



Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment  
for a building of 6 storeys in height including ground and 3 storeys basement,  
for use a specialist head and neck facility (Class D1)

Former University College London (UCL) Student Union and Royal Ear Hospital,  
Huntley Street, Bloomsbury

## **Heritage Appraisal**

February 2015

**The former University College London  
(UCL) Student Union and Royal Ear  
Hospital**

Huntley Street, London WC1E 6DG

**Heritage Appraisal**

February 2015

Consultancy for the  
Historic Built Environment

**KMIHeritage**

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 KMHeritage has prepared this report on behalf of the UCLH NHS Foundation Trust, and it relates to the former Royal Ear Hospital, located at the junction of Huntley Street and Capper Street in Bloomsbury, and also the site immediately to the south of that building, the former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre.

## Purpose

- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to consider how the proposed development addresses the statutory requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 concerning listed buildings and conservation areas, and to assess the proposed development against national and local policies and guidance relating to the historic built environment.
- 1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by Steffian Bradley Architects, the Planning Statement prepared by JLL, and other application documents.

## Organisation

- 1.4 This introduction is followed by a description of the history of the site and its surroundings, and an assessment of the heritage significance of the site and its context in Section 3. Section 4 sets out the relevant legislation, as well as national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. An assessment of the proposed development and its effect on heritage significance is considered in Section 5. Section 6 examines how the proposed development complies with the legislation, policy and guidance set out earlier. Section 7 is a conclusion. There are a number of appendices.

### **Authorship**

- 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 former Royal Ear Hospital and the former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre

- 2.1 This section of the report describes the history and development of the former Royal Ear Hospital and the former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre.

### The former Royal Ear Hospital



Figure 1: The newly constructed Royal Ear Hospital in 1927 (© English Heritage)

- 2.2 The Royal Ear Hospital was originally founded in 1816 by Dr John Harrison Curtis as The Dispensary for Diseases of the Ear. Throughout the 19th century it occupied a

number of properties in Soho, ending up in 1904 at Nos. 42-43 Dean Street in purpose-built premises. The organisation changed its name to the Royal Ear Hospital in 1904, and in 1920 it was incorporated into the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Department of University College Hospital.<sup>1</sup> Being located south of Oxford Street it was logical that after joining University College Hospital the institution wished to move closer to the other hospital departments in Bloomsbury. In 1924 it was announced that negotiations were underway to purchase a site on the corner of Huntley Street and Pancras (now Capper) Street where the Royal Ear Hospital could be rebuilt. It was said to have 'the advantage of being near University College Hospital and the new Rockefeller buildings'.<sup>2</sup> It was proposed to make 'this new hospital the most up-to-date ear, nose and throat hospital in the world, and to equip it with all the most modern facilities for research work to combat deafness'.<sup>3</sup>

- 2.3 A gift of £15,000 to purchase the site, then covered by All Saints National Schools (see figure 2) was made by Mr Geoffrey E. Duveen<sup>4</sup>, the Chairman of the Royal Ear Hospital, in memory of his father Henry J. Duveen (the art and antiques dealer) who had died in 1919.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It was the first London hospital to be founded as part of a university. The first purpose-built hospital opened on Gower Street in 1834, opposite UCL, and was extended in the 1840s and 1860s. A new building on the same site was under construction from the 1890s and opened in 1906; it continued to house the Hospital until 1995, when it closed and was purchased by UCL

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 29 June 1924

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 29 June 1924

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Duveen the chairman was himself deaf

<sup>5</sup> Henry J Duveen founded the famous art firm and the Duveen Brothers became very successful in trading antiques. Their success is famously attributed to noticing that 'Europe has a great deal of art, and America has a great deal of money'



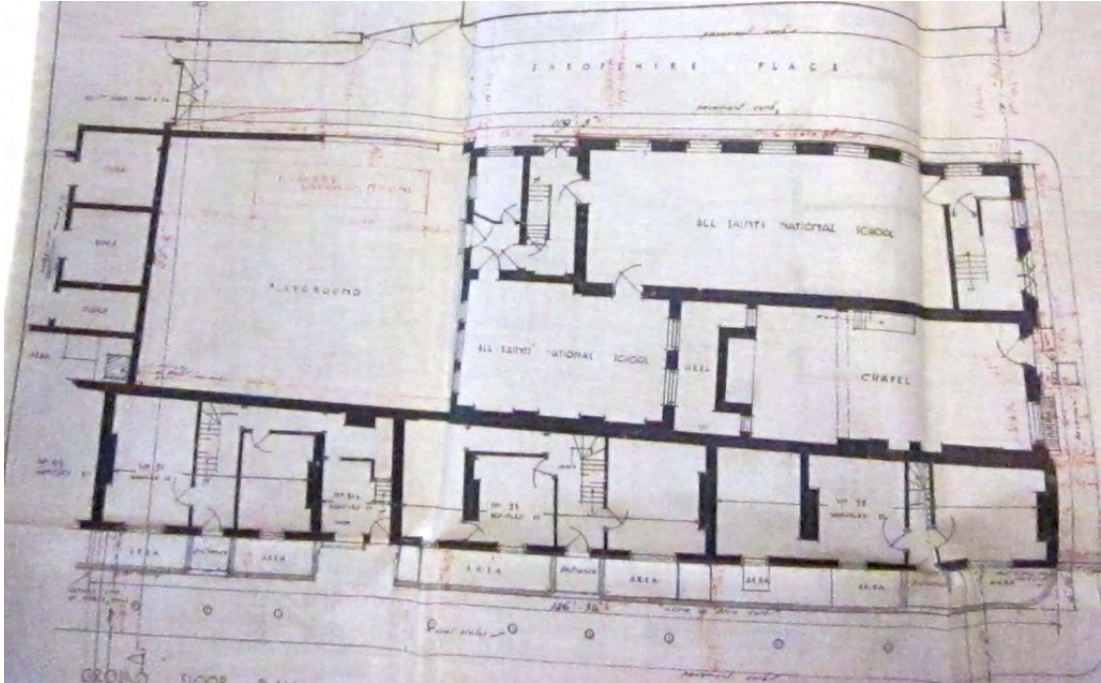


Figure 2: All Saints National Schools, Huntley Street which occupied the site until demolished for the new Ear Hospital in 1925 (© LMA GLC/AR/BR/22/BA/054984 permission required to use)

