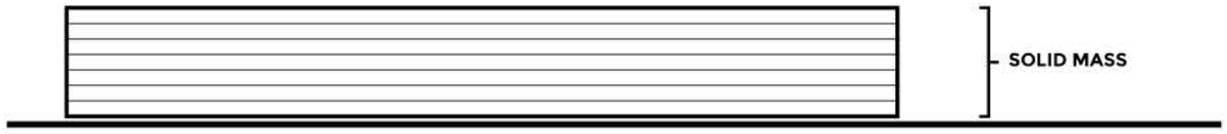
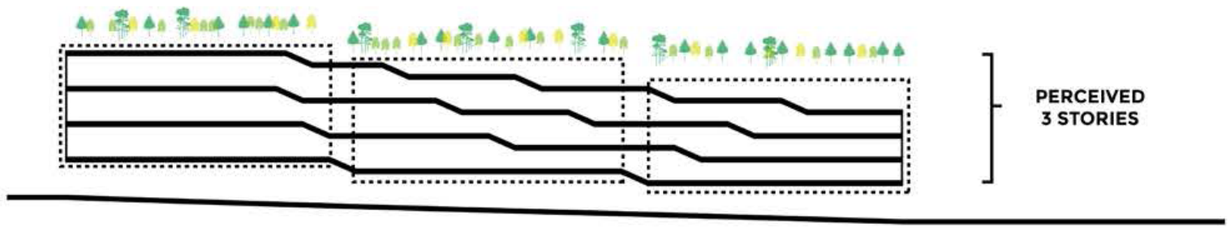
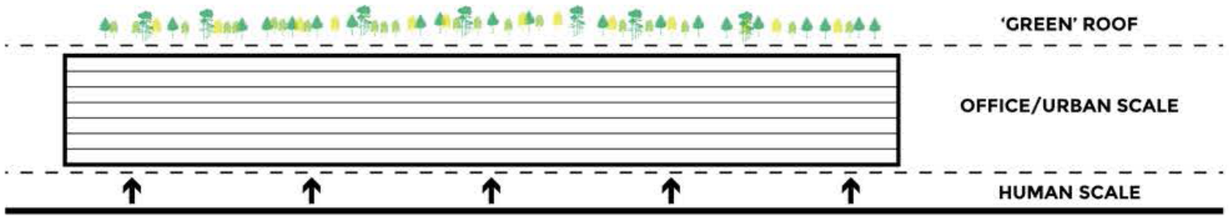
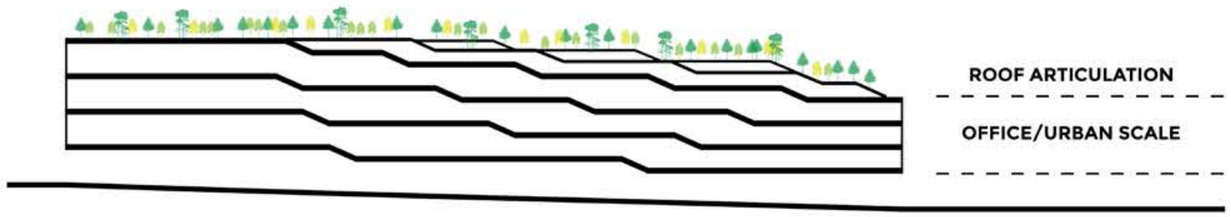
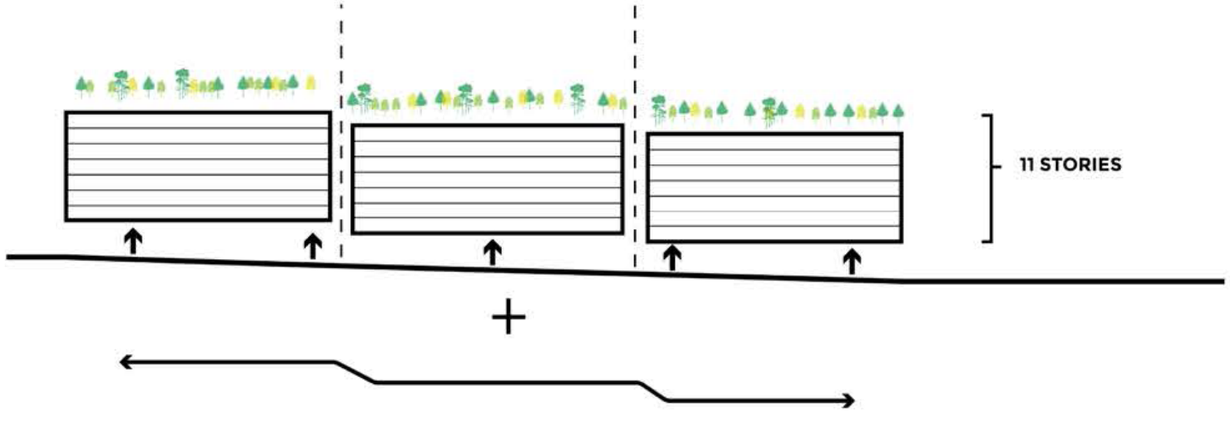










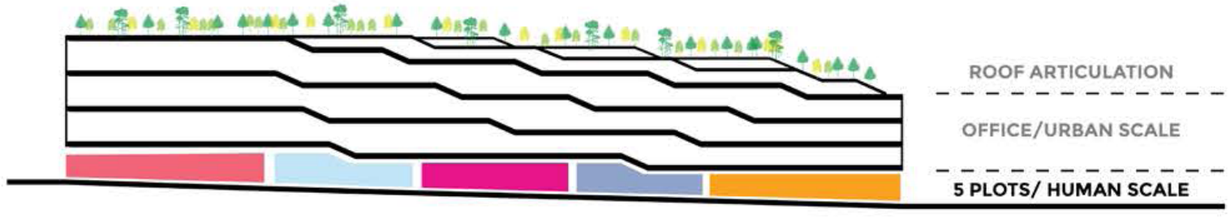


Figure 8: Approach to massing

Approach to Scheme Design

1.2

Design Concept & Brief

The Zone A Building has been designed as an innovative headquarters for a single occupier in a single building within the city. It will be a robust, lean building comprising large floorplates with expansive views above and a distinctive connectivity with the street at the ground floor. Instead of seeking to imitate five individual plots as originally envisaged in the Outline Planning Permission, the proposal draws upon the opportunity to deliver one single, unique building, with a clear identity, whilst responding to the varied planning requirements that encompass it.

A key aspect of Google's brief is to create large continuous floor plates in order to facilitate the varied requirements of its unique business operations. The requirement has an affinity to the site context of King's Cross, echoing the large volume transport and industrial entities, this time to facilitate an innovative, modern working environment. The basic concept is based on a dual approach around the 'City' and the 'Desk' with both coinciding ideas presenting an opportunity for the site to establish itself as an active participant in both King's Cross and the wider community.

Figure 8: The Ledbury Building

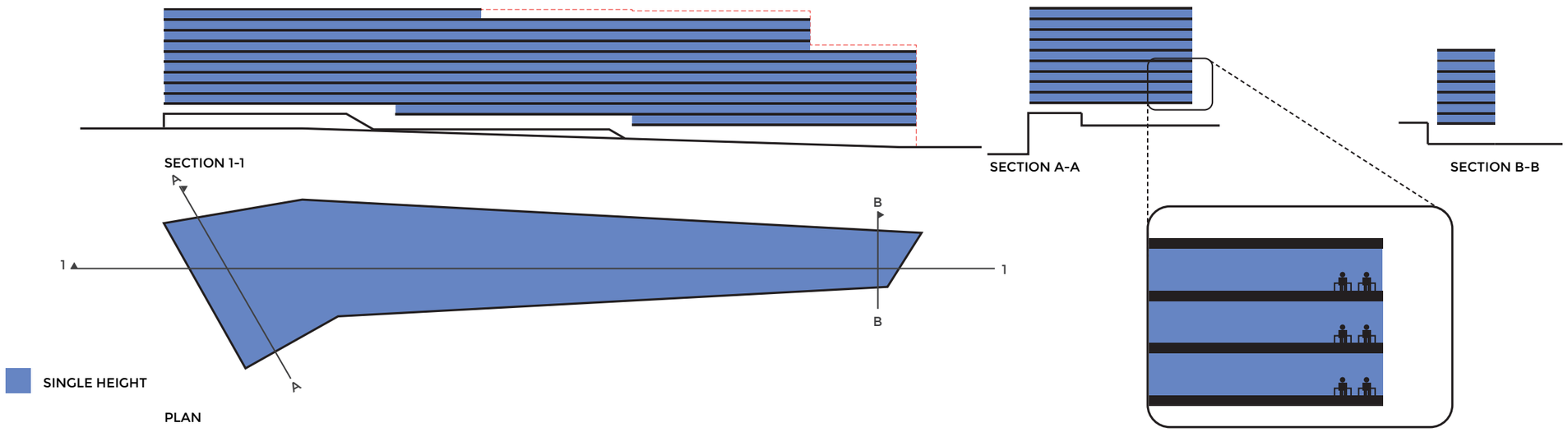
City Concept

The 'City' concept seeks to explore the ambition of Google to integrate with the community and the wider city. Whilst the Outline Planning Permission permits a sizeable building in Zone A, it needs to sit comfortably on the site alongside the key public thoroughfare of King's Boulevard and the Zone B buildings, and the historic buildings to the north and south. In particular, the proposal aims to sit with confidence, to capture the spirit of both old and new by:

- Reinforcing the character of the different spaces around the Zone A building;
- Addressing the change in level along the length of King's Boulevard;
- Strengthening the different characteristics of long grain and end grain already inherent to the site;
- Creating a continuity of frontage in terms of volume, surface, material and rhythms, both vertical and horizontal;
- Responding to the increase of scale of the Boulevard towards the north as the ground slopes upwards towards Goods Way to ensure the widened resultant space has a strong dynamic character;
- Responding to the railway to the east and positively engaging the public spaces surrounding the building; and
- Connecting the ground floor with the railway lines to the east through high degrees of visual permeability from the King's Boulevard.
- Reinforcing the masterplan's street hierarchy by positioning entrances along King's Boulevard - the main public pedestrian route;
- Activating the street edge along King's Boulevard with a high degree of continuous transparency on the ground floor to engage the public realm and ensure a secure and enjoyable public experience;
- Prioritising ground floor accessibility to achieve smooth transitions from outside to inside with level thresholds that factor in the 1:30 gradient of King's Boulevard;
- Creating a legible sequence of defined spaces from public to private;
- Responding to the complex geometries and varying degrees of enclosure to Battle Bridge Place with a dynamic yet coherent southern face that offers both shelter and interest;
- Presenting a dynamic, responsive and interesting façade with structural honesty, to King's Cross Station and York Way beyond; and
- Utilising the opportunities presented by this single building to achieve a coherent response to the adjacent industrial architecture and views from York Way.

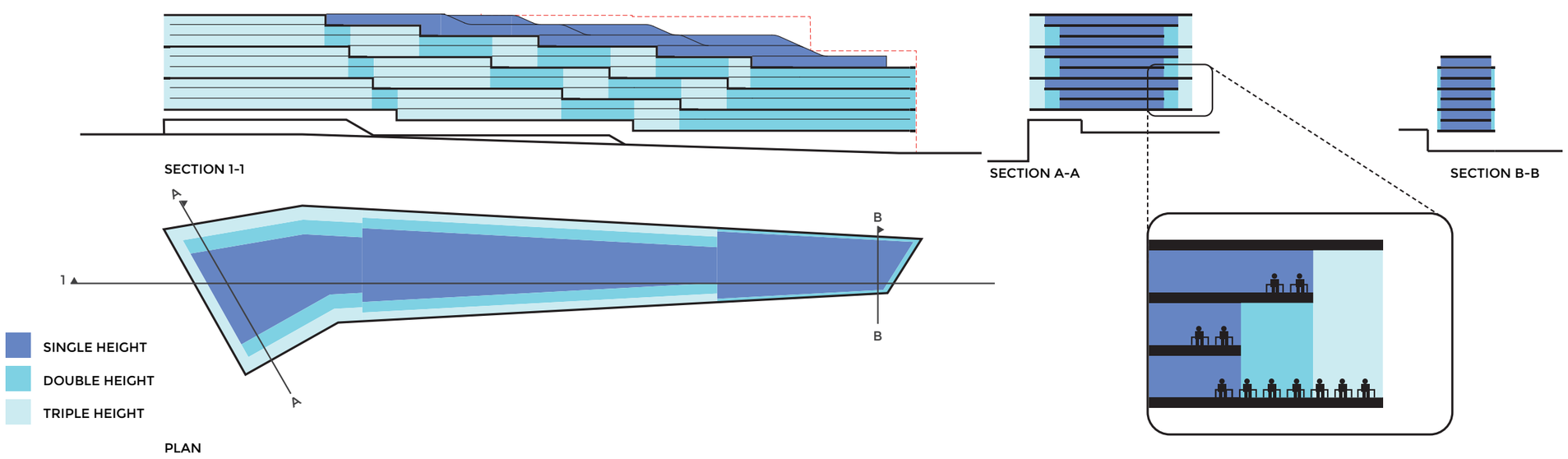
A significant ground plane of interest and depth is a particularly important aspect of the City concept. The building is lifted to create a column-free, varied and open ground plane that can change with time, akin to historic buildings such as Ledbury Market (Figure 9). In keeping with the aspiration to create a major new shopping street along King's Boulevard, the building sits on a retail 'plinth', punctuated by the office entrances. The shopfronts have been designed to reinforce the role of the street as a retail destination and complement the ground floor uses in the buildings opposite, namely B2, B4 and B6. The design concept seeks to create a unique retail destination that incorporates both fixed and flexible spaces, positioned to take advantage of the prospect and footfall offered by the junctions with Battle Bridge Place and Goods Way.

Accessibility and movement around the building has been key to the development of the design. The starting point has been the location of entrances, which are intended to address all directions and adjacent public realm. Once inside the building, staff and visitors need to be able to move efficiently through the spaces. This has informed both the configuration of uses within the building, but also the provision of a Diagonal Staircase that runs through the building's office floors, connecting cores, workplaces, major shared amenities and a large roof garden in an easy and enjoyable journey that encourages encounter.



TYPICAL OFFICE BUILDING

In a typical office building, permanent workstations are commonly arranged along the perimeter of a floor plate. This leaves the majority of the floor plate lacking access to natural light.



GROWING WIDTH - GROWING HEIGHT

As the site widens, the height of the focus space increases. With a triple height volume, even deep of-fice plates have access to natural daylight.

Figure 9: Volumetric Concept showing comparison between typical office floorplate and the proposed concept

Approach to Scheme Design

1.2

Desk Concept

From a programme perspective, Google are looking to create an inspirational place for its employees. To achieve this, the design team have focused the plan around three large continuous stacked floorplates that provide a range of single, double and triple height workspaces with a unique volumetric quality. These warehouse style floorplates provide the opportunity to create continuous desk space and a flexible working environment that is capable of change as the business and ways of working evolve. As illustrated in Figure 10, the floors in between the three main floorplates are hung from those above, representing a unique structural solution which allows a column free perimeter and creating spaces with different characters to support workspaces and ancillary uses. The atria, traditionally in the middle of the building, can therefore be moved to the perimeter, and combined with higher than normal floor to floor heights, brings natural daylight deep into the building, no matter its physical context.

Addressing the significant level change across the site, the design team have explored different ways of connecting workplace levels using gathering spaces, breakout areas and sloping gardens. This approach aims to create a cascading arrangement along the length of the workplace floors that is captured in the facade through cut-out spaces and gardens.

