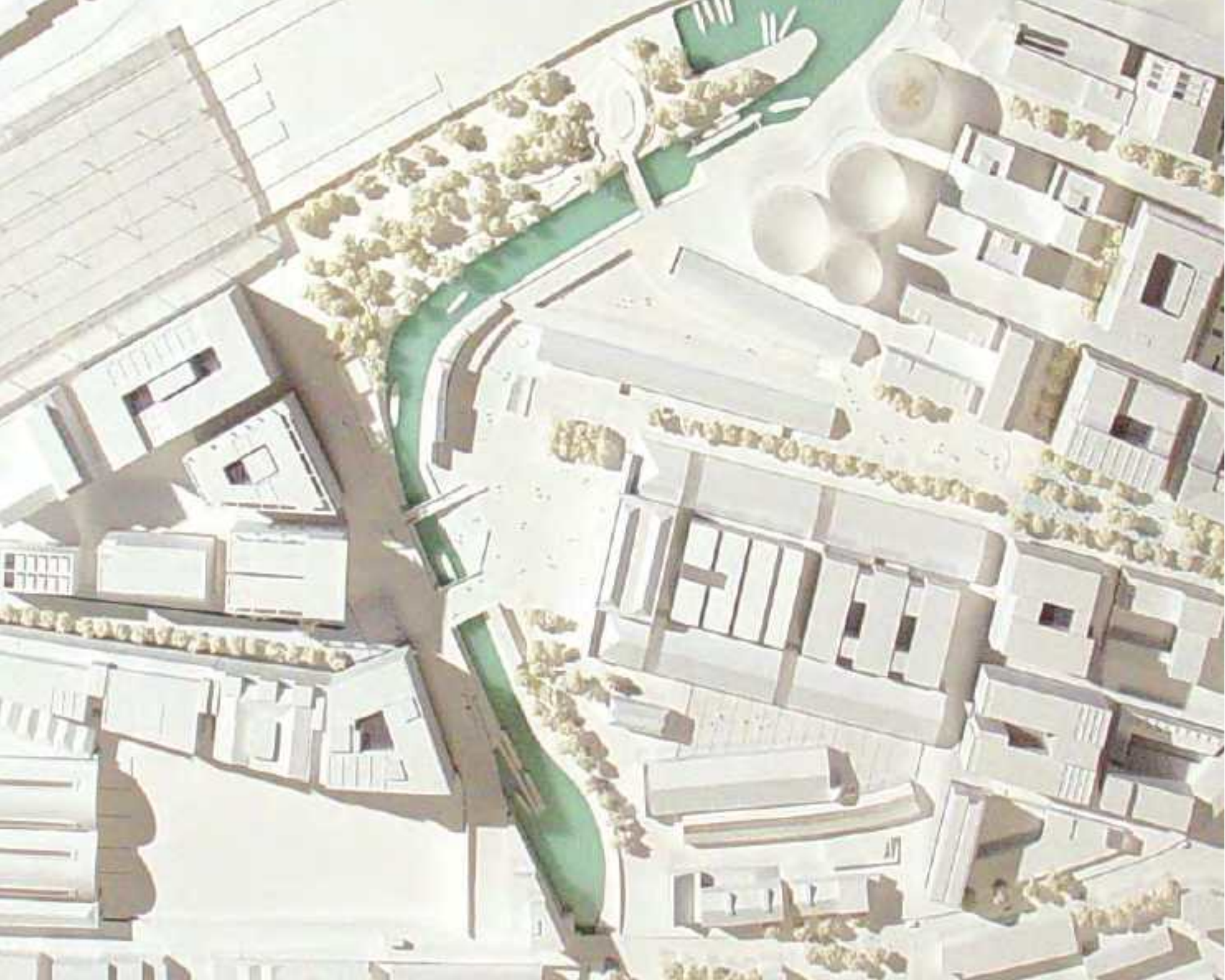


King's Cross Central

Urban Design Statement

prepared for Argent St George, London and Continental Railways and Exel



Introduction

This document describes the vision of Argent St George, London and Continental Railways and Exel for the regeneration of King's Cross Central.

It has been prepared by the King's Cross Central Team to accompany the two outline planning applications; for the Main Site and for the Triangle Site.

We hope it will assist the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington and others in understanding our design approach to the site, its sense of place and the role it could play within the local context and within London as a whole.

Landowners	London and Continental Railways Exel
Developer	Argent St George
Masterplanners	Allies and Morrison Porphyrios Associates
Landscape Designers	Townshend Landscape Architects
Wider Area Urban Designers	EDAW
Heritage Consultants	IHCM
Transport Consultants	Arup Transport
Engineering Consultants	Arup
Environmental Consultants	RPS and others
Quantity Surveyor	Davis Langdon and Everest

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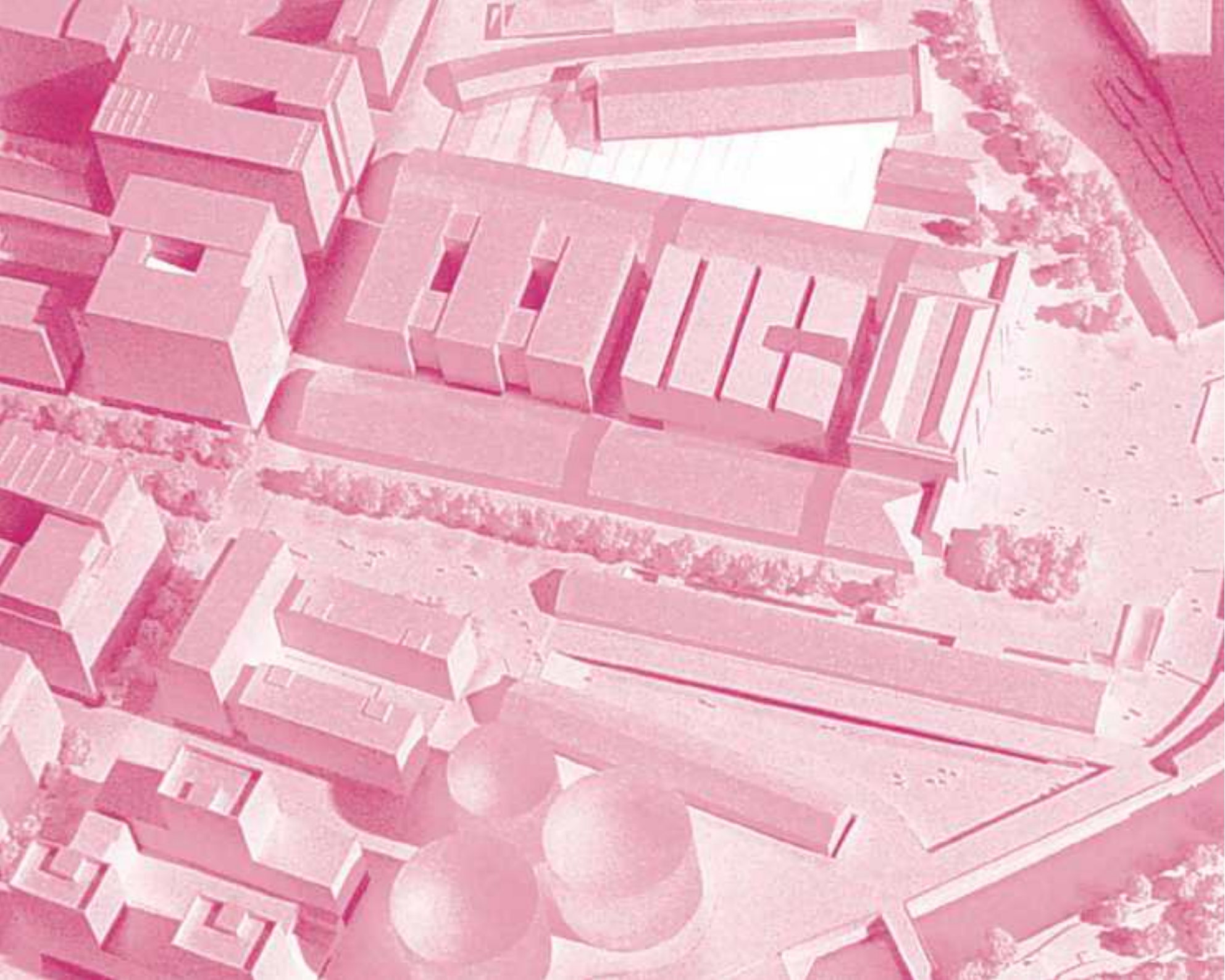
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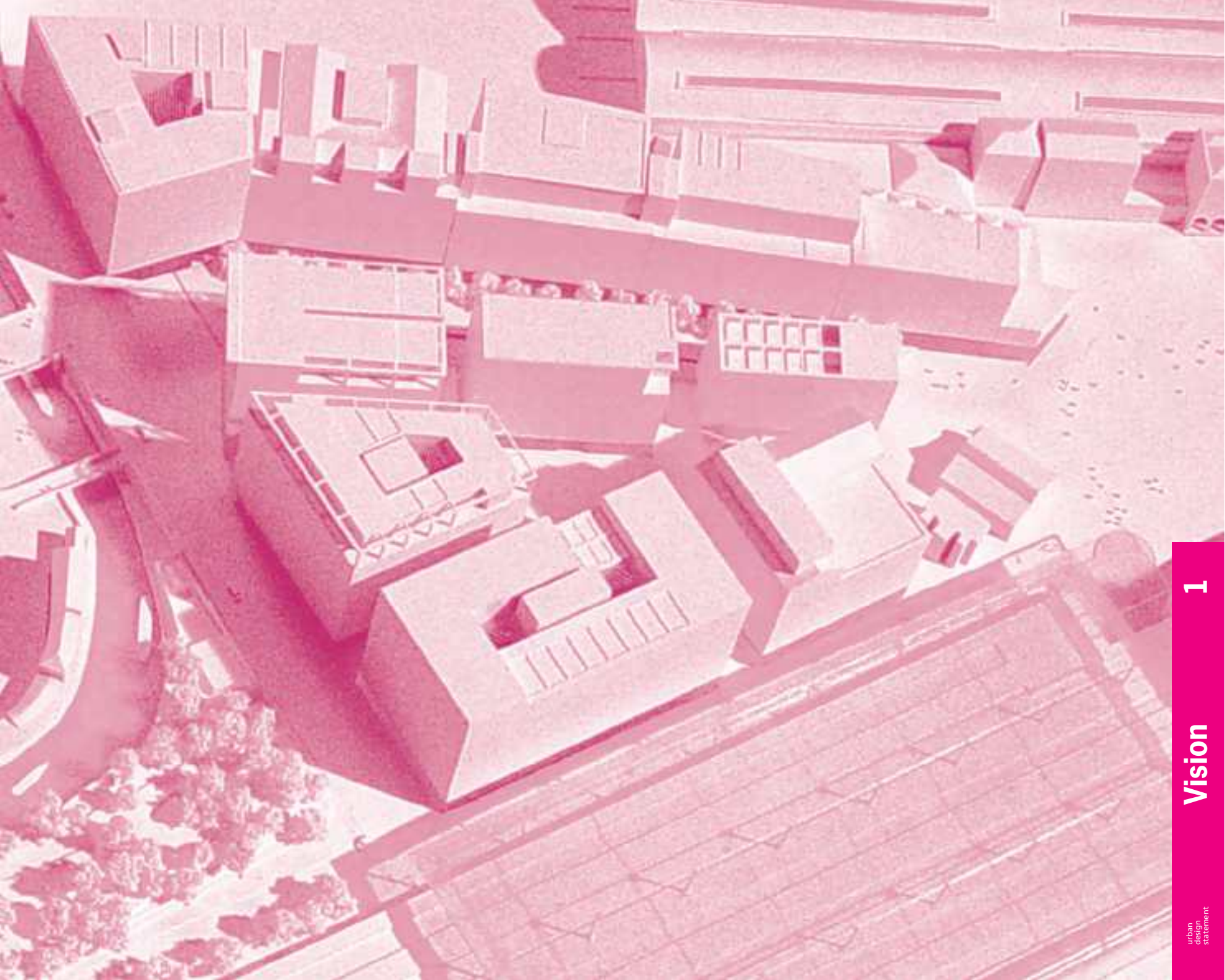
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1.1 Our Vision for King's Cross

Our vision for King's Cross Central is one of both diversity and cohesion. A new, high density, mixed use piece of city which fits naturally into – and grows out of – its context.

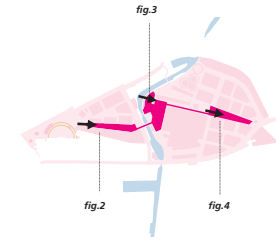


fig.1 Station Square and the Boulevard looking towards Granary Square

Illustrative Scheme:
The views and sketches within this document are based on the 'Illustrative Scheme': a worked example of how a development, in line with the maximum quantum of floorspace applied for, may emerge from the Parameters and Guidelines, defined elsewhere in the planning applications and supporting documents. See Urban Design Guidelines Introduction p.IV

By creating this illustration of how our ideas might be realised, we have proved to ourselves that it would be a coherent and connected piece of city of exceptional diversity and quality.

King's Cross Central can become a generator for change beyond its own boundaries:

A place where communities are drawn together.
A balance of contrasts: old and new, large and small, regular and irregular.
A Human City.

A Site of Extremes

King's Cross Central is an extraordinary site, a site of contradictions (fig.5):

- The largest development site in Central London.
- The best public transport connections in the country.
- From 2007, only two hours and twenty minutes from Paris;
- A few minutes walk from Camden Town, Upper Street and Bloomsbury;
- A 'backland' with a long history of neglect;
- One of the most important industrial heritage sites in Britain; a place where history is still fresh and tangible;
- Surrounded by 'difficult' edges; railways and busy roads;
- With a 12 metres change in level from end to end and the Regent's Canal running through the middle.

A New Urban Quarter

King's Cross Central is an opportunity to shape a vibrant new urban quarter, held together by an attractive and safe public realm.

By creating connections within and beyond the site; by establishing a coherent urban grain and a flexible mix of uses; by embedding and reusing existing buildings within a new framework; and by maximising the use of brownfield land in this central location, we can create a model for a sustainable piece of city with a unique sense of place.

We want King's Cross Central to be a place for everyone, with a character that is both dynamic and innovative: a character that is rooted in the location and history of the site (fig.2-4).



fig.2 Looking north along the Boulevard

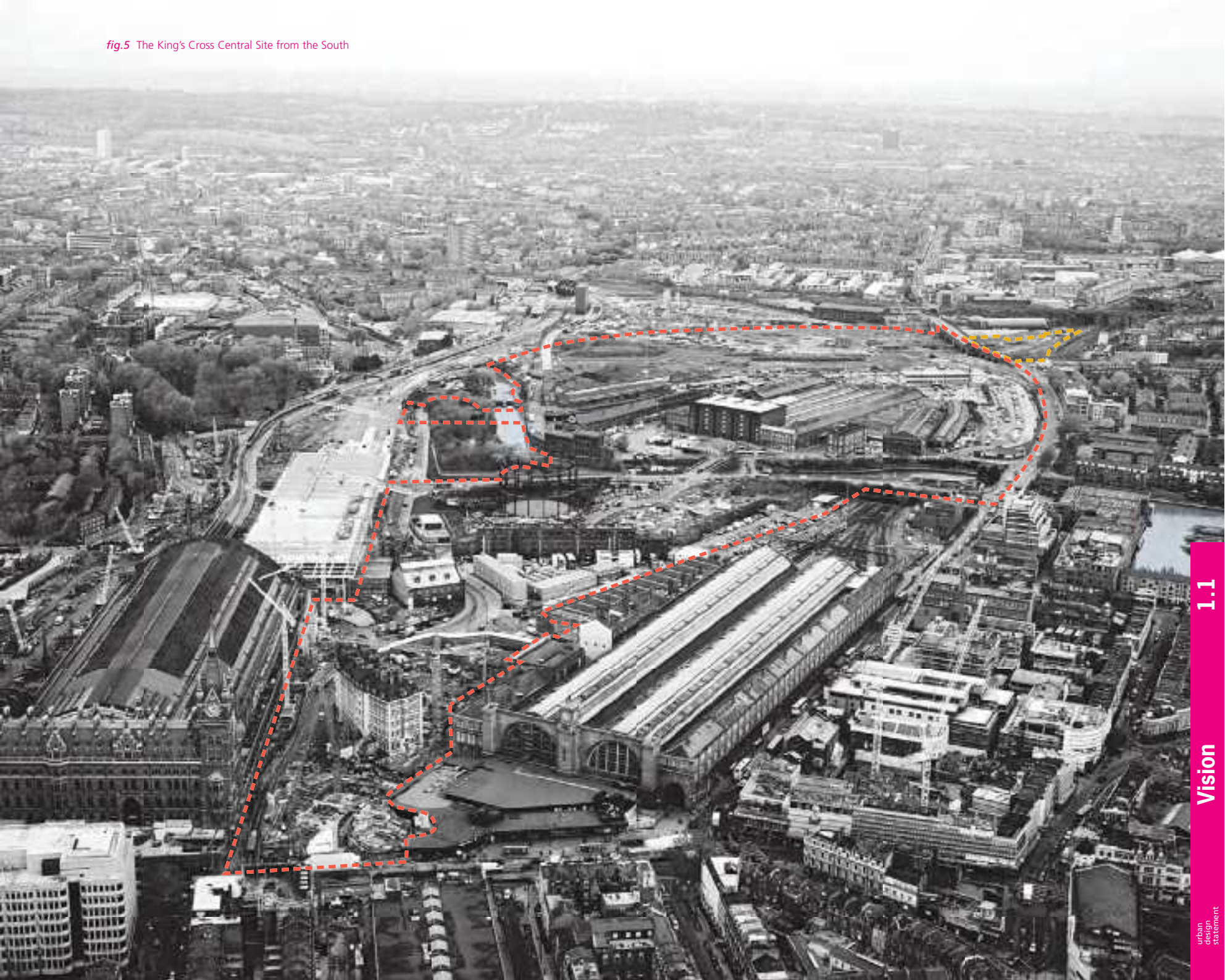


fig.3 Ice Skating in Granary Square



fig.4 Lunchtime in Long Park

fig.5 The King's Cross Central Site from the South



1.2

What is the Framework?

The Framework outlines the potential of this place to create the right conditions for regeneration.



Public Consultation

- Visitors have requested over 60,000 pages of information from our website since it was launched.
- 20,000 copies of documents have been made available by us for consultation.
- We have talked with, and presented to, or otherwise consulted and involved over 4,000 people.
- Over 150 meetings have been held with statutory and local interest groups.
- In February 2002 we worked with FLUID to gain the views of children and young people. Around 200 young people from 4 schools and 3 youth clubs/groups, in Camden and Islington, were involved.
- Refer to the Statement of Community Engagement for more information.

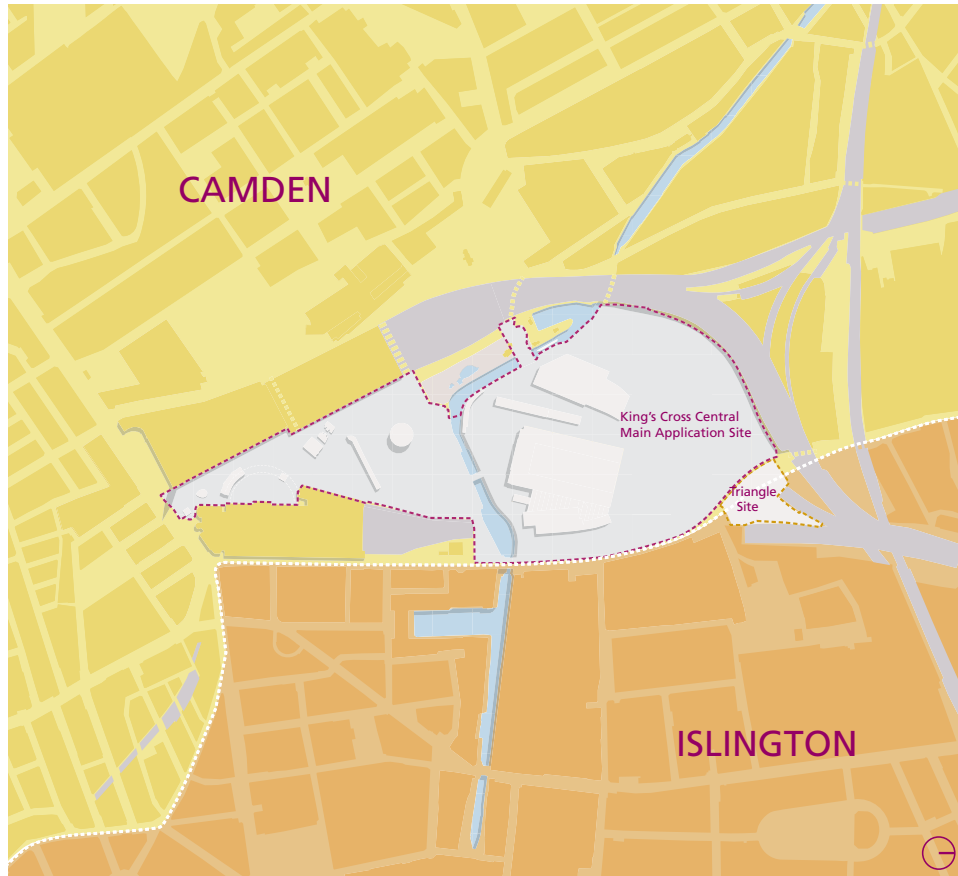


fig.6 The Main Application Site and the Triangle Site

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The Framework is the Beginning of a Process

As summarised in this document, the Framework is an attempt to capture the underlying character or the essence of the place. Without being partisan to a particular architectural approach, it describes the potential of the place to enable regeneration to grow naturally and coherently towards an authentic whole.

It is a starting point rather than an end. It stems from an urban design approach which puts the public realm first, aiming to achieve a balance between public and private life, ultimately to make coherent places which are comfortable to be in.

What is the Status of the Document?

The planning applications for the Main Application Site and the Triangle Site (fig.6) include Development Specifications and Parameter Plans. They set rules for things such as the principal public realm, access and circulation, building heights, massing and mix.

They are supported by this document, by a Public Realm Strategy, by Urban Design Guidelines and a host of other information. These supporting documents would inform the evolution of the development over time, forming part of the brief given to individual architects chosen to respond to specific development plots and opportunities across the site. Camden's Planning and Development Brief has been influential in the evolution of the proposals described within this Urban Design Statement. It is not our intention, however, to address each point from the Brief in this Statement; the Brief is covered in the Planning Statement for King's Cross Central.

The Urban Design Statement is intended, therefore, as an important document for all future design work. Its aim is to help everyone involved, now and in the future, to deliver our vision for King's Cross Central and maintain our commitment to procuring high quality design.

It is intended to be read by a much wider audience than perhaps other planning application documents. We hope it will be of lasting value to everyone with an interest in the site and the role that King's Cross Central can play within London.

Ongoing Dialogue

The Urban Design Statement grows out of the four documents published by Argent St George over the last three years (fig.7):

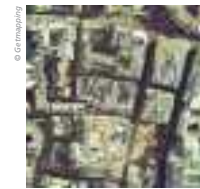
- Principles for a Human City July 2001
- Parameters for Regeneration December 2001
- Framework for Regeneration September 2002
- Framework Findings June 2003

Consultation has been a central part of our work over the last three years.

It has significantly shaped the Framework and sets a precedent for an ongoing dialogue within which ongoing design would develop further layers and detail over the coming years.

A number of fundamental principles have guided our thinking over the last three years. They were explained in Principles for a Human City and have evolved from there as follows:

1. A robust urban framework; urban grain
2. A lasting new place, character and neighbourhood
3. Promote openness and accessibility
4. Good connections, integrated transport
5. Density and diversity with a vibrant mix of uses
6. Harness the value of heritage; embed old within new
7. Public realm, places to enjoy
8. Strong urban enclosure; streets and squares
9. Flexibility; responses to change
10. Sustainability
11. Work for King's Cross; Work for London
12. Commit to long term success
13. Engage and inspire
14. Secure delivery
15. Communicate clearly and openly; ongoing consultation



1.



2.



3.



4.



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6.



7.



8.



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11.



12.



13.



14.



15.



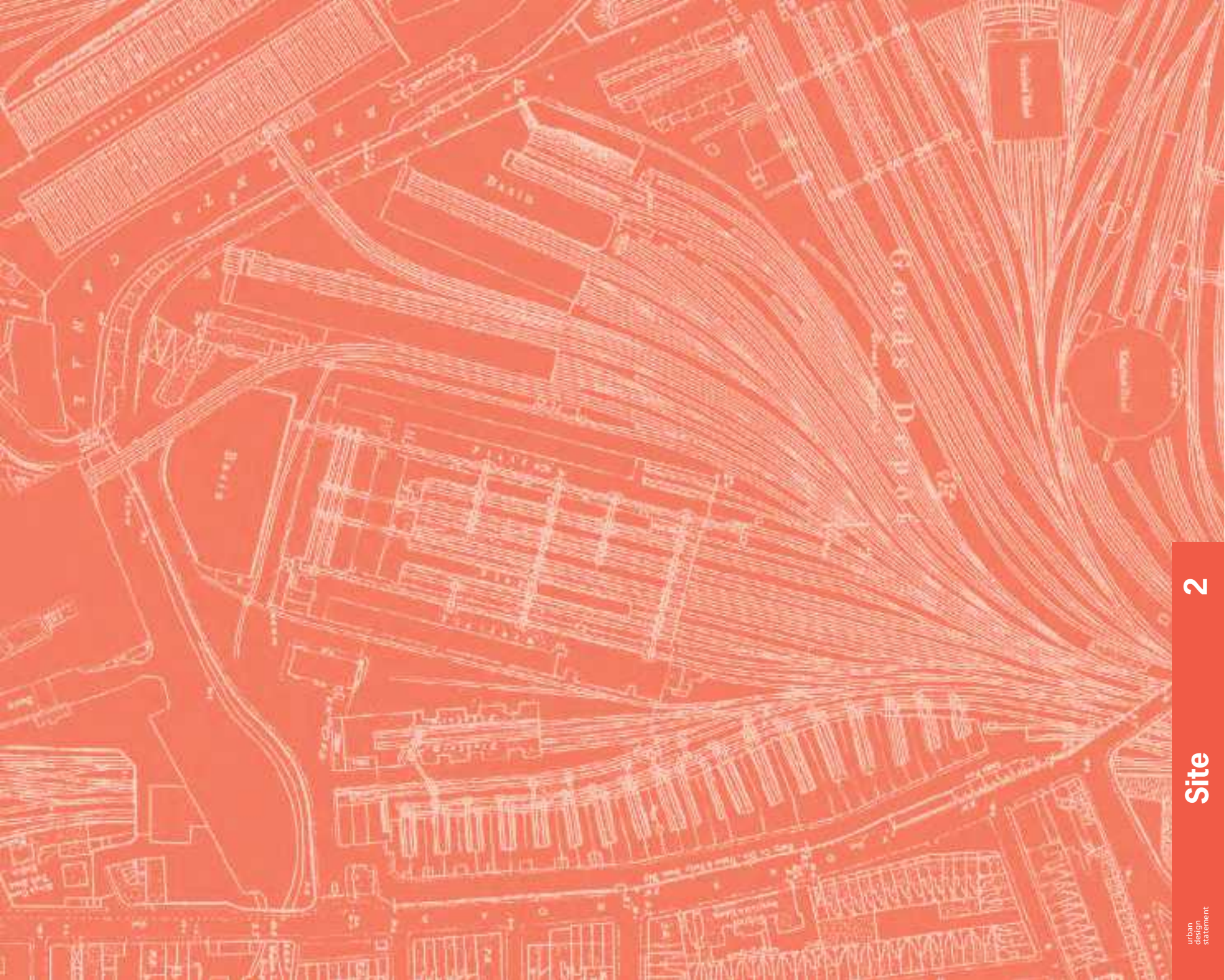
fig.7 King's Cross Central Consultation Documents.

We want it to make the most of what's there, both on the site and in the surrounding area.





fig.8 King's Cross and St Pancras at the height of railway activity in 1894



2.1 Location

King's Cross Central presents one of the most exciting and significant development and regeneration opportunities within Europe. Currently it is the largest plot of under-utilised brownfield land in Central London.



fig.11 King's Cross and St Pancras Stations from Euston Road

Transport Facts

- Kings Cross can accommodate over 300,000 inbound passengers in the peak morning hour of 8-9am in its surface and underground stations.
- Around 35 to 40 million people use King's Cross railway station per year.
- Over 200,000 users can be found entering or leaving King's Cross St Pancras underground station per day.



fig.9 A gateway from Europe to London and the UK



fig.10 The King's Cross St Pancras rail and underground interchange after the completion of the CTRL and the LUL works



fig.12 King's Cross Central: Connected to Central London

- Cultural Focus
- Stations
- Green Space
- Railway

Unlocking the Site

The site of King's Cross Central, previously known as the 'Railway Lands', and its potential have been trapped by railway infrastructure (and uncertainty over its provision) for 150 years. Now, with the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) into St Pancras this previously blighted site is being unlocked.

Part of Two Boroughs

Despite being so central, King's Cross is one of the poorest corners of both Camden and Islington, in need of large-scale regeneration. Most of the land happens to fall within Camden, however, the site and its redevelopment also offer huge opportunities for communities within Islington to the east of York Way.

Running north-south, York Way is an important connection and, together with the Triangle Site, it is very much part of the proposals to integrate the new development within its surroundings.

