

CHAPTER 2.0

BACKGROUND TO PROPOSALS

<p>2.1 Introduction</p> <p>This chapter examines the background to the proposed development and provides an overview of the key challenges facing medical research, nationally and internationally. It considers briefly the relationship of research to the National Health Service (NHS) and the recommendations of the Cooksey Review, to which the UKCMRI project is a direct response. This chapter also considers the reasons why the proposed development should be located within London, and specifically on this site in Camden.</p>	<p>London (UCL) with the aim of developing a world class multi-disciplinary research facility with the capacity to break down the very barriers that the Cooksey Review had identified.</p>	<p><i>"We welcome the Government's support for UKCMRI. The review sees the Government's share of funding confirmed but delivered in a different way. It's clear that the commitment to UKCMRI's success remains. UKCMRI is a unique, long-term project that will enhance Britain's position at the leading edge of biomedical research. It will bring together and train the best scientists to examine the causes of some of the most intractable diseases facing the world. UKCMRI will bring benefits to patients, to the NHS and to the UK economy. The Government's commitment to the project reflects the importance of UKCMRI for science in the UK and globally."</i></p>
<p>2.2</p> <p>Annex A provides a summary of the historical context in which medical research within the UK has evolved and the role which Camden has played.</p>	<p><i>"the UK a world class environment for medical research, development and innovation, through a programme of investment and reforms that enable high quality and cost-effective medical advances to be discovered and developed quickly, cheaply, and reliably."</i></p>	
<p>2.3 The Cooksey Review and responses to it</p> <p>On 31 March 2006, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, together with the Secretaries of State for Health and Trade and Industry, appointed Sir David Cooksey to lead an <i>"independent review to advise on the best design and institutional arrangements for the public funding of health research in the UK"</i>. The final report, <i>"A review of UK health research funding"</i> (December 2006) acknowledged the UK's position as a leader in medical research, responsible for about a quarter of all remedies. However, the report found that this position was under threat due to other, better funded, overseas research sectors undertaking increasingly inter-disciplinary research, with both equipment and processes becoming more complex and expensive.</p>	<p>2.8</p> <p>Following this announcement, the House of Commons all-party Innovation, Universities & Skills Select Committee reviewed the project and concluded (January 2008):</p> <p><i>"We can see the immense benefits that should result from the realisation of this exciting vision.....it is vital that UKCMRI is a vision which delivers the first class science and facilities promised and that the project is implemented on time and to budget....We should very much like the project to succeed. We believe that a centre of such ambition would place the UK firmly at the forefront of world-class medical research, with substantial benefits for the public as well as for British science".</i></p>	<p>2.11</p> <p>Subsequently, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rt Hon George Osborne MP announced in the Emergency Budget Speech on 22 June 2010, that despite budget spending cuts <i>"priority will be given to projects that have the greatest impacts on innovation and jobs"</i>.</p>
<p>2.4</p> <p>The review noted that UK medical research has been piecemeal in its development with the different sectors (public, educational, charity and private) frequently acting independently. A central recommendation of the report was that there is an urgent need to address the barriers between basic and clinical research, and between clinical research and clinical practice. In essence, a more collaborative approach was recommended.</p>	<p>2.9</p> <p>In March 2010 the Prime Minister the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP announced Government funding and support for the UKCMRI project and stated:</p> <p><i>"I think there is nothing more important to the future of our society and our economy than what we are setting in motion. I believe that the project that we are discussing today will transform lives, will make for a stronger economy, will put us at the forefront of research around the world and will give people a huge amount of hope about the future."</i></p>	<p>2.12</p> <p>In July 2010 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published its strategy document <i>"A Strategy for Sustainable Growth"</i> which sets out the importance of UK research and the benefits it brings to the economy.</p>
<p>2.5</p> <p>The Government (through the pre-budget report, December 2006) announced its acceptance of the Review's recommendations. This was reaffirmed in March 2007 when the then Chancellor, the Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP, highlighted the importance of innovation in his first Budget Speech.</p>	<p>2.10</p> <p>The new coalition Government confirmed its support for the UKCMRI project in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech of 24 May 2010. The government committed to funding the new biomedical research facility. Sir David Cooksey, the chair of the UKCMRI steering group, responded:</p>	<p>2.13</p> <p>David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, in a speech to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Medical Research's Parliamentary Reception on 19 July 2010 specifically referred to the importance of UKCMRI.</p>
<p>2.6</p> <p>UKCMRI is a direct response to the Cooksey Review. The proposed centre brings together the Medical Research Council (MRC), Cancer Research UK (CR-UK), Wellcome Trust and the University College</p>		<p>2.14</p> <p>In conclusion, it is clear that the purpose of the proposed development has its roots in responding to the opportunities offered by biomedical research and the Government's desire to see this fully exploited for the benefit of society.</p>

