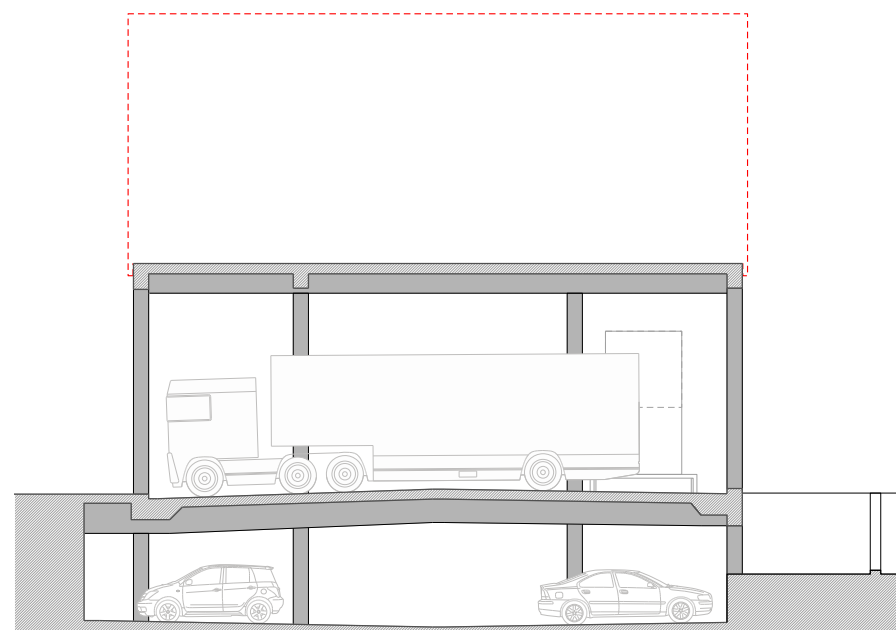


Existing



Demolition



Proposed

Above: Diagram depicting structural approach  
Below: Construction sequence sections



## 7 Grand Union House

### 7.2 Establishing the Architectural Language

Grand Union House is a relatively large building when compared to its surrounding context. We have considered how to generate the appropriate architectural expression for such a building without denying that its scale is also an opportunity to signal dynamic change in Camden's commercial building stock. The building's architectural expression is closely related to the geometry of the existing building. It re-uses the lower concrete structural grid. In order to minimise height it avoids transfer structures at higher levels and maintains the same structural grid for steelwork established by the lower existing structure. This sets out a logical rhythm to the building's façade design.

Our inspiration for the architectural language has been the robust elegance of commercial buildings of the early twentieth century. These buildings confronted the mechanisation and mass production of elements of architecture without overlooking proportion, detail and the value of three dimensional relief.

Oriel Chambers, Liverpool, 1864

Oriel Chambers is amongst the precursors of modernist architecture. Its extensive use of glass includes the world's first metal framed glass curtain walls. H-section iron columns at the perimeter support the floors and are over clad in decorative stonework. A grid of protruding windows became the building's defining feature. The building's ideas were exported across the Atlantic where they influenced early skyscraper design of the 1880s. The structural grid is apparent and absorbed into a façade with great three dimensional relief.

101 Spring Street, SoHo, New York, 1870

101 Spring Street is a five story cast-iron building located at the corner of Spring Street and Mercer Street in New York City. It was designed by Nicholas Whyte. Ornate Cast-iron façades were less expensive to produce than stone or brick. The material's strength could support large windows, high ceilings, and vast floor spans. The 6,000-square-foot façade of 101 Spring Street has 40 window bays that flood each open floor with ample daylight. Despite the mass production techniques used, the building still feels carefully detailed. The cast iron columns provide a relief to the façade that belies its repetitive pattern.

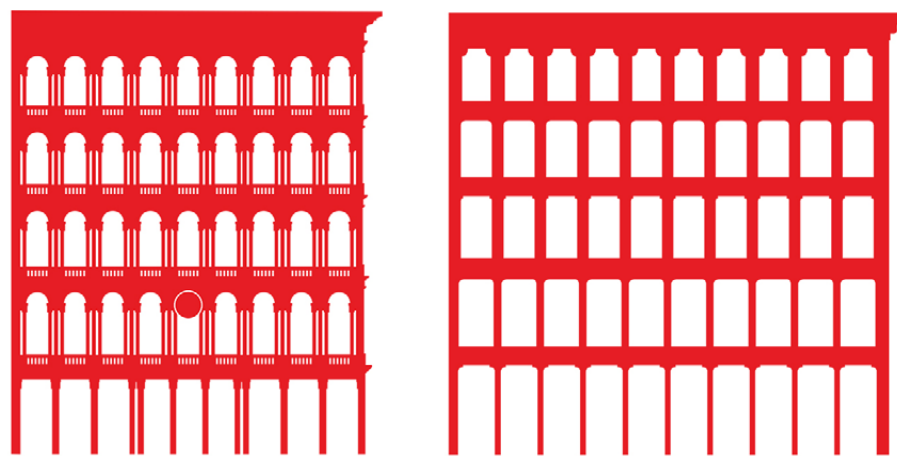
Holland House, City of London, 1914

Berlage's design for Holland House in 1914 was inspired by the work of Chicago architect Louis Sullivan. The building is believed to be the first example of a steel frame structure in Europe. Bury Street at that time was a dark, narrow passageway. The elevations are designed to be seen obliquely. Ornament and considered three dimensional connections are careful details that soften the steel frame's rigid geometry.