The approach to the design has also sought to incorporate an extensive range of wellbeing facilities and amenity spaces for employees and their visitors, including a Multi-use Games Area (MUGA), swimming pool, treatment/massage rooms, fitness suite and cafe/restaurant spaces. Most of the wellbeing facilities are centred around the roof in order to take advantage of the daylight and proximity to outdoor space. In order to achieve this, the design team have looked at the configuration and location of plant, and have sought to remove this from roof level wherever possible. This has resulted in a larger basement than the previously approved Zone A scheme but brings benefits in terms of removing extensive blank facades of louvres and vents at the upper/ roof levels and maximises the area of active and intensively planted roof space.

Events, such as presentations, talks and product launches, form a key part of Google's business and attracts a significant number of external visitors as well as employees. It is important to Google that this operation can stand alone, for example by having its own access from the street, while also including routes back to the main concourse areas and cores to facilitate internal private events. The brief for the Events Centre includes a 450 seat auditorium for Google and third party events, which acts as a feature point of the building, with accessibility from King's Boulevard.

Figure 10: Precedent images of the 'Desk' Concept from left to right, warehouse, adaptable spaces, and abundance of greenery on the roof.

Figure 12: Illustrative view of the Zone A Building showing the arrangement at ground, workplace and roof plane, as seen from the King's Boulevard

Scheme Description

1.3

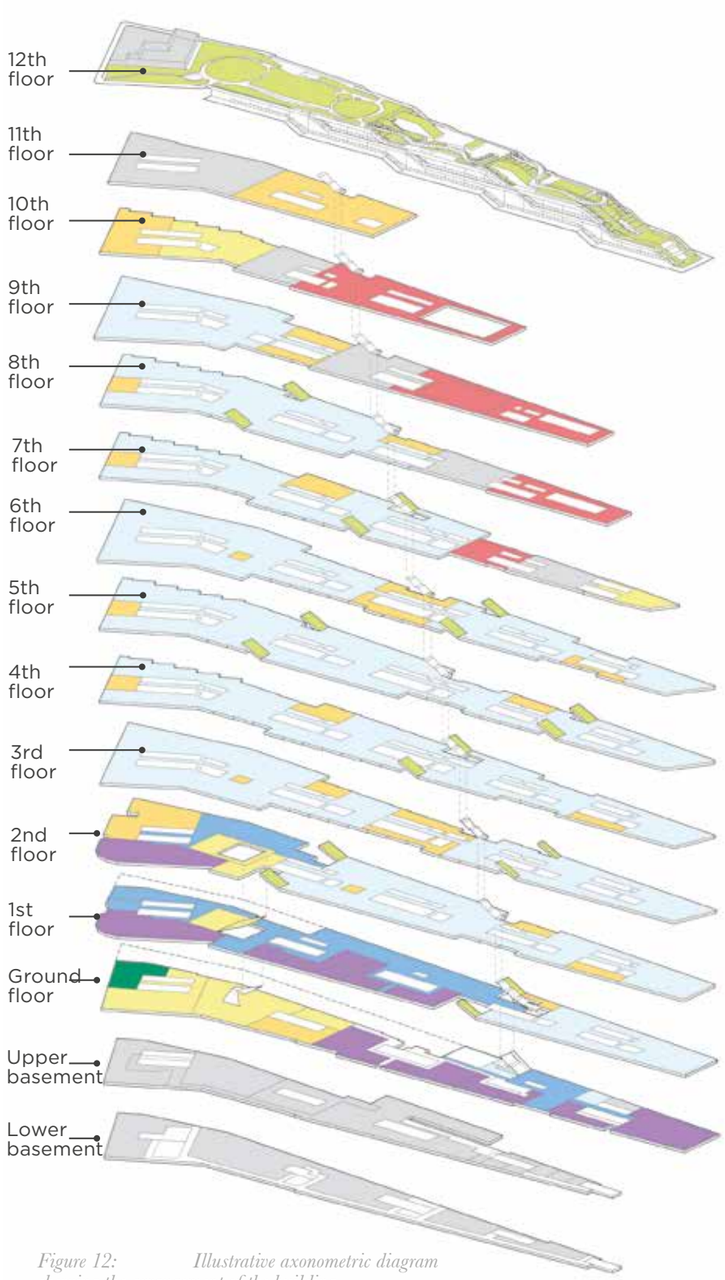


Figure 12: Illustrative axonometric diagram showing the arrangement of the building

Summary of Proposals

The proposed Zone A Building will provide a UK headquarters office building for Google UK Ltd. The building will consist of between 7 and 11 storeys of office above retail uses at ground floor and an extensive landscaped roof.

The office floors will also include ancillary uses for 4,500 members of staff and their visitors including cafes, gym and pool facilities, a covered multi-use games area (MUGA), an Events Centre and staff training facilities. At roof level, landscaped terraces and a walking "Trim Trail" will provide outdoor amenity and recreation space for employees. The arrangement of the building is shown illustratively as Figure 13.

The Zone A Building will have its own basement for servicing, as well as utilising some of the loading bays in the SSY. The basement will also contain, plant, refuse/other storage and car/cycle parking. Access will be provided by the existing ramp and a designated entrance to the cycle store, both on Goods Way.

The building itself does not occupy the entirety of Development Zone A, being pulled back by eight metres from the southern development zone boundary, i.e. Plot A1 and therefore extending the adjacent public realm area of Battle Bridge Place. Details of this additional area of public realm and hard lanscaping along the western and northern footpaths adjacent to the building also form part of this submission and are described later in this section.

Key

- Entrances and reception areas
- Office
- Cafe and restaurant areas
- Staff training facilities
- Events Centre
- MUGA/Swimming pool facilities
- Retail

Overall, the Zone A Building will provide a total of 80,819m² (GEA) of floorspace, excluding basement. Of this 76,137m² will be office use (Class B1) and 4,376m² of retail (Class A1) at ground floor. The basement floorspace, which is spread across two levels comprises an area of 11,084m². The basement floorspace is also the subject of a separate application for a non-material amendment to the Outline Planning Permission under Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to enable a basement of this size to be provided in Zone A. This would see 4,000m² of unused basement floorspace from the area to the north of the Regent's Canal allocated to the southern part of the site, corresponding to the additional basement requirement in Zone A. The overall total of permitted basement floorspace across the site will remain unchanged. Further information is provided in the Supporting Statement which supports that application and the Compliance Report which accompanies this submission.

The submission site comprises the building itself and some landscaping to the north, west and south of the building, which covers part of Goods Way, the King's Boulevard and Battle Bridge Place, respectively.

Further details of the layout and key features of the building design are provided in the sections which follow.

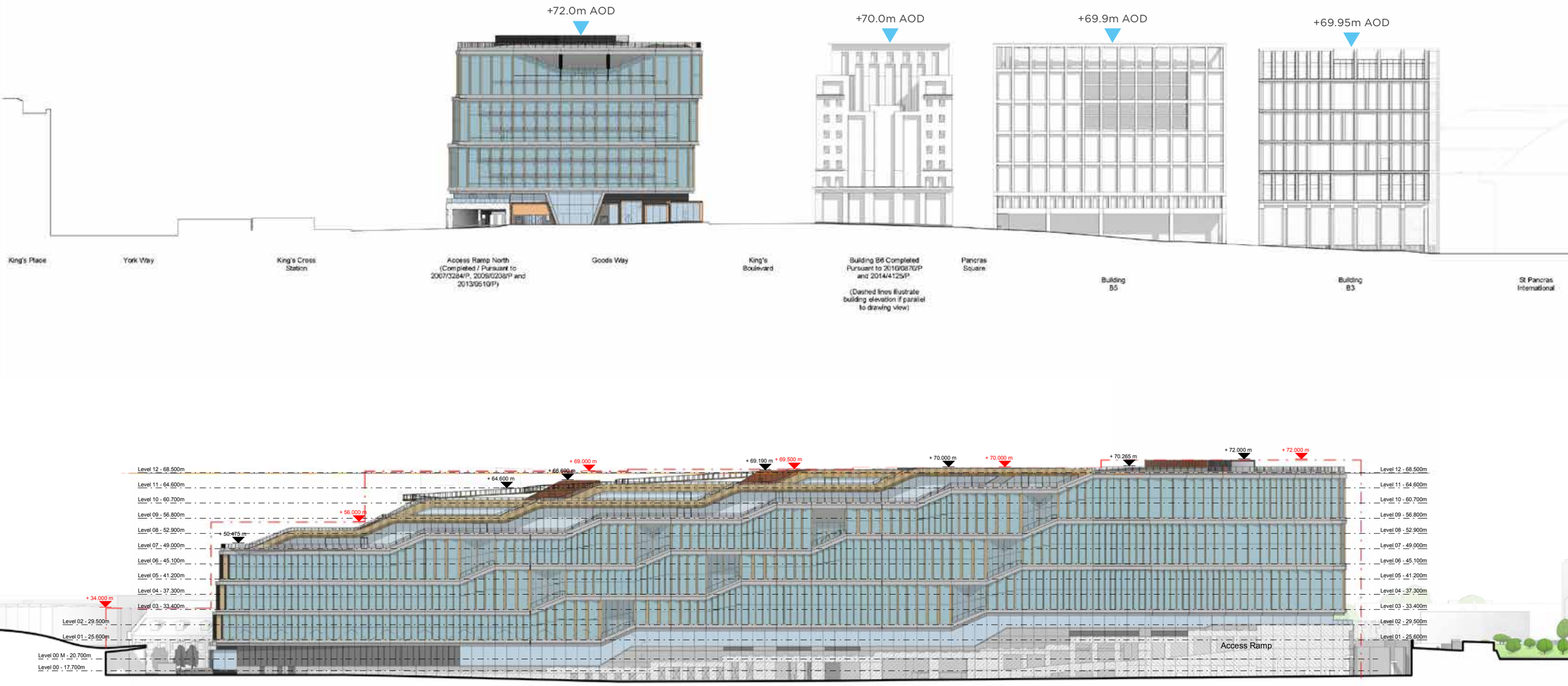


Figure 13: Extract of parameter plan KXC 014 showing the maximum building heights permitted for each plot of Zone A (top) and east elevation showing proposed building heights against maximum permitted heights

Scheme Description

1.3

Figure 14: Photograph of model showing graduated massing on north facade

Massing

The massing of the proposed Zone A Building complies with the relevant Parameter Plans forming part of the KXC Outline Planning Permission, in particular KXC 005 (Development Zones) and KXC 014 (Maximum Permitted Building Heights).

Parameter Plan KXC 005 indicatively divides Development Zone A into five, roughly equally sized plots, referred to as plots A1 to A5, which abut each other to form a continuous terrace on the east side, of what is now the King's Boulevard. Whilst the proposal will see the development of the Zone A Building brought forward as a single building, the concept of a terrace has driven the design, with priority given over to the continuity of the frontage in terms of volume, materials and rhythm.

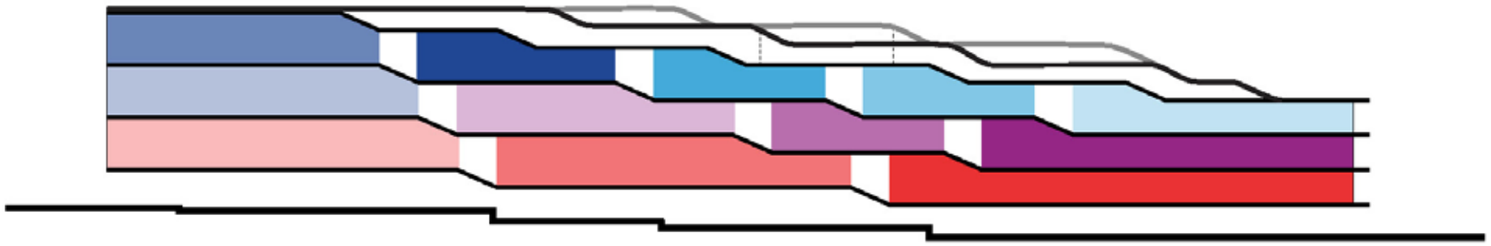
Building Heights

The maximum permitted building heights for Zone A identified on Parameter Plan KXC 014 (shown in red on Figure 14) decrease incrementally from +72m AOD at the northern end of Zone A, alongside Goods Way to +34m AOD at the southern end adjacent to Battle Bridge Place and King's Cross station.

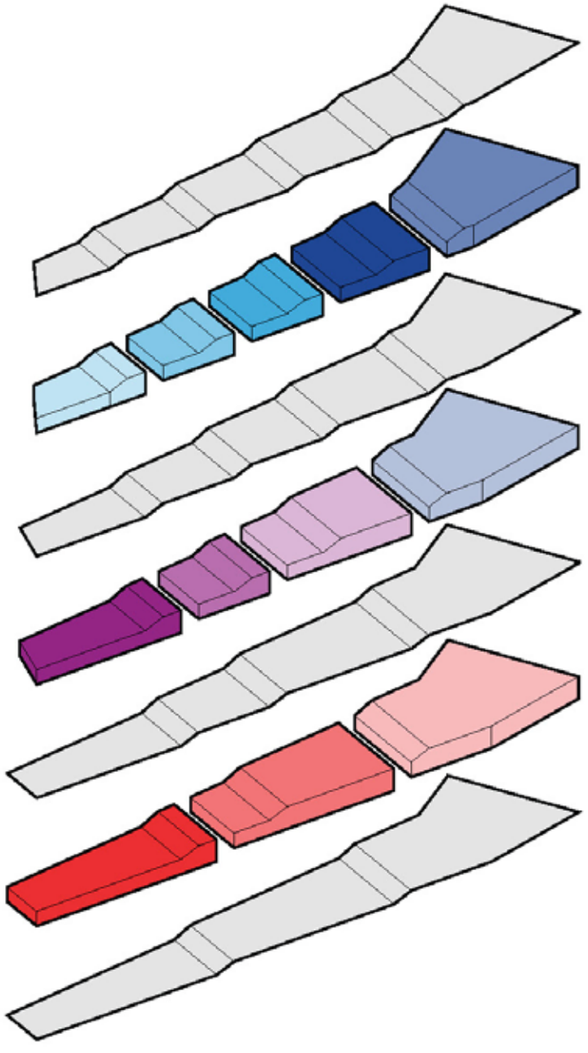
The proposed building heights are informed by this plan and the existing context/approved schemes for new buildings in the adjacent Development Zone B. Including ground floor level, the proposed building ranges in height from 8 storeys at the southern end (+50.475m AOD) to 12 storeys at the northern end (+72m AOD). Figure 14 shows the proposed building heights across the full length of the building and demonstrates that the proposed Zone A Building conforms to Parameter Plan KXC 014.

Buildings B6, B5 and B3, which together make up the northern edge of Development Zone B on Goods Way, are all permitted up to a height of +70.0m AOD. All three buildings have been subject to Reserved Matters approval and approved at heights of +70.0m, +69.90m and +69.95m (AOD), respectively, also shown on Figure 14. At Building B6, the northern façade line of Zone B kinks southwards to align with the notional boundary line between plots A4 and A5 and set up a relationship with Zone A, which has by this point decreased in height from +72.0m AOD to +70.0m AOD in line with Parameter Plan KXC 014.

