

ST JAMES'S HOUSE KEMPTOWN

IDEAS PRESENTATION - YOUR PLACE, YOUR FUTURE

7567-ECE-DO-03 REV B

APRIL 2025



EAST ELEVATION CHAPEL STREET

WEST ELEVATION HIGH STREET



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Brighton and Hove Council

New Homes For Neighborhoods

At Brighton Council we are committed to delivering high-quality, sustainable new homes that enhance our neighbourhoods and meet the evolving needs of our communities. Through the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme, we are transforming underutilised sites into well-designed, energy-efficient housing that contributes positively to the local area. Our approach prioritises thoughtful placemaking, strong community connections, and long-term sustainability, ensuring that each development not only provides much-needed homes but also enriches the wider environment.

By working collaboratively with architects, planners, and local stakeholders, we aim to create places where people want to live—balancing design excellence with affordability, accessibility, and environmental responsibility. This ideas document outlines our aspirations for the future, setting a clear framework for how we intend to shape thriving, inclusive communities across our city.



ECE Architecture

ECE is a 115 strong Architect and Town Planning AJ100 practice with studios in London, Sussex, and Bristol, specialising in Residential, Education, Commercial, Civic & Healthcare sectors.

Our expertise and enthusiasm is applied in partnership with our clients to provide innovative and sustainable solutions to all stages of the development process.

We aspire to the highest quality of design and service to our clients and the wider communities in which our projects are delivered.

We are proud to have won several awards for our buildings including RIBA Awards, Civic Trust Awards, an Iconic Award and a range of Regional Design Awards.

Design Team / Consultants

Ridge and Partners LLP -
Multidisciplinary Consultant (Access and Transport, Utilities, Environmental, Topographical).

B&M
Quantity Surveying

Savills
Valuation and Surveying

Project Centre
Highways

Anderson Acoustics
Air Quality

Lizard Landscape Design & Ecology
Landscape, Ecology, BNG

Archaeological Services Ltd
Archaeology

Anstey Horne
Daylight / Sunlight

Nova Acoustics
Noise

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Summary

This document has been prepared on behalf of Brighton Council, the landowner, to outline the ideas and objectives for the development plans of St James's House, Kemptown. The Site is a strategically important development proposal in the centre of Brighton.

The primary goals of this Ideas Presentation are as follows:

- 01 Present a comprehensive idea setting out key objectives and placemaking principles.**
- 02 Provide a summary of the Site and its local context analysis conducted to date.**
- 03 Development potential of the Site within the context of current Planning Policy.**
- 04 Introduce an initial concept proposal for the Site and illustrate how it has been influenced by the idea and site assessment.**
- 05 Discuss the next steps in fulfilling the ideas for the Site.**
- 06 This document outlines the new site proposal, which includes completely removing the existing building following feedback from the structural engineer.**

THE IDEA

1.2. The Idea

The Idea for the Site at St James's House, Kemptown is structured into three parts; A Clear Vision, Key Objectives and Placemaking Principles; they are not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive, but rather a guide to offering a thriving, sustainable new community for Kemptown.

- Connectivity to the local community prioritising the enhancement the perforate nature of the site. Creating pockets of amenity and landscaping.
- Designing an attractive and high-quality environment which incorporates green spaces, trees, street furniture and street lighting. Avoiding large swathes of car parking, bin storage and unattractive tarmacked areas.
- Incorporating new and enhancing existing amenity facilities and functional spaces to allow people to socialise freely and safely. Consider safety and accessibility of new pedestrian routes and road layouts to allow all users to access local amenities including families with young children, wheelchair users and others.
- Avoid areas of undefined or underused areas of land that do not enhance the setting or provide a functional purpose
- Build in opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and surface water management such as swales and SUDS throughout the design.
- Design parking to be unobtrusive and to avoid dominance in the street scene, in this cae utilising the existing basement car parking areas. Consider opportunities to reduce the reliance upon private cars within the community.
- Maximise existing views from the new development and roof top amenity spaces, consider the positioning and height of new buildings to allow natural light and key views to remain in situ.



Key objectives for St James House, Kemptown are set out below:



1 Integrate the new proposal for St James House, Kemptown seamlessly with the neighbouring areas, creating a robust connection with the established environment and local communities.

“Innovative, Sustainable, Resilient: Shaping Kemptown’s Net-Zero Future”
“Nature and Design United: Creating Eco-Friendly Spaces for Kemptown’s Residents”



3 Establish a new destination and neighbourhood for St James House, Kemptown. A welcoming place for both current and prospective residents.

“Redefining Sustainability: Net-Zero Homes, Thriving Communities”
“Greening Brighton: Connecting Nature, Communities, and a Sustainable Future”



2 To let the rich history and distinctive character of Kemptown guide the vision. Embrace the past while planning for the future, ensuring appreciation for the Site’s heritage.

“Green Homes, Strong Communities: Designed to create unique character”
“Character at Kemptown’s Core: Creating Eco-Friendly Spaces for Brighton’s Future”



4 To advocate a sustainable lifestyle in the heart of Kemptown, fostering immediate positive transformation while safeguarding existing communities for the future.

“Building a Greener Future: Sustainable, Energy-Efficient Homes for All”
“Sustainable Green Spaces: Fostering Biodiversity and Connection for All”

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1. The Site

The Site is situated in the heart of Kemptown - Brighton, in close proximity to key transport links, local amenities, and the vibrant city centre. It is bordered by established residential neighbourhoods, key arterial roads providing access across the city, and a mix of commercial and community spaces that contribute to the area's dynamic character.

