

2.11 City Context

2.11.1 The Grid of Glasgow

The city centre of Glasgow is characterised by a rigorous city grid of streets, with a block-type structure, providing the city centre with a distinct experience for people navigating through it.

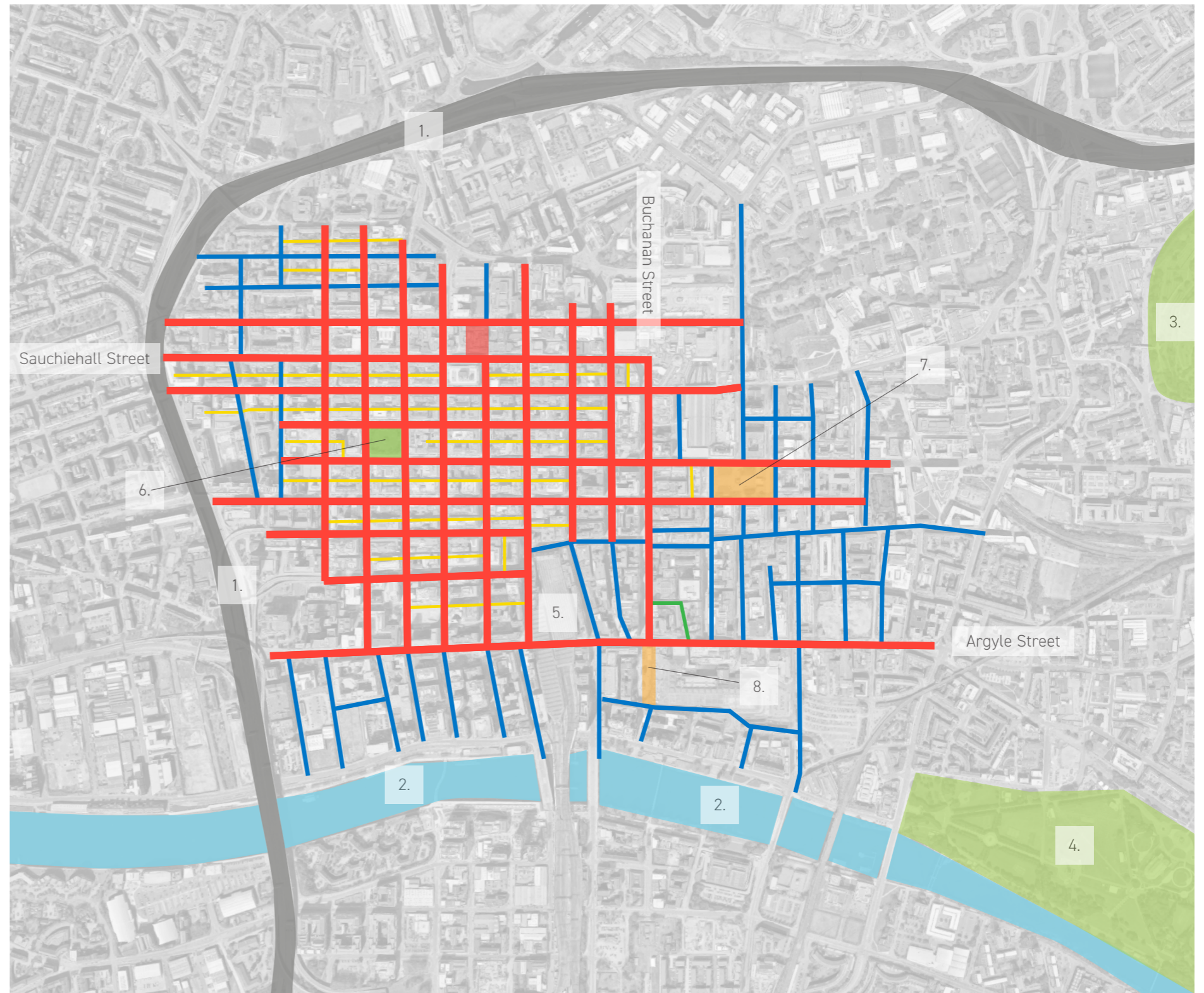
The extents of the city centre of Glasgow as it exists today can be broadly defined by the M8 motorway which bounds the western and northern edges, the River Clyde to the south with the eastern edge being much softer and bleeding out around both Glasgow Green and the site of the Necropolis.

This planning of the city centre, which saw much of its genesis during the early 19th Century established a hierarchy the city's street pattern which is still evident today. This hierarchy can be broadly defined by the use of:

- Primary Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Lanes, and
- Arcade.

- Proposed Site
- Primary Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Lanes
- Arcade
- Square - hard landscaped
- Square - soft landscaped

1. M8 Motorway
2. River Clyde
3. Glasgow Necropolis
4. Glasgow Green
5. Central Station
6. Blythswood Square
7. George Square
8. St. Enoch Square



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Primary Streets

These 'Primary Streets' had their development from the early 19th century where a series of Georgian architects designed buildings which still contribute to the character of the city centre. These Primary Streets include Sauchiehall Street, Buchanan Street, Argyle Street, St Vincent Street, West George Street, West Nile Street, Renfield Street, Hope Street and Bath Street.



Hierarchy of Primary Streets

Within the Primary Streets there is a hierarchy of streets which can be read. Sauchiehall, Buchanan and Argyle Street are the main streets of the city centre. Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street running east-west set establish the next level of the hierarchy of Primary Streets for those that run -east west, which is reflected in Lanes running in this direction and primary frontages of city blocks facing onto east-west running streets. This leaves those Primary Streets running north-south last of which it is highlighted that Wellington Street is an anomaly which does not currently penetrate through Sauchiehall Street - the current city block arrangement of the proposed site blocks it in doing so.

- Proposed Site
- Primary Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Lanes
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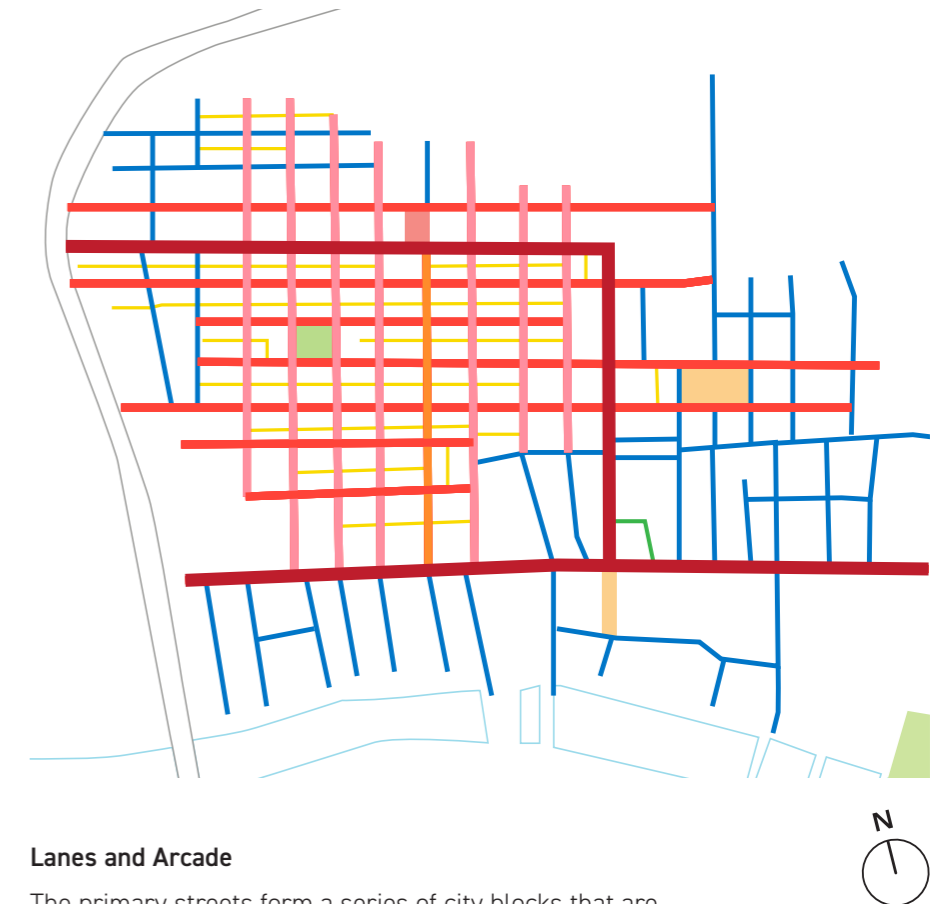
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Secondary Streets

In addition to the Primary Streets, which provide coverage across the majority of Glasgow City Centre, there are also series of 'secondary streets'. These streets are generally shorter in length and are less rigid in their orientation and trajectory.

