

3.0 DESIGN EVOLUTION AND OBJECTIVES



3.1 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 Given the characteristics of the site and its surroundings, it is clear that there are a number of objectives that the design of the proposed development must consider. These are as follows:

01 A new station for Twickenham

The key objective for redeveloping the site is to provide Twickenham with a new station that provides significantly enhanced passenger facilities (including a new ticket hall), that is designed for daily use as well as for large crowds that use the station on event days at Twickenham Stadium.

02 Highly accessible and car free development

The transport interchange element of the site should be enhanced with the provision of taxi and bus facilities. The residential element of the development will be car-free given the highly accessible nature of the site.

03 A riverside walk along the River Crane

The redevelopment of the site will enable the extension of the River Crane walk, which will be located directly alongside the waterway.

04 The provision of suitable town centre uses

The site is located within Twickenham town centre, so residential and ancillary retail uses will be provided in order to improve the vitality of the town centre, without compromising its main retail core, further south along London Road.

05 A scale and massing that respects its surroundings

The allocation of the site for tall buildings and the town centre location needs to be balanced carefully with particular regard to the more suburban nature of surrounding areas, such as Cole Park Road.

06 High quality landscaping and public realm

Development must respect the transitional nature of the site (from urban to suburban), and the landscaping strategy for the site must provide generous spaces that support the site's gateway location, as well as more intimate spaces that respect the more suburban nature of the residential land to the north in particular.

07 Sustainable development

The principles of sustainable development will be embraced wherever possible, which includes reaching Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM 'Excellent' for the commercial elements of the proposal.



3.2 SCHEME EVOLUTION

NOVEMBER 2008

3.2.1 Initial proposals for the site showed the creation of a raft to support the new station with development above as a continuation of the Regal House height. A series of residential blocks were considered alongside the River Crane. As the design of the buildings developed, it became clear that the scale of the proposed buildings was too high against the river frontage and that the massing was too similar to Regal House with little variety in height or roofline. In addition, there was no clear link that provided access from the south, from London Road to the River Crane.

JUNE 2009

3.2.2 The design development of the site progressed to incorporate a cluster of buildings of varying massing centred around a station with two defined areas of public space, one in front of the ticket hall, and another alongside the River Crane. Massing was however felt to be too heavy and similar to Regal House and the central linking of the buildings did not open up the site to public use.

