

**Goodenough College**  
London House, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N 2AB

**Heritage appraisal**

July 2012

Consultancy for the  
Historic Built Environment

**KMH**Heritage

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support listed building consent and planning applications for the refurbishment of Goodenough College, London House, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N 2AB.

## **Purpose**

- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to set out the history and heritage significance of Goodenough College and to assess proposals for the site against policy and guidance for the historic built environment.
- 1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Wilson Mason & Partners and the planning report prepared by Colliers.

## **Organisation**

- 1.4 This introduction is followed by a description and analysis of Goodenough College and its context. Section 3 analyses the heritage significance of the site. Section 4 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. Section 5 describes the proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance. Section 6 assesses that scheme against policy and guidance. Appendices include a location plan, the list description, a bibliography and references, and historical mapping.

## **Author**

- 1.5 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at

Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation. Kevin Murphy was included for a number of years on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Directory of Expert Advisers.

- 1.6 Historical research and assistance for this report was provided by Dr Ann Robey FSA, a conservation and heritage professional with over twenty years experience. She has worked for leading national bodies as well as smaller local organizations and charities. She is a researcher and writer specialising in architectural, social and economic history, with a publication record that includes books, articles, exhibitions and collaborative research.

## 2 The site and its context

- 2.1 This section of the report describes the history and development of the Goodenough College building, London House.

### The development of the area

- 2.2 Plans for the development of the Foundling Hospital Estate had been originally drawn up in 1790 by Samuel Pepys Cockerell (architect and surveyor to the Hospital) and building began almost immediately, with James Burton (the most important developer of his day) taking leases on many parts of the land.<sup>1</sup> Two grand squares were planned at the heart of the estate flanking the Hospital buildings – these were Brunswick Square and Mecklenburgh Square.<sup>2</sup> Much of Mecklenburgh Square was not built until after 1810, when Joseph Kay (who had replaced Cockerell) redesigned the plans including those for the formal garden laid out between 1808 and 1810.<sup>3</sup> Even today much of the original layout; including four serpentine paths from the corners to the centre, survive in the garden square.<sup>4</sup> Greenwood's Map of 1830 shows the completed squares at the centre of the Foundling Estate.

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<sup>1</sup> Burton was to become the most important builder on the Foundling Estate

<sup>2</sup> *Survey of London*, vol. 24, (1952) pp. 25-55

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, the Survey states that the south side was built between 1800 and 1810, the east side between 1810 and 1820 and the north side between 1824 and 1825.

<sup>4</sup> B. Cherry and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*, (1998) p. 332

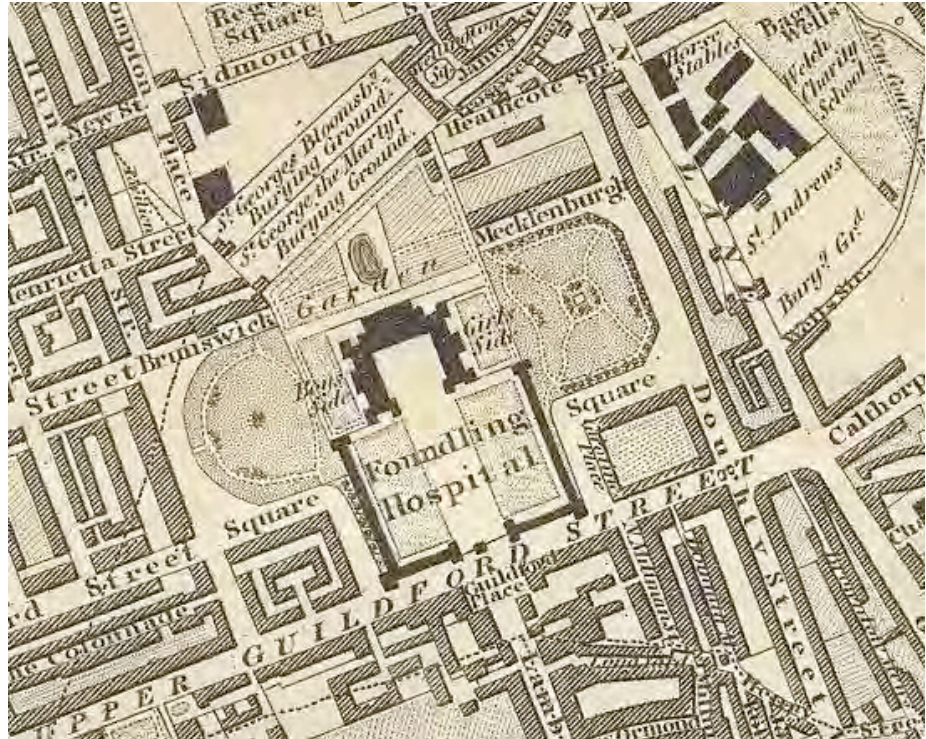


Figure 1: Greenwood's Map of London showing the completed development (surveyed 1824 to 1826, with additions to 1830)

- 2.3 The houses were intended for wealthy professionals from the start, and those built in Mecklenburgh Square were somewhat grander than the plain houses erected by Burton in Brunswick Square. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Mecklenburgh Square was a very respectable address.<sup>5</sup> Today the gardens (now owned by Goodenough College) remain accessible by key holders only. It wasn't until 1909 that lodging and boarding houses were permitted in the square.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Woolf lived in Mecklenburgh Square in 1939-40 and Dorothy Sayers lived at No. 44 from 1918 to 1921

<sup>6</sup> Donald Olsen, *Town Planning in London*, (1984)

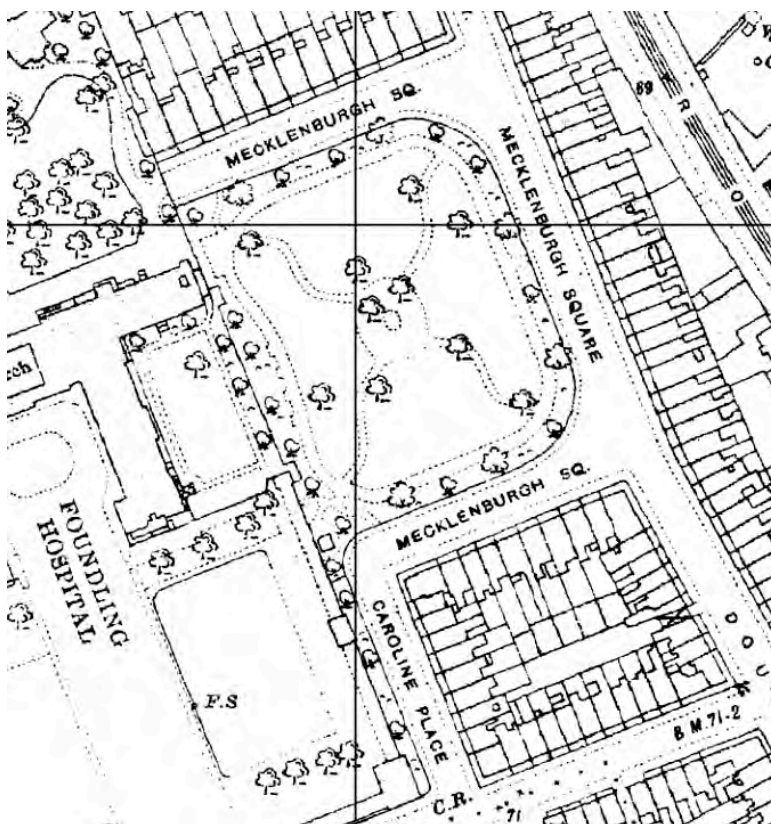


Figure 2: Mecklenburgh Square in 1916 (see island site of the future London House)

### The Dominion Students' Hall Trust

- 2.4 In 1930, Frederick C Goodenough (1866–1934) raised the funds to establish the Dominion Students' Hall Trust, which aimed to provide male postgraduate students from overseas (specifically the Dominions and Colonies of the British Empire) with a home while studying in London. At the time, these men were seen as the future leaders of the Empire and it was perceived as healthy for them to experience a collegiate life based along Oxbridge lines. The college sought to improve international tolerance and understanding amongst people, by providing them with congenial accommodation with good social amenities where they could interact.<sup>7</sup> The man who was the

<sup>7</sup> At first only white men were accommodated as the covenant emphasised the need for the men's families to be of 'European origin' but this stipulation was removed after 1945



instigator in establishing the college was the chairman of Barclays Bank, Frederick C Goodenough, who was born in Calcutta. From 1917 until his death in 1934, he was chairman of what was then Britain's fastest-growing banking group.

