

WEST BAR///

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

An aerial photograph of a city street grid. Several buildings are highlighted with architectural renderings. A tall, blue and yellow cylindrical building is prominent in the upper left. To its right, a multi-story building with orange and blue facades is shown. Further right, another tall building with a blue and yellow cylindrical top is visible. The rest of the city is shown in a realistic, slightly desaturated style.

SO

Masterplan Development



3.1 Scheme Objectives



In which we describe the objectives for the scheme set out in the brief for the West Bar site and the way that the masterplanning team has embraced these objectives.

Sheffield Council initially identified the opportunity to develop West Bar in 2002 as part of a strategy to ensure that the IRR did not become an urban motorway but rather a boulevard bounded by urban development. The brief for the site therefore included a set of design principles for the site. These principles were subsequently included in the Interim Planning Guidance for the site and have remained at the core of our masterplanning work:

EXTENDING THE CITY CENTRE

As our analysis shows, West Bar is the historic northern edge of the city centre. To the south the Cathedral Quarter runs up the valley site and within a 5 minutes walk of West Bar you are in the heart of the city. The urban form however starts to disintegrate on the southern side of West Bar and then the barrier created by the courts building means that the main part of the site feels a million miles from the centre of the city. This in turn means that the emerging Kelham Island Quarter and the Wicker feel isolated from the city centre. The masterplan extends the urban form of the city centre northwards mending the shattered urban fabric that separates the City Centre from Kelham Island and the Wicker.

URBAN CHARACTER AND DENSITY

The brief envisaged a masterplan for the site with a strong, street-based urban character with narrow streets between a series of mixed-use urban blocks. This has been developed by the masterplanning team into a citadel concept as described in the following pages. The masterplan creates a strong urban edge to the IRR and Bridge Street with a series of tightly enclosed public spaces passing through the site.

A MIX OF USES

The brief sought a full mix of uses with offices or housing on the upper floors and an entirely active ground floor. The masterplan has taken this on board with a roughly 50:50 split between offices on the western side of the street along Corporation Street and housing along Bridge street and in the two larger towers

The brief proposed that the site be brought forward by different architects within a strong masterplanning and public realm framework

(including student housing). The ground floor is then active throughout the heart of the scheme with workshops along Bridge Street and office entrances onto Corporation street.

AN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT

The brief required that the scheme created a series of legible, attractive and welcoming public routes from the city centre to the River and to Kelham Island. The plan does this by establishing two diagonal routes from West Bar on either side of the courts that both lead to a central square. This square then distributes routes to the river and to the north towards the pedestrian crossing on the IRR leading to Kelham Island. This 'X' shaped routes is designed to have active ground floors as far as possible on both sides of the route (even where this creates irregular shaped development sites). It is also designed so that there are clear views into the square at the heart of the site to draw people through.

