



King's Cross Central General Partner Ltd  
Aries GNH (GP) Ltd

# Great Northern Hotel Full Conservation Plan

June 2010





G R E A T

N O R T H E R N

H O T E L

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EXTRAGUARD

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The Great Northern Hotel is a Grade II Listed Building (listed in 1984) designed by Lewis Cubitt and completed in 1854. The Hotel is located at the southern end of Pancras Road close to its junction with Euston Road. It is built on a curved plan, originally following the alignment of Old St Pancras Road, now Pancras Road.

The Great Northern Hotel currently stands empty having undergone recent substantial works. These included demolition of non original extensions, substantial basement and ground floor structural works to create a new Arcade and more recently agreed early work to strip out non-historic fabric.

This Conservation Plan supports the submission of details for planning approval (following Outline Planning Consent Ref: 2004/2307/P) and a new Listed Building consent application, prepared by King's Cross Central General Partner Ltd and Aries GNH (GP) Ltd for the Great Northern Hotel. The proposed scheme will refurbish and restore the Great Northern Hotel, to provide 93 guestrooms, together with public bar, retail and ancillary facilities at basement and ground floor levels, a dining room at first floor and light refurbishment works to exterior elevations.

This Full Conservation Plan builds upon the historic research and refurbishment parameters set out in the preceding Initial and Intermediate Conservation Plans, submitted as part of the Main King's Cross Central applications in 2004 and 2006 Arcade works applications respectively. It has been updated from its 'intermediate' status to 'full' status to support the current application and now represents a detailed refurbishment scheme for the Great Northern Hotel.

**Section 1** summarises the history of the Great Northern Hotel and puts it in today's context.

**Section 2** is intended to help understand and evaluate the significance of the asset. It uses the high-quality survey, investigation and recording material from the Initial Conservation Plan, supplemented and updated where new information has become available. Some of the more detailed description of each building has been put in **Appendix A**.

**Section 3** records the earlier objectives and aspirations and proposals, and then sets out in detail the full proposals. These proposals have evolved from a detailed understanding of the heritage resource and a passion to ensure that new use and structural changes will ensure the conservation and future management of the building and its setting.

**Section 4** identifies the conservation factors, objectives and principles that will be followed in the refurbishment, future use and management of the Great Northern Hotel.

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Appendix 01 Historic Building Description

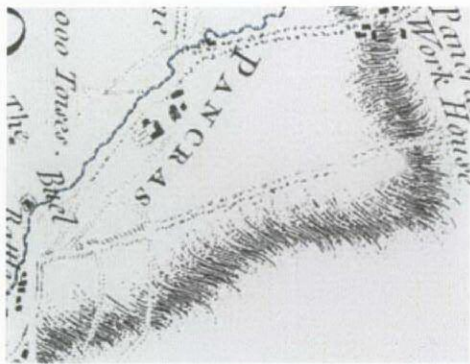
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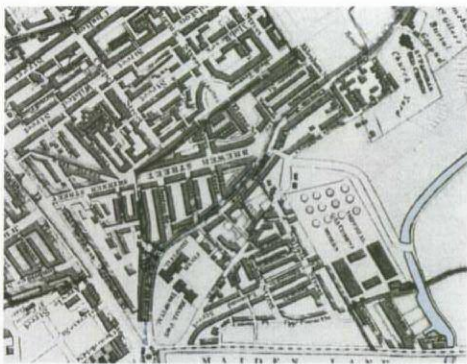


# 1.1 Site history

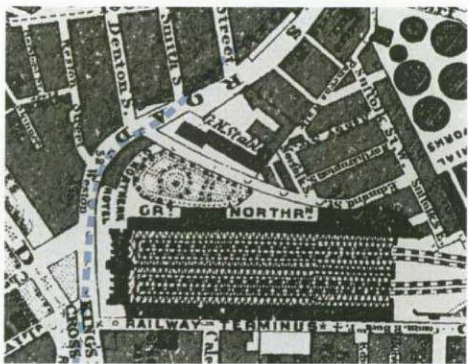
The Great Northern Hotel was constructed during 1853-4 on the site of a Smallpox Hospital, as part of the development of the Great Northern Railway's King's Cross Station. Its curved geometry indicates the former alignment of Pancras Road and the course of the River Fleet. In 1868, the Midland Railway Company completed St Pancras Station and Pancras Road was re-aligned. Since this date, the relationship between the hotel and King's Cross Station has remained, although the formal gardens have been lost. The Hotel appears to turn its back on St Pancras and its relationship with Pancras Road is diminished.



