

Urban Design Report

Zone A



King's Cross Central General Partner Ltd
Google UK Ltd

May 2017

King's Cross

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Figure 1: Aerial photograph as seen from the south across the King's Cross Central Site (July 2016)

Introduction

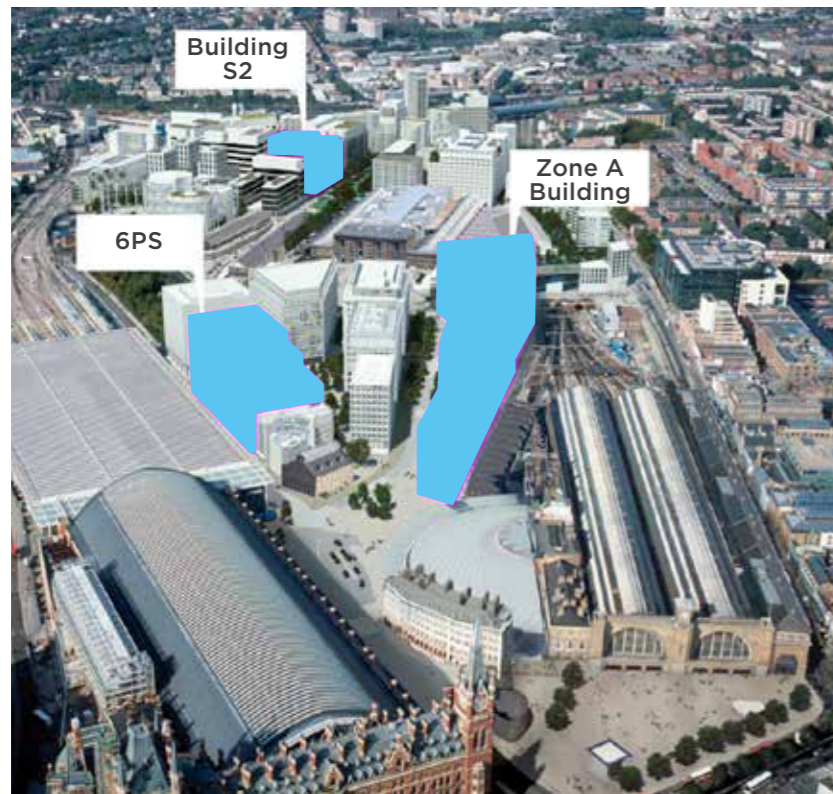


Figure 2: Aerial photograph as seen from the south at Development Zone A, showing the location of the proposed Zone A Building and Building S1 and Six Pancras Square

This document forms the Urban Design Report (UDR) to accompany the Reserved Matters submission for a new building occupying the whole of Development Zone A of the King's Cross Central ('KXC') development. KXC is a mixed use scheme, granted outline planning permission in December 2006 (ref. 2004/2307/P) (the 'Outline Planning Permission'). The wider development is now substantially underway, with a number of buildings and associated public realm already completed, occupied or under construction, including six commercial buildings in Development Zone B and one in Development Zone E, as shown on Figure 1, opposite.

The detailed design has been developed with a thorough understanding of the Main Site Revised Development Specification and Urban Design Guidelines attached to the Outline Planning Permission. The proposals reflect and demonstrate the scale and character expected from that permission. Further, a detailed understanding is shown of the context and townscape, including the listed buildings and important examples of the industrial heritage, which form the setting of the site.

Reserved Matters approval was granted in 2013 for a part 8 to 12 storey building (including ground floor) across Zone A which would provide a new UK headquarters building for Google UK Ltd ('Google') (LB Camden reference 2013/4001/P). The scheme also included a basement service area and limited adjacent areas of external landscaping.

