

A photograph of a modern building with a series of yellow balconies and green structural columns. The building has a dark facade with large windows. A tree is in the foreground, and a red double-decker bus is visible in the background. The ground is paved with light-colored tiles. The text 'Assembly, Bristol' is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

Assembly, Bristol

Assembly, Bristol

Transforming a long vacant site adjacent to the city’s inner circuit road and William Jessop’s Floating Harbour, the Assembly Bristol campus is anchored around a waterfront park, creating a new city place that positively engages with the city, brings colour to the skyline and links the waterside with a restored historic street, Cheese Lane.

A hierarchy of three buildings shape the space and frame a connecting vista from Pip and Jay Church to the water’s edge. These three buildings unify the campus whilst possessing a distinct character of their own. Building A holds the street edge, protecting the waterfront park from the clamor of traffic. It lifts and spans Cheese Lane with a heroic structure to create a lofty entrance portal into the campus centre. Building B is the smaller of the trio standing at seven storeys, enjoying a gentle waterside setting whilst Building C, the tallest building reaching 14 storeys, brings sculptural height over the public realm.

The campus champions sustainability and innovation, reducing embodied carbon through exposed structures celebrating the building’s mechanics and minimising material waste through efficient construction which delivered a 26% saving on carbon emissions compared to other new build office developments in Bristol.

Details
Sector
Office
Location
Bristol, UK
Address
Cheese Lane, BS2 0JJ
Construction cost
£88m
Start
April 2015
Completion
December 2023
Contract type
Design & Building Novated Two Stage Tender
GIA
39,185m²
NIA
30,583m²

Project Team
Client
AXA Real Estate & Bell Hammer Ltd
Architect
Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Project Managers
Gardiner & Theobald
Structural/Civil Engineer
Arup
Cost Consultant
Currie Brown
MEP/Lift Engineer
Hoare Lea
Landscape Architect
Macgregor Smith
Main Contractor
Galliford Try

AHMM Team Members
Simon Allford, Steve Taylor, Adam Burgess, Jaime Martin, Craig Shaw

Awards
AJ Architecture Awards 2025
Workplace Project £10m+ - Highly Commended
BCO South of England & South Wales 2025
Regional Innovation Award

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Scan for location map and more info



Three buildings, one campus

Transforming a long vacant site adjacent to the city's inner circuit road and William Jessop's Floating Harbour, the Assembly Bristol campus is anchored around a waterfront park, creating a new urban place that positively engages with the city, brings colour to the skyline and links the waterside with a restored historic street, Cheese Lane. A hierarchy of three buildings shape the space and frame a connecting vista from Pip and Jay Church to the water's edge. The campus is sewn into the city with permeable routes and gardens that allow the public to move through via Cheese Lane, a waterside route or up and over a shared green podium.

This is to be further enhanced by the local authority with new pedestrian and cycleway links between Cheese Lane and Avon Street, which will heal the historic grain that was disrupted by the construction of Temple Way.

The three buildings unify the campus whilst each possessing a character of its own. Building A, now the Bristol headquarters of British Telecoms, is long and narrow, holding the street edge and protecting the waterfront park from the clamour of traffic. Building B is the smaller of the trio, enjoying a gentle waterside setting whilst Building C brings sculptural height over the public realm.

Each building has been developed to be flexible and adaptable, removing wasteful use of materials and allowing for a range of sustainable measures including future adoption of natural ventilation. The three buildings reflect Bristol's distinctive neighbourhoods by communicating through bold and bright colours that celebrate the structure and facade and set the campus apart from its contemporaries. The campus provides a variety of commercial floorplates, with an assortment of retail, restaurant and flexible units at ground level totalling 320,000sqft. Once fully occupied, the site has the potential for 3,000 daily users.

At the ground, the buildings are connecting by a large and generous waterfront park that fronts onto the Floating Harbour with planted borders and mature trees. Seating and rest spaces are provided in the sculpted amphitheatre steps which gives an opportunity for external exhibitions and performance, then leads to the planted podium street that frames the Pip and Jay Church.

The area is complimented by artwork from British artist Alex Chinneck, bringing a subversive sculptural edge to the public realm. First Kiss at Last Light pairs Victorian-style lampposts twisted into bows and knots, functioning as working lights. Wring Ring inverts a traditional red telephone box with a dramatically twisted body, cast in bronze and glazed. Alphabetti Spaghetti transforms a classic postbox into a knotted surrealist form. Together, the works bring playful moments of wonder to Bristol's historic waterfront.

Reducing embodied and operational carbon was one of the leading initiatives for the scheme. Modern methods of construction supported a lean and efficient approach to construction, delivering a 26% saving on carbon emissions compared to other new build office developments in Bristol. Air source heat pumps and on floor plant, further reduce operational carbon consumption and flexibility is there for tenants to install passive and mix mode solutions in the future. The project has been awarded BREEAM Excellent and EPC A.



ASSEMBLY
BRISTOL

Project Overview

The Site

The site is located in central Bristol and bounded to the south by the Floating Harbour, to the east by Temple Way (A4044) and to the north by Narrow Plain. To the west it is bounded partly by Cheese Lane and also shares a freestanding party wall with the neighbouring Tower Wharf office building.

It is also situated in the north-easternmost corner of the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, one of the UK's largest urban regeneration areas. The regeneration area is based around Temple Meads Station and lies midway between Temple Meads Station and the City Centre - particularly Broadmead and Cabot Circus.

Temple Way is an important thoroughfare for traffic crossing the city between north and south. As such it hosts a large number of bus routes and has become a 'corridor' for offices as well as supporting uses such as hotels.

The site was previously occupied by a 1970s office



View from Temple Way with protected shot tower



View from Tower Wharf



View from Temple Back



View from Temple Way and Narrow Plain

building, Temple Way House which comprised of a reinforced concrete structure, clad with pre-cast concrete and glazed infill panels. The buildings had an element of undercroft car parking.

Temple Way House was vacated in 2006 and demolished in 2008, after which the site lain empty for eight years. During which time planning permission was obtained for two eight storey buildings comprising 27,832 sqm B1 office), 148 sqm A1/A3/A4 floorspace, 141 parking space and associated public realm. This was first granted in 2007, then renewed in 2010.



Temple Way House, demolished in 2008

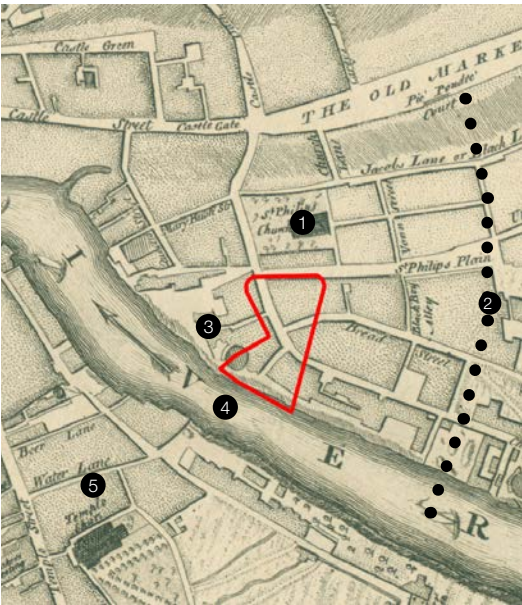


Previously consented scheme for two new commercial buildings

Site History

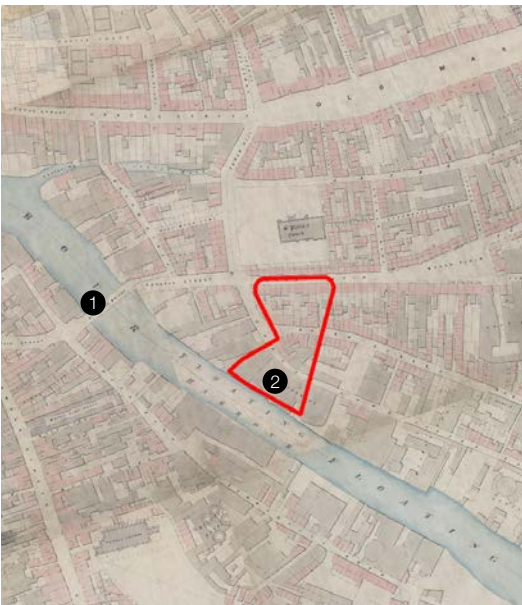
Late 18th Century

- 1 St Philip's Church (the 'Mother Church of East Bristol' c.1174)
- 2 Fringe of the city
- 3 Industry has begun to occupy riverbanks
- 4 River remains tidal prior to becoming Floating Harbour and construction of 'Cut'
- 5 Temple Church



