



# HFL SMALL PROJECTS, WOOTTON STREET, LAMBETH

Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Prepared by Savills Heritage Planning for Homes for Lambeth

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### Project

Wootton Street, Lambeth

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### Disclaimer

#### Assumptions and Limitations

This report is compiled using primary and secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Savills Heritage and Townscape (hereafter 'the consultants') have been appointed by Homes for Lambeth (hereafter 'the applicant') to provide townscape and visual impact advice and to prepare a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) report for the redevelopment (hereafter 'the proposed development') of Wootton Street, Lambeth (hereafter 'the site', figure 1.1).
- 1.2 The consultants have collaborated with Stockwool architects (hereafter 'the architects') by providing design feedback and assessing the potential townscape and visual effects of the proposed development in an iterative manner using Vu.City software in-house during the design process and prior to the production of the Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs, also known as verified views) included in this report.
- 1.3 This TVIA should be read alongside a Heritage Statement by MOLA and an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (ADBA) by RPS, as well as the Design and Access Statement and plans prepared by Stockwool architects and the Planning Statement prepared by Savills Planning.
- 1.4 The aim of this TVIA is to assess the likely effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity within the local and wider townscape surrounding the site. It also provides an illustration of likely visual effects of the proposed development on the setting of nearby designated and non-designated heritage assets, which are assessed separately in the Heritage Statement produced by MOLA.
- 1.5 The process of selecting candidate viewpoints for visual assessment was carried out in extensive and detailed consultation with planning officers at London Borough of Lambeth (LBL) and with reference to the local guidance on views, as presented in the Lambeth Views Study report (2014). LBL were consulted to ensure that any strategic and local townscape views of importance to Lambeth are included in this study.
- 1.6 As a result of this, a set of **16** townscape views were selected by the consultants, 11 of which are fully assessed in this report, while the remaining five views are not assessed and are provided only to show that the proposed development would not be visible, or only minimally visible, from those locations. The assessments are based on AVRs produced by visualisation specialists Miller Hare, which provide both a quantitative and qualitative evidence of the likely visual effects of the proposed development.
- 1.7 This report includes Savills methodology for assessment in chapter 2.0, a short description of the site and its surroundings in chapter 3.0, followed by a description of the proposed development and a brief assessment of its design quality in chapter 4.0. The visual assessments are presented in chapter 5.0, followed by the conclusions in chapter 6.0. Appendix 1 presents the five views where the proposed development is not (or minimally) visible; Miller Hare's methodology for the production of AVRs is included in Appendix 2.