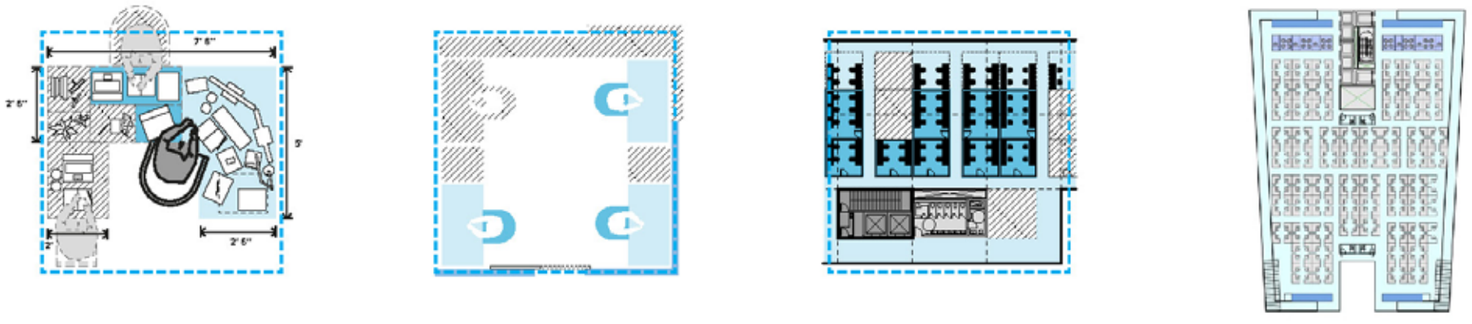
The Zone A Building continues to step down in height in accordance with the maximum permitted building heights on KXC 014 reaching a height of +50.475m (AOD) at its lowest point at the southern end of the building. The gradual decrease in height reflects a general reduction in scale of buildings across the southern part of the KXC site as they start to mediate between the larger commercial buildings along Goods Way and the smaller, existing buildings such as the listed station buildings, the German Gymnasium and the Southern Stanley Building. In particular, both Development Zones A and B are terminated at the southern end of King's Boulevard by buildings of similar height (i.e. approximately +56m AOD) to mark the start of this important route. The proposed Zone A Building is not built out to the full extent of Development Zone A to the south and does not include the lower element, i.e. up to +34m AOD envisaged on Parameter Plan KXC 014.



INSTEAD OF 5 BUILDINGS, THE BUILDING IS SPLIT INTO 12 PARTS EACH OF WHICH HAS ITS OWN IDENTITY



EXPRESSION OF COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE BUILDING

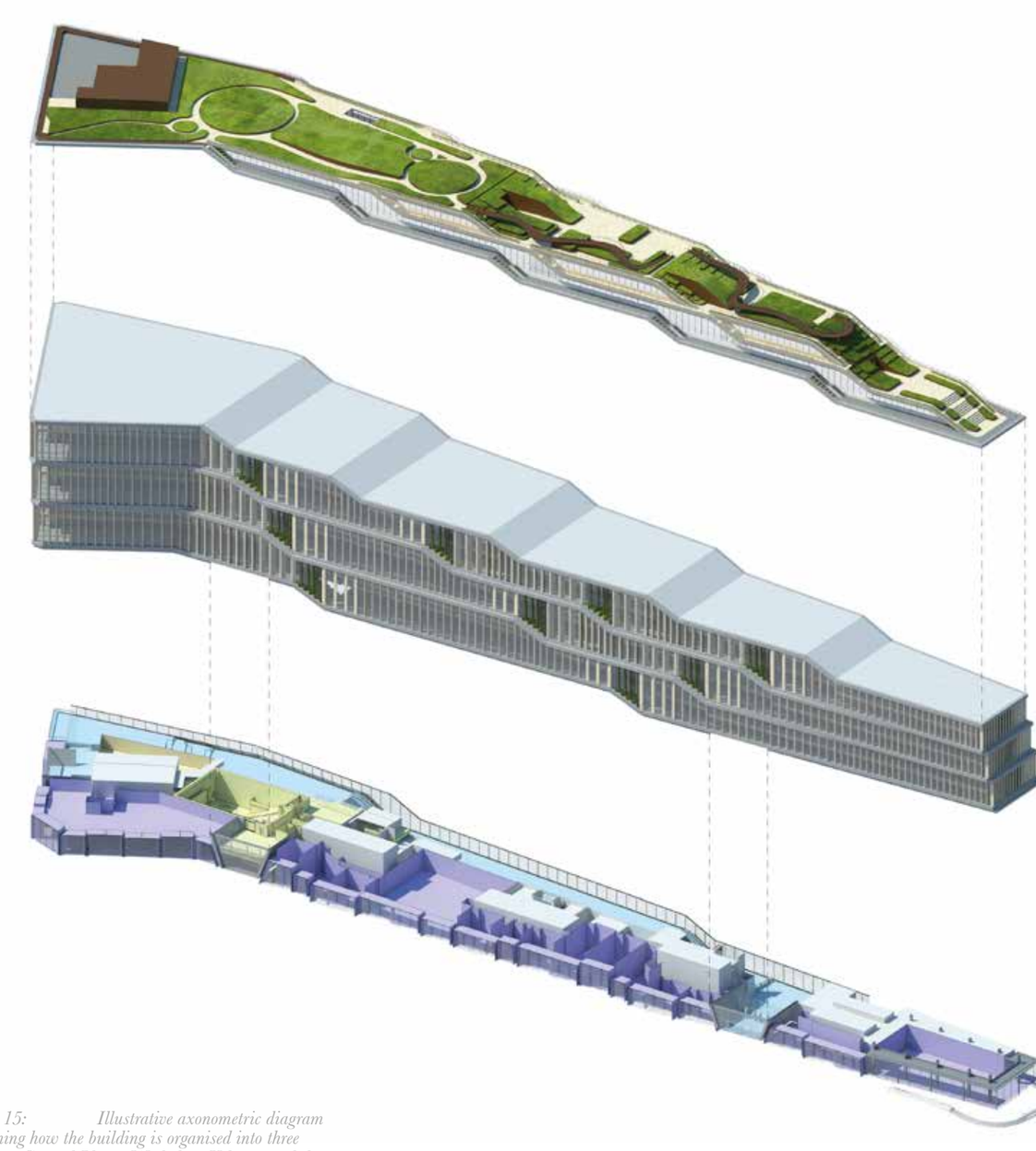


1 PERSON → **COMMUNITY 150 PEOPLE**

Figure 16: Diagram illustrating concept of internal communities

Scheme Description

1.3



Roof Plane
Levels 7 to 11

Workplace Volume
Levels 01 to 11

Ground Plane
Levels 00 to 01

Figure 15: Illustrative axonometric diagram explaining how the building is organised into three elements: Ground Plane, Workplace Volume, and the Roof Plane

Building Form

A number of scale and massing strategies have been employed across the Zone A Building in order to create visual interest and make the building and its functions legible when viewed externally.

The proposal for a large single building, rather than a terrace of five, requires a different approach to the massing. The gentle, graded stepping of the main massing with angled interfaces, subtly mirrors the slope to the south, bring the massing down to Battle Bridge Place. Where the layers fold, as they meet the next higher layer, the transition is marked by a planted terrace, or façade garden. These verdant openings signify the changes in the layers and form visual markers for the internal communities (Figure 16). When combined with the other concepts, particularly the atria at the perimeter and the double/ triple stacking of the floorplates, it seeks to deliver an elegant, graded mass which responds to the urban context that surrounds the building.

The building is essentially organised in a tripartite arrangement, with the form represented by distinct bands of ‘Ground Plane’, ‘Workplace’ and ‘Roof Plane’, as shown in Figure 17.

The upper floors (ie levels 1 to 11) are referred to as the ‘Workplace Volume’. In keeping with the original concept set out in Section 1.2, three main floorplates are grouped across three storeys to the north and two storeys at the south stepping down in line with the site levels along King’s Boulevard. These floorplates, which are expressed in the facade, create a robust framework for the built form and act as the bone structure for the building.

East Elevation

West Elevation

Figure 18: Proposed East and West Elevations

Scheme Description

1.3

The structural solution comprising concrete slab floors, and two further cross laminated timber (CLT) mezzanine floors adds to the uniqueness of the proposal, creating tall, expansively glazed spaces around the perimeter of the building, which in combination with the recessed floorplates at every two to three floors, permit natural light to penetrate into the building, and create bright and spacious spaces for staff to work in.

On the east and west elevations, the façade is set back by 2 to 3m at various points of the building, creating a series of internal and external terraces. The terraces are positioned to mark the change in level and articulate the stepped floorplates of the building (Figure 18 overleaf).

To the north, recessed balconies are proposed on the third and sixth floors measuring 0.8m in depth, with a larger balcony on the tenth floor measuring 3.65m. These balconies extend 18 bays at levels 3 and 6, and 12 bays at level 10, representing a significant proportion of the width of the building and adding depth to the facade in a similar way to the adjacent Zone B buildings. A further balcony, also 0.8m deep, is provided at level 2 above the entrance to the Access Ramp.

In response to pre-application discussions with officers, further massing moves were encouraged and acted upon. At the southern end, the views south towards the spire of St. Pancras were considered. The upper two layers of double height workplace were nudged out, each layer moving over nearly a metre – tilting the building towards the King's Boulevard, as shown in FIgure 19. This allows the view, as you travel south, to be softly framed, wrapped by the Zone A proposal.

To respond further to the scale of the buildings that surround Battle Bridge Place, the southern façade was similarly pushed back northwards and westwards at each layer. This softens the southernmost elevation and massing, with a different language of terraces and rotating fins.

Towards the northern end of King's Boulevard, the road kinks west towards Canal Square and Granary Square. The building massing also rotates in line with this with the upper two triple height workplace layers 'nudged' over by almost a metre each (Figure 19). In addition, on the north east and north west corners of the building, the edge is chamfered by angling large, three storey windows at 45 degrees to the plan to soften the corners at this key junction.

These massing moves are further layered as you reach the top of the building which takes on a more distinct form to reinforce the different character of the spaces and the stepped massing required by Parameter Plan KXC 014. The upper floors (levels 7 to 11) are set back to contain ancillary functions to the offices, the roof gardens and the need to address the King's Boulevard light cone parameters. These levels are also folded, but in a slightly less regular manner, giving them a softer more fluid feel (see Figure 18). This is then allied with a change in architectural language: the floors are created as curved edged trays, and the façade cladding systems differ to those below.

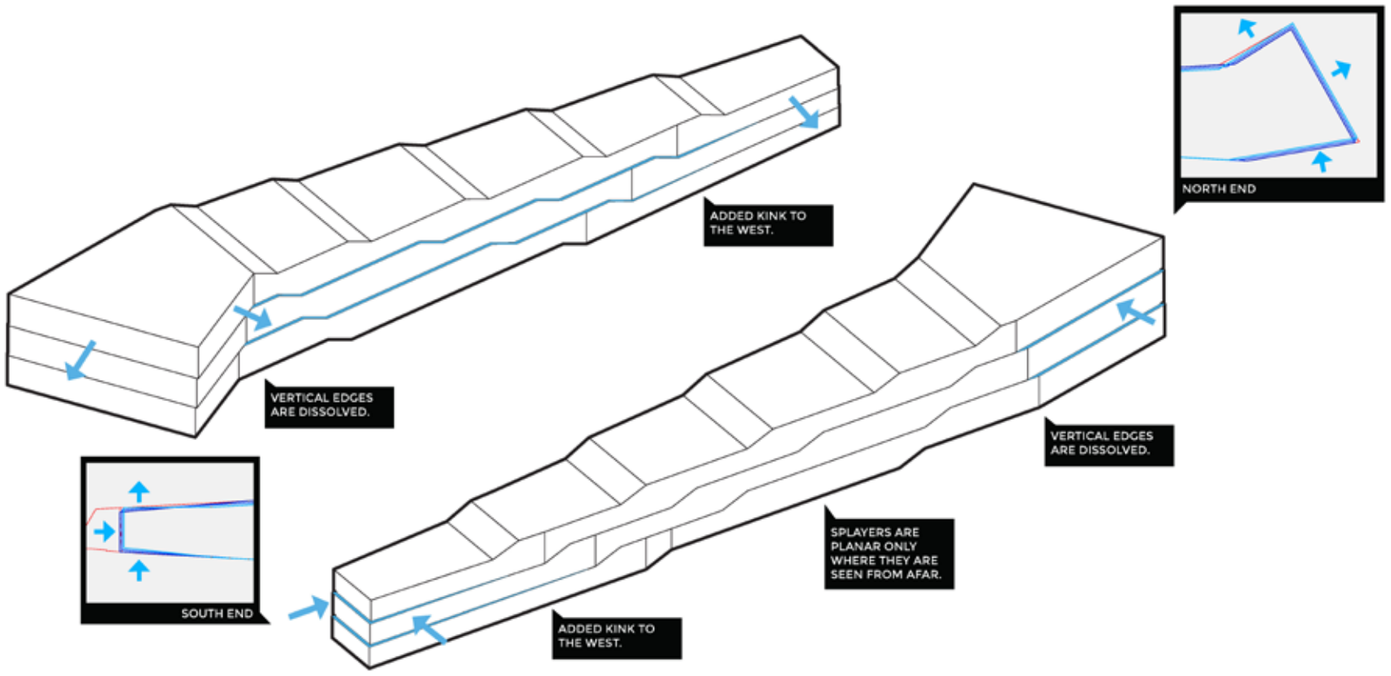


Figure 16: Diagram showing the massing approach, in particular, demonstrating how the three layers of the workplace volume read as separate elements with a shift on one side of the building resulting in an equal shift on the other

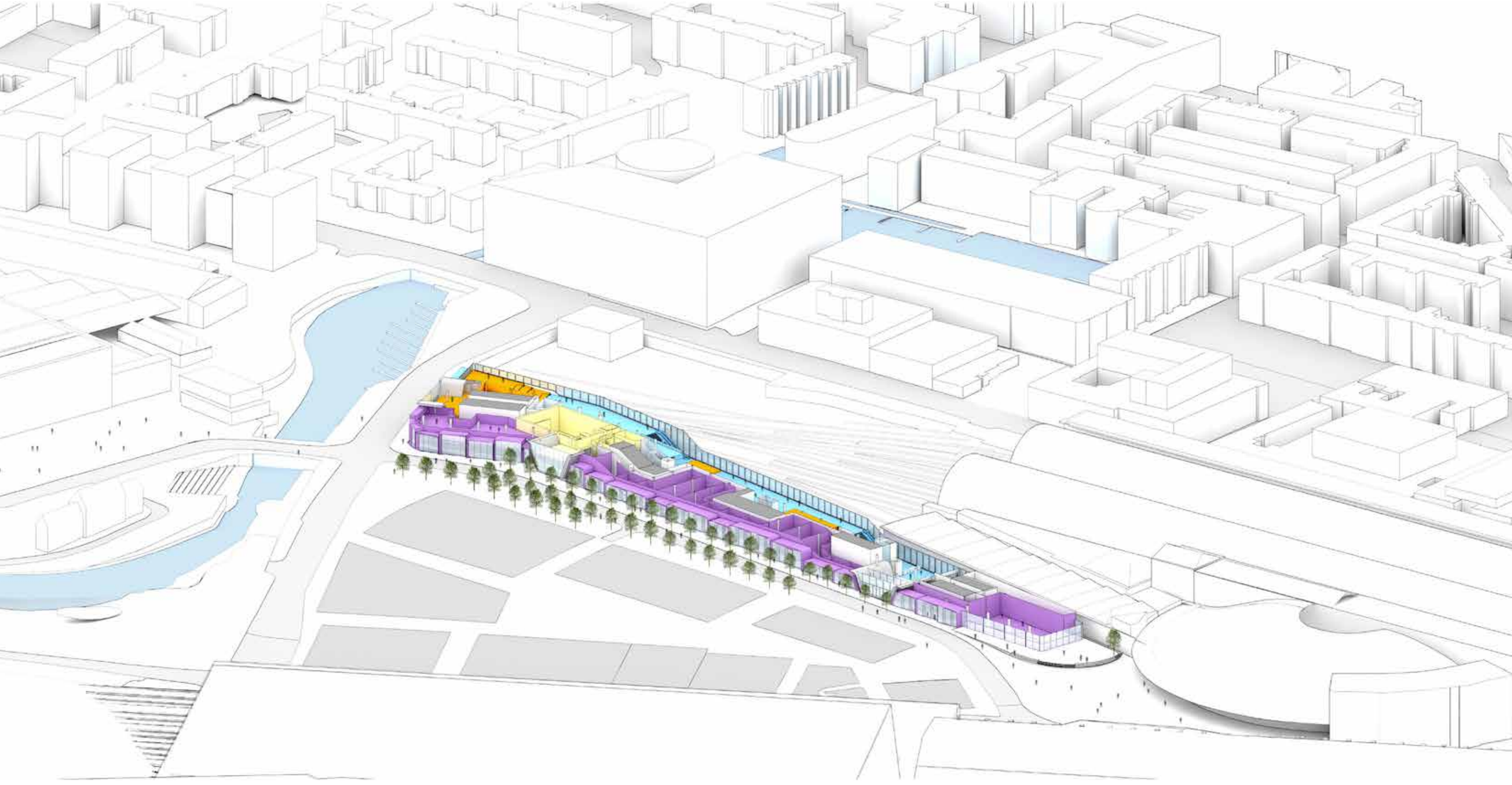


Figure 17: *Illustrative axonometric diagram showing ground plane*

Scheme Description

1.3

Plans and Sections

The design of the Zone A Building reflects the ambitious aspirations and occupational requirements of the prospective occupier, Google UK Ltd, who intend to make the building their European Headquarters. A key aspect of the design is to create the largest continuous floor plates possible, in order to facilitate the varied requirements of Google's unique business operations. However, the building will also feature uses ancillary to the office function and public ground floor uses which serve to activate the façade along King's Boulevard.

