# 3.0 The Principle of Redevelopment

## 3.3 Development Evolution

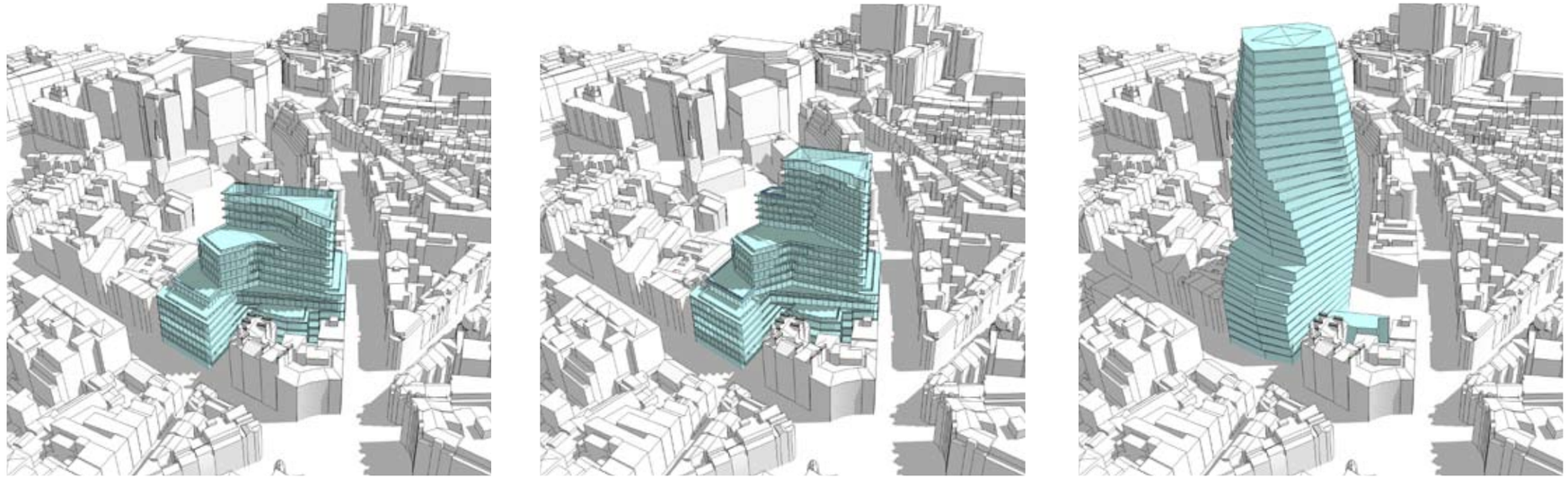
A feasibility study was undertaken at the outset of the project to assess the optimum development strategy for the site. In addition to the refurbishment option, three new build proposals were also assessed in terms of design and financial viability, summarised as follows:

- **15-Storey New Build:** Mixed use scheme with retail at ground floor and a new pedestrian route through the heart of the site. This option was assessed both with and without on-site residential accommodation.
- **20-Storey New Build:** Mixed use scheme with retail at ground floor and a new pedestrian route through the heart of the site. This option was assessed both with and without on-site residential accommodation.
- **30-Storey New Build Tower:** Mixed use (office and retail) tower with a new public plaza addressing Shaftesbury Avenue.

The feasibility study concluded that only two of the four options were financially viable - the refurbishment scheme and the 30-storey new build. As such, further work was undertaken to assess the suitability of the design for the site, including an townscape and visual impact assessment. This revealed that the 30-storey new build option would be visible in a number of key views, including the protected view from Lambeth Bridge towards the Palace of Westminster (LVMF views 19A.1 and 19A.2).

This essentially showed that the 30-storey new build option was inappropriate development for the site, resulting in the conclusion that the refurbishment option was the optimum solution.

As outlined in section 4.3 of this document, the refurbishment scheme has been evolved through an iterative design process, with the input of LBC planning officers, local stakeholders and the full design team, to achieve the optimum solution for the site.



Summary of development options assessed at the outset of the project in addition to refurbishment: 15-storey new build, 20-storey new build and 30-storey new build

# 3.0 The Principle of Redevelopment

## 3.4 Key Design Principles

The driving principle behind the design of 125 Shaftesbury Avenue is to create a development that responds to its unique location and surrounding context, with proportions, massing and materials that are complementary to the surrounding buildings and, unlike the existing building, enhances the local environment by building on the characteristics of the area.

The objective is to create a high quality environment for the building's users, visitors, neighbouring residents and passersby, through the refurbishment and extension of the existing building to create a sensitive, contemporary architectural design.

Utilising the analysis illustrated earlier in this document, regarding the composition and articulation of the existing streetscape, the new proposal makes sensitive reference to the proportions and compositional features of the neighbouring buildings. In essence, the site should reflect the character and qualities of the neighbourhood, acknowledging and respecting its heritage, whilst preparing it for the future.

## 3.5 Civic Presence

St Giles has a vibrant and eclectic mix of communities, businesses, cultural and civic institutions, however, its historic significance is undefined. Part of the design strategy for the site is to produce a building that helps strengthen the identity of the historic quarter of St Giles.

The area is currently dominated by busy vehicular and pedestrian routes on its boundaries, with the area being one in which people move through on their way to other destinations. The proposal will aim to increase the permeability of the area, and increase 'local' routes for users, with a more responsive streetscape helping to reinvigorate the urban context.

The design proposal strives to create a contextually appropriate, civic building that encourages conviviality and provides a positive contribution to the surrounding streetscape.

# 4.0 Design Strategy

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# 4.0 Design Strategy

## 4.1 Site Plan

The proposed scheme for 125 Shaftesbury Avenue involves the refurbishment and extension of the existing building to create a high quality, mixed use scheme comprising flexible retail uses (such as shops, cafes and restaurants) at ground floor level with office accommodation above.

The ground floor predominantly accommodates retail uses, the office lobby, cycle access and access to the basement and loading bay. A consolidation of the basement access with the loading bay entrance (which will remain located on Stacey Street) will allow for increased and enhanced public realm to the north of the building as well as for additional active frontage on this currently neglected elevation.

