



Nº1 READING

29-35 Station Road, Reading, Berkshire

Reading Design Review Panel - Design Response



Revisions:

Issue 2	24th June 2019	Planning Issue
Issue 1	31st May 2019	Draft 1

Disclaimer

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Nº1 READING

Introduction

This documents has been prepared to illustrate the design development following the presentation to Readings Design Review Panel and the comments received following the meeting.

The following document is set out to follow the comments received which can be found in full within the appendix of this document

Since the receipt of the DRPs comments the design team have held further design reviews. The outcome of these were a number of options principally focusing upon

1. The waist band and its relationship between the base and middle
2. The overall materiality of the scheme
3. The grid
4. The Southern abutment arrangement above Brunel House
5. The abutment of the link to the main tower

Having had the input and the opportunity to revisit the design at this stage we feel the proposed amended elevations respond positively to the comments and represent an improved scheme.



Nº1 READING

Building

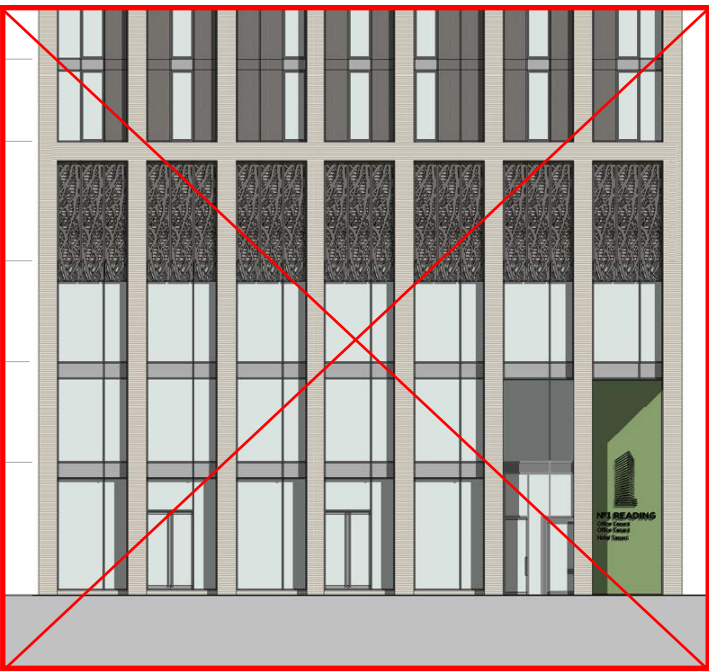
Ground Floors - ‘Waistband’

“The DRP commented that the “waist belt” covering the plant floor could work as a ventilated or back lit element. Visually it would read better to have this an extension to the glazing on the lower floors (as a curtain over the glazing) and back lit, (so the glazing slides behind it) rather than as part of the dark grey panel sections.”

Response

We have revised the base of the tower to respond to this comment. Having reviewed the design with the waist band as an extension to the lower glazing we felt that this made the base of the tower proportionally too tall within the streetscape. Maintaining the base section as three storeys and having clear articulation between the base and upper floors maintains the proportional relationship with the listed former Great Western Hotel and the street scene.

The proposed response boldly articulates the base and upper sections of the tower creating a stronger waist band which underlines the importance of the relationship in scale to the former Great Western Hotel (Malmaison) opposite and to the street scape of Station Rd and Garrard St. The waist band also relates strongly with the mansard roofscape typical of neighbouring buildings.

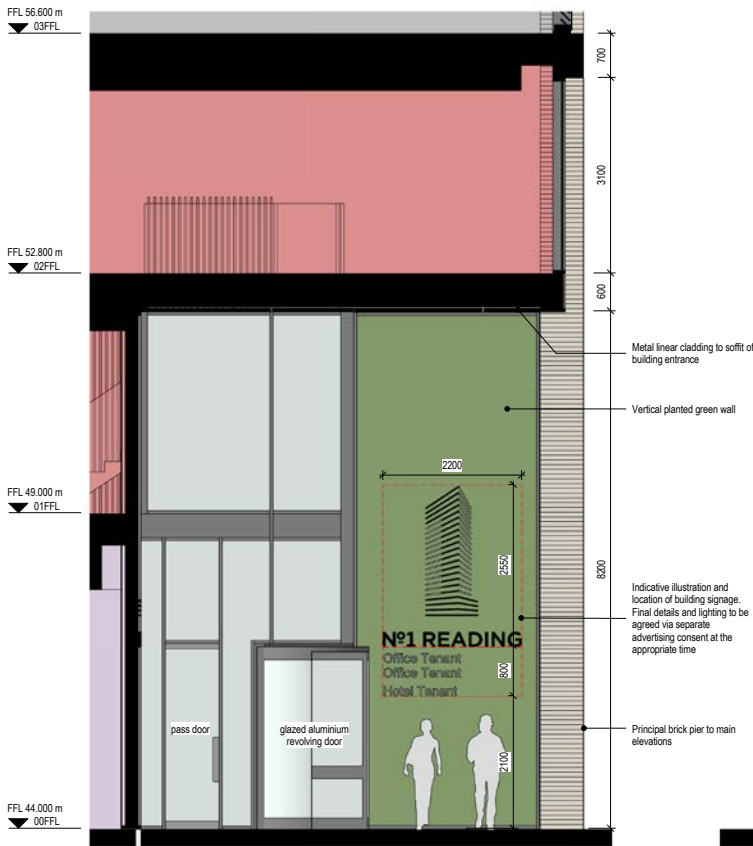


Discounted 4 storey base option



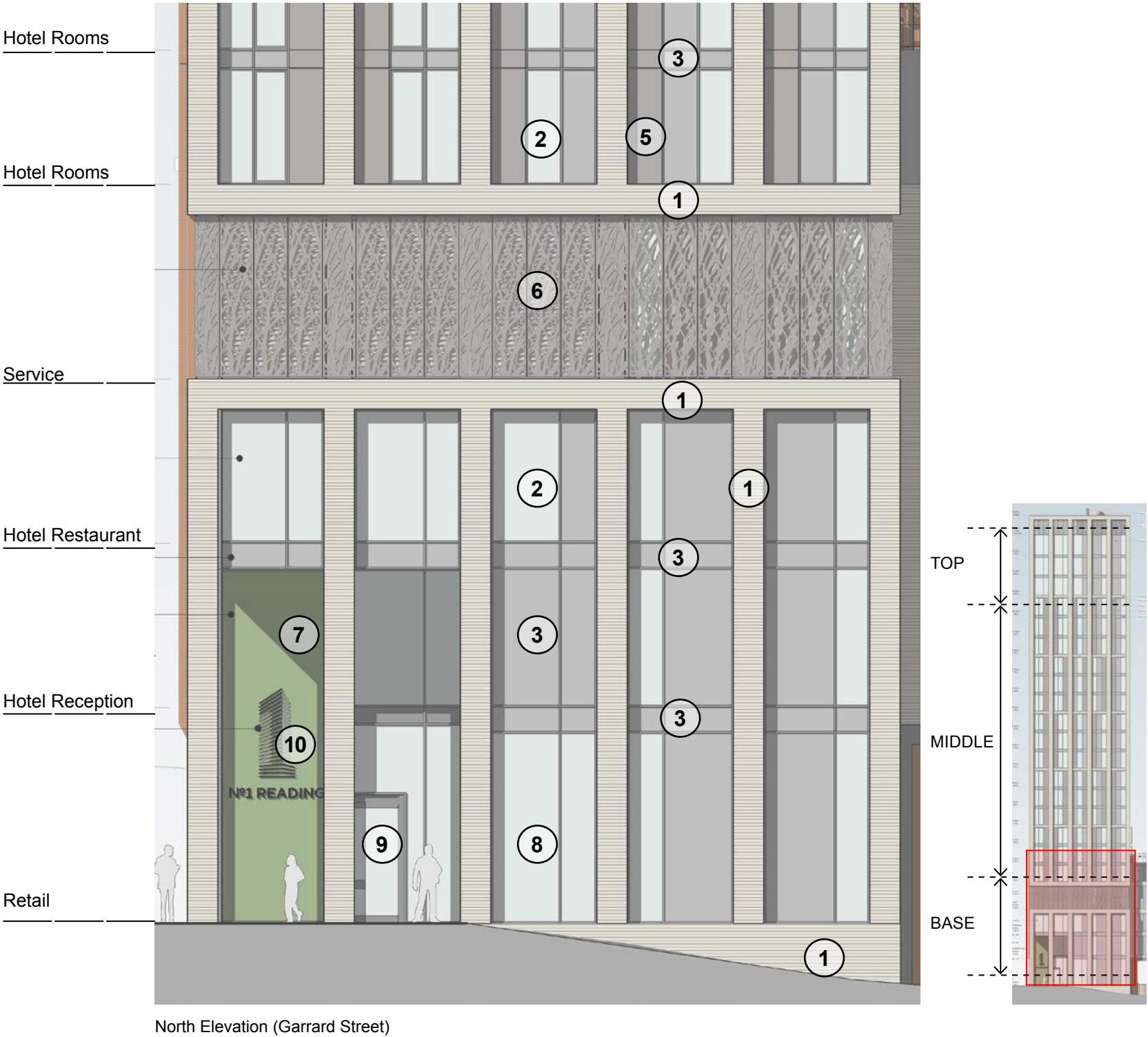
Street scale relationship between proposals and Former Great Western Hotel (Malmaison)

