

Urban Design Report

Building S4



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Introduction

This Urban Design Report is provided in support of the Reserved Matters Submission for Building S4 and the associated public realm within the King’s Cross Central Development. It is prepared by Allies and Morrison on behalf of the client in accordance with the requirements of the Outline Planning Permission granted in December 2006, Ref: 2004/2307/P. It describes the design rationale in reference to the Outline Permission’s relevant guidance, qualities and aspirations.

The proposal is for a residential-led building within Development Zone S of the King’s Cross Central Masterplan. Building S4 is bounded by Chilton Lane to the north, Lewis Cubitt Park to the east, Chilton Court to the west, Keskidee Lane to the south and is surrounded by commercial buildings S1, S2 and S3 and residential building, S5. The site is a tight triangular plot with its principle frontage forming the western edge of Lewis Cubitt Park.

Building S4 is a mixed tenure residential development of up to 14 storeys over basement level within Development Zone S to the north of the King’s Cross Central development site. The building is comprised of an L-shaped block, housing two buildings of social rented and market housing respectively, sharing a party wall above a ground floor of retail, residential lobbies, amenity space and entrances to both tenures fronting both Cubitt Park to the east and Chilton Court to the west.

The social rented building is 8 storeys above the ground floor. The market building is 13 storeys above the ground floor. Both accommodates 176 residential homes in total. The proposal is for 120 market and 56 social rented residential units. The building is designed for high quality living with great views and good access to light in an enviable central London location.

The building seeks to provide a choice of homes with generous openings for light and views. All units have private outdoor space and some units are extra spacious with taller living spaces that are suited

to modern lifestyles embracing loft living. The scheme contributes to the character of King’s Cross by completing the family of buildings on the estate with a high-quality residential building formed of brick and masonry. Its proportions are a contemporary interpretation of the warehouse buildings that were part of the site’s industrial heritage.

The proposed scheme delivers the following aspirations:

- Complete Lewis Cubitt Park in concert with other parkside buildings
- Positively front Keskidee and Chilton Squares
- Sensitively define Chilton Court whilst being respectful of its immediate neighbours S3, S2 and S5.
- Provide a choice of quality tenure blind residential homes
- Activate the public realm with a large key retail space
- Comply with parameters of the OPP

The massing and scale of the building have been designed to define positive edges to the public spaces, enhance the pedestrian experience and optimise environmental conditions. The building responds to the contemporary context from ground level to the roofline as the final piece to complete Lewis Cubitt Park, a key public space in the Northern area of the King’s Cross Masterplan.

The building is surrounded by Lewis Cubitt Park, Keskidee and Chilton Squares and the ground floor responds with active frontages that open out into these spaces. The ground floor of the building comprises lobbies to residential above, amenities for its occupants, a flexible retail space that can be configured into several units and two small retail units facing the park and the squares. Both residential lobbies have through views at ground floor from Lewis Cubitt Park to Chilton Court. The amenity and retail spaces also have expansive

shopfront glazing to animate the pedestrian experience. The western elevation fronts Chilton Court which presents the only vehicular access to the necessary servicing functions to both residential and retail use.

Above the ground floor, a variety of residential unit types are accommodated from lateral units, units with height -and-half living spaces to duplexes on the roof. All units have been designed with generous openings to exploit long views out and to allow daylight in.

The building elevation is comprised of two characters. The elevation to the park is formed of a series of elegant brick towers with expansive windows and balconies. The same architectural elements are composed for the narrower elevations to Keskidee Square and Chilton Square.

The return elevations to the lanes are comprised of a simple brick frame to a more sculpted massing. The elevation to Keskidee Lane steps back to open up views to Lewis Cubitt Park.

The building is composed of a natural and organic palette comprising white and cream stock brick with white concrete lintels and green concrete panelling with dark green metalwork to the windows and white metal projecting balconies. The fabric is well insulated and design to optimise natural daylight, passive solar gain as well heat recovery to reduce the overall energy consumption. The building is connected to site-wide district heating and cooling systems through the estate’s energy centre.

The building targets BREEAM ‘Very Good’ rating for the shell & core retail areas and Code for Sustainable Homes ‘Level 4’ rating for the proposed dwellings. A Code ‘Level 3’ rating, broadly regarded as equivalent to an EcoHomes ‘Very Good’ rating, was a requirement under Condition 17(E), therefore the current design proposal exceeds the requirement of the original condition. Through all stages of the design development of the proposal, the principles of low-energy, high quality and sustainable design have been key and are embedded within the design.

Figure 1: View of Lewis Cubitt Park and Cubitt Square with S4 on the left

1.0

Design Approach & Proposals

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Masterplan Context

Key parameters and principles are set out in the King's Cross Masterplan Outline Planning Permission. Building S4 has been developed in accordance with the aspirations and guidelines established in the masterplan documents which identifies:

- Development zone, plot boundaries and block form parameters, and;
- Maximum height and massing limits for views, daylight, scale and context

The approved outline scheme outlines the following aspirations :

- New routes and spaces to provide legible connections and access to London, integrating King's Cross with its surrounding neighbourhoods and communities;
- Improved public realm of high quality based on successful new public spaces and streets that are safe, clean and easy to navigate;
- Heritage buildings retained and integrated within the fabric of this new city quarter;
- Current and future transport activities designed and accommodated in a safe, clear and efficient manner;
- Facilitates the redevelopment of this highly accessible site, with a mixed use high density development that optimises the use of the land.

