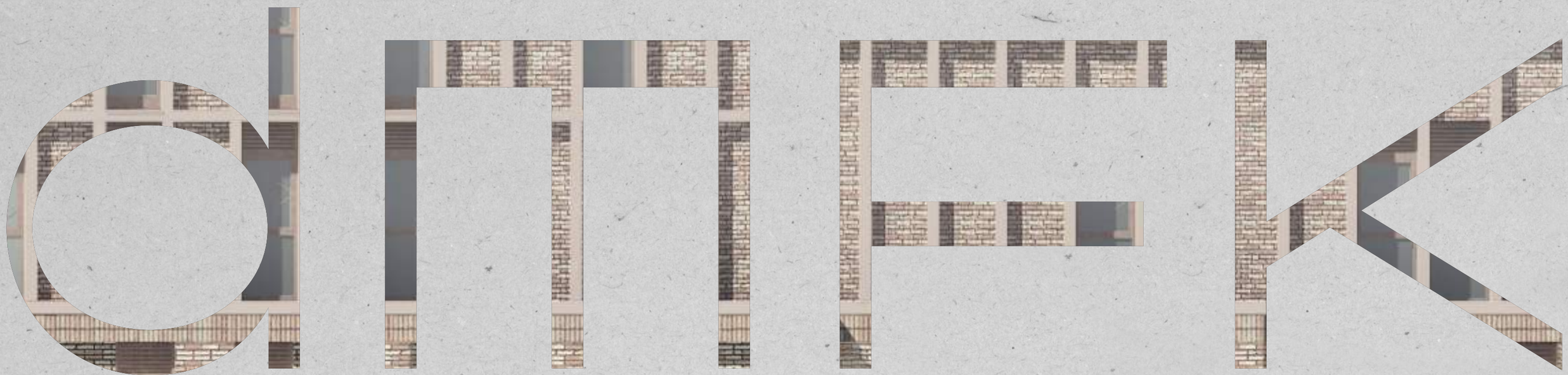
369-377 Kentish Town Road
Design Statement

September 2024



Introduction

This document sets out proposed design updates to the approved scheme at 369-377 Kentish Town Road. The original consent was for a seven story (G+6) building with 14 residential apartments, and Class E (retail) use at ground and basement floor. Planning permission was granted for the scheme in 2020 - application ref: 2019/0910/P.

An s96 non material amendment was granted in August 2023, namely reducing the extent of basement excavation. ref: 2023/3382/P

The proposed design updates in this document follow our detailed technical development into the scheme, which has revealed opportunities to update and improve aspects of the design. This document aims to show how the updates, detailed in this document, will improve the quality of the scheme.

Key design updates:

1. Facade redesign, based on the principles established at planning, to deal with issues around structural facade bands, and to allow for improved design quality.

2. Improvements to the facade design, reinforcing the context-based principles set out in original planning proposals.

3. Increase of public external space around ground floor for better pedestrian flow, and to allow for future ‘Heathline’ pedestrian route.

4. Minor internal layout changes to satisfy regulations and site constraints

Contents

1.0 Approved Scheme Recap

1.1 Massing Principles

1. The massing development of the approved scheme was strongly influenced by the existing context. Diagram 1 shows the key site context drivers which were defined and used to set an appropriate massing for the scheme.

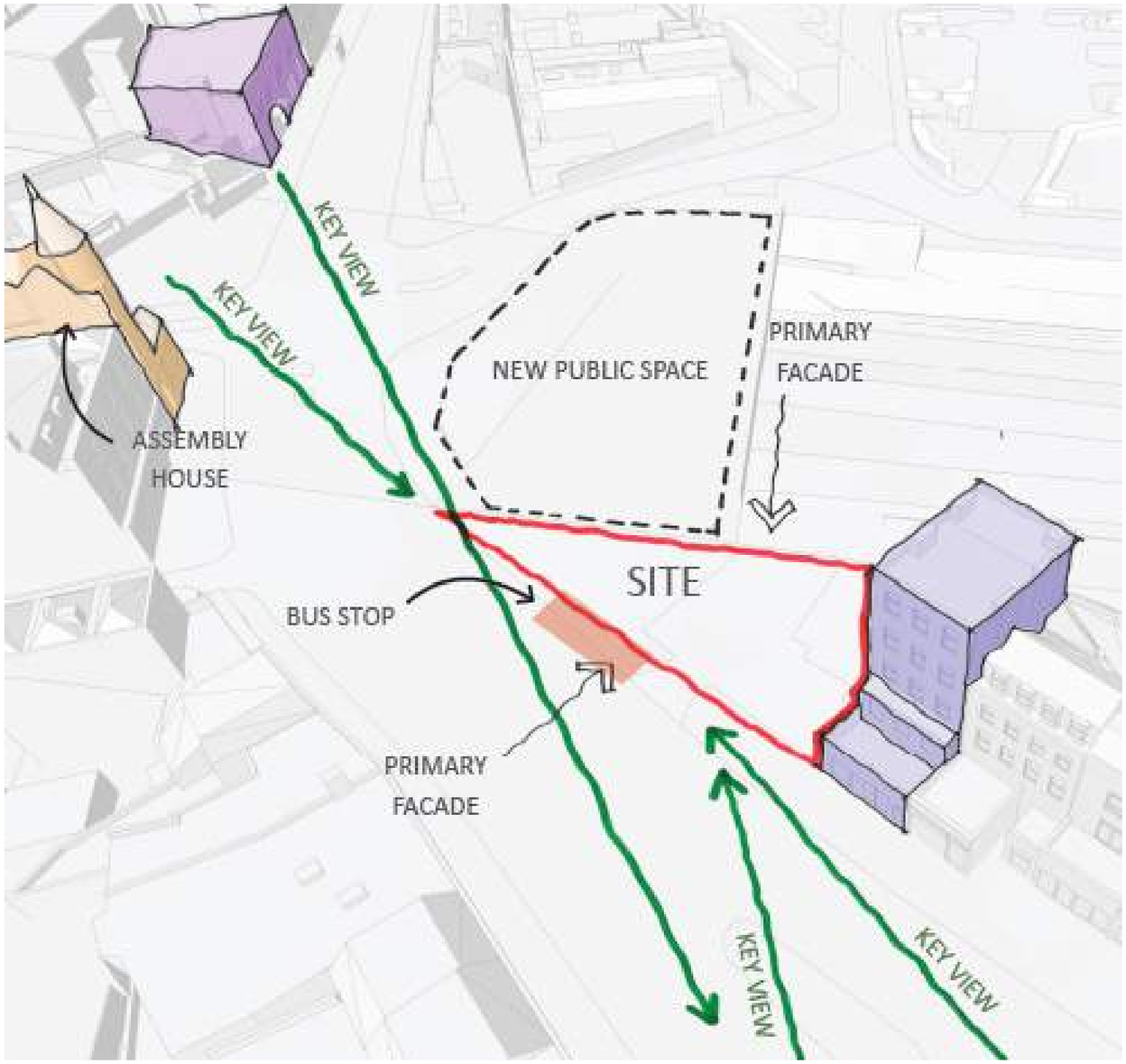
2. The building mass reduces in response to existing front and rear building lines. This minimises the impact of the south facade by one third.

- Respect line A, stepping to Highgate Road
- New bus stop within 1.5 m set back
- Pavement widened to up to 5 m
- Development can address proposed KTNF route
- Landmark building appropriate for Kentish Town
- Respects grain and scale whilst being stand alone landmark

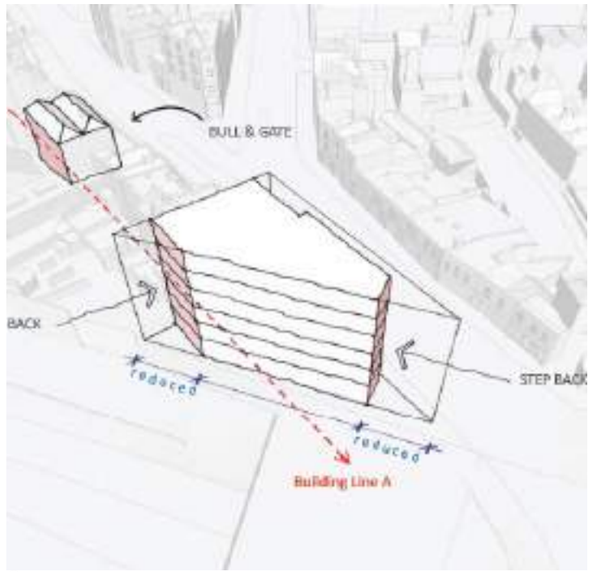
3. The building mass reacts to the facade stepping on Highgate Road

4. The fifth floor is angled and stepped back to line with the neighbouring building and gives the composition a defined 'top'

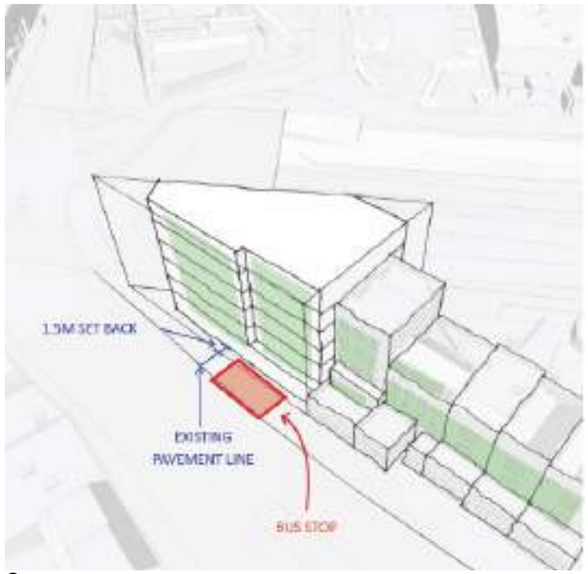
5. A sixth floor is added to create emphasis on the strong 'end' of the building to relate to other key corner buildings such as the Assembly House.



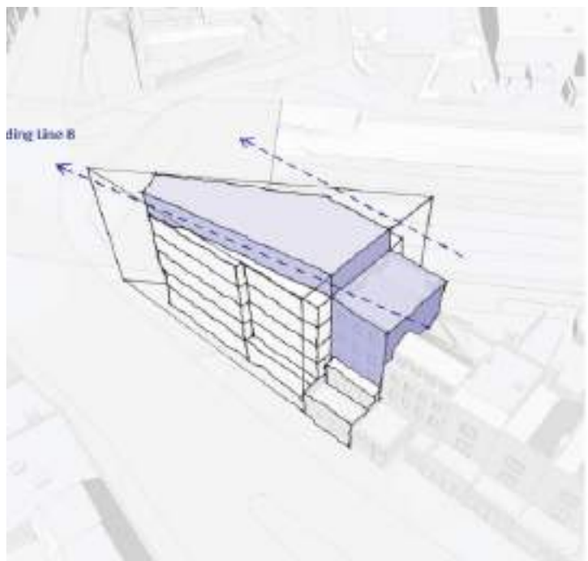
1.



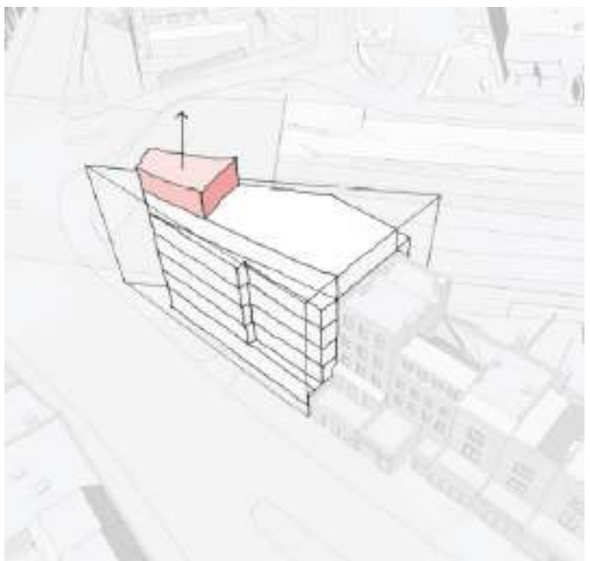
2.



3.



4.



5.

1.2 Principles of Facade Development
1.2.1 Key Context

As part of the design development of the proposed facade, we have investigated key buildings within the context: The Assembly House, No. 2 Highgate Road and the Bull & Gate. These three buildings share common design principles, their elevations are incorporated in our design.

1. The Assembly House

2. No.2 Highgate Road

3. The Bull & Gate

1.2 Principles of Facade Development
1.2.2 Characteristics of Key Context

Analysing the key buildings within the context, 369 -377 Kentish Town Road, The Assembly House and The Bull & Gate, the surrounding façades are composed of three main parts: a strong, set forward retail base, a set back upper body present on most local buildings and, on some a celebratory top making a corner.

The main design principle of the surrounding façades consists in a strong defined retail band with varied set back upper parts.

1. The Assembly House modulates between the upper parts and the base as two completely separate building lines with a celebrated element on the corner

2. No.2 Highgate Road again follows the classical principles of base, middle and top, without setting back from ground floor in this case.

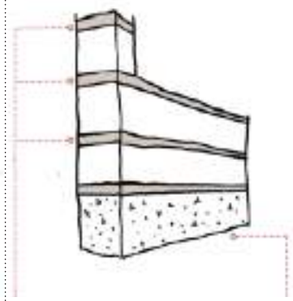
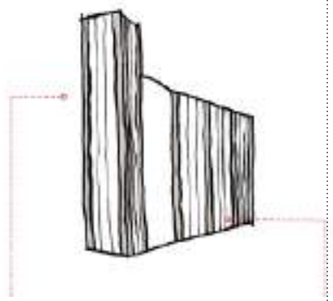
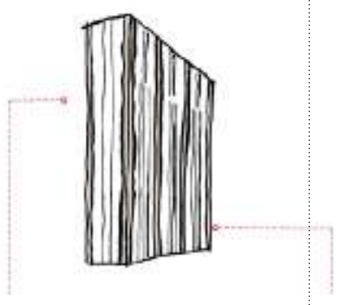
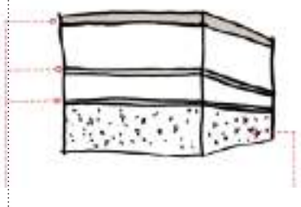
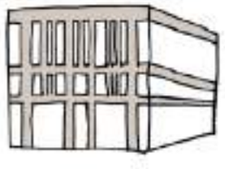
3. A language similar to the Assembly House between lower and upper elements, but with no top floor celebrated component.

1. The Assembly House


2. No.2 Highgate Road

3. The Bull & Gate

1.2 Principles of Facade Development
1.2.3 Key Context Grids

Building	Horizontal Grid	Vertical Grid	Lace Grid
1. 			
2. 			
3. 			

