

Building heights plan

4 Form

Building heights

The 1950's / 1960's development in Notting Hill Gate breaks away from the pattern and scale of the historic urban fabric which can be seen across much of the Borough. Building heights within the district centre are therefore noticeably more variable than the surroundings.

The predominant building height in Pembridge Conservation Area to the north east is 4-5 storeys. Hillgate Village to the south west is also relatively consistent in height at mainly 2 storeys. There is some variety in height around Kensington Mall and Kensington Park Road due to the presence of mansion blocks and larger public buildings.

Post war development brings some increase in height along the primary route, with Ivy Lodge and the Czech Embassy at 6-8 storeys and a number of 4-5 storey buildings. Particularly noticeable are Newcombe House at 12 storeys (plus plant) and Campden Hill Tower at 18 storeys. These both constitute district landmarks and are rare examples of tall buildings in the Borough. Kensington Temple and the Coronet cinema are local landmarks with distinguishing roofscapes - a spire and cupola respectively.



Pembridge Square



Hillgate Place, Hillgate Village



Inverness Gardens



The Czech Embassy, Notting Hill Gate



Campden Hill Towers looking from Holland Park Avenue



Newcombe House, Notting Hill Gate

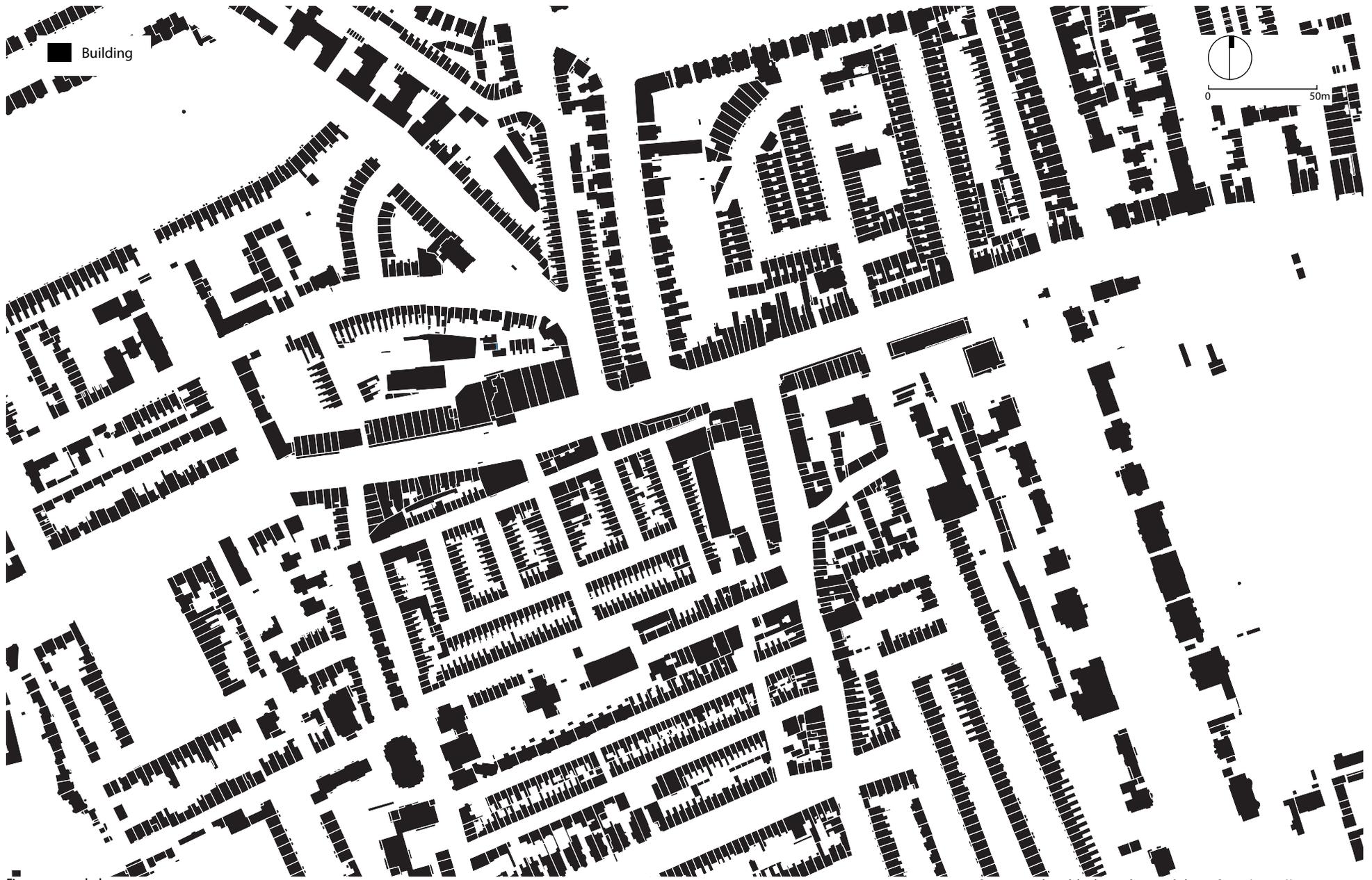


Figure-ground plan

Urban grain

The fine urban grain typical across much of the Borough's historic urban fabric is evident from the figure-ground plan. Some of the modern development in the district centre maintains this fine grain, with the exception of the units around United House, Campden Hill Towers, and also Newcombe House.