The Regent's Canal, which runs east-west, makes King's Cross Central a natural meeting place between the two boroughs.

Part of Pedestrian Central London

King's Cross currently marks the northern edge of the central urban zone between The West End and the City, now broadly known as 'Midtown', and has easy access to both. It has the potential to become part of 'pedestrian Central London' where walking (and bicycling) is often as quick, more enjoyable and cheaper than any other mode of transport (*fig.12*).

Transport Hub: National and International

King's Cross "has the best public transport accessibility in London". (GLA London Plan para 5.37)

The underground station is the only place served by six lines and is the third busiest in London. The mainline stations and their vicinity to Euston links the site directly to the Midlands, the North, to Scotland and Wales. 35-40 million people currently travel through King's Cross St Pancras each year.

In 2007, Eurostar (CTRL) trains from Paris, Lille and Brussels will arrive at St Pancras, turning King's Cross into an international hub, a major gateway into London and the UK (*fig.9,10*).

A Strategic Site

King's Cross Central offers an opportunity for urban regeneration on the scale of several other major developments in and around London. However its central location and transport connections set it apart as a strategic site of truly metropolitan importance, one which can contribute significantly to the next era of renewal for London as a collection of local communities, a capital city and a world city (*fig.13*).

The North Bank's South Bank

With more than 10 hectares of public space in the Goods Yard at the heart of the site King's Cross Central could be "the north bank's South Bank". As a destination for recreation, shopping and the arts, with links along the Canal to Camden Lock and Islington, it would be a unique focus in Central London. The strength and character of the existing buildings, and their relationship with the Canal, embedded within a dense and contemporary urban grain, would make it unlike any other place in the UK.

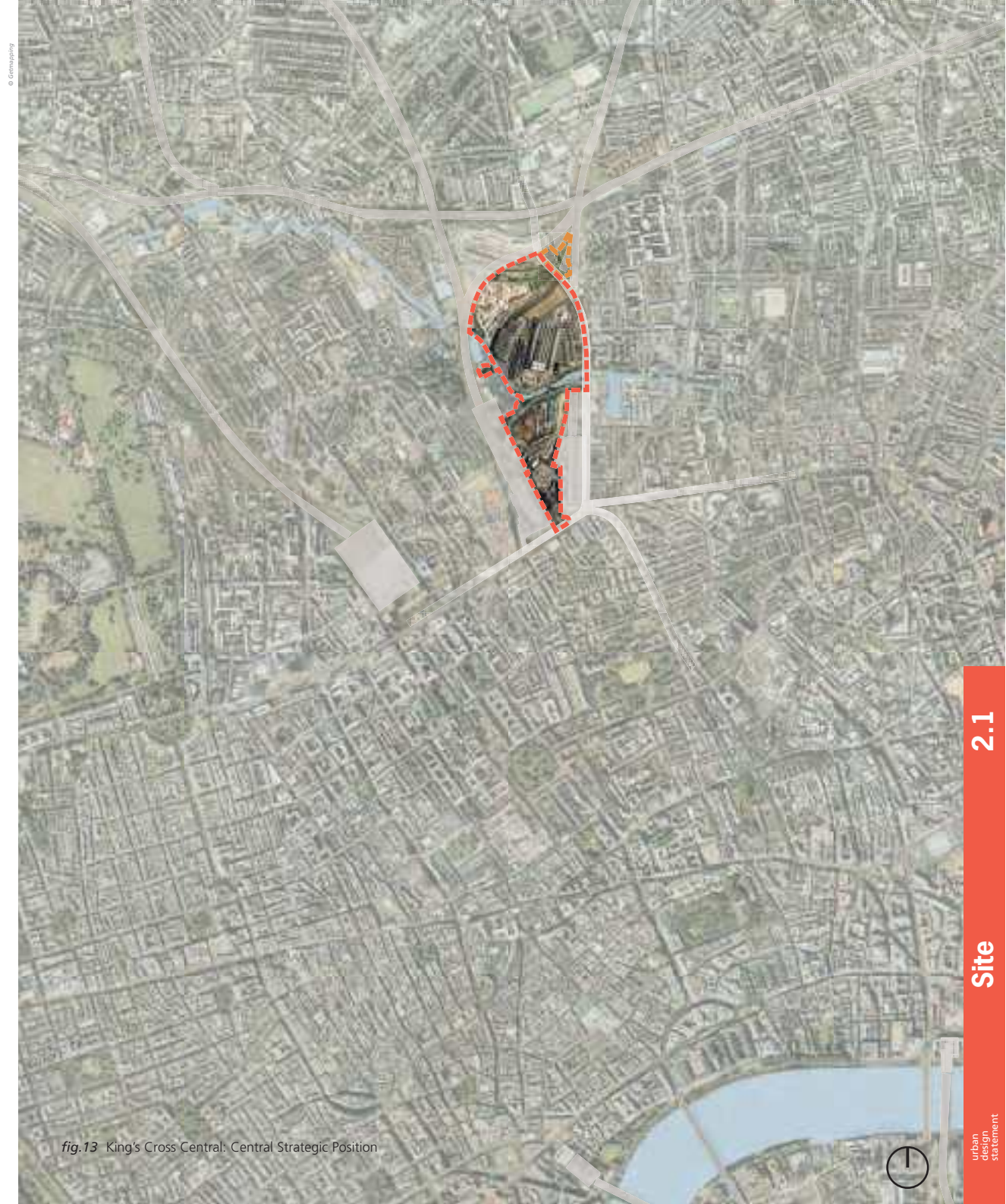


fig.13 King's Cross Central: Central Strategic Position

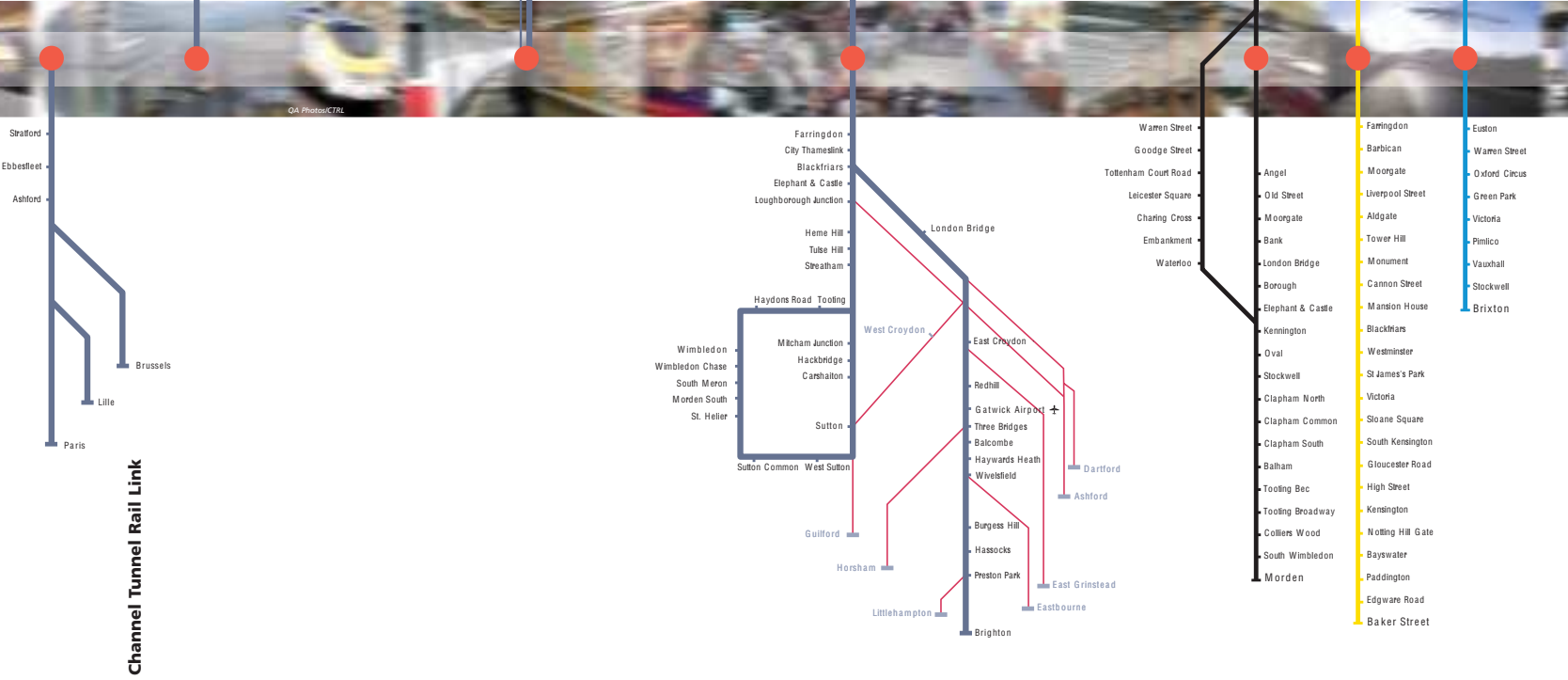
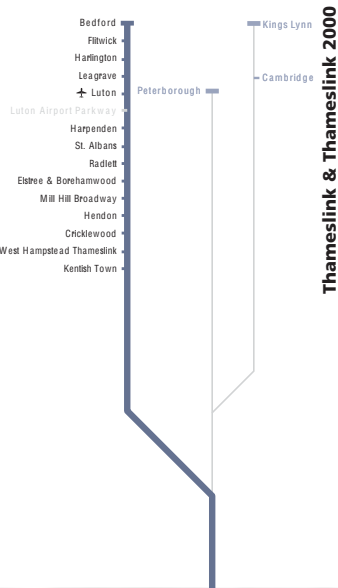
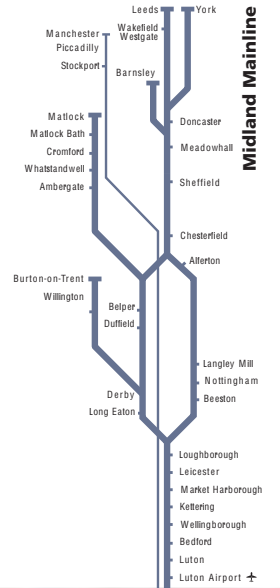
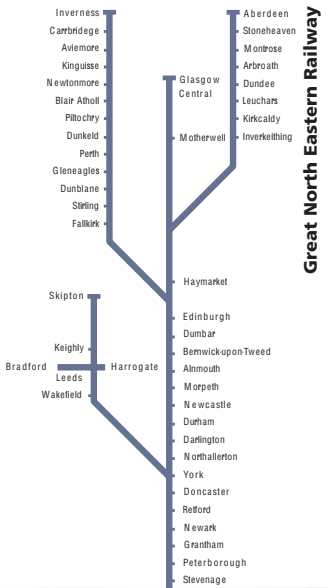


2.2

Transport



King's Cross St Pancras



2.3

Constraints and Opportunities

The site now is fragmented and disconnected.

The CTRL Embankment

"Have you tried to overcome the barrier of the CTRL embankment, now under construction?"

- Yes; we have looked at tunnelling under it or bridging over it in order to create new pedestrian or bicycle routes to Camden.
- In each case we have found it to be impossible for insurmountable technical reasons such as:
- Tunnelling under it is prevented by the Thameslink tunnels which run below/adjacent to the embankment and the Canal.
- The ramps to the bridges/tunnels required to go over or under it would have to be hundreds of metres long.

Could the former York Road Tube Station (closed 1932) be re-opened?

- We have discussed the issue with LUL: the proposition would be fraught with difficulties and the expense would be grossly disproportionate to the benefit.
- Particular problems include:
 - The extra station on the busy Piccadilly Line would disrupt train services, increase journey times and increase the risk of delays.
 - The extensive works required to reopen the station, including the lengthening of the platforms and recommissioning to modern standards would mean that the station would effectively have to be rebuilt.

North-South Orientation

- From this page onwards, the plans are orientated with South on the left and North on the right.
- This is firstly to give equal emphasis to both northern and southern connections between the site and its context.
- Secondly it is to draw attention to the importance of York Way as an active spine.



fig.14 Site from the east: 2004

The Impact of the Railways

Fig. 18 shows the planning application boundaries in red and orange. Inside this line, to north and south of the Goods Yard, past urban infrastructure projects, from 1850 to the present day, have left a hole in the urban fabric, in need of repair (fig.16).

Since the construction of the two great stations, King's Cross and St Pancras, and the Northern Goods Yard, the site has been trapped. The numbers of people passing through the stations and the accessibility they bring offer huge opportunities for regeneration at King's Cross Central. However the long blank facades of these immense railway buildings pose problems of permeability and scale which need to be tackled.

Barriers

Along the boundary, railway lines still form barriers. The new CTRL embankment will present challenges for access to the west and the north. Internally there is at present no link from the south end to the centre or from the centre northwards. The site lacks linkage and orientation.

Existing buildings such as the Culross Buildings, the Great Northern Hotel and the Western Goods Shed each form barriers to greater or lesser degrees.

Urban Compounds

Outside the boundary line, a series of impermeable and introverted urban 'compounds', both residential and light industrial, have made viable connections difficult to create, even where barriers can be overcome.

This is a problem of urban grain and human scale—or lack of it—as much as it is one of disconnection. Unlike the urban blocks of Bloomsbury, Somers Town and Pentonville, the urban 'compounds' around the site lack a familiar scale or coherent urban grain.

The Canal and Camley Street Natural Park

The Regent's Canal runs through the middle of the site. It is easy to see this as an additional barrier: it divides the North from the South but it works as a great connector too. It provides an important—albeit narrow—pedestrian link from east to west. It also connects, and creates a balance between, the upper and lower levels of the site.

The narrowness of the Canal is in contrast to the expanse of the spaces which open out around it. Flowing through the heart of what could become a dense urban place, it reveals 'interior' views of an unexpected cityscape.

A direct link to the countryside and the Thames; it softens and calms the centre of the site.

Camley Street Natural Park brings an element of untamed nature to this 'soft centre'. Over the past few years the park, which is so much a part of King's Cross, has remained reassuringly constant in the face of so much change.

York Way

York Way, too, is a special case. Presently a barrier, it has the potential to become a successful street, a spine of activity between the site and communities to the North and East.

Levels

The interaction between the natural and manmade topography of the site is truly dramatic. The site rises and falls 12 metres along its length. The south area rises 8 metres to the Canal. At the Canal, the lower level of the towpath and the lower yards 'shears' away from the upper plane.

Further north, the Goods Yard is laced by a network of viaducts and bridges, railways, roads and the Canal weave above and below each other in various combinations. To the east, York Way rises to the high point of the site and dives steeply down to pass below the CTRL embankment.

As well as giving the site a unique character, such substantial changes in level present great opportunities for 'place-making' just as they pose challenges of accessibility (fig.17).

Microclimate

The site enjoys good exposure to sunlight, enhanced by its general slope downwards towards the south (fig.15). Prevailing winds from the southwest pose challenges to achieve comfortable levels of enclosure and protection. Towards the edges of the site and along Goods Way, existing noise levels are higher and air quality is relatively poorer. However with the right strategy for containment of space, and an appropriate disposition of uses, their negative impact can be minimised.

Invisible Constraints

Several invisible constraints also impose themselves on the site such as:

- Strategic view corridors to St Paul's from Parliament Hill and Kenwood House.
- Victorian railway tunnels parallel to York Way, leading out of King's Cross (both main line and underground).
- The Thameslink tunnels being constructed beneath the site, as part of the CTRL works.

The Scope of the Applications

This Urban Design Statement relates to two planning applications:

- One application covers the Main Site, on the west side of York Way, to either side of the Regent's Canal. The Main Site lies within Camden.
- The other covers the Triangle Site, on the east side of York Way. The Triangle Site lies within both Camden and Islington.
- We have also submitted a number of related 'heritage' applications; these propose selective demolition, relocation and re-erection works that are necessary to deliver the Framework and our vision for King's Cross.

Adjoining Sites

Two adjoining sites would be covered by separate Planning Applications:

- The Linear Land; a strip of land north of the Main Site which could be used for waste management and other 'supporting' infrastructure uses;
- King's Cross Station Enhancement; Network Rail's aspirations for a new concourse at King's Cross, for which design work is underway. The King's Cross Central Framework anticipates the King's Cross Station Enhancement. Dotted Lines on fig.18 and elsewhere show the zone within which the King's Cross Station Enhancement could be developed. See section 4.1 below.

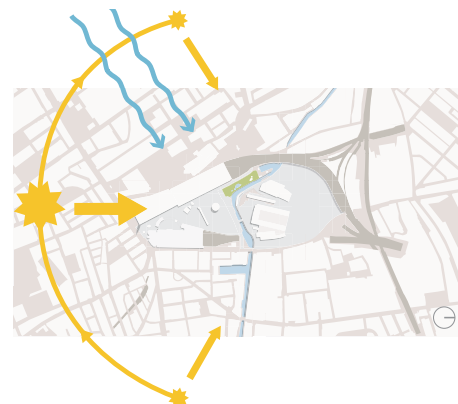


fig.15 The site enjoys good exposure to sunlight, enhanced by its general slope downwards towards the south. The predominant wind is from the southwest.

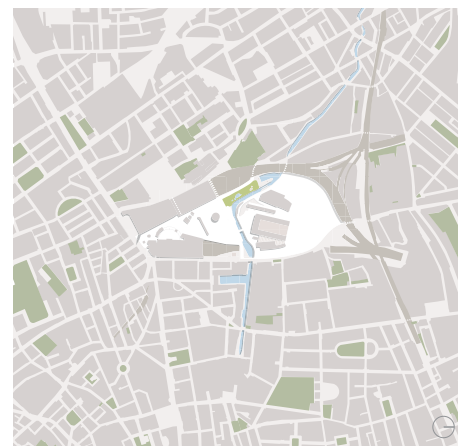


fig.16 A hole in the Urban Grain

fig.17 Long section AA through the site in 2007

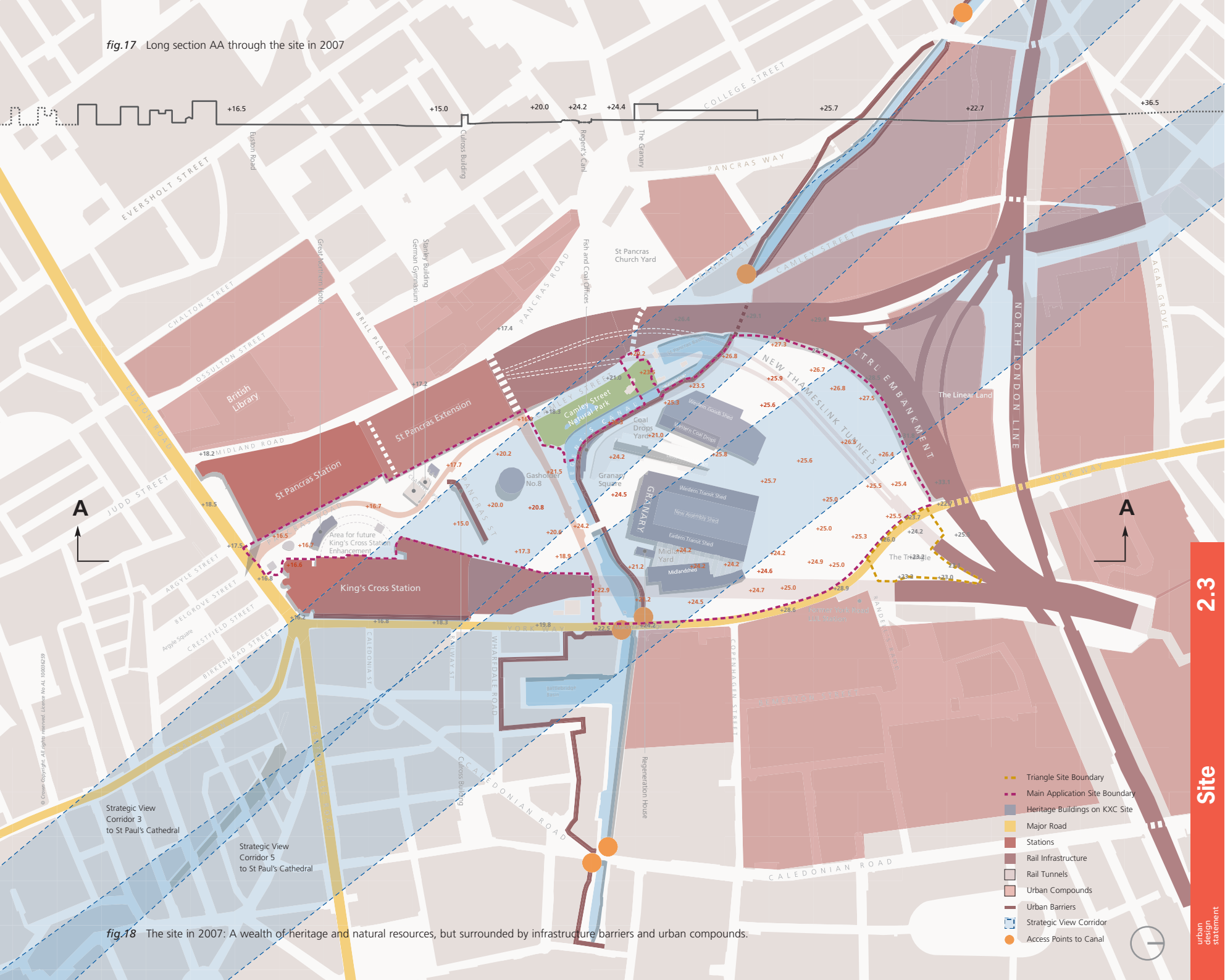


fig.18 The site in 2007: A wealth of heritage and natural resources, but surrounded by infrastructure barriers and urban compounds.

2.4 Uses and Community

The pattern of uses around the site, especially public uses, is fragmentary.
 What are the needs, where are the gaps?

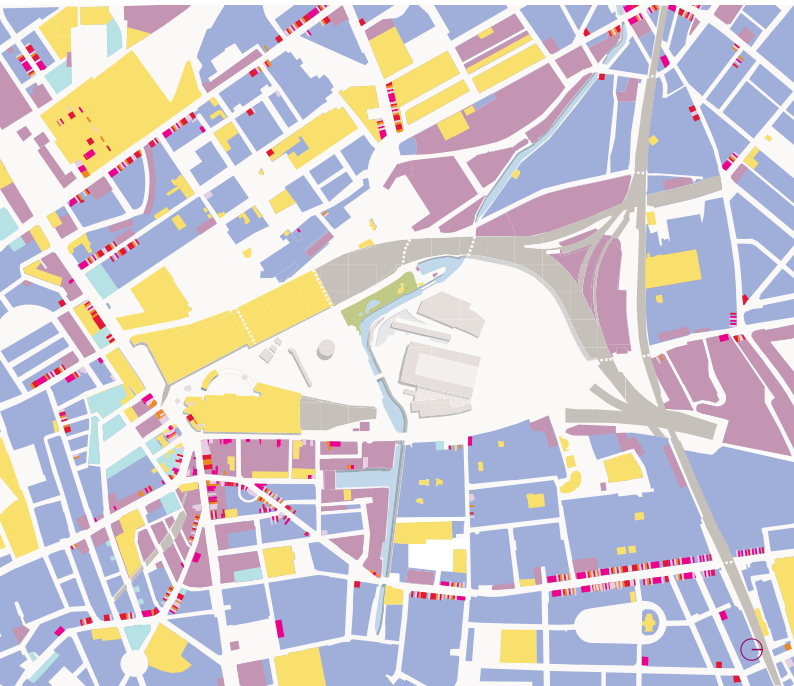


fig.19 Existing Ground level use around King's Cross Central

- Predominantly residential
- Predominantly business/employment
- Hotels
- Other public uses
- Shops, restaurants, bars and cafes
- Canal
- Railway

Communities with a Focus
 Underlying the many diverse opportunities for new uses at King's Cross is the chance to create a new focus and a new sense of place.



2007

Fig.19 shows predominant land uses as they would be in 2007 when the Channel Tunnel Rail Link is opened into St Pancras International. Existing uses and communities focus away from the site (fig.20).

Residential

There is a considerable amount of residential property in the surrounding area. However it includes poor quality, single tenure housing which, combined with lack of connections or focus, has reinforced a pattern of disadvantaged and inward looking communities. With potential for up to 2,550 new dwellings, the need here at King's Cross Central is for a full range of residential property, from privately owned to social rented housing, to be woven into the topography of the site and to take its place among a full mix of uses.

Workspace

Given the strategic potential of King's Cross Central as more than just a local destination, the new mix would include a full range of commercial uses from large scale office space to small scale workplaces.

The site has potential for over 30,000 people to work here, encompassing the broadest possible mix of people from local communities and from around London. The extraordinary diversity of the setting would be matched by the diversity of the people working there.

This shift in influence, energy and the daily life of the area is what is needed to kick-start renewal.

Retail

There is a unique opportunity at King's Cross Central to increase retail choice, diversity and affordability for existing local communities. New retail provision would serve new and existing residential and working populations in and around the site. Beyond this, King's Cross Central could become a unique retail destination within London complementing the West End, Camden Town and other centres. The Goods Yard in particular could offer a special retail and leisure experience for London, one that would attract the local community, workers and visitors alike.

Education, Health, Community, Leisure and Arts

There is an opportunity at King's Cross for new uses such as higher education, nurseries, information centres, health care and community space. Some of these uses are proposed as part of our plans for the Triangle Site. Arts, leisure and cultural uses including sport, music film, theatre and religion would be encouraged.

Open Space

There is a great opportunity here to provide safe and accessible open space, not only for outdoor recreation and play, but also to create venues for public events, specialist markets, festivals and a focus for the community.

The intention is to create innovative, flexible, shared public space that can be used for a wide range of activities by a wide range of people, throughout the day and the evening, on weekdays and weekends, year in year out.

It is consistent with our vision for a dense and diverse urban quarter, that the quality of public open space should be given priority, in order to maximise its use and vitality.

We are lucky at King's Cross Central to have inherited a focal space, or group of spaces—the Goods Yard—which has an established pattern and scale and a strong relationship with existing buildings.



fig.20 Existing uses and communities focus away from the site



fig.21 Watercolour signed by Lewis Cubitt – exhibited at the Royal Academy 1851



2.5

History

The plan of the site in 1894 offers many clues about the essence of the site today and for the future. The existing buildings and places, many of which are still intact, are our starting point for new development. By embedding new buildings amongst old, the character and life of each can be shared and the human benefit multiplied.

Our Inheritance

- The two, grand railway stations of King's Cross and St Pancras lie adjacent to the KXC development site. Both are listed Grade I. King's Cross celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002 whilst St Pancras has the most spectacular train shed of the High Victorian period, with wrought iron arches spanning 74m (243ft), designed by C J Barlow.
- Within the site there are seven listed buildings with a combined footprint of over 32,000 m² (350,000 ft²). This is equivalent to over six football pitches.
- The Granary, listed Grade II, is the only surviving centrepiece of one of London's major 19th century trade hubs. It used to hold up to 60,000 sacks of corn, with a hydraulic system for hauling the grain up through the building.
- The East and West Transit Sheds are of exceptional size for their period (1850s), each being 180m (590ft) long and 25m (82ft) wide.
- The Triplet Gasholders are the tallest to have ever been built with cast iron columns. The guide frames are unique amongst gasholders for the three-way structural linkages, where the three frames abut.
- The majority of the KXC site (55%) falls within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area or the King's Cross Conservation Area.

Scale

- The total site area is just over 27 ha.
- It is around 1km (0.6 miles) from the southern to the northern end of the site.
- Granary Square, one of the larger squares, would be about the same size as Leicester Square (almost 10,000 sq m or 107,000 sq ft).
- The façade of the Granary and its wings is about 100m, the same length as the eastern façade of Buckingham Palace.
- Seven of the structures to be retained are 100m long or over.

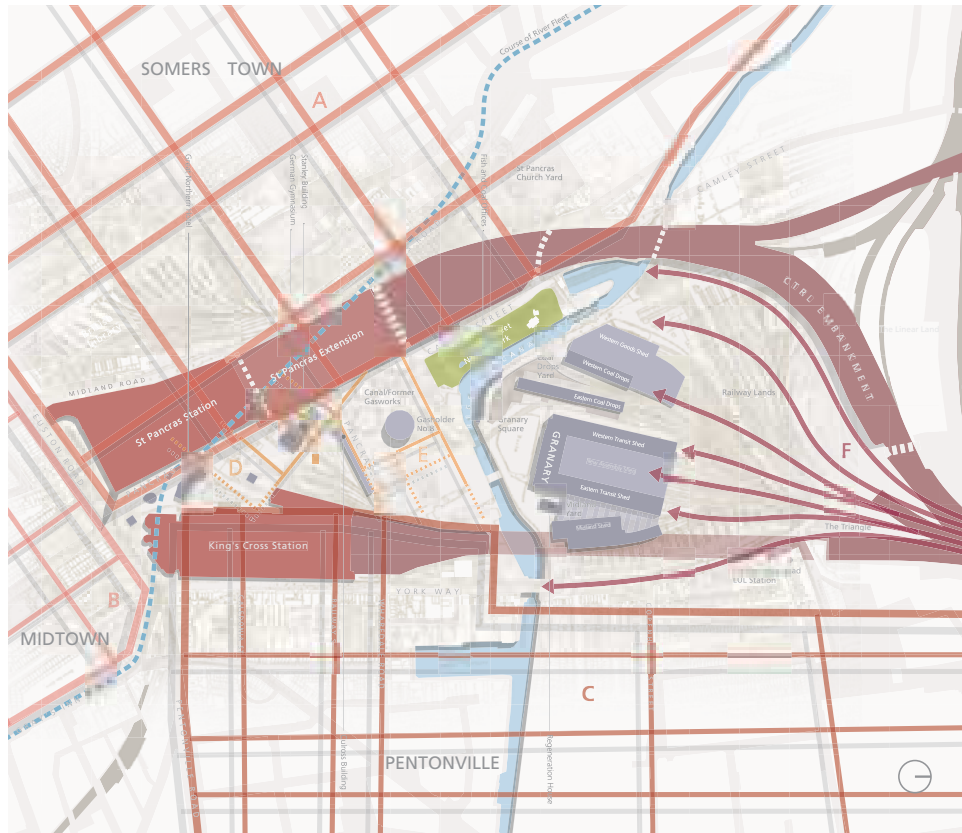


fig.22 Urban grains collide in the South. Railway grains dominate the North

- A Bloomsbury/Camden/St Pancras Grain
- B Gray's Inn/Midtown Grain
- C Islington/King's Cross Station Grain
- D Original Fleet River Grain
- E Canal/Gasworks Grain
- F Grain of former Railway Lands



The Goods Yard Reinvented

Ever since the mid-nineteenth century the site as a whole has been a secure enclosure with high walls and few points of entry.

