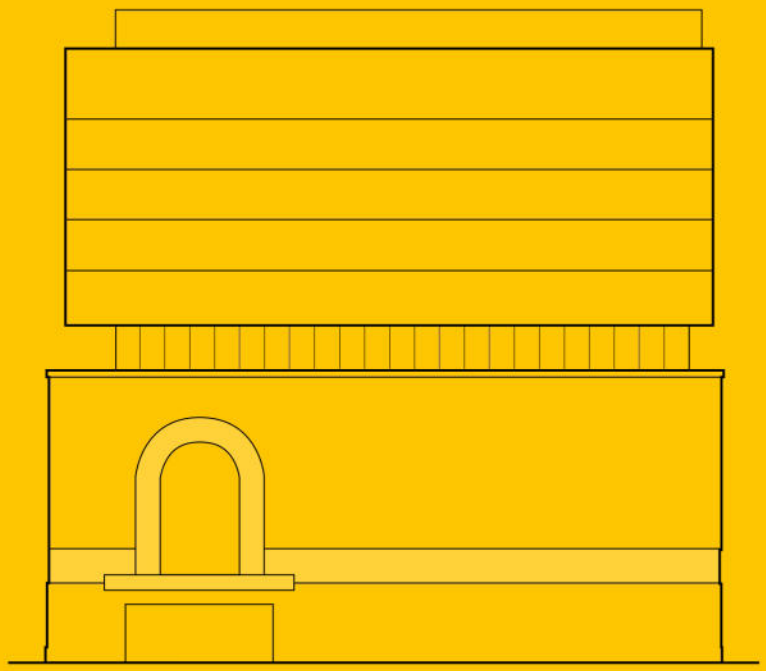

SAVILLE THEATRE

135 SHAFTESBURY AVENUE

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

RPS GROUP

FORMER SAVILLE THEATRE, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

794-ENV-ECO-20186_873a
BNG Assessment
For planning
January 2024

rpsgroup.com

Document status

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Prepared for:

YC Saville Theatre Limited

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope of this Report

1.1.1 RPS were commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNG) of the former Saville Theatre, located at 135-149 Shaftesbury Ave, London WC2H 8AH.

1.1.2 This report has been prepared by RPS on behalf of YC Saville Theatre Limited to support a full planning application for:

"*Part demolition, restoration and refurbishment of the existing Grade II listed building, roof extension, and excavation of basement space, to provide a theatre at lower levels, with ancillary restaurant / bar space (Sui Generis) at ground floor level; and hotel (Class C1) at upper levels; provision of ancillary cycle parking, servicing and rooftop plant, and other associated works*"

1.1.3 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by RPS in 2024 (RPS, 2024). This identified the need to undertake a BNG Assessment of the site, to support the planning application. The PEA also made recommendations for biodiversity enhancements.

1.1.4 This BNG assessment report aims to:

- Calculate and assess the baseline ecological status and condition of current habitats identified on site;
- Calculate the biodiversity value of the site post-development; and
- Provide a summary of the habitat enhancements and creation proposals designed to ensure net gain is achieved.

1.1.5 The recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of RPS.

1.2 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)

1.2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain is defined in Baker *et al* (2019) as:

> *"Development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before".*

1.2.2 The requirement for developments to seek to achieve BNG arises from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023), which states in Para. 185(b) that:

> *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by … minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity."*

1.2.3 An accepted method of assessing BNG is through the use of biodiversity calculators to assess the biodiversity value of habitats pre- and post-development based on habitat type, distinctiveness, and condition.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain Methods

2.1.1 A biodiversity index is derived for the baseline and for the proposed development, and BNG is considered to be achieved where an increase in value is delivered (on or offsite), and where habitats of a higher value are not replaced exclusively with habitats of a lower value.

2.1.2 The methods of calculating BNG for this project followed the guidance produced by Natural England's Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (JP039) (Pank *et al.,* 2022). Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) made available its beta test BNG assessment tool in July 2019, which was subsequently updated in July 2021, April 2022, March 2023 and December 2023.