However, in the case of Astley House, David Game House and Ivy Lodge, when viewed from the street, this fine grain is lost as it is masked by bulky buildings with little definition of the vertical rhythm.

Narrow frontages help to maintain the diversity of form and uses along the streets.

For comparison:

- Ground floor frontages of United House range from approximately 6.5-8.5m. There are a number of instances where 2 units have been amalgamated into 1.
- Ground floor frontages of David Game House are approximately 6m.
- The shops along the northern side of Notting Hill Gate east of Pembridge Gardens have units between 4-6.5m wide.

There is generally strong continuity of building lines, with buildings set in perimeter blocks or back to back, providing continuous active frontages along the streets. The narrow profile of David Game House presents an exception to this rule as it is single aspect and turns its back on Uxbridge Street.

There is a clear uniformity to many of the blocks south of Notting Hill Gate and, for the most part, the north east segment of the plan. The curving streets of the Ladbroke Estate in the north west introduces a less orthogonal formation.

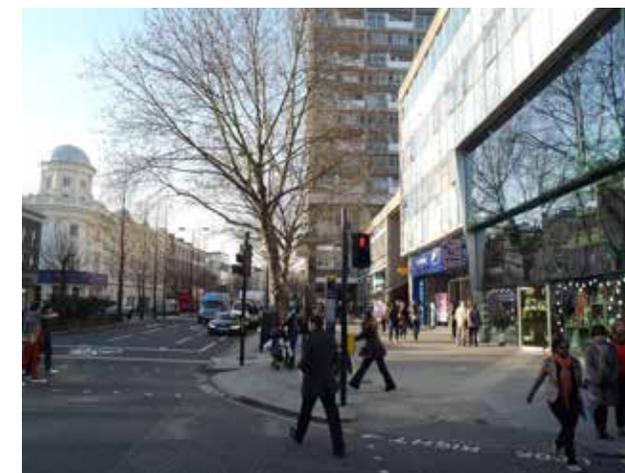
In general, the retail and commercial units sit tight up to the plot boundaries whereas many of the surrounding residential terraced buildings sit within a longer plot with gardens to the rear which vary in size. Kensington Palace Gardens is an anomaly with individual properties sitting in the centre of large plots.



