



Fig. 4.3 Previous Submitted Ground Floor Plan Uses



4.2 Reasons for Refusal

On 7th September 2021 WCC resolved to refuse planning permission for the application against officer recommendation and on 9th November 2021 it advised the Mayor of its decision.

The Council's draft decision Notice set out the following reasons for refusal:

- 'By reason of its excessive height and bulk, Block K would have a detrimental impact on the local townscape, would result in substantial harm to the setting of the Little Venice, Paddington Green, Lisson Grove and Maida Vale Conservation Areas and have a detrimental impact on views from Regents Park and Hyde Park, contrary to policies 38, 39, 40 and 41 of the City Plan 2019 - 2040 (April 2021)'.
- 'The proposed development fails to maximise the number of dual aspect flats within Blocks I and J, resulting in poor levels of natural daylight and outlook due to the proximity of the existing buildings within West End Gate. The proposal therefore fails to provide high quality residential accommodation and is contrary to policy D6 of the London Plan (March 2021) and policy 12 of the City Plan 2019-2040 (April 2021)'.
- 'By reason of the excessive height and bulk of the proposed blocks, the proposed development would result in a significant loss of daylight and sunlight to existing residential properties, contrary to policies D6 (D) and D9 (3) of the London Plan (March 2021) and policies 7, 38 (C) and 41 B of the City Plan 2019 - 2040 (April 2021)'.



Fig. 4.4 Aerial view looking south west over Edgware Road towards the development



Fig. 4.5 View of proposed Edgware Road plaza

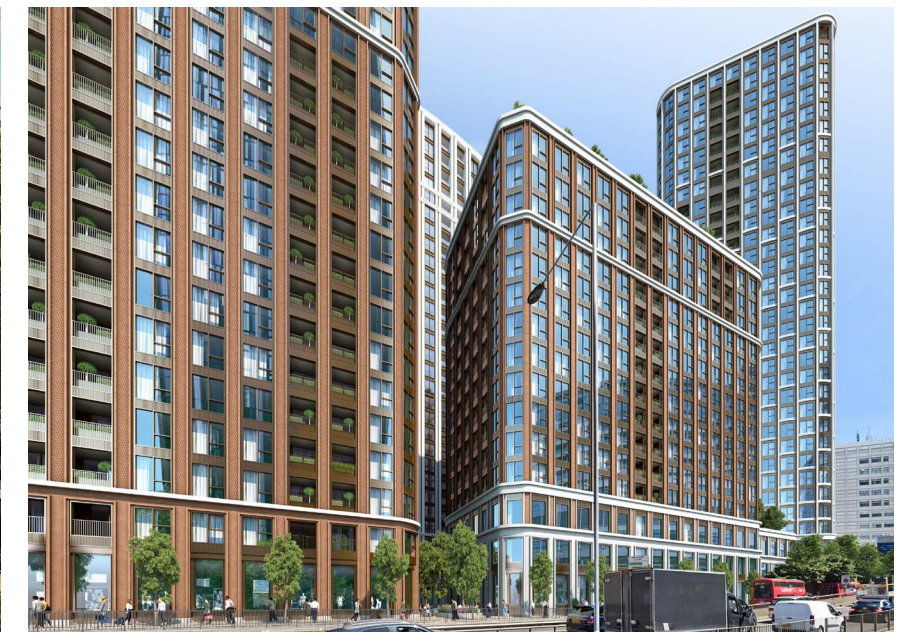


Fig. 4.6 View from Harrow Road looking north towards the development

4.3 Summary

Following WCC's decision that they were resolved to refuse the original planning submission, the scheme was called in by the Greater London Authority on 22nd November 2021.

Since the call in, GLA officers have engaged in joint discussions with the applicant, the Council and TfL officers with a view to addressing concerns raised at consultation stage. The buildings heights have be revised to address concerns with coalescence and the scheme has been taken back to the original design vision and concepts in order to create a more elegant cluster of tall buildings that respond to the surrounding buildings.

The following amendments have been proposed to the application following consultation stage:

- In response to concerns with coalescence, the building forms were refined to develop more slender and defined massing that reduced the visual bulk of each building and brought a clarity to the cluster of tall buildings.
- Building footprints and positions on site were revised to introduce smaller footprints and increased gaps between buildings that improved daylight/sunlight levels to neighbouring properties.
- As the building footprints were reduced, the heights of the buildings were increased. In particular the overall height of Block K was increased from 32 to 39 storeys, helping to sculpt the slender and elegant form of the building;
- Smaller building footprints also resulted in all north facing single aspect apartments being eliminated from the layouts with a 10% uplift in dual aspect apartments as a result;
- The gap between Block I and J was increased to deliver better quality internal spaces to homes, better aspect and improved public realm between the buildings;
- Smaller building footprints also resulted in an increase in the extent and quality of public realm across the site with a new landscape concept driving the creation of clearly defined character areas and dedicated play space at the heart of Newcastle Place;
- The Affordable Housing has been revised to increase the number of affordable homes on site;
- The office component has been removed from the scheme to improve the residential quality of the scheme.

The following chapters of this Design and Access Statement provide further detail on the design refinement and development that has been carried out to bring significant improvement to the scheme as a whole.



Fig. 4.7 View from the Westway looking east towards Block I



Design Development

5

5.0 Design Development

5.1 Overview

The initial stage of design development leading up to submission to WCC in March 2021 focused on delivering a high quality residential led scheme that was carefully sculpted to deliver an elegant, tall and dense development on a site within the Paddington Opportunity Area. Working closely with WCC and the GLA, the building forms were sculpted to minimise impact on neighbours and maximise the residential quality of the new homes. The positive impact of placing height on the site to define the key gateway into London was tested in key views from distance to deliver proposals for tall, elegant buildings on the site that respond to the surrounding context.

The impact of the design proposals on heritage assets, both nearby and in the wider context of London, where explored in detail and informed the final design response. The design has been refined and optimised with careful consideration of the potential impact on the heritage assets throughout the design development process.

Following WCC decision that they were resolved to refuse the design proposals submitted to Westminster City Council, the scheme was called in by the GLA. As part of the review process, a series of design review workshops were carried out between November 2021 and October 2022 that sought to improve the scheme and address the issues with the original planning submissions scheme.

