

WELLCOME TRUST

**WELLCOME COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT**

HERITAGE STATEMENT

FEBRUARY 2013

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Wellcome Trust by Turley Associates heritage team to support planning application proposals associated with the Wellcome Collection Development Project.

1.2 The application proposals involve development at no. 183 Euston Road (the Wellcome Building), an unlisted building within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area within the London Borough of Camden.

1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) requires that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an application to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”¹

1.4 This statement meets these requirements and identifies the relevant heritage assets that will be affected; assesses their significance and the contribution made by their setting; and, assesses the impact of the application proposals on their significance.

¹ NPPF, paragraph 128

2. Heritage Assets

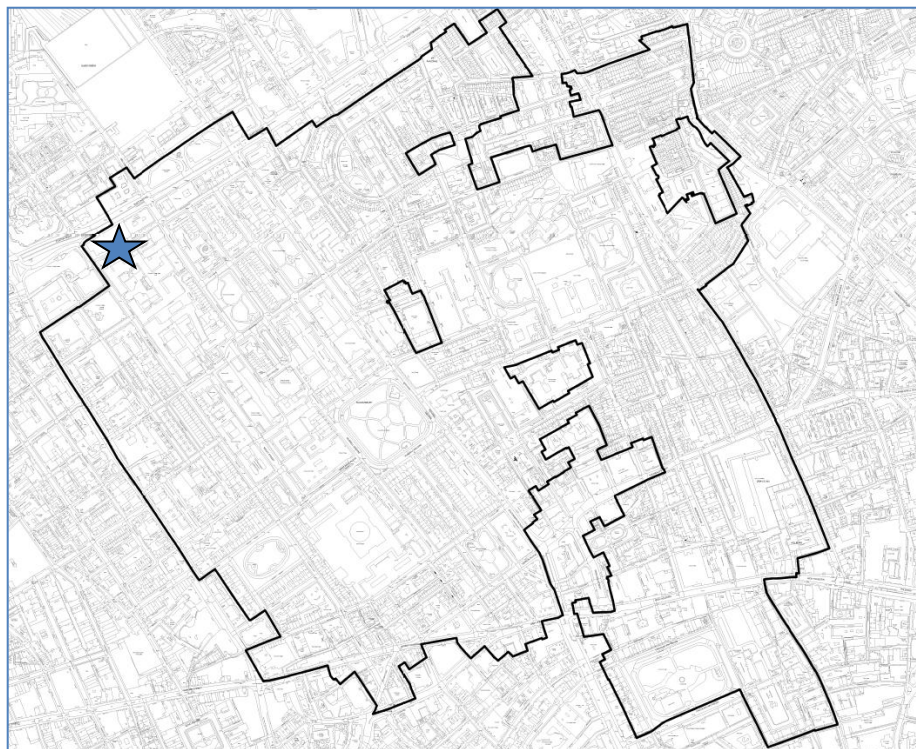
Heritage Assets

2.1 The NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”²

2.2 Designated heritage assets are noted³ to include conservation areas designated under the relevant legislation.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

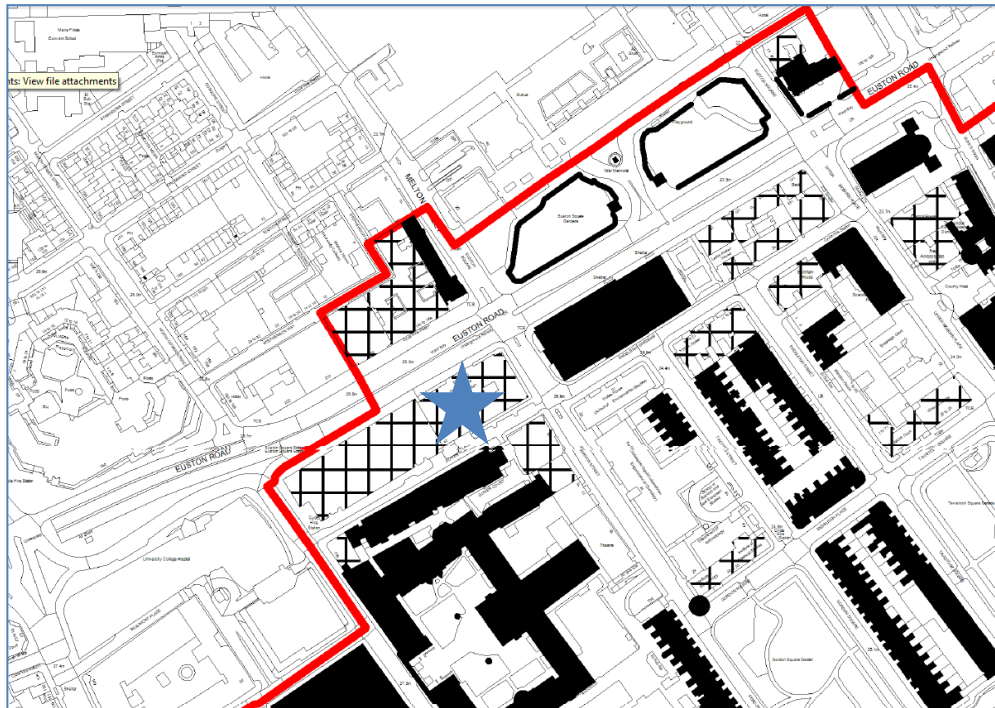


The Bloomsbury Conservation Area (Source: LB Camden)

