

6.4 Townscape Views

View 03 - Greville Street - Hatton Garden Junction

This view position is to the west of Hatton Garden and the incongruity of the existing situation is even more evident. The attempt to create a hierarchy in the existing façade is misguided and results in an uneasy horizontal division of the elevation into two halves, rather than creating a base a middle and a top. The existing elevation appears disorganized and formless, and lacks any legible connection with its context. However, in this view the proposed development clearly announces a new opportunity offered by the site - the archway signals the possibility of passing through the façade and onwards through the urban block. Also immediately clear is the distinction created through fenestration design, massing and brick colours between the older part of the Waterhouse Square to the south (left) and the 'Brooks Market' building - the portion of the development containing the arch and the tall, slim, differentiated fenestration above acts as a mean of breaking the overall mass of the development down and relating better to the surrounding street patter and urban grain.



Existing



Proposed

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View 04 - Greville Street

This view brings us to a position on Greville Street next to Leather Lane outside the existing building and its shortcomings in heritage and townscape terms are plainly evident. The original parts of the Waterhouse Square complex are seen on the left and the clumsiness of the existing building is striking - it collides with the Waterhouse building in a blunt and awkward fashion, and does not respond in any way to the older building's qualities or characteristics. The ground floor is blank and impervious, creating a hostile frontage. It is unsurprising that it creates an opportunity for parking rather than street life.

The proposed scheme powerfully reverses this situation. It immediately responds in scale, massing, façade design and materiality to the importance and significance of Waterhouse Square. A clear visual separation is created between old and new, not least by the creation of a route onwards from the street through the large arched opening. An active frontage, seen on the right, is introduced. The mansard profile of Waterhouse Square is echoed in the new work, both alongside it on the left and in the 'Brooks Market' building to the right. The choice of brick colour creates a nuanced balance between the deep russet of Waterhouse Square, the link element and the 'Brooks Market' building'.



Existing



Proposed

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View 05 - Corner of Greville St and Leather Lane

This view looks northwest from the junction of Greville Street and Leather Lane at the bland, confused and un differentiated elevation of the existing building. An approximate cornice feature fails to rescue this design from its disjointed, ill-proportioned aesthetic. The proposed scheme, however, shows something concerted and legible - a contemporary design that is nonetheless grounded in its context by the reference to the typology of the mansard found in the Waterhouse Square complex and the use of brick to form an elevation with a distinct proportional system. An inviting ground floor frontage is provided alongside the arched entrance to the development.



Existing



Proposed

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View 06 - Leather Lane North

This view looks north along Leather Lane, through a somewhat incoherent environment in the foreground borne of tall post-war development (on the right) and a rather dated pedestrianised public realm. The power and strength of the Waterhouse Square as a large building dominating the urban scene is evident. The eye is also drawn by the white rendered building between Beauchamp Street and Dorrington Street (9-15 Leather Lane or Beauchamp Buildings).

The only part of the proposed scheme seen in this view is the proposed opening in the Leather Lane elevation of Waterhouse Square. This is one of two new openings to the ground floor of 2 Waterhouse Square, one on the east (seen here) and one to the north by the entrance archway in the link element of the scheme on Greville Street. They seek to activate the ground floor facade by giving access to a cafe (to be used by the public) at ground floor. Both will be design in a style consistent in its detail with that of Waterhouse Square.



Existing



Proposed

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View 07- Leather Lane South

This view is from a position approximately 75 metres north of Greville Street and looks south along Leather Lane towards Waterhouse Square, with 9-15 Leather Lane (in white render) on the right and the tall residential building, Vesage Court, on the left. 120 Holborn and 33 Holborn are seen between Vesage Court and Waterhouse Square. The only part of the proposed scheme that is visible is the proposed northern café entrance, the arched opening seen beyond 9-15 Leather Lane to the right of the white van.



Existing



Proposed

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View 08 - Leather Lane South

This viewing position is slightly further south of the previous view, with the same elements, and shows a portion of the existing building on the right. The proposed scheme reveals its separation from the older Waterhouse Square building, even at this acute angle, by the mansarded upper floors that echo those of the listed building.



Existing



Proposed

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View 09 - Beauchamp Street

This view looks west along Beauchamp Street towards Brooks Market, with 2 Waterhouse Square on the left and 9-15 Leather Lane to the right. At close proximity, the existing building is profoundly negative in townscape terms: it appears almost fortified and certainly make no acknowledgment of its heritage and townscape context at all. In contrast, the proposed scheme presents an active ground floor and a generous fenestration allowing visual interaction with the interior of the building. The proposed brick materiality offers a far more contextual and appropriate response to the site context than the harsh, abstract stone of the existing building.



Existing



Proposed

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View 10 - Brookes Market North East

The Brookes Market elevation of the existing building, despite half-hearted detail and a change in stone colour, is remarkably bland - its relentless grid is ugly and alien and relates to nothing in the vicinity of the site. In this quieter enclave, the proposed scheme is much calmer and more clearly referential of the materiality and fenestration character of the surrounding conservation area. Though the proposed scheme is obviously a contemporary building, the use of the mansard typology in a modern way and the breaking down of the elevation into 'townhouse' intervals helps the scheme to properly address its context.



Existing



Proposed

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View 11 - Brookes Market North West

Much the same can be said of the existing building in this view as in the previous view, and once again, by contrast, the proposed scheme is more appropriate and respectful of its context. Its contemporary character is not overstated, and the effect of additional scale in the view is softened by the stepping of the building, the ‘contemporary mansard’ approach, the generosity of the fenestration, and features such as the spandrel detail visible at the corner of the building.



Existing



Proposed

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View 12 - Brooke Street

This view, looking north along Brook Street, demonstrates why matters of scale and architectural quality are directly related. Though lower than the proposed scheme, the existing 2 and 3 Waterhouse Square buildings are incongruous - blocky, overwrought, fussy but nonetheless bland - when seen either side of the older building, whereas the proposed scheme, though taller than the existing, sits modestly alongside the more important older building. Its scale is moderated by its calm architectural expression - it 'knows its place', and despite being taller than the existing is visually subservient. The Grade II* St Albans Church and the Grade II St Albans Clergy House are seen in the background; the setting of both is very definitely preserved and enhanced by the proposed scheme.



Existing



Proposed

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View 13 - Brooke Street

This viewing position is south of the previous position, and the same comments apply regarding the negative effect of the existing situation. The visibility of the mansarded upper parts of the proposed scheme provide a satisfying counterpoint to the gabled older part of the Waterhouse Square complex; the new complements the old in the use of related roof forms in a contrasting but respectful style.



Existing



Proposed

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View 14 - Waterhouse Square

This view, from within the central court yard of the Waterhouse Square complex looking north at 2 Waterhouse Square demonstrates how the contribution made by the original south-facing elevation fully preserved and enhanced by the proposed scheme. At roof level, the alien glass and steel roof structure of the atrium is replaced with visually recessive masonry upper floors, and the distraction from the facade created by existing white structure, complicated glazing bars and balustrading is removed.



Existing



Proposed