

# Urban Design Report

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**R5 South**



King's Cross Central General Partner Ltd

March 2013

**King's Cross**



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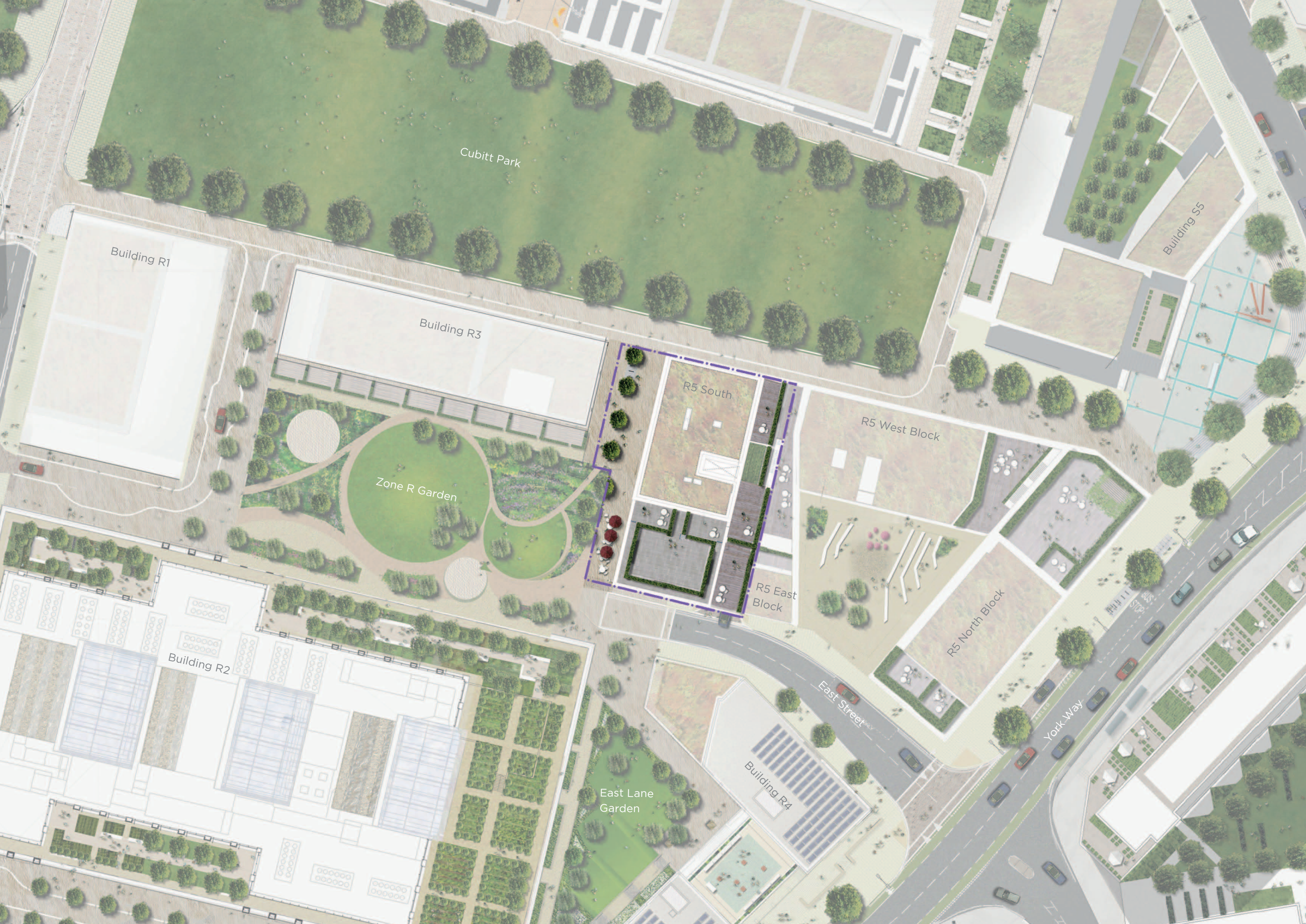
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Cubitt Park

Building R1

Building R3

Zone R Garden

R5 South

R5 West Block

R5 East Block

R5 North Block

Building R2

East Lane Garden

Building R4

Building S5

East Street

York Way

SOS 1st

SOS 2nd



# Introduction

This document forms the Urban Design Report to accompany the Reserved Matters submission for 'R5 South' within the King's Cross Central (KXC) development which was granted Outline Planning Permission in December 2006 (ref. 2004/2307/P).

