

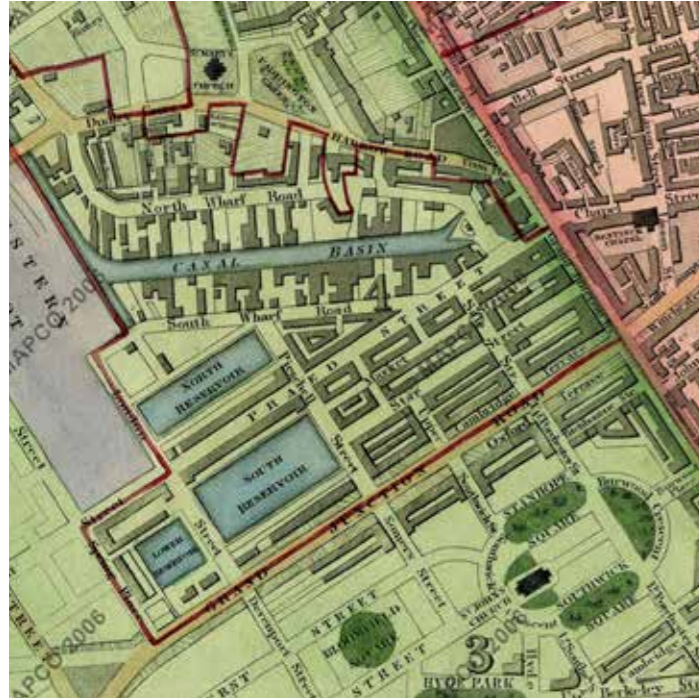
In association with **Great Western Developments** and **Sellar Paddington**

The proposal for the public realm in Paddington aims to give back space to a much-loved area of London. Putting people and transport at its heart, the design for the new development promises to change the shape of the city. Here's how.

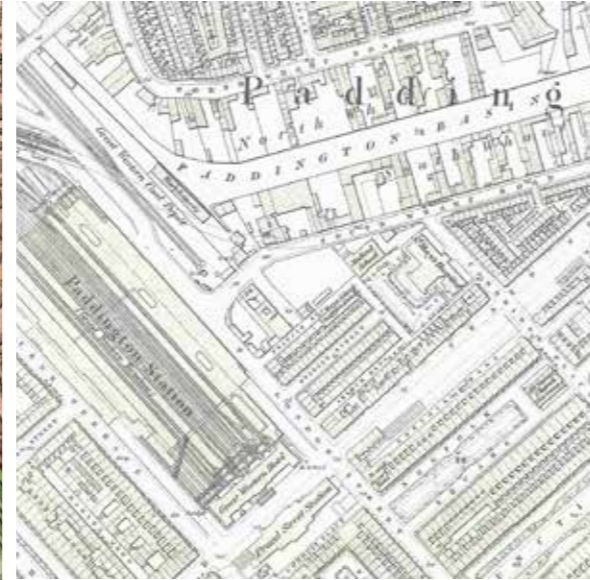


Paddington Quarter

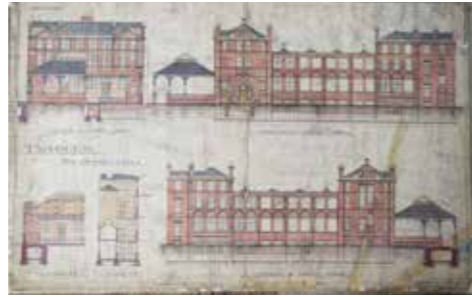
1834



1872



1890s



1892

Original Paddington Sorting and Post Office is first used by Royal Mail

Paddington's development into a fashionable residential area commenced in the early 19th century, when the surveyor to the Bishop of London laid out the area between Praed Street, Edgware Road and Bayswater Road. The scheme was carried out in a grand manner in the form of an inter-related pattern of wide streets, crescents and squares planned on either side of the two main boulevards, Westbourne Terrace and Sussex Gardens.

In the late 1790s, the Grand Junction Canal Company leased land south of the Harrow Road to build a canal terminus at Paddington. The three reservoirs to the south of Conduit Street (now Praed Street) and east of London Street were subsequently relocated and buildings constructed on the newly formed streets east of Paddington Station. Praed Street was originally laid out in the early 19th century as the backbone of the Grand Junction Canal Company's estate and named after the owner of the

company, William Praed, who began the area's development.

A further phase of development occurred following the opening of the new Paddington Station in 1837. This resulted in a continued growth of the residential district around the station. London Street was laid out in the 1840s and became the northern flank of Paddington Station. Paddington Station itself is one of the earliest major railway termini to survive in Britain and an important component of the history of the GWR. It is a major work by I K Brunel (1851-54), in collaboration with Sir Charles Fox and Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt.

The wider context of Paddington Station has changed considerably in the past 10 years, particularly the areas to the north and east (the intensive redevelopment of Paddington Basin and the former Paddington Goods Yard, now known as Paddington Central) and to the immediate west (the refurbishment of 10-30 and 40 Eastbourne Terrace).