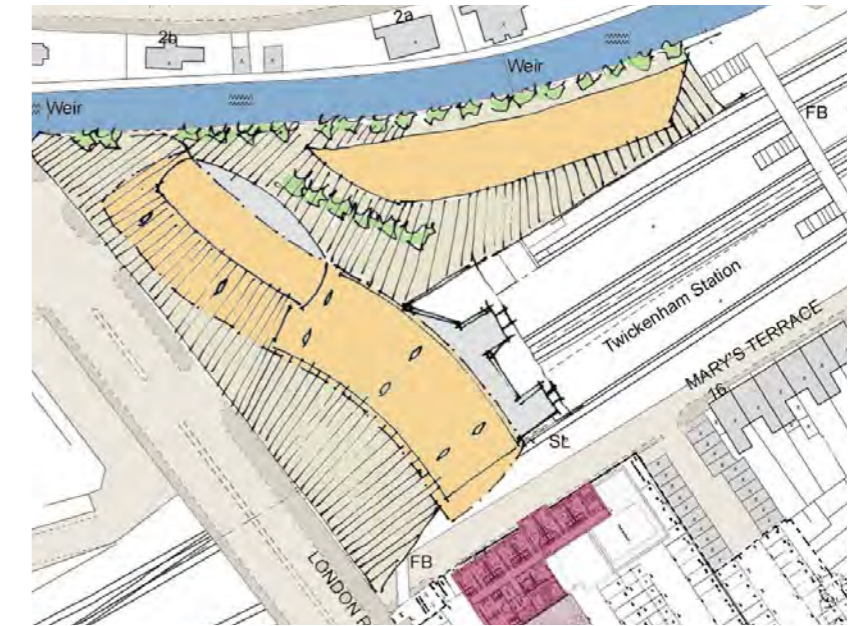


Figure 3.1
November 2008 Proposals

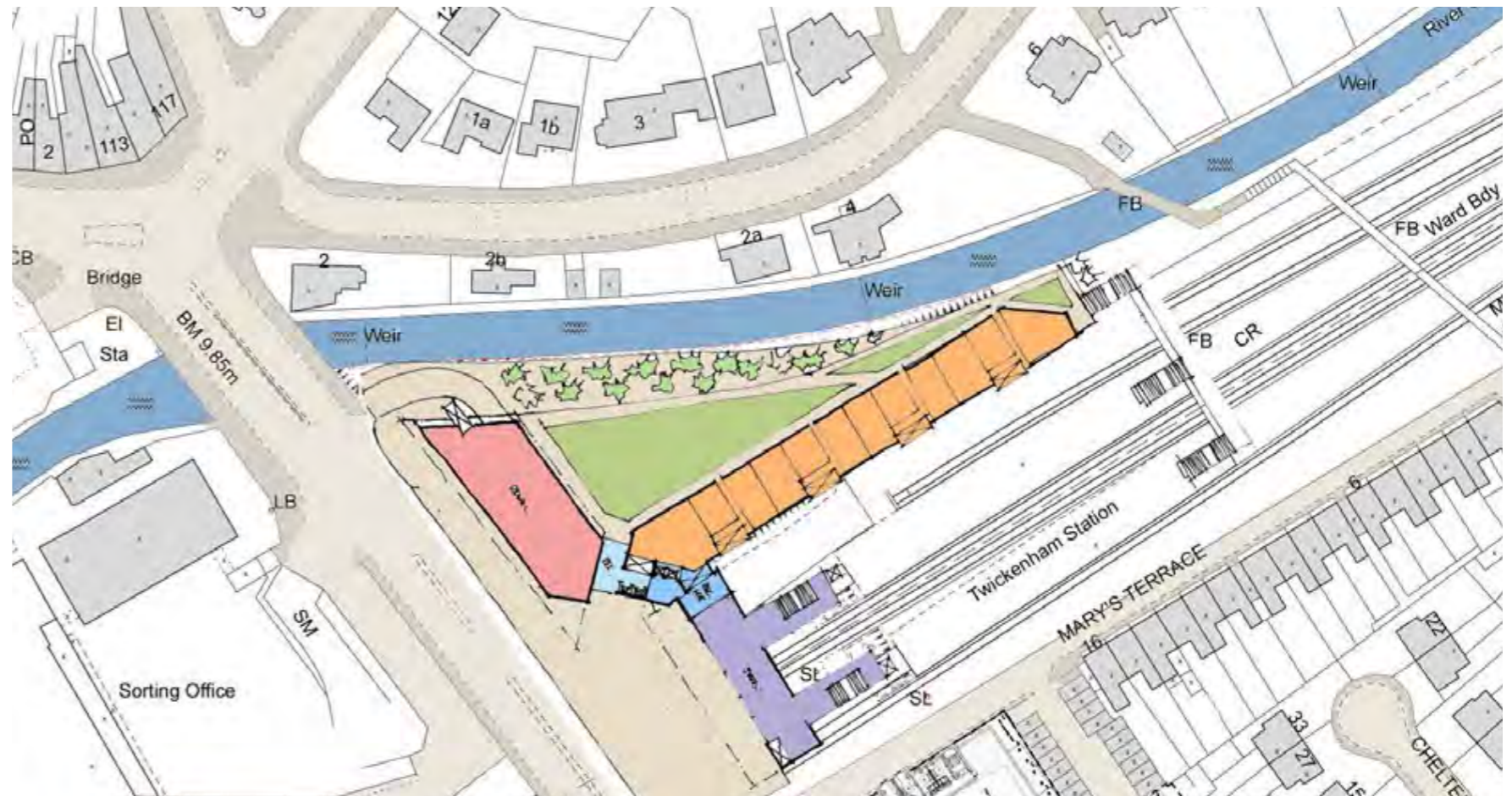


Figure 3.2
June 2009 Proposals

NOVEMBER 2009

- 3.2.3 The scheme was redesigned to incorporate clear paths of sunlight and site lines to break down their massing and address the impact on neighbours. The blocks were split further apart to increase permeability and the building heights adjacent to Regal House were explored with the main block of the station extending to 15 storeys to offset the mass of Regal House.
- 3.2.4 Following consultation with the Council the height was reduced to 10 storeys, equivalent to the highest point of Regal House and a new pedestrian link introduced connecting the site with Moormead Park to the east along the edge of the River Crane.