The design of S4 has been developed in line with the Design Guidelines (Annex 1- Outline Planning Permission) to relate to Zone S to best meet the following aspirations:

- Respond to Lewis Cubitt Park, Chilton Square and Keskiee Square positively in character, hierarchy and scale;
- Relate harmoniously to its neighbouring and historical context;
- Creatively design a robust and beautiful building within imposed constraints and without impacting neighbours, and;
- Provide high quality accommodation for all users

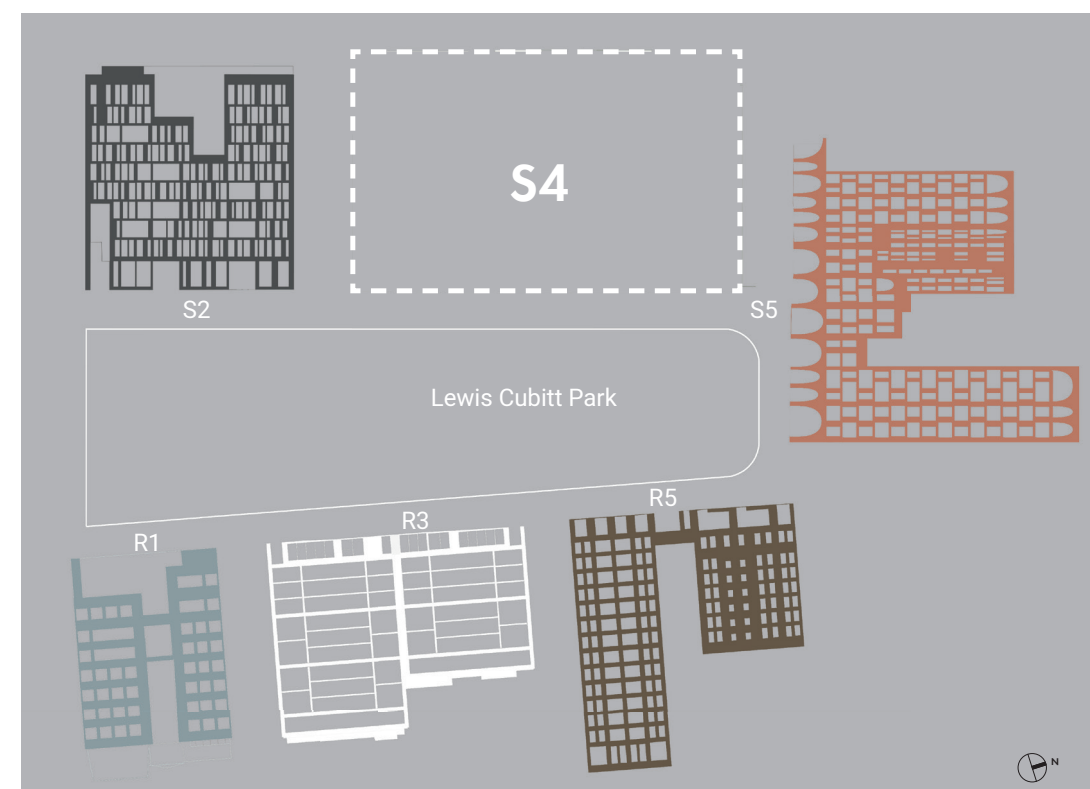


Figure 3: Concept diagram exploring S4's relationship with the family of buildings around the park

Figure 2: Opposite page : Computer visualisation of the King's Cross Masterplan with S4 noted

