



Vision & Principles - Preliminary

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Vision for the Volpe District

Principles

- Public Space
- Ground Level Life
- Built Form

Discussion

Vision for the Volpe Site

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A Center of Gravity for Kendall Square

A Place that Makes Connections

Vision: A Center of Gravity



A unique and memorable place

Warm and inviting

Destination for people from all over

Live, work, and play in a pedestrian focused environment

Vision: A Center of Gravity



The Heart of Kendall Square – you know that you’re Somewhere !

Place where people are seen and can meet

Home for community events and gatherings

An exclamation point for Cambridge; height and density, and texture and diversity too

Vision: A Place that makes Connections



A Nexus - brings diverse people, ideas, & functions together:

- Residential, research, innovation, office, retail, recreation, collaboration, meeting
- Community, culture, and nature

Vision: A Place that makes Connections



A Crossroads – linked to the surrounding districts and neighborhoods

Inviting to residents, workers, and visitors

Active during daytime, evenings, and weekends

Principles for the Volpe District

1. The design of the public realm will create a sense of place.
2. Open space will be inclusive, connective, and comfortable.
3. Ground level life will be diverse and engaging: active streetscape, attract the broader community, encourage community participation.
4. Housing will cater to a variety of demographics.
5. Buildings will reinforce the district's sense of place by defining and enriching the public realm.
6. Buildings will contribute to the city as a whole.

Principle: The design of the public realm will create a sense of place



The site's public open spaces will be the heart of Kendall Square.

The site's public spaces - streets, squares, courtyards, parks, and primary public interior spaces - will be unique, varied, legible, and memorable.

Principle: Create a Sense of Place



Landscape and architectural design will work together to form public space, enrich its character, and support a multitude of uses

Principle: Create a Sense of Place



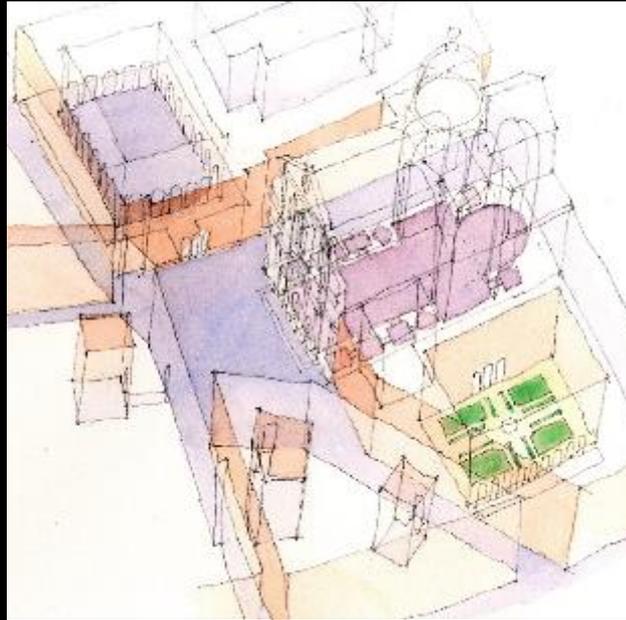
Room-like public open space: street, park, courtyard, passage, and square – is the *Vessel* for community.

Principle: Create a Sense of Place



Ground Level Activity: shopping, eating, playing, meeting, talking, demonstrating, exhibiting – is the glue.

Principle: Create a Sense of Place



The site's interconnected public spaces - streets, squares, courtyards, parks, and primary public interior spaces - will be unique, varied, legible, and memorable.

Principle: Connectivity



The site's public open spaces will organize the site, foster connections between people, and link the site with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Principle: Connectivity



Public spaces within the site will be interconnected with each other, and with other key public spaces in Kendall

Lattice of circulation routes

Principle: Connectivity



Key urban intersection points and nodes of activity.

Thoughtfully inviting transitions and entrances to the site will link it to the surrounding districts and neighborhoods

Principle: Connectivity



Bordering streets are currently barriers.

They should become connectors: zippers linking the site to the adjoining neighborhoods.

Principle: Connectivity



The site of the new Volpe Building should be seamlessly connected to adjoining public open space.

Principle: Inclusiveness



The site's public spaces – parks, squares, streets, courtyards, covered public spaces – will be inclusive and offer a variety of uses and kinds of experiences.

Amenities for multiple generations – children to seniors

Complementary and integrated uses.