2.4 In August 1925, an application on behalf of the Governors of the University College Hospital was made by E. Wimperis & Simpson for the proposed Royal Ear Hospital.<sup>6</sup> A number of versions of the plans had been drawn up from February 1925 and the final plans were made in May 1925 (see Appendix B). Originally a bridge over the street to connect with other parts of UCL was planned, but this was considered unacceptable by the LCC and an underground way was built instead.<sup>7</sup> The site began to be cleared in early 1925 and Geoffrey Duveen gave a further £50,000 so that the hospital could actually be constructed.<sup>8</sup> The existing hospital was said to be unable to deal with out-patients and the planned new hospital would 'contain 42 beds for in-patients and ample provision for treatment of out-patients on a very large scale'. Importantly the new building would also 'provide

<sup>6</sup> LMA GLC/AR/BR/22/BA/054984

<sup>7</sup> LMA GLC/AR/BR/17/027517

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 5 Feb 1925

every facility for clinical teaching, and its new position will make it available and easily accessible to the medical students'.<sup>9</sup>

2.5 The architects for the new hospital were Edmund Wimperis and W. Begg Simpson who had become partners in 1913. Wimperis & Simpson, Architects FRIBA were based in South Molton Street and Wimperis was also the Surveyor to the Grosvenor Estate until 1928.<sup>10</sup> In 1925 they were joined by L. Rome Guthrie, but for the Royal Ear Hospital it appears just Wimperis and Simpson were involved.<sup>11</sup> By 1925 Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie were developing into London practice, specializing in large commercial commissions throughout the West End, though the Grosvenor Estate was their stronghold.<sup>12</sup>

2.6 An architectural sketch for the new hospital shows a considerably more grand and articulated building than was eventually built (figure 3). A series of balconies for nursing purposes were to have enlivened the Huntley Street facade of the building. However, as the architectural plans show, this was swapped around, so that the balconies were built to the rear on Shropshire Place, apparently due to a decision to the effect of reduce street noise on patients. The original positioning of the balconies seems something of a rather basic flaw in the design of an ear hospital. The building was thus built back to front so that the balconies, essential for recuperation from tuberculosis laryngitis, were not open to the main street. At a later date these balconies were enclosed to

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<sup>9</sup> *The Times* 5 Feb 1925

<sup>10</sup> A. Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture, A Biographical Dictionary*, (1988), p.388

<sup>11</sup> The firm won the competition in 1923 for the rebuilding of Fortnum & Masons. In 1925, they were joined by Leonard Guthrie to help with the Grosvenor House project. The partnership was active between 1911-1946 and did a great deal of work for the Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair. Most of their work was neo-Georgian in style. They were very active in St John's Wood and also designed Winfield House in Regent's Park (home of the American Ambassador), the Grosvenor House Hotel of 1927, The Cambridge Theatre in 1930 and Nos. 105 - 108 Park Lane in 1934

<sup>12</sup> 'The Architecture of the Estate: Modern Times', Survey of London: volume 39: The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, Part 1 (General History) (1977), pp. 161-170

create more bed space, and the rear of the hospital lost this feature attractive qualities.



Figure 3: A preliminary sketch of the proposed Royal Ear Hospital  
(unknown source)

- 2.7 The building of the hospital took place for much of 1925 and 1926. In February, 1927 Neville Chamberlain, as Minister of Health, opened the new Royal Ear Hospital. Much was made of the fact that it was designed with 8 private wards (for those of moderate means). Before the days of the NHS, middle-class people did not tend to go to hospital and many could not afford the high fees of private nursing homes and the provision of such beds in new specialist hospitals was seen as the way forward.<sup>13</sup> The plans (Appendix B) show the layout and an image of the single room wards is shown in the series of 1927 photographs in Appendix C.
- 2.8 Over each bed was the provision for the attachment of wireless headpieces and outside the wards were spacious

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<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 10 Feb 1927

balconies for the use of the patients. The hospital was to be a 'focal point where the latest knowledge would be available for practitioners and students', who had previously been forced to seek advice abroad.<sup>14</sup> In the basement was a 'silence room'. This was a specially constructed sound-proof room in the basement which was said to be so silent 'that a watch tick can be heard from one end to the other'.<sup>15</sup> The Silence Room was for ear tests, and resembled a safe with especially thick walls, massive doors and no windows. The floor was marked with distance points for testing a patient's hearing<sup>16</sup> (See Figure 4). In 1928 new massage rooms, a Finsen light and electrical department, new operating theatres and other developments had been built. Further building work was underway in 1928, when the south-west wing which contained an additional 95 beds had been completed. But such advances came at a price, because running the new hospital cost £6000 per annum, which was double that of the old hospital and they were £30,000 in debt.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 10 Feb 1927

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 28 Feb 1929

<sup>16</sup> <http://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/royalear.html> Lost Hospitals of London website

<sup>17</sup> *The Times*, 30 Mar 1928



Figure 4: The 'Silence Room' at the Royal Ear Hospital BL29146

- 2.9 In 1929 the hospital was said to embody all the latest improvements in hospital construction and equipment and designed not only to provide the most modern and complete treatment but also specialist facilities for research.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.10 The design of specialist hospitals such as the Royal Ear Hospital differed only in small ways from that of general hospitals. They were almost exclusively established in the largest cities of England and London had the greatest number. From the late 1920s dedicated hospital architects emerged, encouraged by the 1929 Local Government Act which extended the role of local authorities in providing health services.<sup>19</sup> The Royal Ear Hospital is one of the later specialist hospitals built by general architects in a historical - a stripped down Tudorbethan - style that was used at the time for most domestic and commercial buildings. In the inter-war years, hospitals were seen as a

<sup>18</sup> *The Times*, 28 Feb 1929

<sup>19</sup> English Heritage, Designation, *Listing Selection Guide, Health and Welfare Buildings* (2011)

perfect vehicle for Modernist design, especially for sanatorium. However, a site in central Bloomsbury was probably not thought suitable for that style, even though the Ear Hospital did incorporate modern hospital design features such as external balconies.

- 2.11 When the Middlesex Hospital merged with UCH in the late 1980s, its ENT department merged with the Royal Ear Hospital. In 1997 it joined with the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital in Gray's Inn Road. The Royal Ear Hospital building was in use as a psychiatric unit, but then became vacant and in recent years has been used by the Bartlett School of Architecture (part of UCL).



Figure 5: The Huntley Street elevation in 2014



Figure 6: The Shropshire Place elevation

### **The former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre**

- 2.12 After the Royal Ear Hospital was built the site between the hospital and Nos. 17-30 Gordon Mansions appears to have remained as domestic housing until the Second World War when bomb damage occurred. In 1954, the site was described as a 'derelict bombed site' and a group of four Batley portable precast concrete garages were erected there on a temporary basis.<sup>20</sup> Figure 7 shows the site when the garages were present. It was said that there was a shortage of parking in the vicinity for hospital staff. The structures were removed in 1953, just before the Medical Students' Union building was erected on the site at the end of the decade.