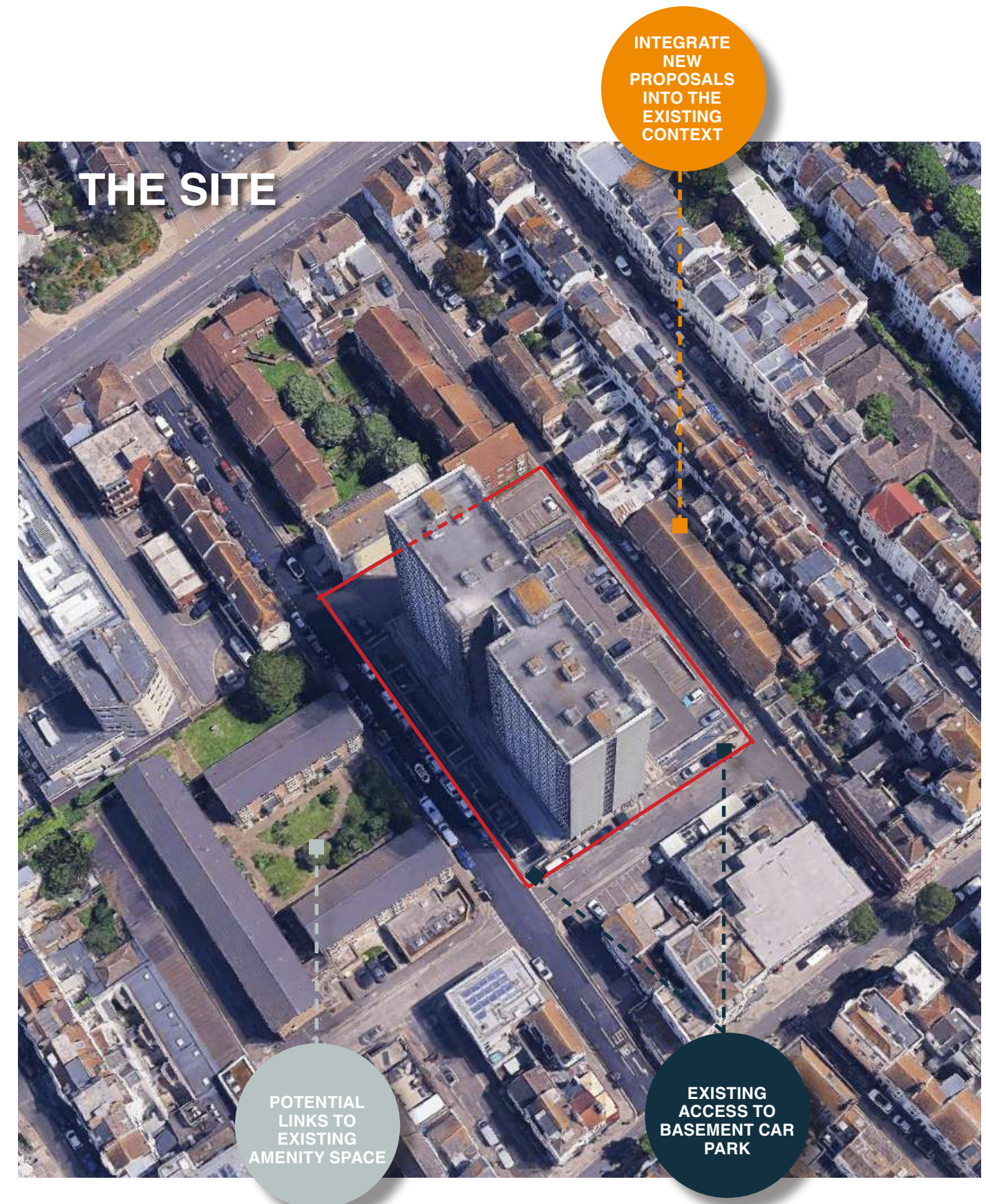
Kempton Brighton benefits from its prime location, offering excellent connectivity and accessibility. With strong transport links, the site provides easy access to the city's extensive public transport network, facilitating connections to surrounding areas and beyond.

This location presents an exceptional opportunity for a new residential development in a highly sustainable setting. Its close proximity to local shops, services, and employment hubs ensures a well-integrated urban lifestyle, easily accessible by foot, bicycle, and public transport.

Distances to local amenities and places of interest:

- Brighton Station (6 minute walk)
- Brighton Town Centre (13 minute walk)
- Brighton Hospital (10 minute walk)
- Brighton College (9 minute walk)
- Marina (23 minute walk)
- Queens Park Primary School (11 minute walk)
- Royal
- Tesco (20 minute walk)
- Queens Park (22 minute walk)

"Kemptown is a vibrant and historic district in Brighton, located to the east of the city centre. Known for its Regency-era architecture, independent shops, cafes, and lively nightlife, it has a distinct character that blends seaside charm with a bohemian atmosphere. The area is home to a strong LGBTQ+ community and features landmarks such as Madeira Drive, the Volks Railway, and Brighton Marina. Kemptown also offers stunning sea views, easy access to Brighton Beach, and a mix of grand period townhouses, modern apartments, and boutique hotels."



AMENITIES & CONNECTIVITY

-  TRAIN STATION
-  BUS STOP
-  SPORTS / LEISURE
-  RECREATION / GREEN SPACE
-  EDUCATIONAL
-  RETAIL
-  PLACES OF INTEREST
-  RESTAURANTS
-  HOSPITAL / HEALTHCARE



2.2. Heritage

The architectural Heritage is defined by uniformity, scale, and formality, particularly around landmarks like Sussex Square and Lewes Crescent, which offer sweeping views over the sea. Kemptown has retained much of its original charm, blending historic grandeur with a vibrant, diverse community and a lively mix of residential, cultural, and commercial uses.



By 1886, the site was already occupied by built form, with notable buildings situated to the north and south. To the north stood Windsor Lodge, while to the south was a building of significance — possibly a religious structure and community hall known as St James' Parish Room



St James's Parish Rooms on High street.



Orininal street elevation to the east of the site - currently 2 storey cottages.