With the construction of King's Cross Central this would be reversed; what was once an impermeable compound for the interchange of goods would become an open meeting place for people.

Intermodal Transport Hub

This site stands out among all the Victorian goods yards in the UK as one of the first and the finest 'intermodal' hubs. The use of the natural topography of the site, with interlocking levels and inlets from the Canal for the transfer of goods from rail to road and boat, was truly sophisticated (fig.23). The spirit of the buildings is the visionary 'hi-tech' of its day, realised with confidence on a grand scale.

Raw Materials

Underlying the imposing robustness of the site are the raw materials of its past: gas, coal, grain, iron, brick and stone all played their part in defining the character of the place. What was a major node in the 'lifeline' of London can be so again; this time for people rather than goods.

Railway Grain, Urban Grain and the River Fleet

In 1894 two contrasting grains characterised the site. To the South, the orientations of King's Cross and St Pancras Stations were determined by two different grains of urban development to the east and west. This left a triangular fragment of land between the two, the grain of which followed the ancient River Fleet. This feature has become a bottleneck converging on the Euston Road.

To the North, the 'fanning' grain of the Goods Yard spreads elegantly to meet the Canal; a marked contrast to the fragmentation of the South (fig.22).

The Regent's Canal and the Gasworks

Cutting across the north-south thrust of the railways is an older, more fluid element of the site's history. The Regent's Canal was completed in 1820, in a cutting along a boundary line between two fields, creating the curve which now characterises the Goods Yard. It was built to transport goods, connecting the Thames to the nationwide network of canals. In particular it brought coal to the Gasworks, constructed in 1824.



fig.23 Interchange of goods between rail, road and water at the Granary Complex during the 19th Century

Maiden Lane

York Way, formerly known as Maiden Lane, is the oldest remaining feature on the site. Although it has long been a neglected and inhospitable place, there is an opportunity now for it to become a major spine joining King's Cross Central to the existing communities to the north and east.

South Area

The South Area has always had an isolated and confusing pattern, with no obvious connection for people to move northwards. Before the railways, it was one of the infamous old-style slums of London, dominated by a smallpox hospital and the Gasworks.

To pave the way for regeneration, existing grains in the South need to be restructured and a new spirit superimposed on the old. It is therefore proposed to extend the grains of the two stations, to remove the Culross Building and the northern Stanley Building and to relocate the No.8 Gasholder along with the Triplet to the north of the Canal.

This would bring legibility to the South Area and, via the Canal and the Goods Yard, form new connections to the North. In this way new life would be allowed to emerge from a historically fractured and isolated piece of London.

North Area

In the North, the spreading railway grain would be the starting point for a pattern of urban blocks. The vast volume of the Granary complex anchors the centre of the site, both in terms of geometry and mass, providing an 'engine house' of activity. Additionally the east west grain of the now removed potato market 'plugging' into York Way sets the pattern for permeability eastwards.

The Goods Yard

The four listed Gasholders are to be relocated on the northern edge of the Canal. The Granary, Transit Sheds, Coal Drops, Midland Shed, Handyside Canopies, Regeneration House and Fish & Coal Building are to be retained and refurbished at the heart of the development. These buildings are remarkable for their immense scale, linear repetition and robust simplicity. This, combined with the more lightweight use of iron and timber which was so typical of the Goods Yard, provides a strong context within which new buildings would be designed.

In order to open up this rich heritage for the first time and provide it with a secure economic future, the restructuring of the South Area, among other new connections, is essential.



fig.24 Maiden Lane and the River Fleet pre-date all developments



fig.25 The Canal was completed in 1820, the Gasworks by 1827, the Smallpox Hospital in 1794

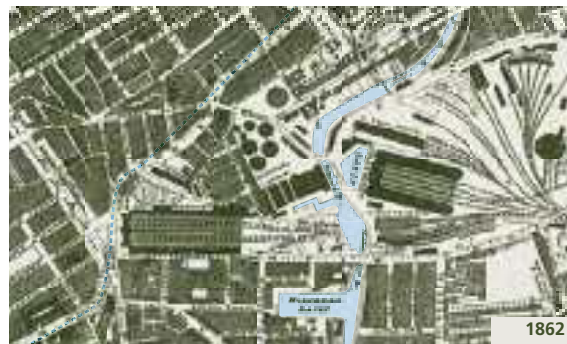


fig.26 By 1852 King's Cross and the Northern Goods Yard were substantially complete with fragments of the older urban blocks remaining



fig.27 The Midland Railway Co completed St Pancras in 1868

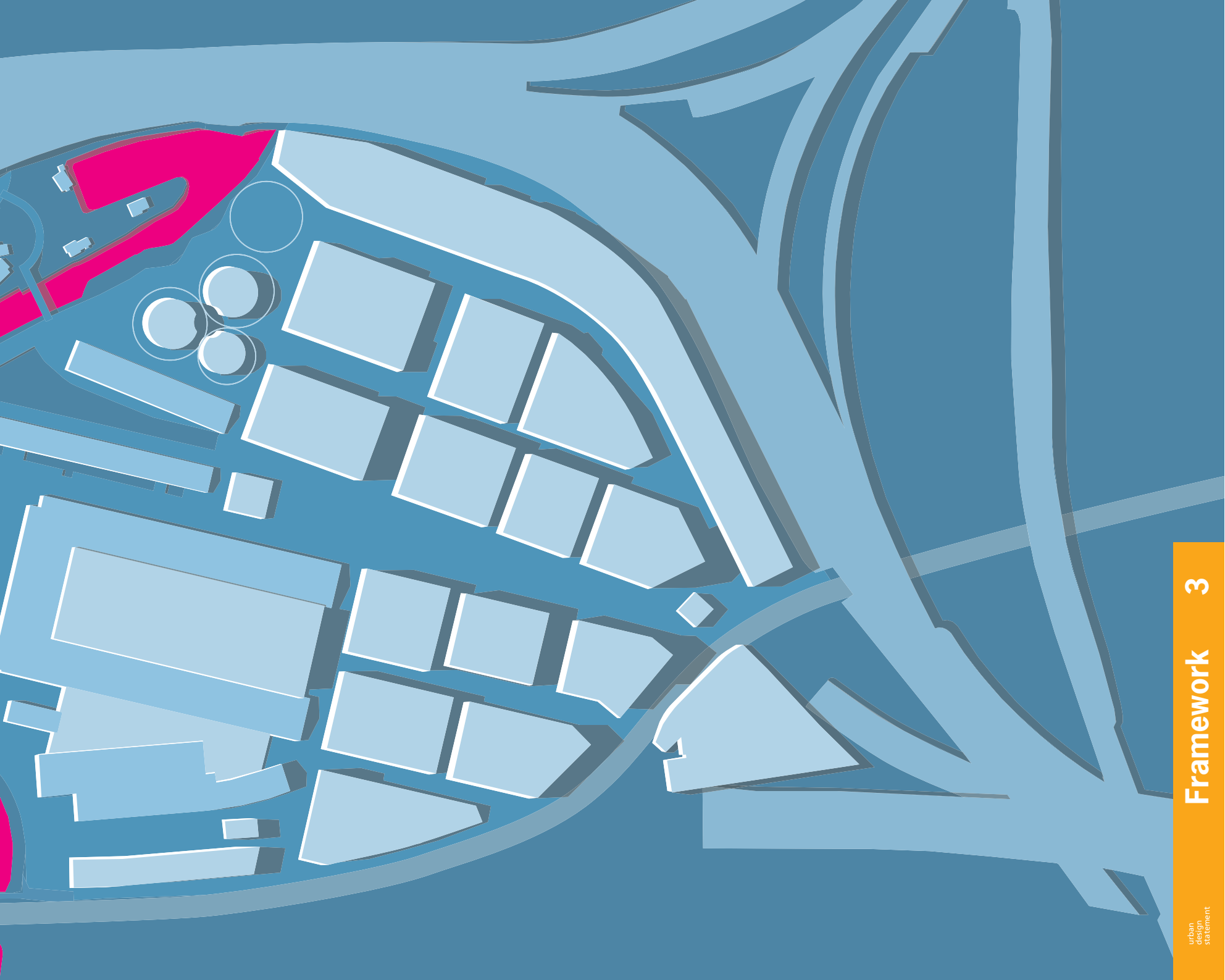


fig.28 Prior to commencement of the CTRL works, many fragments of the Gasworks and the old urban blocks were intact



fig.29 Once completed, CTRL leaves a site with huge potential for regeneration





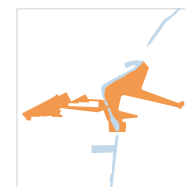
3.1 The Site and Our Response

The Framework for King's Cross Central has grown out of three years of analysis and consultation on the issues discussed in Section 2, combined with a commitment to the principles set out in Section 1.

The main aspects of the site and its surroundings which have shaped the Framework are:

- Unparalleled transport connections.
- The two great stations and the railway embankments and cuttings which serve them.
- The Southern 'bottleneck'; the German Gym & Great Northern Hotel.
- The Goods Yard; vast scale buildings and spaces at the heart of the site.
- The Granary and the Gasholders; Heritage landmarks.
- The Regent's Canal and Camley Street Natural Park; the 'soft centre'.
- Dramatic level changes; split level site.
- York Way; spine of connection.
- The 'missing link' from Caledonian Road to Somers Town.
- Contrasts of hard and soft, regular and irregular, large and small.
- The need for a focus, connections and a coherent urban grain.
- The need for 'critical mass' and flexibility.
- The need to activate the public realm with sufficient intensity and permeability.
- The need to create a diverse place for people of every kind. Places to live.
- Good orientation to sunlight.

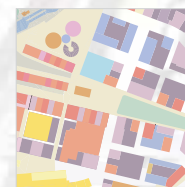
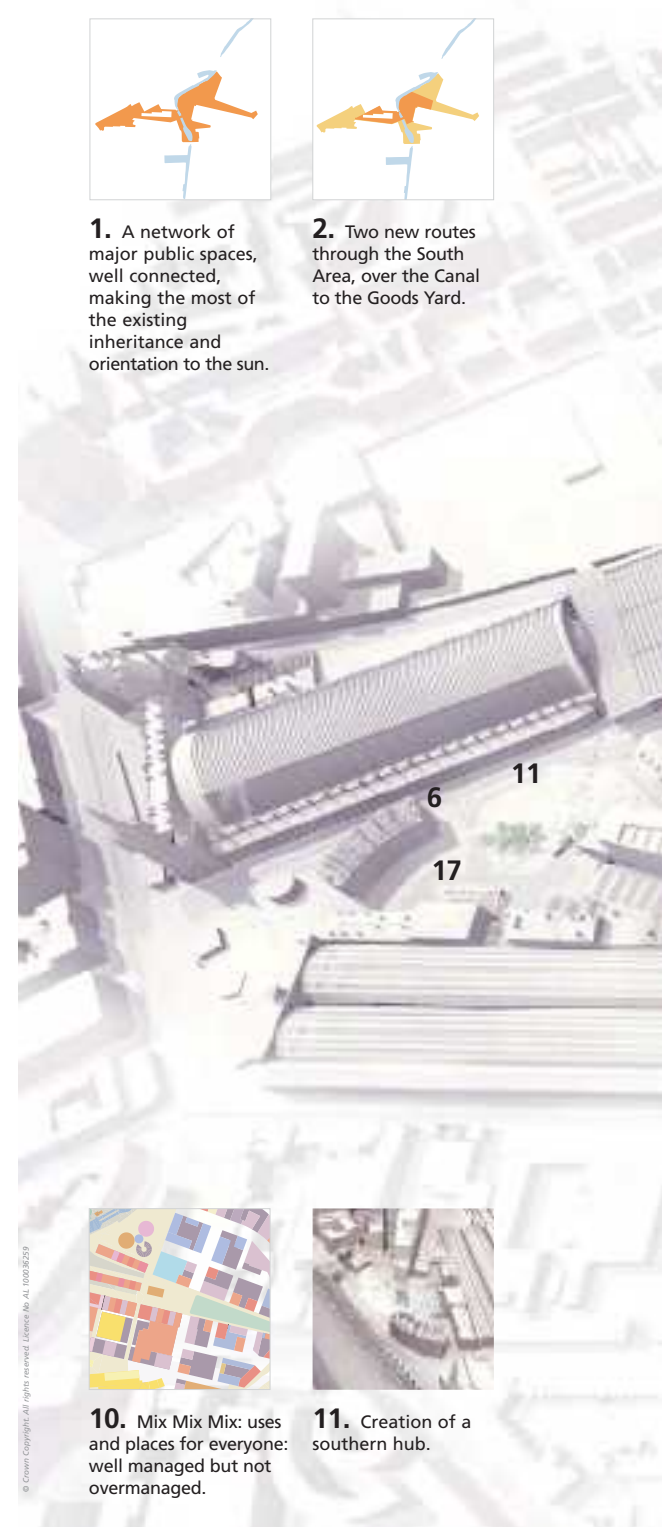
The main responses to these are:



1. A network of major public spaces, well connected, making the most of the existing inheritance and orientation to the sun.



2. Two new routes through the South Area, over the Canal to the Goods Yard.



10. Mix Mix Mix: uses and places for everyone: well managed but not overmanaged.



11. Creation of a southern hub.



3. Gasholders' pivotal role as destination, landmark and connector.



4. Strong urban enclosure: buildings & blocks give positive shape to spaces.



5. A bold attitude to the spirit of the place: large scale and robust, like the Granary.



6. Optimum accessibility-public transport, bikes, pedestrians-throughout the site.



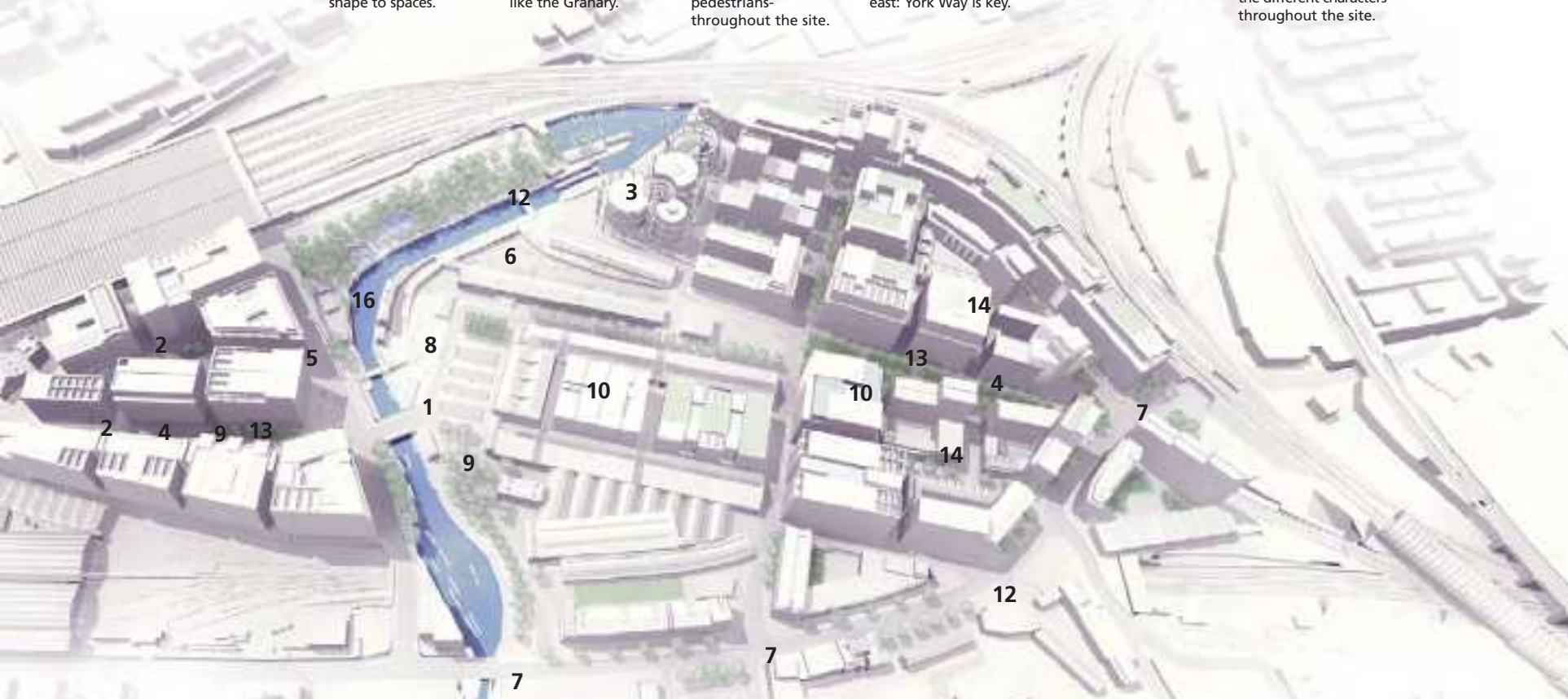
7. Maximum permeability, particularly north and east: York Way is key.



8. "All roads lead to the Goods Yard".



9. A landscape scheme which makes the most of level changes, sunlight and the different characters throughout the site.



12. New links to Camden and Somers Town via Camley Street.



13. Open and active ground floor uses wherever possible: Density and intensity.



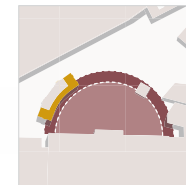
14. Creation of broadly mixed flexible development zones in the North.



15. Make sure it is deliverable: technically and commercially.



16. Revitalisation of the Canal as a route and place to spend time.



17. Enable KXSE project to come forward later as part of an integrated design response to the south.



3.2

Connecting Places

At present the site is isolated. It is surrounded by potential connections but the links are not there.

Why create a major connection at the top of York Way?

- York Way connects directly to Holloway, Tufnell Park and Kentish Town and indirectly to Camden and Islington.
- At a broader 'London-wide' scale, the northern point where KXC and York Way meet could be a 'gateway' to Central London. We want this gateway to be permeable and welcoming.

Have you made a positive link between Caledonian Rd and Somers Town?

- We have suggested that a new square might be formed at the south edge of the Triangle site (the junction of Randell's Road and York Way) and have provided a number of routes from there through the development, past the relocated Gasholders to the Canal towpath and a new footbridge over to Camley Street. In this way a potential 'desire line' identified by London Borough of Camden will be met in a natural and integrated way, appropriate for the number of people who might use it.

Couldn't you connect the South Area to the Goods Yard without removing the Culross Building?

- We have tried numerous layouts for the South Area with the Culross Building retained. None of them work well. For example none of them achieve the simple clear connections which are needed to encourage life to flow into the Goods Yard and the North Area. Routes that pass the Culross lead to Camley Street on to the Midland Shed – but not directly to the Granary at the centre of the Goods Yard.

How will your new connections work if links beyond the site are still missing?

- People's perception of the city – especially that of pedestrians, where the shortest distance from A to B is critical – is incremental and so is redevelopment and regeneration.
- We believe that the significant new connections made within our site will set the conditions for new connections (and further change) in the wider area (See 3.11).



fig.30 Connections to the site in 2007: Large areas of the site remain inaccessible

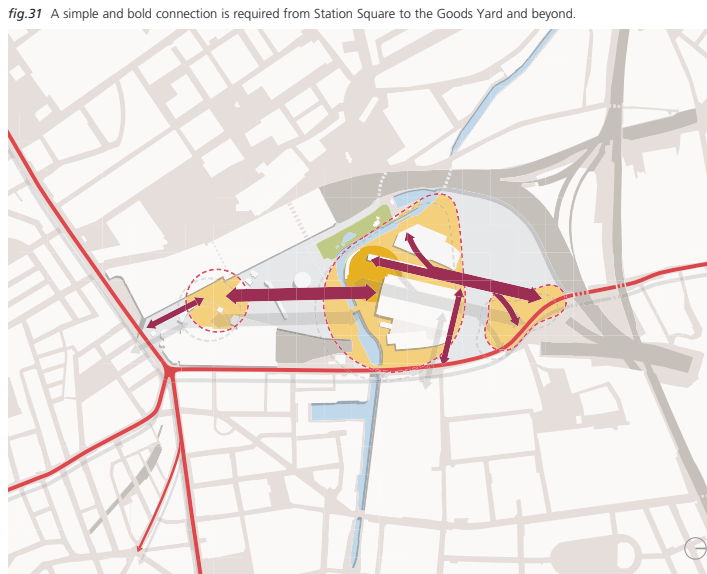


fig.31 A simple and bold connection is required from Station Square to the Goods Yard and beyond.

Inherited Places

Two emerging places within the site – Station Square to the south and the Goods Yard at the centre – hold the key to giving Kings Cross Central accessibility, a unique sense of place and a focus.

What will become Station Square is at present a fragmented and confusing place, in need of re-structuring. In contrast, the Goods Yard has a lasting and powerful order but is disconnected from everything around it. A simple and bold connection between the two is essential (fig.31).

From Station Square to the Goods Yard

From Station Square, two new spaces, the Boulevard and Pancras Square, with a dominant north-south grain, connect to the Goods Yard (see 3.3 over). Of these two, the Boulevard (which includes a public transport route) would meet the direct desire line, with a long view up to the great space at the heart of the site. By contrast Pancras Square would be more gradually revealed, part of a second, alternate link to the Goods Yard offering pedestrians a route with a different character and experience.

Both routes come back together at Canal Square. Here, a pedestrian priority crossing and two new bridges over the Canal would interlock with Granary Square ensuring that the Canal would no longer be a barrier. Broad south facing steps from the upper level would open up the Canal to Granary Square.

These two distinct routes respond to the daily patterns of people moving through the site, many of whom would be going to and from work each day. By allowing people to spread out and filter through the urban blocks of the South Area, we aim to create the familiar conditions of a pleasant 'walk to work' whilst providing both diverse and direct routes from place to place (fig.33).

The Canal, to East and West

The Canal is the primary connector at both upper and lower levels to east and west. To the west, the towpath to Camden (10 minutes walk) would link to the upper level of the Goods Yard, via the public space around the Gasholders. This would form new connections north and east to and from Islington via Canal Street, Long Park and Market Square. In addition to the existing towpath route, a new footbridge over the Canal and across Camley Street Natural Park would connect westwards to Camden Town. The gasholders would be a landmark drawing people down through the grain of new streets and spaces, contributing to new connections between Camden and Islington.

Eastwards, the towpath would be linked to Wharf Road (a tree lined 'esplanade') via steps and ramps. These measures would strengthen the connections and a sense of welcome to York Way and south Islington.

From Granary Square to the Top of York Way

To the north of the Goods Yard, a broad fissure opens up between new urban blocks, taking its cue from the splayed lines of the original railway grain.

Market Square and Long Park occupy the northern section of a natural fault line which runs from one end of the site to the other, bringing not only connection but unity and resonance to the new urban grain.

This central space would be only one of a number of routes connecting north and south, northeast and southwest, reflecting the prevailing north-south grain.

Across this grain, Goods Street, the main route into the Northern Area, locks Long Park into existing street patterns to the east of York Way, by continuing the east-west orientation of Copenhagen St across the site. At the north end of Long Park, a simple link would be made onto York Way via North Square; the gateway of arrival from the north.

York Way – the Spine

With the considerable changes brought about at King's Cross Central, York Way would no longer be a barrier, a frayed edge. It would be a spine of activity and connection for new and existing communities. Lateral connections into the site from York Way are crucial to achieving a secondary layer of permeability and interdependency across our site boundary.

Back to Station Square

Returning to Station Square, the picture – and our vision – is not complete without good pedestrian connections back to Euston Rd and beyond into Bloomsbury and Midtown.

Initially the great space between the western façade of King's Cross Station and the Great Northern Hotel would provide a vestibule to Station Square, an arrival point to King's Cross Central.

King's Cross Station Enhancement

Meanwhile Network Rail are considering proposals for King's Cross Station, to replace the existing (temporary) concourse on the Euston Rd with a new modern concourse on the west side of the station facing Station Square. With continuing co-ordination between King's Cross Central and Network Rail in this area, an integrated solution is in prospect; one that would deliver a permanent repair to this broken piece of city.

Landmarks and Views

The inheritance of nineteenth century buildings at King's Cross Central is an extraordinary asset. In addition to being the key to a unique sense of place, it provides a series of local landmarks, bringing structure and orientation to a complex site.

Some are revealed locally as one moves from space to space, others such as the Granary, St.Pancras Clock Tower and the Gasholders (which are to be relocated by the Canal) are seen from a distance.

Landmark sites for new marker buildings are identified within the Guidelines. Together, a network of physical and visual connections would be created and the people's 'mental map' of the area would be reinforced (fig.32). Within this network, landmarks, open spaces and urban blocks would generally be joined together by walking distances of some two to three minutes. The substantial scale of the development as a whole would be divided and sub-divided to achieve a familiar human scale.

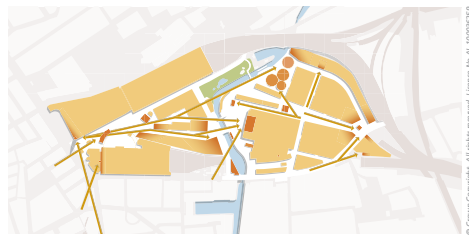


fig.32 By creating a network of physical and visual connections, people's new mental map of the area would be reinforced



fig.34 Joining up the City

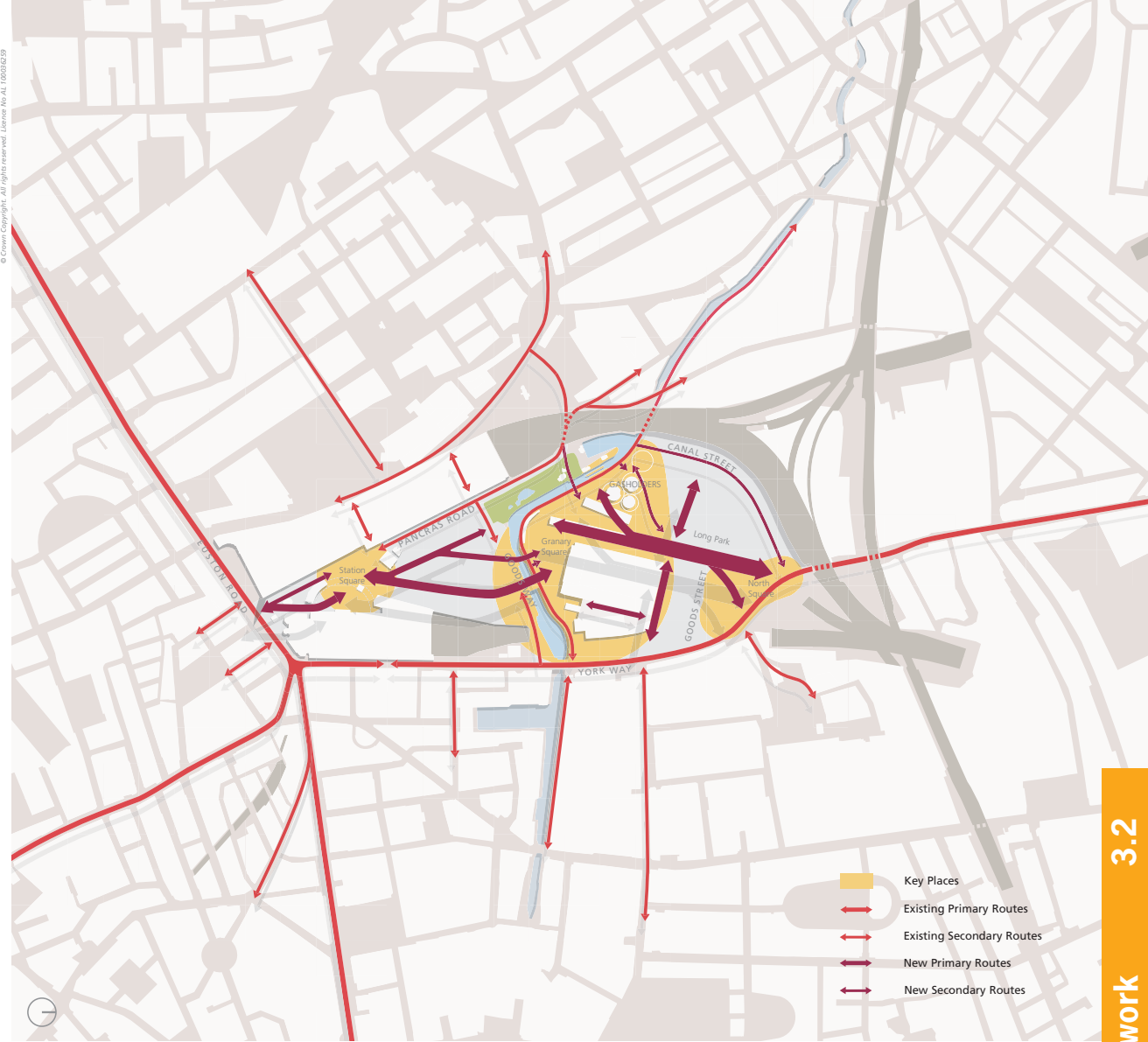


fig.33 A strong network of public routes and connections linking north and south and east-west is fundamental to King's Cross Central

How have you chosen the names for the public spaces?
While the design for King's Cross Central is developing, we have chosen temporary working names for the new public spaces. These names have been chosen for their ease of reference and have a simple descriptive character: relating either to the form of the space, such as 'Long Park' or their relationship to existing buildings and features, such as 'Granary Square'.