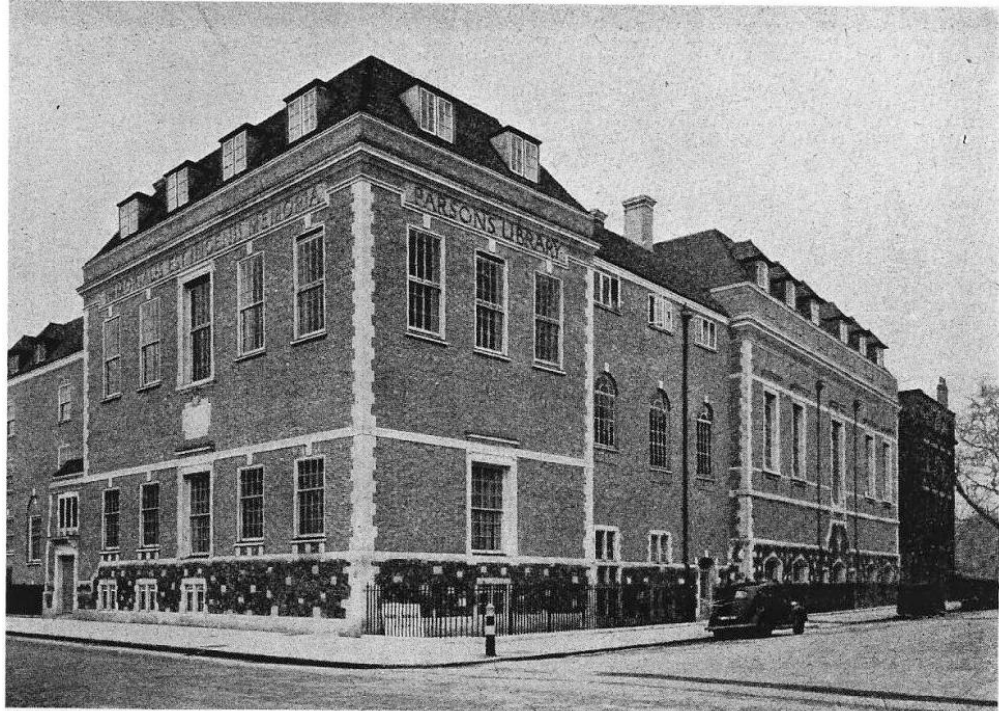


Figure 3: Guildford Street façade in 1937

- 2.5 The search for a site for the new college centred on Bloomsbury, as the University of London was already planning a move to the area just north of the British Museum. This was where Charles Holden was soon to design Senate House (built in 1932-1937), as the first phase of a larger uncompleted scheme for the University. An ideal freehold island site for sale was found between Guilford Street and Mecklenburgh Square, and the Foundation bought it in 1930 at a cost of £200,000 (Figure 2 shows the site in 1916).<sup>8</sup> Although a new college was planned, at first the old Georgian houses in Caroline Place were utilised and in October 1931, London House took in its first students in Nos. 4-7 Caroline (now

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<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 27 May 1935



Mecklenburgh) Place. By 1935, about 57 men were resident.<sup>9</sup>

- 2.6 Mecklenburgh Square became a cause célèbre amongst early preservationists when in 1937 it was specifically mentioned as one of the most threatened Georgian squares of Bloomsbury. Leading conservationists from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the newly formed Georgian Group wrote a letter to *The Times* in which they reported that ‘Mecklenburgh Square is next on the list for mutilation’ threatened for demolition ‘...for the erection on one side of a hostel for Dominion students’. The campaigners hoped that as the leases had not yet run out that there was still time for the project to be discouraged or even ‘checkmated by the pressure of public opinion’. They encouraged supporters to join the Georgian Group and to ‘fight to preserve the English cultural tradition against unrestrained vandalism masquerading as “progress”’.<sup>10</sup>
- 2.7 But they were too late. By December 1937 the contemporary building press were reporting on the completion of the first phase of London House, a hall of residence for British men students from the Dominions (Figure 3).<sup>11</sup> When fully completed the building was planned to occupy four sides of the island site, with the centre of the site forming a quadrangle in the manner of an Oxbridge college. Planned in 1933, the new London House<sup>12</sup> was built between 1935 and 1963 to the designs of the architect Sir Herbert Baker, his partner Alexander T. Scott (1887–1962), and their successor Vernon Helbing. It was completed in three stages:
- Stage 1 (1935–37). The south-east corner of the site including the Great Hall, Charles Parsons Library, common-rooms and the Guilford Street entrance.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *The Times*, 29 Oct 1937

<sup>11</sup> *The Builder*, 10 Dec 1937

<sup>12</sup> Evidence from Camden’s online planning files shows that an application to erect the ‘Memorial Library’ wasn’t made until March 1936, after works were in progress TP 278/22603

This was the only part of London House to be completed in Sir Herbert Baker's lifetime

- Stage 2 (1948–53). The south wing was completed in this phase, along with the west wing and the north-west corner. Alexander T. Scott continued in Baker's style, but with a simplification of detail
- Stage 3 (1961–63). The north wing was at last completed, including the north-east corner. The design was much more economical and built without flint and stone. Architect Vernon Helbing created a College Chapel out of former offices in 1963

### London House

- 2.8 London House was designed by Sir Herbert Baker, RA (1862–1946) and his business partner. Alexander T Scott, FRIBA in 1933. Baker was the leading architect of the British Empire from 1893 to 1923, along with his friend and contemporary Edwin Lutyens. Baker worked extensively in what is now South Africa where he lived for many years and designed some of the most important buildings there prior to the First World War including Prime Minister Cecil Rhodes's Cape Town residence, Groote Schuur (completed in 1896), cathedrals in Pretoria and Johannesburg and over 300 private houses.<sup>13</sup> He was the creator of the 'Cape Dutch' style (based on the Queen Anne vernacular he had learned when a pupil to Ernest George and Peto, mixed with a careful study of early Dutch homesteads, favouring simple massing of whitewashed walls and random-laid stone and generous verandas).
- 2.9 From 1913 Baker spent twelve years in India working alongside Lutyens in New Delhi. He returned to England c.1918, aged almost 60 and spent the remainder of his life

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel M. Abramson, 'Baker, Sir Herbert (1862–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2009 [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/30547](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/30547)

producing some of Britain's most interesting and important buildings in his easily recognisable style.<sup>14</sup> Of particular note are Church House, Broad Sanctuary; Cable (now Electra) House, Victoria Embankment; India House, Aldwych and the Bank of England, in the City of London. London House is one of Sir Herbert Baker's most characteristic later buildings, comparable with Rhodes House, Oxford, and Church House, Westminster.

- 2.10 At London House, Baker used brick on a flint and stone base (which he also employed at Church House in 1936-7, and earlier at the War Memorial Cloister at Winchester College built in 1922-24) which was said to symbolise different ages of building.<sup>15</sup> As architectural historian Christopher Hussey stated in 1945, 'The flint facing to the basement storey carries the mind back beyond Georgian Bloomsbury to England's mediaeval foundations'.<sup>16</sup> The first part of the building was completed between 1835 and 1837 and covered the south-east corner of the site, which extended half-way along the Guilford Street front and for much of the Doughty Street side (Figures 6 & 7). This phase included the Great Hall, the Charles Parsons Library, common-rooms including the dining-hall<sup>17</sup> which measured 80ft by 40ft and was panelled in English oak to a height of 12 ft. and also the Guilford Street entrance.<sup>18</sup> This was the only part of the premises to be completed in Sir Herbert Baker's lifetime.

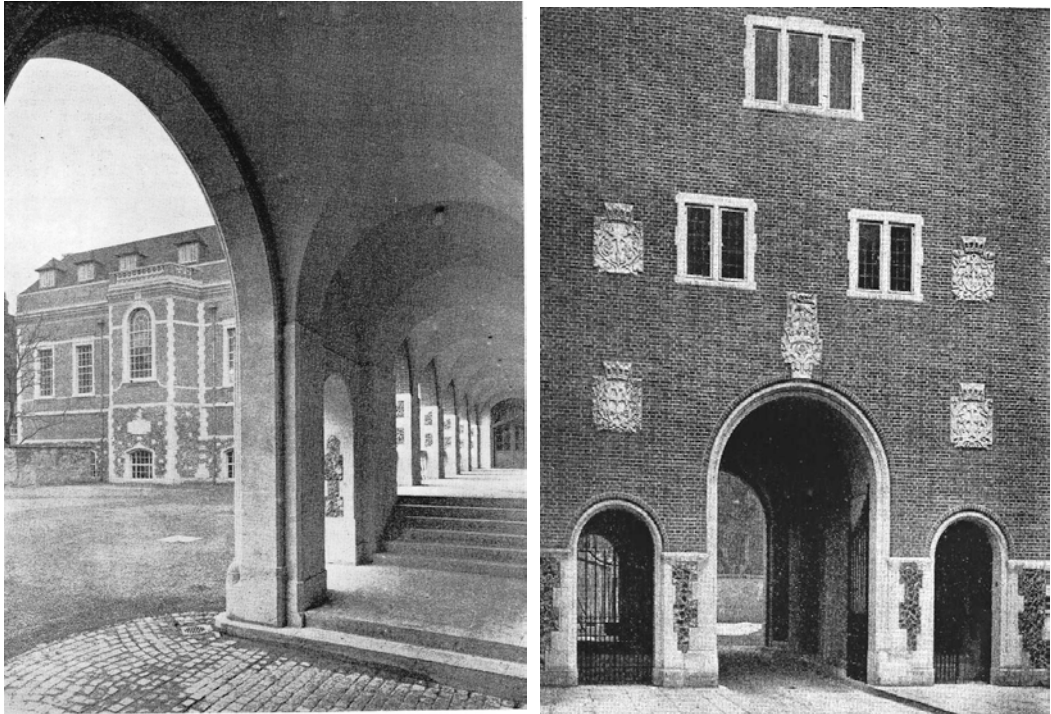
<sup>14</sup> A. Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture; A Biographical Dictionary*, (1985), pp 97-99

<sup>15</sup> B. Cherry and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*, (1998) p. 267

<sup>16</sup> *Country Life*, 22 June 1945

<sup>17</sup> The dining hall was said to be the gift of Mr Evans Bevan

<sup>18</sup> *The Builder*, 10 Dec 1937



Figures 4 & 5: The main entrance and cloister beyond in 1937

- 2.11 Of particular importance to the design was the loggia open to the quadrangle and the fine entrance from Guilford Street (Figures 4 & 5). In the bedroom block each resident was provided with a bed-sitting room with fitted wardrobes, a tiled recess with a wash-hand basin and a fitted bookcase and cupboard. Toilet and bathroom facilities were provided on each floor and included 'shower-baths'.<sup>19</sup> In the basement was a shooting gallery.
- 2.12 The interior decoration of the building included much symbolism relating to the British Empire and those associated with the college. The dining-hall coving had thirteen bas-relief painted and gilded emblems of the British Empire and over the doorway leading from there to the vestibule was placed an Empire clock with a normal dial and an additional dial which could tell the time 'all over the Empire'.<sup>20</sup> In the library, the plaster cove contained fourteen emblems or badges of the various societies that Sir Charles Parsons (who paid for the library)