Paddington Sorting and Post Office (by Henry Tanner, 1892)

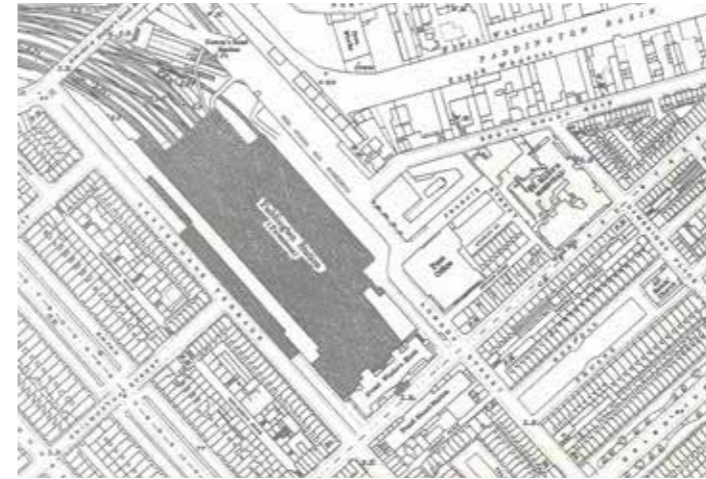
The site of the original Paddington Sorting and Post Office was first used by Royal Mail in the late 19th century. It was built on a site narrower than the present one, between the former Francis Street (now Winsland Street) and Stanley Street (now Winsland Mews), where terraced houses were cleared for its construction. Paddington District Office was strategically sited next to Paddington Station (built 1851-1854) with its opportunities for transhipment with mail trains. As built in 1892 to designs by architect Sir Henry Tanner, it was

much of the previous building was demolished, leaving today only 11 bays on Winsland Street. As with the earlier building, the interior of the extension was entirely plain and functional. As the building stands today, the interior lacks any notable fittings and features. The façade of the 1907 extension is treated in the Edwardian Baroque manner but does not form a symmetrical composition. This is perhaps because Wager had to retain old fabric rather than starting with a tabula rasa.

Mail Rail

Construction of the Mail Rail (London Post Office Railway)

1914

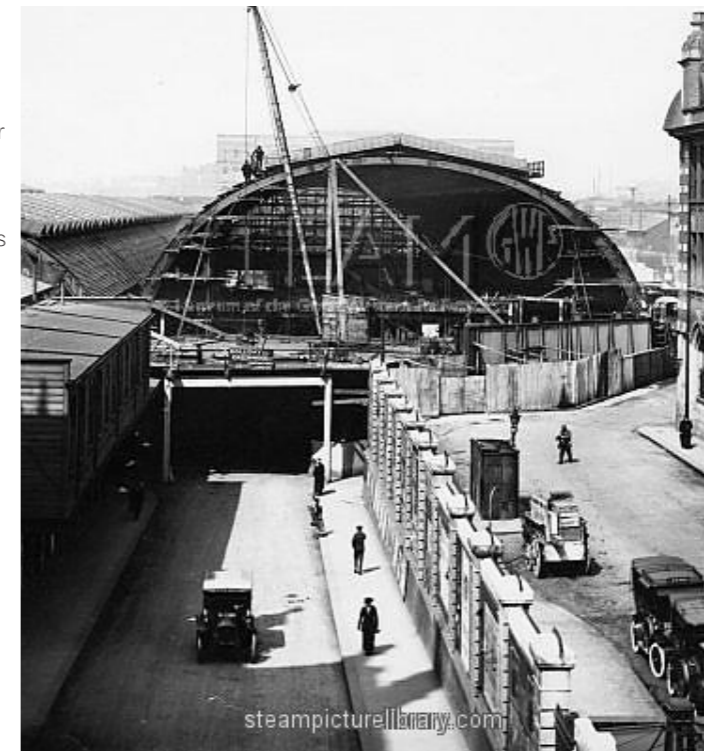


a two-storey structure with a third storey at either end for offices and staff rooms. The bulk of the building was given over to two huge sorting rooms, one on the ground floor for parcels and the other above for letters. The exterior of the building was relatively plain. This was probably due to its logistical status and perhaps also because much of the surroundings were industrial in character, such as the neighbouring Mint Stables for the GWR's London onward distribution centre (begun in 1877), coal depot and other wharfside structures.

First extension (by Jasper Wager, 1907)

The 1907 extension of the Paddington District Office was designed by Jasper Wager of the HM Office of Works, the architect in charge of Post Office buildings in London. The building was extended to the south-east as far as Winsland Mews and the façade brought forward up to the line of London Street. Thus,

1916



Clockwise from top left Map of Paddington dated 1834; Ordnance Survey map of Paddington of 1872; Paddington District Office elevations in a drawing of the early 1890s from the office of Henry Tanner; Paddington in an Ordnance Survey map of 1914; London Street elevation of Paddington Mail Centre; construction work at Paddington station in progress in 1916

Today

Paddington Mail Centre was vacated in 2010 and Mail Rail was closed in 2005. The building was considered for listing by Historic England (then English Heritage) in March 2003 but deemed not listable. A Certificate of Immunity from listing is in place (first granted in 2007, renewed in 2011 and in 2013) covering the 1892 Edwardian building and its 1907 extension. Westminster City Council considers it an Unlisted Building of Merit (or undesignated heritage asset) for its townscape contribution and past functional association with the railway station. The building is currently used by Crossrail as an access and work site to construct the underground passenger link between the new line and the Bakerloo platforms.