3.3

Public Realm

The Public Realm is at the heart of our Framework.
 A successful Public Realm should connect real places together,
 integrate communities and their neighbourhoods and make the
 city safe to use and easy to understand.

- Did you consider recreating the Granary Basin?**
- Yes; we decided not to for two main reasons:
 - Its level would have been over 3m below the level of Granary Square and boats would probably have had to be craned in and out due to the high voltage electricity power supply running in the towpath.
 - We want to create a flexible and accessible space – at grade – to be used by as many different people as possible in as many ways as possible, through the year; the basin would not have achieved this goal.
 - We also looked at re-creating the Stone and Coal Basin on the west side of the Western Coal Drops. After careful analysis we concluded that a basin and the Gasholders would be mutually exclusive. We believe the Gasholders offer the greater public benefit.

- Public Realm Facts**
- There would be at least 10.2 hectares acres of Public Realm within the site; that is 39% of the site area.
 - The most common understanding of the term public realm is that it includes all spaces between buildings that can be freely accessed by the public. It therefore encompasses all the outdoor areas including roads, parks, squares, pedestrian areas, cycle routes and other open areas as a continuum of wall-to-wall interconnected physical spaces. The figure of 10.2ha excludes the area for KXSE, the Midland Yard and York Way. It also excludes the Regent's Canal and Camley street Natural Park.

- A Human Scale**
- From the Southern Hub, Granary Square would be only 5 minutes walk away.
 - Much of the northern part of the site could be accessed within 10 minute walk.
 - Most of the new blocks on the site would be about 60m long creating a considerable variety.



fig.35 The Goods Yard: it was originally the hub of the site and would be reinvented as such

Breathing Space

The Public Realm at King's Cross Central would be a great 'breathing space' inserted amongst dense urban blocks, binding them together. There would be over 10.1 hectares of public open space in a 27 hectare site.

Character

Its character – a combination of hard and soft, immense and intimate, historic and contemporary – would evolve from the site's history and topography, helping to steer the development towards a coherent and connected whole.

Richness

It is full of surprises: changes in level, broad vistas, glimpsed views; together creating the richness and drama which comes from embedding the new city with the old.

It would be a lively setting for events, day and night; the everyday and the extraordinary.

It would combine busy places, calm places, places for strolling, sitting or sleeping in the sun. It would offer pedestrian priority and excellent public transport.

The Heart of the Public Realm

The Goods Yard, with Granary Square at its centre, would be at the heart of the Public Realm.

It was the hub of the site and would be reinvented as such. What was formerly a primary node for goods would now be a destination for people across London.

It was and would be again a hive of activity, a market place, a place of business, competition and enterprise at the confluence of transport routes – the Canal, the towpath, new pedestrian connections in each direction and new high quality public transport.

It not would be a single space but a collection of public places, split between two levels; the upper level that of day-to-day and public life; the lower level of the Canal and Coal Drops Yard, devoted more to leisure, shopping and relaxation.

This combination of busy urban space, of history and of softer, quieter places within the site, would make King's Cross Central unique and would be the root of its enduring popularity and success.(fig.35)

Major Spaces

The Boulevard, with Pancras Square, and the combined space of Long Park and Market Square, would allow the life and character of the Goods Yard to permeate into all areas of new development to south and north. Together they would form a central 'armature' of connection across the site.

The splaying shape of each space and the use of inflected geometries especially at the point where the Boulevard meets the Canal (Canal Square), would ensure continuity and flow for people moving through the site.

All the main edges to the Public Realm have grown out of how the site meets its context; this would ensure that these spaces have a coherent and legible relationship to each other and to the wider area, rather than exist in isolation.

Woven amongst the major spaces, a network of secondary spaces and streets, within the development blocks, would provide a full hierarchy of open space from large to small, from public to private.(fig.36)

These are described in more detail in the Public Realm Strategy.





fig.36 The Goods Yard would form the heart of the site, connected to the north and south by a strong spine of public realm. A finer grain of connections would link the site across York Way and the Canal to the communities on either side.



3.4 The Framework

It is urban quarters, city blocks, buildings and skylines which give definition to the Public Realm. In turn, uses, facades, textures and details would throw the character of the Public Realm into relief.



fig.37 Grain and scale comparison between Regent Street and King's Cross Central

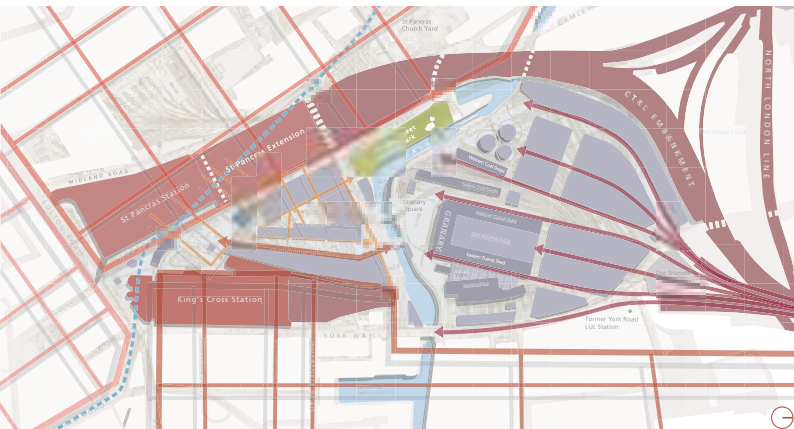


fig.38 The new framework responds to the existing grains of the site and the surrounding city

The Influence of Two Stations

The pattern of the two stations, converging onto the Euston Road, has determined the layout of the South Area. To the south it forms a funnel, to the north a fan or filter.

Urban Blocks and Open Space

- The urban 'compounds' which surround the site represent a kind of urbanism far removed from our vision for King's Cross Central. They lack urban enclosure and good connections.
- The kind of city we want to create is one of densely knit urban blocks which give strong containment, legibility and interconnection to open urban spaces.
- Public open space in turn gives coherence to the urban blocks and buildings; it establishes a balanced relationship between the public and private realms.
- This is the Human City.

Structure and Infrastructure

So far we have described the 'infrastructure' of King's Cross Central—the open spaces, streets and public transport connections which make development possible. We have connected these to existing routes and spaces, to ensure that public life could permeate seamlessly into and through this new piece of city. We must now turn to the 'structure' in between, the pattern of buildings and blocks without which the city would not exist.

Framework for Development

Fig.39 shows two components working in conjunction with the Public Realm to form a framework for development. Firstly, the new urban 'mega-blocks,' each of which would be subdivided into city blocks and buildings; secondly the existing buildings due to be retained.

Embedded Heritage

The existing buildings – their form, disposition, scale and character – have been central to shaping the urban 'mega-blocks' and the Public Realm. The new has grown out of, rather than being imposed on, the old. This is what we mean by embedded heritage.

Rather than setting these buildings apart, putting them in a 'heritage park', they are woven into the fabric of the living and working community, to facilitate secure and sustainable new uses. These buildings add to the complexity of the Framework and its implementation and they are a unique asset of great value.

They would give to King's Cross Central the sense of having 'come from somewhere'; a collective memory. They would give diversity and intimacy of scale in balance with an overriding order.

An example of this is the Gasholders which would be located again beside the Canal; a re-invention (not a replica) of their original setting. They would be embedded in the topography of the site, taking up the change in level between the upper and lower levels of the Goods Yard and the intermediate level of St Pancras Lock. While Gasholder No.8 would be left open and would form the focus of a new public space, the 'Triplet' would house a new mixed use development (flats and public uses) embedded within the original guideframes, ensuring that heritage would be brought back to life and securing their future.

Grain, Scale and Density

Learning from the urban grain of Clerkenwell, Fitzrovia, Fleet Street and other 'coherent' parts of Central London, at King's Cross Central the mega-blocks, bounded by primary routes, would be broken down into city blocks by a series

of secondary streets and then into individual buildings by side streets and passages. This approach offers a familiar 'grain' of plot division and frequency of public routes, a human scale which is an essential part of the 'Human City'.

These are high density areas; areas which optimise the use of inner city land and concentrate public open spaces with strongly defined urban edges (fig.37,38).

In two instances—Canal Street and the Boulevard, where railways form barriers to the site – continuous terraces would be integral to the Framework, bringing a particular coherence to the urban block, overriding the diversity of individual buildings.

Flexibility

As with any city, flexibility to evolve and to adapt to changing economic and social opportunities and circumstances, without reinventing the urban plan (or the infrastructure that goes with it), is key to achieving a sustainable urban solution. Flexibility within the urban grain is essential to the life and character of places. It is also essential to achieving a balance between diversity, organic development and cohesion.

Rules

At the heart of our applications are the Development Specifications which set rules relating, in part, to the subdivision of urban mega-blocks or 'Development Zones'.

Secondary routes through these Development Zones generally run north-south, whilst tertiary routes are mostly east-west. Dimensional parameters for these routes are set as part of the Development Specifications to ensure a suitable scale and permeability.

Guidelines

We cannot predict exactly how the new urban blocks would be subdivided but we can set guidelines to promote cohesion without limiting architectural creativity and diversity.

We can also promote a familiar texture, scale and hierarchy by reference to urban types—squares, streets, terraces, mews, passages and courts. The suggestion, for example, that long urban blocks, such as those to the east side of the Boulevard, might be terraced, is symptomatic of our intent that a normative 'backdrop' to public space should be established before individual buildings are allowed to stand out.

The Urban Design Guidelines that have been proposed and submitted alongside this Urban Design Statement, in support of the planning applications, set out our priorities for each space across the site. They add another layer to the Framework, describing how developments should relate to the historic environment, surrounding context and Public Realm.



fig.39 Framework for Development



fig.40 Illustrative Landscape Scheme



3.5 A Walk Through King's Cross Central

Made up of three distinct characters; a walk through King's Cross Central would be a pleasant and varied experience.

King's Cross is for Everyone

We cannot over-stress the diversity of people we envisage will be drawn to King's Cross Central.

"If you wake up one morning and you've got nothing to do, you will know there's always something good going on at King's Cross"

Fifteen Minutes' Walk from End to End

It would take about fifteen minutes to walk at a leisurely pace from Euston Road at the south end of the site to the top of York Way in the north.

The site is divided naturally into three areas, each with a distinct character. It would be held together by a network of routes and spaces which interconnect and link to surrounding areas.

The South Area would be the Commercial Hub of the Site

The context of the South Area is dominated by the two huge stations (St Pancras will have doubled in size by 2007 with the construction of CTRL): long facades, robust architecture, heavy passenger flows.

The Boulevard and Pancras Square would together form a focus for the South, fanning northwards with two new routes, connecting across the Canal via two new bridges.

At each end, Station Square and Canal Square would form points of interlock, with the Euston Road to the south and the Goods Yard to the north.

As the site narrows to the south, existing buildings would be embedded within the new urban grain.

The new buildings, some free-standing and some terraced, would be suitable for large floor-plate office use, with a full range of retail and other public uses at ground level.

The streets and spaces here would be part of 'large scale London', comparable with Regent Street or Bishopsgate, only here the pedestrian has priority over most of the ground. The development would combine the coherent urban grain of parts of London such as Fitzrovia, with the scale of Broadgate. A strong sense of urban enclosure would work with north-south permeability to give a dynamic but comfortable environment (fig.41).

The Goods Yard is the Heart of the Site

The Goods Yard would be the meeting place of all major routes within the Framework and of connections beyond the site.

It consists of a series of public spaces, on two levels arranged and interconnected along the Regent's Canal. Its point of focus would be Granary Square with the Granary building as the centrepiece (fig.42). Collectively, the existing buildings of the Goods Yard establish its strong character. It would combine the toughness of the nineteenth century industrial landscape with the openness, intimacy and buzz of new public spaces, its atmosphere changing from week to weekend and day to night.

It would be a unique destination for an eclectic mix of retail and a myriad other public uses such as exhibitions, performing arts, sport and education, both locally and for London as a whole.

It would combine the scale and history of St Katharine's Dock, West India Quay or Butler's Wharf with the intimacy and vitality of Camden Lock.

The North Area offers a Broad Mix of Uses

The North would be larger and distinct from the South. Its central space, Long Park, would connect laterally and at its top end to York Way. Together with Granary Square and the Boulevard, it would form a central spine, joining up the site and connecting it to its context (fig.43).

The urban grain in the North Area fans out to the south to meet the Canal, just as the railways did in the past. New blocks interlock with the existing buildings to form an integrated piece of city (fig.44).

Every main street would have a mix of residential, office and other uses along it and would be active, day and night. On the east side, York Way would form an active and permeable 'connector' to neighbouring areas. One part of the site, the Triangle Site, sits on the east side of the realigned York Way.

Character

The urban blocks at King's Cross Central would be of comparable scale with Paternoster Square, Regent's Place, Broadgate or Paddington Central. They would also benefit from:

- A tightly knit, diverse and flexible urban grain, underlying the plot divisions between individual buildings, which would draw the city together at a wider level.
- Being interwoven with existing buildings of great character and quality. Using their pattern as the starting point for a new urban grain.
- Being a truly integrated mixed use development, King's Cross Central would achieve a mix between workplace, housing, retail, leisure and public use which, among major commercial developments in Central London, would be unique.



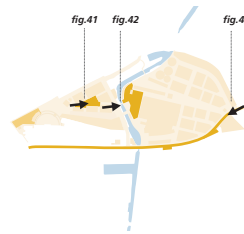
fig.41 Both the Granary and the Gasholders are visible from Pancras Square



fig.42 Granary Square would be the focus; the meeting place of routes in and around the site



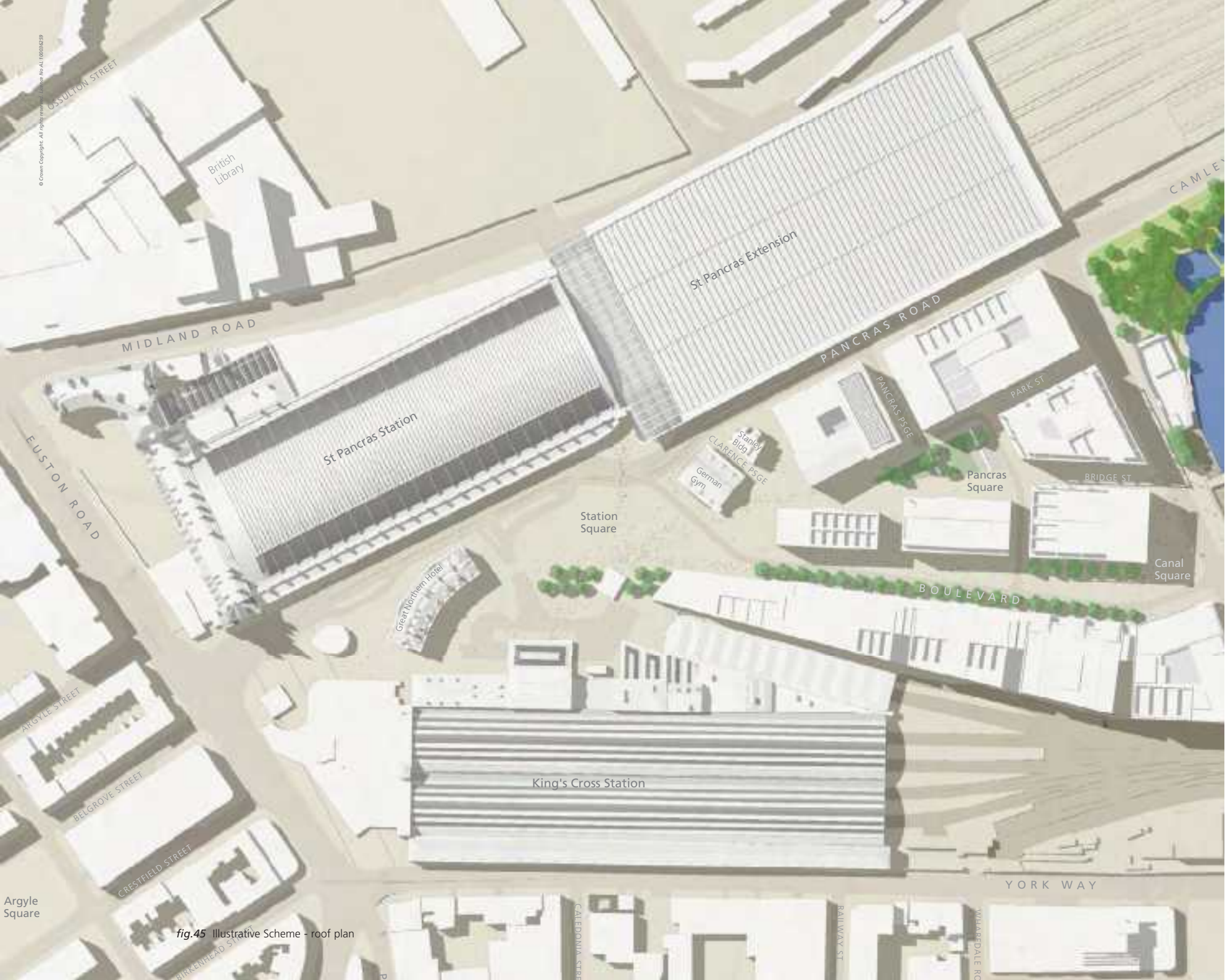
fig.43 York Way, North Square; linking Long Park to the Triangle and the city beyond





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fig.44 The urban grain gives great permeability for routes from the surrounding city into and through the site.



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fig.45 Illustrative Scheme - roof plan



3.6 Using Public Space

Looking more closely at the web of public spaces which together bring coherence, connection and life to the Public Realm, how are the spaces used, how do they work?

More Detail

- Descriptions of each space can be found in section 4 of this document 'Places' and the Public Realm Strategy.
- Further analysis is contained in the Urban Design Guidelines.

How do you know some of these spaces won't feel too large?

- Some of the spaces, such as Granary Square, are expansive – fitting the world class scale of the site – whilst others are quite intimate and contained.
- In each case we have assessed the proportion of open to built space and of width to height, to ensure that the right sense of enclosure is achieved.

...or that some won't feel too small?

- Almost 40% of the site would become public realm allowing both generosity and diversity in the public routes and spaces.
- Careful solar and precedent studies have assessed the light levels in each space benchmarking these within a London context. (see 3.11)

Pedestrian Routes and Public Spaces

Public spaces are knitted together by a network of pedestrian routes, major and minor and at every boundary these routes must be stitched into existing flows.

It is estimated that 80,000 commuters, residents and visitors would use King's Cross Central on weekdays.

Making sure that their way to and from King's Cross Central is comfortable and coherent has been a priority.

To ensure pedestrian priority across the site and to deliver pleasant and safe routes are primary concerns (fig.46).

Trains

The combination of the CTRL and other new services at St Pancras, with the new London Underground ticket halls and continued services at King's Cross, would provide the best train connections in the country at the south end of the site. In order to make King's Cross Central even more accessible to underground passengers, however, we are proposing to extend the subway link between St Pancras and King's Cross Station northwards, to feed the south end of the Boulevard and Pancras Square (fig.46).

Bus and Tram

Buses are likely to be the main means of distributing people throughout the site from the many train connections in the south and the North London Line to the north. Local bus services could pass from one end of the site to the other (fig.47). In the longer term, Cross River Tram, the Mayor's proposed link from Elephant & Castle to King's Cross and Camden, could provide additional connections.

Bicycles

The network of primary and secondary roads through the site, as well as the introduction of some dedicated cycle routes, would provide good access for bicycles and would connect naturally into the London Bicycle Network on Pancras Road and along the Canal (fig.46).

Streets

Within the site, a network of roads would be constructed, linking to Pancras Road, York Way and Goods Way. Here and elsewhere a high level of management and maintenance would be required to achieve the standards expected for a high quality public realm that is open to all, day and night. This is seen as essential to achieving a natural and accessible environment.

In addition to primary and secondary streets, a network of tertiary vehicular routes would allow for deliveries, fire

access, taxis, bikes and, in some cases, buses, to serve the main pedestrian spaces.

Servicing would be managed on an area-wide basis, with limited hours of access to some areas.

Servicing to the South Area would be done via two 'shared infrastructure' roads below ground, in order to ensure that the public realm would be quiet and calm (fig.48).

Parking

Parking would be provided on site through a combination of on-street parking, a multi storey carpark and private parking within blocks. Night time parking could encourage evening activity and to contribute to safer streets.

Defined Spaces

Having understood how transport and movement work across the site, we find a web of well-defined public spaces held between the routes; places where things can happen (fig.49).

The variety and extent of this network cannot be overstated. From a vast space in front of the Granary, to a pocket space with a single bench beneath a tree, the more you knew the site, the more you would discover.

Within the Framework the main new public spaces – the Boulevard, Pancras Square and Long Park/Market Square – would provide relatively little space for vehicles. None would be accessible as through routes for private cars; pedestrians would have priority.

They would combine hard and soft, and give definition to space, more on a continental model than that of a traditional London square.

Each space is different but each one has substantial areas where people can linger and where building frontages can actively engage with public space.

Public Life

The central objective here would be to blur the boundaries between public and private realms at ground level, in order to allow the density and intensity of activity generated at King's Cross Central to flourish.

The need is to provide 'enough' space of sufficient intensity to promote public life and a sense of community, but not to provide too much.

Spaces would be large enough to accommodate the large numbers of people passing through and using them at peak times but they would have sufficient enclosure (and appropriate landscaping) to avoid the feeling of the 'windswept plaza' at quieter times.



fig.46 Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

- Pedestrian Routes within the Site
- King's Cross / St Pancras Hub
- Key Cycle Route
- Canal Towpath Pedestrian + Cycle Routes

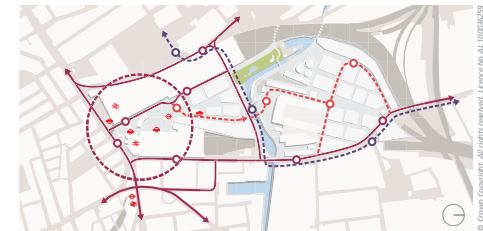


fig.47 Public Transport Interchange

- King's Cross / St Pancras Hub
- Existing Bus Route and Stops
- Potential New Bus Routes and Stops
- Potential New Tram Route (Cross River Transit) and Stops

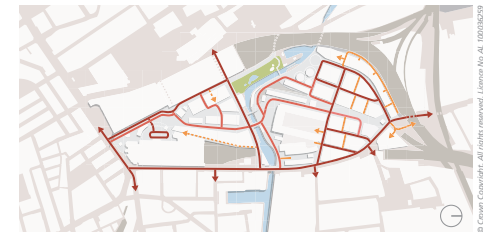
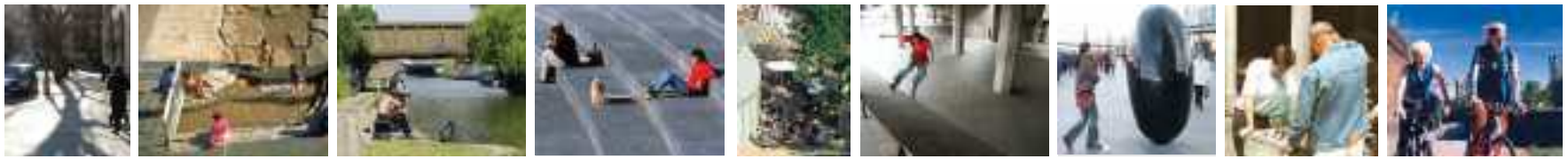


fig.48 Vehicular Access

- General Traffic
- Taxis + Light Service Vehicles Only
- Service + Parking Access Only
- Access to Below Ground Facilities



The variety of settings would be matched by the diversity of events. From an open-air concert, a summer festival or temporary exhibition, to a favourite spot to spend a lunch break, public life would thrive.

Green Space, Play Space

Although the site as a whole has tough industrial roots, a balance needs to be struck between hard and soft.

Green space and play space would always be within easy reach, both as part of the Public Realm and within development blocks.

The Goods Yard would be a hive of recreation, education and cultural activity, as well as eating, drinking and shopping. The opportunity to create unique, accessible and diverse places for play and leisure is being seized and out of it, something for everyone will evolve.

The Regent's Canal

As well as being a significant connector, the Canal is a major recreational asset and an important natural habitat. Much of its present character would be retained but a new level of activity would be made possible by the introduction of good connections to Granary Square, the Coal Drops Yard and the Gasholders.

New moorings could be created along both sides of the Canal, connecting to an 'esplanade' along Goods Way at the upper level.

Microclimate

The site would be well exposed to the sun. Volumetric guidelines have been set to ensure that all public spaces enjoy sunlight for a good part of the day.

Prevailing winds from the southwest would be baffled by the use of trees and development volume.

Within the site, the low levels of traffic and the density of the proposed urban grain offer benefits for ambient noise levels and for air quality.

Safety, Security and Wellbeing

An active place is a safe place. With a full mix of uses, busy by day and into the evening, and with good management and communication, we aim to create a safe and successful environment.



fig.49 A Web of Diverse Places

3.7

Using Buildings

The way in which public spaces, the transport network and the life of the street interact with buildings, and the way that internal uses (especially at ground level) change the nature of public space have been central issues for us.

How will you ensure mixed use?

- The Development Specifications define uses for specific frontages both at ground level and above:
 - some are for workspace
 - others are for retail and food/drink or hotels
 - others are for community and public uses
 - and a number may be any of the uses applied for, ensuring flexibility and promoting diversity for the future.
- In setting these parameters we have ensured that there is a mix of uses throughout the scheme, particularly in the north where residential and workspace will together form part of every major street.

How will you ensure a good retail mix?

- We have been developing a '1 in 5' principle for the Coal Drops. We want to see a mix of small specialist outlet, unique or local retailers, visitor attractions, regular retail units and cafés or restaurants.

Why are you planning to make the Triplet Gasholders into apartments?

- The Triplet would be a landmark group of apartments with amazing views and a unique location on the Canal.
- It is the key to bringing residential uses into the Goods Yard, the heart of the scheme.
- It would animate the Canal and would increase security for all. It could contribute up to 200 homes towards Camden and Islington's ambitions for at least 1800 new units across the Main and Triangle Sites.
- It is the most viable way of giving the Gasholders—which could easily become 'white elephants'—a sustainable new life.
- Meanwhile the fourth Gasholder, Number 8, would become an open space devoted to play and sport.



fig.50 King's Cross will cradle a diverse mix of uses – public and private, large and small. An example of how this mix might develop is shown here.

Fronts & Backs

It is essential to ensure that fronts and backs are clearly defined and in keeping with the transport and spatial hierarchy, just as we must ensure that activity and diversity are maximised at street level.

Legibility, security and human scale are among the benefits offered by this approach.

Key Public Uses

The proposals anchor public spaces and generate flows by the careful disposition of key public uses.

The Granary, and the Granary complex, would be a crucial site, both to attract people northwards and to pump energy outwards to activate the Goods Yard and surrounding areas. As with all the Development Zones, we do not yet know exactly what these vast buildings would be used for. The options include:

- Cinema
- Museum
- Galleries
- Theatre/Performing Arts Venue
- Library
- Higher Education
- Retail/leisure
- Offices
- Supermarket

What we are sure of is that it would be something significant, something that would match up to its focal location within the scheme.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 Residential | 4 Retail |
| 2 Employment | 5 Transport Hub |
| 3 Public | 6 Other |

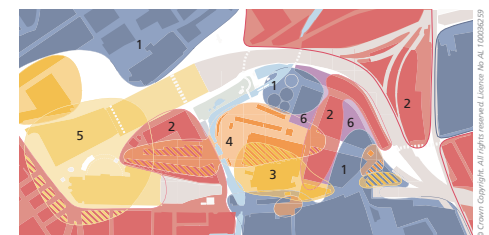


fig.51 The Framework identifies broad zones where particular uses are likely to predominate according to the character and density of the site.

Mix

The Development Specification defines maximum floorspace figures and sets out parameters for the distribution of uses across the site (*fig.51*).

The South Area, being located closest to the transport hub, offers an opportunity to create an area of predominantly large-scale commercial uses. The quantum of commercial space here is informed by the need to achieve a 'cluster' of sufficient critical mass to be successful.

The ground floor would be predominantly retail and food/drink uses.

