

### 2.5.4 Legibility and Identity

Currently there is a lack of identity and urban legibility for the St Giles quadrant with 92%\* of people interviewed on the site not knowing they were in St Giles.

The ambition of the proposal is to help reaffirm the historic identity of the forgotten quarter of St Giles, and to promote stronger connections to St Giles-in-the-Field church as the key landmark of this emerging quarter.

During the West End Project, a major urban design proposal for Camden Council, DSDHA sought to ensure that our design proposals were closely informed by the views of the people who live, work and travel within this area.

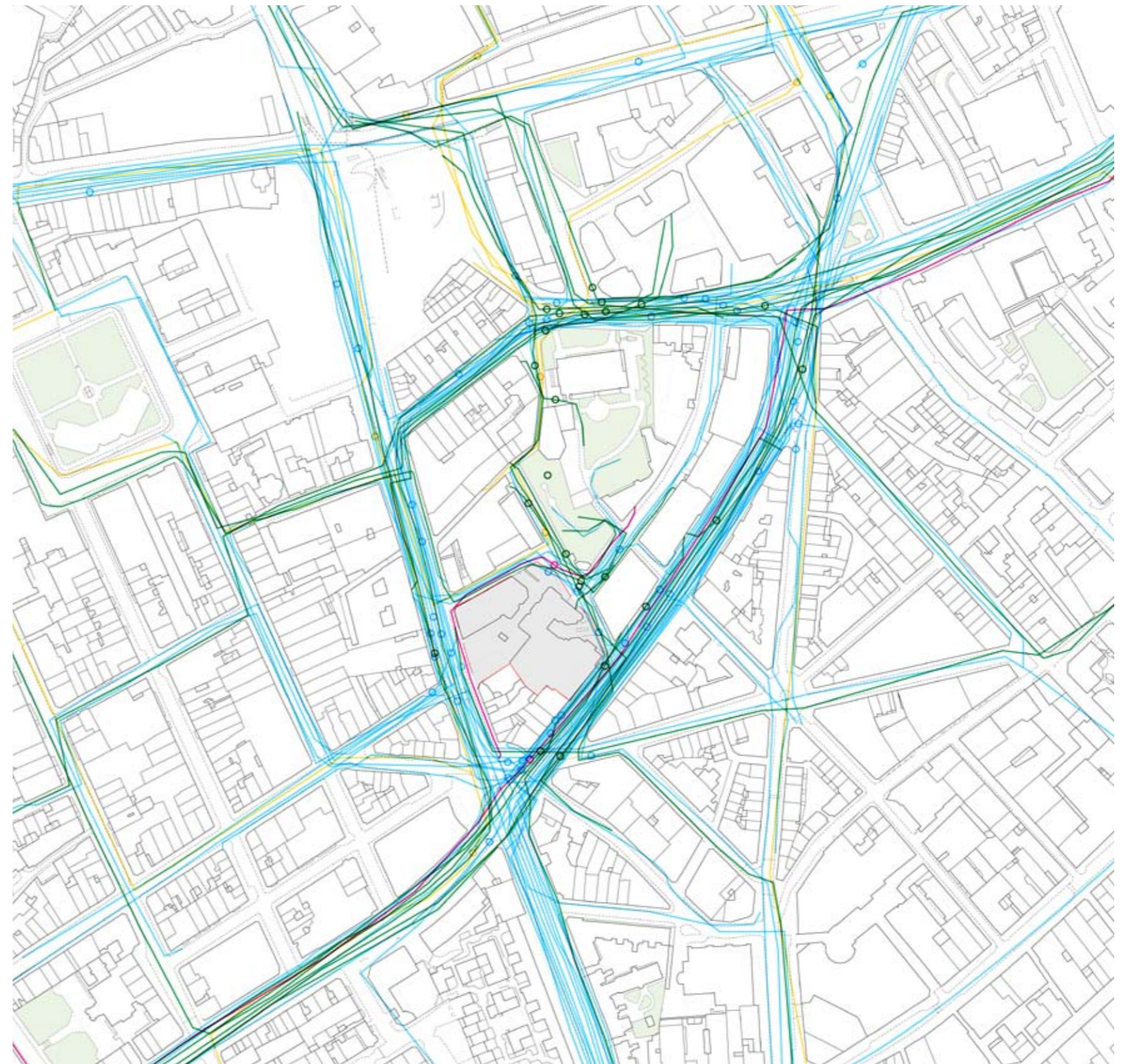
DSDHA's team went on site and interviewed 100 passersby asking them what were their reasons for being in the area, where they were coming from and where they were going. The information gathered was used to gain insights about the use of the site by locals and visitors and to map the way in which people move between the streets and public areas of that part of London. The consultation was very helpful in gaining an appreciation of the area from many different users. During the initial phases of this proposal, we again wanted to get appreciation of who frequents the area and also an understanding of how they would identify the area.

We realised that there is currently a lack of identity and urban legibility for the St Giles quadrant with 92%\* of people interviewed on the site not knowing they were in St Giles. This then became a key strategy when developing the proposal.

One of the ambitions of the proposal then became to help reaffirm the historic identity of the forgotten quarter of St Giles, and to promote stronger connections to St Giles-in-the-Field church as the key landmark of this emerging quarter.

Key:

- Residents
- Explorers
- Workers
- Students



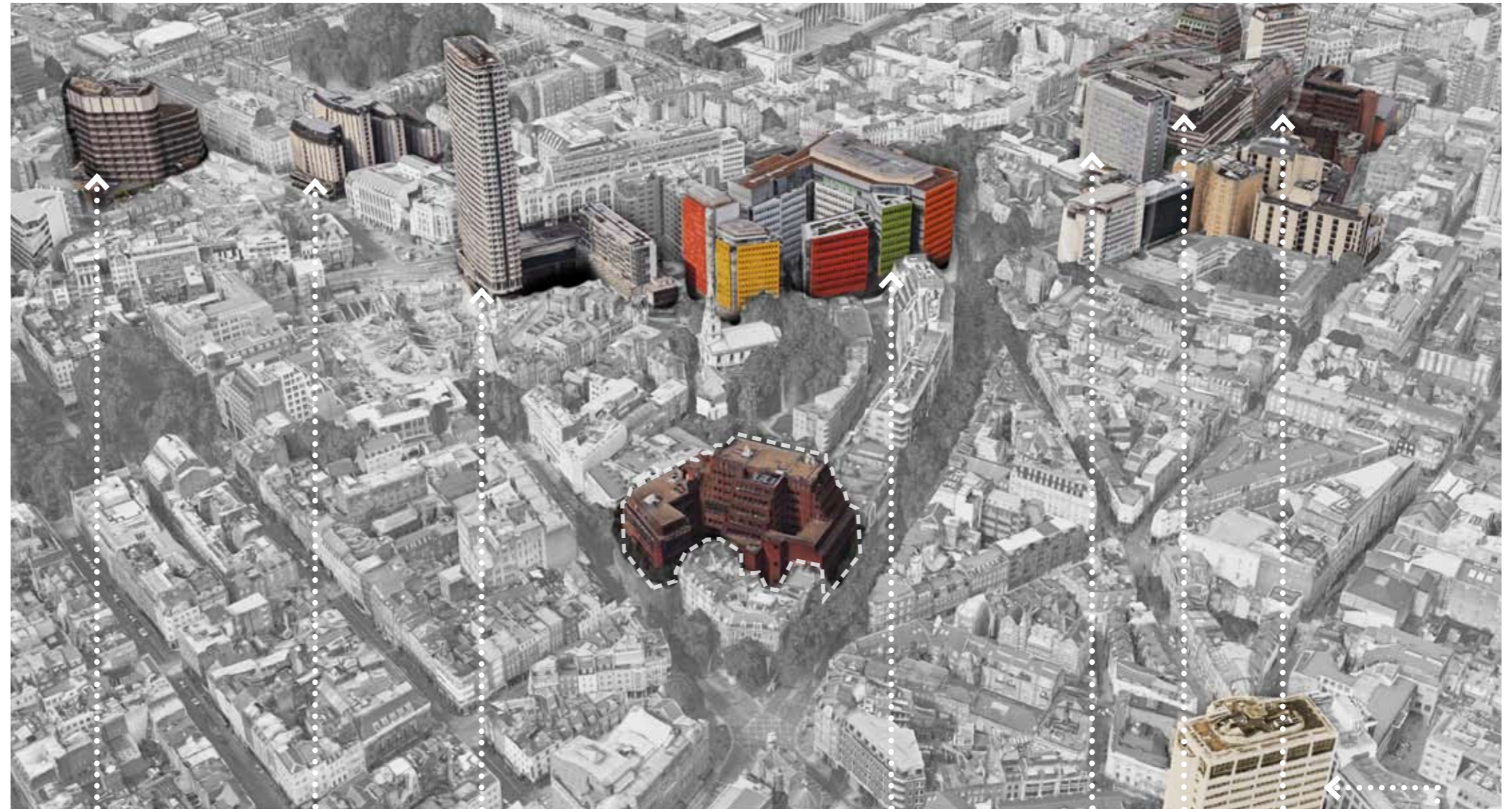
Mapping of 100 individual journeys

\* Based on an interviews with 100 people undertaken by DSDHA over a 6-hour period on 11.08.15 as part of our grounded research methodology.

### 2.5.5 Local Large Buildings

The site is not in a Conservation Area, and does not clearly belong to any one of the areas with distinct identities that surround it. The predominant context is that of the north-south main road systems (Charing Cross Road/Shaftesbury Avenue) that are varied in character and quality of built frontages along their lengths. Both road systems have varied building heights and include a number of large-scale buildings, including the existing building.

In the wider area there are a number of major large post-war buildings that establish a strong presence and architectural character of their own, which provide a context for large buildings. Many of these post-war buildings in the area have been listed, however, none of the buildings on the site or immediately adjoining the site are listed.



Stephen Street

St Giles Hotel

Centre Point

Central St Giles

Travelodge

One New  
Oxford  
Street

Commonwealth  
House

Orion  
House

### 2.5.6 Active Frontages

The distribution of entrances and active frontages contributes to the patterns of pedestrian movement, natural surveillance and overall character of an area.

New Compton Street is dominated by blank and inactive frontages and a high concentration of service entrances. It has few active entrances to the residential blocks.

Old Compton Street, Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue have a high density of active frontages on both pavements attracting movement.

The proposed link through the site, will increase accessibility to the site. This increase will add activity to New Compton Street and Stacey Street, opening a 'local route' for pedestrians in the area.