2.0 Background to the Proposals

2.15

Why London?

London's concentration of expertise provides a unique opportunity for interaction with research scientists, clinicians and academics as well as the workforce of a large number of significant related industries. The capital:

- is the home to more than 50 clinical and medical research organisations;
- attracts over £100 million (31%) of Government funding for medical, dental and allied research at its higher education institutions;
- has 25 institutions offering health education or training in medical disciplines, teaching almost 40,000 students annually, including more than 6,000 from abroad;
- has the highest number of academic staff (45% of those in England);
- attracts the greatest proportion of health related research funding of any UK city; and
- has more than 6,000 people working in the pharmaceutical industry and another 175,000 in the wider healthcare sector.

2.16

UKCMRI will further contribute to and consolidate the status of London as a global centre of research excellence. It will be the hub of multiple local, national and international networks, aided by its proximity to numerous clinical centres and research institutions and supported by an unsurpassed public transport network. It will become one of the world's leading biomedical research institutions.

2.17

UKCMRI will recruit from a global pool of talent, providing an opportunity for researchers to develop their careers in the UK. Through collaboration, UKCMRI will build extensive links throughout UK medical science. A key role for UKCMRI will be to train scientists and technicians at all levels to the highest standards, preparing them for leadership roles in other biomedical research institutions within the UK and throughout the world.

2.18

By choosing to locate in the centre of the capital UKCMRI will reinforce London's role as a centre for the life sciences, research and development by bringing resources from the MRC, CRUK and UCL together and locating in close proximity to London's leading teaching hospitals and research institutions. Currently, scientists are based at Mill Hill, Clare Hall, Lincoln's Inn and within the wider Camden area. A convenient location is essential to manage the transition of scientists who will need to be relocated to the new Institute.



Figure 2-1: Aerial photograph of local area (indicative application site boundary)