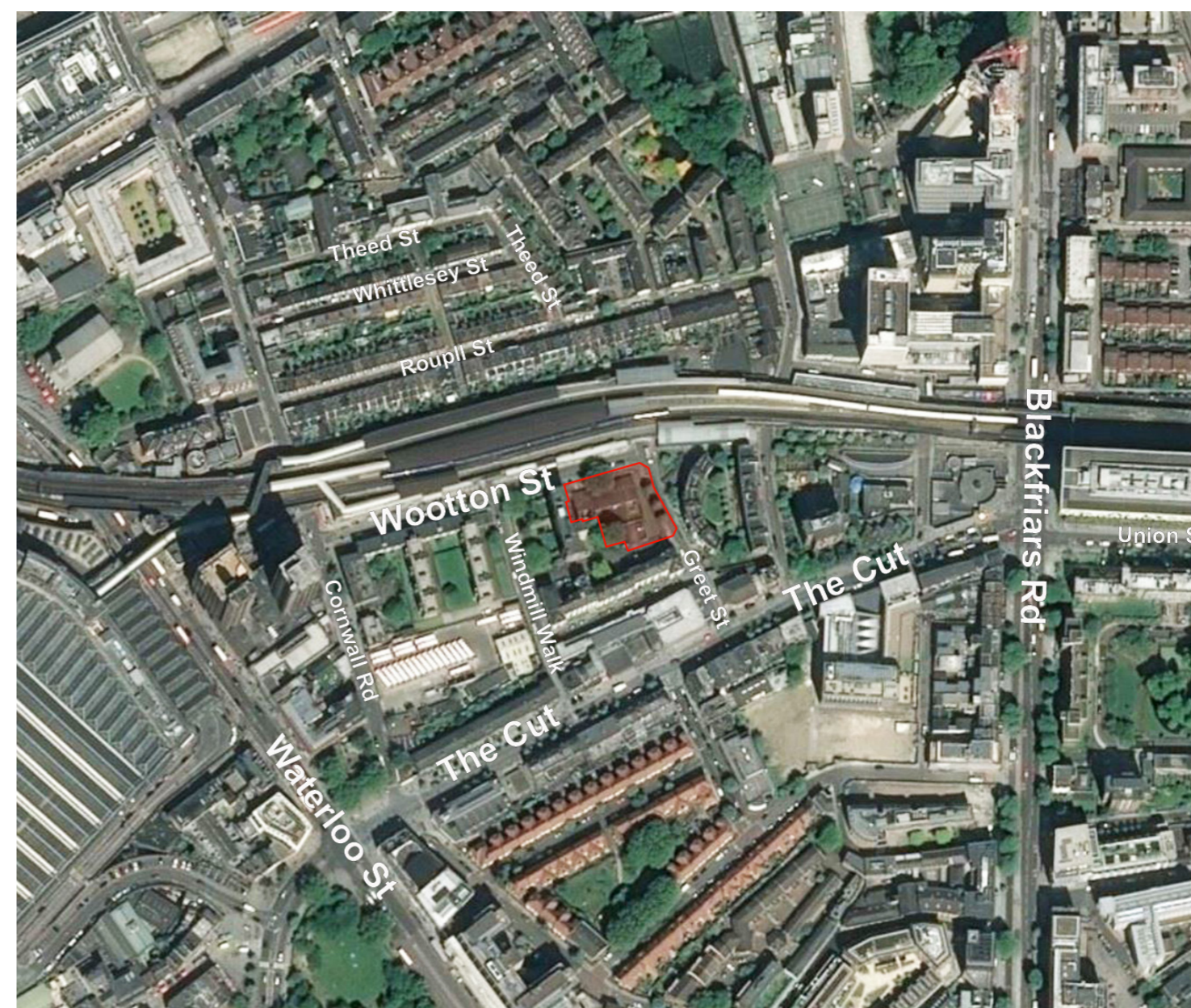


Figure 1.1: Aerial view of the site. Approximate site boundary highlighted in red.

## 2. Methodology

### Introduction

- 2.1 This section sets out the assessment methodology developed by Savills Heritage and Townscape used in this Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) document to establish the likely effects of the proposed development on the townscape as a whole and on the visual amenity of people experiencing it through townscape views. The topics covered in this section include: policy and guidance informing the assessments; mitigation of effects through design and consultation; effects on the townscape and visual receptors; assumptions and limitations; and authorship.
- 2.2 When assessing the impacts of newly proposed development within a dense urban environment there is often an overlap between the resulting effects on built heritage and the townscape and visual amenity. The visual assessments presented in this report therefore make reference to any designated or non-designated heritage assets that may be affected by the erection of the proposed development.
- 2.3 The assessment of effects on the townscape, including its perceptual and aesthetic qualities and its distinctive character, are assessed in a visual way by considering how the proposed development will change the visual amenity of the townscape as seen from specific viewpoints by people experiencing the views, known as 'visual receptors' in this TVIA.

### Policy and guidance

- 2.4 The assessment methodology set out in this section has been informed by policy and guidance at a national, regional and local level with regards to urban design, townscape and visual impact, as listed below. The policy and guidance mentioned is publicly accessible information so its text is not replicated in this document. For a full assessment against policy and guidance the reader is referred to the Planning Statement submitted by Savills Planning as part of this application.
- The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Third Edition, 2013;
  - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), National Planning Policy Framework, published February 2019; Updated June 2019;
  - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), Planning Practice Guidance, On-line Resource, 2016, latest updated in October 2019;
  - Greater London Authority (GLA), The London Plan, Spatial Development Strategy for London, 2016;
  - Greater London Authority (GLA), London Plan, 2019. Until the adoption of the new London Plan, the London Plan (2016) is the adopted Development Plan, whilst the policies contained within the London Plan (2019) will be a material consideration;
  - Greater London Authority (GLA), London View Management Framework SPG (LVMF), 2012;

- Lambeth Local Plan September 2015;
- Draft Revised Lambeth Local Plan (Proposed Submission Version, January 2020);
- Draft Lambeth Design Code SPD, February 2020;
- Lambeth Local Views Study, July 2014;
- Draft Local Views Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation, January 2021;
- Waterloo and South Bank Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2032), adopted in 2019;
- Lambeth conservation areas: Roupell Street CA, Waterloo CA, Waterloo CA, Mitre Road & Ufford Street CA, Lower Marsh CA; and
- Lambeth's List of Heritage Assets of Local Architectural or Historic Interest (Local List) 2017.