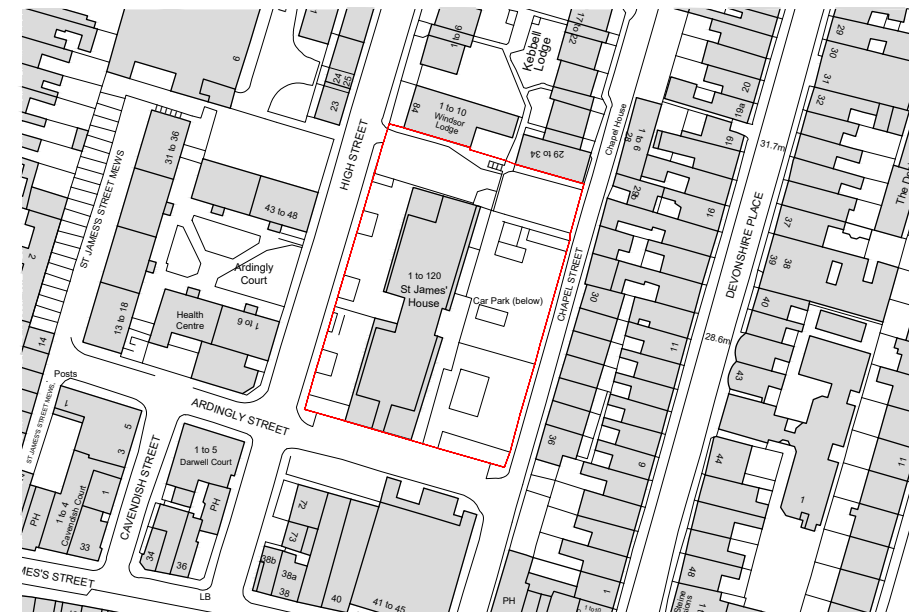
23-30 High Street - Grade II listed building



By 1952, the buildings on the site were typical of the area — arranged back-to-back with smaller courtyard gardens. The building lines clearly defined the street frontage. To the north, Gordon Hall (formerly Windsor Lodge) remained, while the building of significance to the south had been removed and was recorded as ruins.



By 1970, the area had undergone significant change, including the construction of St James's House and the introduction of a new road to the south — Ardingly Street.



By 2025, further significant changes had taken place since 1970, including the construction of Ardingly Court and new-build developments to the north-east, east, and south of the site.



23-30 High Street - Grade II listed building.



Windsor Lodge (Gordon Hall) Not listed. Residential conversion.



St James's House - current apperance, subject to structural review and possible demolition .

2.3. Character

Mixed use Presence: Busy streets to the south feature ground-floor commercial units with residential above.

Topography: The site sits on a gentle north-to-south slope, typical of Kemptown.

Mixed-Use Area: Primarily residential with some commercial properties mixed in.

Residential Housing: A mixture of historic and modern residential buildings to Chapel Street, Ardingly Street and High Street.

Narrow Streets & Limited Parking: Narrow roads with limited on-street parking. Chapel Street is one-way; Ardingly Street and High Street are two-way. A closed basement car park reduces parking options.

Green Spaces: Little greenery in the area. Ardingly Court has semi-private amenity space, largely disconnected from the public realm.

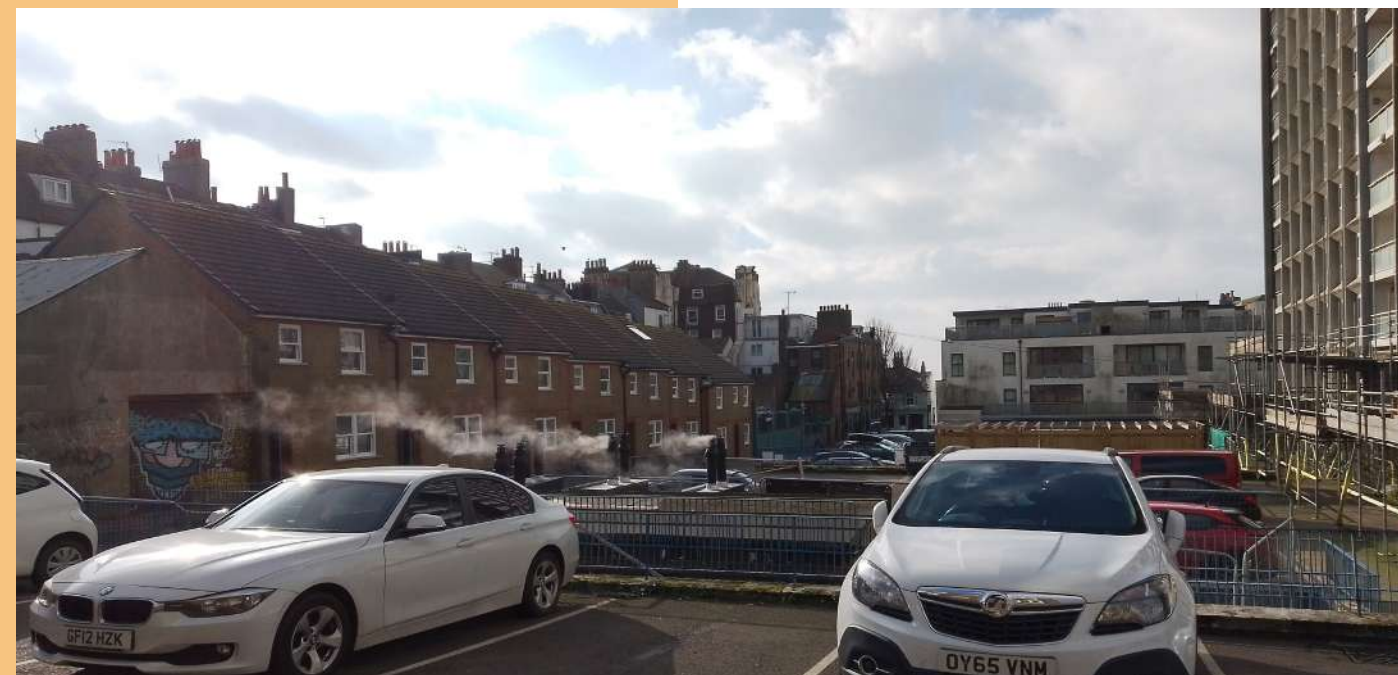
Connectivity: Close to public transport and within walking distance of St James's Street, though traffic causes occasional bottlenecks.

Urban Grain: Densely packed residential streets define the local character.

Building Hights: Mostly 2–5 storeys, with taller elements at key corners. St James's House rises to 16 storeys.

Noise & Air Pollution: Traffic contributes to noise and air pollution.

Community Facilities: Nearby schools, shops, and services support local residents.



