

4.4.4 Side Streets

The public face of the three courtyard blocks will be four side streets which come off Commerce Road and lead down to the water. As we described in the masterplan development section, we identified these 'lanes' leading down to the water as being part of the character of Brentford and there are a number of examples running between the High Street and the water. The character of these streets is that they are urban in character and therefore narrow and slightly 'crooked' to create interesting views.

The streets have therefore been tightened up to a minimum of 14m in width. Any wider than this and the urban character of the streets would be lost. The predominant building height is 5 storeys as shown in the section above creating an enclosure ratio of 1:1 (ie the width of the streets is the same as the height of the buildings). This means that the residential accommodation facing onto these streets has a privacy distance that is potentially lower than the Hownslow standard. This has been subject to more detailed design work to show that this situation can be mitigated. This is done through offsetting windows, setting balconies within the building line - so that they don't project into the street, and using the side

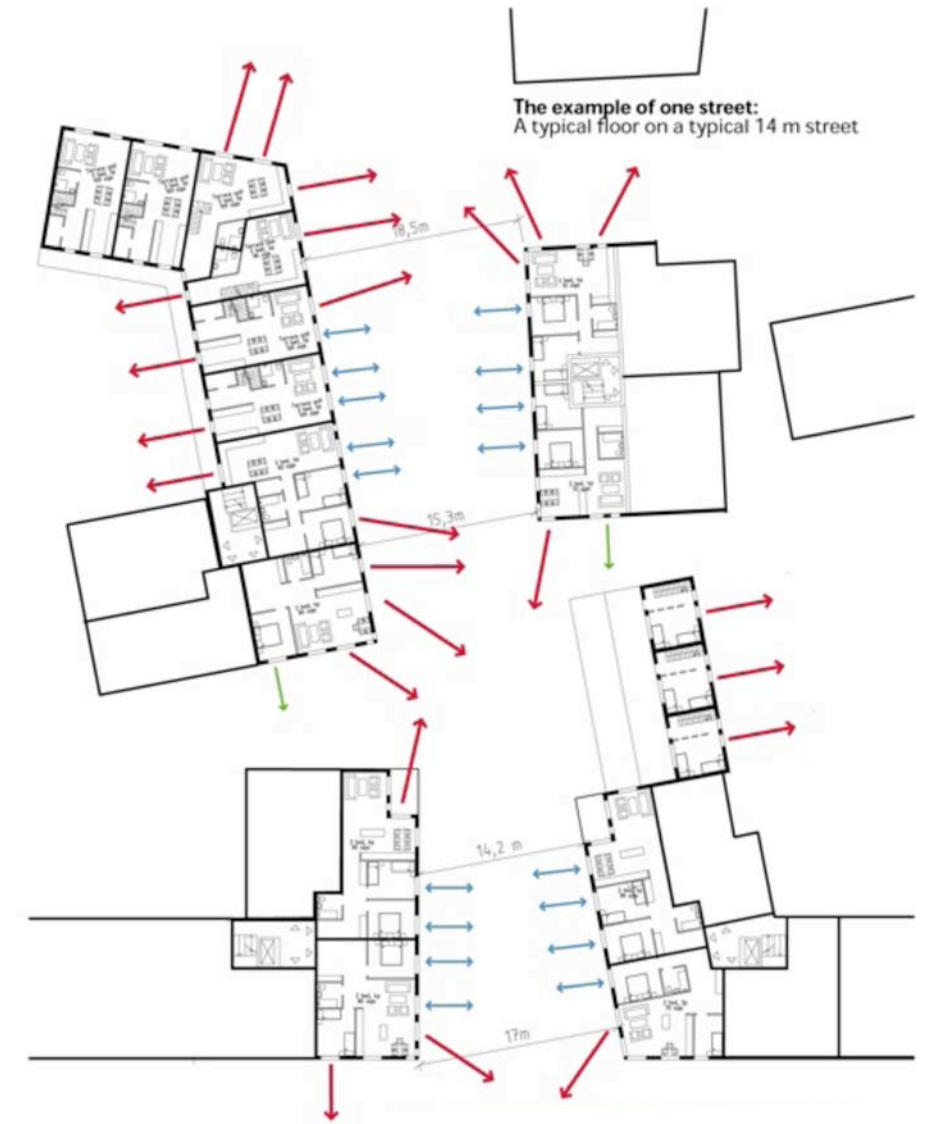
elevations of apartments for living room windows. In this way apartments have full privacy distances looking across the street at an angle. See the plan opposite. This is detailed in the Development Specification which accompanies this application.

