View from Gordon Square at around midday

Early morning view along Gordon Street from north

At street level the structure establishes a series of framed openings bringing balance and a sense of order and appropriate scale to the street composition. The structural framing to the openings unifies their different functions. Within this framework, three of the four bays are set forward, suggesting some emphasis to the building entrance and shop windows to the UCL campus. The fourth bay, with the pedestrian route into the Campus, steps back and provides a closer alignment with the more diminutive 26 Gordon Square.

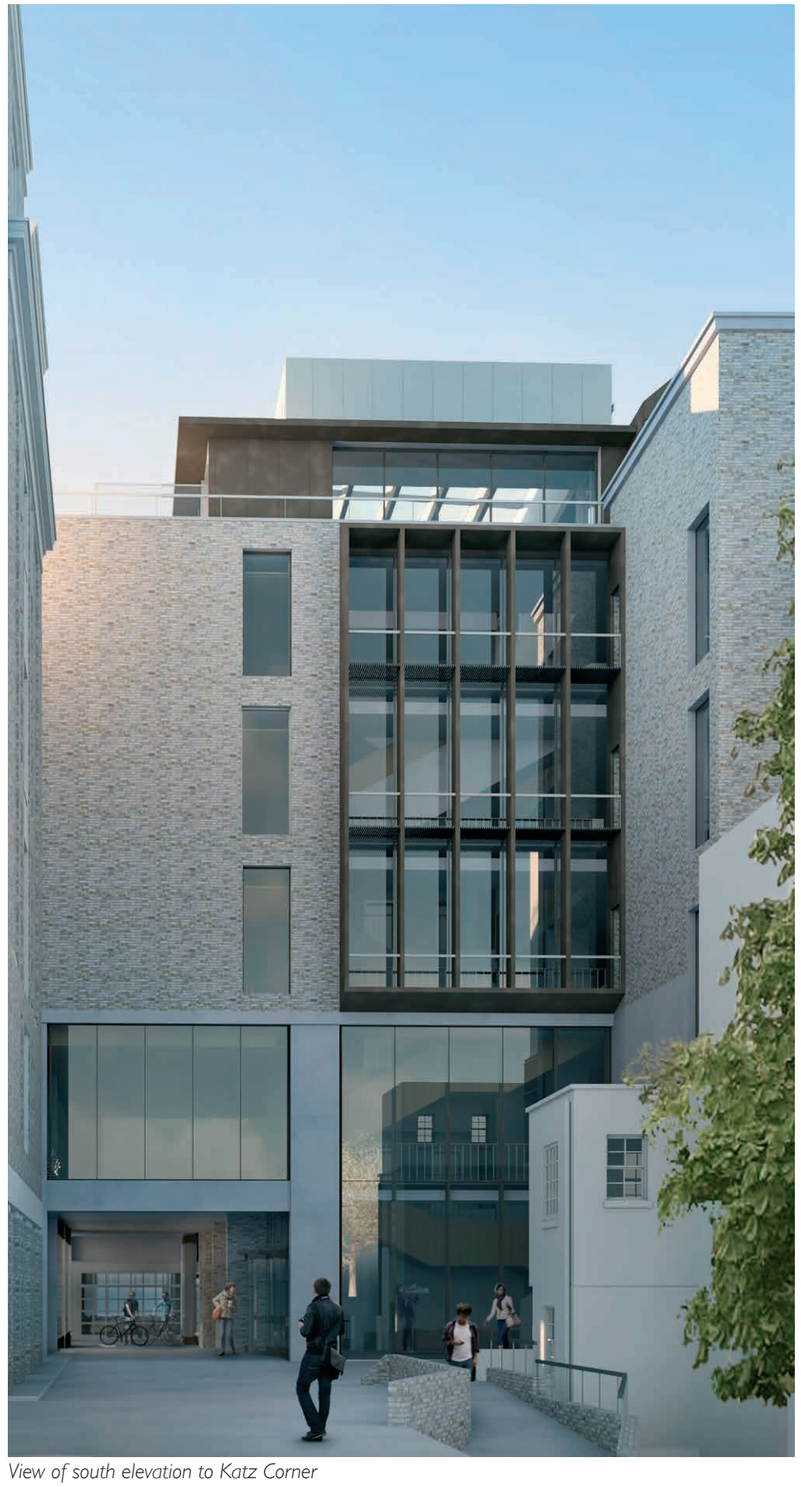
At roof level the fourth floor glazing and modular sloping north light roofs appear as distinct elements behind the main façade line. Viewed from the north, their form appears to echo the rhythm of chimney stacks on the listed terrace buildings facing Gordon Square.