Second extension (1985)

In 1985 the Paddington Sorting and Post Office underwent another major extension programme. The existing building was extended to the rear while a new facility with public counters was built on Praed Street. A covered bridge connecting the two buildings was constructed across Winsland Mews. The complex became known as the Paddington Mail Centre.

2016



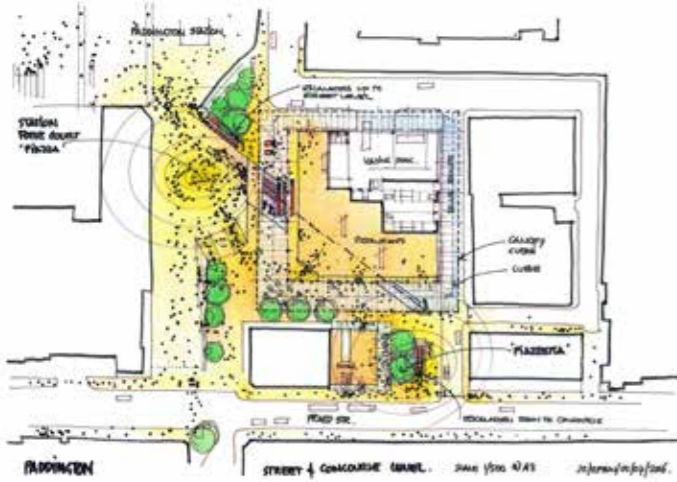
2010

Paddington Mail Centre was vacated

History and context

Nicholas Bridges, co-founder of Ettwein Bridges Architects, looks at significant dates in the development of the Paddington site

'Paddington Station is one of the earliest major railway termini to survive in Britain and an important component of the history of the GWR'



Public realm

The proposals for Paddington deliver an impressive extent and quality of public realm, says *Jack Carter*, founder of Jack Carter Architects

The public realm experience for passengers arriving at Paddington Station is poor by any standards – and surprisingly so, given the iconic status of the station. Expectations of a grand entrance into 21st century London are dismissed as soon as the daunting arrival ramp heaves into view.

Unfortunately the land-locked nature of the site has for years confounded easy solutions.

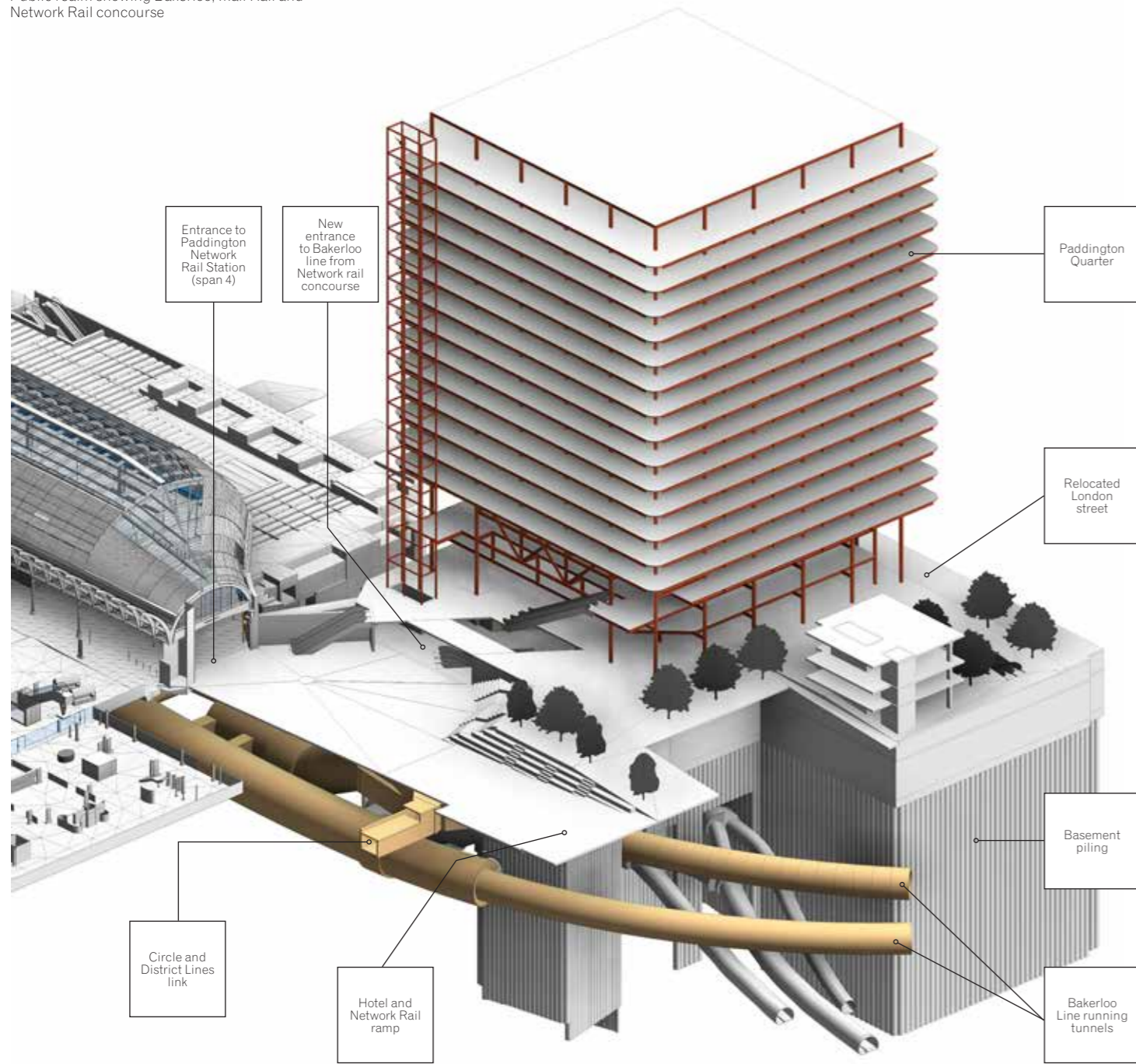
Beyond the high wall that bounds the ramp is a roadway – London Street – that also forms the setting for an interesting if disused building, the Royal Mail building at 31 London Street. It is the redevelopment of this site that uniquely releases the road alignment and provides the key to creating an open and generous new piazza in front of the station and resolving many of the challenges that have beset the travelling public for over 100 years. At the same time it provides the opportunity to provide grace and dignity to the station by providing it with an enhanced setting appropriate to its status.

