

# 42 PHOENIX ROAD

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



**Allies and Morrison and David Bonnett Associates**

October 2015



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Findlay Estate Company in order to describe the design of the proposed development at 42 Phoenix Road in Somers Town between Euston and King's Cross railway stations. This is a detailed planning application for all components of the scheme. The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with other documents and drawings submitted as part of the planning application.

The development has been informed by pre application meetings with Camden Council, the Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum, the Somers Town Planning Forum and the Design Out Crime officer for the north-west London region. We have consulted local residents and relevant interest groups through a public consultation event and have met with the Department for Education regarding their proposals for the adjacent Maria Fidelis School.

The purpose of this document is to describe the proposed development and the process of design evolution which led to the conclusion that the scheme presented here is an appropriate and viable response for the future of the site, which fulfils the client brief and makes a positive contribution to Somers Town. This includes a careful review of feasibility options for retention of the existing building and the subsequent design evolution of a proposal for a new building.

The Design and Access Statement accords with the legal requirements set out in the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 and Planning (Applications for Planning Permission, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) Regulation 2006.



Cafe supporting adjacent space



Brighton College boarding house by A&M



Unite student accommodation by A&M



Typical student bedroom by A&M



Ash Court student accommodation by A&M



Fitzwilliam College student accommodation by A&M

## 1.2 PROJECT BRIEF

The Findlay Estate Company have owned and managed 42 Phoenix Road for over 20 years. They approached Allies and Morrison in 2014 with the requirement for a design proposal that sought to address existing accessibility issues and provide spaces of a higher quality which will be more efficient and sustainable to operate.

Over the years, the company has continued the provision of facilities commensurate with those of Camden, as the previous owner. This has become increasingly difficult as the existing building fabric is tired and run down. Its poor fabric performance and dated service installations make it progressively expensive to maintain and increasingly uneconomic to occupy.

The existing floor space is inefficient with many small rooms and convoluted circulation routes. The raised multi-level ground floor results in steps up to the building and various different level changes once inside. Due to these level changes, the building does not comply with modern accessibility regulations making increasingly difficult to let and no longer fit for its intended purpose.

The King's Cross masterplan and the Euston Area Plan (EAP) have had a dramatic impact on the area in recent years and present great opportunity for the future. There has been a rise in the number of universities in Camden which has increased the number of students seeking accommodation in the King's Cross and Euston Areas.

The existing building is on the councils 'Local List' of buildings which are considered to contribute to the character of Somers Town. Allies and Morrison have reviewed various options for adaptation and refurbishment of the existing building. This design and access statement documents the different options which have been explored and explains the reasons behind the proposed development.

### Design Brief

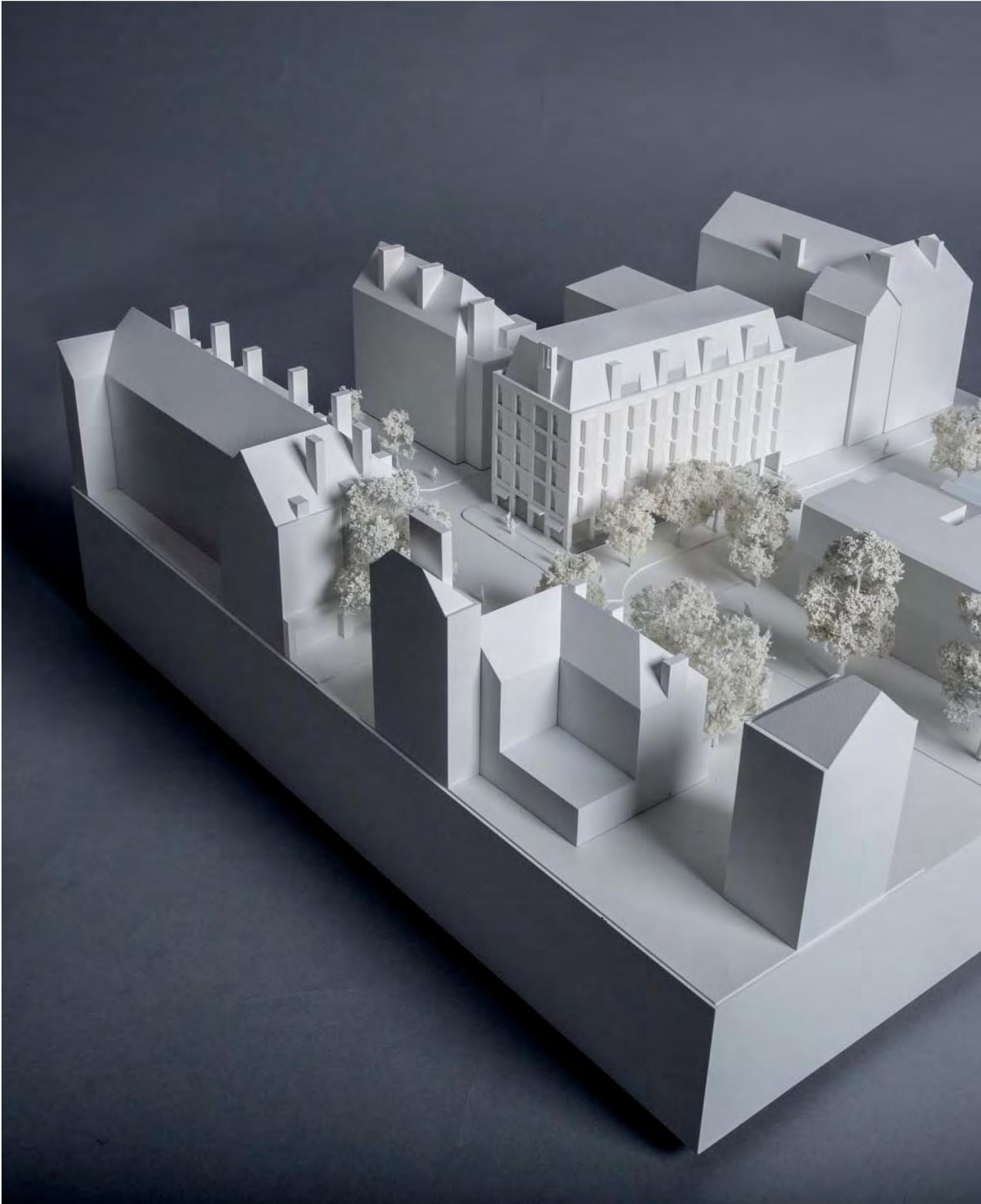
The lower floors of the building have a history of being let to charitable organisations and the brief asked that the D1 space be enhanced and retained at ground and lower ground floor but with spaces arranged in such a way that it is coherent and flexible and most critically fully inclusive and accessible. It should contribute to the street level activation and improve on the existing townscape as per the Euston Area Plan.