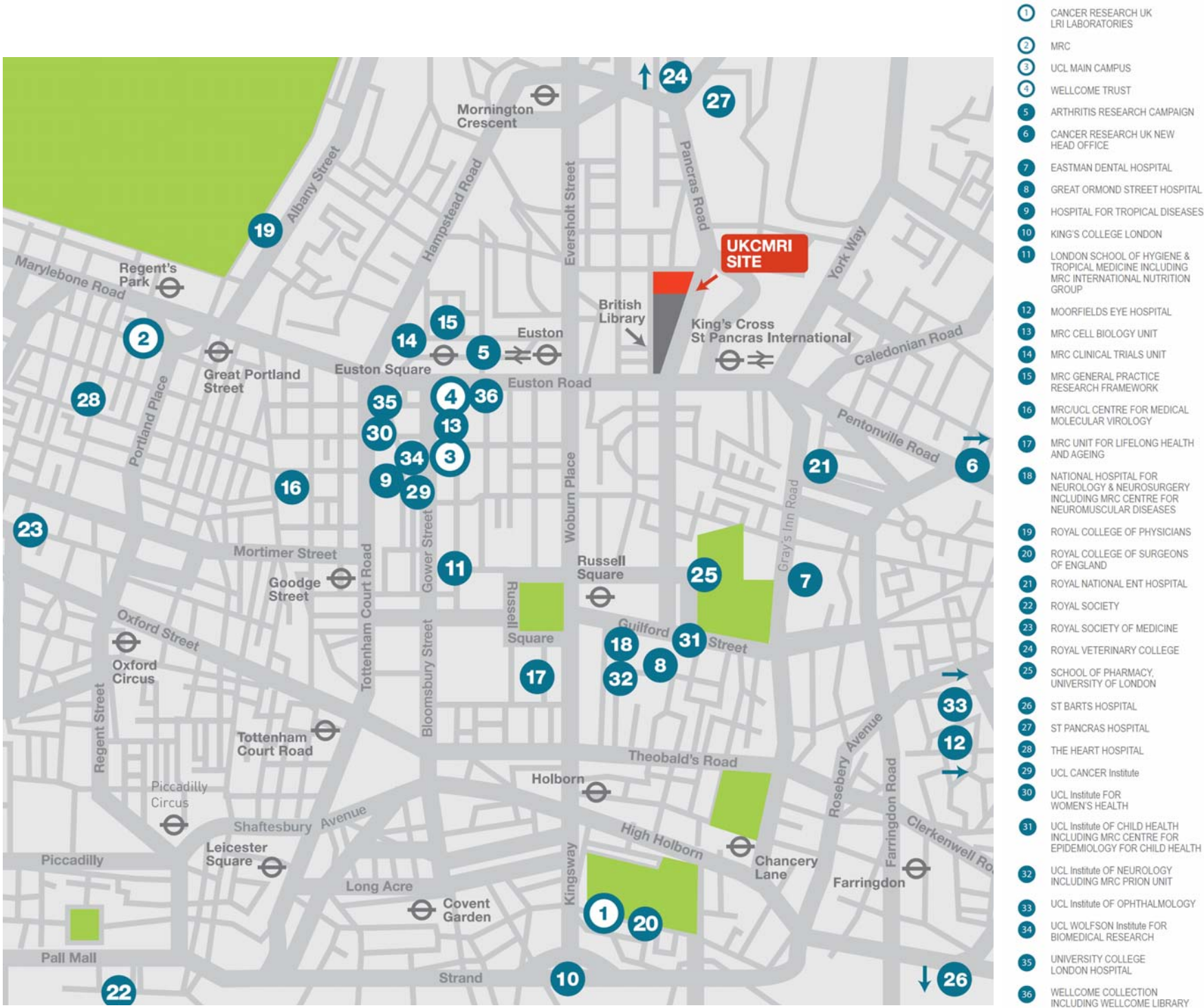
2.19
Why Camden?

The chosen site, at Brill Place, adjacent to St Pancras International and in close proximity to King's Cross and Euston stations (see Figure 2-1) is probably one of the most accessible locations by public transport in Europe. It offers excellent links to the UK, Europe and all major airports in the South East. In addition there are fast rail connections to most important UK cities. The local public transport connections are the best in London.

2.20
This unique location also has strong links to the local medical research sector, a concentration of renowned and complementary institutions and a host of other facilities and businesses located within the borough or in close proximity to the proposed development (see Figure 2-2). This includes:

- 16 major hospitals;
- 3 world-leading universities, with UCL and Imperial College both in the world top 10 universities for science and research;
- 16 Royal Medical Colleges (10 in Camden);
- Royal Society of Medicine (Westminster);
- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (Westminster)
- General Medical Council (Camden);
- British Medical Association (Camden);
- Cancer Research UK, the Wellcome Trust and other major medical charities;
- London Bioscience Innovation Centre (Camden Town) and over 30 biotech small and medium enterprises;
- NHS Innovations; and
- British Library.

2.21
Camden offers the necessary skill base across a range of health areas to support UKCMRI. It will be able to link directly with academic and medical facilities within central London to develop innovative new treatments.