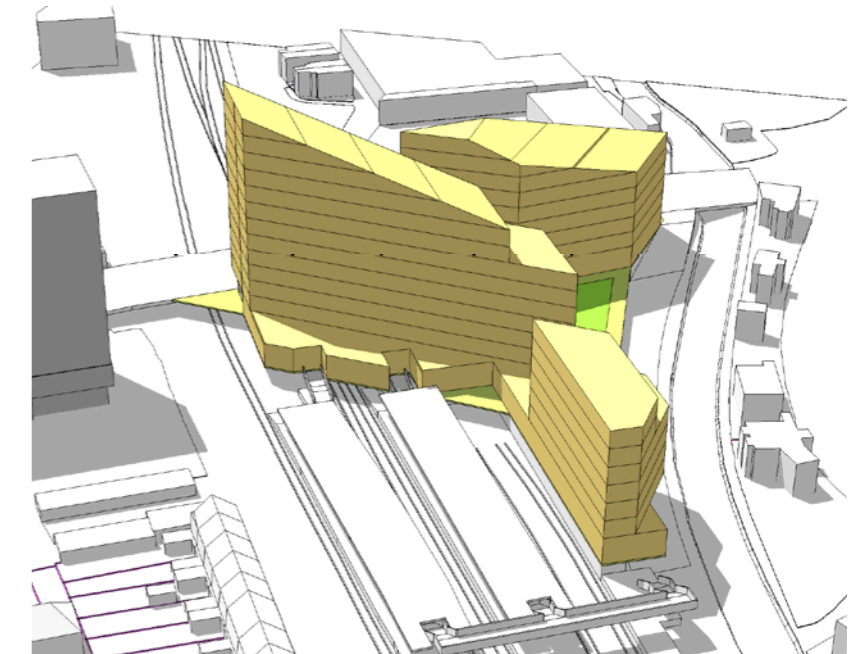
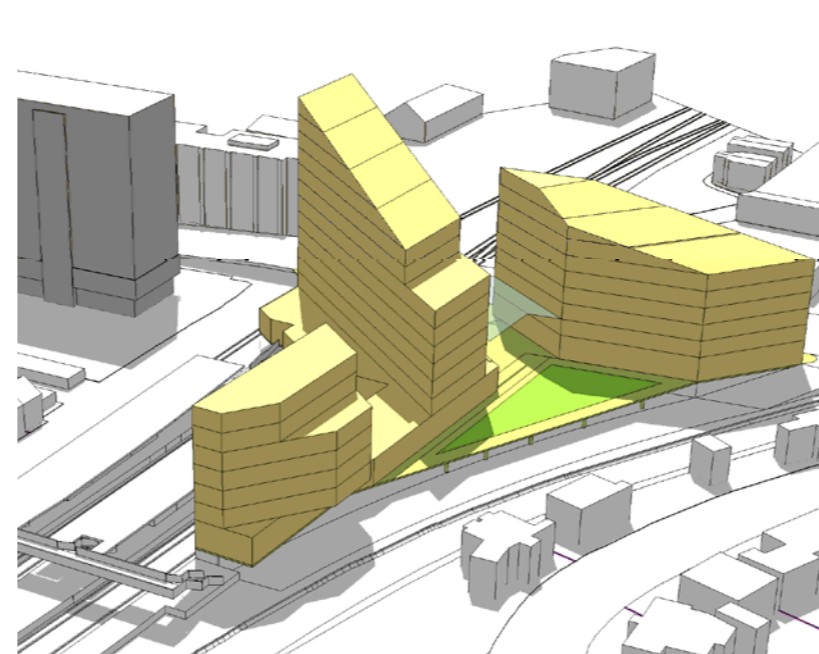


Figure 3.3
November 2009 Proposals

3.3 2010 CONSULTATION

3.3.1 By the summer of 2010, the proposed scheme had been developed further in line with comments that had been received from the Council. Additional consultation was then carried out with key consultees, prior to a public exhibition in July 2010. Comments were received from the following bodies:

- CABI in May 2010
- Richmond Design Panel (RDP) in July 2010
- Greater London Authority (GLA) in May 2010

3.3.2 The response from these consultees is summarised below.

CABI

Supports	Concerns/Comments
The principle of redeveloping the site	The scale of buildings to the north of the site closer to Cole Park Road properties
The overall ambition to provide public spaces	The roofline of the proposed buildings
	The prominence of the station entrance from the street should be increased
	A simpler approach to the architectural appearance should be used
	The incorporation of single aspect flats looking across the railway the quality of the riverside walk