The project brief, in particular in relation to the existing building and ground floor uses has evolved over the last 6 months through consultation with the local planning authority, local residents, local councillors and other stakeholders.

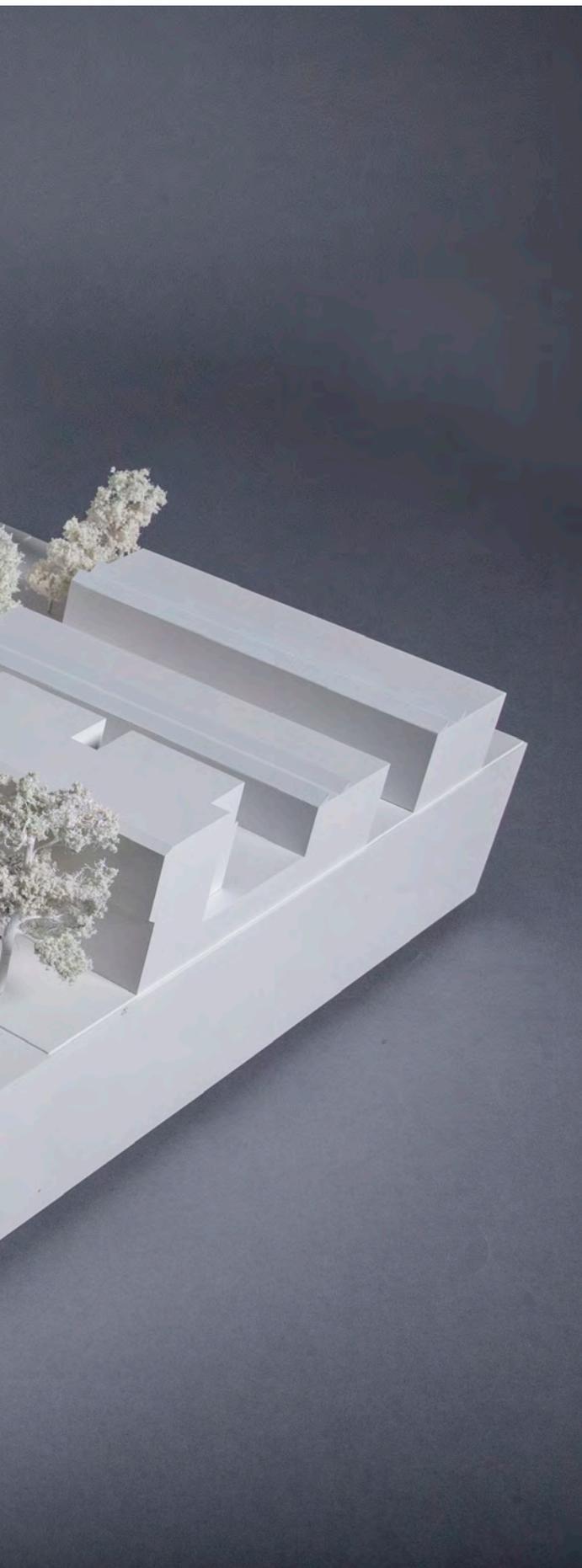
The existing building currently has 9 student bedrooms on upper floors. The brief requires approximately 60 student bedrooms organised in cluster apartments with up to 6 bedrooms per apartment. Based on previous projects completed by the applicant, the student accommodation should be tailored towards postgraduate and returner students, who are in their second or third year at university and want to share with a group of friends.

Research has shown that this type of accommodation – tailored towards returning and postgraduate students – is not readily provided for in Camden and therefore presents the largest threat to the private self contained family homes available for local residents and key workers.

Most importantly, the design proposals should respond to the Euston Area Plan, enabling access for all and seize the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the local area in social, economic, environmental and townscape terms.



Model photo



### 1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The proposals for the redevelopment of the application site at 42 Phoenix Road comprise a detailed design application for the 460sqm (0.046 ha) corner site fronting Phoenix Road and Chalton Street.

The application contains proposals for the demolition of the existing four storey 1930's building to be replaced with a new six storey building with an extended basement.

The application seeks permission for retention of D1 use where the existing area of D1 will be re-provided in the new building at ground and lower ground floor with student residential use on floors 1-5 above.

The new building will contain 55 student rooms in a mixture of 6 bedroom cluster apartments (with shared cooking, bathroom and living facilities) and single occupier, self contained studio flats on the upper floor. The scheme will exceed current planning guidance with over 24% of student rooms suitable for wheelchair adaption. It is proposed that 7% of these rooms are adapted from the outset.

The GEA of the development will increase from 1,087 sqm in the existing building to 2,657 sqm in the new building. The new development will be serviced from the rear via Clarendon Grove. The proposals include secure and covered cycle parking to encourage cycle use and discreet refuse storage located at the rear to de-clutter the pavements and encourage recycling. The development will be car free.

The proposals include level access for all and are designed to provide an active frontage on to Phoenix Road and Chalton Street. The development will include much needed improvements to Clarendon Grove, the existing public passageway adjacent to the site which has been a persistent hotspot for crime and anti social behaviour for more than twenty years.

The scale of the development is in keeping with the surrounding context. The massing will contribute to the townscape of the area and the architectural detail and character of the proposal will complement the character of adjacent listed buildings.





#### 1.4 SUMMARY OF PLANNING POLICY

The Planning Statement, prepared by Protean Planning, outlines the proposals and explains how the development has evolved through consultation to comply with relevant national, regional and local planning policy.