<sup>19</sup> *The Architect & Building News*, 10 Dec 1937

<sup>20</sup> *The Architect & Building News*, 10 Dec 1937

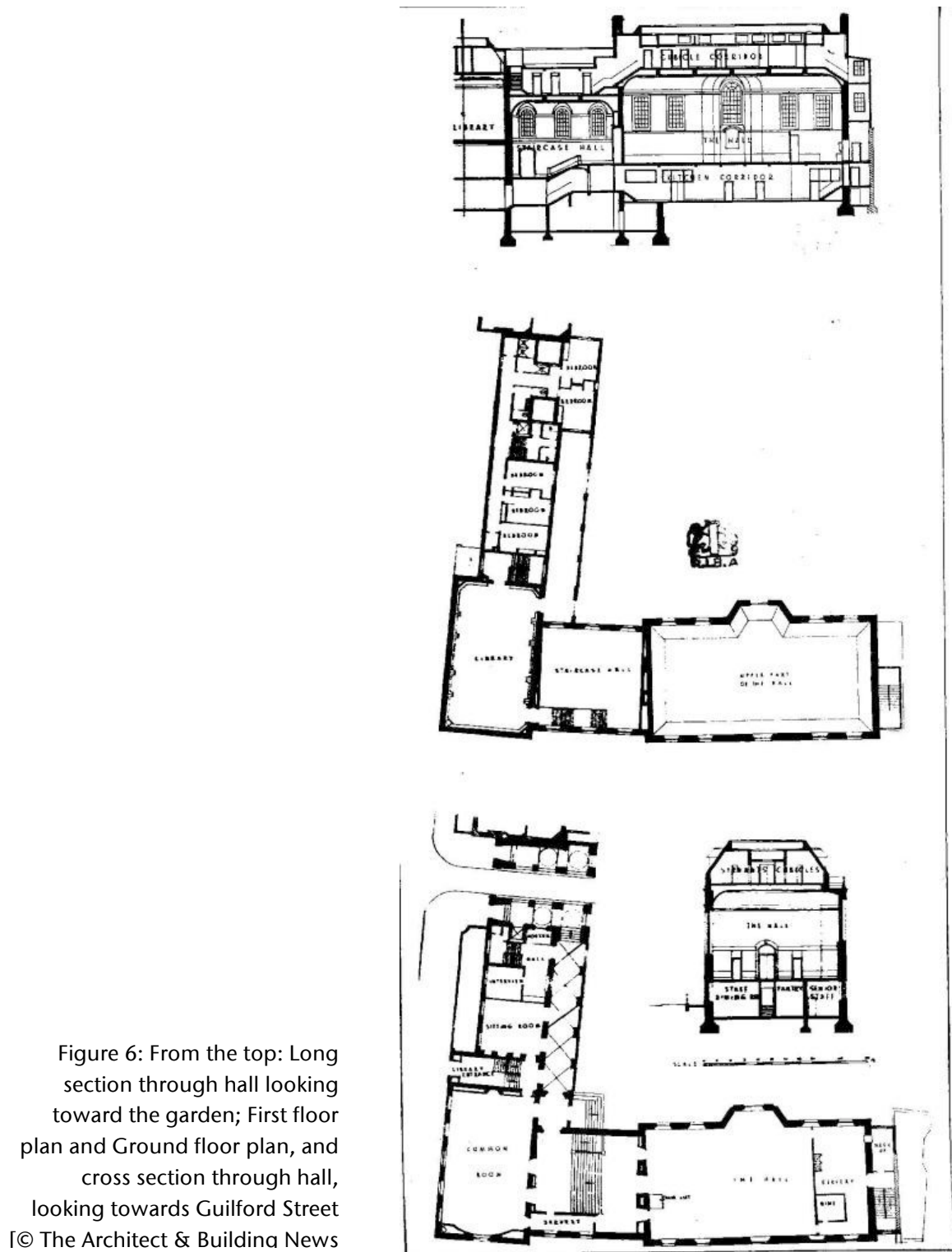
belonged to. It has been said that 'Towards this end, Baker's public buildings were usually composed with symbolic meaning and festooned with appropriate heraldry, sculpture, painting, and inscriptions'.<sup>21</sup> This is certainly the case at London House. The trestle tables were made by Robert 'mouse man' Thompson of Kilburn. (contemporary photographs of the interior when first built are provided in Appendix E).

- 2.13 Materials from all over the Empire were used including English oak, Rhodesian mahogany and Australian Jarrah (used for the flooring throughout the principal rooms and corridors). Ancaster stone was used for the wall linings and Hopton Wood stone for steps and paving.<sup>22</sup> The main contractors for the works were Messrs Ashby and Horner, Ltd. and Laurence Turner (1864-1957) was responsible for all the decorative plaster work in the building. Turner was one of the leading sculptors in plaster during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and his works are of outstanding quality. A list of sub-contractors is given in Appendix F.

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel M. Abramson, 'Baker, Sir Herbert (1862–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2009  
[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/30547](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/30547)

<sup>22</sup> *The Architect & Building News*, 10 Dec 1937



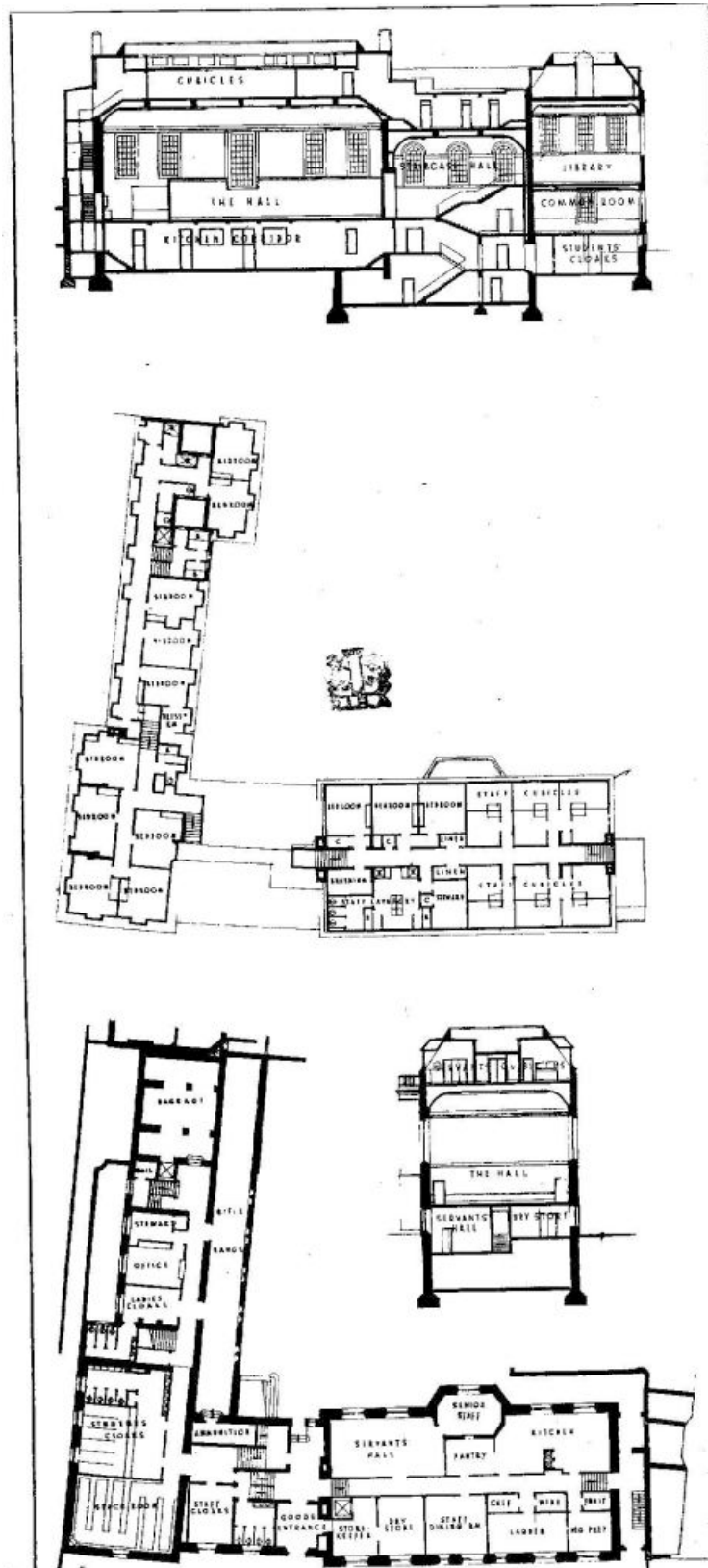


Figure 7: From the top: Long section through hall, looking towards the street; third floor plan; lower ground floor, and cross section through hall [© The Architect & Building News



- 2.14 Soon after the completion of the first part of London House, the Second World War broke out and the conclusion of the rest of the building was delayed. In 1939, it was reported that 'most of the houses on the east side of Mecklenburgh Square have been destroyed in the Blitz' but it appears the newly built part of London House escaped devastation.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.15 The northern and western ranges were completed to a simplified design after Sir Herbert Baker's death in 1946. This second stage of building work took place between 1948 and 1953 and the south wing was completed in this phase, along with the west wing and the north-west corner. Baker's former partner Alexander T. Scott continued their original design and style, but with a simplification of detail (which was highly influenced by Herbert Baker). In 1945, Christopher Hussey in *Country Life* called for the proposed completion of London House an appropriate way of thanking the many thousands of men from the Dominions that had fought for Britain in World War Two.