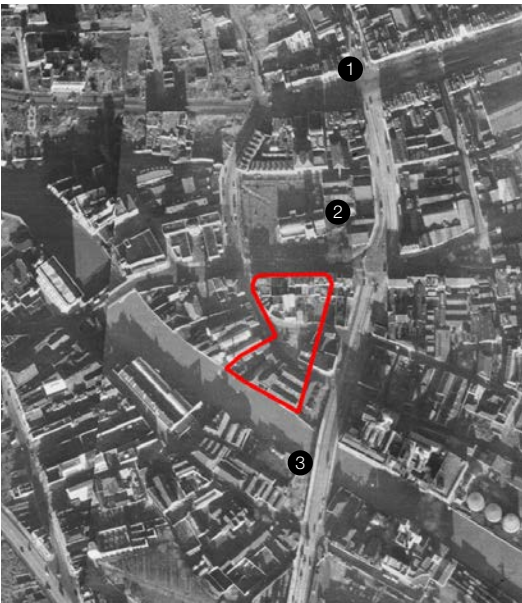
1855

- 1 St Philip's Bridge built 1841
- 2 Iron Foundry



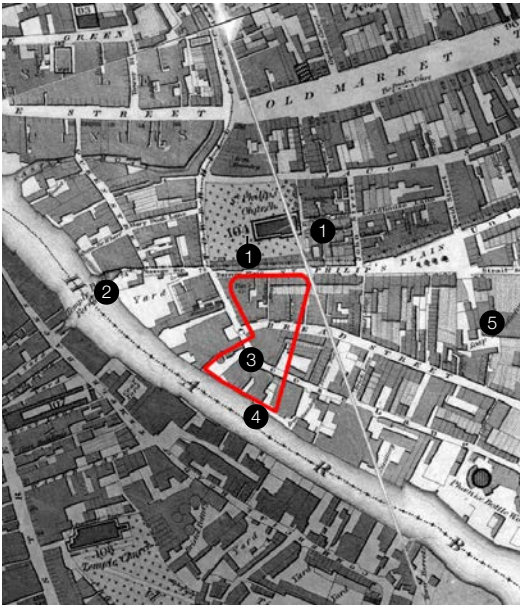
1946

- 1 New junction with Old Market St
- 2 Buildings remain between Church and Temple Way
- 3 Temple Way and Temple Bridge formed in 1930s



1828

- 1 Dense grain of buildings around St Phillip's Church
- 2 Ferry Crossing
- 3 Industry continues to occupy riverbanks
- 4 Floating harbour built 1804 - 1809 to compete with Liverpool
- 5 Soap works



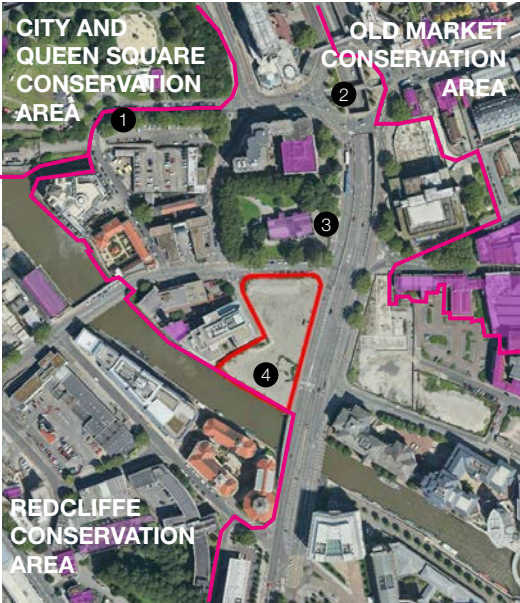
1880

- 1 Church becomes St Phillips and St Jacobs
- 2 Buildings removed from south side of church
- 3 Lead works



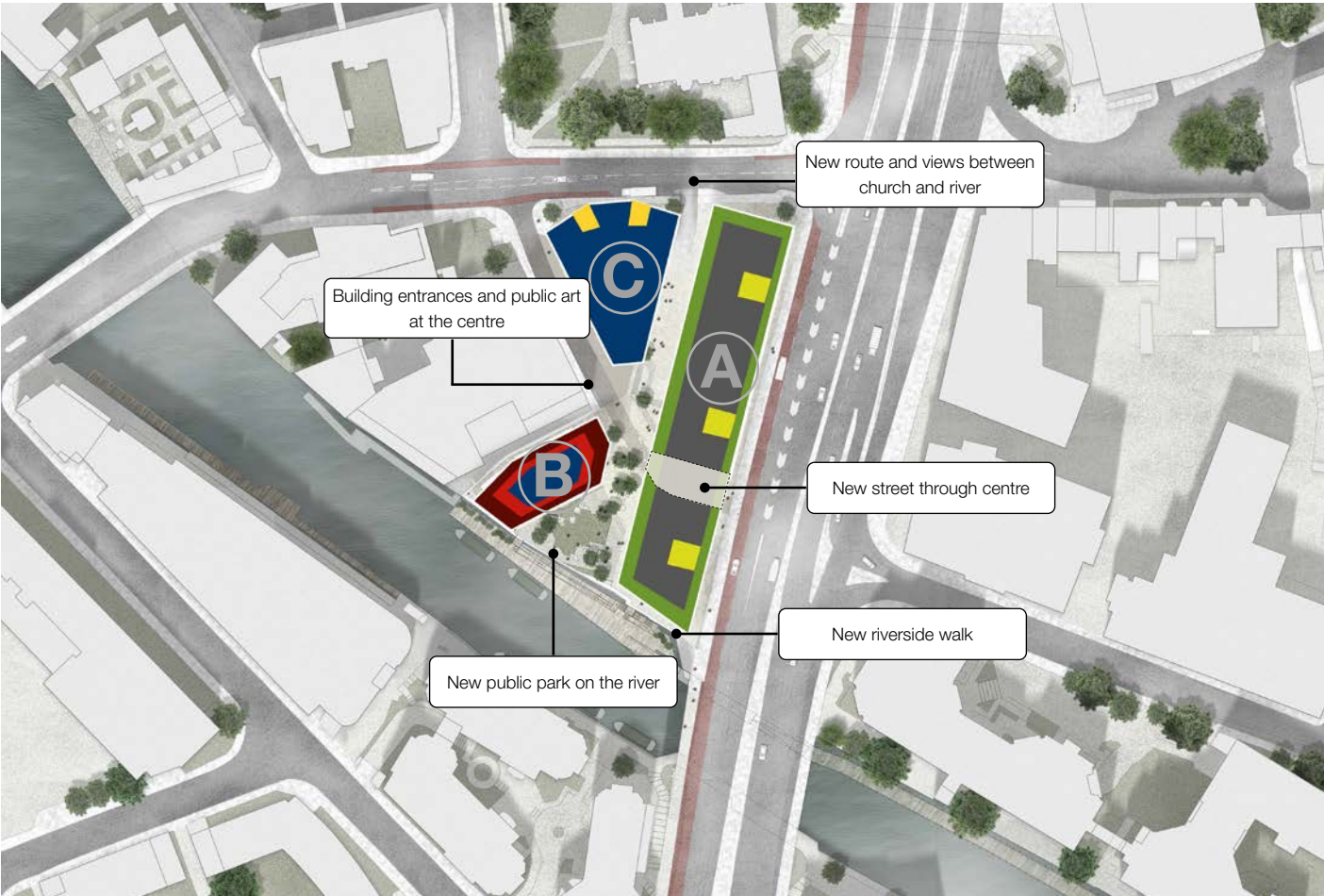
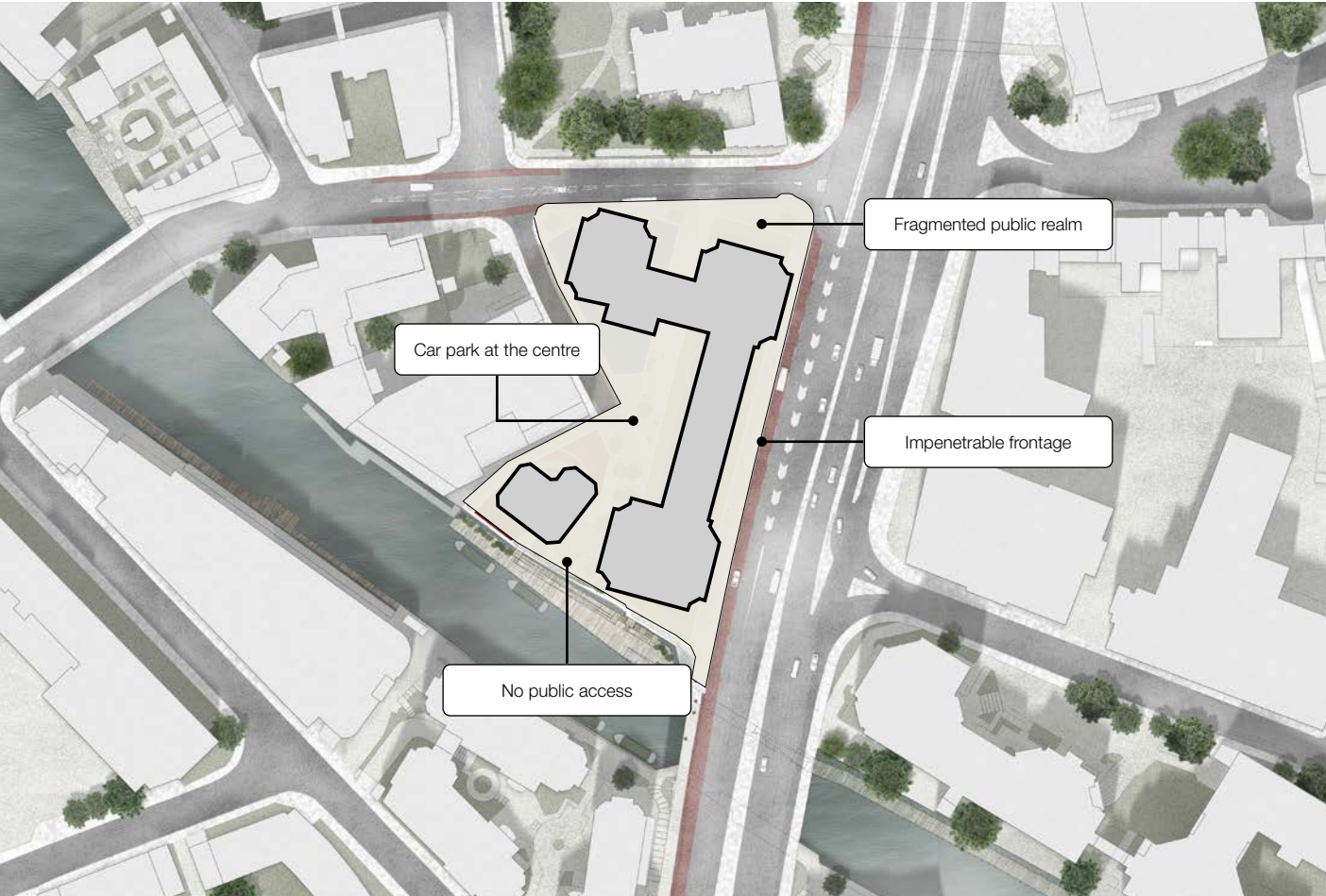
2015