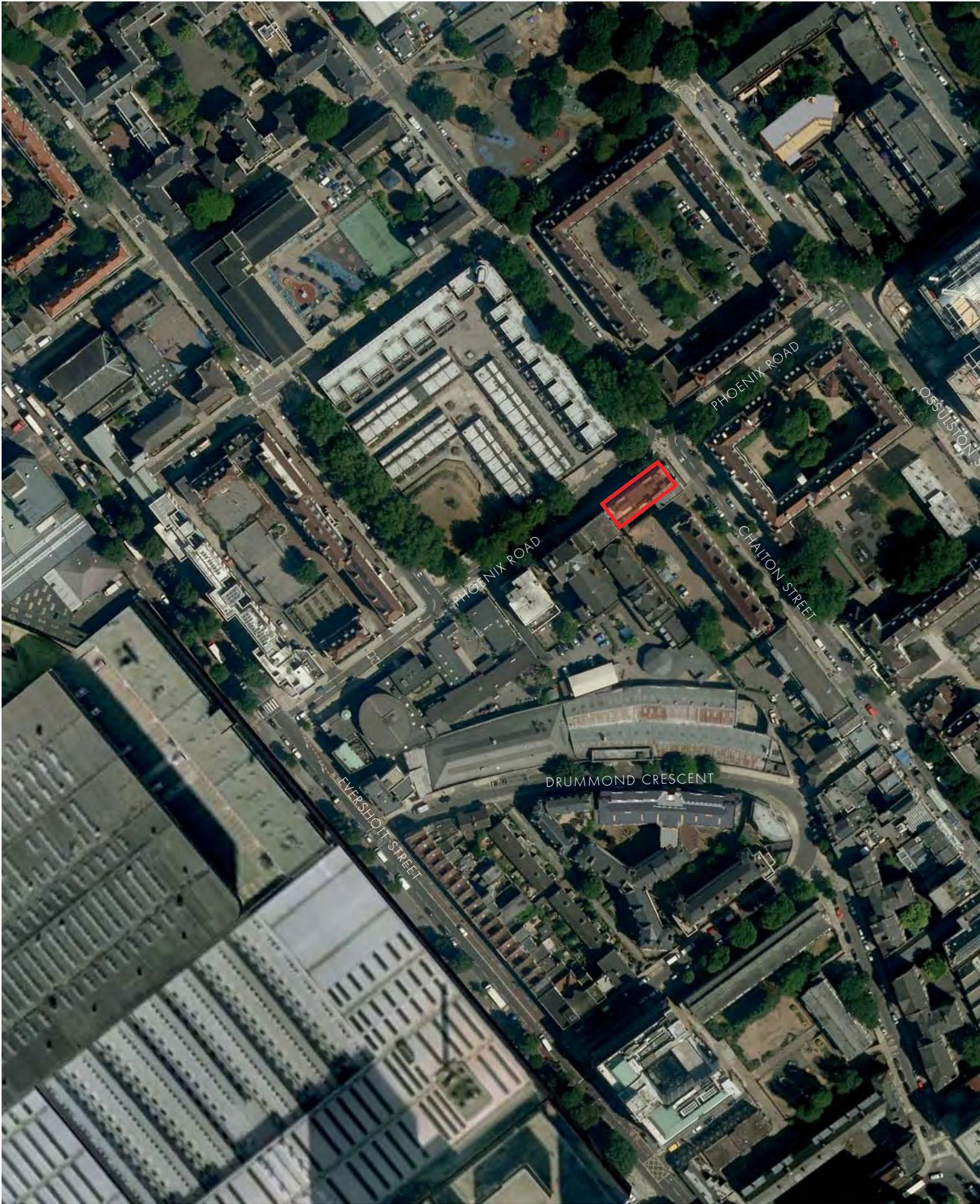
The Planning Statement provides a full detailed review of the scheme against all relevant adopted and emerging policies and guidance which include;

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(2012)
- London Plan (2011)
- Camden Core Strategy (CS) (2010)
- Camden Development Policies (DP) (2010)
- Camden Supplementary Planning Documents
- Euston Area Plan (EAP)
- Local List for Non-Designated Heritage Assets (2015)
- Somers Town Community Investment Programme (CIP) (consulted 2013)
- Blackheath to St Pauls viewing corridor

The entire building has been designed to meet accessibility standards with generous corridor widths and spacious flat sizes. The publicly accessible areas within the D1 space and ancillary areas have been designed to meet current building regulations, including AD Part M. The scheme will exceed CPG2, with almost a quarter of student rooms as wheelchair adaptable bedrooms, designed to meet ADM part 2.

The new student residential accommodation in the proposed development has been designed to exceed Camden's Minimum HMO Standards (2008). It is in line with Camden's Development Policy 9 (DP9) on student housing and Camden's Planning Guidance 2 (CPG2) on Housing – Section 3, Student Housing.

The development has been designed to meet the Councils requirement for BREEAM Excellent rating under BREEAM multi residential category.





## 2 SITE CONTEXT

### 2.1 LOCATION

The site for the proposed development is at 42 Phoenix Road in the London Borough of Camden, in the Somers Town Ward. Somers Town is a predominantly residential area nestled between King's Cross and Euston Stations, just north of the Euston Road.

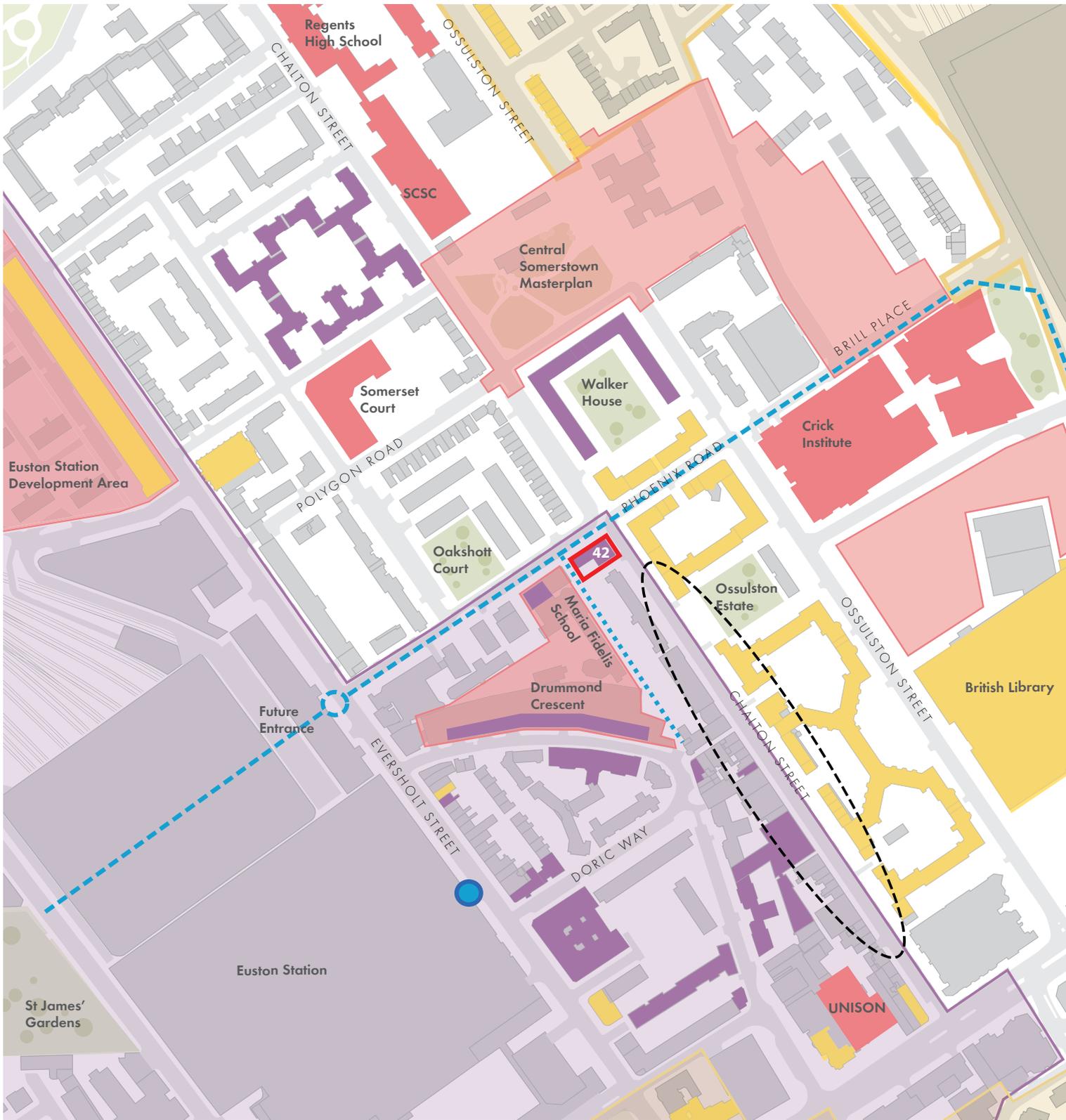
Phoenix Road is parallel to the Euston Road and runs east to west connecting King's Cross and Euston Stations via their entrances on Midland Road and Eversholt Street respectively.