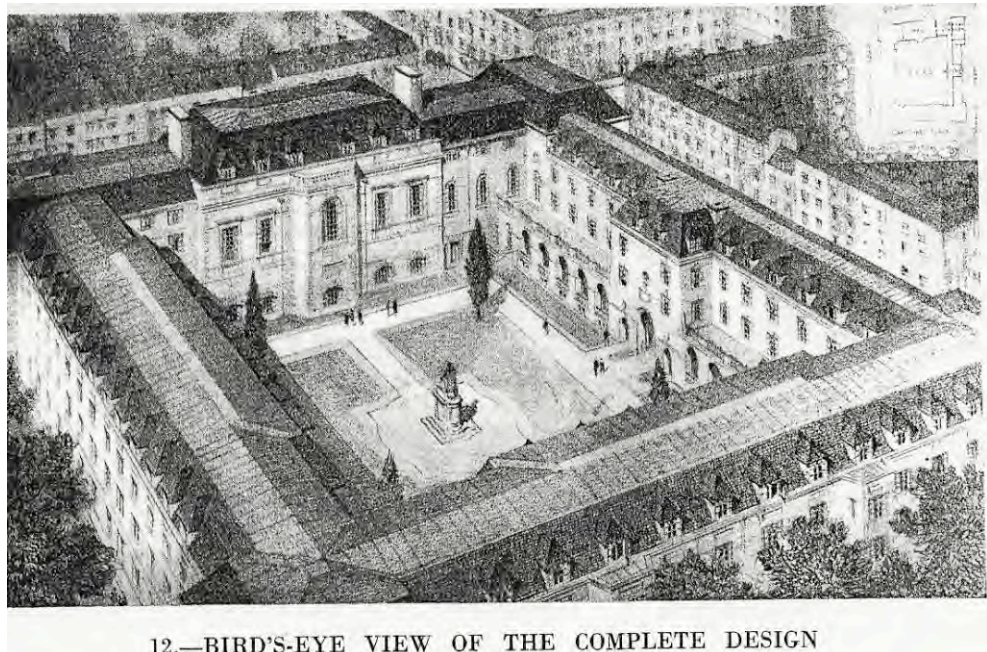


Figure 8: The design for the 'completed' building published in *Country Life* in 1945 [© *Country Life*]

<sup>23</sup> Harold P. Clunn, *The Face of London*. 145

2.16 It was stated that £725,000 was needed to complete the building works and that £225,000 was being provided by the Nuffield Foundation who planned to have their Headquarters in the building. The son of the founder, Sir William Goodenough held a lunch at the Mansion House to launch and raise money for the second phase.<sup>24</sup> By January 1947 an application was made 'for the erection of the remainder of the block of buildings known as London House'.<sup>25</sup> The two sides of the quadrangle that were still to be built would add 200 further rooms to the college and would be similar in design to the 100 already built in 1937.<sup>26</sup> The OS Map of 1952-3 (Figure 9) shows the extent of the further development carried out between 1948 and 1952.

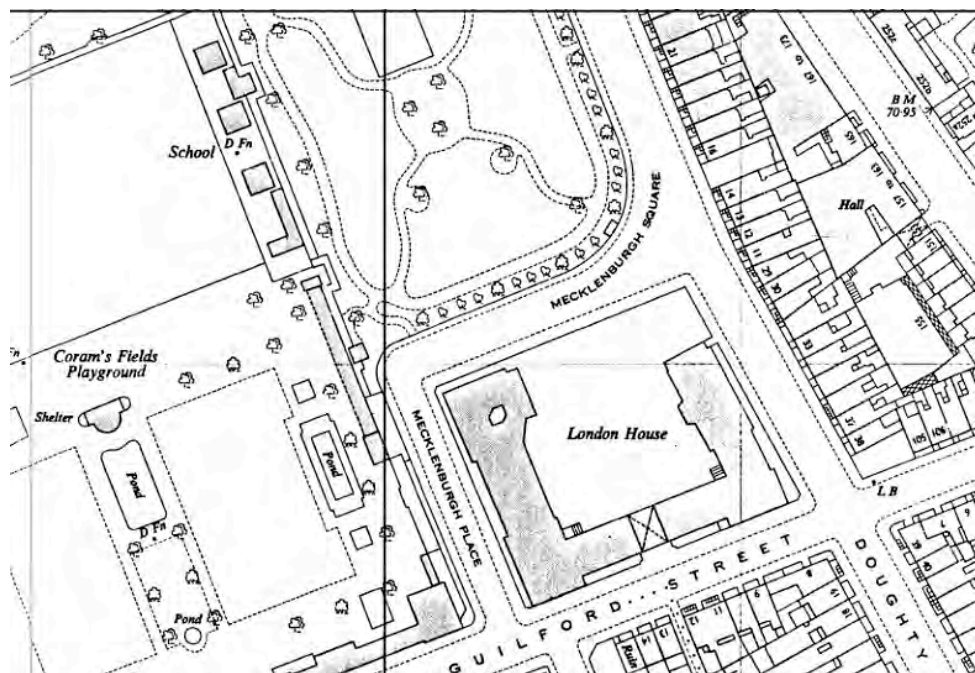


Figure 9: OS Map of 1952-3

2.17 The Mecklenburgh Place (west) front is from 1949-54 and is quite plain, basically symmetrical with some irregularities and occasional iron balconies. The south-west wing includes on the ground floor the Churchill Room of 1952, which is oak-panelled to full height and

<sup>24</sup> *Country Life*, 22 June 1945

<sup>25</sup> LB Camden on line planning files TP 278/0963

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

also contained a small chapel which was formed in 1962-3 by Vernon Helbing, out of former offices. An elevation from 1946 shows the proposed Guilford Street front and the Doughty Street front (Figure 10).<sup>27</sup> Funds continued to be limited in the post-war years and it wasn't until 1961-63 that the north wing was at last completed, including the north-east corner. The Mecklenburgh Square front was largely of 1961-3, and was similar to the south front but simplified, with three open round entrance arches in centre, the middle one raised. The design was much more economical and built without the distinctive flint and stone favoured by Sir Herbert Baker.

- 2.18 Internal alterations were carried in 1963, when Vernon Helbing created a chapel containing panelling behind the altar in the south-west wing. By the 1960s, there was a gym and a badminton court in the basement and also squash courts. The swimming pool was added to the basement in 1971 to the designs of the firm of Sir Herbert Baker & Scott, by then run by Vernon Helbing.<sup>28</sup> By 1974, parts of the basement were being used for storage.

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<sup>27</sup> LB Camden online planning files

<sup>28</sup> RIBA, BAH/98/2 Catalogue entry for Vernon Helbing's papers on London House 1971-1973

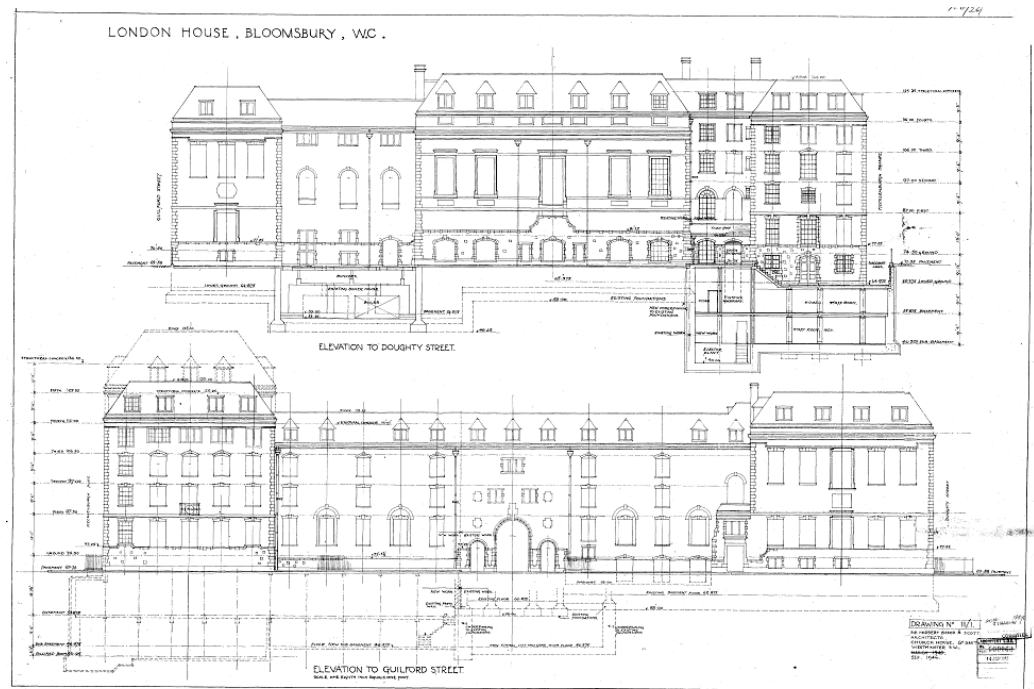


Figure 10: Elevation from 1846 by Baker and Scott [© LB Camden online planning files]

2.19 In 1988 there was extensive refurbishment and a partial redesign of the lower ground floor café bar area, including the partial demolition of internal walls, alterations to internal door openings, to the existing ground floor bar and internal screening of external windows.<sup>29</sup> In 1990 an application was made by Colin White FRICS of Hogarth Design for a change of use for part of the lower ground floor basement and sub-basement to form a health and leisure facility that would be open to the public as well as students. An external entrance lobby was built on the west elevation of London House utilizing 'knapped flint walls to match existing'.<sup>30</sup> At the time the basement floors contained a gymnasium, squash courts, badminton court, pool (unused) and storage facilities, some of which were still in use by London House students. Permission was granted for the development in February, 1991.