The existing building does not currently provide sufficient lift capacity to cope with modern office population densities so the scheme involves the reconfiguration of the current lift cores to provide a larger central core that provides access to all office floors. This reconfiguration of the lift core also provides the opportunity to relocate the office entrance to Charing Cross Road (as opposed to Shaftesbury Avenue). This is more appropriate due to current and soon-to-be completed transport infrastructure improvements to the nearby Tottenham Court Road Station in line with the opening of Crossrail in 2018. Furthermore, it allows the reinstatement of the historic route that once ran through the centre of the site, reconnecting Old Compton Street with New Compton Street and providing a significant public benefit through the increased permeability that will be created.

The plant room and back of house/service areas are located on the basement floor. Other plant areas will be located at level seven and level eleven / roof.

First to eleventh floors accommodate flexible office space with roof terraces, balconies and inset loggias evenly distributed between the different floorplates to provide amenity for the building's users.

The existing façade will be removed and replaced with a more energy efficient, contextually appropriate and contemporary design. The existing structure above level seven is to be demolished due to its spatial constraints - columns grid and overall area – and rebuilt using a lightweight structure to provide efficient modern office space.

The driving principle behind the design of 125 Shaftesbury Avenue is to create a development that responds to its unique location and surrounding context, with proportions, massing and materials in keeping with the surrounding buildings, to enhance the local environment by building on the characteristics of the area.

The objective is to create a high quality environment for the building's users, visitors, neighbouring residents and passersby, through sensitive, contemporary architectural design.


Proposed Site Plan (NTS)

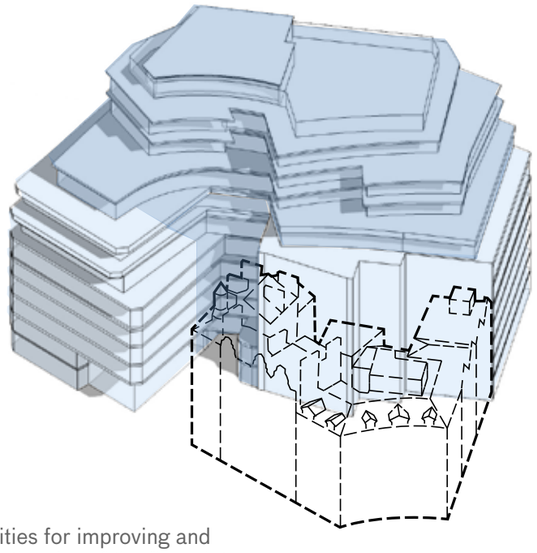
# 4.0 Design Strategy

## 4.2 Design Principles

### 4.2.1 Existing Massing

Central to the design strategy is the ambition to create modern and sustainable working environments, whilst retaining the existing structure.

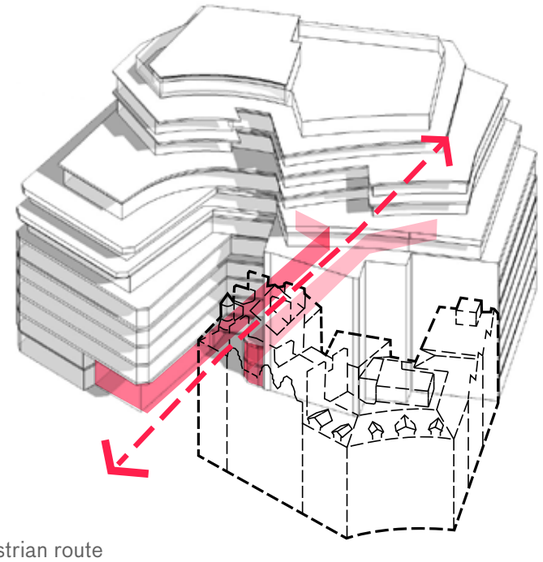
The potential of the existing structure will be realised through the construction of lightweight additions to extend the building and infill existing lightwells.



Opportunities for improving and increasing the size of the floorplates

### 4.2.2 New Pedestrian Route

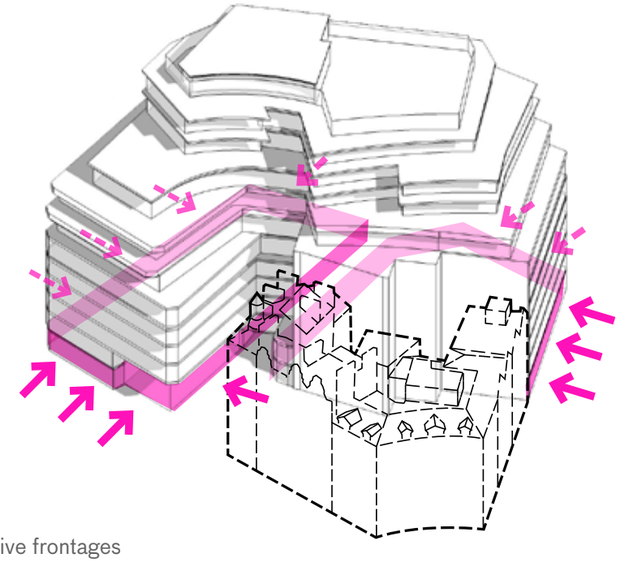
The refurbishment of the site provides the opportunity to reinstate the route that previously ran through the centre of the site. Significant public benefit will be achieved through re-linking Old and New Compton Streets to increase permeability and accessibility.