Shaftesbury Avenue



New Compton Street



Old Compton Street



Charing Cross Road / Phoenix Street

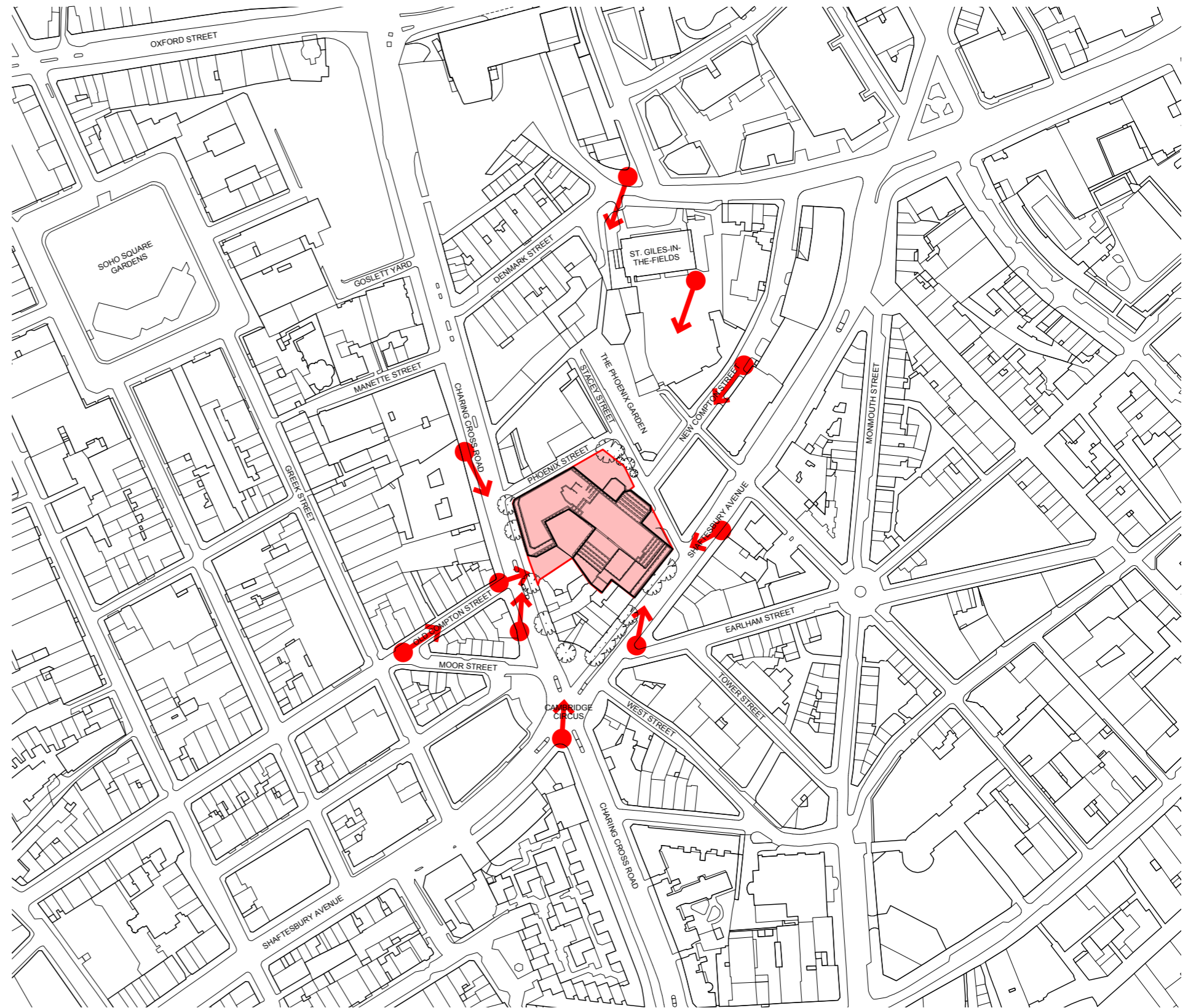


Charing Cross Road/Phoenix Street

### 2.6 Townscape Analysis

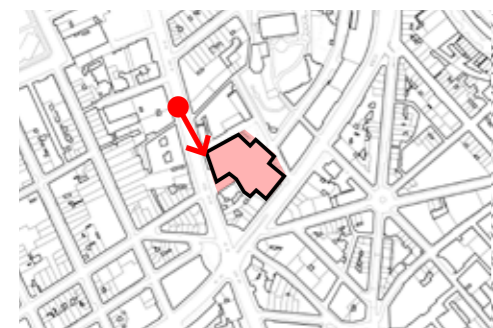
At the outset of the project, a number of key townscape views were identified that represented popular and key approaches to the site, as well as significant locations from which the existing building is visible.

The adjacent map, together with the photographic survey and associated commentary shown on the following pages, highlights the main townscape views through which the scheme has been developed. These views were subsequently discussed with LB Camden planning officers and refined/ added to in order to form the basis of the Townscape, Visual Impact and Heritage Assessment undertaken by Peter Stewart Consultancy.



Site Plan (NTS) identifying key townscape views established at the outset of the project

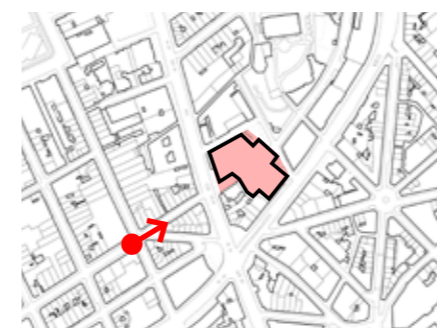
2.6.1 Charing Cross Road looking south



Key Findings

- Shop fronts do not align with the neighbouring building.
- Dark facade makes use and significance of the building illegible.
- Neighbouring buildings are more highly articulated with legible entrances unlike the existing building.

2.6.2 Old Compton Street

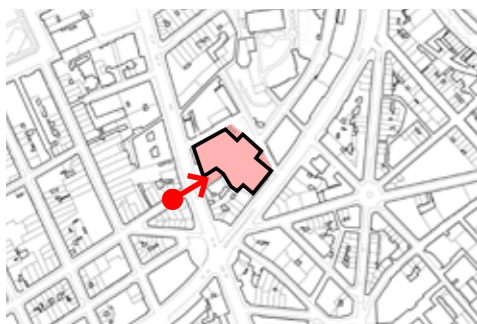


Key Findings

- The existing building acts a barrier, not a beacon and hides St. Giles Quarter.
- At an urban scale, a lack of delight makes the viewer feel forced away. The building seems impregnable.
- This elevation, with its looming, overbearing quality, firmly tells the public to back away.

## 2.0 Site Matters

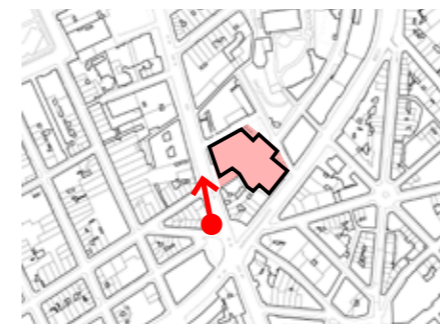
### 2.6.3 Caxton Walk



#### Key Findings

- The neighbouring building is composed of strong horizontal banding and vertical indents.
- The sheer brickwork of the existing building creates chasm-like quality to Caxton Walk.
- The use and status of the buildings is ignored at both an urban scale and close up too. Its function is uncertain and it appears looming.

### 2.6.4 Charing Cross looking north



#### Key Findings

- Elegant layered architecture next door. Which any proposal should relate to.
- Dark chasm at Caxton Walk. A lighter tonality would uplift public realm and surrounding streets.
- A clear and legible entrance is needed on Charing Cross Road.

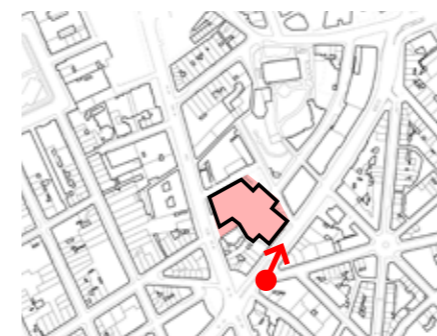
2.6.5 Cambridge Circus



Key Findings

- 125SA sits on its own axial order, confusing the legibility of the St Giles Quarter.
- The lower buildings either have over scaled flank walls or too little architectural presence to compete with the decontextualised block behind.
- The delight of turrets and decorations on Charing Cross Road, versus, dark, looming impenetrable block beyond.