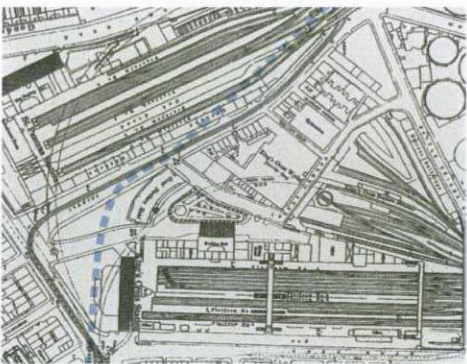
Site 1766



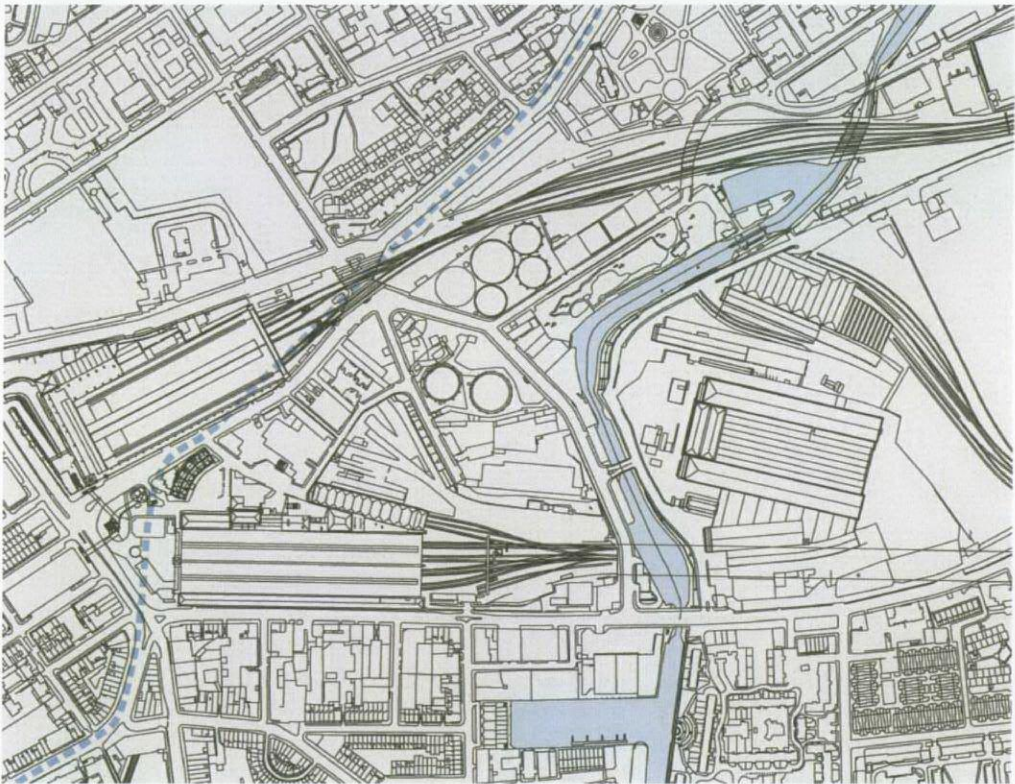
Site 1834



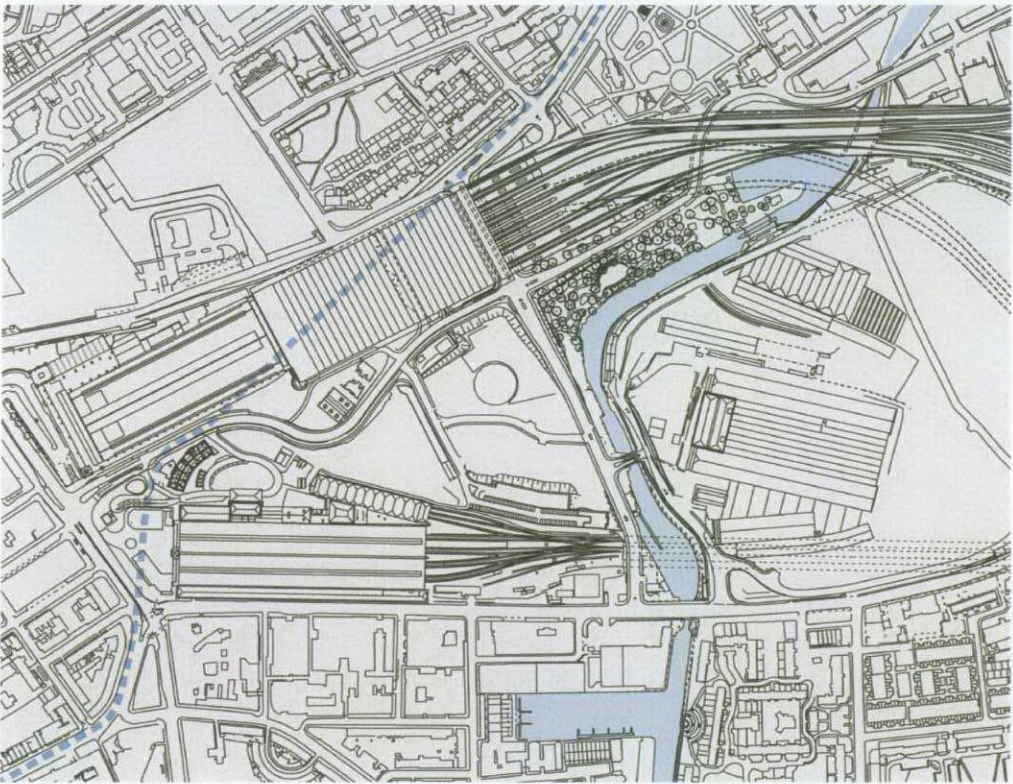
Site 1862



Site 1894



Site 1999



Site 2007

# 1.0 Site context





(above) Relationship between St Pancras Station, the Great Northern Hotel, and Kings Cross Station



(above) Kings Cross Central



(above) Early computer rendered image of Kings Cross Station Western Concourse  
Images taken from the Intermediate Conservation Plan