New pedestrian route

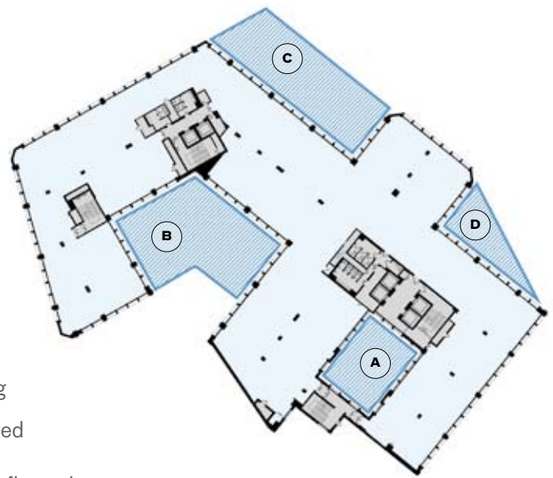
### 4.2.4 Active Frontage

In conjunction with the creation of a new pedestrian route, the scheme aims to deliver a more attractive retail offer with increased active frontage. This will contribute to a better surveilled and maintained area with positive overlooking.



New active frontages

**A:** 2F - 7F
**B:** 2F - 7F
**C:** GF - 4F
**D:** GF - 7F




Existing
Proposed

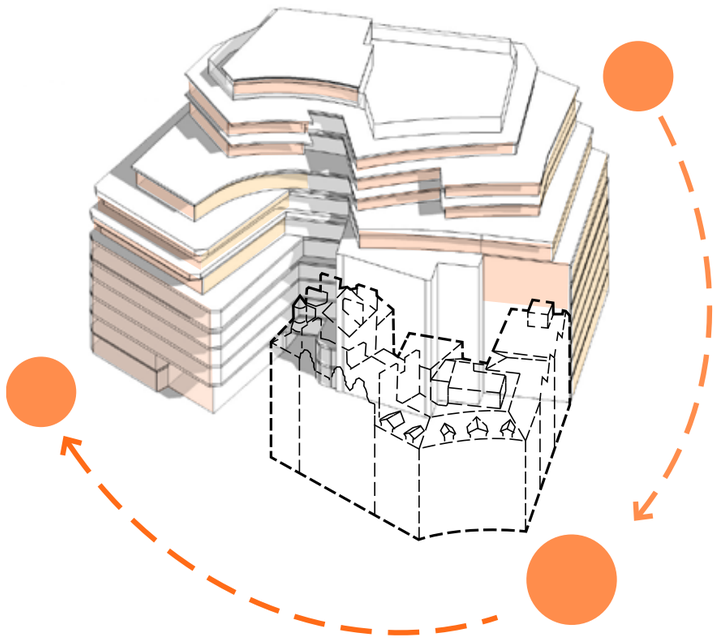
Typical lower floor plan


Existing condition of Caxton Walk

Stephen Street, ORMS (refurbishment)

### 4.2.5 Sustainable, Low-Energy & Responsive

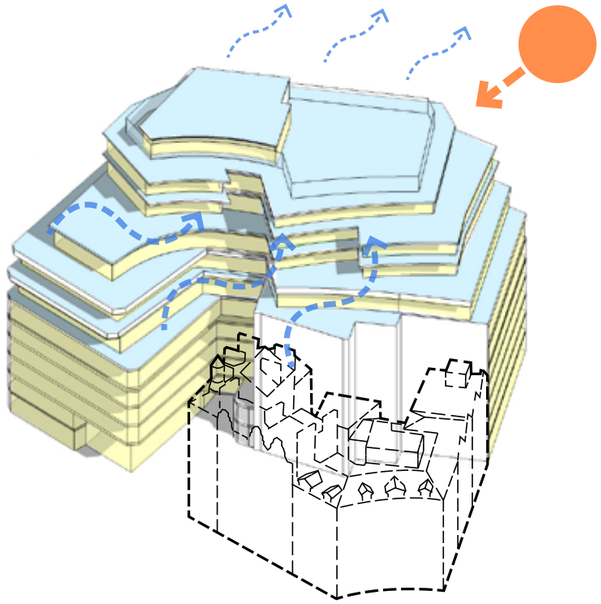
The form, articulation and, in particular, the reconstructed upper floors of the building will promote passive solar shading to enhance environmental performance.



Maison des Etudiants, Geneva, Switzerland, Lacroix Chessex

### 4.2.6 Ventilation & Daylighting

An intelligent, environmentally controlled building is proposed, with the potential for users to control their environment through openable ventilation panels. A new facade will improve environmental performance and offer improved daylighting.

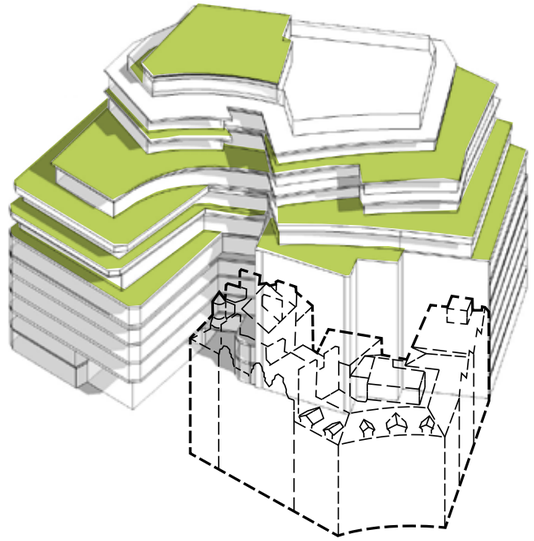


The Wedge, Copenhagen, Lundgaard & Tranberg

### 4.2.7 Biophilic Design

Access to external amenity for the building's users has been a key concept in the development of the design.

Increased biodiversity and visual amenity will be provided through generously planted terraces, balconies and roofs, creating a workplace that promotes wellbeing.