- 1 Castle Park formed after WW1 bombings
- 2 Old Market roundabout formed in 1970s
- 3 Buildings removed as part of Temple Way widening
- 4 Temple Way House built in 1970s and demolished in 2008



Maps and photos credited to Bristol City Council's 'Know Your Place' website: <http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp>

Site Layout - before and after

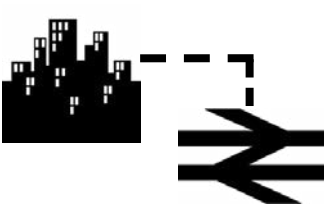


Reinstated entrance to campus along Cheese Lane - Tim Soar Photography



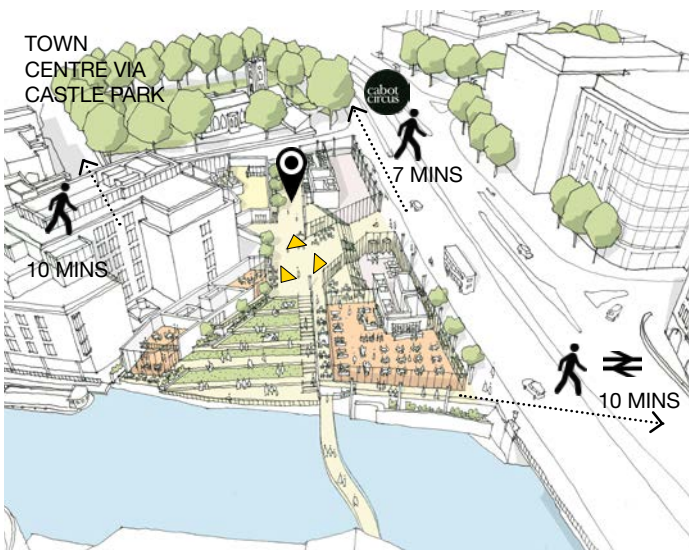
1. A new destination in the city

The mixed-use scheme is a collection of buildings which create a new city campus. The buildings engage with public realm at ground level to create a new riverside park and community space.

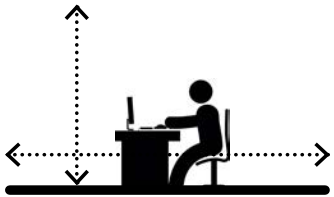


2. Improve connectivity

Create new and improved connections between Temple Quay and Cabot Circus, extending down to Temple Meads Station



Design Concept



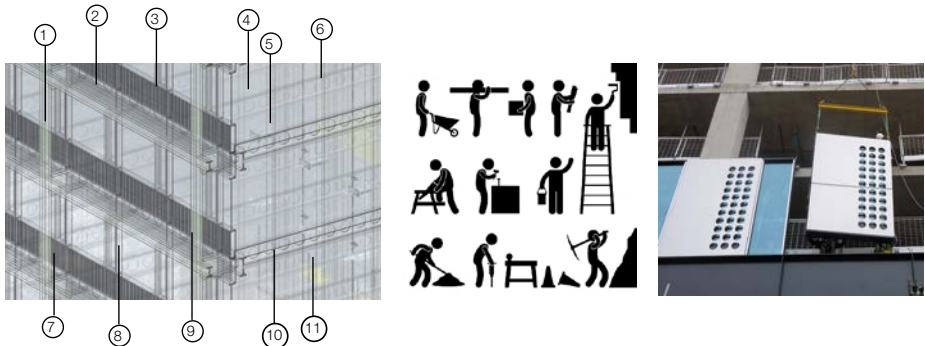
3. Generous Floorplate
Maximise ceiling heights and comfort with employee wellness at heart of the scheme. Maximum employment potential.



Design Concept



4. Template for a Kit of Parts
High quality and cost-effective design to improve efficiency of construction and build a better value building for the client and contractor.

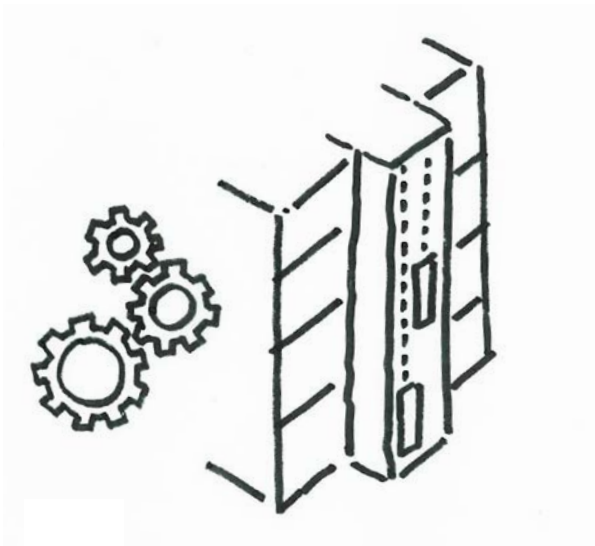


- a. Minimise the number of building elements
- b. Minimise on site and wet trades with key elements as finish and function
- c. Maximise off site potential and Modern Methods of Construction
- d. Early contractor input
- e. Early interrogation of each element to maximise its potential to work as part of an efficient whole



5. Passive Energy Design for low running costs

Carefully curated services remain visible with demountable services. Doing more with less approach to structure, services and skin generates the architecture, there is nothing superficial.



6. Enhanced occupant amenity

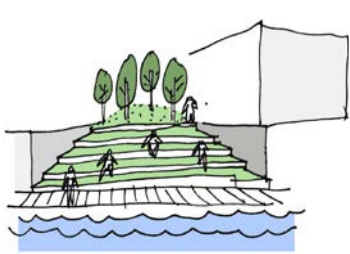
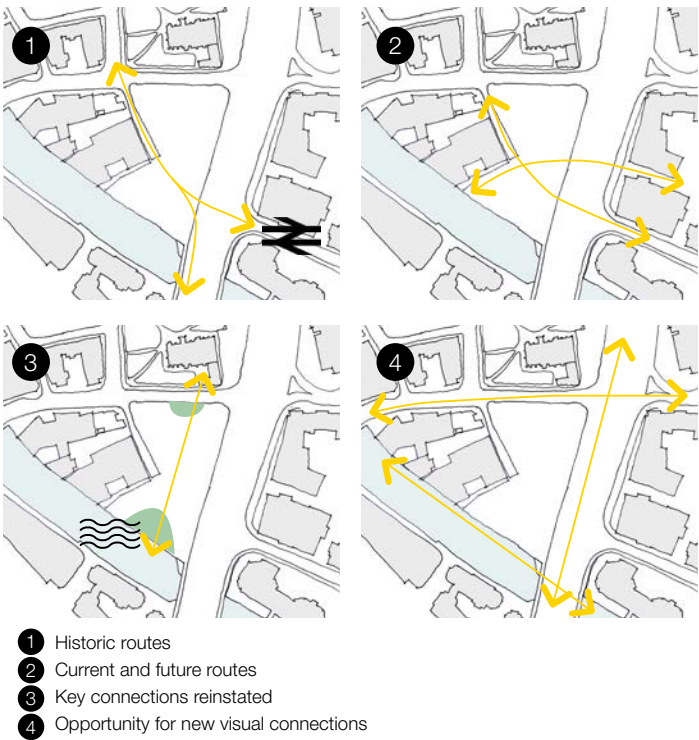
Designed around a relaxing, waterside park the buildings look to promote occupant wellbeing. Offering a rooftop Clubroom, public restaurant and enhanced end-of-trip facilities to encourage active travel.



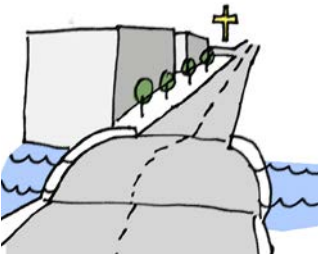
The Masterplan

The masterplan maximises the site's footprint to create breathing space for the surrounding buildings - particularly existing historic buildings, and creates a strong relationship with the waterfront.

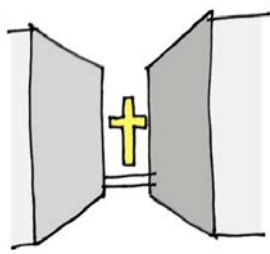
The combination of the flood level and the demand for parking resulted in an insular and disjointed site which the masterplan has looked to reverse. People and spaces are prioritised, active travel encouraged and the creation of amenity space with routes and views opened up are fully accessible to the public.