Lower Level Materials



Key

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Buff/White brickwork primary grid | 6. Laser cut plant screen |
| 2. Glazing | 7. Vertical entrance cladding |
| 3. Glazed spandrel panel | 8. Glazed Doors |
| 4. Buff stone floor edge | 9. Glazed revolving door |
| 5. Metal opaque panel | 10. Building signage |



Lower Level Materials



Example of light buff brick grid



Green Wall Texture Lining Entrance



Example of light buff brick

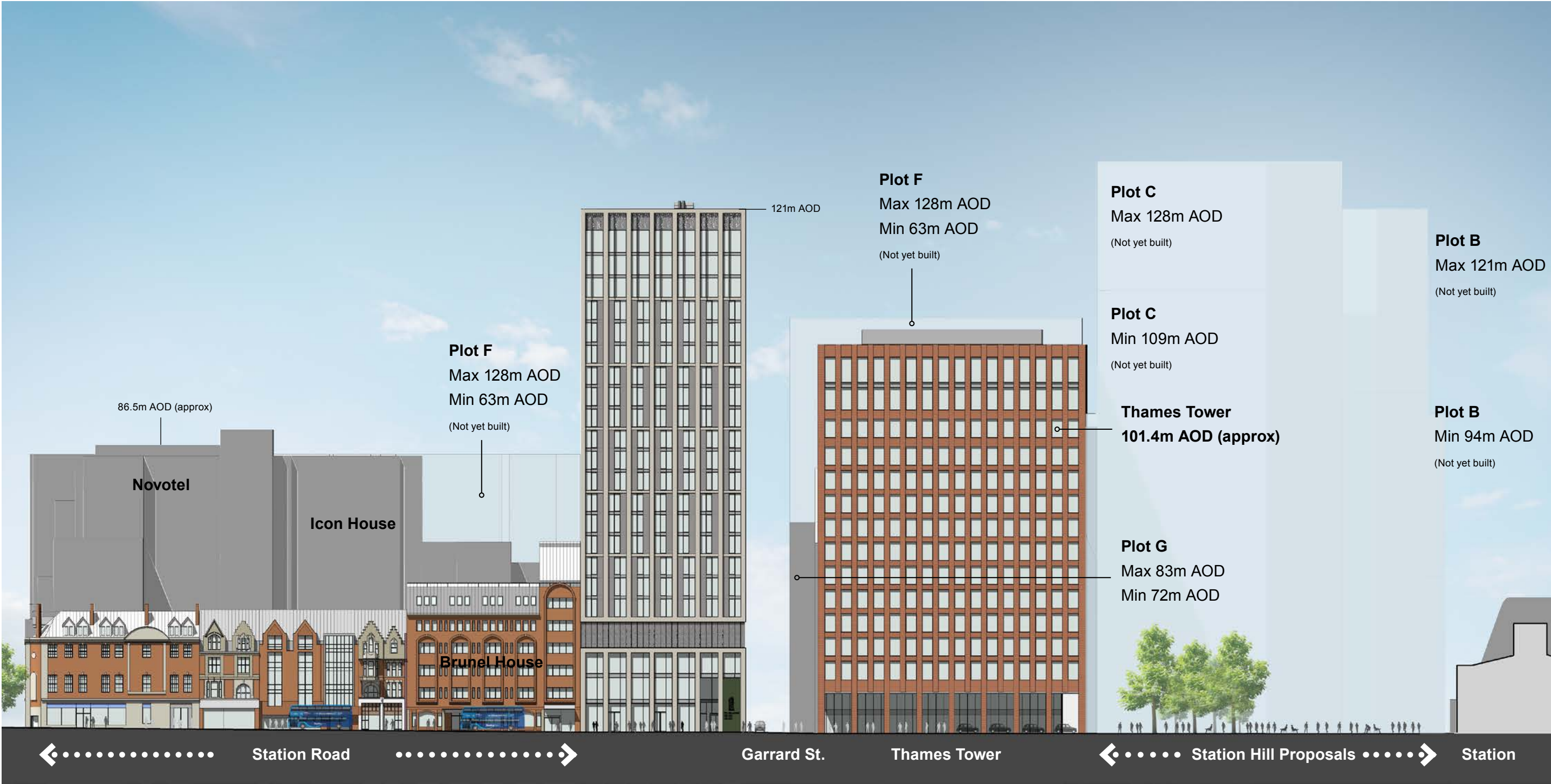


Artist Impression of Station Road Entrance with green wall

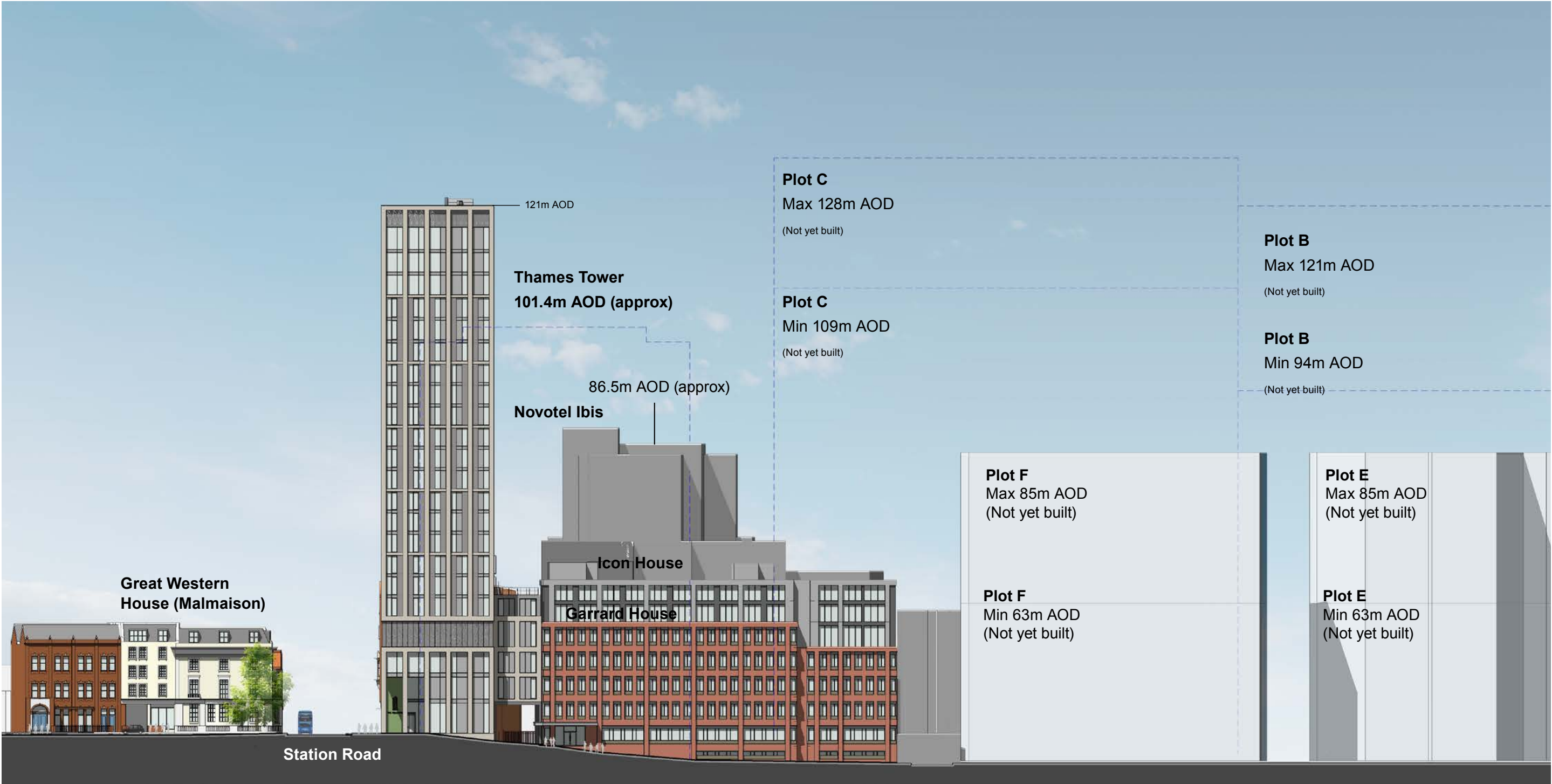


Example of laser cut metal screen to plant areas

Proposed East Elevation
Station Road



Proposed North Elevation
Garrard Street



Middle Floors

“Proportionally, the grid looks convincing from different distances and the white brick approach is interesting. The middle section was agreed by the DRP as being the weakest section as concerns were raised over the low proportion of window to panel. Visually this section was described as being the “second class part of scheme” and needs to be improved. Aesthetically this section may look better if the glazing was more generous on this part of the facade.

