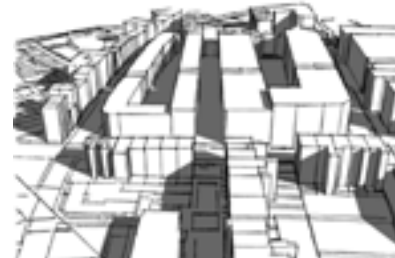
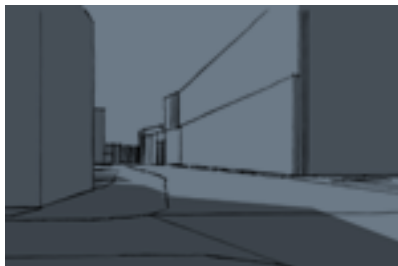


Urban design led review of:
Bath City Centre Sites

Completed for and on behalf
of Bath and North East
Somerset Council by:

Vaughan Thompson
Joe Edgard
Finlay McNab

May 2009



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Introduction

Commission

Independent consultant Vaughan Thompson was commissioned by Bath and North East Somerset Council (the client) to provide an urban design led review the development capacity supported by two and three dimensional visualisations of eight Bath city centre sites.

With the agreement of the client, Vaughan Thompson appointed freelance consultants Joseph Edgard and Finlay McNab to assist in the delivery of the brief.

In 2006 the Council undertook some urban design analysis of city centre sites and prepared a document titled Bath Urban Design Capacity; Urban Design Testing, (May 2006)'. This document outlines indicative block plans and land use mix, height of buildings and estimated floor space that could be generated.

The brief required the review of the two-dimensional plans and translation to three-dimensions visualizations to illustrate the likely form of each site in terms of scale and massing within the context of neighbouring development. It also required an assessment of the likely development capacity.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this report is to inform the emerging B&NES Core Strategy by assisting the Council to present a visualisation of development capacity and indicative land use mix on the key city sites.

Scope of Study

The eight city-centre sites tested are indicated in Figure 1 on page 3. As a capacity analysis exercise, the study is not seeking to provide a master plan the sites.

The consultant recognises the importance of integrating the sites within wider spatial strategy for the city centre and the potential river corridor strategic site. Consideration of context and connectivity was therefore included within the work.

The focus of the commission is on the potential arrangement of development blocks and their height, scale and massing. The report therefore does not extend to detailed design. It does not undertake primary research into site constraints but has taken into account material provided by the client and information contained within the 2006 report and site visits.



The methodology

Visualisations utilise “Vectorworks” (CAD) and “Sketchup” measured two and three dimensional modeling to ridge height based on topographic mapping provided by the client.

Mapping information is high level and provides a basic topographic base. Whilst it enables an accurate city wide topographic base to be produced, it does not enable detailed site levels to be assessed. Visualisations of sites with pronounced level change have been produced harnessing available information and estimating more detailed level issues utilising site information and photographic material.

All sites were visited and thorough site photographs and notes taken. In addition aerial/birds eye photographs were referenced to supplement topographic mapping. Contextual building heights were assessed through combining site assessment and photographic study cross-referenced with building height assessments undertaken by the client in November 2004.

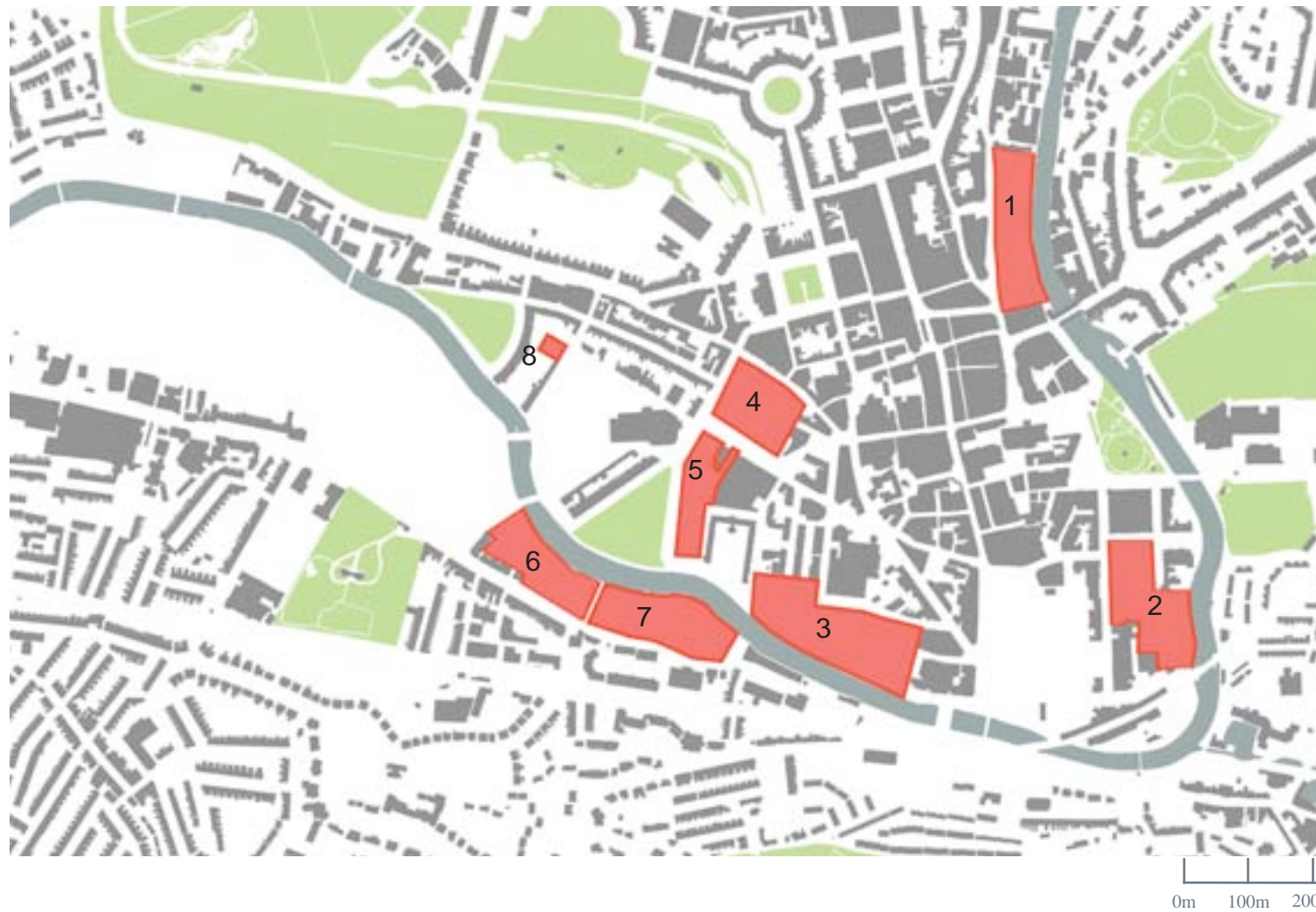
Storey heights of 3.5m for visualised new development have been used. Whilst this is generous, it has been informed by the need to provide levels that would be likely to produce a satisfactory relationship with the predominantly Georgian scale of the city as well as a robust development form likely to support a range of land uses. It may be possible to consider reduced storey heights where the context enables a more flexible approach. However, this would be the subject of more detailed design.

Urban Design Compendium guidance concerning the creation of robust urban perimeter blocks and 20 metre building depths has informed the creation of site testing. This will enable land use options to be considered within the visualised urban forms.

Consistent with the council’s urban design analysis undertaken in 2006, car parking has been assumed to be provided at reduced levels in underground facilities or off site. At Manvers Street and the Podium consideration has been given to the reintegration of public car parking.

Whilst a master plan for the city has not been requested, consideration has been given to previous spatial plans and the connection of the individual sites with the existing context and city structure. Attention has been given to repairing urban form creating new connections and distinctive places and joined up thinking between linked sites.





1. Cattlemarket /Hilton Hotel/ Podium
2. Manvers street car park, police station and royal mail depot
3. Avon Street car and coach park
4. Kingsmead House/ Plymouth House / Roswell Court
5. Green Park House and Salvation Army buildings
6. Lower Bristol Road East (Renault and Travis Perkins area)
7. South Quays (Dyson)
8. Norfolk Crescent



Introduction

Figure 1: City Centre Sites

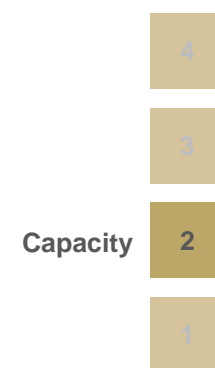
Capacity

The table opposite provides the capacity figures for the city-centre sites assessed in this study. It also highlights the results of the B&NES study.

It concludes a net figure of 172,955 sqm capacity across the sites. This compares to a B&NES figure of 159,195 sq m, which equates to an increase of 8%. Across the sites, there were a number of variances and these are explained in more detail in the following pages.



Site	Total gross (sqm)	Sensitivity* reduction	Final figure (sqm)	B&NES (sqm)	Difference	Difference (%)
[Redacted Content]						



Box 1: Capacity Table

1. Cattlemarket, Hilton Hotel, Podium

The Cattlemarket, Hilton Hotel and Podium create perhaps the most complex development site in the city centre. The site complexities are likely to necessitate a detailed design exercise to realise optimum potential. However this report's visualisation can assist in testing the high level baseline capacity.

Whilst the site is divided into three elements, access and uses in each element make a contribution to the operation of the whole. Phased redevelopment will therefore be more complex and a comprehensive approach more realistic. However, for this to be achievable, the development potential needs to create additional opportunity for the principal owners and operators.

The library, Waitrose and hotel ground floor uses all require significant large single floor areas. Parking extends beneath The Podium and Hilton. Access and servicing arrangements include all three sites. The Cattlemarket neighbours the empty Cornmarket and contains archaeology. It hosts the Walcot Street Saturday market and provides public car parking through the week.

The site is steeply sloping towards the river. This has been harnessed by the development of parking and servicing below street level that serves both the Podium and the Hilton. It is screened from the Podium but is open on the Hilton side.

Whilst adding complexity, a comprehensive approach will produce the greatest opportunity to reweave this very divisive site into the fabric of the city, creating new connections to Walcot Street and the river.

Interpretation and Review

Height

The council's assessment has been validated.

Layout

This assessment shares the council's suggested urban design principles, creating a rhythm of blocks and routes to the river that draw reference from Walcot Street.

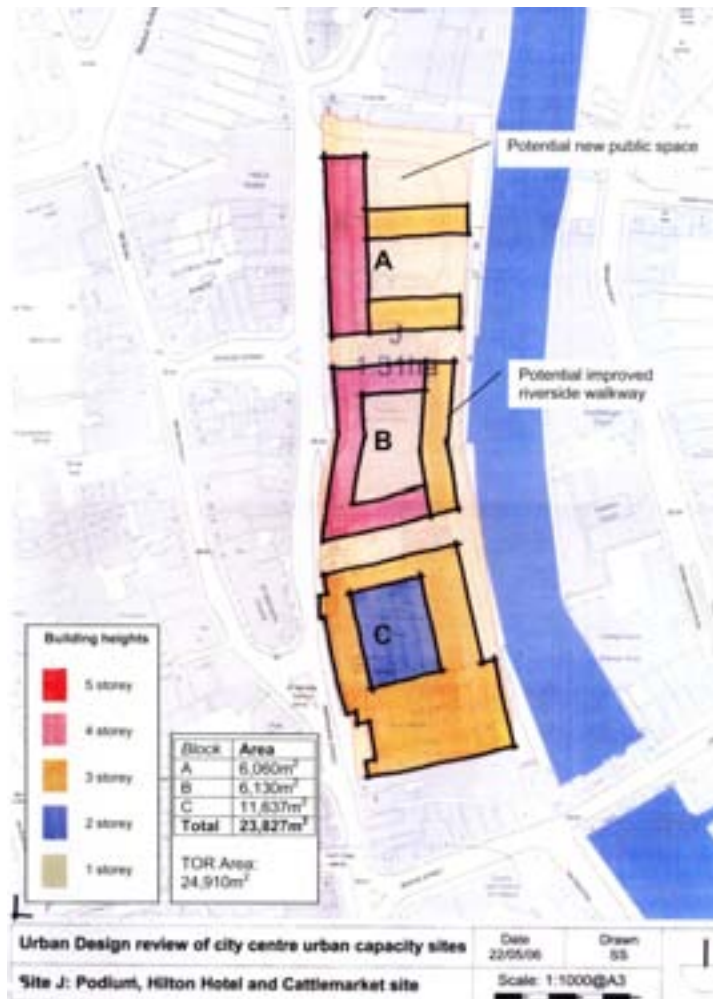
This report suggests a slightly simpler development structure that creates a deeper 20m dual aspect upper floor frontage to Walcot Street with ground floor areas that extend back towards the river, enabling larger footprint uses such as a new food store, library and hotel foyer.

It has shown possible roof top terraces at first floor level and a continuous river walk. As with the council's plan, routes to the river have been shown and return frontages addressing the Cornmarket. Redeveloping the Podium allows new views and relationships to St Michael's church with the suggested creation of a new street continuing the line of Green Street.

Car parking and servicing are considered to be located below the street level deck.