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<sup>20</sup> LMA GLC/AR/BR/22/BA/054984

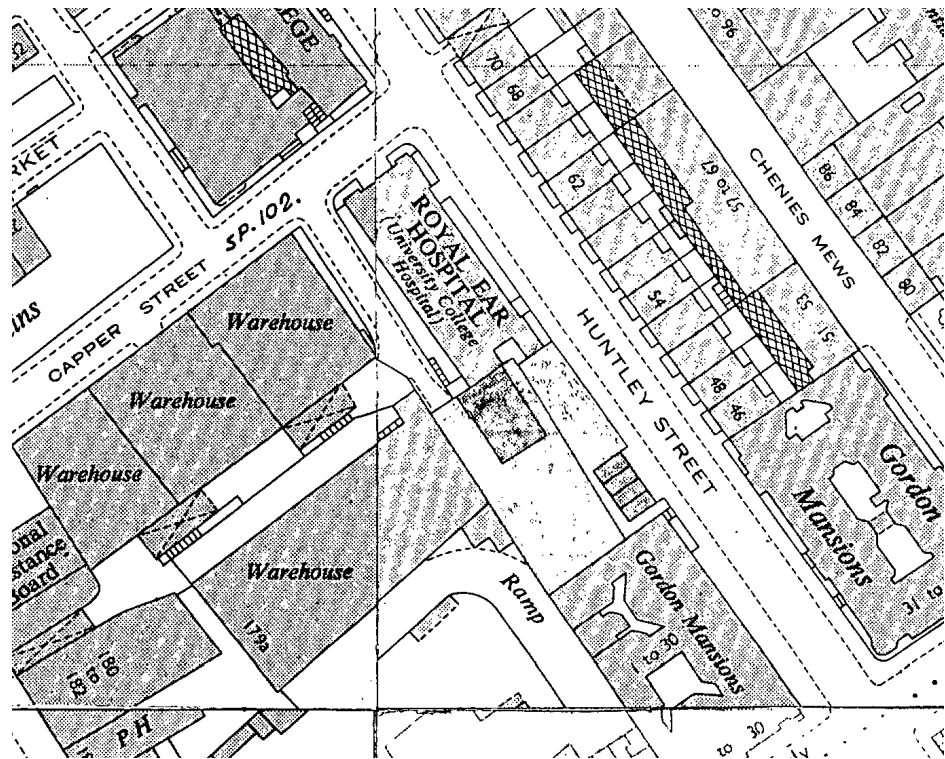


Figure 7: OS Map from the mid-1950s

2.13 The University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre was designed by John Y. Hamilton of Cluttons in 1958 (see figure 8) and built soon after. An application was made to build the 'medical students' assembly hall and day house' as the building was called.<sup>21</sup> It was described as part two, and part of four storeys (including basement) and included a lecture hall and bar and served the needs of student doctors for over half a century. In the planning stage alterations were made to the Huntley Street facade of the Assembly Hall building where three first floor windows were added and built. They do not appear on the drawing in figure 8. The ownership of the Medical Student's Union was transferred from UCL following its closure as a student facility in 2011. Today it is empty and unused.

<sup>21</sup> Camden online planning TP 29000/NW



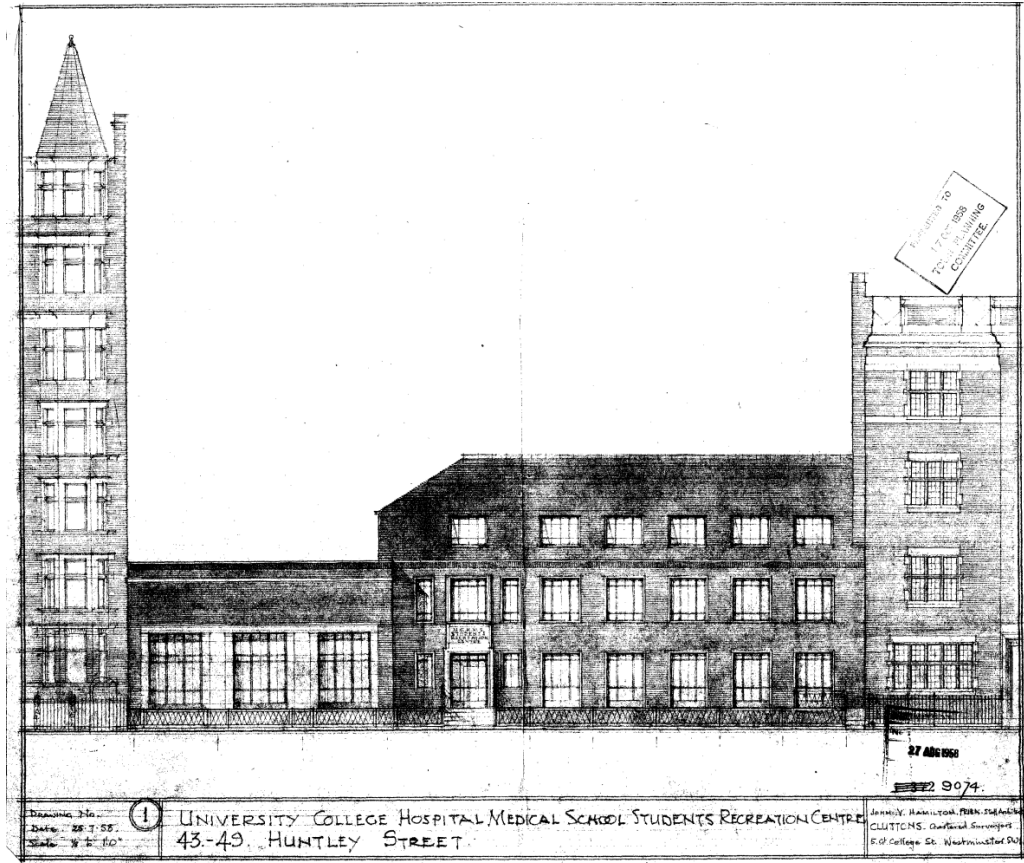


Figure 8: Design for Medical students' Union (Camden Planning online)

### 3 The heritage significance of the site and its context

#### Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the report describes the heritage significance of the Former University College London (UCL) Student Union and Royal Ear Hospital, and the context of the site.