5.2 Design Principles

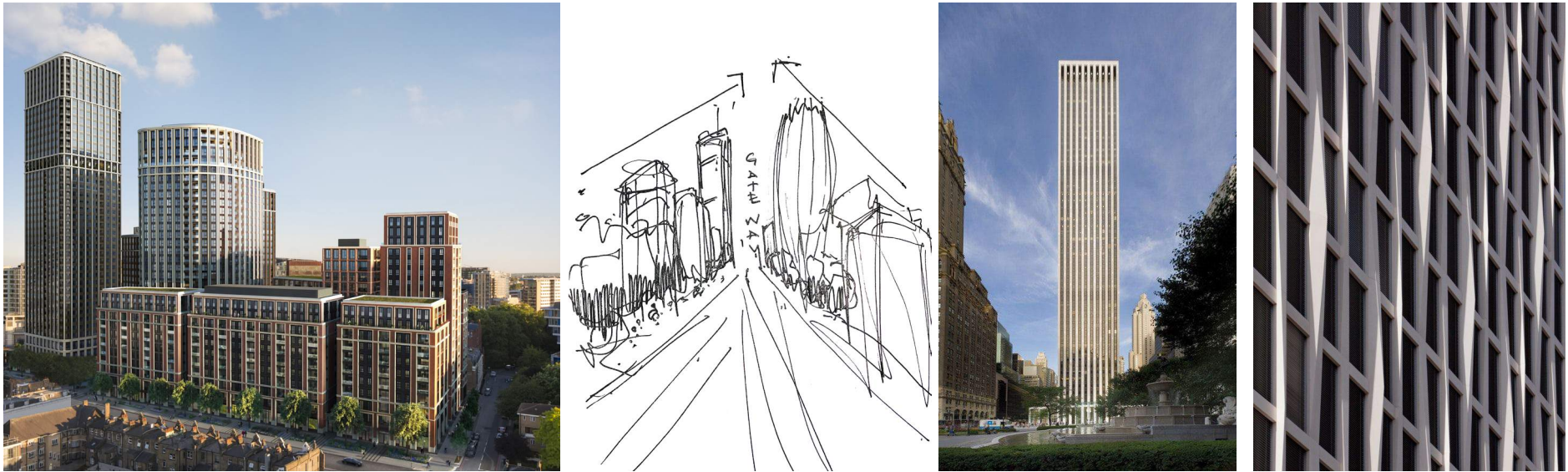
The design is composed of three key elements that have informed the design approach and for Paddington Green Police Station. These are;

- Public Realm
- Gateway Tower
- Residential Quality

The Public Realm is designed as a response to the site analysis and design concepts. The site is currently occupied by a single, impermeable block but the proposals seek to open up the site, creating new pedestrian routes through and into the Newcastle



Public Realm



Gateway Tower



Residential Quality

Fig. 5.1 Design Inspirations

Place. The landscaping has been developed as a quality managed environment for both residents and members of the public. The revised concepts have taken on board feedback from the GLA and the Design Review Panel to develop a series of site specific character spaces that inform the wider design response for the site.

The key gateway tower is intended to mark the entrance to the centre of London on this key artery into the city centre. The long distance views and local views create the setting for designing the external appearance of the building to minimise visual coalescence and accentuate the slender elegance of the buildings.

Residential quality has been a key focus of the design development with inset balconies providing private amenity space and complemented by the new public realm landscaped areas within Newcastle Place. Each home is designed to maximise daylight/sunlight levels whilst facade system design responds to current energy, air quality and acoustic performance requirements.

Facades are designed to be vertically expressed and with a minimum number of bays. The simplicity of the design creates an organic rhythm of expressed columns, spandrels, bays and balconies. The buildings draw on the successful architectural articulation of the Westmark tower, helping the proposals to read as a cluster of tall buildings.

5.3 Design Drivers

Key design issues that have been addressed during the review and development of the scheme are as follows:

- Provision of a residential led development of appropriate scale and massing for the local area, providing a significant number of new, high quality dwellings.
- Residential quality delivered through recessed balconies providing private amenity, maximising the number of dual aspect units and views out, and providing good levels of daylight and sunlight within the new homes whilst minimising the impacts on neighbours.
- Building heights and design respectful of all long distance views, specifically those from the Little Venice and Royal Parks, whilst also marking the key gateway junction on the corner of Edgware and Harrow Road to form a successful cluster of tall buildings.
- The creation of much needed permeability of the urban block to create new routes through and into the site in order to repair the broken streetscape.

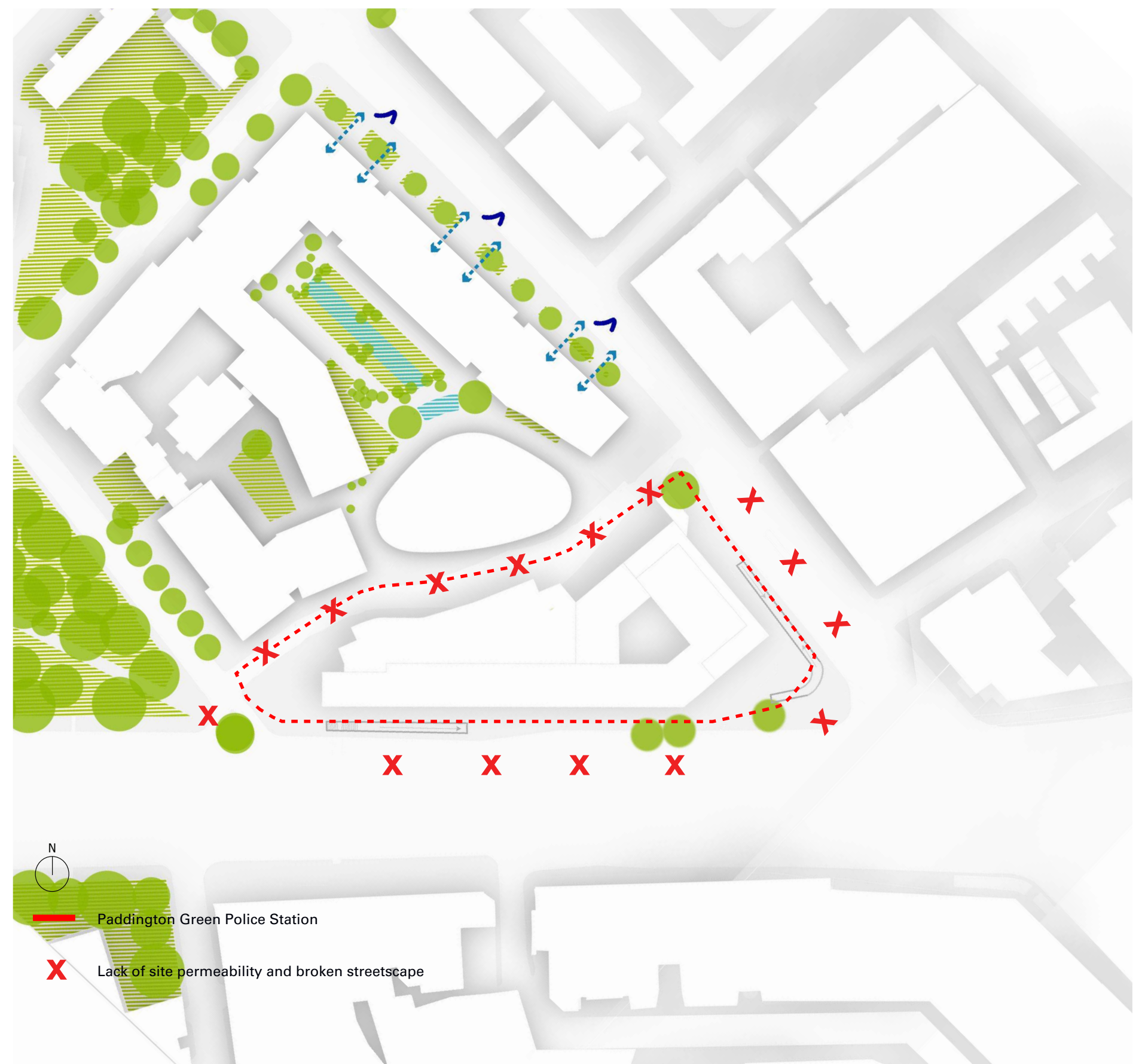


Fig. 5.2 Paddington Green Police Station - Existing site constraints

- Newcastle Place and the associated public realm re-imagined as a green urban oasis with high quality landscape and public realm improvements combined with significant uplift in biodiversity. Distinct character areas define the public realm scheme and contribute to making the development a successful place to live.

