

3.1

Concept Development

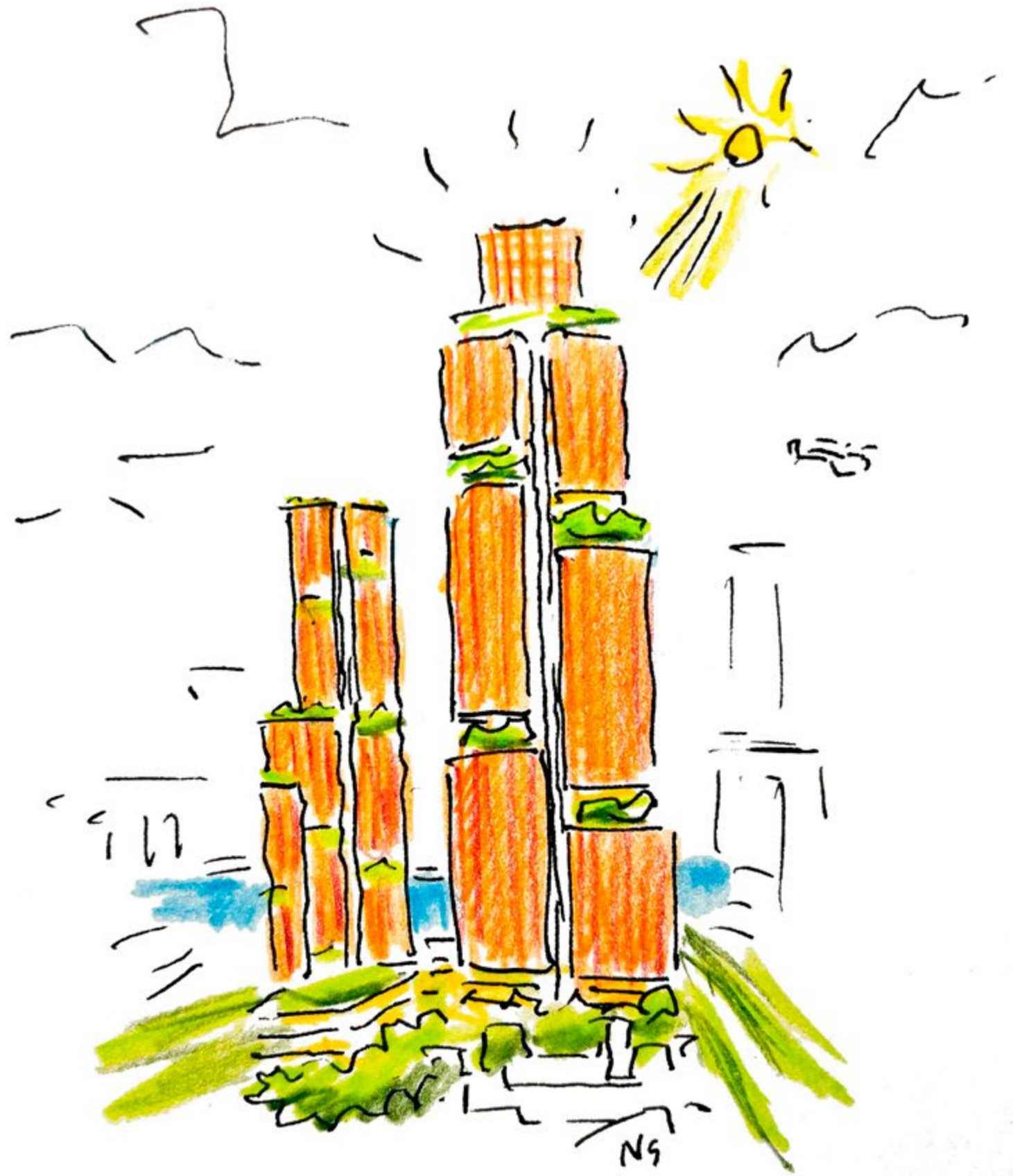
3.1.1 18 Blackfriars Road Vision
Introduction

Our vision for 18 Blackfriars Road is to establish an innovative, sustainable mixed-use development of exceptional design quality that will breathe new life into this strategically important location. The proposal promises to bring significant local benefits to Southwark and to the wider London area.

The project is inspired by and rooted in the surrounding neighbourhood to become a wholly integral part of Southwark, with a diverse mix of land uses.

Three main themes have informed our approach :

- Focus on the local community and neighbourhood by providing diverse activities, public spaces and new homes to create a vibrant hub.
- Create a flexible and future-proof workplace that prioritises wellness, responding to the changing patterns of work.
- Build a sustainable and responsible development that serves as a symbolic marker in innovation and sustainability.



Right:
Sketch showing the
design intent

3.1.2 Concept Design
Key Development Drivers

The key development drivers identified by the project team support the desire to create an inspiring location for the people of Southwark. The development will build on the history of Southwark, from its mention in the work of Shakespeare to the Rotunda Radicals, creating a diverse, sustainable, and attractive destination.

Throughout the design process Foster + Partners have been led by the following core aspirations:



Connectivity and Public Realm

- The Proposed Development would create an active public realm, making a place that people would enjoy.
- The Proposed Development would repair the urban fabric with new pedestrian routes connecting to the surrounding context.
- The Proposed Development would create a secure, accessible, and inclusive public destination that relates to the local character and enhances the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The Proposed Development aims to minimise service related traffic on surrounding roads and provide a pedestrian only public realm.
- The Proposed Development would enhance the public realm through a variety of retail, and food and beverage, as well as cultural offerings in the surrounding area.
- The Proposed Development of the neighbourhood would be improved by providing new 'oasis' areas for people to rest and relax.

High Quality Design

- The Proposed Development would provide buildings of exceptional architectural design to create an inspirational place on the Site.
- The Proposed Development would create a focal point for the Blackfriars cluster and celebrate the uniqueness of the Site, whilst complementing the surrounding buildings.
- Building designs would aim to enhance townscape views and local views.
- The Proposed Development would be sustainable, durable and adaptable in design, construction, and use.
- The Proposed Development would utilise high quality materials and encompass intelligent detailing.
- The Proposed Development would provide active frontages and entrances that will enliven the ground and podium levels of the proposal.

Creating a place for the local community that makes people, culture and businesses thrive

- The Proposed Development would offer a variety of uses with events tailored for a diverse set of interests.
- The Proposed Development would embrace a strong place vision inspired by the public consultation process, focused on food and hospitality, health and wellbeing, creativity and performance.
- The Proposed Development would aim to become a new local hub and destination for visitors.
- The Proposed Development will create a variety of spaces at a range of scales, within public realm to complement the buildings' proposed functions.
- The Proposed Development would provide a distinct sense of place embedded in the local community.

3.1.2 Concept Design
Key Development Drivers



Diversity

- The Proposed Development would seek to bring vibrancy to the area.
- Density, diversity, and choice would respond to local needs and provide a range of commercial facilities and spaces that would accommodate a variety of uses, at different times of the day.
- The Proposed Development would provide a safe, secure, and sustainable environment and improve the quality of its surroundings.
- The mixed use Proposed Development would encompass a mix of residential tenures, office typologies, and retail offerings encouraging a wide array of people and companies to live and work within Blackfriars.
- The landscaping and buildings would be accessible and usable to all.