These streets are generally located within the area to the south of the city centre between Argyle Street and the River Clyde, to the east of Buchanan Street and for a portion of Garnethill to the north-west of the city centre.



Lanes and Arcade

The primary streets form a series of city blocks that are predominantly square in plan form. South of Sauchiehall Street and north of Argyle Street these blocks are divided in two by east-west running 'Lanes' which intersect multiple city blocks.

There are a smaller number of north-south running lanes which do not penetrate beyond the single city block which they are located within. This enables the orientation of the city block to turn through 90 degrees to allow for the primary frontage to respond to important spaces, such as: Blythswood Square, George Square, Central Station and the meeting of Sauchiehall Street and Buchanan Street. One anomaly of note is Argyll Arcade, providing a 'dog-leg' route connecting Buchanan Street with Argyle Street. The arcade was Scotland's first indoor shopping mall and is one of Europe's oldest covered shopping arcades. Built in 1827 in a Parisian style the arcade is famous for its glass roof and the jewellers and diamond merchants it is home to.

- Proposed Site
- Primary Streets
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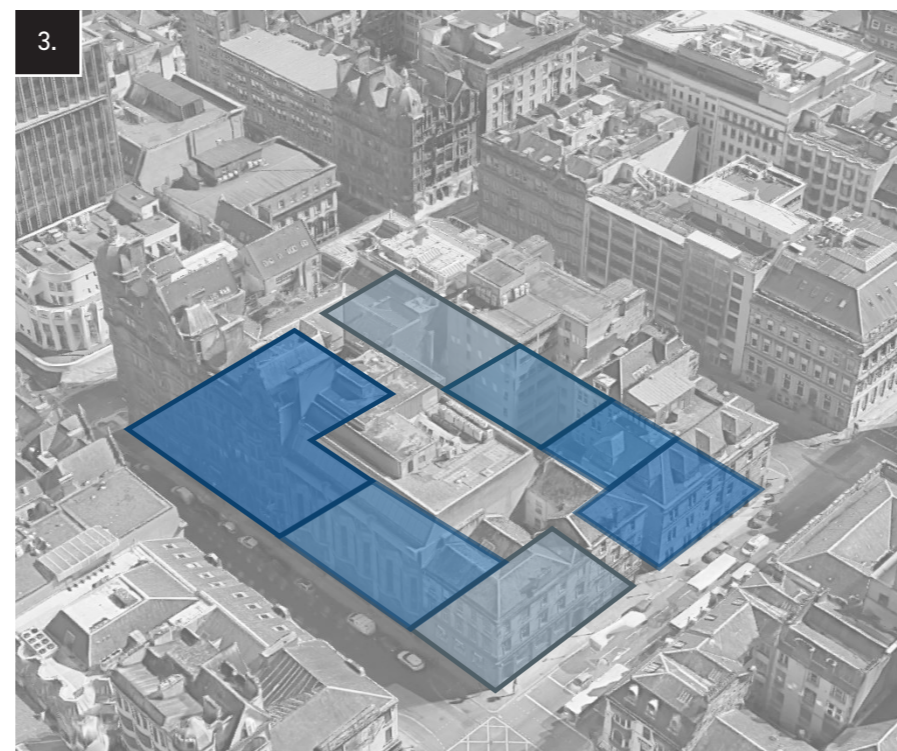
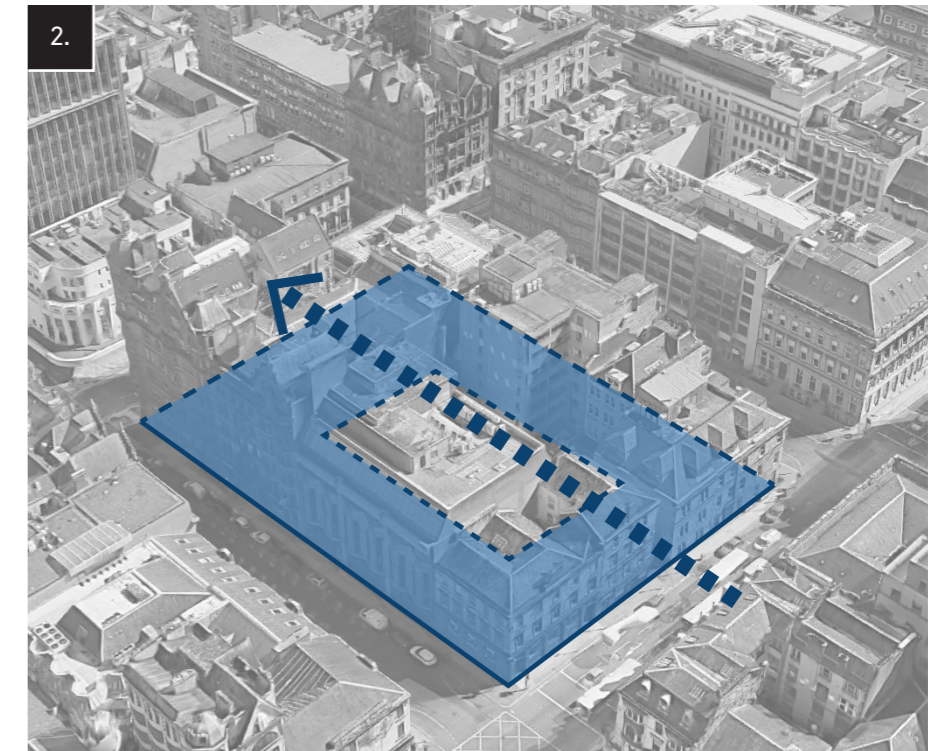
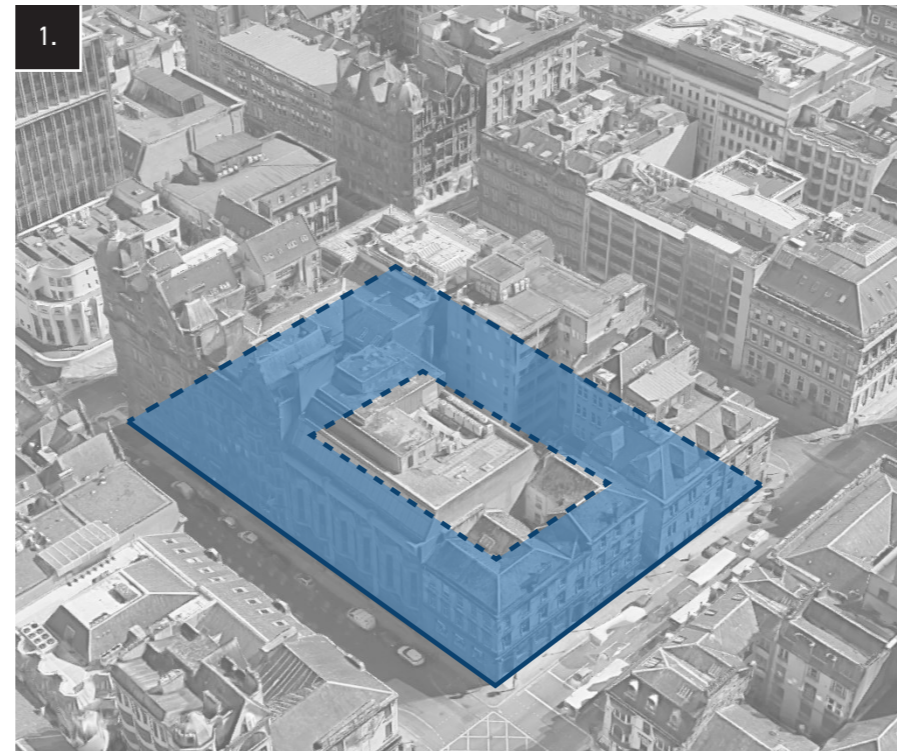
2.11.2 The City Blocks of Glasgow

The rigorous city grid of Glasgow, established during the early 18th century created a large number of city blocks that are predominantly square in plan and provide coverage across the majority of the extents of the city centre.