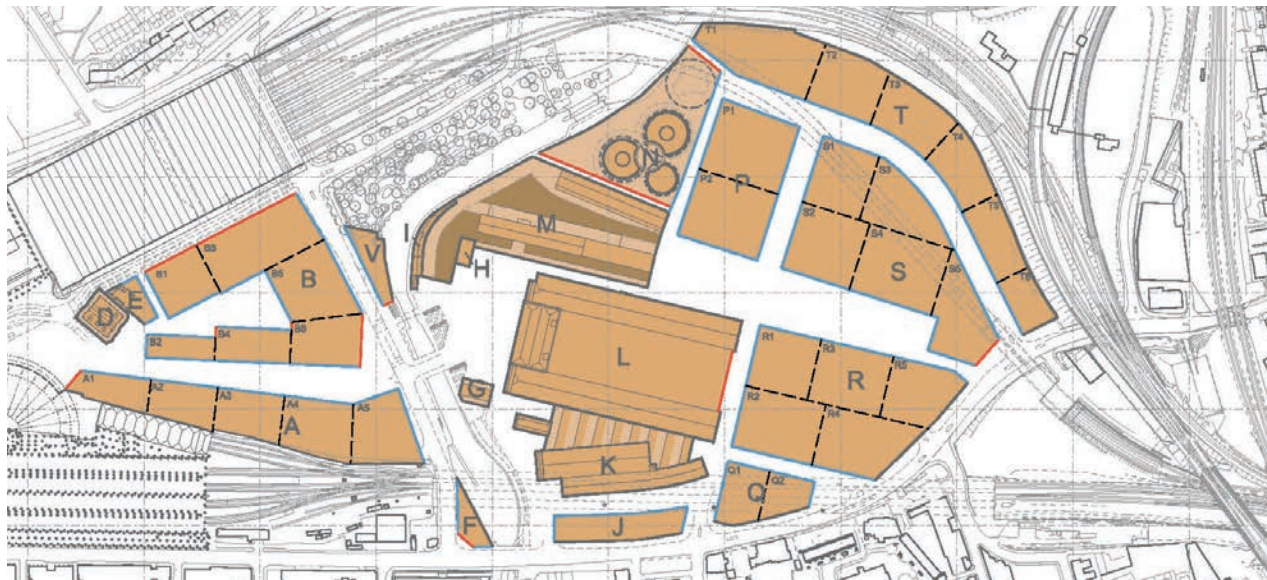


Figure 4: Parameter Plan KXC 005 - Development Zone showing location of Zone S

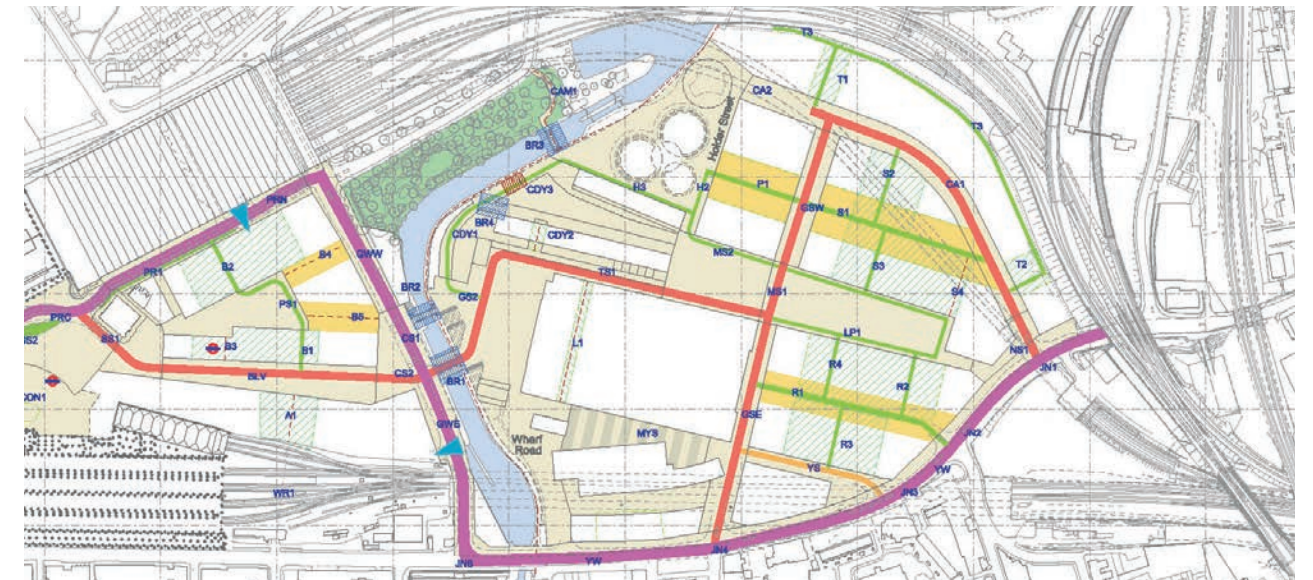


Figure 5: Parameter Plan KXC 007 - Principal Access & Circulation

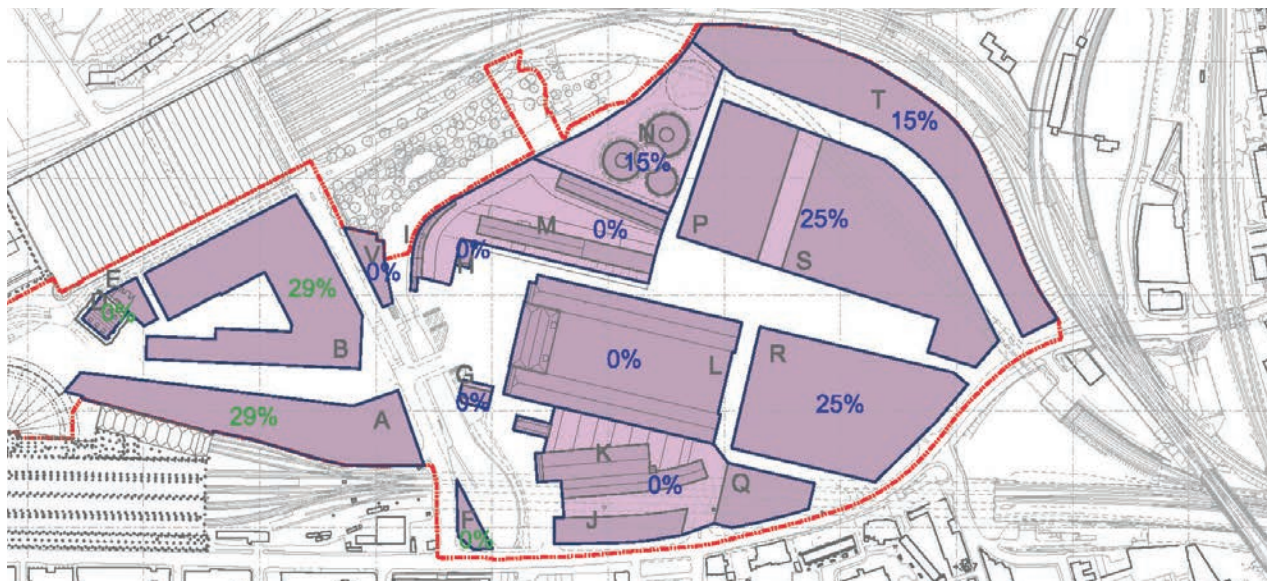


Figure 6: Parameter Plan KXC 013 - Development Massing



Figure 7: Parameter Plan KXC 014 - Maximum Building Heights

Masterplan Context

Immediate Site Context

Building S4 sits within Development Zone S of the King's Cross Masterplan. As the resultant geometry of consented and built neighbouring plots, plot S4 is a triangular site. Its longest primary frontage is to Lewis Cubitt Park with shorter ones that open out on to Keskidee Square, Keskidee Lane and Chilton Square. To the south sharing Keskidee Lane, its neighbour is Building S2. To the west, the consented office building S3. To the north, the consented residential building S5. S4 completes Lewis Cubitt Park with buildings of Zone R.

Parameters

The parameters set the maximum height of the buildings for S4 at +72.5 AOD along Lewis Cubitt Park and +75.0 AOD to the west of this datum. The massing also requires the form above 30m to be reduced and equate to a maximum of 25% of the overall GEA.

Brief

The brief from Argent for S4 comprises of two residential components, for both market and social rented tenures, notionally separated by a party wall above an active ground floor of retail and amenity uses. The slab at ninth floor forms a party wall division with market residential units above social rented apartments for the ninth to eleventh floor.

Consultation

Throughout the development of the design of Building S4, the team has consulted both the internal specialist at Argent, neighbours and stakeholders below:

- Camden Council – planning, urban design, transport, building control
- Neighbours – Sony (S1), AKDN (T5) and S3
- Argent – planning, retail, marketing, customer care and management teams
- King's Cross Design and Access Forum
- Network Rail
- Metropolitan Energy

Report Structure

This Urban Design Report (UDR) sets out the design for Building S4 within the Development Zone S of KXC and its compliance to the Kings Cross Masterplan Guidelines. The report comprises two parts.

The first section describes the design rationale for the scheme based on the context analysis, the understanding of the brief and explains the design principles employed in terms of layout, density, scale, visual appearance, landscape and access.

The second section reviews the design of Building S4 and its adherence to the aspirations set out in the King's Cross Masterplan parameters and principles in respect to the townscape and context of King's Cross. It also examines the scheme's response to the relevant guidance, qualities and aspirations of the permissions granted for reserved matters application of the neighbouring plots and for the outline consent for the King's Cross Masterplan. This report is to be read in conjunction with the suite of submitted documents as part of this application for Building S4.