While the proposals for Paddington made here have been driven by this unique opportunity the extent and quality of the public realm they deliver is impressive and significant. The proposals seek to create a dramatic new

‘This redeveloped site uniquely releases the road alignment and provides the key to creating an open and generous new piazza’



Public realm showing Bakerloo, Mail Rail and Network Rail concourse



public space in association with the Praed Street frontage to Paddington Station. The proposals will enhance the setting to the station and its associated buildings, including the Hilton Hotel – and will celebrate the historic and international status of the area to provide a clear, legible and uplifting experience through the creation of new and integrated public space with associated connections into adjacent streets and spaces.

The design of this new space will be developed to create a unique high-quality space with a



strong association to the station and its wider context. It will provide a distinct and attractive address but will also be fully embedded into, and complementary to, both its Paddington and Westminster contexts.

It is proposed that the station forecourt will be broadened and a new destination space created. This will improve the setting to the station's iconic entrance and provide a focal space from which new links to the wider area and proposed development will be created. In particular, new connections will be made between

the station forecourt, the proposed piazzas on London Street and Praed Street.

The public realm will have a warm and public feel, with seating and edges creating convivial places for people to dwell. Low-level planting and the provision of semi-mature trees will help to create a human scale while providing seasonal interest. Tree locations have been carefully considered, and below-ground structures adjusted, to ensure that appropriate soil volume can be made available and that any trees that are planted are afforded

healthy and sustainable growth.

Significant level changes within the site present an opportunity as much as they do a constraint. The design seeks to optimise this opportunity and ensure that they are able to contribute to the creation of a distinctive public space. Like a fold in the landscape, each crease demarcates the boundary between spaces, places for people to dwell, lines for drainage or security and lines to intuitively guide pedestrians on their outward and onward journey.

Above Model of proposed street-level public realm at Paddington Station
Far left Visualisation of proposed forecourt

47%

Percentage of all London commuters using the Bakerloo line

Paddington Quarter

Joost Moolhuizen, partner at RPBW, describes the rationale behind the Paddington building's distinctive cubic form



The existing old Royal Mail Group sorting office on London Street will be demolished down to basement level together with the existing Post Office building located on Praed Street. On London Street the existing wall enclosing the arrivals ramp will also be demolished, creating a site of 0.8 hectares.

The proposal is to create a permeable and accessible ground floor, animated with new retail facing onto London Street, Winsland Street and Winsland Mews. In place of the previous Post Office building on Praed Street, a small piazza will be created, providing a new pedestrian link to Winsland Mews.

London Street will be combined with the Paddington Station arrivals ramp to form a generous new public space with direct pedestrian access routes to the station entrance.

Below grade, a new entrance to the Bakerloo line will be created with escalator connections both from the new piazza on Praed Street and the new station entrance. In total, more than 4,700m² of public realm will be repaved and landscaped including 2,100m² of new space, not previously publicly accessible.

The previous scheme sought to mark the presence of the iconic Paddington Station on the skyline of London with a light, elegant, slim tower.