Although there is relative consistency in the footprint of the city blocks, the articulation of the built form within them differs on a block-by-block basis reflecting their individual historical development to their present day condition.

Despite these differences, there is an underlying rationale which is consistent across city blocks:

1. City Blocks are generally provided as a 'donut' footprint.
2. Lanes provide a route through the block.
3. The City Blocks are further segmented into individual building blocks.
4. These individual building blocks are then extruded to varying heights and roofscapes providing a rich mix to the city grain.



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2.11.3 Alexander 'Greek' Thomson

Alexander Thomson was one of the pre-eminent architects of Victorian Glasgow through his interpretation of Greek and Egyptian ancient works to produce distinctive neo-classical architecture.

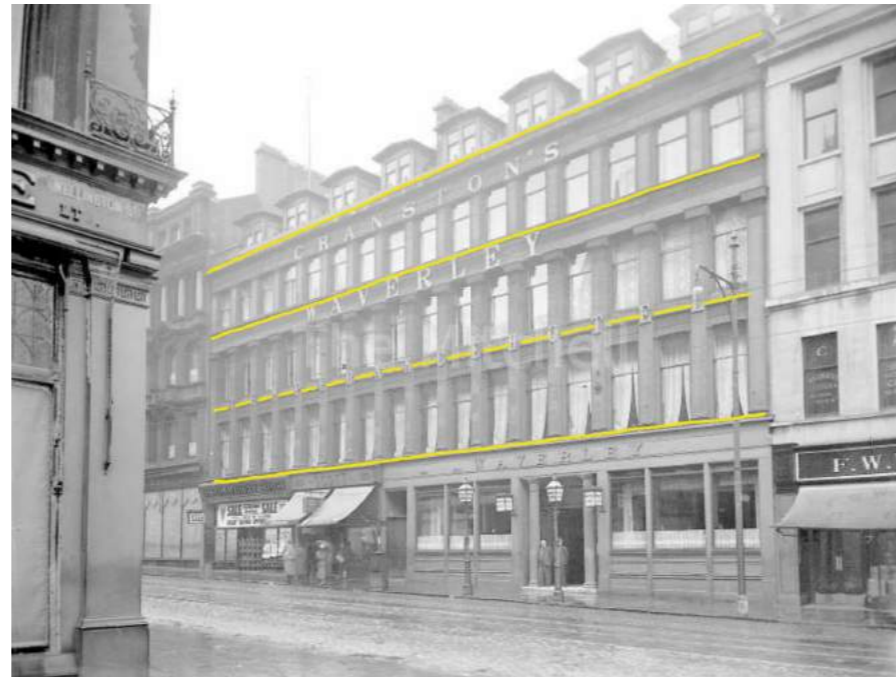
His Graeco-Egyptian styled buildings are located almost exclusively within Glasgow where he designed commercial warehouses, tenement housing blocks, terraces of houses, suburban villas and three churches (with only St. Vincent Street Church surviving).

His contemporary success and subsequent legacy are the result of his unique approach to the interpretation of classical works which is underpinned by his careful consideration of order, grid, rhythm, scale and proportion in his designs, leaving Glasgow with some of its finest buildings.

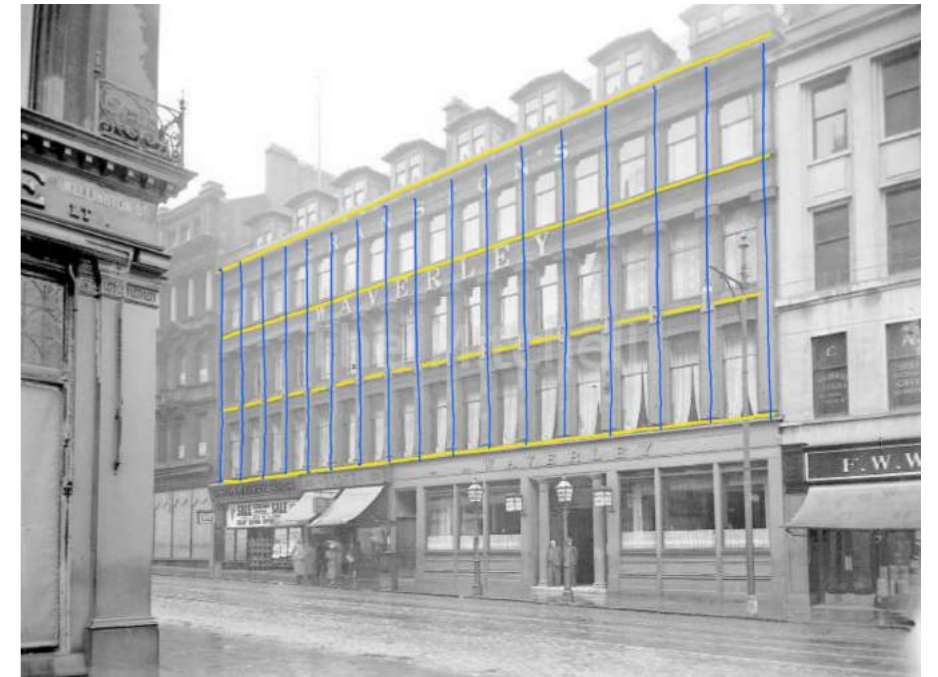


Alexander 'Greek' Thomson. Source: The Alexander Thomson Society,

Strong Horizontals



Vertical Rhythm



Waverley Hotel designed by Alexander Thomson demolished to build the current M&S store

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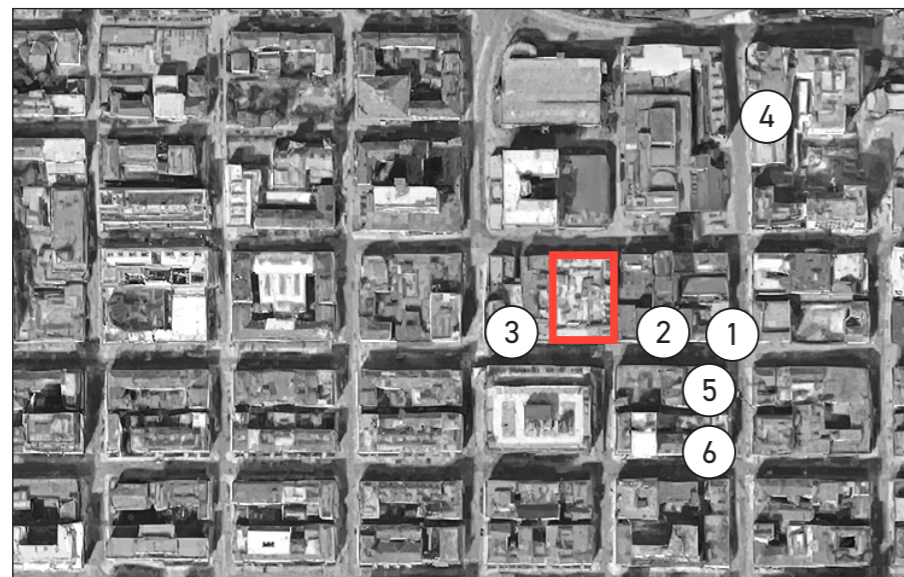
2.11.4 Local Context and Character

Due to the gradual development of several key areas within the city, the City Centre has developed a somewhat eclectic urban grain and blending of styles from the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Notable Victorian characteristics, such as facade ornamentation, sculptural reveals and animated rooflines are intertwined with historic Glasgow-style build lines and predominantly linear proportioned elevations which are set to the back of the pavement.