2.1.3 This tool (the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric) has been used for the assessment in this report. The tool and associated documents were downloaded from: *http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720*

Condition Assessment

2.1.4 Using the data collected from the Phase 1 Habitat Survey (January 2024), a habitat condition assessment was undertaken for the habitats present within the project boundary. The appropriate 'condition sheet' was first selected via the Table TS1-1a in the technical supplement provided in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 -Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (March, 2023).

2.1.5 The condition sheet was then used to assess the individual habitats by comparing how they scored against pre-set condition assessment criteria. The criteria describe what components are needed for the habitat to be of good, moderate or poor value.

2.1.6 Each habitat was scored the following:

- 1 – Poor;
- 2 – Moderate; and
- 3 – Good.

2.1.7 The calculator allows these to be further divided and provides categories for fairly good and fairly poor. The ecologist undertaking the assessment used their professional judgement, considering the habitat condition assessment criteria, to decide when it was suitable to use these categories.

2.1.8 It should be noted that some habitats are given a fixed score and do not need assessing.

3 BASELINE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

3.1.1 The baseline description is taken from the habitat assessment conducted during the Phase 1 Habitat Survey as part of the PEA report (RPS, 2024) where the full descriptions can be found. Only habitats that were deemed to have an ecological value are discussed further.

Phase 1 Habitat Survey – Overview

3.1.2 The Phase 1 Habitat Survey identified that the site comprised solely hardstanding and buildings, with no vegetation present.

3.1.3 The Phase 1 Habitat Plan is provided on Figure 3.1.

Habitat Condition Assessment

3.1.4 The assessments below relate to the condition of the habitats present on site at the time of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey undertaken in January 2024 (as shown on Figure 3.1). The extent, distinctiveness and condition of the baseline habitats on site are summarised in Table 2.1 overleaf.

3.1.5 Numbers in the tables in this section are copied from those generated by the DEFRA metric. Note that the spreadsheet rounds the figures of credits to two decimal places which occasionally generates apparent minor discrepancies due to rounding errors when numbers are placed into tables.

Hardstanding and Buildings

3.1.6 The site comprised of 0.09 ha of developed land / sealed surfaces (i.e., hardstanding and buildings), including one building within the application site. Following the Natural England guidance on habitat condition types, these would not require condition assessment; by default, these habitats are not given a distinctiveness, nor condition.

Figure 3.1: Phase 1 Habitat Plan (pre-development habitat)