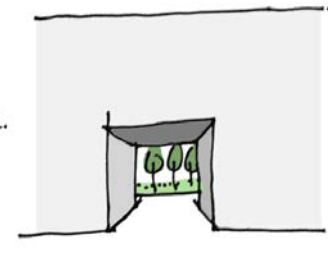
Public realm on the river



Enhance the site margins



Create views and routes between buildings



Create views and routes through buildings



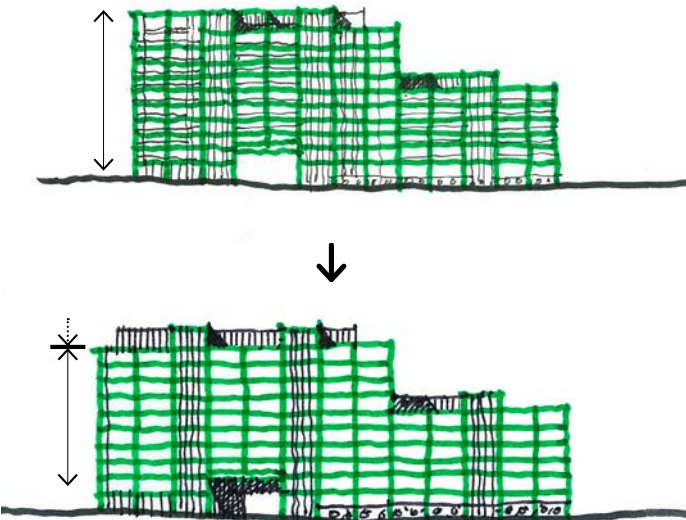
Height and Massing

Height and massing are stepped with Building A at 61m, Building B at 28m and Building C, the tallest of the three, at 70m set at the back of the site. Various models were made to test massing variations 'Sculpting' of the tower resulted in a reduction in

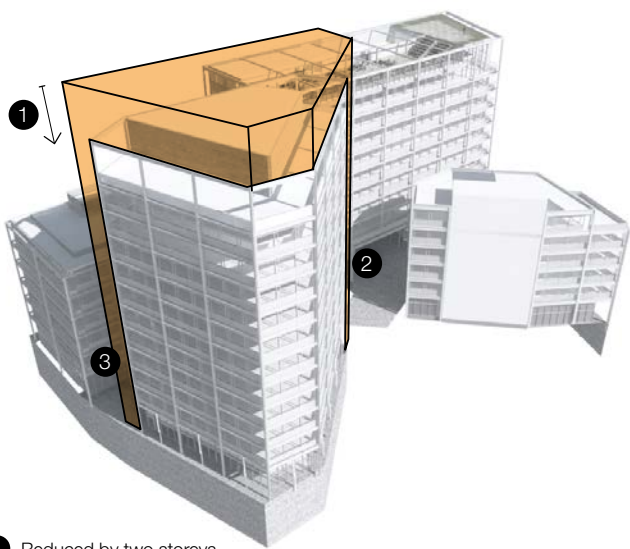
efficiency and an increase in height. The most effective change was to minimise the number of storeys without any 'sculpting'. All three buildings make a positive addition to Bristol's skyline with the public realm bringing foot traffic through the development and connecting the campus to the wider city.



Adjusting the scheme



Assembly A - reduction in height following consultation - 2016



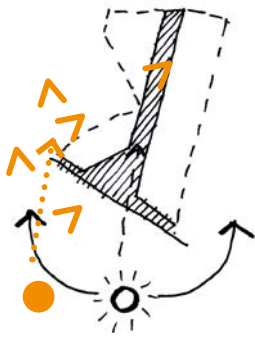
Building A - Overview

The first completed building on the campus, the design of Building A is an anchor building which connects and shields the site from the busy Temple Way, running along the entirety of its Eastern elevation.

The building's form responds to this major piece of inner-city infrastructure with an articulated facade and bold green external frame. It offers 16,722m2 of flexible office space over 12 storeys each with an external private terrace.

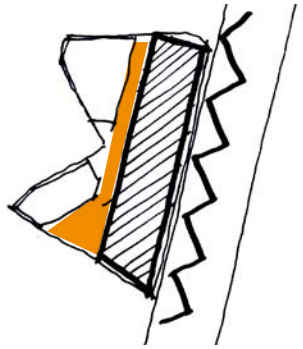
Orientation

1



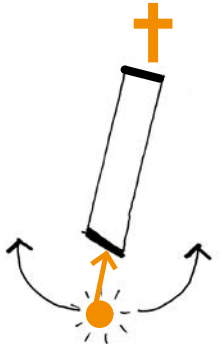
Encourages sunlight to penetrate as deep as possible into the site and maximises views of the river

2



Provide an acoustic buffer against Temple Way and protects the new public realm

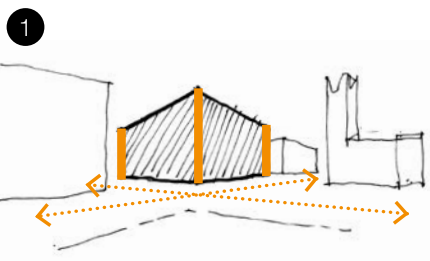
3



The new building has two minimal frontages - one facing south and one facing the Church

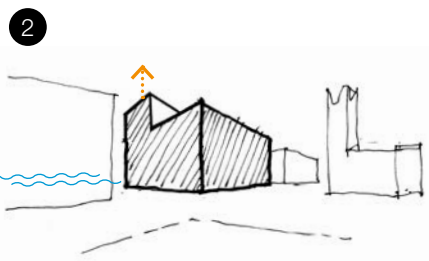
Form

1



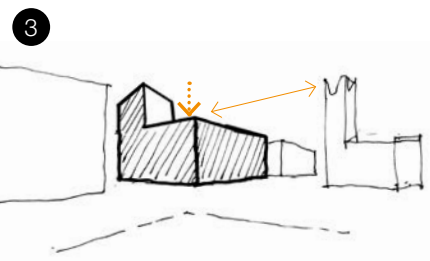
Holds the corner as an anchor building and reinforces streetscape

2



Acts as a marker on the corner of river and Temple Way

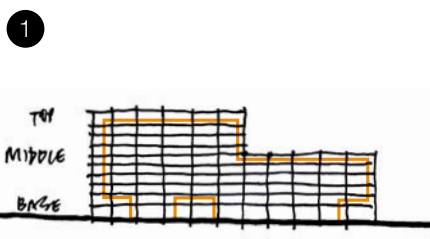
3



Respects the adjacent heritage asset. The building's form also assists in maximising the passive design and therefore sustainability potential.

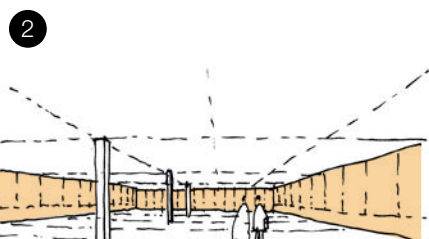
Articulation

1



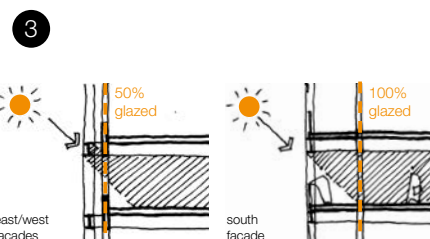
Creates an external structural frame that maintains a strong form while enabling the facade behind to change depending on orientation, entrances, routes and terraces

2



Enables clean floor plates without perimeter columns

3



The external frame also provides for solar shading with variation in the facade line and allows for external terraces. Opening windows add to facade articulation and user control



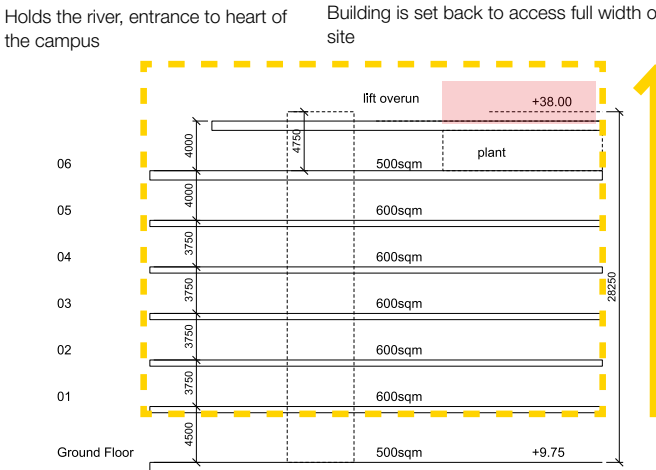
Building B - Overview

Building B

Building B is set back along Cheese Lane to reinforce the new route through the site with the entrance positioned to connect the trio of buildings across the campus.

The building further explores the kit-of-parts concept with a focus on efficiency. The precast structure is a single leaf solid panel, minimising the use of concrete on site and achieving the optimal wall thickness for a building of this size. Peikko steel beams are only used on mid floor beams, with the perimeter carried by precast concrete beams delivering carbon savings and efficiency on site.

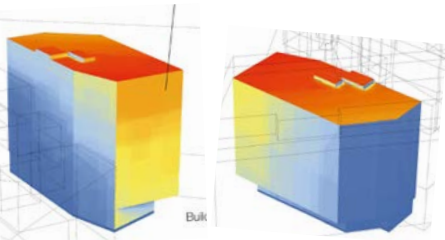
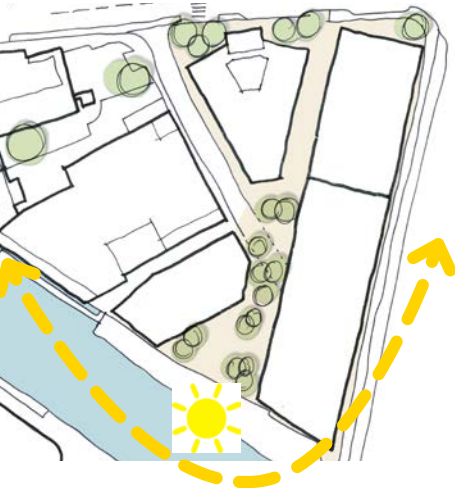
The façade combines the efficiency of a stick system with the quality of a prefabricated system. The stick system mullions were delivered to site with vertical rails and brackets pre-installed and routed ready to receive the prefabricated infills, which were delivered to site fully assembled.