There are several buildings surrounding which have Listed status, as well as a number of unlisted buildings that have sufficient character to provide positive contributions to the area and urban grain.

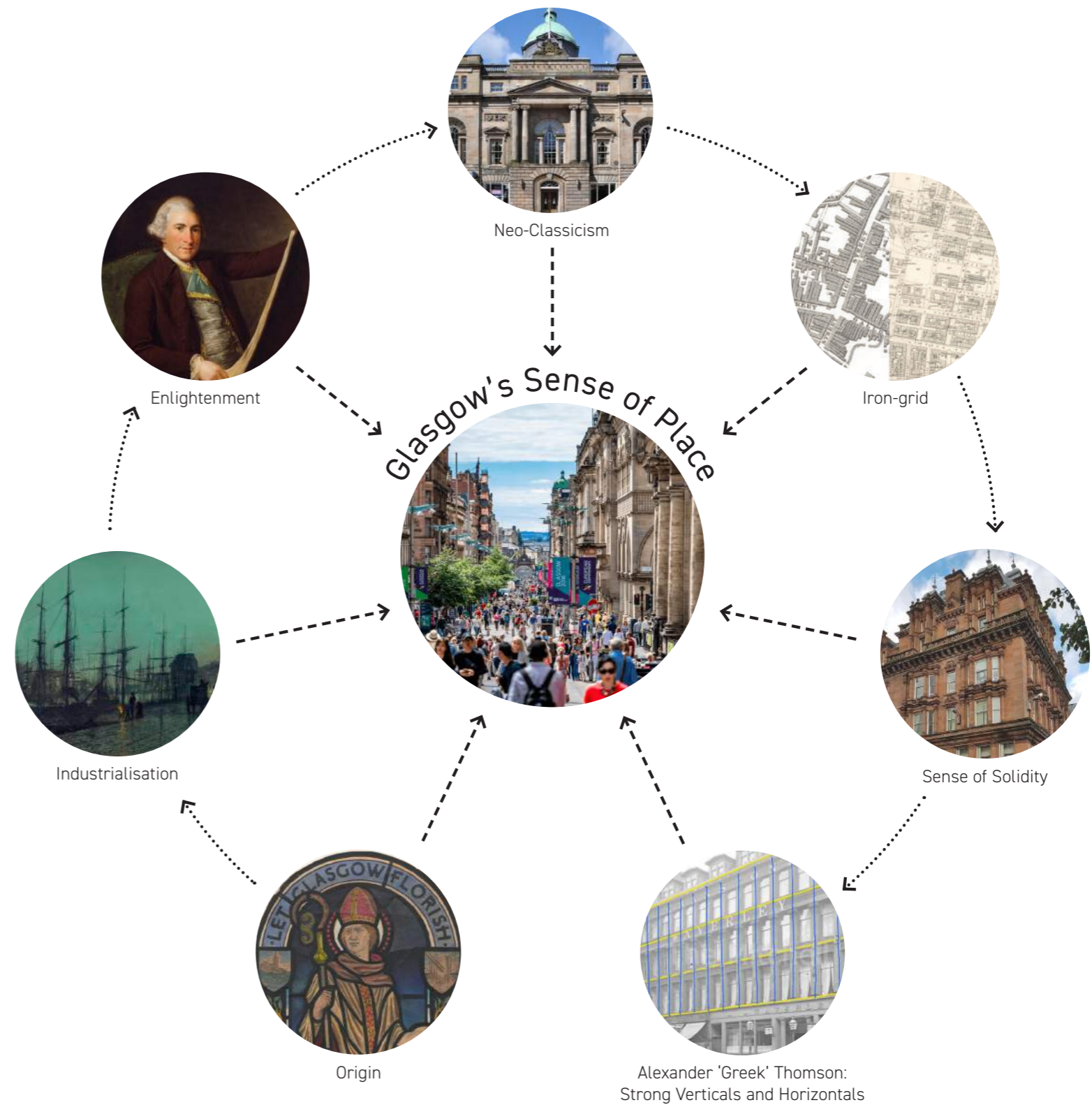
1. 120 Sauchiehall Street
2. Savoy Centre
3. 208 Sauchiehall Street
4. Theatre Royal
5. 123 Sauchiehall Street
6. Watt Brothers, Bath Street



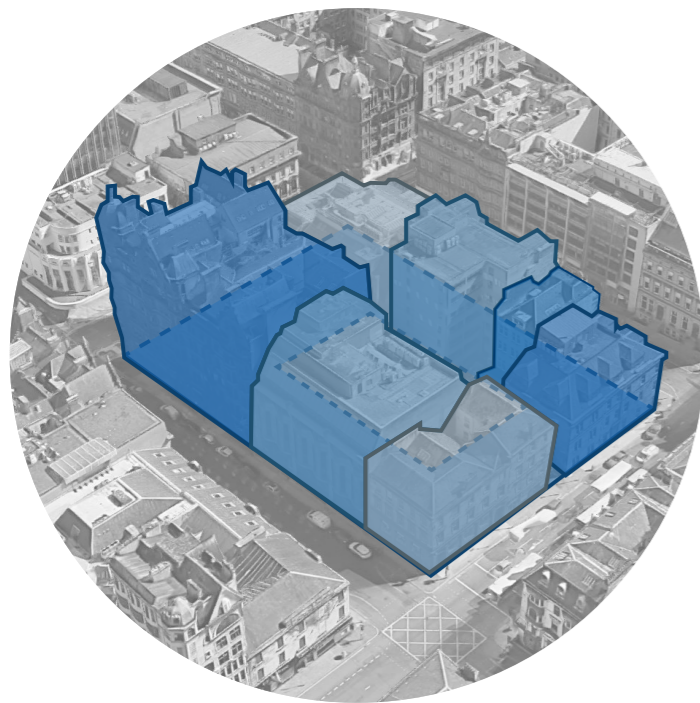
2.12 Glasgow's Sense of Place

Glasgow's sense of place and the unique, tangible qualities that define it as a city are the direct result of its historical development. This development can be specifically captured in Glasgow's break from its medieval development to that of a planned city, in an iron-grid arrangement, fuelled by industry and cross-Atlantic trade, its intellectually underpinning from the Scottish Enlightenment and the architectural movement that spawned from it.

This resulted in a building stock which carefully interpreted ancient classicism and delivered buildings of the highest architectural value from which contemporary development can still respond.



2.13 Key Design Drivers



Grid and Block

Respond to the established urban grid and block typology with a contextually considered massing approach.



Solidity, Strong Verticals and Horizontals

Evoke a feeling of solidity through the use of robust materials and design, referencing the strong vertical and horizontal elevational articulations utilised by architects like Alexander 'Greek' Thomson.