2.6.6 Shaftesbury Avenue looking north



Key Findings

- Low shop fronts and relentless brickwork ignore neighbouring buildings

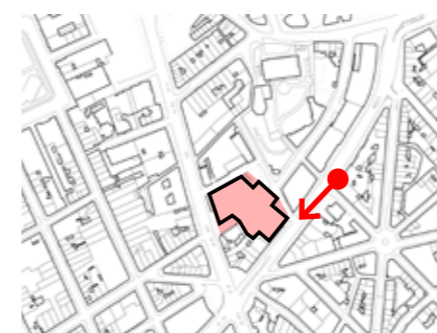
2.6.7 New Compton Street



Key Findings

- The back street nature of the public realm is emphasised with inactive frontages.
- The solid nature of the architecture reads as a wall.
- Nascent amenity exists with recent tree planting.

2.6.8 Shaftesbury Avenue looking south



Key Findings

- This is definitely the existing building's 'best side' - here the oriel windows break up the mass, and the ziggurat form recedes.
- This only 'works' here as the building's geometry relates solely to Shaftesbury Avenue.
- The listed odeon cinema struggles to relate to the building, as the lack of articulation that provides visual hierarchy is noticeable, including the 'too-small' entrance without distinction, or the relentless use of the same prefabricated brick window opening.



## 2.0 Site Matters

### 2.7 Streetscape Analysis

Following the detailed historic and existing site analysis undertaken and detailed in the previous sections, the adjacent analytical diagrams have been developed to illustrate key compositional themes relating to the building and urban morphology of streets surrounding the site. This analysis enables an understanding of how to identify key (and specifically local) features, which may inform the design of the proposed new building, ensuring a contextual response.

The analysis highlights the contrast in the urban morphology between the different street contexts, whilst also emphasising how poorly the existing building responds contextually.

#### 2.7.1 Analysis of Streetscape Composition Cambridge Circus

The existing building appears incongruously in the view from Cambridge Circus, rising above the 5-storey building that fronts the circus itself.

From this view it is not legible that the building has a frontage on both Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road.

Cambridge Circus is characterised by strong horizontal banding, particularly visible through strong cornice lines on both adjoining Trentshoe Mansions and the circus building, currently occupied by McDonalds at ground floor level.



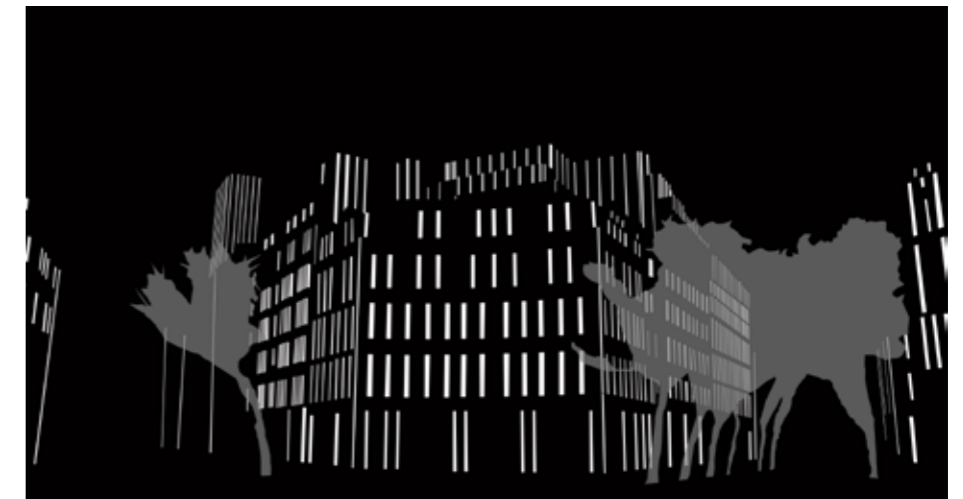
Existing condition



Individuality



Horizontality



Verticality



Apertures



Bottom-Middle-Top

### 2.7.2 Analysis of Streetscape Composition Charing Cross Road

The diagrams generally demonstrate that this particular context is characterised by buildings with a dominance of horizontality in the architectural detailing and a well-defined datum for the ground floor shop frontage. Colour and varying levels of detail within the facades reinforce these horizontals.

The existing building presents a markedly different facade articulation with dominant vertical mullions.



Base Photograph



Horizontality



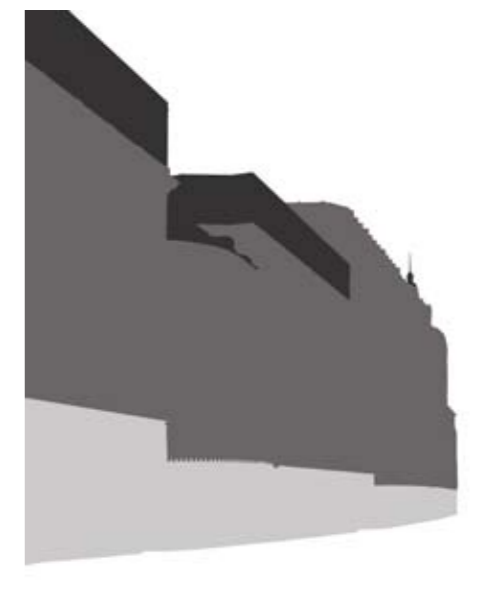
Verticality



Individuality



Apertures



Bottom-Middle-Top

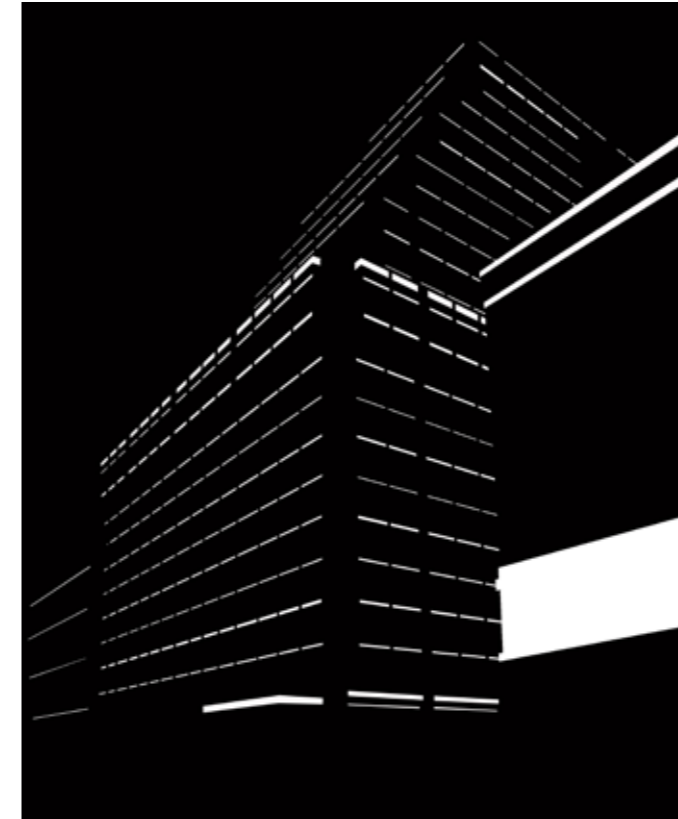
### 2.7.3 Analysis of Streetscape Composition Shaftesbury Avenue

The diagrams adjacent indicate that the morphology of this context is not consistent with that of Charing Cross Road. With differences in heights and the views demonstrating that there is a stronger emphasis on vertical articulation than horizontal, emphasised with window openings that are more often orientated vertically.

