

**26-27 kirby street**  
design and access statement  
august 2015

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This report sets out the basis for the refurbishment and extension of 26-27 Kirby Street for a full planning application submitted to London Borough of Camden Planning Department.

The proposal is to refurbish the commercial accommodation on the lower levels and to extend the building vertically to provide residential accommodation and to continue the established street massing and form created by other notable developments on Kirby Street.

## **Brief**

The client is the current owner/occupier of the proposal site, which is a long established jewellery business at the heart of the jewellery quarter. The intention is that the business will continue to operate as a jewellery shop with associated offices and workshop.

The building is old and in need of major refurbishment and, in order to enable this modernisation, an opportunity has been identified to bring the building in line with other buildings in the immediate area by adding further storeys to generate funding and to allow the building to fit better into the urban fabric.

The brief is to retain useable floor space for the jewellery premises and to provide additional residential accommodation in the form of three additional storeys, creating two new flats and one larger duplex apartment.

# 02 site site location

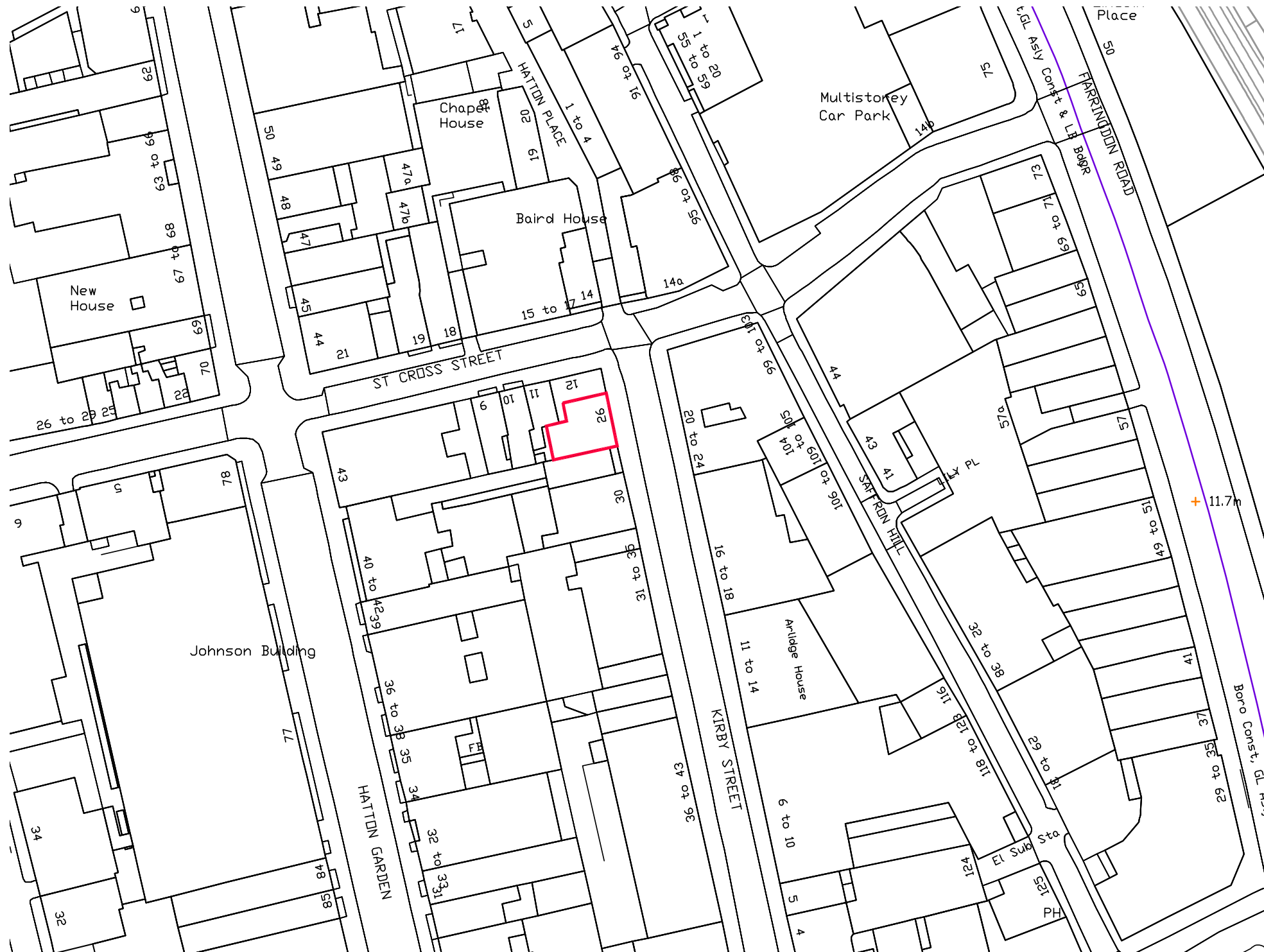


fig 02 01 site location plan

The site is located at 26-27 Kirby Street, formally known as Antwerp House, close to the junction with St Cross Street. Kirby Street is located to the west of Farrington Road and to the east of Hatton Garden.

The existing building contains a ground floor jewellery retail unit with associated offices above. A basement serves as secure storage for the commercial unit above.

The site is within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area; however the building is not listed.

The building is surrounded on all sides by taller buildings and there is potential for new development of the site to extend the established scale of buildings in the area.





fig 02 02 hatton garden south



fig 02 03 hatton garden and junction of st cross street



fig 02 04 typical junction



fig 02 05 hatton garden

The Hatton Garden Conservation Area Statement states that the character and special interest of the Hatton garden area is defined largely by the quality and variety of buildings and uses, as well as the unique pattern of streets.

The character is not dominated by one particular period or style of building but rather by the combination of styles that make the area of special interest. It is often the case that buildings of different periods, architectural styles and functions exist together in the same street, creating contrasts in scale and character. Subsequently, where alterations have taken place they usually respect the established character of the adjacent buildings as well as that of the street.