Bosco Verticale, Stefano Boeri Architetti

Ford Foundation, NY, Kevin Roche

# 4.0 Design Strategy

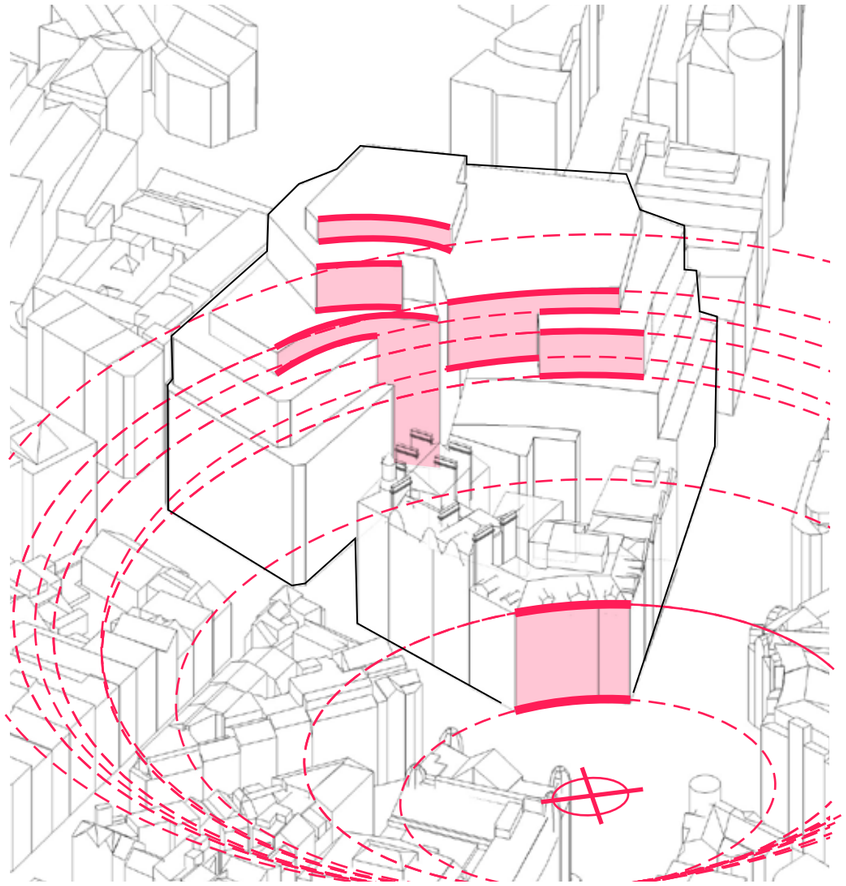
## 4.2 Response to Urban Context

### 4.2.1 Concave Urban Form

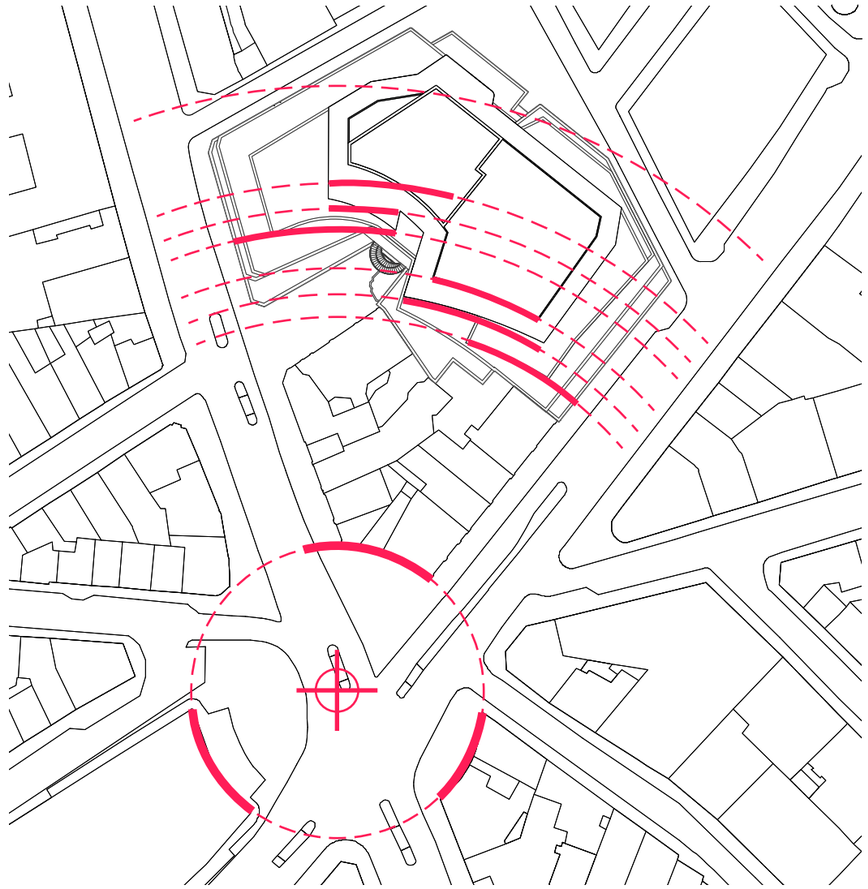
The massing of the existing building appears to be more successful on its main street frontages on Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue but, where the building ziggurats to reduce its perceived mass, the architectural language of the building is oppressive and defensive and fails to respond to its immediate context. In particular, its form appears incongruous where it rises above its context on Cambridge Circus - the areas principal urban 'set-piece'.

The bulk of the building is significantly visible from Cambridge Circus and does not provide a positive backdrop to the immediate context. Its silhouette, topped by unsightly aerials and roof plant, is noticeably inelegant in comparison to the rooflines of adjacent 19th century circus buildings, which provide delight in the form of turrets, gable ends and other decorations.

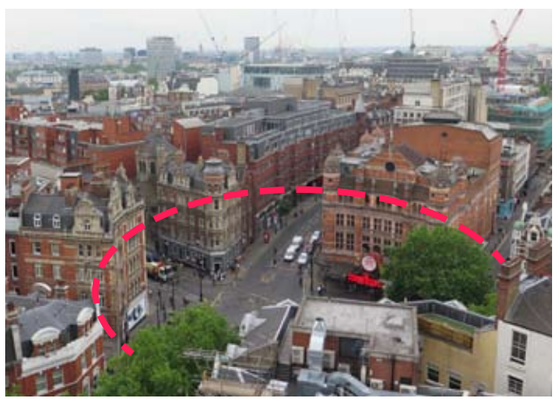
As part of the urban strategy the proposed scheme references the strong geometry of the Circus, complimenting and receding from the Circus as a 'background' building whilst also positively engaging with the different contexts of Shaftesbury Avenue, Charing Cross Road and the Churchyard.