Celebrate the historic architecture

- The Proposed Development would respond to and enhance the existing heritage assets, including those referred to in sub-chapter 2.0.6: Historic and Listed Buildings. It would seek to reinforce the qualities that make them significant.
- The Proposed Development would seek to secure the future of the listed buildings on the Site by providing them with a new life and careful restoration of the neglected and altered facades.
- The Proposed Development seeks to make 1 and 3-7 Stamford Street a destination and community asset.
- The Proposed Development would repair, restore and integrate sensitive new additions to secure the future of 1 and 3-7 Stamford Street.
- The Proposed Development would allow the listed buildings to become integrated within the public realm and ground floor animation.

Sustainability

- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) had been and will continue to be a guiding principle of design.
- The Proposed Development would provide for the social, economic and environmental needs of a diverse mix of residents, visitors and employees.
- The Proposed Development would seek to minimise and mitigate any adverse environmental impacts, including the effects of climate change.
- The Proposed Development would deliver high-quality architecture in a high-density environment, situated adjacent to excellent public transport links. It would encourage walkability. It would make a significant contribution towards a sustainable neighbourhood in Southwark.

Height, Massing, and Townscape

- The approach to height across the development would respond to the urban context.
- The Proposed Development would seek to optimise daylight and sunlight into the public realm and buildings.
- The Proposed Development would aim to respond positively to key townscape views providing legibility as part of the cluster, demarcating the neighbourhood and entry to the borough.
- The Proposed Development would respond to the distinct spirit and character of the local neighbourhood.
- The Proposed Development would positively contribute to the emerging Blackfriars cluster.
- The Proposed Development would create interest and intrigue at street level.
- The Proposed Development would engage with the existing listed buildings (as described in Chapter 5.0 and 5.1) and surrounding context (as described in Chapters 2.0 and 2.1).

3.1.3 Concept Development Process
Site Opportunities

As discussed in Chapter 2.0, throughout the design process, Space Syntax have analysed and highlighted the potential of the Site in terms of maximising strategic connectivity with the wider context. The key points established include:

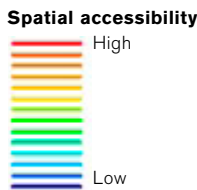
- The importance of site edges for larger scale movement, connecting to areas further away.
- Importance of a centre for local activity for slower movement, supporting social interaction.
- Importance of geometry and width of the public route behind 1 and 3-7 Stamford Street ("Hatter's Yard") for pedestrian access and visual access from Blackfriars Road.
- A masterplan design that creates a space at its heart that can support multidirectional views and pedestrian flows, which are an essential ingredient for successful public space design.

The adjacent diagrams highlight the design process in establishing the routes and connectivity to the immediate context.



Existing Baseline

The current pedestrian movement hierarchy shows the existing Site could benefit from additional routes and further connections between the site edges to support social interaction and walkability.



Developing routes through the Site

Throughout the design process, various proposed routes were analysed to seek the strongest connections through the public realm. This included the removal of the rear west wing of 3-7 Stamford Street to provide direct access to the central public amenity space within the Proposed Development ("The Rotunda") and Blackfriars Road.

The analysis shows there is less importance to the link between Paris Garden and the central space.



The Proposed Development

With alterations to the rear west wing of 3-7 Stamford Street, the rear passageway has been improved and the wider opening will help to attract visitors to the Site.

Removing the connection from Paris Garden to the central space helps to concentrate the pedestrian movement reinforcing the central north-south pedestrian route.

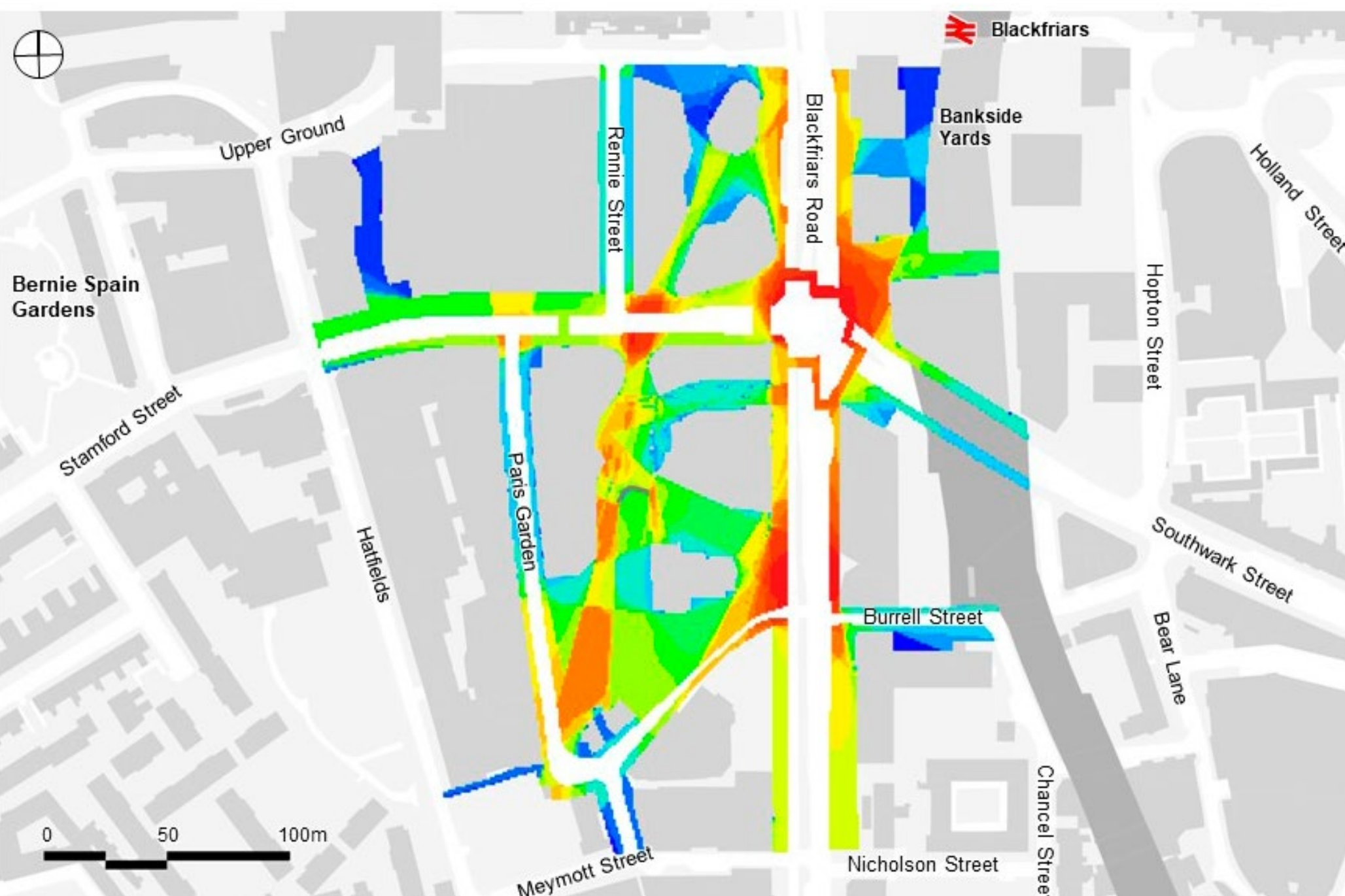
3.1.3 Concept Development Process
Public realm and routes development

The junction at Blackfriars Road/Stamford Street is visually a highly integrated space. It acts as a point of orientation that connects different approaches.

Entrances to the Site from Stamford Street and Blackfriars Road were widened during the design process to enhance the flow of people in addition to providing a visual connection through the Site.

The removal of the rear west wing of 3-7 Stamford Street further increases visibility whilst creating a destination to attract further visitors and footfalls to the Site. This introduces a generous link between Blackfriars Road and the Rotunda providing improved visibility to the heart of the Site generating a more vibrant public space environment with good levels of social surveillance.