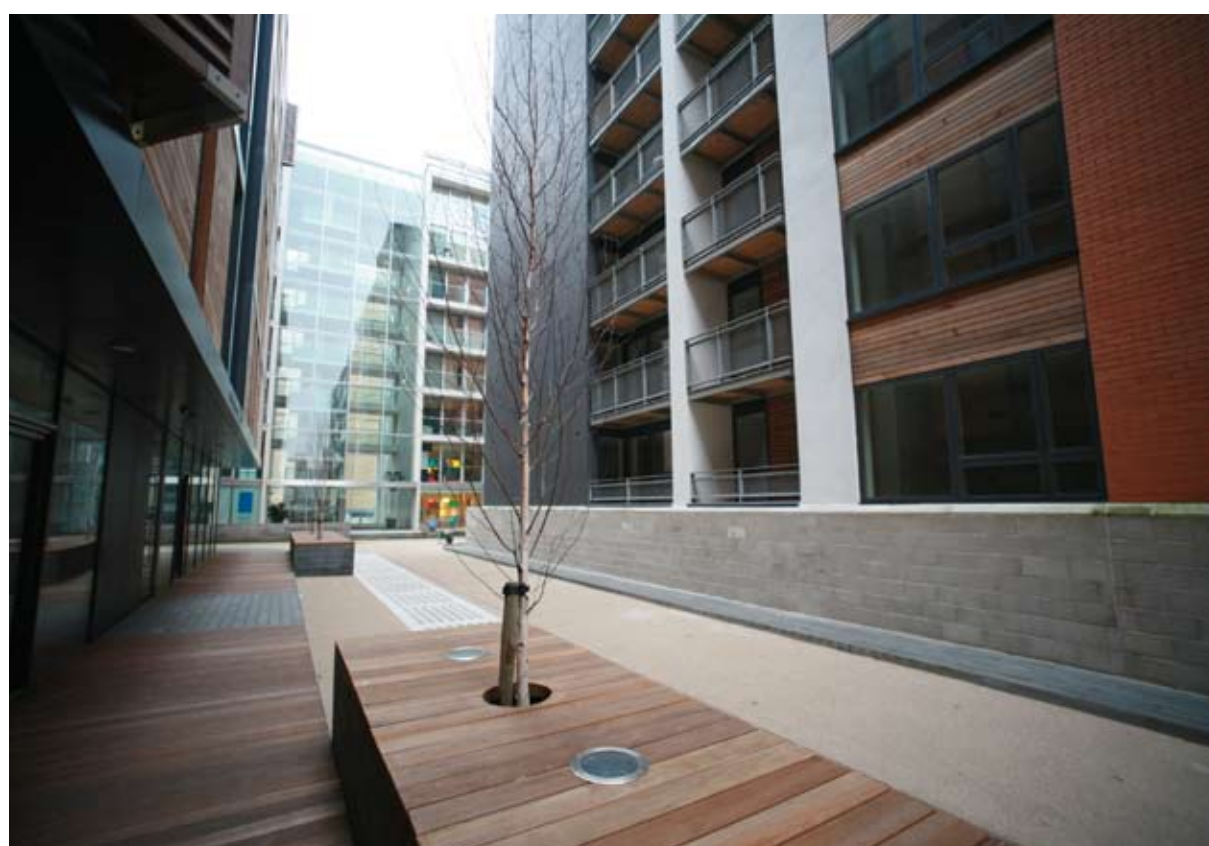
DESIGN QUALITY

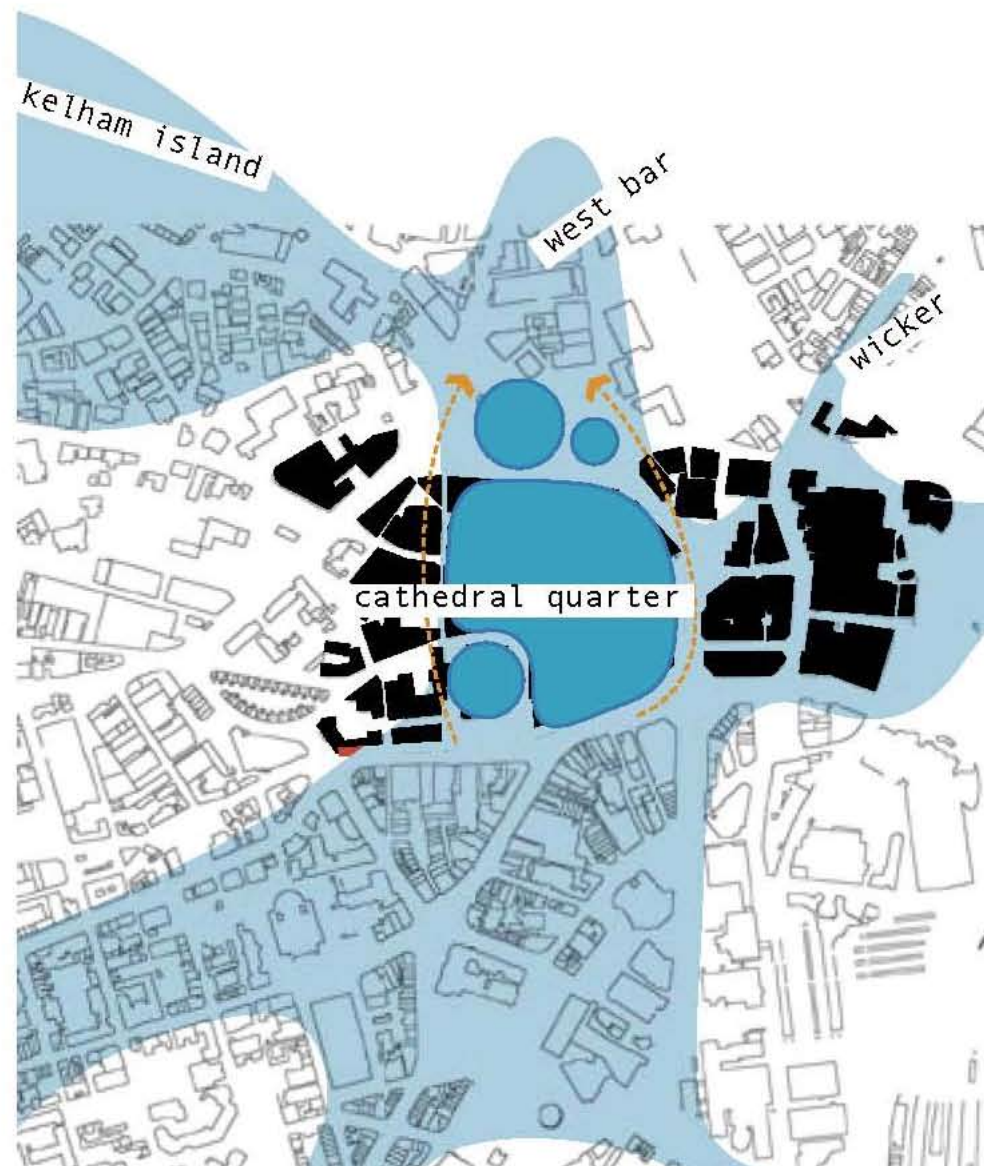
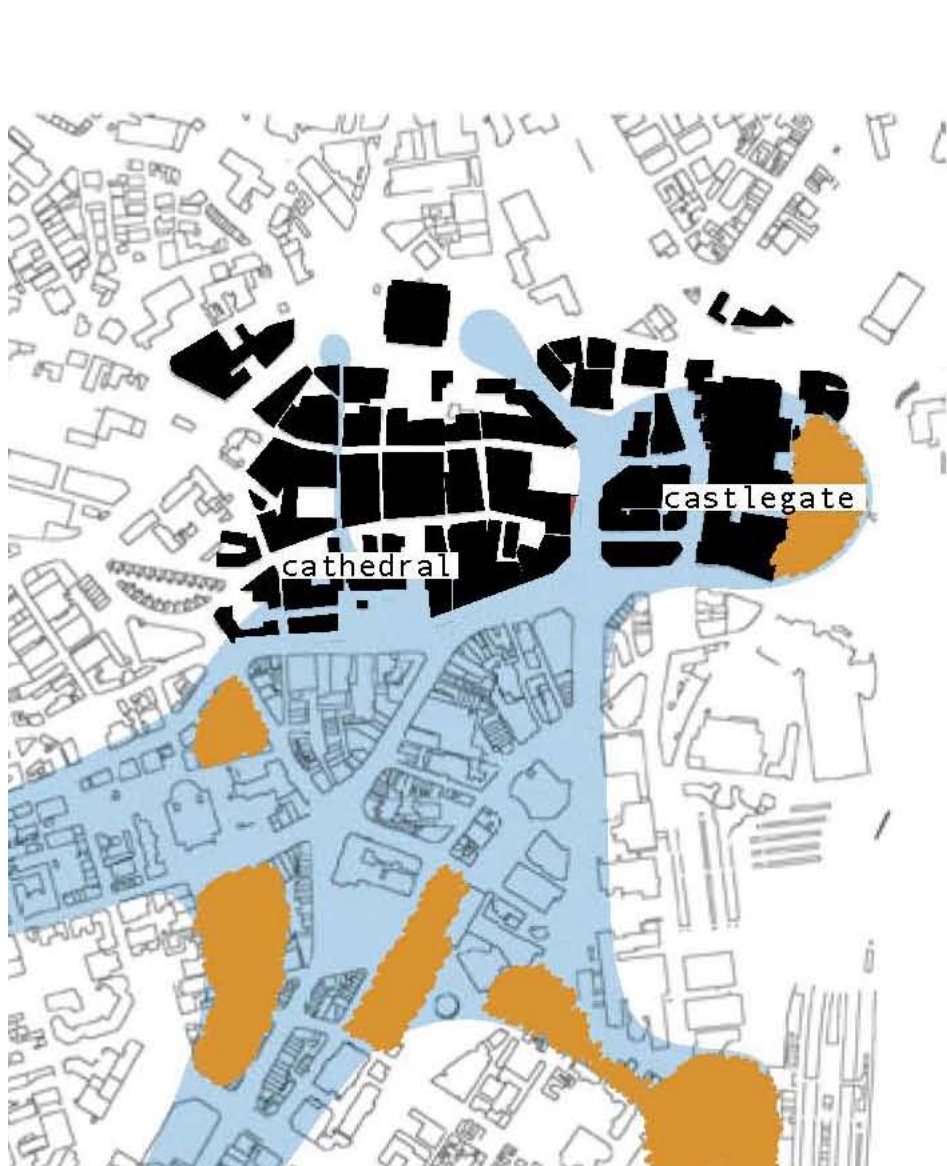
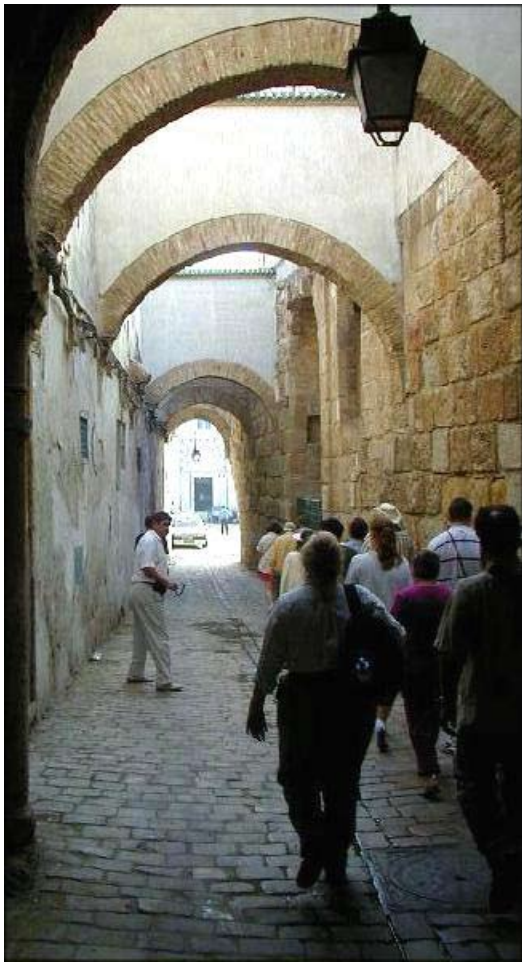
The brief proposed that the site be brought forward by different architects within a strong masterplanning and public realm framework. This has underpin the masterplanning approach.