Right: 101 Spring Street, New York.





01

02



03

04

05



06

07

08

Above: Elevation Diagrams of New York cast iron buildings.

01 101 Spring Street

02 EV Haughwout Building

03 147 Wooster Street

04 429 Broadway

05 476 Broom Street

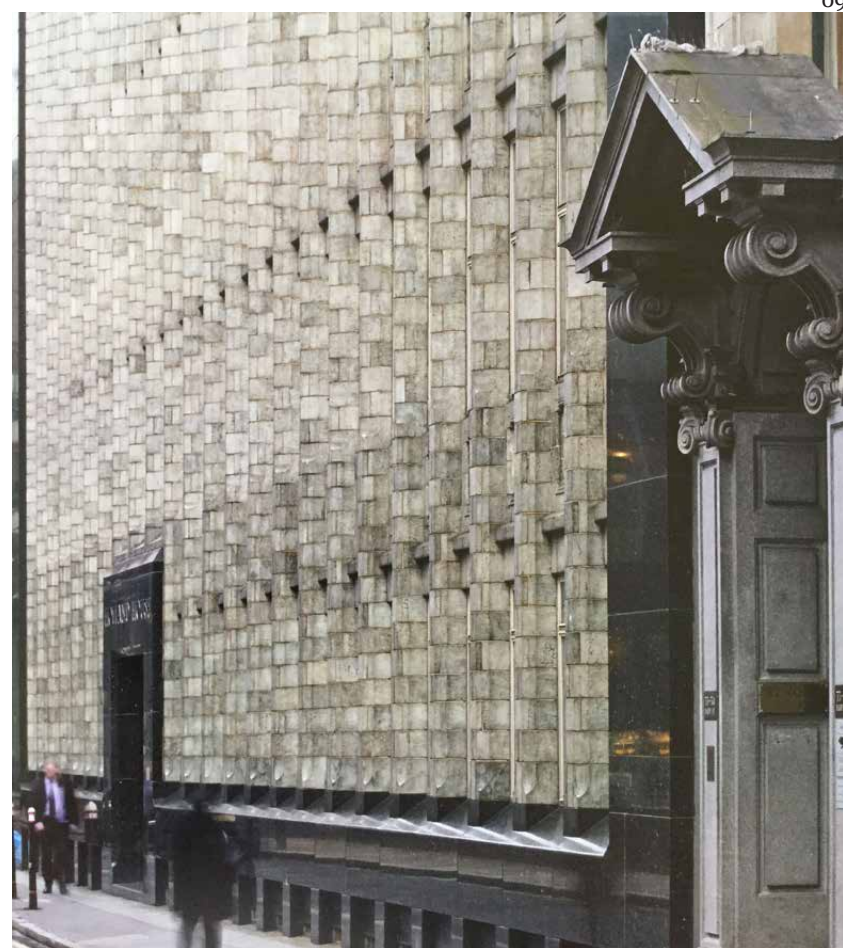
06 29 Howard Street

07 15 Mercer Street

08 17-19 Greene Street



09



09



10



10

09 HP Berlage, Holland House, London

10 Peter Ellis, Oriel Chambers, Liverpool



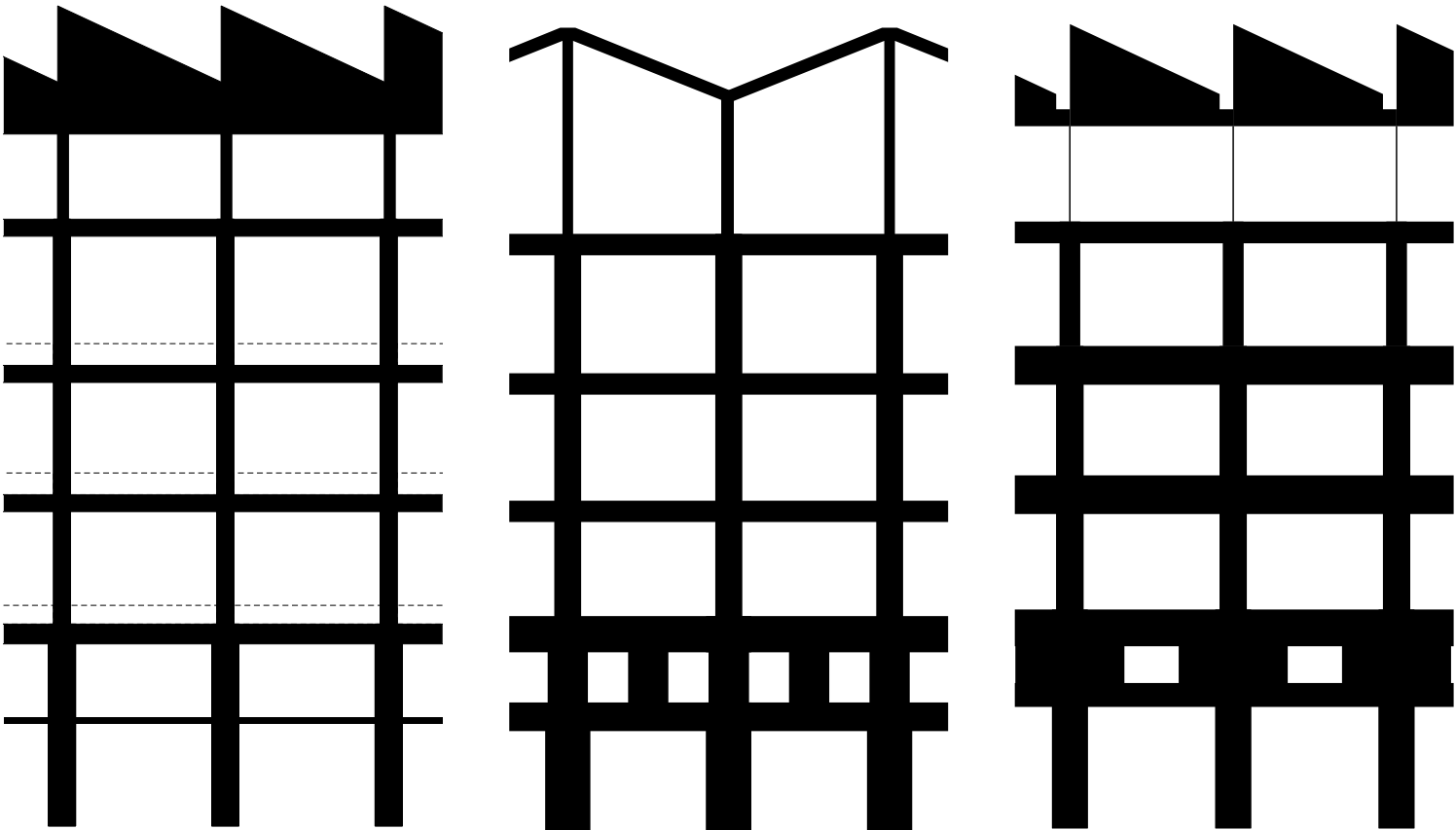
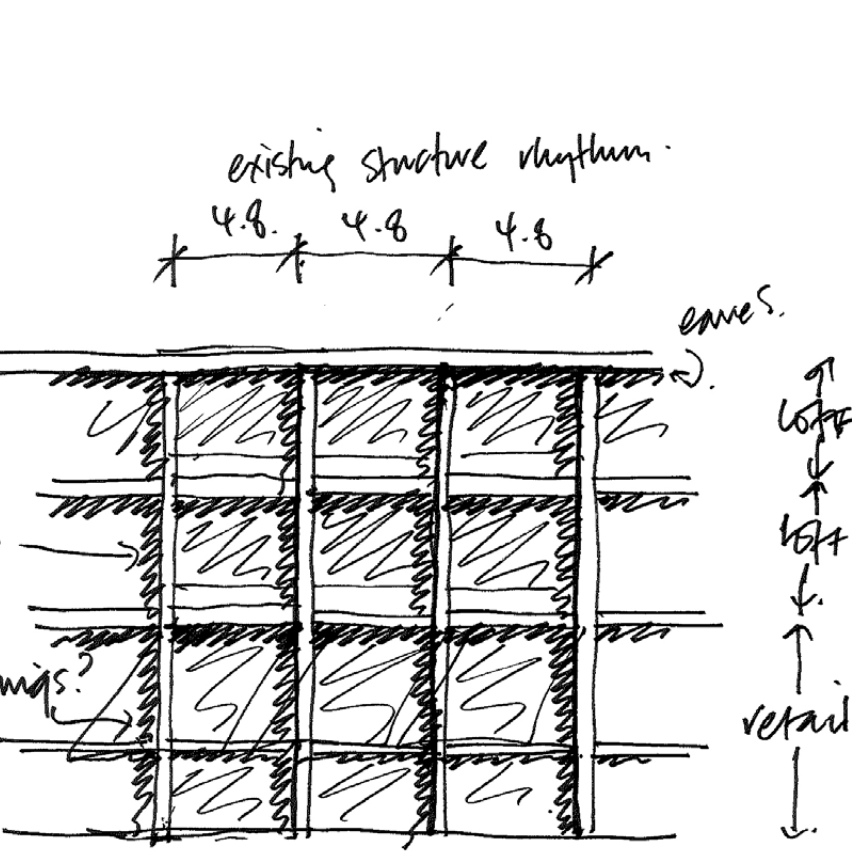
7.3 Facade Design

The commercial office building has a clearly defined base, middle and top architecture.

The ground floor architecture responds to the street. The lower concrete structure will be insulated and encased in coloured, glazed ceramic. This material is often seen on industrial and public buildings in busy streets. The ABC Bakery, London Underground Stations and Public Houses are examples. The street level architecture will have a robust, characterful materiality and presence.

The upper facade is a composition of sculptural columns and beams that surround generous windows. These are formed in lightweight, richly-coloured anodised aluminium. The proportions and details of these elements change at each floor as the structure becomes lighter.