The North Area would be characterised by a mix of residential, office and other uses. Every substantial street or space would have some of each use along its length, giving diversity and a balanced day/night rhythm. Residential uses could encompass the full range of market, social, key worker and other affordable housing. These could be complemented by high quality local community uses.

The Coal Drops Yard, adjacent to Granary Square and down at towpath level, would be predominantly retail or other public uses. The retail mix across the site would be as varied as its topography. At the Coal Drops, boutiques could sit side by side with more mainstream retail. The diversity of premises and locations across the site would ensure that there would be a place for independents alongside major chains (*fig.52*).

Bringing Life to Heritage

The rich mix of uses at King's Cross Central would bring life to existing buildings and new buildings alike. In some cases, for example the Gasholders, bringing existing buildings into sustainable beneficial use presents a major challenge, but it offers extraordinary opportunities for diversity and character as well as long-term benefits.

Daily & Weekly Cycles

Patterns of use, both of buildings and public space, would vary by day and by night, on weekdays and weekends (*figs.52-54*).

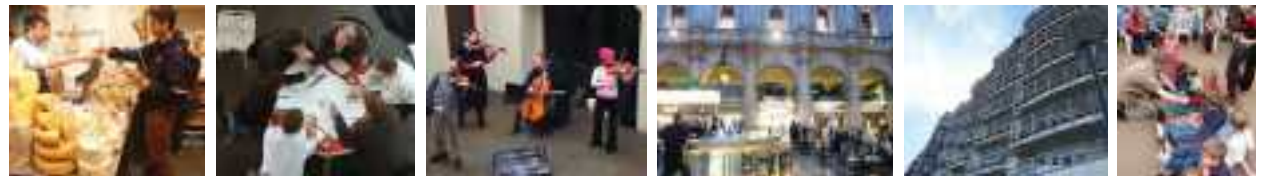
With a carefully structured mix, almost continuous activity could be achieved without homogenising the life of the place.

Flexibility

In order to respond to market conditions and build King's Cross Central as quickly as possible, it is very important to retain some flexibility, especially between commercial and residential uses. *Figs.55-57* illustrate options to adjust the balance of land uses, over time, in the north.

Some areas, mostly north of the Canal, would be most appropriate for residential uses and are allocated as such within the Development Specifications. Others would be best for employment uses. There are several areas however, which would work equally well for either use and parameters and guidelines are given accordingly.

Similarly, at ground level, some areas are designated as 'any permitted use', with guidelines promoting active frontages at street level.



Changing Activity Through The Day



fig.52 08.00 start of the working day.



fig.53 13.00: Lunchtime

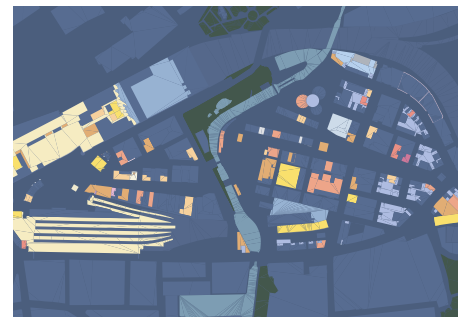


fig.54 21.00: evening out/evening in

A flexible framework

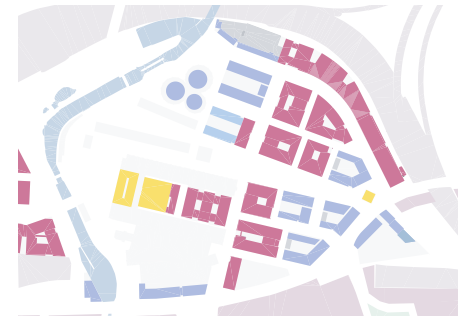


fig.55 The Framework allows the mix of uses in the north to be chosen to respond to a changing economic and social climate. Either more work space...



fig.56 ...or a median mix (the Illustrative Scheme)...

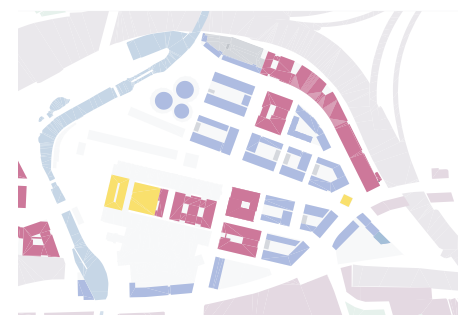
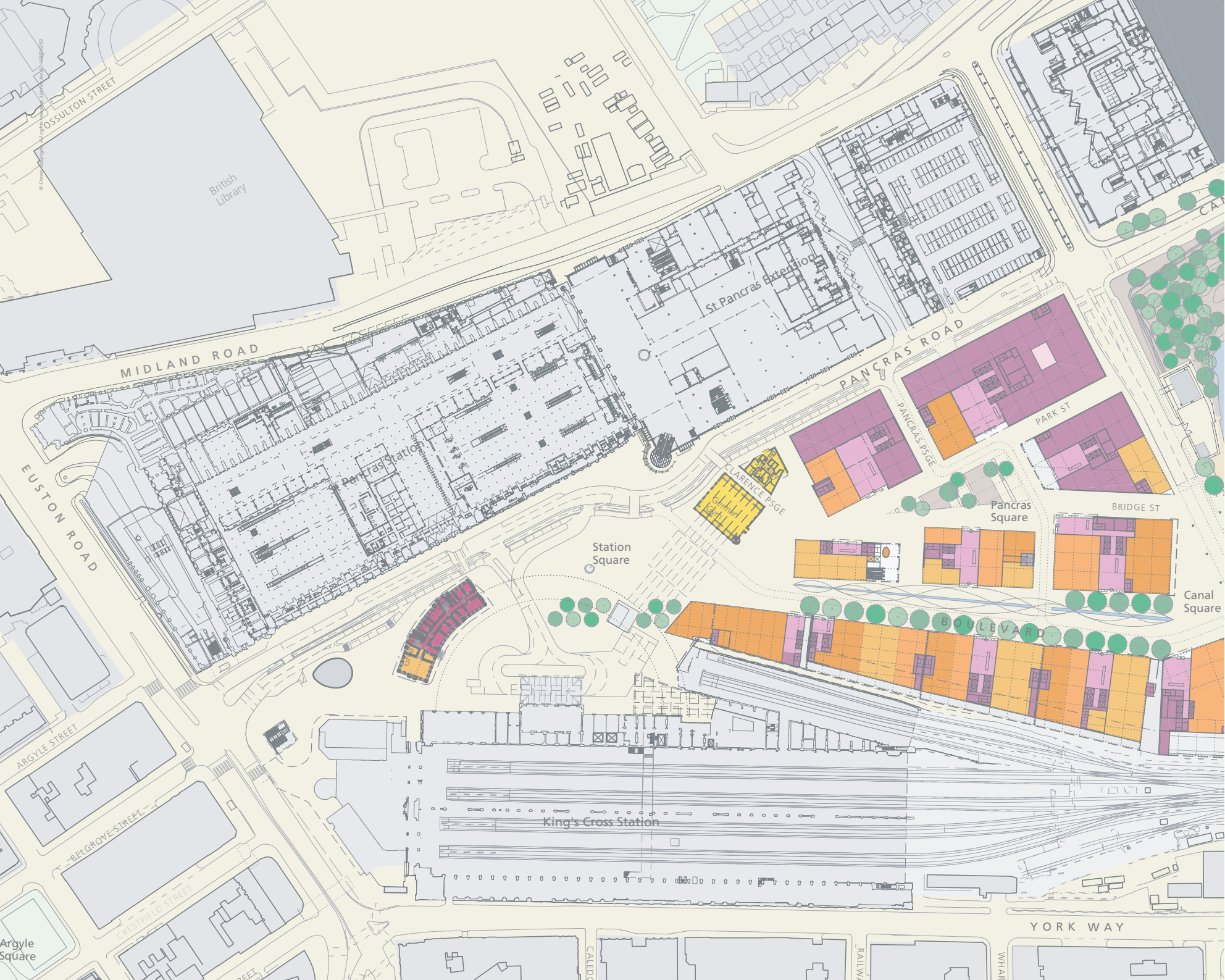


fig.57 ...or more residential.



British Library

MIDLAND ROAD

St Pancras Extension

St Pancras Station

PANCRAS ROAD

EUSTON ROAD

Station Square

CLARENCE PSGE

Pancras Square

BRIDGE ST

Canal Square

BULEVARD

King's Cross Station

ARGYLE STREET

BELGROVE STREET

CRESTFIELD STREET

YORK WAY

Argyle Square

CALEDONIAN

RAILWAY

WHARF

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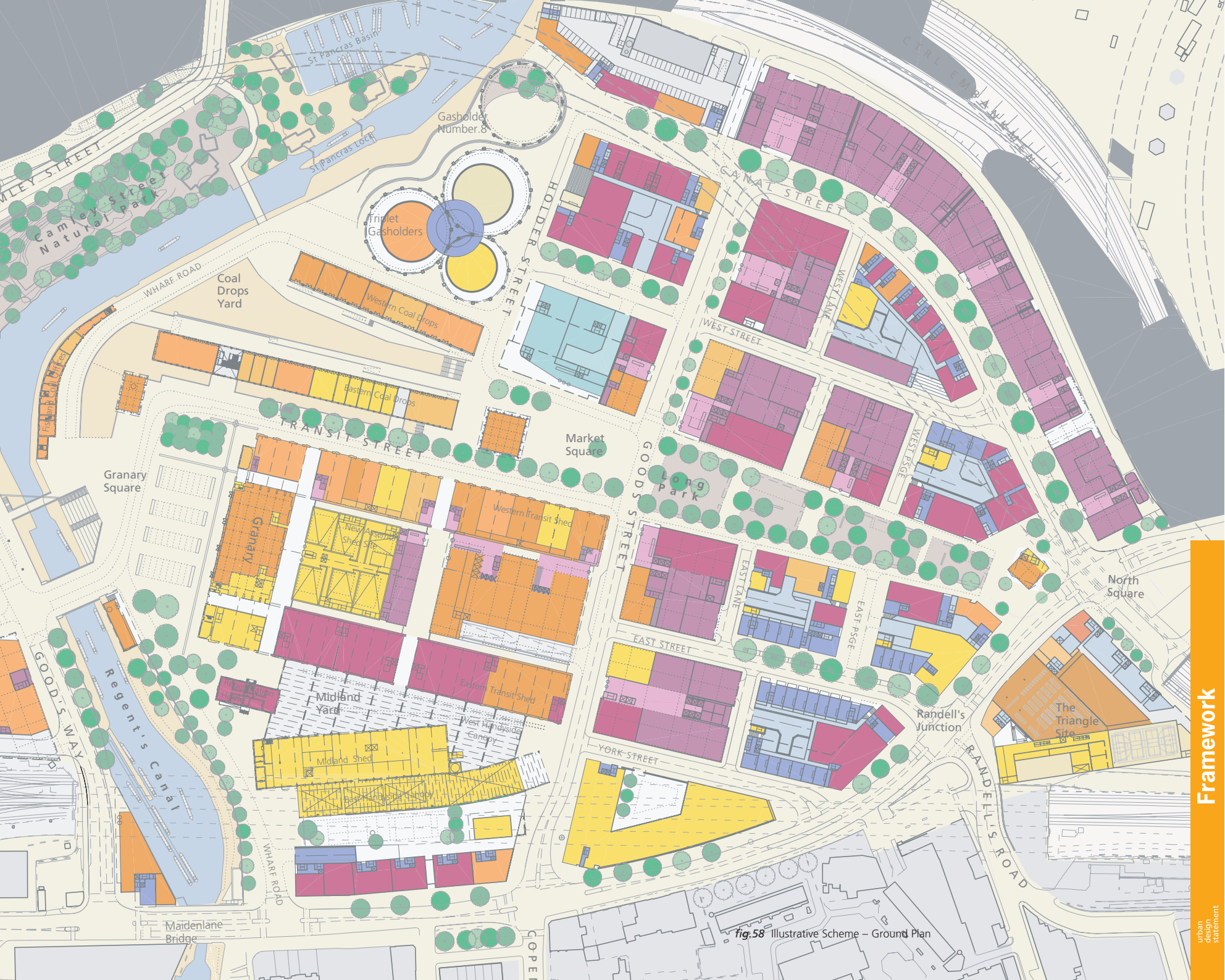


fig.58 Illustrative Scheme – Ground Plan

3.8 Sustainability

King's Cross Central would be a dense, well-connected node for a growing city and region. It would establish a Framework, responsive to topography and climate, promoting the efficient use of resources.



fig.59 Almost the whole site is within 10 minutes walk of the King's Cross/St Pancras transport hub and would be served by a finer grain of bus and other public transport.

A High Density Node for a Growing City and Region
King's Cross and St Pancras will form one of London's most intense rail transport nodes, connecting two of the fastest growing regions around London – Kent and the Thames Gateway to the east and Cambridge and the East Midlands to the north – to the centre of London. King's Cross Central, utilising 'brownfield' land, would create focused, high quality space for work, living and culture – a place where people want to be. As both a new part of Central London and as a city gateway for a dynamic region, King's Cross Central would build on the intrinsic sustainability of its site to meet strategic priorities for sustainable growth, based on maximum public transport accessibility (fig.60).

Sustainable Topography

The Framework responds to the existing grain of the site and its microclimate and takes full advantage of found spaces. This approach minimises the removal of material off site whilst creating a new high density quarter which embeds the existing heritage levels, buildings and spaces within the Framework (figs.62,63). The reuse of existing buildings not only contributes to its unique sense of place but avoids the waste of demolition and reconstruction, reducing the energy embodied within the site as a whole.

The existing Goods Yard at the centre of the Framework encompasses a fanning sequence of sunlit south-facing public spaces focused on the Canal – a breathing space between the higher density development zones on either side. The predominant grain of the streets and public spaces would run north-south maximising sunlight to the public realm. The resulting predominant east-west orientation for the buildings, set against these spaces, creates opportunities for lower energy buildings with good daylighting and reduced cooling loads. In the southern part of the site, where offices would predominate, the Framework grain minimises exposed southern façades whilst expanding more easily cooled north-facing façades, to take advantage of the views over the Canal. In the northern part, the more open south-facing end grain would allow sunlit courtyard spaces to be created within residential blocks (fig.62).



fig.60 A high density node connecting some of the fastest growing regions in and beyond London.

The party-wall terrace blocks on the Boulevard and Canal Street, against the CTRL embankment, would help to protect the site from the hostile noise and poor air-quality of the surrounding rail routes. Improved environmental quality within the site, coupled with low traffic volumes, may provide opportunities for the use of natural ventilation.

An Long Term Place, Built to Last

The Framework centres around a network of high quality public spaces. The Development Zones held within this network are scaled to permit a wide range of dense use and building types and the reuse of heritage buildings. The Framework allows uses to change and adapt incrementally against the background of a stable, inclusive public realm – increasing diversity and prolonging and enhancing the life of buildings. This would contribute to a long lasting city quarter which is socially and ultimately environmentally sustainable.

An Accessible Place

The Framework's grain of north-south connections would give greatest priority to pedestrian and cycle access. Almost all parts of the site are accessible within ten minutes walk of the King's Cross St Pancras transport hub, at the southern end of the site. Working with the existing grain, the levels within the site would be configured to give smooth, accessible gradients, tied into the levels of the surrounding city. Bus routes to all the key Framework spaces could provide a fine grain of public transport accessibility across the site (fig.59).

Sustainable Systems

We have prepared an Environmental Sustainability Strategy to support the applications which discusses the potential for resource efficient district systems such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), Combined Cooling Heat and Power (CCHP), grey water recycling and intensive waste collection and recycling. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy includes targets for the efficient use of energy, water, waste and materials (fig.61).

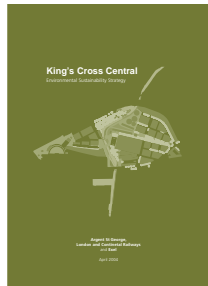


fig.61 Environmental Sustainability Strategy



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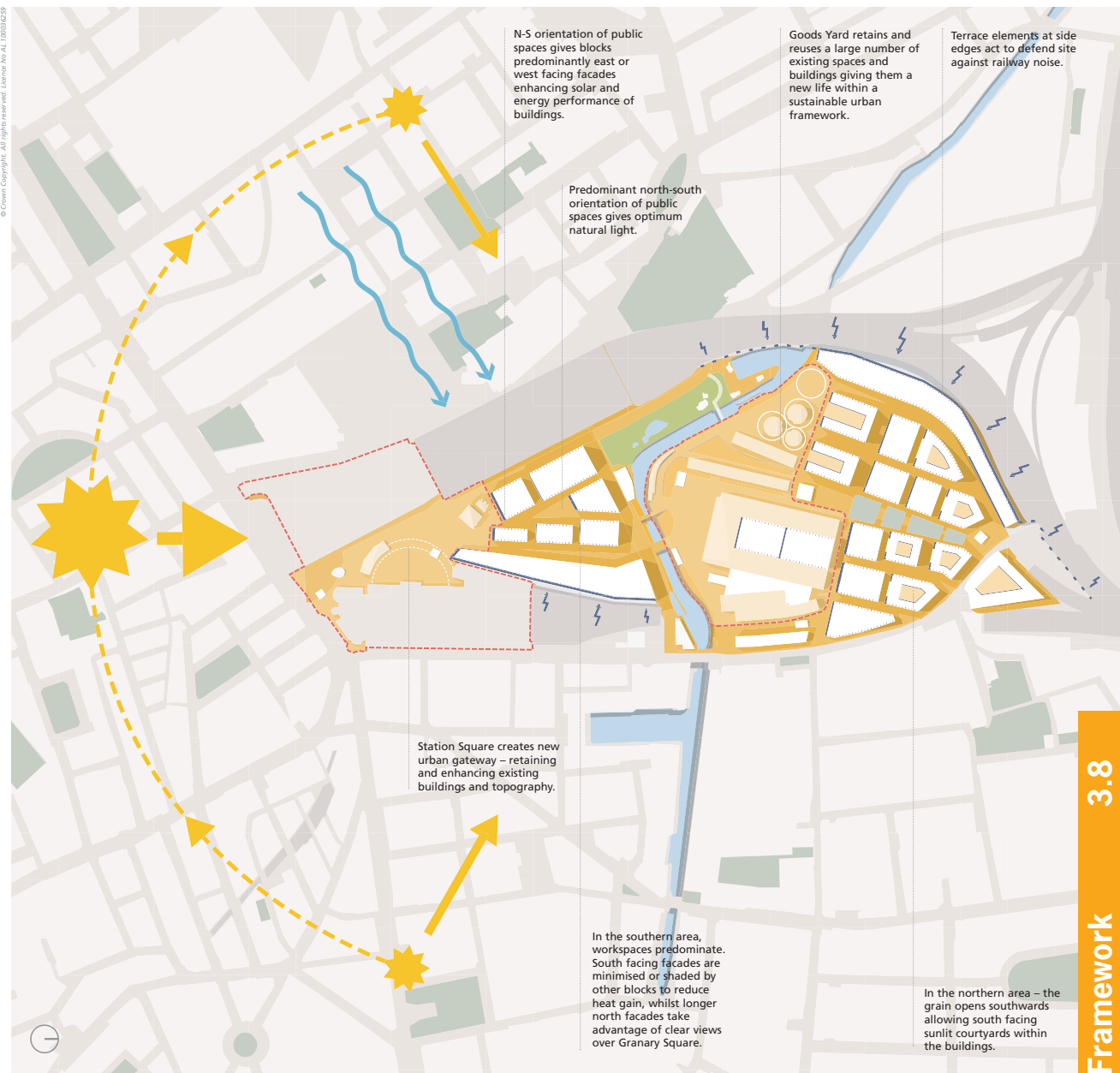


fig.62 The Framework responds to the form, orientation and existing structures of the site to create a sustainable topography

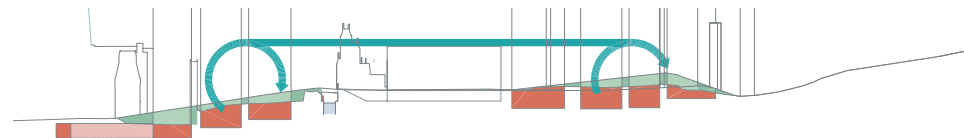


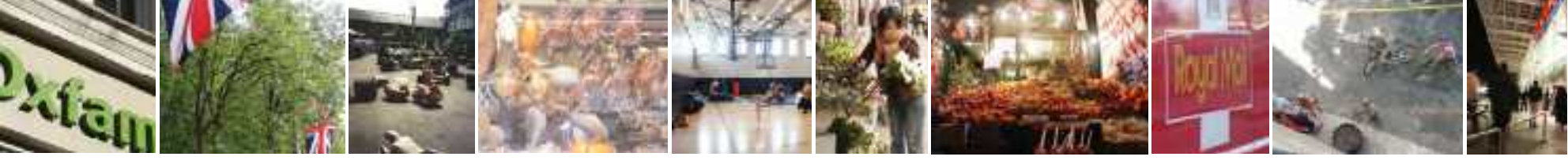
fig.63 Where possible, earth excavated for creating basements will be re-used on site to form an accessible public realm with smooth gradients.



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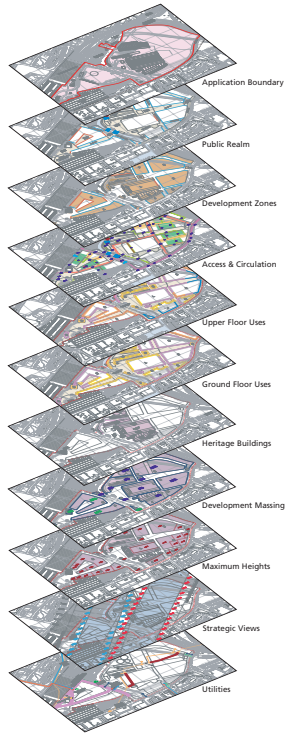
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3.9

Volume

What would it all look like? Bulk and massing have been defined but, architecturally, we don't yet know. The proposals do not (and should not) attempt to define or put a strait jacket around future detailed designs.



Rules, Guidelines & Illustrative Schemes

Because no new buildings have been designed in detail yet, we have established a set of rules and guidelines which would govern or guide issues of height, massing, street frontage and façade treatment for future designs. We also have set out a number of illustrative ideas, to varying levels of detail, to show how buildings developed within the Framework could give enclosure to public spaces (figs.64,65).

Maximum Envelope

In the Development Specifications a number of parameters combine to set a maximum envelope (figs.64,70). In places this reflects the maximum possible height set by the two viewing corridors to St Paul's Cathedral which pass over the site. In other areas, maximum building height limits are set lower than this for specific townscape reasons such as daylight, urban scale or context.

Floorspace Limits and Massing

There are maximum floorspace limits for each use and each area, fixed within the Development Specifications.

The Development Specifications also control the massing within each part of the Framework, specifying how much of the floorspace applied for in each zone could be constructed above a 'normative' height of 30 or 31m above ground level. This takes account of, and addresses, public space and context, whilst offering flexibility over future design.

The Guidelines

The Guidelines provide information about how to work within the rules of the development Specifications. The Guidelines are intentionally not prescriptive, in order to leave room for talented designers to respond to each plot individually, informed by the Urban Design Statement, the Guidelines and other documents; to give them both the freedom to be creative and the framework within which to participate in a wider vision.

Street Enclosure

For all frontages facing onto public spaces, the Guidelines indicate a minimum façade height below which the façade should follow the building line. This is to promote a suitable degree of street enclosure and definition, together with continuity between façades.

Setbacks and Daylighting at Street Level

The Guidelines address the use of setbacks at the upper parts of buildings. This is to promote both good levels of daylighting at street level and diverse skylines.

A traditional 'light cone', from the centre of a street or space, is used to guide development such that all spaces are sufficiently light. Thus, narrower (or taller) spaces would require more setbacks than wider ones and conversely where buildings front onto major spaces, no setbacks are required (fig.69).

A number of other exceptions to general guidance are allowed in order to make site-specific responses possible; and to avoid the homogenising effect which setback rules could have, if applied uniformly.

Major Buildings

Although there are a number of opportunities to consider tall buildings, at gaps between the Strategic View Corridors, the submitted proposals do not contemplate any buildings over 84.0m AOD (less than 60 m tall).

Nevertheless, they offer scope for 'marker' buildings on the plots shown in fig.68.

Flexibility

Massing for housing is likely to differ greatly from that of offices. Housing forms are generally more fragmentary than offices and in places, in order to achieve sufficient daylight, street enclosure may have to be reduced. In the North Area, the flexibility to vary the housing/office mix brings with it wide variability of form and frontage. However, the intention is that frontages onto major spaces, as Long Park, are maintained as strong street enclosures, with the interiors of blocks offering greater scope for diverse volumes. Guidelines are set out for each space to ensure appropriate urban enclosure.

Character

The underlying intent for massing is to achieve a bold definition of public space, in keeping with the grand scale of the existing buildings and spaces, that form part of the spirit of King's Cross.

Substantial public spaces would be created and these would be enclosed by substantial buildings. In some places, short sections of secondary streets would intentionally be made as narrow as possible. In these areas, the increased density would be beneficial to the coherence of the urban grain, rather than detrimental.

fig.64 The Development Specifications form an envelope for the development within which future designs would evolve.

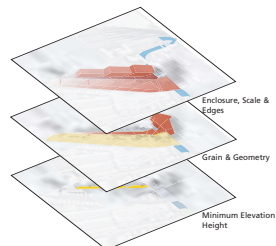


fig.65 The Urban Design Guidelines build on the Development Specifications to provide a finer grain of detailed guidance for each space.



fig.66 Development specification maximum envelope

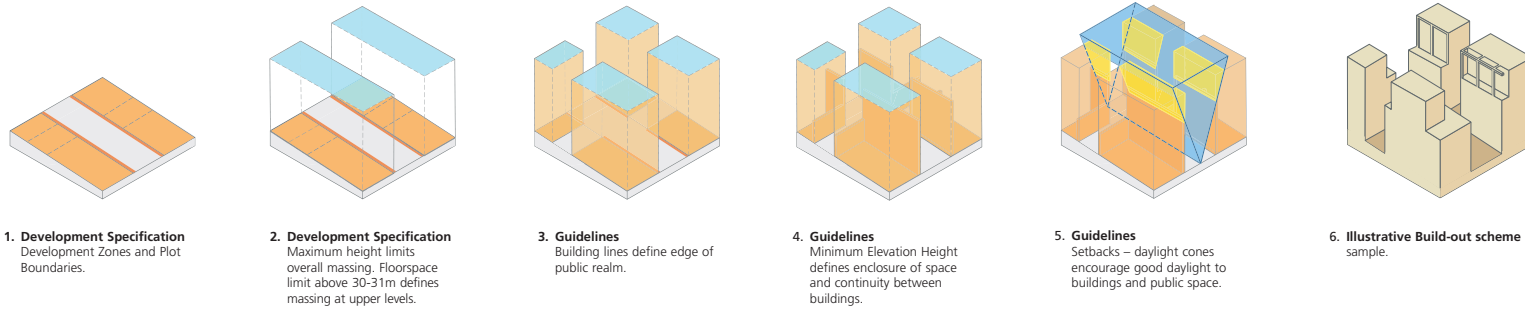


fig.67 Illustrative buildout scheme



fig.68 Potential locations for marker buildings

fig.69 Sequence by which the Development Specifications and Urban Design Guidelines define building envelope.



The Daylight Cone
The daylight cone developed for King's Cross Central is based on extensive precedent studies of equivalent London streets. It is a 40° cone (edges 70° to the horizontal) set at ±2° to the vertical on streets aligned north south and tilted 6° southwards on streets aligned east-west (to respond to the predominant light direction).



fig.70 The illustrative build-out schemes shows how building volume and the mix of uses might emerge within the maximum Development specification envelope, other parameters and in accordance with the Guidelines

3.10 Density and Scale

King's Cross Central needs a density commensurate with its strategic importance which is at the same time sustainable and an attractive place to work and live. In addition to overall density, an appropriate size and scale for the Public Spaces are vital to achieving a successful city.

How can density be measured?

One of the clearest ways to understand the density of a mixed urban area is to look at plot ratio. This is obtained by dividing the total floor area of a development by the site area and allows direct comparison of the quantity of floorspace on sites of different sizes. Further information can be gained by looking at the percentage of the site covered by development, balanced by that left for public spaces, and also by looking at the mean height of the development blocks around those spaces.

What does the guidance say on density for the King's Cross Central Site?

- The Camden Planning and Development Brief states that: 'King's Cross is identified as part of the Central Activities zone where developments are expected to maximise plot ratios.' (2.2.2)
- It goes on to say that: 'the provision of a "critical mass" of office floorspace in the [main site] Area and Triangle is a cornerstone of regeneration. It will provide most of the job opportunities.' (2.4.4)
- And that, in terms of location: 'the highest densities and many of the commercial uses, including efficient offices for national and international companies, are likely to be located closest to the rail termini, consistent with strategic and local guidance.' (2.2.4)

A Crucial Balance

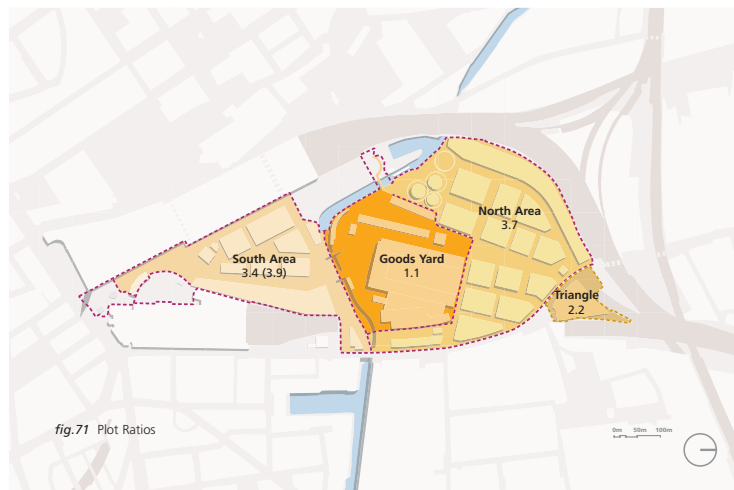
The strategic opportunity represented by the transport hub at King's Cross St Pancras calls for high density residential, leisure and workspace to take advantage of the unparalleled transport links. This immediate need for density must be balanced against the long term imperative to create a vibrant, human city capable of adapting to future change and inclusive to a wide range of people and uses.

