

CHAPTER 4.0

## PLANNING HISTORY



<p><b>4.1</b> <b>Introduction</b> This chapter assesses the planning history for the application site and examines the more general history of the urban evolution of the site and the surrounding area.</p> <p><b>4.2</b> <b>Planning History</b> The planning register confirms that the previous permanent use of the site was as a railway goods yard and coal depot. The first formal planning application was recorded in June 1950 for the erection of a small garage within the railways good yard (Ref: TP56280). A number of other similar applications are documented within the records, but none of these have any relationship to the proposals forming this application.</p> <p><b>4.3</b> An application for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Somers Town Goods Depot into a mix of residential, retail, hotel, public house, warehousing, petrol filling station and car parking was refused on 21st April 1970 (Ref: CTP/K13/4/8439). The decision notice states that the application was deemed to seriously prejudice the proper redevelopment of a larger site around King's Cross, then being initially considered for the British Library.</p> <p><b>4.4</b> As the British Library was developed, less than half of the Goods Depot site was used for the main building's footprint. Nevertheless, the application site was until recently retained as part of the British Library's masterplan. This application represents the first major redevelopment proposal for this brownfield site which has lain redundant since the depot closed in 1968, other than for temporary ancillary uses in conjunction with the adjoining station (in particular as a working site for the CTRL).</p> <p><b>4.5</b> <b>History of the Site and Surroundings</b> Development of the Somers Town area commenced in the 1780s. Prior to the first development, the application site appears to have comprised part of a far wider area of fields through which the River Fleet ran. During the eighteenth century the area was agricultural interspersed with small block buildings, churches, pubs and brick, tile and gas industries (Figures 4-1 and 4-2).</p> <p><b>4.6</b> During the early nineteenth century the area became suburban in character. The built up area was defined by the Grand Union Canal at the north (bisecting the area since the 1820s). The urban fabric generally consisted of a series of building blocks along New Road, now Euston Road, and along the intersection of Euston, Gray's Inn and King's Cross.</p>	<p>To the west, around what came to be Euston Station, the urban blocks comprised small terraced housing, established in a network of streets and squares.</p> <p><b>4.7</b> <b>'Railway Mania' and its urban legacy</b> From the mid-1800s the wider area surrounding the application site, stretching from King's Cross in the east to Euston in the west, became extensively shaped by construction of new railways and terminals (figure 4-3).</p> <p><b>4.8</b> Euston Station, then known as Euston Square, was one of the first London terminals when it opened in 1837, serving London and Birmingham. The rail lines approaching Euston were constructed at approximately ground level since the surrounding area was only moderately built up. New Road was by then well established, lined by buildings and crossed by a large residential square.</p> <p><b>4.9</b> The original Euston terminal was relatively small by comparison to the current one (rebuilt 1969). However, its influence was substantial. From 1881 Euston Road, along with Drummond Street to the west and the railway yards, were lined by large blocks of office buildings.</p>	<p><b>4.10</b> As passenger and freight demand for rail increased, operators sought to extend their connections to London. King's Cross and St Pancras Stations were also built on New Road, which had by then become the northern boundary of a restricted Central London area (set up by the Royal Commission on Railway Termini in 1846). By comparison to Euston, these later stations necessitated the demolition of many existing buildings in the area. King's Cross opened in 1852, and was built on the site of buildings belonging to the London Smallpox Hospital.</p> <p><b>4.11</b> St Pancras opened in 1868 as the hub for the Midland Railway, as its initial operation of sharing lines with Great Northern Railways from Hitchin into Euston (for freight) and King's Cross (for passengers) became unattractive and insufficient for their expanding ambitions and requirements. The new lines into St Pancras were to approach from the south of Camden Square through the deprived neighbourhoods of Agar Town, over Regent's Canal and the River Fleet, into the new terminus. The effects on the existing urban pattern and landscape were considerable. The Midland Railway obtained Parliamentary consent to demolish remaining housing in Agar Town in 1866, as well as St Luke's Church. In so doing much of the urban fabric surrounding the application site was also demolished.</p>
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Figure 4-1: Rocque, 1746