Approaching the New Student Centre from the south, around the corner by the Bernard Katz Building, the building appears its tallest at effectively five storeys in height. Two connections 'through' the building are clearly articulated and defined by the structure: the slope running up to Gordon Street, and a direct route straight ahead towards the Lower Refectory.

From the latter, the entrance into the new building will be immediately apparent, made clear by glazing in the building's flank wall at this ground level. The elevation above is characterised by providing glazing up the height of the atrium, which in turn is protected from solar gain by a robust solar shading screen that also provides access for glass cleaning.

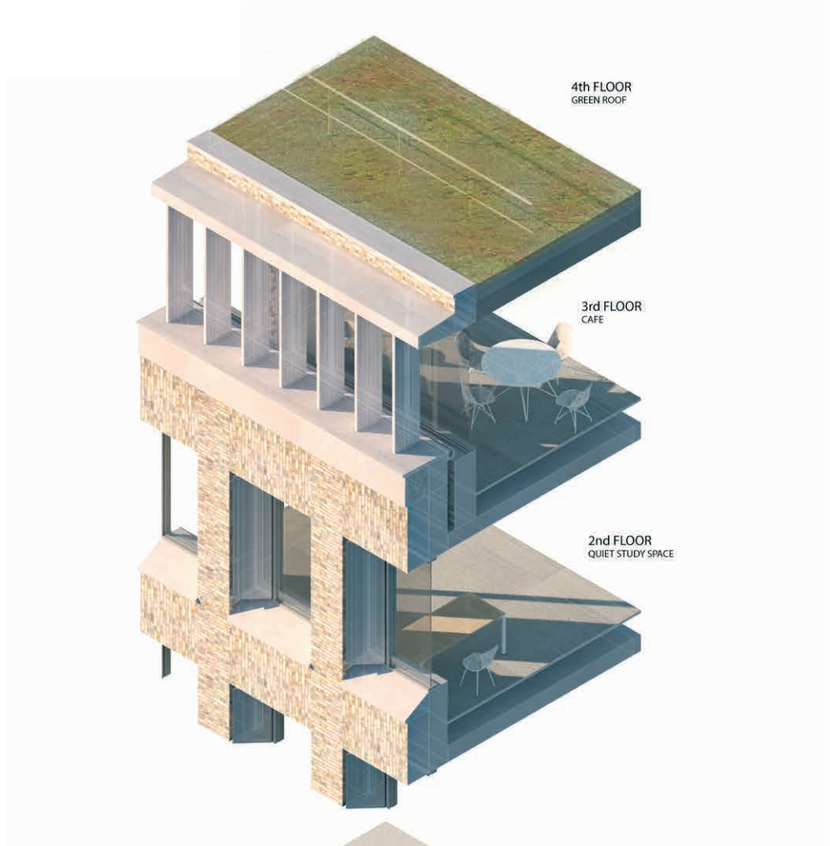
Developmental sketch of the south elevation

View of Refectory Route from Katz Corner

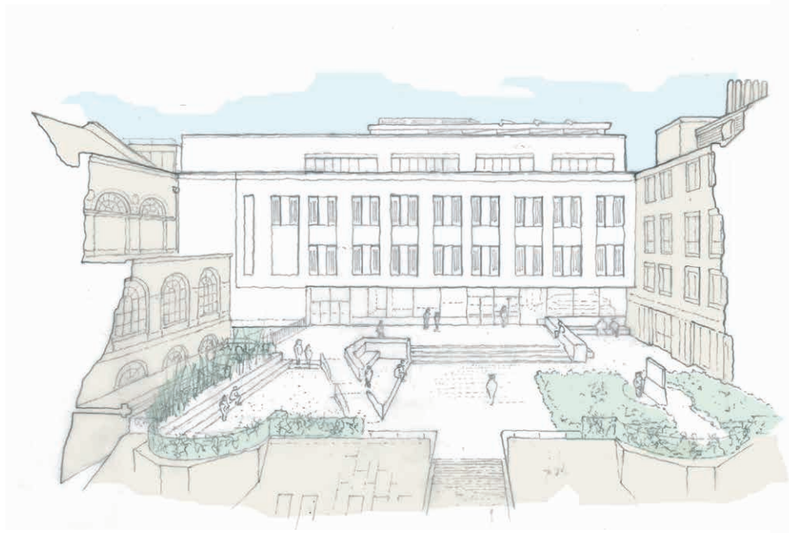


View of south elevation to Katz Corner

Extending the cornice line through to the Japanese Garden allows the consistent parapet height that already exists around the other three sides to be maintained, providing a sense of unity to the space. This establishes a predominantly three-storey façade, with the third and fourth floor levels above set back from the building line. Looking from the South Cloister the fourth floor façade will not be visible, whilst the elevation at third floor adopts a finer and more delicate approach that sets it clearly apart from the main elevation below. Two storeys of learning space appear to float above a transparent storey at ground level. Here the glass is set back behind a colonnade of reconstituted stone columns that provide shade and some weather protection to the benches lining one side.