Contrasting Characters

Our design response recognises the varied character of the site, using this to create zones with different characters and densities. The Goods Yard, which reuses many existing buildings and spaces, would have a low density for a central urban site (plot ratio 1.1): its generous spaces, and large low buildings are well suited to intensely public, cultural, retail and leisure uses at the heart of the site.

The northern area would have the greatest mix of uses and incorporate most of the residential units. Although the site coverage would be similar to the south, the need for good sun and daylight for each apartment, would create a more varied height profile and a slightly lower density of approximately 3.6, though this will depend on the precise mix of uses. The Triangle site would have similar characteristics but a lower density (approximately 2.1) owing to its constrained footprint.

The southern area (plot ratio 3.4) is bounded by the two large stations and is closest to the transport hub. This area is appropriate for high-density workspace and retail.



The relatively tall average heights (averaging 9-10 storeys) would be balanced by strong public spaces. It may seem surprising that the plot ratio of the south is lower than the north, however this is due to the space south of the German Gym between the Grade I listed stations which must accommodate various transport, pedestrian and public realm functions. The only building is the Great Northern Hotel. If this particularly sensitive location is taken out of the calculation, the plot ratio of the south area would be 3.9.

Benchmark Studies

But would the site be too dense, or not dense enough? The emerging framework has been benchmarked against a wide range of UK and international developments. For example: the Goods Yard would have a similar density to Manchester Millennium (plot ratio 1.4) which successfully incorporates many old buildings within the new development. It would not be as dense as low rise Covent Garden. The southern area would be less dense than the new development adjacent to Paddington Station and would be less dense and have more public space than Broadgate in the City of London. The northern area would perhaps be most similar to Potsdamer Platz – a vibrant new mixed use development at the heart of Berlin. In terms of heights of buildings, it will probably be most similar to Regents Place on the Euston Road.

Taken as a whole, King's Cross Central would have a plot ratio of 2.9, a little denser than well-established areas of Central London such as Covent Garden or Mayfair.

South Area

Site Area: 6.9ha
Plot Ratio: 3.4
Site Coverage: 40%
Mean No. Storeys: 9.9

Goods Yard

Site Area: 6.8ha
Plot Ratio: 1.1
Site Coverage: 49%
Mean No. Storeys: 2.6

North Area

Site Area: 10.9ha
Plot Ratio: 3.7
Site Coverage: 52%
Mean No. Storeys: 10.2

Triangle

Site Area: 1.1ha
Plot Ratio: 2.2
Site Coverage: 65%
Mean No. Storeys: 4.5

Whole Site

Site Area: 25.8ha
Plot Ratio: 2.9
Site Coverage: 49%
Mean No. Storeys: 7.8



fig.72 Broadgate, London
Site Area: 8.6ha Plot Ratio: 4.2
Site Coverage: 60%
Mean Number of Storeys: 8.6

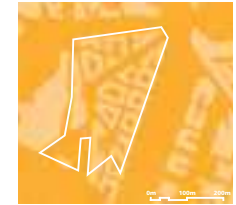


fig.73 Potsdamer Platz, Berlin
Site Area: 10.4ha Plot Ratio: 3.4
Site Coverage: 50%
Mean Number of Storeys: 11.3



fig.74 Paddington, London
Site Area: 11.3ha Plot Ratio: 3.7
Site Coverage: 32%
Mean Number of Storeys: 11.3



fig.75 Manchester Millennium
Site Area: 20.1ha Plot Ratio: 1.4
Site Coverage: 59%
Mean Number of Storeys: 4.0



fig.76 Mayfair, London
Site Area: 33.5ha Plot Ratio: 2.5
Site Coverage: 42%
Mean Number of Storeys: 5.7

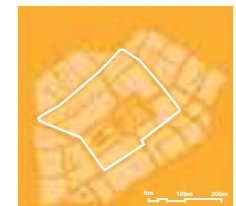


fig.77 Covent Garden, London
Site Area: 8.0ha Plot Ratio: 2.5
Site Coverage: 67%
Mean Number of Storeys: 4.6



fig.78 Broadgate fig.79 Paddington fig.80 Potsdamer Platz fig.81 Manchester Millenium fig.82 Mayfair fig.83 Covent Garden fig.84 Trafalgar Square fig.85 Regent's Street figs.86, 87 West India Quay - old and new fig.88 Paternoster Square fig.89 Piccadilly Circus

A Mix of Spaces

The diversity of uses and character at King's Cross Central demands an equivalent diversity in its public spaces. These must range from generous, 'World City' spaces, able to accommodate large numbers of people and formal events comfortably, to more intimate secondary spaces sheltering a journey to work, a game in the playground or an evening drink.

Character and Enclosure

The feel of a space is given not only by its physical size, but also by its orientation and the uses and height of the buildings enclosing it. The form of the spaces shown in the Development Specification Parameter Plans and the guidance given in the Urban Design Guidelines for forming the development around them, will result in spaces that balance these factors.

Lessons from London

In seeking to define the feel of spaces both large and small we have made an extensive study of similar spaces within London.

Routes

The Boulevard, intensely used and lined by shops at ground floor with commercial space above, would be comparable to Regent Street – a major London shopping street also oriented north south. Although narrower than Regent St in some places, this would be off set by the much greater proportion of pedestrian space. Its cross section would be similarly proportioned to High Holborn.

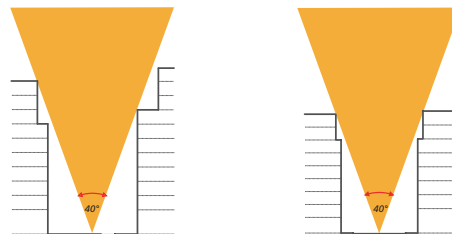


fig.90 Sectional comparison between Boulevard (left) and High Holborn (right)

Although slightly wider and lined by taller buildings, the Boulevard shares the same proportion as High Holborn: both fitting to the 40° daylight cone (see 3.9) identified as a model for good daylighting from our London Precedents studies. However, the Boulevard, unlike High Holborn, is aligned north-south and would receive better sunlight coverage during the course of the day.

By contrast, Long Park in the North would be greener and quieter. Comparable in plan to long green squares such as Montague Square, in section the building heights would be similar to those around Russell Square.

Spaces

Granary Square at the heart of the site would be the same size as Trafalgar Square. The striking façade of the Granary on the north side of the Square facing the end of the Boulevard, similar to the façade of the National Gallery facing Whitehall. The central portion of Granary Square is the same size as Leicester Square. The cross section would be similar to West India Quay.

Pancras Square, a quieter space to the side of the Boulevard would be similar in feel to the recently completed Paternoster Square near St Paul's Cathedral, although with taller buildings.

Station Square, the focus of the busy southern transport hub, would be similar to Piccadilly Circus in size and feel.

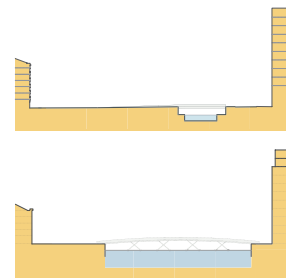


fig.91 Sectional Comparison: Granary Square (above) and West India Quay (below).

West India Quay, at Canary Wharf, shows how taller modern buildings can provide an appropriate urban edge to new public spaces formed by older 19th Century industrial infrastructure and buildings.

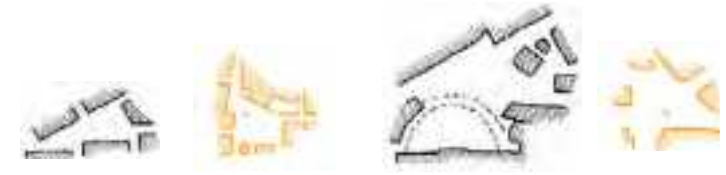


fig.92 Comparison: Pancras Square (left) and Paternoster Square (right)

fig.93 Comparison: Station Square (left) and Piccadilly Circus (right)



fig.94 Comparison: Granary Square (left) and Trafalgar Square (right)



fig.95 Comparison: Boulevard (left) and Regent's Street (right)



fig.96 Comparison: Long Park (left) and Montague Square (right)



3.11

Catalyst for Change

The full regeneration of the wider area around King's Cross relies on more than just the realisation of King's Cross Central. King's Cross Central however would set the conditions and provide the catalyst for change on all fronts.

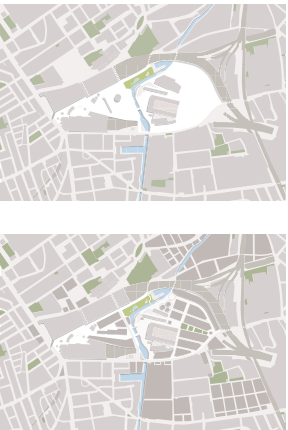


fig.97 Repairing the Urban Grain

Repair

The need to create missing links, and repair the urban grain extending beyond the site boundary; just as in the past the negative influence of the railways has extended beyond the wall of the Goods Yard (fig.97).

King's Cross Central is for Everyone

It is important to remember that the success of King's Cross Central relies on the surrounding local communities flowing through it, using it and feeling a part of it. The degree of activity, the influx of investment and the pleasure that King's Cross Central would bring once local people have engaged with it, would make opportunities for further regeneration much more tangible (fig.99).

The Canal

The Regent's Canal is a significant pedestrian connector between east and west but it is under-used and feels unsafe at times. King's Cross Central would be one of many special places along it. Although its character as a quiet pedestrian resource is something which should be conserved, there may

be opportunities, especially between King's Cross Central and Camden Lock, to open up buildings and routes to the water, enhance the towpath and create visitor/interpretation facilities. Change is already underway with new developments such as the recently completed Jubilee Waterside.

There are opportunities for local Canal improvements linked to King's Cross Central. These could include new moorings and works to the towpath, linked to the British Waterways Board Canal Action Plan.

The north end of Camley Street

Camley Street is a dead end, occupied by under utilised light industrial sites and disconnected urban compounds. It very nearly connects with Agar Grove, one of Camden's thriving residential areas. The creation of pedestrian, cycle and vehicular links may be achievable with local authority intervention. This would hugely increase the accessibility of King's Cross to Camden. Camley Street itself would acquire a 'footfall' which could trigger regeneration.

Camley Street Natural Park

Discussions are already underway with the London Wildlife Trust in relation to plans to create a new Visitor Centre with a landing stage at the northern end of the park. This scheme would be integrated with our aspiration for a new pedestrian ramp from Camley Street along the edge of the park, leading to a new footbridge over the Canal into Coal Drops Yard at the upper level.

This link would offer a very significant new pedestrian connection between the heart of the site and the route to Camden Town.

York Way

York Way is already changing fast. With the Regent Quarter development now underway, small scale residential developments, new bars and cafes on several sites and the Parabola proposals on Battlebridge Basin, momentum is building.

Camden's own idea of creating a footbridge across the King's Cross railway cutting, on the line of Wharfedale Road, also remains a possibility. It would link directly into the Boulevard via the eastern buildings of the South Area. If firm proposals for the bridge with secure funding come forward during the development of this zone, a covered route through to the Boulevard could be accommodated.

North of the Canal, King's Cross Central would bring about the total transformation of the west side of York Way. Disjointed housing forms and small-scale retail on the east side offers numerous opportunities for regeneration over time.



Triangle

Proposals for the Triangle Site include a health and fitness centre with retail at street level and a substantial number of flats above. Standing at the bend in York Way this site occupies a strategic location, anchoring the Framework to York Way and providing a catalyst for change on the east side of the street.

Randell's Junction

Adjacent to the Triangle Site stands the former York Road Underground Station and another potential development site. The comprehensive redevelopment of this corner of York Way could lead to a new public space (which we refer to as 'Randell's Junction') becoming a node of connection eastwards to Islington.

Links to Islington

The Bemerton and other estates, together with Bingfield Park, are currently impermeable and uninviting. There are numerous opportunities for new and improved connections through here between Caledonian Road and York Way. Randell's Junction would be the focus, leading into King's Cross Central and from there through to Camden.

Network Rail site on York Way

The south end of York Way, which has been almost entirely transformed on its east side over the last few years, has potential for further change. If this site on the west of York Way were to be developed, possibly in connection with a new Wharfedale Road footbridge, the street could be reinforced and much needed activity on the west side generated.

Euston Road

The idea of 'taming' the Euston Road in front of the two stations is part of wider aspirations suggested by Sir Terry Farrell. There is also an aspiration, on the part of King's Cross Central, to connect seamlessly into Bloomsbury. Crossing Euston Road should not be the daunting experience it is now. There are likely to be opportunities for new crossings, tree planting, widening of pavements and the opening up of new pedestrian links through the urban grain, as well redevelopment opportunities on the south side of Euston Road.

Good Communication

The process of developing this application to date has involved good communication with our neighbours and other interested parties and statutory bodies. In taking the scheme towards implementation it will be essential to build on these relationships, involving all those who will contribute to or be affected by the evolving Framework.



fig.98 A lot is already happening in the area and King's Cross Central could be the catalyst for much more.



EUSTON

MORNINGTON CRESCENT

CAMDEN TOWN

Euston Station

SOMERS TOWN

ELM VILLAGE

British Library

St Pancras Extension

MAIDEN LANE ESTATE

BLOOMSBURY

St Pancras Station

Granary Square

KING'S CROSS CENTRAL

Station Square

BOULEVARD

LONG PARK

INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

King's Cross Station

YORK WAY

Edge Centre

Living & Working

Major Transport Interchange

Major Public Buildings

Shopping, Eating & Drinking

Argyle Square

KING'S CROSS

BEMERTON & BARNSBURY ESTATES

GRAY'S INN ROAD

PENTONVILLE ROAD

PENTONVILLE

CALEDONIAN ROAD

CALEDONIAN ROAD & BARNSBURY

3.11

Framework

urban design statement

fig.99 King's Cross 2020: King's Cross Central would provide a new centre, knitting together adjacent communities.





Places

This section describes how we imagine each place within King's Cross Central; what it would look like and feel like to be there, who would be there and what they would be doing. It is written as a narrative describing what someone might see and experience as they walk through the site.

This process of imagining has helped us to uncover an idea of the unique character of each space. It is this sense of character, supported by the strength of the existing buildings and context, which will continue to underpin our vision through to completion.

The sketches and views used in section 4 stem both from the Illustrative Build-out scheme and from the work of other architects (listed in section 5.1) relating to specific sites.



1. Station Square



2. Boulevard



3. Pancras Square



4. Pancras Road



5. Goods Way and Canal Square



6. Granary Square



7. Regent's Canal



8. Coal Drops Yard



9. Gasholders



10. Market Square



11. Long Park



12. Goods Street



13. Canal Street



14. York Street and Midland Yard



15. York Way

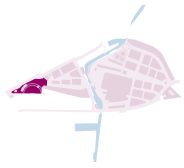


ILLUSTRATIVE SCHEME

The views and sketches within this document are based on the 'Illustrative Scheme': a worked example of a how development, in line with the maximum quantum of floor space applied for, may emerge out of the Parameters and Guidelines, defined elsewhere in the planning applications and supporting documents. See Urban Design Guidelines Introduction p.IV.

By creating this illustration of how our ideas might be realised we have proved to ourselves that it would be a coherent and connected piece of city of exceptional diversity and quality.

4.1 Station Square



What difference would the King's Cross Station Enhancement make?

- A new concourse in the area shaded light red in fig.102 would create a more active edge and a stronger sense of enclosure to Station Square.
- A public route would be created around the edge of the concourse (dark red), and a new arcade at the base of the Great Northern Hotel (orange), together forming a new gateway from Euston Road into King's Cross Central.
- Taxi canopies on either side of the hotel would provide some screening between the road and the square.

How are you responding to the busy traffic on Pancras Road?

- Our proposals include moving Pancras Road which would otherwise cut through the middle of Station Square. This is why we are proposing the removal of the northern Stanley Building.
- All surfaces except the main carriageways are to be treated in special stone finishes to make them feel part of a coherent Public Realm.
- The taxi canopies and the German Gym and Stanley Building would provide buffers between most of the square and the road.

How busy would it be?

- In 2020 it is estimated that during the peak evening hour (5-6 pm): 10,500 people will pass through Station Square



Fragmentation

In the northwest corner is the German Gymnasium, a small brick building which was originally embedded within a dense urban block (figs.100,101). Its twisted angle relative to the buildings which surround it is evidence of the complex and fragmentary history of this part of London.

Coherence

Within the profusion of elements, large and small, and the numerous disparate geometries, three things hold the space together and give a strong sense of unity (fig.100).

- Firstly a notable landscaping scheme with a strong centre, picking up the geometry of the German Gym.
- Secondly the fine splayed view northwards looking three ways up the Boulevard, into Pancras Square and along Pancras Road.
- Finally the extraordinary view looking South from the square towards the tower of St Pancras Station with the Great Northern Hotel in the foreground.

Site for a New Concourse

The square, which currently includes the handsome space between the curve of the Great Northern Hotel and the Western Range of King's Cross, could form the site for a new station concourse, being considered by Network Rail (fig.102). This would make possible the removal of the existing concourse on the Euston Road. It would also radically change the sense of enclosure, arrival and activity within the Station Square.

Activity

The visual diversity of Station Square is matched by its busy and dynamic atmosphere. On the west side, Pancras Road runs northwards in front of St Pancras Station, with provision for buses, taxis, bicycles and other traffic.

It provides a point of arrival and interchange both between the two stations, and between King's Cross Central and the rest of Central London.

The abiding image of the southern end of the square is that of people ebbing and flowing from one mode of transport to another, in an elegant landscaped setting. Towards the northern end, shops, cafes and bars group themselves around the German Gym, which is alive with people (fig.104).

Clarence Passage

Behind the German Gym, on the other side of Clarence Passage, lies the retained Stanley Building, the last of the tenement dwellings built here for railway workers. The passage frames an intriguing view of the north end of the St Pancras 'Barlow' shed which is now abutted by the new CTRL station structure.

This surprising juxtaposition sums up the way in which new and old are allowed to coexist throughout King's Cross Central, creating a rich and rewarding place to explore.



fig.100 A space of many geometries and many elements, large and small



fig.101 A busy gateway to the site and a place to meet.

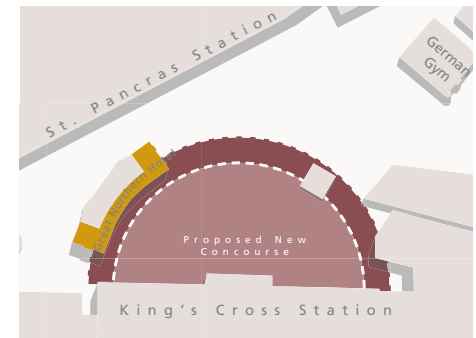


fig.102 Station Square allows space for the future King's Cross Station Enhancement project.

fig.103 Caruso St John: sketch scheme for end of terrace office, articulating the change in scale between Station Square and the Boulevard.

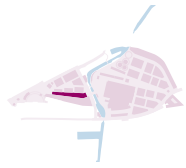




fig.104 A long view up the Boulevard and a glimpse into Pancras Square; new buildings form a backdrop to the German Gym.

4.2

Boulevard



Looking along the handsome line of plane trees which run the length of the space, with a water channel running down from the top end, the effect is beautiful, especially with the sun shining from the South.

How did you determine the alignment of the Boulevard?

- In order to allow people to spread out through the South Area, and to respond to direct 'desire lines' into the North Area, we wanted two routes to lead to two crossing points over the Canal into Granary Square.
- By aligning the Boulevard to the east side of the Granary we have achieved this, making space for Pancras Square which offers the second route into Granary Square and a link to the Coal Drops.
- By folding the building line at the top end of the Boulevard we have framed and focused an emerging view of the Granary (fig.109) and orientated people towards the Coal Drops, Market Square and Long Park.
- An even distribution of people crossing Goods Way, from both the Boulevard and Pancras Square, ensures that pedestrians would have priority over vehicles. It also offers greater choice and diversity for the many kinds of people moving through the South Area, day and night.
- The two routes created would be very different from each other; Pancras Square, quieter, winding between urban blocks; the Boulevard, more direct and lined with shops
- Finally, the creation of two spaces, each enclosed by new buildings greatly increases flexibility for phasing, particularly in the context of providing work sites for Network Rail's plans for a western concourse. Future flexibility is essential to facilitate the delivery of the scheme.

How busy will it be?

- In 2020 it is estimated that during the peak evening hour (5-6pm) 8,000 people will flow along the Boulevard.
- 9,800 people would cross the two bridges over the Canal at the north end of the Boulevard.



fig.105 A treelined avenue with shops and offices rises towards Granary Square



fig.106 At the top end of the Boulevard, Canal Square unfolds to reveal a wide view of Granary Square.

Perspective

Orientated directly North-South, the slightly splayed shape of the Boulevard and a rise of 7m to the north end creates a strongly compressed perspective (fig.109).

Dynamic Space

The Boulevard is a street on the scale of some of the great streets in London such as Piccadilly or Regent Street. In this case however it is dominated by pedestrians, with only a one-way route for buses, taxis and access. The character of the space changes dramatically through the day, with workers flooding northwards in the morning and in the evening a mix of people going home and others starting an evening out.

Thriving Street

During the day it is a thriving commercial street. The east side provides a good mix of shops and cafes, interspersed with office entrances and a larger store at the north end. On the west side are larger restaurants and bars where activity can spill out onto the broad pavement.

A series of benches (favourites of children for playing on), a paving pattern inlaid with steel 'tracks' and a water rill animate and unify the space.



fig.107 St Pancras Tower and the Great Northern Hotel seen from the south end of the Boulevard.

Building Frontages

There is a noticeable difference between the buildings on either side of the Boulevard. The buildings on the east side form a continuous frontage and have a pleasing consistency of scale and rhythm. At the top end, at Canal Square, this frontage folds to address the Regent's Canal and Granary Square, giving a sense of containment to the Boulevard. On the West side, distinctive free-standing buildings sit, separated by side streets leading westwards through to Pancras Square. The southernmost building contains a new entrance to King's Cross underground station.

Views at Each End

Perhaps the most remarkable things about the Boulevard are the spaces and views which open out at each end. At the south end, approaching from the north, the eastern side of the street extends into Station Square and interlocks with the site for a new King's Cross Station concourse. The emerging view of the tower of St Pancras, behind the Great Northern Hotel, is a reason in its own right to walk down the Boulevard (fig.107).

At the North end, the Boulevard opens out to Canal Square, with views to one of the finest and most impressive spaces in London, Granary Square (fig.106).



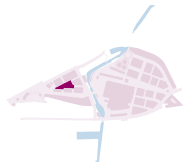
fig.108 Strong terrace on east side contrasts with permeable west side – providing links to Pancras Square





fig. 109 The landscaping is devoted primarily to pedestrians and the character of the space changes dramatically through the day.

4.3 Pancras Square



Pancras Square is a large triangular 'room-like' space enclosed by large buildings. Entered at the south end, at a point where the two buildings behind the German Gym almost appear to touch, the space splays out broadly to reveal a quasi-theatrical view.

How did you set the opening into the square at the south end?

- We wanted to maximise the enclosure of Pancras Square whilst still allowing a tightly framed view into it from Station Square and a framed view of St Pancras Tower from within the Square.
- We also wanted the southern buildings to 'push forward' to create a new context for the German Gym and Stanley Building and to form a strong edge to Station Square.

What determined the geometry of the square?

- It has its origins in the geometries of the two stations, which in turn stem from pre-existing urban grains of Camden and Islington.
- It naturally creates the fanning shape which gathers people from the north, both from Camden (via Camley Street) and from Granary Square.

How did you locate the new Underground entrance?

- We wanted to give equal access to both Pancras Square and the Boulevard, responding to natural flow patterns to west, north and east.

People numbers

- In 2020, it is estimated that during the peak evening hour (5-6pm), 4,000 people will pass through Pancras Square.



fig.110 Three views



fig.112 Porphyrios Associates' study for a building to hold the southern entrance to the square, mediating between the scale of the German Gym and the Stanley Buildings to the south and the larger buildings within the Square.



fig.113 Pancras Square is an outdoor room with views of major landmarks in three directions.



fig.114 Eric Parry Architects' sketch scheme for a building at the head of the square, framing both northwards views.

fig.111 The southern end of the Square frames a view of St Pancras Tower.



Three Views

Standing in the middle of this 'raked' space, looking northwards, an imposing office building faces us with streets to either side, fanning out with the grain of the site (fig.110). To the left, a street leads downhill towards Camden, ending in a horizon of sky, trees (Camley Street Natural Park) and a glimpse of the Gasholders. To the right another street continues the uphill slope of the square, leading to a footbridge over the Canal and Granary Square beyond. The direct view to the Granary from here is irresistible.

On reaching the top of the square, the view back tightly frames the clock tower of St Pancras and creates a surprising enhanced perspective (fig.111).

Scale

Although everything in Pancras Square is on a large scale, everything seems close. This is partly because of its foreshortened perspective and partly due to the projecting corners of the free-standing buildings on the right, which mark side streets leading through to the Boulevard.

Daily Pattern

Pancras Square has a strong daily rhythm. In the middle of the day it is calm and quiet. There is little traffic, just the occasional taxi (most deliveries are below ground from Pancras Road). The triangular space in the centre, with grass, trees, benches and water, is an ideal place to take a sandwich.

In the morning, however, there is a tide of commuters flowing northwards around the edges of the square, many of them coming from the Underground entrance which discharges at the south end of the Square. In the evening the tide ebbs south.

Ground Floor Frontage

At the south end there are a number of cafes and amenity shops clustered round the underground, whilst some impressive office entrances mark out the rest of the square. In addition, there are larger restaurants, with tables spilling out across the square, to animate the east and west flanks.

Landscape

Pancras Square is remarkably sunny due to the subtle use of massing and terraced levels. Its landscaping is softer and in a sense more intimate than the Boulevard; it is a very good place to pause or simply to pass through (fig.115).



fig.115 The square fans northwards – offering routes and views to the Granary and Camley Street and sunlit terraces to stop and sit on or eat lunch.

4.4 Pancras Road



Pancras Road is the 'backbone' of the South Area. Its entire length is dominated on the west side by the long horizontal of the new St Pancras International Station which gives a dynamic, new feel to the street.

What is St Pancras International Station and what impact will it have on Pancras Road?

- St Pancras Station is being transformed into a modern world-class station for high speed international and domestic rail services. It will be the principle gateway in London for Eurostar services to Paris, Brussels, Lille and the continent.
- The existing platforms will be doubled in length to accommodate international Eurostar trains. The original Barlow single arch trainshed – in its day, the largest single span structure in the world – will be fully restored and a new roof, designed to complement the original, will span the additional platforms.
- When work is finished in 2007, a total of 13 platforms will provide capacity for services via the Midland Main Line to Sheffield, Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and high speed trains to Kent. Two further platforms will be created beneath the west side of the station to replace the existing Thameslink Station on Pentonville Road.
- St Pancras Chambers, the neo-gothic former Midland Grand Hotel, is due to be refurbished as a hotel and loft apartments.
- The main entrance to the new station will be on Pancras Road at the junction of the new and old station buildings. The station will contribute to significantly increasing the flows of people across Pancras Road into Pancras Square and the Boulevard.

Street

On the east side the large commercial buildings might contain complementary uses such as a health centre and cycle parking, as well as some office space forming a focal point of activity on the street. Towards the north end, a gated ramp in one of the buildings leads down to the basement delivery route for the offices around Pancras Square. Further south, a sloping side street provides a route for taxis into Pancras Square itself.

North End

It is at each end, however, that Pancras Road is most interesting. At its north end there is an extraordinary crossroads where the road below the railway meets the slope of Goods Way. Between them the wooded crown of Camley Street Natural Park forms a green backdrop. From here, the long edge of the park leads north towards St Pancras Basin, where a new footbridge connects the route from Camden, over the Park and the Canal, into the Goods Yard. The lighting scheme and increased people numbers make this relatively quiet part of the site feel very safe.

South End

At the south end the linear containment of the street breaks down. To the east side, the retained Stanley Building and German Gym (see 4.1) peel away from the larger blocks. On the west the junction between the new station extension and the old Barlow shed opens up one of the truly iconic views of St Pancras tower, side by side with the Great Northern Hotel (fig. 120).

Gothic fantasy meets classical realism.

Shop

Street level activity increases on the west side with a food store and the domestic entrance to St Pancras Station. This is well placed opposite Clarence Passage, the original alley behind the German Gym which is now a thriving landscaped space with entrances and benches.