These drivers combine to provide a high quality residential development supported by publicly accessible, landscaped realm, combined with ground floor activation through retail, office, affordable workspace and residential amenity spaces.

The site presents opportunities and constraints relating to existing land use policy, social-economics, archaeology, noise, air quality, ground conditions, water resource management, biodiversity enhancement, wind, daylight and sunlight, and townscape and visual amenity, all of which have informed the detailed planning of the site. The following sections of this Chapter describe the design evolution processes undertaken by the Design Team as part of the detail GLA Design Review process. A series of site layouts and built form options are presented and described along with the necessary explanations that have informed the evolution of the alternatives considered.

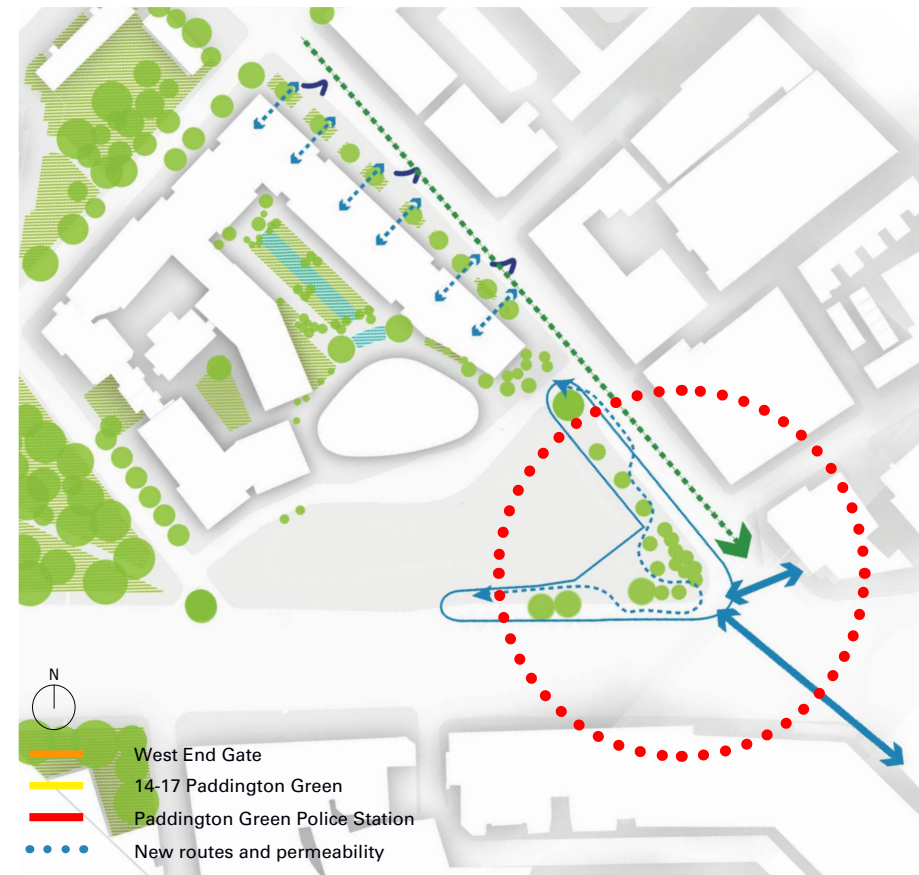


Fig. 5.3 Site Context

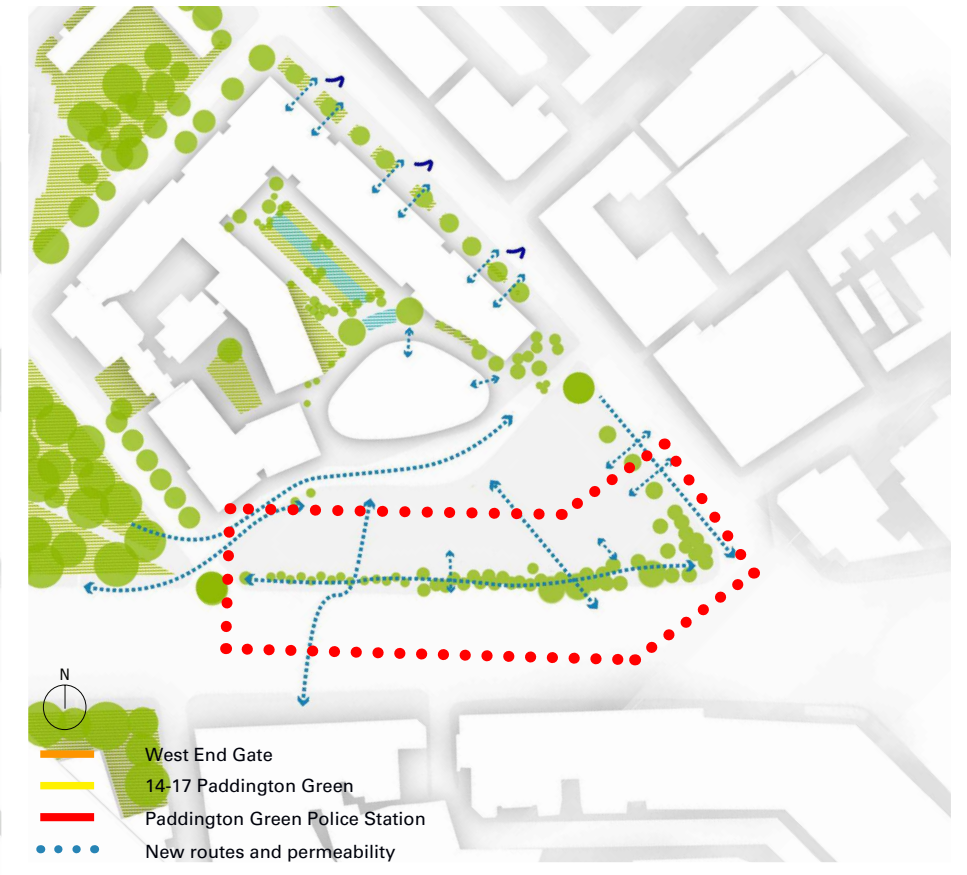


Fig. 5.4 Harrow Road - Landscape and Site Permeability

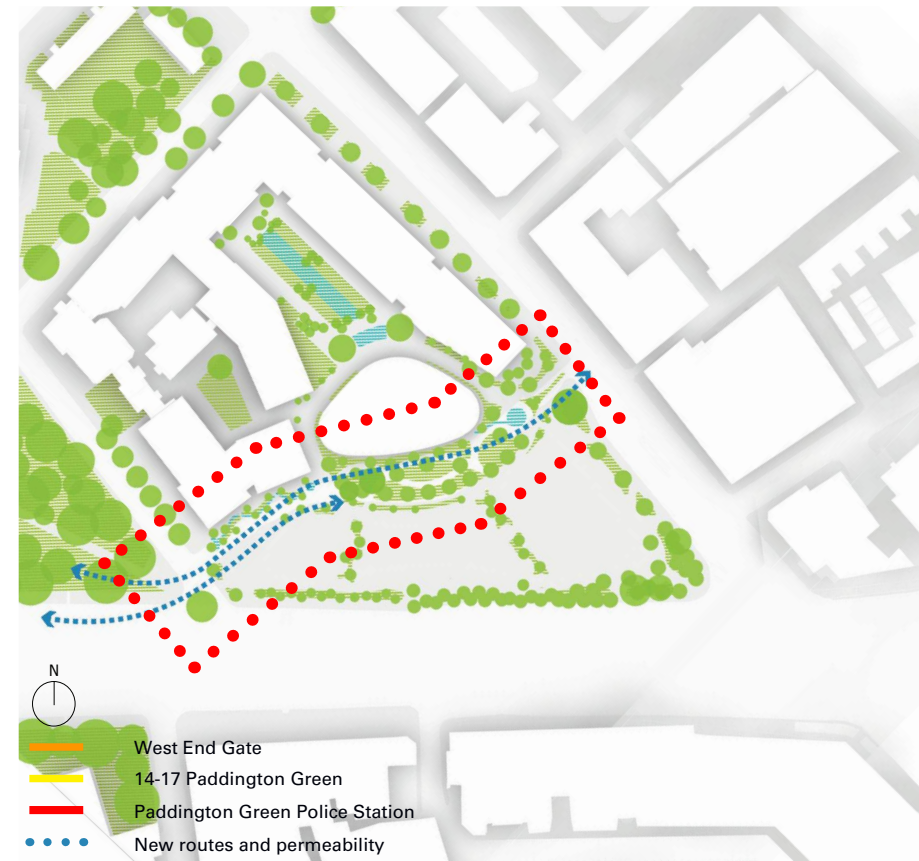


Fig. 5.5 Harrow Road - Landscape and Site Permeability



Fig. 5.6 Newcastle Place - Green Urban Oasis

5.4 Design Evolution

Driven by the key design requirements, the scheme has been explored in depth to examine the potential to make significant improvements to the legibility of the blocks, improvements to residential quality and significant improvements to the extent and character of the public realm spaces.

Various massing options have been explored to realise these ambitions and to ensure the most suitable design response has been proposed. The resultant layouts take on board feedback throughout the process and look to deliver a successful design solution for a challenging and constrained site.

5.5 Key Design Opportunities

Key site opportunities have driven the development of the massing and building layouts (fig. 5.3-5.6). These include;

- An opportunity to create a new gateway tower where the old Roman Edgware Road running north/south meets the west/east orientated Westway.