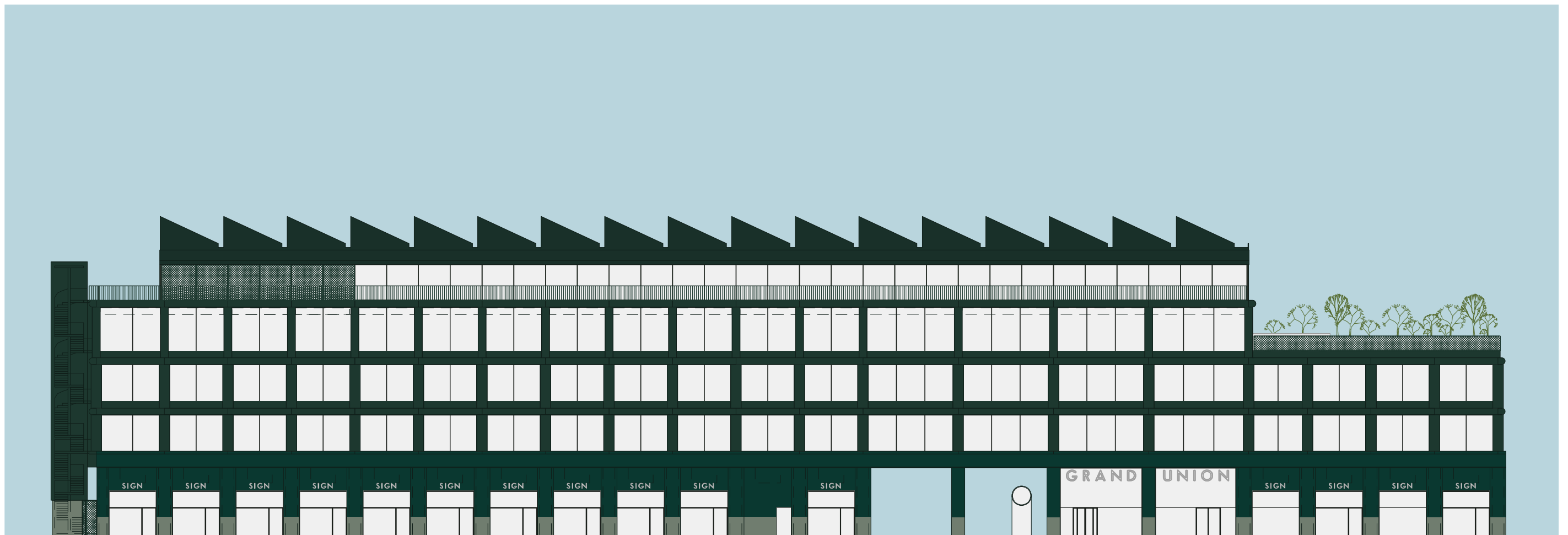
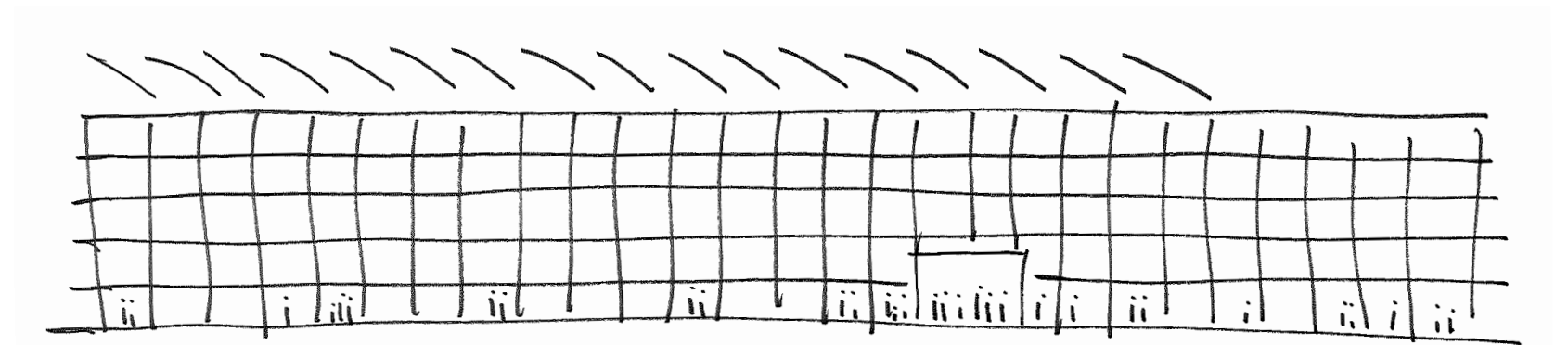
The reflective facade materials will react to London’s changeable light conditions throughout the day and across the seasons.



Left: AP conceptual design sketch.  
Right: Facade development diagrams.



Left: Early AP study of Grand Union House looking north along Kentish Town Road  
 right: Artist's impression looking north along Kentish Town Road



Above: Initial AP concept sketch

Below: West Elevation along Kentish Town Road (not to scale)



Base Facade

The base of the building will re-employ the existing concrete structure. The façade composition varies between surfaces than frame individual retail units and a colonnade that signifies the office lobby and public pedestrian route under the building.

The retail façade has a smooth wall surface with rounded corner pilasters projecting slightly on the column grid. As a result each retail window/entrance is a very defined opening in the base. These are shaded with individual projecting awnings, and protected with recessed integrated aluminium shutters. The design approach recalls the defined shopfronts of historic shopping parades in Camden Town.

The colonnade consist of a field of nine heroically-scaled columns. This grand scale emphasises the entrance to the lobby and the passageway through the site. The office lobby and passageway are defined by the same materials. The ceiling lighting matches in both spaces.