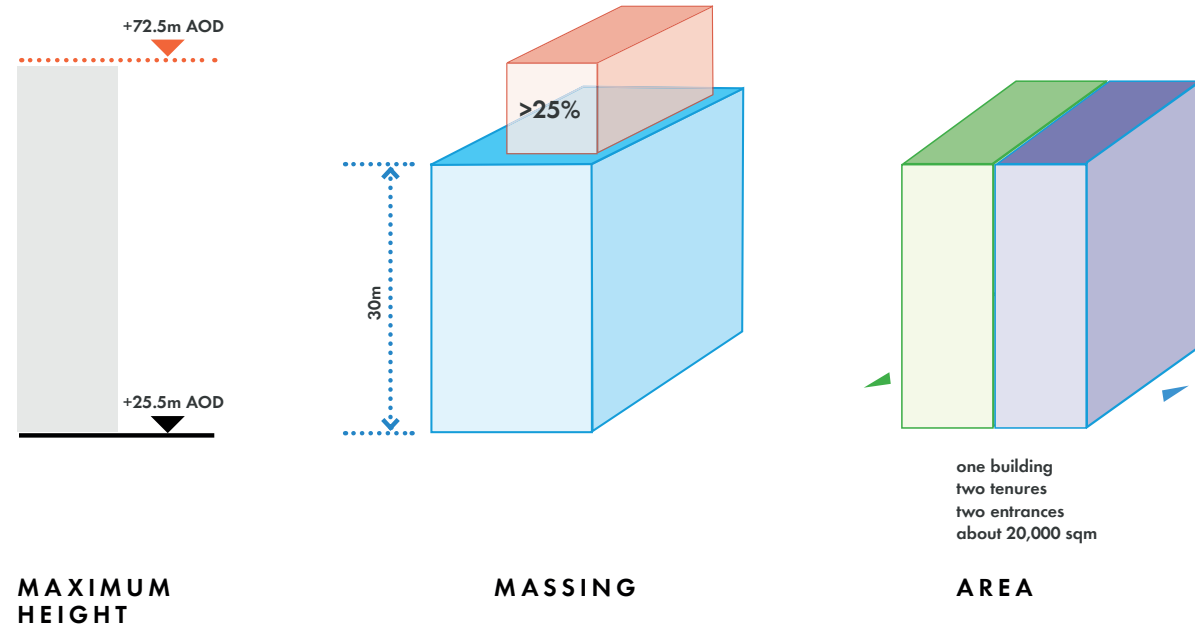


Figure 8: Diagram of Massing Parameters for S4

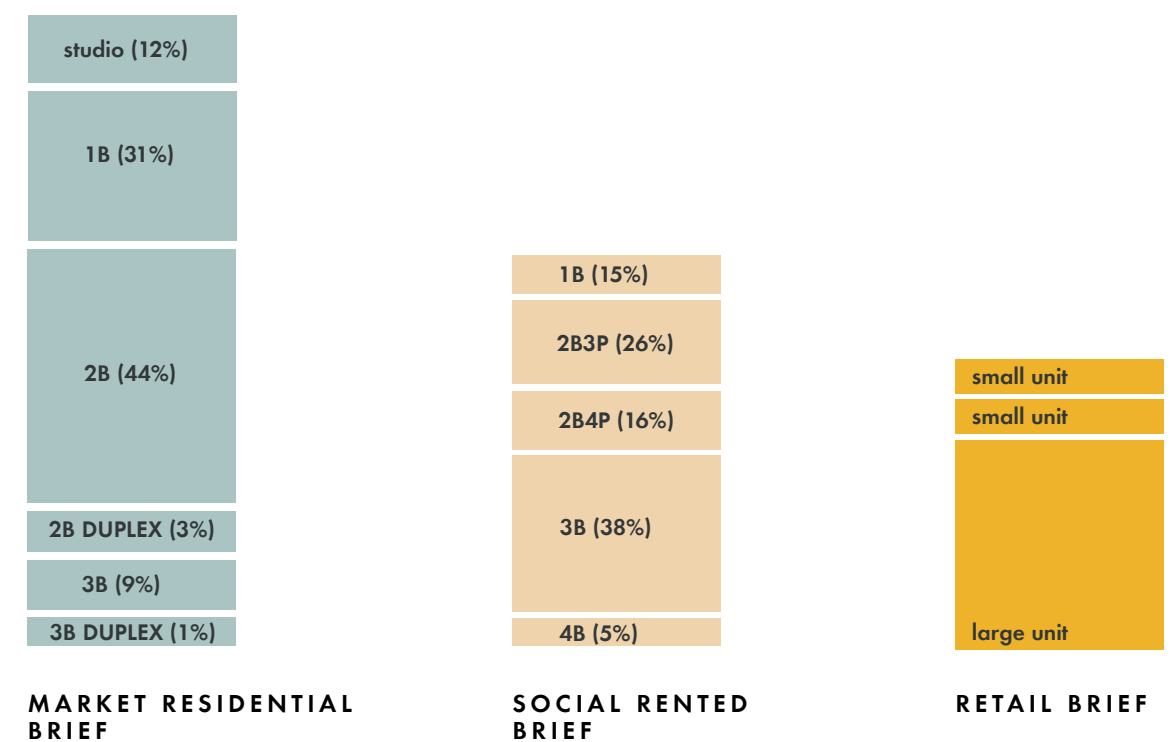


Figure 9: Diagram of Argent Brief for Uses and Quantum for S4

Approach to Scheme Design

Overview and Vision

The brief that Allies and Morrison were commissioned to design for the plot of S4 is for an exceptional urban building fronting Lewis Cubitt Park to complete Zone S of the King's Cross Masterplan. The site is a wonderful opportunity to create high quality residences for mixed tenures that will help enliven its surrounding public realm.

Allies and Morrison developed the design approach from April 2019 through interview and ultimately commission by the client, Argent. The concept for S4 evolved out of a series of design iterations with feedback and consultation with Argent, the consultant team and officers at LB Camden. This included the change to the market residential mix, retail and amenity provision, the extent of the basement and increasing the the social rented S106 requirement.

The scheme responded to the evolving brief and respected the masterplan parameters with a design that observed the principle of alignment and the compositional arrangement of the buildings of Lewis Cubitt Park. It defined the edges of the smaller adjacent public spaces, Keskiddee Square and Chilton Square, while offering exceptional standards of accommodation and retail space to activate the public realm.

The interior design of the social rented were undertaken by Allies and Morrison in consultation with registered providers,. The design of the interiors for the market units, lobby and amenity space were developed by Johnson Naylor with advice by the client's residential team.

The scheme for Building S4 comprises of;

- 120 market units,
- 56 social rented units,
- residential lobbies,
- communal and private terraces
- an amenity space,
- one large retail space,
- two smaller retail units at ground floor with;
- a basement for cycle stores and plant.

The scheme balances its requisite urban roles along with constraints of the west tunnel on a triangular site to accommodate the best quality of residential and retail space.

Building S4 contributes a high quality residential scheme to King's Cross, one of the most accessible, animated, inclusive and significant regenerational developments in London. The scheme will be a great place to live with fantastic views, direct access to central London and surrounded by many amenities. It celebrates Lewis Cubitt Park and responds positively to its neighbours and contributes its part in defining well the streets and squares.

Constraints

Plot S4 is constrained by two key infrastructural features and the design has developed with respect to these constraints. The underground Network Rail tunnel runs diagonally below S3. This is outside of Plot S4 but required the building to observe a zone of 19m offset from the edge of the tunnel to its foundations. The Camden Sewer also runs parallel to the eastern edge along Lewis Cubitt Park.

