

Birkbeck, University of London
ToddlerLab
32 Torrington Square, Bloomsbury, London, WC1E 7HX
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

July 2017

**BISSET
ADAMS**

BB029-BA-00-RP-Z-Design and Access Statement-S0-P1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.1 Scope and Purpose

In 2016, Birkbeck University of London commissioned Bisset Adams and a design team to deliver a new ground-breaking research facility using a vacant site on Torrington Square identified in a campus-wide property feasibility study completed in 2012, along with a refurbishment of an adjoining Georgian terraced house. The new facility will provide a specialist environment for the study of autism in children at an earlier age than has previously been possible.

A multidisciplinary study served as the basis to achieve a successful design and ensure that the proposed solution delivers a concept that is suitable, flexible and robust to fit the different functions and, within the scheme constraints, become future proof. The study aimed to clarify the requirements of the "ToddlerLab" in terms of building footprint, site constraints, access and to progress the design of the external form and appearance, structure, plant, and materials.

The Toddlerlab will be situated on vacant land to the north of 32 Torrington Square, which is part of a Grade II listed Georgian terrace, the scheme making use of an area of potential infill between this property and the Warburg Institute. 32 Torrington Square is currently vacant and unsound, and the Toddlerlab will provide the opportunity for a full refurbishment of this building and links to the new-build annexe in the vacant site.

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) is submitted in support of an application for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent made on behalf of Birkbeck, University of London (the Applicant) for the restoration of 32 Torrington Square (Listed Grade II) including internal changes together with development of an annexe on land to the north for Class D1 Use to accommodate a Toddler Lab for Birkbeck, University of London.

The purpose of the DAS is to explain and justify the design principles that have been applied to the scheme and to illustrate how the different issues have been dealt with.

This document should be read in conjunction with the application drawings. Reference should also be made to more detailed supplementary information submitted as part of the application under separate cover, including but not limited to, the following:

- Drawings
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Plans, Sections and Elevations

- Demolition Plans, Sections and Elevations
- Proposed Plans, Sections and Elevations
- Specialists Reports (as set out within the Planning Statement)

1.2 Executive Summary

The creation of a ToddlerLab is part of a wider vision to improve the facilities and provision of Birkbeck. The proposed state of the art facility within a site of historic significance will provide a much-needed new academic space equipped to undertake ground-breaking research in diagnosis of autism in children at an age much younger than previously possible.

The new facility will help to unlock the potential for the site by creating a linkage between the existing listed building at 32 Torrington Square and a new annexe on the vacant site to the North adjoining the Warburg Institute. A new and self-contained entrance to the annexe will be created providing level access via new vertical circulation elements that will also assist with providing level access to 32 Torrington Square.

As well the new annex, there will be a number of important improvements to the existing building (32 Torrington Square). The removal of the poorly considered modern elements will provide the opportunity to reinstate the historic layout and restore the more significant elements of the original architecture.

1.3 Introduction

The ToddlerLab will comprise research rooms and associated spaces required to accommodate toddlers and their families, and will be situated on a vacant site between the Georgian terraced townhouse, 32 Torrington Square, and The Warburg Institute (which backs onto Torrington Square).

32 Torrington Square (Grade II listed) will be refurbished to house the Institute's researchers and academics, and will connect the new annexe building to 32 Torrington Square granting researchers direct access to the test environment.

The new annex will house all the research spaces that, given the nature of the studies and specialist equipment used, require a high spec building envelope with high acoustic and M&E performance that couldn't be achieved on the existing listed building.

The ToddlerLab will contain a series of natural environment rooms, within which the latest technologies will be used to measure brain function of toddlers.

The ToddlerLab facility will expand on the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development's (CBCD) current research by focusing on the toddler period of a child's development before autism is likely to be diagnosed and which is currently a "black hole" in research findings because of the difficulty of studying this age range.

The new facility such as a home environment, pre school research room, nap research room and a 'cave' research room, where audiovisual equipment can create interactive environments of outdoor scenarios. These environments need to be as spacious as possible to create the realistic environments for the child to understand.

The design of the new annexe is proposed to be sympathetic to the heritage of Torrington Square which lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and to the Grade II listed 32 Torrington Square.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.4 Project Team

A number of consultants have been appointed on behalf of the college to help inform the study within their area of expertise:

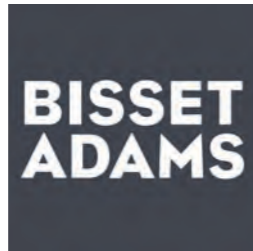
Client:

Birkbeck University of London
Estates and Facilities
Malet Street
Bloomsbury
London
WC1E 7HX



Architect:

Bisset Adams
The Cube Building
17-21 Wenlock Road
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N1 7GT



Planning and Heritage:

Turley
17 Gresse Street
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W1T 1QL



Quantity Surveyor:

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WC1E 7BD



Structural Engineer:

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London
EC2A 4HH



Services Engineer:

MKP Consultants
Warren Farm Barn
Andover Road
Micheldever Station
Winchester
SO21 3FL



Acoustic Engineer:

Hann Tucker Associates
Duke House,
1-2 Duke Street
Woking
Surrey
GU21 5BA



Breem Consultant:

Twin and Earth
2nd Floor, White Bear Yard
144a Clerkenwell Road
London
EC1R 5DF



Fire Engineer:

Jeremy Gardner Associates
11 Risborough Street
London
SE1 0HF



Landscape Architect:

Wilder Associates
39 York Road
London
SE17 NQ



Transport Consultant:

Robert West
Delta House
175-177 Borough High Street
London
SE1



1.5 Concept Diagram

After research and consultation with academics and estates professionals, a diagrammatic plan of the new facility and how it relates to the existing building at 32 Torrington Square was produced, identifying required adjacencies and links.

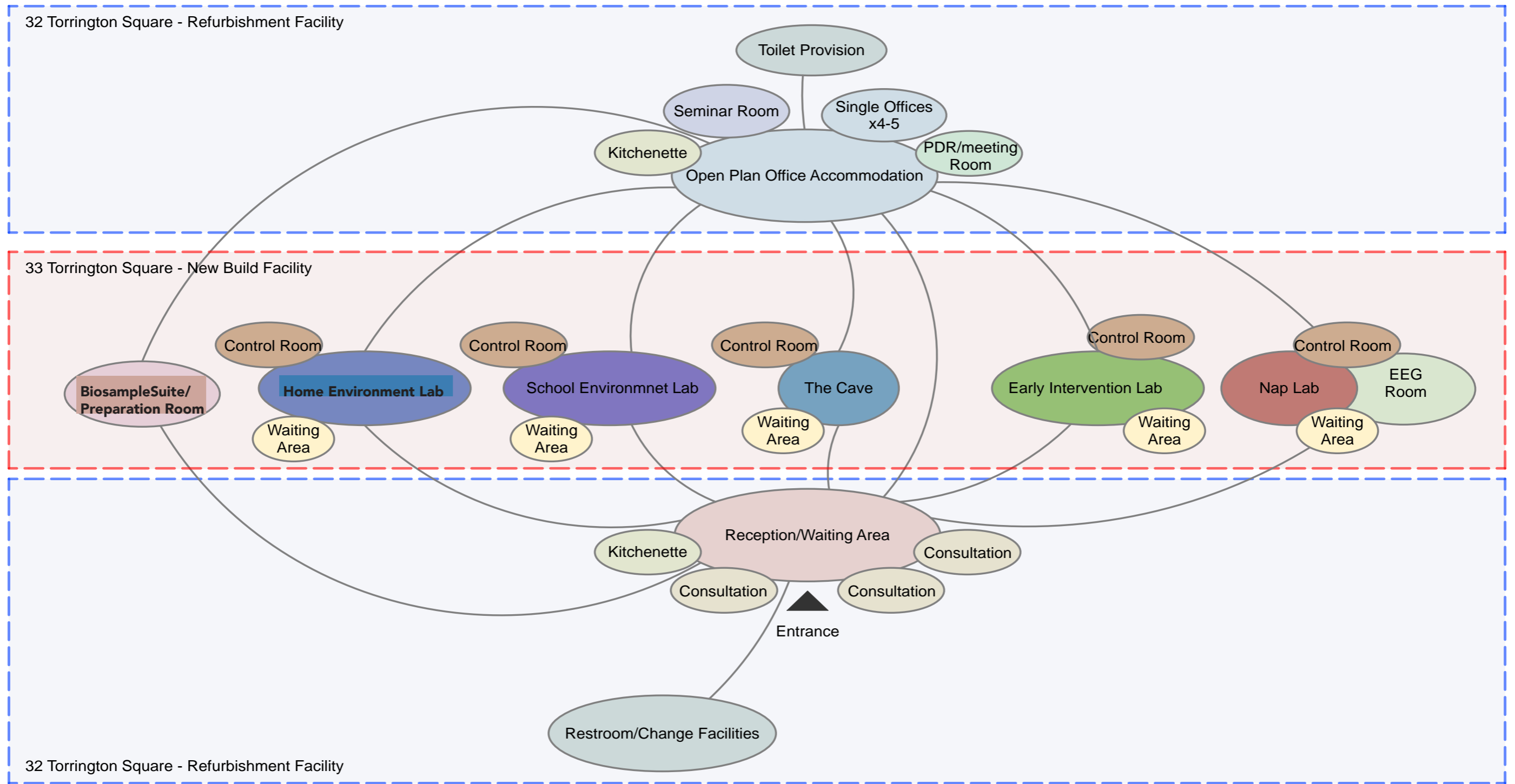


Figure 1.1. Concept Diagram

2.0 CONTEXT



2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Site

The site is located at 32 Torrington Square, London WC1E 7JL, taking in land to the North of this building, formerly no 33 Torrington Square.