CHAPTER 3.0

SITE & SURROUNDINGS

3.1

Introduction

This chapter describes the application site at Brill Place and its immediate and wider surroundings within the London Borough of Camden (LBC) in a geographical and spatial context. The Design and Access Statement provides analysis of the application site and surroundings having regard to the characteristics which have influenced the design of the proposed development.

3.2

The application site, including the access to the British Library, comprises 1.96 hectares. It is bound by Ossulston Street to the west, Brill Place to the north, Midland Road to the east and the British Library to the south (Figure 3-1). It is located between Euston and St Pancras International.

3.3

The application site comprises former railway sidings and is currently unoccupied, having been fully cleared in the 1980s. It was used temporarily as the site offices and storage depot associated with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) works (now HS1) but these temporary buildings were removed in early 2009. The application site itself was part of a larger site originally earmarked for the British Library expansion. However, as the latter's masterplan was scaled down the land became surplus to requirements and was subsequently released for disposal.

3.4

Currently, the application site is being used for a temporary urban garden project in association with the London Wildlife Trust. It houses, within a portacabin, a public exhibition on the UKCMRI project, which also forms part of the applicant's public consultation programme. The garden project is itself a response to suggestions made during public consultation that has been running since 2008.

3.5

The last built development on the application site was the Midland Railway's Somers Town Goods Depot, constructed in the 1880s. The depot became redundant in the 1950s and was largely dismantled in the 1960s. Today, part of the depot's perimeter wall survives along the north and west side of the application site. A more detailed planning history of both the application site and surroundings can be found in chapter 4 of this statement.



Figure 3-1: Existing site context with planning application boundary line

3.0 Site and Surroundings

3.6

Access

Currently, access to the application site is via former works entrances located on Brill Place.

3.7

The British Library has a temporary access route from Midland Road and an outstanding application for a new access from Ossulston Street. This application currently remains undetermined. The Council's preference is for the British Library's future access to be from Midland Road. An application for the permanent relocation of the temporary access to the site further to the south on Midland Road (reference 2010/4152/P) was submitted to the Council on 2 August 2010. For completeness, the provision of this new access is also included in the planning application for the proposed development.

3.8

The application site benefits from excellent public transport links and has Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) 6b. St Pancras International is approximately 50m to the east, King's Cross Station approximately 200m beyond and Euston Station is approximately 300m away to the west and west along Euston Road. These stations collectively provide links to international, national, suburban and local mainline and underground services. Additionally, a number of bus routes and stops are located along Euston Road, Midland Road and Pancras Road (Figure 3-2). Ossulston and Purchase Streets form part of the London Cycle Network.