## 1.2 Site context in 2010

The first phase of works to the Great Northern Hotel comprising the demolition of Twentieth Century extensions to the south-west and north-west extensions and Arcade Works were completed in November 2009.

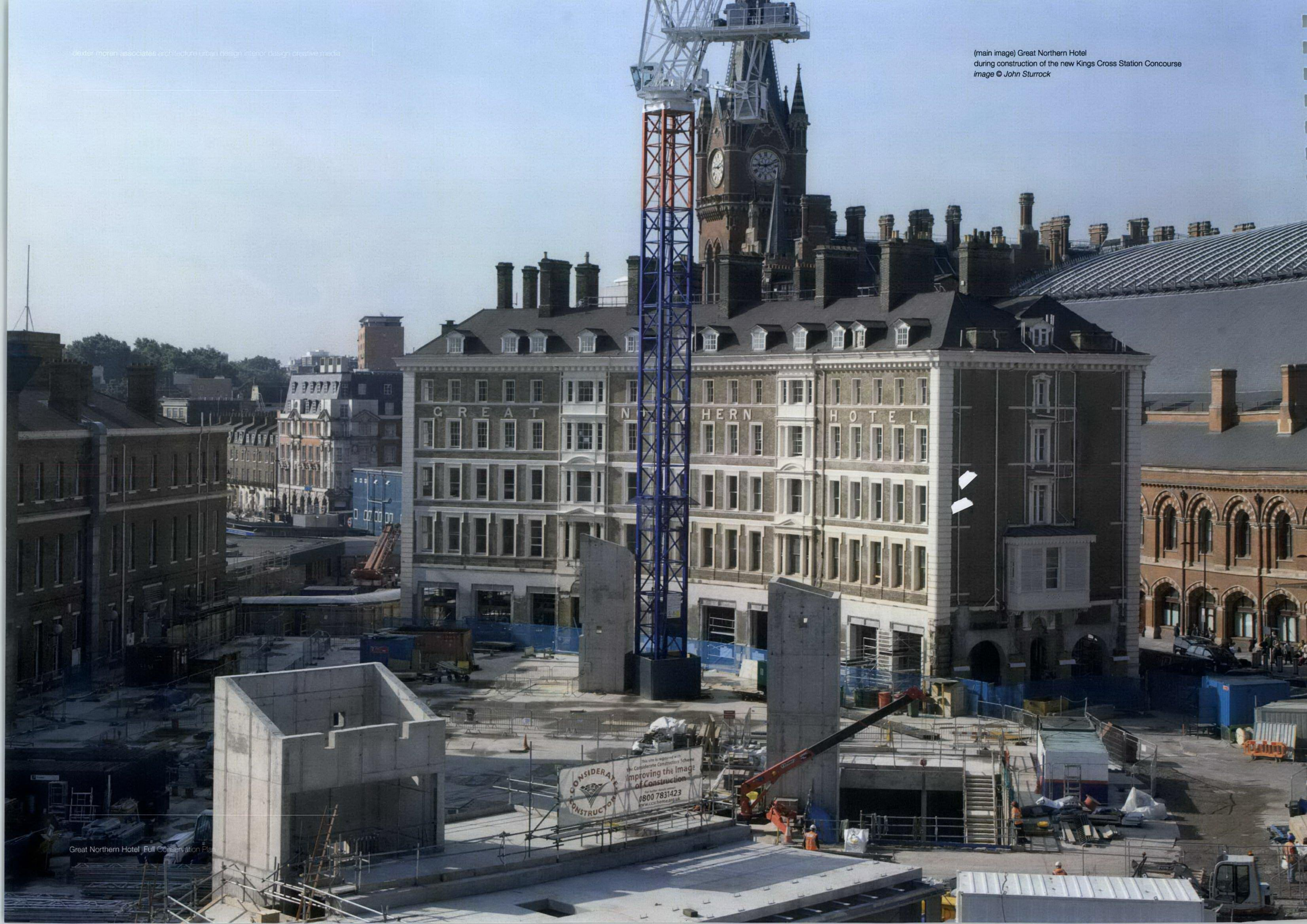
The land between the hotel and King's Cross Station remains a construction site for Network Rail's Station enhancement works which includes the construction of the new Western Concourse ticket hall and provision of new taxi facilities.