The site is bounded by the Warburg Institute to the north and Torrington Square to the west, with Torrington Square terrace to the south and the rear of buildings on Woburn Square to the east. The open space to the front of the site is used regularly for the Bloomsbury Farmers market, and there are buildings of academic use on all sides.

A thorough site analysis was carried out looking at the various site constraints and opportunities, including site history, traffic routes, servicing, retained estate and site structure and infrastructures.

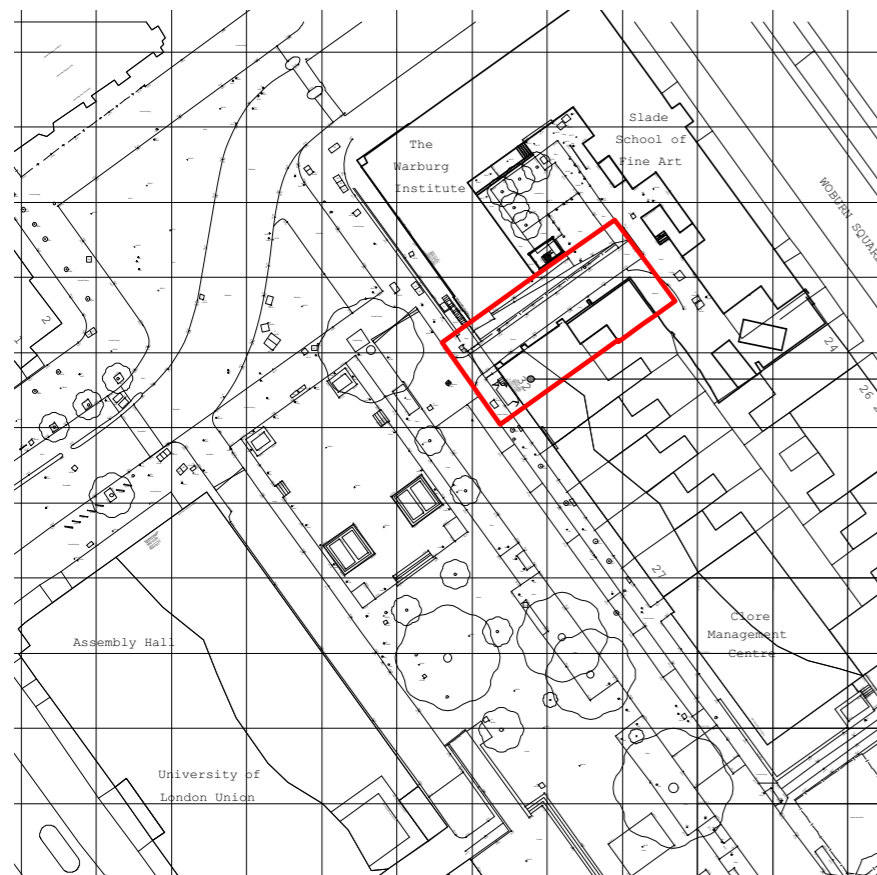


Figure 2.1. Location Plan

— Site Area

● Building site

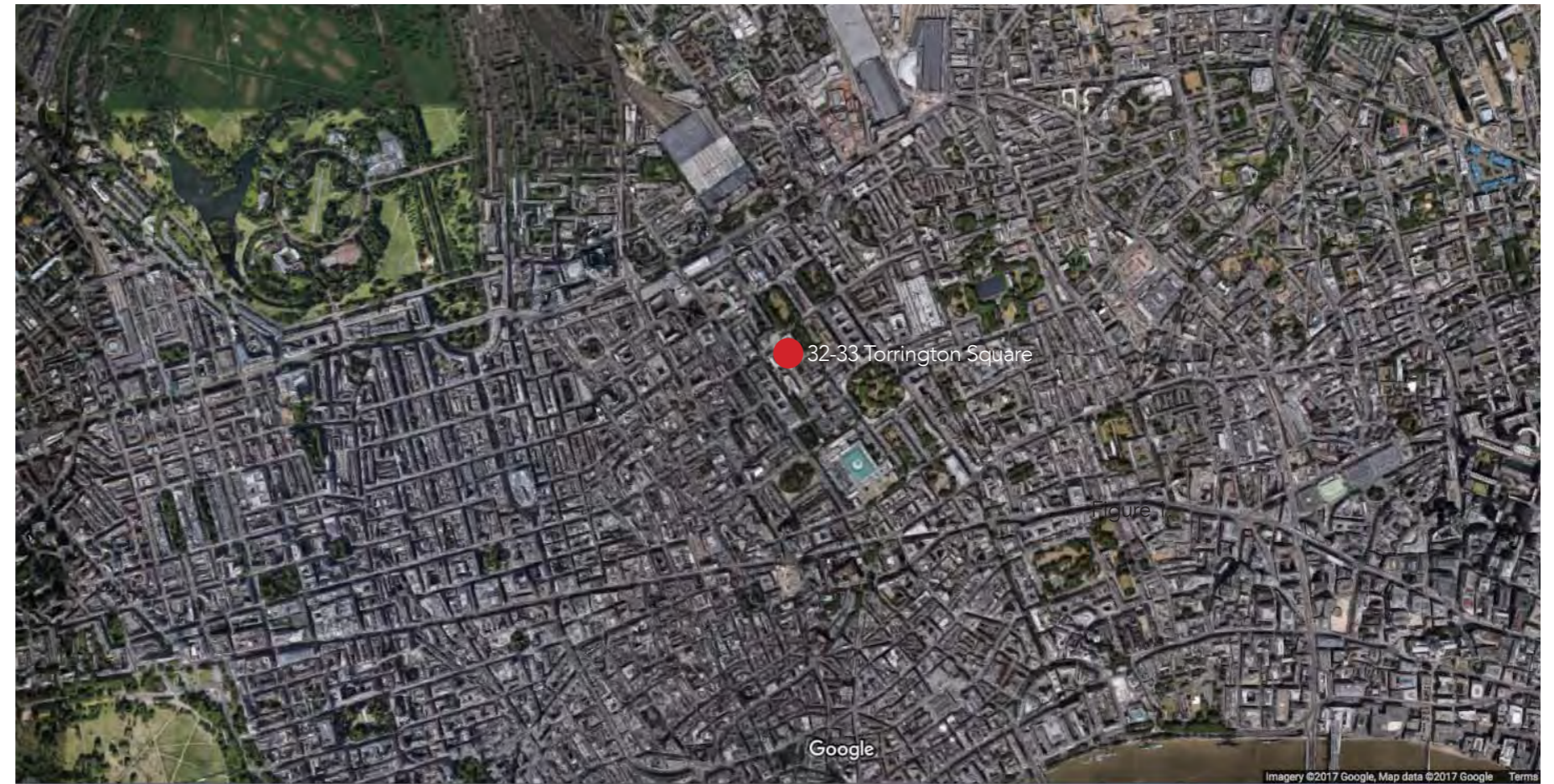


Figure 2.2. Aerial View (image from google)

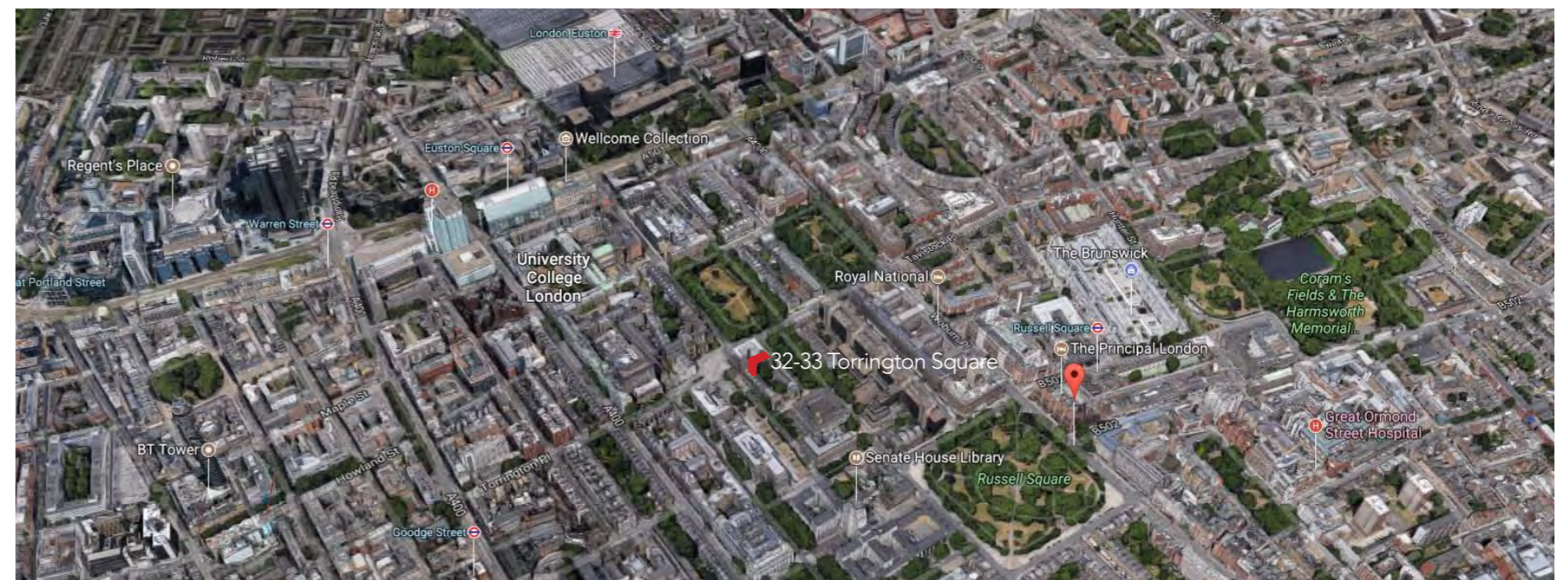


Figure 2.3. Aerial View (image from google)