The masterplan has been coordinated by URBED while six different architect teams from five different practices have developed the buildings in the plan with opportunities for two further architects to be appointed. The public realm has been coordinated by Landscape Projects with specific advice on public art from In-site. Friendly competition and internal design crits have created an atmosphere where the scheme includes the highest design quality. The corner buildings in particular, the three towers have been designed as landmark buildings that will create a gateway to Sheffield on the new IRR.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Buro Happold have been appointed to develop a sustainability strategy for the site with a brief that they should take it as far as the viability of the scheme allows. An important decision has been to link the scheme to the Sheffield District Heating system and to set demanding targets for the individual buildings. Buro Happold's sustainability strategy is available as a separate report.





Top: In meeting the objectives in the masterplanning brief the team drew inspiration from walled cities - these have a very clear edge and a form that can be read as a single composition made up of a series of elements. The open spaces outside the town are contrasted with the tight streets within (**top right**).

Middle: The aim of the plan is to extend the activity of the city centre northwards. At present the city centre activity (in blue on the left hand plan) barely reaches the law courts. The masterplan is designed to unblock this barrier to allow activity to flow through to Kelham Island and the river.

Bottom: The city wall of Manchester's warehouses and the city gateway of Berlin's Potsdamer Platz.

3.2 The Competition Scheme



In which we describe the original competition masterplan and the origins of the Citadel concept as a unifying factor for the plan.

West Bar lies on the northern edge of Sheffield City centre in a 'shatter zone' of very limited urban quality. In developing a masterplan there is very little in the existing urban context to work with, it is difficult to integrate the plan into an urban context because none exists. The Masterplan therefore creates its own context by developing the idea of a citadel that can be read as a single mass from the open areas around the site. This is then carved up by a series of primary and secondary routes as shown on the early sketch drawings at the bottom of the page.