Since 2013, King's Cross Central General Partner Limited ('KCCGPL') and Google (together, referred to as 'the applicants'), have worked closely to re-design the Zone A Building as Google's new UK headquarters which will be its first new building outside the United States. Google has signed an Agreement for Lease with KCCGPL for a building on Zone A and has already committed to a further two buildings on the KXC site to accommodate different areas of its business, specifically: Six Pancras Square which is already occupied; and Building S2 which is currently under construction. The location of these buildings is shown on Figure 2. Google will eventually accommodate 7,500

employees across these three offices. The proposals for the Zone A Building reflect Google's vision for high quality, sustainable design that will provide a dynamic and flexible working environment for up to 4,500 employees that are expected to use the building each day.

The revised Zone A development comprises a single, predominantly office building of 80,819m² GEA. Rising between 8 and 12 storeys (including ground floor), it is located in the southern part of the KXC site, adjacent to King's Cross Station and running along the eastern side of King's Boulevard. The building will also provide retail (A1) units at ground floor, together with an extensive roof terrace and other ancillary uses such as cafes, gym and pool facilities, a covered multi-use games area (MUGA), an events centre and staff training facilities.

Service areas for the building will be provided within its basement and the existing Shared Service Yard ('SSY'), completed in 2010 to facilitate servicing for King's Cross Station. Both are accessed from Goods Way via the Zone A Access Ramp which was completed in late 2013. The proposed scheme, in particular the basement and service areas, has been designed to be consistent with the Access Ramp structure and entrance. As well as 4no. separate loading bays (in addition to 2no. in the SSY), the two storey basement will include car parking, retail and office storage, refuse storage, cycle parking and associated changing facilities, and plant.

The proposed footprint does not utilise the whole of Development Zone A, leaving a small triangular shaped area at the southern end of the building between the building envelope and the existing Battle Bridge Place. Consequently, details of this space, including a terrace alongside the south façade of the Zone A Building, are submitted for approval for the first time. The submission also includes revised details of the eastern footpath along King's Boulevard, originally approved in September 2010 (ref. 2010/3152/P) as part of the Station Square and King's Boulevard submission, and for the footpath adjacent to the north façade of the building on Goods Way, also approved previously in October 2008 (ref.