The design of these streets is described in the public realm section. Access to the car parks under the courtyards is directly from Commerce Road so that the level of traffic on the side streets will be very low. Nevertheless the intention is to make them shared surface streets where driving is allowed but speeds are reduced to walking pace or less. This will allow people to deliver shopping to their front door or stair well and then go and park in the car park. This mixing of cars and pedestrians is actually important to the character of these streets. They will also be used by refuse vehicles and will need to be accessible by the emergency services.

These streets will drop down gradually towards the canal and each terminates in a canal side space. The most northerly street leads to the commercial hub as described above. The others terminate in Watergates that allow the level to drop down to towpath levels and allow access to the water. Each street will therefore provide interesting views to activities on the canal.



Section through side street



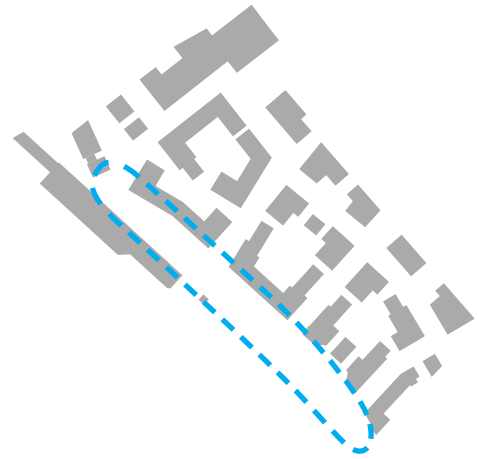
Plan of window aspect on side street

Examples of side streets





An illustration showing how the tree lined side street accommodates pedestrians, cyclists and onstreet visitor parking.



4.4.5 Commerce Road Frontage

Commerce Road is a difficult environment to deal with as part of the scheme. It is a cul-de-sac but nevertheless carries a lot of bus traffic, significantly early in the morning and late at night when the buses leave and return to the depot. As part of the scheme development we explored a number of options for overcoming these issues. This included looking at the possibility of taking it over, or under the railway to allow traffic out onto Great West Road. This is not physically possible regardless of viability. We have also looked at turning the scheme away from the road or redirecting the buses along the former railway embankment neither of which proved possible.

The solution is to turn a negative into a positive and to design Commerce Road as an attractive street in a way that allows its use by buses without creating problems for the adjacent accommodation. As described in the public

realm section, the intention is to design the road as a traditional street with a 7.8m carriageway, on street parking, a line of street trees and generous pavements 4.2m wide. The parking, trees and pavement will all provide a degree of protection to adjacent accommodation as well as creating an attractive frontage.

The blocks facing onto Commerce Road have also been designed to mitigate the affects of the buses. The ground floor accommodation is commercial space so that there is no ground floor residential space. The apartments above are generally double fronted so that they look into the courtyards so that less sensitive rooms can be on the Commerce Road frontage. There may also be scope to include a double skin to the blocks to provide further protection.



Examples of treatment of Commerce Road



An illustration looking down Commerce Road showing retention of art deco frontages set within new development.