The randomisation across this section does create movement, but the DRP didn’t feel this was necessary and making this movement more subtle may simplify this area. If the concept is to increase the lightness and glazing as you move up the tower facade, this could be played out more convincingly by introducing much more glazing lower down in the building rather than just at the top two bands of the middle section.”

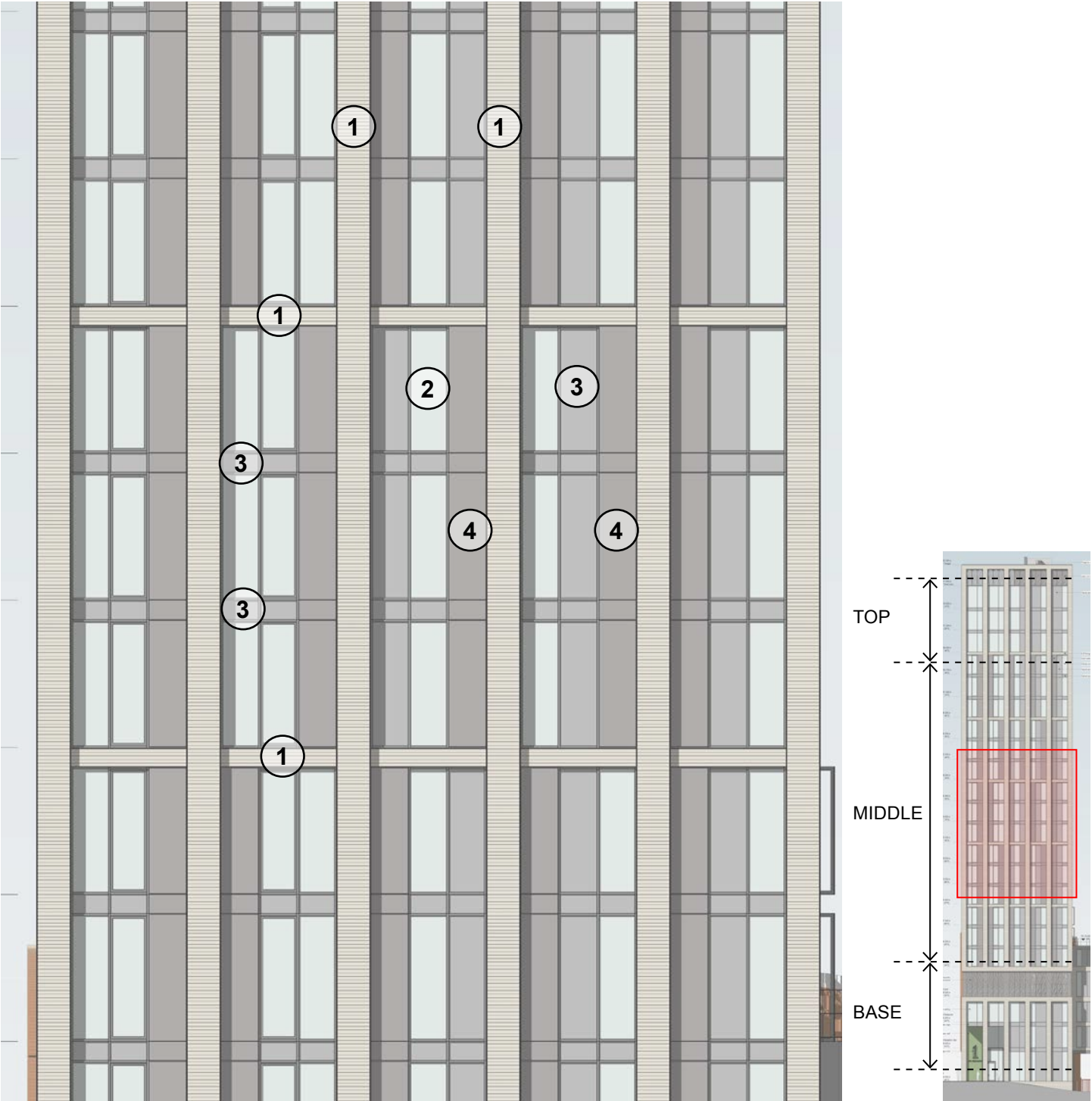
Response

We have reviewed a number of alternative designs associated with these comments and remain content that the middle section of the tower will be of high quality. The proportions of the glazed and solid elements within the facade have been flipped and thus increasing the proportion of glazing to the hotel rooms from one-third to two-thirds. We have prepared a few visuals of each section of the tower to assist in understanding the relationship between the different materials.