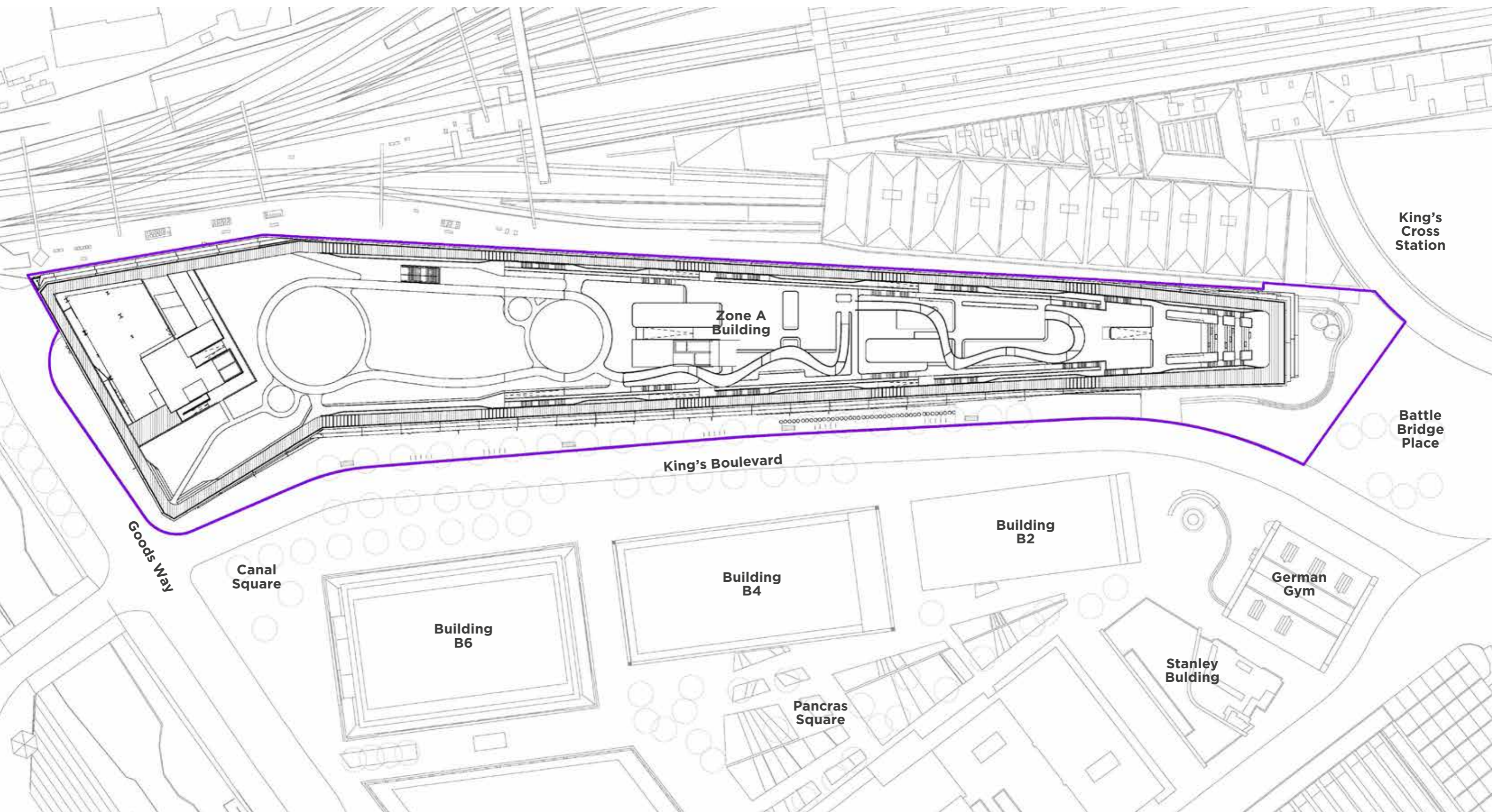


Figure 3: Site location plan showing the Zone A Building and the Reserved Matters submission boundary (edged in purple)

Introduction

2008/3731/P) as part of the Southern Infrastructure Enabling Works ('SEFI') submission. Although the proposals for the two footpaths remaining largely as approved, the revisions include a new granite sett edging alongside the building line to mirror that applied to the Zone B buildings on the west side of King's Boulevard and amend the number and position of the cycle racks on the street.

The design of the building has been driven by the principles of low-energy and sustainable design in order to reduce its energy consumption in occupation, but also to provide a comfortable and healthy environment for its many users. A combination of active and passive design has informed a highly efficient building that is on target to achieve at least BREEAM 'Excellent' and LEED 'Gold' ratings (with an aspiration to achieve BREEAM 'Outstanding') and will deliver an overall carbon saving of 22% below Part L of the Building Regulations 2013.

Report Structure

This UDR explains the design of the Zone A development, specifically covering the design principles, concepts and the details of the proposed design in response to Condition 16 and the associated Design Guidelines of the Outline Planning Permission.

The report seeks to:

- Describe the rationale for the scheme's design based on the context analysis and understanding of the brief for the building.
- Explain and illustrate the design principles employed in terms of layout, density, scale, visual appearance, landscape and access.

The design parameters and principles for the proposed building reflect the townscape and site context of King's Cross including the approved and emerging designs for nearby buildings within the KXC masterplan.

This report does not seek to repeat the detailed and comprehensive analysis that has already informed the KXC scheme. Rather it references the relevant guidance, qualities, and aspirations that stem from the permission that has already been granted.

The report is organised as follows:

Section 1.0: Design Approach and Proposals

Describes in detail the current proposals including the massing, design and materials of the Zone A Building. This section also covers the relationship with existing and proposed buildings and public realm.

Section 2.0: Response to Design Guidelines

Provides the detailed response to each of the General Design Guidelines and to each of the relevant South and Canal Area Design Guidelines attached to the Outline Planning Permission.

In the preparation of the proposals, a number of details and technical studies were undertaken which have informed the design. These studies are reported in documents which accompany the submission, in particular:

- The Planning Compliance Report;
- The Drawing Package;
- The Earthworks and Remediation Plan;
- The Environmental Sustainability Plan; and
- The Access and Inclusivity Statement.

