

# The Concept Masterplan

The proposals are for a 'masterplan', a layout indicating locations and buildings but not their appearance in detail. Architects for the design of individual buildings will be appointed after planning approval has been given to the masterplan. The masterplan includes initial concept proposals for road layouts and parking arrangements as well as sitewide landscaping proposals.

This is not the final version of the masterplan, so please do contribute so that further design work can take place in consideration of your views.

A Qatari Diar spokesperson said:

"Qatari Diar has a long-term commitment to major investment at this site in order to create a sustainable new neighbourhood for London, delivering both private and public spaces where people will want to be. An enormous amount of work has gone into this Masterplan Concept, which will lead to a development of which London can be truly proud, and which will reflect the traditions, culture and diversity of its surroundings within this historic area of the capital.

Extensive public consultation has been central to developing a concept that we believe will be an authentic London landscape yet forward looking in character, capable of adapting over time and therefore truly sustainable. This is an invaluable partnership and we are very grateful to all those who have taken part in the consultation and will continue to do so in the months ahead"



The frontage along Chelsea Bridge Road forms part of a journey connecting Battersea Park with Hyde Park



This historic map shows the route of the River Westbourne which used to flow from the Serpentine and parts north, filling the canals and basins of Ranelagh Gardens, informs the idea of water being reflected in the proposal

## The Concept Masterplan

Described by Jeremy Dixon, Edward Jones, Michael Squire and Kim Wilkie of the masterplanning team. The letters in brackets refer to places on the sketch on the left.

### Concept

The aim is to provide a scheme for the Chelsea Barracks site that relates in a constructive and sympathetic manner to its location in the city. To establish this relationship, it helps to remember something of the history and nature of London. The city has had a distinctive growth pattern, largely influenced by the lack of invasion over the last thousand years, leading to an evolutionary structure broadly based around historic villages and the ownership pattern of the great estates. It is these great estates with their garden squares that have produced the most memorable of London's domestic environments. It is, therefore, curious that although the square enjoyed relatively uninterrupted development from the mid 17th century to the end of the 19th, very few squares have been created in new developments over the last 100 years.

### Layout

In a traditional city, the streets, squares and spaces, are bounded by urban blocks made up of a number of individual buildings. The proposed layout uses this technique to establish new streets and other spaces on the Barracks site. The geometry of the layout ensures that a continuous linkage with the surrounding streets is formed.

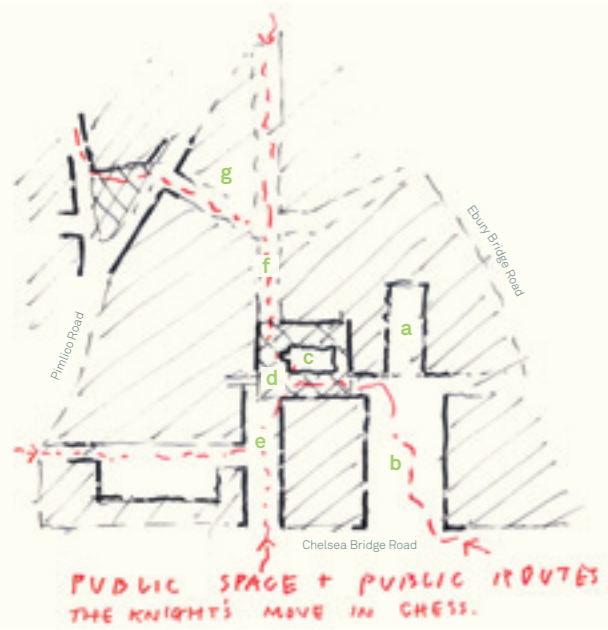
The concept starts with the manner in which the site occupies part of a larger 'urban block', a near-equilateral triangle of land formed by Pimlico Road, Ebury Bridge Road and Chelsea Bridge Road. These three frontages form boundaries of a contrasting character – the animated world of galleries, shops and restaurants on Pimlico Road, the more varied character of Ebury Bridge Road, and the parkland setting of Chelsea Hospital on Chelsea Bridge Road.