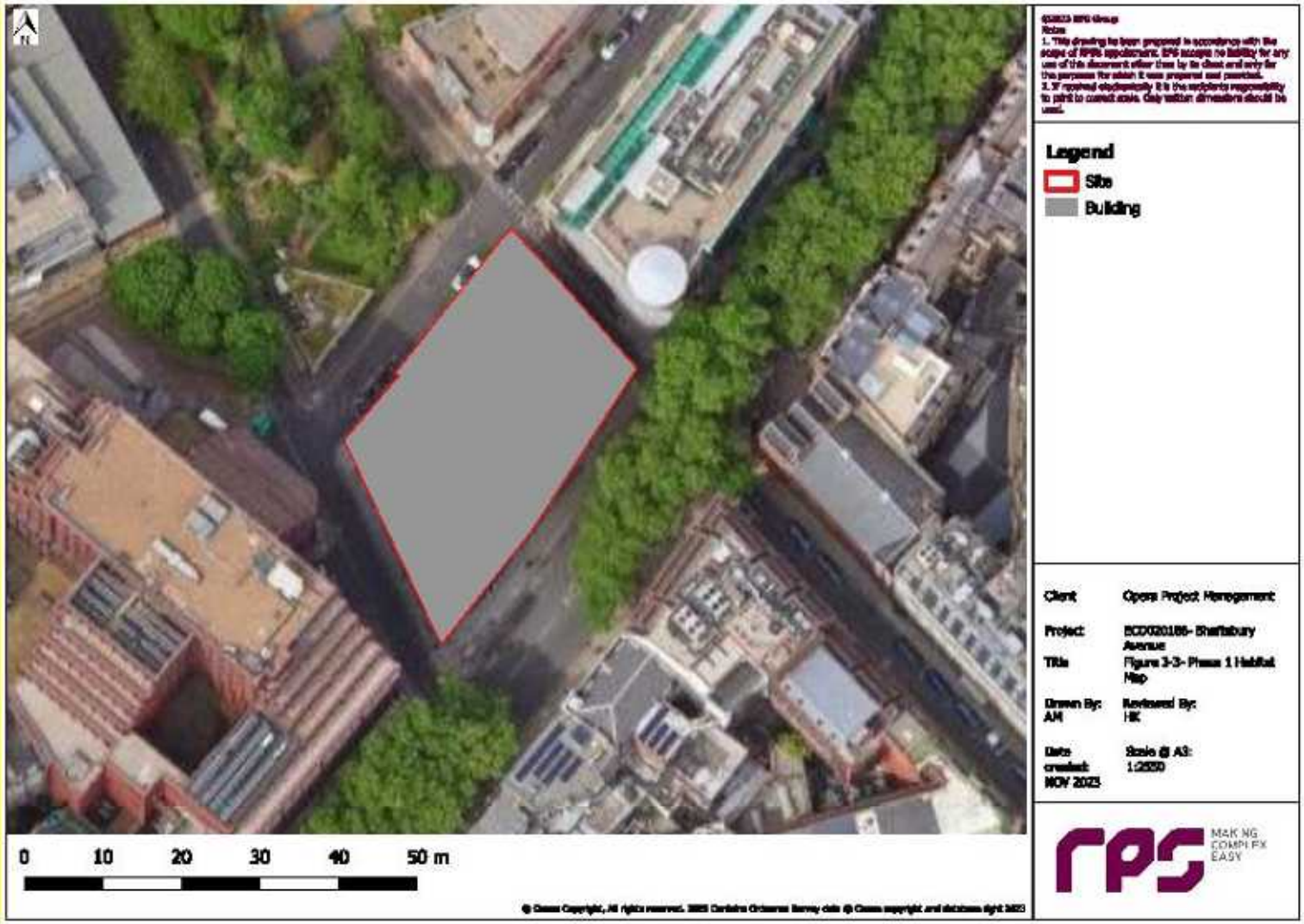

Table 3.1: Baseline assessment of biodiversity value

Habitat type	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness score		Condition score		Strategic significance score		Value (biodiversity units)[a]	Area of habitat retained	Area of habitat enhanced	Baseline value of retained habitats	Baseline value of enhanced habitats	Area of habitat lost (ha)	Value of habitats lost
Developed land; sealed surface (buildings and hardstanding)	0.09	Very low	0	N/A – Other	0	Low	1	0.00	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Total	**0.09 (excluding urban trees)**							**0.00**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0.00**

A: Calculated as: area x distinctiveness x condition

b: Areas for urban street trees are calculated using the 'urban tree helper' tool provided with the Defra metric. This provides an 'area equivalent' to enable the value of street trees to be included in the total site value calculation, but as this is not a direct measurement of actual habitat area, it does not get included in the total site area. The urban tree score for the site post-development is based on estimates from landscape design drawings. As a precautionary basis, the target condition for the urban trees has been set as 'poor'. It may be possible to review this target condition upwards when final planting schedules are produced.

As no trees are within the site, the urban tree calculation is permissible for this site.

4 BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – Proposed Habitats

4.1.1 Habitats on the proposed development site are taken from the Landscape Masterplan (refer to Appendix A).

4.1.2 Taking into account the proposed use of the site, the post development planting will include a several areas of ornamental planting, a green roof and areas of green wall.

Introduced Shrub

4.1.3 A series of ornamental planters will be included in the landscape plan for the proposed development. They will consist of mostly non-native species and provide suitable foraging and nesting space for invertebrates with the proposed species composition including pollinator resources. Planting specification is provided in Appendix A. This will deliver **0.03 habitat units**. This habitat will hold low distinctiveness by default and does not require a condition assessment.

Green Wall

4.1.4 A façade bound green wall is to be incorporated into the proposals, and this will measure circa 0.0024 ha, assuming that it covers the majority of the identified façades. The species to be included within the planting schedule have included those known to thrive well in such situations, such as *clematis*.