Number 42 is approximately half way along Phoenix Road, at the intersection with Chalton Street which runs north to south.

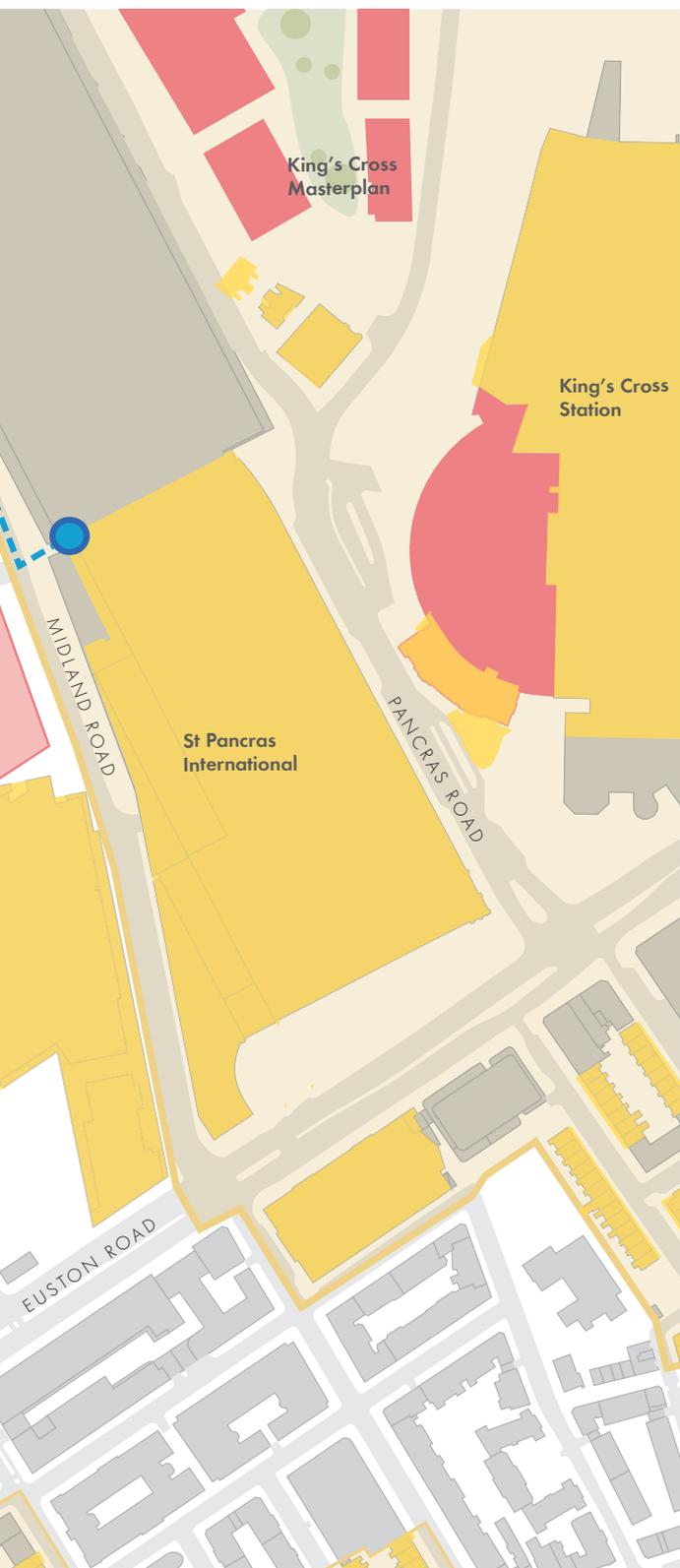
The site is on the southwest corner of the junction, diagonally opposite the Cock Tavern. It is to the south of Oakshott Court and to the west of the Ossulston Estate. The site lies north of Chalton House and shares its western boundary with the Maria Fidelis Convent Upper School.

The public right of way, Clarendon Grove, runs along the south western boundary of the site between the site and the Maria Fidelis School.

- 42 Phoenix Road
- Euston Area Plan boundary
- listed buildings
- buildings on Camden's local list
- conservation area
- station entrance
- Chalton Street Local Centre
- opportunity area
- newly completed development
- primary pedestrian route



Summary of policy areas in the surrounding context



## 2.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Somers Town is an area between two major transport interchanges which have either recently undergone, or are due to undergo, immense change.

There have been a number of major recent changes in and around the Somers Town neighbourhood. With the introduction of High Speed 1, Thameslink and plans for High Speed 2 (HS2), King's Cross and Euston railway stations are each experiencing significant transformation.

The site lies within the Euston Area Plan (EAP). The EAP was adopted by Camden Council, GLA and TFL in January 2015 and will guide development within the plan area up until 2031, including the expansion of Euston Station to accommodate HS2.

The plan clearly highlights Phoenix Road as the main pedestrian link between Euston and King's Cross St Pancras. Even today – without the increased passengers of HS2 – the road is busy with pedestrians moving between the two stations.

Despite the clear aspiration for Phoenix Road, within the EAP, the existing listed buildings and residential uses along the street currently limit the opportunities to introduce activation and improvement.

As part of the EAP, Camden Council is currently consulting on Somers Town Community Investment Programme (CIP), a 15 year plan to improve schools and homes on council owned land. A significant part of the CIP is the Central Somers Town masterplan on Brill Place which will include new housing, community space, open space and a new building for the Edith Neville Primary School and St Aloysius Nursery due to open in 2017. Private housing is proposed as part of the programme, which is likely to take the form of a 26 storey tower on Brill Place.