An early inspiration was the Walled City in Kowloon, a former Chinese military base that was abandoned and yet lay outside the jurisdiction of Hong Kong. Over the years it was colonised by a squatter community creating the most extraordinary 8 storey high city. We don't propose to recreate the conditions of the Walled City but we hope to recreate a small part of its intensity.

CITADEL

The starting point was to define the citadel and to use development to define a strong edge to this bastion. The aim was to make this solid using heavy materials and with limited opening for streets so that the citadel would read as a single object.



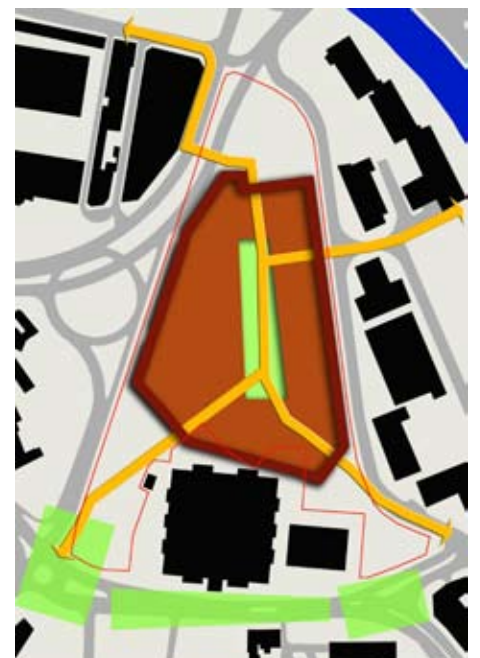
CONNECTIONS

The next step was to create the key routes. These, by necessity came either side of the court building feeding into the heart of the site. From here links are created to the river and northwards to Kelham Island. The routes create winding sequential views through the site to draw people through.



SQUARE

At the heart of the site we create a linear space. This is the gathering point for the routes through the site and is oriented north south to catch the noonday sun. The square is modeled on a medieval square, narrow and long to create both a place and a route through the site.



The Masterplan creates its own context by developing the idea of a citadel that can be read as a single mass from the open areas around the site.



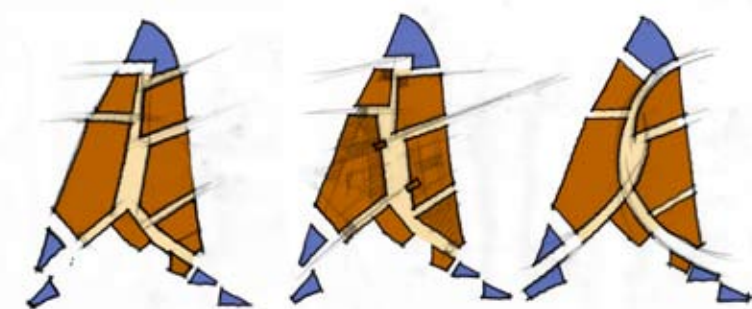


GATEWAYS

To maintain the idea of the citadel the points at which the routes enter the city walls were to be marked with gateways. These are either pick points between buildings, gateways or routes through buildings.

CRYSTAL TOWERS

The original concept was that each of the three main entrances to the tower would be marked by glass towers. The southern entrances had two gateway towers on either side of the gateway with a wider, lower tower to the north.



3.3 The Consultation Scheme



In which we describe the work that was undertaken to develop and test the competition masterplan and to evolve it into the plan that was subject to a major consultation exercise in January 2006

Following the selection of Castlemore as preferred developers the team spent the Autumn of 2005 developing and testing the masterplan.

This involved the start of a programme of monthly meetings with the Council and consultations with key stakeholders and agencies. During this period architectural practices were appointed for all of the key buildings and schemes drawn up for each of the buildings that could be costed and appraised.

In December 2005 the Council South East Planning Board gave approval for the council to consult on the draft Interim Planning Guidance covering the