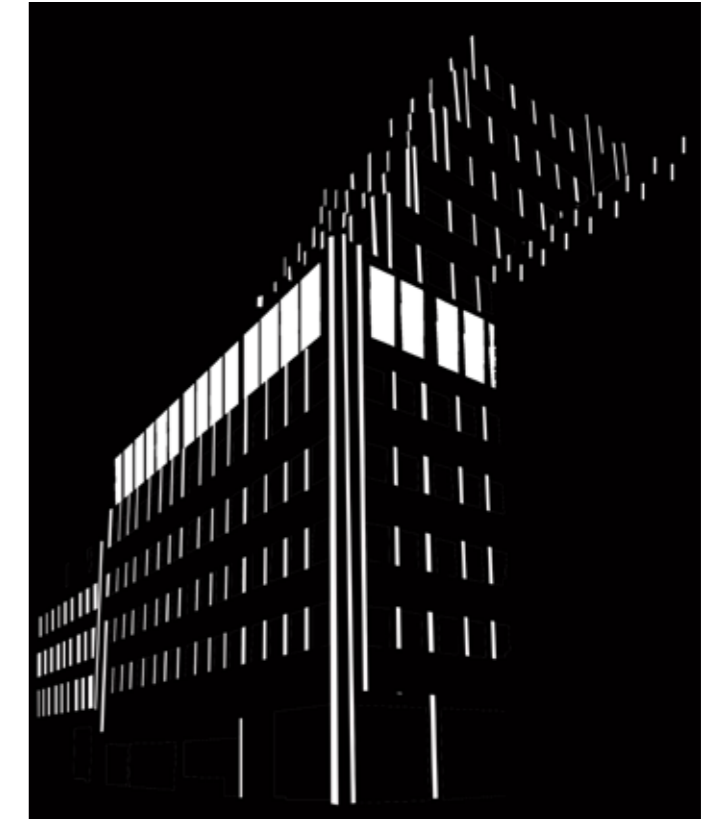
The frieze of the Odeon Cinema presents a strong horizontal datum that corresponds approximately with the front floor of the existing building.



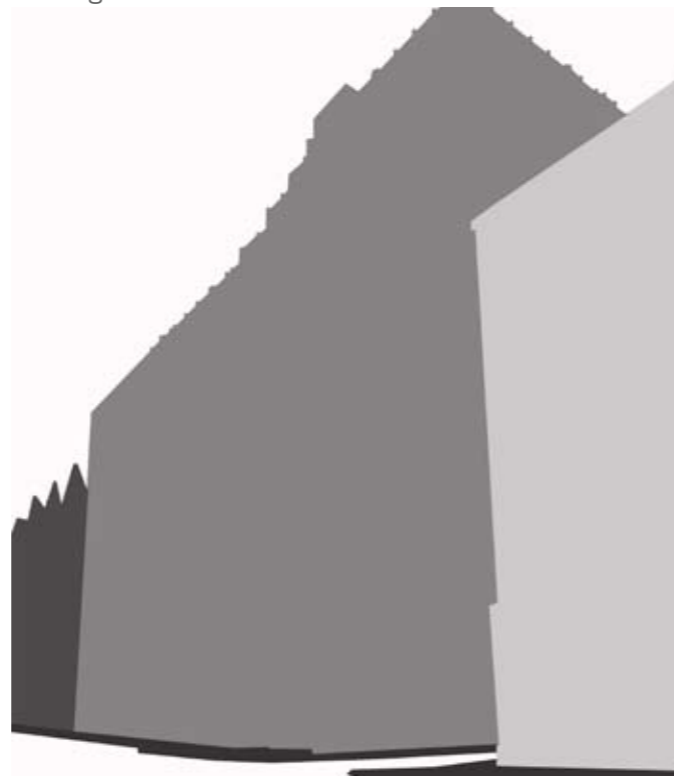
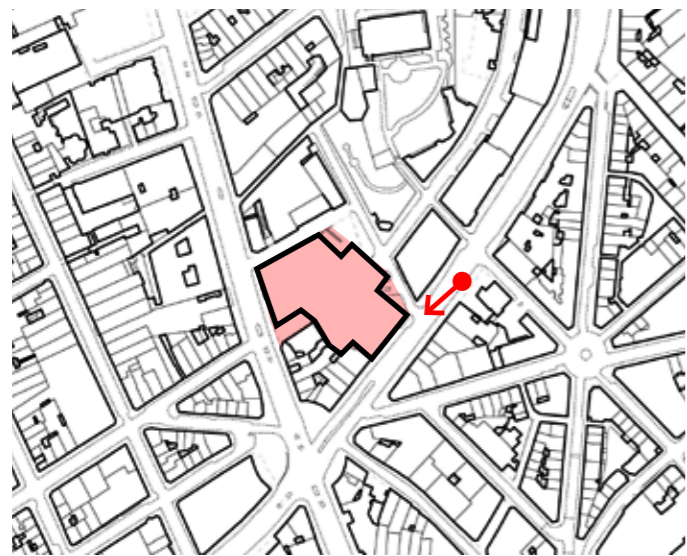
Existing condition



Horizontality



Verticality



Individuality



Apertures



Bottom-Middle-Top

## 2.0 Site Matters

### 2.8 Local Architectural Character

#### 2.8.1 Materiality

The material palette of buildings within close proximity to the site is predominantly masonry -- brick, stone, terracotta and render -- with a great variety of decorative articulation of different colours and hues.

Beyond the immediate site area, however, the materiality becomes much more diverse, from fine metal, fully glazed facades to the ceramic cladding of Central St. Giles.

The palette of fenestration in the area around the site is also quite varied. In more traditional buildings smaller windows are either organised into groups/ bays with intricate unifying details, or are simple regularly spaced appatures carefully framed. In more contemporary buildings, however, the window compositions are much more free, allowing for large areas of glazing with fewer formal constraints.