### Mitigation through design and consultation

- 2.5 As part of the design development process the consultants advised the architects on ways to mitigate, as far as possible, any potential adverse effects of the proposed development on the townscape and visual receptors, while maximising any beneficial effects available. This process included the use of 3D computer models, specifically using Vu.City software, to illustrate the effects of different design options. A brief description of the proposed development is provided in chapter 4.0 and the reader is encouraged to read this TVIA alongside the architects' Design and Access Statement (DAS) and plans.

- 2.6 Given the above design development process, it is considered that mitigation is embedded in the designs and that it is unlikely that any further or 'supplementary mitigation' will be needed. If necessary, however, it would be clearly stated in the assessments.

### Effects on the townscape and visual receptors

- 2.7 The GLVIA, at paragraph 2.7, defines townscape as: *"...areas where the built environment is dominant. Villages, towns and cities often make important contributions as elements in wider-open landscapes, but townscape means the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces."*
- 2.8 Paragraph 2.20 of the GLVIA goes on to define visual amenity as *"When the interrelationship between people ('human beings' or 'population' in the language of the Directive and Regulations) and the landscape is considered, this introduces related but very different considerations, notably the views that people have and their visual amenity - meaning the overall pleasantness of the views they enjoy of their surroundings."*
- 2.9 As in most cases the townscape is generally experienced by people in a visual way, in this TVIA effects on the townscape resource as a whole are considered as a reflection of the effects of the proposed development on visual receptors, i.e. people experiencing views.