R5 South is a residential building within Plot R5 facing Cubitt Park to the west and the 'Zone R Garden' to the south.

This building will complete the 'R5' urban block which also includes the three buildings that form 'R5 North' shown in Figure 1. R5 North was approved in April 2011 (ref. 2011/0431/P) and is now completed. The building has been transferred to One Housing Group and will welcome its first residents shortly.

As R5 North and R5 South were conceived together, many of the following diagrams, which illustrate how the context has been developed and explain the urban form, include R5 North and describe the design approach to plot R5 as a whole.

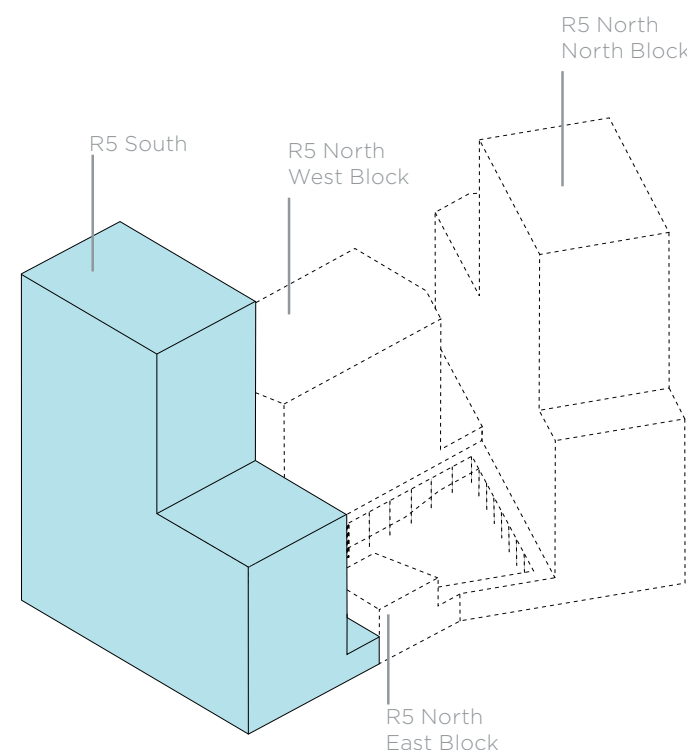


Figure 1 (above): Diagram showing R5 South in the context of the approved R5 North blocks

Figure 2 (left): Illustrative masterplan of Development Zone R

R5 South provides a total of 76 apartments, all of which are open market housing units. R5 North provides affordable housing in the North Block and West Block and open market housing in the East Block

In addition to residential accommodation, R5 South provides commercial uses at ground floor level which will open directly onto and help activate the Zone R Garden.

As shown in Figure 2, this submission includes a small area of public realm parallel with the south facade of R5 South. The detailed designs for Cubitt Park and the rest of the Zone R Garden will come forward under separate Reserved Matters submissions.

Residents amenity space will be provided in the form of an 8th floor communal roof terrace, private balconies and terraces.

The detailed design of both the building and its relationship to the surrounding context has been developed with a thorough understanding of the Development Specification and Design Guidelines that form part of the King's Cross Outline Planning Permission.

These proposals reflect and demonstrate the scale and character envisaged in the KXC Outline Planning Permission. A detailed understanding is shown of the existing and emerging context and townscape which form the setting to the building. In particular, the design has been developed in close dialogue with the project teams of the approved Buildings R2 and R4 and informed by the massing shown in the illustrative masterplan for adjacent Buildings R3 and S5.