<sup>29</sup> No plans have as yet been seen of these alterations as they are not available online, but might be available to view at LB Camden

<sup>30</sup> LB Camden online planning files 9000467, 25 Sept 1990

- 2.20 In 1992, Peter Edrive & Partners drew up plans to convert existing offices and parts of the corridors into additional study bedrooms.<sup>31</sup> Permission was granted to carry out this work in the same year. Evidently unauthorised works to the windows of London House (which was in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area) were undertaken in the mid-1990s, as retrospective planning permission was refused and the collage was not allowed to retain the 82 new PVC windows to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors. The Council stated that ‘the replacement windows are detrimental to the visual amenity of the conservation area by reason of their materials and their detailed design’.<sup>32</sup> Around the same time in April 1996 London House was listed Grade II.<sup>33</sup> In 1998, an internal refurbishment of the Nuffield Health Club in the basement was undertaken.<sup>34</sup>
- 2.21 In 2005 and 2006, minor internal alterations were made to the 1930s part of London House, including the insertion of louvres within the windows at basement level in connection with internal ducting. Alterations were also made to the large and small common rooms where secondary glazing and air conditioning were added. By that date many of the grander rooms at London House were regularly rented out for events, weddings and as a conference venue.
- 2.22 London House has an enclosed quadrangle entered through wrought-iron gates and the central garden is a lawn with mixed beds and trees including a large mulberry. A sundial in the garden was unveiled by the College’s patron, HRH the Queen, on 10 November 2006, to mark the 75th anniversary of the college. In 2011 Goodenough College celebrated its 80th year with a variety of special events, including another visit from its patron.

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<sup>31</sup> Plans of this scheme can be seen online PA 9200285 20 Mar 1992

<sup>32</sup> LB Camden online planning files 9600421, 14 Feb, 24 May 1996

<sup>33</sup> See Listing Description, Appendix B

<sup>34</sup> LB Camden online planning files L 59804572(1998)



Figure 11: The Courtyard in 1945 before the grass was planted

### 3 Heritage significance

- 3.1 This section of the report assesses the heritage significance of Goodenough College.

#### **The heritage context of the site and its surroundings**

##### *Listed buildings*

- 3.2 Goodenough College was listed Grade II on 19 April 1996. And the list description is contained in Appendix B. A large number of buildings in the immediate vicinity are also listed. Those closest to Goodenough College are:

- 11-26 Mecklenburgh Square and attached railings (Grade II\*)
- 29-38 Doughty Street and attached railings (Grade II)
- 8, 9 And 10 Guilford Street And Attached Railings To Nos. 9 And 10 (Grade II)
- Bollard at junction with Mecklenburgh Place (Grade II)
- Gates and Railings on east side of Forecourt to Former Foundling Hospital (Grade II)

##### *The Bloomsbury Conservation Area*

- 3.3 Goodenough College is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1968. The current conservation area appraisal was adopted in April 2011.

##### *Parks and gardens*

- 3.4 Coram's Fields, with Mecklenburgh and Brunswick Squares was added to English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in 1987 at Grade II.



## Heritage significance

### *Heritage values*

- 3.5 The listed buildings and structures mentioned above, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the registered landscape are ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (see next section). The unlisted buildings within the conservation area that positively contribute to its heritage significance are ‘undesigned heritage assets’.
- 3.6 ‘Significance’ is defined in 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’. The English Heritage ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ puts it slightly differently – as ‘the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest’.
- 3.7 ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of ‘heritage values’ that may be present in a ‘significant place’. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

### *‘Historic interest’ or ‘Historical value’*

- 3.8 Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative. Goodenough College, the listed and unlisted buildings of any discernible historical quality nearby, their relationship to one another and to the conservation area, illustrates the evolution of this part of London. What happened to these older buildings, the historic urban grain and the area generally throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century is highly illustrative of how our towns and cities changed in that period. It tells us about the transformation of the older city the expansion of London into new western suburbs during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and about social change and lifestyles in various periods. The area as a whole has

historical associations with various important historical architects, developers and other figures.

- 3.9 Goodenough College is a listed building (i.e. a designated heritage asset), and thus has ‘special architectural and historic interest’. The preceding section describes its historic interest: it has associations with notable figures both architectural and otherwise, with third level education during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in Bloomsbury, and with Britain’s role in relation to its colonies.
- 3.10 In terms of English Heritage’s ‘Conservation Principles’ the building provides us with ‘evidence about past human activity’ and, by means of its fabric, design and appearance and notwithstanding the changes that have occurred, communicate information about its past.
- ‘Architectural interest’, ‘artistic interest’ or ‘aesthetic value’*
- 3.11 This interest or significance is located in its external appearance (particularly to the street); in its plan layout; and in its decorative features. Of these things, the external appearance survives largely intact, whereas the plan layout and internal decoration of the listed buildings has been altered to varying degrees. The preceding historical account makes clear that considerable change has occurred throughout the building over a period of decades, though many of the more important spaces remain intact in terms of architectural quality. Much of the building has been adapted over time to provide improved and more modern accommodation, and facilities upgraded. This is entirely typical of this type of building, and this type of change is found in many educational or collegiate buildings.
- 3.12 The phased nature of the development of Goodenough College distinguishes between varying levels of architectural significance. Herbert Baker’s original conception and the first southeastern phase of building represents the best part of the building architecturally. The second and third phases involved a progressive simplification of Baker’s design and a dilution of the

aesthetic he established in the original design. While they are of undoubted quality, they do not match the first phase in its distillation of Baker's design skills and his use of composition and materials. There is discernible flair and creativity in Baker's original work, and the later parts of London House seem pedestrian in comparison.

- 3.13 It is clear that, despite the changes that have occurred, Goodenough College has 'architectural' and 'artistic interest' (NPPF) or 'aesthetic value' ('Conservation Principles'). In respect of design, 'Conservation Principles' says that 'design value... embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship'.
- 3.14 Nonetheless, much of the interior, away from key spaces, is prosaic in architectural terms and has little to do with the architectural qualities of the listed building. Though some interventions sought to emulate or integrate with the architectural approach of the listed building, this has not always been successful; the external entrance lobby built on the west elevation uses 'knapped flint walls to match existing', but rather clumsily interferes with a large window behind.

### **Summary**

- 3.15 In summary, Goodenough College remains a handsome listed building and retains a considerable degree of heritage significance despite internal and external alteration. The underlying typological character of the building survives beneath the layers of accretions that have occurred, and some decorative detail of quality survives.

## 4 The policy context

- 4.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment.

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 4.3 On Tuesday 27 March 2012, the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaces Planning Policy Statement 5: 'Planning for the Historic Environment' (PPS5) with immediate effect.
- 4.4 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. It says at Paragraph 126 that 'Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', and that
- 'In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:*
- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
  - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;*
  - *and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place'.*
- 4.5 The NPPF says at Paragraph 128 that:
- In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant 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.*

- 4.6 The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to 'identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'.
- 4.7 At Paragraph 131, the NPPF says that:
- In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
  - *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
  - *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*
- 4.8 Paragraph 132 advises local planning authorities that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting'.
- 4.9 The NPPF says at Paragraph 133 'Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good

design is indivisible from good planning.’ Paragraph 133 says:

*Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

4.10 Paragraph 134 says that ‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

4.11 Further advice within Section 12 of the NPPF urges local planning authorities to take into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset when determining the application. It says that ‘In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

4.12 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF advises local planning authorities to ‘look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to

enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably’.

4.13 Paragraph 138 says that:

*Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.*

4.14 The NPPF incorporates many of the essential concepts in Planning Policy Statement 5 ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’. PPS5 was accompanied by a ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’, published by English Heritage ‘to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it’. The ‘Guide’ gives, at Paragraph 79, a number of ‘potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme’ in addition to guidance on ‘weighing-up’ proposals in Paragraphs 76 to 78. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;
- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance,



character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;

- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

4.15 Paragraph 111 of the Guide sets out the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities when making decisions must 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' and 'pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a conservation area.

#### **Camden Council's Local Development Framework**

4.16 Camden Council adopted its Core Strategy and Development Policies on 8 November 2010. Core Strategy Policy CS14 deals with 'Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage' and says:

*'The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:*

*a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;*

*b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;*

*c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;*

*d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;*

*e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views'.*

4.17 The commentary to the policy says:

*‘Our overall strategy is to sustainably manage growth in Camden so it meets our needs for homes, jobs and services in a way that conserves and enhances the features that make the borough such an attractive place to live, work and visit. Policy CS14 plays a key part in achieving this by setting out our approach to conserving and, where possible, enhancing our heritage and valued places, and to ensuring that development is of the highest standard and reflects, and where possible improves, its local area’*

4.18 It goes on to say

*‘Development schemes should improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment and, through this, improve the experience of the borough for residents and visitors’*

4.19 Regarding Camden’s heritage, the Core Strategy refers to Policy DP25 in Camden Development Policies as providing more detailed guidance on the Council’s approach to protecting and enriching the range of features that make up the built heritage of the borough

4.20 Policy DP25 deals with ‘Conserving Camden’s heritage’, and is as follows:

*Conservation areas*

*In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will:*

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where*

*this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*

*d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*

*e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

#### *Listed buildings*

*To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:*

*e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*

*f) only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building; and*

*g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.*

#### *Archaeology*

*The Council will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.*

#### *Other heritage assets*

*The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares.*

### **The Bloomsbury Conservation Area conservation area appraisal**

- 4.21 The current Bloomsbury Conservation Area conservation area appraisal was adopted in April 2011. Goodenough College is located in Sub Area 12 of the Bloomsbury

Conservation Area, and is identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area, as well as being a listed building.

## **5 The proposed scheme and its effect**

- 5.1 The design of proposed alterations at Goodenough College in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Wilson Mason & Partners.
- 5.2 The following is an assessment of the effects of proposals in terms of the heritage significance of the listed building and the other heritage assets described earlier.

### **The proposed scheme**

- 5.3 The scheme involves a number of discrete elements whose purpose is to improve the quality of residential and other accommodation in the listed building, and to improve accessibility to various spaces. These are:
- The upgrading of bedrooms in the west wing (1948-53) of the listed building to provide ensuite accommodation, along with the conversion of a limited number of former staff and other areas to use as bedrooms (at lower ground and ground floors).
  - The removal of the existing mansard roof in the lower section of the north wing (1961-63) and its replacement with a new floor plus a new mansard, both to match the existing building.
  - The creation of a new access from the quadrangle to Freddie's Bar beneath the Great Hall.
  - The upgrading of heating to the Great Hall

### **Assessment**

- 5.4 These proposals, apart from the proposed entrance to Freddie's Bar and the upgrading of heating to the Great Hall, affect the later two, post-war phases of the overall listed building. As the preceding history and analysis of Goodenough College has shown, these phases of the overall listed building are later in date and of lesser

architectural significance than Baker's original southeast corner. They have been altered internally at various times.