114-116no. Charing Cross Road



99no. Charing Cross Road



93no. Charing Cross Road / Moor Street



Palace Theatre



Odeon Cinema (former Savilles Theatre)



Trentishoe Mansions



144no. Shaftesbury Avenue / Earlham St.

## 2.0 Site Matters

### 2.8.2 Decoration

Irrespective of their built periods, successful facades within the vicinity of the existing building pay a great deal of attention to the decorative details of the facade, to either signify important elements, relay symbolic messages, or simply to bring a sense of dynamism to the facade.

Through decoration and cornices a sense of horizontality dominates the the immediate surrounding existing building facades.

### 2.8.3 Bay Definition

Already identified in previous analysis is the prevalence of bays as a dominant facade element. Their definitions are achieved through a variety of means. Sometimes with oversized classical orders, other times with a change of material working in combination with projecting floor plans.

### 2.8.4 Material Tonality

A lighter material tonality can be identified on historical and listed buildings such as the Church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, the Odeon Cinema (former Savilles Theatre) and Centre Point.

The materials proposed will reflect the site context's mixed material palette with a contemporary architectural response. For further details of the proposed materials, please refer to section 5.1.3.



St. Giles-in-the Fields



Centre Point



Phoenix Theatre



Odeon Cinema - Facade Detail

## 2.0 Site Matters

### 2.9 Planning Context

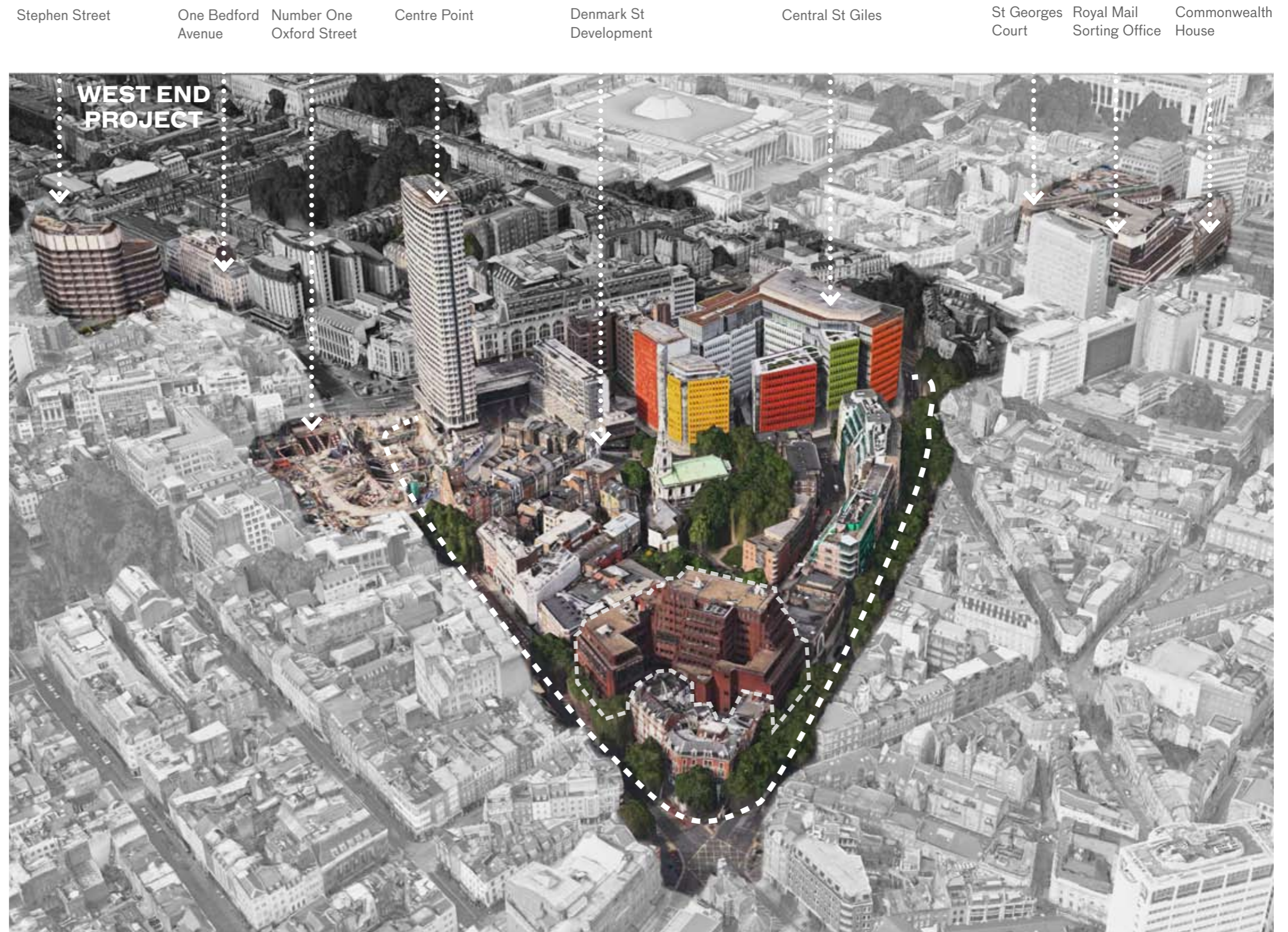
The London Borough of Camden assesses all development proposals against the Development Plan, which comprises the London Plan (LP) Consolidated with Alterations (2016), Camden's Core Strategy (2010) and Camden Development Policies (2010). Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) is the overarching planning document in the country. It sets out the Government's planning policy objectives for England and how these are expected to be applied. It summarises, in a single document, all previous national planning policy. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the Development Plan and is a material consideration in all planning decisions.

The PPG should also be considered alongside the NPPF, as it outlines how government planning practice should be followed and interpreted in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

For the purposes of decision-taking in the Borough, the policies in the Core Strategy are not considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted before the publication of the NPPF. However, policies in the NPPF are material considerations which the Council should take into account. The Council should give due weight to the relevant policies in the Core Strategy according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

The Mayor of London and the London Borough of Camden have also produced Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents (SPGs/SPDs) which provide further detail on the implementation of policy and are a further material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Camden's supplementary guidance documents are referred to as Camden's Planning Guidance.



## 2.0 Site Matters

### 2.9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), March 2012

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. All plans should be based upon, and reflect, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally. The NPPF explains that the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole constitute what the Government considers sustainable development to mean in practice.