Figure 2.4. Site in Context (image from google)

2.0 CONTEXT

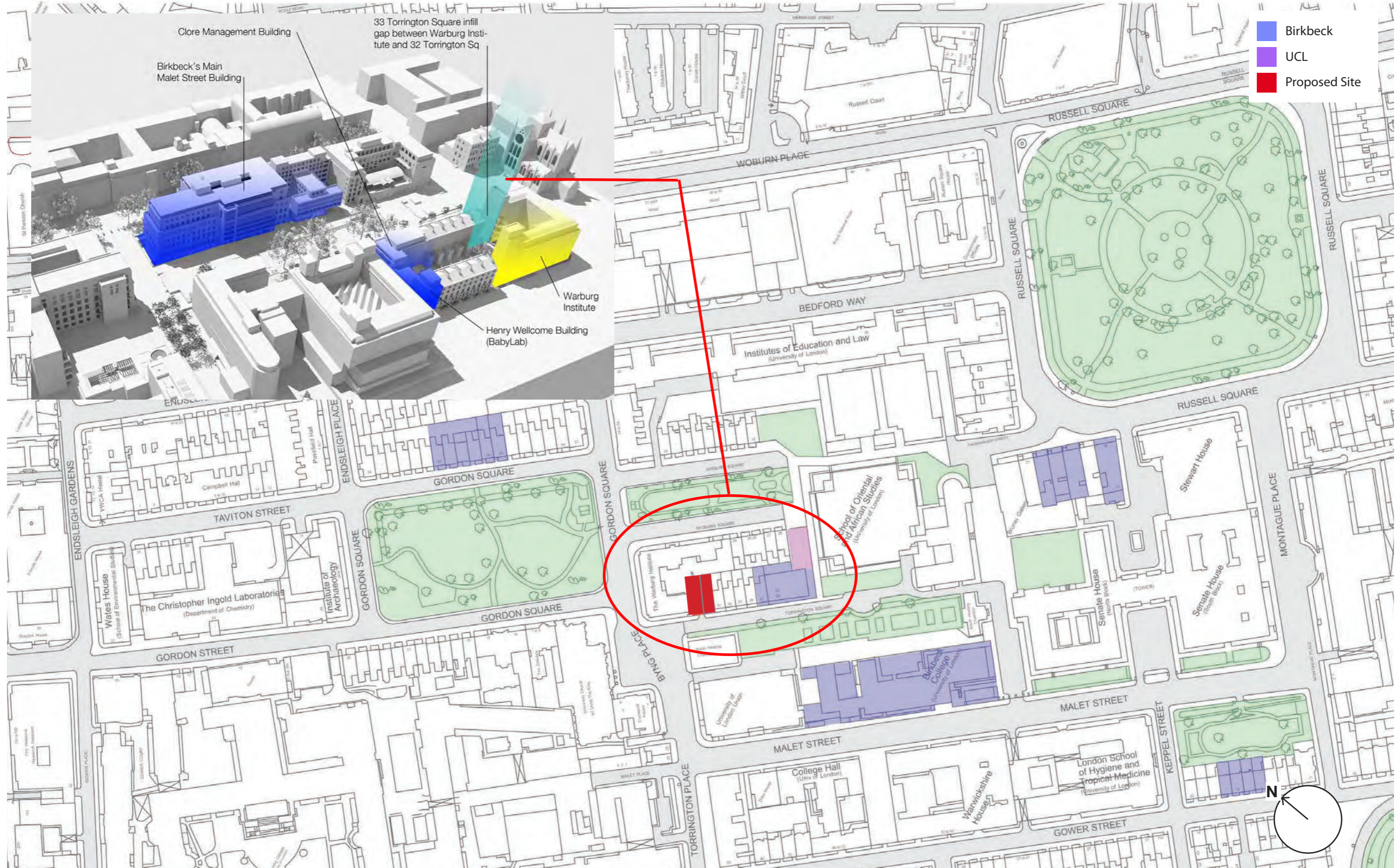


Figure 2.5. Map of the surrounding area N/S