Axo diagram of the proposed scheme highlighting concave faces



Plan diagram of the proposed scheme



Birds eye view of Cambridge Circus

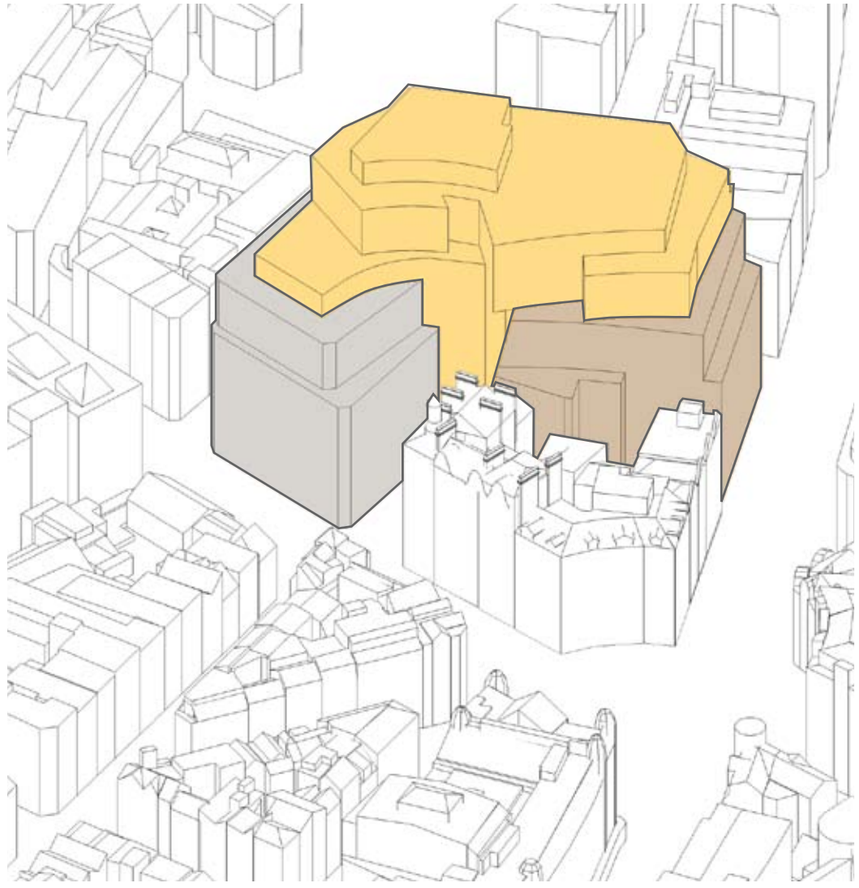
View from Cambridge Circus towards the site

### 4.2.2 Urban Morphology

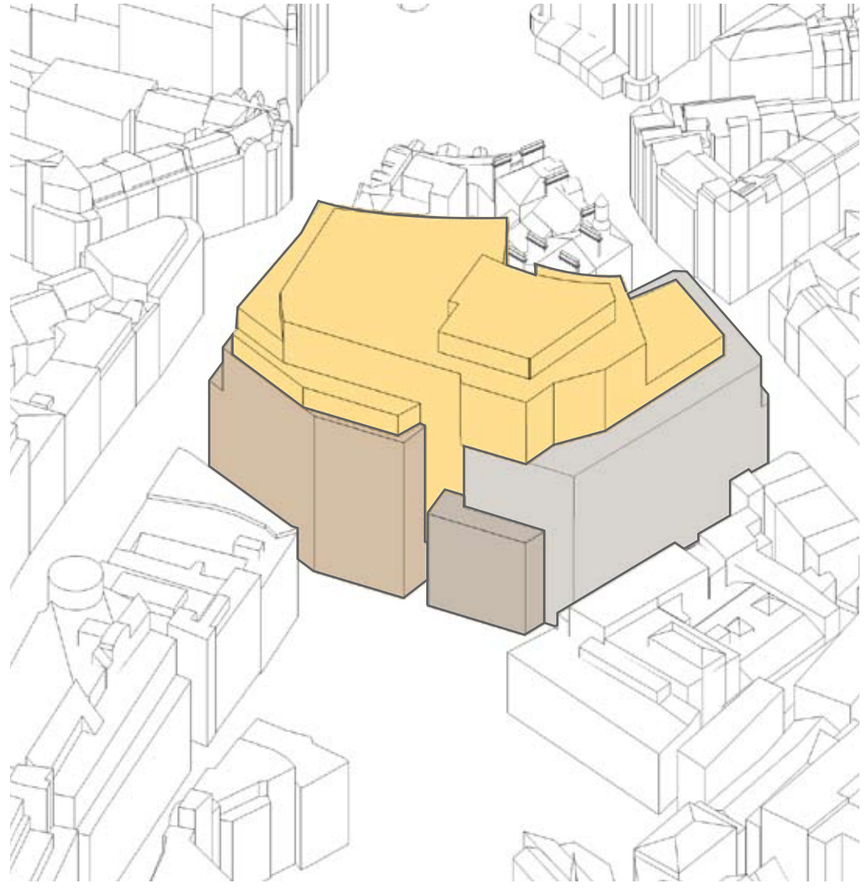
The overall architectural effect of the existing building lacks reciprocity with both the neighbouring buildings and the landscape over which it looks.

The impact of its under-articualted and uninterrupted “background architecture” is that the building has a very limited street presence and does nothing to aid urban legibility.

Central to the urban strategy of the proposal is that the building should respond specifically and appropriately to the differing contexts of Shaftesbury Avenue, Charing Cross Road, Stacey Street and also in the more distant townscape views. This is achieved through breaking down the massing of the building into four distinct volumes: a Shaftesbury Avenue building; a Charing Cross Road building (separated from each other by the new pedestrian route on Caxton Walk); a smaller Stacey Street building, which mediates between the different scales of neighbouring building surrounding the site, and lastly a distinct rooftop architecture for the upper floors.