Specifically, paragraph 19 states that the planning system should do all that it can to promote sustainable economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity and meet the challenges of global competition alongside a low carbon future. The NPPF states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Investment in business should not be overburdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development is new policy guidance designed to ensure that the planning system as a whole focuses on opportunities. The presumption, in practice, means that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system and local planning authorities should plan positively for new development and approve all individual proposals wherever possible. However, development should not be allowed if it would undermine the key principles for sustainability in the Framework. The NPPF makes clear that the policies should apply “unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits” (paragraph 14).

The NPPF sets out core planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. It states that “every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs for an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth” (paragraph 17).

Section 7 of the NPPF states that the Government attached great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

### 2.9.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), March 2014

On 6th March 2014, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched its National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The PPG outlines how government planning practice should be followed and interpreted in accordance with the principles of the NPPF. The guidelines set out in the PPG should be accorded to when determining an application.

With regard to decision taking, the PPG is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### 2.9.3 The London Plan Consolidated with Alterations, 2016

The London Plan aims to set out a framework to co-ordinate and integrate economic, environmental, transport and social considerations over the next 20 years. The London Plan includes London-wide planning policy guidance and sets the relevant regional planning policy guidance for Islington and forms a component part of the statutory development plan.

The Mayor recognises that London is a city which has very distinctive strategic needs. The London Plan has been designed to facilitate the continuing attractiveness of London as a World City.

The Mayor considers that the greatest challenge faced in London is to accommodate significant growth in ways that respect and improve London’s diverse heritage while delivering the vision of an exemplary, sustainable world city. This will involve the sensitive intensification of development in locations that are, or will be, well served by public transport.

The following policies from the London Plan are considered relevant to the planning application:

- 2.10 – Central Activities Zone – Strategic Priorities
- 2.11 – Central Activities Zone – Strategic Functions
- 2.13 – Opportunity Areas and Intensification Area
- 4.1 – Developing London’s Economy

- 4.2 – Offices
- 4.3 – Mixed Use Development and Offices
- 4.7 – Retail and Town Centre Development
- 4.8 – Supporting a Successful and Diverse Retail Sector and Related Facilities and Services
- 4.9 – Small Shops
- 5.1 – Climate Change Mitigation
- 5.2 – Minimising Carbon Dioxide Emissions
- 5.3 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- 5.5 – Decentralised Energy Networks
- 5.6 – Decentralised Energy in Development Proposals
- 5.7 – Renewable Energy
- 5.8 – Innovative Energy Technologies
- 5.11 – Green Roofs and Development Site Environs
- 6.1 – Transport – Strategic Approach
- 6.3 – Assessing Effects of Development on Transport Capacity
- 6.9 – Cycling
- 7.1 – Lifetime Neighbourhoods
- 7.2 – An Inclusive Environment
- 7.3 – Designing Out Crime
- 7.4 – Local Character
- 7.5 – Public Realm
- 7.6 – Architecture
- 7.8 – Heritage Assets and Archaeology
- 7.14 – Improving Air Quality

#### *Supplementary Planning Documents*

- Central Activities Zone (CAZ) (2016) - The emphasis of this SPD is to encourage the provision of office and business floorspace within the CAZ and the document sees a shift towards greater weight being placed on the provision of offices and other CAZ strategic functions relative to new residential.

## 2.0 Site Matters

### 2.9.4 Local Planning Policy

The relevant development plan is Camden's Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2010 and Camden's Development Policies, also adopted in 2010. The following policies are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

#### Core Strategy

- CS1 – Distribution of Growth
- CS3 – Other Highly Accessible Areas
- CS5 – Managing the Impact of Growth and Development
- CS7 – Promoting Camden's Centres and Shops
- CS8 – Promoting a Successful and Inclusive Camden Economy
- CS9 – Achieving a Successful Central London
- CS11 – Promoting Sustainable and Efficient Travel
- CS13 – Tackling Climate Change through Promoting Higher Environmental Standards
- CS14 – Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving Our Heritage
- CS15 – Protecting and Improving Our Parks and Open Spaces and Encouraging Biodiversity
- CS17 – Making Camden a Safer Place

#### Development Policies

- DP1 – Mixed Use Development
- DP10 – Helping and Promoting Small and Independent Shops
- DP12 – Supporting Strong Centres and Managing the Impact of Food, Drink and Entertainment and Other Town Centre Uses
- DP13 – Employment Sites and Premises
- DP16 – The Transport Implications of Development
- DP17 – Walking, Cycling and Public Transport
- DP18 – Parking Standards and Limiting the Availability of Car Parking
- DP22 – Promoting Sustainable Design and Construction
- DP24 – Securing High Quality Design
- DP25 – Conserving Camden's Heritage
- DP26 – Managing the Impact of Development on Occupiers and Neighbours
- DP31 – Providing of, and Improvements to, Open Space, Sport and Recreation

#### *Supplementary Planning Guidance*

Other relevant LBC Supplementary and Design Guidance of relevance to this application includes:

- CPG 1 – Design
- CPG 2 – Housing
- CPG 3 – Sustainability
- CPG 5 – Town Centres, Retail and Employment
- CPG 6 – Amenity
- CPG 7 – Transport
- CPG 8 – Planning Obligations

#### *Emerging Local Plan*

Consultation on the Local Plan Submission Draft ran for 8 weeks from 8 February to the 4 April. On 24 June 2016 the Council submitted the Camden Local Plan and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for independent examination. The public hearings for the Examination will be held at Camden Town Hall and are currently timetabled for October 2016.

The Camden Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies and, once adopted, will replace the current Core Strategy and Development Policies planning documents (adopted in 2010). The Local Plan will play an essential role in the delivery of the Camden Plan, the Council's vision for the borough, in particular the objectives of creating the conditions for and harnessing the benefits of economic growth, reducing inequality and securing sustainable neighbourhoods.

### 2.9.5 Site Specific Allocations

Within the LP, the site is located in the CAZ. The LP notes that the CAZ contains a unique cluster of vitally important activities including central government offices, headquarters and embassies, the largest concentration of London's financial and globally-orientated business sector and the offices of trade, professional bodies, institutions, associations, communications, publishing, advertising and the media. The LP identifies that the Mayor and boroughs should inter alia recognise that the CAZ is the heart of London's world city offer and promote and coordinate development so that together they provide a competitive, integrated and varied global business location.