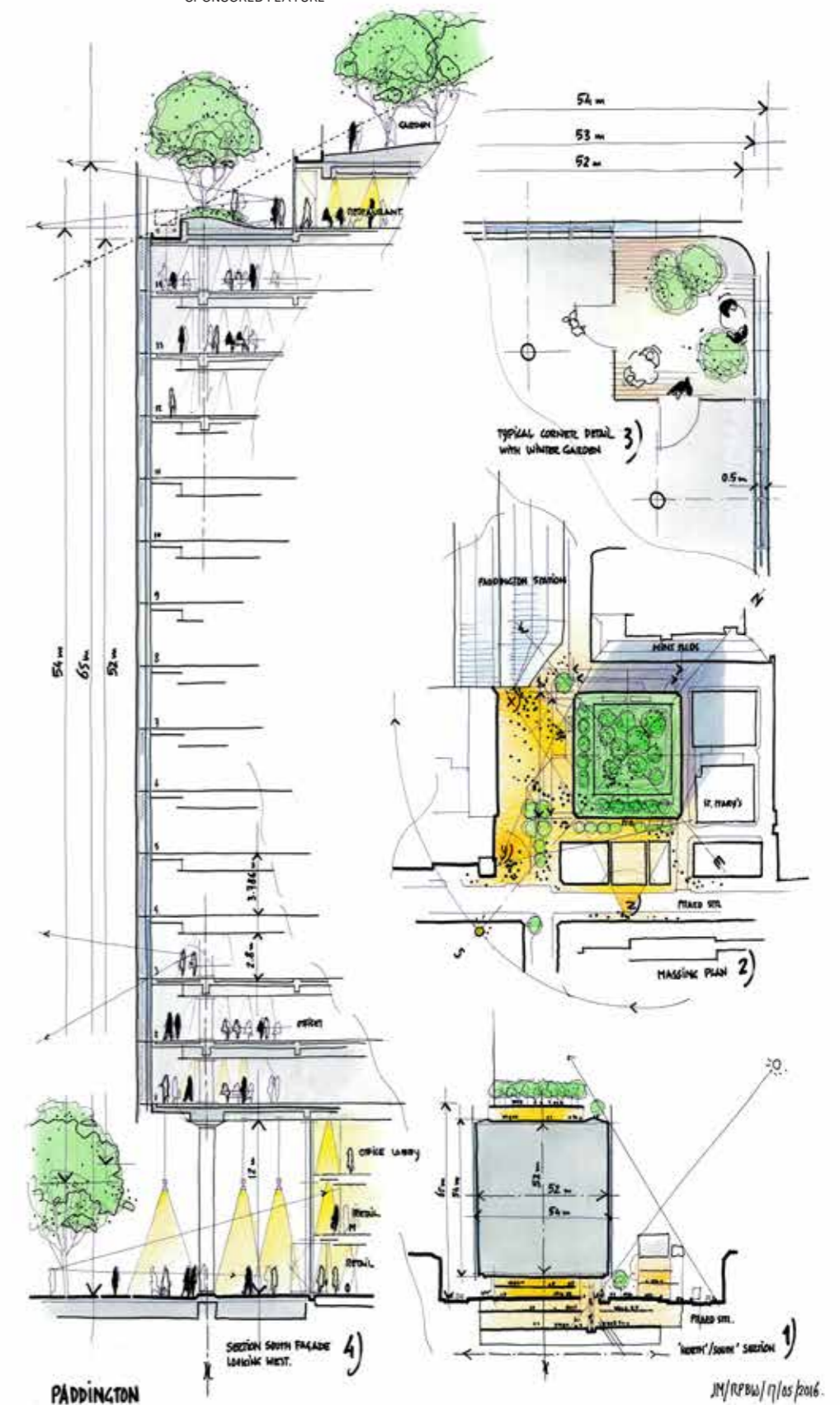
During the planning process, extensive public consultation resulted in public concern regarding the height of the tower. Combined with this came a change in brief which called for high-quality commercial office space and not apartments.

The new scheme responds to public concern regarding the height of the scheme with a much lower building but is by no means a departure from the underlying principles previously established relating to the public realm.

The diverse urban fabric of Paddington is the result of contrasting developments varying in geometry and architectural style.

The proposed building is for a perfect cube, 54m by 54m wide and 54m high. This pure, elegant geometry is a direct response to the dominant urban grid established by Praed Street in the east-west direction and London Street in the north-south direction.

The dimensions of the cube result in 2,400m² NIA floorplates,



Paddington developmental drawings by Joost Moolhuizen

‘Viewed in the context of the varied and contrasting architecture of Paddington Basin, the cube provides a rational and elegant geometry in harmony with the dominant historic urban grid’

commercially an optimum size for the London market.

Responding to the rectilinear site, the cube reinforces this dominant grid in three dimensions and, when viewed in the context of the varied and contrasting architecture of Paddington Basin, the cube provides a rational and elegant geometry in harmony with the dominant historic urban grid.

In keeping with the pure form of the proposed building, it is vital that the detailing and articulation of the building are well executed and similarly refined. Each face of the cube is proposed to cantilever at the edges, not quite touching one another.

The roof is similarly treated as a fifth elevation to the building and will contain a tatami of photovoltaic panels both generating on-site electricity for the building and providing solar shading to the rooftop restaurant.

