First look: Will Alsop's Blackfriars hotel

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Proposals for a £250m luxury hotel development next to Blackfriars Station on the banks of the River Thames have been submitted for planning.

Designed by Alsop Architects for developers Heatherfield (managed by Blackfriars Investments), the 28,000m² scheme involves the re-development of the existing No. 2 Puddledock office building and the Mermaid Conference and Event centre.

Following on from Alsop Architects and Blackfriars Investments’ collaboration on the Palestra office development, which is now fully let to Transport for London, the scheme will create a landmark stand-alone building that is intended to rejuvenate one of the few remaining major development sites in the City of London.

The new five-storey building comprises four floors of hotel accommodation above ground, reception areas on the first floor/ground floor, a conference centre with a double-height ballroom for up to 400 people on level -1, and gym and spa facilities on level -2. In addition, the scheme includes bars and restaurants and an elegant rooftop terrace overlooking the Thames.

Alsop Architects has claims the design is ‘a unique sculptural building’ with its triangulated cladding system and diamond-shaped windows which will allow hotel guests to enjoy views of the Thames. Responding to St. Paul's height restrictions, the building ‘steps up gently’ from south to north in contrast to the existing buildings which have marked changes in height.

An integral part of Alsop’s design is the use of translucent stone to add texture and give identity to the building elevations. Maximising the views towards the South Bank and the Thames, the south elevation is fully glazed. The other elevations feature a faceted facade system where a high percentage of elements are insulated in order to improve the thermal performance of the building.