## 1.3 Kings Cross Central

London Borough of Camden granted outline planning permission ('the Outline Planning Permission') and related consents for Kings Cross Central in December 2006. The scheme will regenerate the whole area (nearly 27 hectares) over the next 10-15 years. Construction is already well underway and the demolition and arcade works to the Great Northern Hotel are already complete. Argent (Kings Cross) Ltd and its development partners are transforming the disused and derelict 'railway lands' into a vibrant urban quarter through the provision of a new, high quality public realm and buildings, whilst preserving, retaining and reusing the most important heritage structures on the site.

## 1.0 Site context







## 2.1 Introduction

The Great Northern Hotel is the southernmost building of King's Cross Central, located between King's Cross and St Pancras train stations. Built during 1853-54, it was designed by Lewis Cubitt for the Great Northern Railways terminus at King's Cross and is a Grade II listed building.

The original setting of the building, including the Old St Pancras Road that defined its curved shape and the Garden that sat between the entrance to the hotel and the Western Range of King's Cross Station, has now been lost and the hotel is the last remnant of the urban structure of this time.

As part of the wider King's Cross Central development, the Grade II listed hotel will form a significant part of the southern gateway to the area. The new Western Station Concourse and Great Northern Arcade will facilitate pedestrian movement between the stations, Euston Road and King's Cross Central development and re-unite the Great Northern Hotel's relationship with King's Cross Station. The refurbishment and re-use as a hotel will allow for active uses especially at ground level that will influence the way pedestrians in particular will use and move through the site, and interact closely with the hotel and proposed retail facilities.

## 2.2 Methodology & surveys

The Great Northern Hotel was assessed for consideration of its heritage value in the base line surveys that formed part of the 2004 Outline Planning Application (Ref: 2004/2307/P). That work was used to inform the Initial Conservation Plan for the Great Northern Hotel which gave a better understanding of the important features that should remain and the scale and type of changes that were likely to be needed to bring this heritage building back into beneficial use.

The subsequent proposals for the Great Northern Arcade works that arose as a consequence of the Western Concourse proposals resulted in an Intermediate Conservation Plan being produced which built upon the historical research and refurbishment parameters set out in the Initial Conservation Plan. In order to fully understand the asset, this Conservation Plan reproduces information from the Initial and Intermediate Conservation Plans, and then adds to it. In particular this chapter identifies the additional surveys that have been undertaken whilst the next chapter sets out full details of the proposals that have evolved.

In order to bring forward detailed proposals extensive new surveys have been carried out:

- **Building Measurement / Survey:** All of the building was accurately measured prior to the Arcade works being undertaken. A further survey is currently being undertaken now that the agreed internal strip-out works are complete.

- **Heritage:** Although a baseline heritage survey was undertaken prior to the submission of the Outline Planning Application, a more detailed Building Recording and Analysis scheme has been undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited to satisfy conditions imposed by the Outline Planning Permission (Condition 55) and Planning and Listed Building consents for the demolition of the extensions and Arcade works. The building recording survey was carried out in two phases from 8 to 25 October 2007 and from 11 to 23 January 2008 in advance of the demolition of the extensions and enabling works to the lower floors of the main Hotel block to implement the Arcade Works. The work comprised measured surveys of the Great Northern Hotel, a historic narrative and photographic recording. The work has been carried out as far as the ceiling of the fifth floor, with further recording to be carried out to the attic and roof once access is feasible.

Further Historical Surveys has been undertaken by the project Architects (Dexter Moren Associates and David Archer Architects) and Heritage Expert, Giles Quarme Associates. These surveys have included:

- Architectural Salvage Survey & Schedule
- Historical study for replacement window sashes to 6 over 6 sashes.