- 5.5 In this context the upgrading of existing and the creation of new bedrooms will have a negligible effect on the overall special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. This work will be completely internal and will affect fabric of relatively little significance in terms of the overall building.

#### **Additional storey in the north wing**

- 5.6 Though the various phases of the site's development are linked architecturally, they are clearly different in appearance and quality. The north block was the last to be built and is a weaker version of the earlier phases. The north elevation to Mecklenburgh Square is not entirely symmetrical, with the western section being a storey taller than that to the east. Whilst the central section is one storey lower this does not appear to be an integral feature of the overall façade design. Early designs for the whole building by Baker show that the original intention for this façade was to have a roof height consistent with that of the western block. Though the incremental development of the site is part of its heritage significance, the relative informality of the roof form of this side of the listed building would still be maintained by the projecting blocks at either end of the façade and the raised section to the west. The architectural design of the additional storey is such as to match the existing and in principle no objection is raised.
- 5.7 This part of the building is the most recent - it was completed in the 1960s - and as such the value of the fabric (which is designed in any event to reflect the earlier phases) itself is more limited. The accommodation on the third floor of the northern wing consists of unremarkable student rooms with no features of merit. Internal features of note, and special architectural and historic interest generally, is confined to the earlier phases of the site. No

fabric of note would be lost as part of the additional storey proposals.

- 5.8 The proposed development will not raise the overall height of the Mecklenburgh Square elevation. The east side of the square is bounded by four storey buildings (some with mansards) while the block to the north (William Goodenough House) is five storeys in height, and the additional height would be in keeping with this general scale.
- 5.9 In summary, the proposal to create an additional storey of accommodation on the north wing will affect the latest and least significant phase of Goodenough College, but will nonetheless respect the architectural language of the building. The profile of the building in this part of the complex permits this approach – it is a sensible and measured way of providing new accommodation in what is a sensitive and constrained site, and there are clearly very few other options for providing a meaningful amount of additional accommodation on the site. The proposal will allow this range of the complex to match the appearance of the east and west sides in terms of roof profile, still leaving the northwestern corner higher than the northern range.

### **Other proposals**

- 5.10 The proposed new access to Freddie's Bar makes a minor adjustment to an existing opening, and uses an existing octagonal space within the building. Again, little that is important in terms of internal fabric or appearance is affected by the proposed scheme, and the external appearance of this part of Goodenough College will remain as it is.
- 5.11 The proposed upgrading of the heating system in the Great Hall is a matter of detailed design and careful installation. This is a type of work common in buildings of this age, and it is essential that the Great Hall can continue to be a useable and comfortable space. The visual effect of



the works will be negligible, and the overall quality of the space will be largely unaffected.

### **Summary**

- 5.12 It is important that Goodenough College continues to function efficiently on its site in Bloomsbury. It is a key Bloomsbury institution, and part of the identity and character of the area. However, and as with any institution, its needs have evolved and the functional and qualitative needs of the building and its users have changed.
- 5.13 The proposals will allow Goodenough College to continue to achieve its essential purposes of providing decent residential student accommodation and associated facilities, and to do so in an effective way. They will improve and increase the student accommodation that the College can provide, as well as enhancing the communal facilities that are used by both student residents and visitors to the college alike.
- 5.14 The proposals will thus reinforce Goodenough College and will help it to continue to perform its role. None of the proposals will harm the heritage significance of the listed building. The roof proposals for the northern range are a sensitive and modest infill scheme, which will not detract from the listed building or the conservation area. The other proposals will have a limited or negligible effect on significance.

## **6 Compliance with policy and guidance**

- 6.1 This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the arguments set out in the previous section regarding the nature of the proposed scheme and its effect on heritage significance.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 6.2 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of Goodenough College and its heritage context, as required by Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.3 In respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the revised scheme can certainly be described as ‘sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation’. It secures the ‘positive contribution’ that Goodenough College makes to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the overall scheme contributes to sustainable communities by helping to secure and sustain the commercial and educational resource of the site, and thus enhancing the economic vitality of the conservation area.
- 6.4 The proposed development complies with Paragraph 133 of the NPPF. It does not lead to ‘substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset’. It also complies with Paragraph 134 for the reasons given in detail earlier. Any ‘less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset’ – i.e. the listed building, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area or nearby listed buildings – that can be ascribed to the scheme is greatly outweighed by the benefits generated by the scheme – economic, architectural and heritage-related. In satisfying Paragraph 134, the revised scheme also satisfies Paragraph 135 regarding non-designated heritage assets.
- 6.5 The revised scheme very definitely strikes the balance suggested by Paragraph 138 of the NPPF – it responds to the site in a manner commensurate to its significance, its

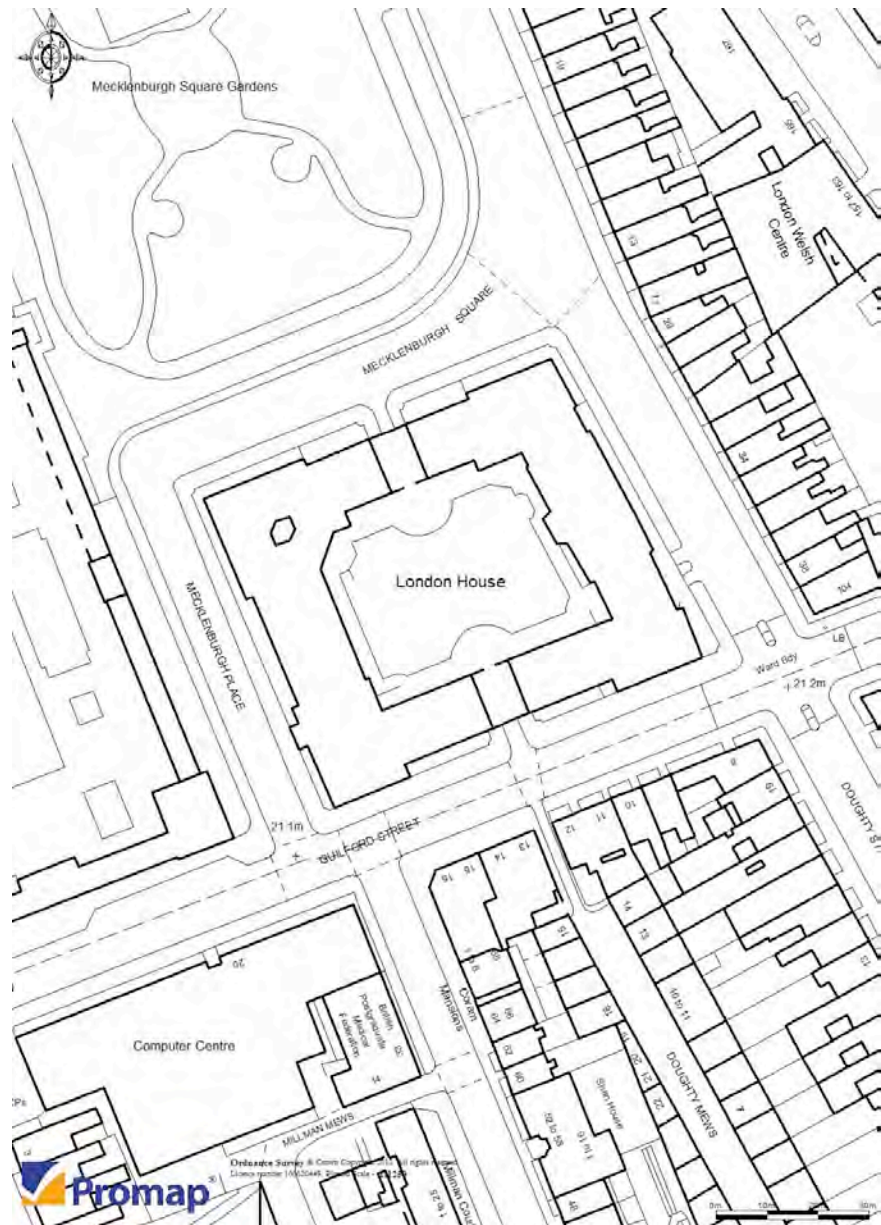
contribution to the conservation area and its contribution to the setting of the listed building opposite.

- 6.6 The scheme also does the relevant things that the 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' urges in its Paragraph 79. For the reasons explained earlier, the proposed development 'makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities', and 'is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment'.