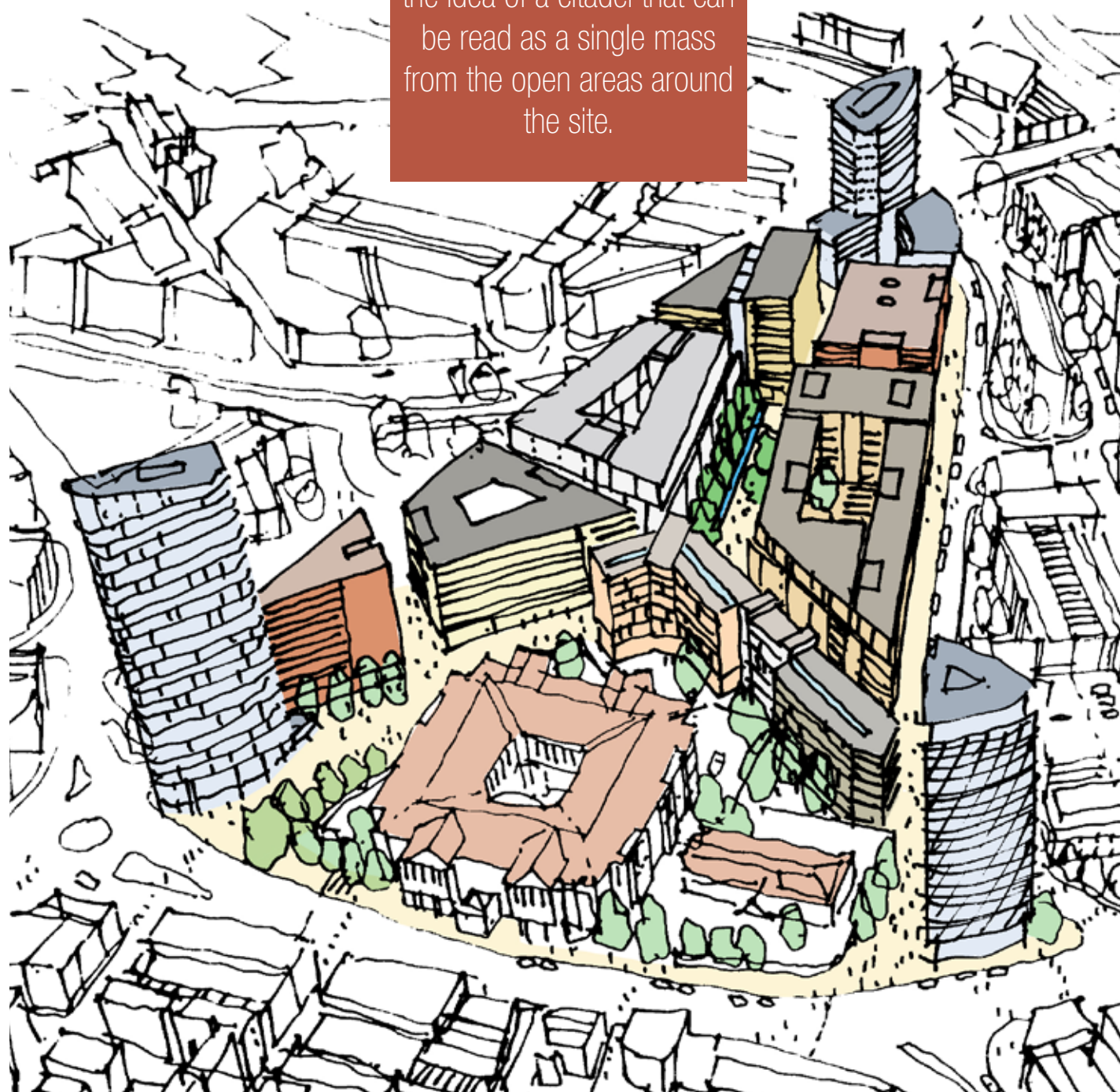
site. In early 2006 we were therefore in a position to consult both on the planning guidance and the emerging masterplan. This included a travelling exhibition that spent three days around the site in the city centre, as well as presentations to the City Centre Forum, the Netherthorpe and Upperthorpe Community Alliance, the Burngreave New Deal for Communities, the Kelham & Neepsend Riverside Form, the St. Vincents Forum, the Black Community Forum and the Sheffield Civic Society.

As described on the following page, the overwhelming response to this scheme was positive with 81% of respondents saying that they liked the masterplan concept.

As illustrated by the plan to the right, the fundamentals of the consultation scheme remained the same as the competition scheme. Viability testing caused Block 6 to get wider so that it could be developed more efficiently. This caused the square to move eastwards. Block 1 and Block 3 were joined and the based of Block 3 became a supermarket while the an office tower rose above Block 1. The remainder of the on the eastern part of the scheme remained

as office space. The Residential towers on West Bar were developed further to confirm their viability and Landscape Projects developed a full public realm scheme.

The Masterplan creates its own context by developing the idea of a citadel that can be read as a single mass from the open areas around the site.





3.4 The Consultation Response



In which we describe the response to the consultation exercise and the broadly positive comments that we received on the scheme.

Consultation took place over a 6 week period from late January to Early March 2006. This involved advertising the draft Interim Planning Guidance, making presentations to key stakeholders, organizing a traveling exhibition and setting up an interactive web site.

The URBED bus was used for public consultation. This was based in West Bar on Thursday 16th February, on the Wicker on Friday 17th and in Tudor Square on the Saturday. During this time approximately 330 people came onto the bus to look at the plans and model and to talk to the team. Of these 51 people completed feedback forms setting out their views on the scheme. At the same time a website (www.sheffieldwestbar.com) was launched as a consultation tool. By the end of the consultation period this has registered 523 unique users with a total of 874 page views. The responses to this consultation were broadly positive:

- **What do you think of the plans for West Bar?** 81% of respondents liked the plans with only 4% expressing dislike, the others being unsure.
- **What do you think of the Citadel concept?** A slightly smaller but still significant majority liked the idea of the citadel (72%), with 8% against.
- **What do you think of the mix of uses and planned open spaces?** 75% of people liked the mix of uses with only 6% disliking it.

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Broadly people welcomed the architectural ambition of the scheme. A typical comment was; "Would like to see designs that are eye catching and not more of the same monotonous buildings". This broadly extended to the towers, although there were some people who objected to there being more tall buildings in Sheffield.

"In favour of the towers as they do not swamp existing buildings."

"No high rise towers, there is enough city centre living already and instead one should create bars restaurants and landscaping."

"Use the roof space more imaginatively- roof gardens."

"Good quality building design is essential and please do not place a 'bunch' of cheap red bricks like Riverside."

"It is important that this gateway to the city is vibrant and striking."

"An exciting development that would enhance Sheffield's overall appearance"

"It is important that this gateway to the city is vibrant and striking."

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

There was considerable critical comment about the fact that the consultation scheme gave no detail of environmental sustainability; "Need green not grey thinking. Very surprised to see no mention of environmental sustainability". This related to issues such as recycling as well as cycling and tree planting. This issue has since been addressed by the masterplanning team.

"The provision of recycling facilities, effective signage, cycle routes and energy efficient processes of development and maintenance."