Additional constraints include the narrow allowance for below ground utilities west of the plot due to a buried attenuation tank for S3 in Chilton Court and crane bases for adjacent buildings. As the last plot of Zone S, the servicing strategy of the building is also constrained to prioritise the surrounding streets for pedestrians.

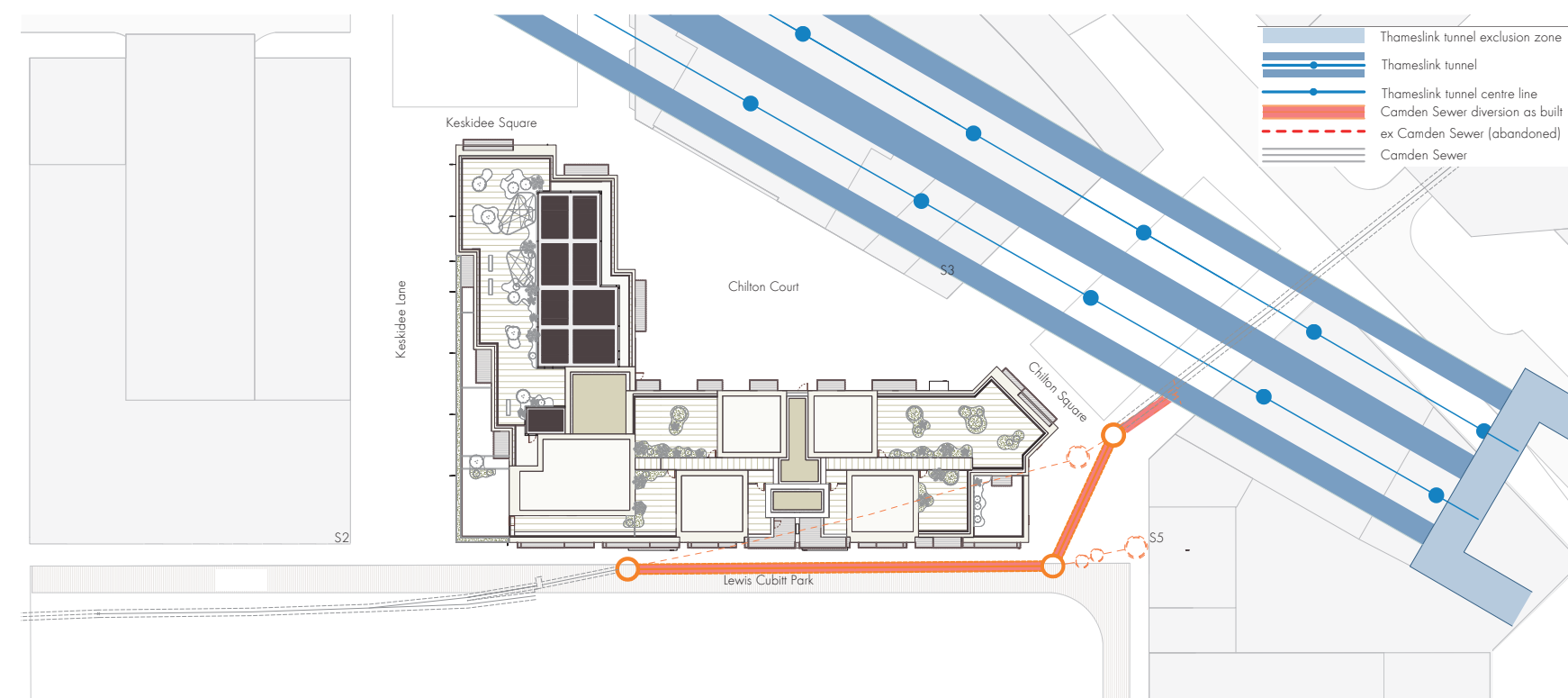


Figure 10: Diagram of Constraints for S4 showing tunnel and Camden Sewer

Site and Surroundings

King’s Cross has a rich industrial history with a legacy of robust materials of iron, brick and masonry that characterises the buildings of the area’s heritage. The buildings of its past, present and emerging all respond to its industrial simplicity in composition with repeated large windows and strong simple forms. The setting of these buildings are softened with natural elements from the surrounding green spaces of Lewis Cubitt Park and Camley Street Natural Park.

Building S4 continues with this lineage with the proposal composed of large brick frames infilled with generous openable windows and doors to bring in light and air. It is accented with green pigmented concrete panels that is inspired by the greenery of the public spaces immediately adjacent to the plot. White balconies formed of fine metalwork give depth to the elevations.



Figure 11: Context images of old, new and natural - German Gymnasium, Luma and Lewis Cubitt Park

Approach to Scheme Design

Opportunities and Massing Approach

Opportunities

S4 has the unique opportunity to complete the longest western frontage to Lewis Cubitt Park. It also has the role as a transitional piece that mitigates between the group of residential buildings facing the park to the commercial buildings towards Canal Reach. The plot provides active uses to all frontages to address the public realm and animate its surrounding streetscape.

Aside from designing within the parameters of a height cap of +72.5 to +75 AOD, the massing is developed in response to its orientation. The arrangement of key spaces is configured to optimise access to light and views for its occupants.