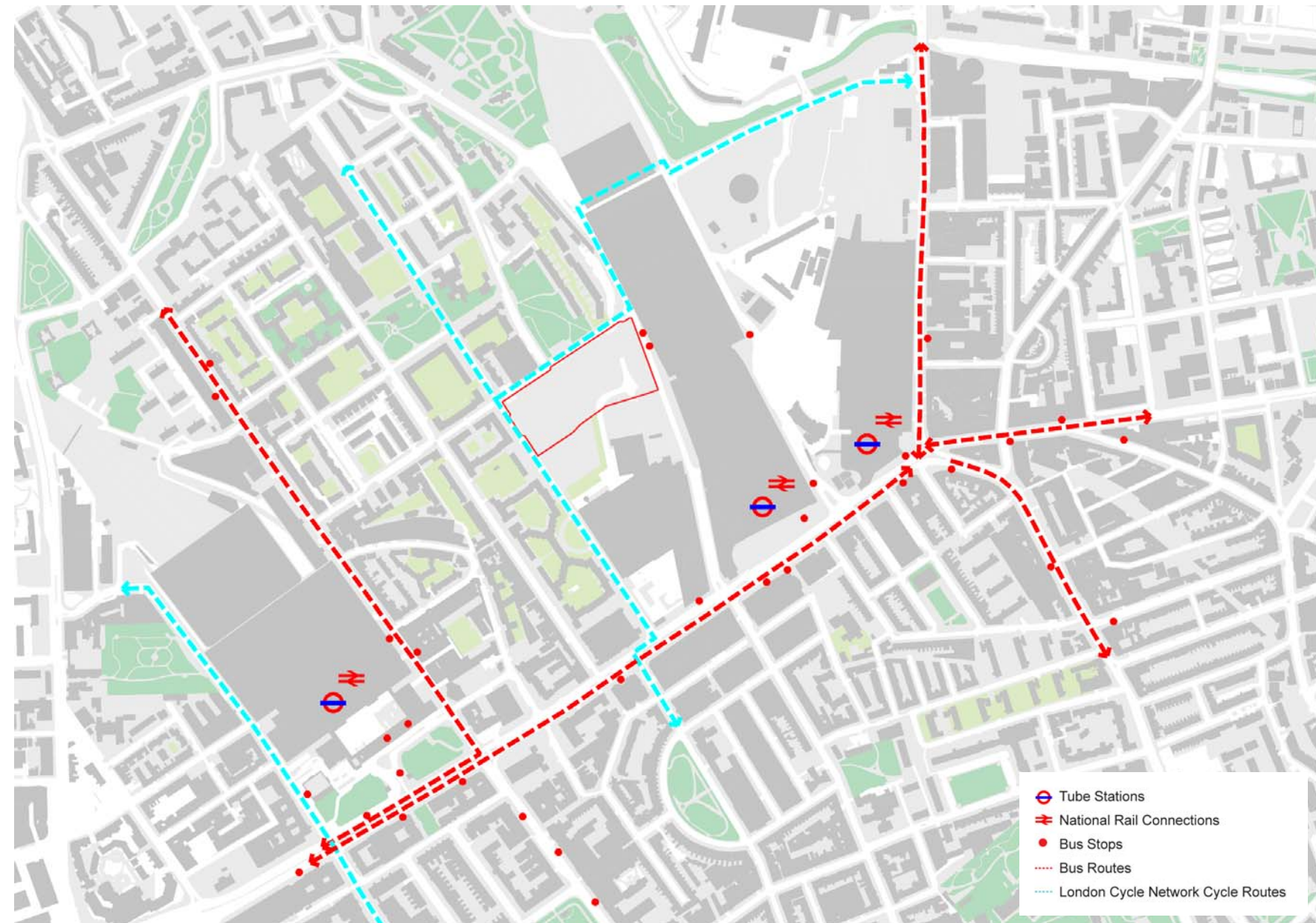


Figure 3-2: Surrounding Public Transport Links (including London Cycle Network)

3.9

The Surrounding Area

The application site is located in an area undergoing substantial regeneration. The surrounding urban pattern has been highly influenced by the station buildings of King's Cross, St Pancras International and Euston International, and their accompanying railways (see Chapter 4 of this statement for further detail).

3.10

To the north and west lies Somers Town, a predominantly residential community bounded by the Euston Road to the south, Midland Road/St Pancras Road to the east, Crowndale Road to the north and Eversholt Street to the west. To the south, along Euston Road the large, important public buildings and landmarks include the British Library. The area to the east, encompassing St Pancras International and King's Cross has been and is still subject to much development activity. Between St Pancras and King's Cross railway lines is the King's Cross Central development site which is described in more detail later and forms one of Europe's largest regeneration sites. To the west, Euston is also identified as an area suitable for mixed-use intensification. Proposals for the redevelopment of Euston Station are being developed by Network Rail for a second high speed rail link (HS2).

3.11

The application site is located adjacent to the King's Cross Conservation Area (Figure 3-8), whose boundary extends to include a small part of the north-eastern corner of the application site. The Grade I listed St Pancras Station and former Midland Grand Hotel (Figure 3-3) lie close to the application site. Other listed buildings immediately adjacent to the site are:

- Levita House (including attached shops) - Grade II (Figure 3-6);
- Chamberlain House (including shops 45-58 Phoenix Road) – Grade II (Figure 3-5); and
- Walker House Southern Block (including the Cock Tavern Public House) - Grade II (Figure 3-4).