At the eastern end of Phoenix Road is the recently completed Francis Crick Institute – with 15 storeys and 91,000sqm of floor space, the biomedical research building is by far the largest and tallest building on the street at present.

These recent developments will have a significant impact on the setting of the listed Ossulston Estate and are alien to the existing scale and character of the area.



Somers Town Community Investment Programme – Projects

### What will happen in Somers Town?

Below is an aerial view of how the proposed Central Somers Town scheme could look, this is only an indicative illustration and is likely to change as the design progresses.

**Open space**  
We want to improve the quality of public open space to ensure it meets the needs of local people and, if possible, increase the amount of public open space.

- The new proposals link the existing green space to create one large community park at the heart of Somers Town. This will provide better facilities and activities for everyone.
- We're keeping the open air gym, reprofiling and reshaping the community garden near Coopers Lane and reviewing other outdoor facilities for the new park.
- Existing trees will be maintained where possible and new trees will be planted as part of the scheme.

**Community safety**  
We want to ensure that new buildings and spaces are designed to reduce the opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour.

- We've removed the alley at the back of Plot 10 and designed out anti-social behaviour.
- Where possible we've included residential units that actively overlook public spaces to create a safer, watched environment.
- We've created 'sight lines' across the open spaces and parks.

**Housing**  
We want to build new affordable homes, including larger socially rented homes, address overcrowding, the lack of variety and invest in our existing housing.

- The new homes in Central Somers Town will pay for the new park, school and community buildings and other improvements in Central Somers Town.
- We will aim to maximise affordable housing across the site and prioritise to local residents in housing need, on a local lettings policy.
- We can't put housing on top of the school building, as it is likely that the school will need to expand and build upwards in the future.

**Education and Community**  
We want to ensure that all schools and children's centres provide an excellent environment in which to learn and that the community has appropriate and flexible spaces to meet.

- Edith Neville school is being rebuilt to provide modern, flexible teaching and learning spaces. Making the best use of outdoor play and learning is very important in the design.
- The footprint of the school has been reduced to allow the two public open spaces at Polygon Road and Purchase Street to become one large community park at the heart of Somers Town.
- A new community hub and play project are part of the proposal. It will be located near to its existing Plot 10 site as this is a good, central location that is easily accessible.
- St Aloysius Infant's school nursery will be co-located in the same building so that maximum use is made of the new play facilities.
- A new community hall for use by local community groups including Coopers Lane Tenants means that the new facilities will be actively used throughout the day.

**Getting about**  
We want to make it easier and safer for people to walk around Somers Town and beyond to other places that people want to get to.

- Priority has been given to creating better conditions for pedestrians (rather than vehicles) to encourage people to walk and cycle through Somers Town.
- We are proposing to pedestrianise Polygon Road, with access for emergency vehicles only. There will be a full separate consultation on this proposal with the local community.
- We are building 'car free' developments to promote sustainable living.

Central Somers Town masterplan, currently being consulted

## Somers Town FESTIVAL

of cultures

# 2014

Saturday July 12th

Chalton Street NW1 11am-7pm

**Music & entertainment** Starring...

- Lipstick Melodies with Alan Wase (ex-Libertines)
- Bengali masha two-start garage rockers Oh! Ganquik
- Rock 'n' blues The Mighty Caretakers
- Punk country Skabees
- Arts and crafts workshop New Horizon stage

**Family Funfair**

**Sports** football, Graffiti artist workshop, Science from Francis Crick

**Entertainment** with live **Filming & film** showing

**Community** events, a house fire on 9th July

**History** with Alan Old (Somers Town Guide Book)

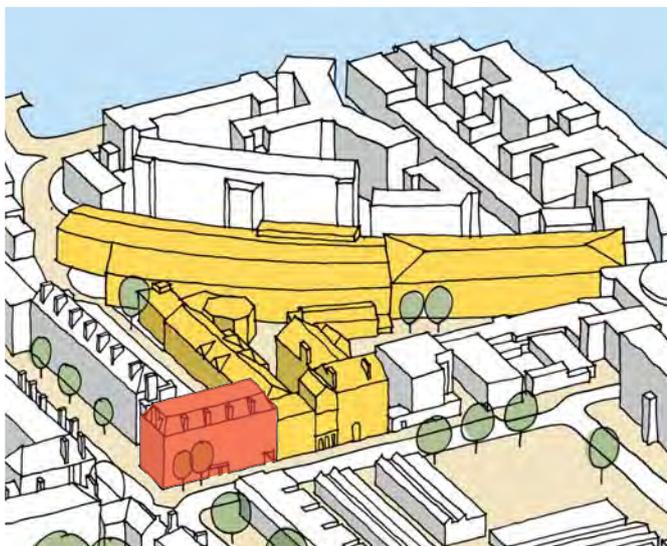
www.somerstowntart.org

Camden welcome logo, STaBT, orange, A-LEVEL

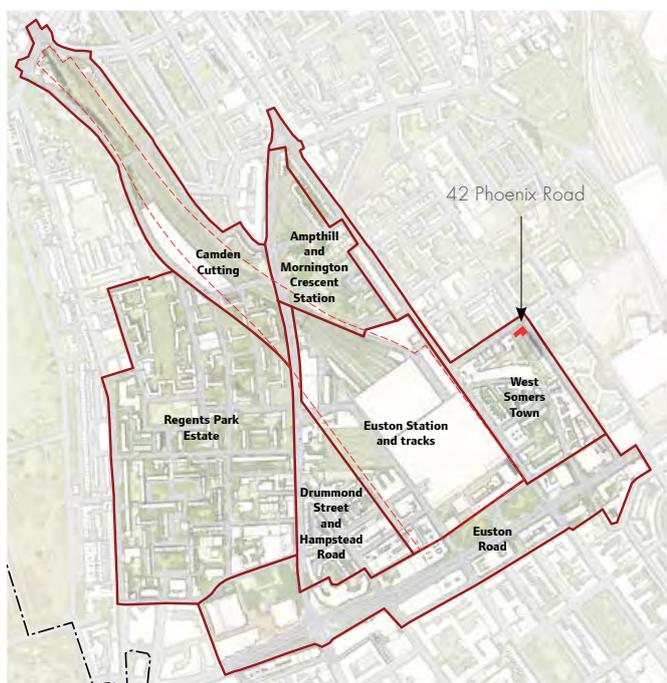
START festival on Chalton Street



The Francis Crick Institute, now near completion



Site of the proposed Maria Fidelis School redevelopment (No.42 in red)



Euston Area Plan, Character Areas

In addition to these major projects, the school site to the west of 42 Phoenix Road is also highlighted as a development site in the EAP. This is because the delivery of HS2 requires land currently in use by the Maria Fidelis Lower School on Gower Street. A recent land swap has taken place to allow the two separate schools to combine onto the Phoenix Road and Drummond Crescent site.