Principle: Inclusiveness



Enough activity to draw in a critical mass of users, which will draw in more people

Principle: Inclusiveness



Interactive and fun
Year-round interest

Principle: Comfort



The site's public spaces will provide sunlight and warmth, protection from wind. Trees, water features, movable furniture, opportunities to linger. Feeling of safety – eyes on the space, lighting. Public spaces will range in scale from grand to intimate.

Principle: Comfort



Open spaces will be defined by edges – retail, housing

The site's public spaces will provide comfort, protection, opportunities to linger, things to do.

They will include open outdoor spaces and covered interior spaces.

Principle: Activation of streetscape



Small shops, cafes, restaurants - Priority for building edges
Locate large scale anchor uses interior to site, and/or on upper/lower floors

Principle: Attract the Broader Community



Large community space – multiuse, flexible, configurable for different functions, permeable to adjoining public outdoor space.

Blend different activities, demographics, complementary interests

Multigenerational, inclusive of children

Examples: market hall, work space, event space, art space, indoor recreation, playspace



Principle: Attract the Broader Community



Open Spaces of diverse character and uses: quiet enjoyment of nature, informal recreation, outdoor dining; public events, markets, & performances

Comfort & safety, light, shade, trees, water, permeable edges



Principle: Community Participation



“Owner Operated” activities.

Flexible financial structure – not everything is “market rate”

Civic participation and dialogue

Principle: Housing is to serve the full demographic range

The range of unit types will address the growing need for family housing.

A considerable portion of the units should be two and three bedroom.

Integrate amenities and consideration of adjacencies to support family life.

Principle: Built form will reinforce the district's sense of place by defining and enriching the public realm

What creates a sense of place?

- Room-like civic scaled space: legible, inhabitable, and beautiful space, framed by buildings and reinforced by landscape design.
- *And/or*
- Unique characteristics or features whose form, texture, materials, or scale contrasts with the surroundings: a particularly memorable open space or an area/district dominated by a iconic building.

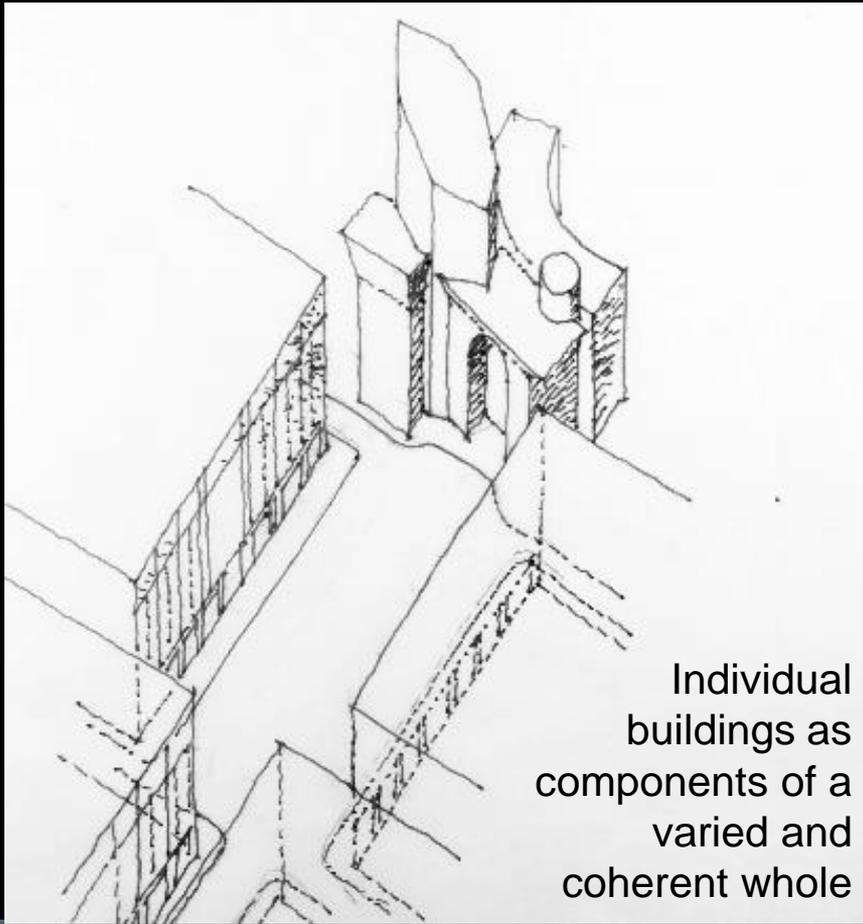
Principle: The Volpe site's buildings will contribute to the city as a whole.