Design plant as part of the architecture, plant screen integrated into the cladding

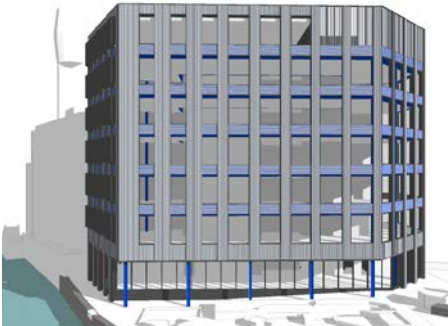
Orientation

Solar analysis of the thermal loading on building B showed variation in solar gains ranging from the South with no overshadowing, to the North facade which were shaded by the taller neighbouring buildings. The East 'garden elevation' is partly shaded by building A so the solar gains on this facade show a graduation cross the facade.



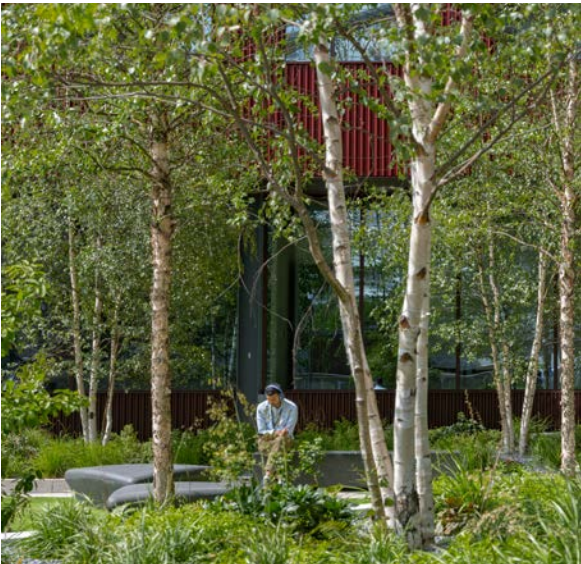
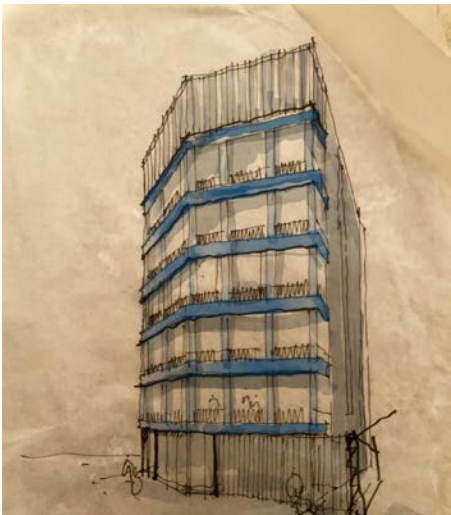
Structural Frame

As with the Building A the expression of the structural frame is an important way to bring depth to the facade. The head of the windows is positioned to expose the steel. Views of the frame through the glazing vary as you move around the building giving interest and depth.



Cladding Weave

The external cladding is conceived as a weave of horizontal and vertical profiled panels. Introducing texture and variation. Profiles of different shapes and sizes have been explored and profiles of two different scales have been selected to add some more variation.



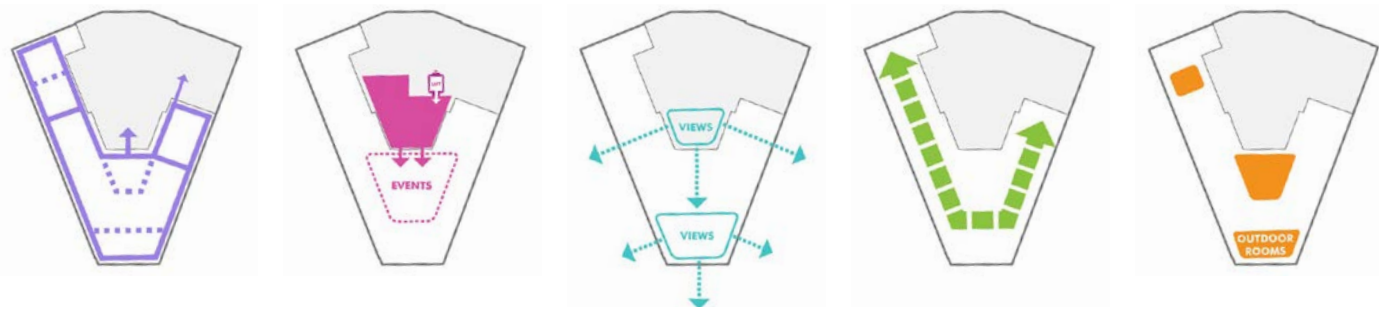
Building C - Overview

Building C utilises its structural frame as a self-finished element, creating a lean floorplate while maintaining depth, texture and quality. The core features a twin-wall precast system, and floors are made from hollow planks with delta beams, resulting in a flat soffit. Flat steel perimeter beams are supported by steel columns which are expressed at window openings, adding depth and colour to the facade. Following passive design principles, the facade proportions balance glass and solid elements based on height and orientation. A weave concept of alternating fins frame profiled panels, some of which are perforated to conceal vents. The north elevation's central section is load-bearing precast, eliminating additional materials while incorporating large porthole windows

and alternating textures. Designed with single tenant floorplates and central soft spots, which allow for internal communication stairs that connect floors together under one tenancy. The floorplates are light and open with panoramic views and with a service solution that is flexible and moveable to reduce waste in both construction and fit out. The rooftop clubroom and gardens are available for all tenants to use throughout the year either as a place of quiet for a breakout or lunch, or as an event space for external speakers, events, fitness classes etc. Each floorplate has its own private balcony offering views over the waterfront park and across the city. There are also informal lounge spaces at the ground floor reception a cycle store with associated end of trip facilities.



Terrace Design Development



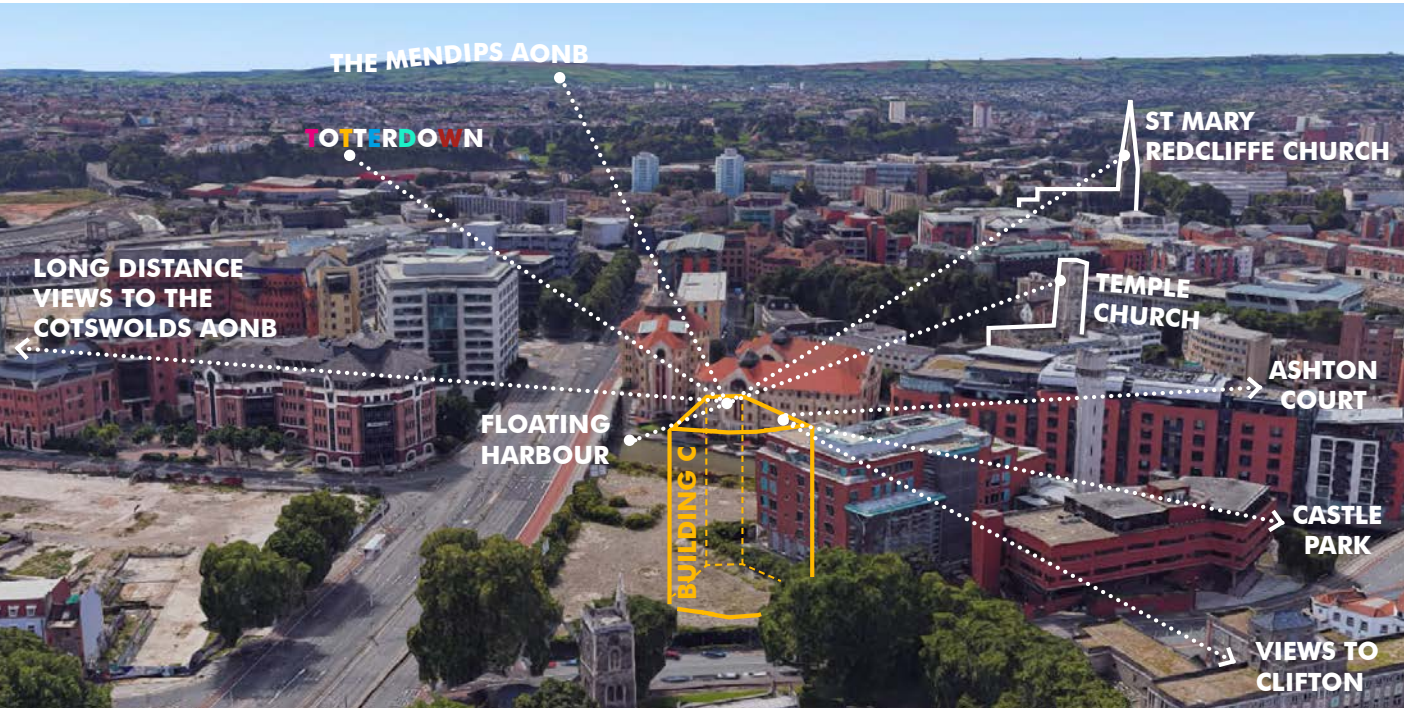
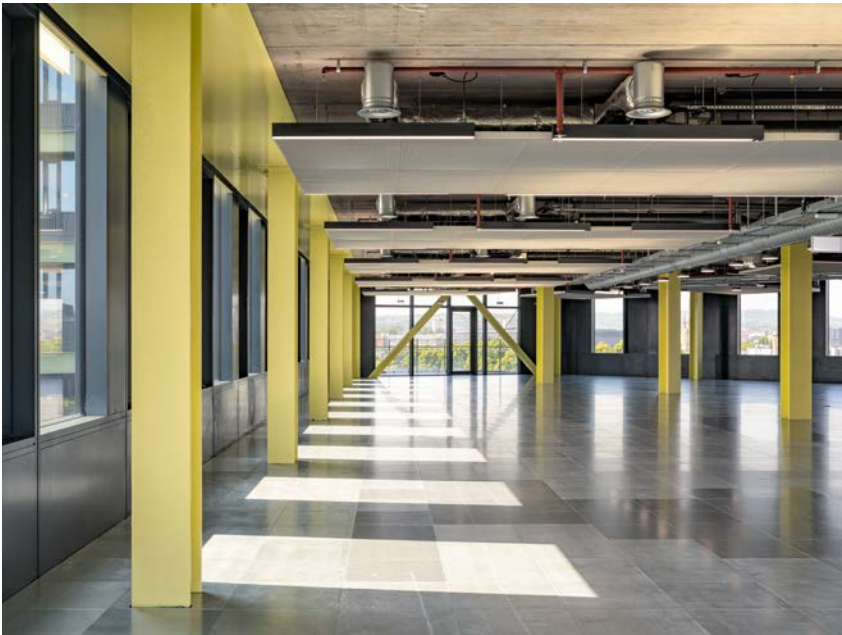
Create a series of routes and journeys while retaining maintenance access along the edge of the roof terrace