Another characteristic of the key context on Kentish Town Road is the creation of a ‘lace grid’ to accent the building facade:

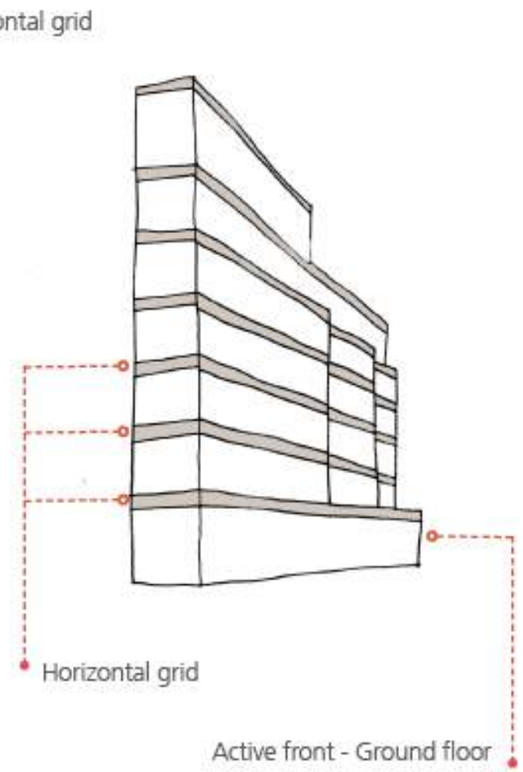
1. The Assembly House: A common feature is the marking of windows and floor edges with contrasting accents. These appear ‘applied’ to rudimentary brick buildings and show as ‘lacy’ grids.

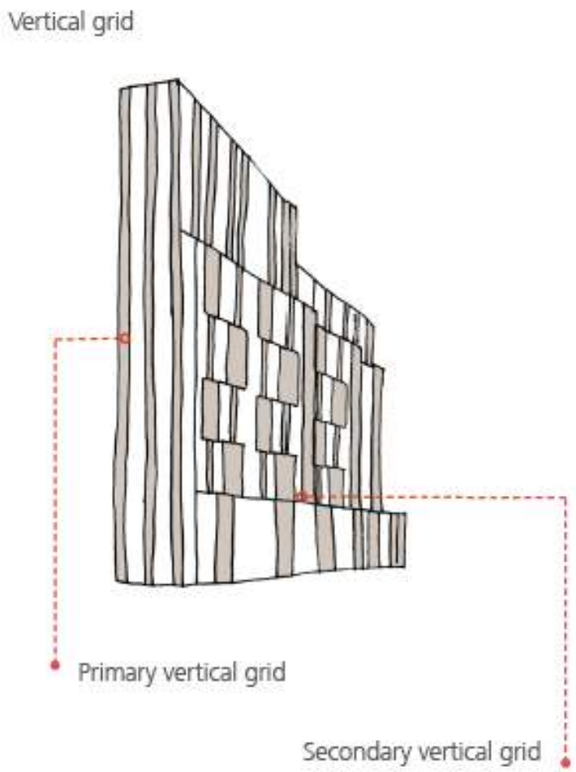
2. No.2 Highgate Road: This ‘applied’ approach is found on the more ‘workaday’ buildings too.

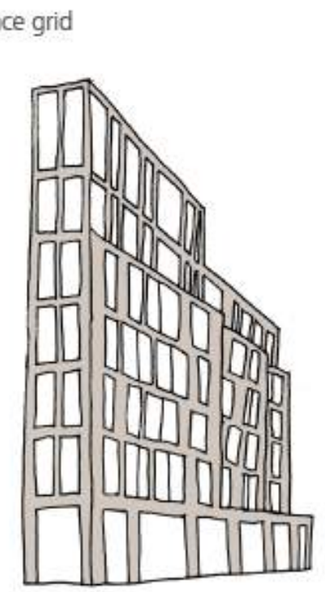
3.The Bull and Gate Public House: again contrasting accents are used to in an ‘applied’ approach.

1.2 Principles of Facade Development
1.2.4 Lace Grid Development

The proposal uses the idea of the marking of the floor edges and windows and presents it in a different way, expressing it in varying forms to accentuate the 3 ‘bands’ of the composition.





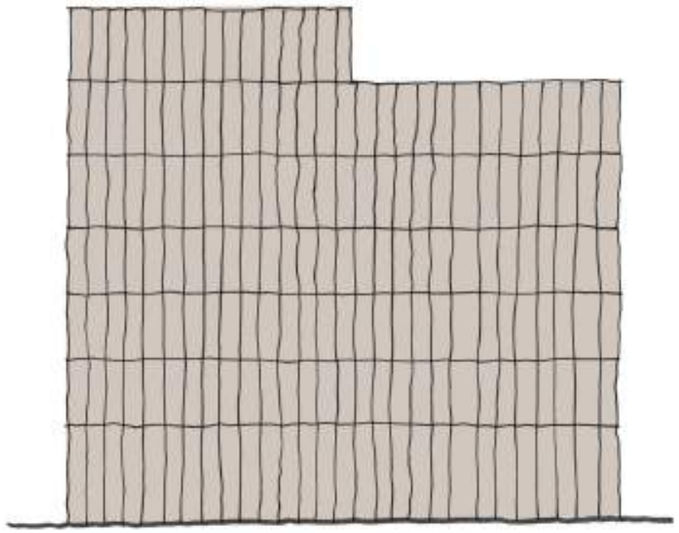


1.2 Principles of Facade Development
1.2.5 Layering of facade

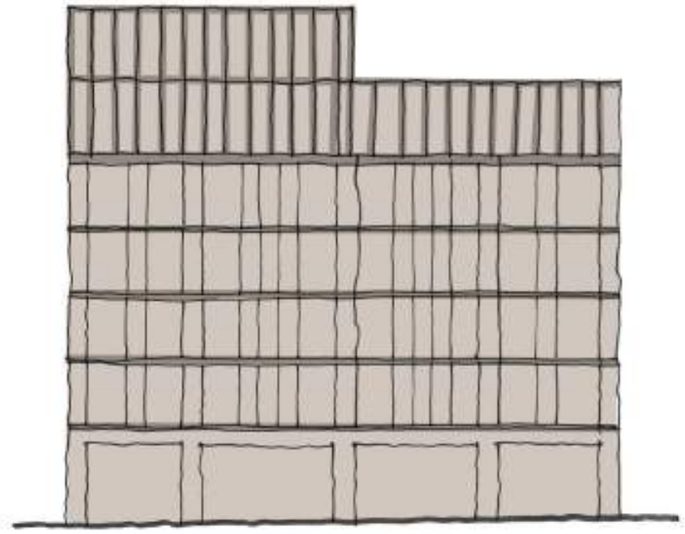
The design seeks to create 2 layers of texture / pattern / decoration into the facade of the building.

The first is an overall pattern created by the play of brick panels setting gently back and forward across the building.

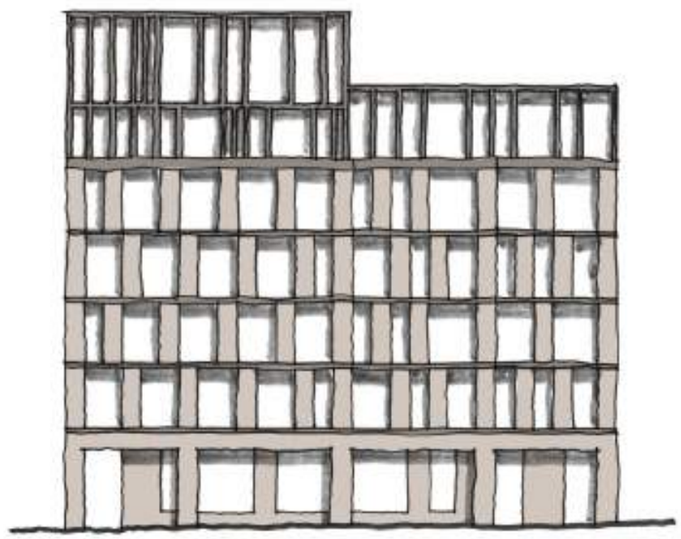
The second is an accentuation of the inner panels through the introduction of textured brickwork.



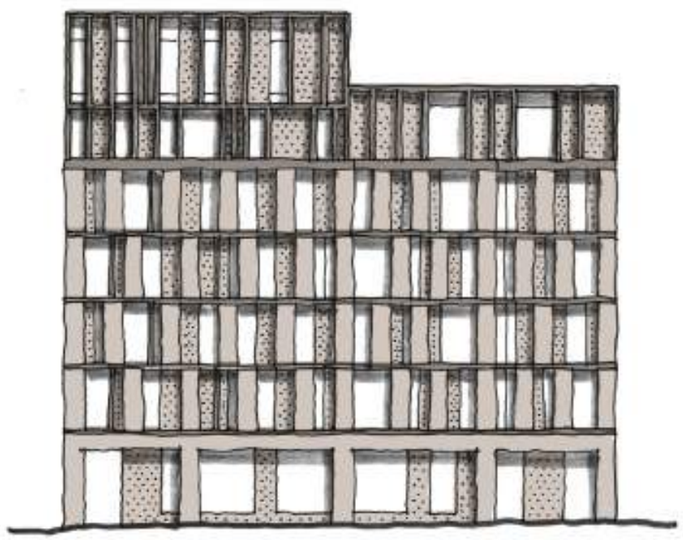
900mm vertical to brick dimensions



Top, middle and bottom



Pattern making in the facade



Texture and underlying elements

1.2 Principles of Facade Development
1.2.6 Feedback and Further Development

September 2018 - Pre-Application Comments

- Supportive of the overall design approach, care and detailing
- Encouraged the 'pattern making' within the facade
- Supportive of a brick building, stepped massing, with a few suggestions regarding the top storey
- Supportive of focused, taller and strong corner element with vertical emphasis
- Supportive of 3 tier approach, but more design linking between each is required
- Explore materiality and colour

November 2018 - Pre-Application Comments

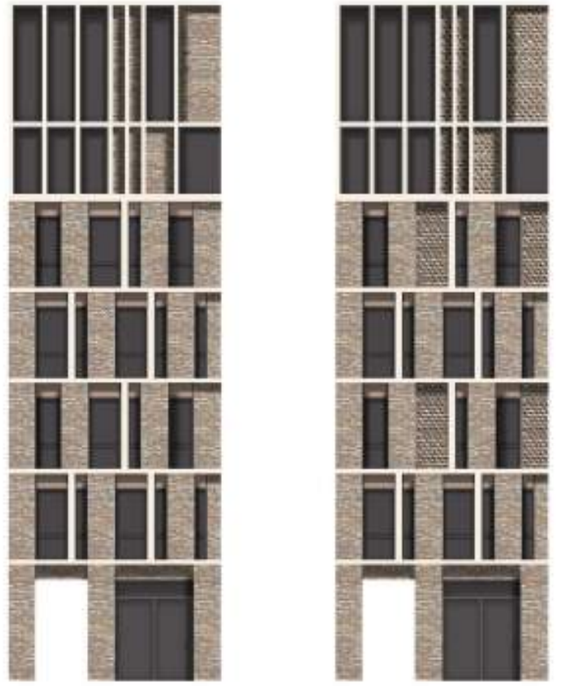
- Supportive of the overall design approach, care and detailing
- Suggested an additional step to the Kentish Town Road facade to gently address the transition of the mass into the neighbouring buildings
- Encourage a more playful approach with the 'end' elevation
- Requested to see treatment options to the north facing gable
- Encouraged to emphasis the top element of the building and link the architecture throughout the facade down to the bottom

January 2019 - DRP Comments

- Supportive of the design approach, care and detailing
- Supportive of the high-quality design and materiality
- Supportive of the building's height, but suggest a reduction with one floor of the northernmost element
- Suggested a two storey step up at the south of the building
- Explore a wider public route located between the railway and the building
- Suggested stepping the ground floor back further to give the pavement every opportunity to be wider