² NPPF, Annex 2 Glossary

³ Ibid

- 2.3 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset within which the application building is located. The conservation area is broken down by the local planning authority into a number of sub-areas – the application building lies within the Euston Road sub-area (1) on the northern fringe of the conservation area.



Listed buildings and positive contributors (Source: LB Camden)

The Wellcome Building, 183 Euston Road

- 2.4 Non-designated heritage assets can be identified by the local planning authority. In this instance, the application building has been identified⁴ as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and is therefore likely to be treated as a non-designated heritage asset.

⁴ Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, April 2011, LB Camden



The Wellcome Building today (Source: Wellcome Trust)

Setting and Nearby Listed Buildings

2.5 The setting of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF⁵ as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

2.6 The setting of the application building comprises the immediate surroundings in the conservation area. The application building also lies within the setting of listed buildings. It is opposite nos.1-9 Melton Street (grade II*); to the east is nos.173-177 Friends' Meeting House and walls, railings and garden (grade II); and, to the south in Gower Place, University College Chemistry Laboratory and attached railings and wall (grade II).

⁵ NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary

3. Significance

- 3.1 Significance for heritage policy purposes is defined by the NPPF as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from setting.”⁶

- 3.2 Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance⁷.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- 3.3 The following summary of the significance of the conservation area and specifically that of sub-area 1 is based upon the local planning authority’s document Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2011) and site survey.

Overall

- 3.4 The overall conservation area covers an area of approximately 160 hectares extending from Euston Road in the north to High Holborn and Lincoln’s Inn Fields in the south and from Tottenham Court Road in the west to King’s Cross Road in the east. Bloomsbury is widely considered to be an internationally significant example of town planning and the original street layouts, which employed the concept of formal landscaped squares and an interrelated grid of streets to create an attractive residential environment, remain a dominant characteristic of the area.

Euston Road

- 3.5 The Euston Road sub-area is characterised by large scale institutional buildings that line the major east-west thoroughfare, which is wide and heavily-trafficked consisting of a dual carriageway with broad pavements and mature street trees. A large number of buildings adhere to a classical architecture and were built in the first half of the C20th as replacements of the earlier C19th domestic terraces and the southern half of Euston Square. Later C20th and early C21st buildings tend to

⁶ NPPF, Annex 2 Glossary

⁷ s.69 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

be of a larger scale and height, with high rise buildings along the stretch of the road outside of the conservation area to the north of Euston Square, which dominate the skyline and long views. Traditional building materials are red brick, Portland stone and stucco alongside a modern vocabulary of glass, steel and concrete.

- 3.6 There are two designated open spaces of differing scale and character comprising Euston Square and the gardens east of Friends House. The buildings along Euston Road within the conservation area are generally of four to five storeys. The application building on the south side forms part of a group of classically-styled Portland stone buildings.

The Wellcome Building, 183 Euston Road

- 3.7 The Wellcome Building is identified as a 'positive contributor' – i.e. contributing positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



The Wellcome Research Institution, 1931 (Source: Wellcome Trust)

- 3.8 No. 183 dates from 1931-2 and was designed by Septimus Warwick. It was built as a research institute and museum for the Wellcome Foundation established in 1924 by the pharmaceutical magnate Sir Henry Wellcome.
- 3.9 Septimus Warwick (1881-1953) was born in England and served an apprenticeship under the London architect Arthur Vernon from 1895 until 1898. After working as

an assistant in the offices of W.A. Pite and R. Frank Atkinson he began to practise in 1905 in partnership with Herbert A. Hall. They won a series of architectural competitions for the Lambeth Town Hall (1906-08), the Holborn Town Hall (1906) and the Berkshire County Hall, Reading (1909).

- 3.10 Warwick went to Canada in 1913 to assist Frank Simon of Liverpool, England with the construction and supervision of his prize winning scheme for the Legislative Buildings at Winnipeg, Manitoba. After 1915 he moved to Montreal and during the next five years executed a number of Edwardian residential and commercial commissions for prosperous clients in that city.