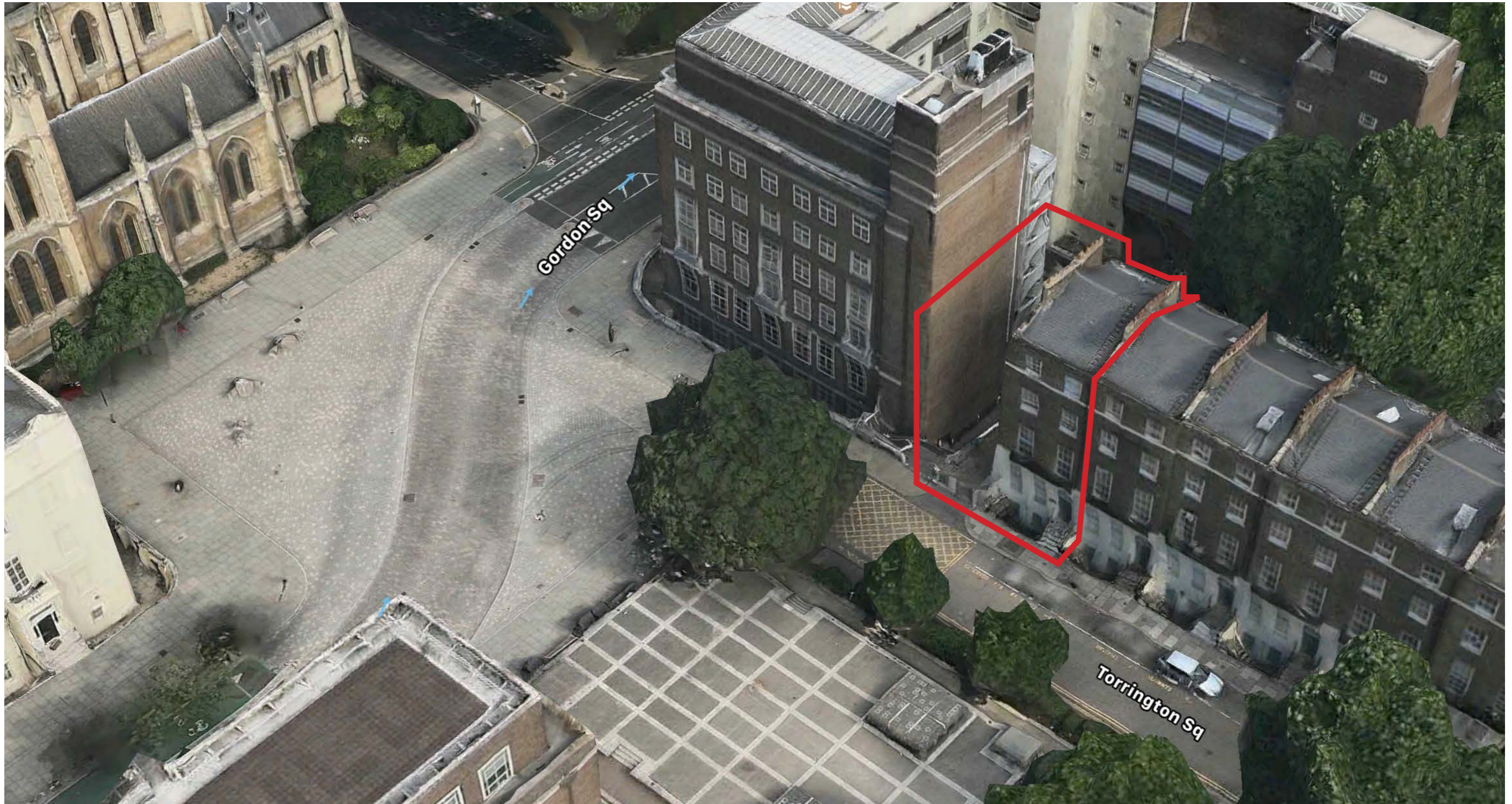


Figure 2.6. View to the North end of Torrington Square highlighting the infill gap between 32 Torrington Sq and the Warburg Institute