"There is no mention of the sustainability goals in the masterplan and there should be better consideration of environmental criteria and methods in place to improve them."

"Have you counted how many trees there are in the area at the minute? Virtually none, that needs putting right."

"More thought to energy conservation needed."

ACCESS

People were concerned that the surrounding area is unpleasant for pedestrians because it is dark, lacks activity and is steeply sloping up to the Cathedral. There was concern that this could undermine the scheme's aspiration to connect to the surrounding area and to create a destination in the evenings. Consultees believed that there was a need for wider improvements to the surrounding area.

"Reservation about the effectiveness of the area as a social evening destination- the pedestrian route from the cathedral quarter needs to be improved, with better lighting and paving to create a safer environment that will encourage people to move between the two areas."

"I love the concept but my concern is the connectivity between the development area and the rest of the city centre, for those who are less mobile as the terrain by the cathedral is rather steep."

"A need to link the city centre with the canal basin. The provision of recycling facilities, effective signage, cycle routes and energy efficient processes of development and maintenance."

"Welcome the pedestrian area. Excellent."

INFRASTRUCTURE

The main concern related to the level of parking which was felt to be insufficient. The scheme takes away city centre parking and there was concern that it could lead to parking problems elsewhere.

"Wants to know that the placement of bins will not be neglected as has been in other schemes where large bins are placed in inappropriate places."

"Does not feel that there is sufficient parking or delivery access in the site."

"Create some parking instead."

"Is there enough parking."

"Ensure that there is full cycle access, storage and links with the cities cycle routes."

REGENERATION

Overall the scheme was seen as having a transformational effect on this part of Sheffield and was welcomed.

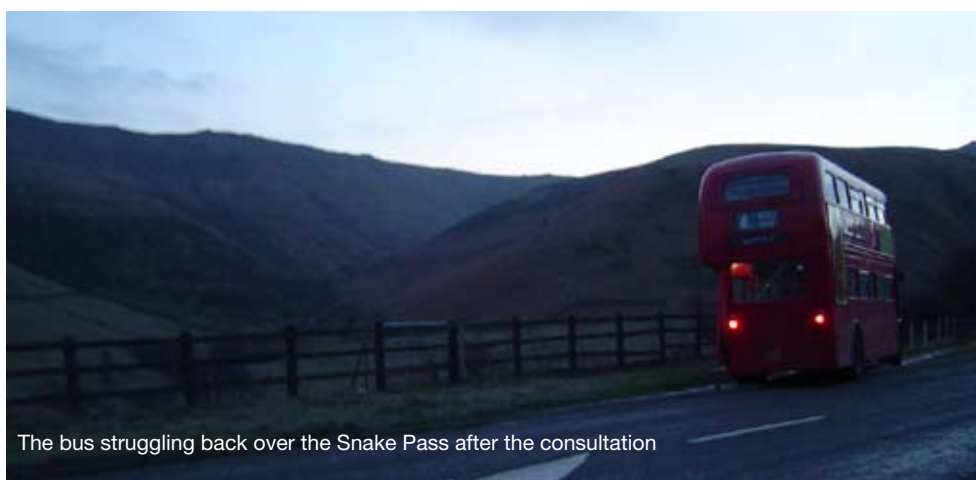
"I think this plan for West Bar is a fantastic opportunity for Sheffield and should be given the go ahead on the grounds that everything has been taken into consideration and it would be of benefit and something to be proud of by the people of Sheffield."

"This would give this area of Sheffield a well needed lift."

"Sheffield was a very old city which needed a lot of work to bring up to date. I am excited to see it when finished."

"Like the idea of spread to Kelham, like to see city blend into West Bar more."





The bus struggling back over the Snake Pass after the consultation



3.5 Scheme Development



In which we describe the development of the scheme post consultation and the way in which tensions between the appraisal and the urban design framework were resolved.

Following the consultation scheme the masterplan was developed in response to the comments made and the views of the council. At this stage the scheme was being pulled in different directions. On the one hand the planning authority was seeking clarification about the scale of the building and the level of enclosure of the streets and central square. On the other the work on the appraisal and potential occupiers was putting pressure on the masterplanning team to make the scheme more efficient and to amend individual blocks to address the needs of potential users.

The work on massing and the enclosure of space involved precedent studies of public spaces in UK cities to understand their dimensions as well as a study of the tight urban streets to understand the likely character of the streets proposed in the plan. A tall building study was also undertaken using the Z-Mapping computer model of the city to show the visual impact of the tall buildings. The plan to the right shows the scheme agreed with the City Council in Summer 2006. This however had developed into the plan overleaf by the time we presented to the Sheffield Urban Design panel. The issues being addressed at this time were:

■ **Block 1:** The slim tower in the earlier schemes was not viable because its floorplates were inefficient. The plan on this page and the following page therefore experiment with different forms of tower. The scheme was also expanded to accommodate the ramp to the car park in Block 3.

■ **Blocks 2,4,5 and 11:** These Blocks were initially developed as three separate office buildings but were then combined in the scheme overleaf into a single block with a central arcade. This was in response to a very

■ **Block 3:** The team were asked to explore expanding the block to accommodate a large supermarket below the multi-storey car park. This caused the block to expand westwards moving the north/south route to the eastern side of the square. It also expanded southwards so that the route between Block 3 and 6 no longer lined up with the route to the river. The supermarket was not acceptable to the Planning Authority on policy grounds and has been reduced in the final masterplan to a 'local' store. This has allowed the block to be shrunk back to its dimensions in earlier schemes.

■ **Block 6:** This was developed with a larger ground floor retail footprint by taking out the public courtyard. This reduced permeability and led to an excessive level of retailing.