Landscape

Although Pancras Rd is a very busy road, the surfaces are well thought-through to ensure that certain lanes – taxi queues, through lanes, public transport routes etc – are well managed, reducing the dominance of the vehicular road surface. This helps the visitor to appreciate Pancras Rd as a normal, if busy, London street.



fig.116 Inside the refurbished Barlow Shed at St Pancras International.



fig.117 Entrance to St Pancras International from Station Square showing the 2007 road configuration.

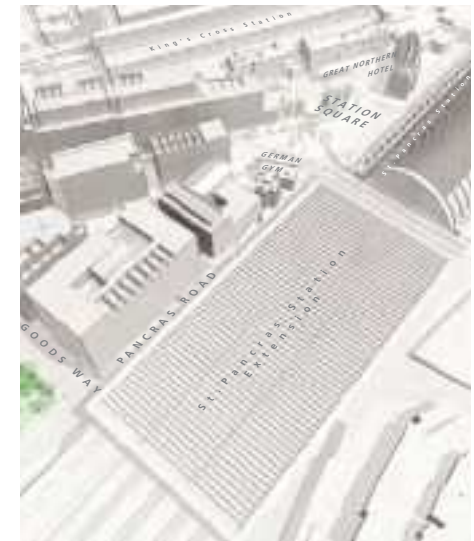


fig.118 A dynamic street combining a strong route to Camley Street Natural Park with the activity of the busy King's Cross St Pancras surface transport interchange.



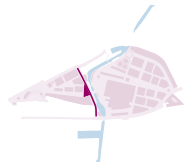
fig.119 St Pancras International Station under construction.





fig.120 Pedestrian crossings link the new entrance to St Pancras Station with Clarence Passage and Station Square

4.5 Goods Way and Canal Square



The character of Goods Way varies hugely from one end to the other. The buildings along its south side form a strong urban edge to the open space of Granary Square, the Goods Yard and Camley Street Natural Park.

- How will you ensure that Canal Square is not spoilt by traffic?**
- We looked at allowing Goods Way to pass under a pair of pedestrian bridges from the Boulevard and Pancras Square, but practical issues of levels and accessibility and the fact that 'grade separation' is widely believed to be disastrous for cities, led us to conclude that 'at grade' crossings were the best solution.
 - The grouping together of the two crossings, operating simultaneously, and the treatment of this section of Goods Way in stone rather than tarmac, would make Goods Way part of the square rather than an edge to it. This level of traffic calming and pedestrian priority would be significant in helping movement northwards and joining north and south.

- Have you taken into account the scale and nature of the Canal in determining the massing along Goods Way?**
- The strength and scale of the Goods Way frontage is significant in giving a sense of enclosure to the Goods Yard as a whole. While we wanted it to be on a grand scale, in proportion to the scale of the Goods Yard (of which the Canal is a part), we also wanted it to be perforate, to allow views and routes to and from the South.
 - In order to break up the scale of the frontage, without losing its strength, we have allowed the central building to twist towards the Granary, ensuring a broken and diverse skyline.
 - Sheer walls on the canal edge are one of its most typical characteristics. Our aim is to achieve a balance between smaller buildings on the water's edge (for example the new marker building on Goods Way or the Fish and Coal building) and larger buildings set back some distance. Together these would combine to create strong edges to the Canal, foreground and background.
 - Special guidelines are set to promote sensitivity to the character of the Canal, its history, material, spirit and scale.

This edge, which is best seen from the north side of Granary Square, is of a grand enough scale to give enclosure and definition to a vast space, which was previously under-used and windswept.

Four Buildings

The south frontage of Goods Way comprises four building facades, each one revealing its 'end grain' fronting northwards. The gaps between the buildings reveal the funnelling of routes and spaces southwards, downhill a drop of some seven metres to Station Square. The drama of this edge rests most of all in the way it inflects to create Canal Square, forming a positive relationship with the Granary and 'opening the door' to the Boulevard.

Corner Marker

Coming from York Way on the south side of the Canal, you pass a beautiful apartment building on the right between Goods Way and the Canal with a café at ground level. This forms a 'gatehouse' to the Goods Yard, mediating between the large scale of the four buildings and the smaller scale of the Canal and framing a fine view of the Granary as the centrepiece of Granary Square. When passing the apartment building, one is aware of the split levels of the site, with the railway running beneath the Canal and the lower level towpath peeling away from the level of Goods Way.

Arrival

The first large building presents an acute corner to mark our arrival at the centre of the scheme. Its façade combines the solidity of the Granary with contemporary transparency. Its ground floor is taken up with the side of a retail unit which fronts onto the Boulevard and Canal Square.

Canal Square

On arriving at Canal Square you are at a highpoint. Two bridges can be seen crossing the Canal – a road bridge to the east, a footbridge to the West – and between them the road has been paved as a pedestrian space, operating as a wide pedestrian crossing.



A grid of 'beacons' (bearing gas flames on 'events' nights) marks out Canal Square and the Canal edge.

Centrepiece

The focal point of Canal Square is the second building, which turns to face the Granary. It has a large retail unit at ground level, bringing activity to the square, but, above that, its façade has an almost civic quality fronting the Goods Yard.

The Canal

Approaching the canal edge, one looks down to find a much more gentle world of canal boat moorings and the towpath below, shielded from the traffic by the change in levels. Complementing the Granary, the other major marker for Canal Square is the Fish and Coal Building. Although on a small scale, its tall narrow gable and its sensuous curved form (matching the Canal), contribute to the enclosure and character of the square (fig. 124).

Keystone and Bookend

The third building in the row also presents an acute corner to the Square (the angle stemming from the two stations and the surrounding urban grains) where Bridge Street leads back into Pancras Square. It 'locks' the two geometries of the South Area together like a keystone. At this point, Goods Way falls markedly to the west. It becomes more enclosed due to the wall of the new Gas Governor site, but it still enjoys glimpsed views along the length of the Canal to the north, which bends at this point, up to St Pancras Lock. The fourth building anchors the corner of Goods Way and Pancras Road like a 'bookend' and it enjoys views along Camley Street Natural Park. Park Street leads up into Pancras Square and at the corner, the edge of the park leads us along Camley Street towards Camden.

Sense of Place

These four buildings are all different but they harmonise with each other, creating a unified and impressive edge to the Goods Yard. By their scale, the containment they bring and the way they positively 'front' northwards, they give the Goods Yard a strong sense of place, merging old and new while maintaining the heroic spirit of the original place.



fig.122 A strong southern edge to Granary Square.



fig.121 The urban edge inflects at Canal Square to form a connection between the North Area and the south side of the canal.



fig.123 Canal Square from Goods Way

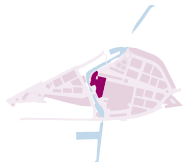


fig.124 New and old, large and small, are juxtaposed and balanced; echoing the drama of scale which characterised the edge of the canal from the earliest days of the gasworks.

4.6

Granary Square

The view of Granary Square, from the Maiden Lane Bridge, draws us into this unique urban space at the heart of King's Cross Central. The Granary is a magnetic presence.



Did you consider recreating the Granary Basin as the focus for Granary Square?

- Yes, we looked at many ways of doing this. There were two main reasons why we chose not to:
- Firstly we want Granary Square to be a space for people. We want the flexibility to hold public events there or install temporary attractions such as a skating rink. The level of the water would have been more than 3m below the square and would have created a void in its centre.
- Secondly a major national grid cable runs in the towpath and it would not be viable to move it. Boats within the basin would therefore have had to be craned in and out.
- The grid of fountains in front of the Granary is a direct reference to the original basin, but not a literal one. It offers the accessibility, the flexibility and the simple enjoyment that we are after.

Will Granary Square be too large?

- Granary Square itself is slightly smaller than Leicester Square. We are sure that with active public uses in the Granary, the Coal Drops, Fish and Coal and the pavilions, and with the diversity of landscaping, levels, scale and enclosure that is proposed, it will be an exceptionally pleasant place both at busy times and when quiet.
- The urban space, of which Granary Square is part – including Canal Square – is closer to Trafalgar Square in size. It will be a valuable expanse of open space in a dense piece of city, one with an exceptional scale appropriate to an international city. The scale and strength of the Goods Way frontage is an important factor in ensuring that it has sufficient level of enclosure.

The Provender Store

- Two smaller buildings used to be located in the corner of Granary Square between The Eastern Coal Drops and the Fish & Coal building.
- The tallest was the hydraulic pumping station which operated the Goods Yard machinery with the smaller Provender Store for Yard equipment and supplies located next to it.
- The Provender Store Pavilion takes its name from this group.

Approach

Approaching through trees along the north side of the Canal at the upper level, we pass some new waterfront apartments, on the other side of the Canal, and the Victorian buildings of Midland Yard on the right (see 4.14). On the left the promenade along Wharf Road overlooks the wide 'turning place' in the Canal, with a view down to the grand cast iron vaults of King's Cross Station in the distance.

Granary Square is hard to summarise. It is complex, a space full of contrasts.

Arrival

Passing Regeneration House you arrive between two buildings of a relatively small scale: on the right, the old office wing of the Granary and on the left the new Bridgehead Pavilion, which opens onto the square at the upper level and the canal towpath below.

Scale

On looking around, we see the sheer front of the Granary rising up on the right, answered by the line of large new buildings on Goods Way, a hundred metres or so to the left, all looking into the square. It is a large space but at the same time it has a comprehensible scale due to the substantial strength of its edges.

Connection

Straight ahead, the low horizon of Camley Street Natural Park forms a wooded backdrop to three medium-scale buildings which together form the 'knuckle' of connection between Granary Square and the Northern Area. The Fish and Coal Building, the Eastern Coal Drops and the new Pavilion together hold the edge of Granary Square and at the same time set up a spiral motion both down into Coal Drops Yard and northwards to Market Square (see 4.10).

Canal

The soft curve of Fish and Coal and its slender gable end signal the presence of the Regent's Canal. One is unaware of the proximity of the Canal at first glance since it runs three metres below the square. Opposite the Granary

however, between two new canal bridges, a broad set of steps lead down to the Canal, forming a favourite place to bask in the sun and watch the boats (fig.126).

The Past

At this point, we should recall what this space used to be. There was at one time a deep Canal basin in front of the Granary; in place of the steps, a wall, with an archway to the Canal. The atmosphere of the place was busy, ordered and tough; its purpose was the interchange of goods. The space has been reinvented for people rather than goods, but its essence is unchanged.

Landscape

A rectilinear square is laid out in front of the Granary with a grid of trees on the far side. A robust and simple paving pattern provides a base for a grid of fountains, a focal point for a changing programme of events through the week and through the year.

The paving has the quality of a well worn tapestry, many of the granite setts are original and, in some cases, are inlaid with the original railway tracks and turntables which ran across the space. An intriguing new art installation moves across the space, to add motion to what is already a dynamic three dimensional composition.

Dynamism and Calm

Dynamism and a prevailing sense of calm are in balance in Granary Square. The calm is rooted in the strong geometry of the landscape and the massive presence of the Granary itself. In contrast to this, the dynamic interplay of levels, scales, materials and building forms, means that the space never ceases to surprise. The occasional glimpse of the Eurostar trains sliding into St Pancras is one of many peripheral events which animates the ever-changing 'tableau'.

Weekday Activity

More than anything else however, it is the life of Granary Square which ensures that it is never static. Apart from the organised events which take place, three kinds of activity



fig.125 The existing buildings enclose Granary Square, focusing it towards the Canal.

animate the square. Firstly the movement of people, both on foot and by bus, as well as taxis, bicycles etc, fills the square throughout the working day. Secondly, the plentiful options for places to sit and wander give a leisurely feel to the space, especially at lunchtime. Thirdly the buildings which surround the square activate the space and open out onto it.

The Granary and the Assembly/Transit Shed complex behind, are fully occupied by a thriving mixed use development. Routes either side of the Granary lead to a mixture of commercial and public uses within the block. The great vertical loading bay slots of the Granary have been opened up at ground level to allow a new restaurant/café inside to spill out onto the Square.

The Western Granary Offices, the long façade of the Eastern Coal Drops and the small Provender Store Pavilion form a cluster of cafes and shops on the west side of the square, to mark the way into the upper level of Coal Drops Yard (see 4.7). The Fish and Coal Building, and the arches beneath Wharf Road, mark the way down to the lower level.

Weekends

At weekends, Granary Square is a very different place. Londoners and visitors come here throughout the year to enjoy a combination of festival, retail, leisure and public space which has no parallel in London. It has a vitality and historic character akin to Camden Lock combined with the scale of something closer to the South Bank. More than just a place to live, work and shop, it has become a place to enjoy in its own right.

A Place of Contrasts

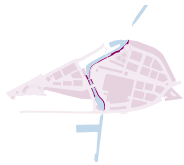
The contrast and balance of large and small scale, background and foreground, high and low, hard and soft, old and new at Granary Square and in the surrounding spaces, offers unlimited interest. It is a tactile place, it is alive; one of the great pleasures of London.



fig.126 A generous space at the heart of the site – a place for formal events or spontaneous activity and a focus for the life of King's Cross Central.



4.7 The Regent's Canal



Canal Facts

- The Regent's Canal is 8.5 miles long (13.8km) and was completed in 1820.
- Stop locks were built during the Second World War so that they could be closed to lessen any flood damage should the Canal be hit by bombing.
- Horse ramps run out of the Canal onto the towpath to enable horses which had accidentally fallen into the water, often frightened by the rumble of passing trains, to get out again!
- The Regent's Canal is a Wildlife Site of Metropolitan Importance.
- Many cyclists use this stretch of the Canal to commute to work.

The walk along the Canal for the first time since the construction of King's Cross Central is at the same time surprising and familiar. So much is the same as it ever was and yet so much has changed.

Travelling along this stretch of the Canal in a boat is now very popular but there is so much to look at that there are benefits in doing it by foot.

East End

Starting from York Way, we look down on a broad stretch of water with residential moorings on the south side. The corner marker building on the south side has a restaurant with views out over the water. On both sides the basin is overlooked by solid canal walls lined with trees. On the north side ramps lead down to an area where the towpath has been substantially widened and generously landscaped. Facing south and shaped like an 'amphitheatre', this is a favourite for everyone from fishermen to sunbathers (fig.131).

Bridgehead

Moving north, a two storey café pavilion – the Bridgehead – faces us, with tables spread out under trees, by the water. This architectural 'jewel' connects to Granary Square on the upper level and to the towpath below, providing public access between the two. It also anchors the first of the two new bridges.

Two Bridges

The two bridges work as a pair but are opposites of each other. The eastern road bridge is flat and crosses the Canal as a simple continuation of the ground plane. The western footbridge is a fine arched structure.

Granary Square Steps

Coming from under the road bridge, which cleverly incorporates light slots overhead, new residential moorings on the left face the Granary Square steps. The view back up to Granary Square here is dramatic, with both the Granary and the re-erected gasholders beyond Coal Drops Yard emerging above us as we climb (fig.127).

Fish and Coal

Passing under the footbridge, the atmosphere changes immediately from that of a busy urban space to that of the quiet almost undiscovered place that it always used to be. As we approach the sharp bend in the Canal, we are

screened from Goods Way, the noise drops and at times it is hard to believe that we are in Central London (fig.130).

Camley Street Natural Park

With Camley Street Natural Park and existing boat moorings on the left and the slender Fish and Coal Building on the right, this is like a scene from another era. However the lower floor of Fish and Coal, and the arches below Wharf Road, are now occupied by a mix of arts, craft and retail uses and, behind us, the buildings along Goods Way remind us that old and new are in balance here.

Coal Drops Yard

Fifty yards on from Fish and Coal, three of the Wharf Road arches open into Coal Drops Yard, a focal point for eating, drinking and specialist shopping. This is the moment when we realise for the first time how the Canal and Goods Yard interlock and how the original topography of the site was used to assist in the transfer of goods. The yard is at towpath level, three metres below Granary Square and this level change enabled the 'gravity-assisted' transfer of goods from trains to carts and boats.

St Pancras Lock and the Gasholders

Moving on we pass under the second new footbridge, an exquisitely made structure which connects Camden (via Camley Street) to the upper level of the Coal Drops, and from there to Long Park and York Way (fig.128). As we come to St Pancras Lock, standing with the lock-keeper's cottage as it was 150 years ago, we rise half a level and are greeted by the gasholders in their new location. Broadly terraced steps, facing south onto the basin, curve to fit the form of the Triplet Gasholder frames and wrap round Gasholder No.8 at the west end to form a magnificent space for play and sport.

Change beyond our Site

This 'chain' of four very different places along the Canal is strongly framed at the western end by the tip of the Canal Street terrace. The extraordinary change in the Canal, which King's Cross Central has brought about, spreads far beyond the site. To east and west, the Canal is now a far safer, more accessible and more enjoyable place to be than before.



fig.127 Granary Steps.



fig.128 The Camley Street footbridge.



fig.129 St Pancras Basin.

fig.130 The Canal beside Fish and Coal.



fig.131 King's Cross Central, like Camden Lock, would be one of the rare moments where the surrounding city focuses on the canal. Steps and ramps would connect the spaces of the Goods Yard with the towpath.

4.8 Coal Drops Yard



Coal Drops Yard is the hub of the site for specialist shopping, eating and drinking. It is a dynamic collection of spaces on two levels, one of the two parts of the site which remain almost unchanged since the late nineteenth century.

Cubitt's Vision

- When it was conceived, the Goods Yard was the largest and most ambitious goods interchange in Britain.
- The Great Northern Railway company was the first to supply coal to London by rail, wresting the traffic from the coastal shipping routes. The Eastern Coal Drops were pioneering in the design of coal handling facilities.
- The main group of buildings (the Eastern Coal Drops, Granary, Transit and Assembly Sheds, Midland Shed and Regeneration House) was constructed in 1850/1851. The Western Coal Drops were added in 1859/60 to meet the expanding coal trade.
- Lewis Cubitt, the architect of the main group of buildings emphasised that the buildings should be erected in a 'plain and substantial manner' but used their composition to create a grander effect. His watercolour of the buildings (see image preceding 2.5) shows the full effect of his intended 'industrial acropolis' composition. ('King's Cross Goods Yard': Thorne, Duckworth, Jones 1990.)

Levels and Connections

Coal Drops Yard is the space where the levels of the site are best understood and enjoyed; where the lower level of the Canal interlocks with the upper level of Granary Square. A series of viaducts, connected to buildings, have been built out over the natural ground level, but it almost seems as though the ground has been eroded to reveal the yards below.

The linear grain of the site is felt strongly here. The long spaces of the Lower Yards both lead northwards, to connect to Market Square and Long Park via ramps and steps.

Lower Yard West

With the Gasholders forming an impressive backdrop, we follow the sinuous curve of the Fish and Coal Building and descend the ramp into Lower Yard East. Passing between the lower level of the new Provender Store Pavilion and the curved arches below Wharf Road (the base of Fish and Coal), we come to the fine Eastern Coal Drops.

Eastern Coal Drops

This is one of the 'high-tech' buildings of its day. Sleek and elegant, its balance of robustness and lightness reminds us of the optimistic modernity of the Industrial Age. Its simple long shape, terminating frontally towards the Canal, is central to Cubitt's original plan for the Goods Yard and to the fanning north-south grain of the site as a whole. On reaching the lower level, the view along its restored east façade is revealed. The elaboration of this façade, compared to the relative plainness elsewhere, reflects Cubitt's desire for the Coal Drops to be an integral part of the composition for the Goods Yard, centred on the Granary Basin.

The arm of Lower Yard East which runs along the Coal Drops facade benefits from the line of trees at the upper level in front of the Eastern Transit Shed. A series of small kiosk-type units are tucked within the retaining wall here and bridges overhead connect into the upper level of the Coal Drops.

Lower Yard West

Moving west we pass under a new footbridge and enter Lower Yard West. This is an intimate but highly structured space contained on each side by the East and West Viaducts. The Western Coal Drops are of a simpler brick structure than the East, but the iron framework of their viaduct and its cantilevered high level canopy (reminiscent of many Victorian railway stations) lighten the space and attract outdoor seating (fig.135).

Link to the Canal

The played volume of the yard opens out to the Canal through an opening created in the original stable arches, providing a direct view and a route to the water. South sunlight bounces up off the Canal into the archways and there are views through to trees and narrow boats.

Camley Street Natural Park gives a soft edge to what is essentially a tough industrial space. The telescopic splay of its edges also contributes to its strong sense of place and of connection north and south.

Shops and Cafes

On both levels, the Coal Drops are occupied by a range of shops, restaurants and cafes – large and small, mainstream and independent – and other public uses. Being entirely pedestrianised, the space is very quiet and offers a wide choice of places to eat and drink, most of which have tables and chairs outside. A number of stairs and lifts connect between the two levels, with a major route through the Eastern Coal Drops connecting the Upper and Lower Yards back to Granary Square. This space lends itself to a specialist seasonal market, benefiting from Eurostar links to the continent.

Groundscape

As with Granary Square, the groundscape is a rich inlay of old and new. Here it has been possible to retain areas of the original setts, witnessed by the continuity of their



fig.132 The fanning double level space of Coal Drops Yard links Market Square to the Canal.

smooth worn surfaces. Along the centre of Lower Yard West, the paving pattern marks out where the third viaduct (the 'Plimsoll') once stood.

The Upper Level

Walking back up the ramp to Granary Square the emerging view of the Granary looming above us is a reminder of Cubitt's heroic vision for the Goods Yard. Walking along Wharf Road, past Fish and Coal, excellent views open out in both directions, into Coal Drops Yard and down onto the Canal. The new footbridge over the Canal to Camley Street, the lock and St Pancras Basin draw us on past the Western Coal Drops to explore the Gasholders.

fig.133 Currently, the derelict Plimsoll viaduct fills the lower level space of Coal Drops Yard.



fig.134 The form of the Coal Drops is well suited to reuse and to being easily sub divided into large or small units.



fig.135 Shops, restaurants, cafes, museums and galleries surround Coal Drops Yard on two levels.

4.9

Gasholders



The Gasholders' history

- There were originally more gasholders on the site (up to nine) all constructed as part of the Imperial Gaslight and Coke Gasworks which occupied the area immediately south of the canal.
- The guide frames of Gasholder No. 8 and the uniquely interconnected Triplet, all dating from the 1880's, have been listed as being of special historic and archaeological importance.
- The guide frames are constructed from classical cast-iron columns, connected together by iron lattice girders.
- The frames are currently painted red, black and white but testing has revealed a total of 31 paint schemes including: cream, grey, yellow and dark red.
- The gasholders were decommissioned in 2000. In 2001-2002 the Triplet was dismantled in order to allow the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link embankment. The dismantled Triplet guide frames have been carefully stored adjacent to Gasholder Number 8, awaiting re-erection as part of King's Cross Central.

Anyone who remembers the great Gasholders of King's Cross etched against the sky, rising above the Canal and the trees of Camley Street Natural Park, should be pleased to see them now.

By a feat of engineering and determination which almost matches their original construction, they have been moved from one side of the Canal to the other and given a new life.

On the Horizon

Once again, one can see the Gasholders on the horizon from much of the surrounding area and from many parts of the site; from Granary Square, Market Square, Coal Drops Yard, Pancras Square, from Goods Way, Canal Street and of course, from the Eurostar (*fig.137*).

Arriving from the upper level of Coal Drops Yard, the closeness of these complex metal forms to each other and to the Canal is breathtaking. The way they dwarf the Lock Keeper's Cottage, the boats and the basin is almost surreal.

Two Levels Meet

Added to the obvious drama of this new setting, the Gasholders have been beautifully integrated into the landscape. This is the point where the upper and lower levels of the Goods Yard meet and in doing so form a natural base for the Gasholders. The Canal here rises by 2m at St Pancras Lock and Wharf Road falls to join the towpath at the half level. This half level is subtly terraced in two stages to take up the change in levels and to form a natural connection back to Holder Street and Market Square.

The Triplet

The Triplet, on the upper terrace, form the outer casing to a very unusual contemporary housing development. Added to the finesse of its cylindrical forms, the fact that a generous space has been allowed between the new and the old structures means that the power of the original frames has not been compromised. The ground level offers a well balanced mix of community space, cafes and other public uses facing the Canal (*figs.136,139*).

Western Coal Drops

The long single storey brick form of the Western Coal Drops accentuates the scale of the Triplet. One or two of the shop units in the Coal Drops (which generally face onto Coal Drops Yard) have created second entrances, to make the most of connections to the Canal. Its long low arched façade forms a natural link between Market Square and the new Camley Street footbridge.

Gasholder Number 8

Further along the terrace, which forms a pleasant place to sit facing the St Pancras Basin, receiving the sun throughout the day, is the re-erected guideframe for Gasholder No.8, forming the focus of this space.

Number 8 has been left as an open space for play and recreation. The way the landscaping intermingles with the skeletal structure of the gasholder guideframe increases the sense of archaeology in this part of the site, of found artefacts and lasting memories.

The space is given strong definition by the south end of the curved terrace which extends south from Canal Street to meet the Canal. The building facing this space ingeniously conceals a multi-storey carpark with new housing facing south and east and succeeds in providing an animated backdrop to the Square. The large buildings behind the Gasholders lead the eye back to Market Square. Their south facing frontages, divided by a road, display the natural 'end grain' of the site while complementing the scale of the Gasholders and forming a strong front to the Canal.

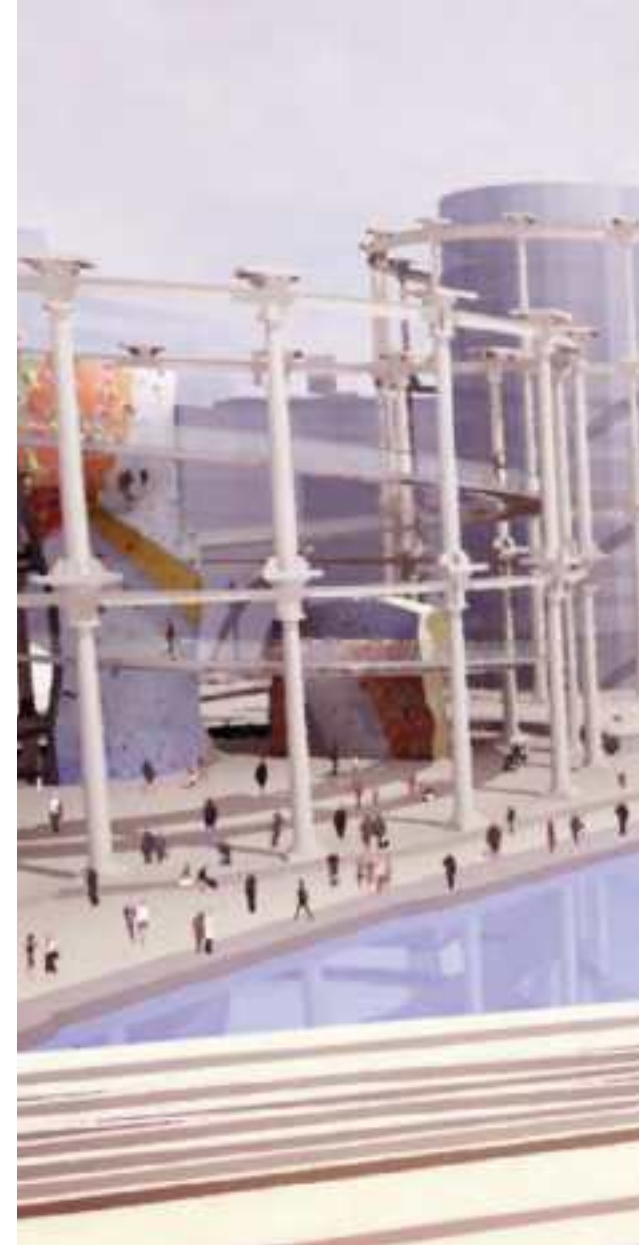


fig.136 Wilkinson Eyre Architects sketch scheme for apartments within the Triplet Gasholders.





fig.137 As seen from Eurostar: the upper and lower levels of the Goods Yard meet at the Gasholders; creating a wide space by the water's edge.

fig.138 Alan Conisbee, Paul Simons and Ian Simpson Architects: Gasholders as Urban Rainforest.



fig.139 John Thompson and Partners: sketch scheme for apartments within the Triplet Gasholders



fig.140 Gasholders seen from Market Square



fig.141 The Gasholders have been relocated on the northside of the Canal, but they retain the essence of their relationship with the Goods Yard, railway and Canal.



fig.142 Lifschutz Davidson: sketch scheme for offices within the Gasholders



4.10

Market Square



Market Square is spatially part of the same volume as Long Park but its character is very different. Like Long Park, Market Square relies on its sides for enclosure, with its ends open to other spaces. It is the hub of connections to and from the Northern Area.

What would Market Square be used for?

- In contrast to Granary Square, which we believe would have metropolitan importance within London, Market Square would be a local focus, especially for people living and working in the area.
- There would be an opportunity for specialist markets linked with activities in London or possibly selling seasonal produce from France, benefitting from the connections provided by the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

Transit Shed

On the east side, the Western Transit Shed anchors Market Square. This massive brick shed (180m long, only half of which fronts the square) has been sensitively refurbished with new openings created in what were formerly 'blind' brick arches. It now contains an impressive row of shops. A new first floor has been inserted within the Transit Shed for a variety of uses, including offices and studios (fig.146).

Behind the Transit Shed, accessed via a covered passageway created in one of the arches, the new Assembly Shed development is visible, built into the heart of the Granary Complex.

New and Old

The west side of the square is contained by equally interesting buildings. A site for what could be a new hotel or unusual contemporary apartment/office building rises up to ten storeys, continuing the scale and alignment of Long Park and highlighting the drama of embedment between new and old and large and small.