1.0

Design Approach & Proposals

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Masterplan Context & Planning Background

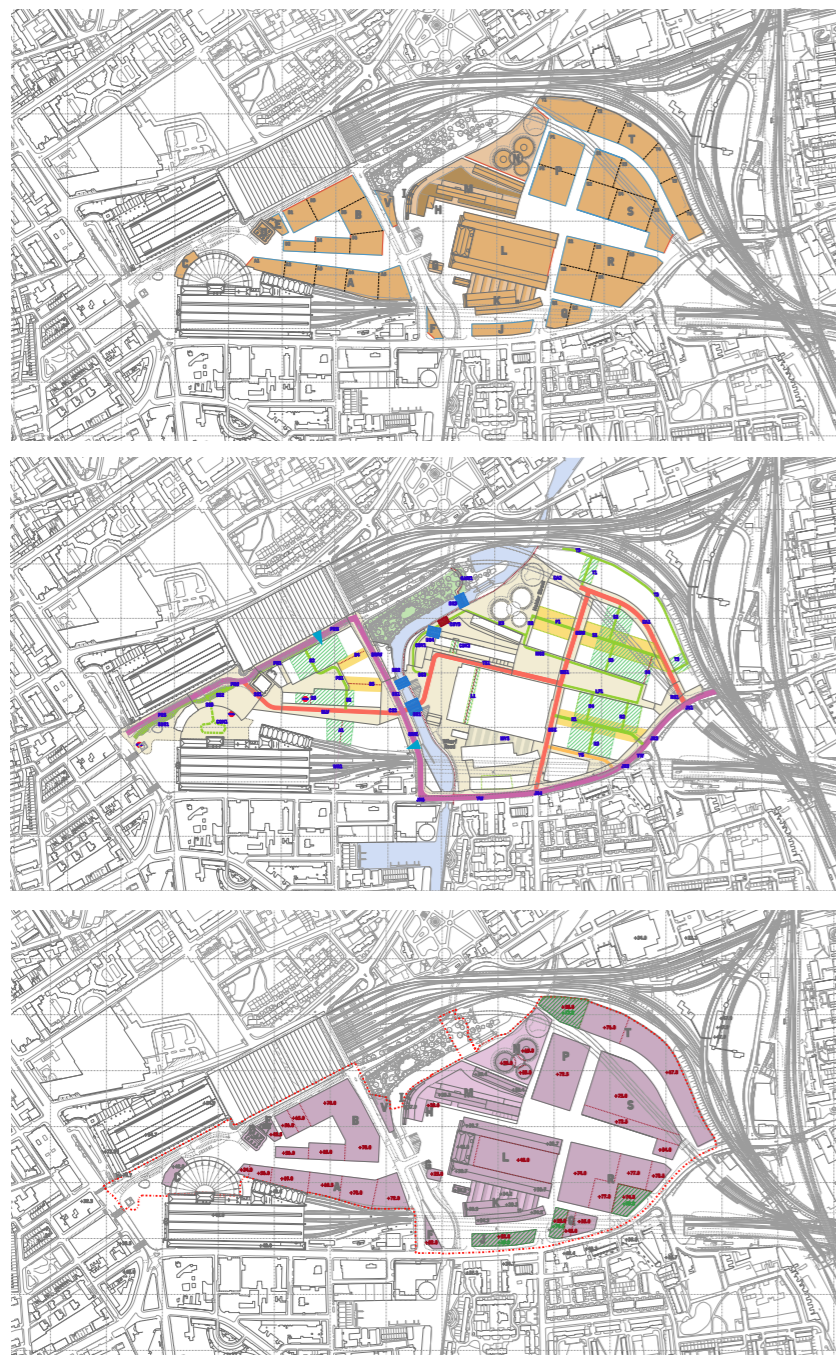


Figure 4: (above) showing Parameter Plans from the Outline Planning Permission (top) KXC 005 showing the KXC Development Zones, (middle) KXC 007 showing Principal Access and Circulation and (bottom) KXC 014 showing Maximum Building Heights (bottom)