4.1.5 In order to ensure that the green wall survives in the long-term, beyond the initial establishment, an irrigation system will be designed and installed. The assessment has also assumed that the green wall will only successfully establish where suitable amounts of sunlight are received; as opposed to the entirety of the façade.

4.1.6 The green wall, taking the above into account, will be considered to be of a moderate habitat condition, in line with the Natural England guidance on habitat conditions, and will deliver **0.01 habitat units.**

Green Roof

4.1.7 An intensive green roof system will be included atop the MEP Plant building. This habitat will be classified as an intensive biodiverse green roof within the metric as it will comprise a deep substrate with a minimum depth of 600 mm which will achieve additional condition criteria G.

4.1.8 The habitat created will provide pollinator resources for invertebrates and foraging opportunities for bats and birds from Spring through to Autumn, and will achieve condition criteria B. No invasive Schedule 9 species (as listed on Wildlife and Countryside Act 6) will be included in the planting scheme, to ensure delivery of condition Criteria C. The proposed planting and management will aim to deliver three criteria within the condition assessment and therefore the proposed assigned condition for this habitat is moderate. This will deliver **0.04 habitat units**.

Table 4.1: Assessment of biodiversity value of post-construction habitat creation

Proposed habitat	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness score		Condition score		Time to target condition (years)	Temporal multiplier	Difficulty of creation / enhancement	Difficulty multiplier	Habitat units delivered[a]
Developed land; sealed surface	0.0	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	0	1.000	Low	1	**0.00**
Introduced shrub	0.0162	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1	1	0.965	Low	1	**0.03**
Green wall	0.024	Low	2	Moderate	2	3	0.899	Medium	0.67	**0.01**
Green roof	0.0086	Medium	4	Moderate	2	5	0.837	Medium	0.67	**0.04**
Total Area	**0.09**									
Total habitat creation										**0.08**

a: Calculated as: area x distinctiveness x condition x time x difficulty.

5 SUMMARY

5.1 Biodiversity Net Gain – Conclusions

5.1.1 The assessment above indicates that the development proposals for the site will deliver a net gain of **+3780922.88%** for habitats. The total units delivered by the proposals is **0.08** units, and the Trading Rules below have been satisfied.

5.1.2 As there are no hedgerows on site (either pre or post development), they have not been included within the assessment.

5.1.3 Proposed habitats include targeted conditions and the score provided is based on the delivery of habitats that meet the criteria for these conditions.

5.1.4 It is recommended that the habitats be audited at various stages throughout the life-cycle of the project, to ensure that the habitat units and conditions have been delivered as intended.

6 REFERENCES

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Appendix A

Landscape Masterplan

8.0 LANDSCAPE

Landscape Vision

The landscape scheme for the redevelopment of the Saville Theatre provides an opportunity to create a superb setting for future hotel and theatre visitors alike. In parallel with the visitor experience, significant habitat and biodiversity enhancements are also provided by the landscape elements set within the scheme.

Urban greening is provided by green walls, green roof systems and a range of raised planters. Botanical interest will include flowering, scented and textural species; offering a varied and rich experience to visitors and wildlife.

Selected landscape elements will be on-view by hotel guests via the suite windows, providing visual interest. Within the central front-of-house floor, an external terrace will provide a place for visitors to enjoy a drink, sit and relax. Views of the Shaftesbury Avenue will be provided at key areas.

Illustrative Planting Proposals

Key
LANDSCAPE DETAILS

RAISED PLANTER
Metal / corten fabricated, cl mbing / green wall planting only

GREEN ROOF
Extensive substrate, e.g. sedum

GREEN WALL
Vertical tensile trellis, including evergreen, flowering and scented climbing plants

NOTES:
All planters and green walls will require automated irrigation and maintenance access.