In response to the above comments we have made a few subtle changes to the grid to help strengthen and simplify the central section of the tower. These are changing the horizontal buff stone to a brick to match the vertical brick and to increase the horizontal grid to three floors from two. We feel these subtle changes strengthen the grid and simplify the materials palette in line with the DRPs comments.

Key

- 1. Buff/White brickwork primary grid
- 2. Glazing
- 3. Glazed spandrel panel
- 4. Metal opaque panel



North Elevation (Garrard Street)

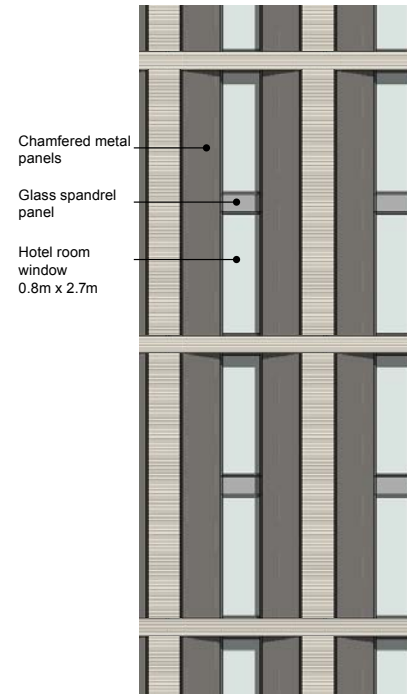


Artist impression of tower mid-section - hotel floors



Artist impressions of top middle and base

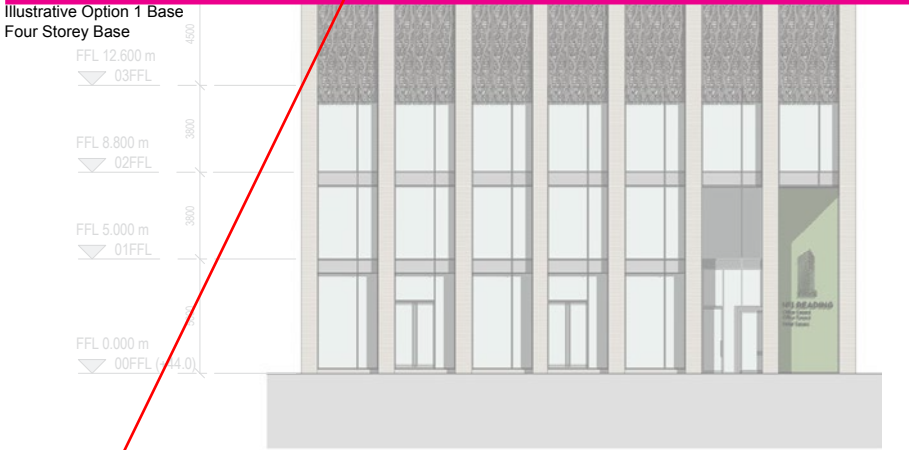
Discounted Grid/
Material Options



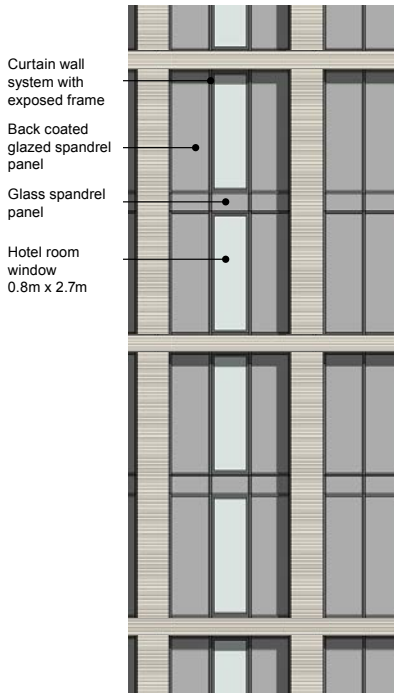
Bay Elevation - 1:100

1:200 @A3

Illustrative Option 1 Base
Four Storey Base



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Bay Elevation - 1:100

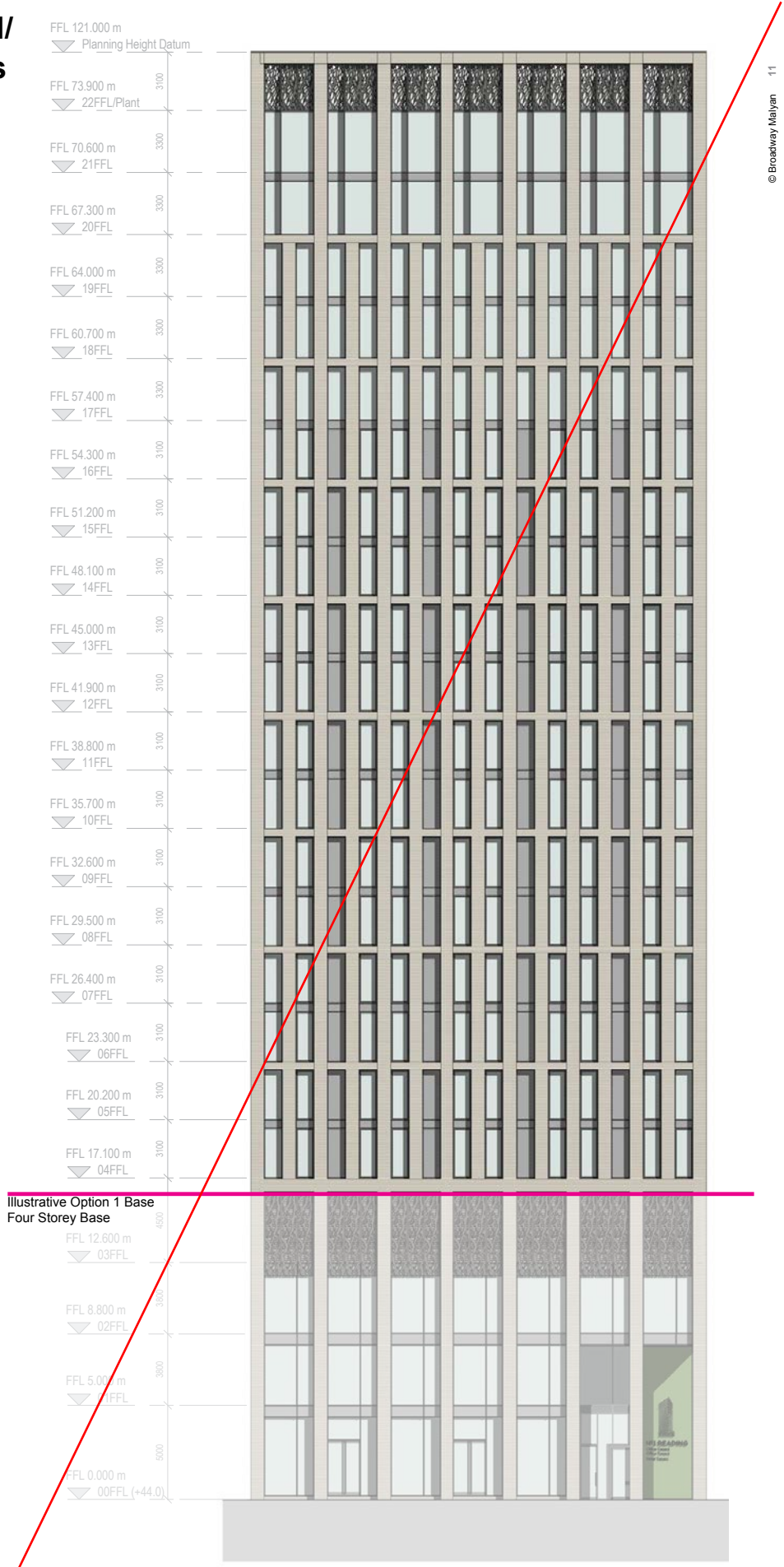
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Illustrative Option 1 Base
Four Storey Base