<p><u>Baseline conditions</u></p> <p>2.10 In order to get a full understanding of the site, its existing building and its role in the townscape in relation to national, regional and local policy and guidance, the site and its townscape context were studied, researched and photographed as set out in chapter 3.0. The information gathered represents the baseline conditions against which the assessments are made.</p>	<p><u>The assessment process</u></p> <p>2.17 The visual assessments are carried out by comparing an ‘existing’ photograph of the baseline condition with a ‘proposed’ image of the final condition after the proposed development has been completed and a ‘cumulative’ image of the proposed development in combination with other consented schemes in the vicinity.</p>	<p>ii. <u>‘Proposed’</u>: a description of the proposed development as seen in the view and how this will change the visual amenity of people to result in a ‘beneficial’, ‘neutral’ or ‘adverse’ visual effect; and</p> <p>iii. <u>‘Cumulative’</u>: a description of the proposed development in combination with other consented development proposals and how together they will change the view to result in a ‘beneficial’, ‘neutral’ or ‘adverse’ cumulative visual effect.</p>	<p>iii. The non-verified model-shots presented in Appendix 1 are a simplified representation of the proposed development within its context. The model is as accurate as the data informing it, which means that there always is a certain degree or error embedded in its representation. This goes especially for the representation of the vegetation, including trees and hedgerows, and secondary elements such as fences and perimeter walls surrounding buildings. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to always compare the photograph of the existing baseline condition (where available) with the ‘proposed’ model-shot; and</p>
<p><u>Selection of townscape views</u></p> <p>2.11 Map analysis and the use of computer models, specifically the Vu.City software, allowed for the identification of viewpoint positions from which the proposed development would be potentially visible, as presented in chapter 5.0. Considerations for selected views include, amongst other factors: the likely maximum visibility of the proposal; the likely people that may experience the views from a certain location; winter and summer-time tree cover (where relevant); hierarchy of viewpoint (e.g. public or semi-public access, where relevant); the heritage significance of the viewing location or viewed place; the position of traffic signs or other visual obstructions; and the ability for surveyors to safely place equipment without causing obstructions. Views are generally restricted to street level (i.e. 1.6 metres above ground), as this is from where townscapes are most commonly appreciated.</p>	<p>2.18 Following guidance, unlike assessments that form part of an Environmental Statement (ES) where these follow a complex procedure based on significance tables, the assessments in this TVIA are written in a simple and proportionate narrative manner.</p> <p>2.19 For the ‘proposed’ views, Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) of the proposed development were constructed from the selected viewpoints. The AVRs were produced as photomontages of a 3D computer model of the proposed development onto surveyed photographs of the local area, in accordance with Miller Hare’s methodology (see Appendix 2) and as set out in the GLA’s London View Management Framework SPG.</p> <p>2.20 The cumulative effects owing to the interaction between the proposed development and other relevant consented proposals in the vicinity have also been assessed using AVRs of ‘cumulative’ views.</p>	<p>2.23 In accordance with Historic England’s recommendations in Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017), the assessment commentary that accompanies the ‘proposed’ and ‘cumulative’ views is intended to provide <i>‘a clearly expressed and non-technical narrative argument that sets out ‘what matters and why’ in terms of heritage significance and the setting of assets affected, together with the effects of the development upon them’</i>. The reader is therefore encouraged to appreciate the assessments in the context of the narrative text about each view. The effects found should not be translated into scoring systems or statistics.</p> <p><b>Assumptions and limitations</b></p> <p>2.24 The methodology for assessing the townscape and visual effects in this TVIA includes some assumptions and limitations:</p> <p>i. The views included in chapter 5.0 of the TVIA do not cover every possible view of the proposed development, but were selected using professional judgement of where there are particular instances of townscape or visual sensitivity;</p> <p>ii. The photorealistic rendered AVRs included in chapter 5.0 are a useful tool for assessment, but there is a degree of professional judgment made by the visualisation specialists in the artistic representation of materials and the effects of weather conditions, daylight and distance;</p>	<p>iv. Assumptions have been made in the TVIA about the susceptibility of people to visual changes in the townscape, as well as on the types of people likely to experience particular views. These assumptions are based on professional judgment but are limited as the responses of individuals are varied and cannot all be covered in the assessment.</p>
<p>2.12 The selected views take into consideration local LBL policies that refer to the preservation of local views of importance and represent a spread of close and medium distance views, where either the silhouette or the architectural design of the proposed development will be clearly visible.</p>	<p>2.21 Additional views included in Appendix 1 of this TVIA are presented as unverified 3D computer model-shots. This set of views is not illustrated as AVRs given that the effect of the proposed development on each of these views is marginal. These model-shots replicate the view as observed from each viewpoint.</p>		
<p>2.13 The selected views are from publicly accessible locations and illustrate the urban relationships likely to arise between the proposed development and the setting of heritage assets and other important elements of the townscape.</p>	<p>2.22 The narrative assessments are structured under the following elements:</p>		
<p>2.14 Each viewpoint and view aims to represent the ‘maximum exposure’ of the proposed development as well as its ‘maximum conjunction’ with sensitive elements in the built environment.</p>	<p>i. <u>‘Existing’</u>: a description of the existing view in its baseline condition, which seeks to evaluate its townscape qualities and the visual amenity;</p>		

**Authorship**

2.25 This TVIA has been prepared by Savills Heritage and Townscape, a multidisciplinary consultancy with expertise in the areas of built heritage, townscape and archaeology. The consultants are employed by the applicant to provide independent and unbiased professional advice to the design team and to consider any beneficial or adverse aspects of the proposed development based on best practice guidance in a balanced and transparent manner. Any qualitative aspects of the assessments that can be considered to a certain extent to be subjective are based on informed professional judgment based on the authors’ experience. All consultants are highly qualified and trained professionals in the areas of planning, architecture, urban design, and the historic environment.

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## 3. Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The site, located at the corner of Wootton Street and Greet Street, comprises a single storey nursery building, a car park and a playground. The site is defined as follows: to the immediate north it is bounded by Wootton Street and the railway, which includes commercial units under its arches. To the west it is bounded by Windmill House, of nine storeys in height. To the east, the site fronts onto Greet Street, across which is Tait House, of five storeys in height. And to the south, the site fronts onto the Ipsden flats, of five storeys and accessed from Cons Street. Directly to the south of this is the Young Vic Theatre, fronting onto The Cut (see figures 3.1 to 3.13).
- 3.2 The main frontage of the existing building on the site faces Wootton street . This building which is attached to Windmill House has a flat roof and is built in yellow brick. The site also contains a local residential car park space, and a play area for children of the nursery (see figures 3.1 to 3.4).
- 3.3 The site is located in a high density built area between Waterloo and Southwark stations and to the south of Waterloo East station. The surrounding area has a mixed architecture, for instance Windmill House is built in a 1960s architectural style, while the Ipsden flats have a typical Edwardian style. Another example is the curved architectural form of Tait House, which makes it distinctive from the rest of the surrounding buildings. This building is in brick with tall vertical stairwell windows and folded concrete canopy porches and according to Lambeth local list register (2017), it is designed by the architect who also designed Loughborough Estate for the Guinness Trust (see figures 3.8 to 3.13).