DMFK elevation studies - Summer 2018

DMFK elevation studies - Autumn 2018



DMFK elevation studies - Winter 2018

1.3 Approved Elevations

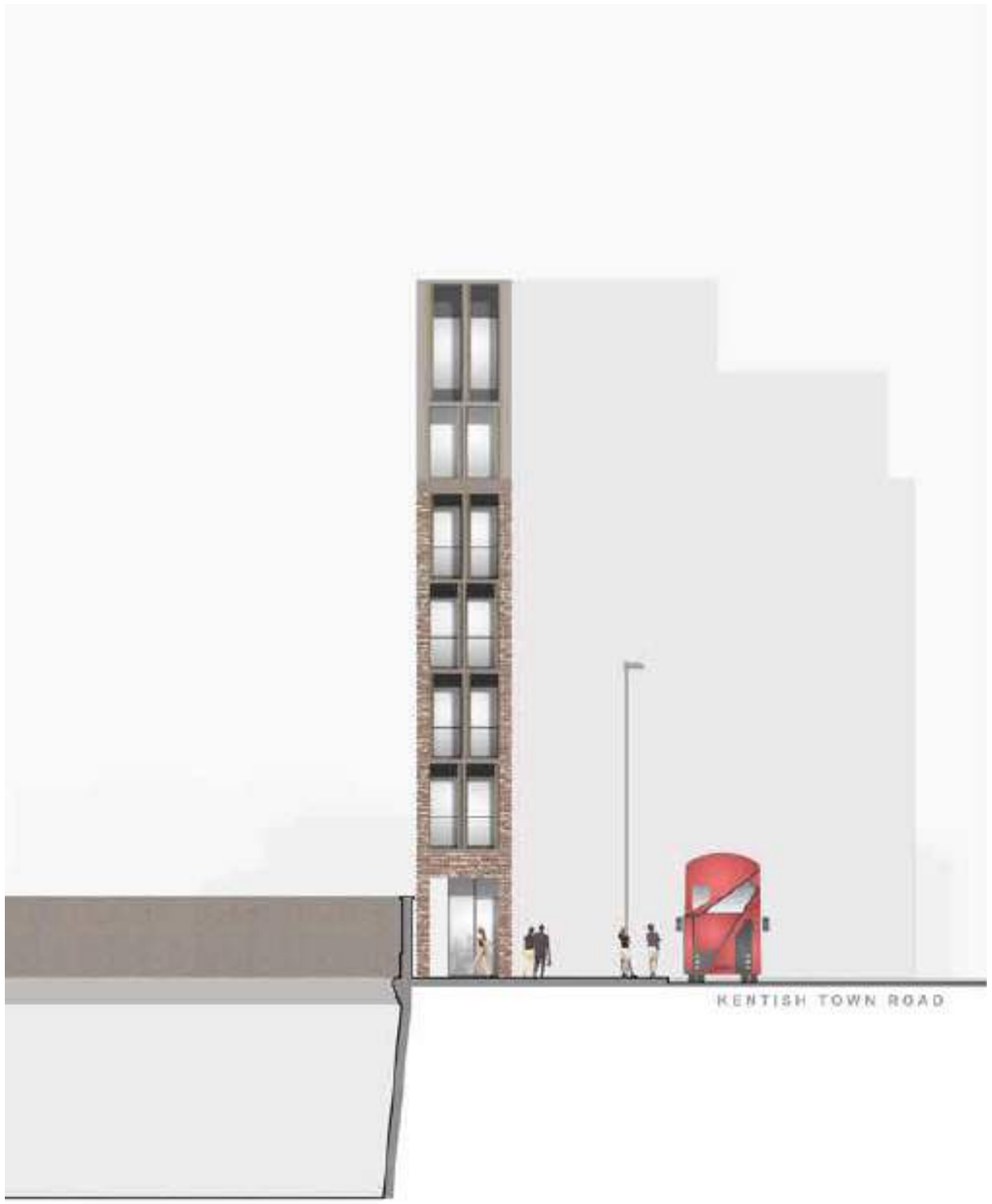
1.3.1 East Elevation

1.3 Approved Elevations
1.3.2 West Elevation

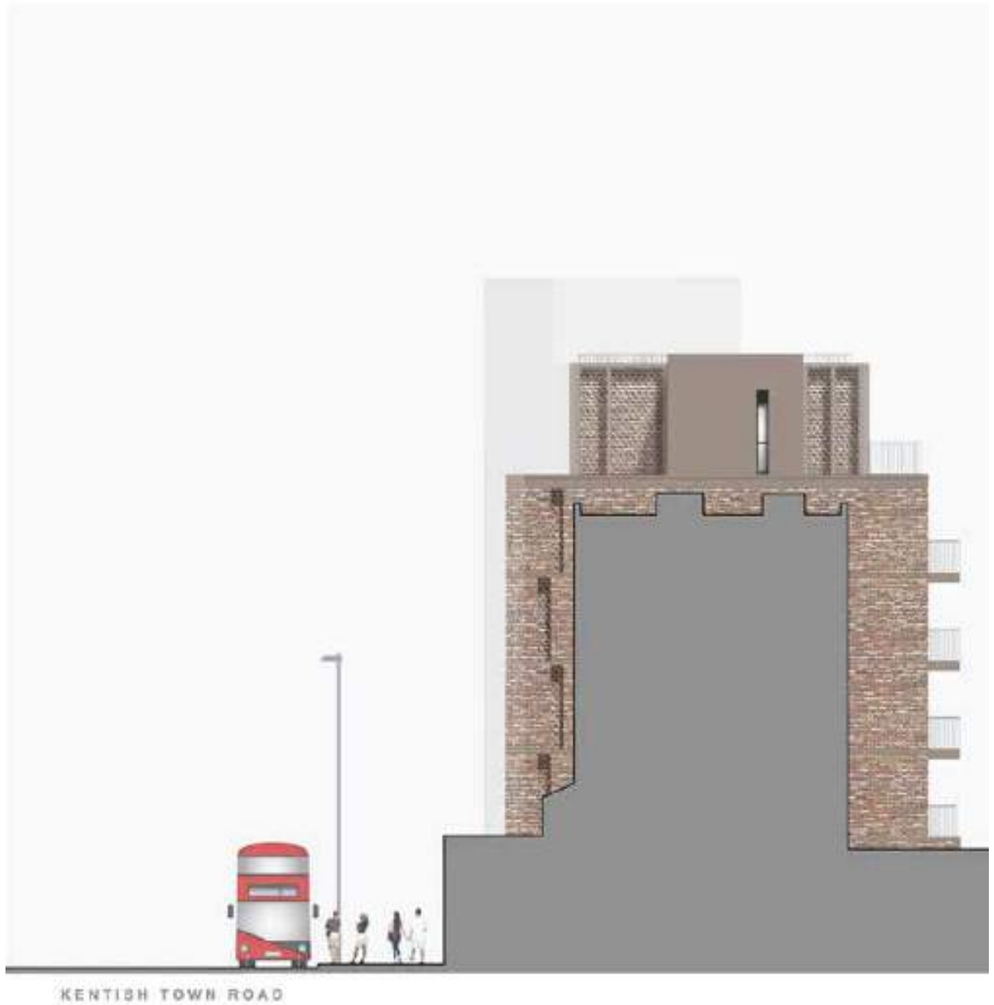
1.3 Approved Elevations
1.3.3 North and South Elevation

1. South Elevation - Approved Scheme

2. North Elevation - Approved Scheme



1



2

1.4 Approved Views

1.4.1 View from Kentish Town Canopy

1.4 Approved Views
1.4.2 View from Highgate Road North

2.0 Development of Revised Scheme

2.1 Approved Scheme Analysis
2.1.1 East Elevation

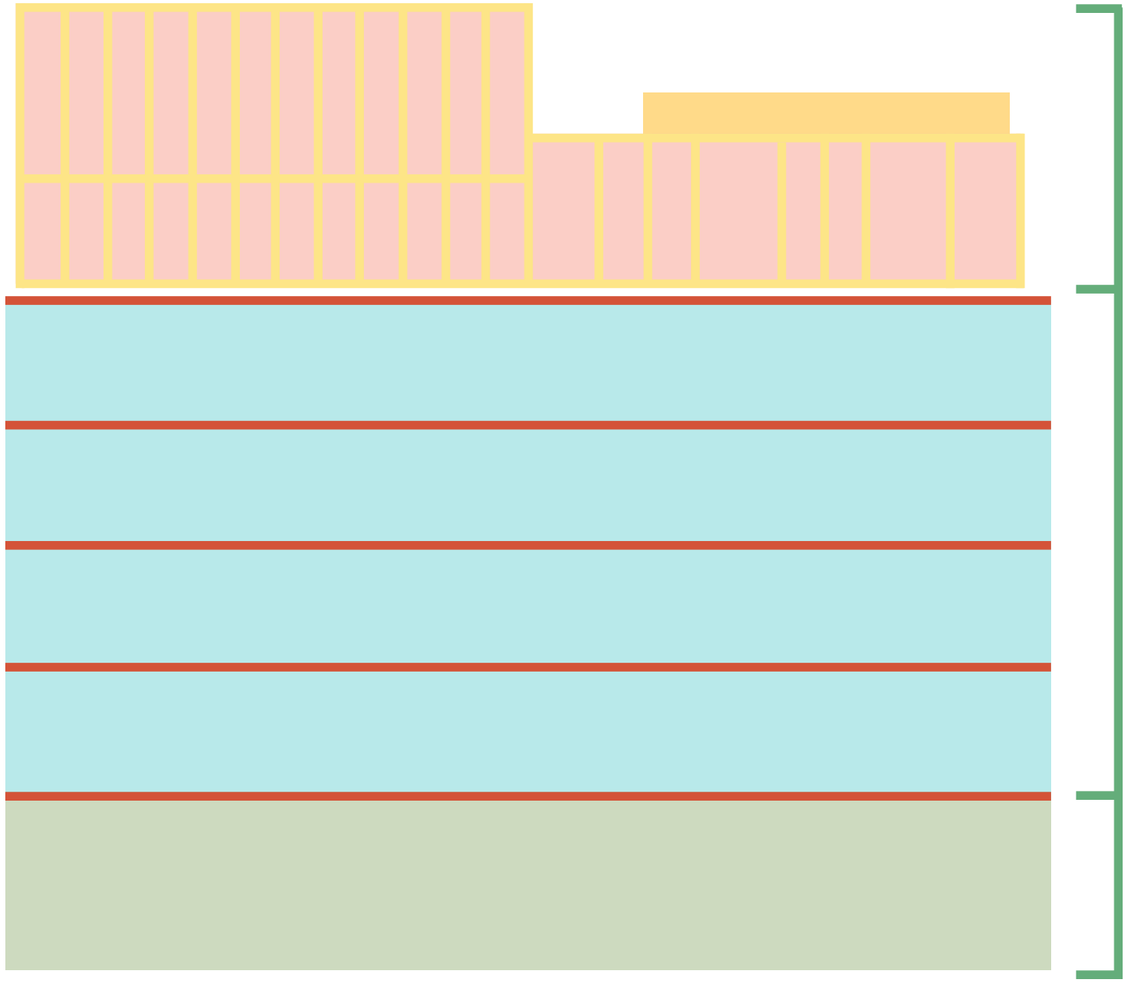
Breakdown of approved facade design:

Pros:

- Base, middle, top - works well referencing classical proportions of key adjacent context
- Rhythm of top stories - important to define the top stories as ‘roof levels’ and break down the massing
- Stepping in and out facade is important for rhythm and pattern making

Cons:

- Horizontal bands too thin, change of material is complicated and ‘fiddly’ for the design
- The ‘base’ could be more clearly defined, currently it is visually comparable to the ‘middle’
- Addition of required air source heat pumps and acoustic enclosure sits above parapet level



2.2 Updated Scheme
2.2.1 East Elevation

Breakdown of the updated facade design:

- The ‘base, middle and top’ is reinforced with greater variation between the three elements
- The rhythm of the top stories is retained and made more regular
- The stepping in and out facade is retained and regularised
- The horizontal bands are made thicker and defined using a double brick soldier course
- The base is more clearly defined by stepping back and a small change to the material
- Raised parapet to 6th floor level to conceal ASHPs on roof

2.2 Updated Scheme
2.2.2 View from Kentish Town Canopy

2.3 Facade Design Refinements
2.3.1 South and East Elevation

1. Reconfigured design to upper levels to strengthen rhythm of piers.
2. Raised parapet to help conceal ASHPs - not visible from street level.
3. Layout change to facade to reinforce the stepping rhythm.
4. Horizontal bands at first to fourth floor levels changed to a double vertical brick soldier course.
5. Change to 'textured' brick recessed panels to avoid drawbacks of extruded headers - refer to technical design development section for more detail.
6. Set back columns at ground floor to allow better flow around corner retail entrance.
7. Ground floor set back to emphasise the active 'plinth', reinforcing link to the context.
8. Reconfigured and set back entrance - to provide protected entrance space.
9. Shutters removed due to health and safety cleaning requirements.

South Elevation

East elevation - consented scheme

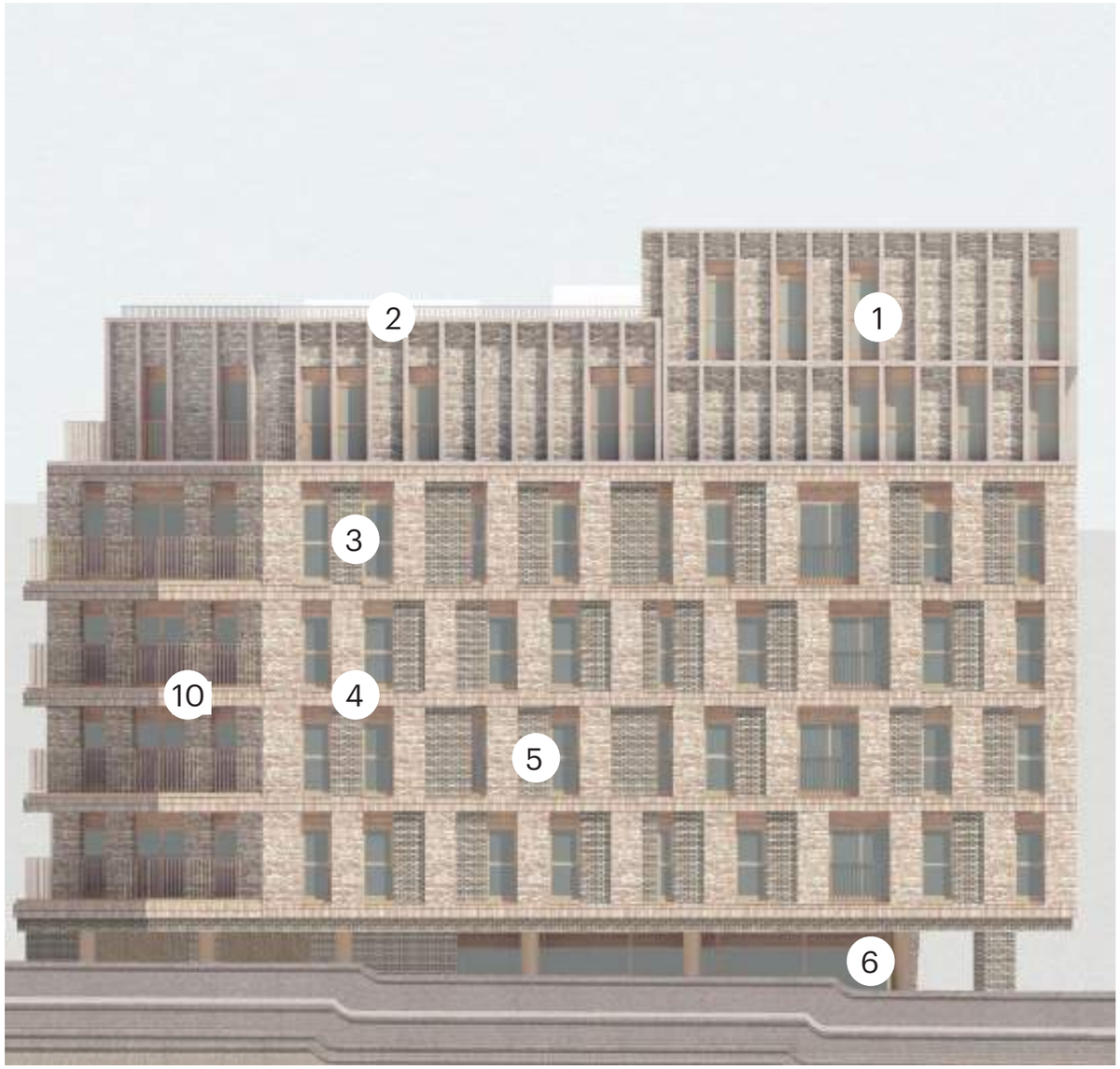
Proposed East elevation - revised scheme

2.3 Facade Design Refinements
2.3.2 West Elevation

1. Reconfigured design to upper levels to strengthen rhythm of piers.
2. Raised parapet to help conceal ASHPs - not visible from street level.
3. Layout change to facade to reinforce the stepping rhythm.
4. Horizontal bands at first to fourth floor levels changed to a double vertical brick soldier course.
5. Change to 'textured' brick recessed panels to avoid drawbacks of extruded headers - refer to technical design development section for more detail.
6. Set back columns at ground floor to allow better flow around corner retail entrance.

10. Balcony layout changed to allow for cleaning and maintenance.

Proposed West elevation - consented scheme

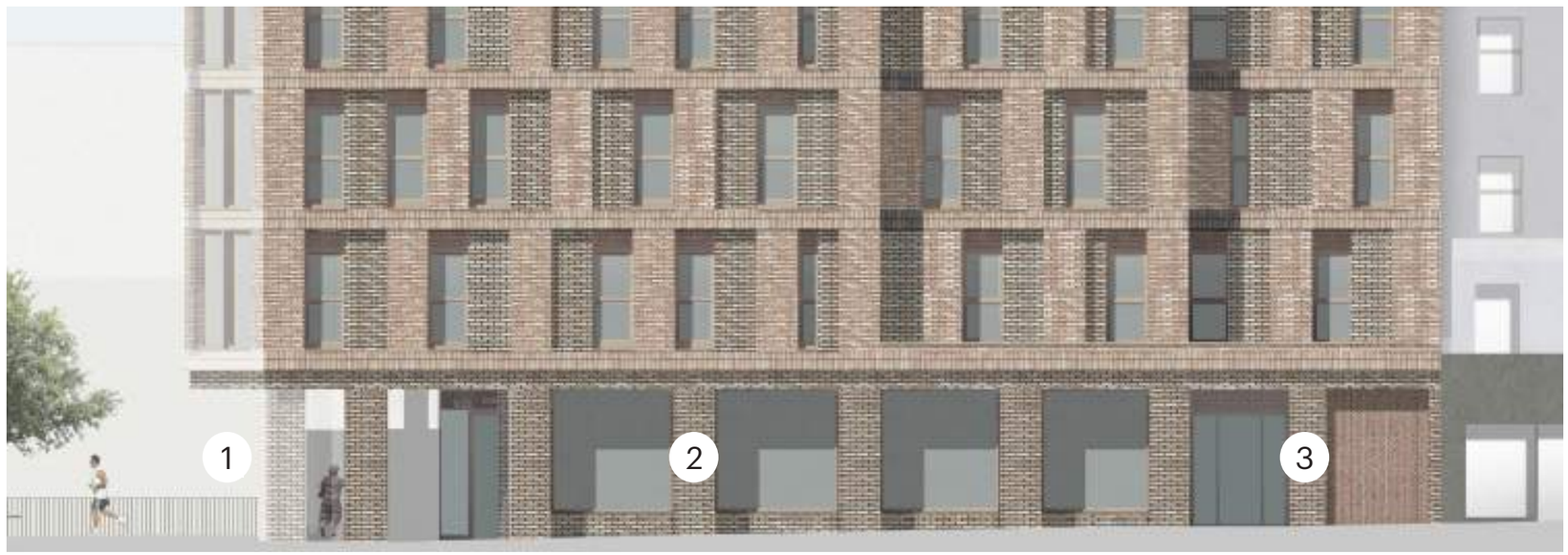


Proposed West elevation - revised scheme

2.3 Facade Design Refinements
2.3.3 Ground Floor

1. The structure has been pulled back from the edge of the building (to the left of the elevation) to allow for a better window layout on the corner. At ground floor this allows the structure to be pulled back, allowing a better flow of public space in this location.
2. The facade is stepped back at ground floor and the brick is textured here providing a form of rustication - reinforcing the base of the building.
3. Reconfigured entrance layout as described in the plans above.