The proposals demonstrate an integrated and comprehensive approach to sustainability and low energy design, with all elements of the building contributing to ensure that the building maximises the opportunities available; and delivers a high-quality environment.

## Report Structure

This Urban Design Report is structured in two parts:

- The first part outlines our design approach for R5 South and provides an overview of the proposals including uses, relationship to context, appearance and the general workings of the building.
- The second part provides detailed responses to the relevant Design Guidelines attached to the Outline Planning Permission Masterplan. It should be noted that although North Guidelines 2 and 3 make specific reference to Plot R5, the guidelines are concerned with the contribution to townscape and the environment along York Way and were therefore fully addressed as part of the earlier submission for R5 North. As R5 South does not front onto York Way, they are not considered further in this report.

This UDR does not seek to repeat the detailed and comprehensive analysis that has already informed the KXC scheme as a whole, as presented at the outline stage in 2004 and 2005. Rather, it references the relevant guidelines, qualities and aspirations that 'flow' from the granted permission.

In the preparation of this R5 South submission, a number of detailed technical studies have been undertaken which have informed the design. These studies are reported in documents which accompany the submission, in particular:

- a Planning Compliance Report
- an Environmental Sustainability Plan
- an Earthworks and Remediation Plan
- an Access and Inclusivity Statement; and
- a Daylight and Sunlight Report



*1.0*

# Design Approach & Proposals

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- 1.1 Masterplan Context and Planning Background
- 1.2 Approach to Scheme Design
- 1.3 Scheme Description
- 1.4 Cycle and Vehicle Parking
- 1.5 Servicing, Waste and Refuse Strategy
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*Figure 3: Aerial view of the illustrative KXC masterplan.*



# Masterplan Context and Planning Background



Figure 4: KXC masterplan showing the location of Plot R5 within the context of Development Zone R

The KXC Outline Planning Permission sets out the key masterplan parameters and principles for the development, and is supported by a comprehensive set of documents and plans that explain, analyse and justify the development of the site.

The proposals described in this report have been developed in accordance with the framework and aspirations established within these documents.

Key aspects of the Revised Main Site Development Specification (2005), including the revised Parameter Plans and revised Landscape Proposal Plans are effectively bound into the permission. The design team has worked within this framework which:

- Forms an envelope for the development within which future designs will evolve;
- Identifies Development Zones and plot boundaries, giving city block form and parameters; and
- Identifies maximum height and massing limits in response to strategic views, daylight, urban scale and contextual factors.

The approved outline scheme:

- Creates new routes and spaces to provide clear physical connections and access to London, integrating King's Cross with its surrounding neighbourhoods and communities;
- Provides an improved, legible public realm of a high quality with successful new public spaces and streets which are safe, clean and easy to understand;
- Retains and integrates heritage buildings within the fabric of the new city quarter and over the KXC site as a whole;
- Accommodates current and future transport activities in a safe, clear and efficient manner; and
- Facilitates the redevelopment of this highly accessible site, with a mixed use high density development that optimises the use of land.

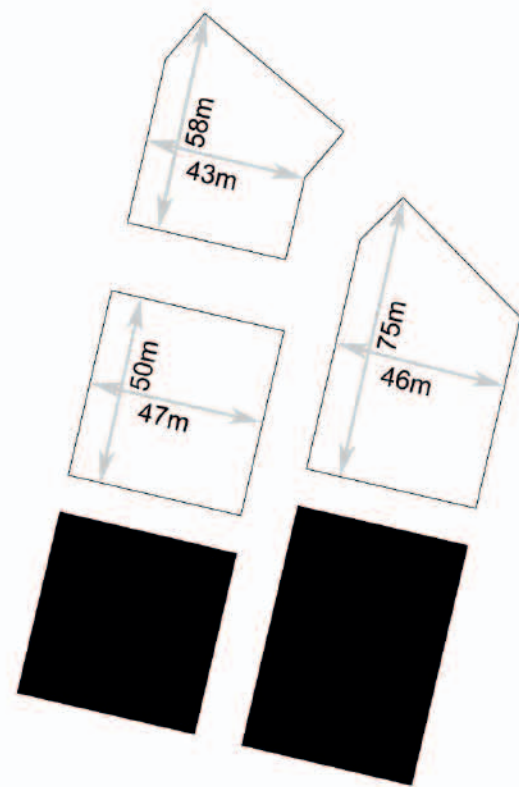
The Design Guidelines which form Annex 1 to the Outline Planning Permission reflect an expectation that subsequent detailed designs should demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that architectural diversity and quality can thrive, within the robust framework provided by the Outline Planning Permission, while affording priority to the public realm and achieving an integrated urban grain with continuity and human scale. The R5 South proposals meet this expectation, as set out in detail below and in Section 2.0 of this UDR.

