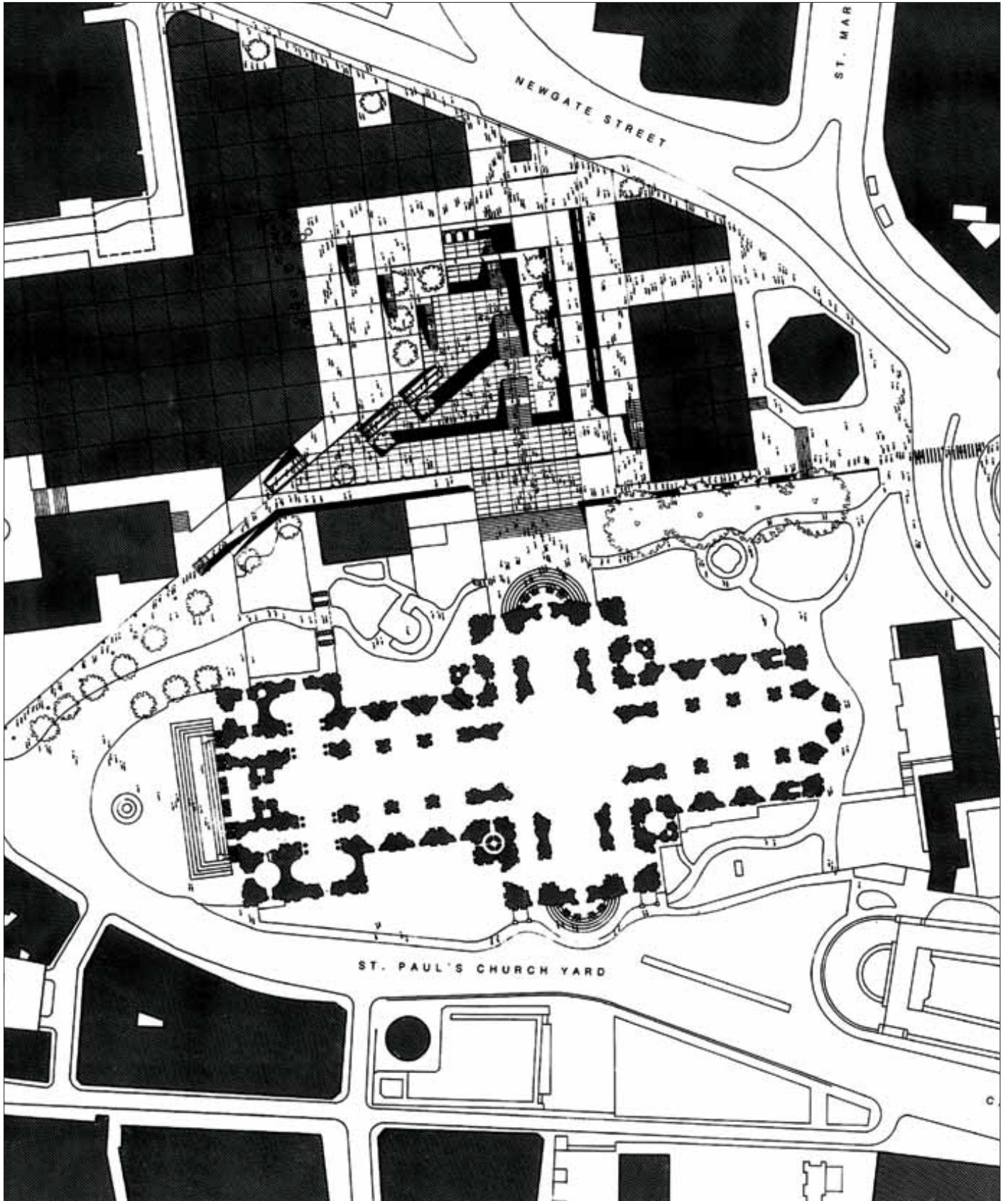


Paternoster Square



Place/Date
London, England 1987

Client
Paternoster Consortium Ltd

Area
141,000m²

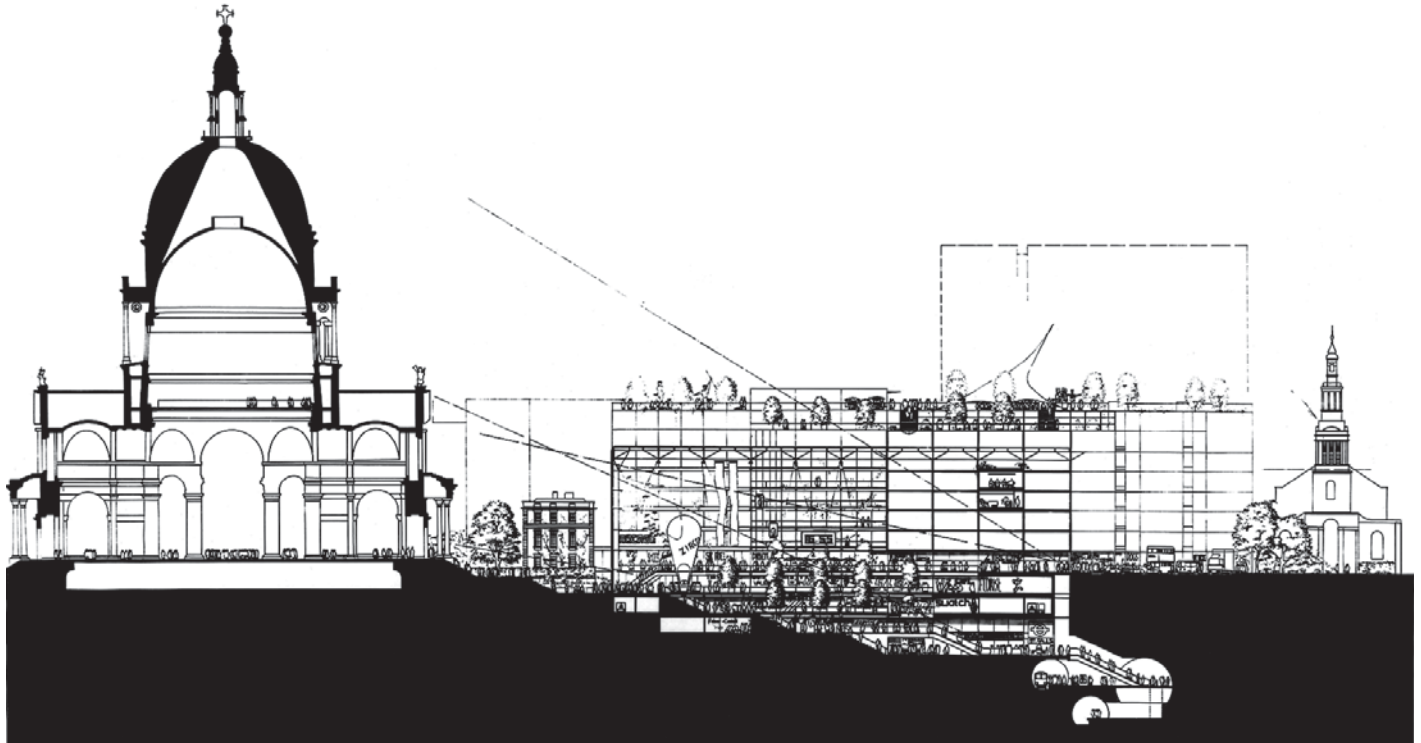
Architect
Richard Rogers Partnership

Structural Engineer
Ove Arup & Partners

Services Engineer
Ove Arup & Partners

Quantity Surveyor
Davis Langdon & Everest

Model Maker
R W Models



RRP was one of a number of leading practices (including Foster, Stirling and Isozaki) invited to submit proposals for the total redevelopment of this area of 1960s offices adjacent to St Paul's Cathedral. The aim was to replace the existing blocks with accommodation more suitable for modern financial operations. At the same time, it was recognised that public spaces providing a worthy setting for Wren's cathedral were necessary.

The ground plan of the RRP scheme resembled, albeit in a more regular, grid-like form, that of the historic area which had been flattened by Second World War bombs. RRP's proposal recognised that buildings isolated in space would not work – instead the project was driven by the concept of a solid morphology of buildings cut through by public routes. The scheme devoted all ground-floor space to public uses, including extensive cloisters, with offices above. Roof gardens were to provide dramatic City views, while the excavation of a glazed lower level piazza adjacent to the north transept of St Paul's maximised public space and provided a striking entrance to the underground station – passengers alighting would have enjoyed a memorable

perspective looking up to Wren's great dome. This aspect of the scheme has influenced the design of many subsequent underground stations.

Rather than a megastructure, RRP proposed a design framework within which individual buildings could assume their own identity. These proposals related only to the central part of the site owned by the clients but were designed to be extended to the entire site, once ownership problems were resolved.

What was needed was a scheme with real integrity – not a dogmatic piece of modernism or an eclectic pastiche. Our proposal focused on creating attractive pedestrian routes and compact, highly charged public spaces.

Although initially identified as the front runner, RRP's scheme was caught up in public controversy, further fuelled by the intervention of the Prince of Wales. As a compromise, RRP was invited to collaborate with Arup Associates but this proposal was also dropped. In the event, a replacement scheme for the 1960s buildings was only completed in 2003 – the result is confused and disappointing.