Provide a flexible space to support a variety of adjacent uses

Maximises and frames panoramic views to the south, east and west

Creates an immersive landscape which wraps the club room in green

Creates a series of rooms to provide a variety of intimate and social spaces



Design Detail - Modern Methods of Construction

The site's constraints between Temple Way and the Floating Harbour presented construction challenges, which were addressed through modern prefabrication techniques. The project has been designed from the outset to be lean and efficient in construction and to reduce upfront and operational carbon. Self finish materials have been used to remove the need for superfluous linings. A loose fit approach to the internal arrangements allows for future flexibility and adaptation of use ensuring the longevity of the building.

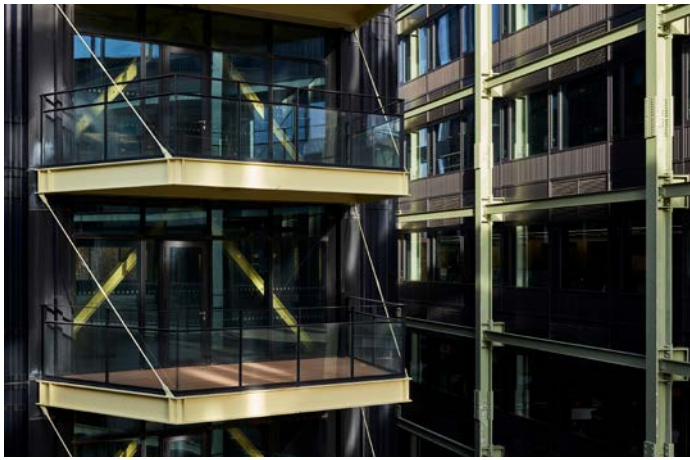
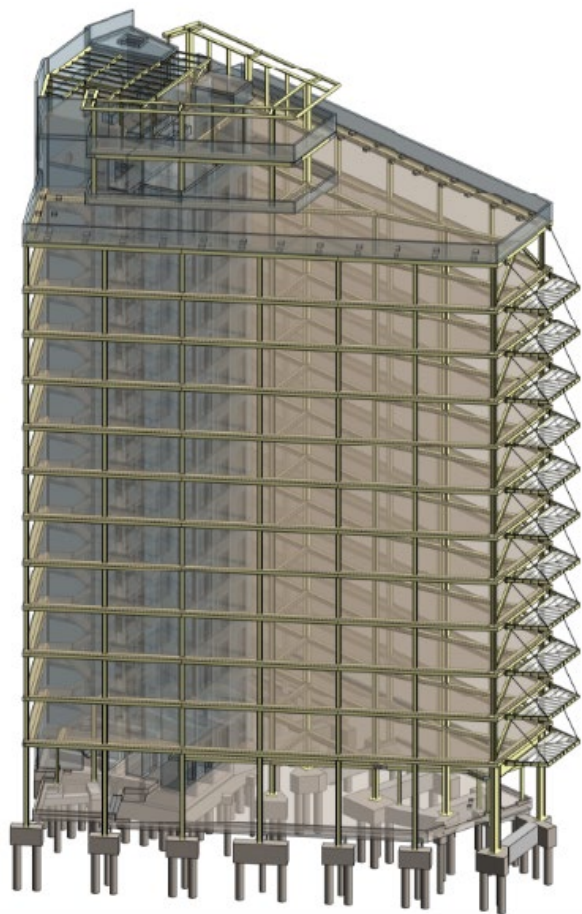
Kit of Parts

The design of Building C meant that almost all elements of construction were fabricated off-site in controlled environments. All construction elements are smart tracked and chipped creating a material database and break down of each element giving all data needed for replacement and maintenance throughout the buildings life. All of these initiatives drastically reduce waste in construction with almost 100% of waste on site being diverted from landfill.

Across all buildings lightweight construction and self finished materials have meant that less materials were needed in the sub structure, super structure and fit out of the design.

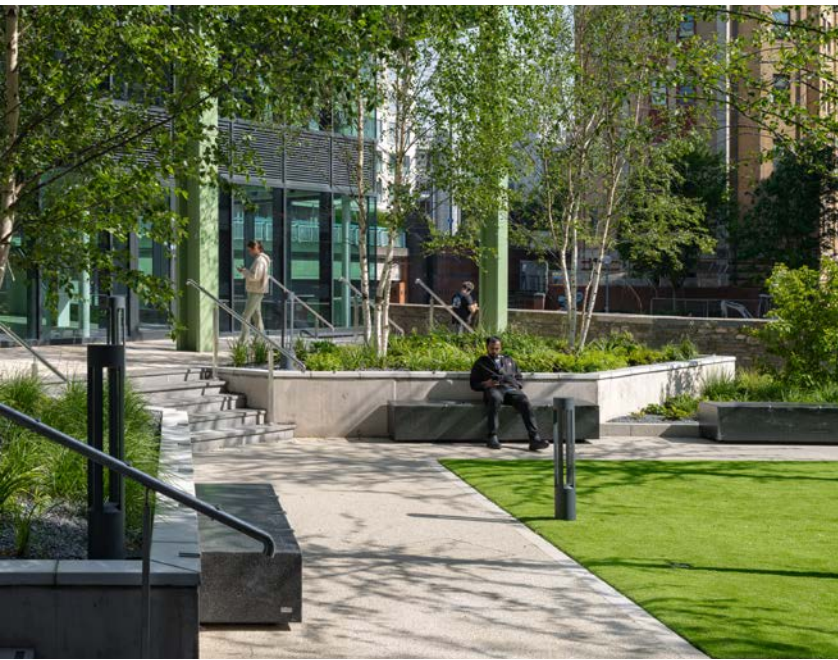
The prefabricated construction also allows for disassembly and reuse at the end of the buildings' life span further supporting the circular economy.

The skin of the buildings are designed to minimise solar gain through flexing the window modules in response to the sun's orientation whilst maximising views out. In addition the facade has opening vents that have been sized to allow the building to support passive ventilation system should the tenants wish. the buildings are also connected to Bristol City's heat network.



Waterfront Pocket Park

Externally, the public waterfront park and podium amphitheatre offer additional spaces for building users to enjoy whilst also opening up and reconnecting the building back into the city. These areas are further enhanced with a gallery of sculptures by the renowned artist Alex Chinneck, whose work playfully subverts familiar forms, from Victorian lampposts tied into bows and knots, to a twisted telephone box and a knotted postbox. Cast in metal and finished with colour, the pieces bring moments of surrealism and delight to the public realm, grounding contemporary art within the materials and character of Bristol's historic waterfront.

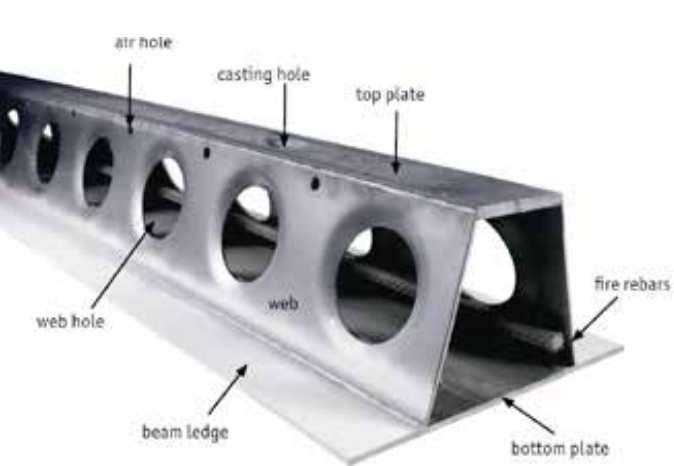


Images of artwork by Charles Emerson



Design Detail - Structure

The scheme uses a delta beam system with steel columns and precast concrete hollow planks. This system allows for only perimeter columns on a 6m grid with the plants spanning the 10m back to the core. The core is a precast twinwall which is sealed and left exposed.