- **Structural and Materials Investigation of Existing Building:** To assess opportunities to conserve the existing fabric, further investigative work has been undertaken to add to the information already documented. The tests and investigations have included the following:

- Brickwork strength testing;
- Inspection of cast iron frames within walls and floors;
- Opening up works to establish construction and support of the jack arches;
- Opening up works to determine extent of Portland stone slabs and their interface with the staircases;
  - Review of calculations for the arcade works to determine if any impact might have arisen to upper floors not being part of the works;
- Chimney flue survey including establishing extent of damage caused by sulphate reaction;
- Roof structure inspection;
- Timber condition survey;
- Penetrating damp survey;

- Investigation of walls at proposed new doorway locations;
- Basement brickwork moisture content;
- Investigation of oriel window; and, survey of level 2 transfer beam to allow removal of walls within first floor dining area;
- Acoustic surveys.

- **Hazardous and Deleterious Materials:** A Type 3 asbestos survey, plaster testing for anthrax and paint testing for lead content have all been carried out and future further surveys are planned.

- **Camley Street / Fleet Sewer:** A CCTV survey has been undertaken to identify the location and condition of the existing sewer.

- **Baseline Noise:** This survey was undertaken for the whole of King's Cross Central to meet the requirement of condition 59 attached to Outline Planning Permission.

- **Unexploded Ordnance:** This survey was undertaken for the whole of King's Cross Central to meet the requirements of condition 68 attached to the Outline Planning Permission.

This list enumerates surveys that have been commissioned to date, as deemed necessary or appropriate at this stage of the design process. As detailed design progresses further surveys will be undertaken to continue to inform the historical analysis and ensure that the work being specified meets the high standards required for the refurbishment and re-use of the Great Northern Hotel.

## 2.3 Assessment of significance

### The Heritage Importance of the Great Northern Hotel

#### Architecture and Fabric

The Great Northern Hotel is an early surviving example of a purpose-built railway hotel. Italianate in its design in yellow stock brick and stucco, and only slightly altered, it resonates with other designs by its architect, Lewis Cubitt - the nearby King's Cross terminus, and his large-scale residential elevations in Belgravia.

The building developed a new scale for a hotel in both length and height, but Cubitt successfully articulated what could otherwise have been repetitive and bland façades, through the restrained but considered use of stucco for string courses, pilaster strips, and as mouldings around door and window openings.

The result, although more ornate than his adjacent station, has none of the fussiness of much subsequent Victorian work. As such, it is a well-balanced and original composition.

The pronounced asymmetry of the building, with its off-centre main entrance (now removed as part of the arcade works), was a response to the asymmetry of the Western Range Buildings, both weighted towards the Euston Road and the passenger facilities at the southern end of the station. It also provided a direct line of sight between the hotel entrance and the Booking Office entrance, which would have been obscured by the gardens had the hotel entrance been sited centrally.

Pressure on toilet and washing facilities in the station resulted in the hotel's footprint being expanded rather uncomfortably at the beginning of the 20th century by the construction of two-storey extensions on both the south west and north west elevations. The prominent steel fire escape on the south west elevation was a further uncomfortable addition.

#### Setting

The curved plan form and the orientation of the building offer the sole remaining evidence of the street pattern at the time of construction, before Pancras Road was realigned as a straight thoroughfare down the east side of St Pancras Station. The north-east elevation of the hotel focuses onto the entrance of the former Station Booking Office.

The enclosure of the triangular space to the west of the station, including the hotel together with gardens to the north (now lost), was originally a clearly integrated whole. It offered an efficient layout for road vehicles, and also a sense of privacy.

The setting of Cubitt's relatively plain Italianate terminus and hotel, immediately alongside the exuberant neo-Gothic St Pancras Station and its hotel by Scott and Barlow, is a juxtaposition possibly without comparison in early railway architecture.

The hotel makes an important contribution to the King's Cross Conservation Area, particularly in its association with the main line stations, both evoking 19th century railway development.

#### Significance related to type

The Great Northern Hotel is among the earliest surviving purpose-built railway hotels, contemporary with the Great Western Royal Hotel at Paddington but retaining more of its original character both externally and internally.

#### Significance related to intangibles

The hotel retains a close relationship with King's Cross terminus, and effectively enfolds the space between this and the hotel.

