Sebastian Street Site Analysis

Project Objectives:
The site on Sebastian Street has been identified by the University as the location for a 6500 sqm postgraduate facility, offering high quality academic spaces to support research and enterprise. A building of high sustainability standard that contributes positively to its local context.

Northampton Square Planning Brief (2009):
“A disparate collection of buildings of variable architectural quality, which are not well suited to modern University requirements and surrounded by vacant and untidy space at the junction of Sebastian St and Goswell Road.”
“This site offers the prospect of a strong focal point on Goswell Road for those approaching north from the City, while remaining sensitive to the surrounding urban fabric.”

Planning Brief Objectives:
• Be of high design quality, with careful consideration given to entrances.
• Positively define the street corner, creating articulated and active frontages on both streets, respecting residential amenity.
• Have scale and massing reflecting Northampton Square conservation area and the adjoining Hat and Feathers Conservation area.
• Emphasise the diagonal approach connecting Northampton Square with Sebastian Street.

View from Goswell Road looking towards the site
Proposed Corner View

A landmark opportunity - an urban marker for City

Landmark: The College Building
Myddleton Building (1923)
Goswell Place (1909-1911)
Parkes Building (1947)
Health Centre (1970's)

Sebastian Street Concept

Proposed Retention & Demolition:
The proposal has been informed by an early assessment of the significance of the buildings within the site. This included identifying the contribution that each building makes to the significance of the Northampton Square Conservation Area.

Myddelton Building:
A three storey brick built former factory, dating from 1923. It is identified in the Northampton Square Conservation Area Design Guidelines as an unlisted building that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Myddelton Building will be retained and integrated into the proposal.

Goswell Building:
A two storey brick built former workshop and factory from 1909-11. The Goswell Building will be largely retained and integrated into the proposal. The proposal to demolish the west end of the building and rebuild to a new footprint will offer greater internal flexibility and provide a more considered elevation onto Sebastian Street.

Parkes Building:
A three storey concrete and brick built former factory building dating from 1947 which replaced Georgian townhouses damaged during the Second World War. The proposal is to demolish the Parkes Building allowing for a meaningful reinstatement of the building line along Sebastian Street, reinstating the block towards the west end of the site.

The Health Centre:
A part one, part two storey prefabricated building which dates from around 1970. Originally built on a temporary basis, it continues in use today. The proposal is to demolish the Health Centre. Its replacement and the redevelopment of the prominent corner site presents an opportunity to enhance the significance of the area.

Conceptual Sebastian Street elevation

Conceptual block plan
Sebastian Street Design

Site Layout:
Working with the retained Goswell and Myddelton Buildings the development is conceived as a series of blocks unified by a central atrium space. Each block has its own character and has been designed to respond to the surrounding residential context.

The main entrance to the building will be along Goswell Road with a secondary entrance on Sebastian Street. The existing trees along Sebastian Street will be removed and replaced with new trees planted at regular intervals. This will be a car free scheme and secure cycle parking will be provided in Goswell Place.
Sebastian Street Design

Scale:
While the building appears as four separate blocks, it will function as one. The appearance has been designed to respond to the character and context of the surrounding area, this is most evident along Sebastian Street where the building steps up from two storeys on Sebastian Street to seven storeys at the junction with Goswell Road.

The shape and form of the seven storey element emphasises the diagonal approach and will be a new strong focal point from Goswell Road. The two storey and five storey elements directly respond to the residential development along Sebastian Street.

The positioning of windows and entrances along Sebastian Street on the lower blocks has been designed to give a nod to the surrounding Georgian architecture.

The Goswell Building will be retained and refurbished as will the Myddleton Building, where an additional storey will be added and set back.