The area contains few open spaces, therefore the emphasis is on streetscape. Most buildings front directly the highway. Subsequently there is a degree of enclosure in most streets and the appearance of high urban density.

Buildings vary in height between three and eight storeys, although the prevalent building height is five to six storeys.

In a number of instances buildings of considerably contrasting height exist directly adjacent to one another and, in so doing, contribute to the special character of the area.

Street junctions vary in scale from road to road, however the visually strongest junctions generally have buildings of similar size at each corner.



## urban analysis kirby street



fig 02 06 kirby street from south



fig 02 07 kirby street from north with antwerp house in foreground



fig 02 08 junction of kirby street and st cross street



fig 02 09 st cross street looking towards kirby street

It is believed that the junction of Kirby Street and St Cross Street formed the northernmost boundary of the ornate gardens, which were part of the Hatton Estate.

Kirby Street runs between Greville Street and St Cross Street and has a t-junction at either end.

Post war development has taken place along the length of Kirby Street, much of which has now been superseded by more modern development. Most buildings are six to seven storeys in height with four storeys fronting the street, with further storeys set back from the street.

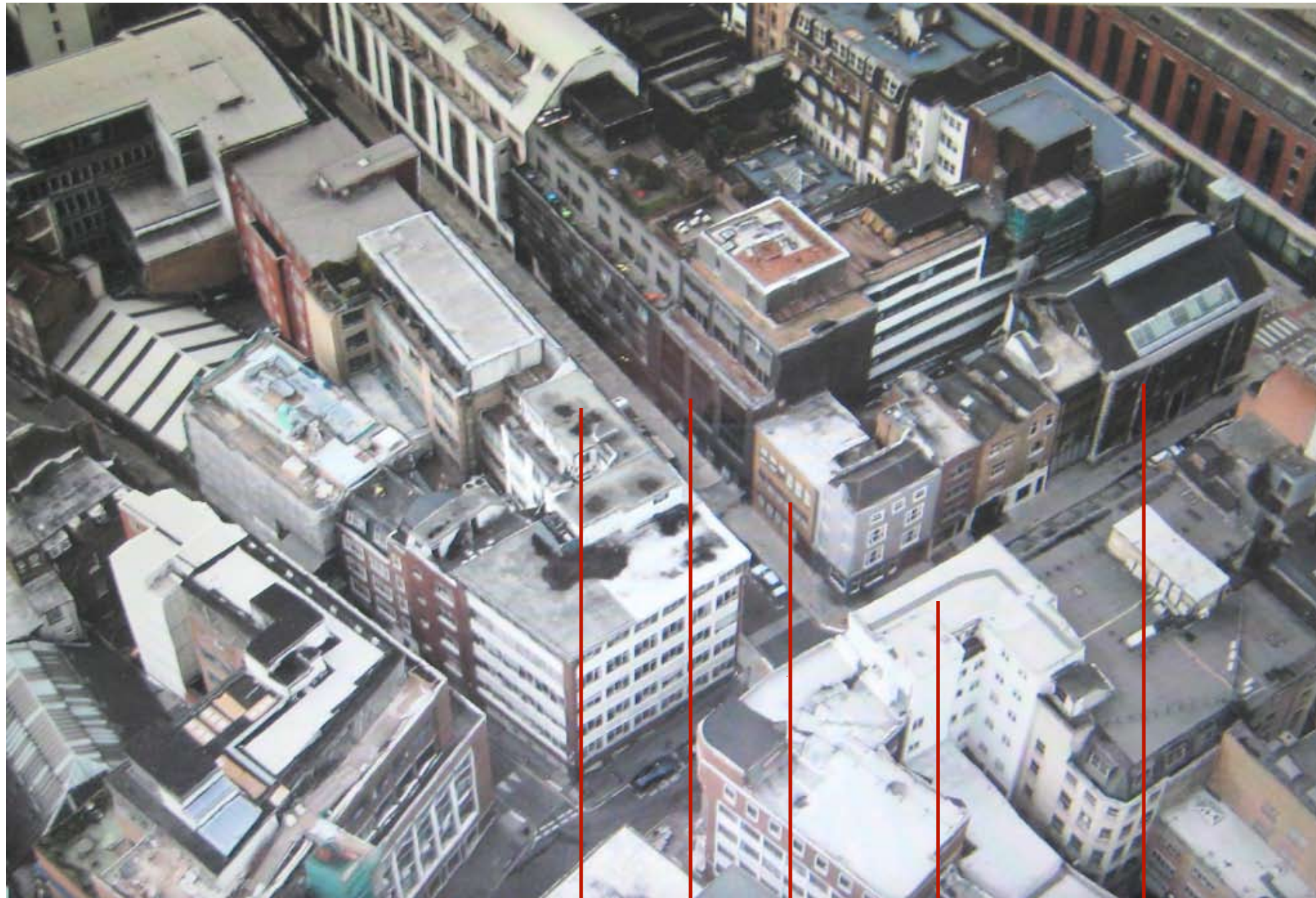
The notable exception to this is the proposal site, 26-27 Kirby Street and there is potential to improve the building and to realign it with the prevailing size of buildings along Kirby Street.

Buildings are generally modern in design and use modern materials in their cladding. The most common materials are brickwork and painted render. Windows are generally large and designed in groups to visually enlarge the area of glazing in each facade.

Ground floor uses are generally commercial with a mix of commercial, student accommodation or residential uses above.

Apart from the street character, the street junctions also add to the character of Hatton Garden. Most of the junctions are emphasised by having buildings on each corner of similar height. This is also the case where uses are drastically different. In the case of Kirby Street the building on the junction of Kirby Street and St Cross Street is lower than the surrounding buildings, which creates a visually weak junction in the context of Hatton Garden.





20-24 kirby street (6 storeys)

28-30 kirby street (6 storeys)

15-17 st cross street (6 storeys)

antwerp house (3 storeys)

wren house (grade II listed)

fig 02 10 aerial view of site from east

The site falls within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area; however the only listed building in the immediate vicinity is Wren House, refurbished for office accommodation in 1999.