- Regenerate and activate the corner of Edgware Road to create a new urban realm and destination that will repair the broken streetscape that surrounds the existing police station.
- Create a grouping of tall buildings incorporating the height and prominence of the Westmark and 1 Merchant Square to allow the new cluster of tall buildings to gradually step up in height.
- Frame the entrance to Newcastle Place with a feature building adjacent to the corner of Paddington Green that utilises the unique site constraints to create an architecturally striking building form and deliver new public realm to extend the green welcoming spaces of Paddington Green.
- Re-imagine Newcastle Place as a pedestrian green urban oasis creating a new green artery that will connect Paddington Green to Edgware Road.
- Introduce much needed permeability of the urban block to dismantle the urban fortress environment associated with the former high security police station and create pedestrian movement from Harrow Road to Newcastle Place.

Throughout the GLA Design Development process, these key aims have remained relevant to the development of the design response with further emphasis placed on the delivery of character driven public realm that reflect the unique history and opportunities of the site.

5.6 Massing and Scale

The massing and scale of the buildings are driven by four factors:

- Townscape studies of the building in terms of height, mass and context.
- London's requirement to meet housing demands and affordable housing needs.
- Public consultation and comments from the wider public

The illustrative views adjacent (fig. 5.9) capture the mass and scale of revised development in the immediate vicinity of the site and the concepts developed in response to this context. Utilising this information, the design was further developed to carefully sculpt the building forms to ensure the proposals sit comfortably within the existing and emerging context. Key revisions to the overall bulk and massing have also seen greatly reduced building footprints which result in more elegant and slender building forms that sit more comfortably when viewed from the streets around the site and in views from distance.