Figure 3.1: Main frontage of existing nursery building on the site, as seen from the junction of Wootton Street and Greet Street. Windmill House is the large building in the right background. The lower building on the left background is the Ipsden Flats.



Figure 3.2: Rear side of the existing nursery building and play area on the site, as seen from Greet Street.



Figure 3.5: The site as seen from Windmill Walk.



Figure 3.8: Windmill House.



Figure 3.11: View due west along Cons Street from Greet Street, with the Ipsden flats in the foreground.



Figure 3.3: Main frontage of existing nursery building on the site, as seen from Wootton Street, with Greet Street on the left.



Figure 3.6: Existing parking spaces on the site.



Figure 3.9: View to the east from Windmill Walk along the northern side of the Ipsden flats. Tait House is seen in the backdrop.



Figure 3.12: Young Vic Theatre on The Cut, as seen from Short Street.



Figure 3.4: Looking west along Wootton Street, part of the main frontage of the existing nursery building on the site is visible. The commercial space under the railway arches is seen to the right.



Figure 3.7: The site as seen from Greet Street, looking north. Greet Street continues north under the railway.



Figure 3.10: The curve facade of Tait House, as seen from Greet Street.



Figure 3.13: Ospringle House, as seen from Wootton Street, to the west of the site.

3.4 In summary, the space immediately surrounding the site is of a varied townscape quality, with a predominant character of 1960s-70s residential architecture, strongly defined by the railway to the north, and with some landscape features of value, including some mature trees around the perimeter of the block.

**Wider context:**

3.5 The site is located in the Bishop's Ward of London Borough of Lambeth, and is within a distance of c.70 m from Waterloo East station, c. 200 m from Southwark Underground Station and c.310 m from Waterloo station. The site is located in a medium-rise area of townscape and to the south of two emerging clusters of tall buildings, one on the South Bank around the Shell Centre and the other around the southern approach to Blackfriars Bridge. The closest conservation areas are located to the north of the site, including the Roupell Street Conservation Area, to the north of the railway, and the Waterloo Conservation Area, further north and west. Other nearby conservation areas are located to the south of the site, including the Mitre Road & Ufford Street Conservation Area and the Lower Marsh Conservation area, to the south-west.

3.6 The emerging skyline within the wider context of the site includes a large number of schemes that are consented or under construction, as illustrated by figure 3.14, which shows cumulative schemes nearby the site. A full list with the description of each of these schemes is included in Appendix 2 of this report, as part of Miller Hare's methodology.