Antwerp House is significantly smaller than the prevailing surrounding building height and there is potential for adding additional storeys to the building to bring it in line with established building heights on Kirby Street.

Buildings on Kirby Street are generally 5 storeys above ground floor level and, while the area is well known for the jewellery trade, there is a good mix of uses, creating a lively and vibrant area.

Recent developments in Kirby Street and surrounding streets mean that, in addition to the traditional jewellery associated premises, there is now a mix of commercial, retail, residential and student accommodation and hotel uses in the immediate area. The building adjacent to Antwerp House is a mix of commercial and residential uses. There is a student accommodation building further down Kirby Street.

Recent development has improved the appearance of the area with a mix of traditional and modern architecture. Kirby Street is characterised by buildings of varying building heights and architectural styles. Most of the street has been modernised, leaving some notable historic buildings and some of poor quality, such as the proposal site.





fig 02 11 view across kirby street from roof



fig 02 12 view to rear of site from roof



fig 02 13 view to rear of site from roof



fig 02 14 view into light well from roof

The existing building sits close to the junction of St Cross Street and is surrounded on all sides by significantly taller development.

To the immediate south is a relatively new commercial and residential building (28-30 Kirby Street), which relates to the building heights further along Kirby Street.

To the north is a four storey commercial building smaller than other buildings in the area but, nonetheless, taller than Antwerp House.

To the west are a number of buildings facing into the former courtyard area behind those buildings. The majority of these buildings are commercial offices and workshops.

To the rear of Antwerp House the ground floor extends further out than the upper storeys. A rooflight provides natural light into the retail unit at ground floor level. There is scope to extend the building into this light well.