Figure 5: (left) Photo montage showing the King's Cross Central site and proposed Zone A Building as seen from the air

Outline Planning Permission

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

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

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

- Forms an envelope for the development within which future designs will evolve;
- Identifies development zones and plot boundaries, giving city block form parameters;
- Identifies maximum height and massing limits in response to strategic London views, daylight, urban scale and contextual factors; and
- Sets a limit on the floor space which may be constructed above a defined height. This defines the massing at upper levels addressing public space and context whilst offering flexibility in design.

The approved outline scheme:

- Creates new routes and spaces to provide clear physical connections and access to London, integrating King's Cross with its surrounding neighbourhoods and communities;
- Provides an improved, legible public realm of a high quality based on successful new public spaces and streets that are safe, clean and easy to understand;
- Retains and integrates heritage buildings within the fabric of this new city quarter;

- Accommodates current and future transport activities in a safe, clear and efficient manner; and
- Facilitates the redevelopment of this highly accessible site, with a mixed use high density development that optimises the use of the land.

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

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

The 2004 guidelines set out three design goals which have underpinned the design approach for Zone A and its neighbours:

- Buildings should make a positive contribution to the public realm, particularly in character, hierarchy and scale;
- Buildings should relate positively to neighbouring structures – new or old – to create harmonious whole; and
- Developments must not limit the future flexibility of neighbouring plots beyond the constraints already imposed.