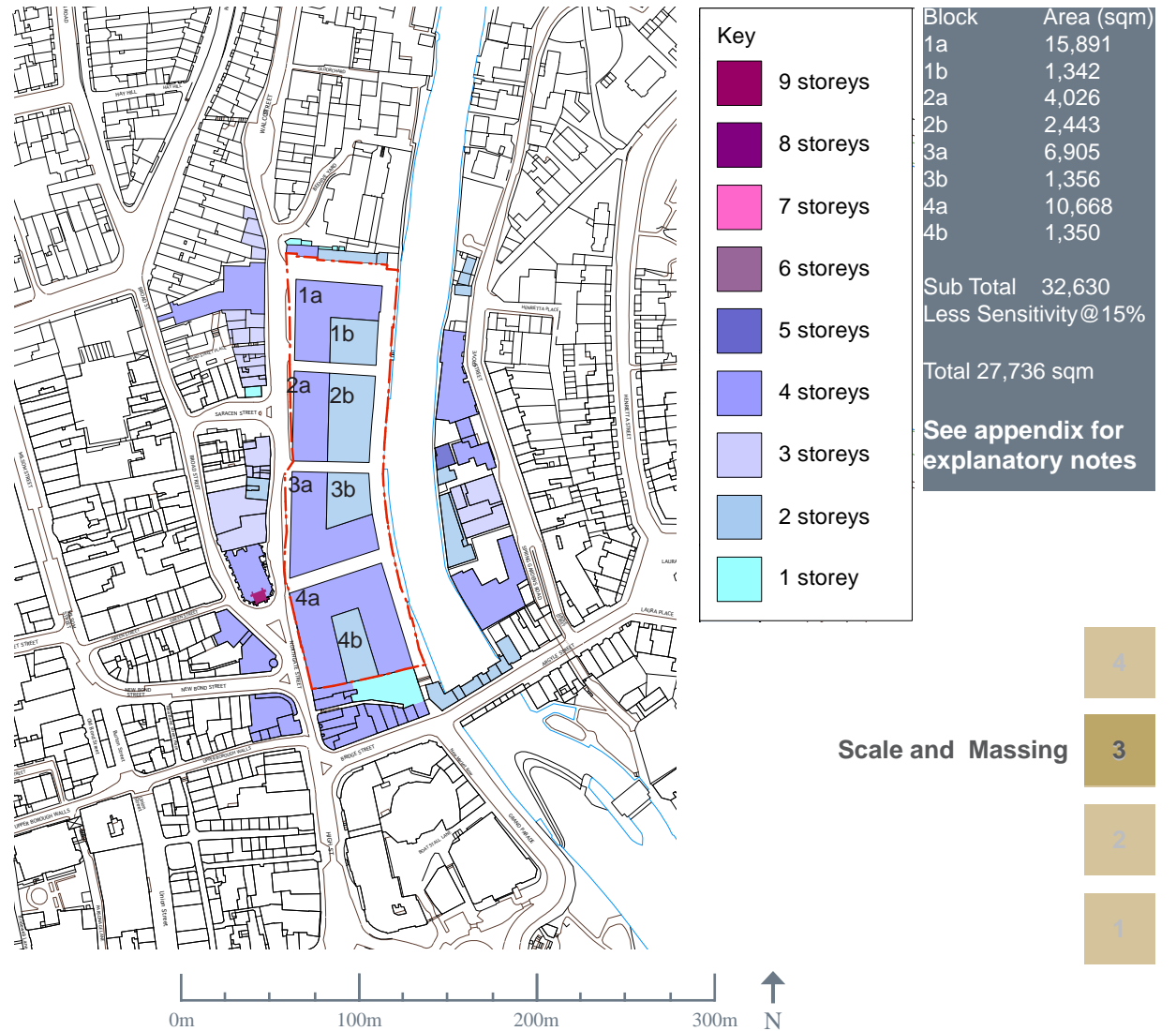


B&NES Layout

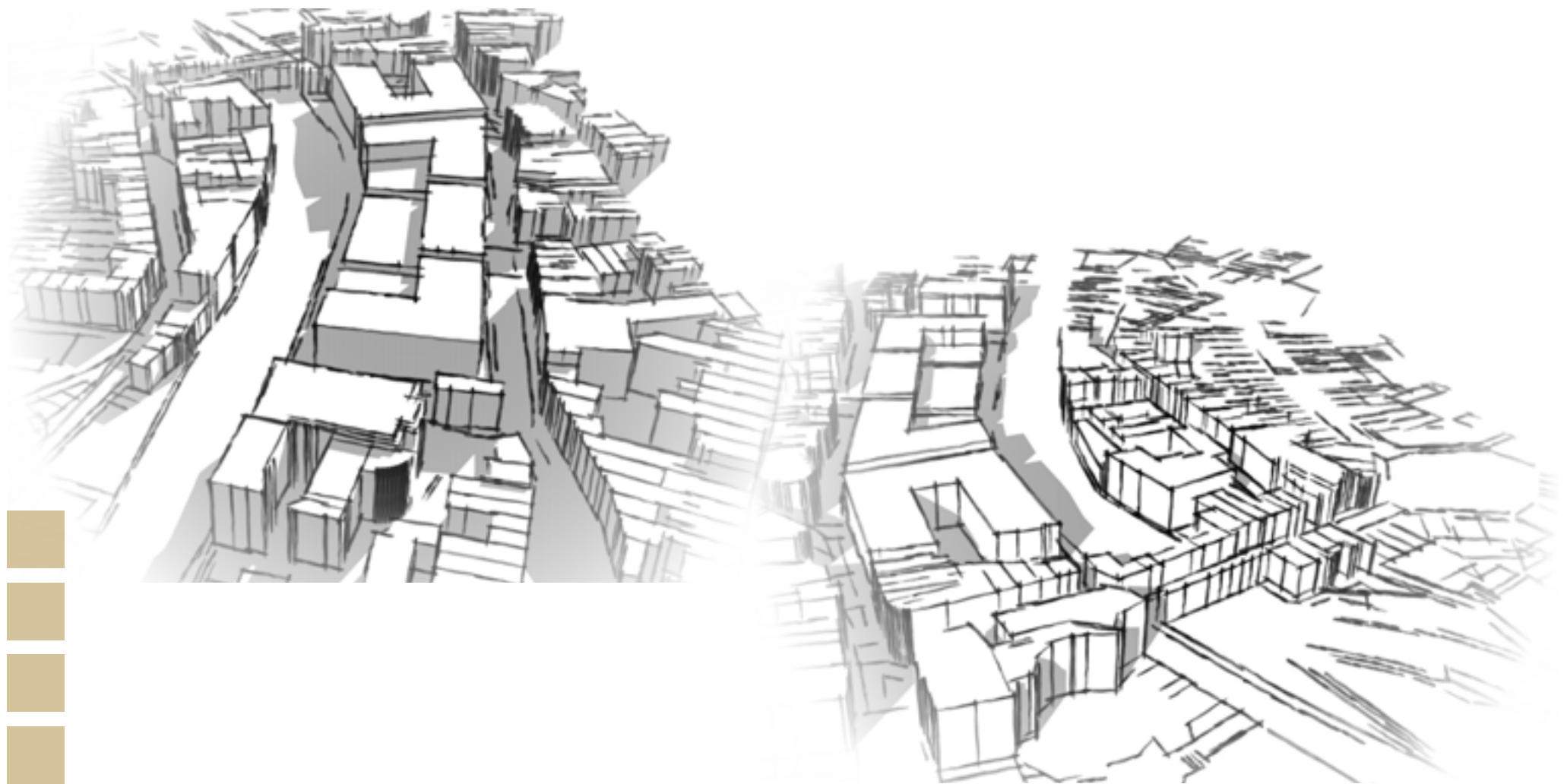


LEFT Figure 2: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 3: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout

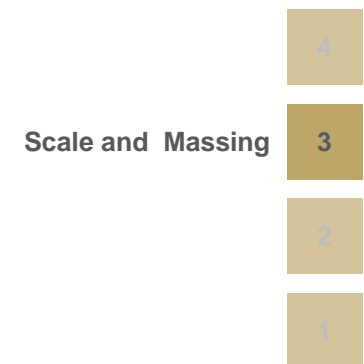
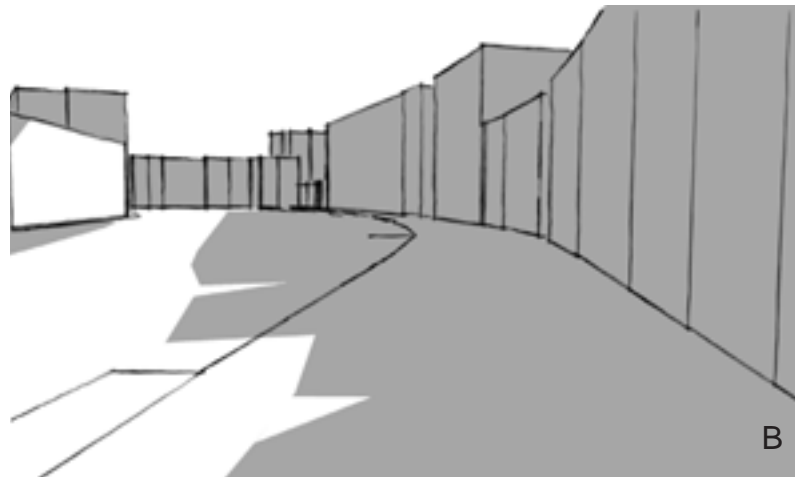
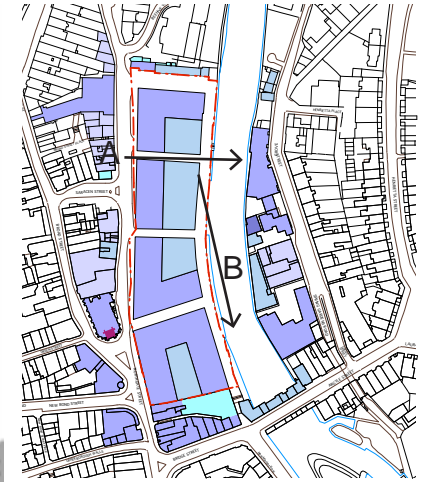


3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 4: Bird's eye view from north looking south
RIGHT Figure 5: Bird's eye view from south looking north

Street Level Perspectives



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 6 Street level perspective view
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 7: Street level perspective view
TOP RIGHT: Figure 8: Location of street level perspective views

2. Manvers Street car park, police station and royal mail depot

This site is dominated by St John's church, a prominent city landmark, and bounded by South Parade and Manvers Street terraces. It is marred by the car park and police station block although the potential for a public space is clearly visible. The post office complex effectively privatises this section of the river frontage.

In addition to the points raised in the council report relating to river frontage, the site is considered to offer a realistic opportunity to create an iconic major new public square at the main gateway into the city from the station and a setting for the terraces, church and new development.

Interpretation and Review

Height

In the context of the revised layout presented in this report, it is considered that a similar site capacity can be achieved with the inclusion of five storey development on the main "St John's Square" building. As a freestanding element completing a block with a variety of building types and styles, it is feasible to consider lower storey heights (c3m) and tolerate varied window and parapet lines.

Layout

By reconfiguring the distribution of public space, the study has identified the potential to create a single destination space similar in size to Queen Square retaining the potential to accommodate underground parking linked to a new development on the police station site. This has significant potential for a major hotel and office development.

The plan retains the creation of a new route linking from the station to Duke Street. However it does not include a route from Manvers Street to the river.