#### Designations

##### *Listed buildings*

- 3.2 Nos 46-48 Huntley Street are listed Grade II, as is No. 70 Huntley Street.
- 3.3 A Certificate of Immunity from Listing was issued in respect of both the former Royal Ear Hospital and the former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre on 10 December 2014 (Certificate of Immunity Numbers 1422892 and 1422893, respectively). Both expire on 9 December 2019.

##### *The Bloomsbury Conservation Area*

- 3.4 Both the former Royal Ear Hospital and the former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre are located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in Sub Area 4 (Grafton Way/Alfred Place/Tottenham Court Road). The conservation area appraisal describes the building as follows:

*The former Royal Ear Hospital, dating from 1926, situated on the west side of Huntley Street makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The building has a finely detailed entrance façade facing Capper Street: constructed from a red brick with vertical ribbing, it has neo-Tudor influences in the form of a stone entrance surround and stone projecting bay window rising through the upper three floors.<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>22</sup> LB Camden, Bloomsbury Conservation Area conservation area appraisal, 2011

*Locally listed buildings*

- 3.5 The hospital building is not included on Camden Council's draft Local List, and was included on a list of 'Nominations received but not included on draft local list' by virtue of the contribution it makes to the conservation area.
- 3.6 The Local List was adopted on 21st January 2015. There are no buildings in the vicinity of the site included in the Council's Local List

**Assessing heritage significance**

- 3.7 The listed buildings and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.8 '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'.
- 3.9 '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.

**The heritage significance of the site**

*The former Royal Ear Hospital*

- 3.10 The former Royal Ear Hospital has a degree of historic interest as an inter-war specialist hospital that sought to be a centre of excellence. It seems that the quality of the facilities and the care provided was indeed high, and represented a new standard in the treatment of ailments of the ear at that time. However, it does not seem to be the case that the hospital was particularly a place of

specific innovation or advancement in the field, but simply a modern hospital that was purpose built, well-equipped and containing appropriate facilities. In this it was similar to other inter-war hospitals.

- 3.11 Architecturally the building suffers from the late alteration to its initial design before implementation, with the re-positioning of the open balconies intended for Huntley Street to Shropshire Place. The effect on the Huntley Street elevation is abundantly clear: between the projecting end bays, the two main ranges of windows facing Huntley street constitute a leaden and undifferentiated elevation of very little merit, and which is not notably improved by the rather generic historicist fenestration of the projecting bays. These neo-baronial windows, along with two fairly plain entrances, some stone detailing and a curiously isolated ceremonial balcony at first floor level (it sits above a very plain window) fail to lift the low architectural quality of what is the most prominent of the former hospital's elevations.



Figure 9: Huntley Street elevation looking south

- 3.12 In addition, comparison of early photographs (See Figure 1 and Appendix with the present day (Appendix D) show that the upper parts of the Huntley Street elevation has been altered, with the loss of original detail. The stone band that runs along the elevation beneath first floor and at third floor cill level was repeated immediately above third floor, and there was what appeared to be stone coping similar to that on Capper Street. The large stone blocks (with a diamond shape within) to either side of the Capper Street parapet level, continued around into Huntley Street to sit atop the two projecting bays at either end of the elevation, but are now missing. The aerial view of the building (Figure 10) shows clearly that the roof has been altered and it is likely that the parapet detail around the building was removed at that time



Figure 10: Aerial view



Figure 11: the altered parapets



Figure 12: enlargement of Figure 1

3.13 The Capper Street elevation has greater merit, though it is in a sense, the great weakness of the building. The architect clearly struggled with the planning (or perhaps phasing) of what would seem at first to be a straightforward site, and the design ended up with its most important façade addressing a narrow side street, leaving the great expanse of the Huntley Street elevation as a dull, secondary but very prominent frontage. The proportions of the main entrance have been altered by the introduction of a ramp in recent years.

3.14 An advising that a Certificate of Immunity from Listing be issued in respect of both the former Royal Ear Hospital English Heritage described the building as follows.

*The building's north façade to Capper Street has considerable panache, but this architectural quality diminishes markedly with the east elevation. This can be attributed in part to revisions to the original design, which incorporated balconies to accentuate the central bays, and to the loss of detail at parapet level, but the overall composition does not respond to the opportunity offered by this prominent corner site. While notable for its state-of-the-art medical facilities, the hospital was not innovative in planning terms, and much of the original layout has been lost, including the 'silence room'. Decorative treatment was confined to the main entrance hall, the remainder, as would be expected, was functional in character and has been considerably altered.*

3.15 The building now has no trace of its former use. The interior has been entirely altered (See Figures 13, 14 and 15, and Appendix E), except for some decoration in the entrance hall, instances of stone dressings in the stairs and landings, and a damaged lift in the stairwell. The plan layout of the building has been transformed throughout. Windows have been replaced to the Huntley Street and Shropshire Place elevations. The plans shown in Appendix B bear no relationship to the way the building is now laid out, and the interiors shown in Appendix E no longer exist. No equipment, fittings, fixtures or indeed anything



to do with the original hospital use of the building survives.



Figure 10



Figure 14



Figure 15

- 3.16 Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie are of reasonable note as architects in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and are associated with two listed buildings. One of these, the Cambridge Theatre in Earlham Street, is a very decent example of a 20<sup>th</sup> century London theatre. Edmund Wimperis is associated with a couple of other listed buildings in his own right. Wimperis is not to be confused with his slightly better known cousin, JT Wimperis who was responsible, for instance, for the large and extravagant houses in Chesterfield Gardens in Mayfair. Edmund Wimperis also worked with JR Best earlier in his career. The former Royal Ear Hospital is not a good example of the work of the larger later practice, the Grosvenor House hotel being a more successful instance of their commercial abilities, built in the same year as the former Royal Ear Hospital was commenced.

*The former University College Hospital Medical School  
Students' Recreation Centre*

- 3.17 This building is unremarkable in a variety of ways. While having some very modest interest as a standalone example of student union facilities built after the War

(another exists in Malet Street, a few hundred metres away), the building has negligible architectural merit, if any. It is a pedestrian example of an extremely common style of architecture in the period, one that represents the long influence of the Festival of Britain on less able architects of the period. As with many similar buildings it cannot resist a gesture to classicism (in the entrance and large window openings, for instance) in its elevation to Huntley Street, but while many buildings of the period looked both backwards and forwards (the Grade II\* Congress House, to the south, is an excellent example of a classically influence modernism, completed the year before this building was designed), the effect here is awkward and laboured. The mansard roof - over part but not all of the building, and with odd inset 'dormers' - is a noticeably weak element of the design, a loss of nerve in a building clearly striving to be up-to-date, but at the same time a feature not sufficiently well handled to convincingly use a historical precedent in a modern way.