The Masterplan Concept envisages that the site is divided into a series of interconnected open areas that provide a range of spaces and uses. Consultation with surrounding residents has emphasised a demand for this variety. Not only will there be a mix of paved and green spaces, private and public gardens, and open and enclosed squares; there will also be a range of cultural, retail and other uses that knit the area into the rest of the neighbourhood, and provide a life to the heart of the new development. The urban squares are orientated to take maximum advantage of the afternoon sun and prevailing fresh wind that passes over the river and Ranelagh Gardens. The proportions of the open spaces to the height of buildings have been carefully balanced to reflect the pattern of some of London's most successful garden squares.

### Public spaces

Central to the proposed layout are two new garden squares which can perhaps be seen as the first of their type to be created for more than a century. They use the rectangular plan form typical of the Belgravia / Chelsea squares and provide two contrasting approaches. The larger green space is a long stepped rectangular square that makes use of the full depth of the site. It consists of two zones, the top end (a) being houses and the area adjacent to Chelsea Bridge Road (b) being apartments. The proportion of the space with houses is broadly similar to that of Wellington Square, off the King's Road, with a similar cul-de-sac layout ensuring privacy and a sense of exclusiveness.

The consultations with the local community, undertaken by Soundings, have revealed a preference for a variety of public spaces rather than a single large square within the site. The proposal therefore consists of a number of different squares, smaller courts and mews. Local support for the retention of the Garrison Chapel (c), located at the heart of the larger urban block, has suggested its use as the focus for a local 'village square' (d).



The masterplan laid over the Stanford's map of London, dated 1862, illustrates how the scheme has been designed to promote interesting connections to the surrounding streets and squares.

A further green space (e) is generated by the reinstatement of the historic axis of Ranelagh Grove (f). Its landscaping takes the form of a long, narrow 'productive' garden. Here a variety of buildings are grouped together to form a picturesque composition that includes apartments, town houses, smaller scale buildings surrounding the Garrison Square and the distant views of the spire of St Barnabas Church (g). This space becomes the main vehicular entrance for the site off Chelsea Bridge Road, a role that is naturally emphasised by a break in the avenue of existing trees. This is in contrast to the end of the larger garden square which is closed by a dense avenue of trees.

### Sustainability

Sustainability concerns, and the need to preserve valuable resources, means that spaces need to be used very carefully. The design of public spaces and gardens will be inspired by the stewardship of soil, water and air. In addition to offering play and recreation, they will need to capture rainwater, improve air quality, compost waste, respect wildlife and even grow food. Historically urban gardens have been very productive. The rich, well-watered, riverside soils of Chelsea were famous for their market gardens. Eighteenth-century maps of the Barracks site show the Westbourne tributary weaving its way to the Thames through a grid of orchards and vegetable plots.

The new development will show how to provide modern and elegant housing that sits comfortably in the traditional pattern of the city, while using its open space as the structure and logic behind the layout. The spaces have to be strong and productive, demonstrating a new kind of urban aesthetic that is both beautiful and responsible.



The development will include a sports centre

### Community facilities

As well as a series of new public streets, gardens and squares, the Concept Masterplan includes a sports and community centre, medical centre, small shops around the Garrison Square, a food convenience store and a boutique hotel. The proposals currently retain the former Garrison Chapel, subject to further public consultation and an appropriate and viable use being identified. The views of the local community on potential uses for the Chapel itself and its immediate surroundings are very welcome.

### Residential

The scheme includes a range of different house and apartment types, tenures and sizes and provides for a mix of different housing needs. The masterplan allows for between 500 and 600 homes in total including the affordable housing. Final numbers of homes will be known when detailed plans for each construction phase are submitted in the following years, however the maximum number approved by Westminster City Council will not be exceeded. As well as private houses and apartments for sale, 50% of homes will be for social rent, shared ownership and key worker sales. This includes housing designed for the elderly and large family apartments.