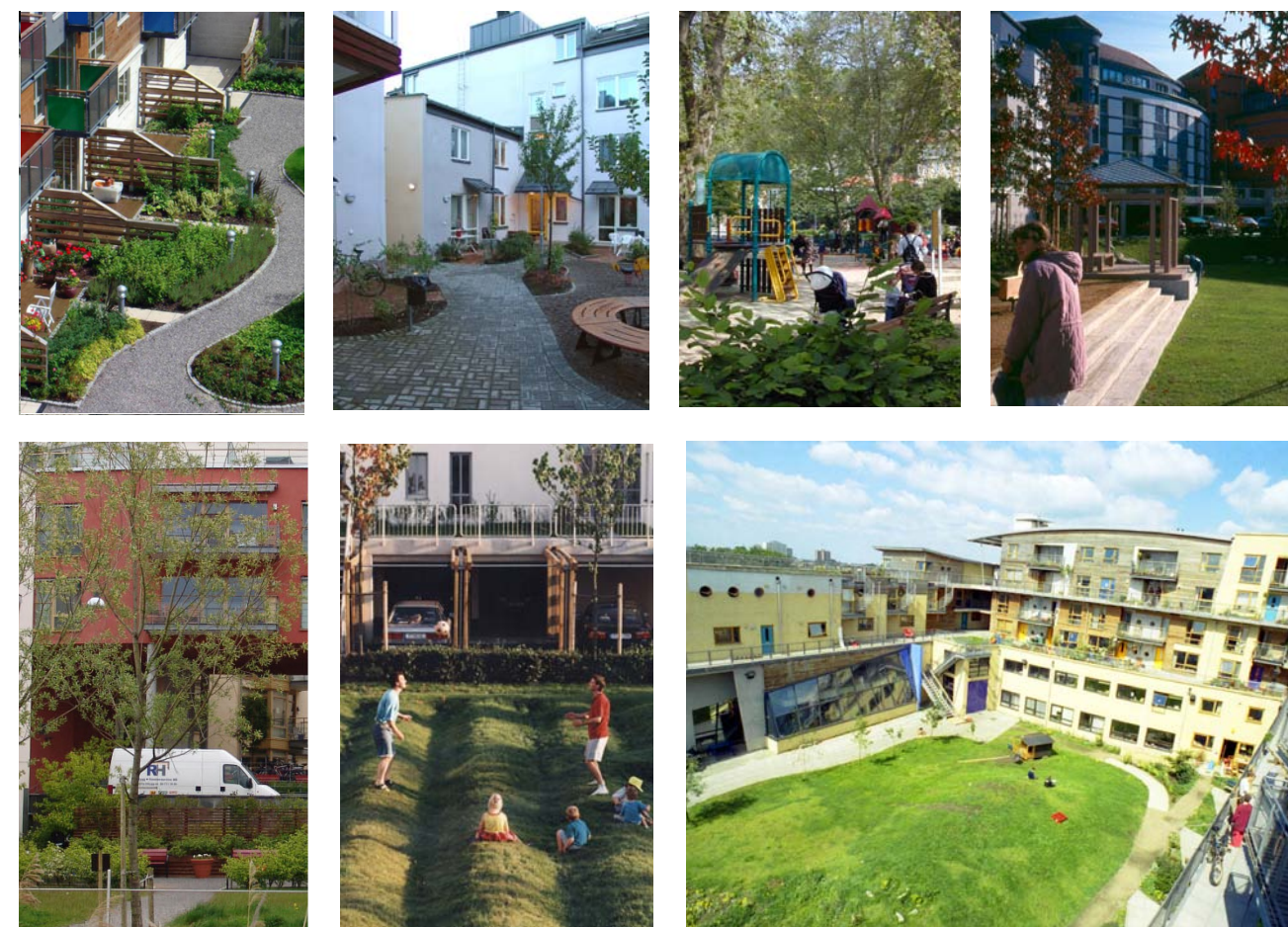
4.4.6 The Courtyard Blocks

The central part of the site will be occupied by three courtyard blocks. These include apartments and town houses around a generous internal courtyard which is over a semi-basement car park. The blocks shown in the illustrative scheme are based on a typical Swedish model which differs to recent development in London. Instead of internal corridors the blocks are based on staircase access, each with a lift, giving access to 4-7 apartments per floor. Most apartments have at least two aspects as a result of this layout and can be generous in their floor area. This model is used for family accommodation in Sweden, for example in Malmo, and the intention in the BLW scheme is to create large apartments and town houses that are attractive to families.