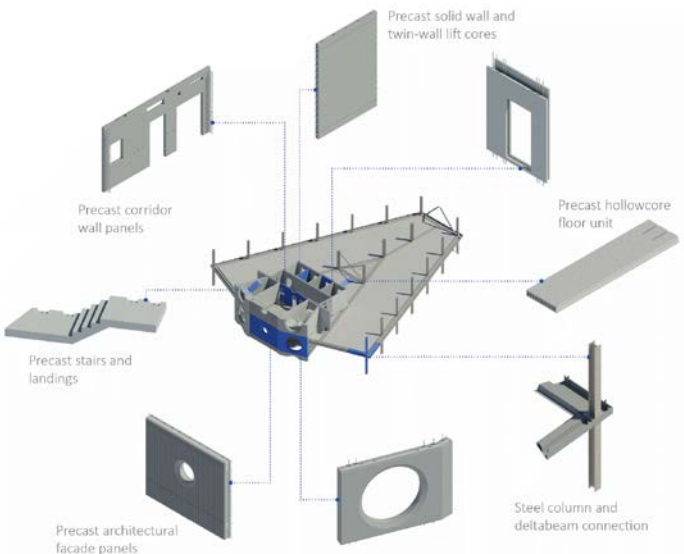
1 Delta beam system



2 Delta beam system set into concrete planks



3 Pouring of concrete to set beam system

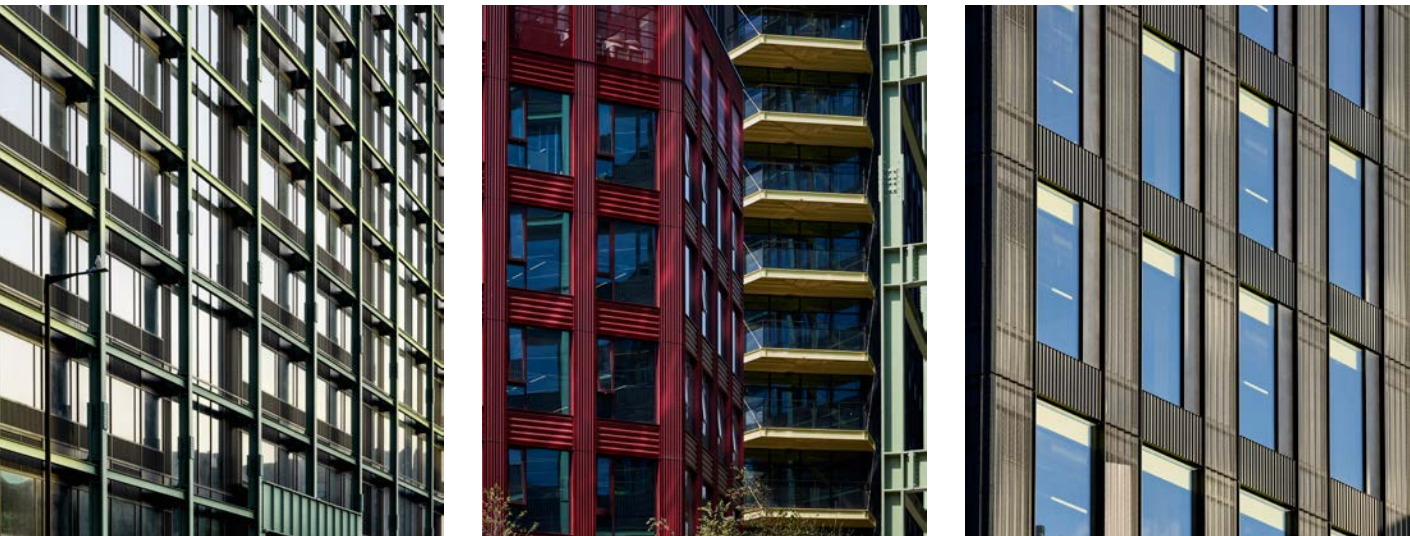


Precast Structure Breakdown

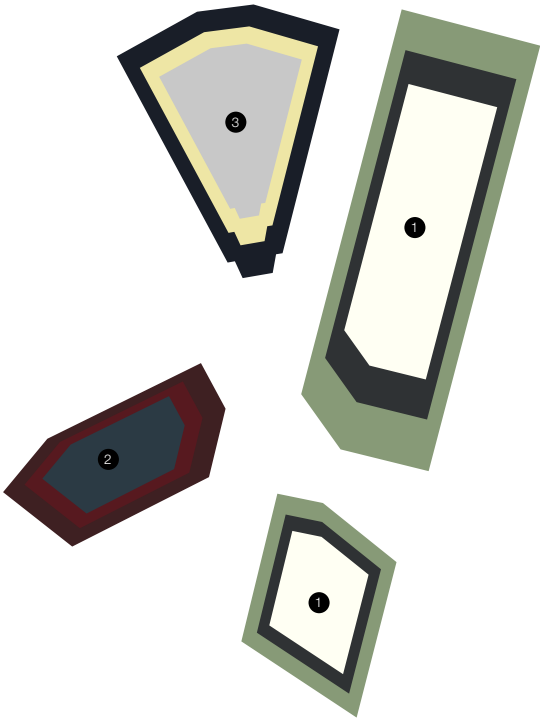


Precast Concrete Walls

Design Detail - Facade: Colour in the City



- 1 Building A**
RAL 6021 - structural frame
RAL 7021 - cladding, stairs and detail
- 2 Building B**
RAL 3007 - cladding primary colour
RAL 3005 - cladding secondary colour
RAL 5008 - structural frame
- 3 Building C**
RAL 5004 - cladding
RAL 3005 - cladding secondary colour
RAL 5008 - structural frame



Assembly A, inspired by Art Nouveau exposed steelwork and Bristol Cars while Assembly B and C take inspiration from colour palettes by Jean Prouvé and Josef Albers. The cladding is no longer just a backdrop but a main feature of the buildings.





Sustainability

- New build on **brownfield site** which had laid empty for several years.
- Champions sustainability and innovation through **exposed structures**.
- **Air source heat pumps** and on floor plants reduce operational carbon.
- Facade is **aluminium and glass - durable and recyclable**. the unitised system can be replaced
- **Smart tracked materials** allow for replacement and maintenance.
- Lightweight construction and **self finished materials** allow for less materials overall.
- Long life, loose fit with generous floorplates for **future flexibility**
- Skin **minimises solar gain** through flexing the window modules in response to the sun's orientation whilst maximising views out.
- Facade has opening vents that have been sized to allow the building to **support passive ventilation system** should the tenants wish.
- Assembly A and C are both connected to the **Bristol Heat Network** contributing to a lower carbon future for Bristol.

Key metrics
BREEAM 'Excellent' for office spaces
WELL 'Platinum' for health and wellbeing - one of first in Bristol
Predicted energy use: 94 kwh/m ² /yr (area weighted average BRUKL)
Actual energy use: 91 kwh/m ² /yr (area weighted average)
Potable water usage: 10l/person/day (Buildings A&C)

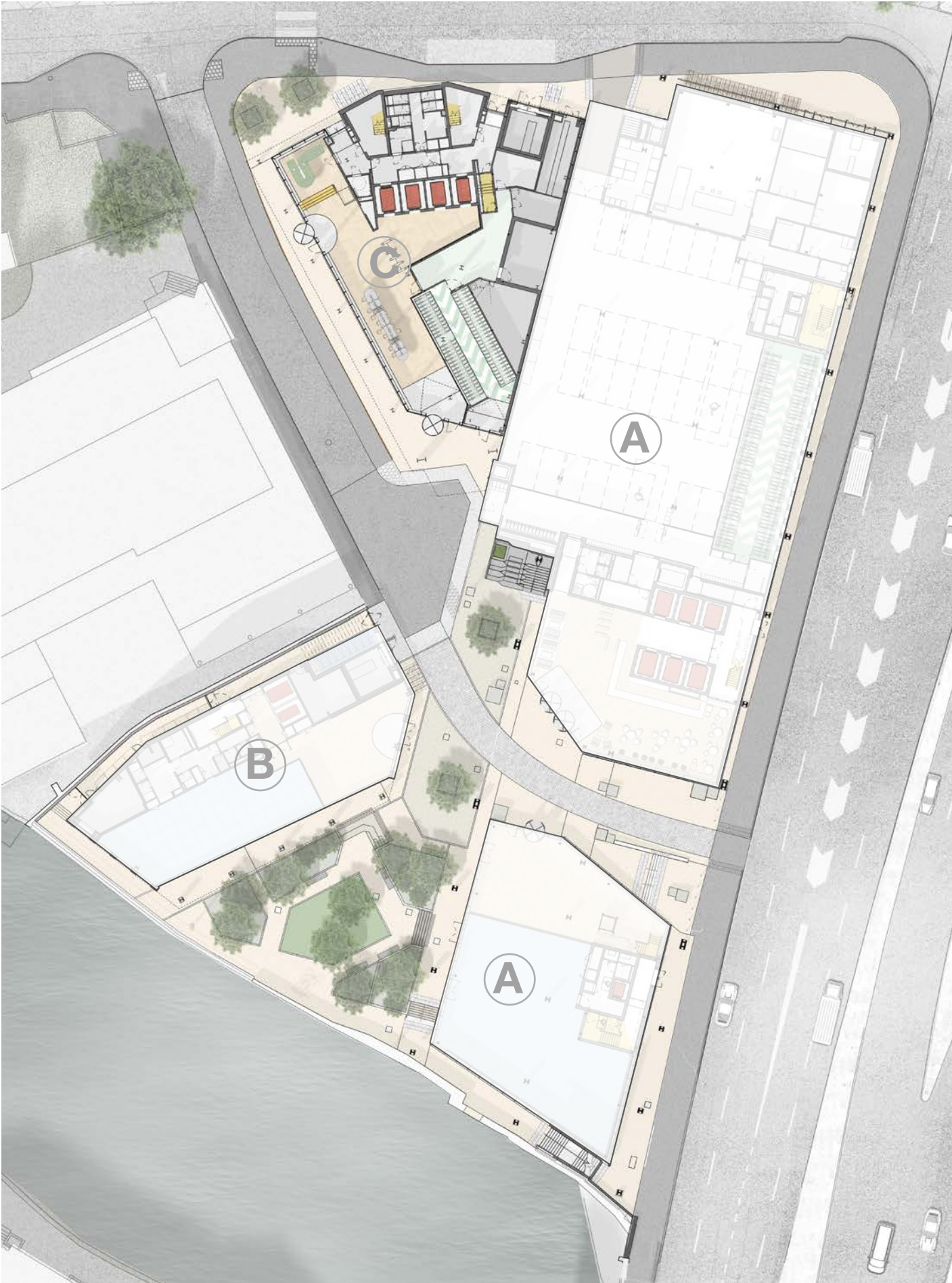
Building A
Airtightness: 2.91 m ³ /hr m ² at 50Pa
Building B
Airtightness: 2.79 m ³ /hr m ² at 50Pa
Building C
Airtightness: 2.92 m ³ /hr m ² at 50Pa
Upfront carbon: 529 kgCO ₂ e/m ²
Embodied carbon: 912 kgCO ₂ e/m ²
Whole life carbon: 1333 kgCO ₂ e/m ²