Developmental studies for the Japanese Garden



Japanese Garden facade

View of the New Student Centre across the Japanese Garden

ROOFSCAPE

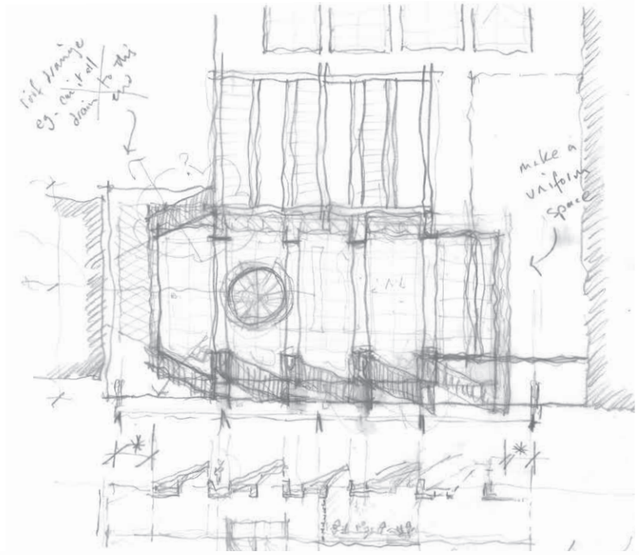
The roof structure is designed to articulate and give a sense of 'lightness' to the building, and bring generous daylight into the top floor space. Above the study space the angled roof planes provide linear north lights with photovoltaic cells attached to their sloping south surface. The atrium adjacent is topped with a monopitch glazed roof, also with integrated photovoltaic cells, these having the added benefit of providing solar shading to the interior.

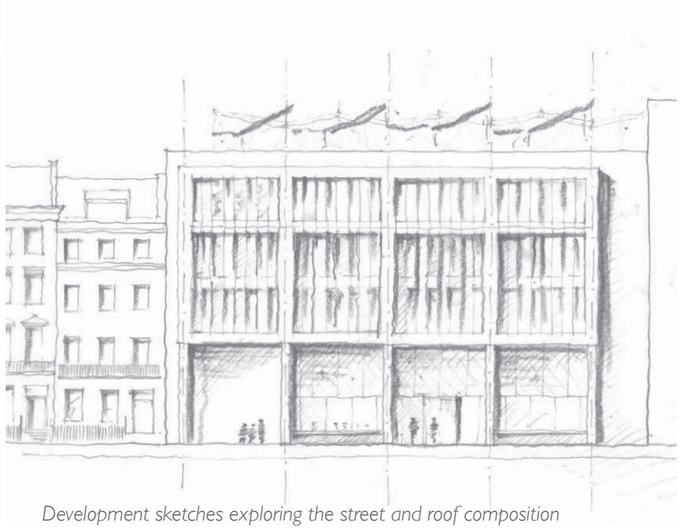
Modulating the line of the façade on the Gordon Street side orientates the top floor space towards the trees of Gordon Square; on the west side, views of the Wilkins Building dome are provided from bay windows with window seats and from the roof terrace proposed at this level.

Beyond the terrace area, and to the east side, are areas of brown / green roof that will enhance biodiversity. It is intended that these areas require very little maintenance.

An external plant enclosure sits immediately above the core. The enclosure is formed with anodised aluminium panels, its height limited to ensure the screen is not visible from the Main Quad. To reduce their visibility, early consultation comments from the planning authority encouraged the design team to relocate the roof level air-handling units that had been proposed at this level. Two new plant decks are now proposed behind the Bloomsbury Theatre for this purpose, with ducted connections to roof level riser openings contained within the plant enclosure.

A further array of low profile photovoltaic cells is proposed for the southern end of the Bloomsbury Theatre roof. These will not be visible from street level.