# 2.0 Understanding the asset



## 2.4 Notable features

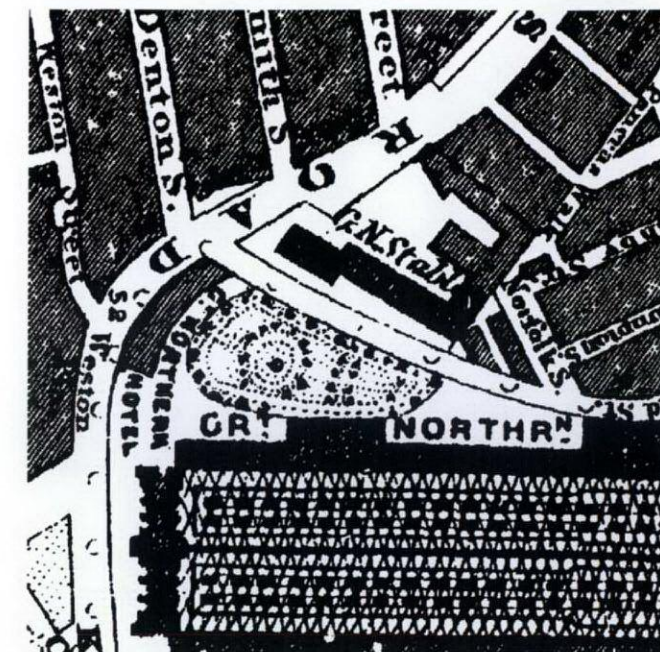
The notable features of the Great Northern Hotel and its history are listed below, and highlighted in the images adjacent and plans and elevations overleaf.

1. The Great Northern Hotel is an early (1854) surviving example of a purpose-built railway hotel;
2. The hotel was of a new scale for such a building of this period;
3. The hotel is competently articulated in Italianate neo-Classical style, as adopted for the adjacent mainline terminus, by the architect of both buildings, Lewis Cubitt, but is more domestic in feeling;
4. The hotel's position is relatively unusual for a terminus station hotel in not being sited across the head of the railway tracks (as for example St Pancras);
5. The building is symmetrical and its form is made up of three parts; a central radial section and two orthogonal sections at either end;
6. The actual siting and partly curved plan form is dictated by the former street pattern (now vanished);

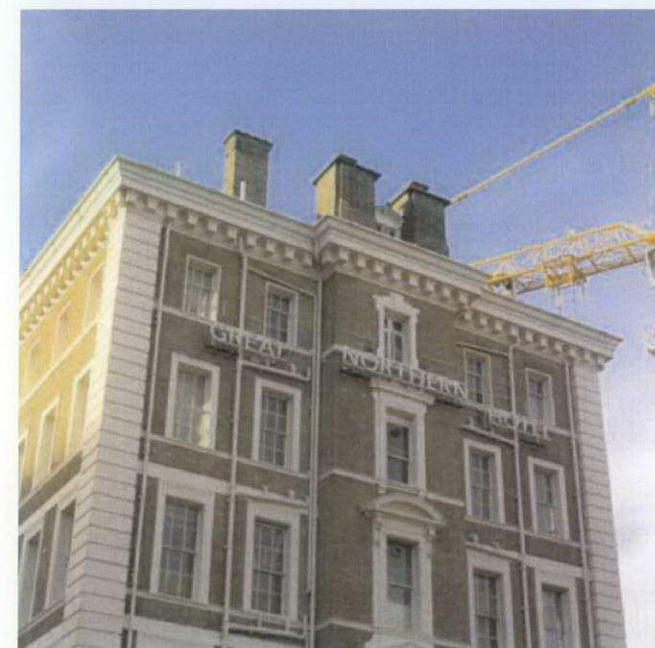
7. The original layout of hotel, gardens to north (now lost), and carriage roads serving the station and hotel were an integrated whole contained within the railway company's available triangular site, immediately west of the station;
8. The hotel is a tall, relatively slender block topped by numerous tall chimney stacks (some later modified);
9. The building's structure is primarily load bearing masonry external walls and internal long and cross walls;
10. Floors would appear to be constructed from cast iron girders, brick arches, with timber boards over;
11. Elevational treatment is of yellow stock brick relieved by restrained but considered use of stucco string courses, pilaster strips and architraves (some later modified);
12. Two original stone staircases provide vertical circulation. These make a significant contribution to the building's internal character; and
13. The juxtaposition of Cubitt's soberly dressed hotel and station (in plain style) with the neo-Gothic exuberance of St Pancras Station and its Midland Grand Hotel, provides an unrivalled contrast in Victorian railway architectural styles.



