

great marlborough street manchester

category Higher Education
Residential
client Student Castle
value £28.5m
date September 2012
awards + MSA Design Award 2013

Great Marlborough Street is a 37 storey tower for 540 postgraduate, mature and international students adjacent to the Higher Education Precinct in the city of Manchester.

The City's railway network is largely elevated on viaducts of heroic scale which encircle much of the city centre as though a city wall. Although not a considered strategy, tall buildings punctuate the viaducts at station intersections. The Great Marlborough Street tower presents a significant urban landmark to signpost Oxford Road Station which remains the only one of the four Manchester railway stations not 'landmarked' as such. From key gateway vistas, Great Marlborough Street supplements the dispersed array of towers whilst being responsive to the more immediate context via its slender profile and architectural treatment.

At street level, a sculptural

'podium' element resolves the acute corner between New Wakefield Street and the adjoining Great Marlborough Street, approximating the cornice height of the surrounding buildings and providing continuity to the street wall. The double height glazing to the ground floor amenity area is set back to provide a generous pavement, which is partially sheltered by the podium's soffit above.

Above the podium sit a cluster of four 'towers', staggered in height, which relate to the city-wide context. The southeast tower relates to the height of some of the nearby recent developments including the 'Green Building' on Great Marlborough Street (Terry Farrell) and a hotel development (Stephenson Bell) currently on site on the opposite side of the urban block. The southwest tower relates to the height of the Waterhouse's Refuge Building's

tower on Oxford Road. Above this, the northeast and northwest towers seek to have a presence at a wider city-scale, presenting a particularly slender profile as viewed from the city centre.

"Almost unheralded and unnoticed the skyline of Manchester has just got better... Student Castle has a gentle and elegant presence."

Johnathan Schofield,
Manchester Confidential,
September 2012