### Density, height and massing

Height and mass is being carefully considered to ensure that the masterplan is a good local fit. Houses contain basements to minimise overall heights, with habitable accommodation and garden spaces below ground level. Houses are lower towards the rear of the site, appropriate to the scale of St. Barnabas Street, Bloomfield Terrace and Ranelagh Grove, whilst apartments towards Ebury Bridge Road increase in height comparable to the existing buildings along this road. Building heights along Chelsea Bridge Road reach the height of the existing mature Plane trees that line this frontage. The upper two storeys of the apartment buildings will be set back to reduce their visual impact from the street and to create an interesting roofscape. The masterplan will set maximum and minimum heights for each building block within the site, to which future architects must adhere to.

### Transport, servicing and parking

The designs aims to minimise the impact of traffic both within the site and in neighbouring streets. Measures will be taken to avoid 'rat-running' through the site, and adequate resident parking will be provided within basement levels, with visitor parking at street level. Service vehicles for the houses, shops and community facilities will enter and exit at street level. New residents living within the site will not be allowed to park on surrounding streets, and existing residents will be unable to park within the Chelsea Barracks site. The open nature of the site, with its traditional streets and spaces with homes fronting onto them, will encourage residents and visitors to safely walk through the site to local destinations and public transport.

### Residential diversity

There are two principal typologies of residential accommodation on the site: terraced houses and apartment buildings. However, within this there are a number of subtle variations. The houses are located so that their rear gardens back onto the gardens of existing streets of houses and serve to 'mend' urban blocks. They also provide the necessary transition between existing areas and the taller apartment buildings. The terraces have a maximum of four storeys and the apartment buildings six storeys with a further two storeys set back behind the parapets.

All the buildings have "normal" relationships to streets and pavements, with "fronts" distinct from "backs" and road and pavement access to front doors. The apartment buildings follow similar rules to the terrace houses integrating the whole into the urban pattern.

### Other Uses

In addition to the residential accommodation, the layout incorporates a number of supportive uses including a hotel with some restaurant facilities, a Community sports centre, a medical centre, some small shops and a diversity of activities that will flourish in and around the converted Garrison Chapel, if it is retained."



The former Garrison Chapel

### Responsible and sustainable design

The masterplan has been designed to make best use of the sun path to provide daylight to external spaces and internal rooms. The southwesterly orientation of the public gardens will cool these spaces during the summer months. Rainwater collection will help irrigate the productive gardens and new tree planting will provide areas of shade. When the buildings are designed in detail they will be required to meet stringent environmental performance targets. Walking and cycling will be encouraged, with extensive cycle parking facilities provided for residents.

### Management and maintenance

Most of the streets, squares and gardens will be open to the public and created with the highest quality materials and planting. The garden squares are likely to be locked at night for safety, like many other squares in the neighbourhood. They will be run and managed by Qatari Diar. The productive Promenade Garden will be maintained and harvested by estate gardeners, whilst site residents will be encouraged to run the Community Gardens.

### Design strategy

A variety of different architectural approaches will add interest for visitors and residents and is appropriate considering the wide variety of building styles found locally. It is important however, that this new piece of city is not an 'architectural zoo' where buildings of wildly different styles do not result in a coherent and elegant character for the wider Chelsea Barracks neighbourhood. The masterplanners are beginning to work on a 'Design Code,' which will set the rules for future architects, allowing design freedom within agreed parameters.

### The planning application

A planning application for the masterplan is expected to be submitted in the summer. The new neighbourhood will be built in different phases, so detailed design planning applications for each construction phase will follow in the coming years.

### Consultation and community liaison

Consultation will continue now and during the detailed design stages. Westminster City Council will also undertake consultation on the planning application with local residents once it is submitted. When work begins on site, Qatari Diar will continue to liaise with members of the community to ensure the construction works minimises impact to neighbouring properties and roads.