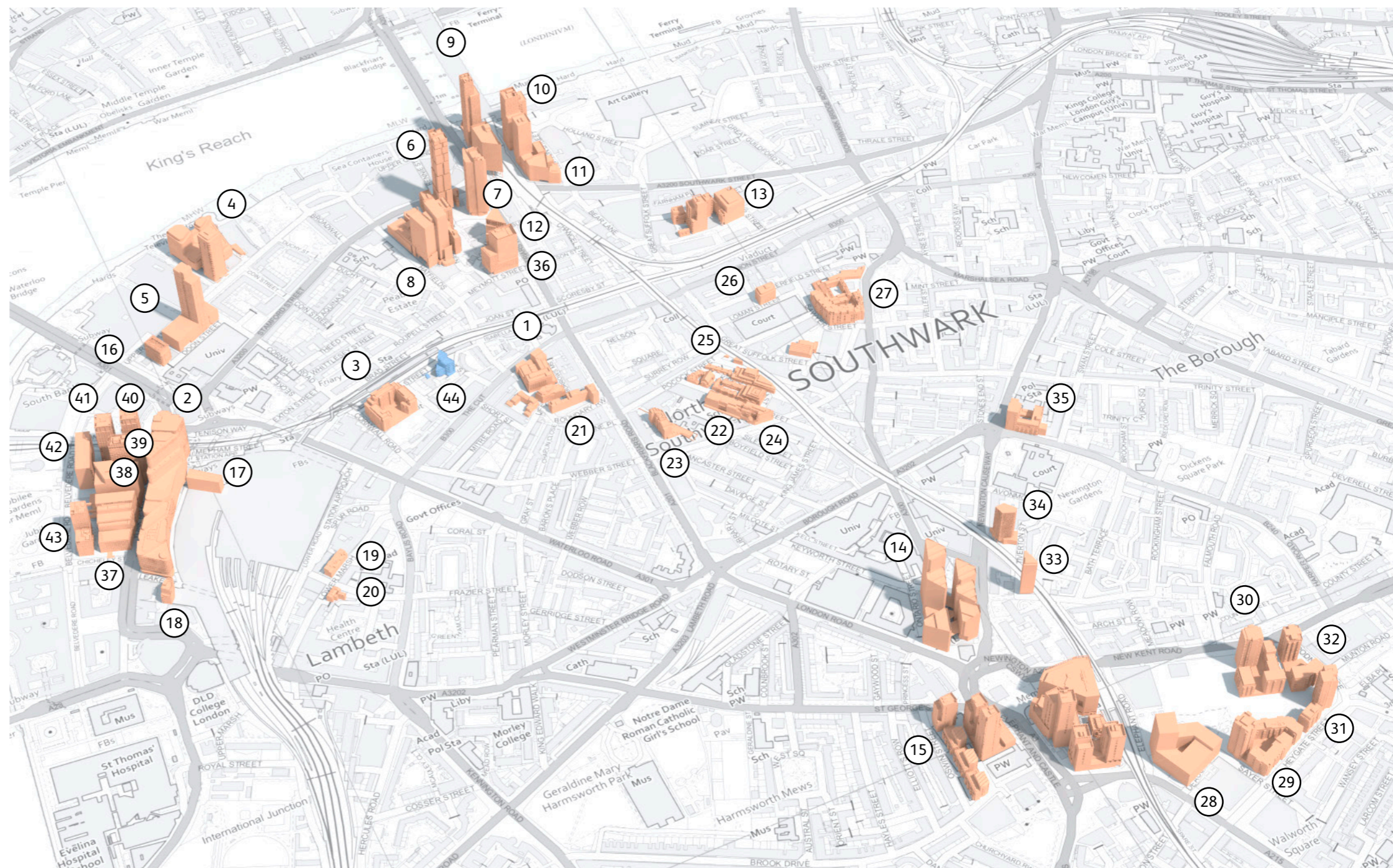


Figure 3.14: 3D map illustration of the cumulative schemes around the site. The proposed development is highlighted in blue. The full list of details for each cumulative scheme is provided in Appendix 2. Not to scale. Source: Miller Hare.

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# 4. Proposed Development

## Introduction

4.1 This chapter offers a brief description of the proposed development, with particular emphasis on how townscape-related considerations have informed the final design, as well as an independent assessment of the design quality proposed. To illustrate this, only a small selection of images and plans produced by the architects are included. For a full description of the proposed development the reader is referred to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and the plans submitted as part of this planning application.

4.2 The proposed development, at the junction of Wootton Street and Greet Street, comprises a residential building of part five, eight and 10 storeys. It will provide 36 new homes, including a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed apartments with a mixed tenure of Council Level rent, Shared Ownership and Private.

## Massing, scale and form

4.3 The proposed development is designed as a triangular plan (see figures 4.15 to 4.22) with a stepped design on each of its facades (see figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7) which results from the interlocking of three blocks that rise to different heights. As such, the proposed massing has been carefully sculpted to respond to the various sensitivities of the surrounding townscape.

4.4 The originator of the triangular shape is related to the site's proximity to Windmill House. The idea of responding to this with a triangular plan and stepped heights was devised in order to minimise the overshadowing and potential adverse daylight/

sunlight effects of the proposed development on the eastern elevation of this neighbouring building. The resulting building creates projecting and recessed volumes on each of the three elevations, which are bridged by curved corners, also repeated at each of the three corners of the main triangle. The tallest of the three parts addresses the corner of Wootton and Greet Streets, where the surrounding townscape offers the most generous 'breathing space' to accommodate this height. By contrast, the elevation along Wootton Street steps down to the west from 10 storeys to five storeys in height, to reduce the bulk closest to Windmill House. Meanwhile, the elevation along Greet Street steps down to the south from 10 storeys to eight storeys in height, mediating in scale with the Ipsden flats, to the south (see figures 4.11 to 4.14). At ground level, the plan extends to the south and the north to address the surrounding streets, using the same architectural language as the rest of the building and incorporating railings to enclose an internal garden (see figure 4.9). The balconies are recessed and located at the three corners of the overall triangular plan.

