

LSE - Centre Buildings Redevelopment



The Square - a new heart for the LSE quarter

Public Realm Strategy

The LSE campus occupies a range of buildings from Lincoln's Inn Fields to the north through to the Aldwych in the south, at the centre of which is the proposed redevelopment site. Consequently this project represents a unique opportunity to create a heart and a sense of place for the LSE campus and in turn improve the connectivity and way finding between constituent buildings.

Despite the successful creation of public spaces outside both the Library and New Academic Buildings the campus does not have a natural heart, a primary address or a single point of identity. Our proposal intends to build on these existing spaces and key routes by introducing a new public square which will link Houghton Street to the Library Plaza, and connect the existing

route from the the recently completed Saw Swee Hock Student Centre on the western fringe of the campus to the LSE towers to the east.

We have developed the public realm strategy by exploring opportunities for planting and seating within both Houghton Street and LSE Square, and developing building edges that will promote interaction between the street and ground floor uses. Along Houghton street we have introduced double doors in alternate bays to allow permeability with the pedestrianised street. The newly exposed gable wall of the partially retained St Clements building has been developed to provide vertical circulation and an entrance at grade, creating a better connection to the square and an animated façade above.

Key Principles

In designing this unique and distinctive building we have aimed to capture some of the core values of the LSE; Collaboration, Excellence and Innovation. The majority of the building provides simple flexible floor spaces for a range of academic and departmental uses. The building is designed to provide an exceptional learning, teaching and working environment which will enable the LSE to attract the best staff, academics and students on a global stage.

The building will be highly sustainable looking to achieve a BREAM Excellent rating, but also to be flexible and adaptable to allow flexibility of use in future years.

Strategic Organisation

The building is vertically zoned with the most public and highly serviced facilities such as the restaurant, auditorium and large lecture theatres provided at the lower levels allowing a natural interaction with the public realm of Houghton Street and the newly created LSE Square.

On the first and second floors further teaching provision is accommodated, there is access here to a large external terraced garden. These public and student facilities are all connected by the atrium space which provides a dramatic and flowing circulation route between the floors with informal spaces to encourage students to come together to explore, debate and collaborate.

Above level three the academic departments are located to which access is more controlled. These upper levels are interconnected via a dynamic stair that moves in a series of double height spaces across the facade creating connectivity between departmental floors.

Massing and Appearance

The proposal seeks to address the varied heights of the site context by creating a stepped composition.

The block which is adjacent the new public square is proposed at 12-storeys responding to the taller building cluster of the LSE Towers and the Thomas Moore building. The proposed 6 storey Houghton Street block responds to the height of Old Academic Building and the mid-range buildings beyond.

The external language of the building has been developed as a regular rhythm which responds to the environmental conditions which surround the site and the varied uses proposed within the building, whilst creating a coherent piece of townscape which relates to its context.

The Façade on Houghton Street draws reference from the key vertical and horizontal datums of the Old Building opposite.

The vertical sub division of the façade is based on the 6m structural grid of the building which in turn is further subdivided at the teaching levels to create a 3m rhythm which echoes the fenestration of the Old Building.

The envelope of the Tower is based on the same unitised modular system as the Houghton street block with the 6m bays sub-divided into 1m panels which give the envelope a more humane scale and allow the façade to divide into smaller openable sections to maximise natural ventilation which is essential to the passive cooling of the building.

The modular cladding system of the tower is interrupted by the external expression of the departmental stair in the form of a series of double height glazed voids.



Collaborative stair creating informal break out areas and encouraging connectivity between floors



Visibility of the departmental stair will give the façade a distinct character reflecting the collaborative nature of the LSE and provide an active frontage to the square.



The building's stepped composition responds to the massing of the adjacent context.



The building provides active permeable frontage to Houghton Street.