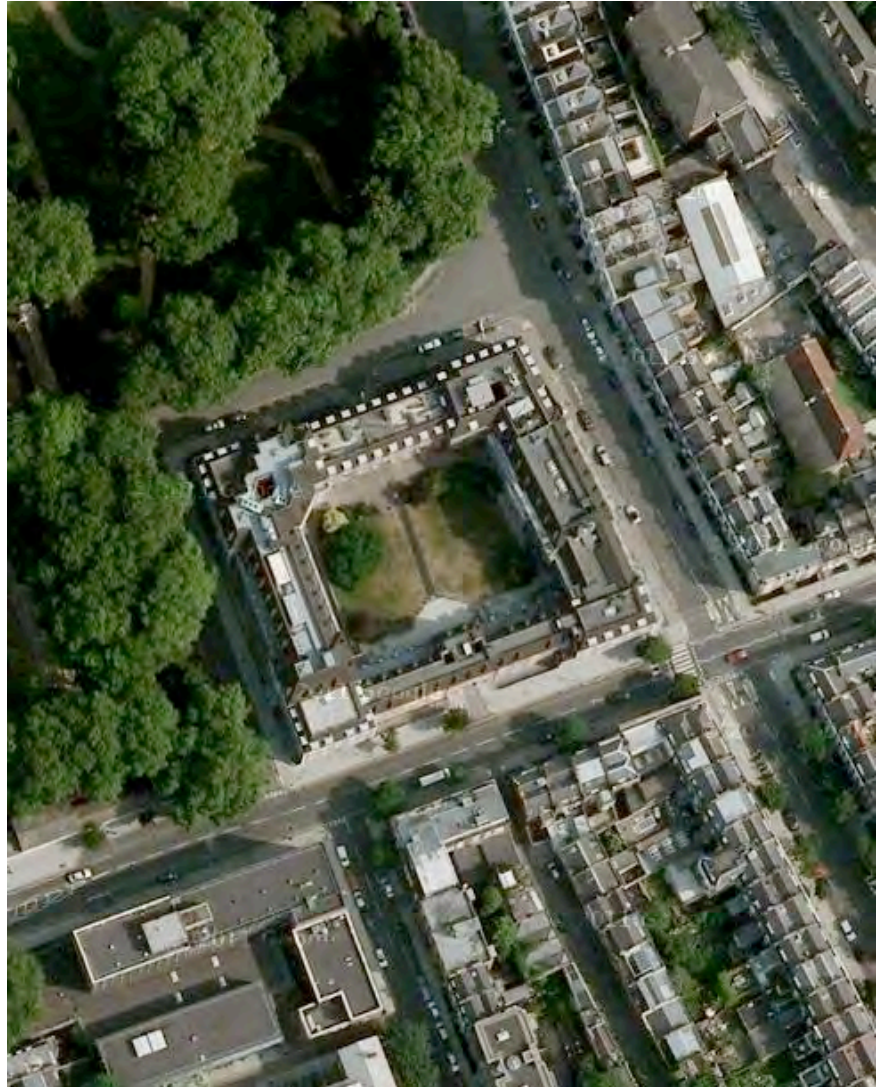
#### **Camden's Local Development Framework**

- 6.7 In satisfying the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposed scheme also complies with Camden's local policies. It will undoubtedly 'respect local context and character' and 'preserv[e] and enhance[e] Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings', as required by Core Strategy Policy CS14.
- 6.8 In respect of Policy DP25, the scheme, as explained in the previous section, is one that 'preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the [Bloomsbury Conservation Area]' and involves 'alterations and extensions to a listed building where... this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building'. No harm is caused to the setting of any other listed building, nor to the Grade II 'Coram's Fields, with Mecklenburgh and Brunswick Squares' registered landscape.
- 6.9 For these reasons, and those given earlier, the proposed development is consistent with Camden's Local Development Framework policies regarding demolition and new development in conservation areas. It also preserves the setting of nearby listed buildings, and thus complies with Policy DP25

## Appendix A: Location



Current Ordnance Survey (not to scale)



Current aerial photography (not to scale)





Oblique aerial view from the south



Oblique aerial view from the east





Oblique aerial view from the north





Oblique aerial view from the west

## Appendix B: List description

LONDON HOUSE, MECKLENBURGH SQUARE (south side)

CAMDEN TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON

Date listed: 19 April 1996

Date of last amendment: 19 April 1996

Grade II

CAMDEN TQ3082SE DOUGHTY STREET 798-1/96/1755 London  
House 19/04/96 GV II See under: London House MECKLENBURGH  
SQUARE.

Includes: London House DOUGHTY STREET. Includes: London House GUILFORD STREET. International Hall of Residence for post-graduates. 1936-63. By Sir Herbert Baker (who prepared a complete scheme in the 1930s), Alexander T Scott and Vernon Helbing. Basement of flint with random stone blocks. Upper storeys of red brick with stone quoins, bands and cornices. Hipped roofs of tile. Neo-Georgian style, with collegiate planning. EXTERIOR: 2-4 main storeys. Irregular fenestration with sash windows; dormers in roofs. Guilford Street (south) front: centre and right wing of 1936-7, left wing of 1949-54. Basically symmetrical, with broad projecting ends and lower centre, the central entrance having three open round arches, the middle one higher, and heraldic devices in stone above. Right wing (housing library) with stone plaque between ground and upper storey commemorating Sir Charles Parsons, and cornice with large inscription in raised brickwork, 'Immortalis est ingenii memoria'. Doughty Street (east) front largely of 1961-3, similar to south front but simplified, with three open round entrance arches in centre, the middle one raised. Mecklenburgh Place (west) front of 1949-54 plain, basically symmetrical with some irregularities and occasional iron balconies. Open quadrangle within has good elevations, notably the east side where the five-bay stone-dressed hall is set left of centre with full-height central bay bearing inscription to Evan Evans Bevan below round-headed window;

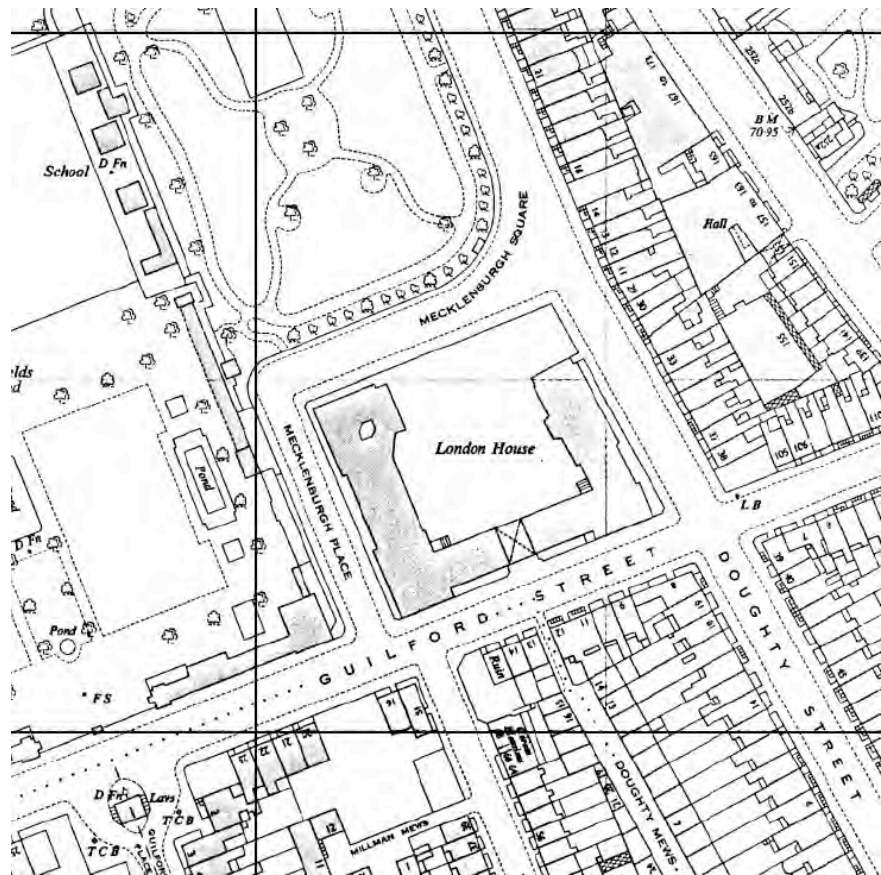
and south side which has projecting round-arched cloister arcade along ground storey and a bust of FC Goodenough in niche over central entrance. INTERIOR: wing of 1936-7 has generous asymmetrical staircase hall, paved and walled to half-height in Hopton Wood stone, balustrade partly stone, partly iron, urns in niches. Double-height dining hall with high oak panelling, plaster over with astronomical 'Empire clock' at south end, and cove to ceiling with coloured plaster shields and devices by Laurence Turner. Ground floor with common room with deep plastered beams. Parsons Library over (partly altered) with oak bookcases to half height and cove to ceiling with plaster shields and devices commemorating scientific institutions also by Turner. South-west wing includes on ground floor Churchill Room of 1952, oak-panelled to full height, and a small chapel formed in 1962-3 by Helbing with panelling behind altar. HISTORICAL NOTE: London House was established in 1931 by FC Goodenough - who raised the funds with which to found the Dominion Students' Hall Trust - as a place where students from the British Empire could live a collegiate life. One of Sir Herbert Baker's most characteristic later buildings, comparable with Rhodes House, Oxford, and Church House, Westminster. The post-war northern and western ranges were completed to a simplified design after Baker's death in 1944.