The Annex 1 Design Guidelines are derived from earlier "urban design guidelines" submitted with the outline planning application in May 2004. These 2004 guidelines do not form part of the permission but the design team continue to use them as important reference documents. The 2004 guidelines provide a relatively fine grain of detailed guidance for each space. The 2004 guidelines provide information and examples about how to work within the development specification parameters (at that time) and were intentionally not prescriptive.

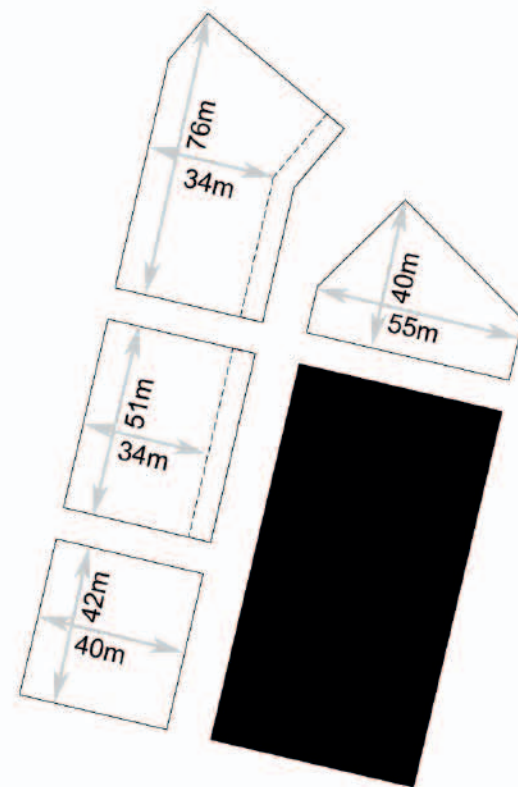
The design team has also had regard to the Urban Design Statement (April 2004), the Urban Design Guidelines (April 2004), the Initial Conservation Plan (April 2004) and the Public Realm Strategy (April 2004) submitted as supporting documents at the outline stage, such that the original vision set out in those and other documents is maintained.

That vision includes new buildings achieving a bold definition of public space in keeping with the grand scale of the existing buildings and spaces that form part of King's Cross and its character. Substantial spaces will be created and these should be enclosed by substantial buildings. In some places, short sections of secondary streets will intentionally be made narrow. In these areas, increased density would be beneficial to the coherence of the urban grain, rather than detrimental.