The blocks include generous amounts of private and communal courtyard space. The private space includes generous balconies and roof gardens at different levels within the block. The large communal courtyard spaces range in size from 255m² to 1,364m² create sufficient space to allow small private gardens for ground floor apartments plus communal space for residents and children to play. The courtyards are above the semi-basement parking

and so are raised between 700 and 1200mm above the surrounding streets. They are accessed by stairs and ramps and it is not proposed that they will be gated. The experience elsewhere (such as the Homes for Change scheme in Manchester pictured above) shows that the level of surveillance in these courtyards is such that there is no need for them to be gated. While they will be predominantly for the residents of the block it will therefore be possible for other people to access the space. Disabled access into the courtyards is gained either by ramp or via the circulation cores.

The housing in these courtyards is predominantly apartments but we have undertaken exercises looking at development with courtyard houses and muse blocks. These fit within the dimensions of the blocks and could be possible for a future phase of the development. The blocks illustrated include a number of town houses on three levels to further increase the mix of accommodation. The blocks are tallest on their south elevation to provide protection against the traffic on Commerce Road. To the north they are lower and the building line is broken. This is designed to create a relationship between the courtyards and the waterfront.



Examples of internal courtyards



View of internal courtyards



View of internal communal courtyards showing views through to the waterway in the background

4.5 Scale

In which we describe the height, width and length of each building proposed in relation to its surroundings.



Bauman Lyons scheme for Block B



Model of the illustrative masterplan

4.5.1 Massing and Scale

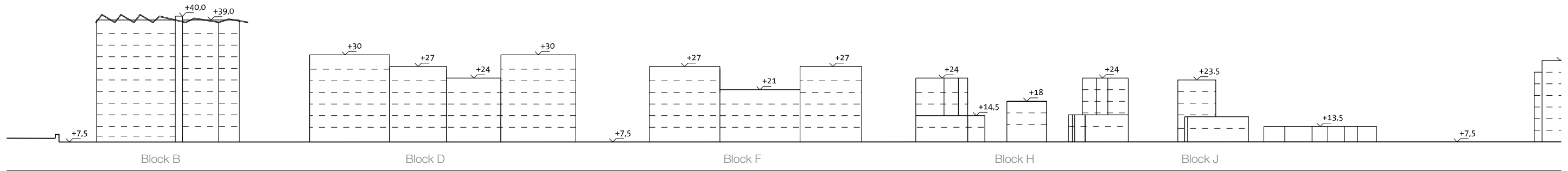
The aim of the masterplan has been to create a development fits comfortably within the current policy in terms of density, but without being high rise. The previous scheme was 13 and 14 storeys and the intention with the current plan has been for much of the scheme to be less than half of this height. The massing strategy is illustrated on the sections to the right. The scheme builds from a 4/5 storey frontage onto the canal towards taller blocks on Commerce Road. On Commerce Road in turn the heights build from five storeys at the town centre end (so as not to overpower the retained art deco frontages) towards the 8/9/10 storey of Block B to the north.

The massing is designed to create a strong enclosure ratio on the streets within the scheme of at least 1:1 (ie. the streets are as wide as the buildings are tall). There is however a great variation in building heights so that three storey town houses are interspersed with 5 and 6 storey apartment blocks. This avoids creating an impenetrable street wall and also allows light penetration into the streets and courtyards.

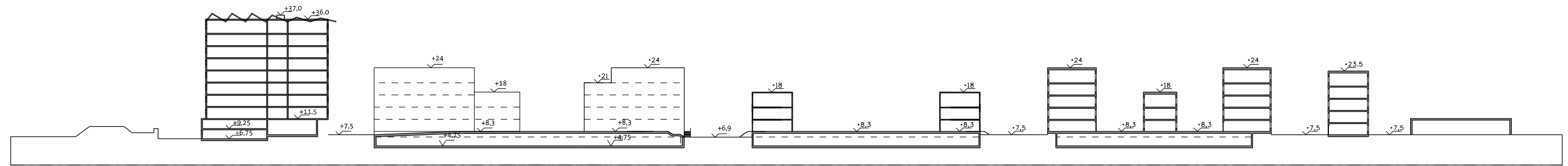
The massing model has been subject to a shadow study that shows adequate levels of daylight are received by all properties and public areas. The reduction in height and setting back of blocks beside the water and the broken up nature of the waterside blocks will ensure that overshadowing of the water and canalside is reduced as far as possible.