A clear visual integration strategy to the site has been implemented. A more visible part of the Proposed Development can generally attract more activities than less visible spaces. Analysis for the public spaces has taken place highlighting the most visually integrated spaces in red and the least in blue.



Above: Public Space Intensity analysis conducted by Space Syntax.

3.1.3 Concept Development Process
Pedestrian Flows

At the heart of the design is the goal to enhance the immediate and wider site, to benefit the community, visitors, residents and occupants.

The development aims to encourage pedestrian and cycle access. By studying the surrounding area and the 'DNA' of Southwark, including vehicular, cycle and pedestrian movement as described in sub-chapter 2.0.8: Site Connectivity, the project team are able to activate the ground plane of the Site. This aims to ensure a lively, well-balanced mix of uses that will bring people together, encouraging social interaction.

Through an iterative analysis of the pedestrian movements highlighted in the previous pages, we have outlined a strategy to reinforce the existing routes and create new connections, ensuring that the Site is knitted into the local fabric and is accessible to all. Improving the connection of the Site to surrounding streets and Southwark to the north of the River Thames will be critical in the success of the development.

Enhancing pedestrian movements and walkability across the Site has been a key driver of the scheme, informing high level decision making regarding the scheme's massing and design.



Above:
Aerial sketch showing the intention to create routes in to the 'heart' of the scheme

3.1.3 Concept Development Process
Enhancing the Experience at Ground Level

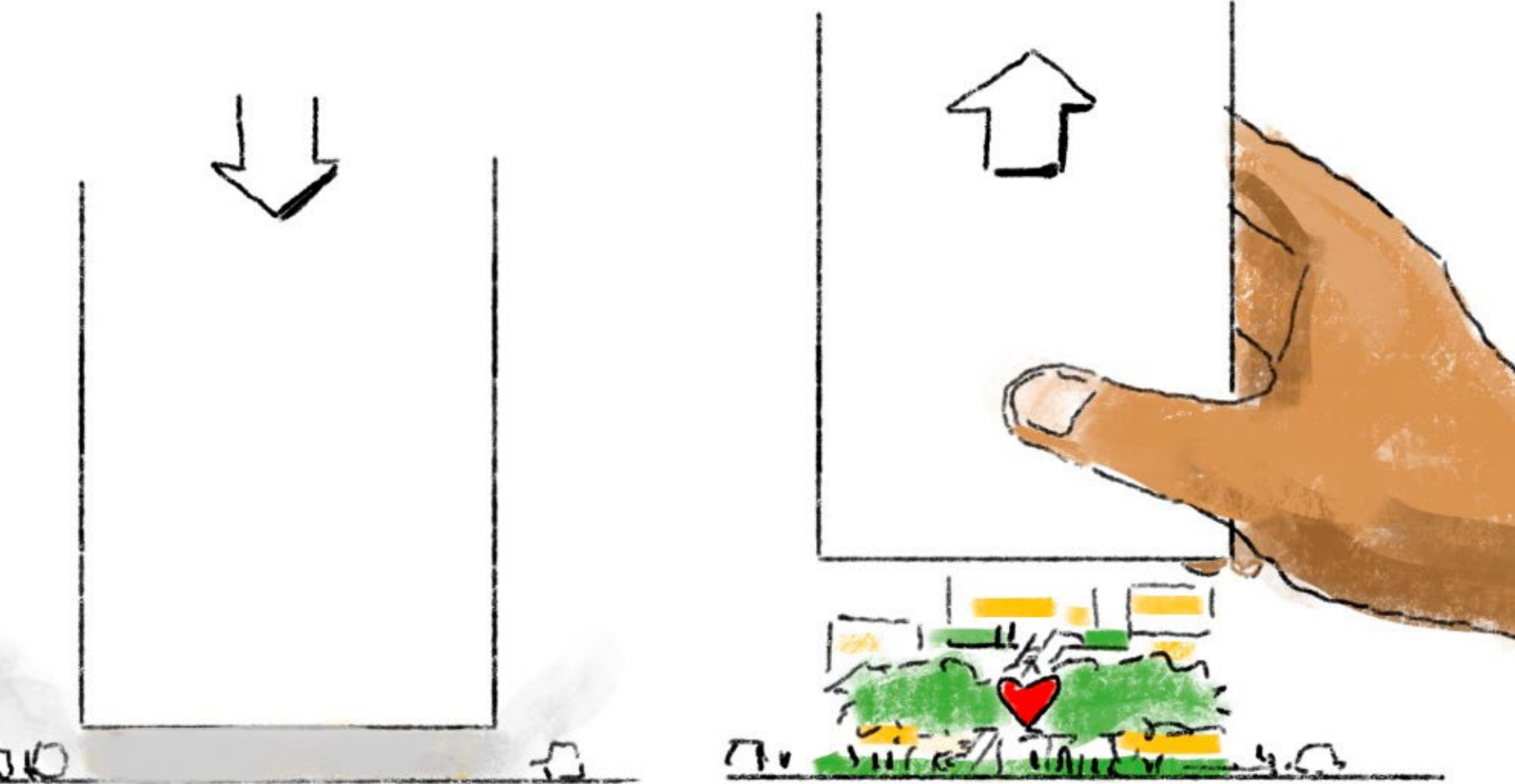
One of the key drivers in developing the proposed scheme is the desire to design the scheme from the 'ground up'.

By lifting the towers above the ground plane, a range of uses can be accommodated which help activate the streetfronts and new public realm. In addition, pedestrian routes are able to flow through the Site, helping ensure 18 Blackfriars Road becomes a recognisable new place within Southwark.

The podium and public realm will be a welcoming place to eat, drink, learn, meet and gather. The podium is intended to accommodate a wide range of uses established during the public consultation including:

- Food & Hospitality
- Health & Wellbeing
- Creativity & Performance

There are incredible opportunities in the city



Right:
Sketch showing the intention to lift the towers up to allow design from the 'ground-up'

3.1.3 Concept Development Process

Ground Level Program and Activities

The place making vision seeks to create a place which is open and inviting to all, which stimulates curiosity, through learning and growth.

It seeks to create a place that builds on community interests to create an attractive and fun place to be, a place in which people can feel comfortable and safe. It also aims to establish a place that provides for common ground in physical and social wellbeing.

The ground plane aims to create an animated and active public realm. It will feature a central public space, the Rotunda, and market hall complemented by a variety of uses, forming part of a responsive and sustainable live/work development.



Right: Aerial sketch showing how we intend to create a sense of place at ground level.

3.1.3 Concept Development Process

Massing Responding Urban Context

High-rise buildings need to work on a city-wide scale, giving form to the urban landscape and defining areas of high economic activity, often focused around transport hubs. 18 Blackfriars Road is intended to become a focal point for the emerging Blackfriars cluster with its excellent links to public transport, the river and the wider Southwark community.