Buildings will:

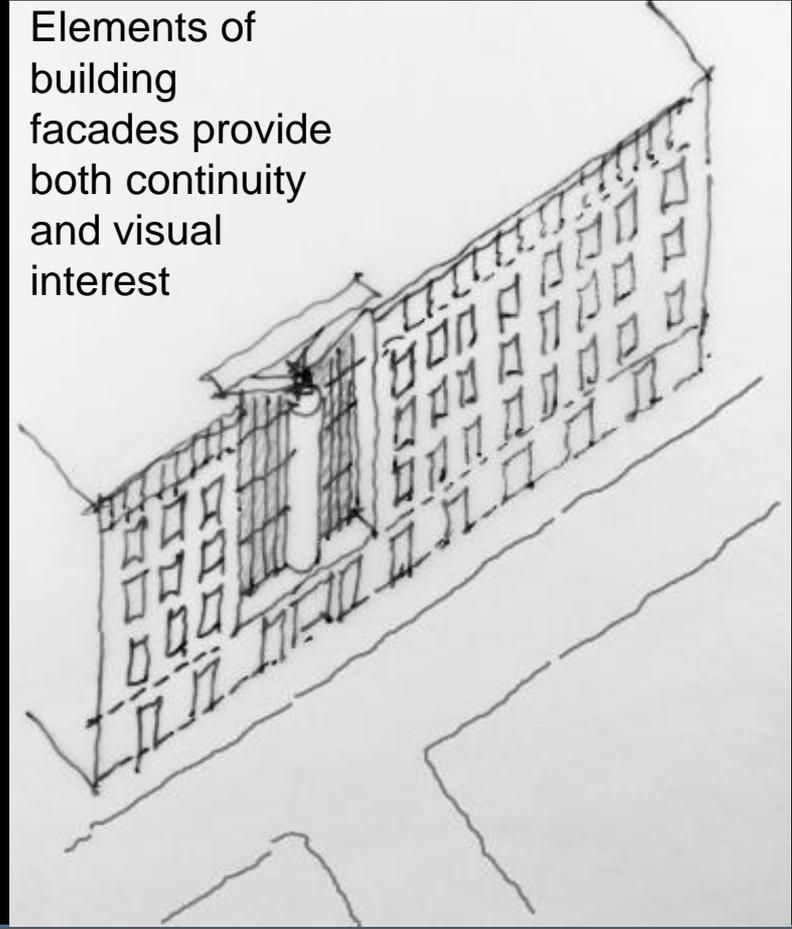
- Define connective public spaces – streets, paths, squares, and parks - both within the site and along its edges.
- Celebrate entry to the site – connective nodes.
- Celebrate the site as part of Cambridge's skyline.
- Participate in the community of Cambridge's buildings. The site's buildings will be designed in a positive relationship with Cambridge's existing built fabric.

Strategy: Background Buildings and Landmark Buildings

Background and landmark buildings work together, responding to opportunities created by the district's civic structure, to create a whole that is visually rich, varied, and coherent.



Individual buildings as components of a varied and coherent whole



Elements of building facades provide both continuity and visual interest

Strategy:

Built Form in a Dense Urban Environment - Four Zones



Pedestrian Zone



Street Wall



Tower



Top

Strategy:

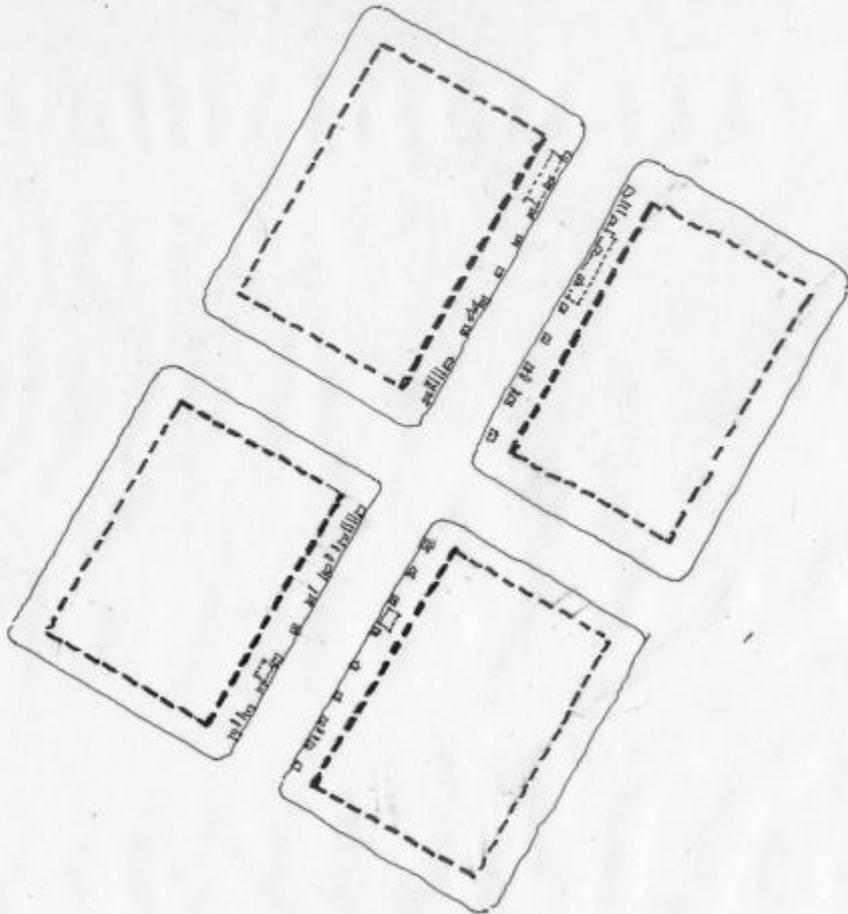
Built Form in a Dense Urban Environment - Four Zones

The horizontal zones address different issues and have different roles in defining and articulating public space:

- **Pedestrian Zone** - creates an active and permeable ground level.
- **Street Wall** - frames the space of the street or square, enlivens the pedestrian experience, and mediates between the scale of the pedestrian and the entire building.
- **Towers** - defines space at a large scale. Verticality and expressive design creates landmarks and punctuates the skyline.
- **Tops** – accommodates building mechanical systems and potentially symbolizes the building or district

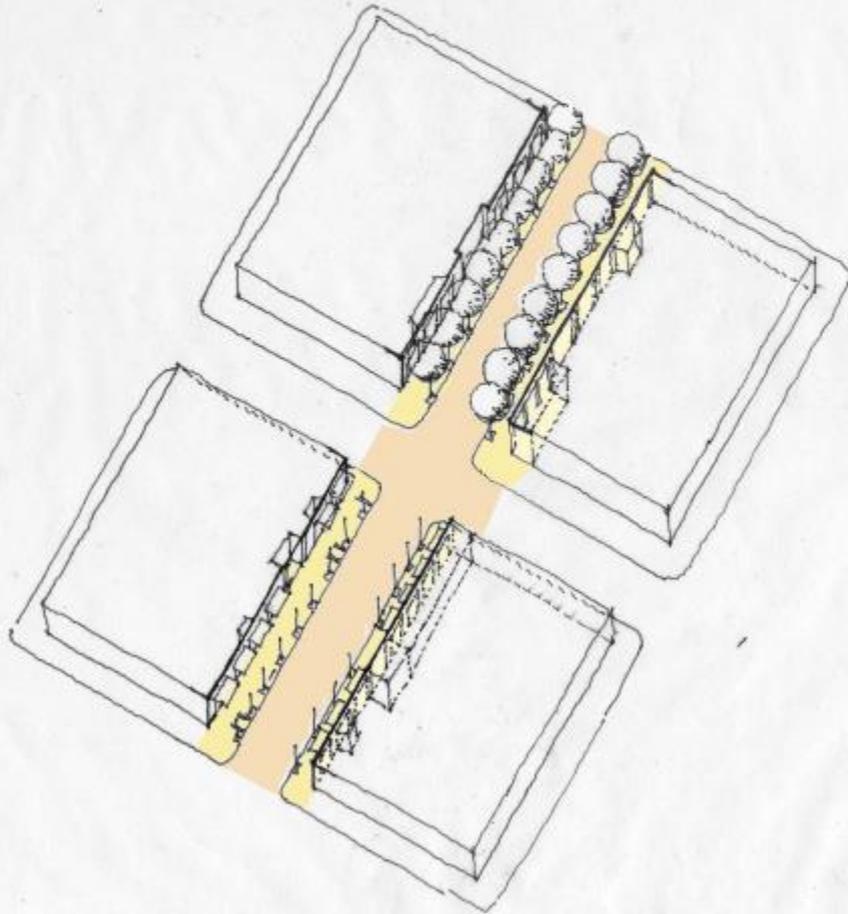
The site plan and its guidelines establish:

- Build-to lines for architecture - the architectural frame for the public realm
- Primary facades vs. secondary
- Variations from build-to line – widths and depths of allowable setbacks



The pedestrian zone:

- The building's ground floor (and sometimes also the second floor)
- Deep zone – curb, trees, sidewalk, outdoor seating, canopies, recessed building entrances, window displays, loggias.