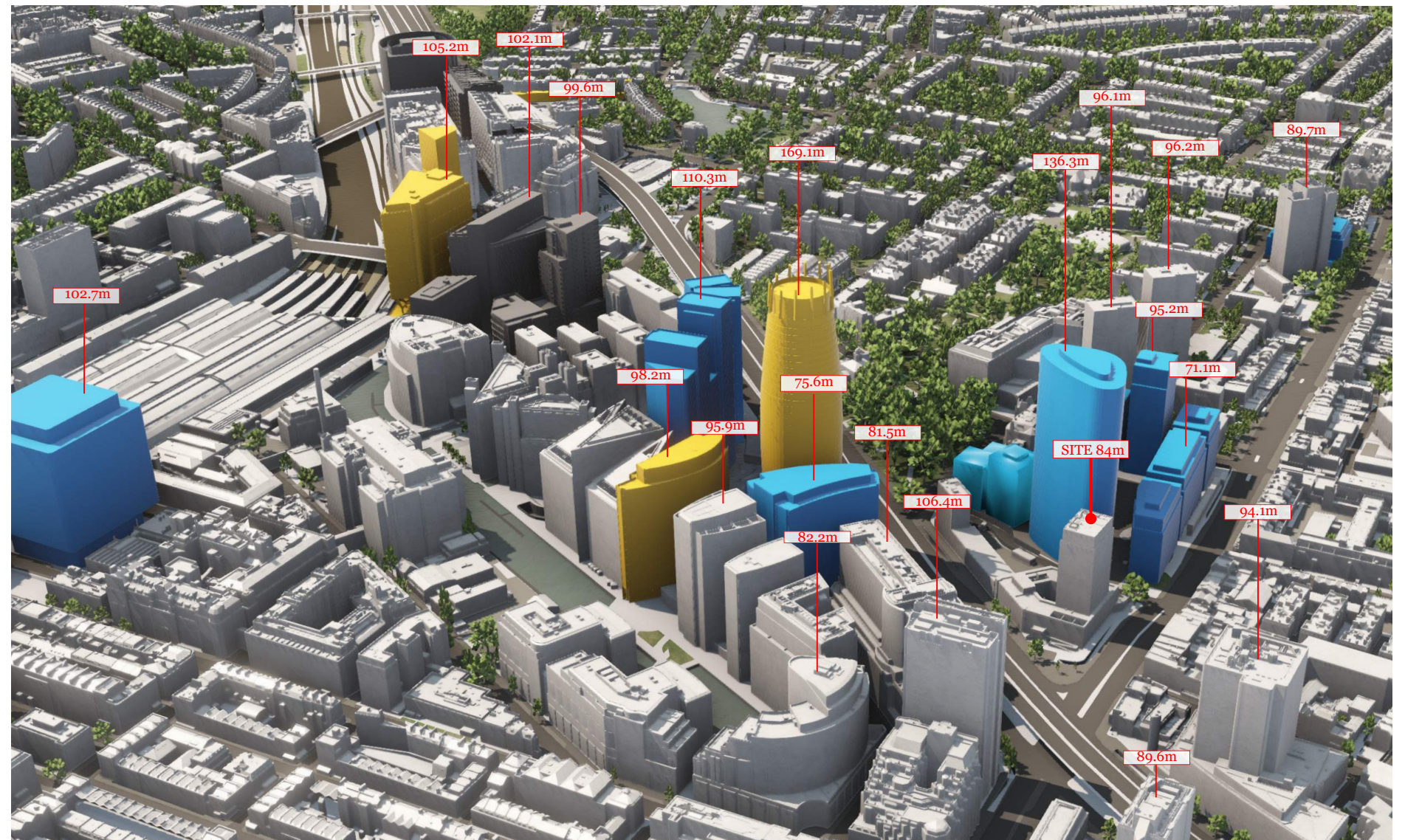


Fig. 5.7 Aerial view of site and surrounding context



Fig. 5.8 2021 submitted view from Westbourne Terrace Road Bridge, Little Venice

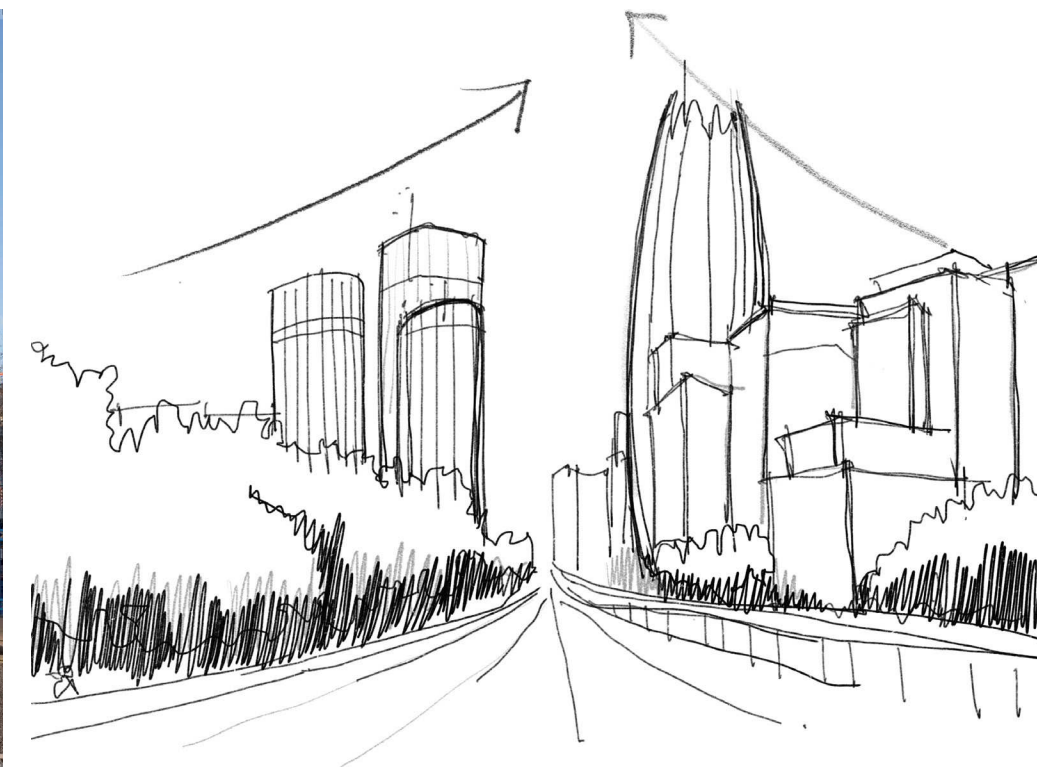


Fig. 5.9 Concept sketch of tall buildings defining key gateway into London

5.7 Massing Design Options

The axonometric views adjacent (Fig. 5.11) illustrate a series of studies that have been carried out to explore the impact of height and mass during the design process.

The original concept looked at the introduction of two towers that would complement the existing Westmark to complete a family of tall buildings. Comments received via Pre-App discussions with WCC noted that whilst this maintained the design language and sculptural form of the existing tower, the views from distance highlight issues with bulk and mass, leading to coalescence of the building forms on the site.

In response to this, the proposals were revised to break down the buildings into smaller footprints that would lead to more slender and elegant tall elements, helping to reduce the visual impact of the proposals when viewed from distance.

As a result of comments received during consultation with key stakeholders and the public, the gateway tower on the corner of Edgware Road has risen and fallen through the design process from a high point of 42 storeys, reducing slightly to 32 storeys and ultimately fixing at 39 storeys in height to deliver a refined and sculpted building form marking the gateway into the city centre and sitting as part of the cluster of tall buildings with Westmark at 30 storeys and 1 Merchant Square rising to 42 storeys.

Similar comments from the GLA development process has led to the building form adjacent to the corner of Paddington Green being increased in height from an initial high point of 18 storeys to 24 storeys. This move has allowed the feature building marking the entrance to Newcastle Place and the wider West End Gate masterplan to truly emphasise the importance of this access point adjacent to Paddington Green whilst providing more usable public realm as the building footprint has reduced. In addition, the design moves have sought to improve the buildings relationship with West End Gate and 14-17 Paddington Green whilst also delivering improvement to daylight and sunlight levels.

Finally, the central block sits considerably lower than the main tower buildings. This step down in height reduces the massing and maximises the extent of daylight that penetrates into the new homes, green avenues and urban oasis in Newcastle Place.

Each of these key design moves has been carried out in response to comments received from WCC, GLA, and the consultation process. The proposals have been tested to explore the impact on views from distance and interrogated against, existing and consented schemes in the vicinity