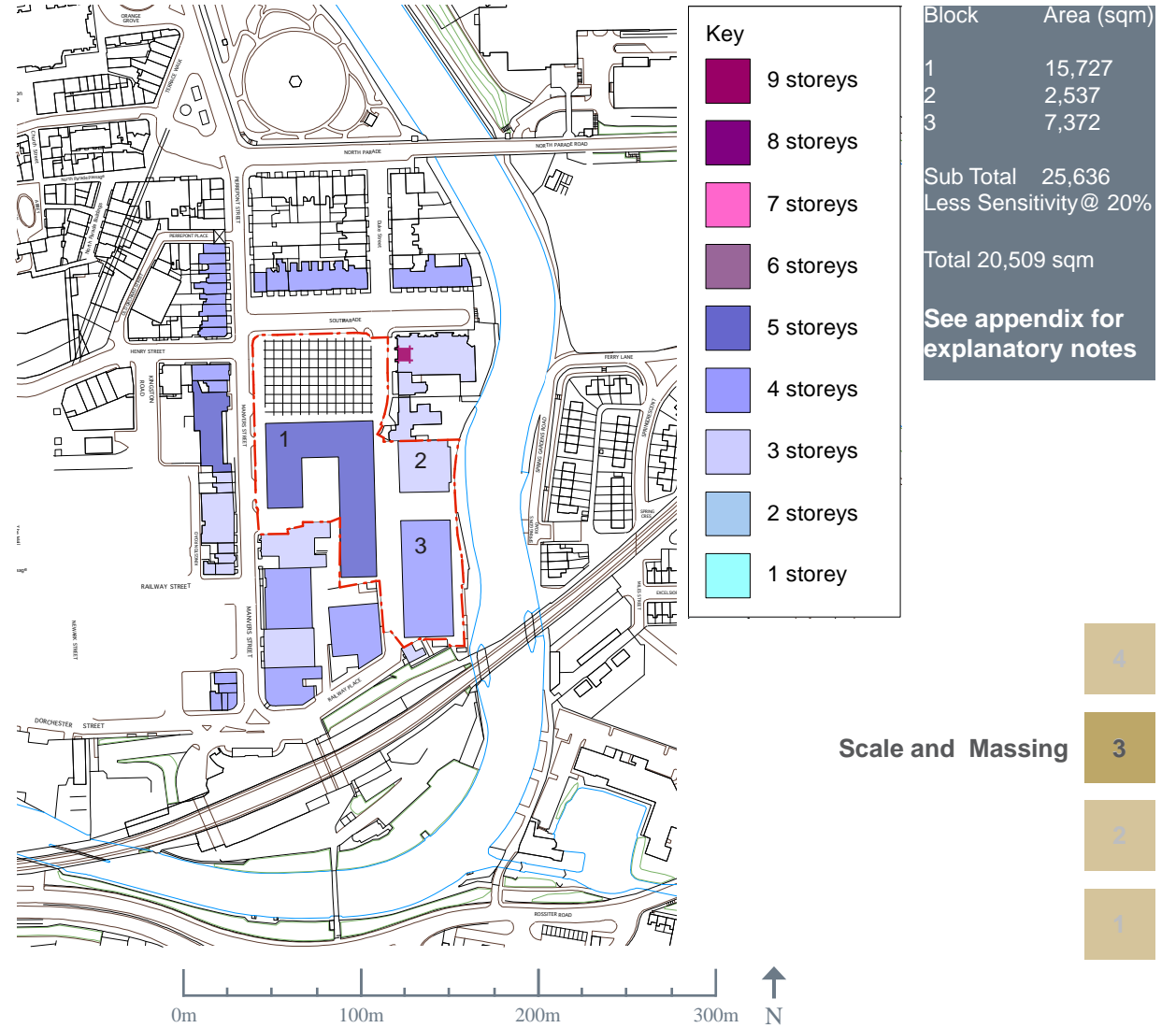


B&NES Layout

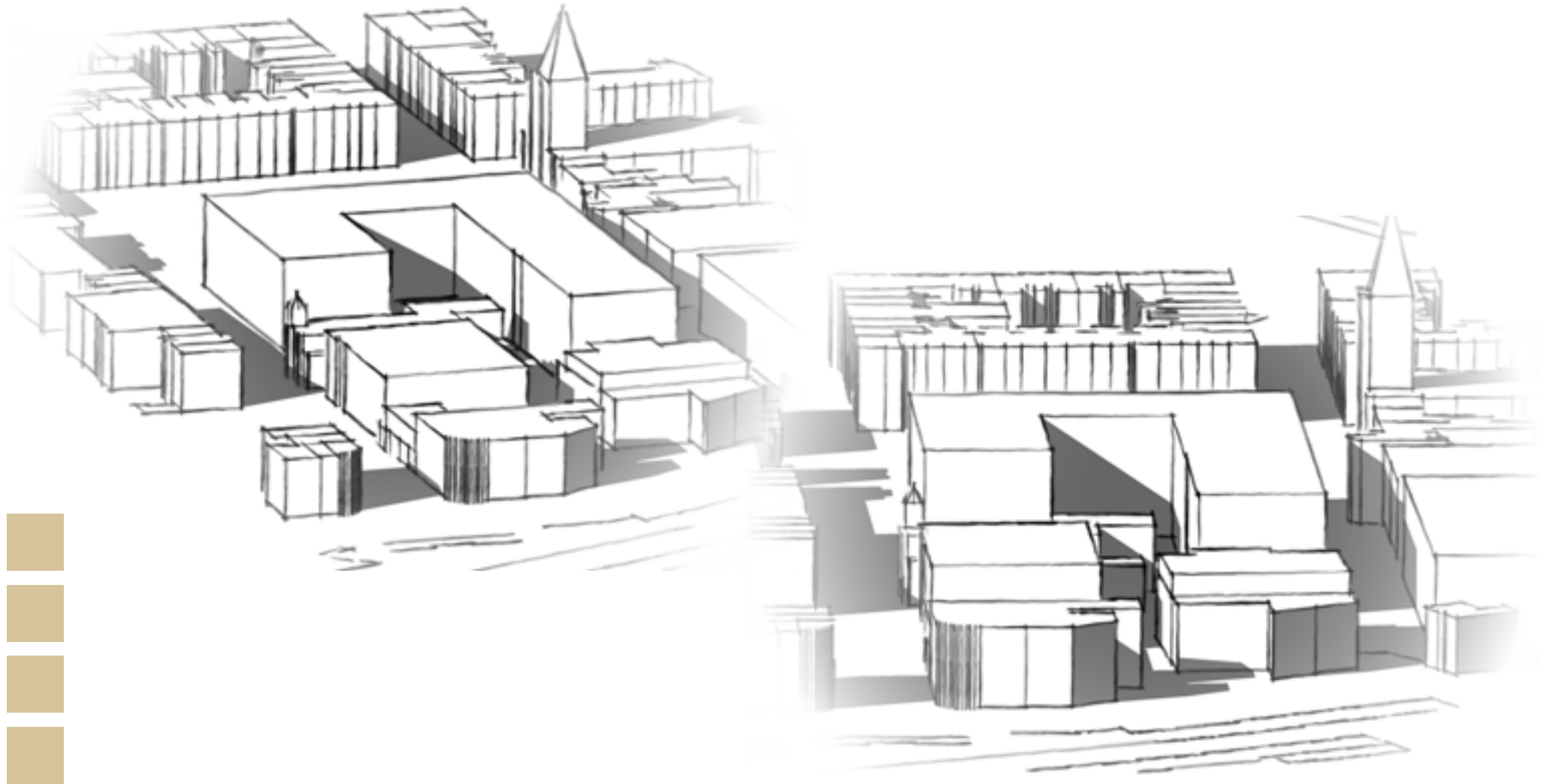


LEFT Figure 9: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 10: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout

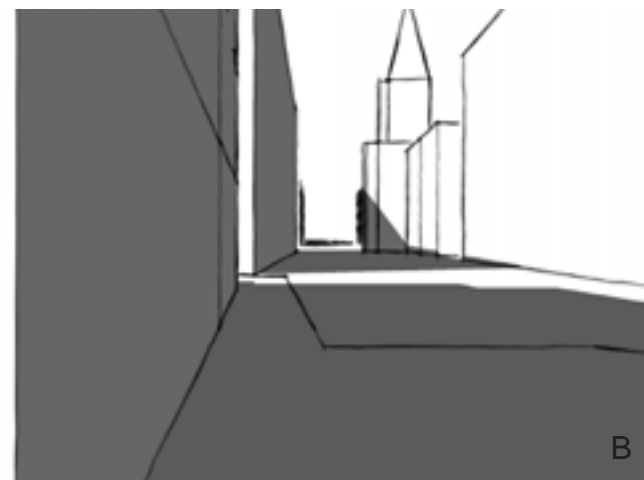
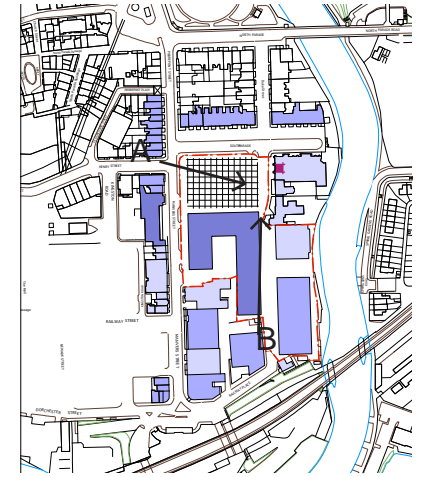
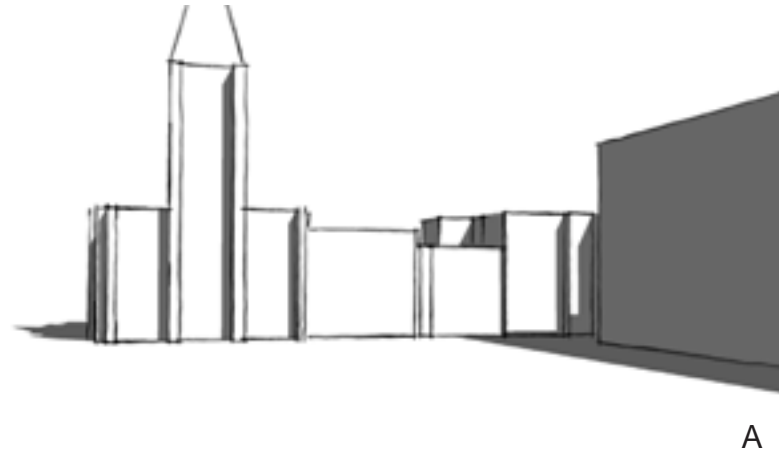


3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 11: Bird's eye view from south-west looking north-east
RIGHT Figure 12: Bird's eye view from south looking north

Street Level Perspectives



Scale and Massing



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 13 Street level perspective view
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 14: Street level perspective view
TOP RIGHT: Figure 15: Location of street level perspective views

3. Avon Street car park and coach park

Together with development at Green Park, this area represents the opportunity to create a new city quarter and connection between Bath's spa and retail focus and the river. Whilst not part of this study, The City of Bath College campus has a close relationship with this area, forming a further element in the quality of links to the river. Consideration of the wider quarter may be beneficial in optimising potential and townscape quality.

No buildings are of architectural merit. The coach station blocks the historic route of Milk Street and Avon Street car park blocks a direct route from the spa to the river.

However, the river frontage already provides a broad south facing grassed edge with mature trees linking to Green Park. At present this is marred by heavy traffic, a lack of access to the waterside path and poor buildings.

There is an opportunity to create a strong river edge and develop the quality of the riverside promenade, creating a strategic link between Southgate/bus station to Green Park and BWR.

Interpretation and Review

Height

The council's assessment of height has been validated. However, the suggested alternative approach may enable six storey frontages to the river.

Layout

On a site this large and significant, there are always different approaches to achieving a distinctive new quarter. The concept of creating a new riverside space has not been rejected by this study which has put forward an option of creating a strong riverside development edge, bounded by a broad promenade, occupying the existing highway and riverside.

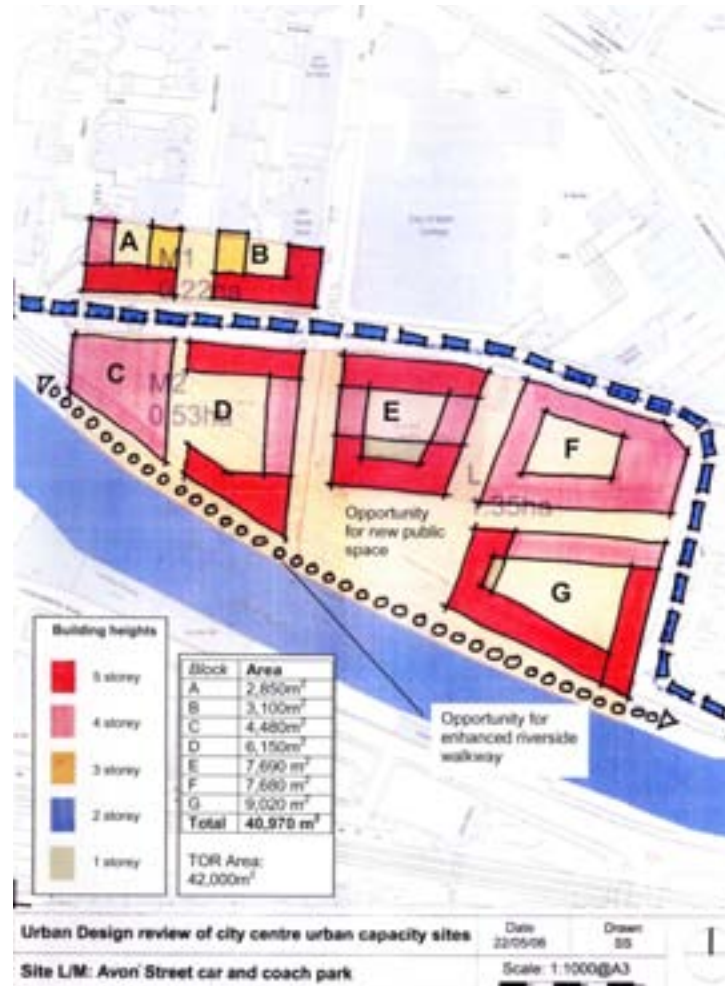
By retaining a development line on the existing southern boundary, eastward hillside views from Green Park, that are considered a strong characteristic of the riverside environment, are retained. In addition phased delivery of development without the prior requirement to extinguish Green Park Road from highway is facilitated enabling a promenade delivered through development contribution and allowing earlier regeneration.

This study does not recommend replacing an east/west traffic route. The historic grain of the area demonstrates long straight routes north/south routes to the river. It is assumed through traffic will be removed as part of a strategic approach to transport within the city.

Adherence to the council's guidance of 5 storeys reduces potential capacity in the suggested alternative layout. Six storeys will bring capacity close to the council report figure.

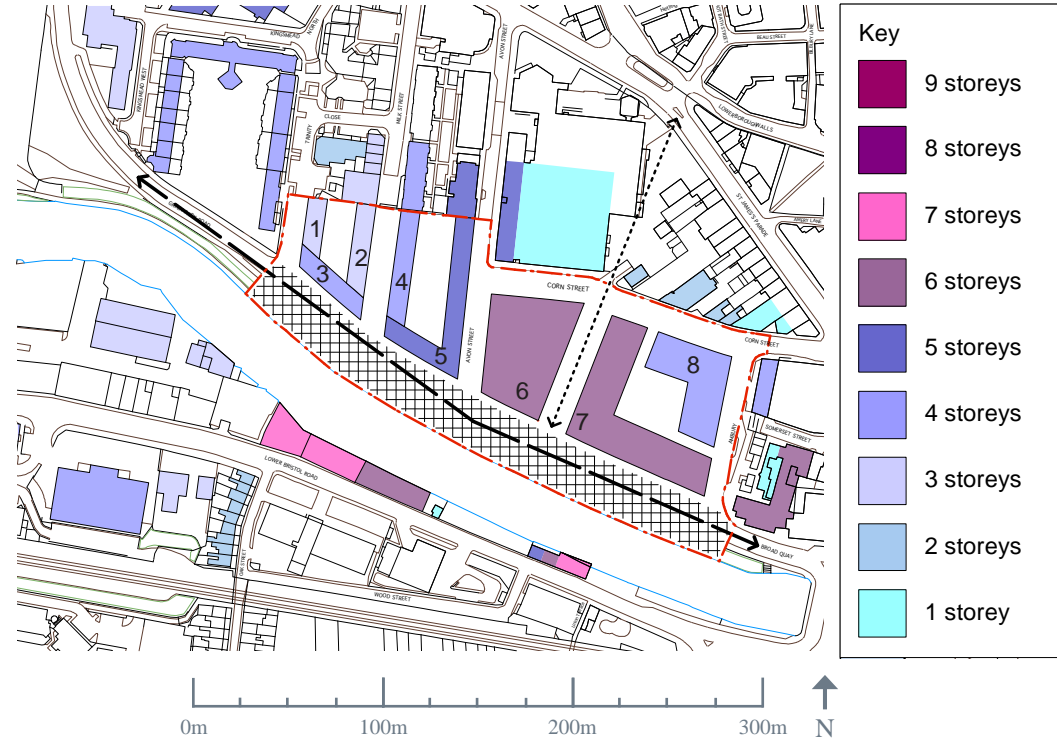


B&NES Layout



LEFT Figure 16: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 17: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout



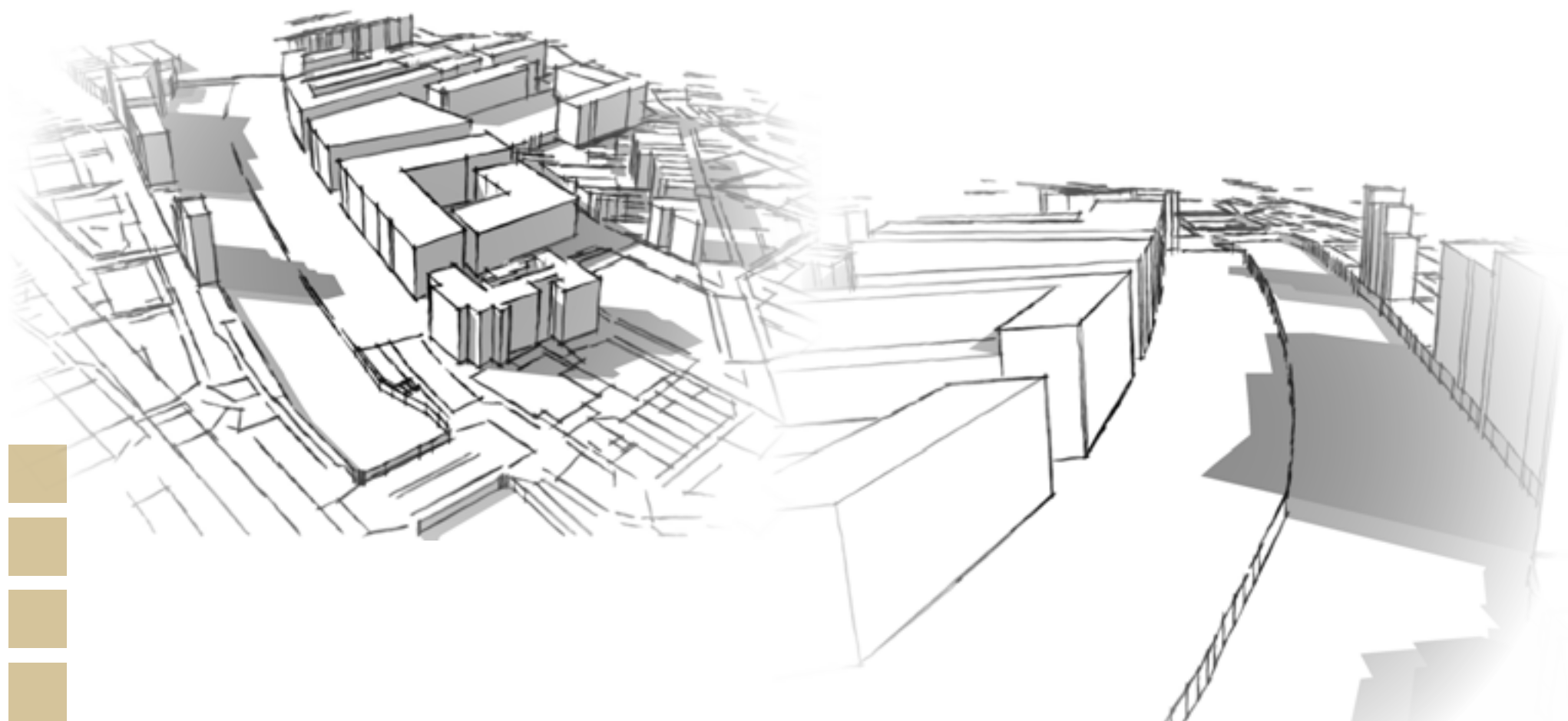
Scale and Massing



Block	Area (sqm)
1	852
2	1,379
3	1,730
4	2,347
5	5,873
6	14,526
7	15,216
8	5,614

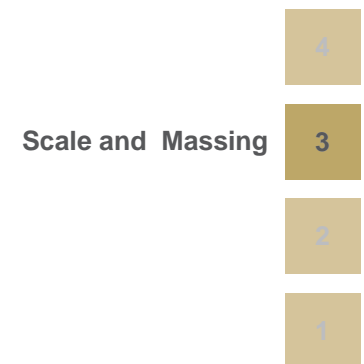
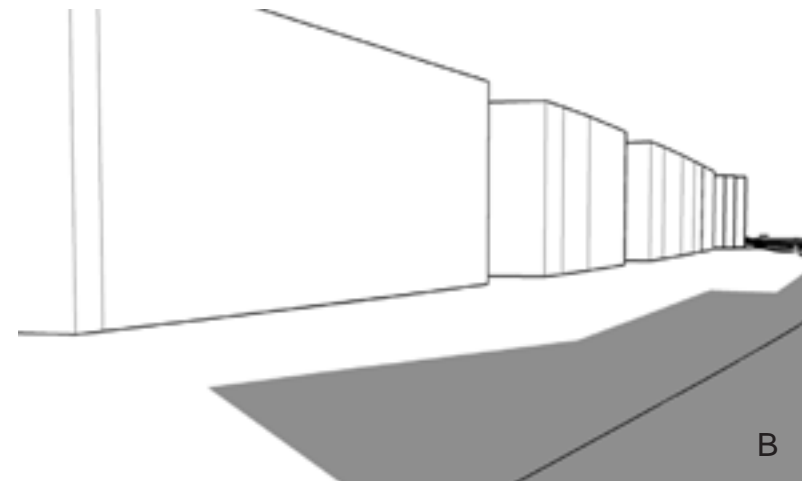
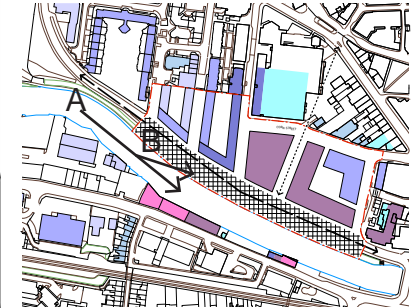
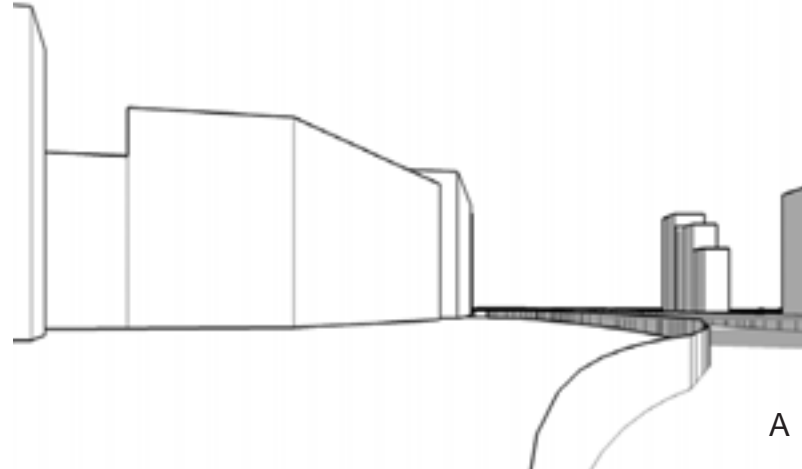
Sub Total 47,538
 Less Sensitivity@ 20%
 Total 38,030 sqm
 See appendix for explanatory notes

3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 18: Bird's eye view from east looking west
RIGHT Figure 19: Bird's eye view looking west to east along river

Street Level Perspectives



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 20 Street level perspective via
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 21: Street level perspective via
TOP RIGHT: Figure 22: Location of street level perspective views

4. Kingsmead House / Plymouth House / Roswell Court

Whilst it is widely recognised the buildings on this site are all of low architectural value and inappropriate scale, the destruction of Kingsmead Street is considered the most fundamental impact on the structure of the city.

The well maintained residential and mixed use street frontage block add vitality and structure to James Street West and are likely to be retained for the medium term. Flats addressing Monmouth Street address the street, are of an acceptable scale although are of limited architectural quality. Key redevelopment targets are focussed on the office buildings and flats blocking Kingsmead Street. Phased regeneration of the site is therefore considered possible focussing initially on these three key elements providing replacement units within initial phases of development.

Interpretation and Review

Height

This study suggests five storeys could be achieved on James Street West, but concurs with the council's assessments for Kingsmead Street and Monmouth Street.

Given the potential for wholesale redevelopment there is an opportunity to consider lower (3m) storey heights.

The site is built into a sloping topography with significant excavation towards Monmouth Street. Topographic information provided by the council does not allow a detailed assessment of height in relation to Monmouth Street. More detailed survey of the site levels could realise additional opportunity on these frontages.

Layout

Examination of the wider urban grain and historic mapping suggest that two long city blocks addressing Monmouth Street and James Street West, separated by a restored Kingsmead Street would better re-establish the urban structure.

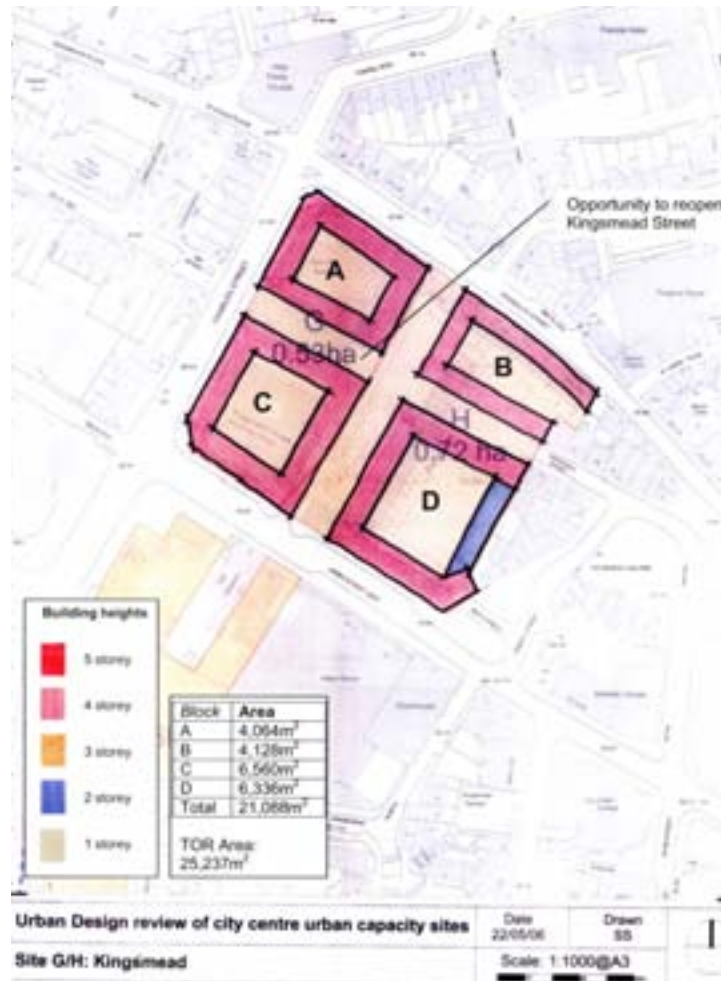
Development concepts join into existing historic buildings at Kingsmead Sq into the restored blocks.

Whilst the southern block is capable of supporting 20m deep development that will support employment and retail uses, the northern block will need to be developed sensitively.

The creation of a north/south street shown in the council report is not considered necessary. Smaller "gap" routes through the blocks are indicated at the point of ownership change demonstrating the need to sub-divide the large linear block at detailed design stage.

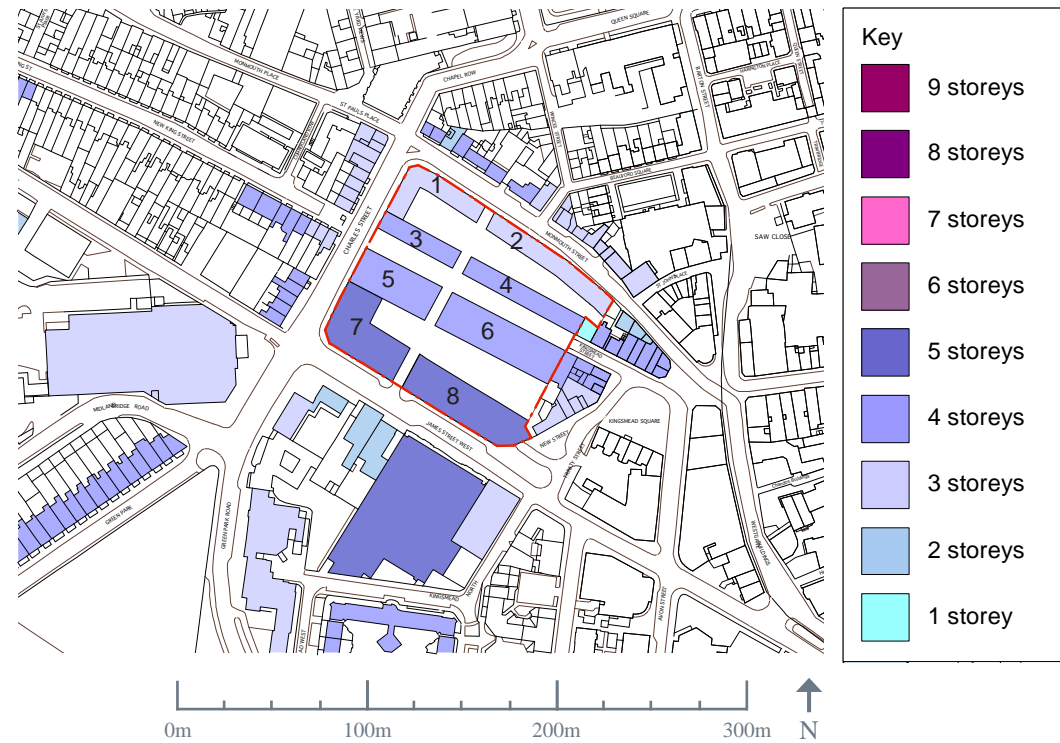


B&NES Layout



LEFT Figure 23: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
RIGHT Figure 24: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout

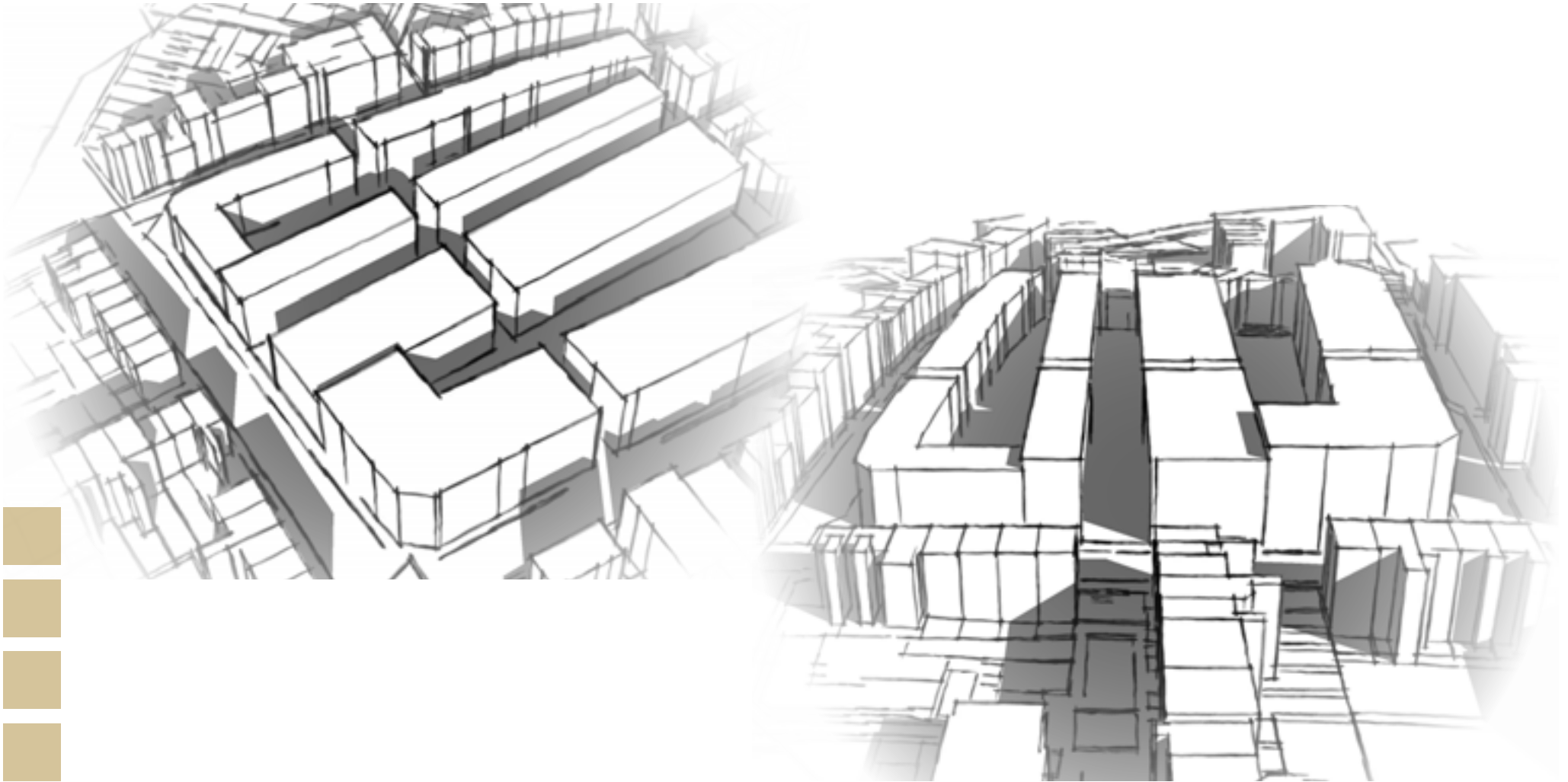


Block	Area (sqm)
1	1,919
2	2,342
3	1,806
4	2,732
5	3,617
6	5,392
7	5,815
8	6,784

Scale and Massing

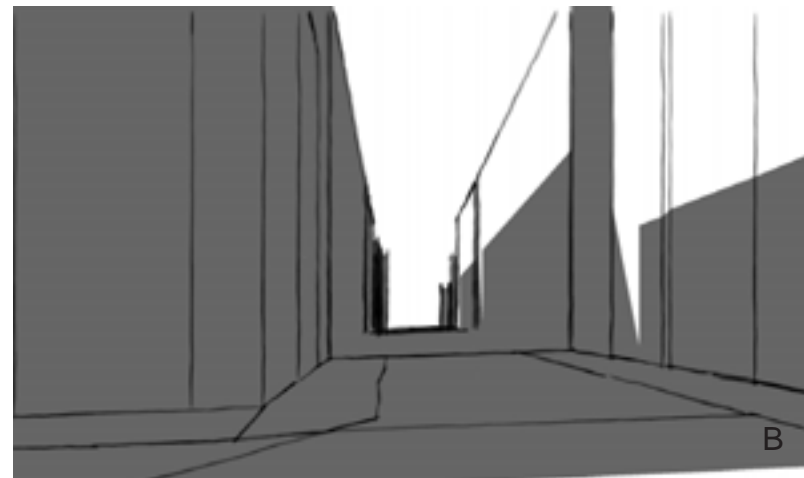
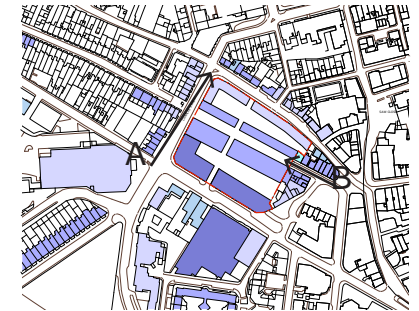
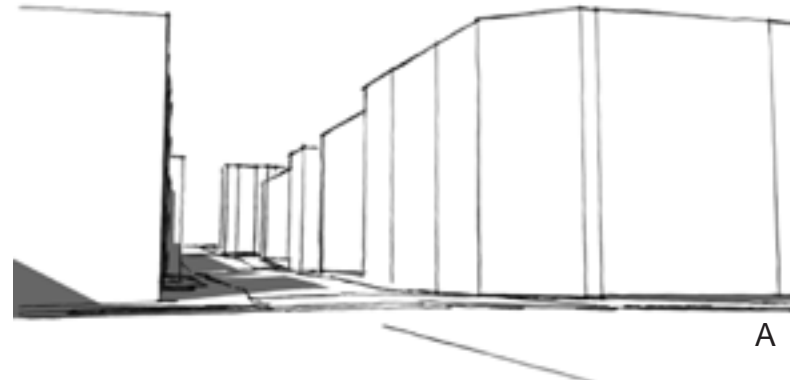


3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 25: Bird's eye view from south-west looking north east
RIGHT Figure 26: Bird's eye view from west looking east towards Kingsmead Square

Street Level Perspectives



Scale and Massing



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 27 Street level perspective view
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 28: Street level perspective view
TOP RIGHT: Figure 29: Location of street level perspective views

5. Green Park House and Salvation Army Buildings

The redevelopment of this site presents another opportunity to repair the city's historic structure and the setting of Green Park. This may require a comprehensive approach to the city's transportation. It also occupies a key corner location opposite Green Park Station and the gateway to Bath Western Riverside. At the time of writing, the southern Green Park House element is the subject of individual development proposals although the client has instructed that this report consider the whole site comprehensively. Given the significance of reweaving the shattered urban fabric in this wider area, a comprehensive planned approach linked to transportation remodelling is strongly recommended.

Interpretation and Review

Height.

This study largely concurs with the council assessment of height, but considers lower 3 storey elements are not necessary in the simplified suggested layout.

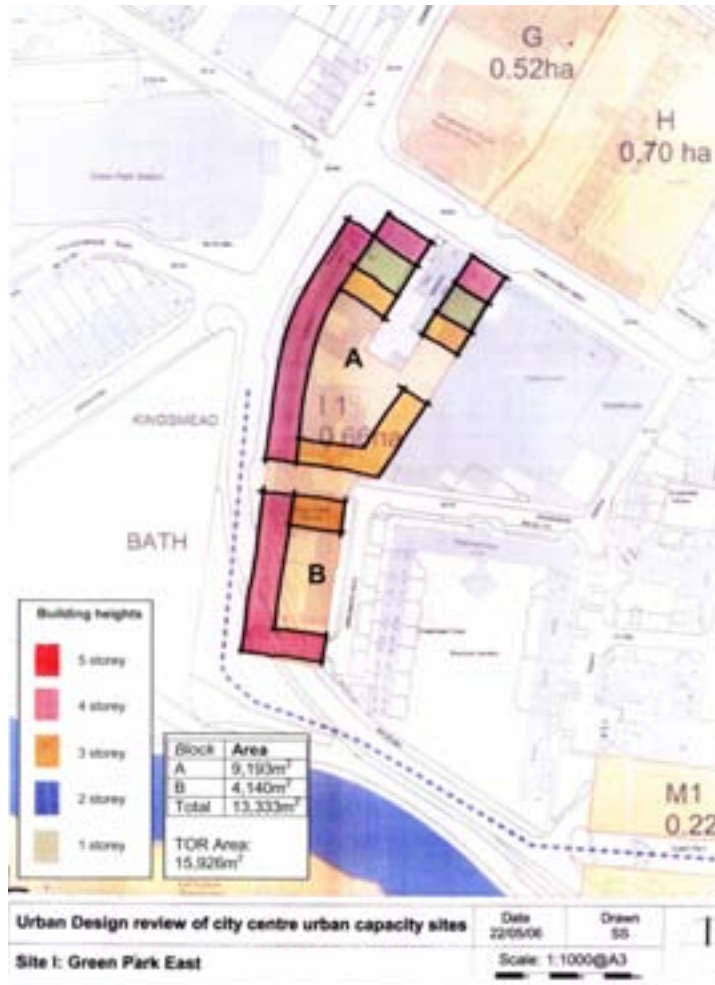
Layout

The council's division of the site into two elements subdivided by a minor link into Kingsmead North has been validated along with the restoration of the historic building line to Green Park.

This study recommends a simplified completion of the larger perimeter blocks with 20m deep dual aspect development. It is considered this form may produce a more viable development form and a more satisfactory relationship with neighbouring development.

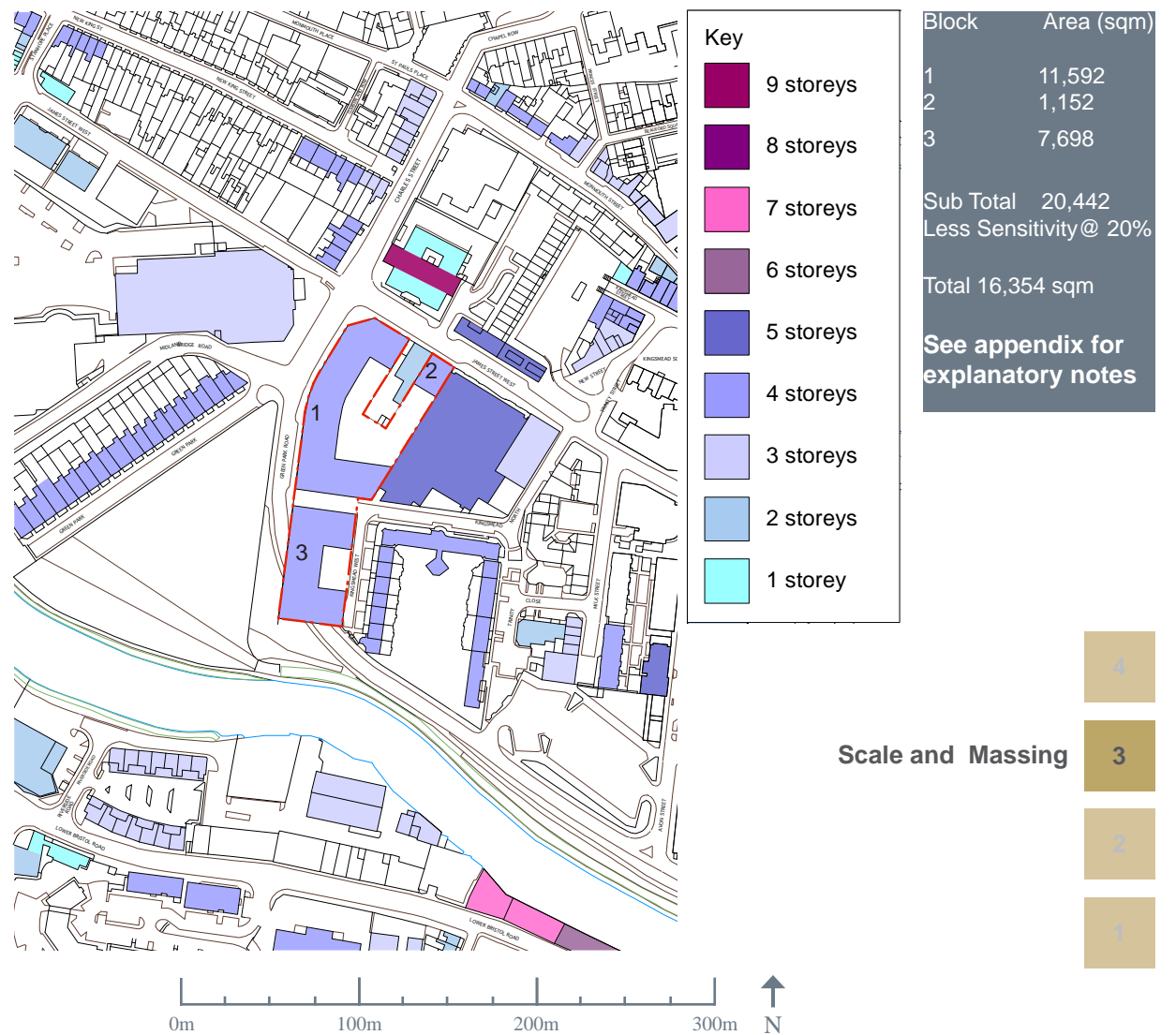


B&NES Layout



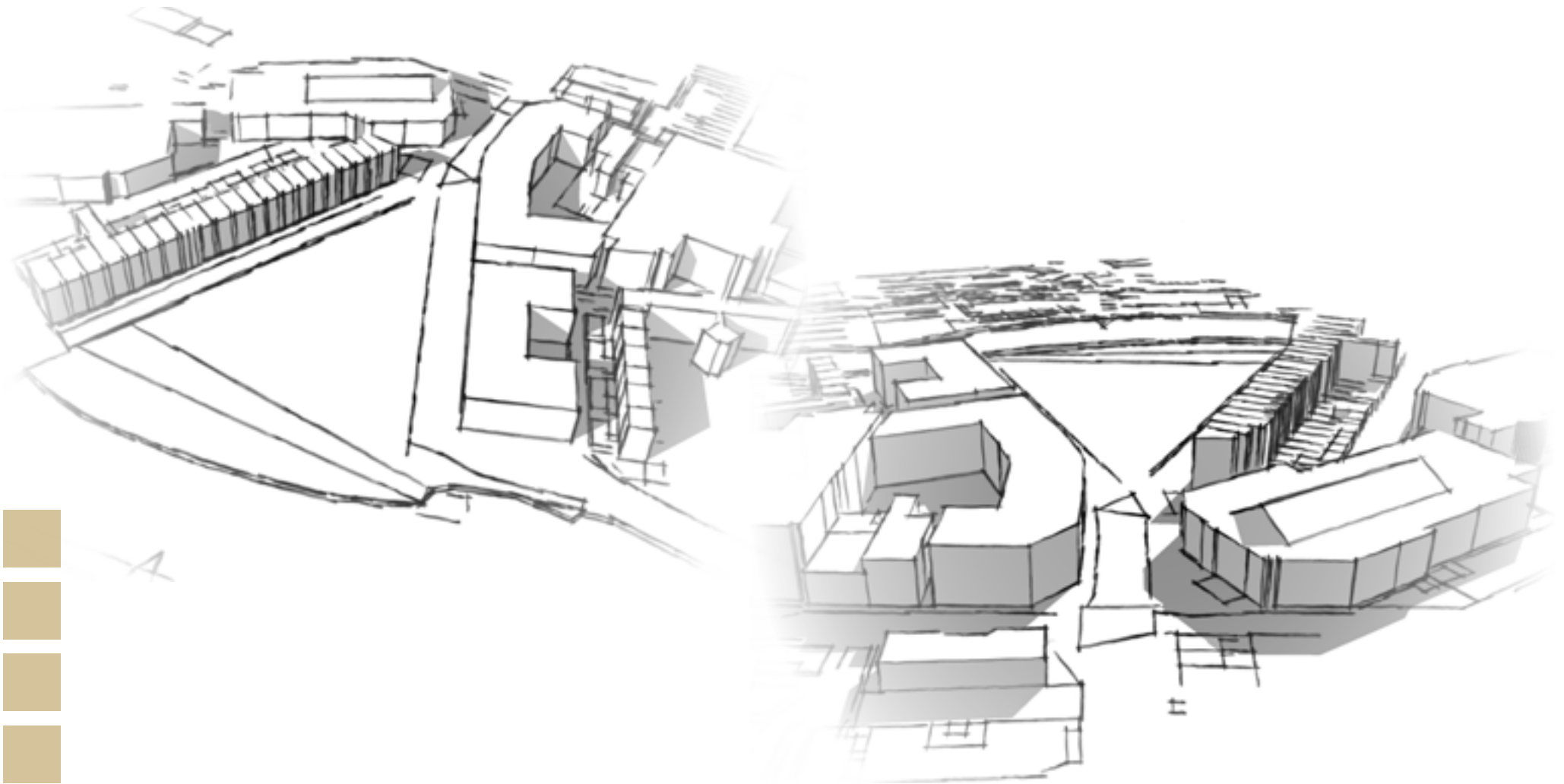
LEFT Figure 30: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
RIGHT Figure 31: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout



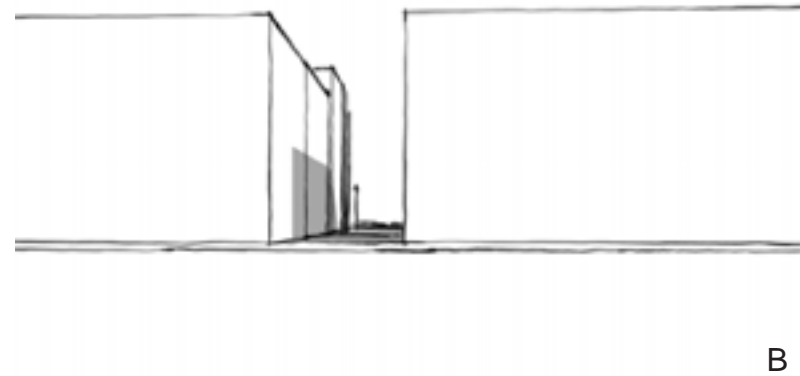
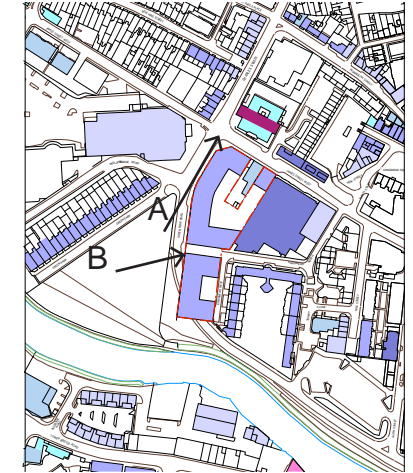
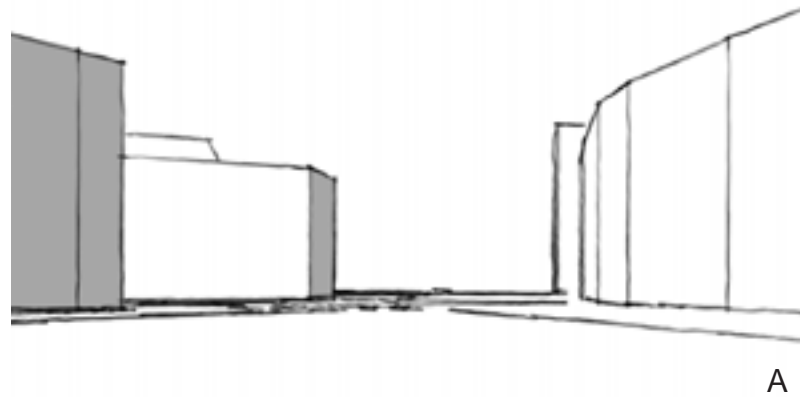
LEFT Figure 30: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
RIGHT Figure 31: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 32: Bird's eye view from south-east looking north west
RIGHT Figure 33: Bird's eye view from north looking southwards

Street Level Perspectives



Scale and Massing



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 34 Street level perspective view
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 35: Street level perspective view
TOP RIGHT: Figure 36: Location of street level perspective views

6. Lower Bristol Road East (Renault and Travis Perkins area)

At present the site is fragmented, inaccessible and offers few views from the Lower Bristol Road to the river and city beyond. It is at the transition between the scale of city centre uses and the domestic scale influences from the south. Therefore arriving at a satisfactory scale of development needs to be built around a clear vision for the future status and role of the area as much as form its immediate context.

The creation of visual connections between Lower Bristol Road and the city should be a key factor in the design solution for this block. In addition development addressing Midland Bridge Road is at a key gateway into the city centre. It should be considered in concepts for this site.

Interpretation and Review

Height

This study suggests a greater scale of development (four storeys) can be achieved to the west of the site.

Layout

This study has adopted an alternative approach to this site.

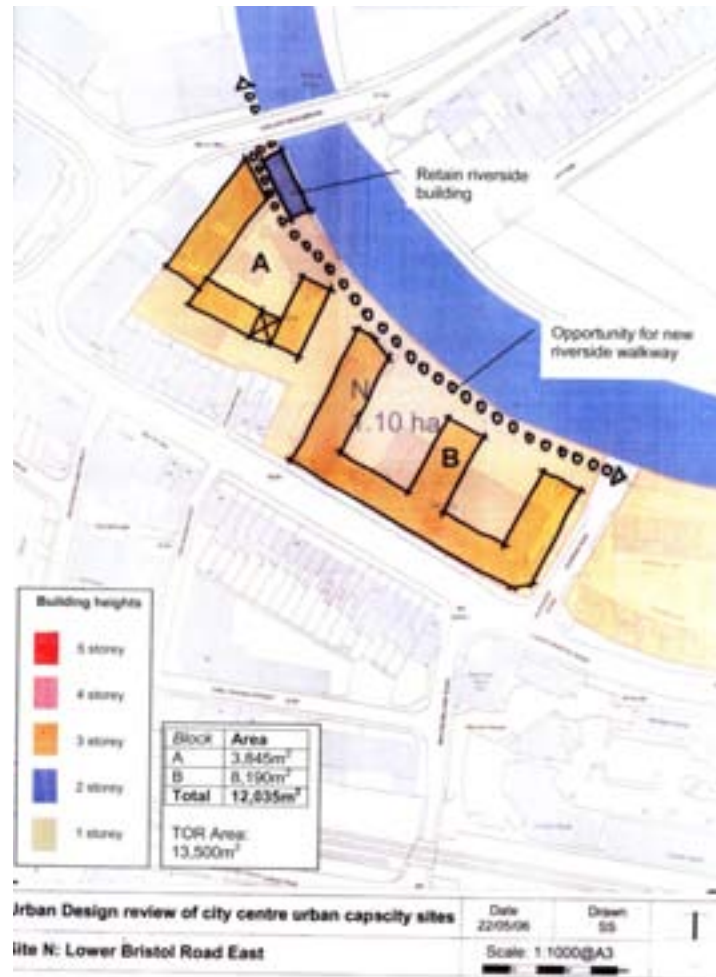
The suggested site boundary has also taken account of the existing buildings of little quality fronting Midland Bridge Road. It is recommended that redevelopment of this corner is a priority.

The suggested creation of a perimeter block to embrace existing housing will enable a defined riverside walk to be created. The historic timber shed has been identified as a focus of freestanding development.

Pavilion buildings have been suggested to the east side of the development. This increases the feeling of connection with the river through glimpsed views in a narrow section where perimeter development is not considered feasible.

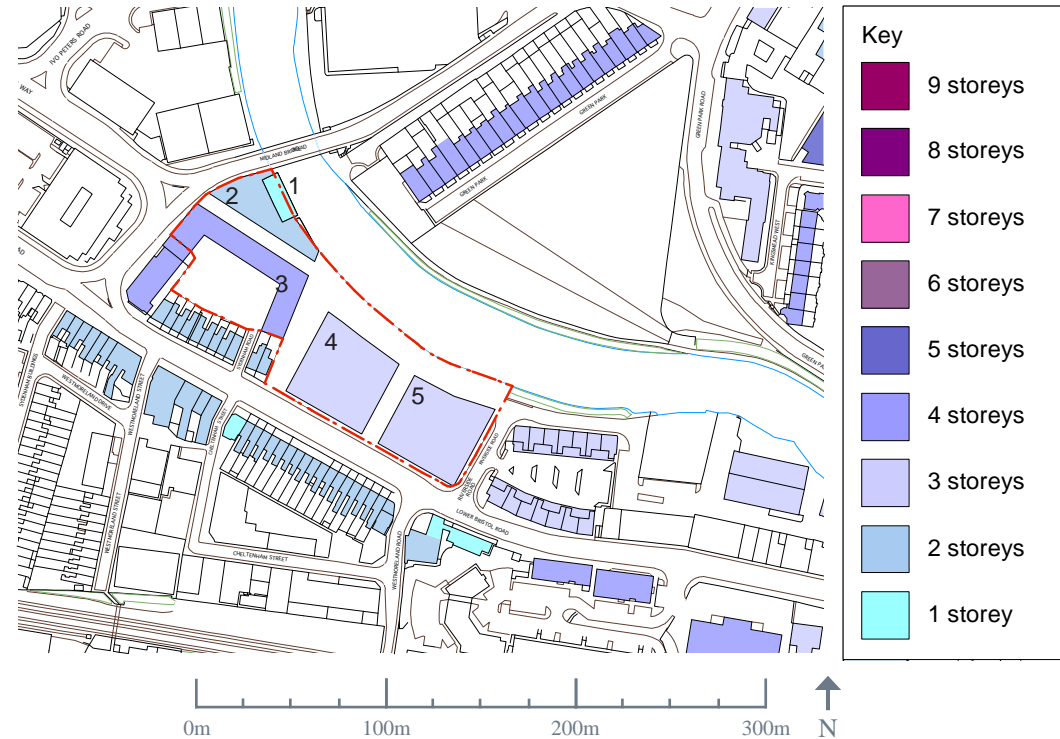


B&NES Layout



LEFT Figure 37: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 38: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout



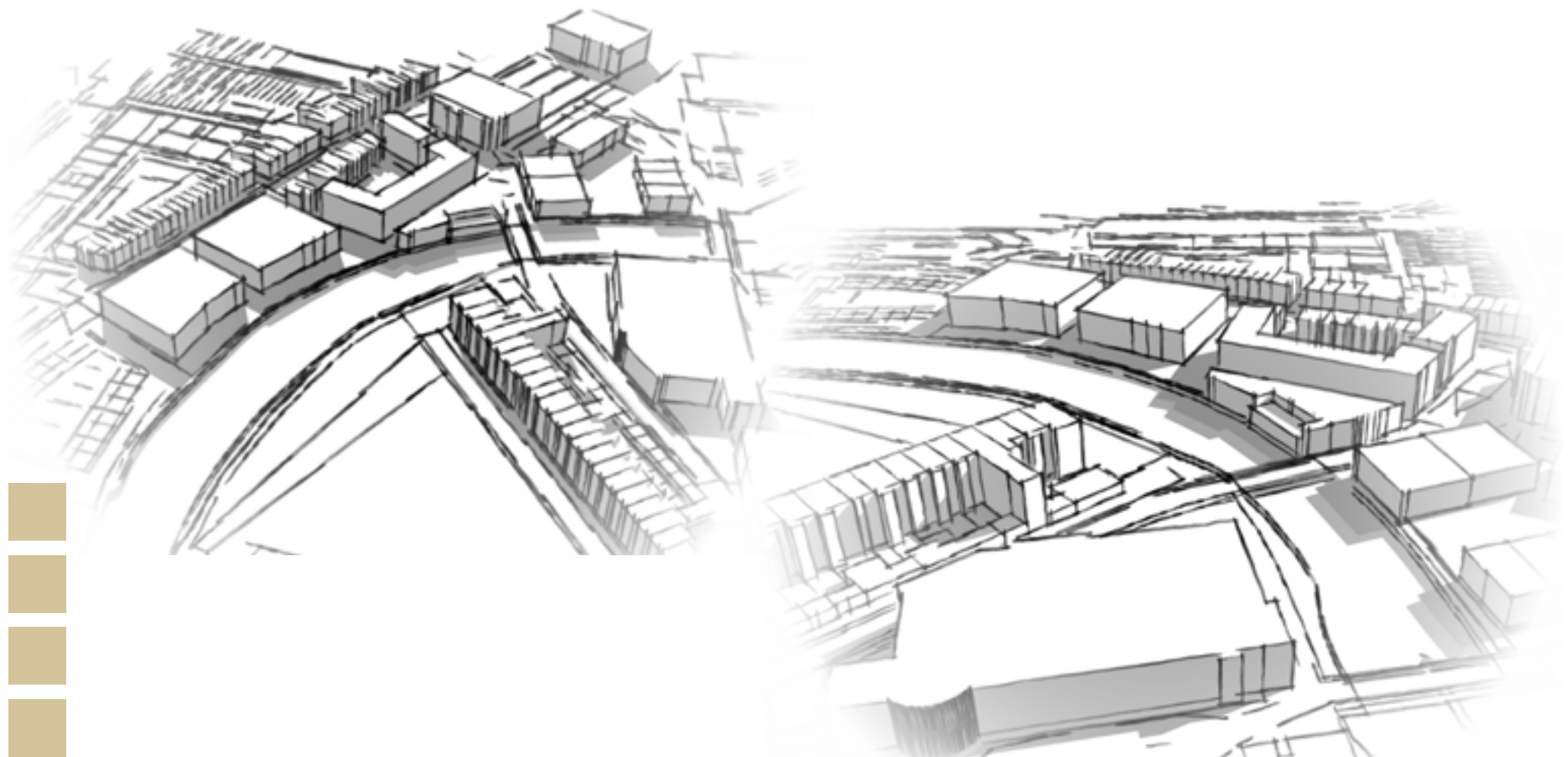
Block	Area (sqm)
1	224
2	1,759
3	5,280
4	6,166
5	5,870
Sub Total	19,299
Less Sensitivity @ 20%	
Total	15,439 sqm