Finally, the underside of the cube will serve as a soffit to the lower level retail spaces and public realm. Like the main façades, the soffit is to be treated as a floating plane, slightly polished, reflecting light and providing interest to the ground floor.



'The station urgently needs to unlock space, reduce congestion and increase comfort'

prevent overcrowding. This is not a long-term solution. The station urgently needs to unlock space, reduce congestion and increase comfort, especially at the cramped Bakerloo Line ticket office. The scheme's engineering design specifically addresses these challenges by using adjacent land and significant oversite development. WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff, which previously worked with Sellar Group on the Shard, has collaborated with TfL, Crossrail, Westminster City Council and other stakeholders to find the best solution for commuters and the areas. Drawing on the Elizabeth Line scheme, the design concentrates on pedestrian movement and accessibility while accounting for the complex civil engineering and tunnelling solutions required.

A new 'front door'
Significant changes include a new piazza above the Bakerloo Line ticket office, creating the station's new 'front door'. In the process a range of utilities and other services will be relocated into the development site. This frees up space for Bakerloo passengers (comprising 47 per cent of all commuters) to benefit from a new ticket office and concourse that is four times larger, a new triple bank of escalators and lifts, and 12 ticket gates, rather than the existing five. This complements construction already under way to connect with the Elizabeth Line and means Bakerloo commuters will have three access points from platform level instead of one, and two lifts instead of none, accommodating medium to long-term commuter growth.

Creating open spaces

The exterior of the station is characterised by its vehicular, inhospitable and dilapidated nature. Sight lines and pedestrian safety is poor. The new public realm created by the development will make Paddington an attractive destination, with wider pavements, extra seating, landscape features including trees, cycle docks and new step-free access to the Bakerloo Line.

Vehicles will no longer need to reverse out into Praed Street from the hotel; pedestrian movement to the adjacent hospital is eased by escalators and lifts; and natural light will fill the lower concourse – adding aesthetics to functionality. Safety precautions will also meet a higher standard.

Paddington transformed

These changes will provide a remarkable transformation in ambition and scope. Rarely in the UK is there a comparable development where so many infrastructure benefits are provided as part of a developer-led building project. The new public realm is similar in area to the building's office floor plate above, reducing passenger congestion and allowing a smoother journey into and out of the station. Collaborative partnerships, private funding and air rights are playing an increasing role in funding infrastructure. This model leads the way in delivering an attractive model for UK investment. *Bill Price is a director of WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff*

Paddington Station is crucial. It is London's gateway to the West and Wales and the quickest route to Heathrow. It will experience a 60 per cent increase in demand to 60 million passengers a year by 2030 following Crossrail's (Elizabeth Line) arrival in 2018. However, it is already an uncomfortable bottleneck, struggling to accommodate the number of people that pass through it.

Currently commuters are regularly held outside the station, adjacent to passing vehicles, to

Transport

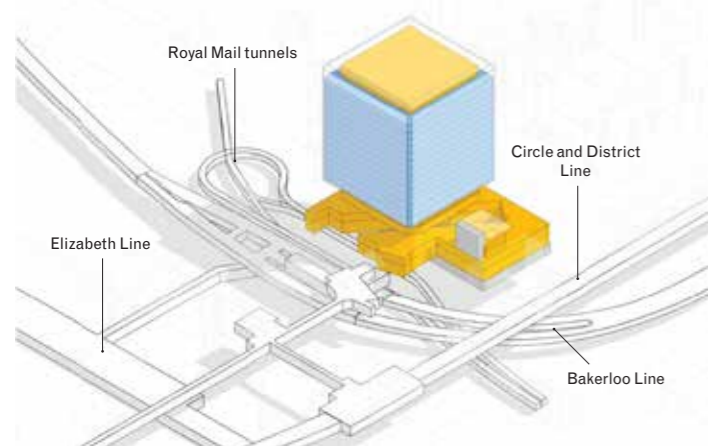
WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff director *Bill Price* explains how the Paddington Quarter scheme's engineering design addresses the terminal's pedestrian movement challenges