The Zone A Building has been designed to be accessible, inclusive and an enjoyable workplace. The quality of access to the building is self-evident from the location and generous dimensions of its entrances and the promenade which weaves its way through the building, providing connections to th wide range of internal uses.

The placement of the building's cores in the centre of the building allows for active uses to be placed around the perimeter, both at the ground and upper floors, as shown diagrammatically on Figure 20. The location of the five cores and their relationship to the entrances and promenade are intended to support simple and direct internal circulation routes, which in turn foster spatial integration between different user groups or teams. The atmosphere within the workplace, range of facilities, spatial interest, acoustics and the servicing methods that provide comfortable conditions, are intended to provide a sense of well-being within a productive workplace and support contemporary working methods.

As noted previously, the building is formed of three component parts, reflecting the uses within the building and its built form. Theses are referred to as the 'Ground Plane', 'Workplace Volume' and 'Roof Plane', shown in Figure 21 and described in terms of their uses and programme below. These elements are linked by the five cores (incorporating lifts and stairs) and a feature diagonal staircase which runs on the eastern side of the building.

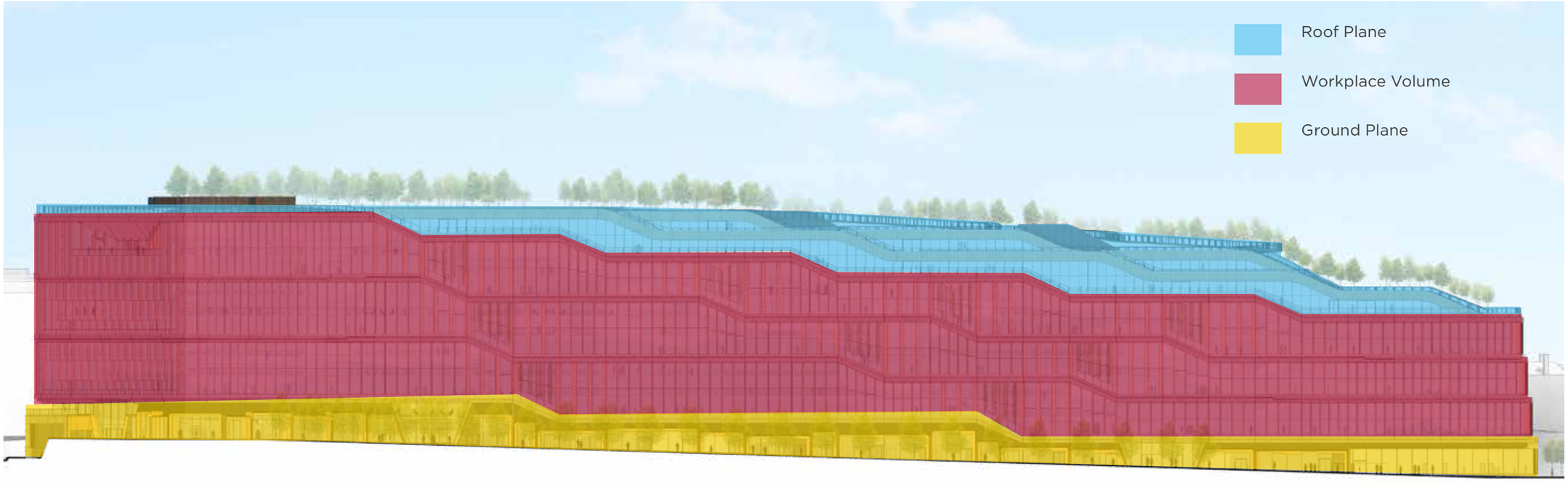


Figure 18: *West elevation showing tri-partite structure of the building*

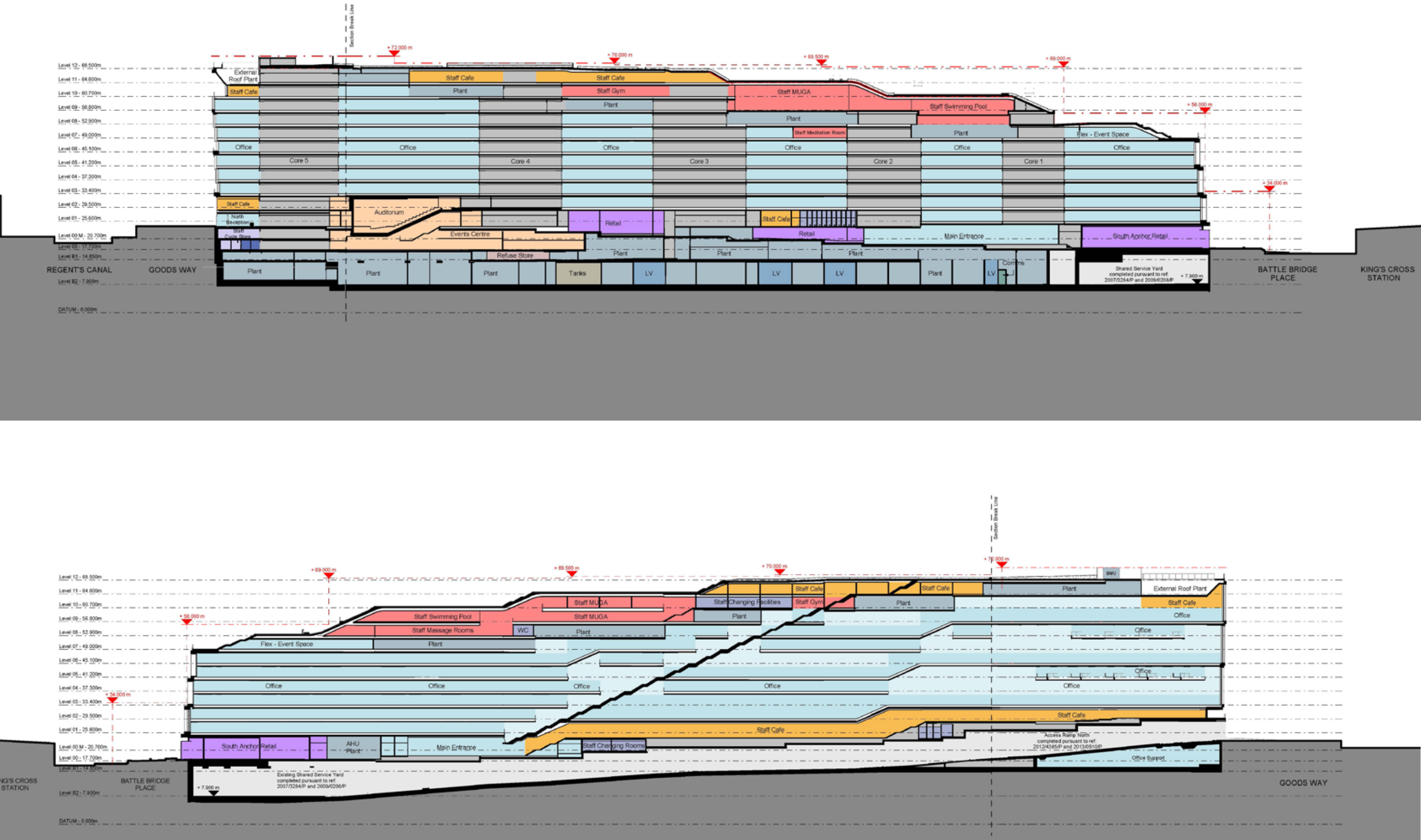


Figure 19: Sectional drawings showing Cores 1 to 5 along length of building (top) and the diagonal staircase through the building (bottom)

Scheme Description

1.3

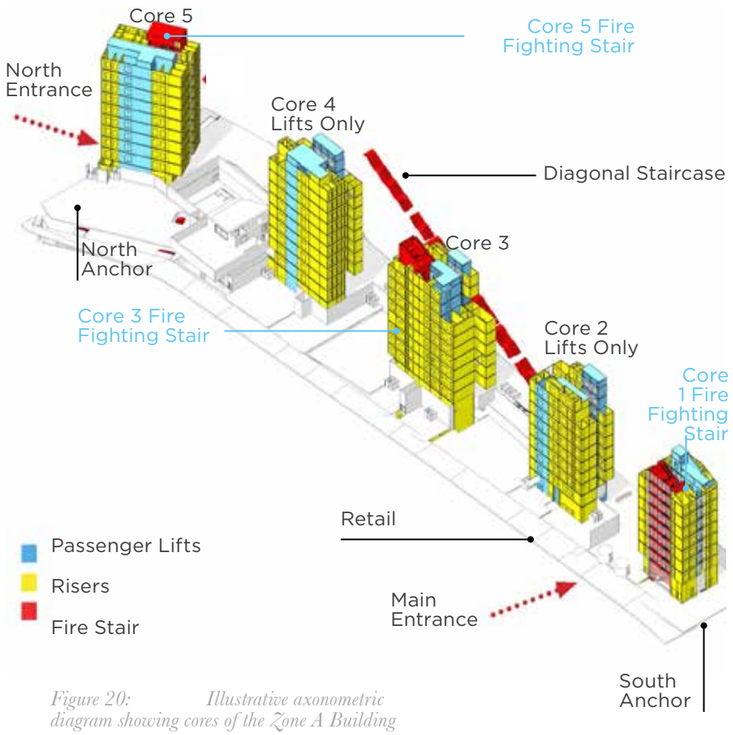


Figure 20: Illustrative axonometric diagram showing cores of the Zone A Building

Vertical Circulation

The circulation within the building has been designed to encourage users and visitors to walk, to use the stairs, and to increase interactions, rather than use lifts. Given the scale and the length of the building, multiple, interlinking, but clear routes are required. Vertical circulation within the proposed Zone A Building is provided by: i) lifts within all five cores; ii) separate staircases provided in cores 1, 3 and 5; iii) the stepping of the floorplates; and iv) the featured diagonal staircase as illustrated in Figures 22 and 23, opposite. Of these, Cores 4 and 5 will extend to the Events Centre on the ground, first and second floors.

Due to a change in site level of approximately 8m along King's Boulevard, the vertical circulation is complemented by escalators adjacent to Core 2 leading from ground to first floor level. A second set of escalators is provided for further circulation between the first and second floors, connecting the internal 'promenade' and staff café spaces, located adjacent to Core 4. These has been placed here as it will be one of the more heavily trafficked places in the building.

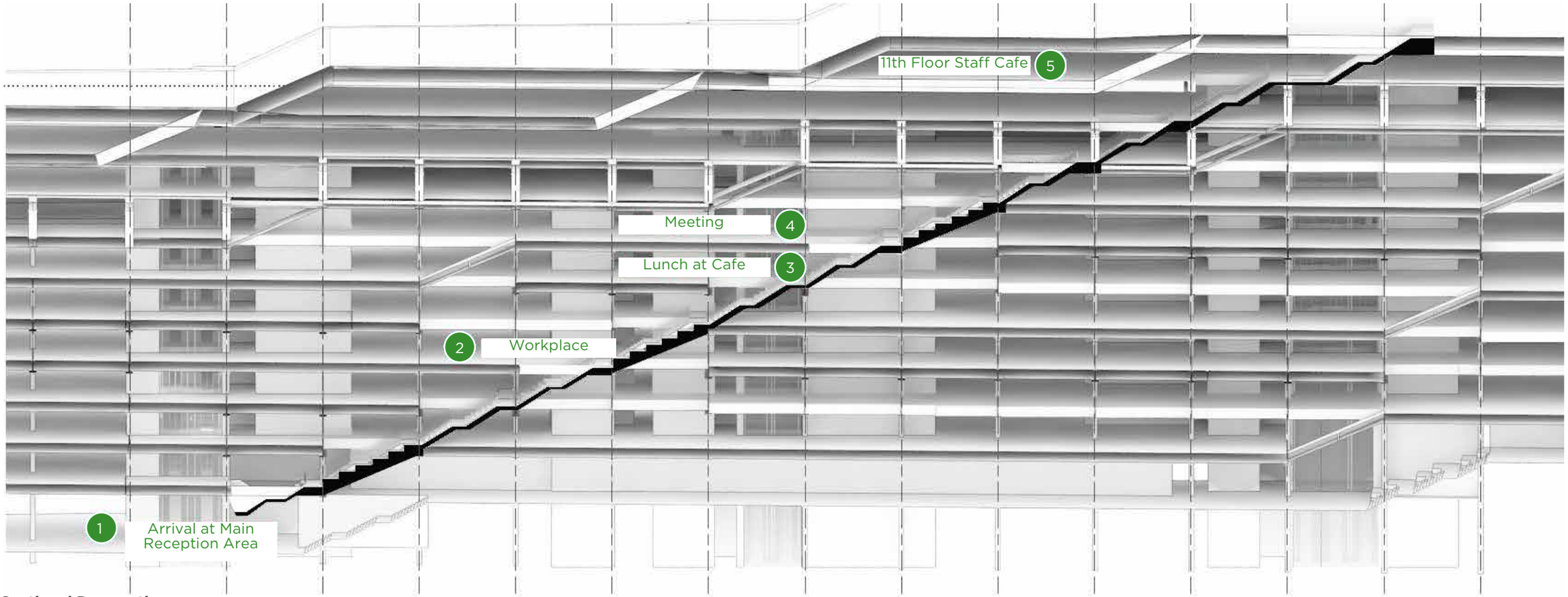
The stepping of the floorplates as they transition from level to level, also form another clearly identifiable part of the informal, non-mechanical circulation strategy. Building users can progress around the building through workspaces and up and down the east and west flanks using these steps at the junctions of the floorplates. These junctions are designed to be more than just steps, they are also interaction spaces, and are designed to take many different forms. They are also signified by the external gardens on the east and west elevations.

The cores are aligned in the centre of the floorplate and are spaced evenly throughout the building, providing convenient vertical access to all floors for staff and visitors, and for the distribution of services. This arrangement of cores results in an adaptable, highly efficient workspace, with good daylight penetration and active facades on all four sides of the building and creates a 'central spine' of circulation that runs between each core at every level. This central spine has been deliberately placed to allow all of the noisy work functions to be organised off it. These spaces, meeting rooms, cafes, welfare facilities etc, then help form an acoustic and visual buffer between the workspace of the east and west flanks adding a logic and a legibility to the circualtion. At the upper floors, the cores also incorporate risers, WCs, server rooms and storage areas.