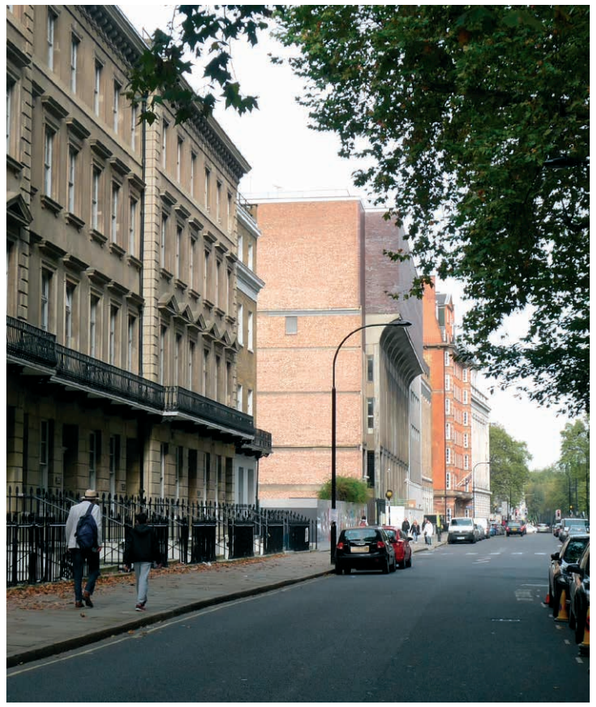




Development sketches exploring the street and roof composition

View looking north with roof terrace

View of New Student Centre montaged onto aerial view, from west



Images of materials found elsewhere around the Bloomsbury Campus

MATERIALS

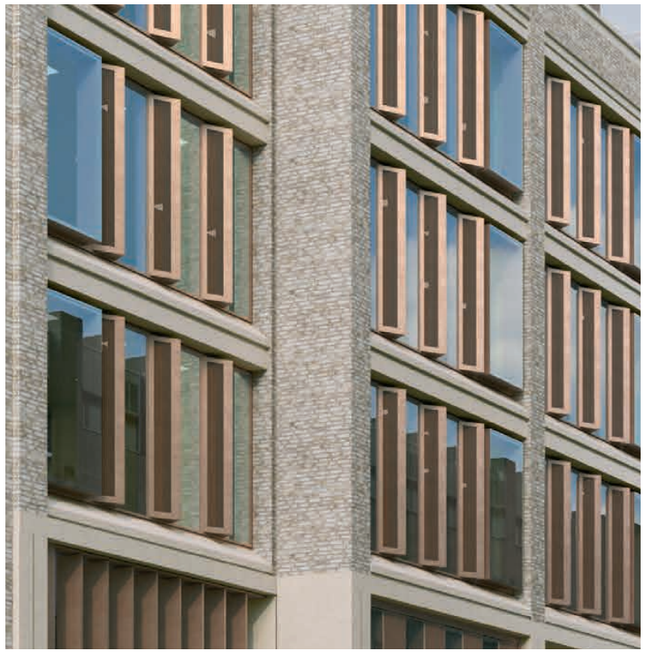
In general, two building materials broadly define the character of the Bloomsbury Campus: Portland stone, used for example, to dress the formal Main Quad and frontage of the Wilkins Building; and brickwork, usually from a buff colour range, used throughout the informal pattern of buildings and spaces within the campus 'interior'. The immediate context on Gordon Street is less easy to categorise with a mix of brickwork, stucco and render, although buff brickwork predominates.

A palette of robust, self-finished materials is proposed for the New Student Centre. Internally, this will be characterised by using in-situ concrete for the structural frame of the building. Where the structural frame becomes visible at street level, it is constructed from reconstituted stone, a high-quality form of pre-cast concrete. This will frame the openings at ground level, and provide visible support to the upper levels, clad with brickwork.