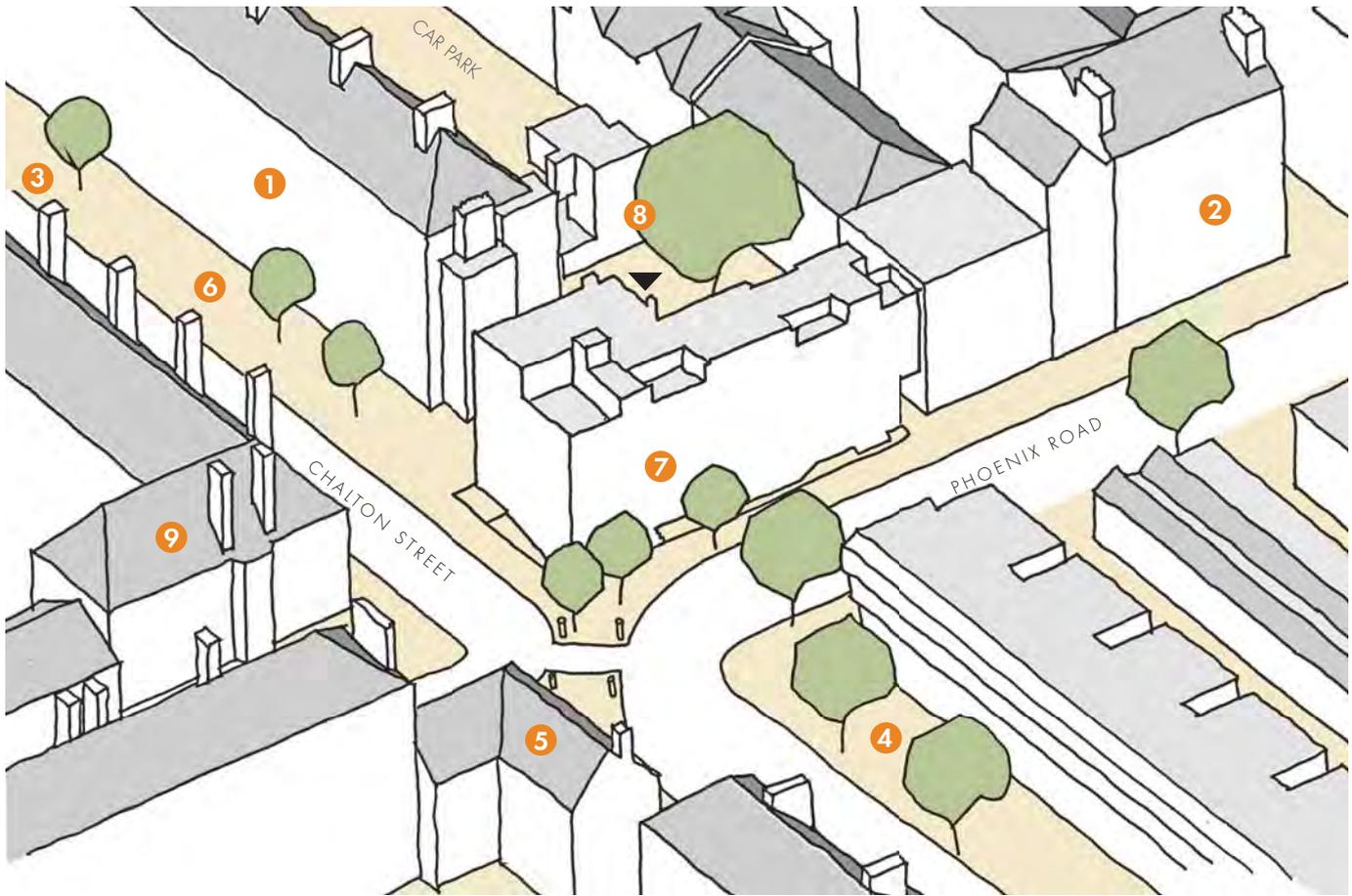
The current Maria Fidelis Upper School will be combined with Drummond Crescent Police Garages to create a site for a new 1000 pupil school which is currently programmed to open in 2017 (see site area, left). This site is included in Camden's Site Allocations document and the recommended height for redevelopment on this site is between 5-6 storeys tall.

The construction programme for 42 Phoenix Road and the Maria Fidelis School are likely to coincide and the design team have been in contact with the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to this. Thus far, it is understood that the existing convent buildings will be demolished and a new school built in the location of Drummond Crescent. It is not yet clear what presence the school will have on Phoenix Road.

Chalton Street has been identified in the 'Western Somers Town' character area of the EAP as a 'local centre'. We understand the intent of this designation is to create a new identity for the area resulting in an increase of shops and street activity. There are already a number of shops and small businesses on Chalton Street, including some popular bars and cafes.

In response to this impetus, Camden Council has recently initiated a regular weekday market which is growing in popularity. START (Somers Town Art festival) is the biggest street festival in Camden and held on Chalton Street in July each year.

This analysis shows that Somers Town is changing and there is an opportunity for the corner site at 42 Phoenix Road to make a positive contribution to the future of West Somers Town, in line with the aspirations set out in the EAP.



Axonometric view and key



Chalton House



Maria Fidelis School



Popular 'Somers Town Coffee House' in the Ossulston Estate



Oakshott Court and Walker House



The Cock Tavern



Chalton Street Market



Site plan showing existing building



42 Phoenix Road front



42 Phoenix Road rear (showing existing tree)

## 2.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

Unusual for its central location, the existing building is almost completely detached, connected only to the Maria Fidelis School on the western boundary. Running between the school and the site is a public footpath called Clarendon Grove which links Phoenix Road to Drummond Crescent. The existing building bridges over this passageway with a flying freehold.

The existing building backs on to the car park of Chalton House to the south. Chalton House is a linear residential mansion block which lies to the south of the site with windows orientated perpendicular and to the rear façade of 42 Phoenix Road. The carpark is gated and the land used by tenants of Chalton House only. Any new development should be cognisant of the fact that there is no public access to the rear line of the existing site boundary.

To the north of the site, across Phoenix Road is 'Oakshott Court', a 1970's Camden Council housing development. Originally designed to turn its back onto the road, the development has a blank wall onto Phoenix Road with no windows overlooking number 42.

The east elevation faces onto Chalton Street and is opposite the grade II listed Ossulston Estate. Chalton Street is over 15m wide in this location and so there is a generous gap between the two buildings. The Cock Tavern and Walker House are to the north east of the site but neither looks directly on to the site. Although unusual for a site in this location, 42 Phoenix Road is relatively private and not overlooked by surrounding properties.