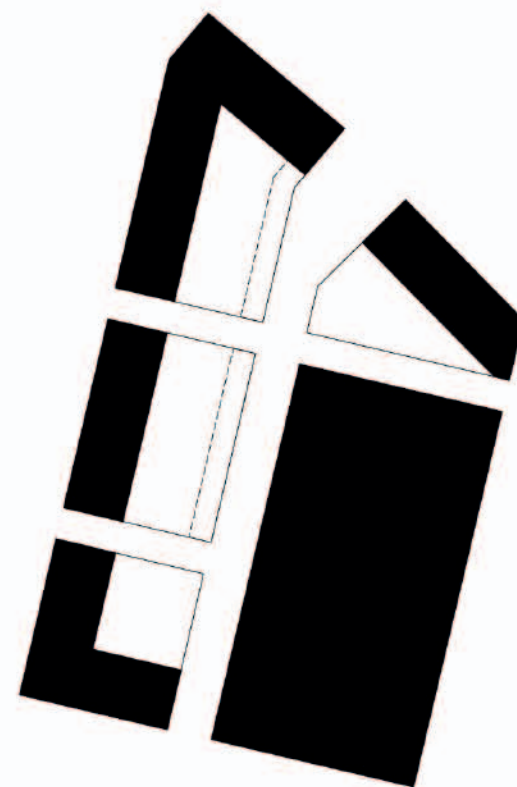




1) 2006 illustrative scheme

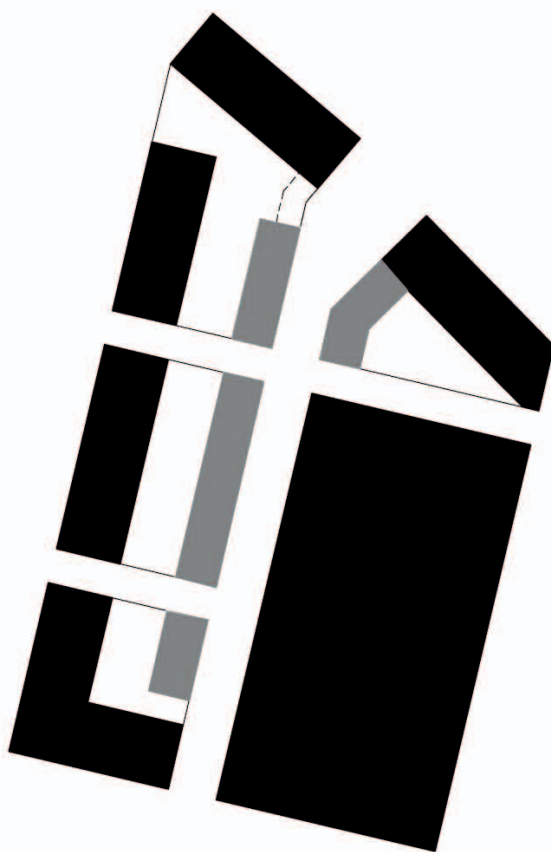


2) Incorporation of approved R2 development.

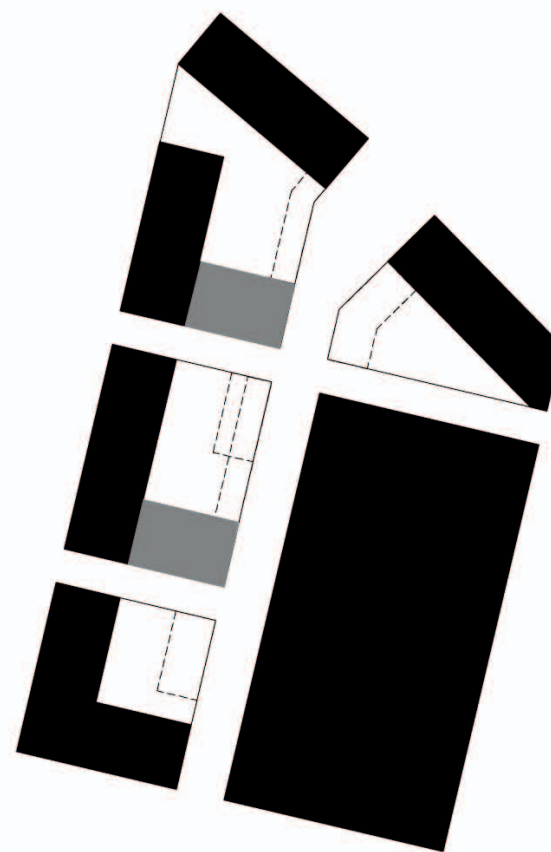


3) Zone R perimeters reinforced.