Figure 16: the former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre



Figure 17

- 3.18 The interior of the building remains something of its original character and appearance, though much has been altered in all parts of the building.

#### **The heritage significance of the surroundings of the site**

- 3.19 Historical value is described as being illustrative or associative. The listed and unlisted buildings of any discernible historical quality in the vicinity of the site, their relationship to one another and to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, illustrates the evolution of this part of London. The buildings of the area tell us about the transformation of the older city the expansion of what is now central London north and north east during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, about commercial activity, social change and lifestyles in various eras, and also about how the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the area was subsequently altered by 20<sup>th</sup> century change.
- 3.20 The area's character derives in considerable measure from the presence of medical and educational institutions, often accommodated in significant historic buildings such

as the Wilkins Building at UCL (Grade I), Senate House (Grade II\*) and the UCLH Cruciform Building (Grade II\*). In Huntley Street this character has evolved, with the building in recent years of the UCL Paul O’Gorman building (designed by Grimshaw Architects) and UCH Phase 3 (Macmillan Cancer Centre) designed by Hopkins Architects.

- 3.21 In terms of English Heritage’s ‘Conservation Principles’ the site and the adjacent parts of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area provide us with ‘evidence about past human activity’ and, by means of their fabric and appearance, communicate information about its past.
- 3.22 The aesthetic interest or significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area is located in the external appearance (particularly to the street) of the individual buildings in the conservation area, and in its street layout and urban grain.
- 3.23 The listed buildings at Nos 46-48 Huntley Street are listed Grade II, as is No. 70 Huntley Street, opposite the UCLH Phase 5 site, and both Gordon Mansions and Woburn Mansions are impressive unlisted buildings that make a highly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 3.24 It is clear that, despite the changes that have occurred in the conservation area, it and those buildings that positively contribute to it continue to have ‘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’.

### **Conclusion**

- 3.25 The conservation area appraisal for the Bloomsbury Conservation Area considers that ‘The former Royal Ear

Hospital, dating from 1926, situated on the west side of Huntley Street makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area'. When the building is examined and analysed as it has been here, that contribution can only sensibly be allocated to the small portion of the building facing Capper Street; the rest of the building (and the Student Union building) very evidently does not make any meaningful contribution to the conservation area, and the conservation area appraisal rightly does not dwell on the rest of the building. The Student Union building, by virtue of its pedestrian design and awkward scale in relation to the street, could be considered to detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 3.26 However, a full analysis of even that part of the former Royal Ear Hospital that is considered to make a positive contribution - makes clear that the 'positive' contribution is a relatively small one, and the Capper Street fragment of the overall former Royal Ear Hospital does not make such a contribution to the conservation area or its sub-area that its retention is not essential for the preservation of overall character and appearance - that aim can be achieved by the replacement of this modest contributor with a new building of equivalent or greater architectural merit.

## 4 Legislation, policy and guidance

### Introduction

- 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.
- 4.2 Section 6 demonstrates how the proposed development complies with statute, policy and guidance. Not all the guidance set out in this section is analysed in this manner in Section 6: some of the guidance set out below has served as a means of analysing or assessing the existing site and its surrounding, and in reaching conclusions about the effect of the proposed development. Section 7 is concerned with how legislation and adopted local plans are satisfied by the proposed development.

### The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 4.3 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Section 66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting. Section 72(1) of the Act requires decision makers with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay 'special attention... to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.
- 4.4 Appendix X sets out the approach taken in this Heritage Appraisal to section 66(1) and section 72(1) of the Act.

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.5 On Tuesday 27 March 2012, the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF),

which replaced Planning Policy Statement 5: ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’ (PPS5) with immediate effect.

4.6 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.*

4.7 A description and analysis of the heritage significance of the UCLH Phase 5 site and its context is provided earlier in this report.

4.8 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’.

4.9 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.*

4.10 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'.

- 4.11 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.*

- 4.12 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.

- 4.13 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'.

4.14 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'.

4.15 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.*

### **Planning Practice Guidance**

4.16 Earlier this year the government published new streamlined planning practice guidance for the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning system. It includes guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section entitled 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. It is subdivided into sections giving specific advice in the following areas:

- Historic Environment Policy and Legislation
- Heritage in Local Plans
- Decision-taking: Historic Environment

- Designated Heritage Assets
  - Non-Designated Assets
  - Heritage Consent Processes and
  - Consultation Requirements
- 4.17 Specific aspects of Planning Practice Guidance in relation to the historic built environment will be referred to later in this report.

#### **Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide**

- 4.18 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’<sup>23</sup>. The references in the existing document to PPS5 policies are obviously now redundant, but because the policies in the NPPF are very similar and the intent is the same, the PPS5 Practice Guide is still valid for the time being in the application of the NPPF (though see below).
- 4.19 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;

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<sup>23</sup> PPS5 was superseded by the NPPF, but the PPS5 Practice Guide is still valid for the time being.

- 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.

4.20 The Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide will be replaced in early 2015 by three 'Good Practice Advice in Planning' notes developed by English Heritage in conjunction with the Historic Environment Forum.

#### **The London Plan**

4.21 The current London Plan, the spatial development strategy for London, was published on 22 July 2011. It replaced the plan (consolidated with alterations since 2004), which was published in February 2008, and contains various policies relating to architecture, urban design and the historic built environment. Policy 7.4 deals with 'Local character', and says that a development should allow 'buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place, to influence the future character of the area' and be 'informed by the surrounding historic environment'.

4.22 Using the language of the NPPF and its predecessor, Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, Policy 7.8 talks of 'Heritage assets and archaeology', and says:

*London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.*

*B Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site's archaeology.*

*C Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.*

*D Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.*

*E New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.*

4.23 Policy 7.9 deals with 'Heritage-led regeneration', and says:

*Regeneration schemes should identify and make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant so they can help stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration. This includes buildings, landscape features, views, Blue Ribbon Network and public realm.*

*B The significance of heritage assets should be assessed when development is proposed and schemes designed so that the heritage significance is recognised both in their own right and as catalysts for regeneration. Wherever possible heritage assets (including buildings at risk) should be repaired, restored and put to a suitable and viable use that is consistent with their conservation and the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality.*

4.24 The Revised Early Minor Alterations (REMA, 2013) seeks to demonstrate that the London Plan policies are consistent with the principles outlined in the NPPF and makes amendments to the policies to refer to the relevant

sections of the NPPF where necessary in order to achieve this.

