VERSE | BtR

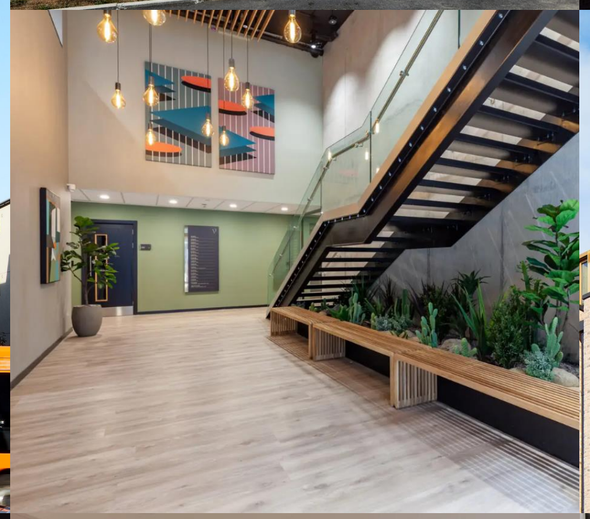
Verse represents a revolutionary approach to modern living, comprising 152 built-to-rent apartments, including 48 studios, 66 one-bedroom apartments and 38 two-bedroom apartments distributed through 17 floors (52m), offering residents over 4,100 sq. ft of dedicated amenity space and over 1,400 sq. ft of dedicated communal workspace. Residents have access to a holistic approach to urban living that goes beyond just providing housing.

In addition, over 1800 sq. ft of commercial space has been included at ground floor level providing an active frontage to Charles Street. **Verse** improves accessibility through the widening of Wesley Lane, an area previously and largely unused.

Verse offers exercise space, a large communal lounge including games areas, a common-use dining room, a quiet reading room, and a sizeable roof terrace featuring a quiet corner and social area to support wellbeing. The spacious and appealing living spaces make it an attractive option for potential residents. The provisions encourage opportunities for residents to connect and provide an overall sense of community, helping to counteract loneliness and isolation, which are increasingly associated with inner city living. In addition, provision of a cycling store for 124 bike spaces has been included for residents with appropriate bike maintenance facilities encouraging the use of sustainable methods of transport within the city.

Our commitment to early collaboration with the project team proved to be pivotal in achieving key milestones within the stipulated timeframes. Notably, the project team submitted the planning application in September 2019, and gained approval by January 2020. Construction began in September 2021, and just 24 months later, we were marking the project's successful completion.

Verse presents a distinctive identity and aesthetic - whilst responding to the materiality of the area without imitating the existing buildings. We introduced deep brick reveals to the elevation facing Charles Street that successfully creates Victorian proportions and depth, providing a contemporary façade aesthetic. The use of expanded aluminium mesh within the brickwork provides a visual link to the tower element as well as adding texture, whilst the lowest block, facing onto Charles Street, continues the repetitive proportions and vertical expression of the adjacent terraces. The panels create a complimentary language of architecture and synergy between the Verse and Bridge Street Exchange developments.



Improving a Conservation Area

Verse's design takes into consideration the historical and architectural character of the conservation `be seen as a benefit for the local community, maintaining the area's unique identity and character.
The massing of the scheme is a direct response to the context of the urban environment. As the building recedes from Charles Street, it increases in height.

The increased height responds and reflects the emerging hierarchy of the city centre redevelopment complimenting the recent developments such as Bridge Street Exchange and Tŷ Admiral to form a cohesive family of tall buildings.
The relationship between the tallest element of **Verse** and the Bridge Street Exchange Tower was identified as key to the success of the massing.

Unitised curtain wall system being installed

Innovation and Sustainability

Verse has adopted an holistic approach to sustainable design, promoting passive measures for comfort and reducing the demand on the energy. This approach extends throughout the buildings and the landscape design.