Massing

The massing towards Keskidee Square and to the north facing S5 have evolved to keep the building height comparatively lower to maximise light into these public spaces. On the east and west façade, the core is expressed to articulate the two wings of the market building. The roofscape is punctuated with the stepping profiles of the duplexes to create visual interest. At the ground floor, both of the primary entrances for market and affordable residences are on Lewis Cubitt Park. Both possess entrance halls that have through views to Chilton Court flooding the space with daylight throughout the day. Much of the design of the ground floor seeks to engage residents and visitors through intimately scaled doors and shopfronts, thereby inline with the adventurous and urban spirit of the area.

From the southern end of Cubitt Park, it is apparent that S4 contributes a significant frontage to Lewis Cubitt Park. Towards Keskidee Lane, the massing steps back as a series of staggered brick planes further connecting apartments in these locations to Lewis Cubitt Park. On Keskidee Square located west of the plot and Chilton Square located northwest, it also features prominently to complete these spaces albeit with much narrower façades.

Influence of plan arrangement

Much of the plan arrangement within the proposed massing is considered to maximise the dual aspect (Market units - 45% dual aspect, Social Rented units - 86% dual aspect) to residential accommodation with windows in proximity of neighbours positioned carefully to mitigate direct views. The design encompasses warehouse style apartments, some with tall living spaces of one and half storeys, offering residents a choice of types of accommodation of different characteristics.

Another design consideration was the importance of connecting the social rented apartments with direct views to Lewis Cubitt Park. It was also important to locate all front doors on the park such that the residents' journey home was as pleasant, enjoyable and safe as possible. The building therefore has prominent well designed front doors marked with a projecting canopy all articulated in green architectural metalwork.

Appearance

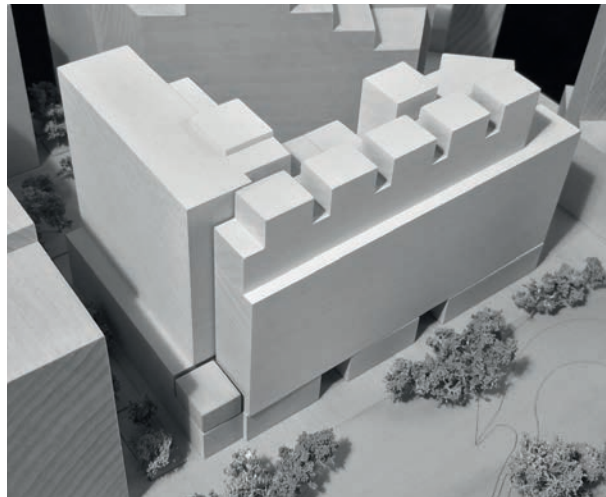
The elevations have two characters. The primary frontages facing the park and square are framed with robust masonry columns and slabs creating generous openings with tall windows and broad balconies. The secondary frontages facing the lane and court have more intimate framed views from punched windows with raised cills and private balconies.

Character and Inspiration

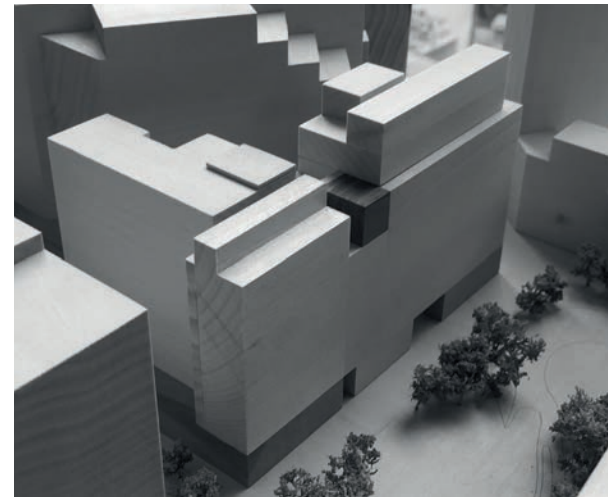
The design of S4 is inspired by a range of influences from the generous and robust character of lofty contemporary warehouses in New York to the simplicity and openness of garden apartments such as Highpoint in Highgate by Berthold Lubetkin. The rooftop duplexes share similar elements to the contemporary houses in natural settings such as the Esherick House by Louis Kahn. The materials chosen are brick and pigmented concrete with fine metal windows so that it relates well with its neighbours and references the historical use of masonry in industrial buildings at King's Cross.