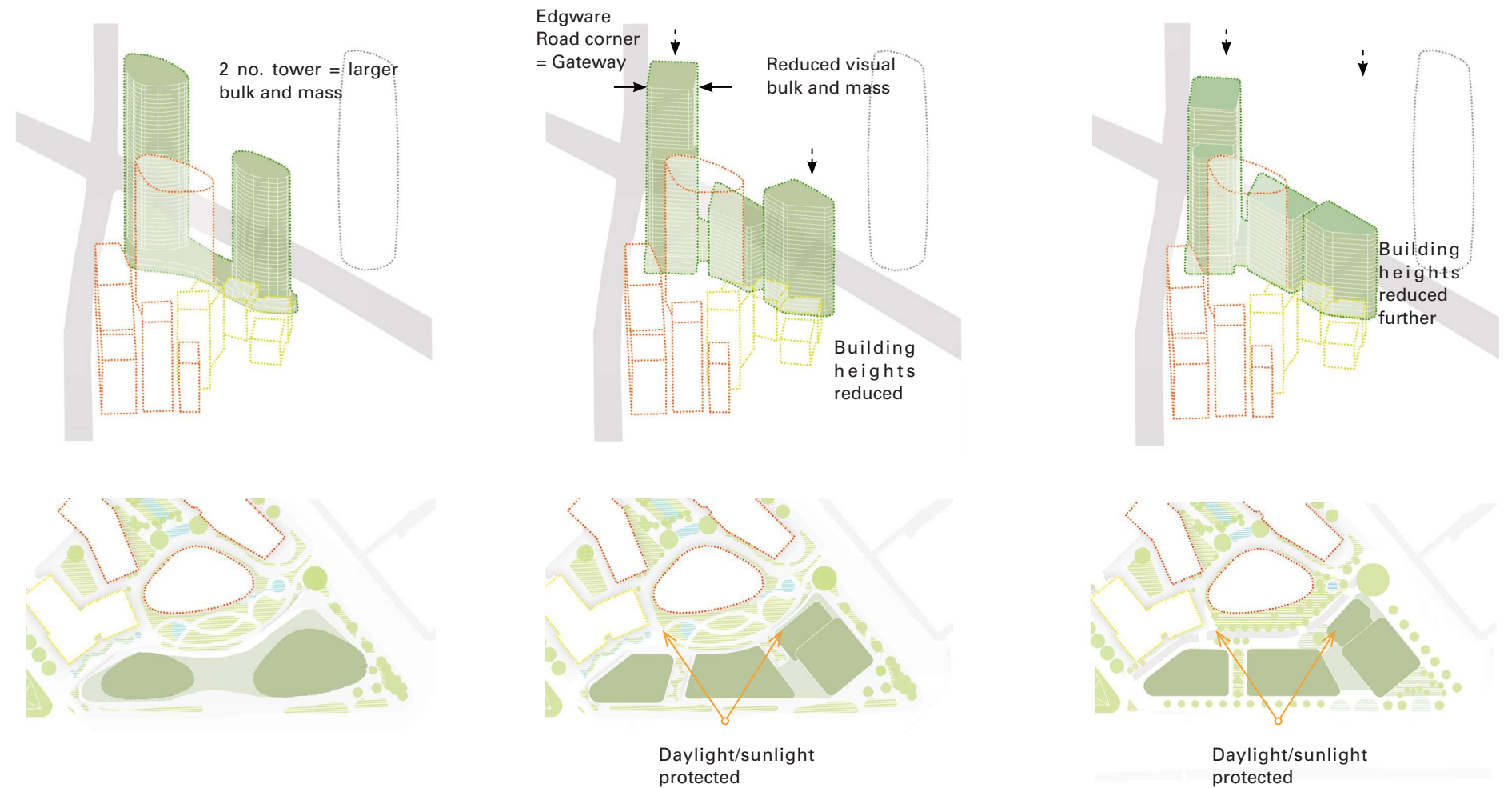
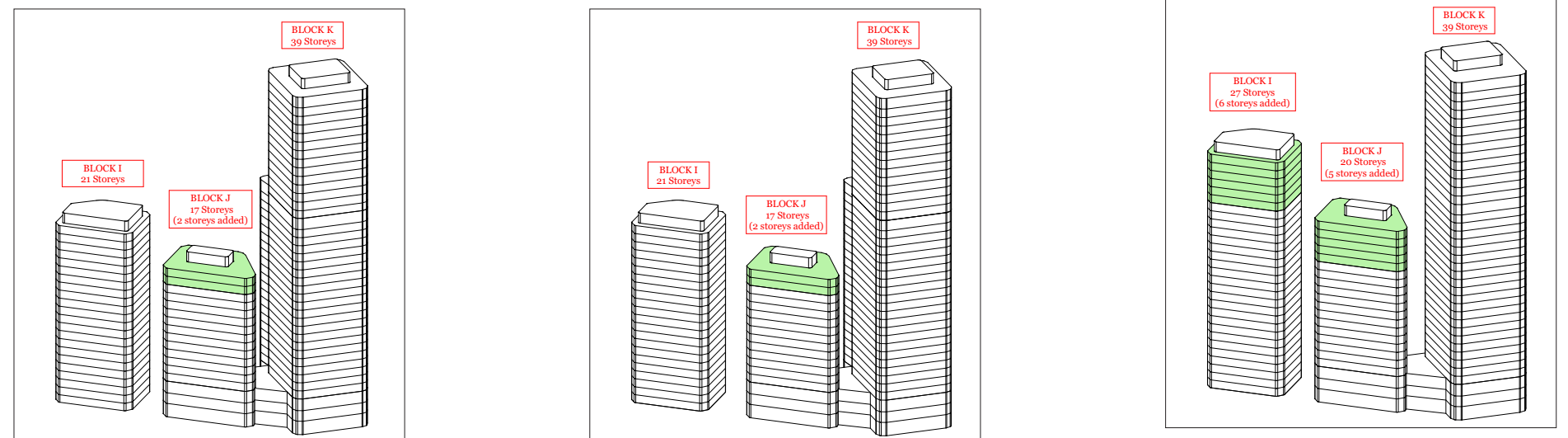


Fig. 5.10 Building massing development



Option 1

- Blocks J and K moved west.
- Results in less public realm in Newcastle Place between the existing Westmark tower and Block K.
- Increased space on Edgware Road not useable.

Option 3

- Distance between Block I and J increased from 12m to 13m or 15m wide.
- Resulting space is oversized, disconnecting Block I from the rest of the development.

Option 5

- Block K shoulder omitted to reduce visual bulk and mass.
- In order to maintain the number of homes on site Block I & J is increased in height creating a much larger tower that has an impact on Townscape views.

Fig. 5.11 Building height development

5.8 Initial Pre-Application Proposals

Concept Design - Option 01

The initial concept design proposals explored the development of two distinct towers located on the western and eastern corners of the site. The towers were sat upon a podium building form providing the opportunity for roof gardens to be incorporated and to provide much needed green space and improvements to the biodiversity of the site.

The building design followed the same organic form as the existing WEG tower and as such resulted in considerable visual bulk and mass when viewed from distance. Two towers were proposed at 42 storeys (Edgware Road corner) and 36 storeys (Paddington Green corner). The design aimed to develop the grouping of tall buildings, stepping up in height from Paddington Green to the Westmark, onwards to the key gateway tower on the corner of Edgware Road and reaching a pinnacle with 1 Merchant Square at Paddington Basin.

The following key design constraints were identified through the evolution of the concept and comments raised during pre-application discussions with WCC:

- Whilst this design response and façade articulation drew inspiration from the successful implementation of the WEG tower, the buildings were deemed to represent excessive bulk and mass when read against the buildings of the WEG masterplan and the wider context. Views from distance were problematic and led to unsuccessful building forms.
- The public realm improvements did not provide a focal point of regeneration to the important gateway junction of Edgware Road and Harrow Road/Westway.
- The podium created a wall like structure that impacted on the permeability of the site. The ability to create new pedestrian and cycle routes through the site was therefore limited;

As a result of this feedback, the design was developed to address the concerns raised.