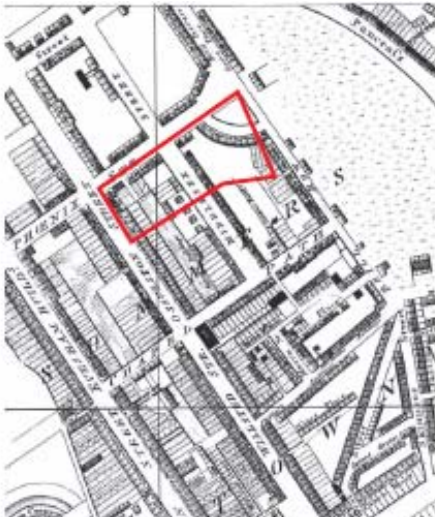


Figure 4-2: Horwood, 1799



Figure 4-3: Ordnance Survey, 1871



Figure 4-4: Ordnance Survey, 1893

4.0 Planning History

4.12

To accompany its new terminus, the Midland Railway acquired land to the west of St Pancras Station (both the application site and that of the British Library), for its Somers Town Goods Depot. By the Depot's opening in 1887, construction of St Pancras Station, including the Midland Grand Hotel (later St Pancras Chambers) was fully complete.

4.13

Early-Mid Twentieth Century

During the inter-war period the London County Council (LCC) began the construction of the Ossulston Street Estate to the west of the Somers Town Goods Depot. In 1927 the first block, Chamberlain House, was completed. By 1937 the Estate was complete, providing 514 new dwellings.

4.14

The application site and surrounding area suffered significant bomb damage during World War II when railways were a major target for enemy attack. The Somers Town Goods Depot was damaged by ordnance in September 1940. The LCC's Second World War bomb damage map also records that the western half of the application site was hit by a V1 flying bomb.

4.15

Post-war construction and the decline of Coal Freight

Following the war the Somers Town Goods Depot was never fully restored. As freight was increasingly carried by road during the 1950s, the depot became redundant. In 1966 the British Transport Consortium put forward proposals to demolish King's Cross and St Pancras stations: permission was refused. The Depot closed in 1968, and was subsequently largely dismantled.

4.16

During the late 1960s and 1970s a series of new estates were permitted on disused former rail land to the north of the application site, to accommodate London's increasing population.

4.17

In 1974 the site of the former Somers Town Goods Depot was formally designated by the Government as the site of the new British Library. In 1978 the scheme was given the go-ahead. The site was mostly cleared in the 1980s, though only part of the site came to be occupied by the British Library building (completed in 1997). The application site was declared surplus to the requirements of the British Library in 2005 and was offered for sale by the Government in 2007.



Figure 4-5: King's Cross June 1957



Figure 4-6: Ordnance Survey, 1916.



Figure 4-7: Ordnance Survey, 1973-1976



Figure 4-8: Ordnance Survey 1992-1994



Figure 4-9 to 4-12: Historic images of site and surroundings, London Metropolitan Archives



### 4.18

#### Rail land regeneration

With Euston rebuilt and housing estates completed to the north west of the site, King's Cross Railway Lands became the next focus for regeneration. However this was stalled for many years whilst proposals for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) were considered. In 1982 the first proposals for CTRL emerged and King's Cross was put forward as the proposed terminus. The station along with St Pancras had been safeguarded from demolition by its English Heritage listing.

### 4.19

In June 1988, the London & Continental Railways (LCR) was selected by British Rail to develop the CTRL station at King's Cross. However, due to reasons related to the high costs of providing a large underground concourse, this scheme was abandoned in 1994 when the Government decided to promote an alternative scheme with a terminus at St Pancras.

### 4.20

Development proposals for the King's Cross Railway Lands were advanced in the early years of the next decade and outline proposals were prepared by the landowners (LCR and Exel) and their development partner Argent (King's Cross) Ltd. Outline Planning Permission for the 27 hectare King's Cross Central site was granted in December 2006.