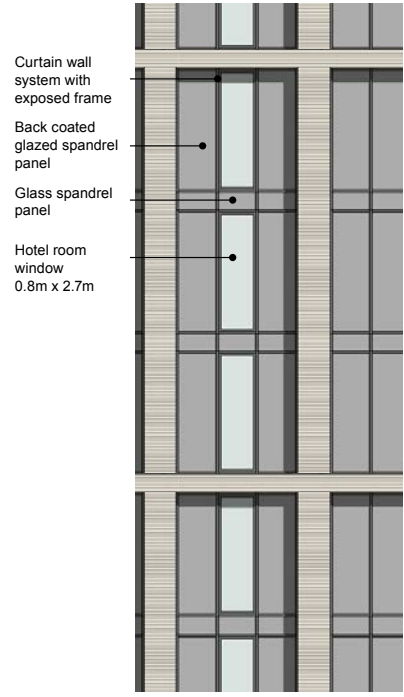


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Discounted Grid/
Material Options

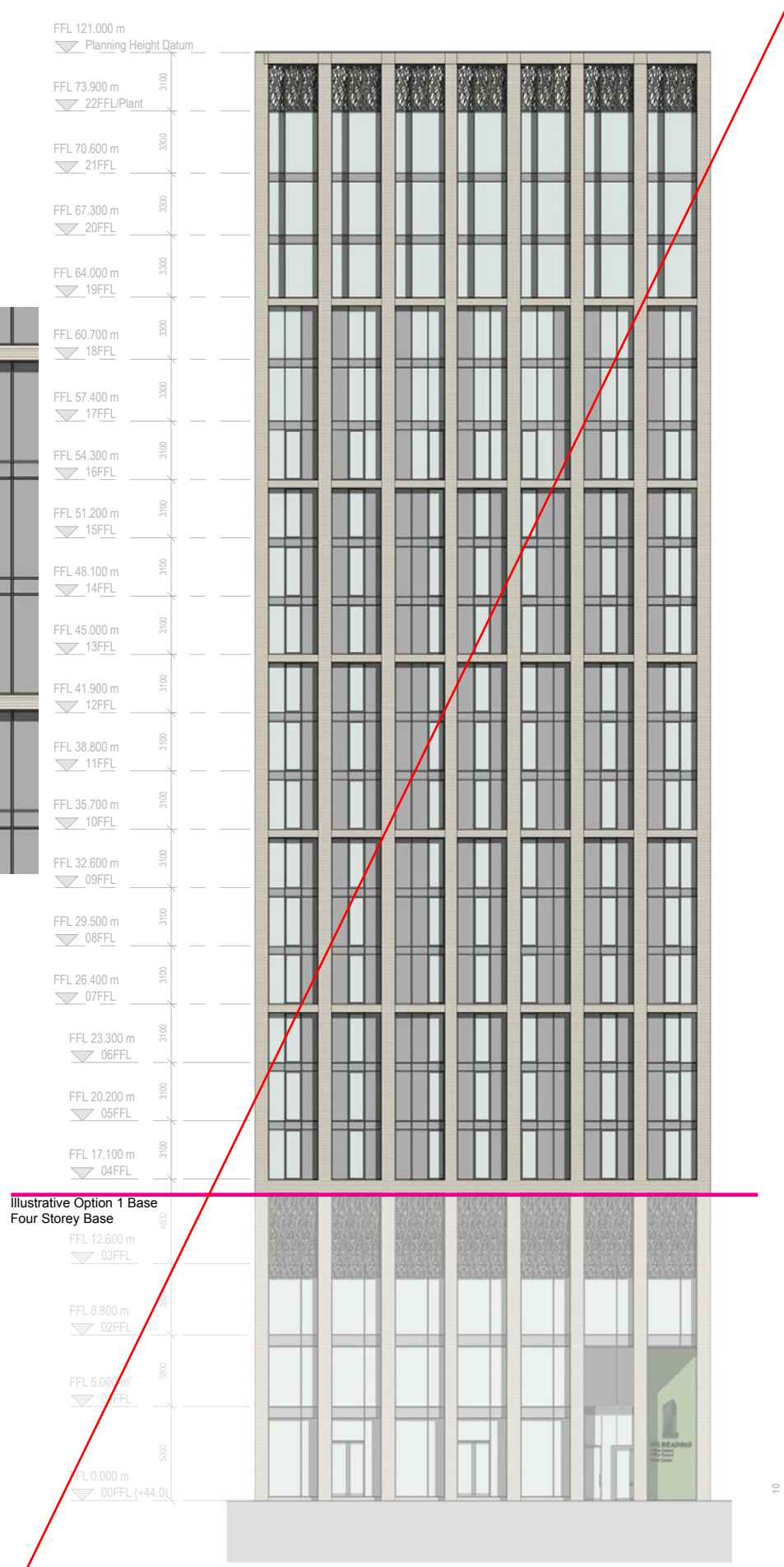


1:200 @A3



Bay Elevation - 1:100

1:200 @A3



1:200 @A3

Upper Floors

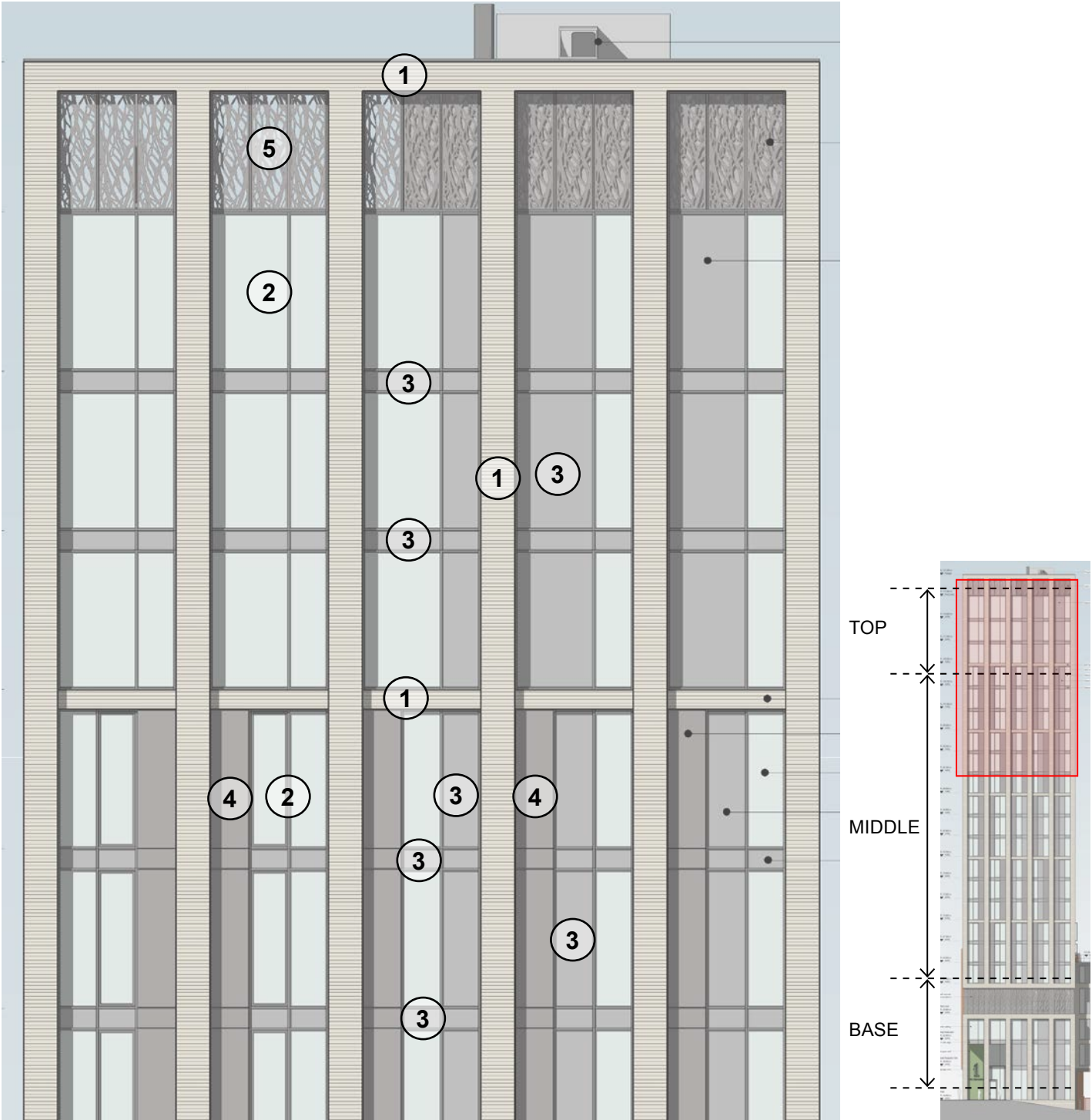
“The DRP commented that the large areas of glazing work well in this areas but frame depth and reveals will key to this scheme in terms of ensuring quality in the design (see more on this below). The DRP questioned whether fins are necessary at these top levels and how much shading they would actually provide into the spaces (could the laser panels be used as a shading curtain in areas?). Proportionally the uppermost bay could be taller to really emphasise the laser cut panels and top lid to the scheme. Thought should be given to this pattern and whether larger signage could be introduced at this level.”

Response

As noted above we have revisited the materiality of the grid and its horizontal setting out. We have enhanced the proportions of the upper floor grid as well in line with the DRPs comments. We are happy that the thermal modelling we have carried out to validate the energy statement requires the vertical fins and they provide valuable shading to reduce heat gains.

Key

- 1. Buff/White brickwork primary grid
- 2. Glazing
- 3. Glazed spandrel panel
- 4. Metal opaque panel
- 5. Laser Cut Plant screen



North Elevation (Garrard Street)



Artist impression of tower top-section - office floors



Artist impressions of top middle and base



Nº1 READING

Detailing

Simplifying the Palette : Emphasising the Grid + Depth

“The DRP discussed the importance in the design team submitting bay studies and sections at 1:10 and models to review how the materials on the facade relate and describe further how the different planes of the grid and inset areas relate (currently the depth of planes and the offsets of the different materials are not clear). These studies will also indicate how any ventilation grilles are integrated into the bays.

The grid is created from: Buff/ White brickwork vertical panels in a projected plane on the vertical elements and a stone edging to form the horizontal elements of the grid (set back from the plane vertical plane). The DRP commented that this would take the emphasis away from the grid and create the appearance of tall vertical slots cut into the building. Removing the stone edging and creating the grid from one continuous material (which is in the same vertical and horizontal plane) will make the openings much more legible and emphasise the grid.

The precedents shown in the D+A highlight the merit in creating depth within the grid using a simple palette of materials and high-quality detailing. A similar approach should be taken for this proposal and more thought over how these facade depths have been considered to articulate the grid and create depth should be provided.