Grade II listed Ossulston Estate



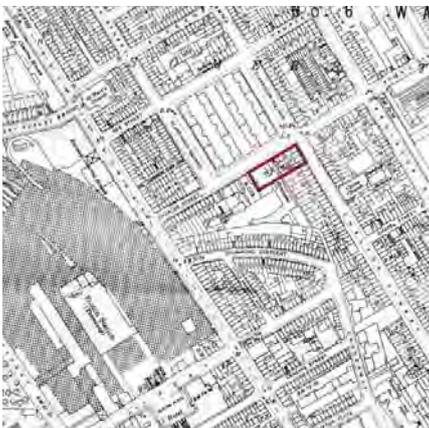
Richard Horwood 1819



1837



Polygon Housing 1850



Ordnance Survey 1914



Suspected joint of rear extension

## 2.4 HISTORIC CONTEXT

Somers Town was originally the name used for the large triangular area bounded by Pancras, Hampstead and Euston Roads but is now taken to mean the rectangle bounded by Pancras Road, Euston Road, Eversholt Street and CrownDale, an area approximately 200 metres either side of Chalton Street.

This chapter will give a concise overview of the history of the surrounding area and application site. Refer to the Heritage Statement submitted with this application for more detailed information on the historical context of the existing building.

### 18th Century

Somers Town was named for Charles Cocks, 1st Baron Somers (1725-1806). Granted by William III to John Somers (1651-1716), Lord Chancellor and Baron Somers of Evesham. The Polygon was one of the first housing schemes to be built in Somers Town in 1784 amid the open fields and brickworks of north London.

### 19th Century

The railways were constructed in the 1830's and during this time the population density soared due to construction workers settling in the area.

Overcrowding became a problem in the late 19th century and Somers Town experiences some of the worst slum housing conditions in the capital. The Polygon was demolished and replaced by tenement buildings in the 1890's.

### 20th Century

The area underwent major slum clearance in 1906 and new social housing was built by the St Pancras House Improvement Society in 1924. Following this large swathes of social housing were built by London County Council, of particular note is the Ossulston Estate which begun in 1927 during the interwar period. The estate is now grade II listed.

In the 1970's Somers Town was a prominent site for the squatting movement and during the 1980's many of the council owned properties exchanged hands through the Right to Buy scheme. Each of these factors mean Somers Town today is a diverse mix of both leaseholders and tenants.

### History of the existing building

42 Phoenix Road was built in 1931 as a nursery and day centre, one of several in the area and replaced a row of townhouses previously on the site.

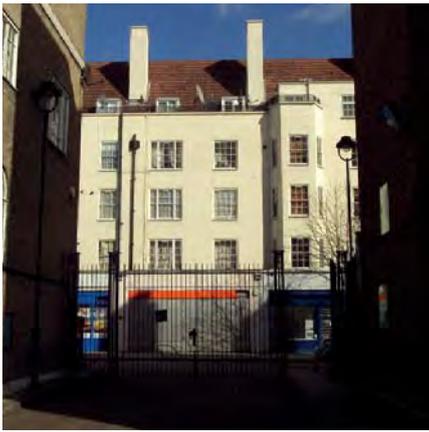
It is believed that the building was initially rectangular in plan and extended shortly after completion with a rear extension to create the L-shape plan which remains today.

Since the 30's the building has undergone several alterations and accretions which have disfigured its appearance. The most notable qualities of the existing building retained today are the warm grey brickwork and the light neo-regency windows. Although many of these were replaced with galvanised steel replicas in the 1960's.

### History of Clarendon Grove

Clarendon Grove can be seen on maps from as early as 1820. It got its name from its starting point of Clarendon Square which was home to the Polygon. This historic route is today a public right of way.

Refer to Chapter 3 of this document and the accompanying Heritage Statement for more information.



Grade II listed Ossulston Estate



42 Phoenix Road



Maria Fidelis RC Convent School



St Joan's House, Phoenix Rd



138-186 Eversholt Street



57 Chalton Street



Walker House



Map of designated and non-designated heritage assets

### Listed Buildings

The most significant adjacent listed building is the grade II listed Ossulston Estate and Cock Tavern and southern part of Walker House.

The Ossulston Estate consists of several courtyard housing blocks, parts of which are up to seven storeys tall. The estate is the most important inner-city estate of the interwar period and represents the most considered attempt by the LCC to inject new thinking into this typology. It was influenced in particular by Viennese housing models and was innovative in terms of layout and elevation.

Any redevelopment of 42 Phoenix Road should give sufficient consideration to the impact on the setting of this designated heritage asset.

The Ossulston Estate was built 1927-29 and so existed prior to the construction of the day nursery at 42 Phoenix Road. Despite being surrounded by these exemplary buildings, 42 Phoenix Road does not have any group historical value with its disparate neighbours and hasn't had from its initial completion in 1931.

### Conservation Area

Despite being in close proximity to several grade II listed buildings, the site is not in a conservation area. Local conservation areas in close proximity to the site include the King's Cross and St Pancras Conservation Area to the east and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area to the south.

### The Local List

Camden is balancing the benefits of new development with retaining the identity of the borough by the creation of a list of buildings deemed to be contribute to the history of the area.

Following a period of consultation Camden's Local List was adopted earlier in the year and lists several buildings in Somers Town, including 42 Phoenix Road.

The inclusion of a building on the local list does not preclude replacement but certainly raises the expectation that any alternative replacement buildings would need to be of the highest quality. In the assessment of such a replacement, consideration should be given to the economic, environmental and social benefits of a replacement building against the extent of heritage value being lost.

Refer to the Heritage Statement submitted alongside this application for more detail on the Local List.