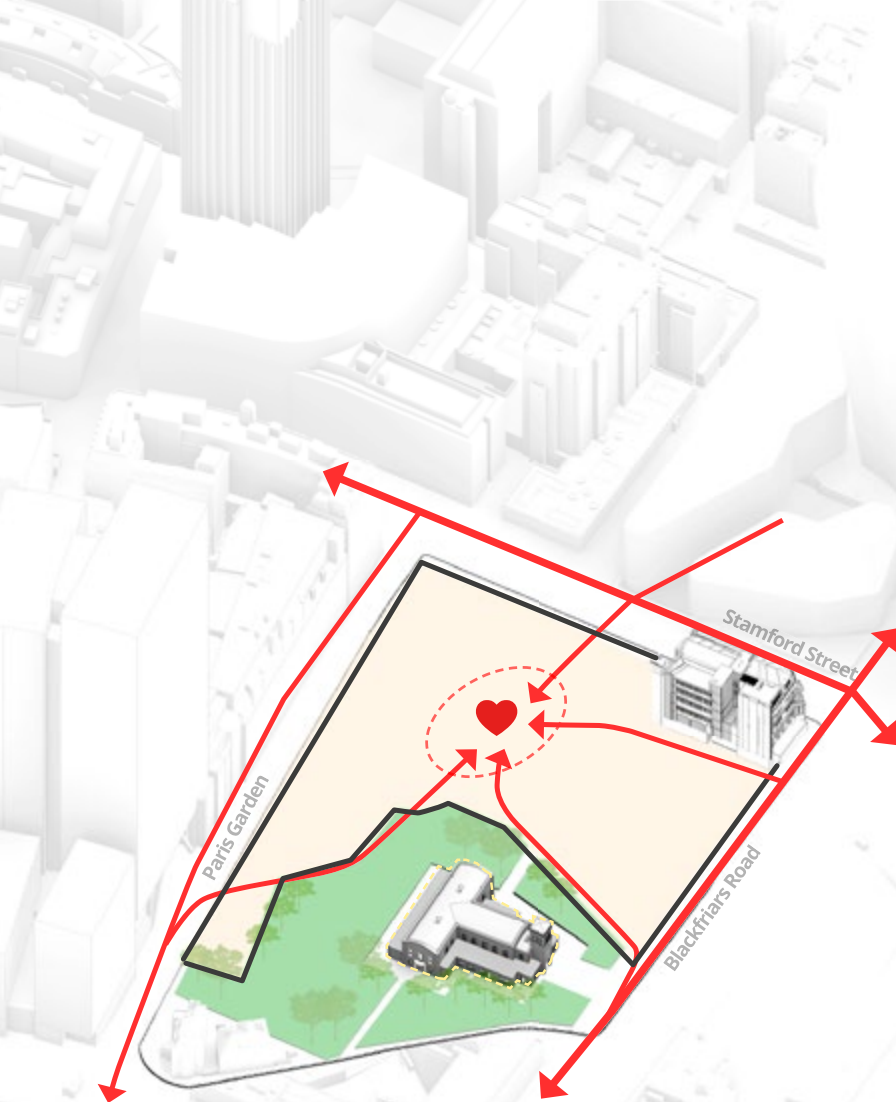
The precise location and heights of the buildings, as well as their interaction with the podium, have been continually tested and developed in consultation with the local community and the LBS planning team and are discussed in more detail in their respective chapters.



Right: Aerial sketch showing how the towers will sit atop the enlivened podium

3.1.4 Site-Wide Vision
Scheme development

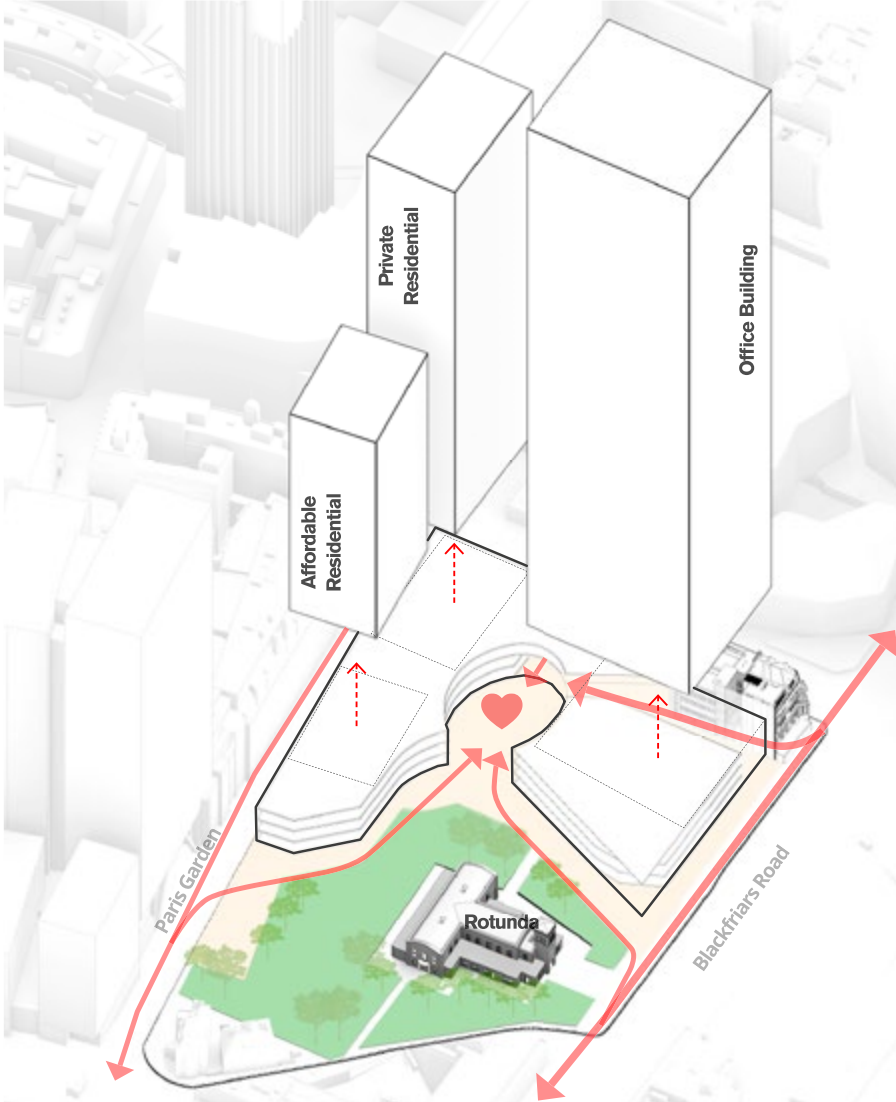
1. Creation of a new public realm and connection



A new plaza will be located at the centre of the proposal, interacting with both the ground floor retail, the market hall, and the neighbouring green space within Christ Church Gardens.

Key pedestrian routes have been identified across the Site connecting the new public realm into the wider community.