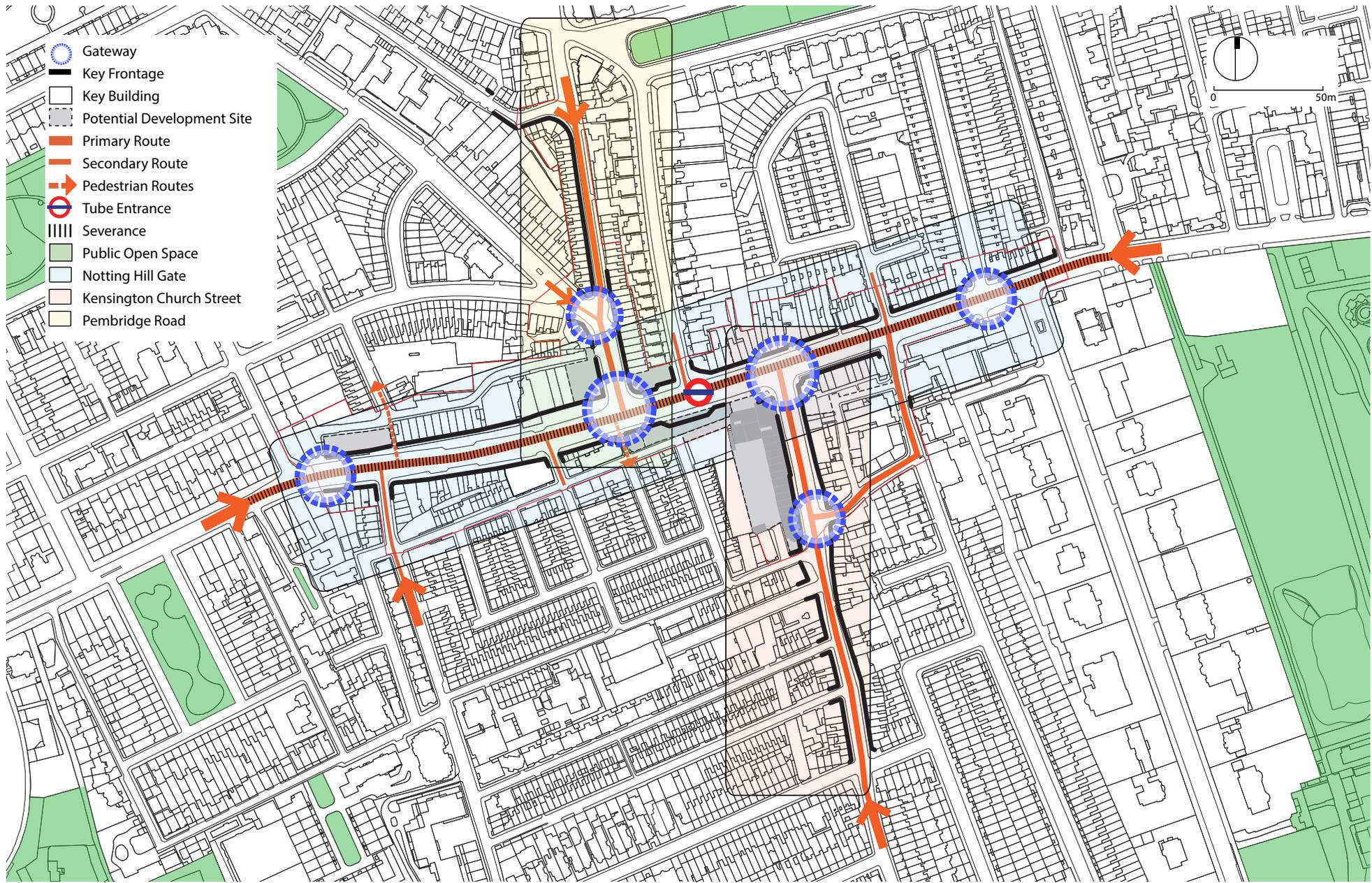
Fine urban grain generally evident in the distinction of individual shop units



Fine grain masked by large modern block with little vertical definition



Course grain providing larger shop units, use of upper floor as additional retail space or mezzanine and double height frontage



Urban structure plan

The urban structure

The district centre is structured around the main movement corridors. Notting Hill Gate is the primary route forming a key east-west axis and a focus of activity but also severing the centre in two.

Pembridge Road and Kensington Church Street are key secondary routes which approach the centre from the north and the south respectively, creating gateway points at their intersection with Notting Hill Gate. A number of the potential development sites correlate with these gateway locations, providing an opportunity for the form of new buildings to reflect this.

A concentration of independent shops aimed at visitors has developed along Pembridge Road due to its strategic position as the main pedestrian desire line from Notting Hill Gate underground station to Portobello Market. As it also functions as a busy bus route, the narrow street struggles to accommodate the competing demands of different modes and suffers from pavement overcrowding during the weekend peak.

Kensington Church Street has a different character altogether, retaining a number of specialist galleries and antiques shops.

A number of secondary gateway points can be identified at the periphery of the district centre on the north, south, east and west approaches. These represent key transition points between the district centre and its hinterland.

The form of future development should take account of the wider urban structure in order to improve the legibility of the townscape.