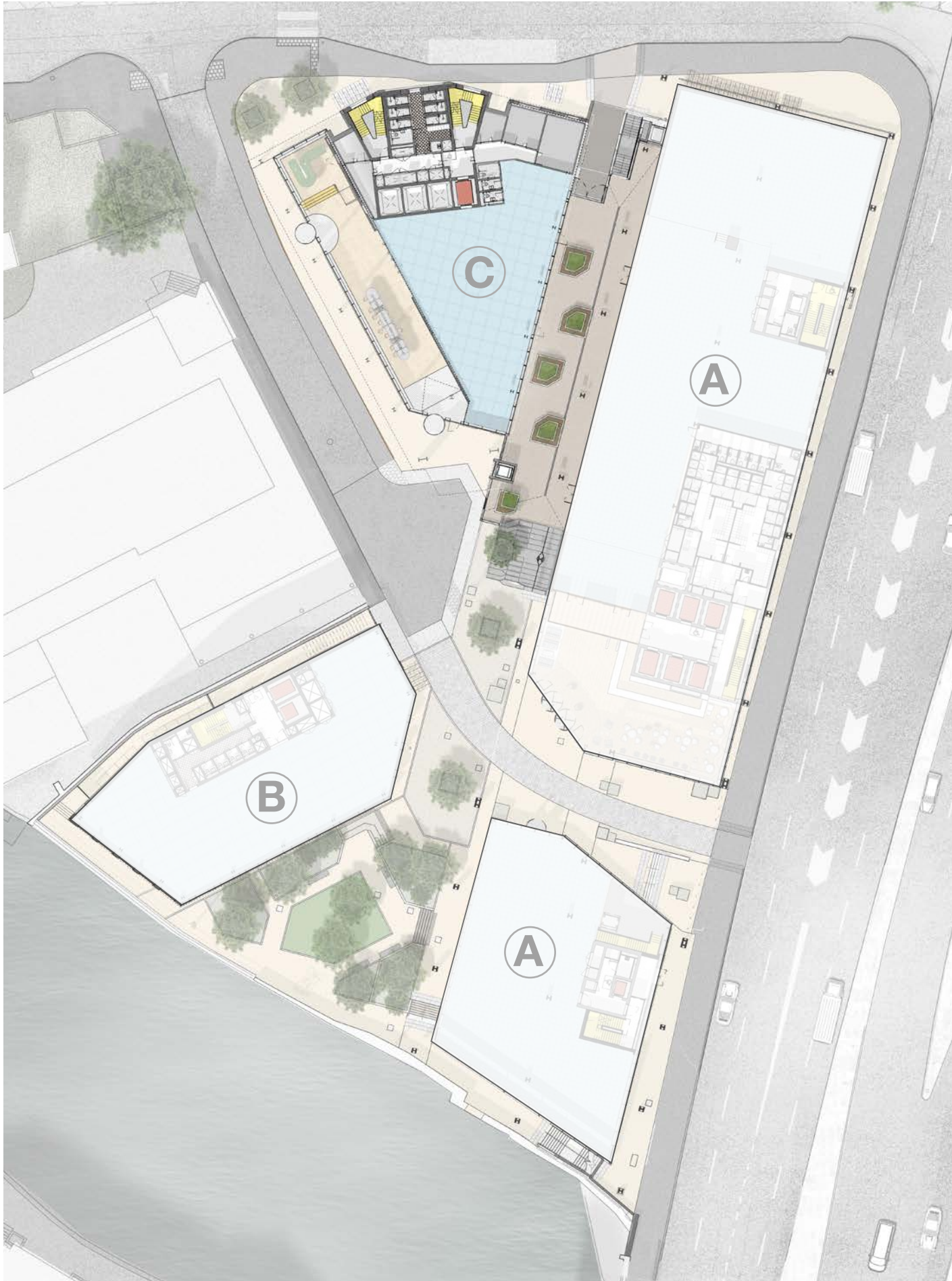


Drawings

Lower Ground Floor - Masterplan



Upper Ground Floor - Masterplan



Typical Floorplan - Masterplan



Roof Plan - Masterplan



South Elevation



North Elevation



East Elevation



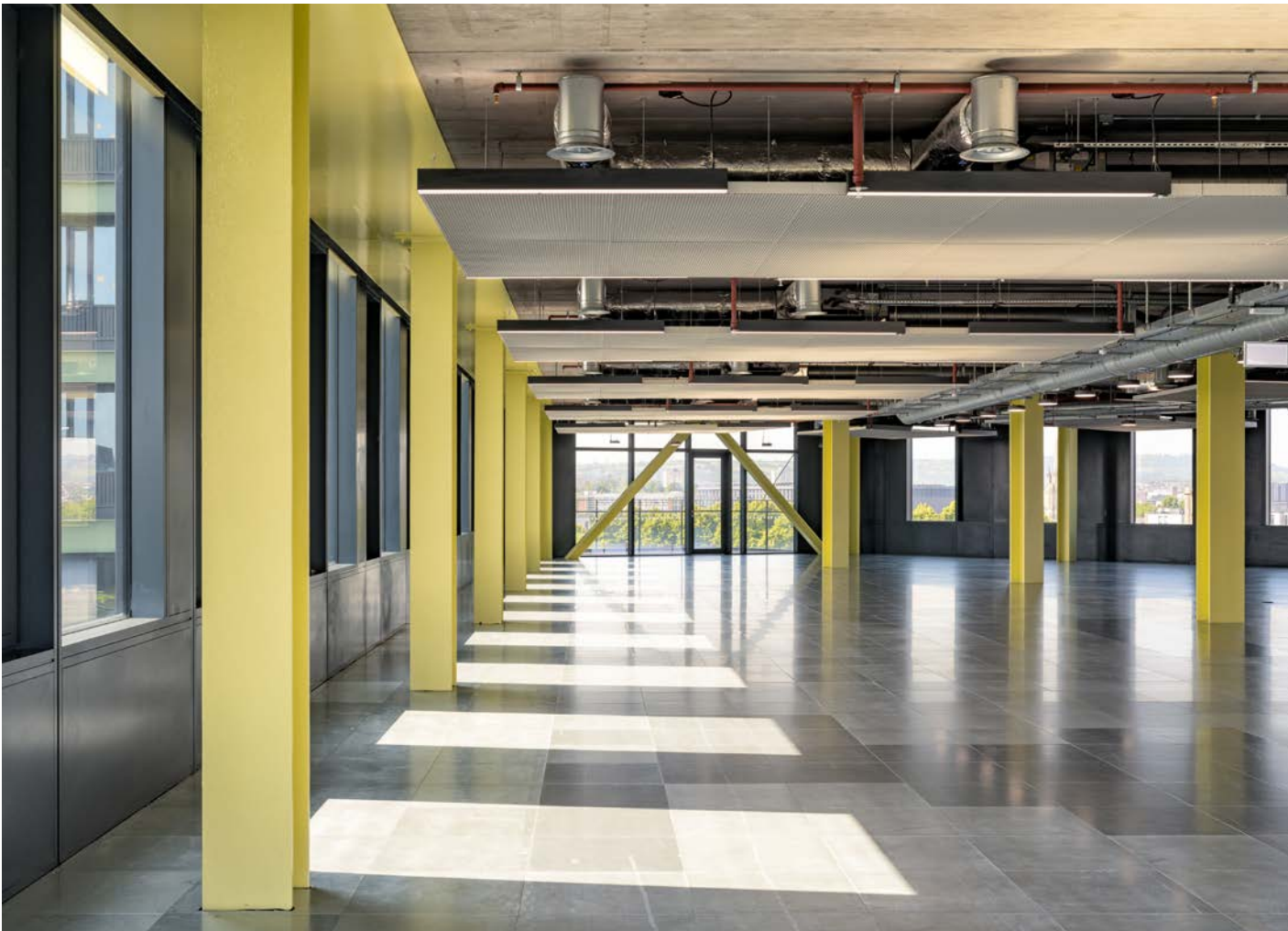
South Section





Photography









Alford Hall Monaghan Morris Ltd.

Morelands
5-23 Old Street
London, EC1V 9HL
United Kingdom
www.ahmm.co.uk