2. Raising the buildings and locations of key functions

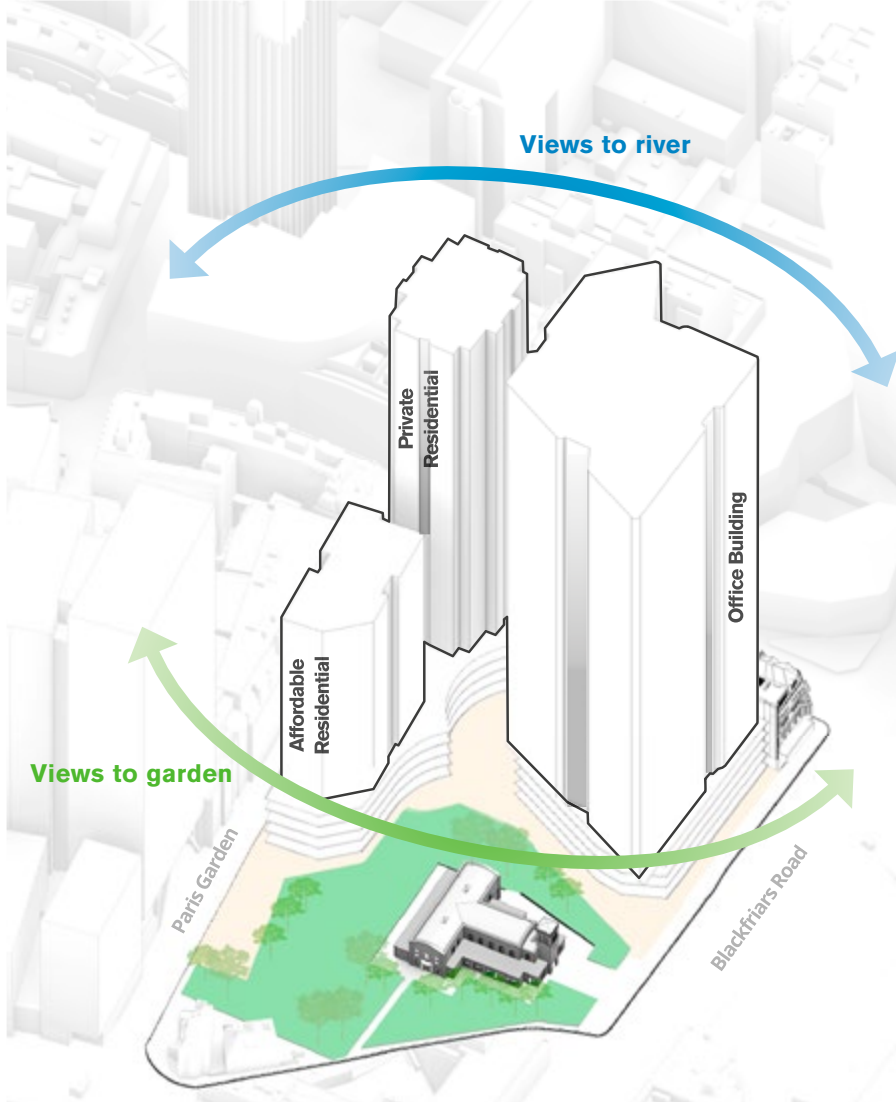


Raising the buildings to create a podium base allows the public realm and pedestrian routes to flow beneath. This aims to create a vibrant, local hub providing new retail, food and beverage, wellness and community spaces.

Located within the Blackfriars cluster, the Office Building has been positioned on the corner of two main transport routes, Blackfriars Road and Stamford Street. Its proximity to public transport and the cycle highway make it easily accessible and visible on approach.

The residential buildings are located on the quieter street of Paris Garden to the west of the Site.

3. Articulating the facade



The vertical slots are integrated into the design. They enhance the internal environmental conditions by delivering daylight deep into the floorplates, whilst the increased facade allows for greater views out for all occupants. The slots allow for glass corner windows in the residential buildings.

3.1.4 Site-wide Vision
Building Locations

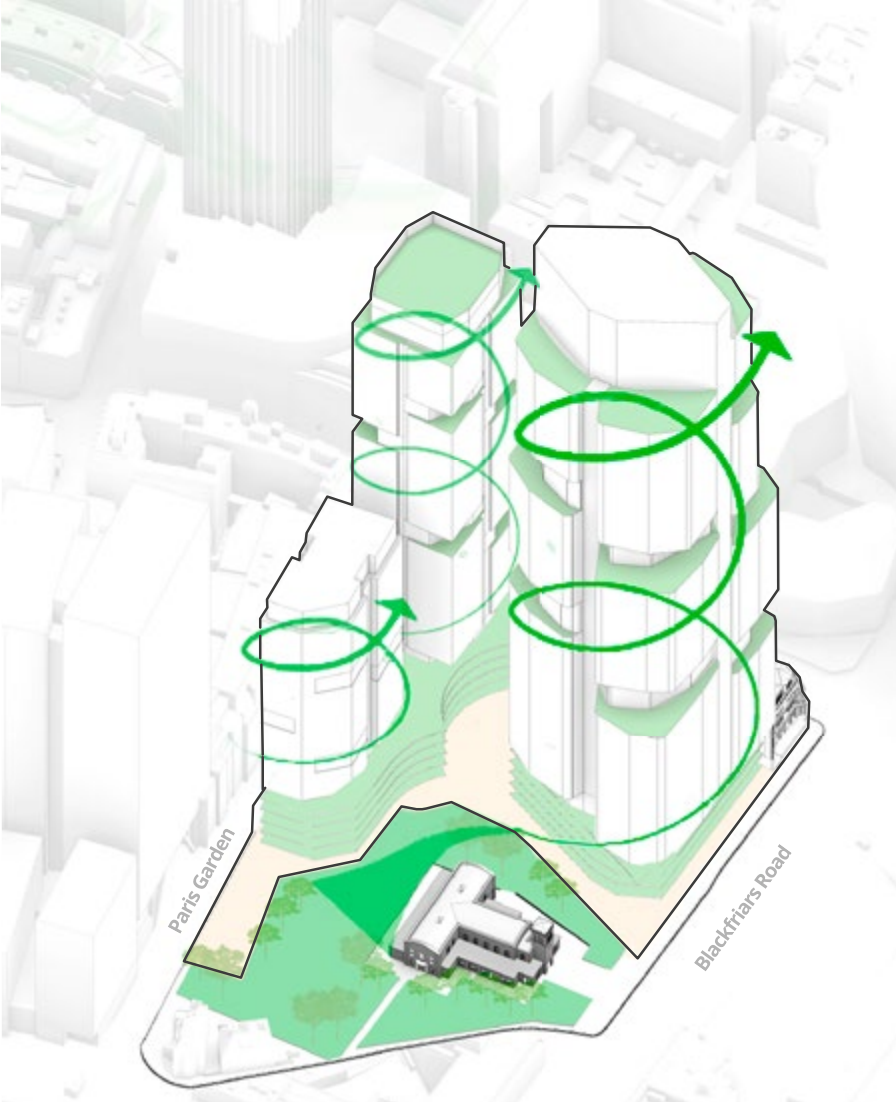
4. Breaking down the massing



Horizontal breaks are introduced, breaking down the massing and scale by creating identifiable units of accommodation. These units, referred to as 'Bustles' provides a visual hierarchy when viewed locally and from further afield. The change in depth and orientation of each Bustle creates a rich variety of floor plate sizes, suitable for a range of businesses.