Other listed buildings near to the application site include:

- King's Cross Station (north side) – Grade I (Figure 3-12);
- Camden Town Hall, Euston Road – Grade II (Figure 3-7);
- Great Northern Hotel – Grade II (Figure 3-13);
- 26 Pancras Road (German Gymnasium) – Grade II (Figure 3-11); and
- Pancras Road Arches, Pancras Road (west side) – Grade II (Figure 3-9).
- St Pancras Old Church, Pancras Road (east side) – Grade II* (Figure 3-10).



Figure 3-3: St Pancras and former Midland Hotel

3.0 Site and Surroundings



Figure 3-4: Walker House



Figure 3-9: Pancras Road Arches



Figure 3-5: Chamberlain House



Figure 3-6: Levita House



Figure 3-7: Camden Town Hall

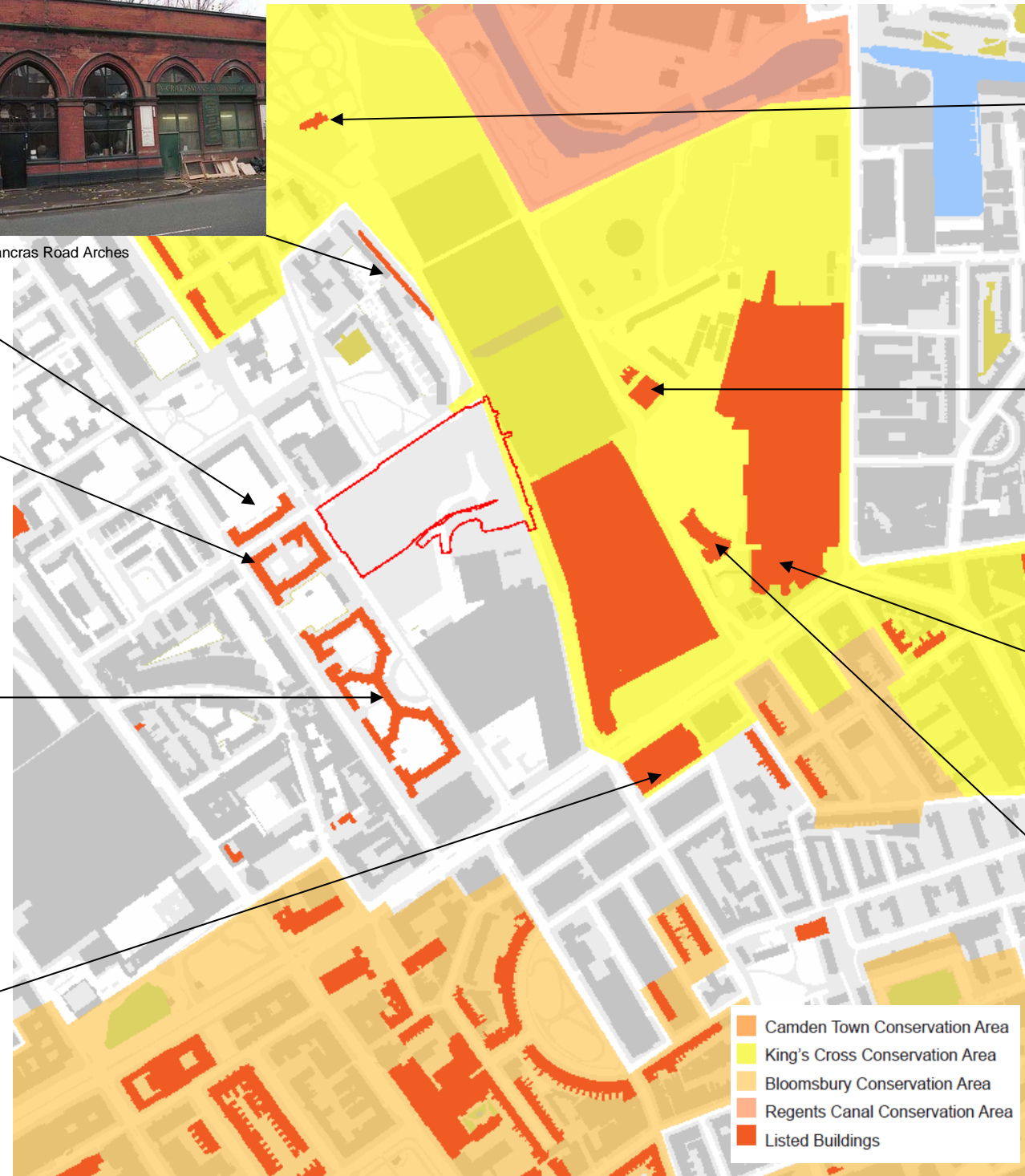


Figure 3-8: Surrounding Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings



Figure 3-10: St Pancras Old Church



Figure 3-11: 26 Pancras Road (German Gymnasium)



Figure 3-12: King's Cross Station



Figure 3-13: Great Northern Hotel

3.12
The Surrounding Area – West

Ossulston Street bounds the west of the application site and is characterised by residential buildings of between 4 and 7 storeys in height, including the Grade II listed Chamberlain and Levita Houses (Figure 3-14). The Chamberlain and Levita blocks comprise part of the larger Ossulston Estate developed in the ‘Viennese style’ during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The blocks are situated between Ossulston and Chalton Streets (which runs parallel and to the west of Ossulston Street). Hadstock House, constructed later during the 1960s stands between Chamberlain and Levita Houses and is not listed.

3.13
The Ossulston Estate extends to the north of Ossulston Street, and also includes the Grade II listed Walker House. The Estate comprises blocks of flats, configured generally around a courtyard intended to provide amenity space for the residents. They were designed with additional access from Chalton Street, the dual entrances enhancing permeability for residents and pedestrians.

3.14