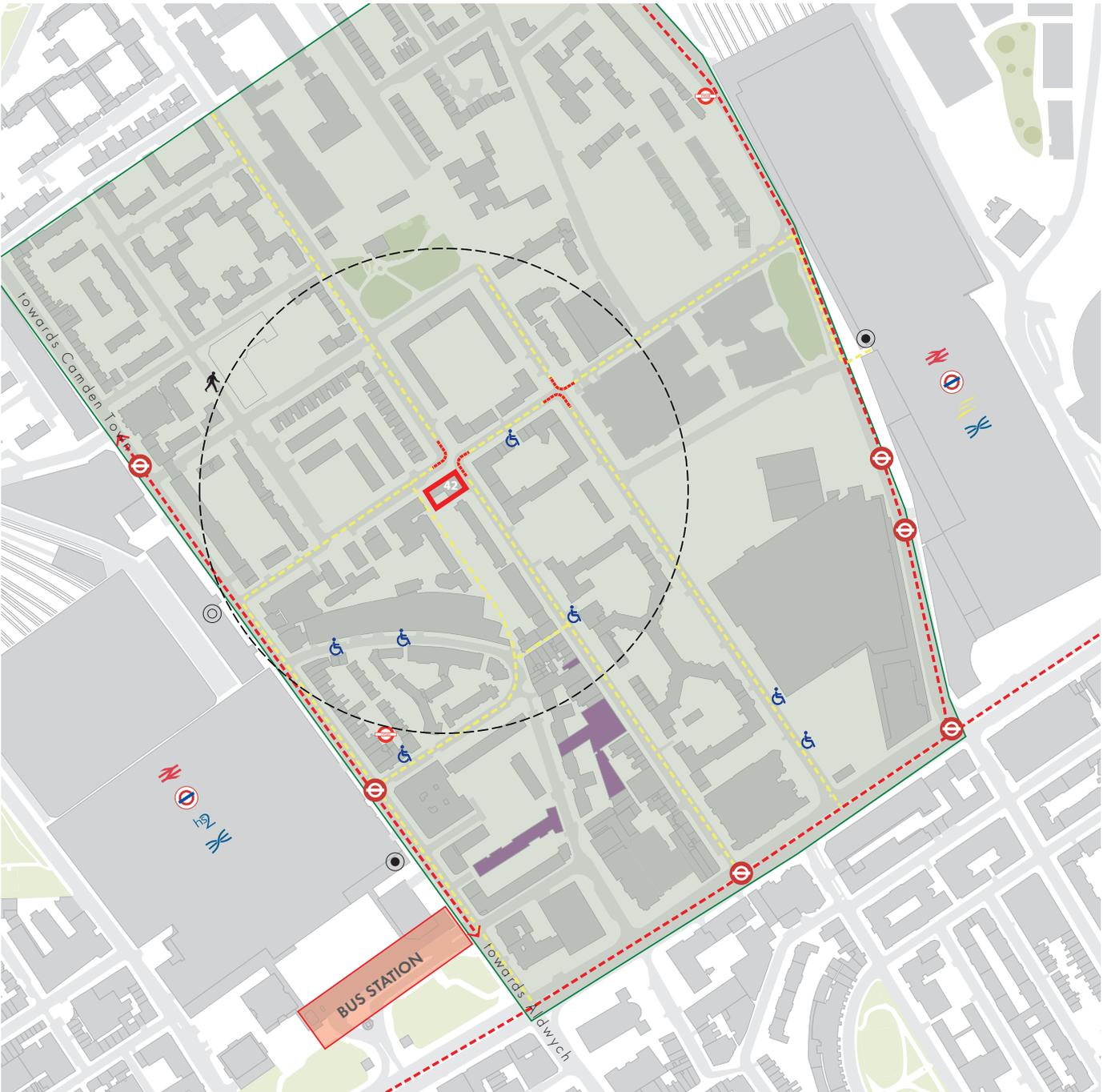
### Euston Area Plan

The site lies within the boundary of the EAP which is focused on growth and development at Euston Station and the surrounding areas.

Phoenix Road is integral to the western Somers Town region of the EAP. High priorities for the EAP are improved permeability (east-west routes in particular), more active frontage, more retail, employment, housing, community and open space.

-  locally listed building
-  nearby locally listed building
-  no.42 Phoenix Road
-  Euston Area Plan boundary
-  conservation area
-  listed building

-  station entrance
-  future station entrance
-  bus stop
-  Santander cycles
-  residents parking mon-fri 8.30-18.30
-  key bus routes
-  key road routes
-  5 minutes walking
-  blue badge parking space
-  traffic calming from Olympics



Public transport connections

## 2.5 VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

### Public Transport

With Euston, King's Cross and St Pancras Station less than ten minutes' walk in either direction, the site is extremely accessible and well connected to many forms of public transport. Both stations are within TFL zone 1 and are interchange points for several different tube and rail lines. Frequent mainline trains run from both stations to the north of England and Scotland and the HS1 Eurostar link allows wider international connections. Government plans for HS2 and Crossrail 2 will bring greater and faster north-south and east-west links in the future.

Euston also has a key bus station which is a termination and starting position for many bus routes. The routes closest to the site run along Eversholt Street (168,253,N5,N20,N253) and connect between Hampstead Heath and Aldwych. The nearest bus stop is six minutes walk from the site.

Due to its central location it is reasonable to expect that occupants may travel to their destination by bike. It is a priority that safe and accessible bike storage will be included within the proposal both for student residents and staff of the non-residential areas.

### Private Vehicles & Bikes

In 2012, Phoenix Road was upgraded as part of the Olympic Route Network to respond to its role as a key east-west thoroughfare between Euston and St Pancras Station. To prepare for this influx of people, traffic calming measures were made to the road to improve pedestrian safety. A raised table and bollards were installed at the junction of Phoenix Road and Chalton Street to slow traffic and the footpath was widened at Brill Place. As a result vehicular through traffic is not heavy along Phoenix Road.

All of Somers Town is in Parking Zone CA-G which has on street parking restrictions on weekdays. Parking is difficult as there are many cars belonging to residential properties in the area. Due to the high

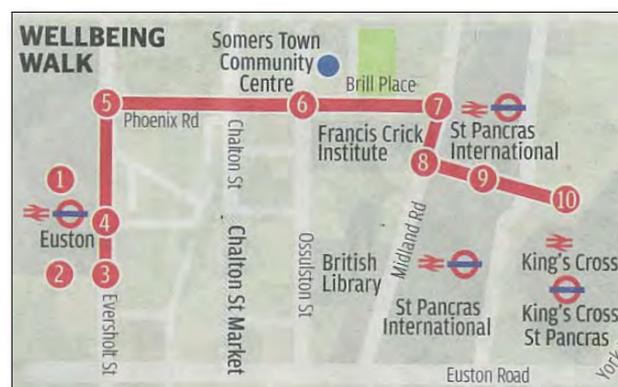
levels of accessibility to public transport (according to the TFL website the site has a PTAL rating of 6a), it is proposed that the development will be car free and no parking will be provided. There is a cycle docking station of 18 Santander Cycles on Doric Way just five minutes' walk from the site.

Please refer to the Travel Plan prepared by Paul Mew Associates and submitted as part of this application for more information on transport around the site.

### Pedestrians

Since the traffic calming measures were put in place, the roads around the site are relatively quiet and pleasant in their nature. As a result Phoenix Road is becoming increasingly popular with commuters to transition between stations rather than the busy Euston Road.

Due to its position at a crossroads, there is good north-south and east-west pedestrian permeability from the site to the wider area. The 'Well Being Walk', featured in the Evening Standard recently, encourages pedestrians to walk along Phoenix Road as an alternative to the Euston Road and there are now signs up along the road to highlight this initiative.



The 'well being walk' featured recently in the Evening Standard