



1.0 Design Statement

The expectation and desire for urban space has changed greatly since the original square outside the Town Hall was devised. The new space will be more than just a setting for a civic building; it will be an exciting new **platform for urban activity** providing a stage for a variety of events that extend the enjoyment and full participation of the community from morning through to the night. The design will provide a distinct identity for the place and extend the culture of finely detailed open spaces within London.

The principle design component of the square is a level and freely accessible plaza in front of the newly restored Town Hall. The plaza is defined by the staircase to the southern and western edges. A solid element acting as **a bed rock** supporting the Town Hall and surrounding development. The northern boundary is open to the pavement along King Street and provides a clear welcome to the passerby. Retail and cultural opportunities will activate the edges of the space bringing people into the area. A new link to the Thames will encourage a steady cross flow of movement and the orientation will allow sunlight to bath the northern edge creating an engaging addition to the streetscene.

The design of the plaza draws inspiration from the water course that runs beneath the Town Hall to the Thames. Consultation with local school children confirms a local awareness of this feature but the true location is hidden and secret. The plaza becomes **a memory of water** expressed as a series of shimmering silver quartzite ripples that cross the space. This impression is further animated by a body of water jets strategically located near the pavement to screen the noise of the street. They attract playful activity yet are capable of being silenced to allow greater flexibility and use of the space. At night pinpoints of light sparkle across the ripples reminiscent of moonlight reflected off a still pool.

The distinctive identity of the space is further enhanced by the inclusion of text within the paving. Drawing on the countries rich legacy of poetry phrases that describe the act of being on or near water will be incorporated into the ripples further capturing the essence of the space.

To the west of the square the bands of quartzite ripples twist and turn as they encounter a series of intrusions; softly shaped layers of seasoned oak reminiscent in their form of river washed stones. These playful shapes act as containers for trees and planting as well as providing informal seating opportunities. In turn they serve to bring a welcome **drift of nature** into the square. They originate in void between Nigel Playfair Avenue and the Town Hall and act as a green counterpoint to the proposed streetscape running along the western side of the development. The proximity of Riverside Gardens guarantees a community of families in the development and these oak forms serve to offer informal play opportunities within this intimate environment.

Apart from being lively and inviting the design of the new square is also **highly adaptable and multifunctional**. The water jets that guide the visitor into the space can be controlled to allow the space to grow permitting large groups to gather and view staged events on the Town Hall steps. The open nature of the square also allows for temporary markets to take place with the paving containing discrete power and water supplies. The new trees filter sunlight across the building to the east encouraging the use of outside café tables, a prime people watching venue.