BOON

32-42 Victoria Street Cambridge Development

Design Intent **15 July 2025**

Prepared by BOON Ltd



BOON

Design Intent for 32-42 Victoria Street, Cambridge

We have been engaged by the applicant. Grovic Property Ltd, to develop a contemporary mixed-use development to blend in with the future and anticipated growth within the central Cambridge business district, whilst still maintaining the aesthetic appeal of the area.

Boon Limited, as established in 1974, is a multidisciplinary team working across architecture, landscape and urban design, event, brand, and experience. The team is based in New Plymouth yet has extensive experience in various public, commercial, and civic projects throughout New Zealand with multi-generational experience to draw from. BOON is part of the nationwide Team Architects network – a creative collective of ten studios which shares best practice and knowledge, collegiate support, marketing, resources, and expertise giving us a local agility with New Zealand wide scale.

"We know our role as designers is to provide spaces that improve the social, cultural, environmental, and economic outcomes for our communities. Enhancing the local is part of who we are." BOON

1. Contextual Analysis

- Site Location: The site is located on Victoria Street near the intersection with Duke Street, a significant thoroughfare in Cambridge; a town experiencing surging growth and development.
- Neighbouring Structures / Site Context: Known for its blend of historical and contemporary architecture, the neighbouring retail shops, cafes, and residential buildings reflect this. Immediately adjacent to the proposed development is the Historic Cambridge Post Office (1908), with flamboyant Edwardian architectural elements of pediments, castellations, plaster, bold colours, and decorative windows.

  Neighbouring the development to the North on the Duke Street intersection is a single storey building with a high plastered parapet with flared cornices and heavy canopies. Alongside is the Wallace Building, a 2-storey classical Art Deco plastered building demonstrating decorative plaster elements.

  The other side of the new development (Commerce Street) has a collection of single-storey retail shops of painted insitu concrete and mixed materials of more modern buildings of the 20th century.
- Regulatory Rules: The district plan & Central Cambridge Character Guidelines provide overlays to protect the existing character of the town's urban scape. Certain requirements shape our design focus to incorporate elements of human scale, street canopies, glazing guidelines, materials, mass, and scale. The District Plans key proposal change is to increase the height restriction from 14m (3-stories) to 18m (5 stories), to cater for the town's growth and allows for intensification of development as we are proposing.

2. Design

- Building Form: The proposal consists of a four-storey mixed use development with a sub-floor car park. The size of the development aligns with the provisions of the District Plan while maintaining economic feasibility and catering for the demand Cambridge requires in retail, café, office space, and carparking.

  A key design intent therefore is for the design of a significantly larger building to fit within its neighbouring context & maintain visual cohesion. This is done through dividing the built form into the multiple parts – the first being the ground & first floor (plinth), where the scale of the façade aligns with the Wallace building & surrounding predominantly 1 & 2-storey Cambridge Town Centre.

  The proportion & scale at ground level is focused on the human element, with protective canopies, large-glazed windows (shopfronts & cafes), and a sheltered central foyer/atrium that invites pedestrians' interaction into the complex. The first floor then maintains a consistent language with smaller rectangular glazing (as per district plan regulations), with the windows set around decorative brick features to provide relief & texture.

This ground & first floor (plinth) level is then divided into six parts along the street elevations – each part unique in material, texture/relief, and tones. The materials reflect the Victoria Street & Cambridge context of brick, plaster, timber with relief & depth in the façade to emulate the relief in the historic facades. This design breaks the street façade down into smaller components which, given the context, creates a design that is sympathetic to local architecture while providing a modern interpretation.

The Second floor (level 3) is a singular mass with dark vertical glazing, set back from the lower to levels to reduce visual impact from the street. The setback is skewed slightly, being closer to the street near the Wallace Building & further away near Commerce Street. This is a design response to the change in scale from the larger Wallace building to the smaller scale shops; and is seen when someone walks down Victoria Street as the height of the development diminishes, and only the first-floor parapet is visible. This was tested through computer modelling on deemed effective.

The design intent of level 3 is to clearly define the development as one building and not a handful of smaller buildings assembled as one, yet do so in a manner that is recessive, reducing the large mass & scale. This is assisted through the darker tones of the cladding / glazing receding over the lighter lower street frontage.

The top floor (level 4) is set back in plan from level 3 and in contrast with the lower levels, utilizes a more slender, lighter structure that reduces the visual weight and bulk. This light aesthetic is characterized by overhanging eaves/canopies, balustrades, & warmth in timber soffits. This level additionally provides opportunity to planting on exterior terraces to further soften the building frontage

The car park level being sub-floor is entirely hidden from the road and provides generous additional parking while being accessed from the rear service lane & Commerce Street, which reduces traffic impact on Victoria Street.

3. Summary

This design sees a vision for Victoria street to establish a mixed-used development that sets a precedent in Cambridge, fostering a large format, vibrant, modern facility & community space within the township center. It seeks to do so with focus on the historic context, materials & scale of the town. Balancing the need for greater size & intensity of development, with the need to respect the predominantly low-rise built form. Being in a key pedestrian locale, there is a duty to promote the public interface along the street, creating inviting ground floor spaces, incorporating outdoor seating and landscaped areas, fostering community interaction. This development offers a significant opportunity to further enhance the town of Cambridge.