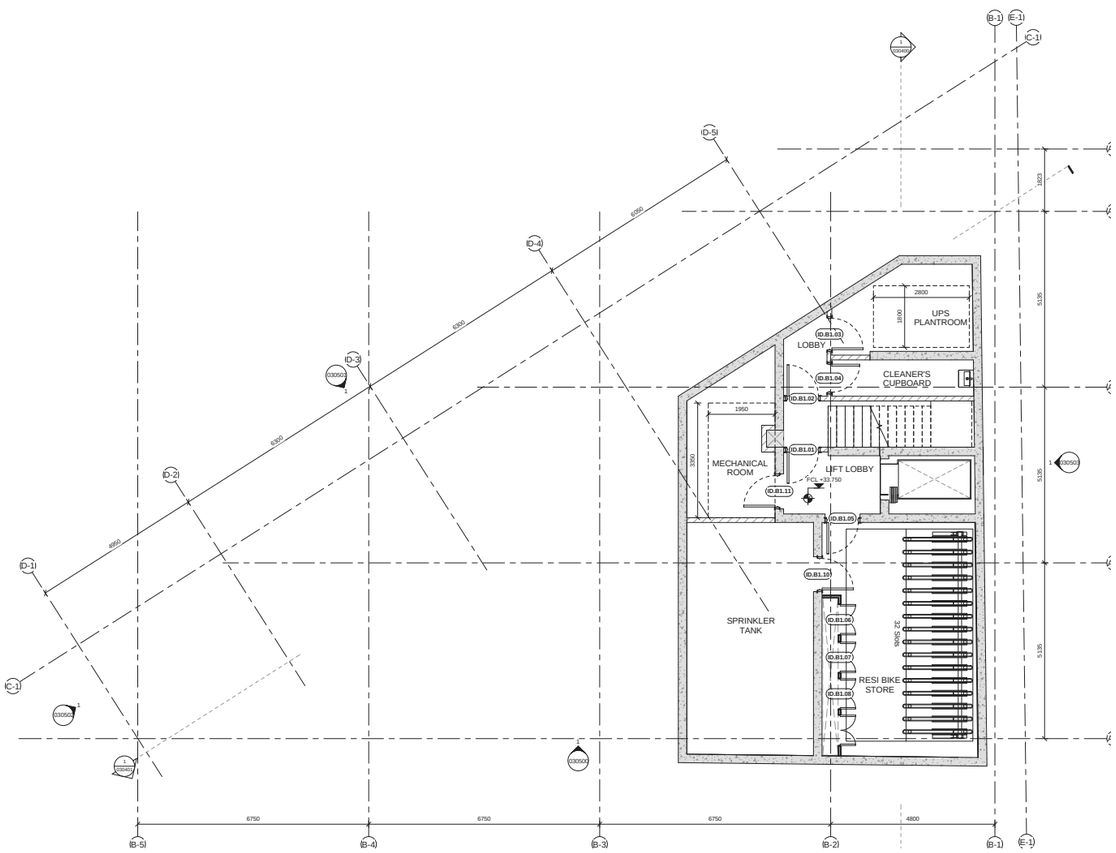
Proposed East Elevation GF Detail - Approved Scheme



Proposed East Elevation GF Detail - Proposed Revised scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.1 Basement Plan

Note: Updates to the basement layout have been approved via a non-material amendment to the scheme, application number: 2023/3382/P. No further changes are proposed.

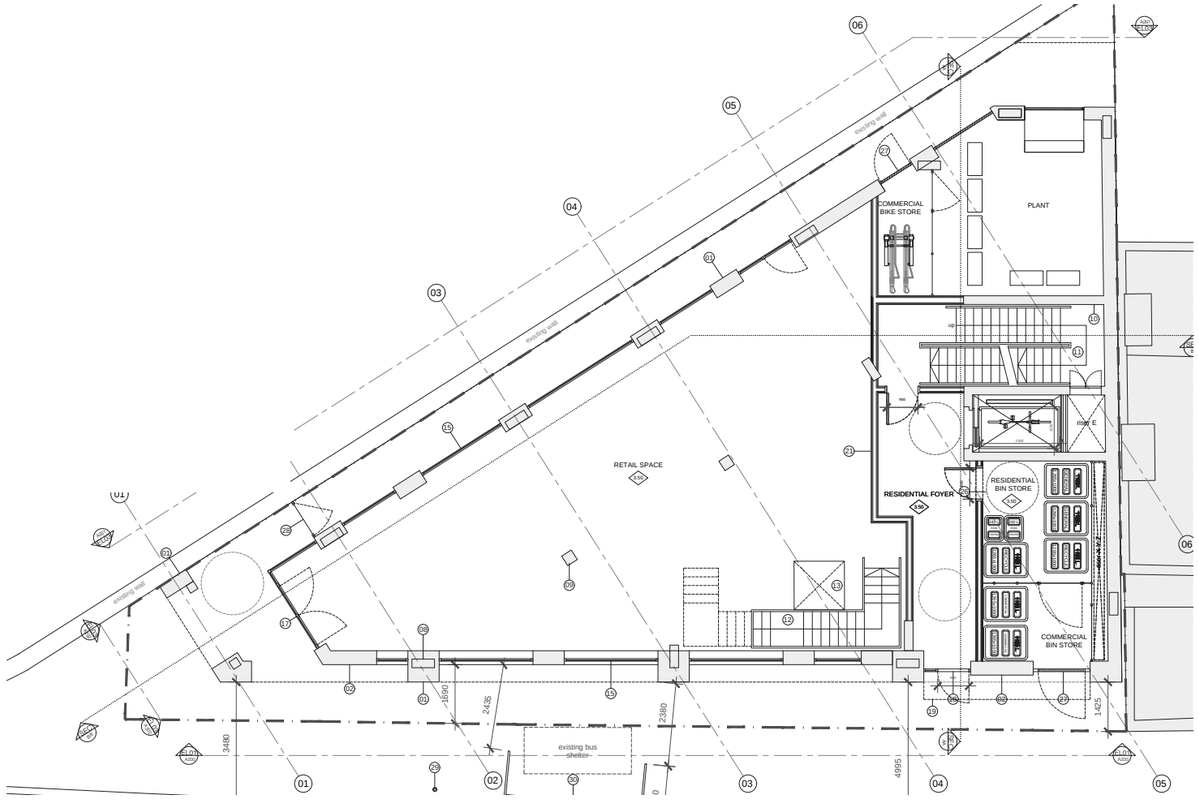


Proposed basement plan - planning approved scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.2 Ground Floor Plan

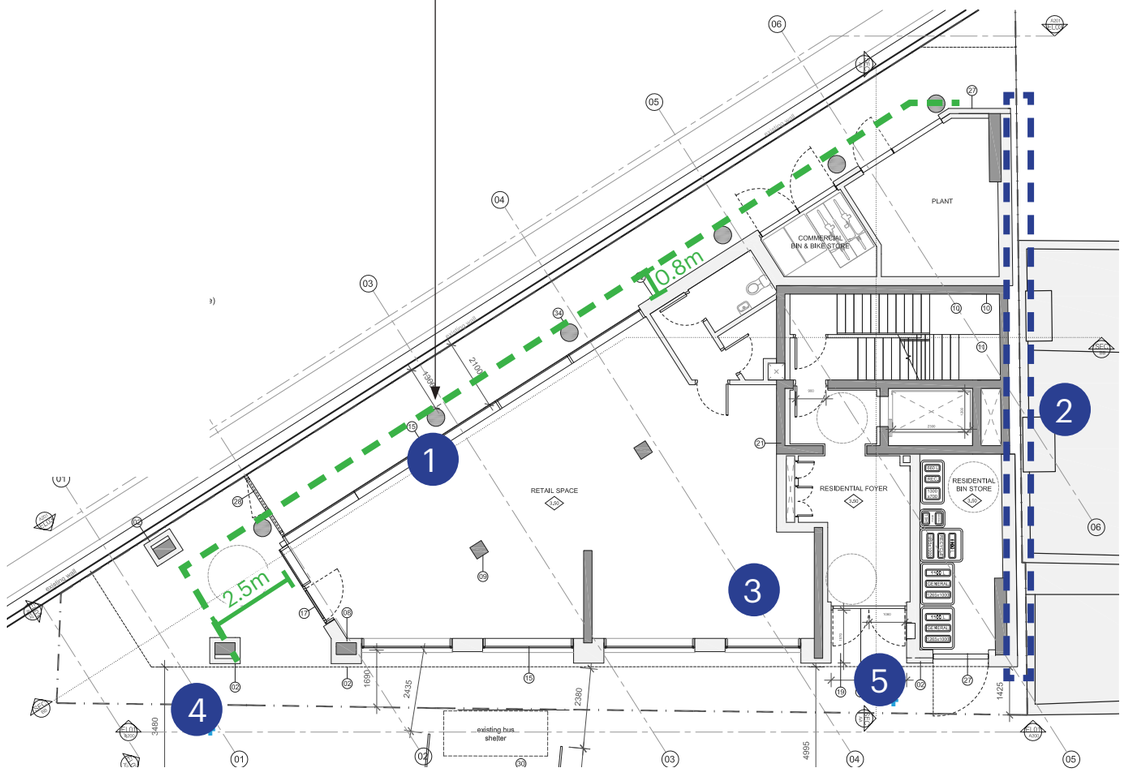
Plan Updates:

1. Set back of main façade to allow for public access and future Heathline walkway. 2.8m spacing of curtain wall mullions to allow for aluminium system.
2. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.
3. Escape stair from basement and lobby no longer required.
4. Reconfigured structure to allow for better window arrangement and better public flow at the retail entrance.
5. Entrance canopy removed, entrance recessed to allow for covered landing. Dry riser provision in side wall adjacent.



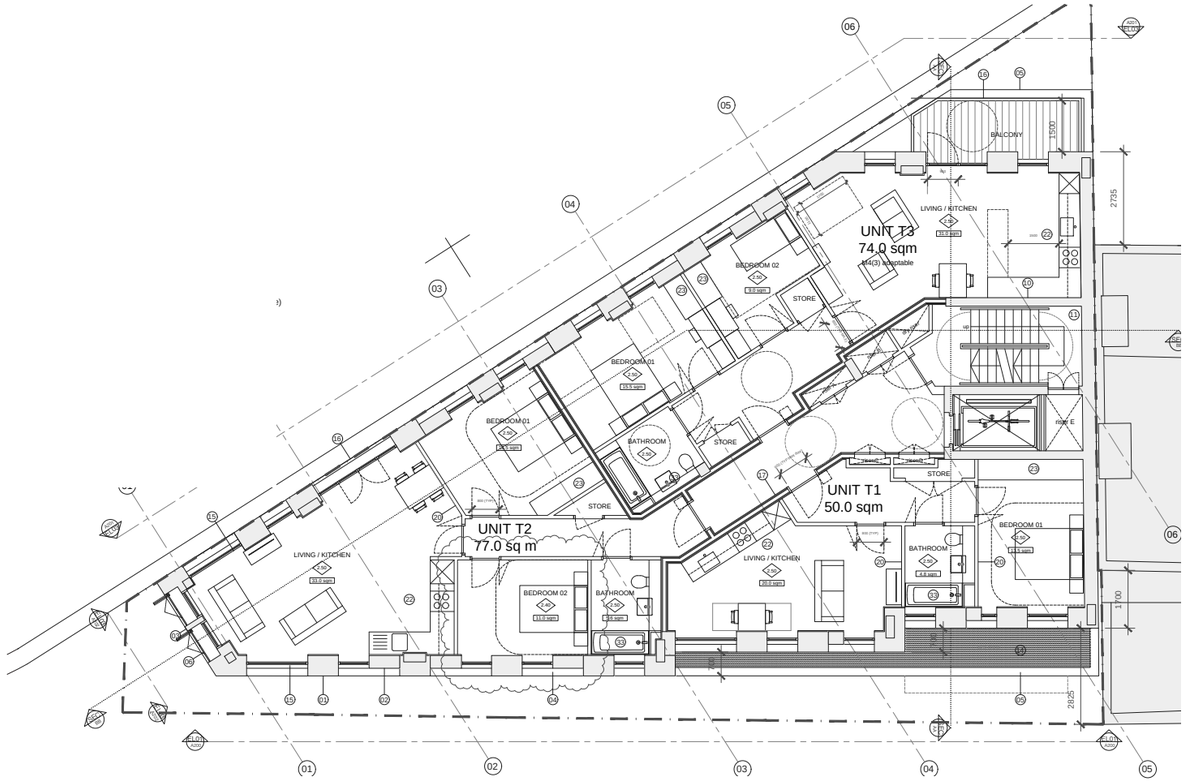
Proposed ground floor plan - planning approved scheme

facade line - approved scheme



Proposed ground floor plan - revised scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.3 First Floor Plan



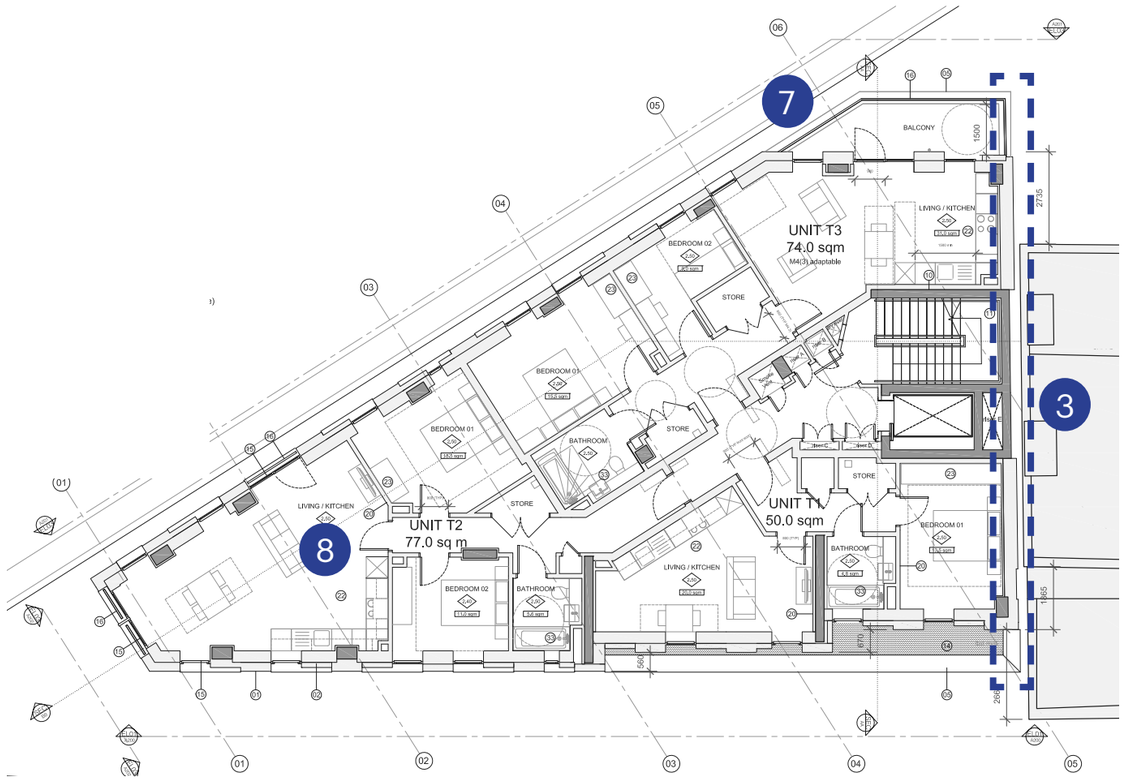
Proposed first floor plan - planning approved scheme

Plan Updates:

3. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.