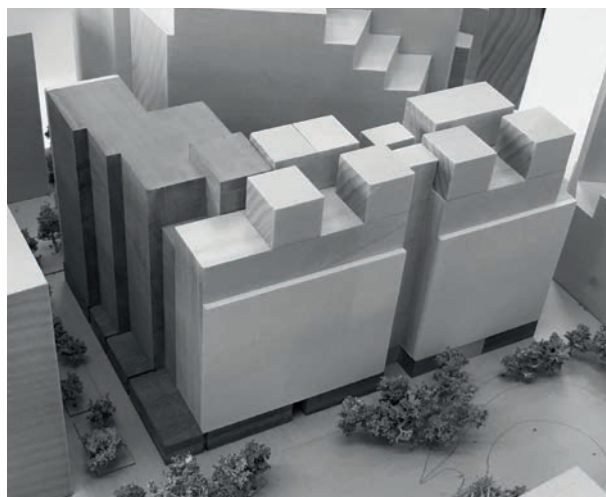
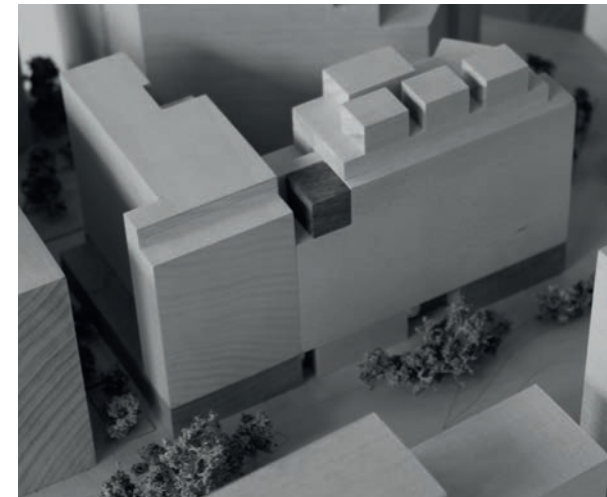
Figure 12: Historical painting of Granary Building of King's Cross



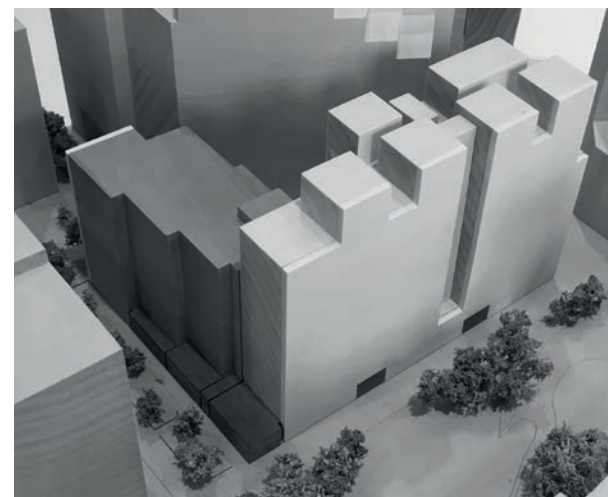
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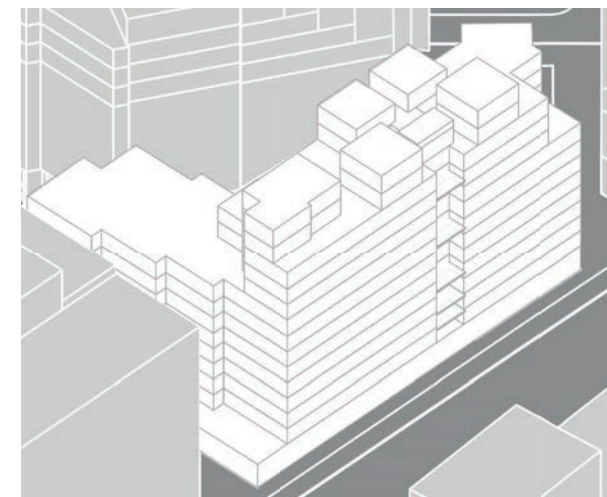
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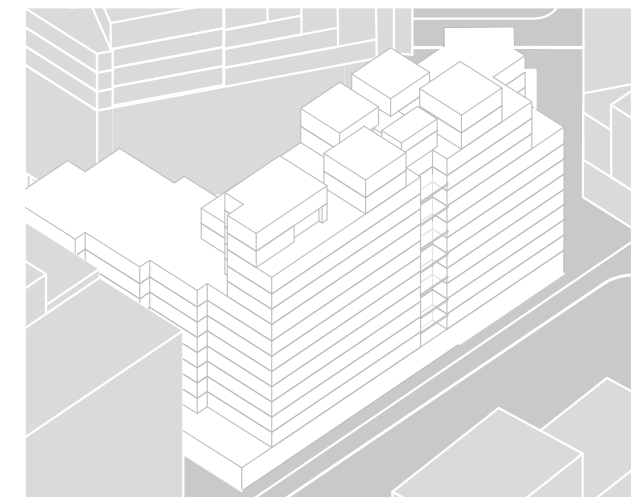
August 2019



September 2019



February 2020



December 2020

Figure 13: Massing development of Building S4

Approach to Scheme Design

Design Evolution

The massing, its orientation and arrangement of key spaces of Building S4 has evolved in response to consultation with the client's internal teams, the planning and urban design officers at Camden Council and consultation with various stakeholders to meet its objectives to:

- provide excellent residential accommodation,
- bring social rented units into the centre of the development,
- create views to the park for the majority of the units
- maximise daylight and views within a constrained site,
- animate and provide activity to the vibrant streetscape;
- design a distinctive and complementary high quality set piece to Lewis Cubitt Park and its surrounding public spaces that form the wider character of the area, and;
- respect and comply with the aspirations of design guidelines and parameters set in the King's Cross Masterplan.

The design has been informed by the client's specialist advisor, the consultant team and specialist façade consultants FMDC. Considerations range from interior and facade design, sustainable measures, compliance to housing standards, accessibility to co-ordination of structure, services and fire design for buildability.



Figure 14: View from Lewis Cubitt Park