The DRP think that the design would benefit from simplifying the palette of materials, currently there is a combination of: opaque panels/ spandrel panels/fins/ stone edging/laser cut panels/brick slips used across the design alongside the randomised panel movement in the central section of the scheme.”

Response

As noted above we have simplified the materials of the primary grid removing the stone in place of brickwork. We have maintain the subtle set back of the horizontal brickwork as on review of different options we feel this contributes to the vertical slenderness. The reveal depths already detailed are generous while the detailing and material specifications will be of high quality consistent with the buildings key location and usage within the townscape.

Regards the general comments in relation to details will provide further detailed visuals to assist in portraying the design intent of the layering of the different façade materials. We have also already provided bay elevations and sections with the original application. At this stage of the project details at a 1:10 scale would be unlikely to reflect any final details as information in relation to the structure, walls construction and servicing will not be prepared until the next stage of the project. We would be content with a planning condition to deal with this point.



Artist Impression from Blagrove Street/Reading Station

Dark Infill Cladding: Proportions

“The DRP would like the central section of the scheme to be developed particularly where opaque panels are noted. Spandrel panels are introduced on the upper and lower sections of the scheme with some being taken down into the central section of the elevations in places, these will appear as more reflective and lightweight.

The quality these opaque panels will be important to the proposal especially as these appear quite dark and heavy on the elevations. This may be improved by increasing the ratio of glazing in each of the bays (as on the corner windows) and introducing more spandrel panels.

More details and justification of this approach alongside the specific materiality of these panels should be provided to convince the panel of the quality and aesthetic of the panels.”

Response

As noted previously the proportion of the windows to the central section have been increased.

The solid metal panels are a folded metal cassette panels. This will have a high quality finish with a warm grey to brown powder coated finish. The final colour will be chosen alongside the brick selection. Fixings will be concealed within the folds of the panel system.

The cladding systems will also be selected to ensure appropriate fire testing with fire cavity barriers to openings and floor levels in line with building codes for tall buildings.



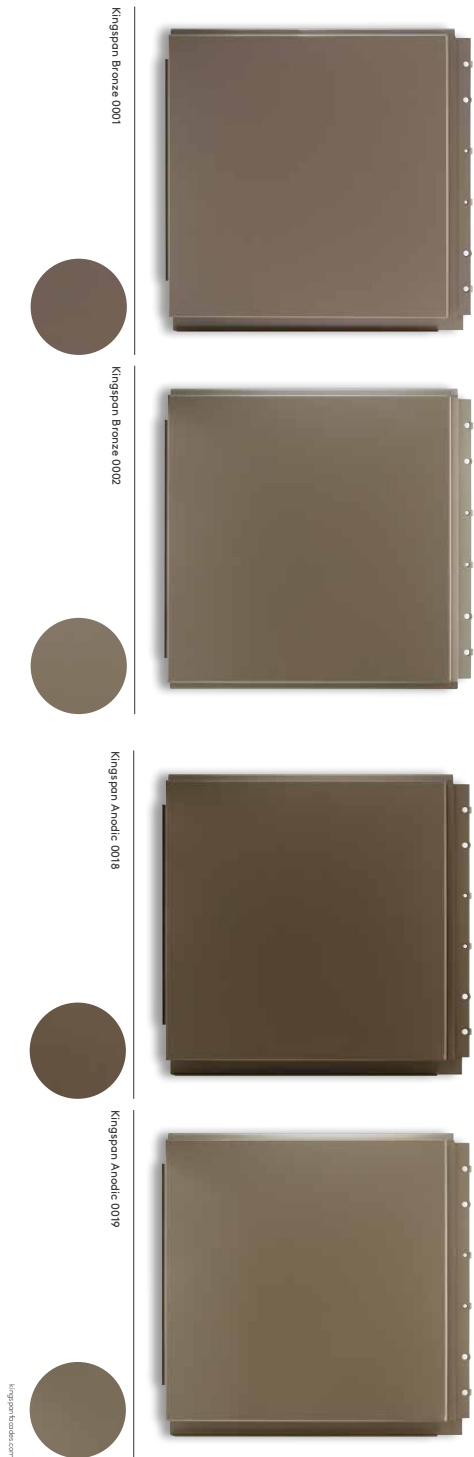
Example tonal and jointing of metal panels



Folded metal panel



Example wall buildup



Example colour palette

Laser Cut Metal Plant Screen

“The details and pattern on these should be developed more and could relate to Reading as a place. The DRP commented it would be nice to see these integrated up through the design but more as an interesting feature.”