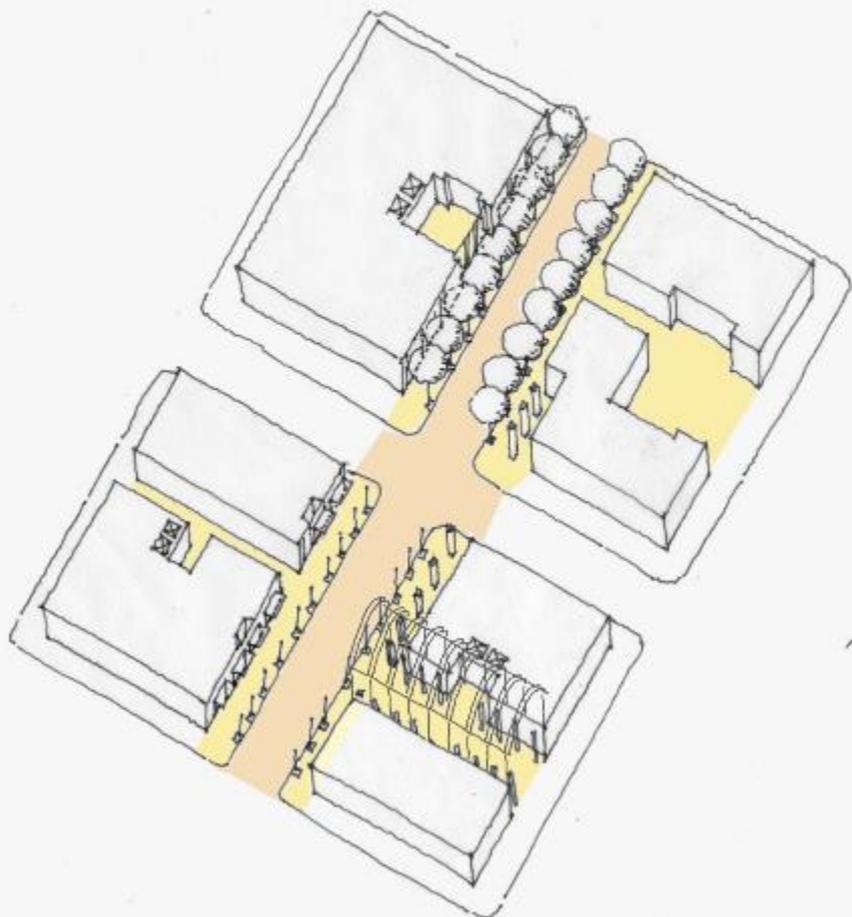
The pedestrian zone:

Nuances of design and use of materials will create a rich and enjoyable pedestrian experience: visual interest, beauty, comfort, permeability



Permeable buildings:

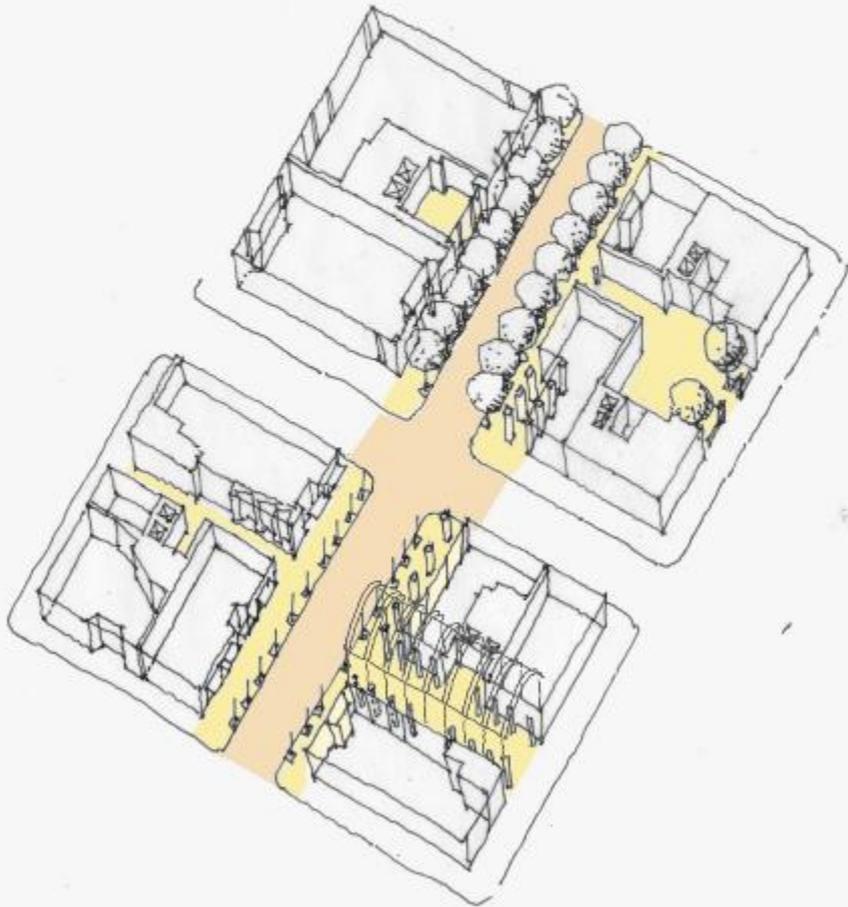
Lobbies, courtyards, passages, and gallerias enrich the pedestrian environment

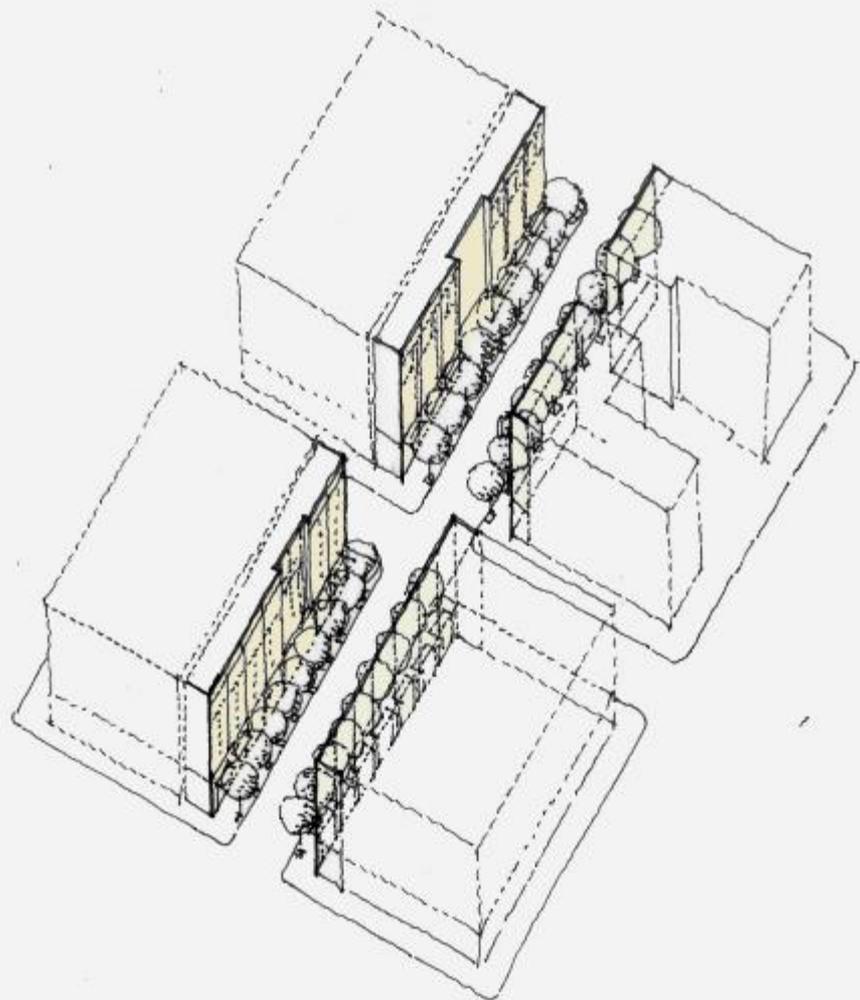




Transparency and connection

Shops, restaurants, community spaces, and lobbies connect with the street and sidewalk, adding fine-grained porosity





The Street Wall:

- Addresses the pedestrian's cone of vision
- Creates a visually rich experience
- Provides continuity to the pedestrian experience.
- Conforms to build-to lines
- Frames the space of the street, square, and park.