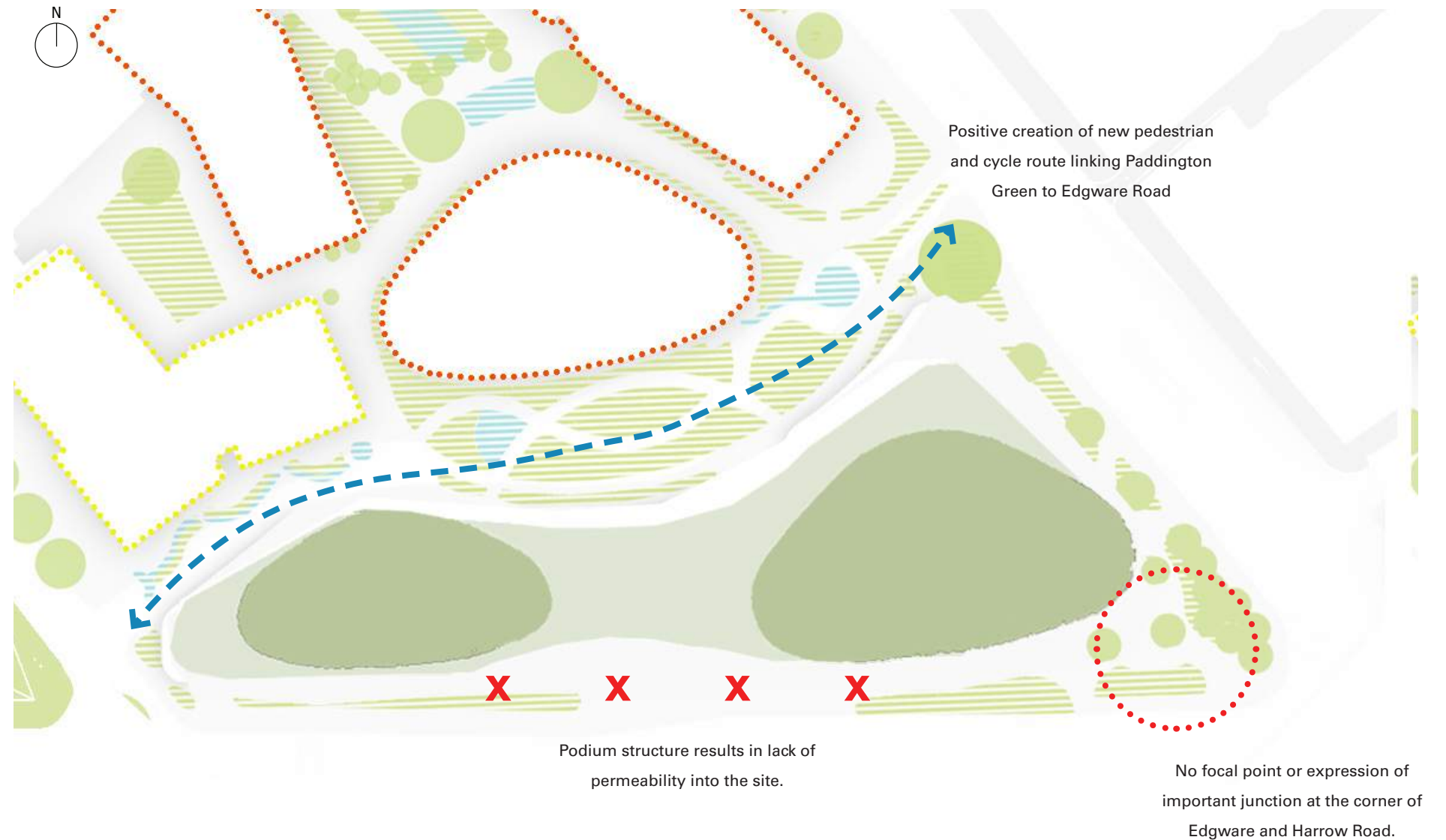


Fig. 5.12 Concept Design - Option 02 - Site Plan



Fig. 5.13 Concept Design - Option 01 - 2 blocks - 42 / 36 floors

5.9 Initial Public Consultation Proposals

Concept Design - Option 02

In order to further break down the mass and introduce much needed permeability to the urban block, the design was developed further to introduce three distinct building volumes. A more slender 39 storey tower was introduced to mark the gateway corner of Edgware and Harrow Road and was complemented by a flatiron 25 storey tower in the western corner overlooking Paddington Green, with a lower 15 storey mansion block positioned to the centre of the site.

Careful placement of the taller elements to the extremities of the site allowed for the central mansion block to step down in height and maximised daylight and sunlight into the Newcastle Place urban realm. The amended height allowed for smaller and more elegant building footprints, improving sightlines and spacing between buildings whilst also helping to mark the junction of Edgware and Harrow Road.

The overall result, as shown in Figure 4.14 delivered a more considered design response that reinforced the importance of the junction of Edgware and Harrow Road/Westway, created a new urban realm across from the Edgware Road Underground station and addressed the concerns raised with regards to bulk, mass and coalescence.

The following consultation feedback was provided:

- Excessive height was noted during pre-application discussions with WCC and as part of the consultation process. It was noted that WCC felt that 39 storeys on the corner of Edgware Road and 25 storeys on the corner of Paddington Green was too high.
- The architectural language was noted as very similar to the existing buildings and as such made it harder to distinguish each building form when viewed from distance, impacting on the quality of the proposals.

In response to these comments, the design was further refined to reduce the overall height and visual impact of the towers whilst also exploring more fluid and organic architectural forms that would help to generate more unique building forms.

