



View of the approach from the southeast corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields



Section (east-facing) along the main axis – from Lincoln's Inn Fields through to Portugal Street

Elevations – a point of view
On the north and west of Lincoln's Inn Fields the architecture is largely experienced as a continuous gently manipulated surface; a terrace of individual properties that nevertheless hold to the rules and characteristics of the architecture of terraces. On the southern range of the space, we have studied the elevational relationship of No35 with its three neighbours – however, we quickly became conscious that such a reading of the building in context is very much an architectural construct: these four buildings are never experienced as a collective elevation. Rather, they are experienced in passage – as one walks east or west across the Lincoln's Inn Fields or Portugal Street elevations. This experience is dynamic – the relationship of No35 to its neighbours unfolds and adjusts with every footstep. One might turn to look at the elevation from directly across the street, yet the prevailing perception of No35 will be from an oblique viewpoint (or approach) where the modelling of the elevation interacts with the massing and scale of the neighbouring buildings. This is a fundamentally different condition to the other sides of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and it is a characteristic that the Marshall Building also develops. We have sought to investigate our proposal through views of all approaches – so that the building

interaction with its neighbours is carefully considered so that it can contribute positively to both Portugal Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Two Fronts
It is easy to fall into a reading of the site as having a front (to LIF) and a rear (to Portugal St) – we have resisted this and, in our design process have been clear to talk about the building having two front elevations. Each of these two aspects demands a specific response.

To Lincoln's Inn Fields the project presents as a more formal character – a composition of elements that modulate and mediate between the neighbouring buildings whilst establishing a distinct architectural character and identity.

To Portugal Street, where we have retained the existing structure, we open up a lateral stretch of the ground floor to foster a stronger visual connection between the common areas of the ground floor and the street (at a key node on Portugal Street identified within the public realm



View of the approach from the east along Portugal Street



View of lecture theatre at basement level – looking out to the sunken 'rain garden' in the northwest corner of the forecourt

strategy). A row of circular columns (wrapping the existing columns) offer a series of 'pockets' or recesses with full-height glazing between the interior and exterior. These recesses offer small social spaces – 'eddies' within along the flow of the street.

From Street to Street – movement and visual permeability
Our proposal connects Lincoln's Inn Fields and Portugal Street. This connection is both visual and circulatory. Our ground floor plan has been laid out to minimise interruption to views through the entire depth of the plan from north to south sides. To this end, the service accommodation (escape stairs, lifts etc) are all gathered into a linear block that runs along the west party-wall boundary to the RCS building. This creates a clear circulation route between the Portugal Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields entrances – a route within which the café is located (closer to Portugal Street where it can contribute to a more vibrant street character that connects with the LSE's other nearby buildings).

When the Agora is not in use, the foyers can extend round all four sides – when in use, its

eastern and southern sides can be closed to general use so as to create dedicated Agora foyers. In the latter instance, the general circulation route around from LIF through to Portugal Street is maintained.

Episodes
Our proposal offers a variety of spatial experiences defined through volume, proportion, scale, light and materiality. Visitors and users of the building can choose between more open/communal spaces or more sequestered/intimate spaces – thereby providing for the preferences of individuals.

We envisage that the experience of moving through the building would be episodic – offering distinct atmospheres and conditions so that the day-to-day experience of the building is not limited to one pervasive architectural or material character.



Plan identifying some key buildings – a collection of 'characters'

Characters and Collections
Whilst identifiable as a singular specific place, Lincoln's Inn Fields and the area to its south and west (around which the LSE is centred) can be understood as being defined by a range of distinct elements and conditions. We considered the buildings that surround, define and address Lincoln's Inn Fields – early in our design process we began to discuss them as a collection of individual pieces that have been gathered together to constitute streets, terraces and sub-groups within the wider collection.

Within this wider collection we can identify particularly distinct buildings - these characters may stand out for various reasons; aesthetic, programmatic, historic etc. Sub-consciously or otherwise each visitor to the neighbourhood will notice particular buildings – some are prominent because of particular significance and might be common to any such list: Soane's House; 63 LIF (Royal College of Radiologists); The Great Hall & Library; The Marshall Building; Saw Swee Hook. We think of these buildings as characters that add richness and variety to the stock of buildings that constitute the wider collection. Through our proposals at No35 we want to add another character to this context – adding to the richness of the urban fabric whilst relating to its context.