Richmond Design Panel (RDP)

Supports	Concerns/Comments
Station improvements	Impact of the scheme on long distance views
Landscaping proposals (although would want this maximised)	Overall scale of development, and height of building adjacent to Mary's Terrace in particular
Increase in density of the site	Potential shift of gravity from the town centre
Shared areas of public realm	Quality of the public realm alongside the River Crane



Figure 3.4
Summer 2010 Consultation Images

Greater London Authority (GLA)

Supports	Concerns/Comments
The principle of a residential-led development and podium level retail	Landscaping and public realm proposals must ensure that there are “no spaces within the scheme where ownership of the space can be questioned” due to crowd management issues
Twickenham town centre is suitable for tall buildings	The quality of the walk alongside the River Crane with limited overlooking opportunities and a sense of ‘unwelcomeness’ or enclosure of the path
The development will not have any discernable impact on views from Richmond Hill	Unsure of the sustainability of the vertical garden proposed on the northern elevation of the building
The general approach to design	Queries the single aspect apartments and issues relating to quality of outlook and noise given the proximity of the railway lines, vibration and ventilation
The use of multiple cores	Impact on Mary’s Terrace should be considered. Especially given extension to Regal House
Supports car-free nature of residential development	Cycle parking must be provided
The entrance needs better presence and signage and the location of the cycle parking within a safeguarded area has no real option of being relocated	Awkward arrangements for movement from ticket hall to riverside
The new ticket hall, step free access, riverside walk, improved match day arrangements	Conflicts between service arrangements and kiss/ride movements
High quality, safe and accessible routes across the site.	Integration of southbound bus stop into development
Code Level 4 of Code for Sustainable Homes.	Safety/security concerns associated with the provision of private amenity space over railway lines and platforms.

3.3.3 The GLA were consulted again on the proposed scheme (as illustrated in Chapter 4.0) in August 2010 and were generally positive in terms of the changes that had been made. In addition, the Richmond Design Panel were consulted again in October 2010. The identification of the type and level of changes that have been made to the scheme following the consultation process are indicated in the ‘Final Design Development’ section of this Statement (section 3.4).



Figure 3.5
Summer 2010 Consultation Image

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

3.3.4 As previously stated, a public exhibition was held in July 2010 (see figures 3.4 to 3.6). The Statement of Community Involvement submitted in support of this application provides more details relating to consultation responses. However, to summarise, the broad areas of concern over the design of the scheme focused on the following issues:

- 01 The height of the proposed buildings
- 02 the lack of parking provision for the residential part of the scheme
- 03 the impact on local school places

3.3.5 The general public generally supported the following:

- 01 Improvements to station facilities
- 02 The inclusion of the riverside square and station plaza

3.3.6 It is clear that there was a general level of support from the general public, with 90% agreeing that the station is in need of development and 63% supporting the redevelopment plans.



Figure 3.6
Summer 2010 Consultation Image - proposed plan

3.4 2010 PLANNING APPLICATION

- 3.4.1 An application for planning permission to redevelop the site was submitted in late 2010 and is currently under consideration by the Council. The content of this application was as follows:
- 3.4.2 A total of 15,371 sq m of floorspace, to be located in three blocks (A, B and C) across the site. The height of the proposal was between 3 and 7 storeys from London Road and consists of the following elements:
- a new, larger station ticket hall;
 - 165 residential units, of which 17% are to be affordable;
 - A1/A3 commercial space to be located in 6 units at ground floor level; associated plant, core, cycle store and refuse space
- 3.4.3 It should be noted that the content of this application was heavily influenced through the consultation process. The items outlined below provide information on the level of changes to the design of the proposal that were incorporated into the 2010 application:
- The reduction of the height of Block A to peak at 7 storeys, with it stepping down to 3 storeys towards the river to prevent any feared 'canyon' effect between the site and the post office site opposite.
 - The reduction in the height of Block B (above the Station) to peak at 8 storeys from London Road and the stepping back of the block towards the river.
 - The height of Block C was lowered by 1 storey, and rose to 5 storeys, with the top storey set back.
 - The site was rearranged with greater focus on the station entrance, which was turned to face London Road. This has allowed for more presence to be given to the station entrance and the station signage is clearly visible from London Road.
 - The elevations facing the Regal House hotel development were staggered and re-orientated to avoid overlooking, whilst maintaining views to the east and west.
 - The plaza at the station entrance remained enclosed by the proposed blocks, but allowed visual links to the riverside.
 - The riverside walk was retained after strong positive feedback. Block C was pulled back to create more sense of arrival for users of the riverside walkway when entering the site from the east. Match day crowds were also directed away from this area to avoid inconvenience and retain privacy.
 - A clear separation of vehicles and pedestrians was provided in the riverside level, to allow pedestrian priority and a vehicle free residential area to the front of Block C.