2.4. Existing Building Audit

KEY

Site Area: 3117sqm - 0.311 Hectares

Hard Surface - 2295sqm

Neighboring green space

Existing Building Footprint

- St James House: 822sqm

Accommodation Schedule

- 1 Bed Units: 1 Unit
- 2 Bed Units: 121 Units
- 3 Bed Units: 1 Unit

Residents Car Parking Spaces

- 81 Car Parking Spaces

Cycle Parking Spaces

- N/A

Refuse and recycling bins

- St James House bin store: 20sqm
- New external recycling bin store: approx 50sqm



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Baseline Plan

3.0 SITE ASSESSMENT

3.1. Site Considerations

The findings of the Site Assessment have been evaluated to identify the key opportunities and considerations relevant to the development.

This will ensure that the proposals are responsive to existing site features and provide mitigation as appropriate. The following points provide a summary of the Site assessment undertaken to date, for the following disciplines:

- KEY
- Site Boundary
 - Existing Site Access
 - Overlooking Windows
 - Views into Site
 - Sun Path
 - Potential Noise Source
 - Key Corner
 - Existing Building Footprint
 - Amenity Green Space
 - Vehicular Street Access
 - Conservation Area Outline
 - Listed Buildings

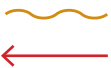
Residential	
	1 Storey
	2 Storey
	3 Storey
	4 Storey
	5 Storey
	16 Storey



3.2. Site Opportunities

The following opportunities have been identified for the site, based on the key site considerations outlined:

- 

1. Existing height on site could be used to establish scale and mass precedent.
- 

2. Retain access to basement. Improving public realm and the presence of the car.
- 

3. Established height on site - Policy SPD.17 suggests between 8-15 could be justified.
- 

4. Reinstate the building lines to High Street, Chapel Street and Ardingly Street.
- 

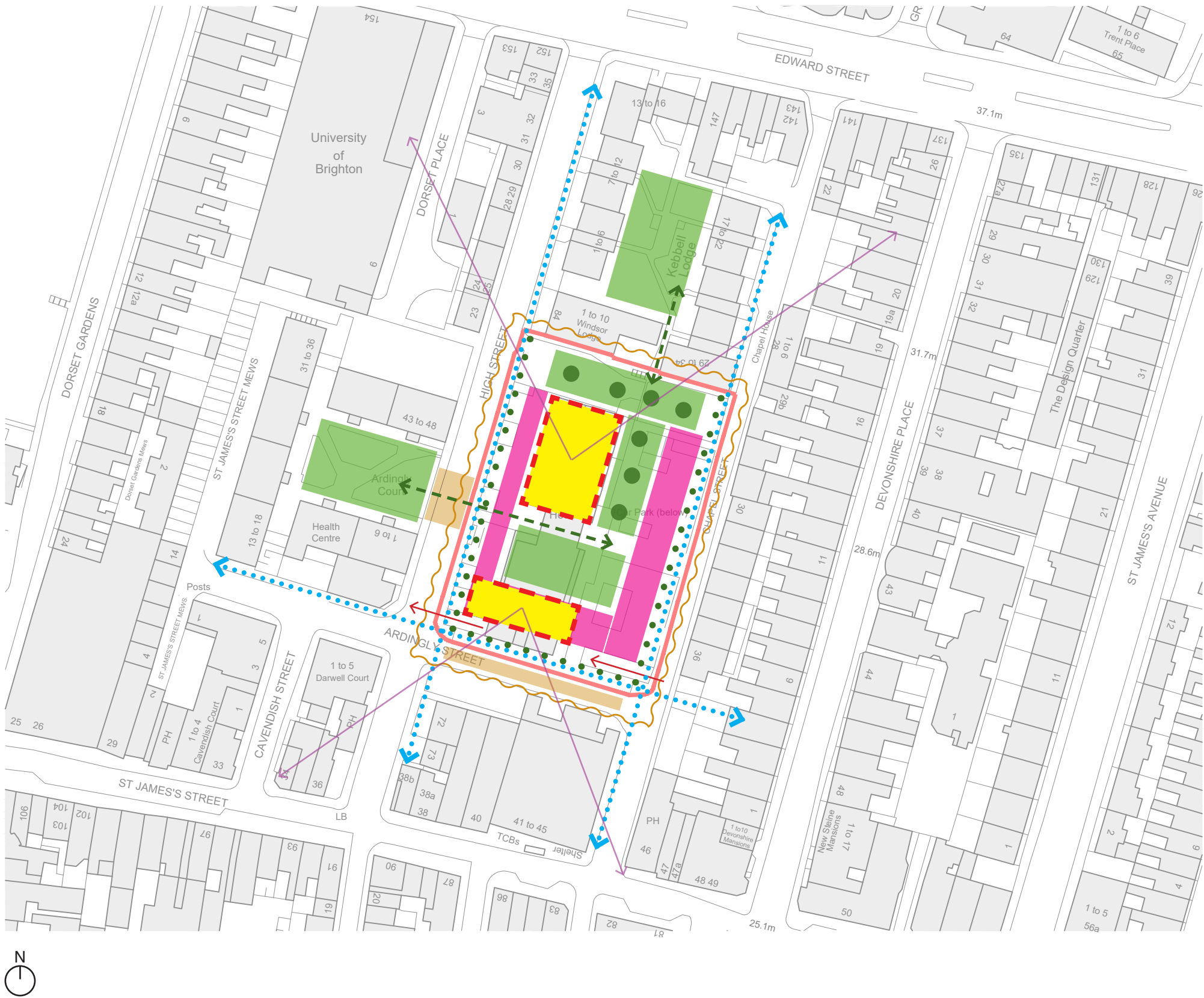
5. Create usable public realm and connections to the immediate context with a perforate pedestrian friendly scheme.
- 

6. Test existing context in terms of daylight, sunlight and rights of light with the existing building establishing a benchmark.
- 

7. Improvements to existing road infrastructure with home-zone type hard landscaping and connections to Ardingly Court
- 

8. BNG improvements over existing landscape conditions.
9. Potential to reuse materials from demolition of existing St James House
- 