See appendix for explanatory notes

Scale and Massing

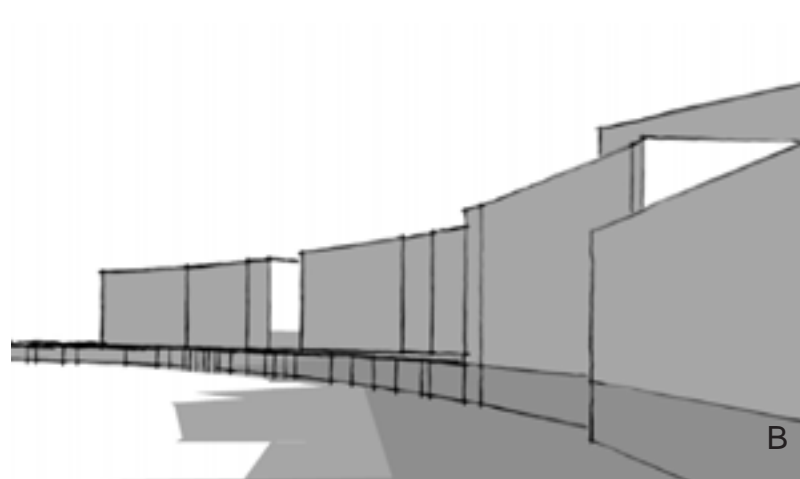
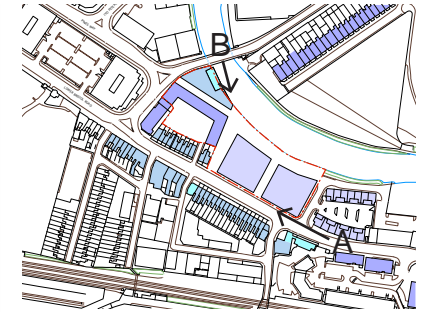
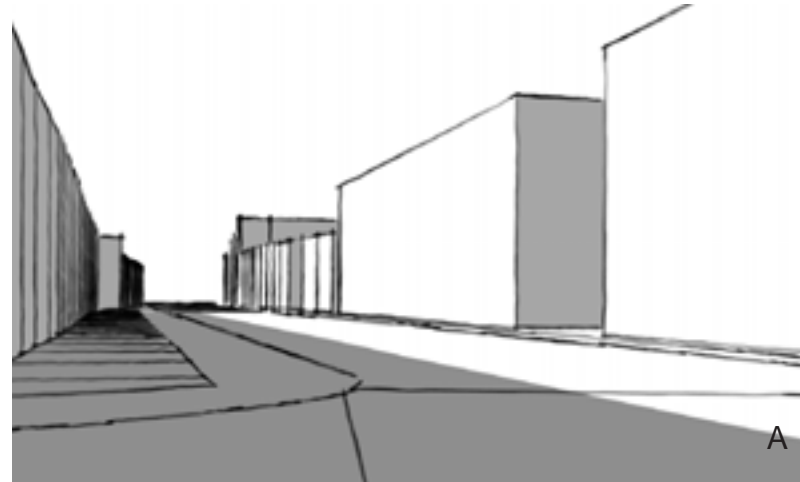


3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 39: Bird's eye view from north-east looking south west
RIGHT Figure 40: Bird's eye view from north-west looking south east

Street Level Perspectives



Scale and Massing



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 41: Street level perspective view
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 42: Street level perspective view
TOP RIGHT: Figure 43: Location of street level perspective views

7. South Quays (Dyson)

This site has been the subject of recent planning proposals (Dyson) that have proposed a scale and extent of development in the context of the listed Southart and Pitt factory. This is likely to be a material consideration in setting the scale and extent of future development.

However given the sensitivity of the site, more detailed architectural assessment would be needed to resolve the optimum realistic potential of development.

Interpretation and Review

Height.

The council report recommends no more than five storey development on the site. This has been embraced in development concepts put forward in this report.

We find no substantial reason not to consider an overall five storey approach on the eastern block, given the relationship to neighbouring buildings to the east. The western block is indicated as three storeys, taking account of the closer relationship with lower scale buildings opposite.

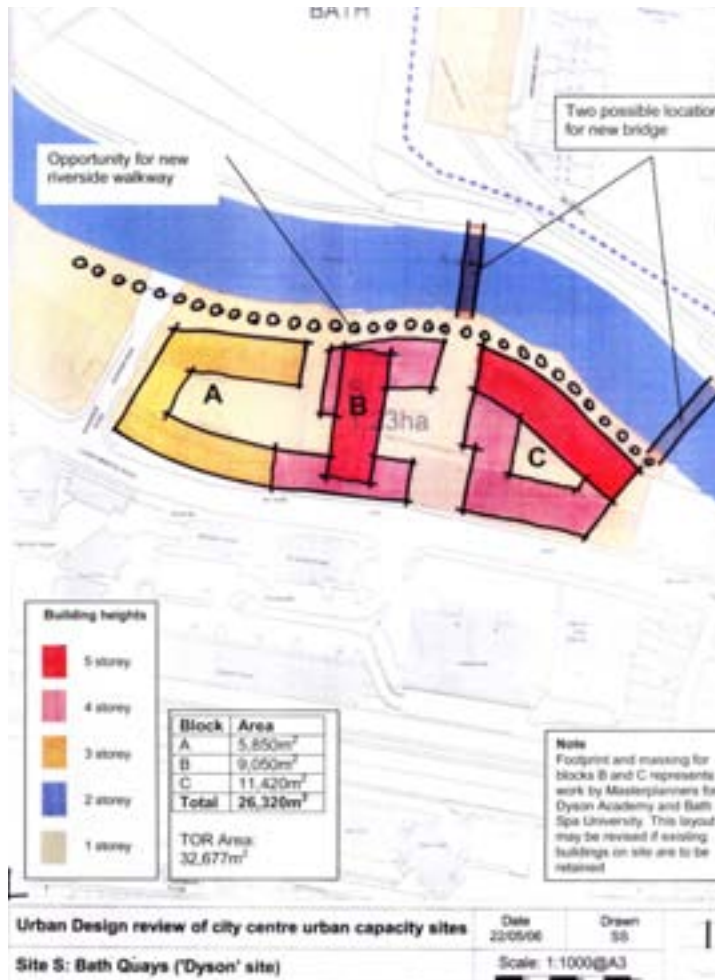
Layout

A simplified two perimeter block approach has been adopted to test and visualise capacity for this site. Whilst this is not on the basis of detailed surveys, it sets a clear framework for assessing capacity based upon robust urban forms.

A pedestrian bridge is suggested creating a direct link from Green Park. Whilst this is considered a natural extension of the city's structure of routes, the location of the connection is flexible.

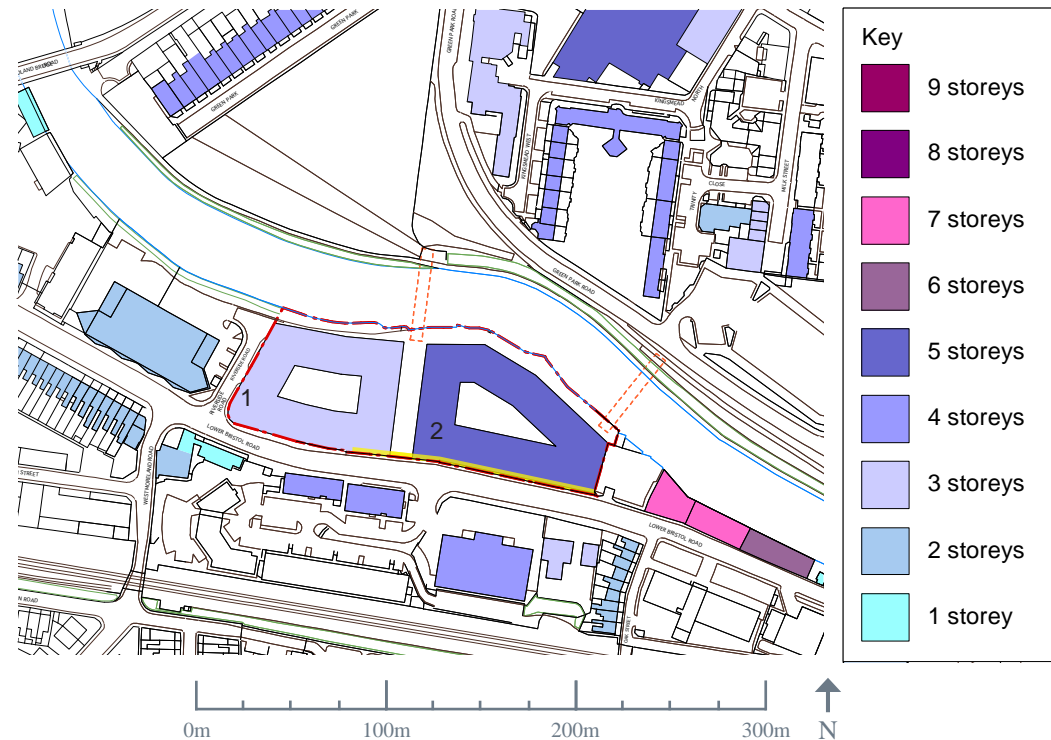


B&NES Layout



LEFT Figure 44: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 45: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout



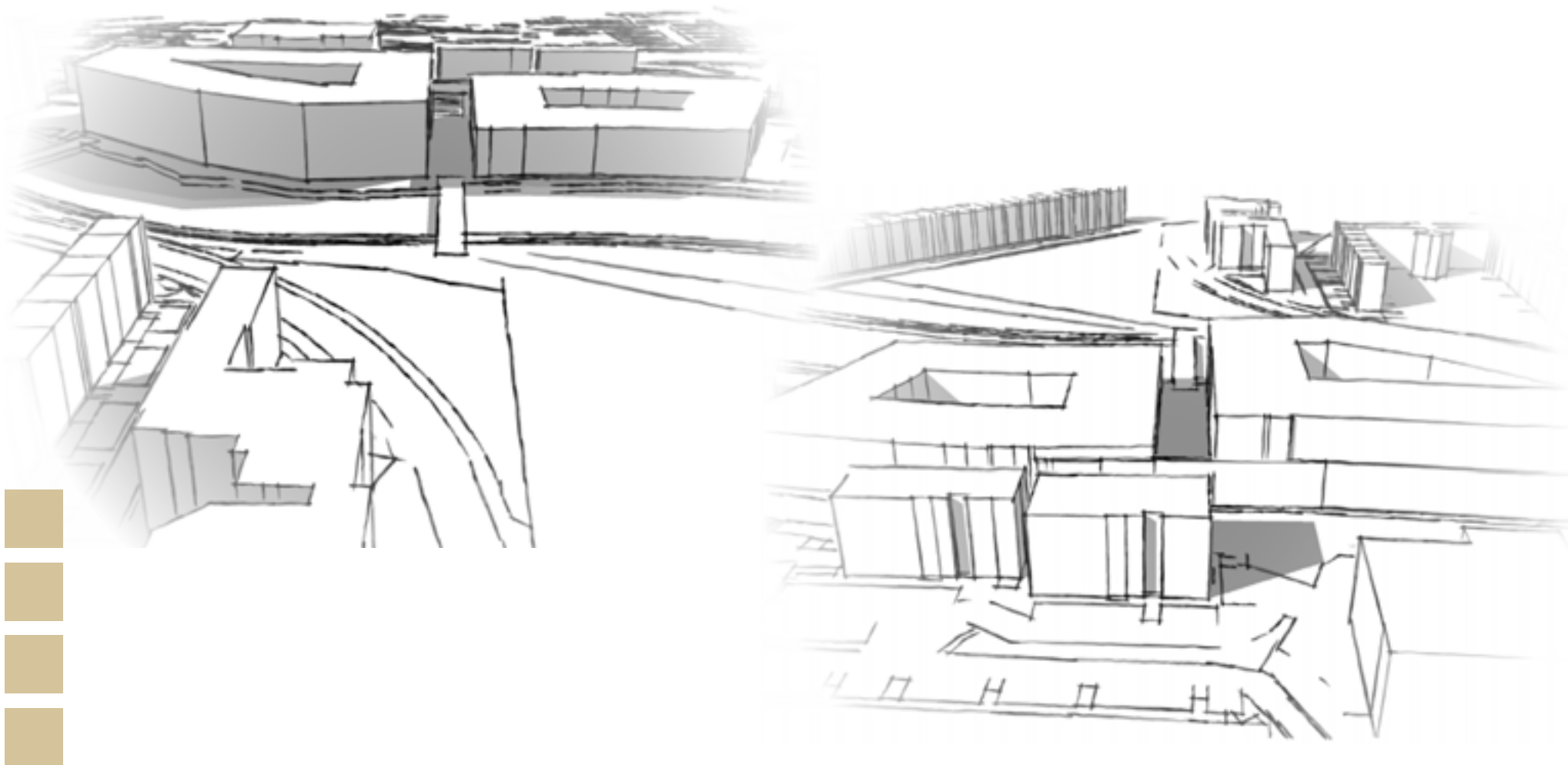
Block	Area (sqm)
1	11,905
2	22,473
Sub Total	34,378
Less Sensitivity @ 20%	
Total	27,502 sqm

See appendix for explanatory notes



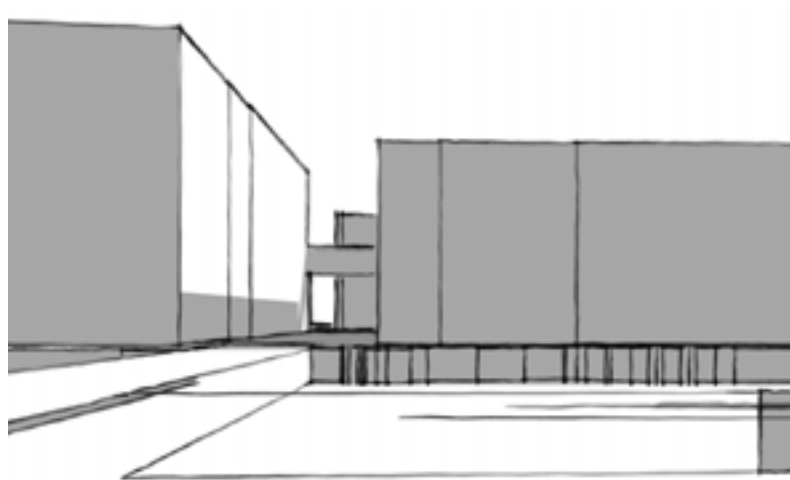
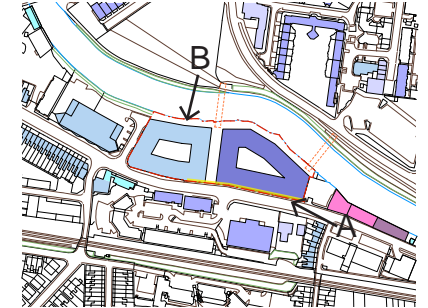
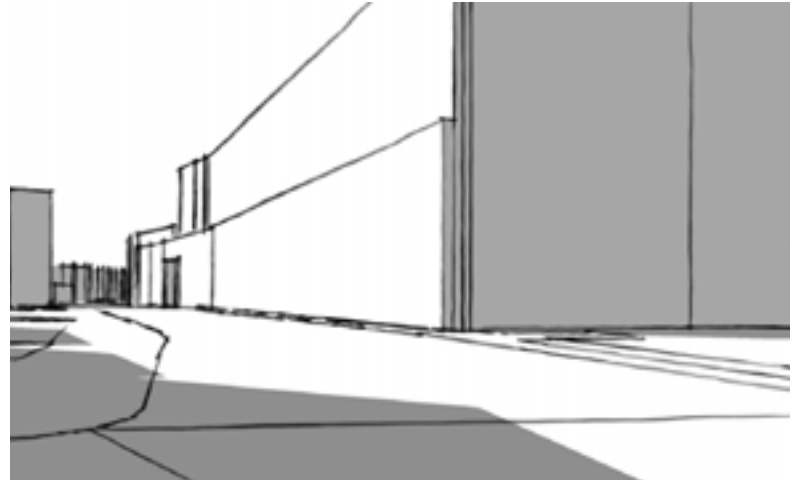
Scale and Massing

3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 46: Bird's eye view from north looking south
RIGHT Figure 47: Bird's eye view from south looking north

Street Level Perspectives



Scale and Massing



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 48: Street level perspective via
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 49: Street level perspective via
TOP RIGHT: Figure 50: Location of street level perspective views

8. Norfolk Crescent

As stated in the council's report, the site is at the end of a Georgian terrace lending itself to a simple repair of wartime damage. The terrace is not of consistent scale and there is scope for some variety in the form of a new development.