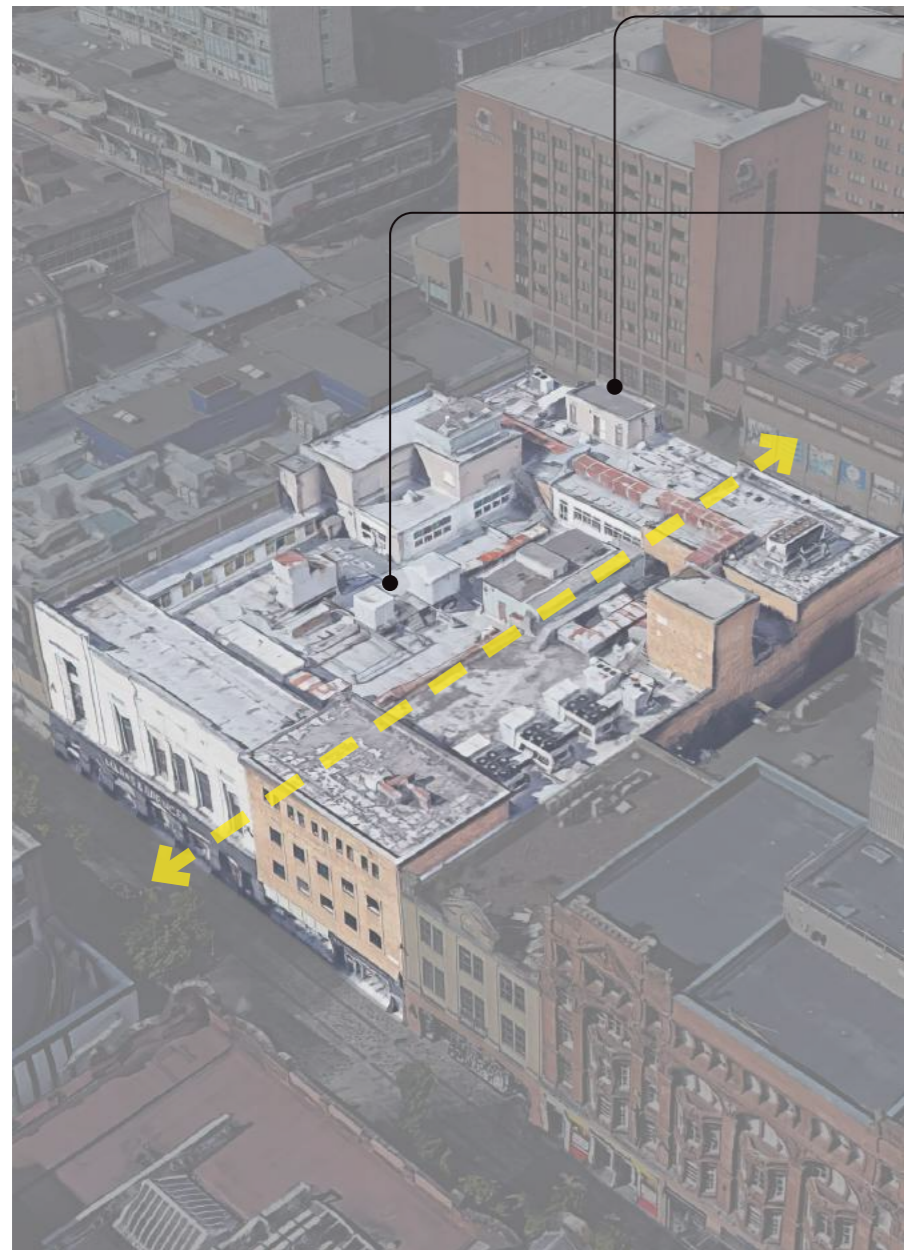
Arcade Reinstatement

Create a connection through the site by reinstating the historic arcade route and creating a new internal environment full of active uses.

2.14 Existing Building

2.14.1 Appraisal

The following section provides an assessment of the existing building to inform the approach to potential adaptation/ re-use within the development proposals.



North East Elevation

Opportunities to maximise daylight without excessive solar gains are hampered by the very low window-wall ratio of the North East elevation, further exacerbating the problem of minimal views out of the building.

Poor Daylighting

Existing floor plates are too deep to allow natural light to penetrate sufficiently, meaning residential accommodation would require the introduction of lightwells/atria

Retail Potential

The current retail space has been vacant since April 2021, no longer presenting a commercially attractive space for contemporary retailers due to its age, layout and column grids.

The building is currently partially occupied on a non-commercial basis by a local charity.

A targeted marketing strategy was progressed over the course of 20 months. This demonstrated there was limited viable interest from retail, food + beverage and leisure occupiers.

Office Potential

The potential to convert the building into office space is limited by the deep floor plates of the existing accommodation, and core locations requiring significant modification

Site Permeability

The existing layout provides a minimal connection between Sauchiehall Street & Renfrew Street via the retail unit itself, and contributes little to the public realm in this prominent position

Sustainability Potential

All options are to be explored to reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions during operation, and to incorporate circular economy principles to reduce embodied carbon.

Social Value

Change of use from retail to student accommodation at the upper levels would introduce a greater diversity to land use in the city centre.

Reduction in Emissions

Student accommodation close to the universities would result in a reduction of transport as students would live close to the universities & a range of local amenities.

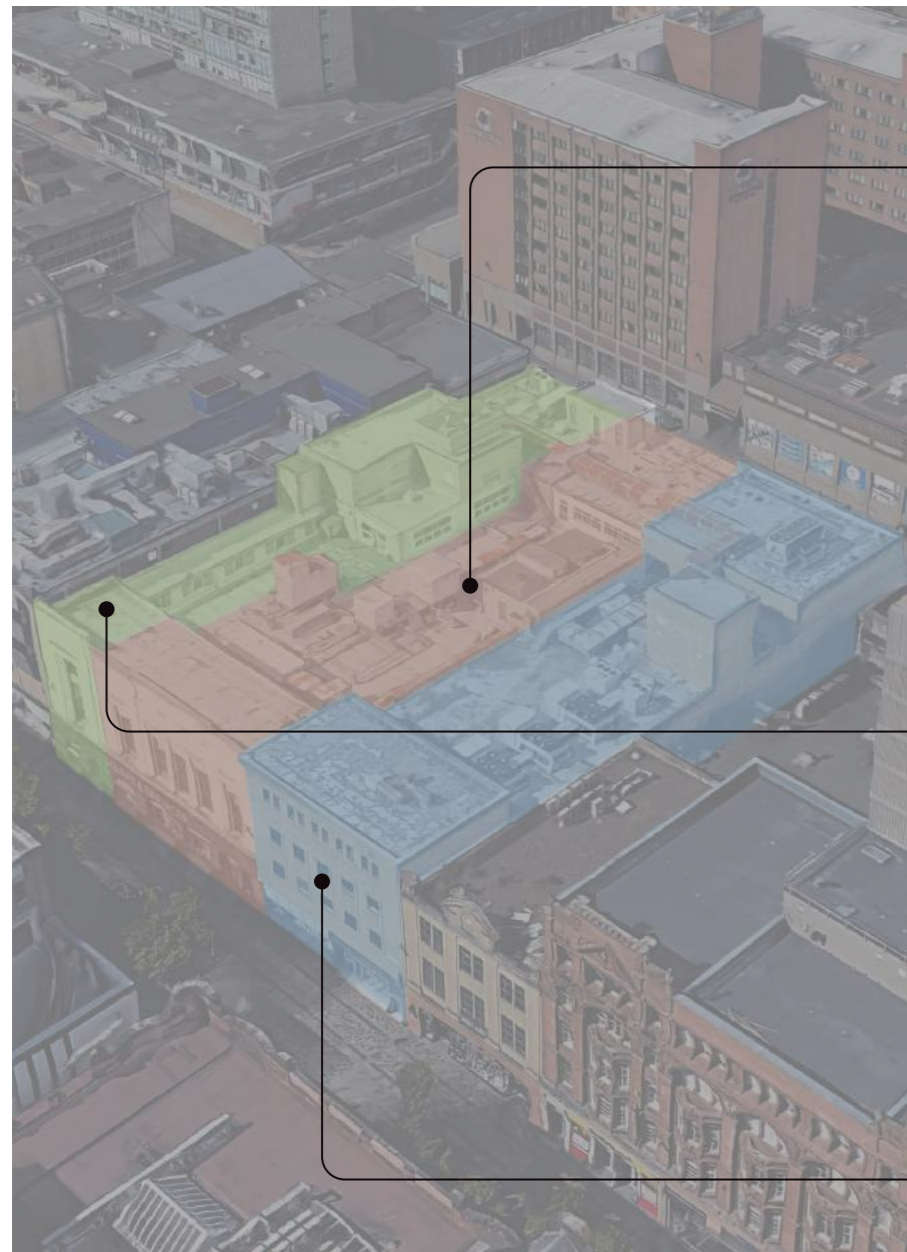
Restricted Views Out

The existing floor plate offers little opportunity for views out of the building by virtue of its depth, negatively impacting the health of occupants without significant interventions.