### 4.21

The application site became available on the open market in June 2007 as the land, then owned by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), was declared surplus to Government requirements. UKCMRI, represented by the Wellcome Trust, made a formal offer to acquire the site. DCMS accepted the offer and legal completion occurred on 13 June 2008. The Wellcome Trust Limited now holds the property in trust on behalf of the MRC, CR-UK, the Wellcome Trust and UCL.



Figure 4-13: King's Cross Central Illustrative Masterplan



CHAPTER 5.0

## THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT





5.1

Introduction

This chapter describes the proposed development. A detailed description of the design and architectural form, including its evolution, is set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This includes a description of the materials and façade treatment and the design relationship of the proposal to its surroundings. A Transport Assessment also accompanies this application and this deals with all relevant highway matters, in particular the operational servicing strategy for the proposed development.

5.2

The Proposed Development

The application seeks detailed planning permission for:

“Development to provide a biomedical research centre including laboratory and research space, lecturing and teaching space, exhibition space and a community facility; landscaped public open spaces; a new pedestrian route between Midland Road and Ossulston Street; and new vehicular access from Midland Road.”

5.3

The application includes the proposed new British Library access road, which comprises enabling works in relation to both the Proposed Development and the British Library’s developing Masterplan for their site. Although the subject of a separate planning application (Reference 2010/4153/P) it is included within this application for completeness.

5.4

In planning terms, the proposed development fulfils two distinct functions. It creates a unique platform for biomedical research and innovation and contributes to the regeneration of a long neglected fragment of London’s urban fabric.



Figure 5-1: The proposed development, view from St Pancras International, Midland Road

5.5

Floorspace

The area of the proposed research centre building comprises 91,287m<sup>2</sup> gross external area (GEA), distributed over 10 floors. The floor to floor heights are 5.0 m but the ground storey in the north east and part of the north west block is double storey height. Above ground the building is ground plus 7 floors. There are 2 basements each with a mezzanine level. The floorspace comprises:

Level	m <sup>2</sup>	ft <sup>2</sup>
-2	8,108	87,242
-2Mezz	6,351	68,337
-1	11,638	125,225
-1Mezz	8,149	87,683
Below Ground Total	34,246	368,487
0	9,314	100,219
1	5,056	54,403
2	9,272	99,767
3	9,103	97,948
4	9,096	97,873
5	8,159	87,791
6	5,276	56,770
7	1,765	18,991
Above Ground Total	57,041	613,761
Total	91,287	982,248

Table 5-1: Proposed research centre building GEA

5.6

Uses

The proposed development provides two distinct types of research space: two large, deep-plan basement spaces (floors -2 to -1M) for highly serviced, specialist research and four blocks of accommodation on several floors that encourage natural light and visibility (floors 2-5). The laboratories can be arranged in many different configurations of primary and secondary research spaces, fulfilling the requirement for adaptability.

5.7

The ground floor provides accommodation for the reception, meeting rooms, 450 seat auditorium, exhibition space and a teaching laboratory all of which can be accessed by the public. Deeper into the plan and past security is the staff restaurant and the base of the north-south atrium which provides casual meeting space and access to the lifts. To the west end of the building is the loading bay and logistics handling area. Active usages on the ground floor enable the proposed development to engage with all street frontages. These are set out in Table 5-2 and Figure 5-3.

Ground Floor Use	m <sup>2</sup>	ft <sup>2</sup>
Community (Ground and First)	462	4,971
Service	2,115	22,757
Circulation	1,293	13,913
Kitchen & Dining	1,436	15,451
Support	2,166	23,306
Lecture & Exhibition	1,273	13,697
Teaching	105	1,129
Seminar	670	7,209
Total	9,520	102,435

Table 5-2: Ground Floor Uses

5.8

The first floor carries administrative offices and a resource centre. This level also accommodates the western end entrance as the lifts rise from the ground level and discharge at the base of the east-west atrium.

5.9

The upper floors largely contain laboratories and plant.