Figure 3.7
2010 Planning Application - The Station entrance

- Plant areas were repositioned against the railway tracks to enable residential units to be taken down to river level and the car parking to be concentrated away from the riverside. Doing this improved the security of the car park by avoiding dead-ends.
- To improve security and accessibility, the cycle parking was relocated to a secure facility above the car park, accessed directly from London Road.
- Residential entrances were made clearer and moved away from main public thoroughfares. One entrance to Block B was moved away from the station entrance to give a more private access arrangement, whilst another was grouped with the entrance to Block A, away from the station plaza area.
- All residential units were designed to comply with the new GLA London Housing Design Guide. Corridors were reduced in length to create cluster arrangements of 8 or less units. Units were also re-orientated to give better aspects against the river where possible and better long views away from Regal House.
- 92% of apartments had balcony / terrace / winter garden accommodation complying to GLA standards.
- The elevations of the site were simplified with more emphasis given to a brick material which would emphasise durability and a local context.
- All hard and soft landscaping features were arranged to direct station users towards the entrance. Above the station entrance, the elevational treatment and balconies were arranged in a way to compliment it, as well as to increase the appearance of height and importance and provide a sheltered canopy over the entrance doors.
- Station ticketing arrangements were improved to create a more open concourse with fewer columns. Further work was also carried out to improve the platform toilets, waiting areas & refuse facilities.



Figure 3.8
2010 Planning Application - view from London Road

3.5 2011 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

3.5.1 Further to the submission of the 2010 planning application, additional consultation was carried out with the Council, most notably in connection with the proposed height of the development.

3.5.2 The design of the scheme has therefore been developed further to this additional consultation. It should be noted that the general development principles associated with the scheme have not altered significantly, and that the changes made to the scheme outlined in section 3.4 remain relevant. The most significant amendments to the scheme relate to its proposed height. The main differences between the 2010 planning application and the application that this Statement supports are as follows:

- A reduction in the height of Blocks A, B and C. The 6th floor to Block A is proposed to be entirely removed, and the building will step up towards the south at second and fourth floor levels. This significant height reduction will result in the block rising between 2 and 6 storeys, (the previous height proposed was between 3 to 7 storeys), in order to pull the scale and massing of the building even further away from land to the north.
- The 7th floor of Block B is proposed to be entirely removed, reducing the maximum height of the building to two storeys below that of Regal House. In addition, the building will now step down from the south at 4th floor level, and again at 2nd floor level in order to further reduce its scale and massing on the riverside. This will result in a building between 2 and 7 storeys in height from London Road (compared to the previous proposal at between 2 and 8 storeys).
- The entire 4th floor of Block C is proposed to be removed to reduce the height of the block to a maximum of 4 storeys. The top floor will remain set back to the south. In addition, the height of the building to the east will also be reduced to bring it down to a total of 3 storeys.

3.5.3 Given the location of Blocks A and B and the change in scale from North to South across the site, the following design approach was taken in accordance with Council discussions.

- An ‘innovative’ approach: At the southern end, a light contemporary palette is chosen as suitable for the context for the new station facility & residential adjacent to the new hotel. Highly detailed contemporary materials predominate the new civic station square with hints of solid traditional elements coming through in the form of brick frames in key areas. All the proportions are all derived from historical precedent but articulated in a light contemporary style.
- An ‘interpretive’ approach : As the buildings continue towards the North end, they drop in scale yet maintain the modular proportions. The ratio of solid brick to glass is increased in reference to a more domestic articulation yet maintaining the contemporary style of the civic plaza.