Overall, more development in this area is needed to convince the DRP that the use of materials, resolution of junctions and proportions have been carefully considered to ensure the building is both iconic as a tall building in Reading and high quality.

Response

The final details and pattern of the laser cut panels will be developed over the next stage with the intention that it will reflect the buildings location and heritage of the site albeit in an abstract manner. We would expect that this element be conditioned as part of the final materials palette.



Example of laser cut metal screen to plant areas



Artist Impression of Station Road Entrance with laser cut panels to plant screen

Edges, Junctions and Grid

The junctions between existing buildings abutting the proposal need more finessing and thought. Particularly, the gable edge roof junction to Brunel House along the south elevation needs to be revisited. Dressing up to this edge of the gable may help the overall effect.

This has been addressed on the revised elevations. See also adjacent view along Station Road.

Maintaining the strength of the grid and corner is key and breaking the corner of this frame with narrow windows (such as on areas of the north elevation next to the Garrard House) doesn't add any benefit and weakens the design so should be revisited.

This has been addressed on the revised elevations. See also adjacent view along Garrard Street.

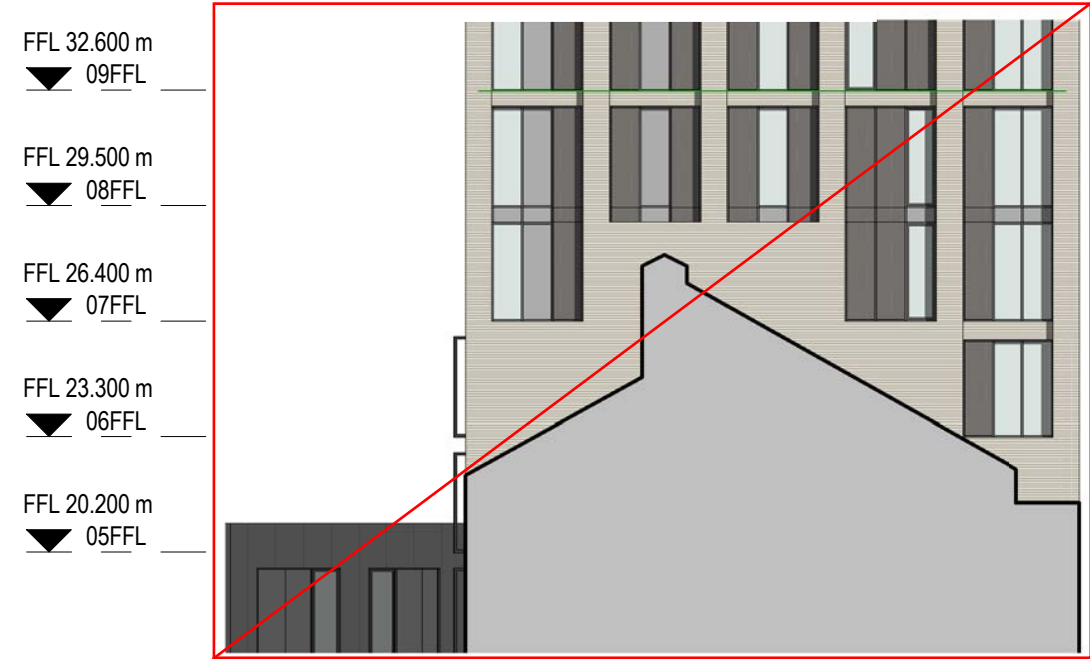


Artist Impression along Garrard Street illustrating revised building corner

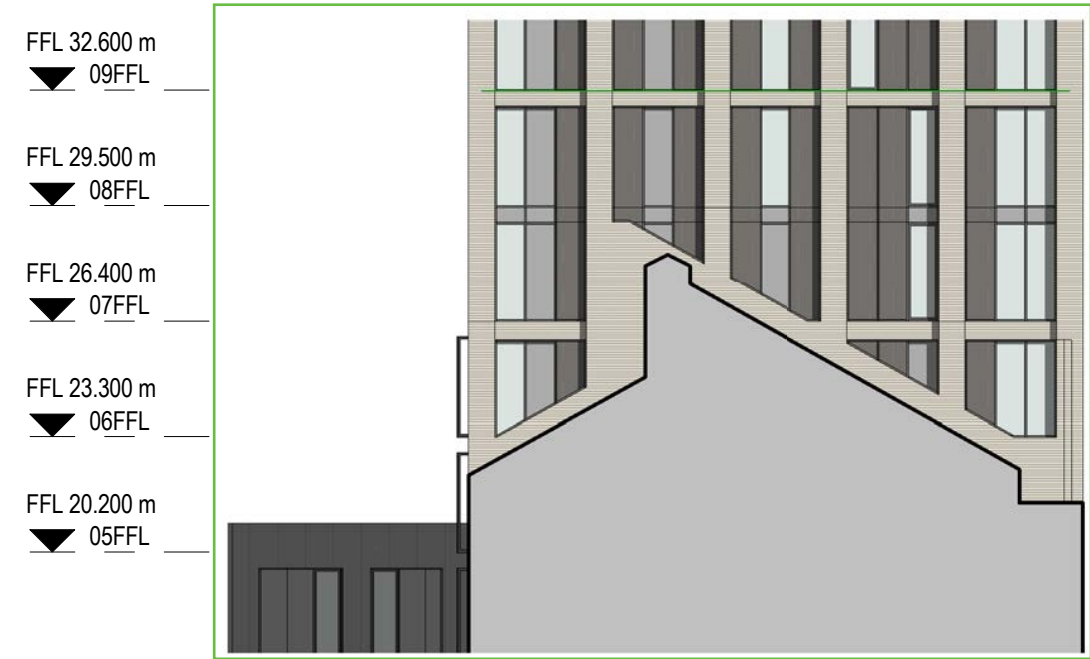


Artist Impression along Station Road

Brunel House Abutment Options



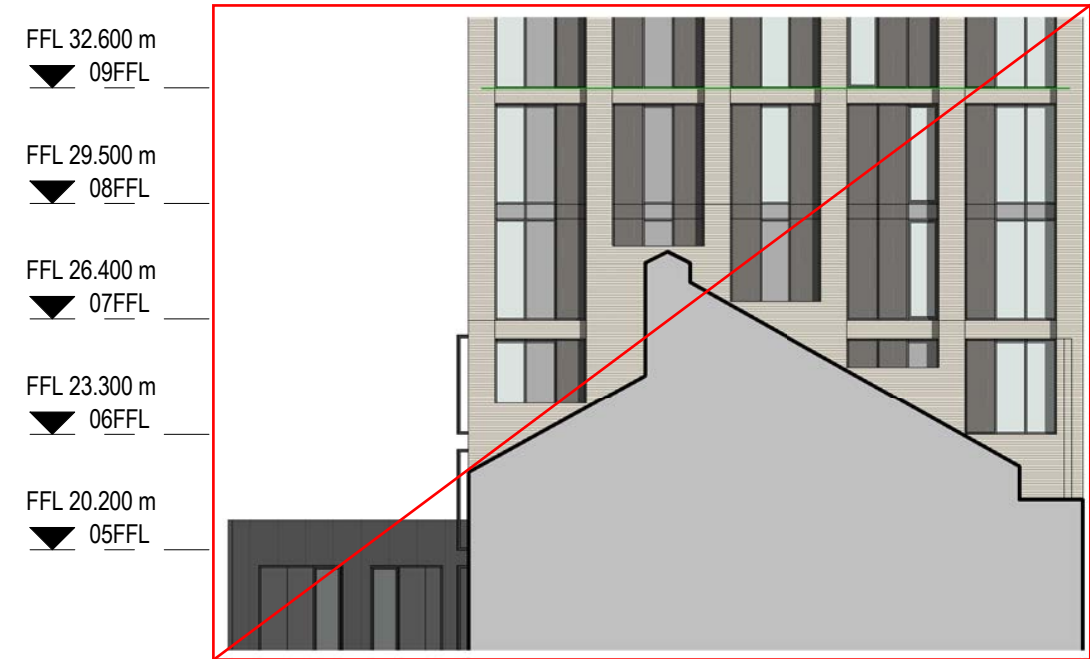
South Elevation Original



South Elevation Sloped



South Elevation Recessed



South Elevation Stepped

Reading Design Review Panel Comments

Application No.

Listed Building: Yes/No
Conservation Area: Yes/No

Proposal: Hotel/Office/Retail Tower

Location: 29 - 35 Station Road, Reading

Site	Building	Sustainability	Detailing	Design Approach
Layout - Urban	Layout – Density & mix	Energy	Craftsmanship	Response to context
Structure & Grain	Scale	Materials	Functional	Legibility
Character of area	Massing	Water	Longevity	Innovation
Quality of public realm				
Landscape - continuity & enclosure	Appearance	Access	Weathering	
Orientation	Function	Health	Structurally honest	
Vehicle circulation	Outlook	Waste	Historically correct	
Pedestrian routes	Legibility	Reuse		
	Adaptability	Inclusivity		

Site
CABE Comments: More rationalisation is needed over the front entrance areas which could benefit from being more generous internally. The DRP commented that having too many steps in the entrance area glazing plan does not benefit the public space significantly and perhaps one step would work better in this area (two bays of glazing in line with Station Road). The DRP also question the number of uses on the two lower floors. The entrance sequence seems quite muddled, currently all hotel guests and office users use the same access with the hotel lobby on first floor. More details should be provided of this sequence.
Building
Differentiation: Proportions Differentiation sits between the sections and the proportions of the primary grid work will within the street scene. To develop the design, more simplicity could be introduced through reducing the number of materials used, increasing more regularity in the central section of the facade and making the transitions between different elements more subtle. Ground Floors: The DRP commented that the “waist belt” covering the plant floor could work as a ventilated or back lit element. Visually it would read better to have this an extension to the glazing on the lower floors (as a curtain over the glazing) and back lit, (so the glazing slides behind it) rather than as part of the dark grey panel sections. Middle Floors: Proportionally, the grid looks convincing from different distances and the white brick approach is interesting. The middle section was agreed by the DRP as being the weakest section as concerns were raised over the low proportion of window to panel. Visually this section was described as being the “second class part of scheme” and needs to be improved. Aesthetically this section may look better if the glazing was more generous on this part of the facade. The randomisation across this section does create movement, but the DRP didn’t feel this was necessary and making this movement more subtle may simplify this area. If the concept is to increase the lightness and glazing as you move up the tower facade, this could be played out more convincingly by introducing much more glazing lower down in the building rather than just at the top two bands of the middle section.