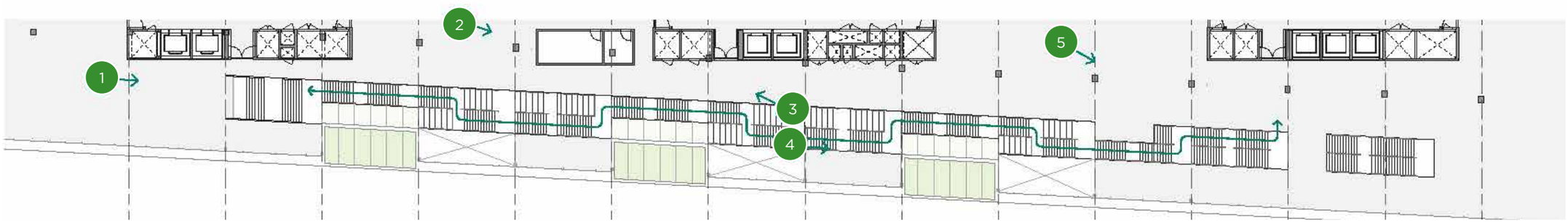
Whilst the building is due to be taken by one occupier, it has been designed with future proofing in mind. In particular, the cores are separated in terms of service distribution, accessibility, lift capacity and fire safety, allowing the building to be subdivided should the need ever arise.

The vertical circulation provided by the lift cores is complemented by a continuous diagonal staircase rising up the eastern side of the building from the Main Entrance at ground floor level to the eleventh floor of the building, and by a 'promenade' at Levels 1 and 2 (see Figure 22). The concept of the promenade and the diagonal staircase has been influenced by the desire to move through the building efficiently and connect various teams to facilitate collaboration, resulting in a route that combines gathering spaces with movement both vertically and horizontally through the building.

Further details on the diagonal staircase and the internal promenade are described in the following paragraphs.



Sectional Perspective

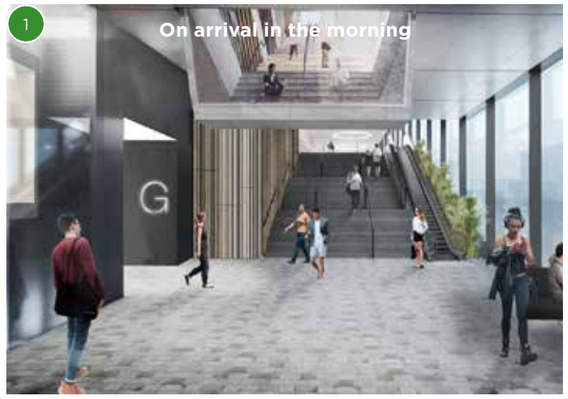


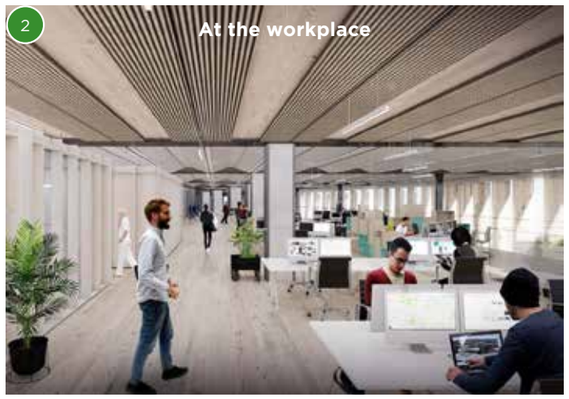
Combined Floor Plan

Figure 24: Sectional perspective (top) and floor plan illustrating the diagonal staircase from the ground to the eleventh floor staff cafe

Scheme Description

1.3





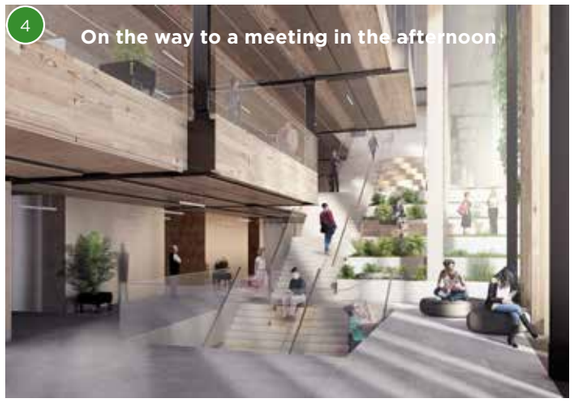


Figure 21: Illustrative interior views showing a journey through the building for a member of staff, as indicated on Figure 24

Diagonal Staircase

Vertical circulation is complemented by the diagonal staircase which acts both as circulation and a place for gathering. The diagonal staircase can be accessed on the eastern side of the building from the main reception area, as shown in Figure 24, and then at intervals on every floor level up to Level 11.

The diagonal staircase connects members of staff and their visitors from the main reception area via the internal promenade (see description below) and staff café spaces located on the first and second floors. It has been designed as an integral part in the journey between each workspace floor, the various breakout areas, as well as the primary link to accessible gardens along the entire length of the building. By positioning key spaces and uses along its length and giving it prominence and visibility within the flooplate, for example by glazing the end of the stair case at Level 01 to provide a visual connection from the Main Entrance (Figure 24), legibility is improved and people are encouraged to move around the building efficiently using stairs rather than lifts. When viewed upwards from the main reception area, the diagonal staircase offers a view into the workplace levels and beyond. An example showing the journey through the building for member of staff is shown in Figures 24 and 25.

At the upper levels, the diagonal staircase provides a connection to the wellbeing facilities on Level 8, the MUGA and swimming pool on Level 9, and to the gym and exercise studios on Level 10.

Between Levels 9 and 10, the diagonal staircase also functions as a space for social gatherings, with steps that can function as seating areas to watch events taking place in the MUGA, as well as an area to for staff to mingle and relax after activities. At Level 11, the diagonal staircase becomes an external feature taking users up to the roof gardens.

The diagonal staircase feature has such a prominence in the way it functions internally, that it is expressed externally along the east elevation, which is described later in this section under the heading ‘Elevations and Façade Design’.

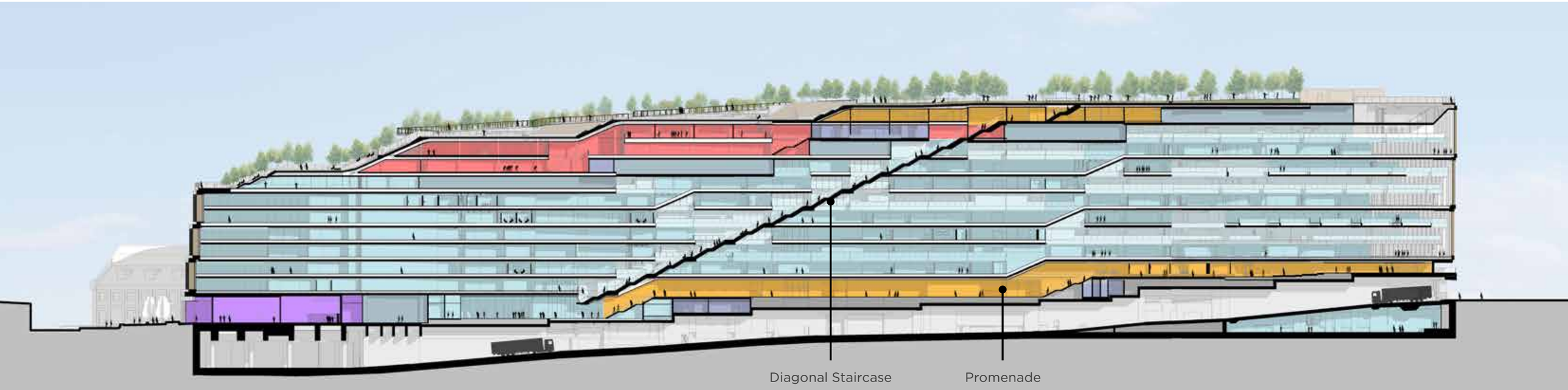


Figure 22: Sectional drawing showing the location of the internal promenade (top) and llustrative interior view of the promenade (bottom)

Scheme Description

1.3

Figure 23: Illustrative interior view of the diagonal staircase between the ninth and tenth floors

Promenade

Wide and engaging, the main entrance off King's Boulevard leads you through to the 'Promenade'. Starting at grade at the south, it rises to the first floor and acts as the 'internal street' or promenade of the building, with views over the railway lines and beyond. As it steps up to the second floor, the promenade continues its way from the east and wraps around the building at the north where it becomes a café space, offering expansive views to the Regent's Canal and the Eastern Goods Yard, including the Granary Building and Granary Square to the north.

The promenade is essentially an amenity and recreation space connecting the building horizontally where members of staff and their visitors can meet, eat and work. The promenade is punctuated by the metallic lift cores, which act as the key wayfinding features within the space.

Key

Retail

Entrances

Events Centre

Figure 24: Plan showing the entrances on a combined ground floor plan (ie Levels 00 and 01)

Scheme Description

1.3

Ground Plane

In keeping with the aspiration to create a major new shopping street along King's Boulevard, the ground plane of the Zone A Building has been designed to bring a layer of vibrancy to the street by engaging with passers-by through the provision of retail spaces, entrances and reception areas into the office element, and the Events Centre. The ground plane will read as a streetscape of building entrances and retail units of varying sizes, complemented by larger retail anchor units at the south and north ends of the Building on Battle Bridge Place and Goods Way, respectively.

The components of the ground plane are shown on Figure 28, and are explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Figure 25: Internal view of the Main Entrance

Entrances and Reception Areas

The Zone A Building has three prominent entrances that address the topography of the site and reflect the anticipated desire lines of visitors to the offices and Events Centre. These entrances, shown on Figure 28, are distributed along the entire length of the King's Boulevard and Goods Way frontage, providing convenient connections to the different functions and spaces within the building.

Each entrance is considered equally important, such that there is no 'back door' to the building. The ground floor entrance spaces are designed to be spacious and welcoming to both staff and their visitors. It is intended that these will be comfortable areas, conducive for communality for the free flow of staff and guests through the building. These areas will have access to lift cores and staircases which are located adjacent to each entrance. Each entrance is discussed in turn in the following paragraphs.

The 'Main Entrance' on the King's Boulevard is set towards the southern end of the building, directly opposite the entrance to the London Underground that sits below Building B2. Its location is placed to accommodate the large number of building users approaching from King's Cross and St Pancras Stations, and from Google's existing office at Six Pancras Square which is expected to be retained on completion of the Zone A Building.

The Main Entrance, which is intended for use primarily by staff and their invited guests, extends the full depth of the building, creating a generous lobby area with views between King's Boulevard and the railway lines into King's Cross Station. The open arrangement helps to draw staff and their visitors into the building where they can be greeted and directed through the secure gateline adjacent to Cores 1 or 2 and then towards the promenade to access other cores and spaces, as illustrated in Figure 28.

The 'North Entrance' to the building is located on the northern facade to serve staff and visitors approaching from Goods Way, York Way and north of the Regent's Canal and those travelling by bicycle (the entrance sits adjacent to the cycle entrance). It is expected that this entrance will be used mainly by staff (although visitors will be able to register here too). The lobby connects directly to Core 5, and incorporates a courier and package drop-off area, as well as a storage room to accommodate disabled scooter/tricycle parking and transfer (see Section 1.5).

A third entrance to the Events Centre is located on the King's Boulevard, opposite the secondary street between Buildings B4 and B6. The entrance is highly visible from Canal Square and adds variety in terms of uses at the northern end of King's Boulevard by interrupting a long run of retail uses. It is largely self-contained to reflect the more public nature of the use, although does provide direct, controlled access via Core 4 to the rest of the offices, as shown on Figure 28.

As noted above, separate entrances to the cycle store and to the basement (via the Access Ramp) are located on Goods Way, this being the only location where the building fronts onto a public highway. This location is also considered appropriate for cycle parking as the storage area can be accommodated within the slope of the site at lower ground floor, and addresses cyclists coming from all directions. The design of the cycle parking facilities is discussed in more detail in Section 1.5, while servicing is detailed in Section 1.6.

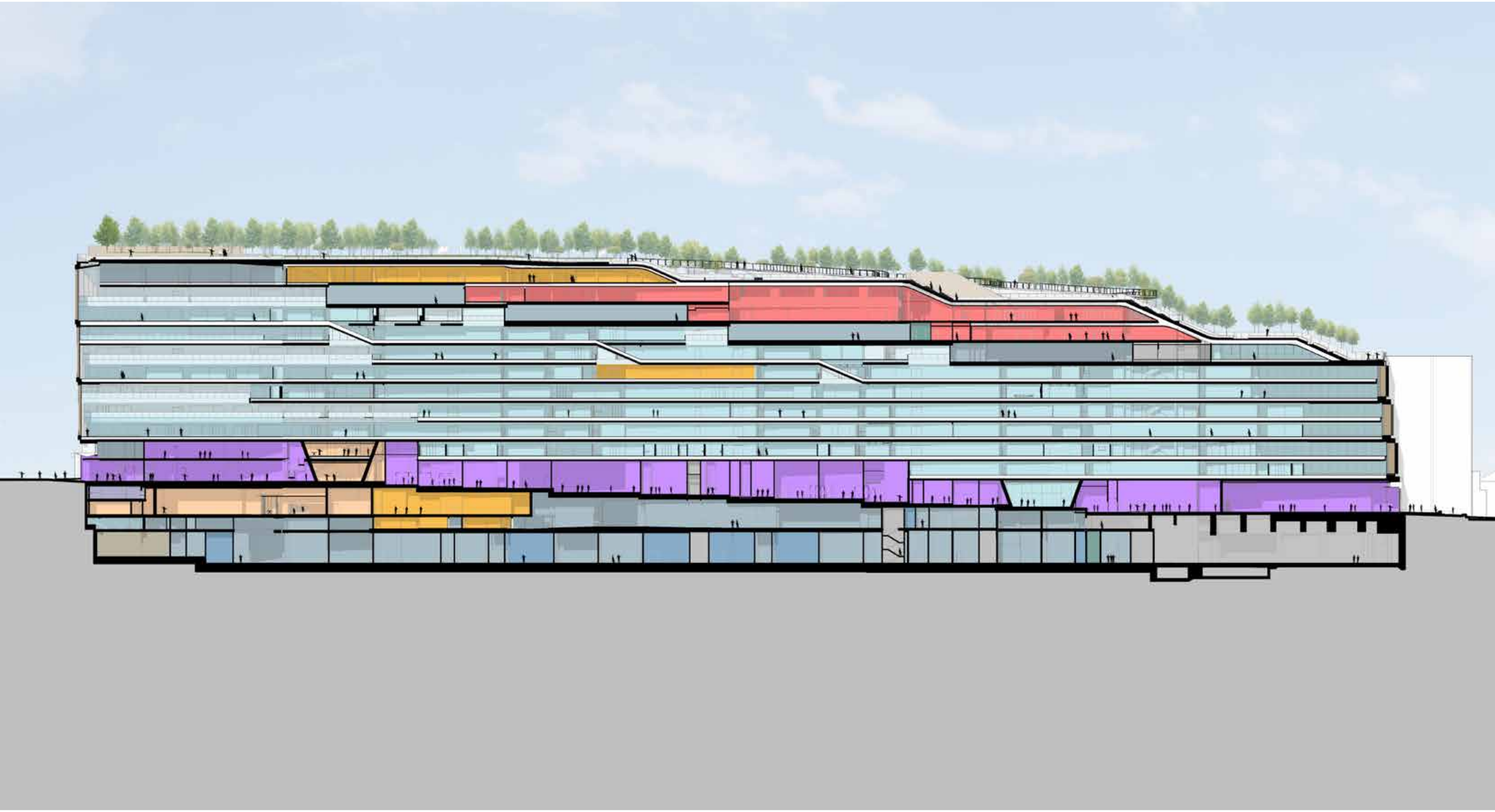


Figure 30: Long section along King's Boulevard, looking east. Retail frontage is shown in purple and demonstrates the slope down from Goods Way to Battle Bridge Place across Levels 00 and 01.