The base facade is faced in glazed ceramics. These are comprised of bespoke modular tiles and curved corner elements. Glazed ceramics are a well-known facing material for buildings that sit in busy central London, particularly at ground floor. The nearby Camden Town Underground station is faced in Oxblood tiles. The ABC bakery that previously sat on the site was also faced in glazed ceramics. This material offers rich colourisation, a light-reflective quality and a materiality that feels suitably robust.



Above: Artist’s impression of the new entry lobby and public passage.

Right: Material palette

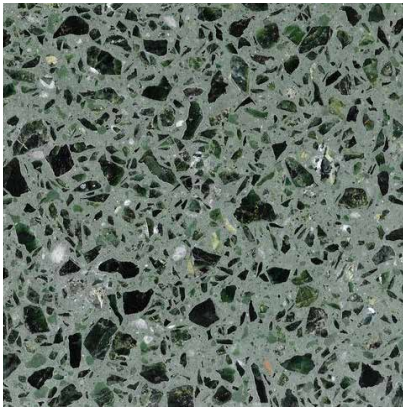
Far right: Detail elevation of the base facade (not to scale)



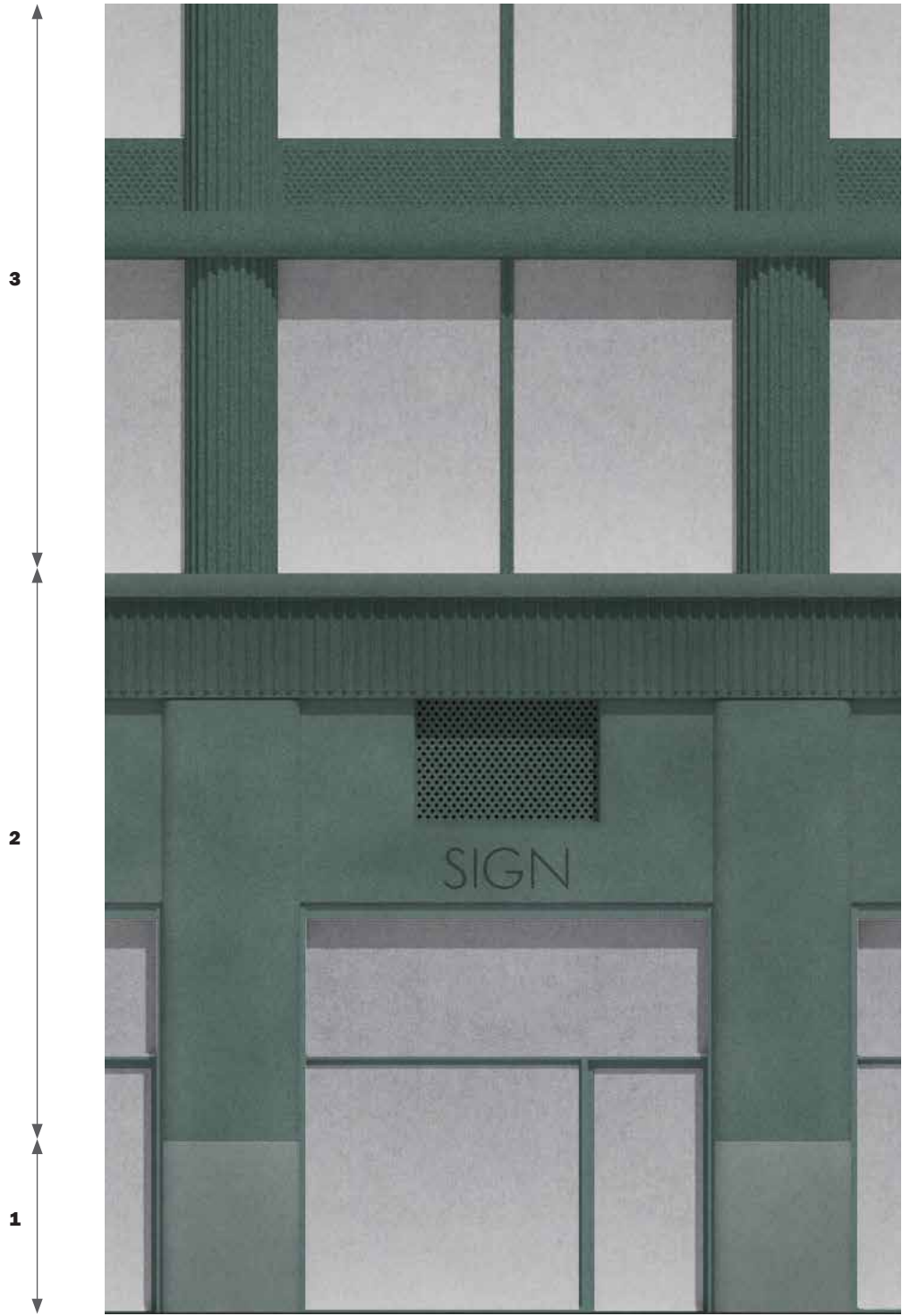
3 green anodized aluminium



2 green glazed terracotta



1 green pigment concrete

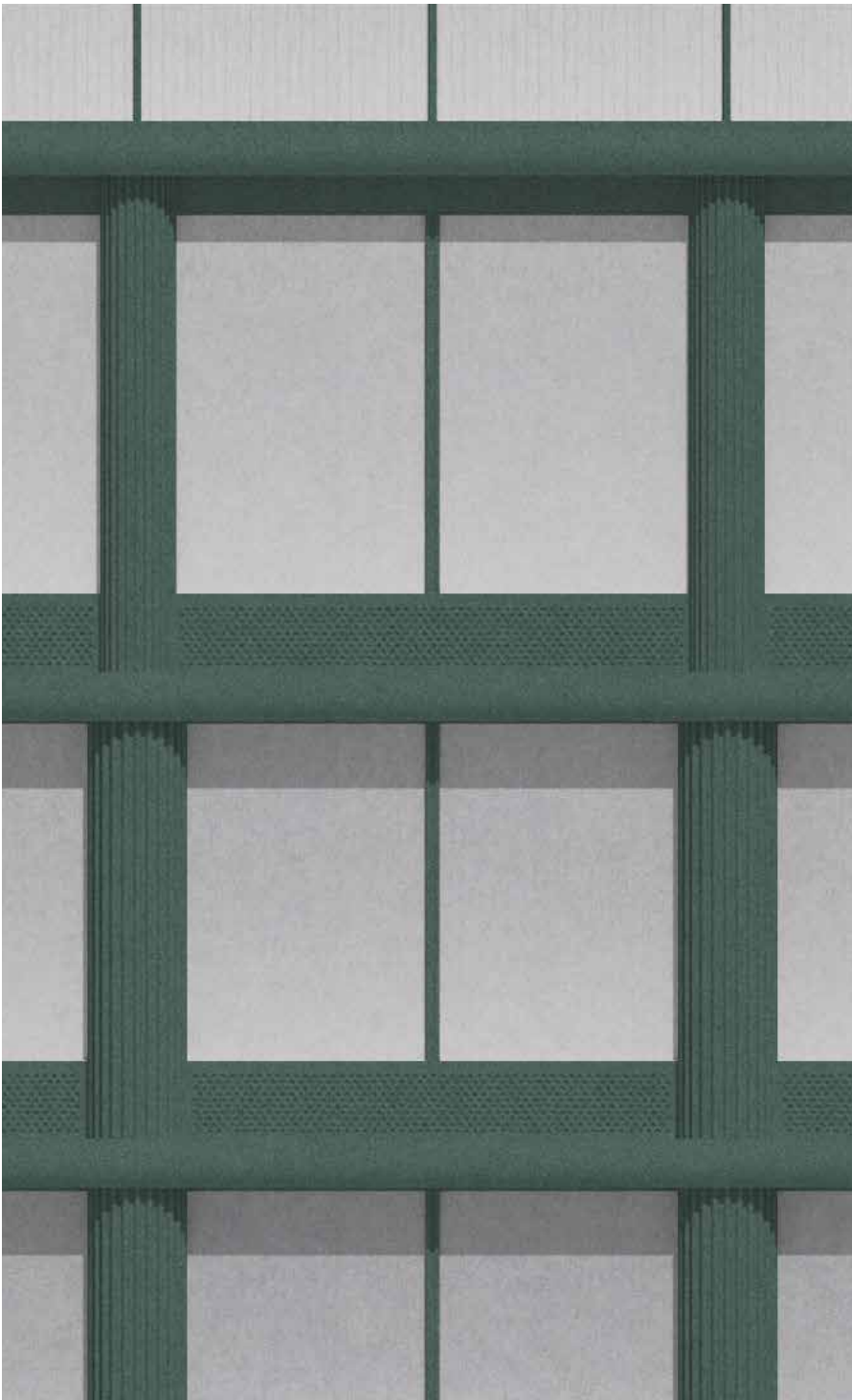
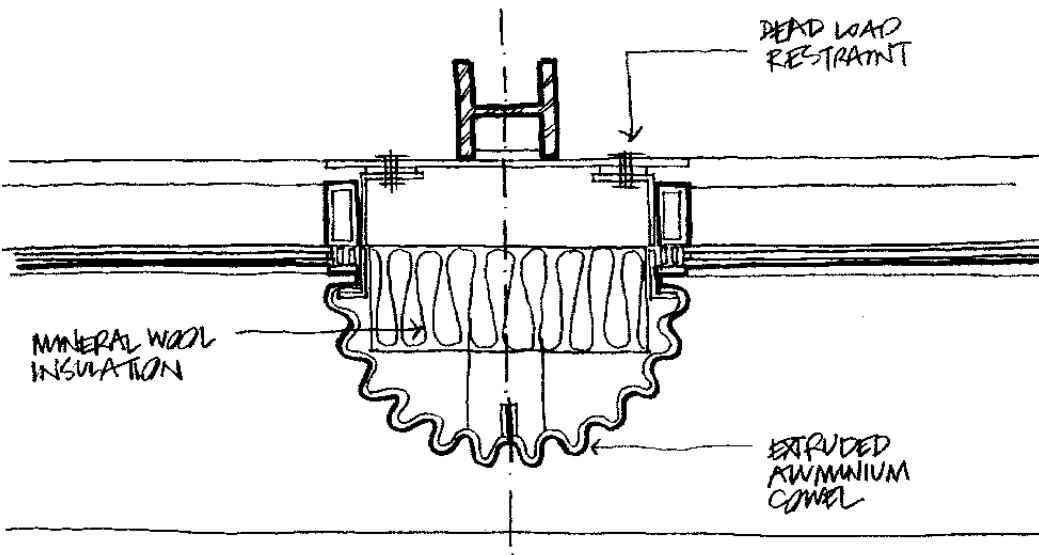


Superstructure Facade

The building's upper façade plays a role in minimising the weight of the upper building. This contributes to maximising the building's possible floor space. The envelope of the building is essentially a high-performance curtain walling with anodised aluminium glazing frames.