Large windows and low cill heights were provided to maximise natural daylight and promote views to each of the habitable rooms, whilst windows to the main circulation areas reduce the need for artificial lighting. Expanded aluminium mesh was incorporated in front of full height openable windows allowing the occupants to ventilate the room without the need for mechanical purge ventilation. The design includes provision of over 80 m sq. of photovoltaic panels, high efficiency ASHP pumps to provide hot water into apartments and, MVHR heat recovery units and VRF units within communal amenity spaces to provide ventilation and heating respectively. The high performance of the external fabric achieved through enhanced thermal performance and low-g-value glazing reduces heat losses through fabric and energy usage. The integration of green and blue roofs, bio-retention planters, and raingarden tree pits as part of the SUDs strategy. Furthermore, the provision of new public spaces and landscaping is a huge benefit to the wider community.

Verse contributes to the ongoing regeneration of Cardiff city centre, by bringing new life to areas, leading to economic growth and improved living conditions for residents. Its central location, close proximity to key city services and access to good pedestrian and cycling routes, reduce the need for use of private or public transportation within the city environment.

Buildability and Assembly

Verse utilised a unitised curtain wall system, a combination of real-brick slip and extruded brick slip as well as metal rainscreen cladding in its external envelope. The structural frame consists on a combination of precast columns and in-situ slabs and core.

MMC and 'just-in-time' delivery maximised efficient use of limited space and resources. As a result, the team were able to maintain the highest level of safety and quality standards and is an excellent example of how innovative construction methods can overcome challenging building environments. The benefits of factory conditions, improved workmanship and quality resulted in the realisation of a 12-week programme advantage within a 90-week timeline, attributed to the effective utilisation of this specific façade type. In turn, this enhanced the efficiency and cost-effectiveness, allowing the project team to successfully deliver on budget.

Functionality and Inclusivity

Verse has been designed to take into consideration the needs of visually impaired and wheelchair users, including provision of Two 8-person lifts and one 13-person lift servicing all floors which has been oversized to serve also as a goods lift; level thresholds to each building entrance; ramped access to the gym and communal roof terrace; four accessible WCs within the amenity spaces, including one WC for staff; appropriate finishes and colours that allow for the needs of the visually impaired; and provision of generous space standards, particularly within the communal and circulation spaces.

The configuration of the accommodation provides for adaptability and flexibility to meet future needs and promotes ease of movement and access in a safe and spacious environment.

Being in a city centre location, **Verse** has been designed to improve the community safety of the area by providing a safe environment for its residents and surrounding areas which included the provision of staffed reception with 24-hour service concierge, CCTV coverage to all communal internal areas, building entrances and perimeter; external and internal apartment entrances to meet PAS24 2016 and LPS 1175 SR2 certification where required; fire prevention and evacuation, including a suitable sprinkler system as required by building regulations Approved document B and BS9991:2015.

Performance and Robustness

The use of traditional materials on the envelope, such as brick, was chosen not only to be in keeping with the surrounding buildings but also to provide a timeless look and robust quality for easy maintenance and cleaning.

The combination of in situ and precast provides a long-lasting and robust structural solution to the building. The structural columns have been set out to fall within party walls between apartments. The use of blade columns allowed these to be fully embedded within the wall thickness avoiding the need for wall protrusions as well as providing flexible apartment layouts and the potential of adaptability for future needs.

The communal areas have been provided with exposed soffits and services, allowing easy access and maintaining mechanical and electrical equipment.
As a built-to-rent scheme, it was essential to specify interior finishes that are hard-wearing and easy to maintain. We introduced LVT floor finishes throughout all apartments with a slip-resistant vinyl floor in the shower and bathrooms. Large ceramic tiles were utilised in the shower and bath areas to minimise grout and facilitate cleaning. Commercial-grade kitchens were installed with quartz countertops within apartments, adding to the robust and easy-to-maintain requirement.

Brick slip cladding being installed to for deep reveal façade.