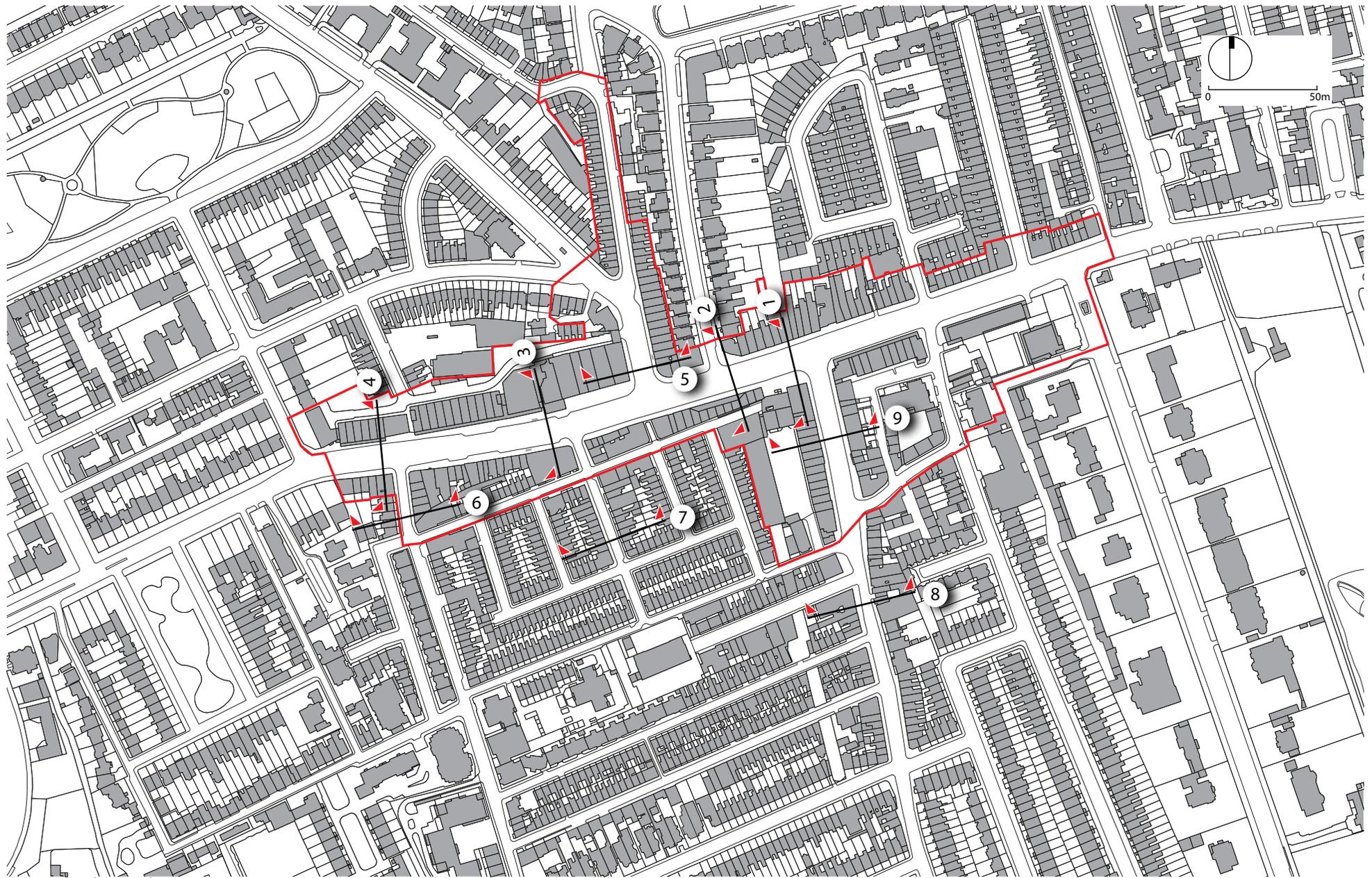
Notting Hill Gate looking east



Kensington Park Road at the junction with Pembridge Road



Kensington Church Street

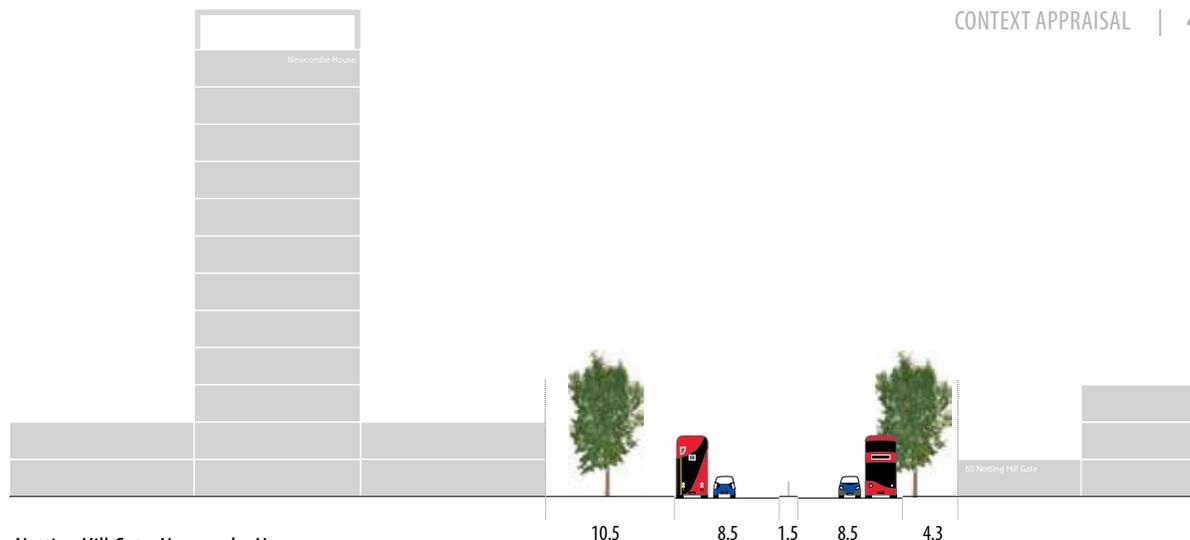


Street sections location plan

Street sections

Primary route

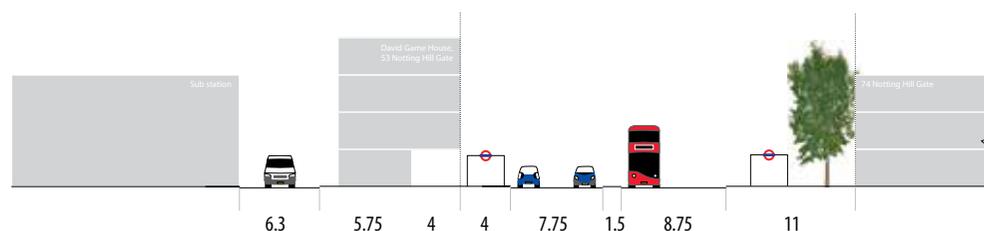
- Height to width ratio of 1:5.4
- Street width (between building lines) of 33m
- 3 lanes of traffic in each direction, separated by a central median with guardrailing