In front of the façade column grid, a composition of bull-nosed brise-soleil and corrugated vertical cowels provide a three-dimensional, trabeated character to the façade. These projecting elements provide useful vertical and horizontal shading to the main east and west facing facades. They are made as pre-formed aluminium extrusions with an inherent lightweight strength. A spandrel panel beneath each window bay, also in anodised aluminium, has a punched surface pattern. It is intended that in future, when air quality is viable, this panel could be adapted to vent fresh air to the interior through the floor void.

The composition of the façade was tested through a series of studies into column size and spacing. We investigated the amount of solid and transparency to achieve a balance and proportion. The chosen proportion best achieves the strong elegant terrace. The rhythm of the façade and the bay proportions confirm the logic of its construction. As the building rises, the composition contrives to gently modify the visual proportions at each floor level. The resulting composition is reminiscent of the cast iron structures of the early industrial revolution but realised using ultra-lightweight modern manufacturing methods.



Above: Typical plan detail through column and glazing (not to scale).

Right: Detail elevation of the superstructure facade (not to scale).

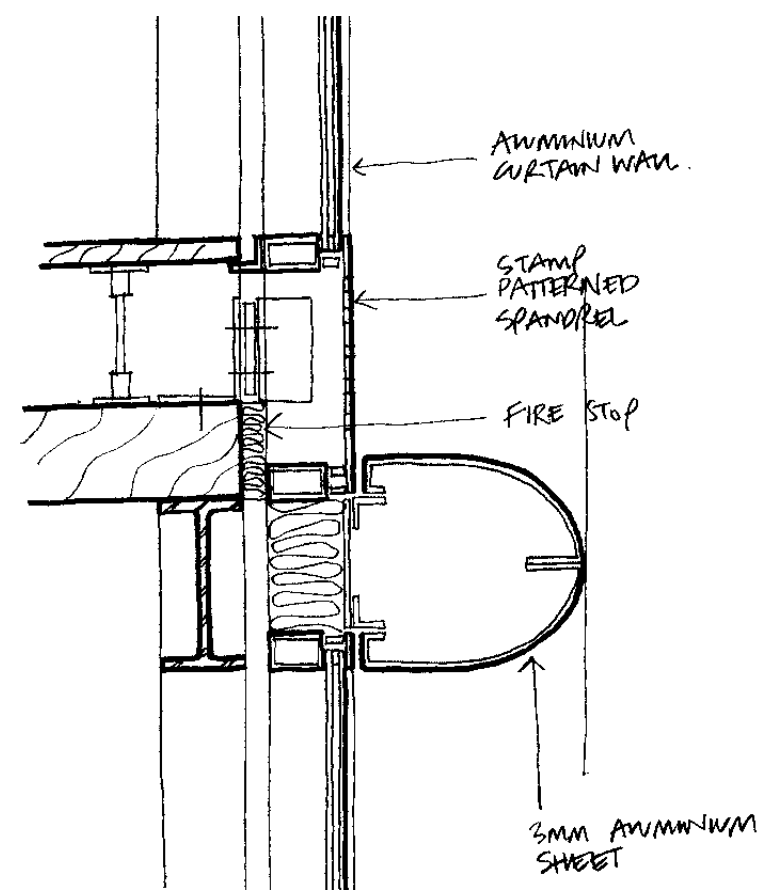


Penthouse Facade

The top floor office space steps significantly back from the east and west facades. This element of the architecture is considered as a separate type of architecture with a distinct and different language from the lower floors. It includes a saw-tooth roof profile that helps angle the roof's photovoltaic array at the optimum angle but is also reminiscent of historic industrial buildings and warehouses on the Regent's Canal.