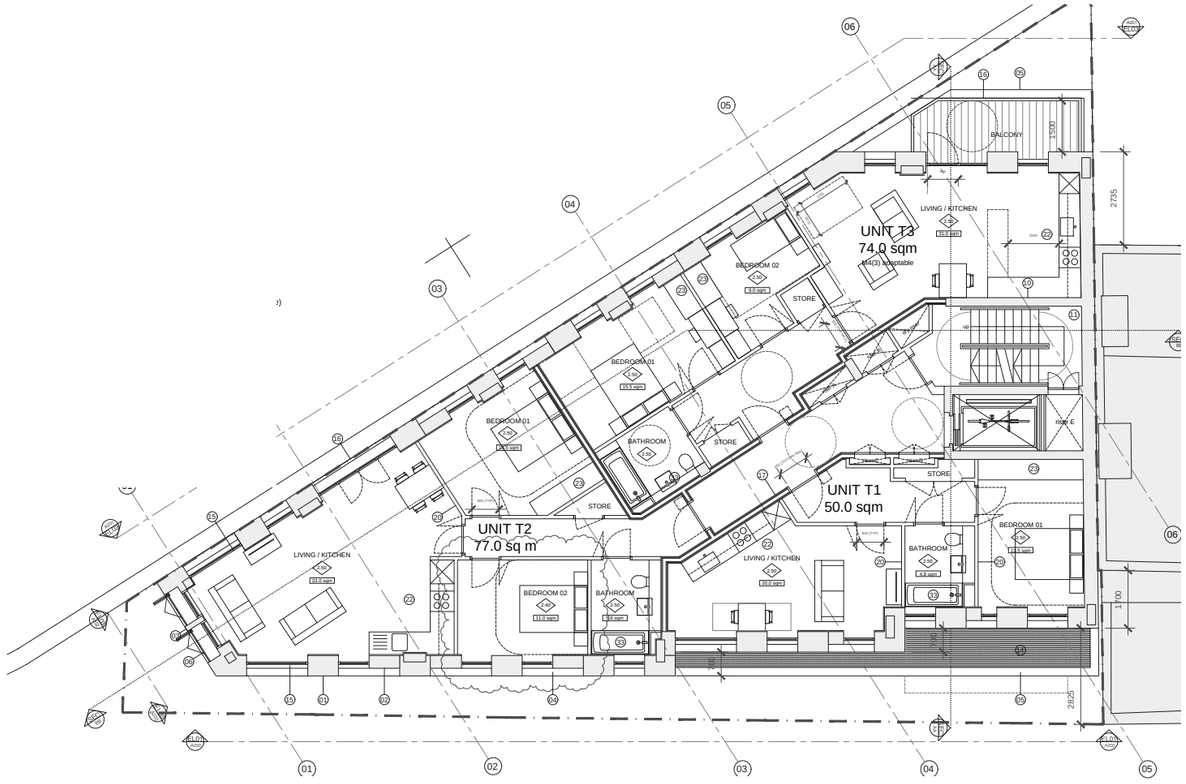
7. Layout of balcony updated to allow for safe cleaning and maintenance.

8. Minor amendments to improve internal layout.



Proposed first floor plan - revised scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.4 Second Floor Plan



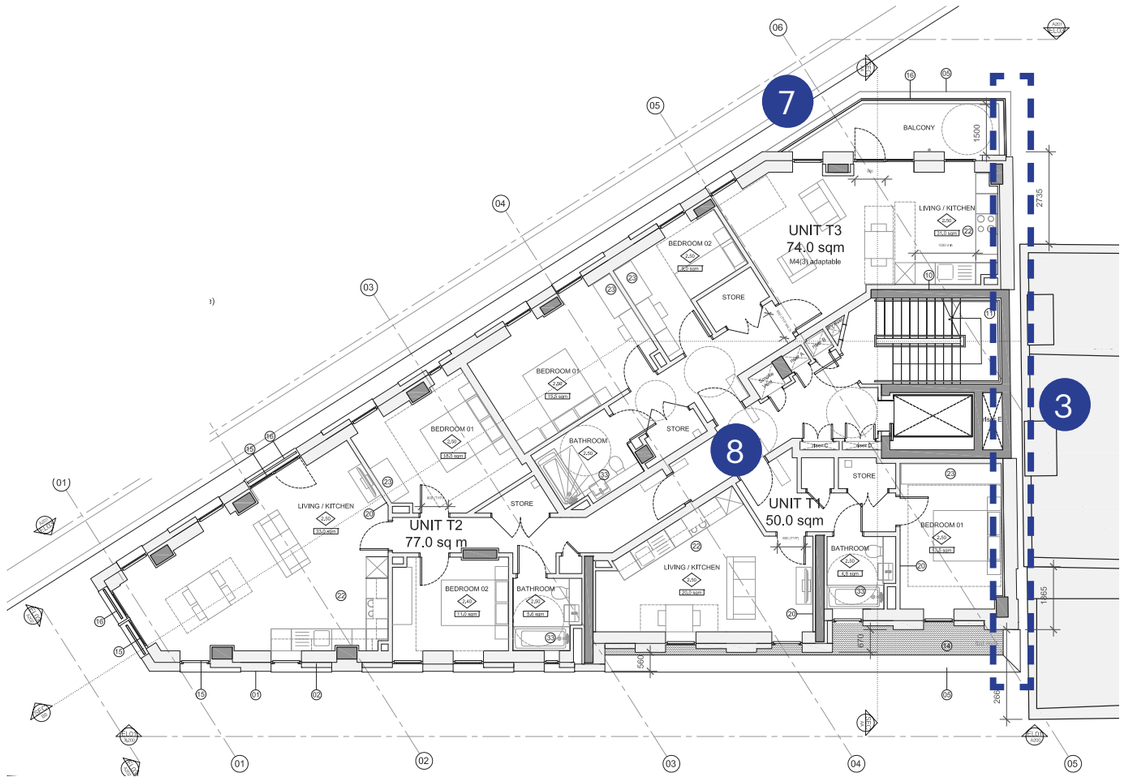
Proposed second floor plan - planning approved scheme

Plan Updates:

3. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.

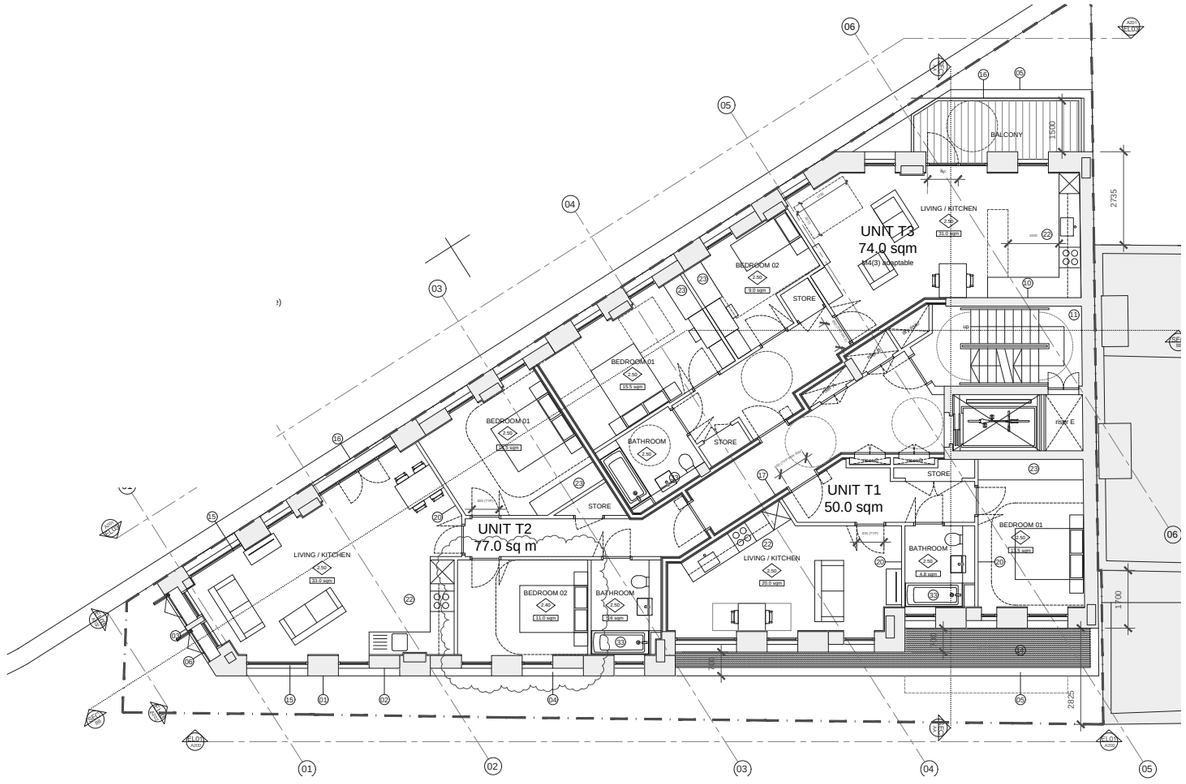
7. Layout of balcony updated to allow for safe cleaning and maintenance.

8. Minor amendments to improve internal layout.

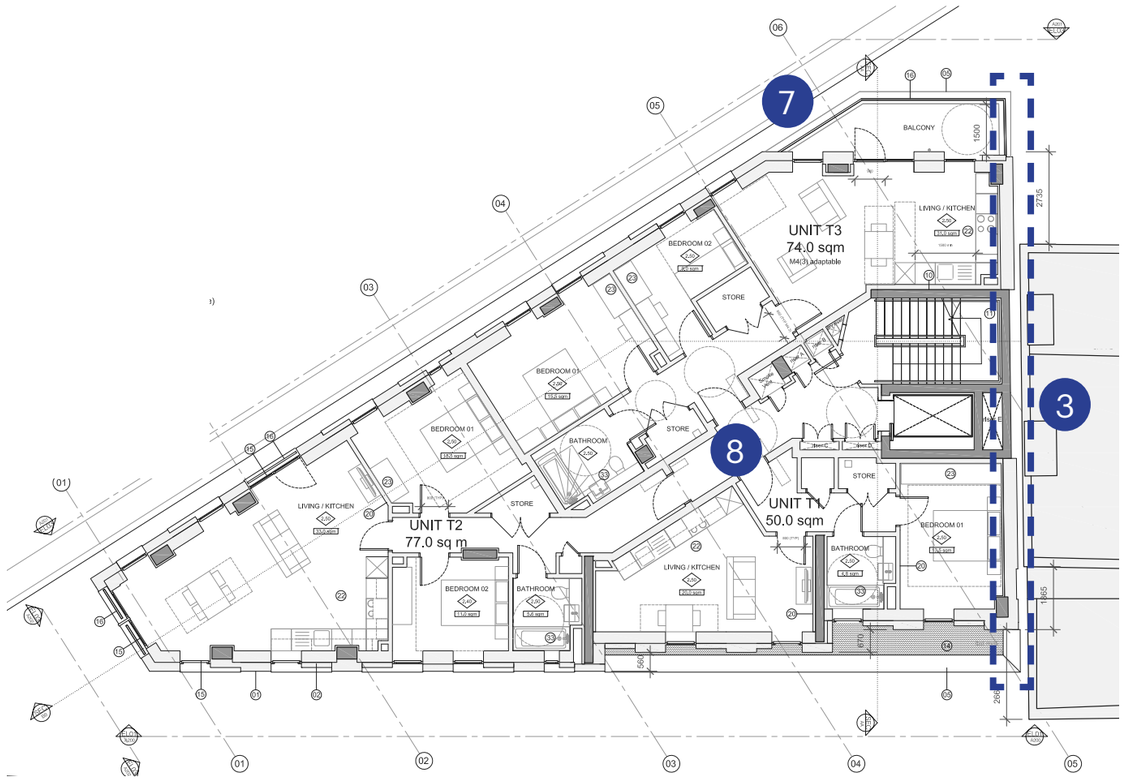


Proposed second floor plan - revised scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.5 Third Floor Plan



Proposed third floor plan - planning approved scheme



Proposed third floor plan - revised scheme

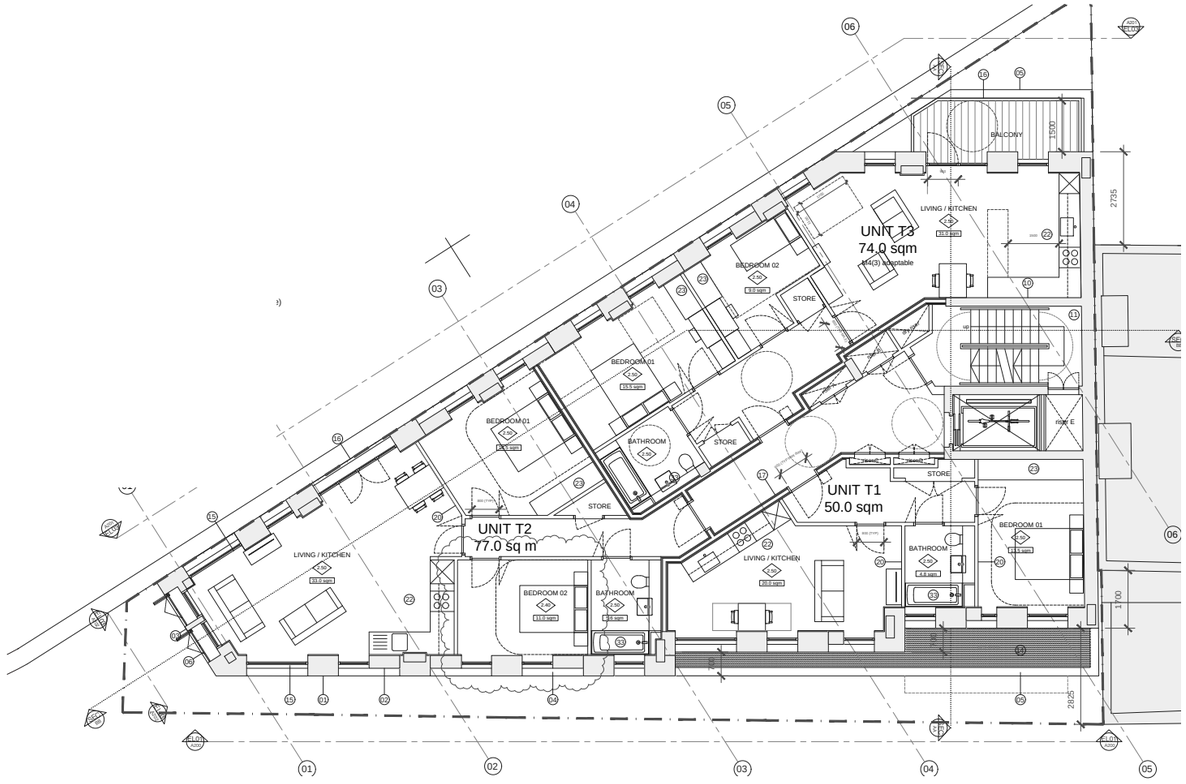
Plan Updates:

3. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.