Axo diagram of the proposed scheme from the south



Axo diagram of the proposed scheme from the north

Key:

- Shaftesbury Avenue building
- Charing Cross Road building
- Stacey Street building
- Rooftop architecture

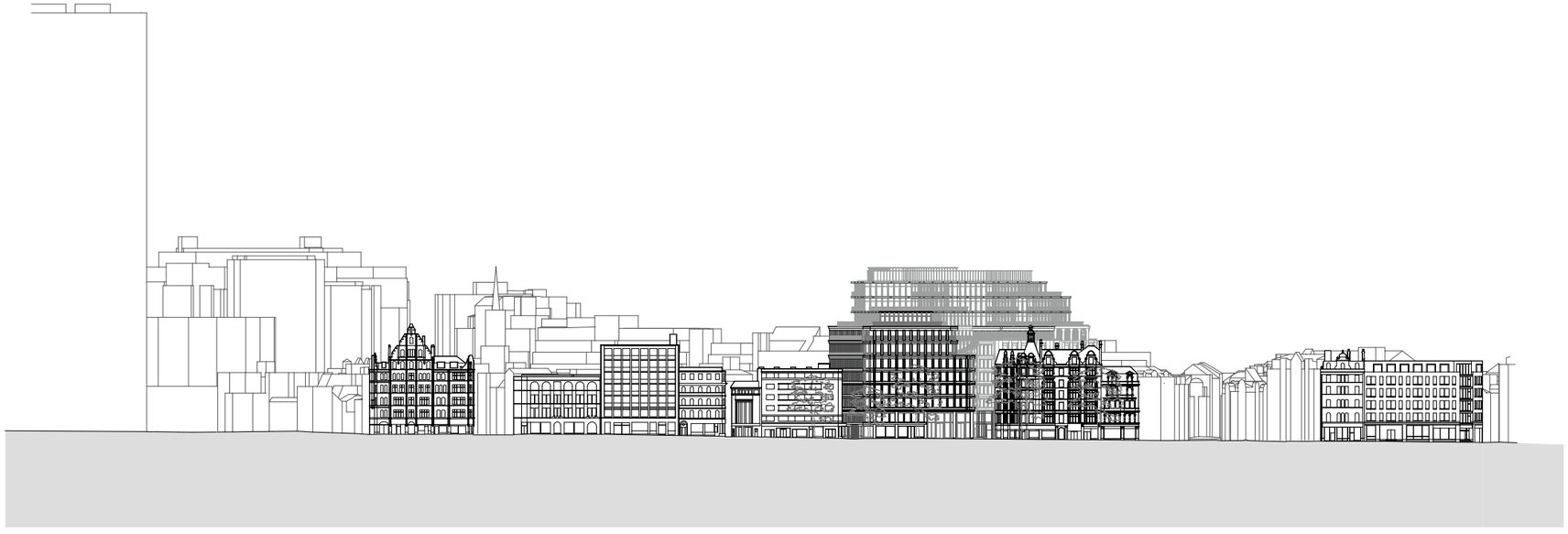
# 4.0 Design Strategy

### 4.2.3 Streetscape

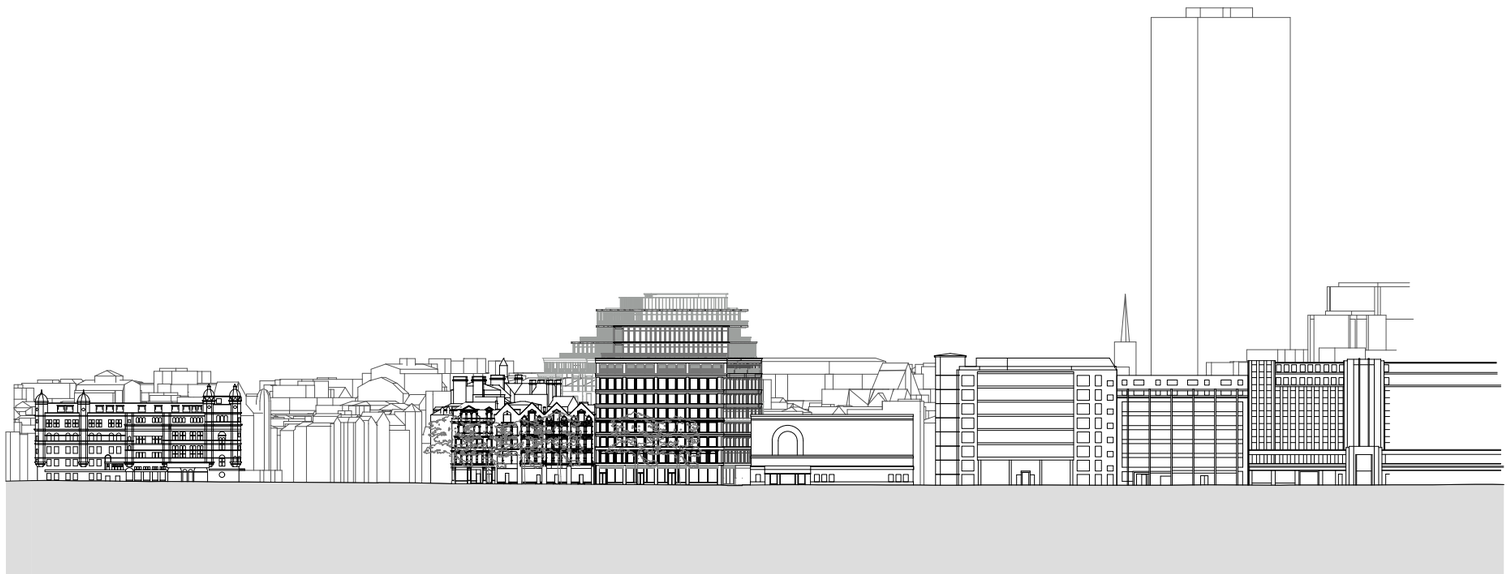
Whilst the existing building is taller than its immediate context, it responds to its neighbours by stepping down its street-facing facades on both Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road to just 6-storeys and marks this 'shoulder' of the building with projecting oriel windows wrapping around the 5th floor.