60%

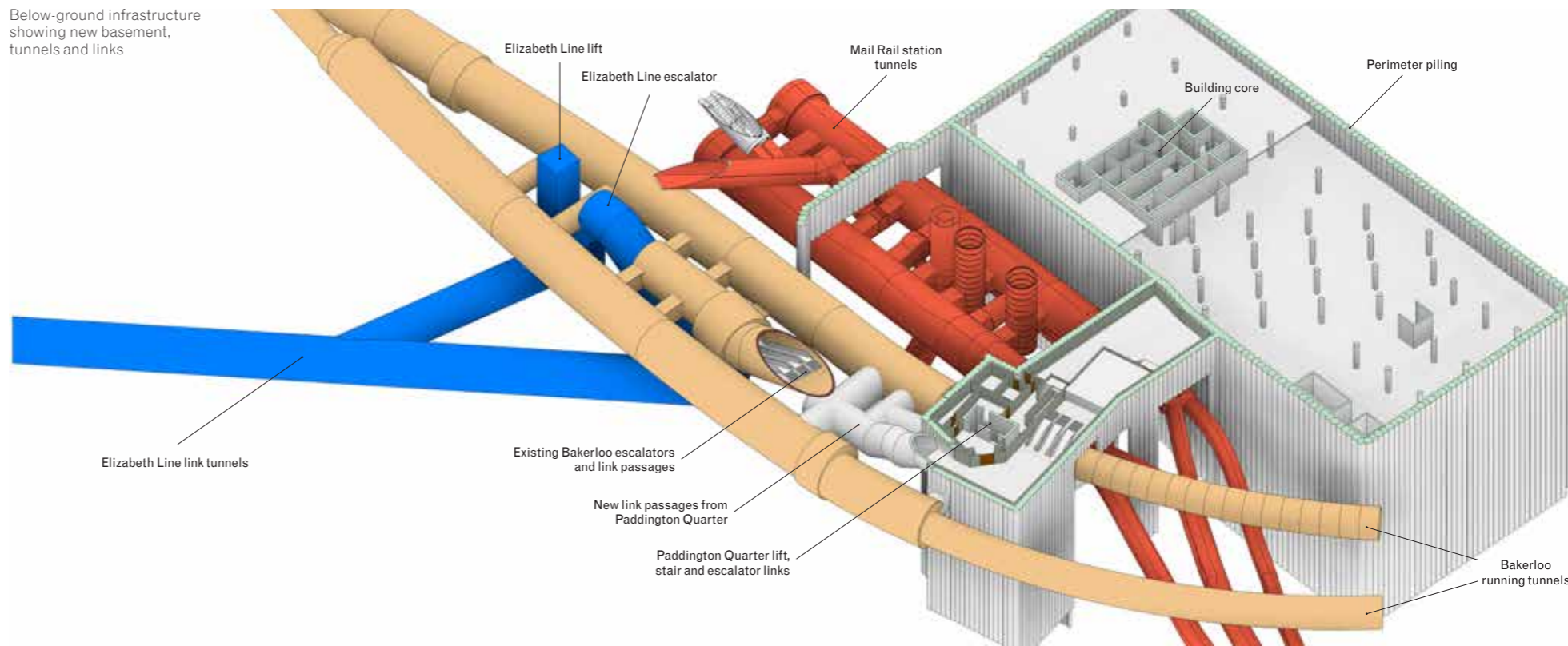
Increase of Paddington station passengers by 2030 expected with the arrival of the Elizabeth Line in 2018

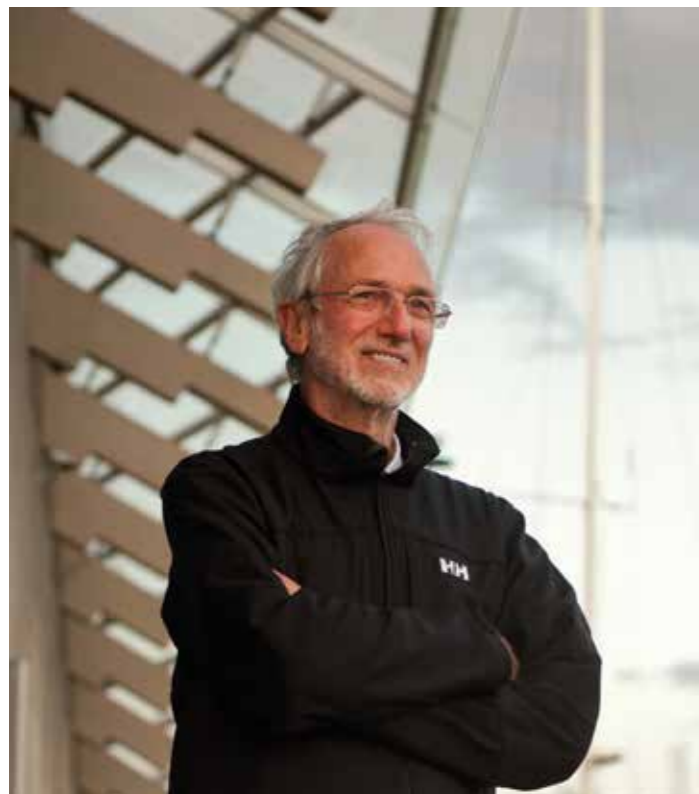


The Paddington Quarter's connections to transport infrastructure



Below-ground infrastructure showing new basement, tunnels and links





How did the Paddington Pole concept come about?

The first idea was to have a very slim tower. I thought it wasn't a bad idea because this left a lot of space on the ground for the public realm – there was this possibility to give back to the city precious open space on Praed Street close to Paddington Station. It also comes back to this idea of intensifying cities. For sure, that doesn't always mean towers, but I'm convinced of the need to intensify cities.