Scheme Description

1.3

Retail

In keeping with the aspirations set at the outline stage to establish the King's Boulevard as one of the main retail destinations within the KXC site, the majority of the ground floor on the south, west and north façades will provide retail space (Class A1).

The retail offer comprise a retail street of up to fifteen units along the King's Boulevard; the 'North Anchor' unit on Goods Way, and; the 'South Anchor' unit fronting Battle Bridge Place, as shown on Figure 31.

The retail units have been designed to be as flexible as possible with the most significant constraint being the external levels along the length of Development Zone A. Consequently, the building has been designed to sit on a stepped podium that responds to the changing nature in site levels and allows a consistent height for all of the retail units.

Along the King's Boulevard, the retail street will comprise of units of varying sizes totalling 4,376m^2 of floorspace that are flexible enough to be amalgamated into larger shop units, or partitioned to create smaller units to respond to tenant demand. The indicative layout of the retail units shown in the adjacent figures and the submitted Drawing Package represents a possible configuration of the spaces. However, the spaces have been designed to have a degree of flexibility to respond to future letting and marketing demands.

The larger anchor units will complement the smaller units along King's Boulevard, allowing a variety of tenants and an innovative retail offer. At the southern end of the buildng, the South Anchor fronts onto Battle Bridge Place and marks the start of the reatil street along King's Boulevard. Entrances to the unit from both the south and west facades take advantage of the expected footfall to/from the stations and to the proposed public realm, which provides a defined outdoor space alongside the south elevation overlooking Battle Bridge Place.

The South Anchor unit has been designed as a showcase unit for retailers with an openable façade offering the opportunity to create a unique, concept retail experience that might include, for example, talks or events, and/or a more curated or marketplace feel to the offer.

At the northern end of the building, the North Anchor addresses Canal Square and Goods Way as well as King's Boulevard, and is flanked by the entrances to the Events Centre to the west, and the North Entrance to the Zone A Building. The level change along King's Boulevard and stepped floorplates allow this unit to include a mezzanine level on the second floor, creating one significantly sized unit or two separate units. The entrance to the unit is located on the corner of the building, taking advantage of sightlines from Granary Square, Goods Way and King's Boulevard.

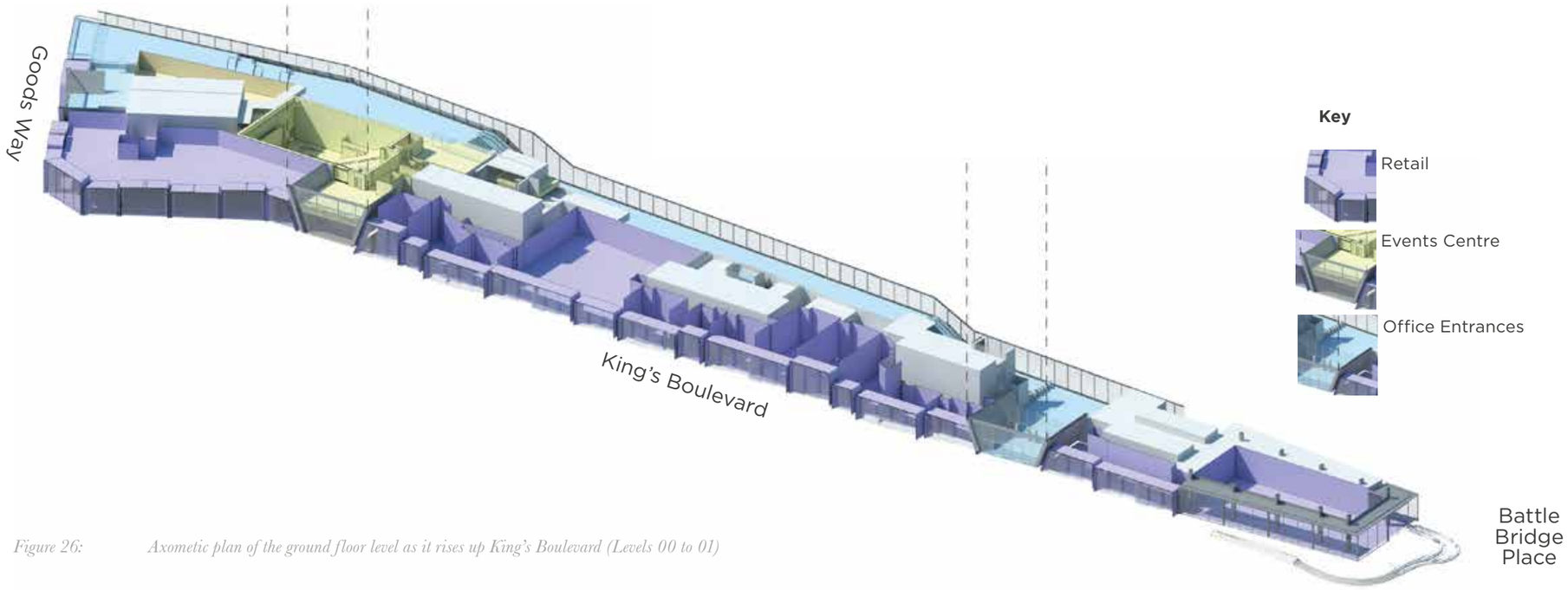


Figure 26: Axometic plan of the ground floor level as it rises up King's Boulevard (Levels 00 to 01)

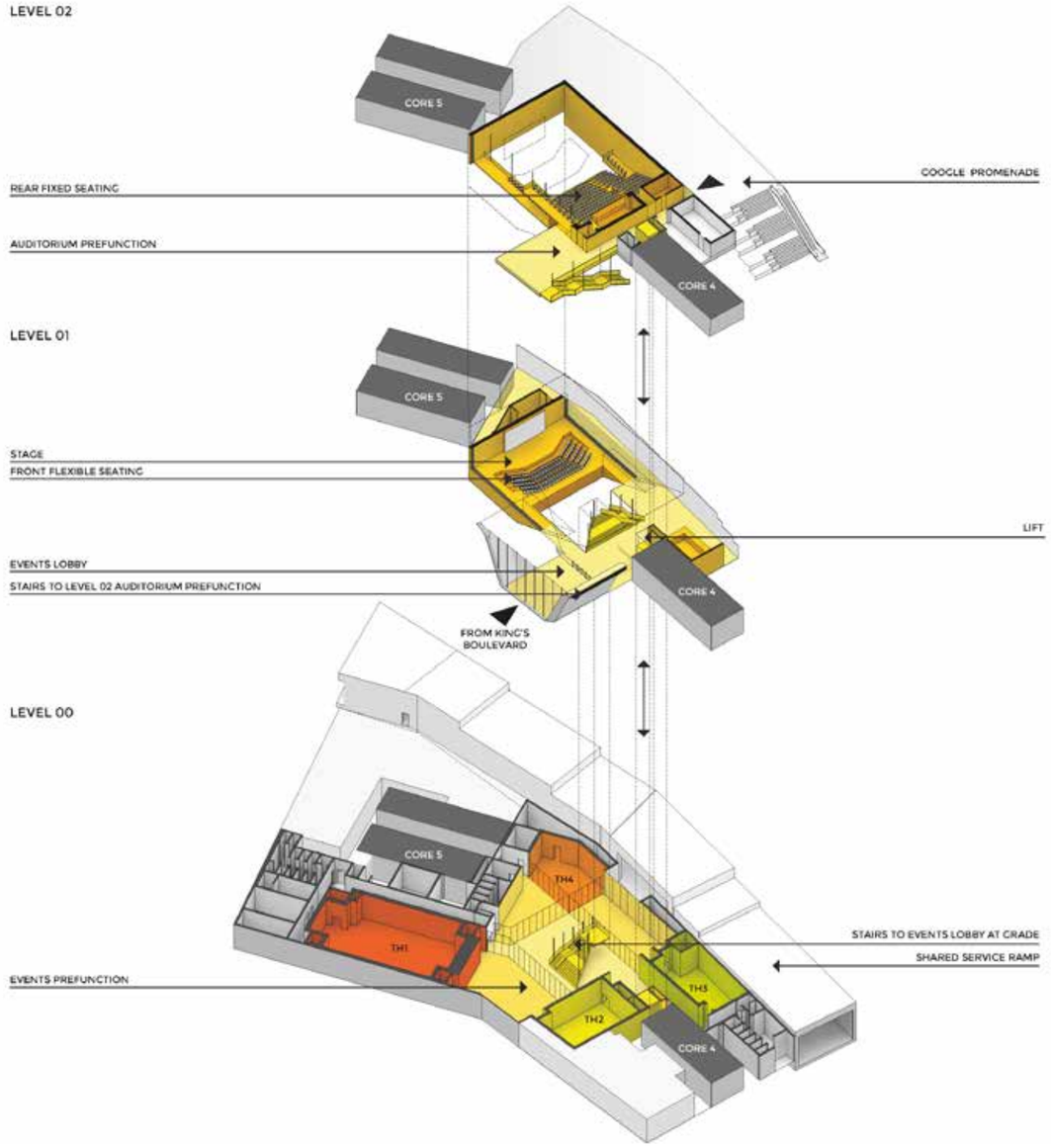


Figure 32: Axometric plan of the Events Centre and illustrative interior views: (bottom right) alternative arrangement of the auditorium with front row seats removed and (bottom left) auditorium pre-function areas

Scheme Description

1.3

Events Centre

As noted above, the building provides an Events Centre across three levels, intended for use by Google and third parties for product launches, talks, presentations and industry events, for example. It is anticipated that any third party events will have a technology focus, or will be linked to local community groups/charities that Google actively work with.

The Events Centre is accessed from the King's Boulevard, opposite Building B6. Although it is arranged over Level 00 (lower ground), and first and second floor levels (as shown on Figure 32), the users main experience will be at lower ground and first floor where the entrance and events spaces are largely focussed. It should be noted that due to the site level changes, ground floor at the northern end of the building is referred to as first floor/Level 01 (see Figure 33).

From the entrance, the lobby provides a direct connection to the auditorium space on the first and second floors, and to the four 'Town Hall' spaces sat lower ground floor level via two staircases and one lift located between Cores 4 and 5. The Events Centre has been designed to be 'self-contained' to the extent there are limited direct links to the main office areas, save for controlled access to Core 4 and the Promenade at Level 01. This will facilitate the management of the space, which is likely to be heavily used by visitors and third parties, and maintain the security of the workspaces elsewhere.

The Town Hall spaces would incorporate foyers, pre-function and support spaces, for hosting a range of functions and events for Google or third party users from 78 to 210 seats. The Town Halls also share a pre-function space at Level 00, which could be sub-divided by moveable partitions to provide privacy or left open to create a larger events space around the central staircase.

Further details regarding the architectural expression of the entrances are provided under 'Elevation and Façade Design' later in this section.

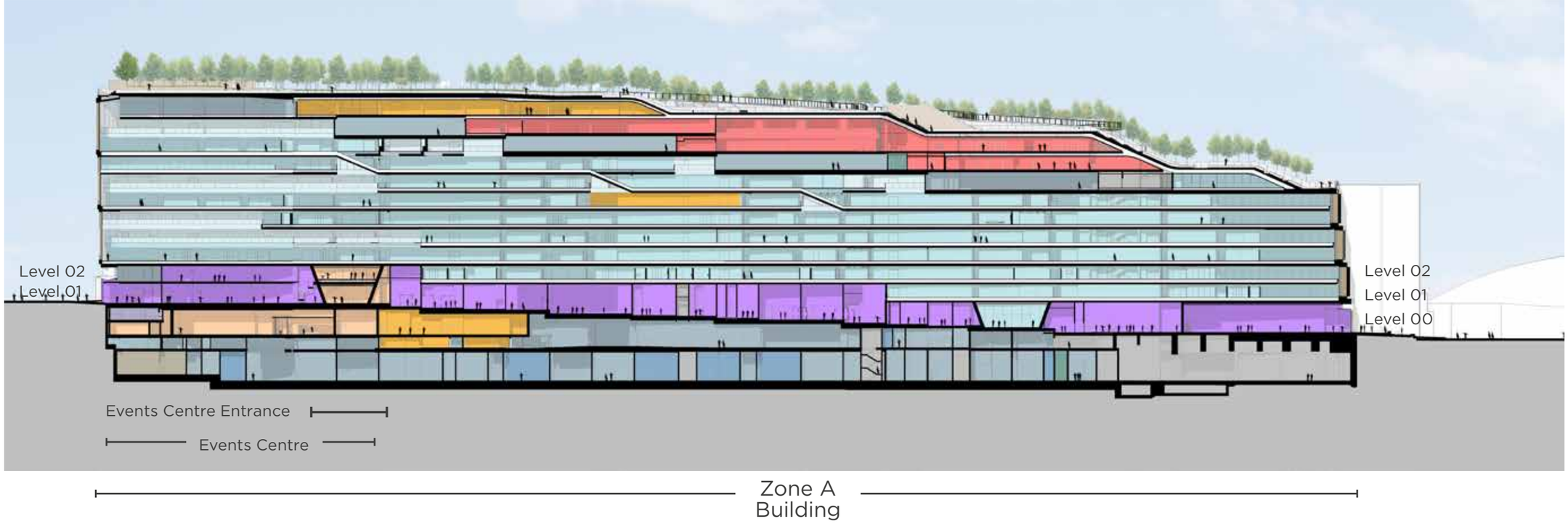


Figure 27: Section showing arrangement of Events Centre across Levels 00, 01 and 02

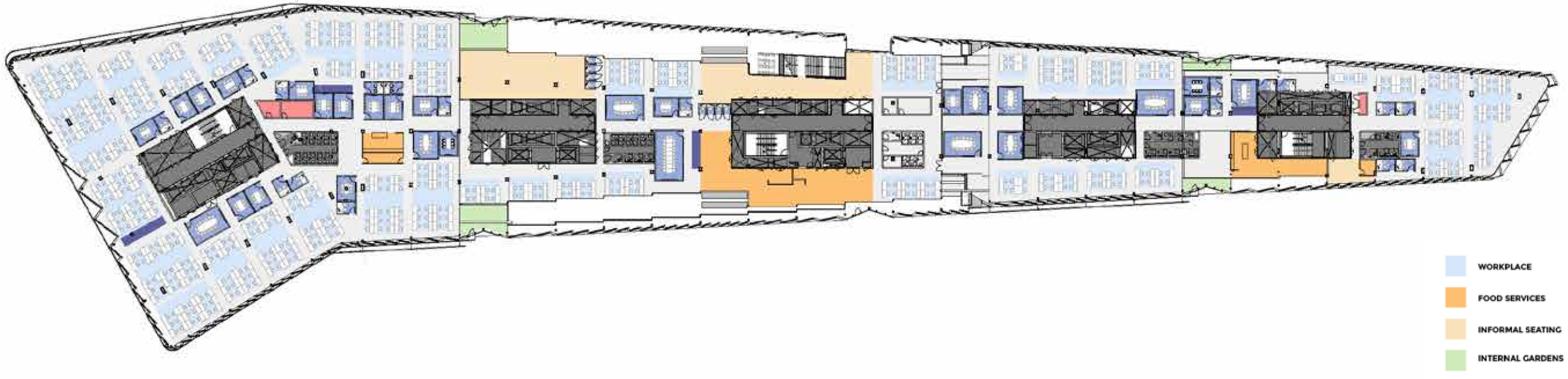


Figure 28: Typical office floorplate (top) and illustrative interior view of the workplace (bottom)