A key principal of the proposed urban strategy is to maintain a strong building datum on these two principle elevations whilst adjusting cornice levels, cills and shop fronts in order to better acknowledge the building's immediate neighbours.

Finely articulated metal detailing is utilised at ground and first floors levels to bring delight to the street and to respond to the lower level datum established by the friezes of the neighbouring buildings, namely the two listed theatre buildings (the Odeon cinema on Shaftesbury Avenue and the Phoenix Theatre on Phoenix Street) and Trentishoe Mansions on Caxton Walk.



Charing Cross Road, Street Elevation



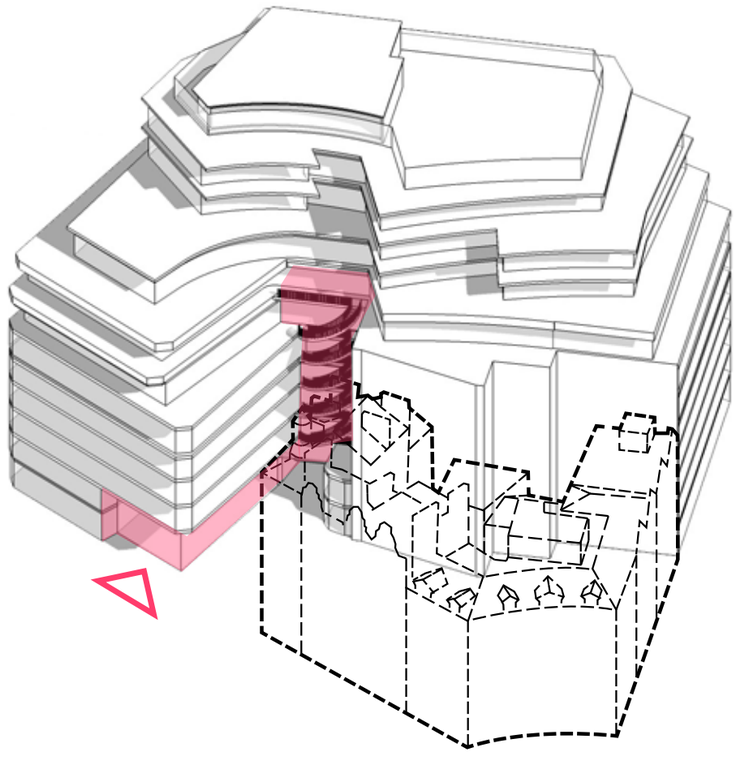
Shaftesbury Avenue, Street Elevation

### 4.2.4 Conviviality

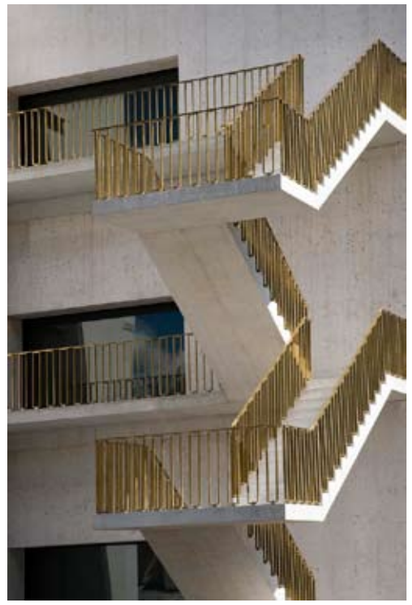
The ambition of the proposal is to create a sustainable, healthy and convivial development that benefits both users and the wider area. The proposal must contribute to the surrounding area, promoting movement through and around the site and encouraging interactions between users, local residents and passersby.

A number of key design features are proposed to promote this, including:

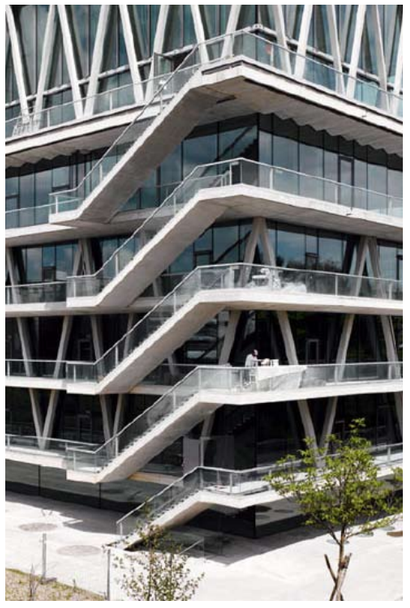
- A new pedestrian route through the heart of the scheme to improve permeability and safety.
- Enhanced public realm with new planting and seating on both Caxton Walk and at the junction of Stacey Street and Phoenix Street, providing a positive point of arrival at either end of the new pedestrian route.
- A generous, dynamic accommodation stair that takes users of the building from the basement cycle store to the 7th floor, largely externally, to encourage walking, interaction between tenancies and also to animate Caxton Walk at the termination of Old Compton Street.
- Planting integrated into a series of terraces, balconies and suspended trays increases biodiversity and complements the verdant environment of the nearby Phoenix Gardens. Large terraces at the upper levels provide amenity for users of the building, relieving the strain on the limited surrounding amenity spaces.