# 03 existing building

## existing layout - floor plans

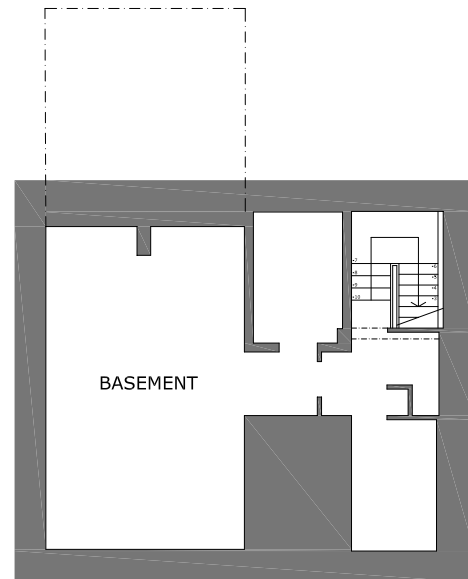


fig 03 01 basement

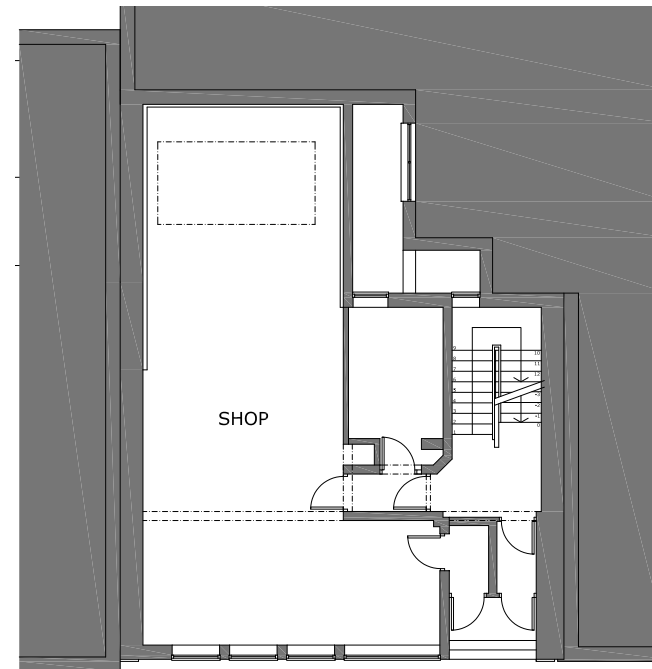


fig 03 02 ground floor

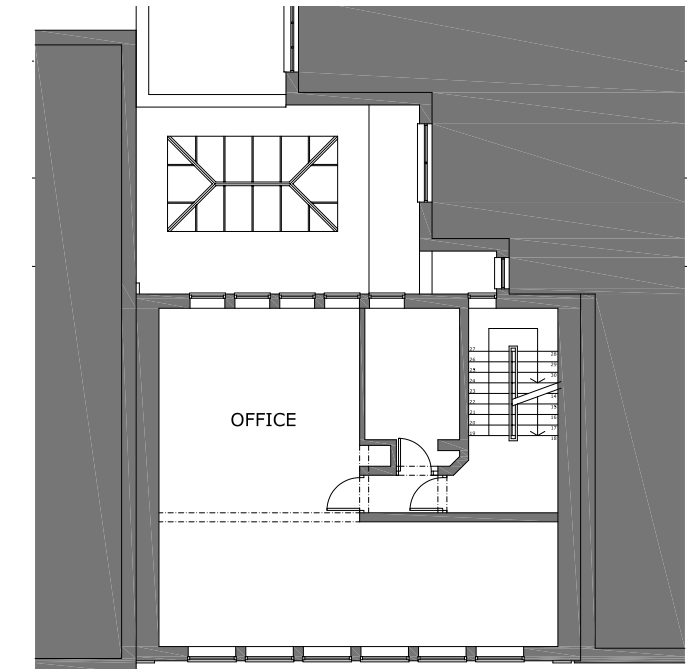


fig 03 03 first floor

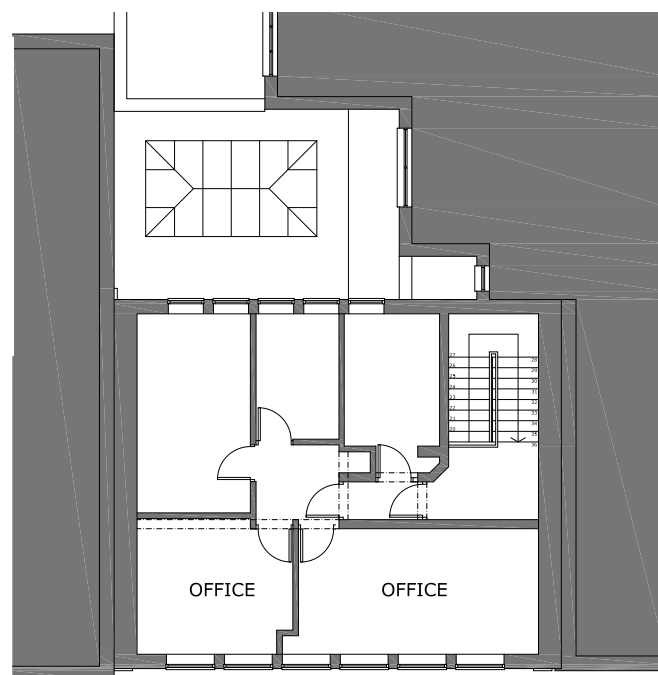


fig 03 04 second floor

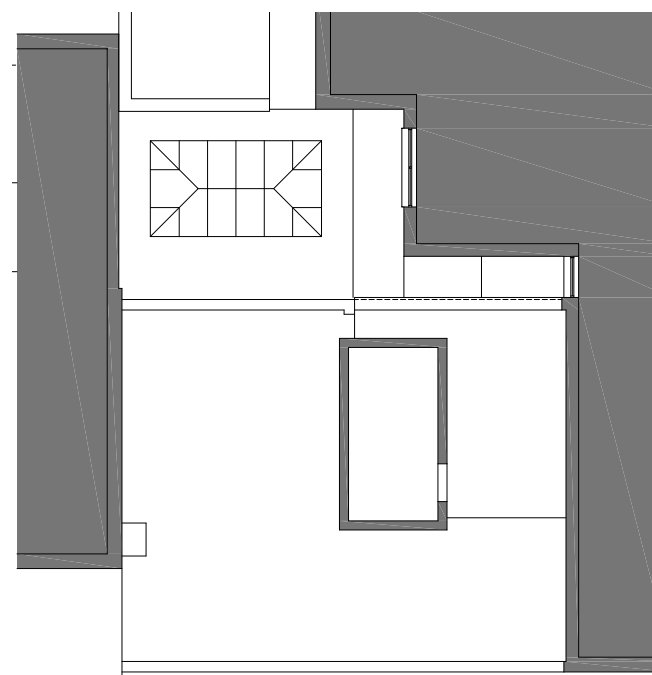
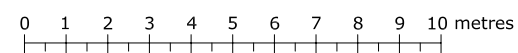


fig 03 05 roof plan

The building consists of three storeys above ground level with a basement providing secure storage. At ground level is a retail unit connected to the jewellery trade. The upper two levels contain office accommodation related to the retail unit below.

The basement floor to soffit height is not sufficient to enable it to be used as commercial or workshop space, so it has been used solely for storage.

The occupier's needs have changed with the advance of technology and two storeys of office space are no longer required, whereas workshop space is required.



# 03 existing building

existing layout - street elevation

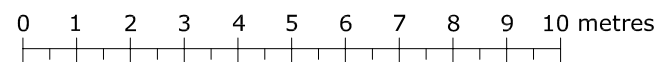


28-30 kirby street

26-27 kirby street

12 st cross street

fig 03 06 street elevation



**26-27 kirby street** august 2015

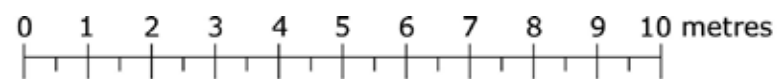


# 03 existing building

existing layout - site section



fig 03 07 section through site



# 04 concept design

## form, height, massing



The opportunity to refurbish and extend Antwerp House also provides an opportunity to continue the strong form and massing of existing buildings on Kirby Street and in the Hatton Garden area.

A horizontal rhythm, represented by blue lines, has been established by existing buildings immediately adjacent and opposite the development site, which the proposal for Antwerp House seeks to continue. Similarly a vertical rhythm, represented opposite by the green lines, has also been established and which is proposed to be continued into the new building.

Ground floor accommodation is of a similar height along the length of Kirby Street and existing uses are retail accommodation with access to commercial or residential accommodation on upper levels. There are generally three storeys above ground floor level, all of which extend to the pavement line, while two further storeys are set back from the street to allow natural light into the street.

It is proposed to develop Antwerp House to complement the form and scale of the other buildings on Kirby Street in both vertical and horizontal rhythm and in retaining the building line at ground and upper floors in line with the building form established further along Kirby Street.

In pre application discussions the conservation officer commented that the building form should step down towards St Cross Street. The design team feel that the proposed building at six storeys does step down from the taller building to the south and will not encroach negatively on the existing building to the north, as it follows the same roof line before stepping back. It is also felt that the corner of St Cross Street and Kirby Street has the potential for a taller building to the height of other buildings on that corner in the future and to step the proposed building down would remove that potential.