1 **Notting Hill Gate, Newcombe House**

Primary route

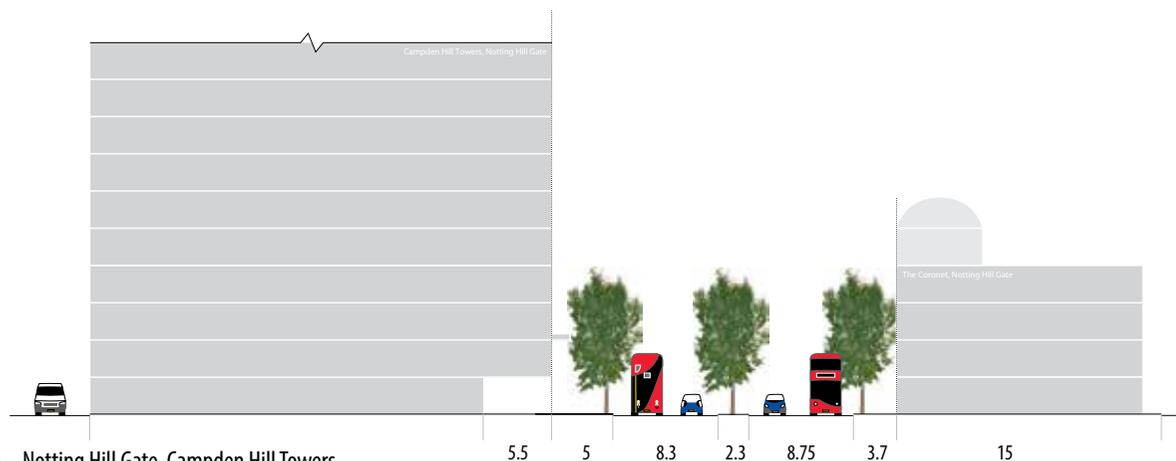
- Height to width ratio of 1:2.7
- Street width (between building lines) of 33m
- 3 lanes of traffic in each direction, separated by a central median
- Tube entrances located on the footway on both sides of the street
- Ground floors set back on the southern side to provide additional footway space adjacent to the tube entrance