The CAZ SPG states that over the period 2011 to 2036, the CAZ boroughs are projected to accommodate a further 460,000 jobs of which 58% are within the CAZ itself. The strategic functions of the CAZ and its unique character and heritage, are fundamental to London's status as a dynamic, exuberant and successful world city. Its continued success will ensure that business, visitors and investment continue to flow into the capital and support not just the economy of inner and outer London, but also the wider metropolitan area and the UK as a whole. The strategic functions of the CAZ as set out in the CAZ SPG are as follows:

1. Functions associated with State, Government and Monarchy
2. Diplomatic organisations (such as embassies and High Commissions)
3. Agglomerations of nationally and internationally significant offices and company headquarters connected with finance, business, professional bodies, associations and institutions
4. Uses connected with science, technology, media, communications and cultural sectors of regional, national and international importance
5. Centres of excellence for higher and further education and research
6. Medical and legal establishments of regional, national and international importance
7. Arts, culture, leisure and entertainment uses/clusters of regional, national and international importance
8. Retailing, including specialist outlets, of regional, national and international importance

9. Tourism facilities including hotels and conference centres
10. Specialist creative clusters associated with other central activities including for example clothing, fashion, jewellery, printing, antiques, art and culture
11. Transport facilities, especially for public transport of regional, national and international importance
12. Places of worship and places of assembly of regional, national and international importance
13. Use and enjoyment of the River Thames
14. Heritage, built environment, the Royal Parks and other green and open spaces (public and private).

On the LDF proposals map to the Core Strategy, the application site is located in the Central London Area. The site is also designated as an Archaeological Priority Area. Part of the site falls within Central London's Frontages.

The Council will use its Core Strategy and Development Policies Document, where relevant and up to date, together with the Mayor of London's adopted LP as the basis for determining planning application in the borough. In addition, to support the policies in these documents, more detailed planning guidance has been prepared. Camden has updated its supplementary planning documents to ensure that they are in line with the adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.



### 2.9.6 Associated Schemes

Camden Council is currently consulting on the West End Project having secured investment to improve the West End in Camden. For the improved traffic flow, London First's report sets out the following:

The Vision:

- High quality public spaces for everyone to enjoy
- A total of 18,000sqm of new public realm proposed.
- Better streets that reduce traffic congestion, delays and collisions
- Brand new parks, green spaces and improved air quality
- Safe and attractive streets with wider tree-lined pavements
- Streets designed to make bus journeys simpler, faster and more reliable
- Improved streets for cycling including protected cycle lanes on Gower Street
- A better place to do business

The Impacts:

- Less traffic across the area
- Some bus routes over 3 minutes quicker
- 6 new or improved public spaces
- Up to 285 new trees
- Widen pavements by up to 2 metres
- Make an extra 15 streets two-way for cycling The existing heavy traffic flow surrounding the site will be greatly improved following the West End Project, creating a more pedestrian friendly location and enhancing the north/south and east/west connections.



West End Project masterplan



Proposed improvement to Princes Circus, DSDHA



Proposed improvement to Tottenham Court Road, DSDHA



## 3.0 The Principle of Redevelopment



## 3.0 The Principle of Redevelopment

### 3.1 Introduction

The analysis of the context has been fundamental in the development of the proposals. Understanding the character of the neighbouring buildings, their urban morphology, analysing vertical and horizontal articulation, identifying the significance and opportunity of key views, as well as the historic context of the site and the surrounding area, have all been used to inform the design proposals.

As a result of the analysis, the following is a summary of the current issues with the existing building:

- Poor / negative contribution to urban character.
- Inactive frontage to neighbouring streets.
- Confusing urban legibility.
- Internal configuration no longer achieves modern office standards.
- Building does not address future intensification of the area as a result of Crossrail.
- Existing facade has deteriorated and is in need of remedial work.
- Poor environmental performance.

### 3.2 Objectives and Opportunities

- Create better, more **sustainable and commercially viable workspace**, including an attractive front door, whilst retaining the core structure of the building.
- Enhance the appearance of the building to respond to its surroundings in a more appropriate manner and **encourage biodiversity** through planted terraces and open spaces.
- Try to deliver a viable, clear and friendly **pedestrian route through the building** to re-link New and Old Compton Streets.
- Improve the **public realm and wider permeability** at ground level, especially in relation to Phoenix Gardens and on Charing Cross Road to help deliver the objectives of the West End Project.
- Deliver a more attractive retail offer at ground floor, with **increased active frontage** around the building.
- **Simplify the servicing and maintenance** of the building.
- Realise the maximum potential of the site whilst being **appropriate to the surrounding context** in terms of scale and massing.
- Examine the potential for **integrating the housing**, created by LBC's policies for any uplift in commercial sqft, on site; and if this is not possible, explore off-site options. If an off-site solution is not found, and in accordance with Policy DP1, the applicant has confirmed that they will make a payment in lieu.



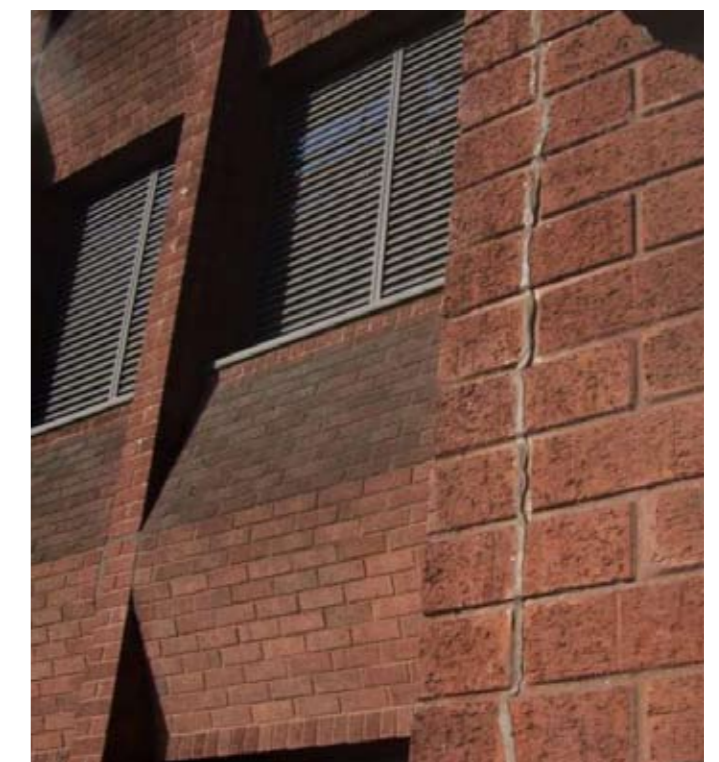
Poor / negative contribution to urban character



Inactive frontage to neighbouring streets



Internal configuration no longer achieves modern office standards



Existing facade has deteriorated and is in need of remedial works