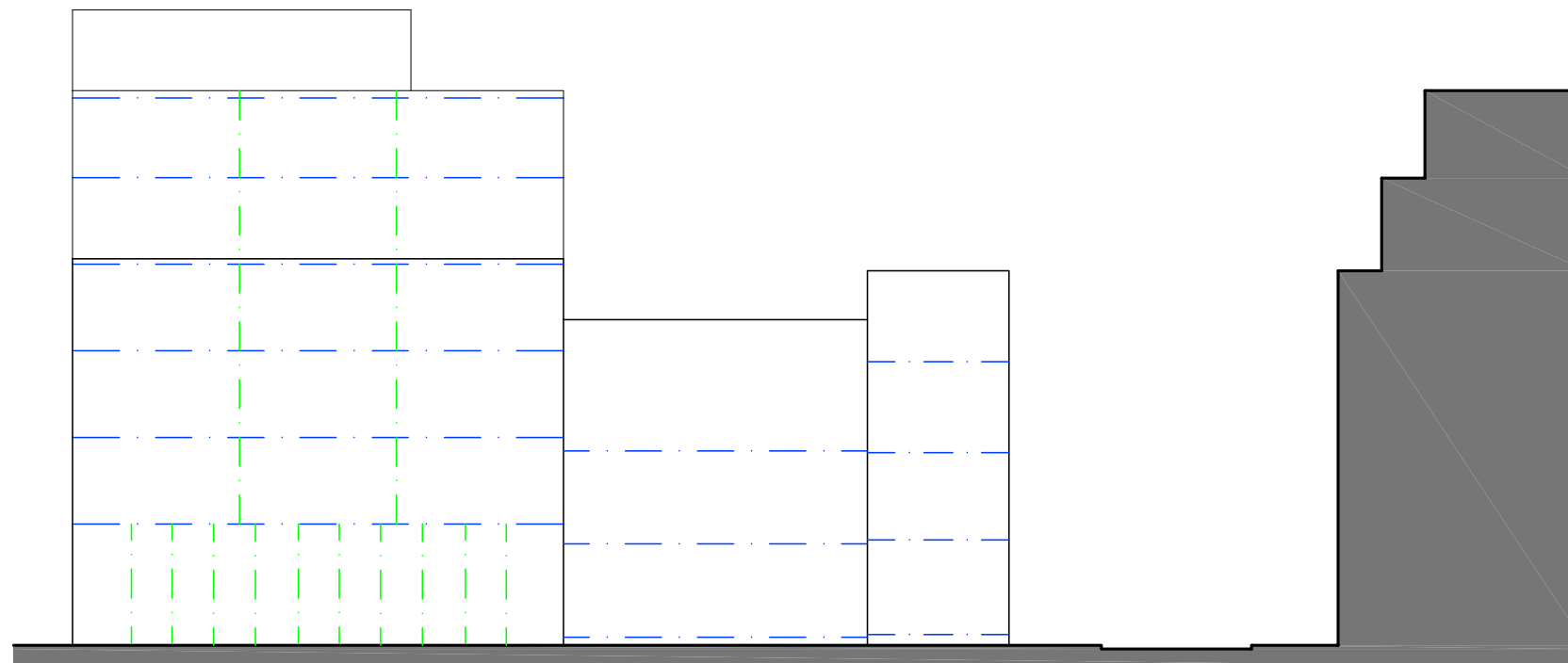


fig 04 01 horizontal and vertical rhythm created by adjacent buildings on kirby street