- 4.25 Policy 7.8 described above in paragraph 13.8, remains unchanged; however, additions have been made to paragraph 7.31 in the Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan, which supports the policy via two new sub-paragraphs that have been added: paragraphs 7.31a and 7.31b.
- 4.26 The additions bring the London Plan in line with the NPPF in terms of the protection of heritage assets, specifically dealing with the treatment of designated assets which have been deliberately neglected and the appraisal of planning applications which will not cause substantial harm to a designated asset.
- 4.27 The Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP, 2014) has been prepared primarily to address key housing and employment issues emerging from the analysis of the 2011 Census data. The FALP incorporate the changes made to paragraph 7.31, but add no further revisions to the elements of the London Plan relating to heritage assets.

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

- 4.28 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'.*

4.29 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'*

4.30 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'*

4.31 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.

4.32 Policy DP25 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 Fitzrovia Area Action Plan**

4.33 The Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (FAAP) was adopted on 3 March 2014. The Former University College London Student Union and the Royal Ear Hospital are identified as opportunity sites. Principle 6 of the FAAP deals with 'Educational, medical and research institutions', and says that:

*Large scale institutional uses should be located and designed to contribute to meeting the Plan's objectives and comply with relevant development plan policies. In particular they should maintain the mixed-use character of the area, support the residential community and its facilities and protect and enhance residential amenity and quality of life.*

*Subject to relevant development plan policies, the Council will guide development of large scale institutions as follows:*

- *medical and healthcare uses to the vicinity of the University College Hospital building in Euston Road and to Opportunity Sites identified for medical or healthcare use;*
- *education and research uses to the area east of Tottenham Court Road and to the Howland Street Character Area.*

4.34 The Plan notes that 'Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury have a history of medical and educational uses stretching back 200 years' and that 'Camden's Core Strategy supports the concentration of medical, educational and research institutions within Central London, recognises the services they provide to residents and visitors and acknowledges their contribution to London's national and international role... Any development of new and expanded institutions in Fitzrovia will therefore need to be located and designed

so that it is sensitive to its surroundings and addresses the concerns set out in the Core Strategy’.

4.35 The FAAP sets out a series of principles in respect of urban design, including:

- *New development should respond positively to the prevailing form of nearby buildings and frontages in terms of scale and grain, particularly listed buildings, and buildings, spaces, and other features identified as making a positive contribution to the conservation areas.*
- *New built form should reflect the area’s human scale, its sense of enclosure and be built to define the traditional street block.*

4.36 The FAAP describes the Huntley Street Opportunity sites and notes the low scale of the Student Union building, saying that ‘a higher building is appropriate here’. It says that ‘Development should be designed to preserve and enhance the setting of the surrounding heritage assets in particular the listed Georgian terraces opposite’.

4.37 In terms of design principles governing a redevelopment of the sites, the FAAP says:

- *The Royal Ear Hospital is identified as a ‘Positive Contributor’ to the conservation area and so there will be a presumption in favour of retaining the building.*
- *Development of the Medical Students’ Union building should add additional storeys in order to match the scale and massing of adjacent sites.*
- *Development should preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury conservation area, and development which causes harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area will not be permitted.*
- *Development should not cause harm to the setting of the listed terrace opposite the site on Huntley Street.*

- *Development should not cause harm to the residential amenity of the occupiers of nearby buildings (see also Principle 9 Residential Amenity). In addition, appropriate measures should also be taken to minimise impact on the amenity of the residential block adjoining Site 8 with regard to structure-borne noise and vibration.*
- *Development should minimise loss of natural light and maintain adequate daylight and sunlight to properties on the east side of Huntley Street.*
- *Development should use materials which are sensitive to the nearby listed buildings in terms of tone, colour, texture and finishes.*

#### **Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management**

- 4.38 This document, published by English Heritage on 25 March 2011, replaces English Heritage's previous conservation area guidance, and is intended to guide local planning authorities in appraising and designating conservation areas.
- 4.39 Table 2 of the document provides a series of questions regarding unlisted buildings in conservation areas. They include:
- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local value
  - Does it have landmark quality?
  - Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
  - Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?

- Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Is it associated with a designed landscape eg a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?

4.40 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' clearly states (our emphasis) that 'a positive response to one or more of the [questions] *may* indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution *provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded*.

#### **English Heritage guidance on the setting of heritage assets**

- 4.41 English Heritage has published guidance ('The Setting of Heritage Assets: English Heritage guidance', October 2011) regarding the setting of heritage assets. The document 'provides detailed advice intended to assist implementation of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and its supporting Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide'.
- 4.42 'Setting' is defined as 'the surroundings in which [the asset] is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution

to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'. The extent of 'setting' is discussed, somewhat inconclusively.

- 4.43 The Guidance provides a step-by-step methodology for identifying setting, its contribution to the significance of a heritage asset, and the assessment of the effect of proposed development on that significance.
- 4.44 The Guidance reproduces a number of 'key principles for assessing the implications of change affecting setting' from the 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' :
- Change, including development, can sustain, enhance or better reveal the significance of an asset as well as detract from it or leave it unaltered (Paragraph 118).
  - Understanding the significance of a heritage asset will enable the contribution made by its setting to be understood (Paragraph 119).
  - When assessing any application for development within the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change and the fact that developments that materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation (Paragraph 120).
  - The design of a development affecting the setting of a heritage asset may play an important part in determining its impact (Paragraph 121).
  - A proper assessment of the impact on setting will take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it (Paragraph 122).

4.45 The document then sets out how the step-by-step methodology is used. Step 1 involves ‘identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings’. In respect of Step 2 (‘Assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s)’) the document says that:

*The second stage of any analysis is to assess whether the setting of a heritage asset makes a contribution to its significance and the extent of that contribution. In other words to determine ‘what matters and why?’ in terms of the setting and its appreciation. We recommend that this assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider:*

- *the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets;*
- *the way the asset is appreciated; and*
- *the asset’s associations and patterns of use.*

4.46 A checklist is provided of ‘potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance’. Step 3 involves ‘Assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)’:

*The assessment should address the key attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:*

- *location and siting*
- *form and appearance*
- *additional effects*
- *permanence*

4.47 A further checklist is provided ‘of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. Only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development’.

4.48 Step 4 deals with ‘Maximising enhancement and minimising harm’ and suggests how a proposal can enhance the setting of a heritage asset. Step 5 is

concerned with ‘Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes’.

- 4.49 The advice contained in ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ is reproduced in the consultation version of the draft ‘Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets’, intended to be part of suite of notes replacing the ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ in early 2015.