2.14 Existing Building

2.14.2 History & Phasing

The existing buildings present a redevelopment challenge due to their uncoordinated levels and independent frames, arising from the development history outlined below.



1935 - Marks & Spencer Building



Existing building, designed & completed by Monro & Partners in 1935 for Marks & Spencer.

The design is an example of Lutyens' vision of modular, grid-based stores for M&S, built throughout the UK in the 1930s and 40s.

The building is formed from single skin walls & has a heavily altered internal layout as M&S repeatedly updated & extended a building originally intended for retail in the 1930s using technology of that time.

1938 - Extension



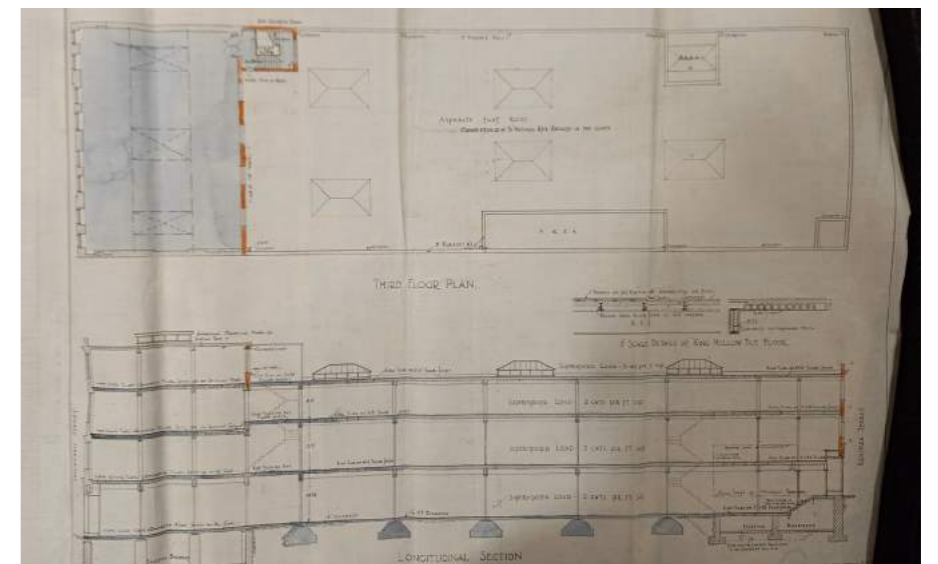
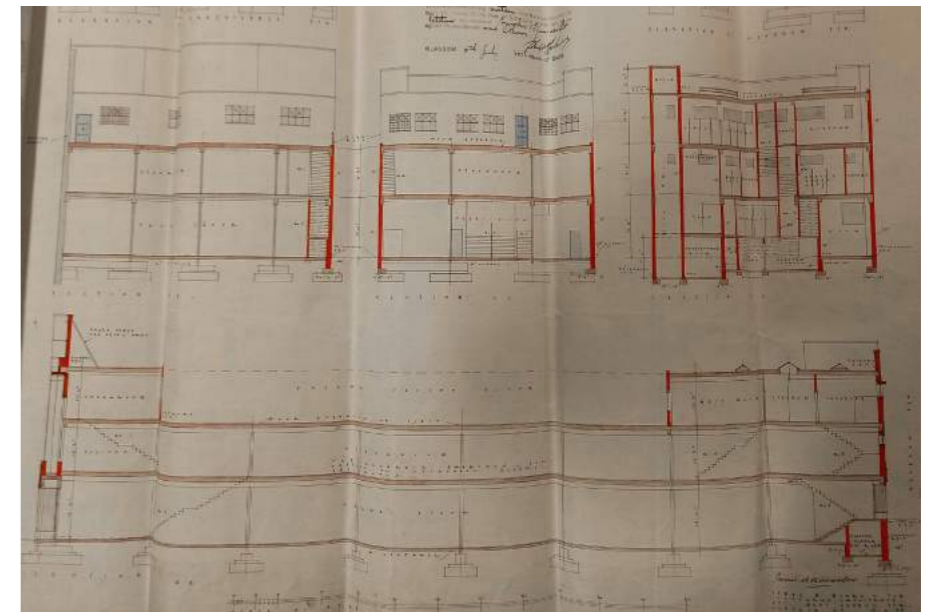
An extension to the western side was constructed just 3 years later as the land became available.

The design broke away from the original modular vision by interrupting the symmetry of the original facade, contradicting its purpose. Alterations to the frontage have rendered the facade visually flimsy, robbing it of the greater mass that was originally intended.

1985 - Demolition & Replacement



The former Woolworths Building was demolished in 1985 & a poor quality brick replacement was erected that declined to make reference to its neighbours or the historic architecture of the neighbourhood.

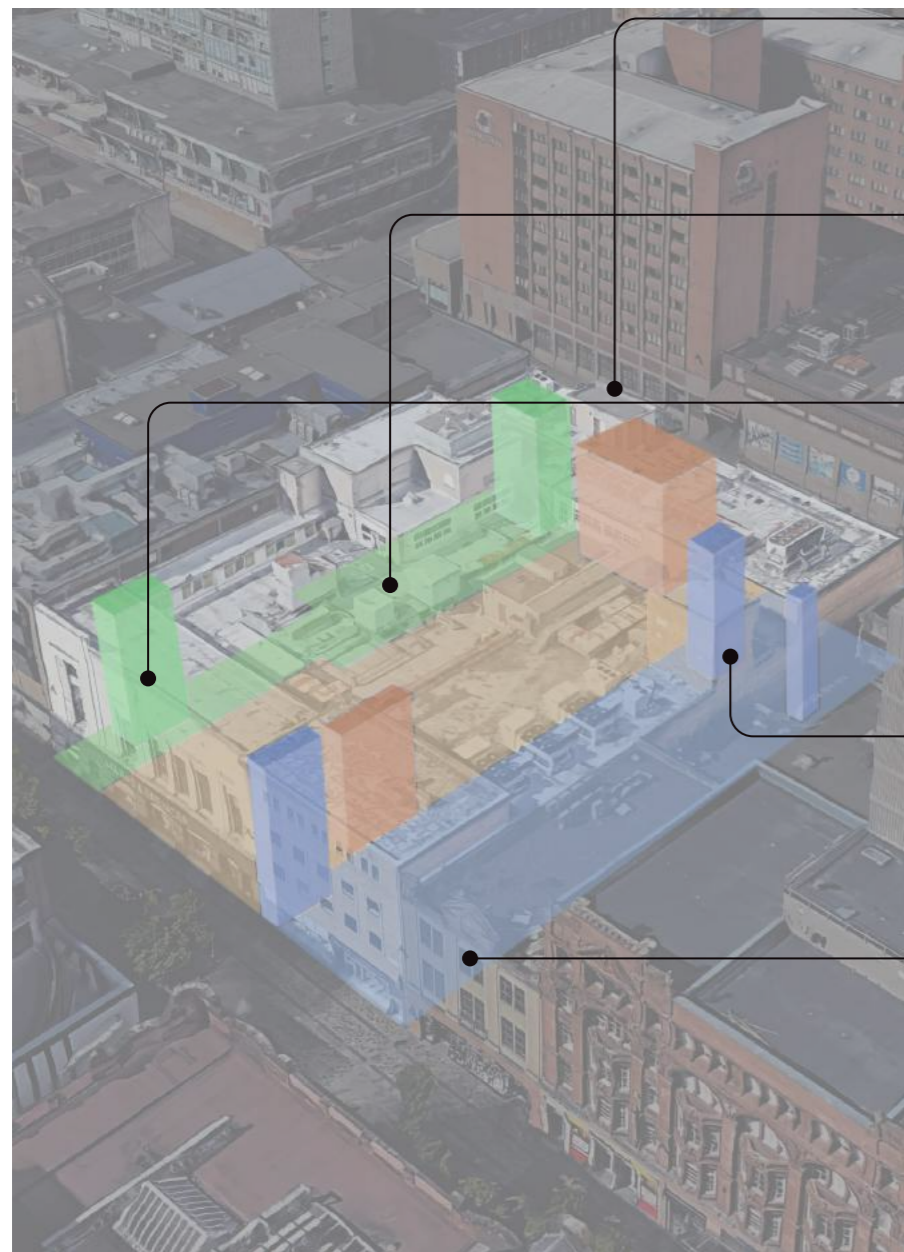


Archive Drawings

2.14 Existing Building

2.14.3 Design Constraints

The existing buildings provide a number of constraints that will limit the ability to re-use the building within the development proposals.