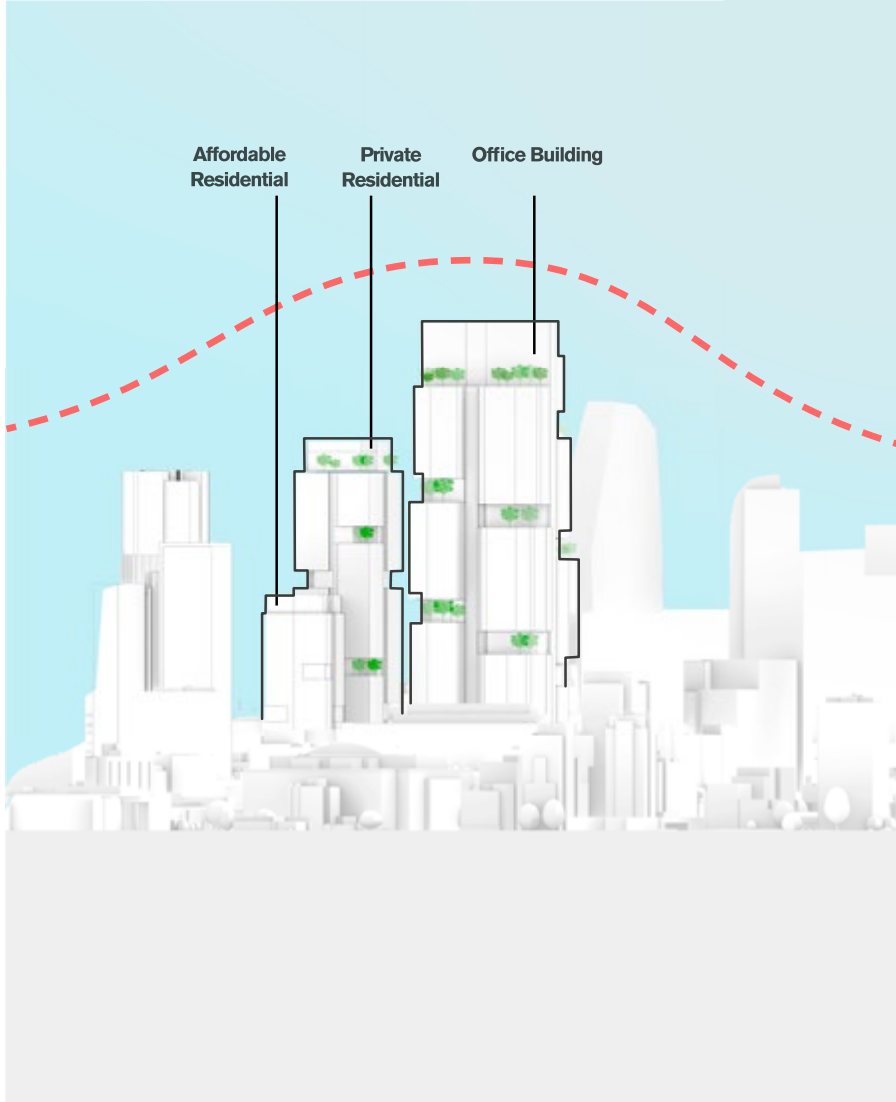
The horizontal breaks are common to all buildings, creating opportunities for terraces and Sky Gardens at regular intervals throughout the buildings.

5. Family of buildings



The development is tied together with a common language to create a family of buildings, with the green from Christ Church Gardens spiralling vertically up the buildings. By creating a series of terraces, steps, and cutaways in the buildings, an abundance of landscaped external spaces are created, providing a unique composition on the skyline.

6. Complementing the cluster



The Office Building and Private Residential building are located to the north of the Site to respond to the existing and proposed tall buildings of the Blackfriars cluster. Using a context appropriate scheme, 18 Blackfriars Road will be a unique and instantly recognisable landmark that enhances not only the Site itself but the Blackfriars cluster and surrounding streetscapes.

3.1.5 Design Development Process

Massing Evolution

The design process began with studies to understand the massing opportunities of the Site and assess the potential strategic options that could be taken forward for further investigation.

A series of different options were considered for the Site whilst incorporating the highest quality of public realm, office, and residential development. From an early stage, a scheme of three independent buildings positioned on a low-rise podium building became the preferred option to meet the core aspirations, accommodate the mix of land uses and public realm, respond to the site context, and address project sustainability and placemaking aspirations.

Massing studies both in plan and 3D were undertaken to explore how the principal pedestrian connections across the Site and range of open spaces could inform the masterplan strategy and help identify the optimum position and scale for the buildings.

The design team has engaged through an iterative design process, including 3D modelling, plan drawings, and physical models, to refine the massing of the proposal to ensure it corresponds to its context and is perceived as a family of buildings.

The following pages illustrate the key stages of the design process, where a range of massing strategies were explored and refined.



Right:
A selection of early massing models.



3.1.5 Design Development Process

Design Evolution



August 2021:
Use of diverse activities to enhance the ground floor public realm.
Creation of generous public realm and new pedestrian routes through the Site.



September 2021:
Highly sustainable, ambitious facade proposal.
Massing intended to create a destination in Blackfriars.



June 2022:
Development of The Rotunda to maximise open space at ground level.
Use of brick facade for improved fire performance and response to context.



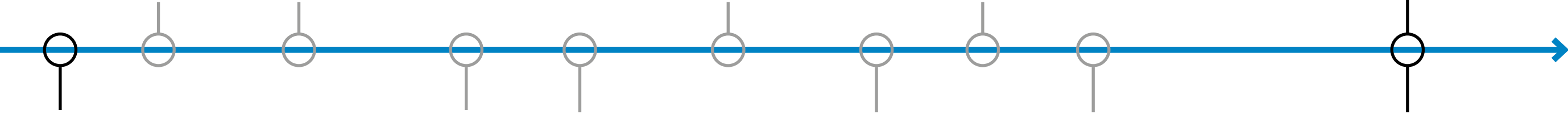
October 2022:
Refinement of The Rotunda geometry.
Use of terracotta to relate to local industrial heritage.



June 2023:
The Proposed Development.
Massing to respond to and enhance the emerging Blackfriars Cluster.



June 2023:
The Proposed Development.



Current Site:
Empty brownfield site in an exceptional central location.



March 2022:
Change in material colour palette to respond to the Site context.
Vertical Gardens introduced on all buildings.
Stepped residential and office massing.



April 2022:
Massing revised to incorporate more dynamic angles to the facades. Top of building simplified.



July 2022:
Revised residential massing removing the stepping to reduce the overall height.



November 2022:
Residential massing improved to introduce more dual aspect apartments and improve sunlight-daylight.



June 2023:
The Proposed Development.

3.1.5 Design Development Process

Design Review Panel Meeting

The design process has included two meetings with the Southwark Design Review Panel (DRP) held in September 2022 and May 2023. These have helped to challenge and inform the direction of the design.

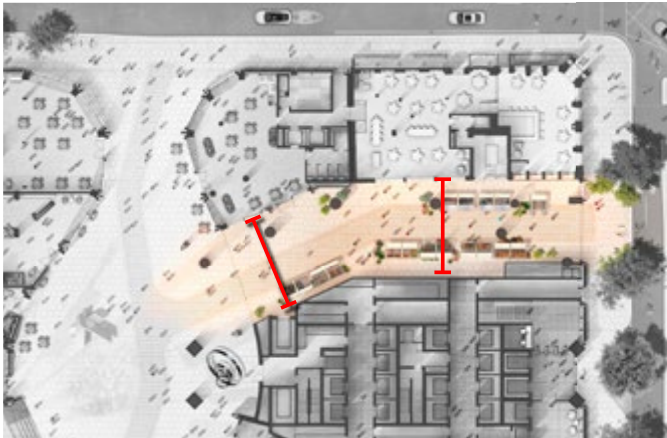
September 2022 Design Review Panel meeting
In the September 2022 DRP meeting, the panel was generally supportive of the proposals. The below table contains a summary of the comments received and the project team's response.