2 **Notting Hill Gate, David Game House**

Primary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:1.5
- Street width (between building lines) of 28m
- 2 lanes of traffic in each direction, separated by a central median
- Tree planting on footways and central median
- Building overhang above wide footway on northern side of the street

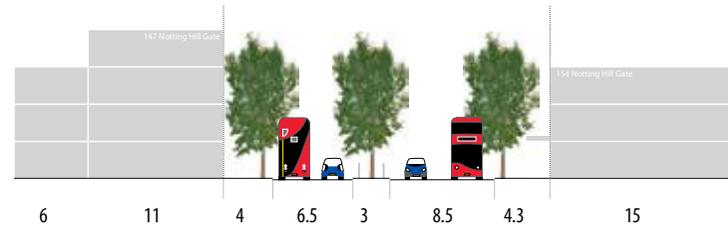


3 **Notting Hill Gate, Campden Hill Towers**

Primary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:2.1
- Street width (between building lines) of 26m
- 2 lanes of traffic in each direction
- Street trees
- Building canopy at ground floor level on the northern side of the street

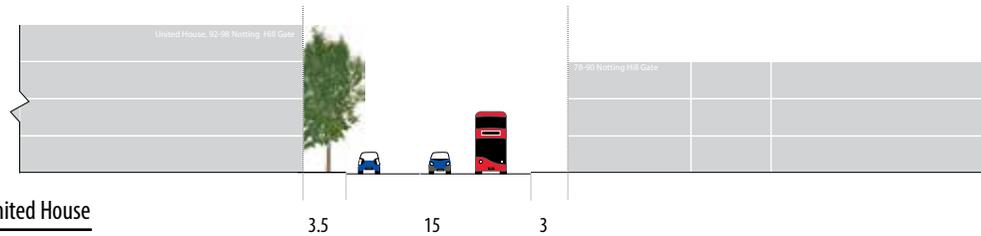
4  Notting Hill Gate, 154



Secondary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:1.7
- Street width (between building lines) of 22m
- 2 lanes of traffic southbound to allow for turning movements onto Notting Hill Gate
- 1 lane northbound
- Bus stops on both sides, encroaching on nearside lanes

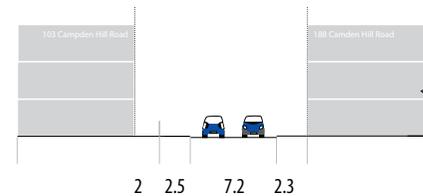
5  Pembridge Road, United House



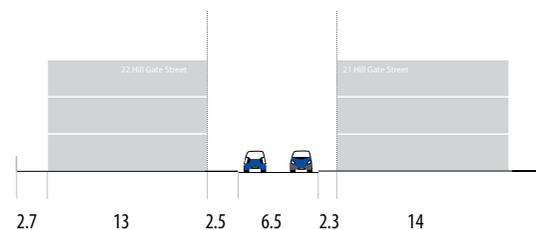
Tertiary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:1.5
- Street width (between building lines) of 14m
- 1 lane in each direction, flanked by narrow footways

6  Campden Hill Road, 103



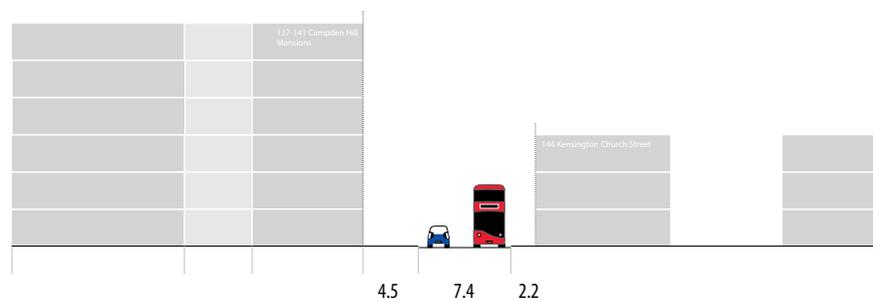
7 Hill Gate Street, 22



Tertiary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:1.2
- Street width (between building lines) of 11m
- 1 lane of traffic in each direction, flanked by narrow footways