Key
LANDSCAPE DETAILS

INTEGRAL PLANTER
ORNAMNETAL SHRUB AND HERBACEOUS PLANTING

Key
LANDSCAPE DETAILS

INTEGRAL PLANTER
ÖRNAMNETAL SHRUB AND HERBACEOUS PLANTING

Key
LANDSCAPE DETAILS

RAISED PLANTER
Metal / corten fabricated, including seating / bench element

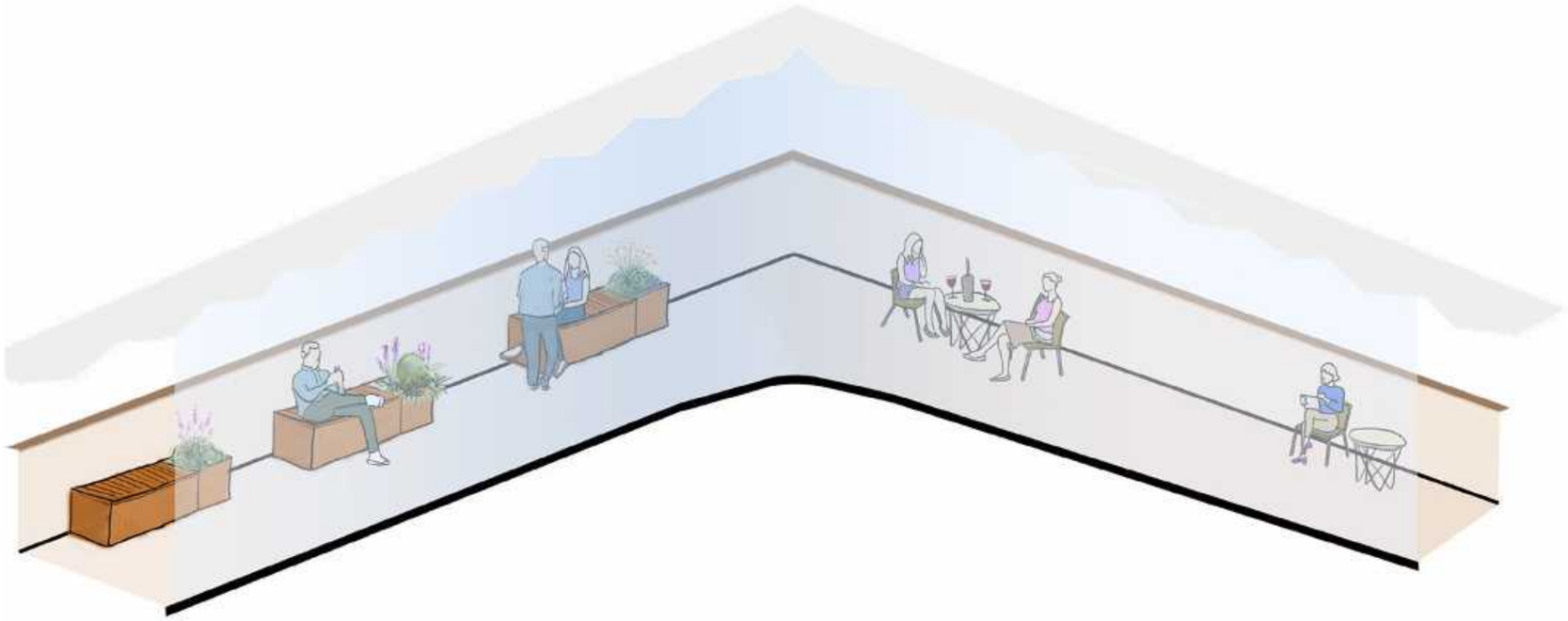
INTEGRAL PLANTER
ORNAMNETAL SHRUB AND HERBACEOUS PLANTING

GREEN WALL
Vertical tensile trellis, including evergreen, flowering and scented climbing plants

NOTES:
All planters and green walls will require automated irrigation and maintenance access.

Plans not to a recognizable scale.