North East Elevation

Opportunities to maximise daylight without excessive solar gains are hampered by the very low window-wall ratio of the North East elevation, further exacerbating the problem of minimal views out of the building

Poor Daylighting

Existing floor plates are too deep to allow natural light to penetrate, meaning reliance on artificial light to illuminate spaces would be essential without significant alterations to the fabric & structure.

Additional Storeys

It has been assessed that the structural frame for the original M&S Building & extension could only support 1 additional storey, without overly significant strengthening works.

Extensive structural alterations may allow for further floors, but are likely to involve the vast alteration of the existing building frames hence deferring from the objectives of a retained building solution, and impacting whole life carbon by introducing further extensive material.

Staircores

The existing staircores are designed to serve 3 separate buildings & are not arranged efficiently to provide circulation for a single development. A great deal of structural alteration and strengthening would be required to remove & relocate the existing cores.

Additional Storeys

It has been assessed that the structural frame for the original Woolworths Building could also only support 1 additional storey, without overly significant strengthening works - see above.

Sustainable Waste Management

Potential for existing materials to be used either on-site or off-site, or recycled to ensure diversion of waste from landfill.

Reduced Passive Design Opportunities

The existing large floor plates limit any opportunity to implement passive energy measures such as natural ventilation & solar gains. This necessitates a greater reliance on mechanical ventilation & artificial light & higher energy use.

SUDS

Limited opportunity to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage systems such as a blue / green roof into existing fabric.

Thermal Performance of Fabric

The existing building has a very poor thermal performance, meaning its retention would have a detrimental impact on operational energy.

Limited Embodied Carbon Savings

The structural interventions & temporary structural works required to retain the existing fabric would be significant & severely limit the potential embodied carbon savings by introducing additional structural material, including additional structure to allow insertion of atria/light-wells within the slabs themselves to facilitate its new use.

Please refer to section 5.8 Sustainability chapter of this document, and the accompanying report prepared by JLL, for full details of the predicted whole life carbon associated with the retention options explored.

2.14 Existing Building

2.14.4 Facade Arrangement

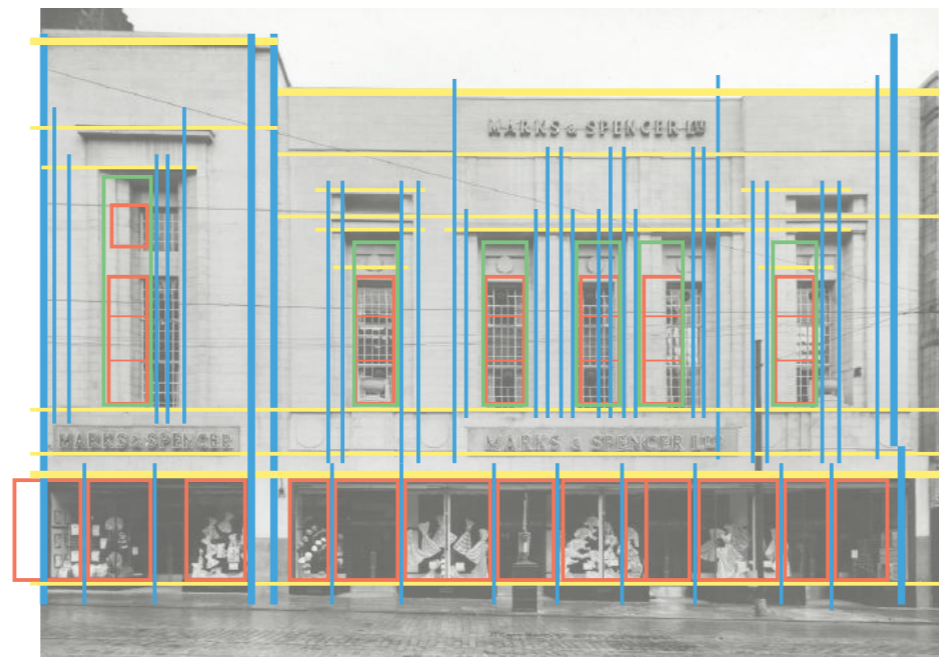
The existing building is comprised of a facade that was constructed in two phases: the original facade, built in 1935, followed by an extension to it, which was built during 1938.

Both phases of the facade are unified by a carefully considered facade arrangement which is underpinned by the following qualities:

- A dominant vertical expression and rhythm
- Secondary horizontal expressions
- A typical recessed window opening proportion ratio of 4:1
- A typical window proportion ratio of 3:1.



The original facade under construction - the modular design is poorly related to the floors that sit behind it.



Extension - 1938 Original Facade - 1935

2.14 Existing Building

2.14.5 Re-use versus Redevelopment

Adapted Building



Facade Retention Building



Replacement Building



Aspect & Orientation

Existing floors can't be populated with accommodation and give access to views and daylight without creating light-well/atrium features due to the deep floor plates. Structural strengthening would be required and fabric removal.

New upper floors provide an opportunity for accommodation with views across the city in all directions, with potential for passive solar shading.

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Visual Permeability

The existing building has a monolithic form with views out restricted to two sides of a very deep floor plate. Visual permeability through the site is also poor due to the low window-to-wall ratio & the footprint occupying the entire site.

Reinstating the original shop-front glazing bays would enhance visibility and connectivity through the site. Increasing the size & number of openings in the existing fabric would damage any character the existing building possesses. .

Full height glazing to the ground floor, creates an open, inviting frontage, maximising views both into & out of the building. Reinstatement of the historical arcade arrangement also opens up the site, providing views & allowing pedestrian movement between Sauchiehall & Renfrew Street.

Scale & Massing

The building scale would remain below the neighbouring buildings, even with the addition of additional floors up to the maximum that is viable to be added utilising the existing strengthened structural frames.

The building massing could be tuned to respond to the retention of the facade on Sauchiehall Street, and step back to address this aspect. The remainder of the blocks could be delivered at the scale proposed for new-build.

The building massing responds to its context, and creates an opportunity to create a new relationship with the street at both upper and lower levels.

Activation

The shop front facades offer limited activation to the street, and feature poorly scaled openings set back from the street, framed in dark marble and stainless steel not in keeping with the existing fabric or the materials of the area.

The shop front facades offer some activation to the street, but the potential to still introduce the arcade through the site will bring activity through and beyond onto Renfrew Street.

The introduction of new commercial and amenity uses at ground floor will enhance activation along the street edges, and through the site, with greater flexibility of unit sizes and types.

Density

Density would be increased in comparison to the existing building, however this would still represent a low density development for the city centre.

This option provides an opportunity for significantly increased density, comparable with the development of other city centre sites.

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External Environment

Potential for small terraces to rooftop, but with limited aspect due to the proximity of adjacent buildings and the existing facade. Scope for the introduction of an internal roof garden, with limited external views.

This option allows the creation of a series of private outdoor spaces, of differing scales and potential uses. The collonnaded facades and arcade offer further external space into the public realm.

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Wayfinding

Continuation of existing monolithic form has limited contribution to city wide wayfinding.

The new-build component creates a subtle city marker by increasing height at the north-west corner of the site, and the massing creates an animated roofscape.

The new-build scheme creates a subtle city marker by increasing height at the north-west corner of the site, and the massing creates an animated roofscape.

- Poor Placemaking Opportunity
- Potential Placemaking Opportunity
- Postive Placemaking Opportunity

2.14 Existing Building

2.14.6 Adapted Building Option

An option has been explored by the design team to retain the existing structural frame, and adapt it to suit a workable arrangement as depicted opposite and below. Structural assessments have concluded that the frame is capable of only supporting one additional floor, without heavy strengthening works to upgrade its capacity.