2.0 CONTEXT

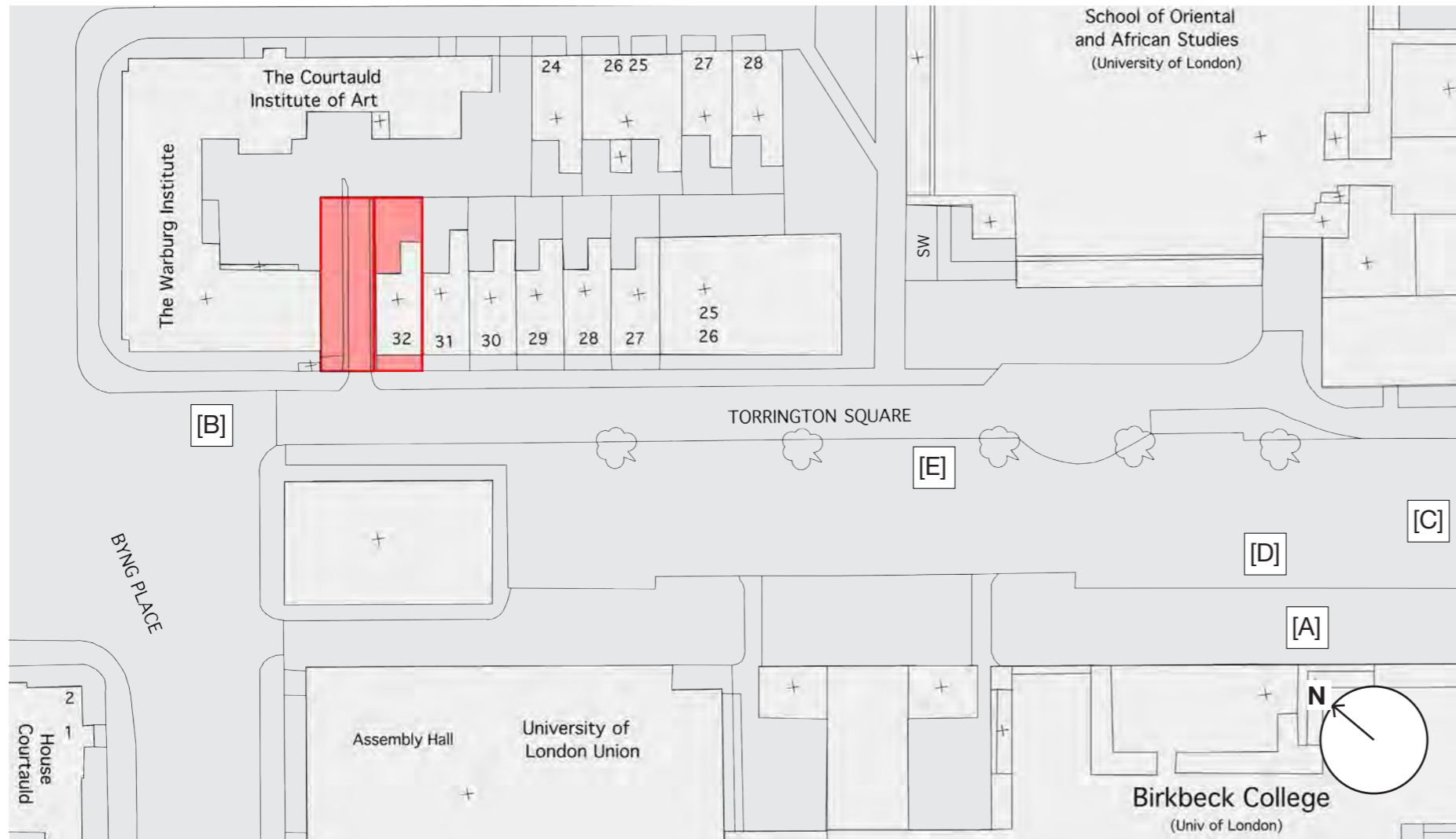


Figure 2.7. Key views of buildings on Torrington Square - site location plan



[A] Figure 2.8. Birkbeck, University of London Malet street



[B] Figure 2.9. Warburg institute



[C] Figure 2.10. Senate House Library



[D] Figure 2.11. Torrington Square North view

SOAS



[E] Figure 2.12 Birkbeck's Clore and Wellcome building

2.0 CONTEXT

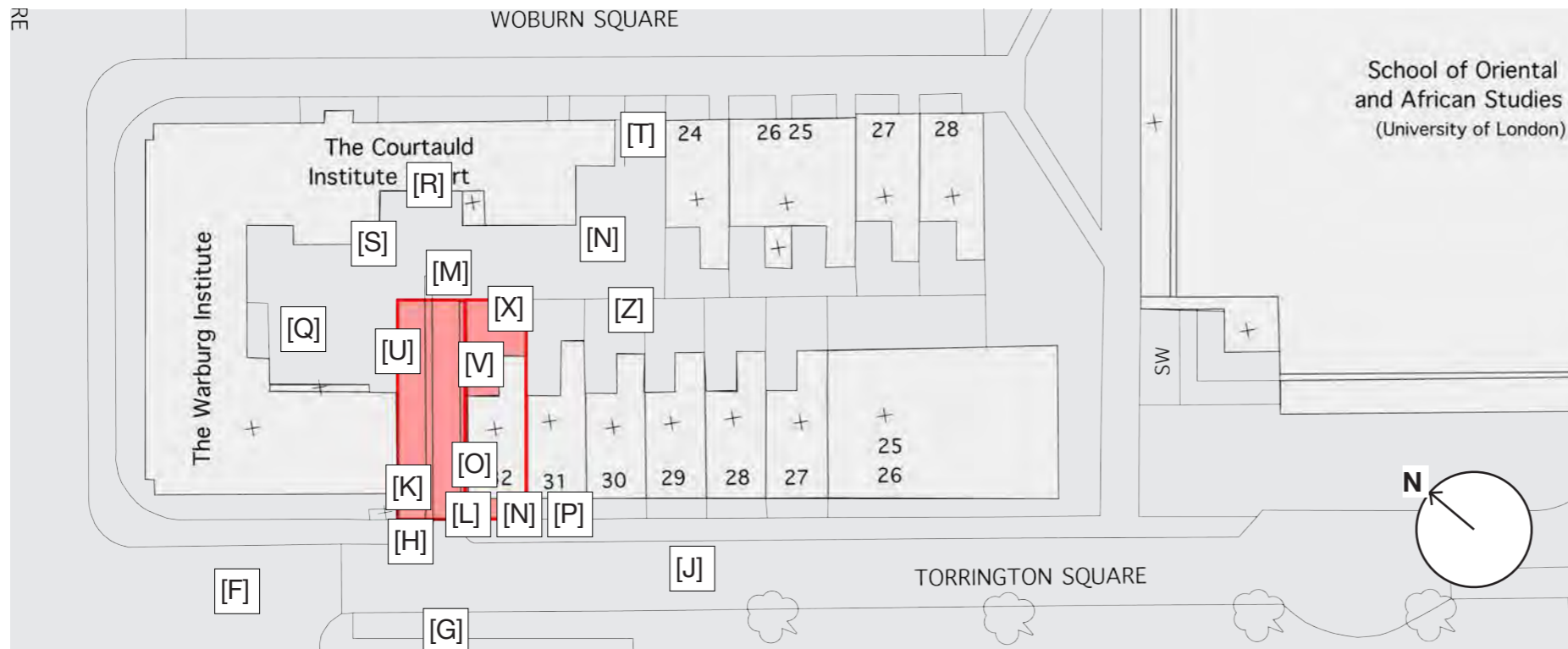


Figure 2.13. Key views of 32 Torrington Square - site location plan



[J] Figure 2.16.. Torrington Square Terrace Houses - view from Torrington Square



[F] Figure 2.14. 32 Torrington Square - view from Byng Place



[G] Figure 2.15. 32 Torrington Square - view from Bloomsbury Farmers Market



[H] Figure 2.17. 32 Torrington Square



[N] Figure 2.18. 31 Torrington Square



[O] Figure 2.18. Fire exit from basement 32 Torrington Square



[P] Figure 2.19. 32 Torrington Square main entrance



[K] Figure 2.20. Warburg institute ramp - View from Torrington Square gate



[L] Figure 2.21. 32 Torrington Square facade mask



[M] Figure 2.22. 32 Torrington Square back facade

2.0 CONTEXT



[Q] Figure 2.23. Warburg Institute Courtyard



[S] Figure 2.25. Torrington Square Terrace Houses - view from Torrington Square



[U] Figure 2.27. Warburg Institute fire exit staircase - view from 32 Torrington Square



[R] Figure 2.24. Warburg Institute back facade



[T] Figure 2.26. Warburg Institute Courtyard along Woburn Place boundary



[V] Figure 2.28. 32 Torrington Square Basement garden exit



[X] Figure 2.29. 32 torrington Square closet wing



[Z] Figure 2.30. Gardens to the back of Torrington Square terrace east side



2.0 CONTEXT

2.2 Urban Location and Historic Context

A baseline heritage appraisal has been prepared by Turley Heritage to provide a shared understanding of the significance of the site, comprising No. 32 Torrington Square, London, WC1E 7JL and an adjoining vacant cleared site to the north (the 'Site'). The report established an informed and robust basis on which the client and design team could prepare the proposals for change at the Site.