## **5 The proposed development and its effect on heritage significance**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 This section of the report briefly describes the proposed development and its effect on the heritage significance described earlier. The proposed scheme is described in detail in the drawings and Design & Access Statement; these documents should be referred to for a full description of the proposals. This section does not repeat the substantial amount of detailed description contained in the Design & Access Statement, but provides contextual information where necessary.

### **The purpose of the development**

- 5.2 The Capital Investment Directorate of UCLH NHS Foundation Trust proposes to develop the current site of the Royal Ear Hospital and Former Students Union, to accommodate services from the Royal National Throat Nose and Ear Hospital, the Eastman Dental Hospital and Head and Neck cancer services. The proposed building would form part of the overall UCLH masterplan to create a medical campus in the area around the main UCLH building.

### **Effect on heritage assets**

- 5.3 The two existing sites must, of necessity, be treated as a single development. This is what is required in practical terms, and, in turn, the holistic approach to the site as a whole helps to ensure the best possible outcome in architectural, urban design and heritage terms. Treating the site in this way permits each part to relate better to each other part and the whole to its surroundings, and this is evident when the scheme is considered in views.
- 5.4 The quantum of development that introduces greater height across the combined sites will allow the scheme to



offer greater benefits - the Design & Access Statement explains at length the very specific constraints and considerations that apply to the amount of accommodation required and how it is laid out. As the FAAP acknowledges, that is not the only justification of greater height in this location - greater height performs an urban design role in addressing the inappropriately lower scale of the former Student Union building. The scale and massing of the proposed development is consistent with that of the majority of Huntley Street, and helps to create a coherent building line on its western side.

- 5.5 The proposed scheme is clearly and confidently contemporary, while at the same time being directly allusive and responsive to its historic context. By virtue of the careful analysis of context that has informed the design, it is in keeping with the historic qualities found in that context. Brick is used in the scheme as a reference to the predominant material of the conservation area. The use of bays and string courses echoes in a contemporary way - without pastiche imitation - the Edwardian aesthetic qualities of Gordon Mansions and Woburn Mansions. The use of perforated brick screens as one aspect of the bay design lends visual interest as well as being a practical feature of the elevation design. The design of the northern end of the scheme - where the existing Capper Street fragment will be removed - reflects the relatively greater formality of this end of the existing building, thus preserving the presence on Capper Street of a prominent element of the hospital site, albeit in new form. The detailed design of elevations and roofs is similarly respectful and contextual.
- 5.6 The proposed development will transform Shropshire Place by introducing a main entrance giving on to that space, and this will assist in activating a connection through Queen's Yard to Tottenham Court Road.
- 5.7 The scheme displays evident skill in making new architecture of integrity in a historic area. Overall, the scheme rejuvenates a pair of redundant sites whose

condition detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area to provide the site as a whole with a secure and long-term future.

- 5.8 The proposal will certainly alter the site and the character and appearance of the conservation area, but will do so in a positive and enhancing way. It will replace a building that detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area (the former Student Union building) and a former inter-war hospital building with only fragmentary heritage quality, with a well-designed modern development that is highly contextual and responds sensitively to the scale and nature of its context. It will provide needed health care facilities and other uses that are consistent with the character and appearance of the conservation area in up-to-date accommodation. The massing and layout of the scheme relates directly to its surroundings in a way that the existing building on the Student Union site does not.

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

### **Introduction**

- 6.1 This report has provided in Section 5 a detailed description and analysis of the significance of the site and its context, as required by Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework and encouraged by English Heritage guidance. In addition, the report also describes (in Section 5) how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance. The effect is positive, and for that reason, the scheme complies with policy and guidance. This section should be read with Sections 3 and 5.
- 6.2 Not all of the guidance set out in Section 4 is analysed in this section: some of the guidance set out there has served as a means of analysing or assessing the existing site and its surrounding and in assessing the effect of the proposed development. The focus of this section is upon compliance with national legislation and with local plans.

### **The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

- 6.3 The conclusion of our assessment, contained in previous sections in this Heritage Appraisal, is that the proposed scheme preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, as well as preserving and enhancing the setting of nearby listed buildings. The proposed development thus complies with S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It does not lead to ‘substantial’ harm or any significant level of ‘less than substantial’ harm to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, or any other heritage assets.
- 6.4 It has been acknowledged that the Capper Street fragment of the overall former Royal Ear Hospital makes a modestly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This

contribution is to a very specific part of the overall conservation area and even to the sub-area within which it is located. It is our view that its retention is not essential for the preservation of overall character and appearance.

- 6.5 If a positive contributor is removed from a conservation area, then a degree of harm may be caused to the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, for the reasons given above and by virtue of the very high architectural quality of the proposed scheme, the character and appearance is preserved and indeed enhanced despite the removal of the existing buildings. Because of this quality, no residual harm is caused to the heritage significance of the conservation area, and the low level of less than substantial harm that may be caused by the removal of the Capper Street fragment is more than compensated for by design the proposed scheme.

#### **The level of ‘harm’ caused by the proposed scheme and the public benefits of the scheme**

- 6.6 As outlined in Section 4, the NPPF identifies two levels of potential ‘harm’ that might be caused to a heritage asset by a development: ‘substantial harm...or total loss of significance’ or ‘less than substantial’. Both levels of harm must be caused to a *designated* heritage asset – in this instance listed buildings in the vicinity of the UCLH Phase 5 site or the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 6.7 Planning Practice Guidance says of substantial harm:
- In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.*

*While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm<sup>24</sup>.*

6.8 Specifically referring to ‘harm in relation to conservation areas’, PPG says:

*An unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area is individually of lesser importance than a listed building (paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework). If the building is important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area then its demolition is more likely to amount to substantial harm to the conservation area, engaging the tests in paragraph 133 of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, the justification for its demolition will still be proportionate to the relative significance of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole<sup>25</sup>.*

6.9 Planning Practice Guidance provides further advice regarding public benefit:

*Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at*

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<sup>24</sup> [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/#paragraph\\_017](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/#paragraph_017)

<sup>25</sup> [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/#paragraph\\_018](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/#paragraph_018)

*large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits*

*Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:*

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting*
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset*
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation<sup>26</sup>.*

6.10 The previous section has examined the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance analysed earlier, and, in our view, the scheme does not in any way cause substantial harm to heritage assets. Though change occurs, that change is not in itself damaging of the things that are of central heritage significance in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The test provided by PPG for substantial harm is not met. There is nothing about the proposal that would give rise to this level of harm. Nothing that is ‘important or integral to the character or appearance of the conservation area’ is lost or damaged by the proposed scheme.