Topic	Heritage impact	Restoration works to listed buildings	Townscape sections and elevations	Landscape proposals	Facade design	Apartment layouts	Architectural expression
DRP Comments	The Panel felt the distance between 1 and 3-7 Stamford Street and the new development was too narrow. They also requested the project team to further study views from the surrounding context.	Further details were required on the proposed interventions and restoration work to the listed buildings.	The Panel requested site wide and townscape sections and elevations.	The Panel welcomed the landscape proposals, but requested further information on the landscape details, management plan, and integration into the wider architectural design.	The Panel welcomed the approach to facade design but noted that the cladding appeared to be in an early stage of design.	The Panel requested more details of apartment layouts, access and servicing.	Th Panel felt more could be done to distinguish the residential buildings from the Office Building
Design team response	The design team's solution was to greatly increase the width and create a new active space that celebrates the rear façade of 1 and 3-7 Stamford Street. This also increases the visibility of the rear façade from The Rotunda and from Blackfriars Road.	These were further developed to show how a sensitive and thorough restoration process has been followed, bringing back new life to these Heritage assets. Refer to Heritage chapter 5 for further detail.	The design team responded with a design philosophy and detailed drawings of how the historic street elevations were to be maintained by the introduction of a ground plus three storey podium around the three major elevations of site, Blackfriars Road, Stamford Street and Paris Garden. The buildings which rise above are separated by a series of 'set-back' levels creating a clear delineation between street scale and city scale.	The design team responded with a detailed landscape and maintenance strategy, presented in May 2023 which covers the diverse variety of spaces that run up through the project, forming a key part of the architectural design.	The design team have responded with a detailed design which looks to create high performance solar and environmentally responsive systems. Presented in May 2023, the design is inspired by the colour and texture of the local industrial heritage.	The design team has continually developed the layout design as well as unit mix of the residential apartments. The access and servicing strategy for the residential apartments has been developed in further detail alongside the wider site access and servicing strategy.	The design team has developed a proposal which distinguishes the facade design of the residential buildings from the Office Building. The residential buildings' facade uses a horizontal expression which includes a human feel and scale, whilst the Office Building uses a vertical expression which is appropriate for the urban scale.

Width of the public route behind 1 and 3-7 Stamford Street (Hatters Yard)



Presented in September 2022



Presented in May 2023: widened public route for the Proposed Development

The Rotunda Landscape Design



Presented in September 2022



Presented in May 2023: Revised Rotunda design for the Proposed Development

3.1.5 Design Development Process

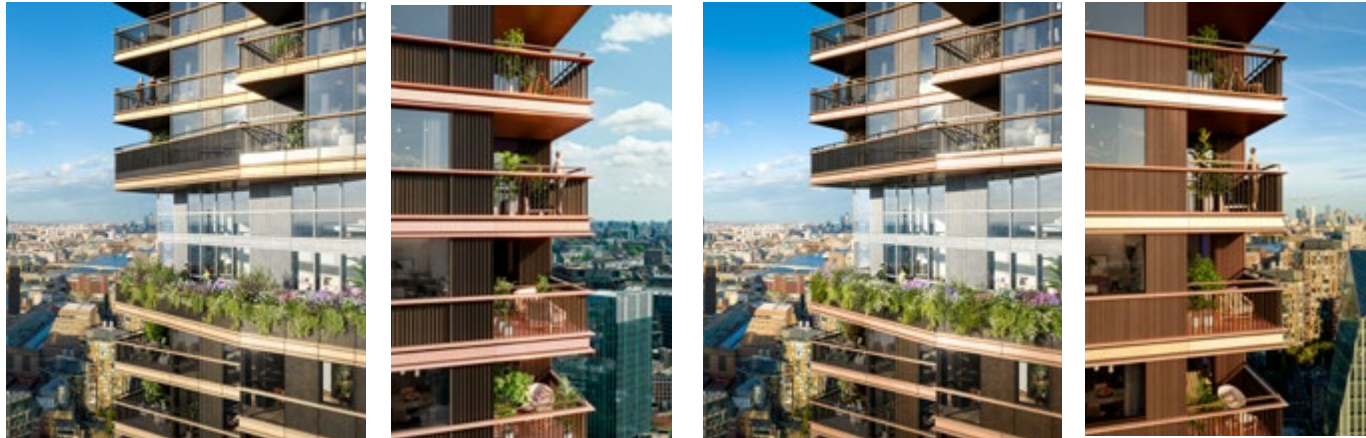
Design Review Panel Meeting

May 2023 Design Review Panel meeting
The May 2023 meeting with the Southwark DRP enabled the project team to discuss more detailed proposals with Panel members. The proposals were generally endorsed by the Panel. The Panel recognised the council's ambition for this location in the borough and the expectation that this site is appropriate for the tallest and largest developments

in the borough. The Panel welcomed the ambition of the developer to plan a significant development on this Site with its obvious links to transport hubs, the street and cycle network, and with such close connections to the City of London and the River. The following issues were raised:

Topic	Architectural expression	Residential buildings	Relationship to heritage	Landscape design	Massing and proximity	Playspace	Paris access route
DRP Comments	The Panel welcomed the ambition to deliver a group of 'Southwark' buildings. The Panel requested further studies on the colour and tone of the facades. The Panel commented on the double height expression on the facade of the Paris Building.	The Panel welcomed the design direction of the residential buildings and strongly supported the principle of providing affordable housing on site. However, the Panel noted that the shape of the Paris Building appeared to be defined by the shape of the Site.	The Panel generally supported the way the design steps back around the listed buildings and does not oversail it. The Panel requested further study of how the massing responds to the listed buildings.	The Panel welcomed the involvement of the landscape architects and the emphasis on greening the buildings. However, the Panel raised concerns about daylight access into The Rotunda and views out of The Rotunda.	The Panel questioned the massing including the proximity between the Office Building and the residential buildings.	The Panel were encouraged by the inclusion of a dedicated playspace at the south west corner of the Site. However, the Panel requested more informal play across the project.	The Panel highlighted the constrained width of the access route between the On-site Publicly Accessible Playspace and The Rotunda.
Design team response	The design team have reviewed lightening the material palette of the residential buildings. The detail and materiality will be conditioned and reviewed further at the next design stage alongside detailed mock ups of the facade. The design team have reviewed Paris facades and will do further reviews of the cladding detailing and break expression as part of the facade conditions.	The form of Paris is driven by space requirements to optimise the number of affordable housing in the scheme. The articulation of the form has also been developed to maximise daylight and sunlight as well as dual aspect units.	The design team have carried out a further study and designed the northwest and northeast bustles of the Office Building to ensure they are set back to avoid oversailing the listed buildings.	The form of the Podium reinforces the shape and legibility of The Rotunda. A Sun Hours on Ground (SHOG) analysis had been carried out showing that this space will be well sun lit throughout the year and meets the BRE criteria.	The design team have done further studies of the massing and proximity, and consider that the current massing is appropriate. Throughout the design process the massing has been developed to reflect and maximise site views and structural efficiencies (with associated carbon benefits).	More informal play has been introduced around the project. This includes the water play in The Rotunda, a heritage trail in Hatters Yard, and a nature trail on the terraces.	The design team have widened the access and reduced the height of the fence to Christ Church Gardens to open up the route to make it more welcoming for pedestrians.