Figure 5-2: The proposed development, view from St Pancras International, Midland Road

## 5.0 The Proposed Development



Figure 5-3: Ground and first floors



5.10

Design

The design of the proposed development is explained fully in the Design and Access Statement.

5.11

The design of the building has been informed by its context. The development creates an active and welcoming public realm which blends smoothly into its surroundings. The main entrance of UKCMRI is located on the eastern elevation facing Midland Road and the western entrance of St Pancras International Station.

5.12

The functions within and around the institute engage and enliven the evolving context of planned regeneration in the area. As set out above, active usages make up the majority of the ground floor enabling the institute to engage with all street frontages. The adjacency to King's Cross Central and future British Library masterplan will further assist in regenerating the area.

5.13

The massing is designed to blend into the low rise residential context of Somers Town on Brill Place and Ossulston Street. The south elevation adjacent to the British Library and east elevation facing St Pancras International step up to greet these more civic buildings.

5.14

The articulated roof forms a key part of the architectural expression of buildings around the site, with particular reference to St Pancras International with the steeply pitched roof of Scott's Midland Hotel contrasted against the powerful low vault of the Barlow Shed to its north.

5.15

Transport, Servicing and Access

The proposed development will be car-free with the exception of the provision of 5 disabled parking bays (2 staff spaces and 3 visitor spaces). 173 secure cycle spaces will be provided for staff and 26 for visitors.

5.16

The proposed development is served by a loading bay which takes access from the western end of Brill Place in accordance with the recommendations of the highways authorities.

5.17

The proposed development has taken into full consideration CABE's principles for inclusive design and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It is designed to be used safely and independently by all.

5.18

Sustainability

The proposed development incorporates sustainability features including combined heat and power (CHP), a 365 m<sup>2</sup> brown roofs and approximately 1,700 m<sup>2</sup> of photovoltaic cells to achieve a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

5.19

The proposed development has been designed to comply with Building Regulations 2010 Part L, which involves a 25% improvement in CO<sub>2</sub> emission over the 2006 Building Regulations. It is expected to achieve an 'Excellent' BREEAM rating (including the LB Camden targets of 60% for energy credits, 40% of the materials credits, and 60% of the water credits). Full details on the proposed development's environmental and sustainability credentials are set out in detail in the ES.

5.20

Public Realm

The proposed development will improve the existing public realm through:

- a public space fronting the main entrance on Midland Road;
- a courtyard garden with a lawn framed by trees and benches on Ossulston Street;
- active ground floor frontages along Brill Place, Midland Road and Ossulston Street, the existing highway frontages;
- a new pedestrian route to the south of the main building between Midland Road and Ossulston Street (this will be subject to conclusion of a walkways agreement); and
- a contribution to the enhancement of open space in the vicinity.

5.21

The total amount of new open space introduced by the proposed development will equate to approximately 0.48 hectares.

5.22

Community Engagement

UKCMRI has already conducted widespread consultation over the last two and a half years with statutory bodies, the local community and other stakeholders. This has had a significant influence on the design of the proposed development and is set out in detail in the Design and Access Statement. A summary of the pre-application responses is set out at Appendix E.

5.23

It is proposed that the local community will continue to be involved in the life of the Institute through an extensive programme of public engagement with science. In addition to a designated community facility (of circa

400m<sup>2</sup>), other facilities will be available for public use, including an auditorium, exhibition space and a teaching laboratory.

5.24

UKCMRI will work with local schools and community youth groups to foster enthusiasm for science and medicine and to inspire students, preparing them for potential future employment. UKCMRI's educational outreach will include:

- staff volunteering policy for working in local schools;
- private views of UKCMRI exhibitions; and
- "open house" sessions for teachers and students on the work of UKCMRI.

5.25

UKCMRI will support training and education for employment, including:

- funding training associated with the construction of the building including an apprenticeship programme;
- provision of training to give members of the local community the opportunity to work within the Institute (it is estimated that there will be between 400 – 700 new posts); and
- priority notification to the local community of job opportunities.



Figure 5-4: The proposed development, looking east from Phoenix Road