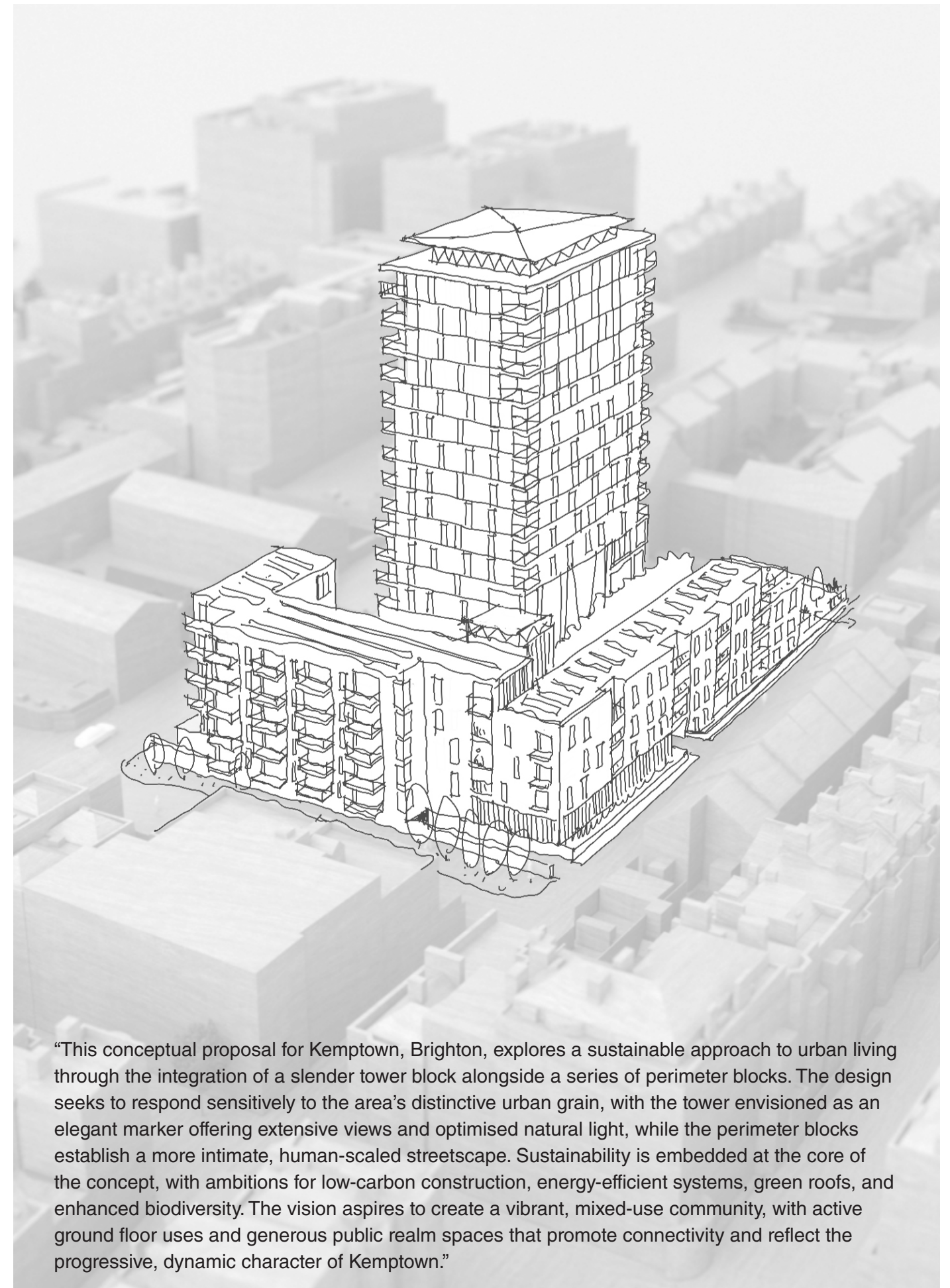
10. Maintain views from height for all with roof top amenity.



3.3. Concept Sketches

“Envisioned for the vibrant heart of Kemptown, Brighton, this conceptual amenity courtyard aims to provide a sustainable and tranquil retreat within the urban environment. The design seeks to blend contemporary architecture with the area’s historic charm, integrating biodiverse planting, permeable surfaces for natural rainwater management, and materials with low embodied carbon. The courtyard concept promotes a sense of community and well-being through sheltered seating areas, thoughtful lighting, and a harmonious mix of hard and soft landscaping. With a focus on ecological sustainability and social value, the concept envisions a green space that not only enhances the development’s environmental performance but also fosters a sense of connection within the community.”

Linear courtyard sketch



“This conceptual proposal for Kemptown, Brighton, explores a sustainable approach to urban living through the integration of a slender tower block alongside a series of perimeter blocks. The design seeks to respond sensitively to the area’s distinctive urban grain, with the tower envisioned as an elegant marker offering extensive views and optimised natural light, while the perimeter blocks establish a more intimate, human-scaled streetscape. Sustainability is embedded at the core of the concept, with ambitions for low-carbon construction, energy-efficient systems, green roofs, and enhanced biodiversity. The vision aspires to create a vibrant, mixed-use community, with active ground floor uses and generous public realm spaces that promote connectivity and reflect the progressive, dynamic character of Kemptown.”

3.4. Landscape Framework

Key landscape objectives in working towards making Brighton a net zero carbon emissions City whilst improving, enhancing and creating green infrastructure and spaces:

Landscape Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Play Space & Amenity Features

- Ecological Corridors & Habitat Networks: Linking green spaces for wildlife movement with native plants and pollinator-friendly species.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): Habitat creation, enhancement, and offsetting to increase biodiversity, including bird/bat boxes and insect hotels.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): Rain gardens, swales, and ponds to manage runoff and provide wetland habitats.
- Diverse Planting: Native trees, wildflower meadows, and varied vegetation supporting wildlife and improving soil health.
- Green Roofs & Walls: Extensive green roofs and living walls to reduce heat island effect and offer additional habitat.