8 Kensington Church Street, 225

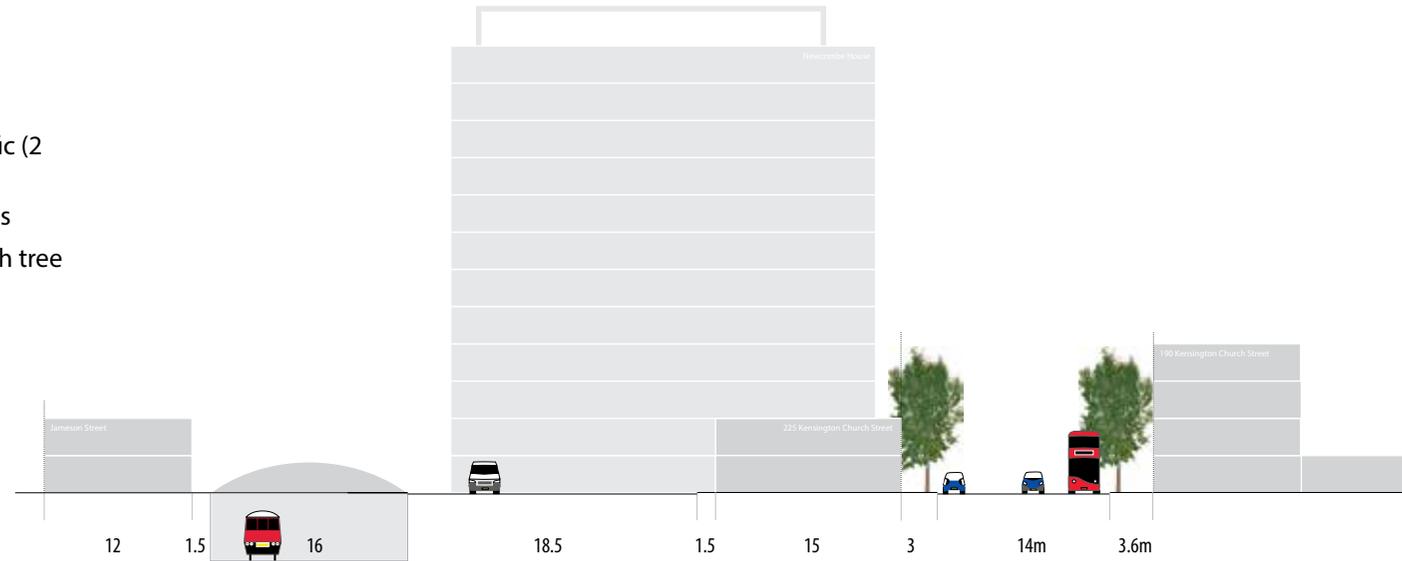


Secondary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:0.7
- Street width (between building lines) of 14m
- 1 lane of traffic in each direction
- Wider footway with tree planting on the western side of the street

Secondary route

- Height to width ratio of 1:1.7
- Street width (between building lines) of 21 m
- 1 way street with 4 lanes of northbound traffic (2 left turn, 2 right turn)
- Bus stops on both sides within kerb side lanes
- Relatively narrow footways on both sides with tree planting



9 Kensington Church Street, 225

Storey heights vary. For the purpose of this assessment, a consistent storey height has been assumed at 3m.

Key principles

Appraisal of the three-dimensional form around Notting Hill Gate identifies the following issues that any policy, guidance or scheme must address:

- **How to ensure that any future tall building replacing Newcombe House is of exceptional design, of elegant proportions, and where seen from surrounding conservation areas makes a positive contribution to the skyline**
- **Whether there is a way to provide more functional floor plans to those buildings which have exceptionally narrow depth**
- **Whether it is appropriate and if so how to emphasise the continuing important 'gateway' function that Notting Hill Gate fulfils, both in terms of journeys into and out of central London, and as a key node within the Borough itself**
- **To ensure that the resulting new buildings provide appropriate levels of street enclosure, recognising that in many situations at present, given the width of the roads, the adjacent buildings could be higher.**



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