Interpretation and Review

Height

In Principle the council's assess for this site have been embraced. Due to the slight variation in heights along Norfolk Buildings there is some scope for a small higher element. However, this will make no significant addition to site capacity.

Layout

The council layout has been validated. The purpose of this report was to inform the emerging B&NES Core Strategy by assisting the Council to present a two and

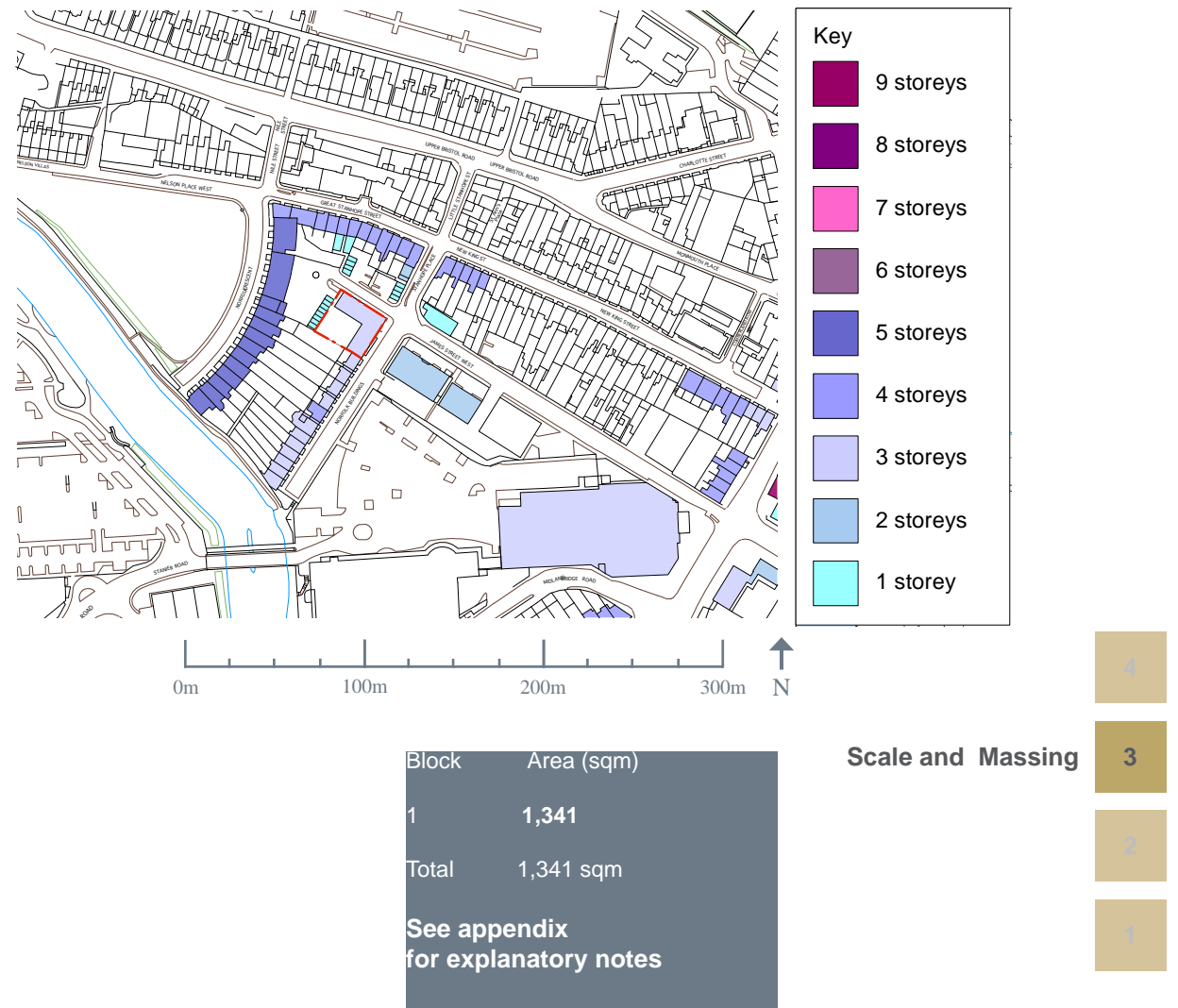


B&NES Layout



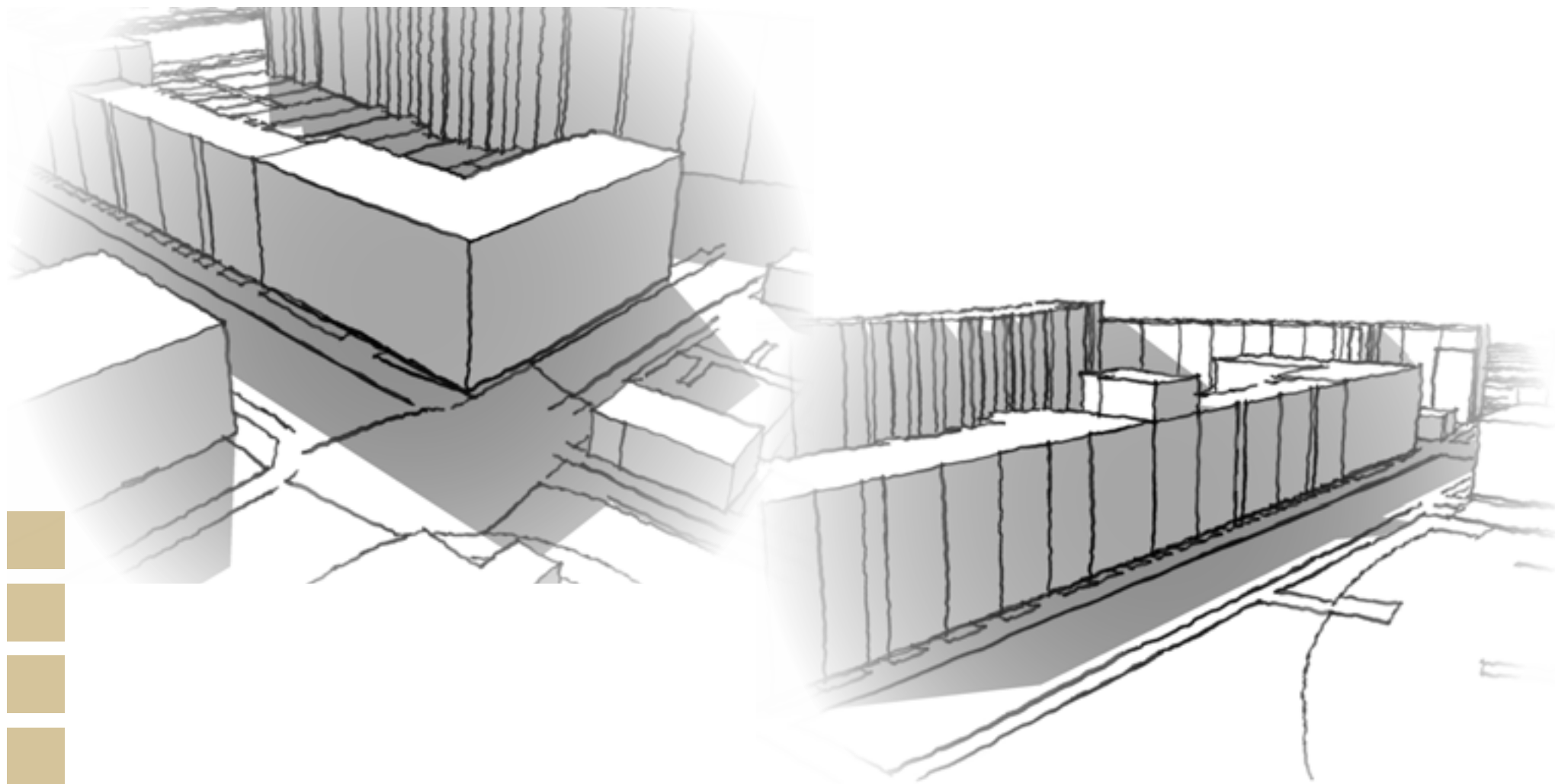
LEFT Figure 51: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 52: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

Alternative Layout

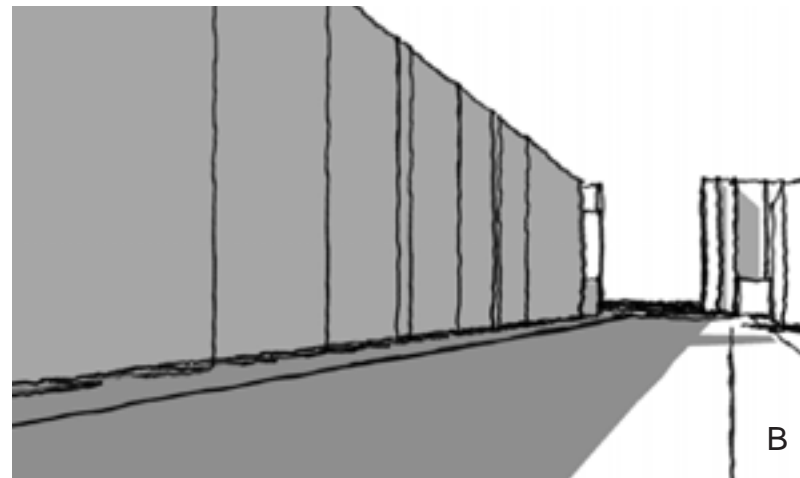
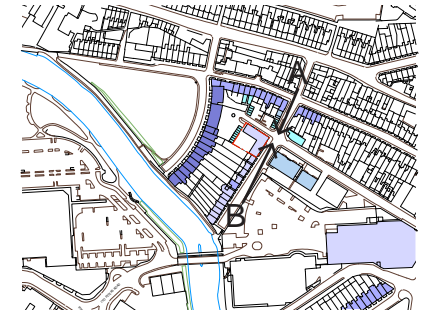
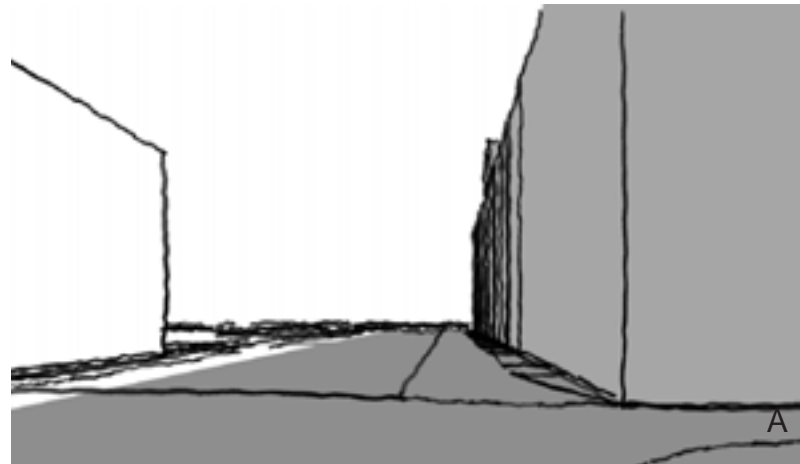


LEFT Figure 51: B&NES site layout and storey height plan
 RIGHT Figure 52: Proposed site layout and storey height plan

3D Visualisation



LEFT Figure 53: Bird's eye view from north east looking south west
RIGHT Figure 54: Bird's eye view from south looking across Norfolk Buildings



Scale and Massing



TOP MIDDLE RIGHT: Figure 55: Street level perspective view
BOTTOM RIGHT Figure 56: Street level perspective view
TOP RIGHT: Figure 57: Location of street level perspective views

Conclusion

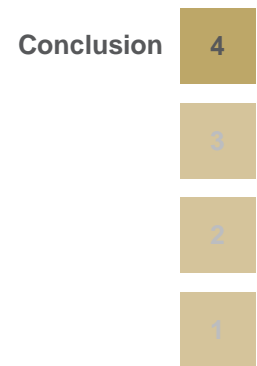
To assist the emerging B&NES Core Strategy evidence base, this report has produced high level two and three dimensional visualisation of development capacity and indicative land use mix on eight key city sites. The report has reviewed a capacity study undertaken by B&NES in 2006, which looked at the same sites. It concludes a net figure of 172,955 sqm capacity across the sites. This compares to a figure of 159,195 sq m, indicated in the B&NES report, which equates to an additional 8% of capacity.

This study has undertaken an urban design led review of capacity and the importance of integrating the sites within the wider spatial strategy for the city centre has been paramount. Figure 58 demonstrates how the proposals contribute to a re-woven city structure. The plan incorporates proposals for Bath Western Riverside including recent proposals produced by this consultant for Bath Western Riverside (East) and the near completed Southgate development.





Figure 58 Composite view of proposed site layouts
(includes Bath Western Riverside and Southgate)



Appendix

A requirement of the brief was to provide a gross capacity figure for each site. These gross figures are shown in box 1 on page 5.

The council requested additional figures that illustrate the potential capacities of the blocks generated within each development site. This required that capacity figures were calculated in a subtly different way to the gross site capacity figure, which were calculated using CAD software.

In this case, figures have been manually calculated through first, calculating the floorspace of each individual building plot (rounding this figure to the nearest whole number) and second, adding all block capacity figures to provide a total site figure.

As a result, this creates subtle variations to the overall capacity figures for each site when compared with the original whole site CAD calculation.

Following a meeting with the council, for the Kingsmead and Podium site, additional small routes were added to illustrate greater permeability. It was agreed that these changes to the illustration would not require a change to overall gross capacity figures as this would be

accounted for within the 20% sensitivity test.

As a result, under this new calculation method, which calculates individual buildings blocks, there is an inevitable difference between gross figures. To reflect this, these figures are shown with a sensitivity test of 15% to reflect the capacity lost by the additional routes.



Site	Total gross* (sqm)	Sensitivity reduction	Final figure (sqm)	B&NES (sqm)	Difference	Difference (%)
[Redacted content]						



Box 2: Capacity Table

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