OPTION - one additional floor

LEVELS G + 1 + 2 + 3 (extended floor)

The re-purposed building is arranged in a courtyard shape in order to address the site constraints.

Single-loaded accommodation is provided in the east and west wings, with windows facing into the courtyard. Double-loaded accommodation is provided on the north and south wings, with accommodation gaining natural light from the courtyard on one side and from the street on the other.

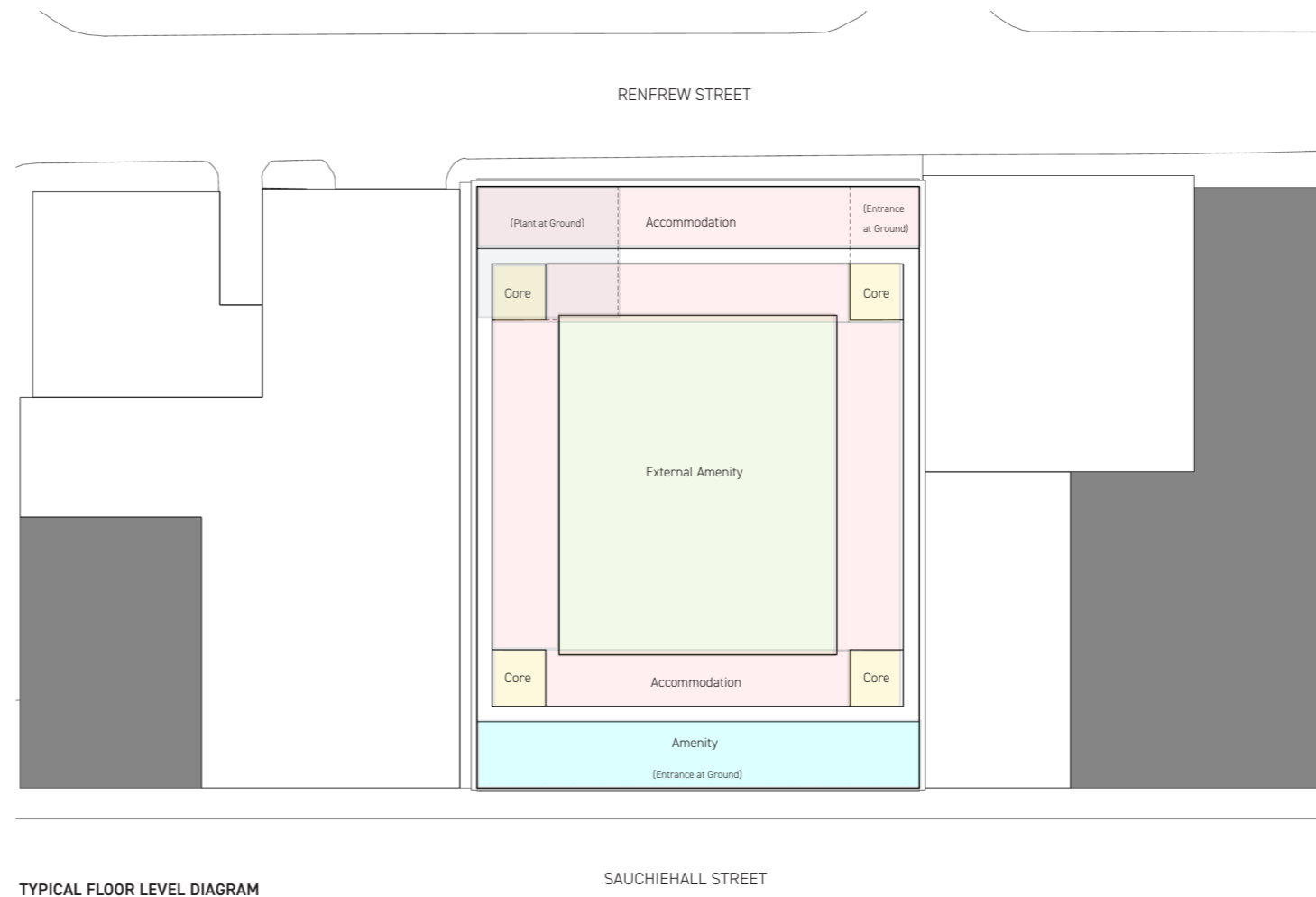
Cores are redistributed at each corner to address the requirements for escape travel distances and general access and circulation.

Internal amenity space is provided at ground, first and second floors, located behind the retained facade on Sauchiehall Street.

The extended floor at level 3 contains only accommodation, and infills the east and west wings to create a full floorplate at this level.

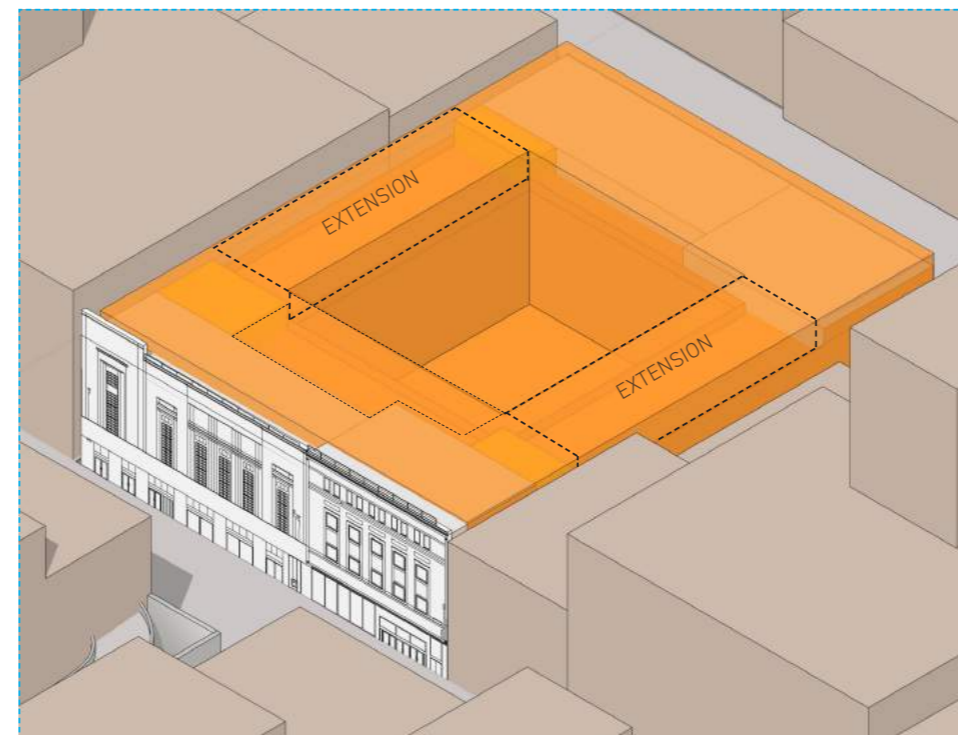
From a sustainability perspective, a carbon assessment has been carried out by JLL to review the performance of this option - see section 5.8 and the report included in this planning submission for full details.

The results show that from a whole life carbon perspective, this option to retain the facade and structural frame is estimated to have whole life carbon emissions that are very similar to the proposed scheme (retained facade only), because of the significant structural interventions required to enable the conversion of the existing building to student accommodation.



TYPICAL FLOOR LEVEL DIAGRAM

MASSING DIAGRAM INDICATING FLOOR EXTENSIONS



OPTION - ONE ADDITIONAL FLOOR

- re-use and heavily modify existing structure to create efficient floor plates and cores
- current structure capable of accepting one additional floor without extensive strengthening, to east and west wings
- retain facade on Sauchiehall Street
- new facades to remaining elevations to comply with current standards
- new roofs generally to comply with current standards
- courtyard arrangement to maximise natural light and support efficient room layouts
- courtyard arrangement to maximise natural light and efficient room layouts

3.0 Evaluation