- Flood-resistant & Climate-Adaptive Landscaping: Flood-tolerant plants and resilient designs for long-term ecological sustainability.
- Community Engagement: Educational spaces and community gardens to promote biodiversity awareness and involvement.
- Water-Efficient Landscaping: Rainwater harvesting and sustainable irrigation to maintain communal green spaces.
- Play Space: Safe, accessible play areas designed for children with natural elements, promoting outdoor activity and connection with nature.
- Amenity Areas: Shared spaces, such as gardens, seating areas, and recreational zones, designed for resident relaxation, social interaction, and community wellbeing.



3.5. Social Value

Sustainable Transport

Secure cycle storage and EV charging points.

Car club provision and good access to public transport.

Pedestrian-friendly layout.

Explore opportunities for local repair/share shops and community markets or swap events.

Social Sustainability

- Mix of tenures and adaptable homes.
- Shared gardens and community spaces.
- Resident engagement during design.

Community

- Food production in community gardens
- Space for community composting schemes
- Educational spaces and community gardens to promote biodiversity awareness and support involvement.
- Amenity Areas: Shared spaces, such as gardens, seating areas, and recreational zones, designed for resident relaxation, social interaction, and community wellbeing.
- Explore opportunities to host markets for local produce.

Wellbeing

- Play Space: Safe, accessible play areas designed for children with natural elements, promoting outdoor activity and connection with nature.

Governance and inclusion

- Form community consultation/management group
- Consideration of safety for vulnerable groups, good lighting, avoiding hidden corners where possible.
- Multiple exits to community space
- Use a range of visual languages in signage and design for those less comfortable with written English

In addition, ECE can support community engagement to develop programming and incubating of the resources needed to run a site to achieve framework objectives.



3.6. Sustainability Framework

Key sustainability objectives in working towards making Brighton a net zero carbon emissions City whilst improving, enhancing and creating green infrastructure and spaces:

Key Sustainability Features – New Residential Development, Kemptown

Energy & Carbon

- High-performance insulation and airtight construction.
- Triple glazing and MVHR for energy efficiency and comfort.
- Low-carbon heating (air/ground source heat pumps).
- On-site renewable energy via solar PV.
- Smart meters for energy monitoring.

Water Efficiency

- Low-flow taps, showers and dual-flush WCs.
- Rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling where feasible.
- Drought-resistant planting.

Biodiversity & Landscape

- Green roofs, living walls, and native planting.
- Bird/bat boxes and insect hotels.
- Sustainable drainage (SUDS) and permeable paving.

Materials & Construction

- Low embodied carbon and responsibly sourced materials.
- Prefabrication to reduce waste.
- Non-toxic, low-VOC finishes.

Sustainable Transport

- Secure cycle storage and EV charging points.
- Car club provision and good access to public transport.
- Pedestrian-friendly layout.

Social Sustainability

- Mix of tenures and adaptable homes.
- Shared gardens and community spaces.
- Resident engagement during design.

Climate Resilience

- Measures to mitigate overheating and flooding.
- Resilient planting and passive design strategies.

Standards & Certifications

- Designed to meet Future Homes Standard.
- Potential for Passivhaus or Home Quality Mark certification.
- Targeting net zero operational carbon.



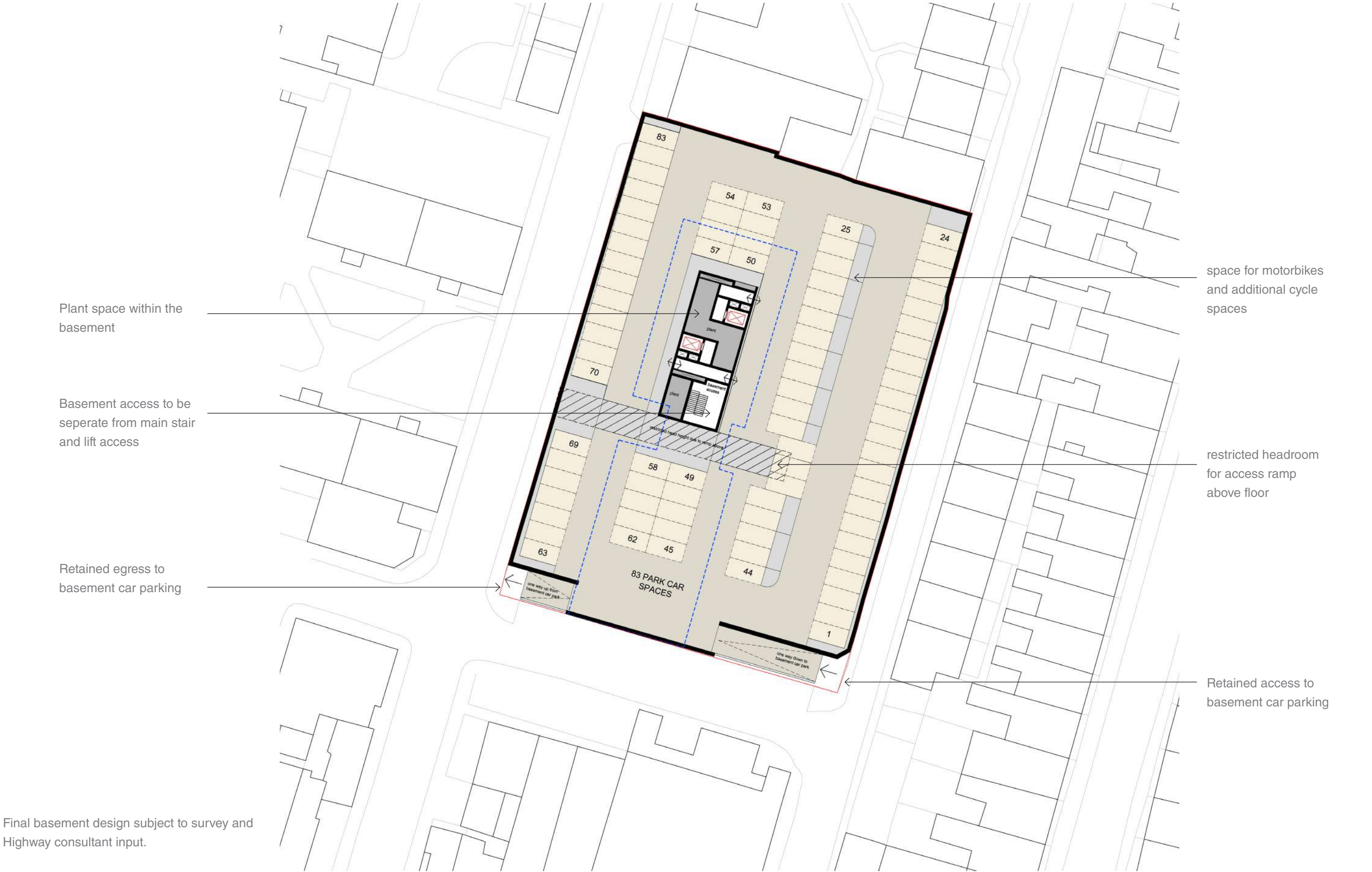
4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1. Ground floor