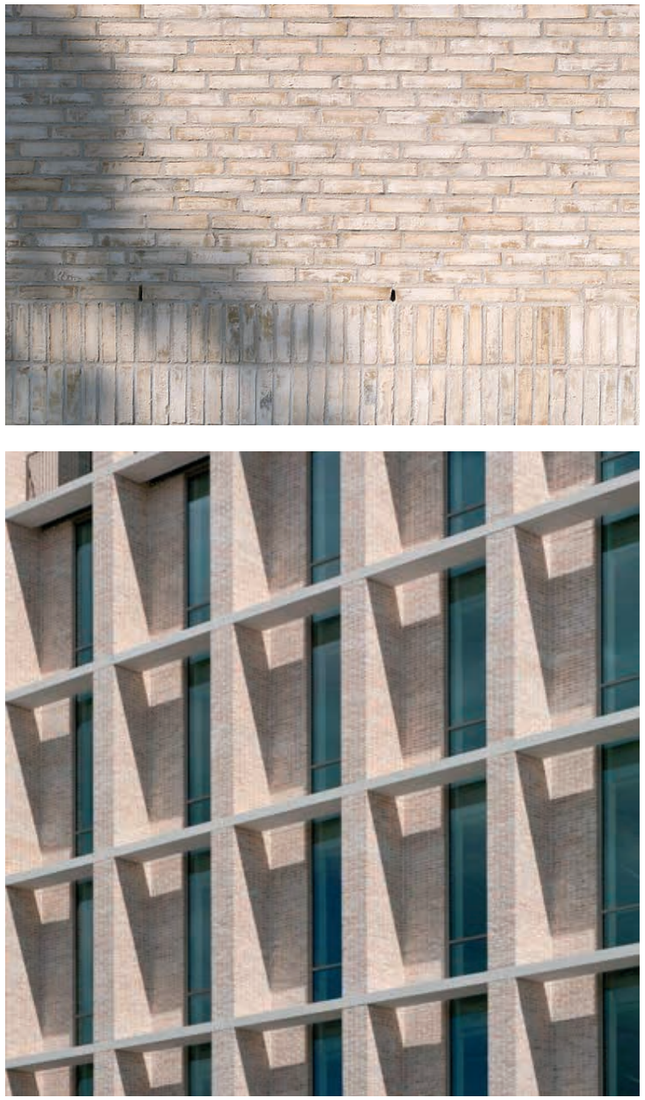
Within the framework set up by the structure, the upper floors lend themselves to a more refined scale with vertical emphasis. This allows for tall, storey height glazing to give deep daylight penetration into the building, but with controlled width to avoid excessive solar gain. The glazing will be fixed in place; between each is a projecting form that incorporates an opening window for natural ventilation, the forward projection providing shading to the adjacent glass, as does the deep reveals to the surrounding brickwork that delineates the structural bays. Externally, a flush grille protects the opening window, with vertical blades in front of horizontal angled blades. Window frames and panels have a bronze anodised finish.

Some regularity to the pattern of glazing and natural ventilation openings allows for flexibility of internal use, and for future adaptations to the functions within the building. This elevational approach is carried through to the Japanese Garden and the south-facing elevation to Katz Corner, where smaller window openings compensate for the greater potential for solar gain on these sides.

Brickwork is the predominant material for the Japanese Garden facing elevation, with reconstituted stone detailing for cills and copings and also the screen of vertical solar shading fins at the third floor café level and the ground floor colonnade. The theme continues into the landscaped area where the solid cast benches are topped with hardwood for seating.



Close-up view of proposed Gordon Street elevation



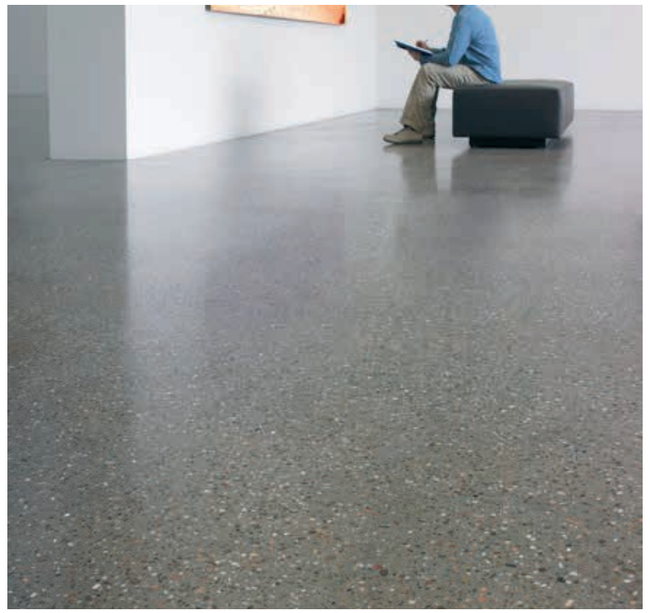
Examples of light buff facing brickwork

Internally, a simple and refined palette of materials is proposed with few applied finishes. Minimising future maintenance has been a key driver in the selection of robust and durable surfaces, particularly in busy circulation areas. In situ concrete columns, shear walls and soffits will be generally visible internally. The volumes of the main core and second escape stair are to be clad with facing brickwork. Internal partitions will be faced with either vertical timber battens to provide acoustic absorption, or panels of gypsum fibre board with a timber veneer or high-pressure laminate finish.

At the three entrance levels, a solid stone tile is proposed to coordinate with the external floor finishes. Above and below this, timber boards will be used to demarcate the central circulation zone with good quality carpet to the study areas beyond.

Wide strips of slatted timber ceiling will run either side of the atrium to allow the distribution of services, with timber rafts incorporating lighting fittings suspended from the concrete soffit in study areas.

Facing brick enclosing core volumes



Terrazzo in core areas

Timber batten linings to walls and ceilings to provide acoustic absorption

Timber faced boards lining study cabin walls