Street Wall – the Facade:

The building's face to the public realm.

Visual engagement and beauty: detail, texture, color, proportion, relief, projections and recesses.

Mediates between the scale of the pedestrian and the entire building.



Street Wall – the Facade



The detail, proportion, and materials of facades enrich the visual environment

The vertical surface of facades defines coherent, room-like streets, squares, parks, and courtyards

The Street Wall: Background Buildings and Landmark Buildings



The varied continuity of the street wall defines public space

Iconic / unique buildings add visual excitement and project a memorable image

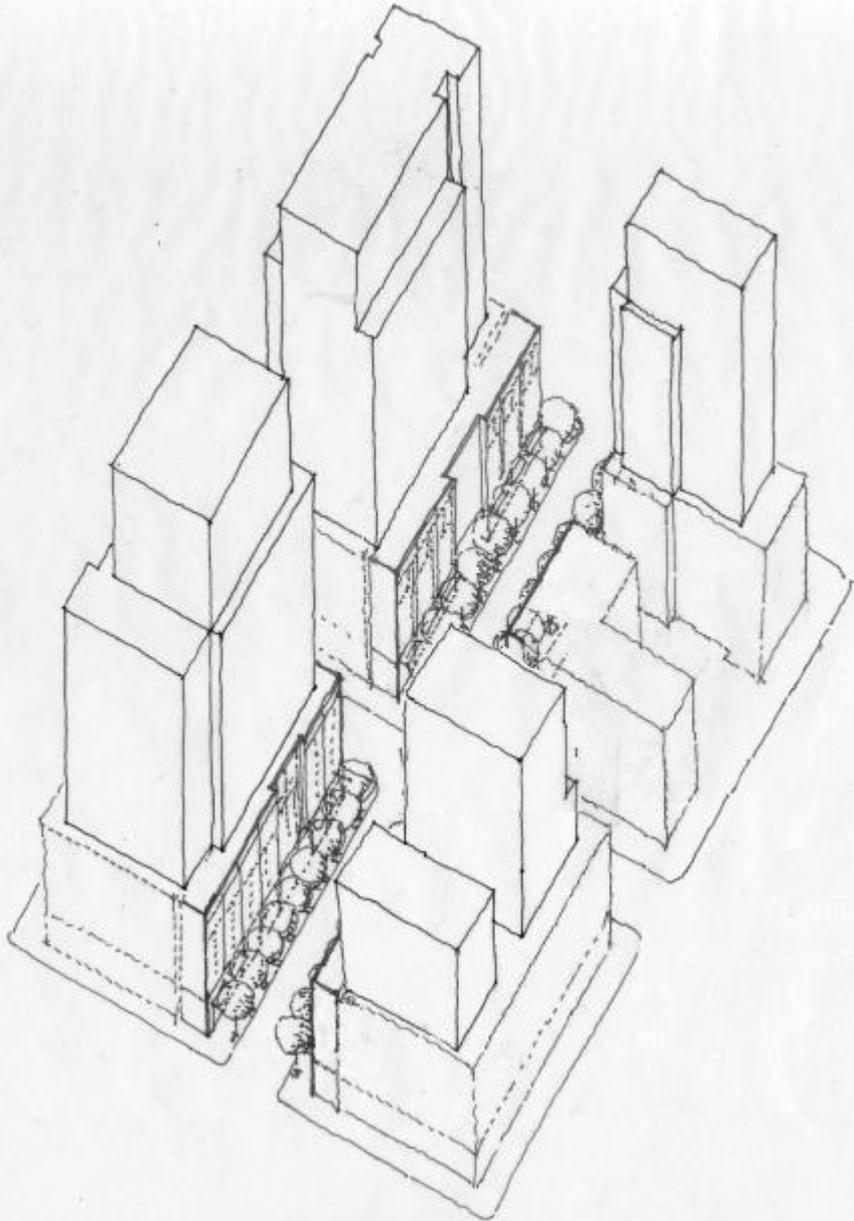
The Street Wall – Lab Facades:



The Street Wall – Cambridge Context



Engage in dialog with the existing buildings of Cambridge – buildings that contribute to Cambridge’s architectural character.



Towers:

- Landmarks in the district and on the skyline
- Heights – sensitivity to neighboring buildings
- Balance benefits of height – maximize open space with drawbacks – shade, loss of sky view
- Judicious location of tall buildings – relative to open spaces and existing buildings.