424

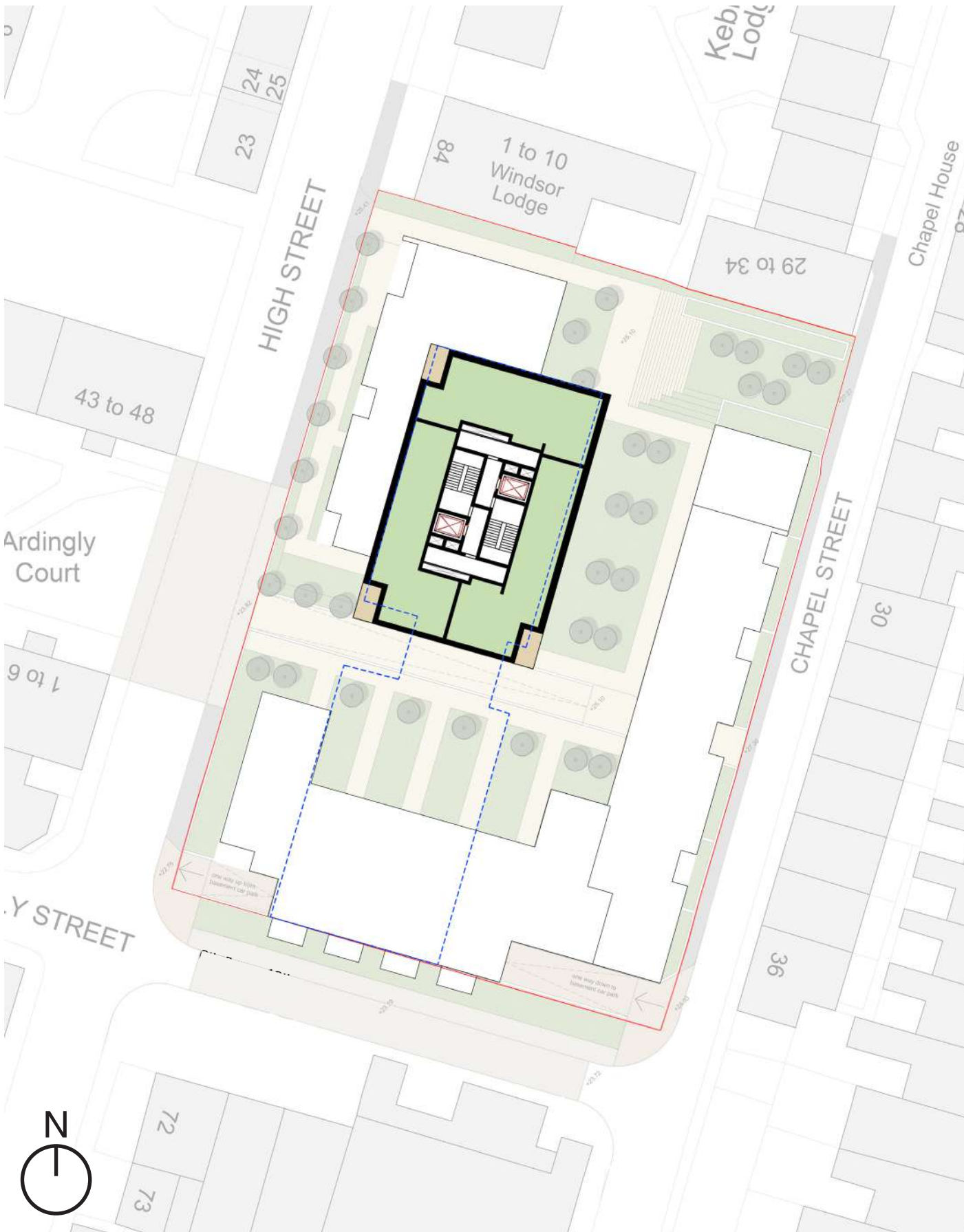
4.2. Basement Floor - 83 car spaces



4.3. Typical floor (3rd floor) and Upper Floor (11th to 14th)

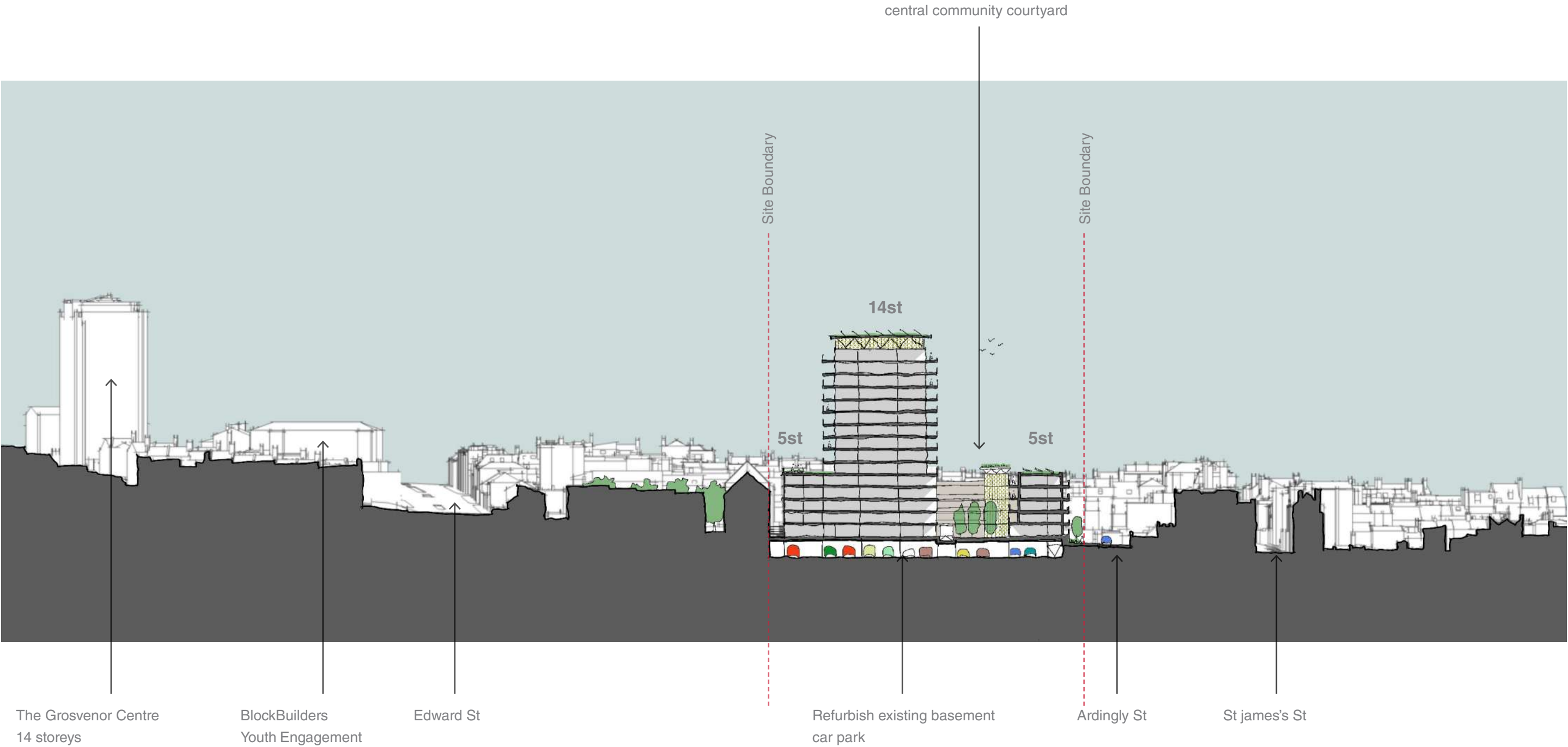


3rd Floor Plan



11th - 14th Floor Plan

4.4. Site Section - Looking West



4.5. 3D massing studies - view 1,2,3



4.6. View 1 - Birdseye View



4.7. View 2 - Placemaking - Community Courtyard



4.8. Accommodation Schedule - 97 Units



ECE Architecture

T 01903 248777

F 01903 248666

E sussex@ecearchitecture.com

W www.ecearchitecture.com

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St James House - Kempton

Schedule of Accommodation - OPTION 1

Proposed Residential Accommodation Schedule

Unit Type Schedule

Floor	1B2P m4(3) 61m2+	1B2P 50m2+	2B3P 61m2+	2B4P m4(3) 80m2+	2B4P 70m2+	3b4p 74m2+	3b5p 86m2+	Community	TOTAL
Ground Floor	6			4					10
1st Floor		6	1		5	1	1	residents gym residents workspace	14
2nd Floor		6	1		5	1	1		14
3rd Floor		6			7	1			14
4th Floor		4			3	1	1		9
5th Floor		1			3				4
6th to 10th					20				20
11th to 14th							12		12
Total	6	23	2	4	43	4	15		97
Percentage	6%	24%	2%	4%	44%	4%	15%		100%

1BED = 30%

2BED = 51%

3BED = 19%

m4(3) - 10 UNITS - 9.7%

Council brief (whitehawk)

1BED = 30%

2BED = 45%

3BED = 25%

M4(3) = 10%TOTAL

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary

The emerging concept proposals for St James House Kemptown show how development has been informed by the vision and Site assessment undertaken to date.

Our key vision objectives for St James House, Kemptown are set out below:

01 Creation of a new neighbourhood, defined by a locally distinctive aesthetic, and providing new sustainable homes fit for future living.

02 Recognition and promotion of the sustainable location of the Site, well placed close to local road, rail and bus links, and within walking and cycling distance of the Town Centre.

03 Promotion of a high quality environment and standard of living, which considers the needs of present and future generations.

04 Delivery of housing to meet local needs, including a mix of housing types and sizes, with potential for affordable housing.

05 Promotion of sustainable modes of transport and enhancing existing foot and cycle routes, promoting healthy living.