‘Shaftesbury View’ Terrace



Illustrative landscape terrace Isomeric

Precedent Landacape Images



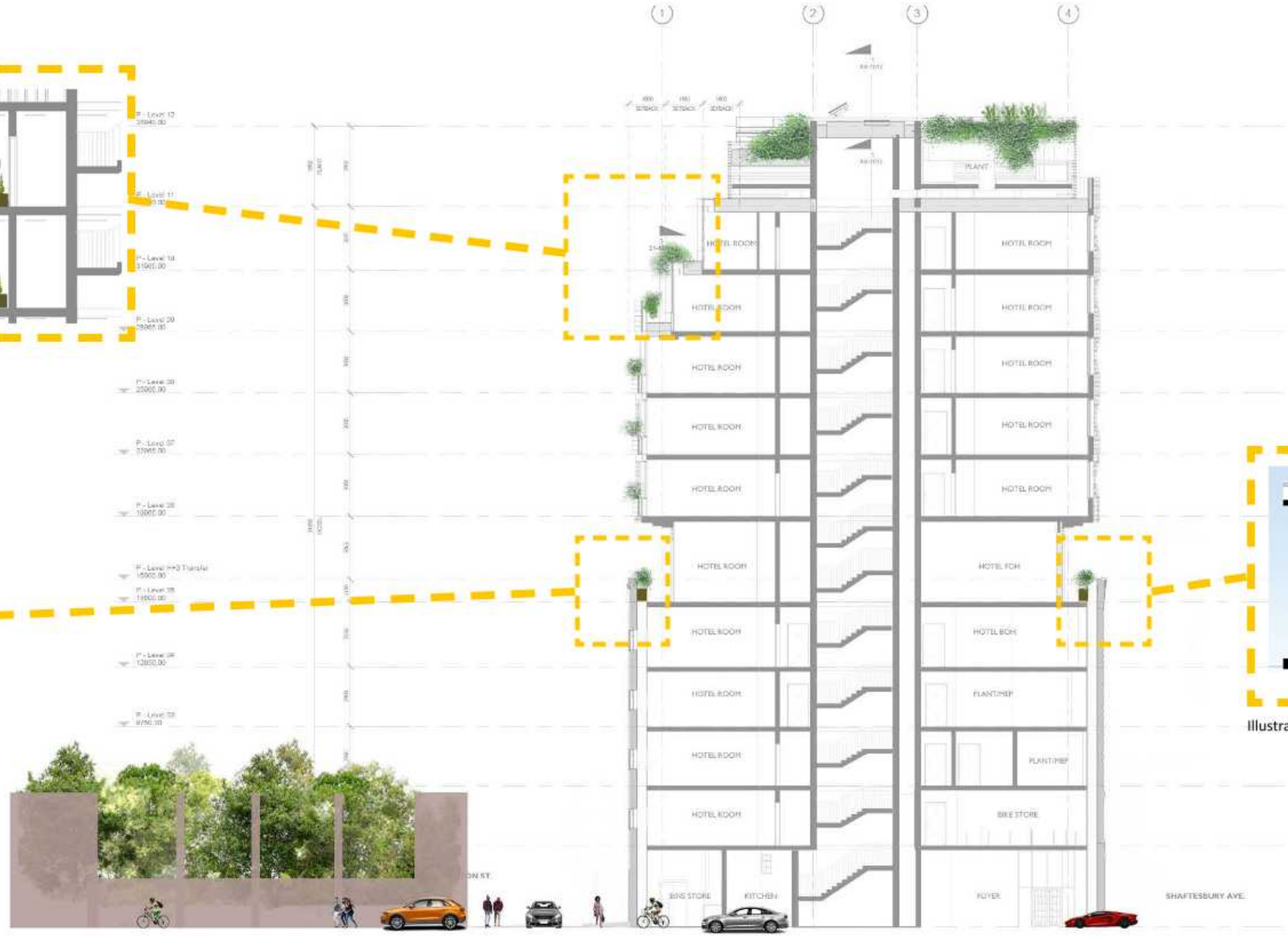




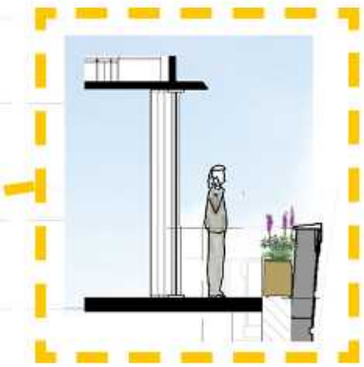


Illustrative Section - level 10 & level 11

Illustrative Section - level 5



Illustrative Section with Phoneix Garden



Illustrative Section - level 5