Phoenix Road bisects the Ossulston Estate and has an active southern frontage providing some convenience retail and service facilities for local residents within the ground floor of the Chamberlain House block. Chalton Street (Figure 3-15) provides the main local shops and services and hosts a street market on Fridays.

3.15
West of Chalton Street is a more complex network of predominantly residential streets (Church Way, Doric Way and Drummond Crescent) forming the western edge of Somers Town. Further west Eversholt Street marks the divide between the residential area of Somers Town (on its east) and the more densely developed, commercially dominated area to the west around Euston Station.

3.16
Between Euston and St Pancras International Stations the main through route is the Phoenix Road / Brill Place axis (Figures 3-16). However, the north-south orientated Chalton Street and the residential blocks of Chamberlain, Levita and Hadstock House serve as barriers to east-west permeability. The residential blocks are all gated with courtyards behind which, although it is possible to walk through them, form the recreational space for residents. The only other route from Eversholt Street to Chalton Street is through a narrow alley between Doric Way and Drummond Crescent.



Fig 3-14: Levita House (Ossulston Street frontage)



Fig 3-15: Chalton Street (Looking North)



Fig 3-16: Phoenix Road



Fig 3-17: Monica Shaw Court

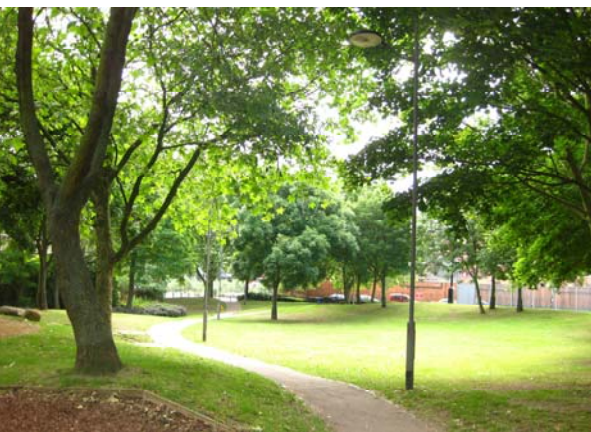


Fig 3-18: Purchase Street Open



Fig 3-19: Coopers Lane Estate

3.0 Site and Surroundings

3.17
The Surrounding Area – North

Opposite the application site's northern boundary, at its junction with Brill Place and Ossulston Street, are post-war residential blocks which rise up to five storeys in height. Monica Shaw Court (within which the Somers Town Community Centre is located) (Figure 3-17) is located on the edge of Brill Place at its junction with Purchase Street. The 1970s development comprises a mix of sheltered and private housing.