06 Provision of safe connections to education, health and community facilities, maintaining existing foot and cycle links.

07 Add extensive green landscaping, providing a multi-function green infrastructure that is easily accessible to all and improves ecological habitats where possible.

08 Provide recreation opportunities throughout the Site, including the provision of onsite natural play spaces, and SuDS to mitigate impacts of the development on the nearby areas.

09 Use best practice urban design principles and placemaking to guide the creation of a safe, legible and vibrant new community.

5.2. Next Steps

The proposals for the development of the site at St James House, Kemptown, represent a significant and exciting opportunity to create a sustainable and impactful addition to the vibrant city of Brighton. The ideas for this site are to deliver a high-quality, carefully designed development that will not only meet the current needs of the local community but also ensure that it can adapt to the evolving demands of future generations. By integrating environmentally conscious solutions with thoughtful design, the project aims to enhance the local environment and contribute positively to the area's growth and long-term sustainability.

BHCC is deeply committed to fostering a collaborative and transparent approach throughout the development process.

BHCC understand the importance of engaging with the local community, and as such, we actively encourage and welcome participation from all relevant stakeholders.

Through ongoing dialogue, consultations, and feedback opportunities, we aim to ensure that the development aligns with the aspirations and needs of the people who live and work in the area.

BHCC are dedicated to creating a space that truly reflects the community's values and contributes to its social, economic, and cultural fabric.

BHCC recognise that community input is crucial in shaping a project that will be sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial for years to come.

BHCC looks forward to working alongside the local residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders to create a lasting positive impact in Kemptown.

Your Place, Your Future