Residential Colour



Stamford and Paris Building colours presented in May 2023

Revised lighter colours for the Proposed Development

Paris Garden Access



Ground floor plan highlighting Paris Gardens Access presented May 2023

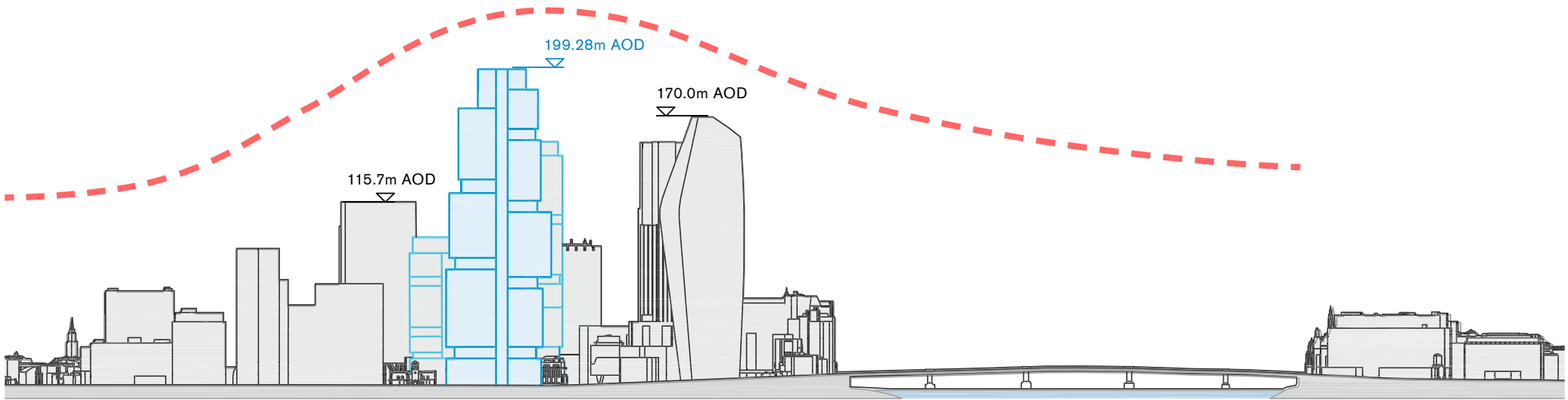


Revised Paris Gardens Access indicative image.

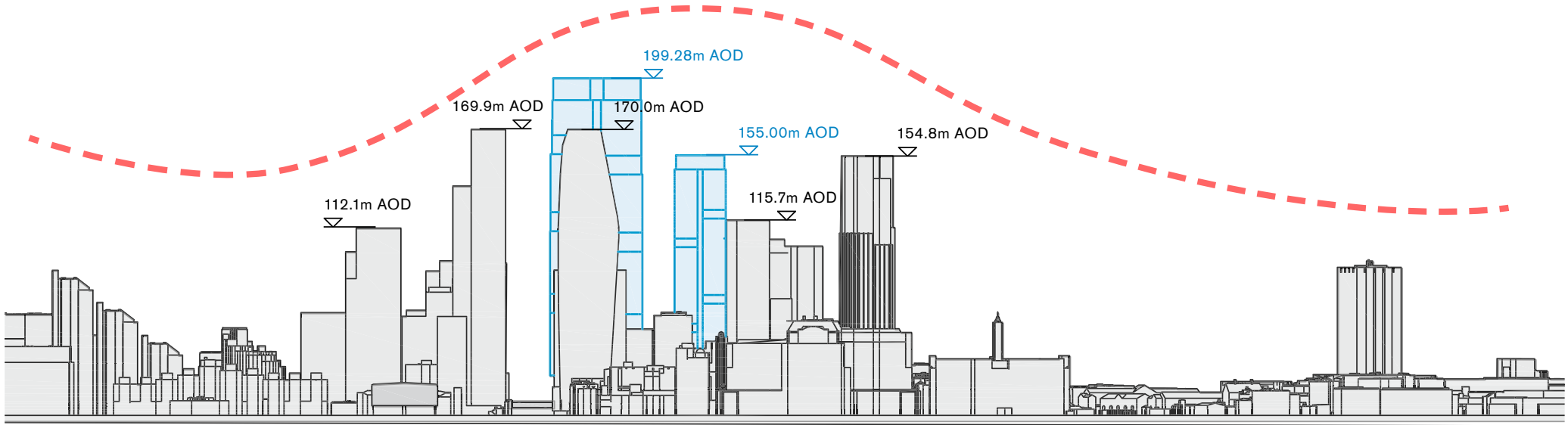
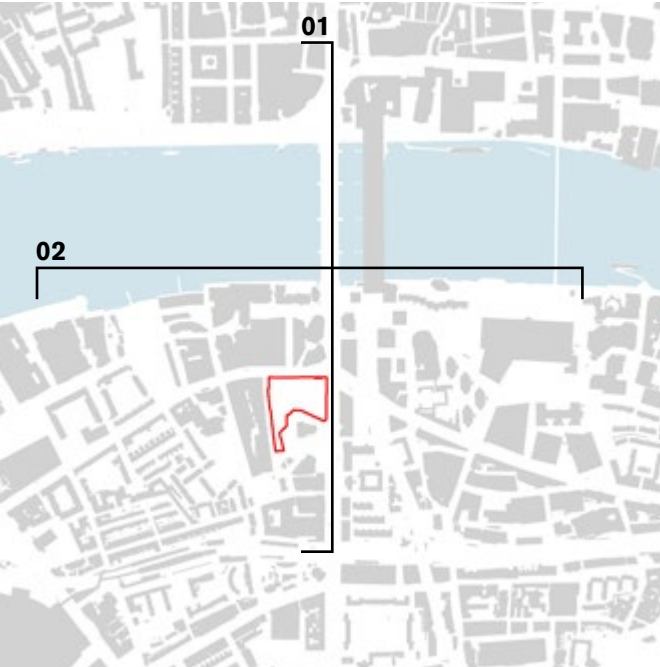
3.1.6 Blackfriars Cluster
A Sustainable Urban Location

The Blackfriars cluster is developing as a higher-density and mixed-use destination benefitting from a central and well-connected location, as described in sub-chapter 2.0.5: Development Framework. Land use types such as this are recognised for their increased sustainability, offering a variety of activities within walking and cycling distance, encouraging healthy lifestyles and the use of public transportation, and supporting the growth of robust local communities.

The office and residential buildings have been designed to ensure that their overall height and massing are appropriate as part of the local cluster of towers, enhancing townscape views and consolidating the cluster as a cohesive piece of city. By breaking up the massing of the towers and adding external terraces, the buildings respond positively to their more immediate local context. The positioning of sky gardens at intervals throughout the towers helps ensure the scheme will become a sustainable landmark within the cluster.



01 East Site Elevation



02 North Site Elevation

Right:
Elevations showing how the office massing fits within the 'Blackfriars Cluster'.

3.1.6 Blackfriars Cluster
A Sustainable Urban Location

The emerging Blackfriars cluster is situated in a well connected and sustainable location. Office Building occupants, future residents, and visitors to the Site will benefit from a broad range of public transport routes, whilst also being located next to a major cycle network (Cycle Super Highway 6) and good pedestrian links.

Furthermore, the density and diversity of uses in the surrounding neighbourhood promotes walkability for occupants and residents of the Site. The scheme aims to support this, by providing new pedestrian routes through the Site and diverse on-site ground floor uses and activities.

- Legend
- Underground stations
 - National Rail stations

Right:
Aerial view shows surrounding AOD heights and key public transport connections.





3.1.7 Project Brief

Site Enhancement Objectives

The project team has developed a strategic approach in distributing the various functions of the Proposed Development.

The following attributes have been reflected in the Proposed Development:

- Retail, market hall, restaurants, and community facilities within a podium and accessible from a new public realm.
- New, generous north - south pedestrian route and link through to Blackfriars Road along with other pedestrian routes across the Site.
- Restored, enhanced and adapted listed buildings.
- Building heights respective of key townscape views.
- Bicycle space provision.
- New playground and internal playspace.
- 40% on-site affordable housing.
- Affordable workspace provision.

The design development of each part of the scheme is further explored in the subsequent chapters:

- Chapter 4 - Podium Design
- Chapter 5 - Heritage Design
- Chapter 6 - Office Design
- Chapter 7 - Residential Design
- Chapter 8 - Landscape Design
- Chapter 9 - Access & Servicing

Opposite:
Indicative dusk view of the proposal, as seen from the north of the River Thames.

Right:
Axonometric diagram illustrating brief program elements distributed across the Site