3.18
East of the junction of Brill Place and Purchase Street, is Purchase Street Open Space (Figure 3-18). This comprises both hard and soft landscaping including a multi-use games area for older children and a playground for the under 7s.

3.19
To the east of the Open Space the Coopers Lane Estate (Figure 3-19), with an introverted urban fabric, runs along Brill Place until it meets Midland Road (the application site's eastern perimeter). The four storey housing estate extends northwards to Chenies Place and links to the remainder of the Somers Town community beyond.

3.20
Further north, the area is predominantly residential in character, comprising the remainder of modern Somers Town, up to its northern boundary with Crowndale Road. It also houses community facilities and services including the Edith Neville Primary School.

3.21
The Surrounding Area – East
Across Midland Road is the Grade I listed St Pancras International Station with Barlow's Train Shed together with the new Foster and Partners designed extension. This forms a hub for Eurostar, national, commuter and underground railway links. Opposite the eastern edge of the application site are taxi ranks, bus stands and bus stops serving St Pancras International. Below ground, the Thameslink (St Pancras Station) box cut-and-cover tunnel passes under Midland Road and the north-eastern edge of the application site.

3.22
The Pancras Road arches and Barlow shed together provide a substantial structure of some 30 metres in height. The station buildings also comprise the edge of the King's Cross Conservation Area, which runs down Midland Road and steps in slightly at Brill Place to encompass a small part of the north east of the application site.

3.23
St Pancras International opened as the terminus for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) in 2007. As part of this the old St Pancras Station underwent significant refurbishment and expansion. The final stage of the station's restoration is approaching completion; St Pancras Chambers will provide 67 flats on the Euston Road frontage and a 244 bedroom hotel alongside the station on Midland Road.

3.24
The redevelopment of St Pancras International has helped provide the impetus for the regeneration of the wider King's Cross railway complex, which has been a strategic policy focus. Outline planning permission was granted in December 2006 (ref: (04/2307/P) for the 27 hectare brownfield site to the north of the St Pancras International/ King's Cross transport hub known as 'King's Cross Central'. Over the next ten to fifteen years it will create 743,200m² of mixed uses. Construction at the site is under way, with the first offices, homes and a university expected to be occupied by 2012 (Figure 3-20).

3.25
The Surrounding Area – South
The British Library site marks the southern boundary of the application site. The British Library building (completed in 1997) occupies the southern part of the site, and rises to a maximum height of 32 metres at its front elevation on Euston Road, and 30 m at its rear. The remaining undeveloped areas of the site are scheduled to be brought forward for development through a masterplan which is currently being prepared. The British Library have advised that this masterplan will consider the development of this land over the next 50 years.

3.26
Within the British Library site, the twin bores of the Victoria and Northern lines run approximately 10m below the surface.

3.27
To the south of the British Library is Euston Road. This area is defined by the entrance and forecourts of Euston, King's Cross and St Pancras International Stations, interspersed with high rise commercial, office and hotel buildings.

3.28
The Surrounding Area – Medical Context
Chapter 2 has already identified that Camden is a centre of medical excellence in both the UK and the world; with a large number of higher education, medical research institutions and Royal Medical Colleges being located within the Borough. In particular, University College Hospital is a

state of the art teaching hospital and is within walking distance.

3.29
The offices for the MRC and Wellcome Trust are also situated close to Euston Road as is the extensive complex of university buildings which form UCL and a large number of medical and academic institutes which are entwined with blocks of residential and student accommodation.