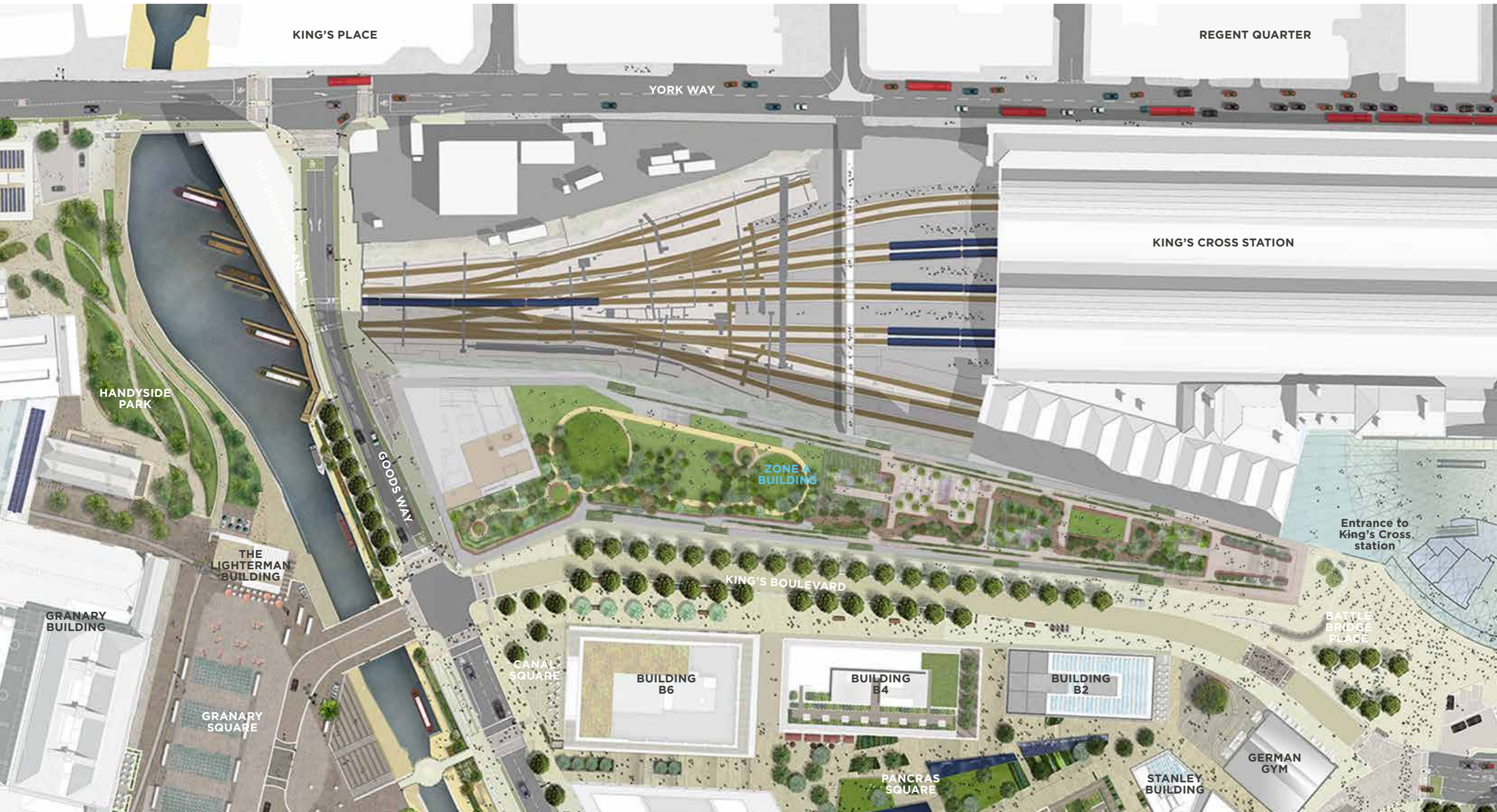


Figure 6: Illustrative masterplan of the King's Cross Central site showing the proposed Zone A Building in the context of adjacent public realm and buildings

Masterplan Context & Planning Background

The design team has also made reference to the Urban Design Statement (April 2004) and the Public Realm Strategy (April 2004), submitted in support of the outline planning application, such that the original vision set out in those and other documents is maintained.

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

The KXC scheme is described in the Outline Planning Permission in terms of two areas, namely 'north' and 'south' of the Regent's Canal. These areas are then subdivided into development zones.

The proposals occupies virtually the whole of Development Zone A in the southern area of the KXC site. The framework of documents referred to earlier, sets out the following objectives for this part of the site:

- Establish a fitting gateway to the wider development;
- Provide a new, strong, legible north-south route along King's Boulevard, and a subsidiary route through Pancras Square, to:
 - Facilitate pedestrian and other movement between the southern area and other parts of the development;
 - Help draw people, life and activity up to the Granary Complex and the Eastern Goods Yard buildings such as there is a secure new economic future for them at the heart of the redevelopment; and
 - Connect the Eastern Goods Yard buildings with the heritage grouping around the Grade I stations
 - something specifically referred to in the Regent's Canal Conservation Area Statement.
- Optimise the use of land close to the public transport interchange for high density development to extend London's world city role;
- Provide the template for the introduction of high quality, modern buildings with good 'front doors'; and
- Meet the aspirations for a highly attractive and legible public space as a setting for the Grade I listed stations.

Consultation

As part of the masterplan evolution a strong emphasis has been placed on engaging local stakeholders and public representatives. Throughout the development of the Zone A Building detailed proposals for the building and the surrounding public realm have been prepared through an extensive consultation process, involving a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies, as follows:

- London Borough of Camden officers;
- Secured By Design representatives;
- London Borough of Islington officers;
- King's Cross Development Forum; and
- London Borough of Camden's Design and Access Forum.

The proposals for Development Zone A have been developed through an extensive and progressive process of pre-submission consultations between KCCGPL, Google, the design team, Planning Officers at LB Camden, and relevant stakeholders and local bodies, over several months. Following a number of pre-application meetings and workshops with LB Camden's Officers the details of the proposed building were taken to the King's Cross Design and Access Forum on 5th April 2017. Comments made by members of the Forum have been considered and incorporated into the proposals.



Approach to Scheme Design

The design of the Zone A Building has been guided by an understanding of the urban context and design framework described previously. Firstly, the proposals seek to create a legible and sustainable working environment that responds well to its setting within the southern part of the KXC site. All four of the building's proposed elevations are prominent with the townscape, and have therefore been carefully composed to respond to its neighbouring buildings, context and aspect.