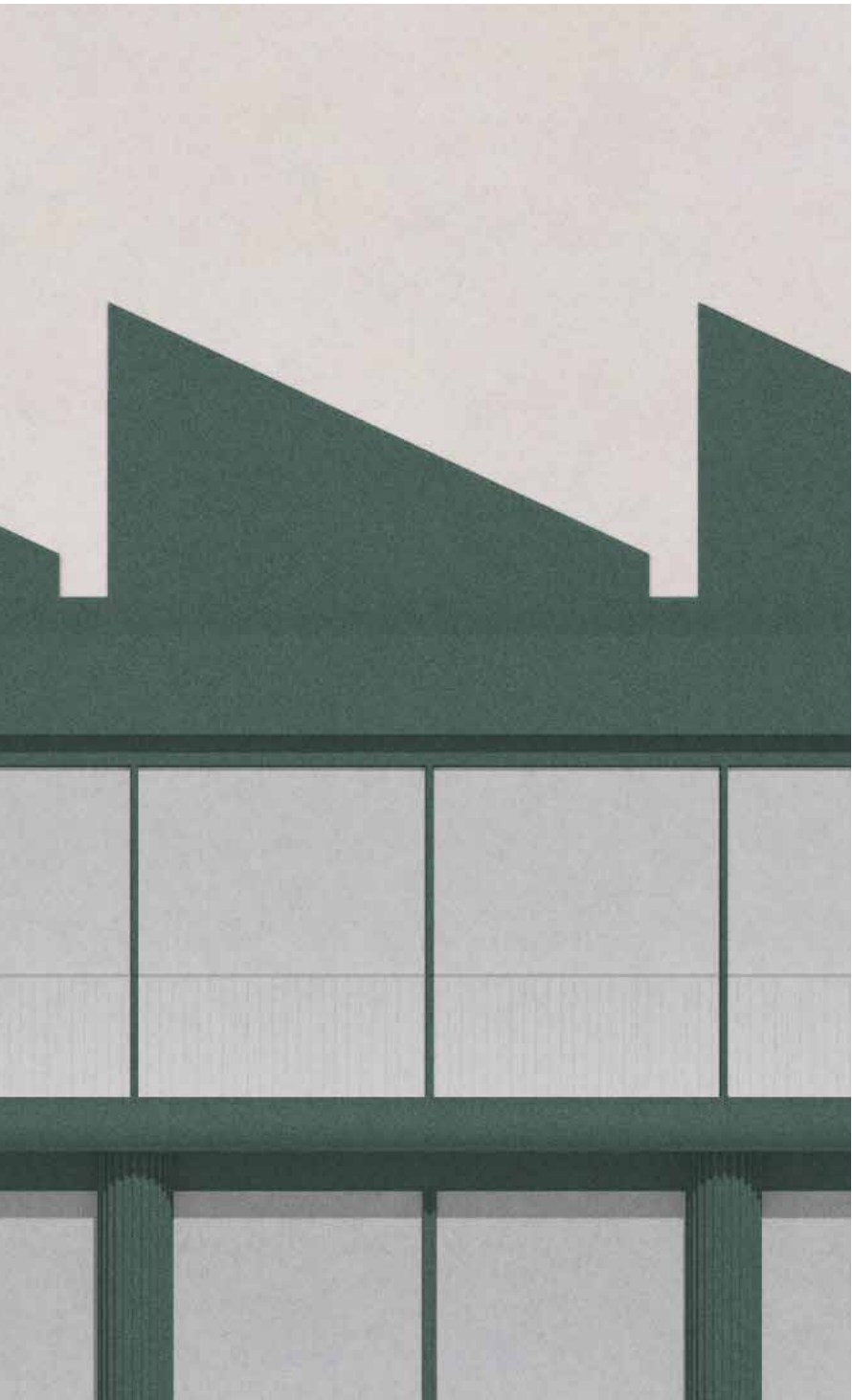
The roof is formed as a singular continuous element. It is clad in vertical powder coated aluminium panels with recessed joint seams. The photovoltaic array is integrated into the form, so that it sits recessed against the cladding edge profiles. These will therefore appear more like a roof-surface than an extraneous addition.

The work space glazing at this level has been organised has a continuous low profile curtain wall with large sliding door elements. It provides panoramic views across the terrace to the London skyline.



Above: Typical detail section through floor and sill (not to scale).

Right: Detail elevation of the penthouse facade (not to scale).



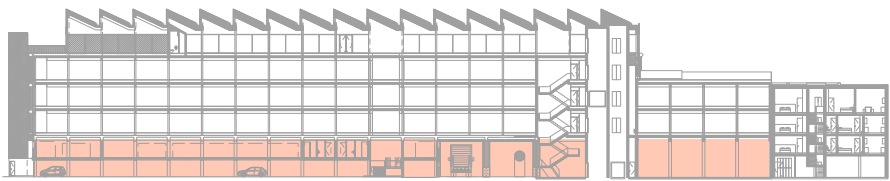
7 Grand Union House

7.4 Ground Floor Layout

Space for modest retail units have been arranged along Kentish Town Road. The façade for these has been designed so that they can be divided into ten equal units of approximately 20sqm each or adjoined to make larger units incrementally. Each bay has an awning and a recessed security shutter. The spaces have been designed to specifically attract smaller independent operators rather than large chains. They will accommodate A1, A3/D2 (Retail, Cafes and/or Leisure). A Larger triple aspect retail space spans between the Kentish Town Road façade and the Sainsbury's Yard. It could also be divided into two units. A further 200sqm unit is located to the south of the site to accommodate A1 A3/D2. The distribution of unit sizes will encourage a mixture of street-side business activity throughout the day.

The office entrance is located within a foyer space in the centre of the site. It will be highly visible from Buck Street and overlooks the pedestrian route across the site and the yard. The lobby space has been designed as a generous open space that reveals activity within. The main staircase is prominent in the lobby space. It rises through the building with a view over the yard and St Michael's Church.

Car parking for the existing Grand Union Walk residents is retained in a protected car park at the rear of the building. It is accessed from the yard. Cycle Parking for office and retail employees is located on a dedicated mezzanine above the car park. It is accessed by a dedicated gate from the yard. WCs, shower facilities and lockers are also located here. The cycle store is weather protected with good natural ventilation.



Key



1



2



3



4

Right: Artist's impression of proposed retail units.

1 Camden Town High St, 1904

2 Fernandez and Wells, Lexington Street, London

3 Paxton and Whitfield, Jermyn St, London

4 Arthur Beale, Shaftesbury Ave, London