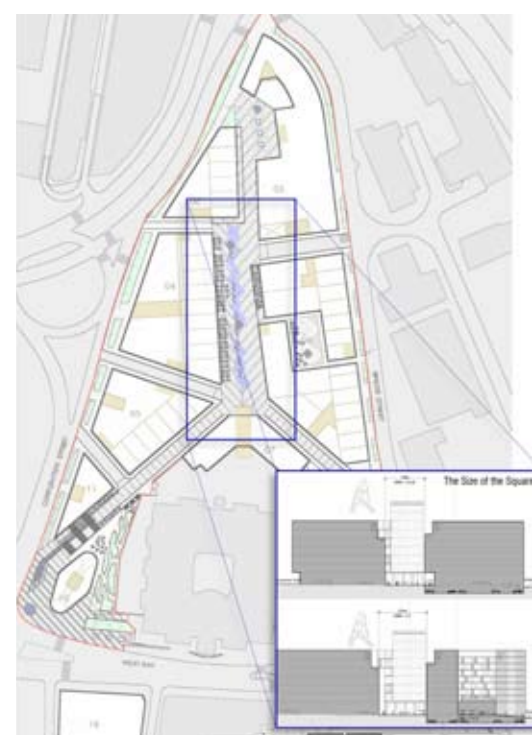
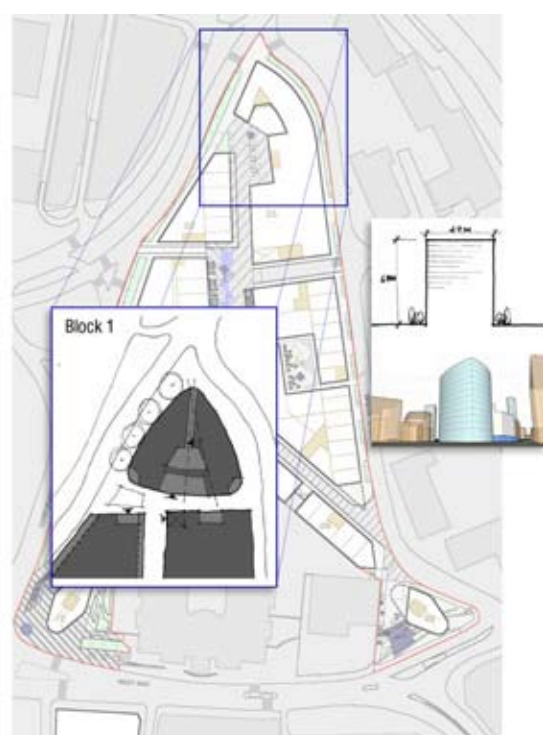
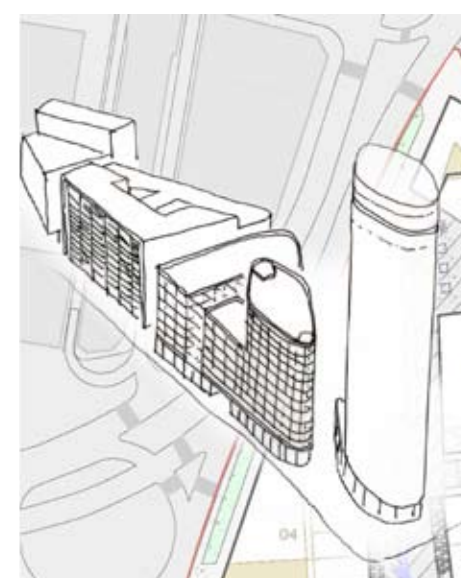
■ **Block 9:** The changes to block 9 took place subsequent to this plan. Pressure on floor area caused the architects, Jestico and Whiles to reconsider the floorplate shown. However this was felt not to work and the final masterplan reverts to the simpler plan shown.

