Our approach

This is one of the most important Opportunity Zones in London, a place where we can deliver a transformational change. It has major variance in land values, as the site transitions from high-rise to mid-rise to low-rise. As an Opportunity Zone, with the advantage of three tube stations (Earl’s Court, High Street Kensington and Parsons Green) and significant urban regeneration potential (including a target of 35% affordable homes), it offers a unique opportunity to respond to the emerging urban form of mid-rise and tall buildings. The former exhibition centres (now demolished) were a dominant landmark defining Earl’s Court.

Evolving our designs

We have assessed the success of these different approaches against the following points with expert input guiding our design process:

- Open space – is enough open and green space being provided?
- Sensitivity to neighbours and heritage – is the design respectful to those living in homes on our site boundary? Are we respecting heritage buildings and spaces around the site?
- Connections – how effectively does the design open the site up and allow people to get through and access?
- Pedestrian environment – will the development be pleasant for those using public spaces?
- Sunlight and daylight – will it ensure good daylight and sunlight throughout the site?
- Insensitive to neighbours
- Variety in building types – is the design of exemplary architectural quality, including a variety of building types from town houses, low and mid-rise blocks through to taller buildings

Initially we tested a uniform approach to height along the site with heights of around 12 floors across the site. This approach caused a number of issues, including inadequate daylight and a lack of public open space which didn’t respond well to existing neighbouring buildings.

This meant putting lower-rise buildings, at the edges such as townhouses, and clustering taller buildings where it was considered most appropriate - such as around the 31 storey Empress State Building and the A4. This approach provides the most open space and good streets through the site, while still delivering the required amount of homes and workspace. At this stage, we had to start introducing some taller buildings, alongside the lower-rise typical townhouses.

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Informing our approach to building heights

This diagram illustrates our current approach to building heights across the site. It shows areas at the edges of the site where we transition through low-rise blocks and townhouses. From this we then extend the scale through mid-rise courtyard blocks.

Current masterplan building height ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storeys</th>
<th>Height Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>0m to 23m above ground level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 12</td>
<td>23m to 36m above ground level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 20</td>
<td>36m to 67m above ground level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>67m to 100m above ground level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 34</td>
<td>100m to 110m above ground level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 38</td>
<td>110m to 125m above ground level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transition

At the edges of the site we are proposing low-rise buildings, including townhouses, that transition through mid-rise blocks and into taller buildings towards the centre of the site.

Extend

From low-rise and mid-rise buildings at the edges, we will extend into taller buildings towards the centre of the site. These will reference the architectural character of the local area.

Reinvent

Taller buildings will be carefully placed to transition from mid-rise blocks to taller buildings. They will be near to key existing buildings, including the 31-storey Empress State Building and also near to major Cromwell Road access.

Three key principles underpin the masterplan’s design approach: to transition at the edges, extend slowly and reinvent towards the center of the site.