7. Layout of balcony updated to allow for safe cleaning and maintenance.

8. Minor amendments to improve internal layout.

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.6 Fourth Floor Plan



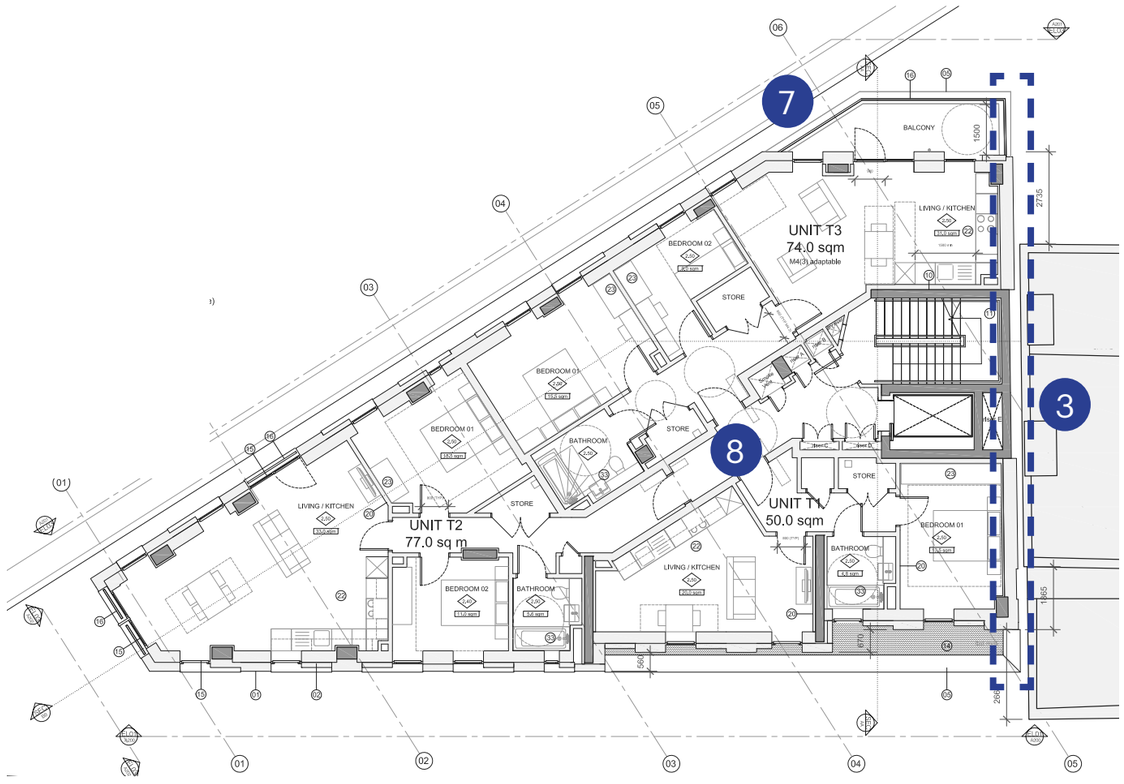
Proposed fourth floor plan - planning approved scheme

Plan Updates:

3. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.

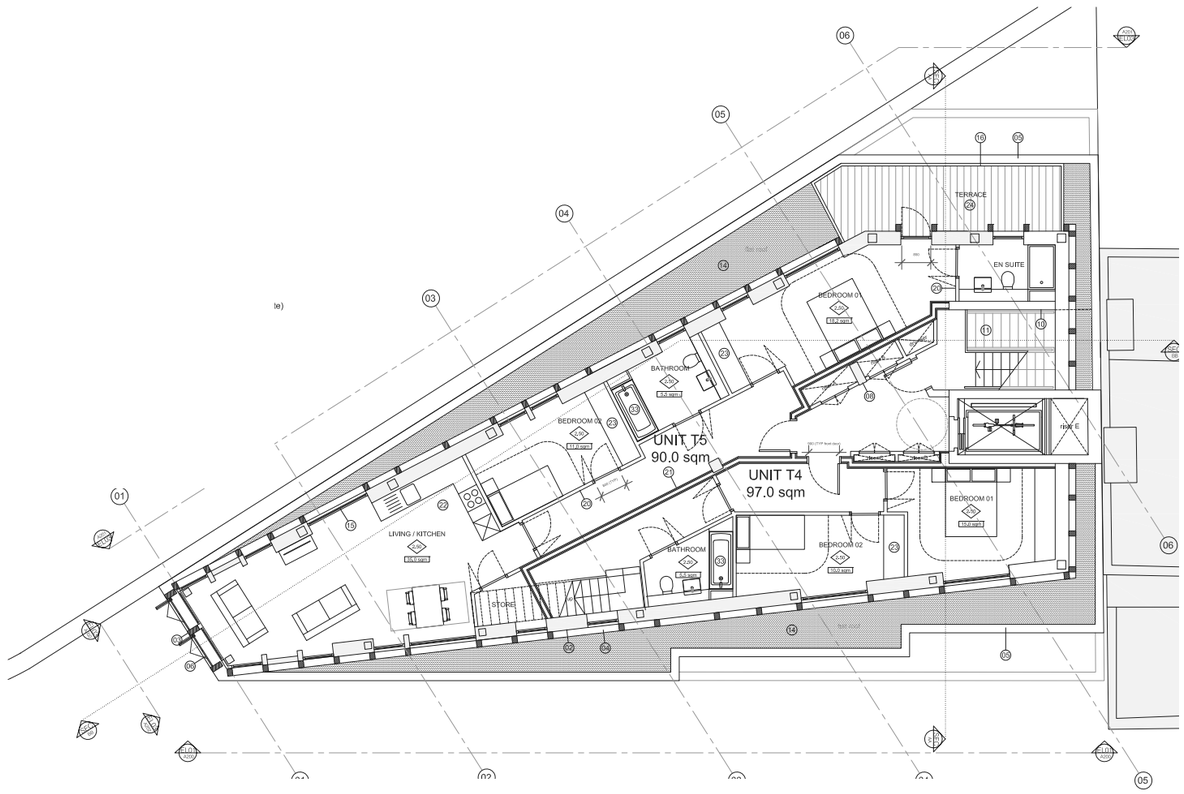
7. Layout of balcony updated to allow for safe cleaning and maintenance.

8. Minor amendments to improve internal layout.



Proposed fourth floor plan - revised scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.7 Fifth Floor Plan



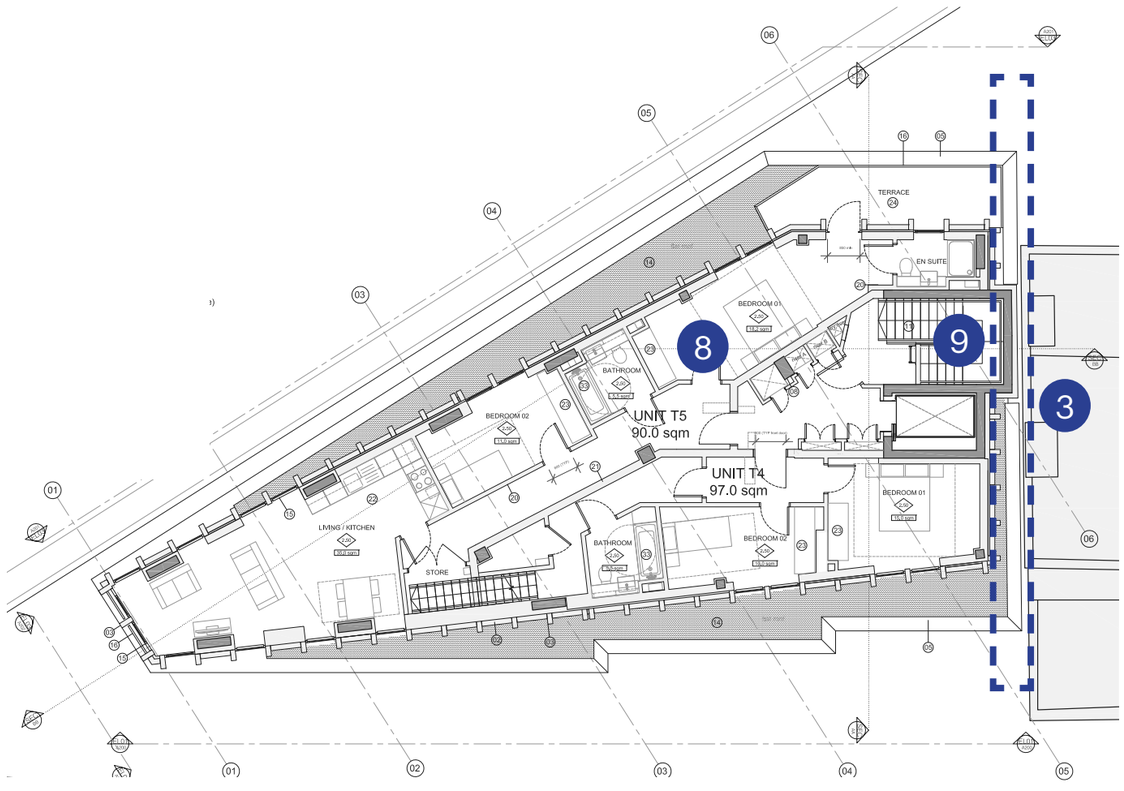
Proposed fifth floor plan - planning approved scheme

Plan Updates:

3. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.

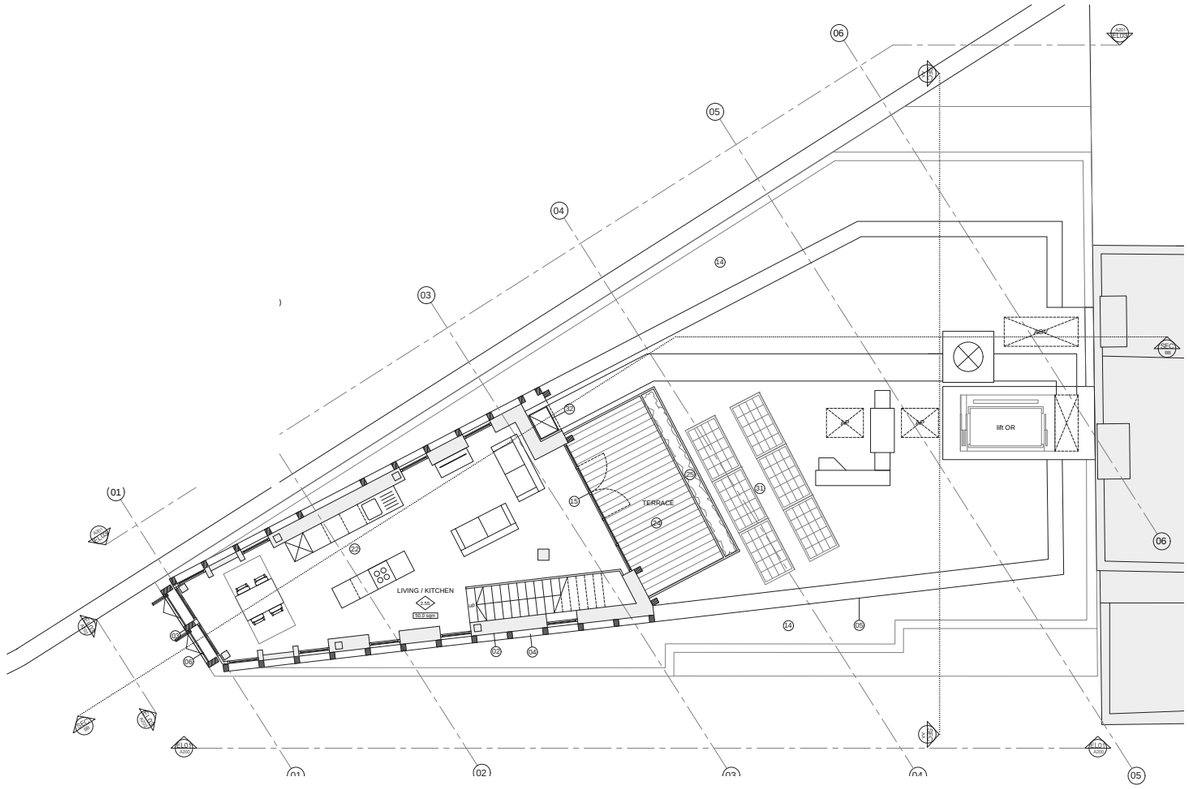
8. Minor amendments to improve internal layout.

9. Core layout adjusted for improved internal layout.



Proposed fifth floor plan - revised scheme

2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.8 Sixth Floor Plan



Proposed sixth floor plan - planning approved scheme

Plan Updates:

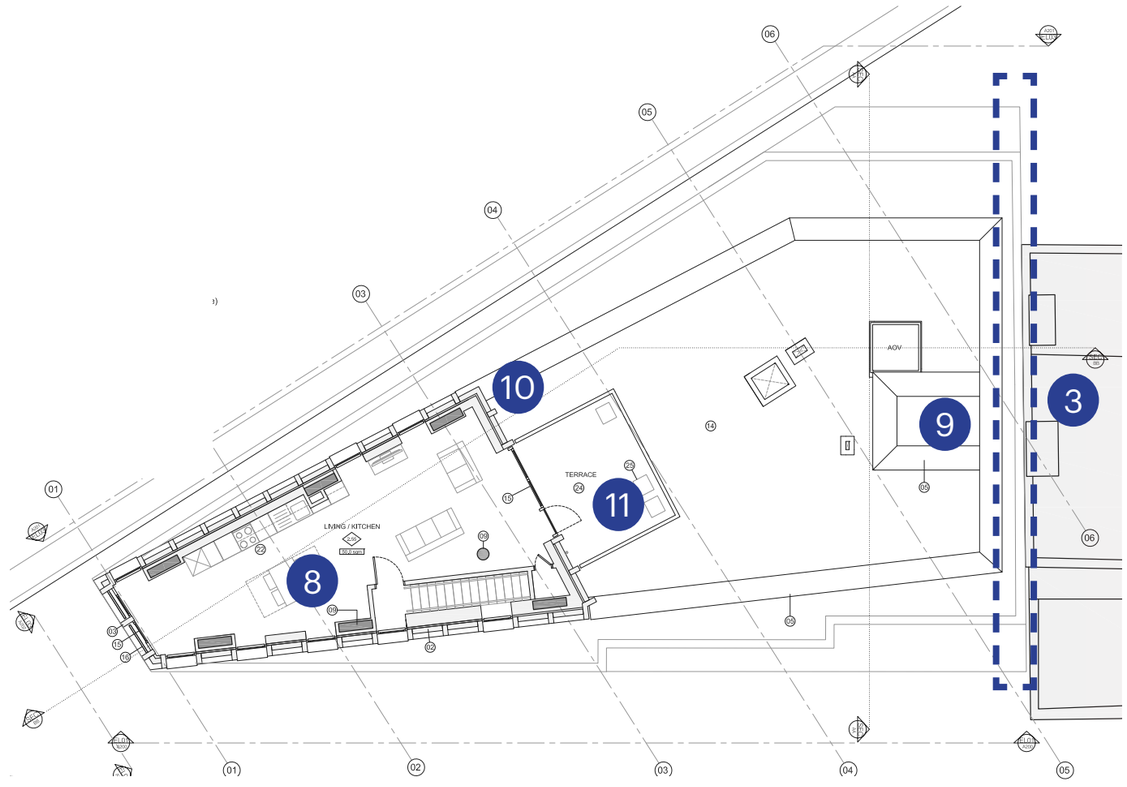
3. Party wall moved 150mm away from site boundary due to site tolerances with existing building adjacent.