Exchange House, London, SOM



Swiss National Park Visitors' Centre, Valerio Olgiati



Leutschenbach School, Zurich, Christian Kerez

Haughwout Building, NY, John Gaynor

# 4.0 Design Strategy

## 4.3 Design Development

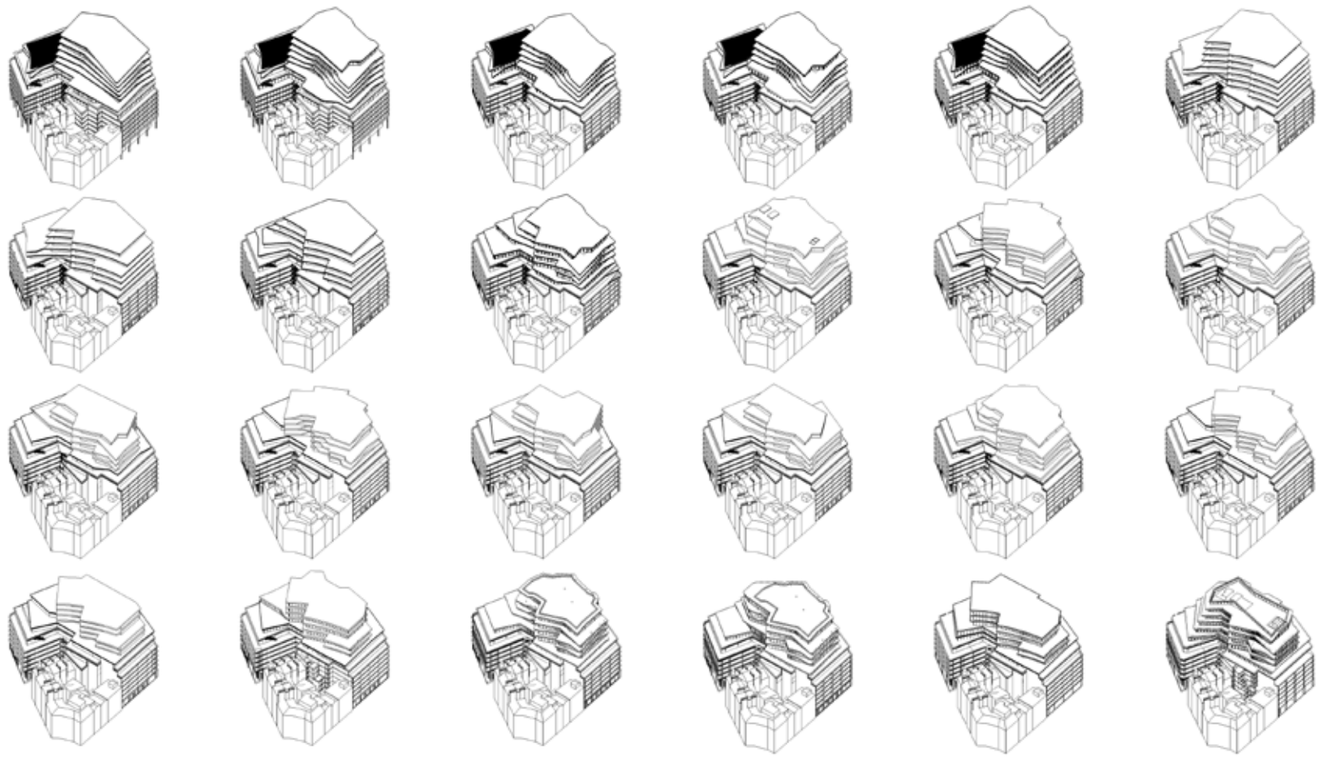
The proposal has been developed through an iterative process, combining sketching, drawings and both physical and 3D computer modelling. The fact that the proposal is a refurbishment means that the building has a number of challenges and constraints through which the design has been developed (including structural capacity, retention of the basement, location of existing cores, etc.), however, the other main challenges were:

1. Developing a proposal that re-engages with its local context at ground level, supporting local movement and enhancing connections between St Giles and the wider area;
2. Delivering additional floorspace in a manner that achieves a height, bulk and massing appropriate to the local and wider context; and
3. Achieving an architectural expression that reflects the nature of its internal uses, creates delight, and enhances the setting of nearby heritage assets

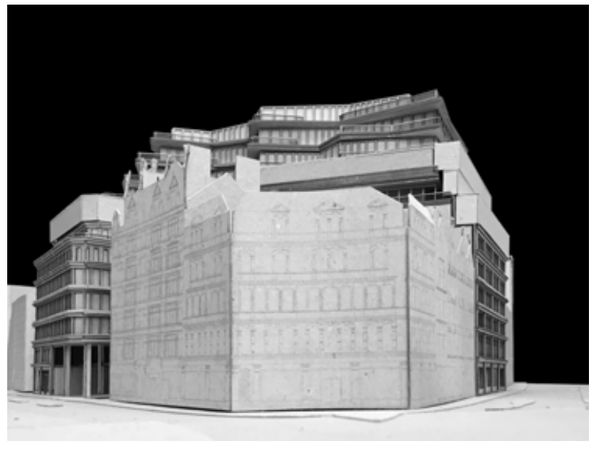
Throughout the design process, the massing has been developed and tested through a series of key urban views and street level studies.

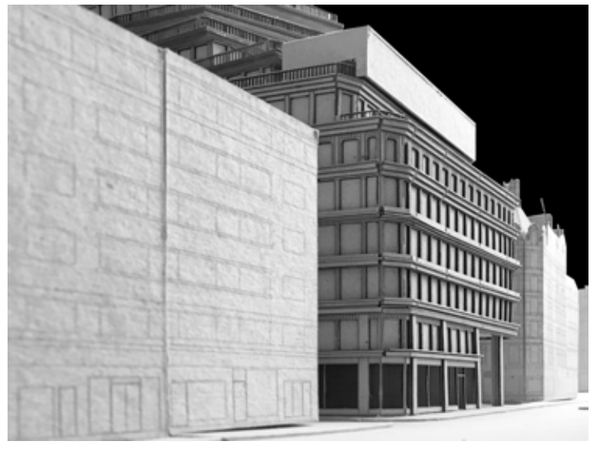
The design development has been regularly reviewed by the client and design team and has been presented at numerous pre-application consultations with the London Borough of Camden as well as to the Design South East design review panel. A public exhibition of the proposals was held in March 2016 and a series of meetings were held with local amenity groups, civic societies, local residents and stakeholders.

The adjacent images demonstrate how the design has been developed through this iterative and collaborative process.



Sketch models representing design development process





Sketch models used in development of design