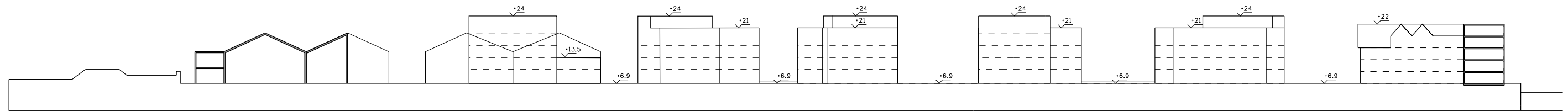
A residential street in Brighton New England Quarter



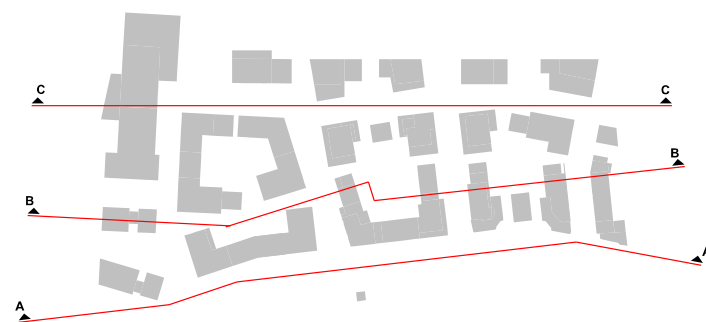
A-A



B-B



C-C

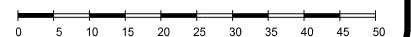


BRENTFORD LOCK WEST

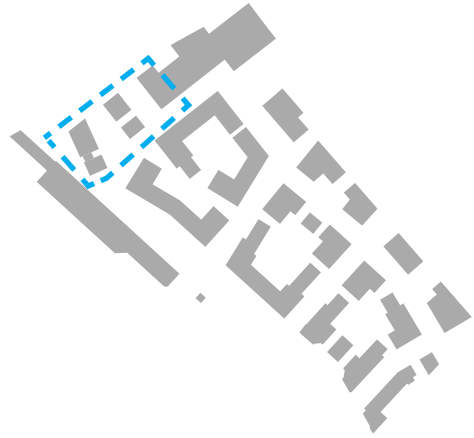
Illustrative Sections through the site



DATE 2010 07 26
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TOVATT ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS with KLAS THAM, CAMLINS, URBED



4.5.2 Block B

At the northern end of the site there is an opportunity for a higher building. This area is not visible from the waterfront and does not affect the view of surrounding residents. It importantly also ends the vista on Commerce Road and relates visually to the taller buildings along the Great West Road. This is a difficult site affected as it is by the railway and the bus garage and the intention is to lift accommodation above these noise sources.

Because of the difficulty of this site and the intention to create a taller building, it was felt that there was a need for more design work to explore the appearance and impact of this block. A limited architectural competition has therefore been run to look at solutions for this part of the site. The three submissions by Allies and Morrison, dRMM and Bauman Lyons are shown on this page. The Allies and Morrison scheme is based on two towers of 10 storeys and 7 storeys similar to that originally suggested in the masterplan. The dRMM scheme includes a single 15 storey tower with lower block along the railway to provide a noise barrier. The Bauman Lyons scheme by contrast is based on three lower blocks rising from 7 to 9 storeys over a podium that is a continuation of the shed. The roof form of the shed is also picked up in the roof of the towers so that they seem to grow out of the industrial structure. All the apartments in Block B are designed to be dual aspect and have access to generous balconies.

Following a presentation to officers at LBH and discussion with the team, the Bauman Lyons approach is the preferred one and has been used to illustrate the potential for this part of the site in the illustrative plan. The Regulatory Plans have also been amended to accommodate the parameters of this scheme.



Design 3 courtesy of Allies and Morrison Architects



Design 1 courtesy of de Rijke Marsh Morgan Architects



Design 2 courtesy of Bauman Lyons Architects