## Appendix C: Historical maps

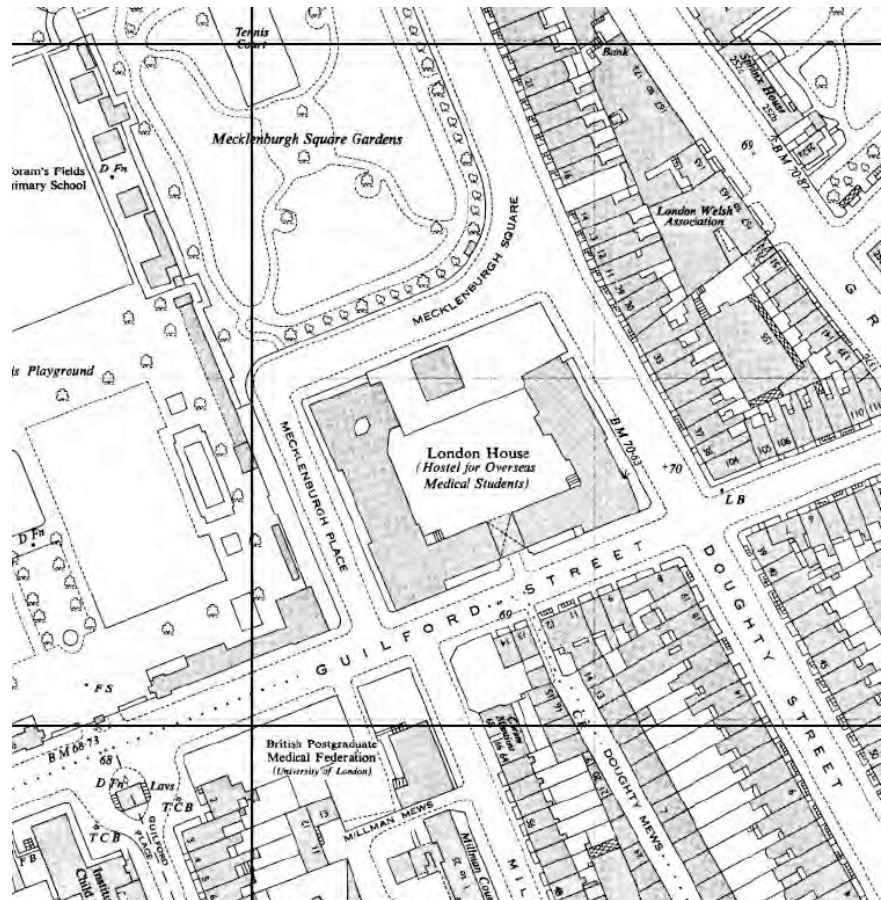
Not to scale



1916



1952-53



1958-71

## **Appendix D: Research sources**

RIBA Library

Senate House Library

LB Camden online planning files

LB Camden paper files

The Times online

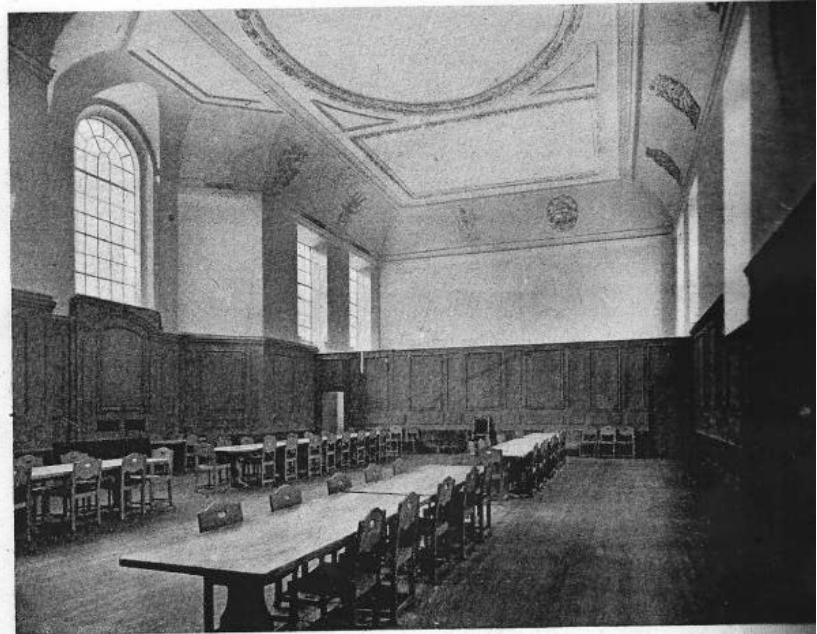


## Appendix E: Interiors of Goodenough College in 1937

Reproduced from The Builder, 10 Dec 1937



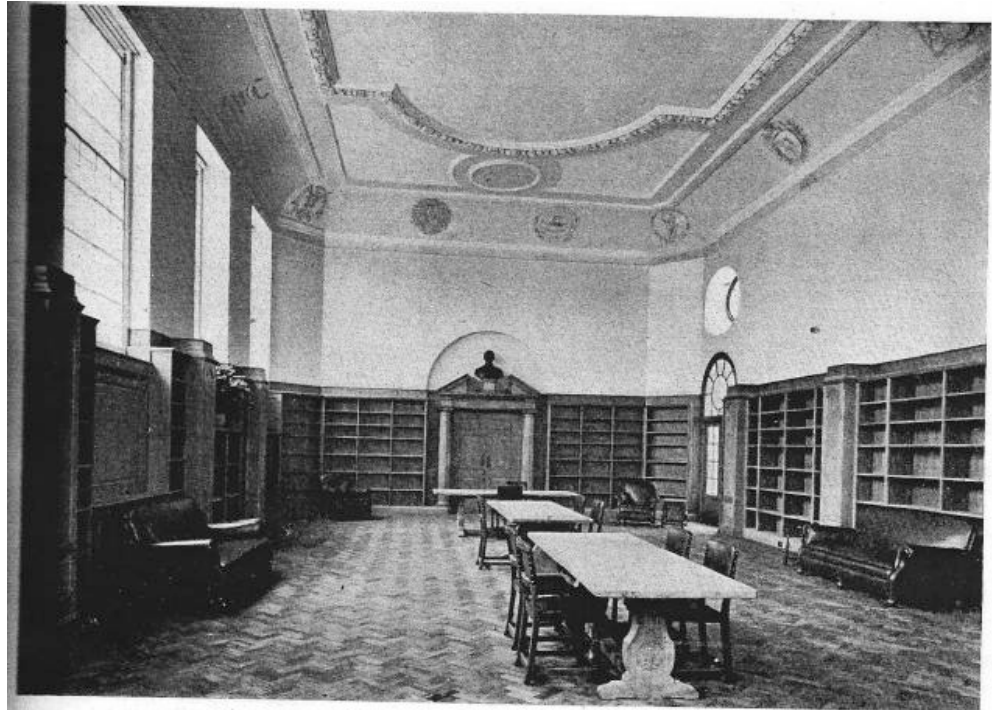
THE ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE.



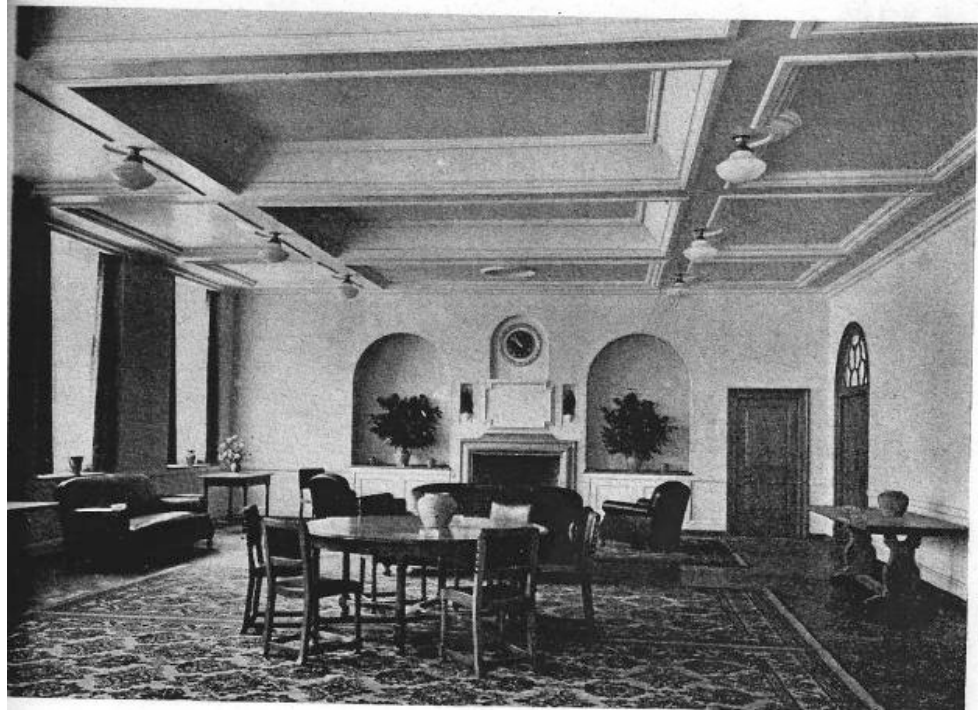
THE HALL.

"LONDON HOUSE," GUILFORD STREET, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.  
SIR HERBERT BAKER, R.A., AND MR. A. T. SCOTT, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECTS.





THE LIBRARY.



THE COMMON ROOM.

"LONDON HOUSE," GUILFORD STREET, BLOOMSBURY, W.C.  
SIR HERBERT BAKER, R.A., AND MR. A. T. SCOTT, F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECTS.

## Appendix F: Contractors at London House

Reproduced from Architect & Builders News, 10 Dec 1937

### SUB-CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS:

#### GENERAL CONTRACTORS

*Ashby & Horner, Ltd.*

#### DEMOLITION AND EXCAVATION

*Goodman Price, Ltd.*

#### STONEMASONRY

*Nine Elms Stone Masonry Works*

#### ASPHALTE

*R. J. Goddard & Co., Ltd.*

#### ROOF TILING

*Robert Y. Ames*

#### LIFTS

*Pickerings, Ltd.*

#### METAL WINDOWS

*Henry Hope & Sons, Ltd.*

#### STAIRCASE AND PAVEMENT LIGHTS

*Haywards, Ltd.*

#### ELECTRICITY

*Bower Engineering Works, Ltd.*

#### HEATING

*Richard Crittall & Co., Ltd.*

#### BULL SILENT MOTORS

*Bull Motors Branch of E. R. & F. Turner*

#### KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

*Benham & Sons, Ltd.*

#### KITCHEN BOILER AND URNS

*Jackson Boilers, Ltd.*

#### PLUMBING

*Matthew Hall & Co., Ltd.*

#### PLASTERING

*W. A. Telling, Ltd.*

#### ENRICHMENTS IN CEILINGS AND CARVING

*Turners*

#### MARBLE WORK

*J. Whitehead & Sons, Ltd.*

#### TERRAZZO PAVING

*Art Pavements & Decorations, Ltd.*

#### GLAZED TILING

*Camden Tile & Mosaic Co., Ltd.*

#### GATES AND RAILINGS

*Tudor Art Metal Co. (1935), Ltd.*

#### HALL FLOOR

*Stevens & Adams, Ltd.*

#### WOOD BLOCK FLOORING

*Acme Flooring & Paving Co. (1904), Ltd.*

#### CLOCKS

*Synchronome Co., Ltd.*

#### CURTAINS

*Waring & Gillow (1932), Ltd.*

#### TUBULAR SCAFFOLDING

*Scaffolding (Great Britain), Ltd.*



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