Upper Floors: The DRP commented that the large areas of glazing work well in this areas but frame depth and reveals will key to this scheme in terms of ensuring quality in the design (see more on this below). The DRP questioned whether fins are necessary at these top levels and how much shading they would actually provide into the spaces (could the laser panels be used as a shading curtain in areas?). Proportionally the uppermost bay could be taller to really emphasise the laser cut panels and top lid to the scheme. Thought should be given to this pattern and whether larger signage could be introduced at this level.
Sustainability
No information presented
Detailing
Simplifying the Palette : Emphasising the Grid + Depth: The DRP discussed the importance in the design team submitting bay studies and sections at 1:10 and models to review how the materials on the facade relate and describe further how the different planes of the grid and inset areas relate (currently the depth of planes and the offsets of the different materials are not clear). These studies will also indicate how any ventilation grilles are integrated into the bays. The grid is created from: Buff/ White brickwork vertical panels in a projected plane on the vertical elements and a stone edging to form the horizontal elements of the grid (set back from the plane vertical plane). The DRP commented that this would take the emphasis away from the grid and create the appearance of tall vertical slots cut into the building. Removing the stone edging and creating the grid from one continuous material (which is in the same vertical and horizontal plane) will make the openings much more legible and emphasise the grid. The precedents shown in the D+A highlight the merit in creating depth within the grid using a simple palette of materials and high-quality detailing. A similar approach should be taken for this proposal and more thought over how these facade depths have been considered to articulate the grid and create depth should be provided. The DRP think that the design would benefit from simplifying the palette of materials, currently there is a combination of: opaque panels/spandrel panels/fins/ stone edging/laser cut panels/brick slips used across the design alongside the randomised panel movement in the central section of the scheme.
Design Approach
Dark Infill Cladding: Proportions The DRP would like the central section of the scheme to be developed particularly where opaque panels are noted. Spandrel panels are introduced on the upper and lower sections of the scheme with some being taken down into the central section of the elevations in places, these will appear as more reflective and lightweight. The quality these opaque panels will be important to the proposal especially as these appear quite dark and heavy on the elevations. This may be improved by increasing the ratio of glazing in each of the bays (as on the corner windows) and introducing more spandrel panels. More details and justification of this approach alongside the specific materiality of these panels should be provided to convince the panel of the quality and aesthetic of the panels. Laser Metal Panels The details and pattern on these should be developed more and could relate to Reading as a place. The DRP commented it would be nice to see these integrated up through the design but more as an interesting feature.

Overall, more development in this area is needed to convince the DRP that the use of materials, resolution of junctions and proportions have been carefully considered to ensure the building is both iconic as a tall building in Reading and high quality. The junctions between existing buildings abutting the proposal need more finessing and thought. Particularly, the gable edge roof junction to Brunel House along the south elevation needs to be revisited. Dressing up to this edge of the gable may help the overall effect. Maintaining the strength of the grid and corner is key and breaking the corner of this frame with narrow windows (such as on areas of the north elevation next to the Garrard House) doesn't add any benefit and weakens the design so should be revisited.
Any further comments
Some more thought should be given to the retail area at ground floor and how this works with the hotel entrance which may feel like a secondary entrance. What will this retain unit be used for and how will this work with the hotel entrance? More detail should be provided on the access via Garrard St. and how this creates wayfinding towards the building entrances through the underpass. Details of materials, wayfinding and lighting to be provided.

Date: 18.04.19

Signed

On behalf of the Reading Design Review Panel