Scheme Description

1.3

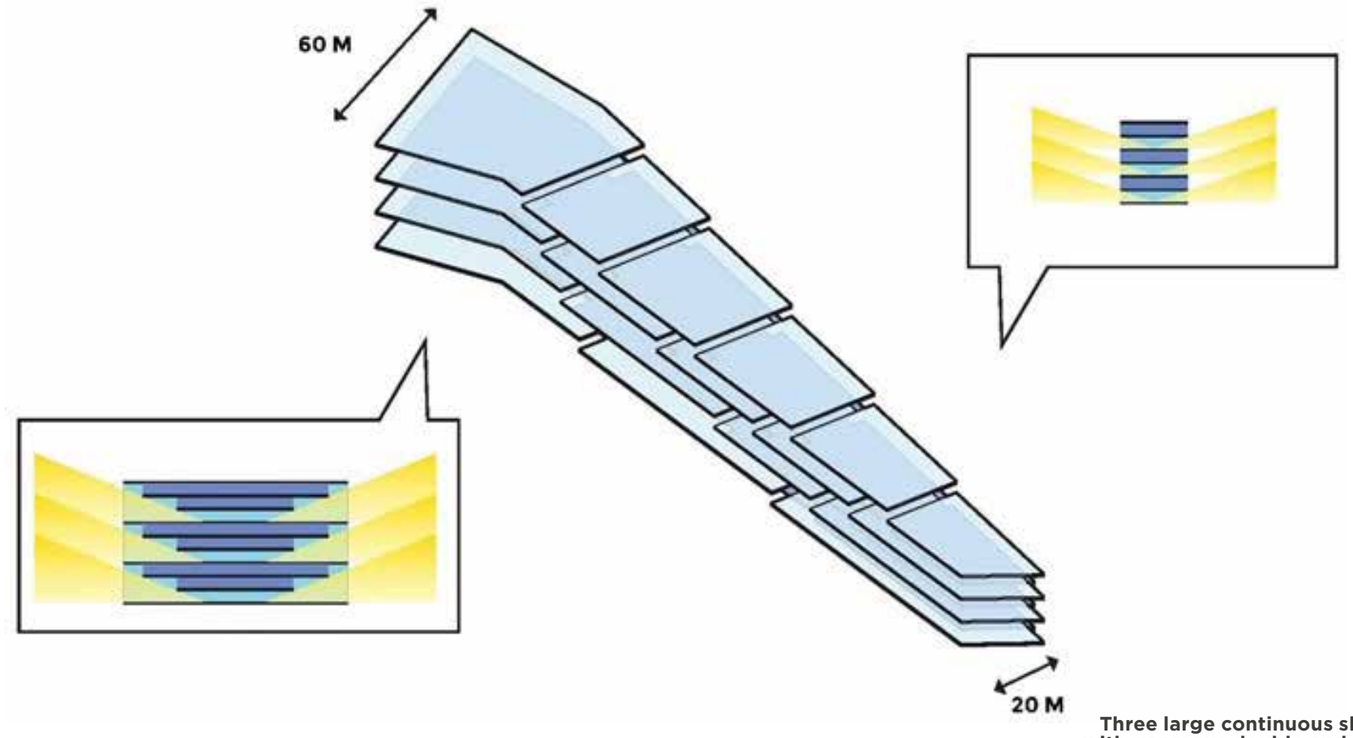


Figure 29: Approach to the structure and workplace floorplates

Workplace Volume

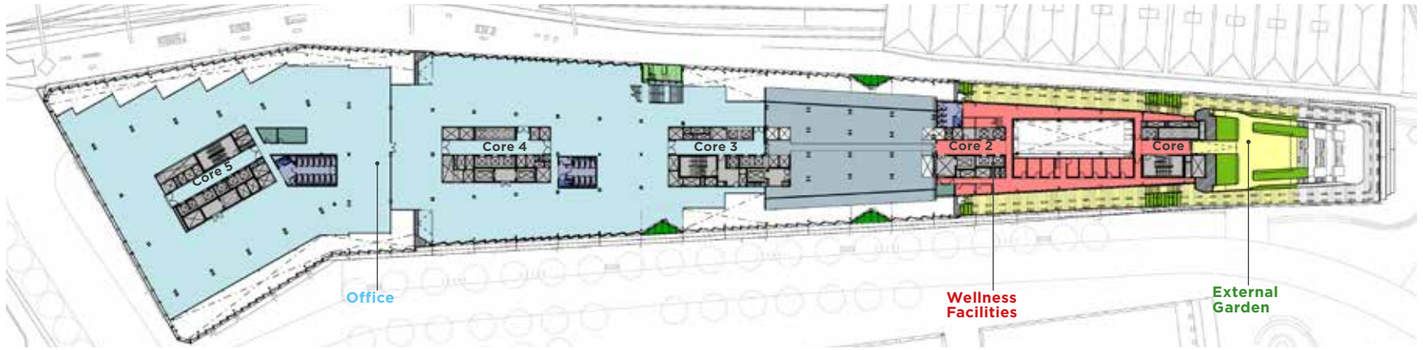
The 'Workplace Volume' represents the office and ancillary uses of the building, located between Levels 01 and 11. The workplace comprises three similar volumes of 2 to 3 storeys, stacked one above the other forming large expansive rooms. Each volume creates tall, expansive glazed spaces around the perimeter of the building, which when combined with the stepped intermediate floors, let natural light deep into the building, creating spacious and bright spaces for members of staff to work in, as illustrated in Figure 34.

The structural solution that underpins this layout adds greatly to the uniqueness of the proposal. Shown diagramatically on Figure 35, the central columns support huge trusses below the roof levels and all of the lower floors are hung from these giant trusses. The upper roof levels then sit upon these giant trusses in a traditional columnar way.

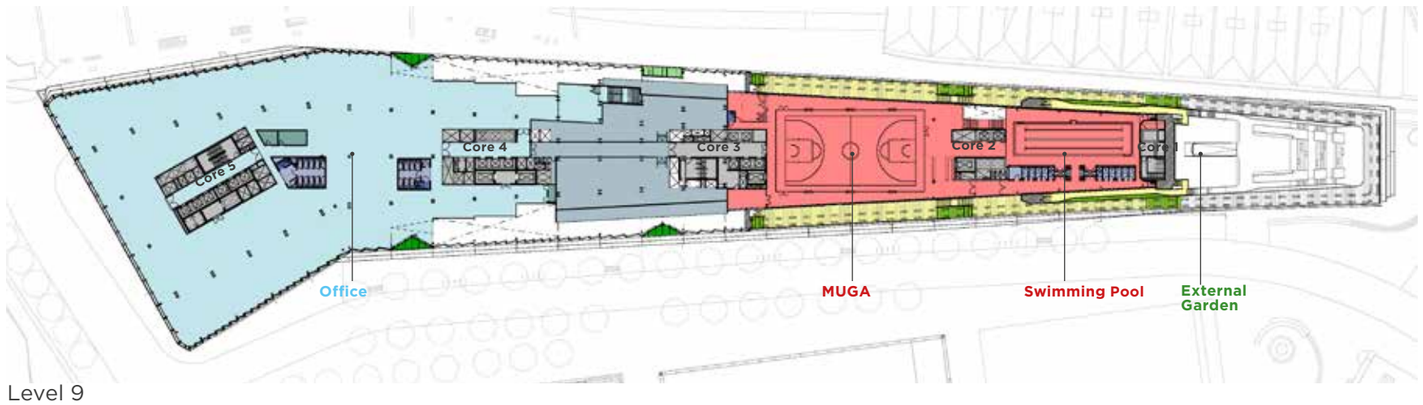
By lifting the proposal and creating a central support system, the column free perimeter is achieved, allowing great variety at ground and upper floor levels. The trusses are used to contain a significant amount of the mechanical and electrical plant, thus freeing the roof space to be as green, open and landscaped as possible (see later explanation of Roof Plane).

As a result, the facades are freed by these concepts; at the ground, they can be a different response to each of the functions – the office entrances and entrances to the ancillary events centre, the retail street and anchor units at the north and south ends; for the workplace volume, two and three storey sections of glazing interspersed with timber mullions, respond to the differing urban contexts and views; the roof and landscaped areas are treated differently yet again, set back from the building's perimeter.

Level 7



Level 8

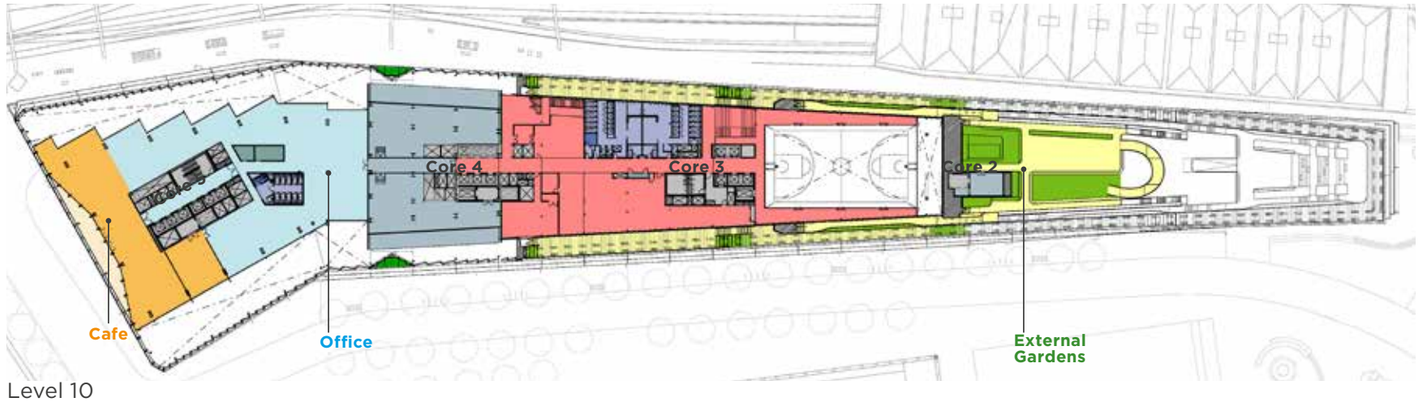


Level 9

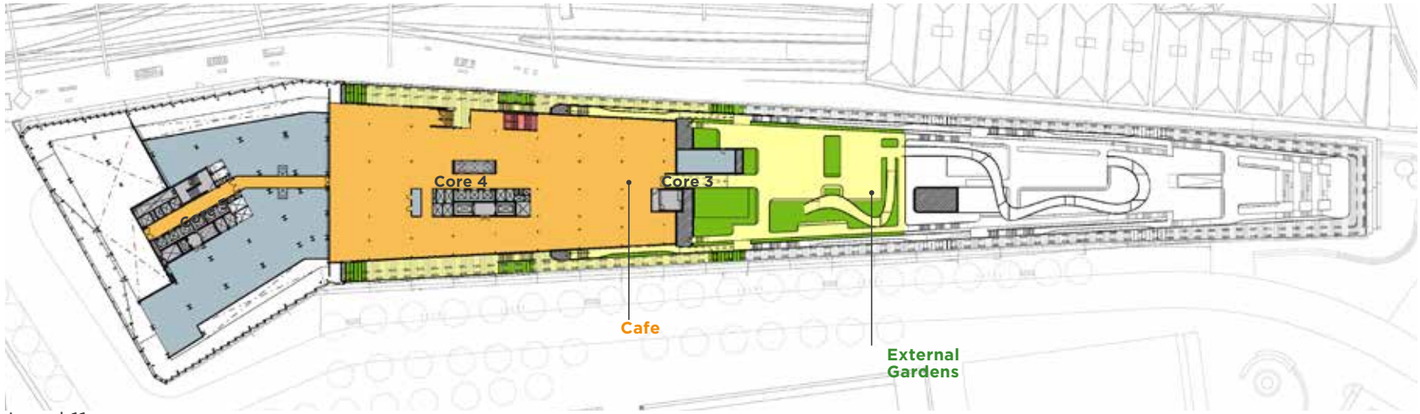
Figure 36: Floorplans showing ancillary spaces at Levels 7 to 9, including (right) the flexible meeting space, wellness centre and the swimming pool

Scheme Description

1.3



Level 10



Level 11

Figure 30: Floorplans showing ancillary spaces at Levels 10 and 11

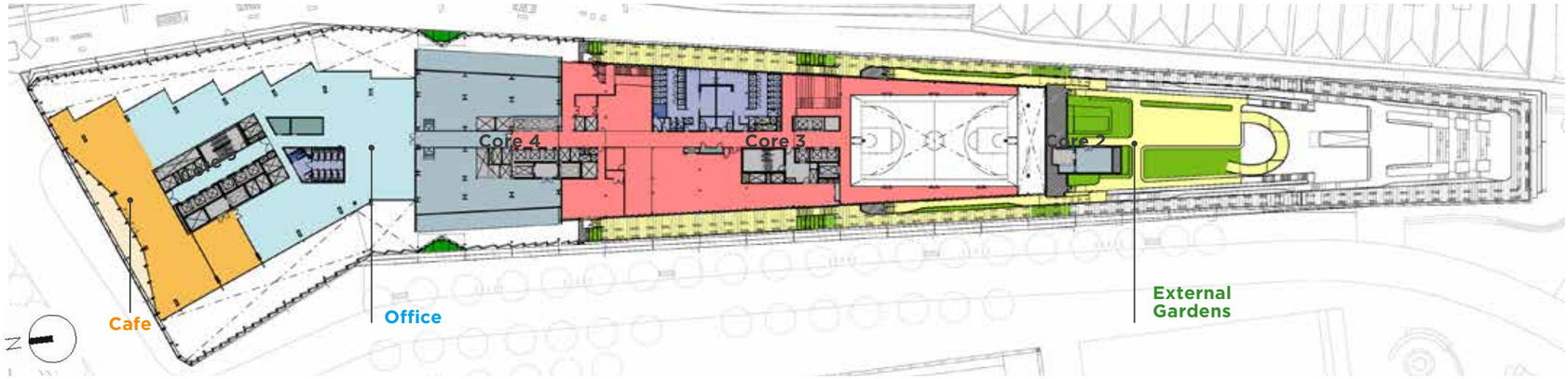
Ancillary Uses

Integrated within the workplace volume of the building are various ancillary uses for 4,500 members of staff and their visitors, including cafes, gym and pool facilities, a covered multi-use games area (MUGA), an events centre and staff training facilities. The landscaped terraces and a walking 'trim track' at roof level will provide valuable amenity and recreation spaces for members of staff with the aim being to foster a highly flexible, creative and healthy working environment. These are described in turn in the following paragraphs.

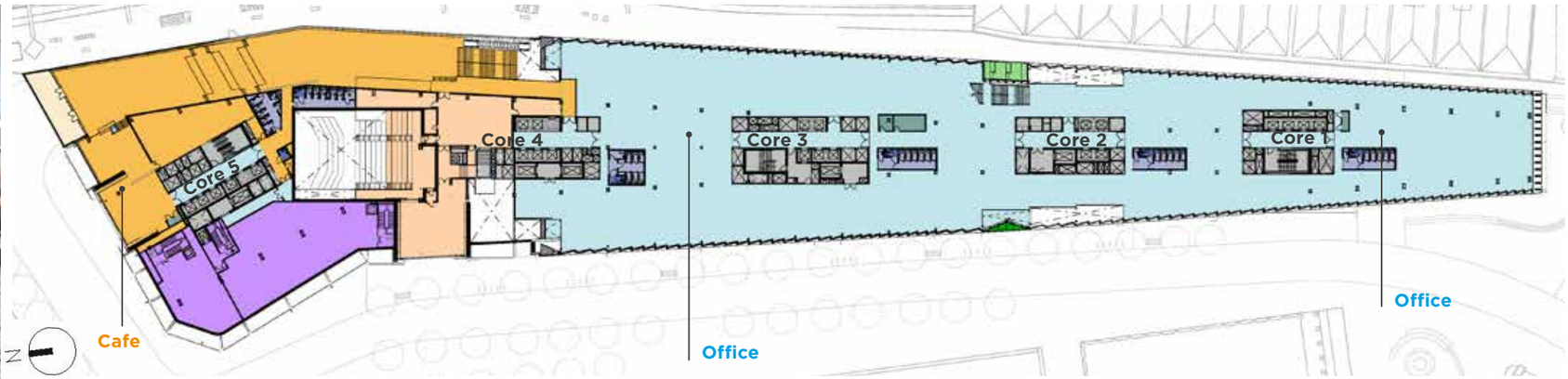
Flexible Meeting Area

Located on the seventh floor, the Flexible Meeting Area occupies a relatively private location at the southern end of the roof. This space, shown on Figure 36, can be directly accessed from Core 1 and has doors to the east and west terraces, where staff have access to the southern terrace and 'the Headland' area of the roof gardens (see description later in this section).