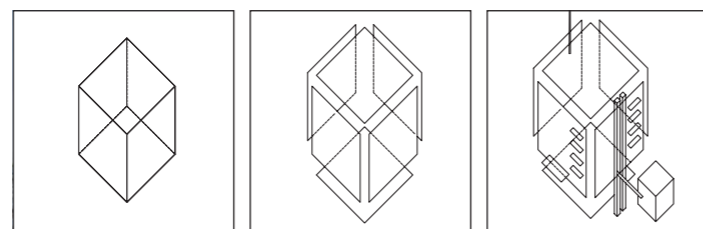
What did you make of the negative reaction to this tall building?

Architecture is a public art and you have to accept when you design something that you must listen to the reaction, listen to the community. As an architect you have a civic duty to stand and listen. Criticism isn't necessarily a bad thing and can be interesting even when it's irritating. This scheme wasn't accepted by the local population and a decision was taken by

efficient and it does give back space to the city, especially on the ground floor. We wanted to find a solution that wasn't a compromise but was something else. The building has an interesting skin and here we've looked at the lace-like vaults and roof of Paddington Station. Movement of people is also crucial to the design and the building will be very visible and very accessible. We're still working on the detail of how the building will touch the ground and we're going to put



Renzo Piano 'Cities are not designed by architects but by politicians, critics and many others'



Westminster City Council not to allow a tower. I was a bit surprised by the criticism but there's a lack of love for towers in England where they've long been seen as symbols of power and of arrogance. I do think we shouldn't be too negative about taller or bigger buildings because they've become a necessity in the city.

What options for the design did you then explore?

One option was to make it a lower tower and we did try that. But of course the tower then becomes fatter and you lose the public space you were aiming to give back to the city. So we started discussing something very different, something lower and more compact. I was happy about the tower scheme and thought it was good and interesting. But cities are not designed by architects but by politicians, by critics and many others.

Tell me more about the Paddington Quarter

It's extremely compact and

in the planning application in mid-September and then three or four months of discussion with Westminster will follow.

Won't the design give back less to the public realm because it has such large floorplates?

A thin tower would have given back more space and that's the reason we're still working on this aspect of the cube design. I want to give more public function to the ground floor. We're also in constant dialogue with the station, with London Underground and with St Mary's hospital in this regard.

Top left Renzo Piano
Above Visualisation of the concept design viewed from the east
Opposite page, top left Irvine Sellar
Above right The Shard



PORTRAIT BY ANTHONY COLEMAN

Irvine Sellar 'I like the fact we are creating an exciting new public realm'

Describe how the Paddington Pole concept came about

Renzo and I were discussing the Royal Mail site and we both felt it has such tremendous opportunity for redevelopment. There are also many similarities between Paddington and London Bridge Quarter, both are neighbours to major transport hubs and major hospitals. Our Shard building at London Bridge Quarter has been a great success. The office elements of the Shard and the News Building comprise of one million square feet of space and are now over 90 per cent let, the convenience of being right next to a transport hub has proved such a success and I am also proud that the Shard has become a global symbol for London and not just the area. A tower at Paddington would have also worked; it was a

beautiful design and something I think this part of Paddington would have benefited from. However, I don't regret the change; our revised scheme will be a catalyst for regeneration surrounding the Royal Mail site.

How do you explain the backlash against it?

There was a relatively small, but vocal, minority that opposed the development of a tall building. The locals see the site as a personal asset; we consider Paddington to be both a national and local asset. Of course, it is all these things. What we were trying to create with both the public realm and transport connectivity was not fully appreciated and the backlash focused on the height, rather than the building set within the wider context of the regeneration and improved connectivity we were providing.



BEN BLOSSOM

How will this new design contribute to Paddington's public realm and to public assets nearby?

By raising the building off the ground we are able to open up the space at street level and create more public realm. The hospital has wanted to redevelop its site for a number of years; they have created a number of schemes but haven't as yet been able to bring them forward. We continue to collaborate with the hospital as neighbours and we of course know there is a synergy between our scheme and what they want to do. Good communication is key to provide the best outcome. However, we are not in a joint venture and our schemes are independent of each other.

The Paddington Pole was residential-led and the new cube building is office-led. How would you characterise these two markets in London right now?

There's been a softening of the residential market since we conceived our original scheme. This has been exacerbated since Brexit, creating a degree of uncertainty in the residential market – and markets do not like uncertainty. However, the office market appears more resilient and we've just announced three new lettings in the Shard,

so Brexit doesn't necessarily mean exit. The residential side is perhaps a little softer but overseas buyers are now finding it 20 per cent cheaper to buy in London than two months ago, so there is still significant interest.

What's it like working with Renzo Piano?

He's very special. He has the ability to understand me and to read my mind very well. In other words, he can interpret architecturally what I have in mind. I do enjoy working with architects generally and enjoy the thought process that this involves. In Renzo's case we've developed a very good working relationship and I trust him. He comes from a family of builders and that helps, because he understands construction, costs and money.

What do you like about the Paddington Quarter?

I like the fact we are creating an exciting new public realm, we are vastly improving transport connectivity and creating a stunning office building, all of which will create around 3,500 jobs. In my view our proposals will, for the first time, open up Brunel's true vision for Paddington. I also like the fact it is only five minutes from Hyde Park and seven from Marble Arch. It's a great location.



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