8. Minor amendments to improve internal layout.

9. Core layout adjusted for improved internal layout.

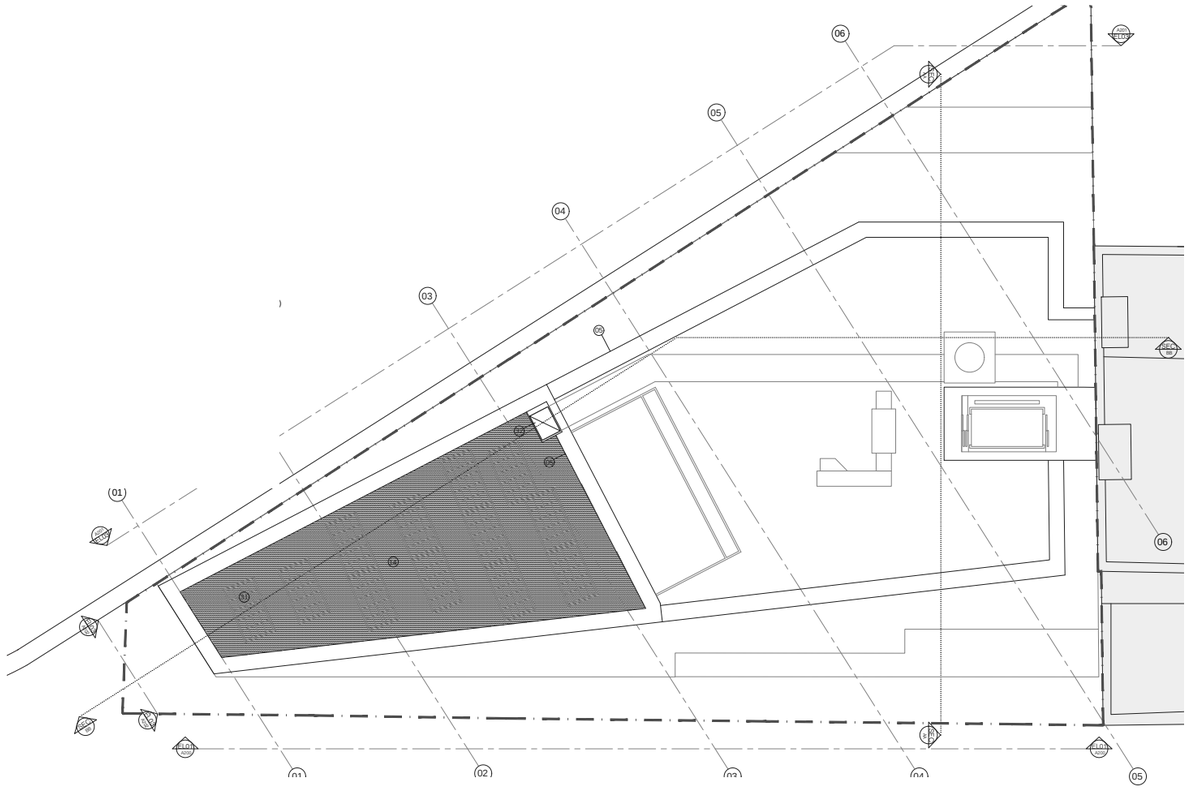
10. Corner closed off as the space for the boiler flue is no longer required.

11. 6th floor terrace reconfigured.



Proposed sixth floor plan - revised scheme

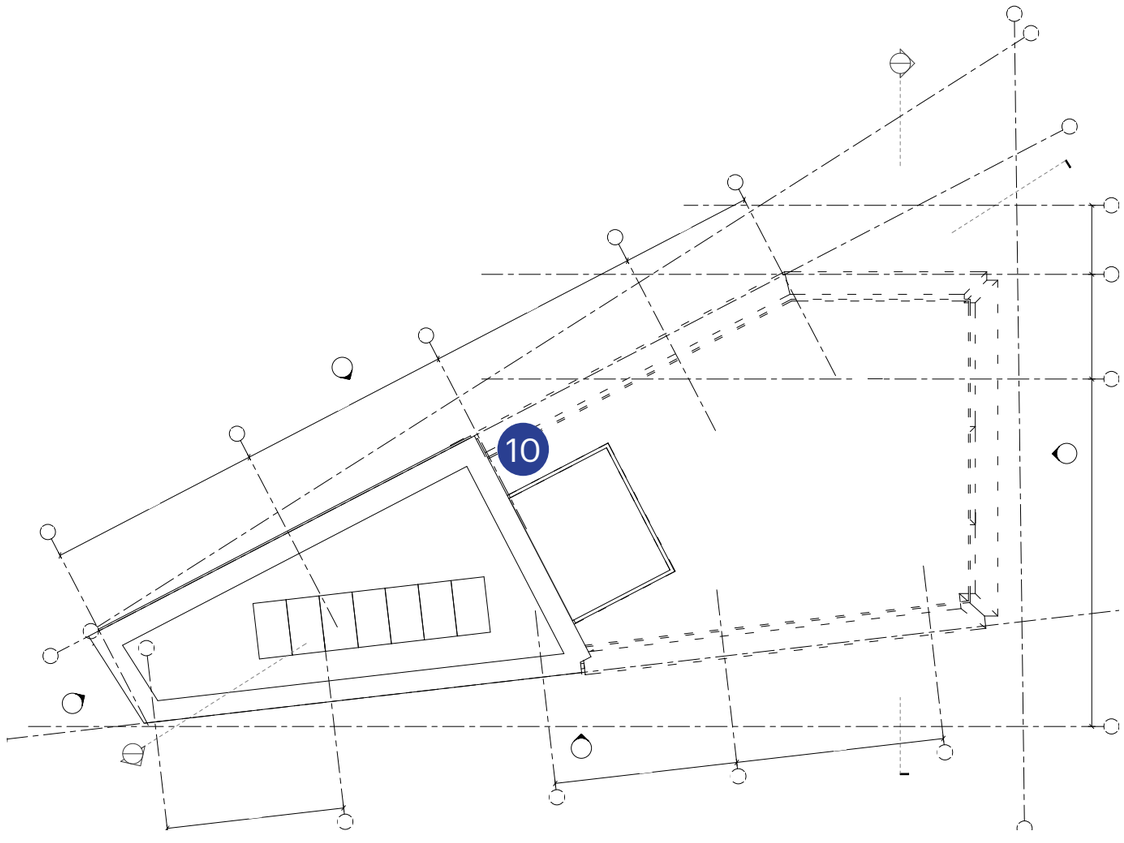
2.4 Plan Design Refinements
2.4.9 Roof Plan



Proposed roof plan - planning approved scheme

Plan Updates:

10. Corner closed off as the space for the boiler flue is no longer required.



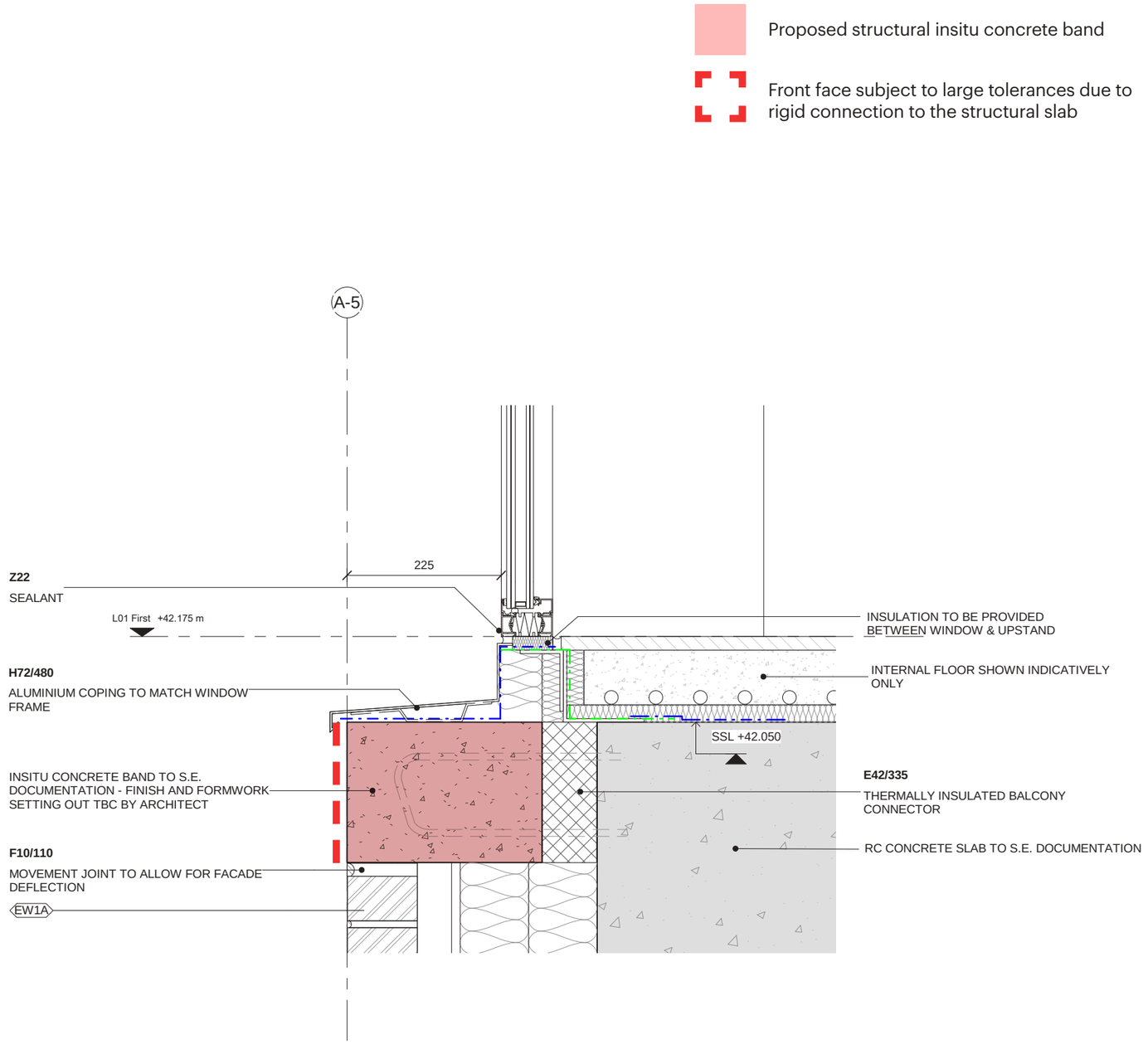
Proposed roof plan - revised scheme

2.5 Technical Facade Development
2.5.1 Approved Scheme - Horizontal Banding Detail

During stage 3 and 4 the detail for the masonry horizontal banding was further developed. As structural elements supporting the stepping brickwork above, the bands have an aesthetic and practical use. On further development of these proposals the following factors were identified:

Positives:
1. Structural concrete bands were required to provide simple solution to support the brickwork on each floor. As the facade is stepping in and out it was agreed that this solution would be most appropriate.
2. Fewer joints would be required compared to a precast option
3. Thermal break and fire stopping is achieved using connectors between the slab and the concrete bands

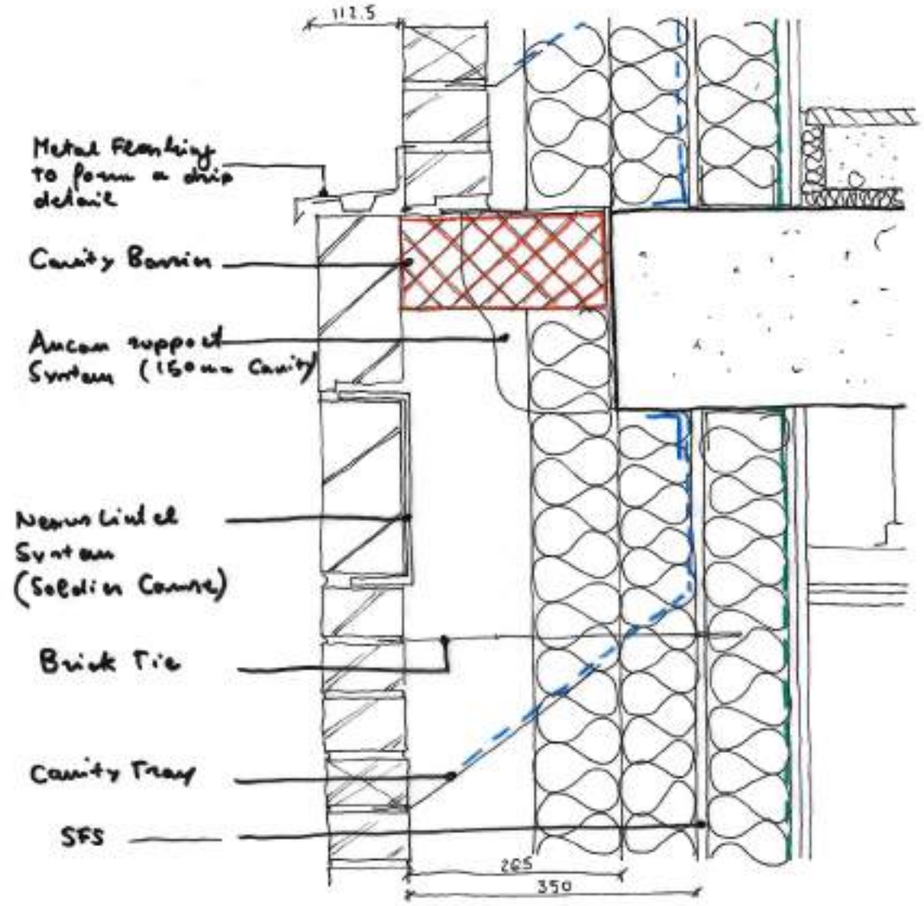
Negatives:
1. Insitu poured concrete bands would be constructed on site, meaning variation in colour and quality between different pours, and a high chance of poor finish occuring.
2. Issues of tolerance would mean the front face of the concrete bands may not align flush with the face of the brickwork as intended. This could look messy and we would need to consider stepping out the concrete bands by 20mm to deal with this visually. This would create a different look to the facade and mean more aluminium flashing would be required.