On the south side of the square is a new cultural pavilion which provides a focus for activity, especially when special events are staged here, framing a view of the Triplet Gasholders rising up behind the Western Coal Drops. These existing structures contrast sharply in character and scale, both with the modern apartments inserted inside the Triplet and with the new buildings on Market Square. The overall effect is both harmonious and exciting (fig.145).

Interlocking Spaces

The view south, dominated by the long low Victorian sheds fanning out towards the Canal, leads us into Granary Square to the left and Coal Drops Yard to the right via ramps and broad steps. The viaducts and canopies invite us to explore the upper level and lead the eye to an open horizon (fig.144).

Horizon

The trees of Camley Street Natural Park remind us of the soft ribbon – the Canal – which winds through the site and beyond the trees to the left. The tops of the large commercial buildings on Goods Way signal the depth and density of the site, increasing as we move to the South.

Vehicular Routes and Landscape

With only a quiet taxi road running along the west side, uses in the ground floor of the new buildings, which include some very popular restaurants, are able to spill out across the square in good weather. Transit Street runs along the east side of the square and connects to Goods Street, carrying buses through the site and feeding connections north and south.

Goods Street runs between the square and Long Park, with generous crossings and shallow kerbs ensuring easy pedestrian connections.

The landscaping of the square has a continental feel, with a combination of hard paving, compacted gravel and a line of trees.

Embedded Heritage

The 'spliced' connection between Market Square, Coal Drops Yard and the Granary Complex, ensures that the Victorian buildings, which have been so formative to the Framework, are embedded amongst new urban blocks. In this way they become an integrated part of this new urban quarter rather than merely a cosmetic showpiece.

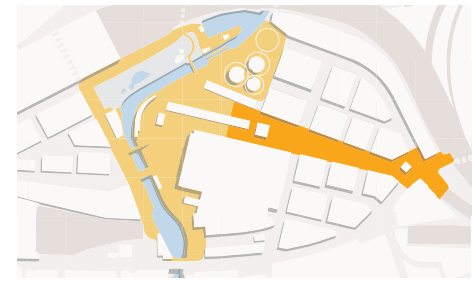


fig.143 A central linking space.



fig.144 The square is enclosed by new and old to west and east, to the north and south it opens to Long Park and the Goods Yard.



fig.145 Looking south towards the new Cultural Pavilion with the Gasholders and Coal Drops beyond.

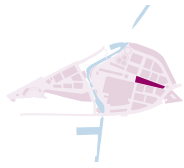




fig.146 The Western Transit Shed forms an active edge to a lively space.

4.11

Long Park



Arriving at Long Park from the North is quite a surprise. After negotiating the winding route along York Way, under the CTRL bridge, a great vista opens up.

How have you addressed the suggestion in Camden's planning brief for a northeast/southwest connection across the north part of the site connecting Camley Street to Bingfield Park?*

- Yes. Long Park is central to a new network of routes between York Way and Randall's Road (which connects to Bingfield Park, the Bemerton Estate and the Caledonian Road) in the north east and Camley Street and the Canal towpath in the southwest.
- The space known to us as 'Randell's Junction' at the junction of Randall's Road and York Way would lead directly to a series of streets filtering through to Long Park. It would also link via North Square to the top of Long Park and Canal Street (fig.148).
- From there, a choice of routes via the Coal Drops, the landmark Gasholders, Goods Street, Canal Street or other side streets lead both to the towpath and to the new footbridge over Camley Street Natural Park, and from there to Camden Town or Camden Lock.
- In short, the urban grain of the development responds to and caters for, this north-east and south-west connection.

*Camden's Planning Brief, UDP Chapter 13 adopted December, section 3.2.3

Because of the uphill slope across North Square to the top end of the park, the substantial building facades on either side dive southwards, leading the eye strongly into the site, opening up to welcome us in.

Heart of the Northern Area

Long Park is the heart of the northern part of the site. With a combination of intimate gardens, playgrounds and expansive lawns, defined by planting beds, hedges and art installations and crossed by occasional footpaths, it is like an elongated London square, but without the traditional enclosure of iron railings. Mature London plane trees line the eastern edge and smaller trees loosely define the natural splay of the space.

Pavements run along the edge of the park between the grass and the buildings on either side. Along the eastern edge runs a quiet road, providing access to the buildings enclosing the space.

It is a quiet relaxed space, overlooked by residential and office buildings (fig.149).

Green Space

Long Park adds to the green open space in the area, lying half way between Bingfield Park to the East and St Pancras Churchyard and Camley Street Natural Park to the West. It is busy all year round and is used for everything from ball games to sunbathing. It gets excellent sun at lunchtime and, in summer, is packed with local people having their lunch.

Local Park

In the evenings and at weekends it is more of a local park used by local residents. With good floodlighting keeping it lively after dark, it is a major focus for local residents throughout the working week. With a number of good cafes at the south end, it is also a popular venue for young families.

Strong Shape

One does not immediately notice its strong shape, especially in summer with the trees in leaf. Rather like the

Boulevard in the South, it is a funnel shaped space, opening southwards to catch sunlight.

Connections

Locally there are numerous 'static' places to sit, linger and play. Overall however it is a dynamic space; it seems to be leading on to adjacent spaces. Its one hundred and eighty metres length is more than doubled by the long facades of Market Square and Coal Drops Yard to the south.

Its open 'sky horizons' make it feel strongly connected to its wider context and to London as a whole. Glimpses of Eurostar passing to the north reinforce this sense of connection. In functional terms Goods Street, which marks the south end of the park, and North Square at the north end, offer good public transport connections.

Active Edges

At the south end, the park is enclosed by two handsome office buildings. With their entrances on Goods Street, these have some smaller, more public uses at ground level. To the North the apartment buildings, with balconies reaching out over the park, have a range of small offices, public uses and small shops at ground level and above they offer a diverse skyline. At the north end the four storey pavilion in North Square forms a distinctive marker.

Side Streets

Strong connections at each end of the park are complemented by a series of narrow side streets and passages connecting east and west. These are full of surprises; dramatic changes in scale, unexpected courtyards and delightful views. As with Long Park itself, there is always a strong sense of direction north-south; the narrower and shorter east-west streets are staggered while the longer and wider north-south streets line through from end to end.

Short Cut to Islington

The side streets to the east of the park offer a series of pedestrian short cuts from Long Park to York Way and beyond through the Bemerton and other estates to the Caledonian Road.



fig.147 Enclosed by offices and apartments, it is both an elongated London square and a local park.



fig.148 Choice of filtering routes across the site, linking Randell's Junction with the Canal and Camden beyond.





fig.149 Long Park: Busy all year round and used for everything from games to events to just sunbathing.

4.12 Goods Street



What street would Goods Street be like?

- In terms of physical form there isn't a similar well known street in London, due to the unusual embedment of the railway buildings within the new urban grain and the presence of the gable ends of the Victorian railway sheds side by side with contemporary blocks.
- The feeling of the street, in terms of mix and 'texture', would be like a cross between Fleet Street and St John Street, Queensway, Farringdon Road, Hatton Garden, Roseberry Avenue or South Eldon Street near Liverpool Street Station.

fig.150 Gable of the Transit Shed on Goods Street: new and old juxtaposed.



fig.151 Maccreeanor Lavington Architects: residential sketch scheme: study of apartments on Goods Street



Goods Street

Goods Street continues the strong east/west line of Copenhagen Street into the site. It is an important connector between King's Cross Central and Islington and it is one of the major entrances to the site.

It is a busy mixed use street which, together with Canal Street, forms the main route through the Northern Area. It is bisected by Long Park and Market Square and is one of the major 'splice' lines between new and old. It integrates the gable ends of the Transit Sheds and Handyside Canopies with new urban blocks.

Handyside Canopies

On arrival from York Way between two large buildings, as well as seeing the full length of Goods Street, we are met by a broad view of the curved Eastern Handyside Canopy. This used to form a covered storage area for the Potato Market and before that parts of it made up the temporary station from which Queen Victoria made her first trip on the Great Northern Railway while King's Cross was still under construction. This leads to the Western Handyside Canopy which is now a covered public space (see York Street and Midland Yard 4.14)

Strong Northern Edge

On the north side of the street a dramatic 'bridge' building, sitting over the railway tunnels which serve King's Cross Station, sets up a strong urban edge, which continues along Goods Street from end to end. Buildings on the north side are generally denser, more continuous and slightly taller than on the south. However they have a noticeably fine grain, with facades often being divided vertically rather than being dominated by monolithic horizontal proportions. A few larger office entrances set the tone for the northern street frontage, balanced by a number of smaller entrances on the south side.

The Transit and Assembly Sheds

The end gables of the Transit Sheds, originally designed as entrances for trains, have been transformed with bold new windows. Original features such as the old clock have been restored. The Western Transit Shed contains a range of shops and cafes, and links to the new Assembly Shed development. This block, inserted between the Transit Sheds, is set back from the street to create a wide active pavement. It is part of a series of new buildings inserted into the space behind the Granary, echoing the spirit of the original Assembly Shed as the nerve centre of the site.

Market Square and Long Park

Once we pass the Transit Sheds, Goods Street opens out to Market Square and Long Park. The views in both directions, but especially south towards the Goods Yard and the Gasholders, are memorable. As it crosses between the two spaces, wide pedestrian crossings facilitate north-south pedestrian movements. Market Square is the local focus for

bus routes in the Northern Area and a distinctive group of bus stops along Goods Street mark it out as a hub.

Goods Street West

To the West of Market Square, the north and south sides of the street are more balanced than to the East. However the buildings on the south side have a diversity and a sense of openness towards the Canal which contrasts with the denser blocks of the north side. A line of trees leads us on to the T-junction with Canal St from where we can turn left down to the Canal or right up to York Way.

Active Mixed Use

Goods St strikes a very pleasant balance between being ordinary and interesting. Its spaces are alternately contained and open. Its uses at ground level are generally active, including a proportion of small scale commercial units with entrances and 'shop windows' on the street.



fig.154 Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects: residential sketch scheme: analytic study – apartment, block, street, city.



fig.152 Alford Hall Monaghan Morris Architects: residential sketch scheme – secondary street leading to Goods Street.

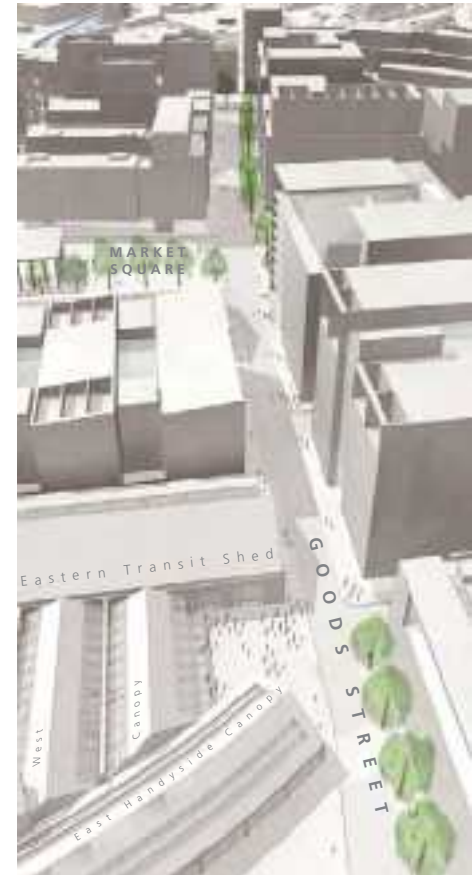


fig.153 A busy mixed street connecting York Way to Market Square and Canal Street.





fig.155 Goods Street looking West to junction with Canal Street

4.13

Canal Street



Canal Street is a pleasant mixed use street, lined with trees, connecting York Way to the Regent's Canal. It is the only curved street on the site.

How will you ensure that the outside of the crescent facing the railway embankment makes a positive contribution to the experience of arriving at St Pancras by train?

- The crescent development block will be treated as a coherent, but not uniform, terrace; a dynamic urban figure.
- The façade facing the railway embankment will be treated as a front both to arriving trains and to the parts of the city, beyond the embankment and cement works, rising from Camden towards Hampstead Heath.

Is it possible to create connection through the CTRL embankment, now under construction?

- We have looked at tunnelling under it or bridging over it in order to create new pedestrian or bicycle routes to Camden.
- In each case however we have found it to be impractical or impossible for technical reasons such as:
 - Tunnelling under it is prevented by the Thameslink tunnels which run below/adjacent to the embankment, and the Canal.
 - The ramps and bridges/tunnels required to go over or under it would have to be hundreds of metres long.

Its shape is generated directly from the new railway embankment that carries trains from Europe and the southeast into St Pancras, and is an echo of the original spreading grain of the Northern Goods Yard.

Terraced Offices

The curve is particularly strong on the west side, where a series of large terraced office buildings form a unified crescent. The facades make good use of the acute, curved perspective along the street by employing deep reveals and strong rhythms. The blocks at the north end are relatively thin, contrasting with the deeper plan buildings at the south end of the terrace (fig.160).

North Square

The end façade at the top of the curved terrace is something of a marker on York Way, holding the top corner of the site by the CTRL bridge. Its east façade forms one side of North Square, the space of arrival from the North for the development as a whole.

At Street Level

Ground floor uses are varied, with a number of 'shopfront' commercial units and some public uses. The street has some parking and good pedestrian surfaces and crossings. Vehicular crossovers and service entries are minimised owing to the use of a shared service road to the west and the secondary and tertiary roads to the east.

East Side Housing

Owing to the curving geometry of the site, the east side of the street is characterised by triangular geometries. At the north end, not far from North Square, a dramatic long straight view down West Street opens up to the left, with the Triplet Gasholders on the skyline. The residential buildings in this area are interesting, with taller elements emerging out of street level blocks, gateways into private courtyards and some memorable facades and unusual forms.

fig. 156 Canal Street opens out at its southern end to the play space in Gasholder No. 8 and the Canal beyond



fig.157 Priestman Architects: the terrace would be treated as a front to trains



fig.158 Priestman Architects: sketch scheme for mixed use building—residential facing into the site and multi-storey carpark facing the railway embankment.



View South

Moving on down Canal Street, Gasholder No. 8 comes into view. Of the four Gasholder guideframes, this is the one which is devoted to play. Its silhouette against the sky, tightly framed by Canal Street, is dramatic (fig.161).

West Lane

The next view to the left is a surprise since, on account of the curve, we are now looking east rather than south. West Lane is a narrow side street with a sizeable office building on one side and a smaller scale housing block on the other. It is closed by the corner of a building, one block beyond.

Side Streets

West Lane is characteristic of a simple hierarchy within the Northern Area which has its origins both in the grain of the site and in an attitude to the flexibility of development plots. The minor streets (lanes or passages) run east/west; they are narrower, shorter and in most cases do not line through with each other while more important streets, such as West Street, run north/south; they are longer and wider and line through from end to end.

View along Goods Street

Continuing on, we pass a large commercial building on our left, with its main entrance round the corner on Goods Street. Looking to the left now a long east view opens up along Goods Street (the main street of the Northern Area) across Market Square and Long Park and beyond, with the gables of the Transit Sheds clearly in view due to the crank of the street.

Gasholder Number 8

Gasholder No.8 is now looming above us, standing at the centre of a large public space. As we approach it, memories of the old King's Cross return, with the cast-iron guideframes rising above the Canal; it is an eerie but thrilling reincarnation. Passing between a residential building on the left and a longer building on the right which cleverly conceals the multi storey carpark and a major electrical sub-station, our path naturally takes us through the gasholder, and down to St Pancras Basin and the Canal (fig.156).



fig.159 The strong curve of the terrace defines the edge of the street.

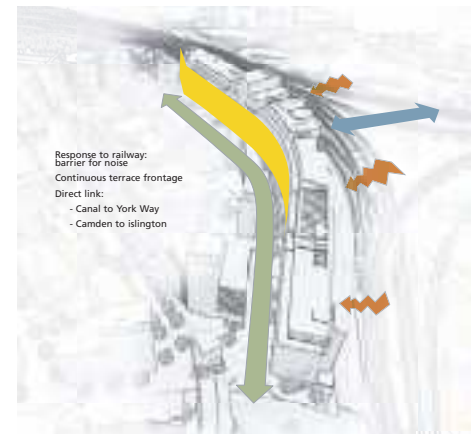


fig.160 The terrace acts to protect sensitive uses deeper within the site

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fig.161 A sweeping line of trees follows the form of the street flanked by residential and office buildings.

4.14 York Street and Midland Yard



The Handyside Canopies and the Midland Shed

- The Handyside Canopies provided all-weather cover to a busy working area in the Goods Yard.
- The West Handyside Canopy used to handle perishable goods. On Sundays, when the fish market at Billingsgate in the City of London was shut, fish was sold here.
- The East Handyside Canopy once formed part of the Potato Market.
- The Midland Goods Shed has a complex history. Evidence of numerous alterations is clear to see as its function continued to change.

Moving south along York Way one notices a series of long inviting views into King's Cross Central, revealed because York Way cuts across the north south grain of the site.

York Street is the fourth in this sequence of views and, peeling away from the line of York Way (at the highest point on the site), it draws us down into Midland Yard.

The Shape of York Street

The northern corner of York Street is marked by a large block of apartments on the west side and by the narrow end façade of the lower triangular plot on the east. It is an unusual street because the western edge is substantially taller than the east. This asymmetry, which arises from the constraints imposed by the Victorian railway tunnels running beneath the east side, is effective in mediating between the scale of the northern urban blocks of King's Cross Central and that of York Way (fig.162).

East Side

Small scale commercial units occupy the west side of the street at ground level. On the east side of the street there is an innovative mixed use building with interesting views into a series of large split level spaces within. The slope of the streets (1:30) adds to the dynamism of this edge. At the south end of the block a dramatic 'bridge' building cuts across the general grain to mark Goods Street, the main (vehicular) way in to the northern part of the site.

Midland Yard

Arriving at Goods Street the space opens out and we are confronted by an array of end gables. We are looking straight into an extraordinary covered public space; a cross between a railway station and a winter garden; this is Midland Yard. On the right the massive brick façade of the Eastern Transit Shed (180m long) continues the strong straight line of York Street down to the Canal (fig.163).

East Handyside Canopy

On the left the curved East Handyside Canopy wraps round the Midland Shed. This structure, which has its origins in the temporary passenger station, used while King's Cross Station was under construction, is now encased in a crisp glazed skin. At its northern end its roof oversails to create a covered space, open to Goods Street.

West Handyside Canopy

Complex geometries and an ambiguous sense of enclosure characterise our arrival at Midland Yard which is roofed over by the West Handyside Canopy, an iron truss structure of titanic proportions. We enter Midland Yard through a partially glazed screen into a space which has a comfortably tempered but external environment. The northern roof slopes of the canopy are newly glazed, giving a soft even light.

The Accumulator Tower

The yard is a dumbbell shaped space, the first section being enclosed by the East Handyside Canopy and the gable end of the Midland Shed. To the left the Accumulator Tower is worth a look; a remnant of the system which supplied hydraulic power for the Goods Yard.

Day to Day Uses

The southern part of the dumbbell has a slightly different atmosphere. Shafts of sunlight cut across this space, which can be used throughout the year for events and exhibitions. Mainly though its life is rooted in the day to day uses which give onto it from the Transit and the Midland Sheds on either side (fig.164).

Midland Shed

The Midland Shed is alive with activity on both floors and interacts with the canopy space through the day and into the evening. It is interesting to look at the way the canopy roof structure collides with the walls of the shed and to see the many alterations and adaptations still evident in its façades.

Transit Shed

The Eastern Transit Shed contains more commercial uses, including design offices and showrooms, on two floors. The way the daily life of these units spills out into the yard makes it feel like an integrated and animated part of the city.

Landscape

The landscaping of Midland Yard is as raw as it always was. Some areas of smooth paving have been inserted but the remainder of the setted paving is original, with the inlaid rail tracks hinting at past uses for the space.

Back to the Canal

Coming out from under the West Handyside Canopy we are on the Canal, between Granary Square and York Way, under a sprawling cluster of trees. We pass Regeneration House, the original site management office for the Goods Yard. Turning left on the Wharf Road promenade, we look down on the Canal with a fine view of the great vaults of King's Cross Station in the distance. Passing the front façade of the Midland Shed and a new housing block on the left, we reach York Way.



fig.163 York Street and Midland Yard lead from the Canal to Randell's Junction; a space enclosed by the converging angles of the Transit and Midland Sheds.

fig.162 Alford Hall Monaghan Morris; residential sketch scheme for York Street.





fig.164 The reglazed Handside Canopy lights a covered space for exhibitions, markets and performances.

4.15 York Way



It is hard to remember how desolate and disorientating York Way used to be before King's Cross Central. It is now a tree-lined, albeit busy, arterial road leading into London from the North and is both pleasant and interesting.

How are you going to ensure that York Way is integrated with King's Cross Central?

- York Way is treated as central rather than peripheral within the scheme; the urban grain of King's Cross Central opens up to York Way and aligns with existing cross-routes linking to the communities on the east side of the road.
- The spread of uses within King's Cross Central adjacent to York Way will complement the existing uses on the east side and responds to the natural node points at the Copenhagen Street and Randell's Road junctions by creating particular foci.

How will York Way feel?

- The wide pavements would be lined with trees. That would be like Holland Park Avenue or Rosebery Avenue where the distance between pedestrians and traffic, combined with active uses and open frontages at street level, make the street a pleasant place to be.
- A total of 10 new crossings are proposed. A unified landscape and traffic management scheme would run from the Canal up to North Square.
- Although we are proposing as many permeable ways into King's Cross Central as we can, both for pedestrians and vehicles, we are ensuring that continuity along the footpaths is maximised by proposing raised tables at every crossing into the site.

Open Grain

Coming south under the new CTRL bridge, we are immediately struck by dramatic views opening up between large new urban blocks. Moving along York Way, four long views to the south, all within the space of 200m, lead us into King's Cross Central. In particular the view across North Square and into Long Park opens up the heart of the site to York Way and invites us in (fig.169).

North Square

North Square forms both an arrival point and a junction between Long Park and Canal Street; each one forming a new route down to the Regent's Canal. Since we are at a low point of the site here, North Square slopes up and, because of this slope and the splayed shape of Long Park, the tree-filled horizon is low and broad; a real surprise given the density of the surroundings. Many of the buildings around North Square are residential, some with small units at ground floor level containing a range of uses. In the centre of the square is a four storey 'pavilion' forming a focal point and accommodating public uses.

The Triangle Site

Behind us, on the other side of York Way, the Triangle Site terminates the space of Long Park with a dramatic stepped apartment building which is part of a larger urban block. At its base there are ways up to a public garden within the block and below that is a supermarket. Passing between two other mixed use (mainly residential) blocks, we come to East Street on our right, giving views into King's Cross Central, and what is known as 'Randell's Junction' on our left. The Triangle Site fronts Randell's Junction and forms a landmark on York Way, picking up long views northwards due to the curve of the street. Here a health and fitness centre forms the third side of this very attractive group of buildings (fig.167).

Randell's Junction

Randell's Junction is the loosely formed space at the junction of Randell's Road and York Way. It is the focus of several new pedestrian and bicycle links which it is hoped

will be created between York Way and Caledonian Road through Bingfield Park and the Bemerton Estate. It forms the connector through King's Cross Central to the Canal and, via the towpath and the new Camley Street footbridge, to Camden Town. Although the edges and scale of this space are diverse, it does hold together, with the old Piccadilly Line Station, and the other surrounding developments adding to its unique character. York Way runs through the space but the treatment of pedestrian crossings ensures that pedestrians are not marginalised. The new bus stops on the west side, and the possibility that the new Cross River Tram might stop here, gives it the feel of a local hub.

Marking the south end of Randell's Junction, the sharp end of this block contains the entrance into a large building. It has been built over the railway tunnels serving King's Cross and as a result its proportions are long and low. Behind this block, the larger buildings on York Street set the scale of the denser blocks in the body of King's Cross Central and again lead our eye into the site.

The Canal

Space opens up in all directions when we reach the Maiden Lane Bridge. The broad view into Granary Square along the Canal brings the heart of the site out to the street. A line of trees (and a ramp down to the Canal) picks up the curve of the Canal on the north side, leading us along Wharf Road, which is now a quiet road for access only, into the Goods Yard (fig.165).

Corner Marker

A small but spectacular marker building on the south side of the Canal holds the corner. Together with the development on the east side of the street it succeeds in fronting both the street at the upper level and the Canal below.

Railway Cutting

The busy junction with Goods Way at this point marks the 'raw' edge of the railway cutting to which the south buildings of King's Cross Central form a dramatic backdrop.



fig.166 York Way: Urban Analysis

Here we see the railway tracks from King's Cross entering the 'Gasworks' tunnels only a few feet below the Canal. Opposite, the vaults of King's Cross sit side by side with new buildings to create a strongly composed space.

Permeable Spine

York Way is not so much an edge as a central spine, shared between the communities of King's Cross Central and the residential areas to the east. It has a permeable cross grain, with many openings and routes branching off it into King's Cross Central.

It accommodates a wide range of building types and scales. Its unity, in spite of such diversity, rests in the continuity both of its landscape design – trees, pavements, crossings – and of its ground floor frontages.

Its north end, a dynamic cluster of dense urban blocks, which frame multiple ways in to King's Cross Central, forms an effective counterpart to the south end of the site.

fig.165 The view of the Canal and the Goods Yard opens up from Maiden Lane Bridge.

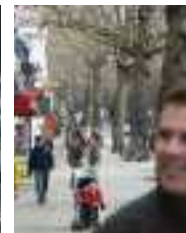


fig.167 David Morley Architects: mixed use scheme for the Triangle Site

fig.168 Looking north along York Way towards Randell's Junction and the Triangle Site

fig.169 Looking southwards from North Square along York Way and into Long Park.











5.1 Process

To realise our vision, process matters as well as product.



fig.170 Presenting King's Cross Central.

This Application

Fig.171 illustrates the scope of the Planning Applications and supporting documents for the Main and Triangle Sites. These documents are the start of an ongoing commitment to high quality design; they do not represent an end in themselves.

Procuring Good Design

We are, and will continue to be, committed to high quality design. To date we have developed and tested the proposals with:

- Allies and Morrison
- Porphyrios Associates
- EDAW
- Townshend Landscape Architects
- Wilkinson Eyre Architects
- John Thompson and Partners
- Alan Conisbee, Paul Simons and Ian Simpson Architects
- Lifschutz Davidson
- Stephenson Bell
- Broadway Malyan
- Feilden Clegg Bradley Architects
- Robert Clarke Associates
- Maccreanor Lavington Architects
- Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
- Bill Dunster Architects
- Priestman Architects
- Robert Adam Architects
- Caruso St John
- Eric Parry
- David Morley Architects
- Burrell Foley Fischer Architects

Detailed Design

Following the grant of planning permissions for the Main Site and the Triangle Site, we would start the detailed design of the first major phase. Underlying the next phase of work will be a commitment to:

- Appoint architects of high calibre, through a rigorous selection process.
- Develop high quality designs, with a suitable level of consultation with the local authority, CABE, English Heritage and other bodies.
- Use the Urban Design Statement and the Guidelines, as a reference document throughout the design process.
- Involve the masterplan team in an ongoing process of review and assessment in order to ensure that the original vision is maintained.

Sequential Build-out Plans

Development will take place over many years. In order to track its evolution in relation to the original Framework, a Sequential Build-Out Plan will be maintained, being updated with every development. This will enable us not only to judge any individual proposals in relation to the original planning permission and our vision, but also to assess any impact it may have on future developments.

Three Golden Rules

Three Golden Rules underpin the submitted proposals. These Golden Rules would also inform the ongoing design process:

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

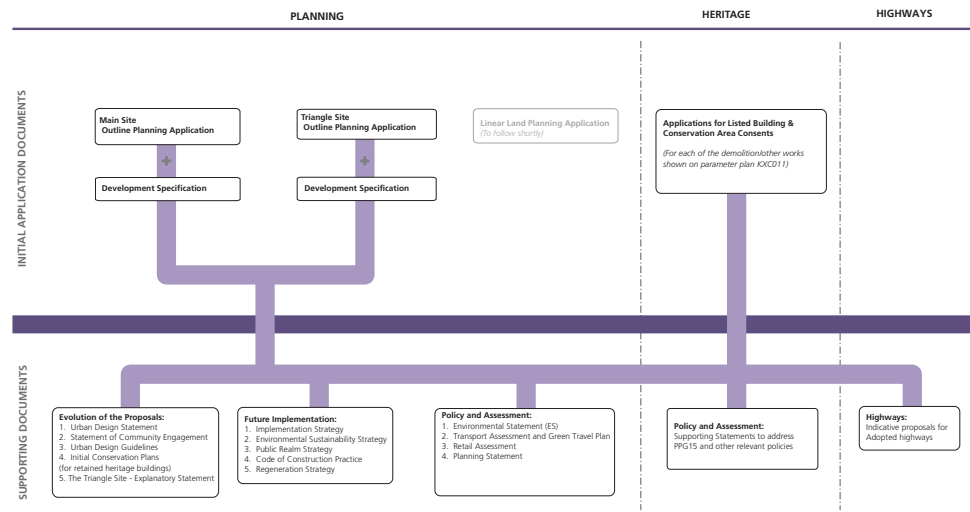


fig.171 Structure of the King's Cross Central Planning Application.





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prepared for: ARGENT-ST-GEORGE



by: Allies and Morrison
Architects