4.5 Overall, the massing and the height are set to be sympathetic to its neighbouring buildings and conservation areas, especially in views due south from within the Roupell Street Conservation Area. In particular, the maximum height of 10 storeys was informed by views south along Theed Street, where the proposed development would be seen in the backdrop of the terraced houses of the conservation area located on the southern side of Roupell Street. The team tested several heights, including taller options of up to 13 storeys, and in consultation with



Figure 4.1: CGI representation of the proposed development, looking north-east. Source: Stockwool.

LBL's officers, it was decided that at 10 storeys, while visible, the proposed development would not appear overbearing in the views (see views 8, 9 and 10 in chapter 5 of this report). It is thus considered that the carefully articulated form and mass of the proposed development is respectful of surrounding sensitivities, addressing each of its sides differently to positively respond to its neighbours.

**Facade articulation**

4.7 As described, the massing of the building has been carefully considered in regards to its surroundings, creating well-articulated facades on all the sides of the proposed development. The stepped, triangular shape and the corner balconies create a horizontal emphasis to the building, which allows for the seamless changes in height of each interlocking block to happen at different levels. This is reinforced by the articulation of facades, which are subdivided vertically to offer the impression of narrow horizontal bands wrapping around the building, each of about half a storey in height. The result is each storey being subdivided into two elements: a recessed band with rusticated masonry, which includes the windows; and a slightly projecting solid band that wraps around the balconies, doubling up as balustrade. This is reinforced further by the subtle horizontal shadows created between the bands and a contrasting white banding capping each of the solid bands (see figures 4.1 to 4.10).

4.8 The facades as described above are a contemporary reinterpretation of modern 20<sup>th</sup> Century architecture, which is used to ground the buildings visually but also to link them to the style of neighbouring townscape elements. For example, Windmill House also has a horizontal emphasis and white banding marking each storey, while the Ipsden flats to the south also play with the contrast between brick and white cornicing, albeit in an older architectural style. Meanwhile, the colour of the brick was selected with the Roupell Street Conservation Area in mind, ensuring that the proposed development is read as a separate element in views from the north, yet still one that is contextual in texture and tonality to the predominant bricks used in the area.

**Materials and landscaping**

4.9 The proposed development will exhibit a mix of carefully chosen quality materials that include buff brick in a light brown/grey tones and the white concrete banding, as well as black powder coated aluminium frames to windows. The chosen materials and colours will make the proposed development both a distinctive and contextual element in the townscape, where the materials are simple and cleverly chosen to strengthen the architectural expression of the proposed massing and façade articulation.

4.10 The distinct building form proposed will also create a series of interestingly shaped open outdoor spaces, including those surrounding the building at ground level and two communal roof terraces on top of the five and eight-storey wings. While the communal gardens on the ground floor will provide a mix of play and seating areas, surrounded by new trees and planting, the terraces will also be generously planted, softening the overall built forms and ensuring a good outlook from the floors above(see figures 4.9 and 4.10). Four wheelchair accessible parking spaces are also proposed at ground floor to the south of the building (see figure 4.15).

**Assessment of design quality**

4.11 The proposed development is the result of an iterative design process which took into account the sensitivity of the neighbouring conservation areas close to the site, as well as the varied scales and architectural styles of the buildings immediately surrounding the site. The consultants were involved from the first stages of the design process in order to advise the architects on mitigation measures that would ensure that the design is contextual, sensitively sculpted, and would enhance its surrounding environment and townscape.

4.12 The result is an elegant and distinct, yet simple design, that is adequate for its location, in terms of massing, façade articulation, materials and landscaping. The architectural design quality is considered to be high, which is a requirement for tall buildings owing to their potential effects on the surrounding townscape and the setting of heritage assets.



Figure 4.2: CGI representation of the proposed development, looking at the corner of Wootton Street and Greet Street. Source: Stockwool.



Figure 4.3: CGI representation of the proposed development, as seen from the south opposite an entrance to Windmill House. Source: Stockwool.