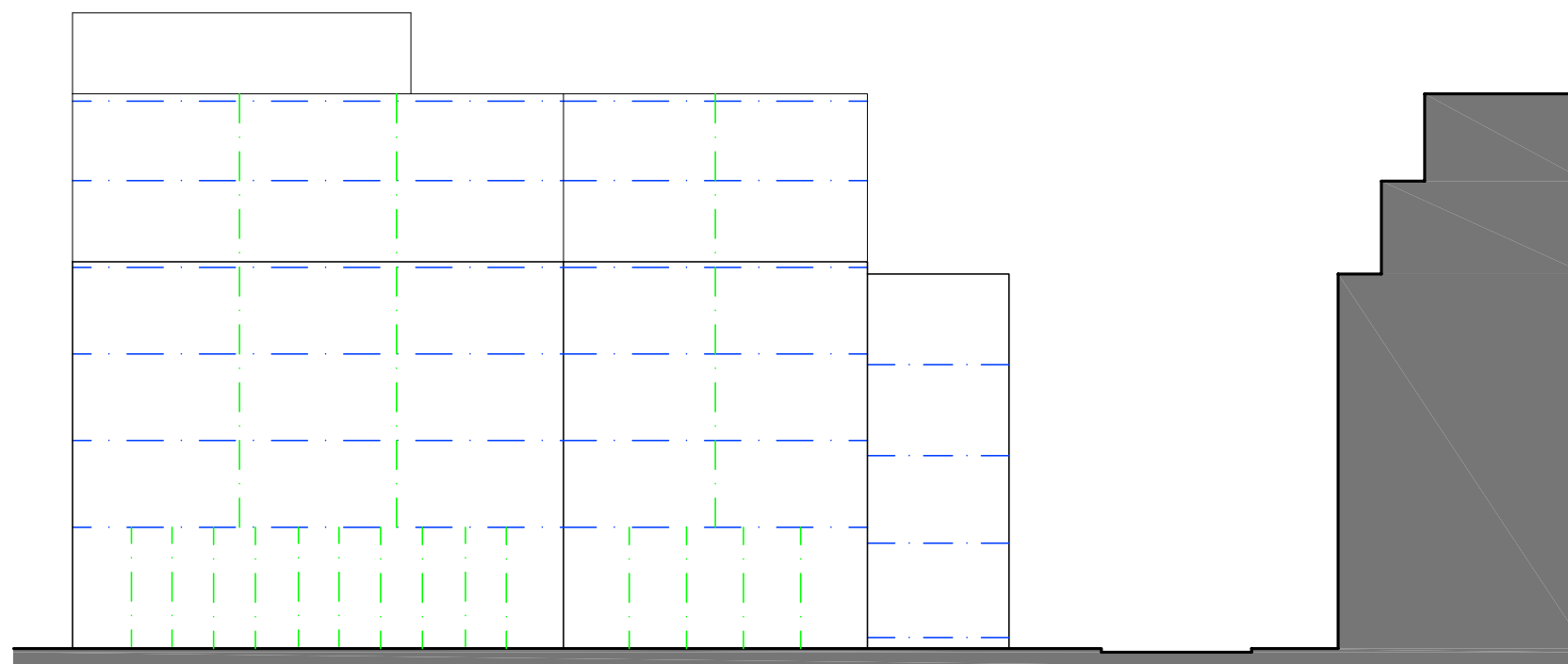


fig 04 02 proposed continued rhythm



# 04 concept design

## massing comparison

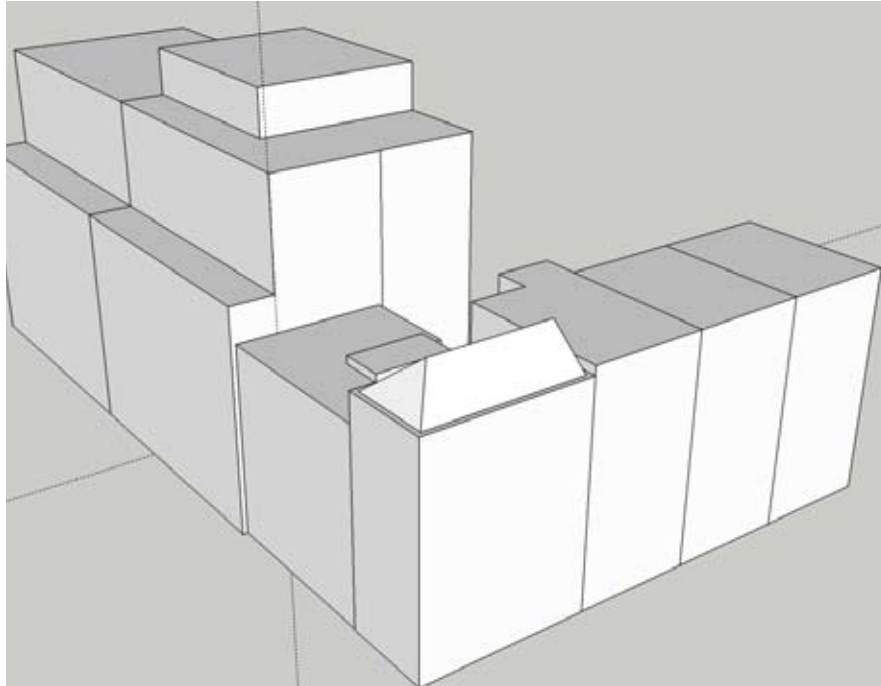


fig 04 03 existing massing viewed from north

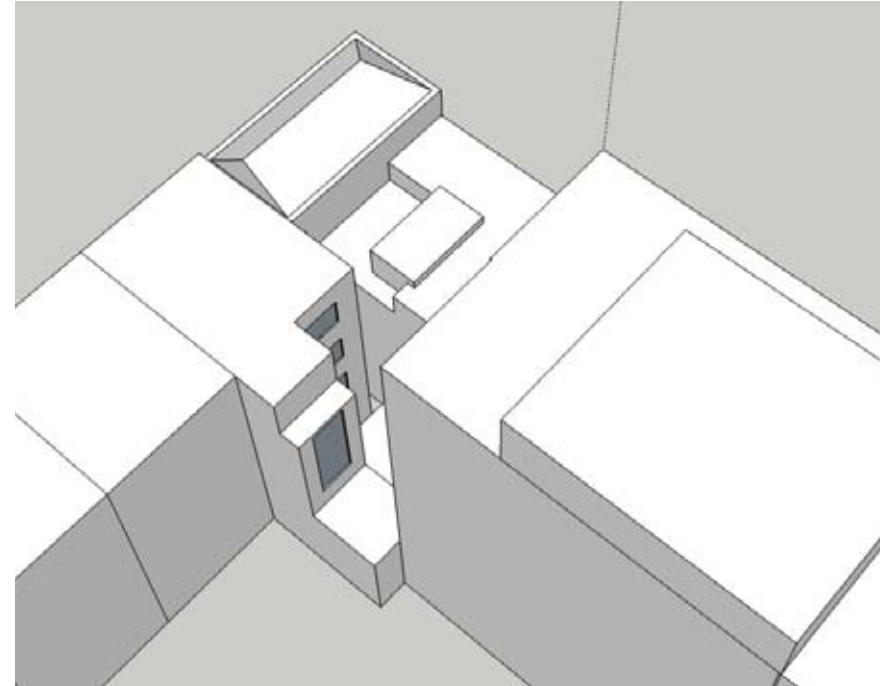


fig 04 04 existing massing viewed from rear

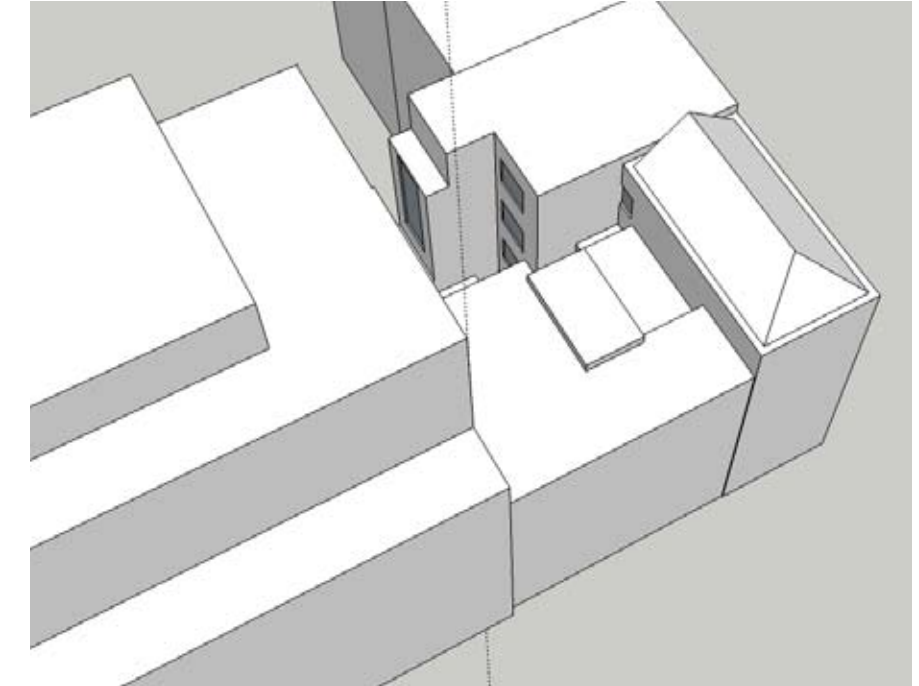


fig 03 05 existing massing viewed from east

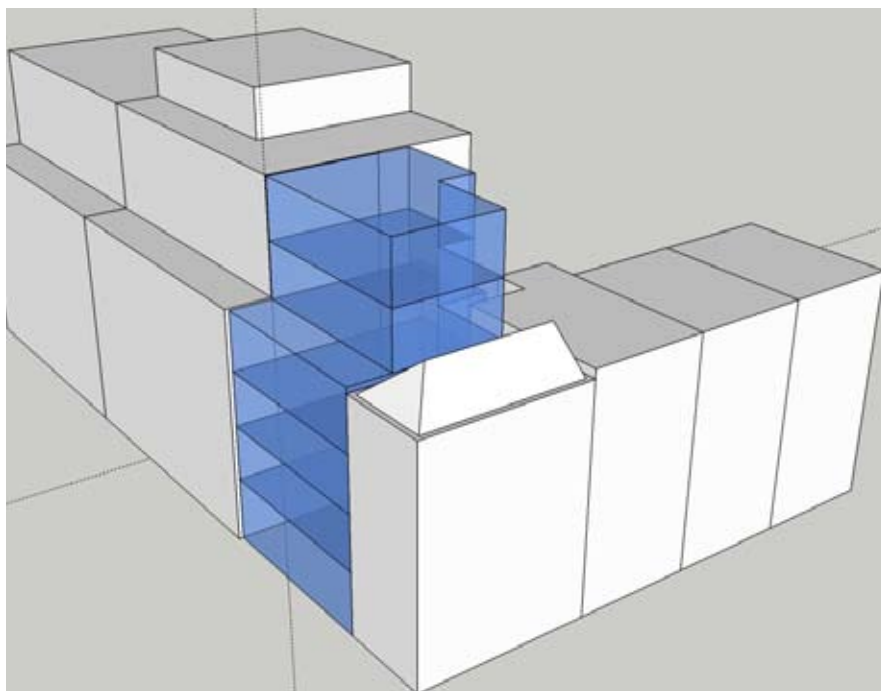


fig 04 06 proposed massing viewed from north

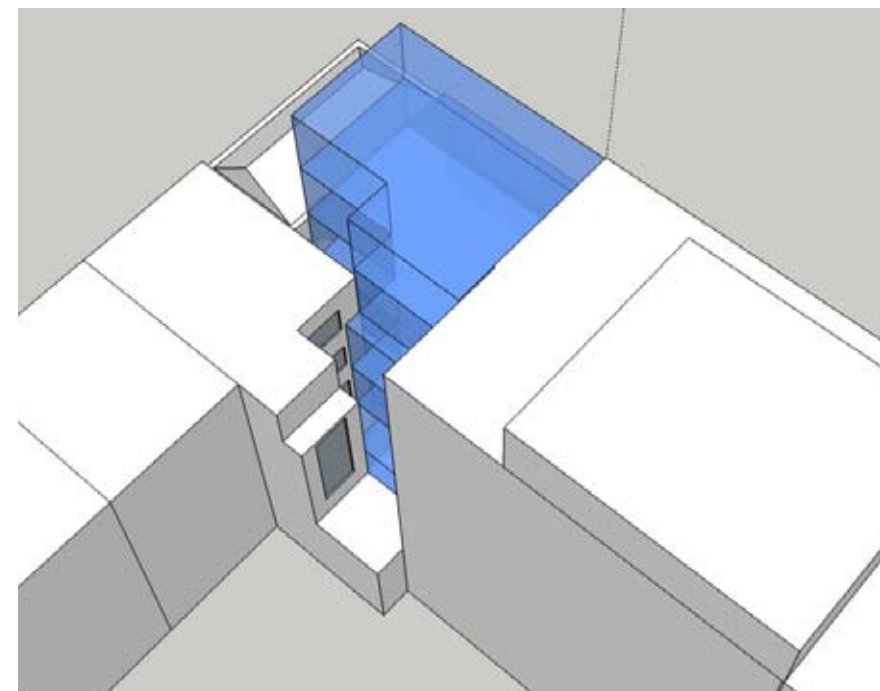


fig 04 07 proposed massing viewed from rear

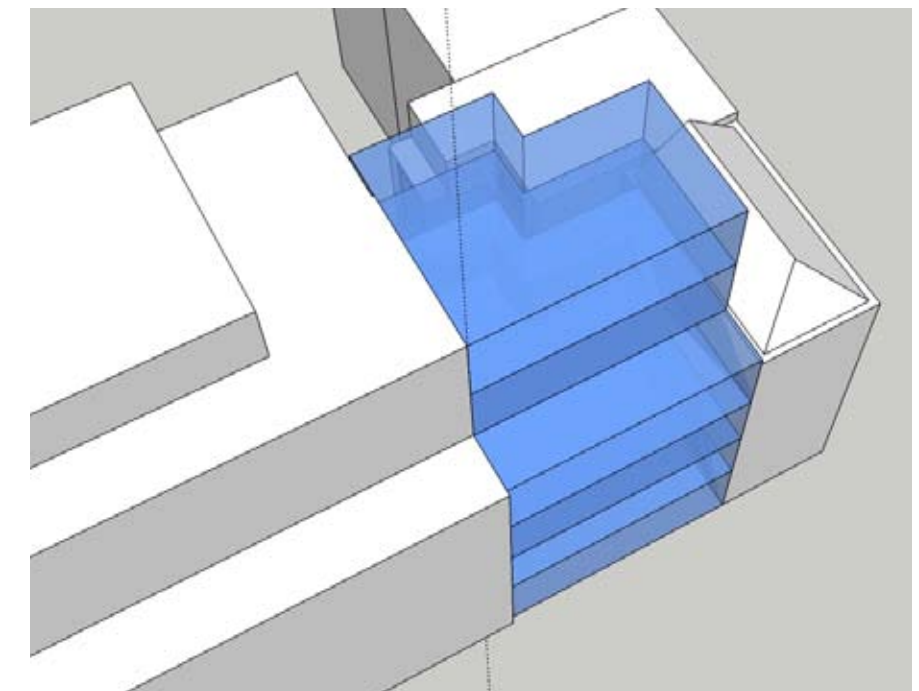


fig 04 08 proposed massing viewed from east



# 04 concept design

## facade development



fig 04 09 typical modern development in kirby street



fig 04 10 typical historic development in hatton garden area



fig 04 11 typical traditional refurbished building in hatton garden



fig 04 12 typical historic development in hatton garden area

There is an interesting mix of new and historic buildings in Hatton Garden and surrounding areas and it is proposed to replace the facade to Antwerp House to respect the historic character while using a modern architectural language in the layout of the building and in the use of materials and detailing.