3



6 & 7

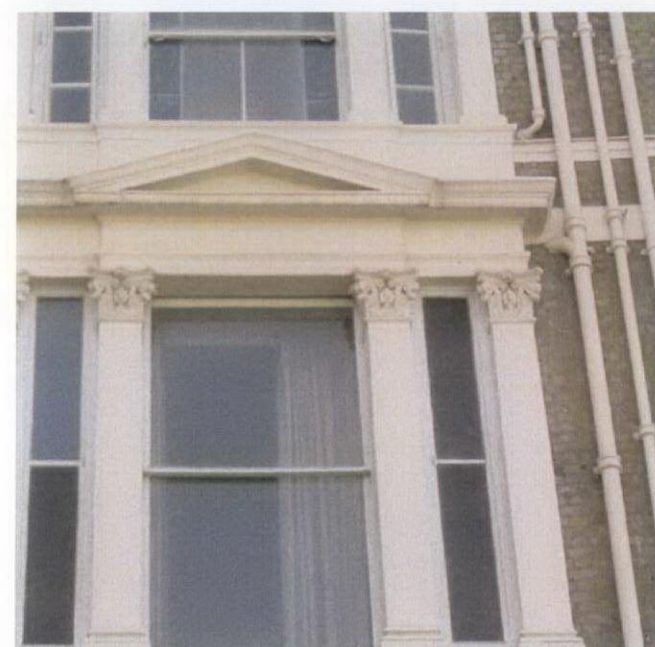


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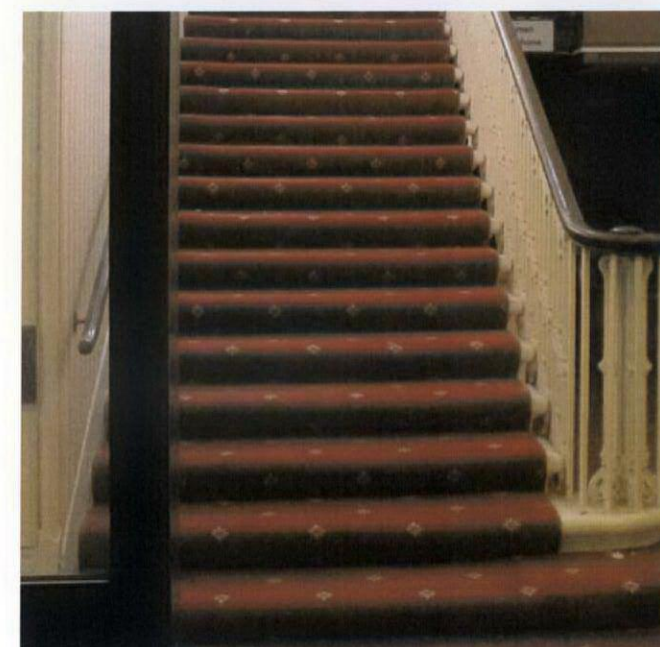


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## 2.0 Understanding the asset

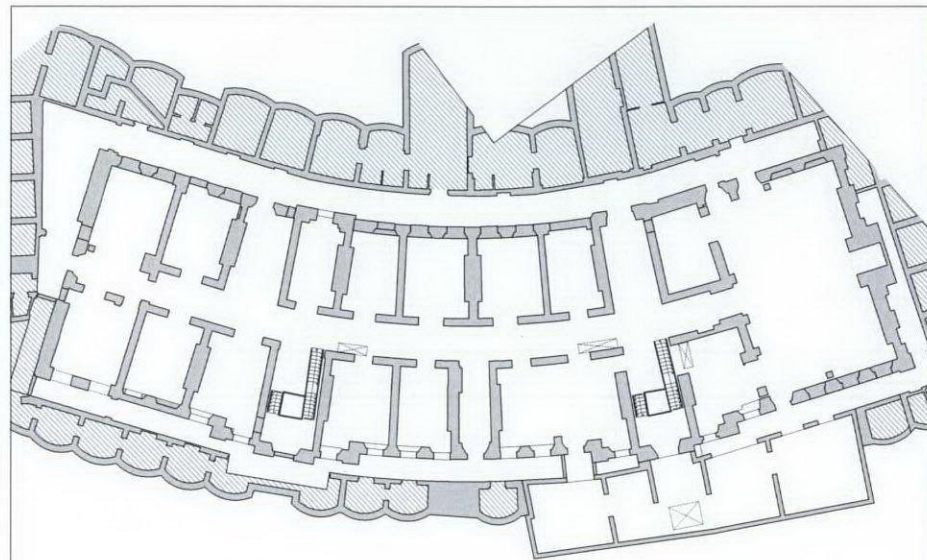


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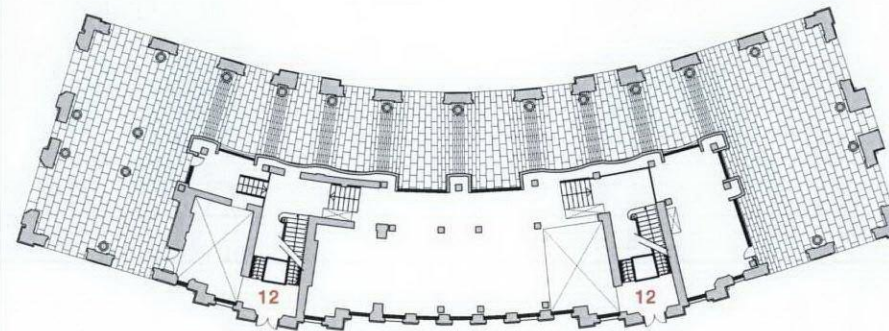