6.11 The changes to the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings, individually or cumulatively, do not reach the threshold of harm that would cause the scheme to fail to preserve the special interest of any listed building or the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. We do not believe that the demolition of the existing buildings has the potential to result in any level of harm to heritage significance greater than a low level of less than substantial harm, for the reasons discussed in the previous section. Quite the opposite applies - the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings will be enhanced.

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<sup>26</sup> [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/#paragraph\\_020](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/why-is-significance-important-in-decision-taking/#paragraph_020)

- 6.12 In any event, and even if some minor level of less than substantial harm is caused by the proposals, the scheme provides a tangible public benefit in the form of providing a major new healthcare facility as part of a co-ordinated development plan for UCLH services. There are few more evidently beneficial ways in which this site could be redeveloped. This would more than outweigh what low level of ‘less than substantial harm’ that might be caused by the removal of the Capper Street fragment. The core special architectural and historic interest of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and other heritage assets remains entirely intact in the proposal.

#### **The National Planning Policy Framework**

- 6.13 In respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the proposed 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 preserves the ‘positive contribution’ that the site makes to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the setting of other listed buildings - it preserves and enhances the designated heritage asset of which it forms a part and the setting of others by means of a scheme of very high quality which more than equates to the quality of what it replaces, and that provides significant public benefits.
- 6.14 The proposed scheme complies with Paragraph 133 of the NPPF - it certainly 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 in this report – the scheme cannot be considered to harm the overall conservation area or the setting of listed buildings, but rather alters the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings in such a way that the net effect of such change is positive, for the reasons given earlier. The proposed development reverses previous harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area (the Students Union building)

and the setting of listed buildings and protects surviving significance.

- 6.15 Any 'less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset' (Paragraph 134) that can be ascribed to the scheme is outweighed by the benefits flowing from the scheme. First among these is that in overall terms the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings is enhanced by the development, even if the appearance of the site will change. The second key - and major - public benefit is that a new and up-to-date healthcare facility will be provided on the site, replacing redundant healthcare accommodation, thus enhancing the ability of UCLH to provide services to its patients.
- 6.16 It is our view that none of the individual interventions that make up the overall set of proposals can reasonably be considered to fail to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings when the cumulative extent of intervention involved is measured against the overall conservation area and its listed buildings. The scheme helps secure the 'optimum viable use' of this redundant site within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The scheme very definitely strikes the balance suggested by Paragraph 134 of the NPPF – it intervenes in the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings in a manner commensurate to their heritage significance. This balance of intervention versus significance is described in detail earlier.

#### **Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide**

- 6.17 The proposed development also does the relevant things that the (still valid) '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’.

### **The London Plan**

- 6.18 The proposed scheme is exactly what the London Plan envisages when it talks (in Policy 7.4) about developments having ‘regard to the form, function and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings’. The design of the proposed scheme is inherently responsive to these features, and it is designed to respect the context in which it finds itself. As has been shown, by carefully considering the heritage significance of the various heritage assets described in this report, the scheme preserves the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings. It also takes positive steps to enhance these things - it replaces the unsatisfactory urban and architectural aspects of the site (described earlier in this report) with coherent new built form that complements retained and repaired buildings on the site as well as the surrounding historic townscape. The proposed development inherently ‘allows existing buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place, to influence the future character of the area’.
- 6.19 By responding as it does to its location, the scheme will build on ‘the positive elements that can contribute to establishing a character for the future function of the area’. The design of the scheme undoubtedly ‘has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass’, and does so with ‘a high quality design response’. The proposed development is certainly ‘human in scale’. It is of ‘the highest architectural quality’ and includes ‘details and materials that complement... the local architectural character’. The scheme thus complies with Policies 7.4 and 7.6.

- 6.1 The proposed scheme adds life and vitality to the setting of heritage assets around it - the 'desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping' has been taken into account. It is 'development' that *does* 'identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets'. The scheme clearly 'conserve[s the significance of heritage assets], by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail'. For these reasons, the scheme is consistent with Policy 7.8 of the London Plan.
- 6.2 It is also consistent with Policy 7.9 of the Plan – the 'significance' of the heritage assets in its context has been 'assessed' and the scheme is 'designed so that the heritage significance is recognised both in [its] own right and as [a] catalyst for regeneration'.

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

- 6.3 As has been shown, and for the same reasons that are given in respect of the NPPF, the scheme would provide new buildings that would preserve *and enhance* the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of other listed buildings.
- 6.4 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, and in particular Policy DP25. It also preserves the setting of nearby listed buildings, and thus also complies with Policy DP25 in this respect.

#### **The Fitzrovia Area Action Plan**

- 6.5 The scheme satisfies the requirements of the FAAP in terms of its detailed guidance for the site. The FAAP indicates that 'there will be a presumption in favour of retaining the building', but this report sets out a clear rationale why the removal of the modest degree of contribution that one part of the former Royal Ear Hospital makes to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area is more than

balanced by the very positive contribution made by the proposed development. The proposed scheme fully addresses each of the other design principles regarding the sites

## 7 Summary and conclusion

- 7.1 The former Royal Ear Hospital is a building that tells us about the evolution of hospital design between the wars and the development of specialist hospitals in the pre-NHS period. It is, for the reasons given in the report, an unremarkable architectural design, and one which suffers from two basic drawbacks. Firstly the original and fairly ordinary design, incorporating open balconies, was compromised by the switching of those balconies from the main Huntley Street elevation to the rear, resulting in a singularly plain and utilitarian appearance on the building's most prominent elevation. Secondly, the building has been altered: by the loss of architectural detail at high level on the Huntley Street elevation, but the enclosing of the open balconies to the rear, and by the comprehensive alteration of the interior. This internal alteration has also removed any historical or evidential value linked to the original purpose and innovation of the building.
- 7.2 The former University College Hospital Medical School Students' Recreation Centre is a very ordinary students union building from the late 1950s, designed using a tame and uninspired interpretation of the kind of 'New Elizabethan' modernism that became popular during the 1950s after the Festival of Britain. It has very little of architectural merit and nothing of its interior is of note.
- 7.3 The conservation area appraisal for the Bloomsbury Conservation Area considers that 'The former Royal Ear Hospital, dating from 1926, situated on the west side of Huntley Street makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area'. When the building is examined and analysed as it has in this report, that contribution is only made by the small portion of the building facing Capper Street; the rest of the building (and the Student Union building) very evidently does not make any meaningful contribution to the conservation area, and the conservation area appraisal rightly does not dwell on the