The current building no longer fits with the street or area context and is of little architectural quality.

The upper floors will be designed to respect some of the original surviving warehouse and commercial buildings which once characterised the area with large windows and openings. The upper two storeys will set back from the street but use a similar language to bring lots of natural light and ventilation into the floors.

At street level it is intended to create fenestration and entrances at a more personal scale and more in keeping with retail use. Two of the openings will form entrances, while two will be retail windows and the fifth, a refuse store door adjacent to the residential entrance.

The building plan creates opportunity for simple forms and details to be expressed on the street elevation within the rhythm established on Kirby Street and detailing may reflect the craftsmanship inherent in the jewellery industry.





fig 04 13 buildings on st cross street



fig 04 14 junction of kirby street and st cross street

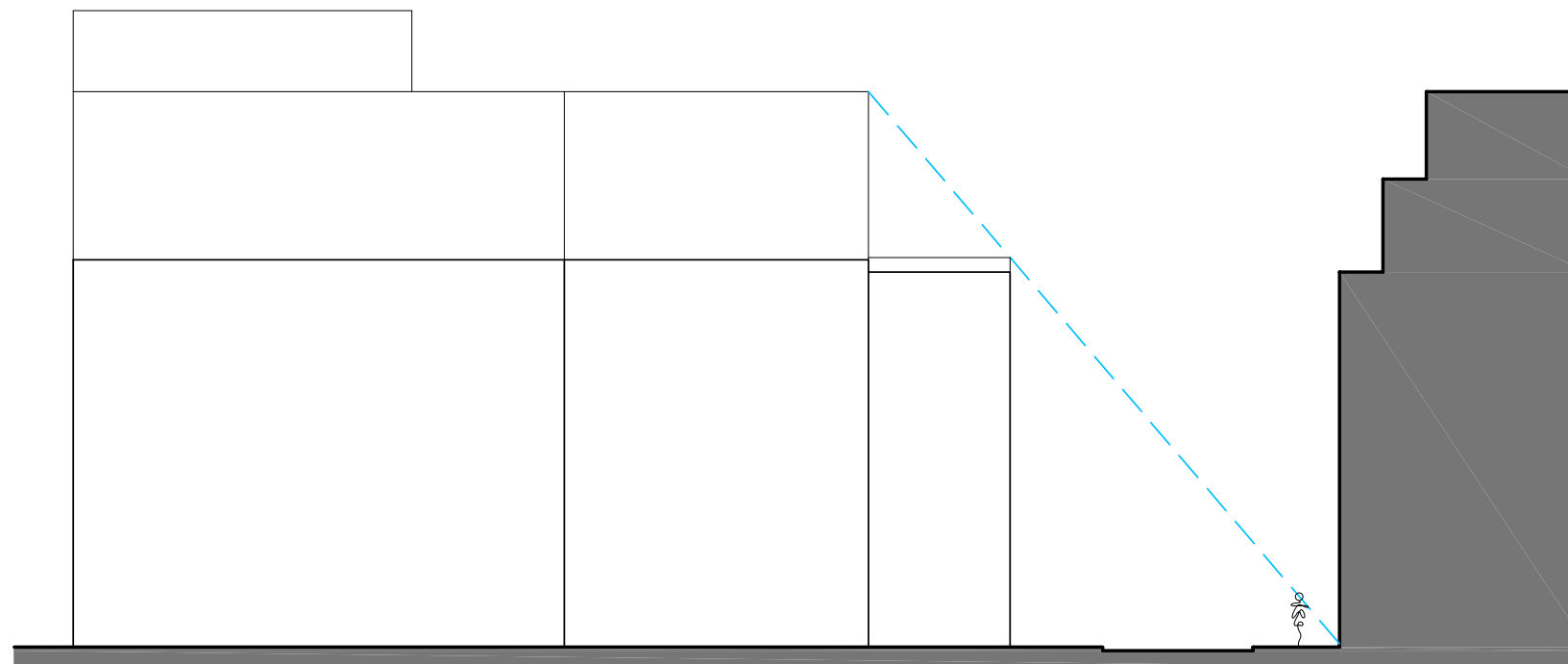


fig 04 15 st cross street section

We note the conservation officer's comments in the pre application response that the new building should step down towards the end of the street; however the urban analysis indicates a mix of building heights contributing to the character of the area and strong visual impact of corners where all buildings are of similar height.

It is also noted that the buildings at 9-12 St Cross Street are considered to be local buildings of interest within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area Statement. This is appreciated where the buildings face St Cross Street; however, where no.12 St Cross Street turns into Kirby Street, it presents a blank facade, which offers little interest or architectural quality to that corner.

In line with other visually stronger corners in the area, it is felt that there is opportunity in the future for that site to be developed to enhance the buildings on both St Cross Street and Kirby Street and that other development should not affect that opportunity.

It is felt that stepping down towards the end of the terrace would weaken the established character of Kirby Street and would extinguish any opportunity to strengthen the corner of the street in line with other streets in the area.

Any additional height up to the 6 storeys proposed on Kirby Street will not be visible from St Cross Street and will not detract from the setting of those buildings defined as a heritage asset.