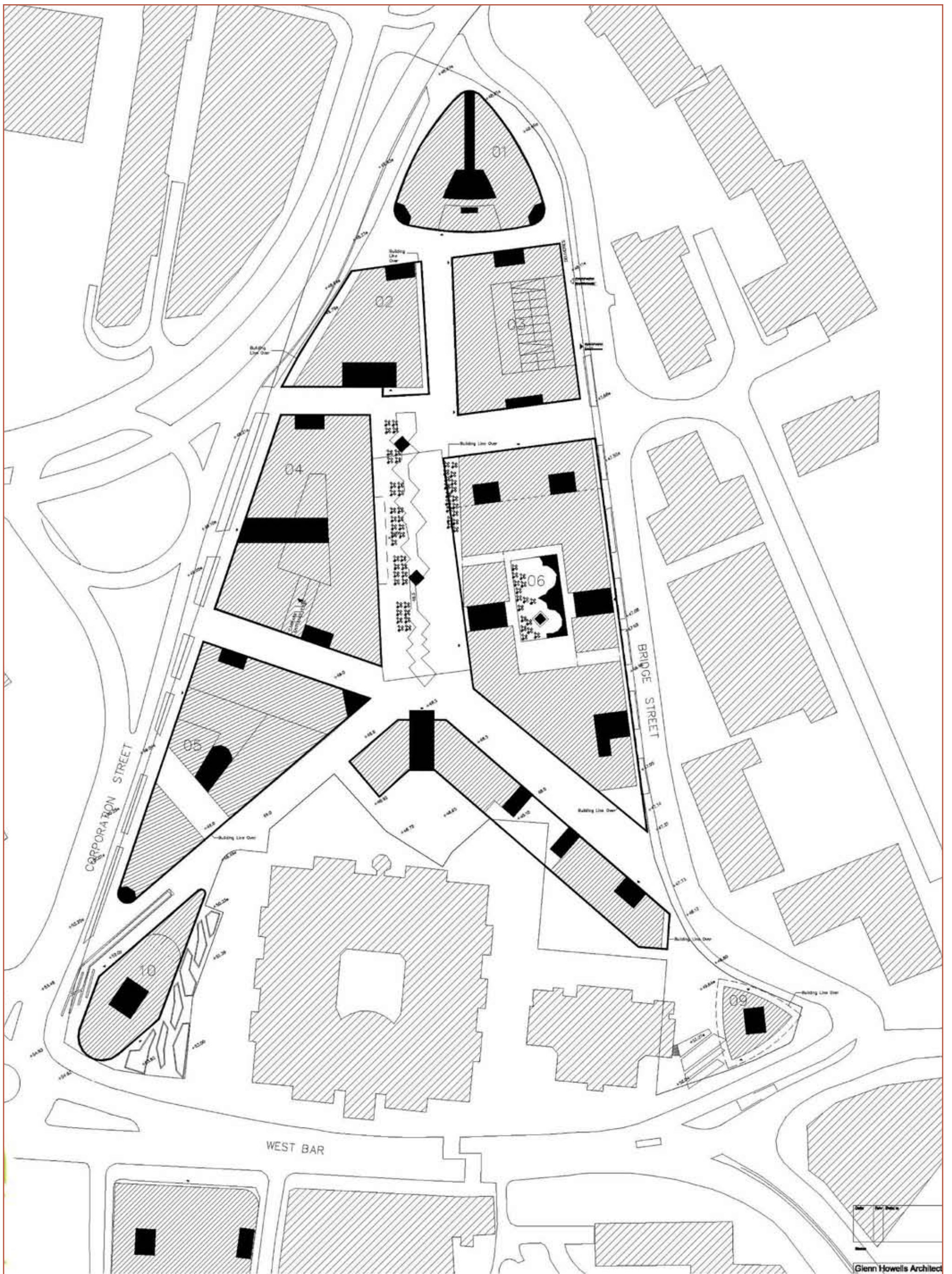
■ **Public Realm:** The effect of these changes was to reduce the amount of public realm, the length of the square, the enclosure of Kelham Square in the north of the scheme and the permeability of the scheme.

This scheme has been developed through detailed negotiation into the application masterplan described in the following section. This has reverted in many respects to the original competition and consultation schemes. However it has benefited from the appraisal work done on the plan to the right so that the viability of the scheme has been retained.

This scheme has been developed through detailed negotiation into the application masterplan described in the following section

large office requirement in the market seeking a head quarters office building. This reduced the permeability and grain of the scheme and has been broken up in the final masterplanning scheme.





3.6 Sheffield Urban Design Panel



In which we describe the two presentations that we have made to the Sheffield Urban Design Panel and how we have responded to their comments.

An important input to the development of the scheme in the early part of 2007 was the Sheffield Urban Design Review Panel. The master-planning team has presented to the panel on two occasions, first on 22nd February (the scheme illustrated on the previous page) and again on 31st May with something very close to the application masterplan.

At the initial meeting the Panel felt that the scheme was based on a strong concept and recognized the commitment to use a range of architecture practices and to create a series of distinctive urban spaces, commenting; 'there is a real ambition for place-making that is often lacking from other such proposals'. However the panel felt that the pressures at play on the scheme has watered down the concept and that there was a 'real danger that the whole framework could dissolve as a result'. The panels concerns, set out below, became the focus for the design team's work as described below:



LAYOUT AND CONTEXT

The February panel felt that increased floor areas in February had led to the scheme becoming too large and to a loss of permeability. This risked losing the citadel concept. Changes to the scheme addressed the permeability issue to the satisfaction of the panel in May.

The panel were concerned about the way that the scheme addressed West Bar and failed to create an urban edge. The lack of frontage onto West Bar has made this difficult to address, however the views of the towers show that they

'The scheme is ambitious and pushing the boundaries in terms of massing, but with skilful handling and exceptional design quality the Citadel concept can be made to work'

will read along West Bar and the panel did not comment further on this in May.

PUBLIC REALM/COURTYARD

The panel welcomed the concept of sculpting public space out of the citadel. However they were concerned that the scale of the space would reduce daylight levels on the central square making it unpleasant. There was also concern about the illustrative public realm scheme and the perceived quality of the material. In May the panel welcomed the changes made to the public realm and reiterated the need to use quality materials.

ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY

In February the panel were unconvinced about the three towers and concluded that they could see no justification for the northern tower. In June the panel welcomed the design development work done on the towers and were no longer concerned about the northern tower. The focus of their concern was Block 9, the student tower, because they did not believe that the budgets available for student accommodation would allow a building to be created of sufficient quality to justify its height. However in June the Panel otherwise welcomed the commitment to use a range of architects and were heartened by the quality of the work being created.

SCALE AND MASSING

In February the panel expressed concern at the massing of the building in relation to sunlight penetration into public areas. They asked that heights be reduced and buildings stepped back to improve this. It has not been possible to reduce floor areas so that the design team's efforts have been directed at making the heights work by using set backs and through careful design. As a result the panel concluded in May; '...the scheme is ambitious and pushing the boundaries in terms of massing, but with skilful

handling and exceptional design quality the Panel consider the Citadel concept can be made to work'.

SUSTAINABILITY

In February the Panel expressed concern about the lack of detail on sustainability. This was addressed specifically in our presentation to the May Panel. However the absence of key panel members meant that the issue was not addressed.

Overall the Panel applauded the design on the masterplan on both occasions. The main drive of their comments was to ensure that the strength of the masterplanning concept was not lost in the scheme development. The team looks forward to continuing to work with the Panel through the ongoing development of the scheme.