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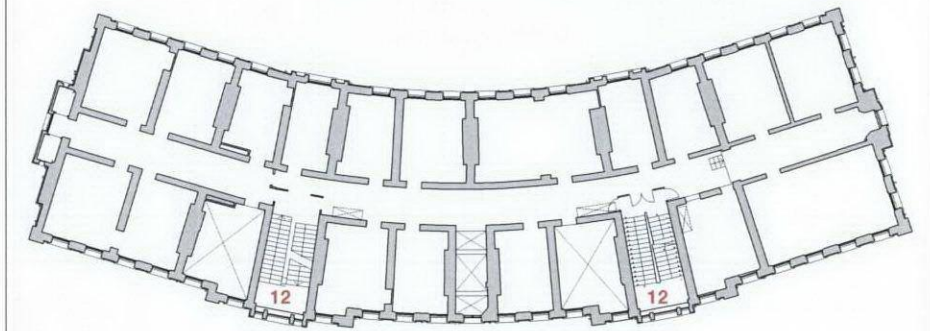




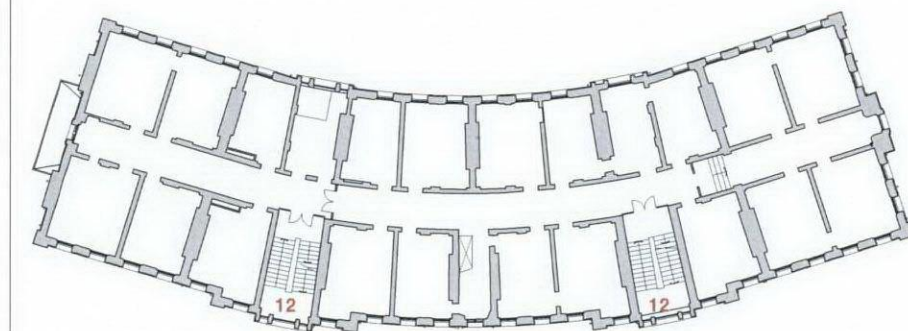
Existing Basement



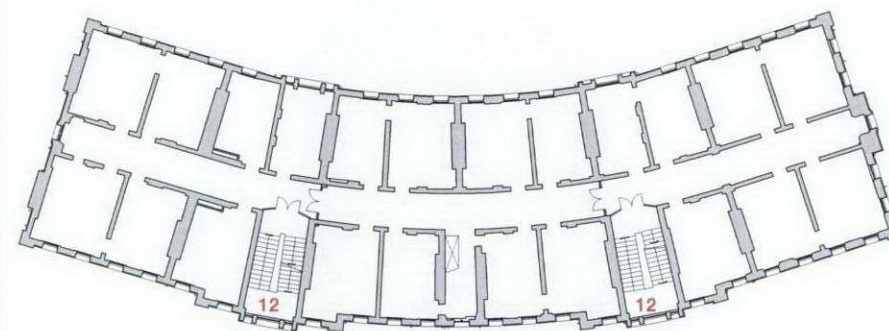
Existing Ground



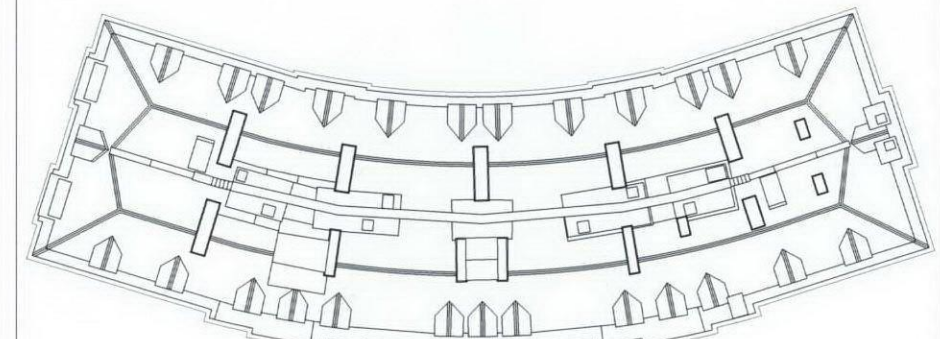
Existing First



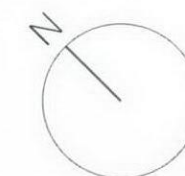
Existing Second



Existing Typical



Existing Roof



2.0