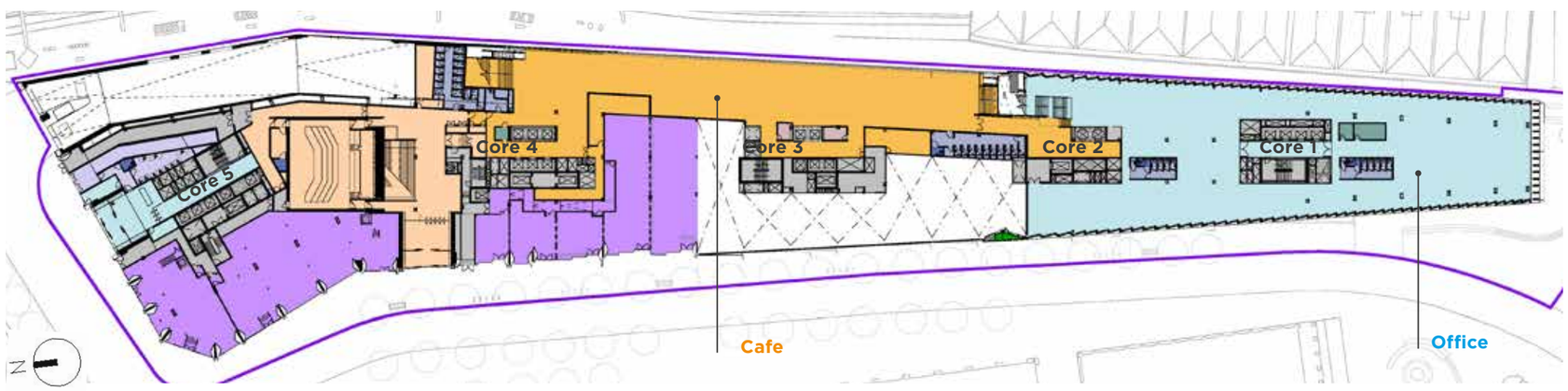
The flexible nature of this space combined with the adjacent Headland roof garden area, means it can be used for meetings, presentations and social gatherings, as an indoor and/or outdoor space. This space can also be used as a separate space for events without interrupting the flow of the rest of the amenity and recreation areas or the roof gardens.



Tenth Floor



Second Floor



First Floor

Figure 38: Illustrative interior views and typical floor plans showing the location of the staff cafe spaces in the building arranged on the second, sixth and tenth floors

Scheme Description

1.3

Wellness and Fitness Centre

Large amenity and recreation areas contribute to the generall wellbeing and satisfaction of staff and are proposed between Level 8 and 10 of the building. These areas include massage rooms on the eighth floor; a covered MUGA, pool and changing facilities on the ninth floor; and a gym, exercise studio and changing facilities on the tenth floor.

The stepped form of the building facilitates natural movement between each space, which has been designed as a journey, while at the same time creating an independent block that can be separated from the other spaces as neccessary.

The MUGA, located on the ninth floor, is the largest internal volume of amenity and recreation space, (Figure 39), measuring 17.4m x 31.9m, with a clear height of 7m. This space can be used for full-court basketball, five-a-side football, or badminton. Nets at high level are suspended below the soffit to subdivide the space and allow for different configurations and sports. A three lane, 25m long swimming pool and changing facilities are provided adjacent to the MUGA area at the same level, separated by a double-height break-out area.

Figure 39: Illustrative view of the MUGA at Level 9

The gym area is designed as a long generous space located along the west façade, benefiting from natural daylight. Two exercise studio spaces are located on either side of the central spine, also benefiting from a good source of natural daylight. Male, female, unisex and accessible changing facilities are located on the east side of the central spine. The east facade provides natural light to the spaces; privacy will be achieved through the application of a film on the inside of the glass.

Staff Cafes

The Zone A Building features staff cafes on the first, second and tenth floors (Figure 38), and large café on the eleventh floor, providing members of staff a variety of indoor and outdoor seating areas. The eleventh floor cafe, shown in plan on Figure 37 on the previous page) has direct openings to the east-west and south-north facing balconies, which are complemented by a large outdoor eating and drinking area set amongst the stepped landscaped terraces, described in more detail later in this section.

The eleventh floor staff café is connected to the lower floors by the diagonal staircase, which extends to roof level.

Figure 40: Illustrative view of the Headland Character Area as seen from the south of the building

Scheme Description

1.3

Roof Plane

The stepped massing of the building and focussing plant within the basement area, creates a number of opportunities for imaginative uses at roof level, ranging from active sports facilities to quieter terraces and landscape areas.

Measuring approximately 300m in length, and between 20m to 60m in width from the south to the north, the roof plane extends from Levels 7 to 11, with further accessible landscaping atop of Level 11. Roof terraces at these levels offer valuable amenity space for office employees and far reaching views across the city. These spaces are well-integrated into the wider building and therefore access needs to be managed to maintain security for other building users. Consequently, these spaces are intended only for employees or authorised visitors although Google has indicated that it will consider opening the roof gardens to the public on selected days, for example as part of the 'Open House' event or similar.

Overall, 8,590m^2 of landscaped roof is proposed, comprising a mix of 60% soft landscape and 40% hard landscape. The rising form of the roof plane creates four distinct character areas that are intended to adopt a unique response to its position and adjacent uses. These are characterised as:

the 'Plateau', the 'Fields', the 'Gardens' and the 'Headland', as illustrated in Figure 41 below. A wildflower green roof comprising a mixture of wildflowers, sedums, herbs, and/or perennials will also be created on top of the MUGA to create a diverse habitat for bees, butterflies, insects and birds.

These character areas are described in turn in the following paragraphs. Details on the planting palette proposed for each character area are provided in the submitted Drawing Package.

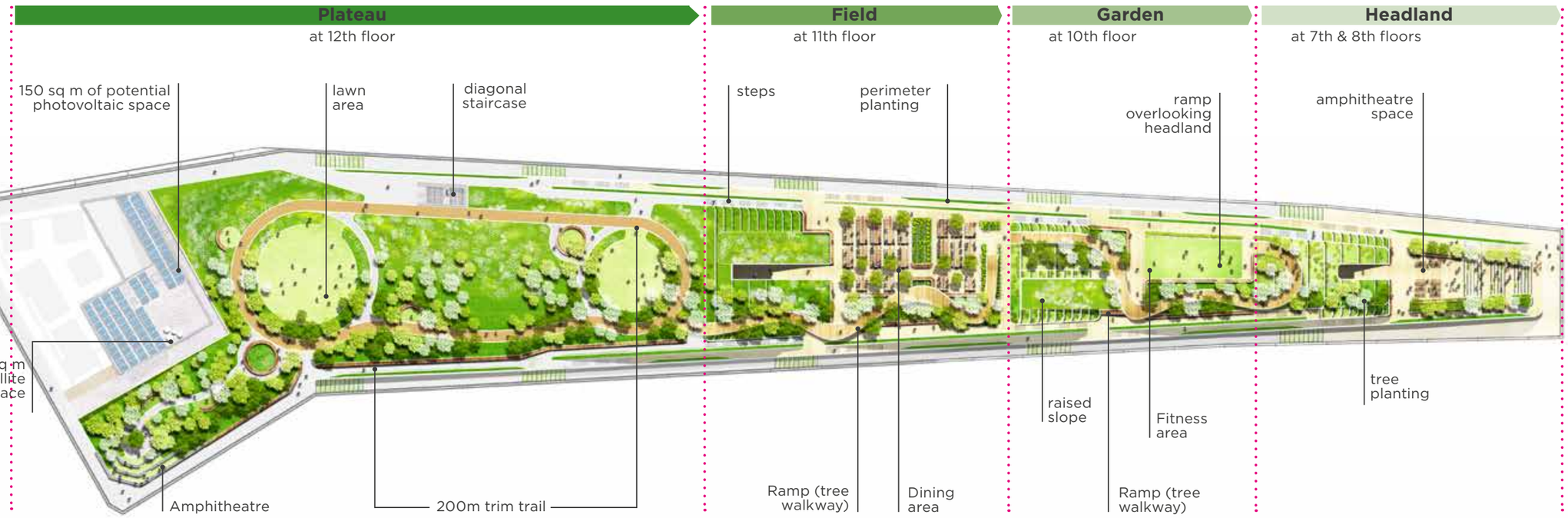


Figure 31: Developed roof plan showing roof amenity and recreation spaces at various levels

Key plan

trim trail

tree planting

climbing plants

BIODIVERSITY

BIO DIVERSE PONDS

CLEARANCE ZONES

LOW MAINTENANCE

Figure 32: Illustrative section showing the Plateau Character Area at the northern end of the building (top) and precedent mages showing the envisaged uses of the Plateau Character Area (bottom)

Scheme Description

1.3

Figure 33: Illustrative axonometric view of the Plateau Character Area, as seen from the air

The Plateau

The Plateau is located on the highest level, atop of Level 11, and is the largest open space on the roof level. Measuring 3,570m^2, this area of open space is connected to the rest of the roofscape via a set of steps and a step-free ramp shown on Figure 43. Access from the office space is also possible via lifts in Core 5.

The Plateau provides a vast expanse of landscape where members of staff and their visitors have the opportunity to exercise around a 'trim trail' (a running/walking track of resin bound gravel material approximately 200m in length with exercise stations at regular intervals) or enjoy the intimacy of 'pause areas' (cut-outs into the wild landscape to reveal more intimate spaces for reading, seating, meeting or escaping away from the office floors).

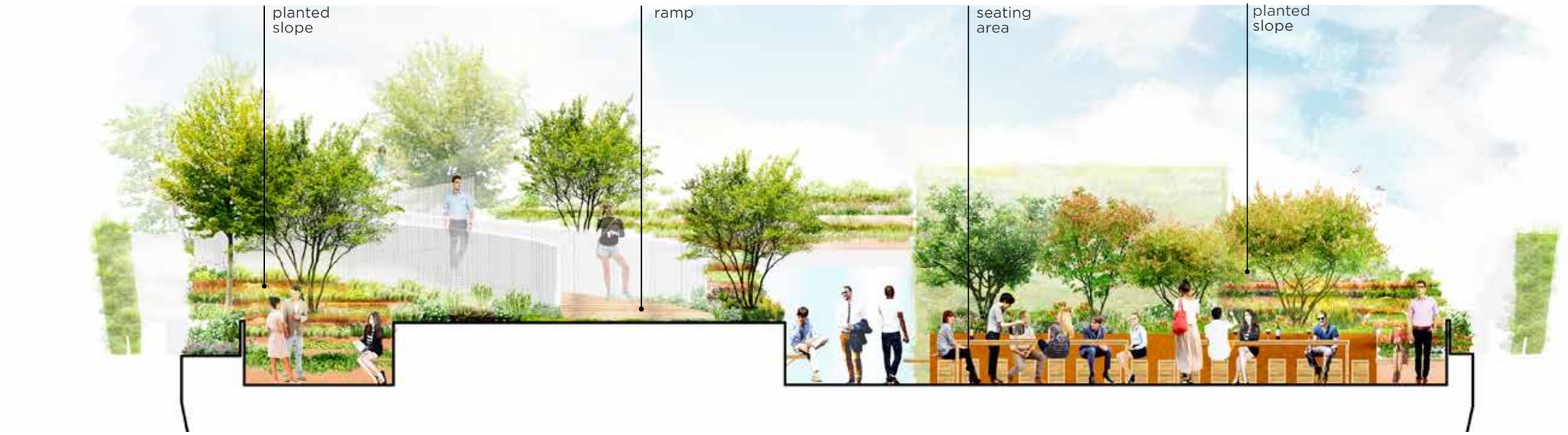
The creation of the trim trail allows two circles of lawn to be created which could be used for seasonal events and regular fitness and recreational classes. An amphitheatre terminates the journey at the North-West corner of the Plateau offering 270 degree views to the Regent's Canal, Granary Square and the London skyline.

The Plateau is the most naturalistic of all the roof plane areas. The planting will bring much valued biodiversity through the use of meadows, woodland planting and rainwater collection, which will attract wildlife such as insects and birds. Where possible, bee-hives will also be introduced to non-accessbile areas.

As shown in Figure 41, a wide band of trees and tall shrubs will line the western edge of the Plateau, protecting wildlife and people from the prevailing south-west winds.

At the northernmost end of the building, the roof also includes an area dedicated to servicing the building which comprises photovoltaic ('PV') panels, BMU housing and storage and maintenance rooms for the gardeners to house some of their equipment and bulk material. The PV panels will be set behind the building parapet and will be angled such that they are not visible from the ground or adjacent buildings.

Key plan



OUTDOOR DINING

MOVABLE PLANTERS

LONG TABLES

TREE PLANTERS

Figure 34: Illustrative section showing the Fields Character Area (top) and precedent images showing the envisaged uses of the Fields Character Area (bottom)

Scheme Description

1.3

Figure 35: Illustrative axonometric view of the Fields Character Area, as seen from the air

The Fields

The character area named as the 'Fields' sits on the eleventh floor of the Zone A Building and provides amenity and recreation space covering approximately 1,240m². The Fields is a predominantly hard space that work as an outdoor extension to the eleventh floor staff café. It is connected to the café, as described previously, with direct access at its centre.

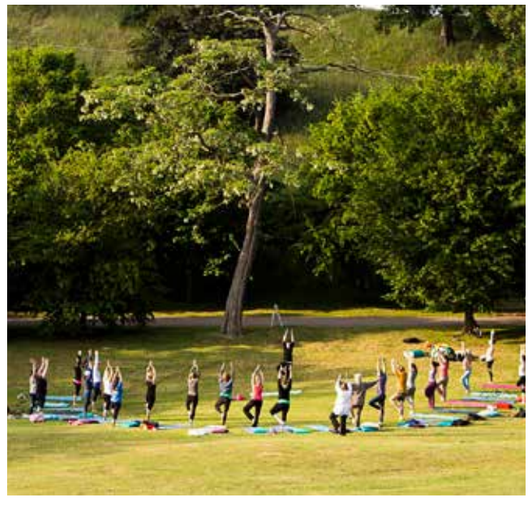
Long tables with benches and stools are grouped together to support collaboration and the adjacent cafe use, creating different 'rooms' that are divided by planting. Movable planters form part of the ornamental component of the Field, comprising of ornamental trees to provide some shade on hotter days and filter the south-west winds. All planted beds are raised off the roofplane in order to accommodate sufficient growing medium for trees and shrubs.

The Fields sits above the MUGA and is connected to the Gardens area below by a set of steps and a step-free ramp which meanders along the western edge of the building (as shown in Figure 45) amongst thick tree planting. The gradient is at 1:15 and is accessible for wheelchair users.

Key plan

RELAXATION

ESCAPE FROM WORK



EXERCISE

MEETING FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

Figure 36: Illustrative section showing the Gardens Character Area (top) and precedent images showing the envisaged uses of the Gardens Character Area (bottom)