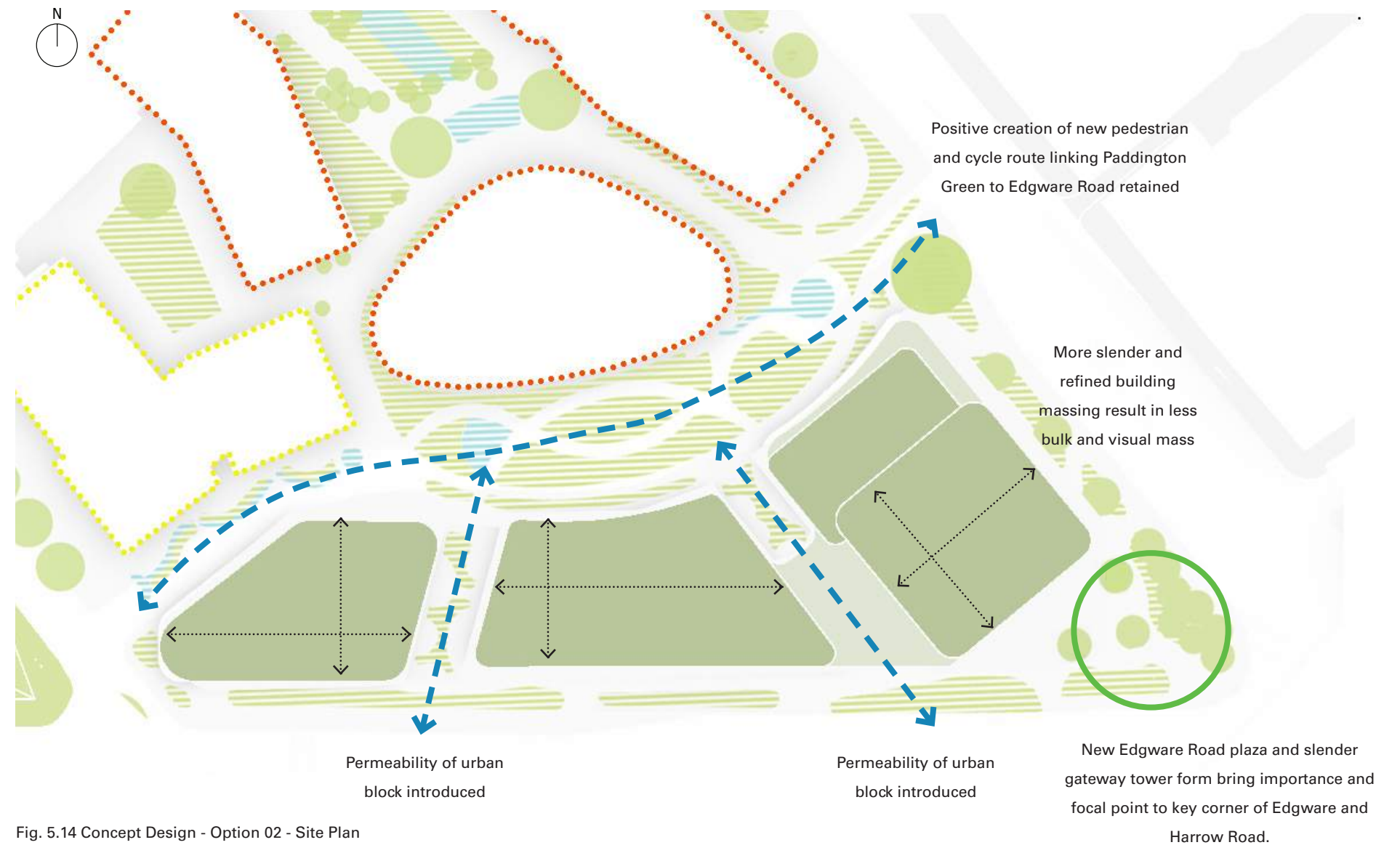


Fig. 5.14 Concept Design - Option 02 - Site Plan



Fig. 5.15 Concept Design - Option 02 - Design Visuals

5.10 2021 Submitted Scheme - Concept Design Proposals

The selected scheme continued to evolve to capture comments and feedback from pre-application meetings with WCC, the GLA, consultation with key stakeholders and the local community. The following refinements were made in order to deliver a final Concept Design Proposal for the 2021 scheme:

- The building layouts were revised to provide more orthogonal building footprints, resulting in more rational and refined homes. The shoulder element of the gateway tower was rotated/ twisted in order to provide a more dynamic relationship with the main tower, whilst still retaining the slender and elegant building form on the important corner of the site.
- Various massing studies were undertaken to address building height concerns and through the evolution of the design proposals, 32 storeys was set for the gateway corner tower. The height of the tower aimed to allow the new gateway tower to step up slightly from the height of the existing 30 storey Westmark tower, helping to differentiate the two building forms.
- More organic facade articulation to the main gateway tower were explored to provide this building form with a dedicated character and style.
- The new Edgware Road plaza was retained on the gateway corner, helping to regenerate the urban realm and bringing activity and life to the development and the wider area.
- The urban green oasis throughout Newcastle Place was retained as an important link between Paddington Green and Edgware Road.

These key design moves helped to deliver a more cohesive and detailed series of Concept Design proposals with which the design of the proposals have been driven.

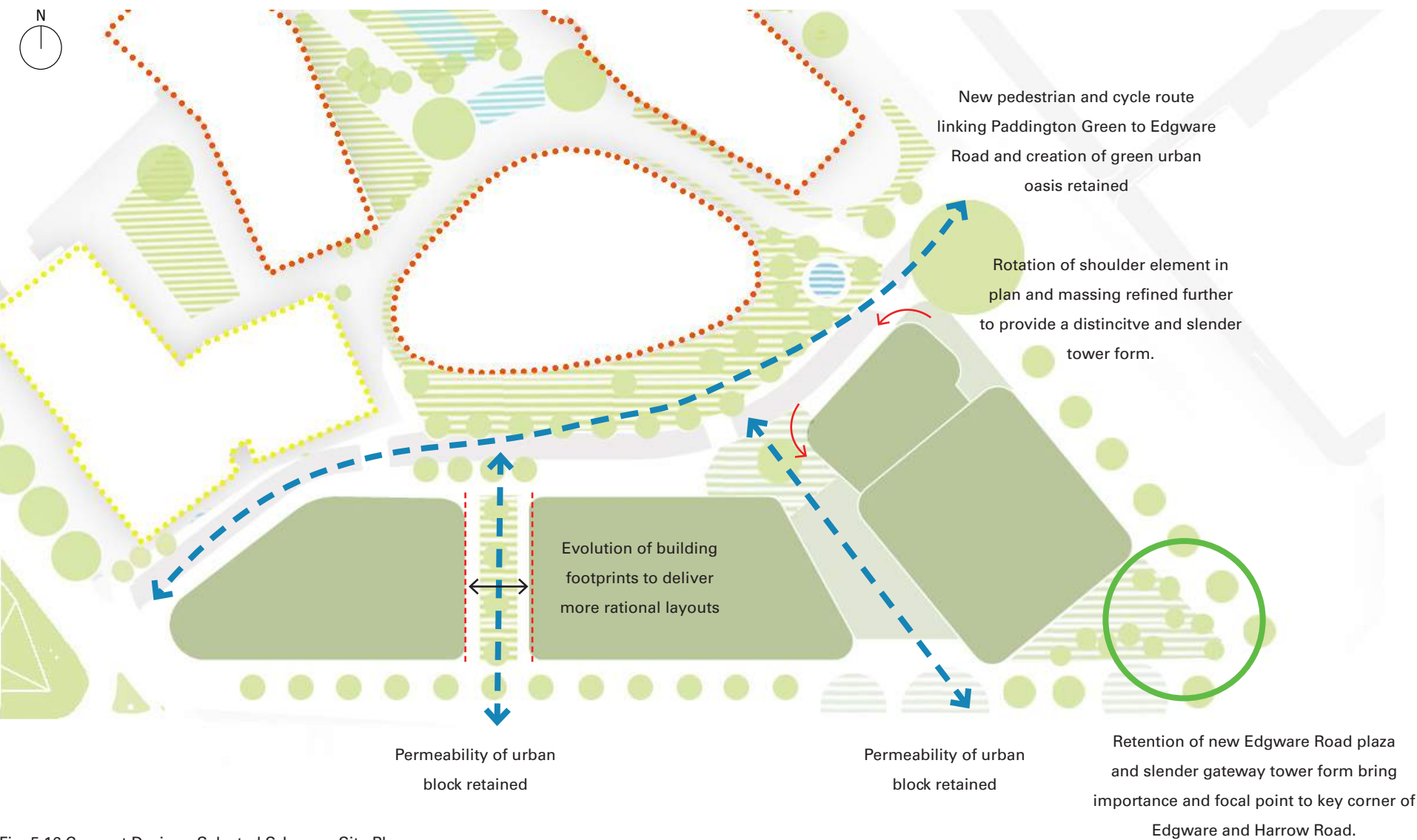


Fig. 5.16 Concept Design - Selected Scheme - Site Plan



Fig. 5.17 Concept Design - Selected Scheme - 3 blocks - 32 / 15 / 18 floors