Sir Henry Wellcome and Septimus Warwick inspecting stonework for the new Wellcome Research Institution building on Euston Road, 1931 (Source: Wellcome Trust)

- 3.11 He returned to England in 1920 and both the Canada Life Assurance Company and later the Sun Life Assurance Company commissioned him to design new London offices within the shell of existing eighteenth century Georgian buildings, and the Canadian Government asked him to radically alter the Union Club (1820, by Sidney Smirke) to create Canada House, Trafalgar Square.
- 3.12 The building features a four storey conventional Classical Revival front with giant Ionic columns and pediment above, on a channelled base. The building is of steel frame construction clad with stone facades. Internally, the building was remodelled in 1989-92 by Mlinaric, Henry & Zervudachi to become the headquarters and

library for the Wellcome Trust with exhibition galleries on the ground and fourth floors. The building has been further altered since including the enlargement and replacement of the four central ground floor windows on the Euston Road elevation. The Wellcome Building is now a public venue (Wellcome Collection) that includes exhibition spaces, meeting areas, a café, a bookshop and the Wellcome Library.

- 3.13 The building is of heritage value for its architectural character and historic interest for association with Sir Henry Wellcome and the Wellcome Foundation and contributes to the significance of the conservation area in these terms.

Setting

- 3.14 The application forms a building group with the adjacent buildings on the south side of Euston Road and those opposite and contributes positively to the setting of the grade II* listed nos.1-9 Melton Street and grade II listed Friends' Meeting House.

4. Proposals, Impact & Policy

Proposals

- 4.1 The application proposals; the removal of the two windows either side of the main entrance to the building off Euston Road; the lowering of their cills to street level; and, the insertion of new 4 wing manually revolving doors. Replacement rooftop plant is also proposed.

Impact

- 4.2 The proposals for new entrance doors allow for the accessibility to the building to be significantly improved and involve the removal of non-original windows with associated limited intervention in areas of building fabric previously altered.
- 4.3 The strict classically derived proportions and symmetry of the facade are respected and maintained by the design of the proposals so that the architectural character of the building would be preserved.
- 4.4 The quality of stonemasonry used in inserting the existing tall windows either side of the main entrance will be replicated in inserting the new entrances. The finer detail of the works can be suitably controlled by a planning condition.
- 4.5 The replacement rooftop plant is located at high-level and would not be visible from street level or within street views of the building. The building has previously been extended at roof level and already comprises plant areas. There will be no impact on the local architectural character or historic interest of the building.
- 4.6 Given the nature of the proposals they will also have no harmful impact on the character or appearance and significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area whilst allowing Wellcome Collection to further develop as a significant cultural resource in Camden and London.

NPPF Policy

- 4.7 In terms of NPPF policy in respect of heritage, the proposals will serve to sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage assets and maintain the positive contribution their conservation makes to the locality (paragraph 131).
- 4.8 The proposals cause no harm to the designated heritage asset of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (paragraphs 132 and 133).

- 4.9 The impact of the proposals on the non-designated heritage asset of the Wellcome Building results in no harm or loss of significance (paragraph 134).
- 4.10 The proposals within a conservation area and the setting of other heritage assets will not harm any aspects of setting that make a positive contribution to their significance (paragraph 137).
- 4.11 The proposals therefore meet the NPPF core planning principle with respect to the historic environment in that the heritage assets will be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Statutory Duties & Local Policy

- 4.12 The proposals will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and preserve the setting of adjacent and nearby listed buildings and therefore meet the objectives of the duties of the 1990 Act.
- 4.13 Similarly, the proposals will therefore meet the objectives of Camden's LDF Development Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's Heritage) and policy 7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology) of the London Plan (July 2011).

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The application proposals involve development at no. 183 Euston Road (the Wellcome Building), an unlisted building within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area within the London Borough of Camden.
- 5.2 The building is of heritage value for its architectural character and historic interest for association with Sir Henry Wellcome and the Wellcome Foundation and contributes to the significance of the conservation area in these terms.
- 5.3 Given the nature of the proposals they will also have no harmful impact on the character or appearance and significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area whilst allowing Wellcome Collection to further develop as a significant cultural resource in Camden and London.
- 5.4 The impact of the proposals on the non-designated heritage asset of the Wellcome Building will result in no harm or loss of significance meeting the objective of NPPF paragraph 134. The application proposals within a conservation area and the setting of other heritage assets will not harm any aspects of setting that make a positive contribution to their significance meeting the objective of NPPF paragraph 137.
- 5.5 The application proposals will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and preserve the setting of adjacent and nearby listed buildings and therefore meet the objectives of the duties of the 1990 Act.
- 5.6 The proposals will therefore meet the objectives of Camden's LDF Development Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's Heritage) and policy 7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology) of the London Plan (July 2011).