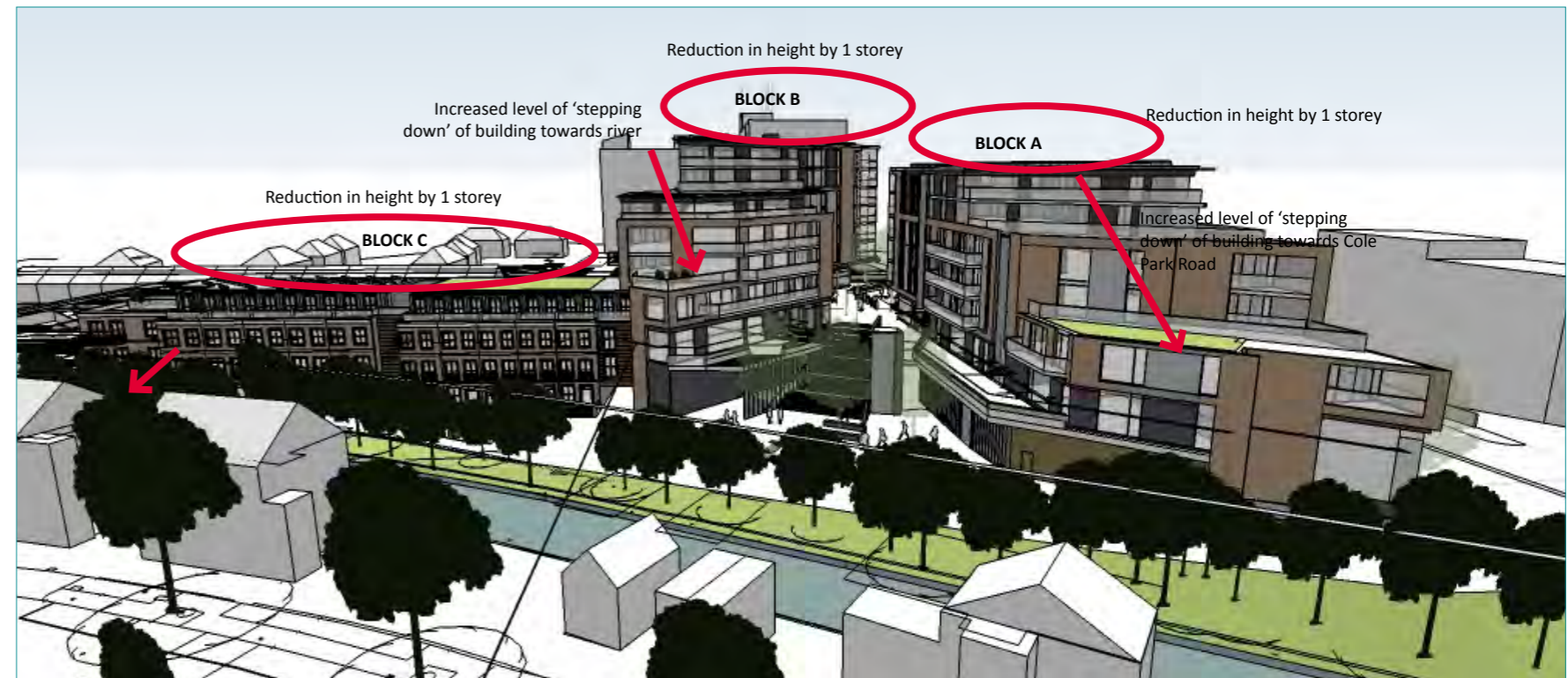


Figure 3.9
2011 - Changes to the proposed height of buildings

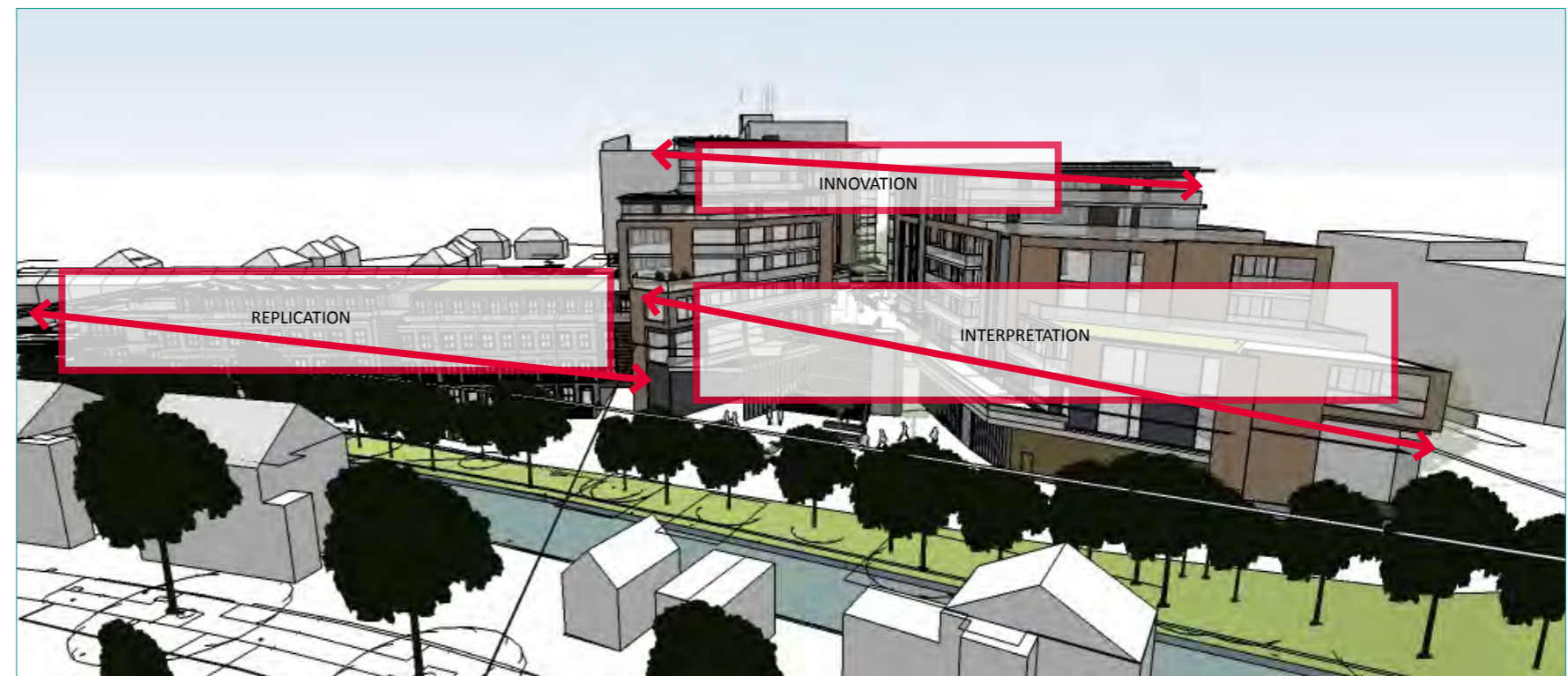


Figure 3.10
2011 - Design approach

- A 'replication' approach : The rear terrace along the river is finished in a traditional style whilst maintaining the fundamental modular proportions and materials used throughout the development. (see description below).

BLOCK C AND CHANGES TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.5.4 Significant discussions were held with the Council with specific regard to the proposed appearance of the development and the River Crane frontage to Block C in particular, and how this integrates with the rest of the scheme and its surroundings. Following these discussions, a 'replication' approach has been requested by the Council and taken with regard to Block C, that considers the appearance of local buildings, such as Heatham House and terraces on Richmond Hill (see fig 3.11).
- 3.5.5 The appearance of Block C had been developed to be an innovation from more classical proportions associated with local terraced properties and is representative of the duplex flats contained within. The previous appearance of Block C was contemporary in nature, with projecting bay windows and predominantly brick elevations which echoed the traditional terrace form (see figure 3.12).
- 3.5.6 The proposed appearance of Block C is now altered to be more representative of a more traditional building form. The Richmond Hill terrace has been used as a model for the appearance of Block C, which exhibits a series of band courses, sash windows and metal railings to ground floor and first floor. This aesthetic was requested by the Council as its preferred option for Block C.
- 3.5.7 The proposed changes to the development from the 2010 application will obviously result in a reduction in the proposed level of residential units together with the overall total of development floorspace. These changes are outlined in the following Chapter. In addition, 'before and after' images are provided in Chapter 5.0, comparing the 2010 application with this amended scheme.



Figure 3.11
Top: Richmond Hill terrace
Bottom: Heatham House



Figure 3.12
Top: 2010 - Proposed elevation of Block C
Bottom: 2011 - Revised proposal for elevation of Block C