Towers:

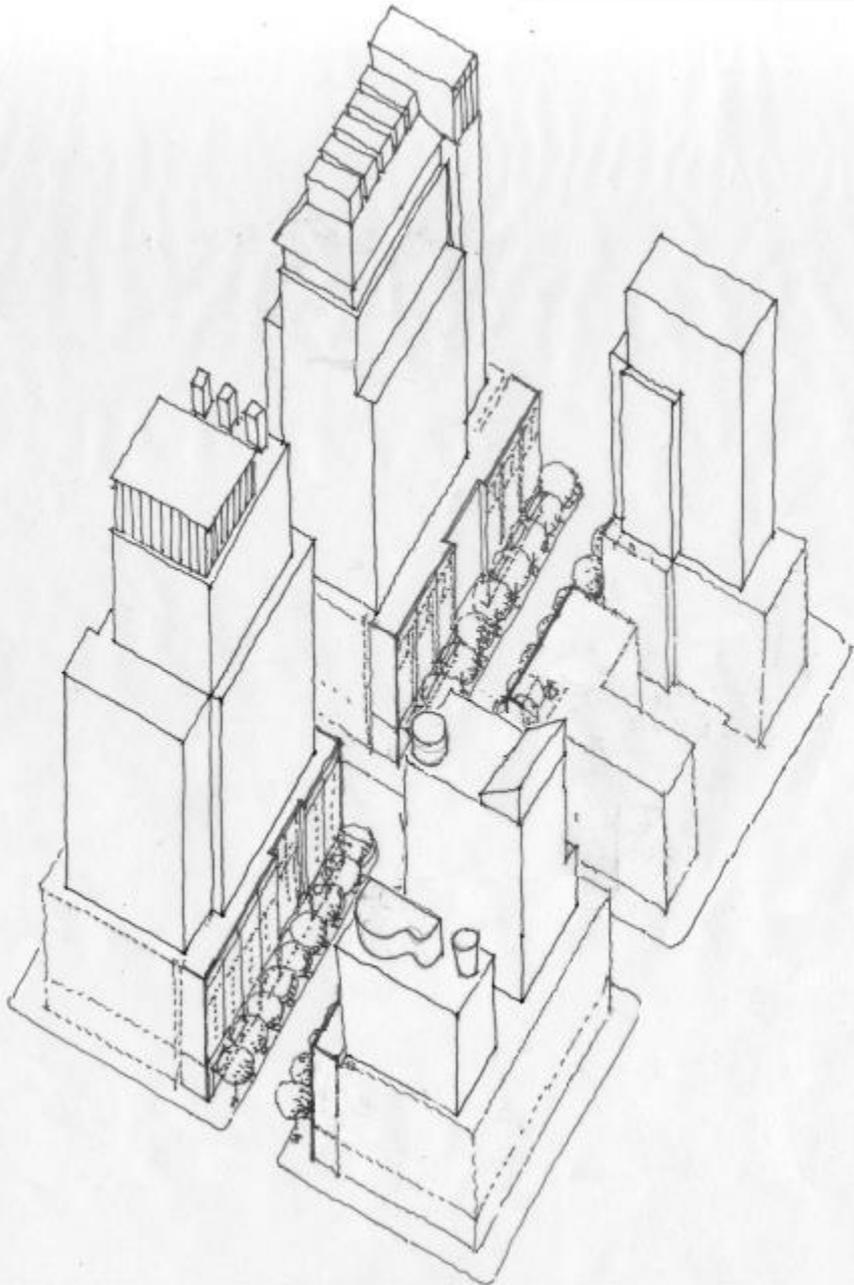


Slenderness

Stepbacks – add visual interest, minimize sense of bulk

Minimize shadows on open spaces

Tops:



Landmarks for a building, a district, and potentially a symbol of the entire city.

Mechanical penthouses as integral part of the design

Building Heights

What principles should guide the arrangement of building heights within the site?

What is the best balance between amount of open space and the heights of buildings?

Where should buildings be low? – relative to open spaces, relative to existing buildings

Where should tall buildings be located?

What is the desired image of building tops / skyline when viewed from a distance?

What skyline views are particularly important?





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Discussion:

- Large dominating open space vs. variety of smaller ones?
- 6th street walkway is an important existing connection. How should we respond to it?
- Which site edges and places within the site are priority locations for retail?