A further key objective for the design team is to create a highly flexible, productive and healthy working environment that optimises resources to minimise its environmental impact in construction and use.

This section sets out the site context and industrial heritage which the design team has sought to respond to in its concept. It also explains the starting point for the design in terms of the occupier's brief, its response to the urban realm and its built form, character and identity.

Site Context

Development Zone A represents a long tapering plot approximately 330 metres in length, located in the southern part of the KXC site. It is bounded at its southern end by Battle Bridge Place and the Grade I listed King's Cross Station; to the west by the King's Boulevard and to the north by Goods Way and Canal Square; to the east, the Zone A building looks out over the King's Cross railway tracks and into King's Cross Station, towards York Way and the buildings lining the eastern edge of that route, which lie across the borough boundary within the London Borough of Islington. Figure 7, opposite, provides photos of the proposed site seen within its adjacent context.

To the north, Goods Way is an existing road that has been subject to improvement works pursuant to Enabling Works approvals in 2008 and 2011 (LB Camden references 2008/3731/P and 2011/3138/P).

As mentioned earlier, details for new public realm at Battle Bridge Place (formerly Station Square) and Enabling works for the King's Boulevard were approved in September 2010 (LB Camden reference 2010/3152/P), with both areas now partially complete pending construction of the Zone A Building. Small areas of paving which fill in the gaps between the approved public realm and the proposed building envelope form part of this submission, alongside part of the footpath on Goods Way to the north of the building. The proposals also include revised details for an area to the south of the building which overlaps with the approved scheme for Battle Bridge Place.

Development Zone A also sits in the wider context of a number of listed buildings, landscape features and public realm. Beyond Goods Way, the northern plot boundary faces Granary Square and the University of the Arts London campus in the Grade II listed Granary Complex, located on the opposite side of the Regent's Canal. As noted above, the site is bounded by the King's Boulevard to the west and in keeping with the aspiration to create a major new shopping street, the Boulevard will be primarily occupied by a mix of

shops, cafes and restaurants to the west, and mainly shops to the east. Currently, the King's Boulevard is a pedestrian thoroughfare, however, this route could eventually be opened up to traffic or remain a pedestrian route connecting Canal Square, Goods Way, the Regent's Canal and the northern part of the KXC site to King's Cross and St. Pancras Stations and the rest of the development in the south.

On the west of the King's Boulevard are Buildings B2, B4 and B6. These buildings, which form part of Development Zone B, were approved between 2010 and 2014 for offices with ground floor retail, food and drink. In the case of Building B2, the building also includes a new subway entrance to King's Cross St. Pancras underground station. Buildings B2, B4 and B6 are now complete and occupied. The public space in the centre of Development Zone B, known as Pancras Square is similarly complete pursuant to Reserved Matters approval 2010/0872/P.

Along its entire length, Development Zone A drops by between one and two storeys (approximately eight metres) as one moves from the north to the south, i.e. from Goods Way towards Battle Bridge Place. In addition, Goods Way reaches a plateau at this point from its upward slope from Pancras Road before sloping gently down to the junction with York Way, as illustratively shown in Figure , opposite. The railway tracks at this point are formed within a cutting which exposes the basement level of the Zone A Building, where the access ramp to the Shared Service Yard from Goods Way is located.

The Shared Service Yard ('SSY'), Access Ramp South ('AR(S)') and Access Ramp North ('AR(N)') have already been constructed in the southern part of Zone A pursuant to earlier Enabling Works approvals 2007/3284/P and 2009/0208/P, and subsequently revised pursuant to 2013/0510/P. The SSY and AR(S) were completed in July 2010, replacing most of the pre-existing above ground vehicular servicing for King's Cross Station. The AR(N) was completed later in November 2013.

Figure 7: Left, Photos of immediate site context, including King's Boulevard, Battle Bridge Place, and the Grade I listed St Pancras and King's Cross Stations.