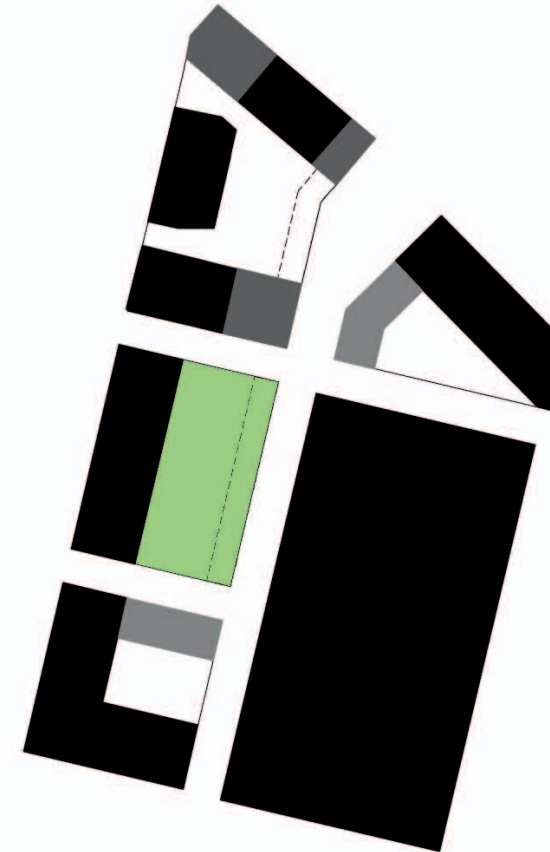
Figure 5: Diagrams showing the evolution of Development Zone R



4) Options for internal streets and spaces developed.



5) Developed option for internal spaces - incorporating a public garden in the centre of the Zone and narrower streets accessing it.



6) Scheme as currently anticipated.



# Masterplan Context and Planning Background

The KXC scheme is described in the Outline Planning Permission in terms of two areas: 'north' and 'south' of the Regent's Canal. These areas are then sub-divided into Development Zones. The proposals for R5 South sit within Development Zone R in the 'northern area' of the KXC site. The framework of documents referred to above sets out the following objectives for this northern part of the site:

- Develop a mixed-use district with its own character and sense of place;
- Achieve a critical mass of development that ensures that a new city quarter is a success;
- Create a vibrant heart to the development by rejuvenating the Granary complex, Coal Drops and other historic buildings;
- Re-erect the listed gas holder frames as a group to provide identity and historic association in a prominent part of the site. These will provide a focal point to draw people to and along the Regent's Canal;
- Optimise public access to the canal frontage and along the canal corridor;
- Pedestrian accessibility more generally, into and across the site north/south and east/west linking and connecting to the existing urban grain; and
- Introduce a range of housing types, economic, social and cultural activities.

## Zone R Masterplan Evolution

In light of the approved design for Building R2, the proposals for Development Zone R have evolved to take account of a smaller Plot R4 and maximise daylight and amenity for adjacent residential blocks. This evolution, illustrated in Figure 5 adjacent, has taken place within the parameters and intentions of the Outline Planning Permission and its associated documents as described above. The evolution of the spatial layout of Development Zone R can be summarised as follows:

- The perimeter of the Zone that faces major roads and spaces has been reinforced;
- Building R2 has led to Plots R3 and R5 becoming 'L' or 'C' shape blocks in order to maximise daylight and amenity, with the taller residential buildings pushed away from, or perpendicular to R2.
- A new public garden has been introduced into the centre of Development Zone R. The short streets that connect the garden to the edge of the zone have been narrowed to create a clear hierarchy between major streets and spaces around Zone R, with the smaller scale, clearly defined public spaces and tighter connecting streets. This hierarchy also provides for a full range of sizes and types of public space, not just the principal spaces identified in the Outline Planning Permission.

The clear hierarchy of public spaces and massing that this creates within Development Zone R has directly informed the development of Plot R5, just as it has also informed the design of the other schemes within the Zone which have already received Reserved Matters Approval, namely Buildings R4 and R2.

## Consultation Process

Throughout the development of these detailed proposals for R5 South, an extensive consultation process has been undertaken with a number of bodies including:

- London Borough of Camden officers;
- King's Cross Design and Access Panel; and
- Secured by Design representatives





Figure 6: Photo of the completed north and east blocks of R5 North alongside R4 and T6