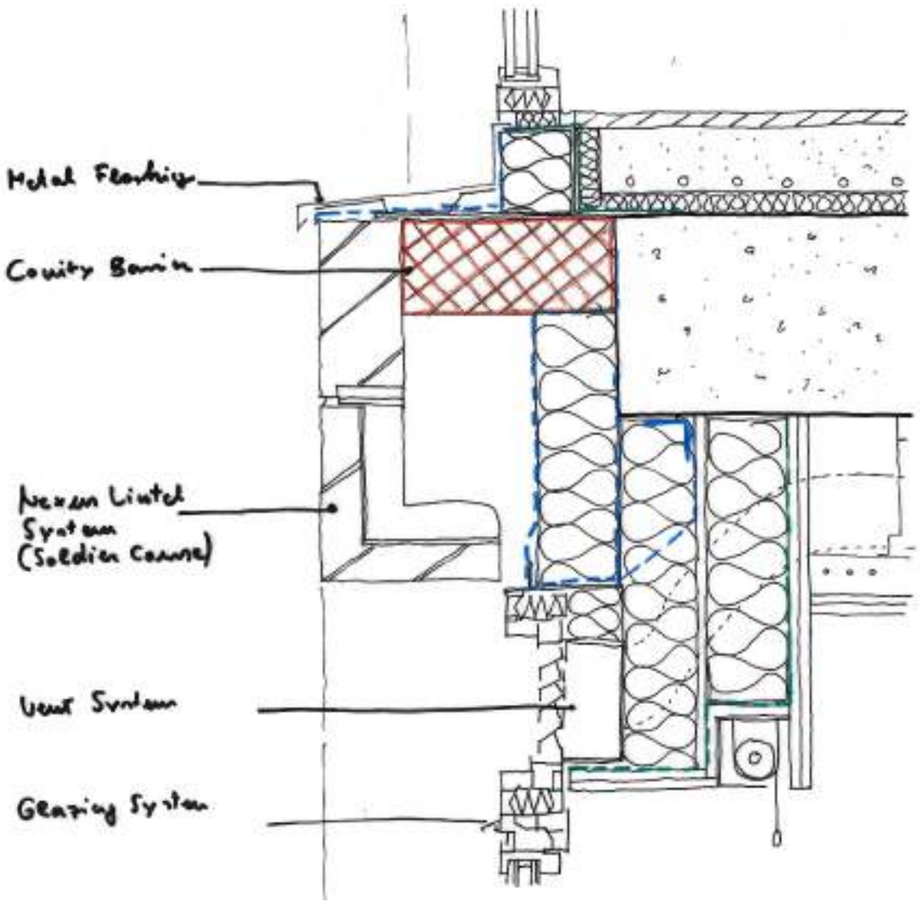


2.5 Technical Facade Development
2.5.2 Horizontal Banding Detail - Development

In the updated design the horizontal banding is created using a double vertical brick soldier course, supported using a concealed lintel system. There are several benefits to this approach affecting the quality of the design:

1. The issues of colour and consistency of finish quality are dealt with by changing the material to bricks, matching the rest of the facade.
2. Tolerance can be absorbed within the cavity and the soldier course can be installed to be flush with the face of the other brick walls.
3. The soldier coursing creates strong bands of vertical bricks running horizontally, which maintains the expression of horizontality - a key design element of the approved scheme - see overleaf.





2.5 Technical Facade Development
2.5.2 Horizontal Banding Detail - Development

Consented scheme: horizontal banding expressed with red stone coloured detailing

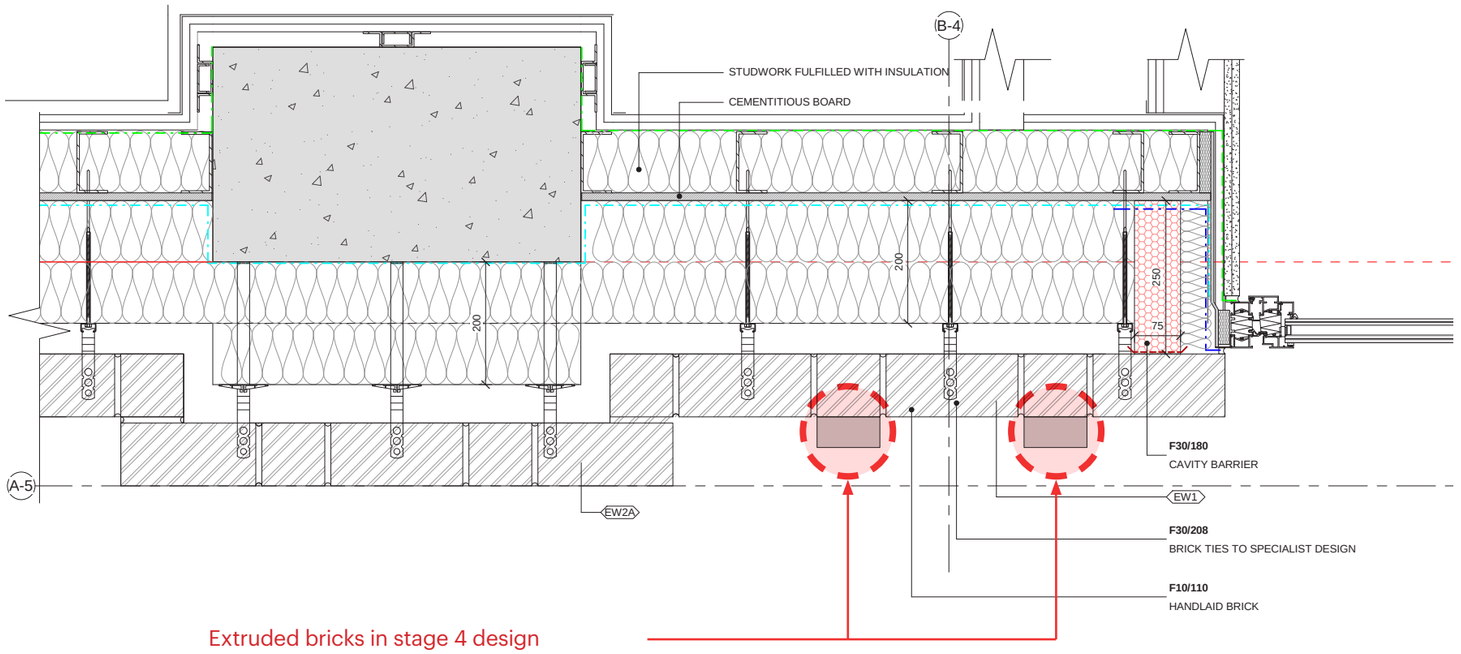
Horizontal banding expressed with double brick soldier courses

2.5 Technical Facade Development
2.5.3 Approved Scheme - Facade Details

The detail for the textured brick facade elements using extruded brick headers was explored further at the detailed design stage. Some drawbacks to this option were identified:

1. Extruded headers would create potential ledges for birds and may create potential risk for water ingress in exposed locations.
2. Using Flemish bond can increase material wastage and dust risk to workers through cutting of bricks

We have explored other approaches which create a textured appearance to the facade without the above drawbacks.



2.5 Technical Facade Development
2.5.4 Proposed Update: Brick detailing Precedents

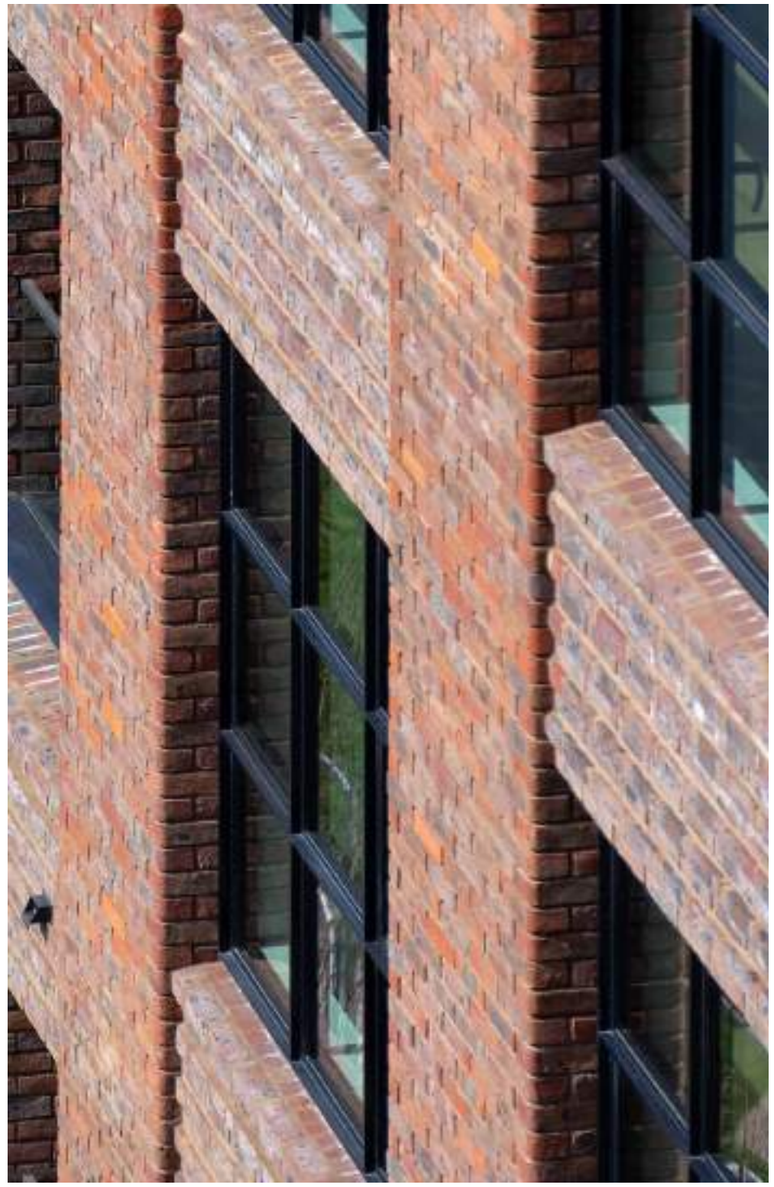
1. Sergison Bates Architects - Antwerp Housing. Brick specials

2. Peter Celsing and Andy Liffner Architects - St Thomas Church. Recessed grout treatment

3. AHMM - Hawley Wharf Camden. Stretcher bond with offset courses

1

2

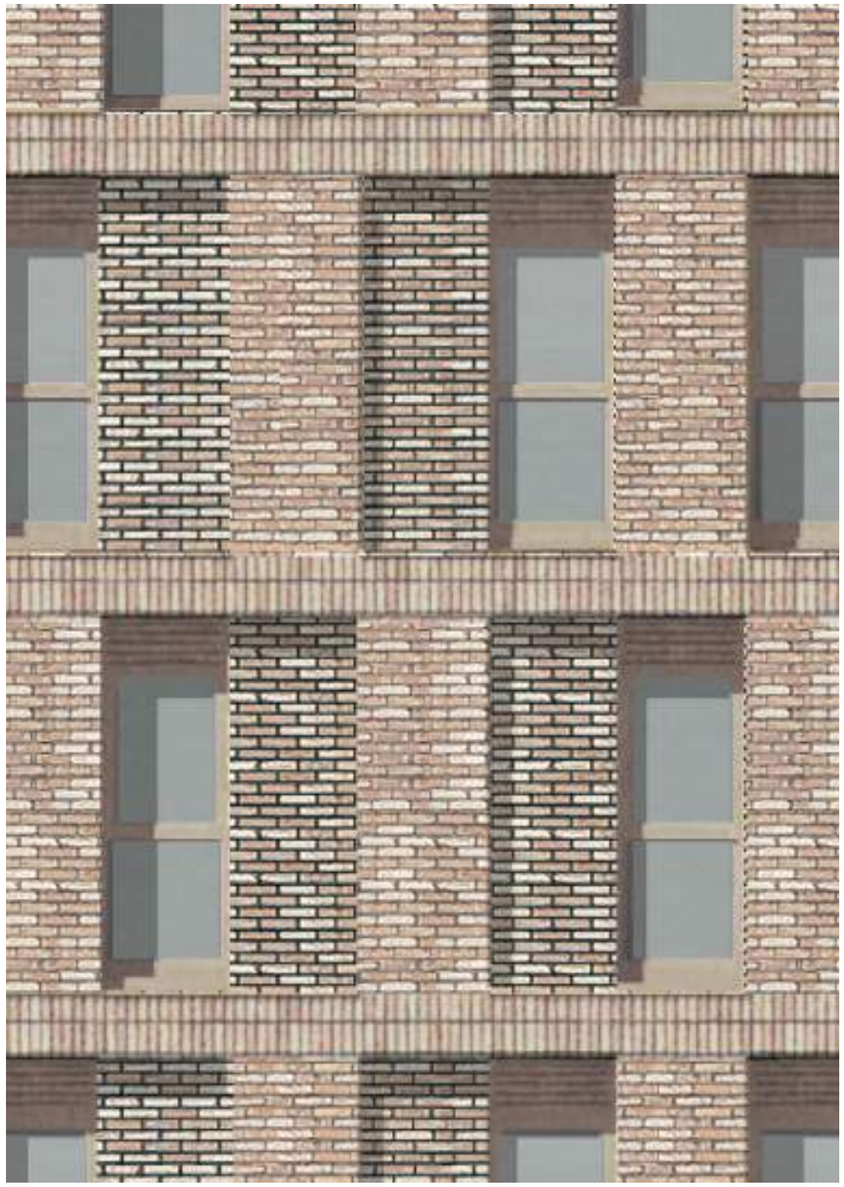


3

2.5 Technical Facade Development
2.5.5 Proposed Update: Recessed Panel Detail

Using a racked brick finish expresses the recessed panel elements in the ‘second layer’ of the facade. This method uses a stretcher bond and therefore reducing brick cutting over Flemish bond with extruded headers.

1. Proposed East Elevation



2. Proposed East Elevation - facade detail

3.0 Response to Pre-App Feedback

3.1 Response to Camden Comments
3.1.1 Comment 1

Comment 1:

‘The (6th floor) raised parapet makes the rear part look much bulkier, which is problematic in views from Highgate Road where the flank wall appears too expansive. You are encouraged to explore how this massing could be shaped to break up the ‘boxiness’.’

Response:

As a simple response to this we have dropped down the parapet wall here by 0.5m, installing a set back balustrade to the roof. From street level the roof plant is still concealled by the lower parapet, but the volume appears considerably less expansive.

Pre-app proposal - view from Highgate Road

Updated proposal with reduced 6th floor roof parapet - view from Highgate Road

3.1 Response to Camden Comments
3.1.2 Comment 2

Comment 2:

‘The slender front / south-east facing elevation is a unique and interesting feature of the building but the changes have the effect of standardising it and making it appear less interesting compared to the approved scheme. It now feels like the treatment to the other elevations extends to the front elevation rather than it having a more defined character like the approved scheme. You are encouraged to explore ways to make this more dynamic and interesting.’

Response:

The initial move we made was to remove the balustrades and create a fixed panel window, immediately defining a different, more impactfull architecture to the south-east facade.

We tested several options to create a more defined character to the slender south-east facade resulting in a shortlist of the three below. Ultimately finding option 3 to work best with the design as a whole. Refer to the final design overleaf.

Pre-app proposal - view from Kentish Town Canopy

Option 1 - Precast

Option 2 - Brick and Precast

Option 3 - Brick/Metal/Precast

3.1 Responding to Camden Comments
3.1.2 Comment 2

The final proposal for the south-east facade incorporates:

- Removal of balustrades
- Fixed, full height windows
- Slender metal ribs to lower floor windows
- Precast spandrel panel defining the top floor

Updated Proposal - view from Kentish Town Canopy

4.0 Revised Scheme

4.1 Updated Elevations

4.1.1 East Elevation

4.1 Updated Elevations
4.1.2 West Elevation

4.2 Updated Views

4.2.1 View from Kentish Town Canopy

4.2 Updated Views
4.2.2 View Highgate Road North

de Metz Forbes Knight

76 Charlotte Street
London
W1T 4QS

+44 (0)20 7435 1144
info@dMFK.co.uk
dMFK.co.uk