The Site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1968 by the London Borough of Camden with the aim of preserving elements of the Georgian townscape. Subsequent boundary alterations have sought to incorporate the Victorian, Edwardian and 20th century architecture also present in the conservation area.

Numbers 27-32 Torrington Square comprise a terraced group of six former early 19th century townhouses, which originally formed part of the larger townscape composition of terraces enclosing the square, and as part of a wider planned layout of streets and square in Bloomsbury.

As found today, these units have been variously altered both externally and internally to accommodate new uses for the University. Nos. 27-32 is the only remaining part of the original pair of terraces on both sides of Torrington Square. Originally the north-eastern section of the square continued to the north in the form of Nos. 33-34 (since demolished).

Importantly No. 33 Torrington Square is not shown as bomb damaged in these maps and should not be considered therefore a cleared WWII bomb damage site. It appears the house was unaffected by the WWII bombing and was likely demolished as part of the construction of the Warburg Institute to the north in the 1950s.

The former terrace of 19th century townhouses at Nos. 27-32 (consecutive) Torrington Square was included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Grade II and for group value on 14 May 1969, including attached railings.

Previous Applications on no.32 Torrington Square:

- 2016/4137/T Application for Tree Works including the removal of 5 trees causing structural damage to the properties opposite - **Determination Level** Withdrawn
- 2015/5575/L Internal and external alterations including partial rebuild of the upper part of the existing elevation, strengthening of existing ceilings, levelling floors, repointing of existing brickwork and other localised repairs to the front elevation - **Decision** Granted 08-12-2015
- 2008/5111/L Alterations associated with display of 400mm x 400mm wall mounted brushed stainless steel tray sign - **Decision** Granted 31-03-2009

For further information on the site heritage context and please refer to the Heritage Statement submitted along with this Application.

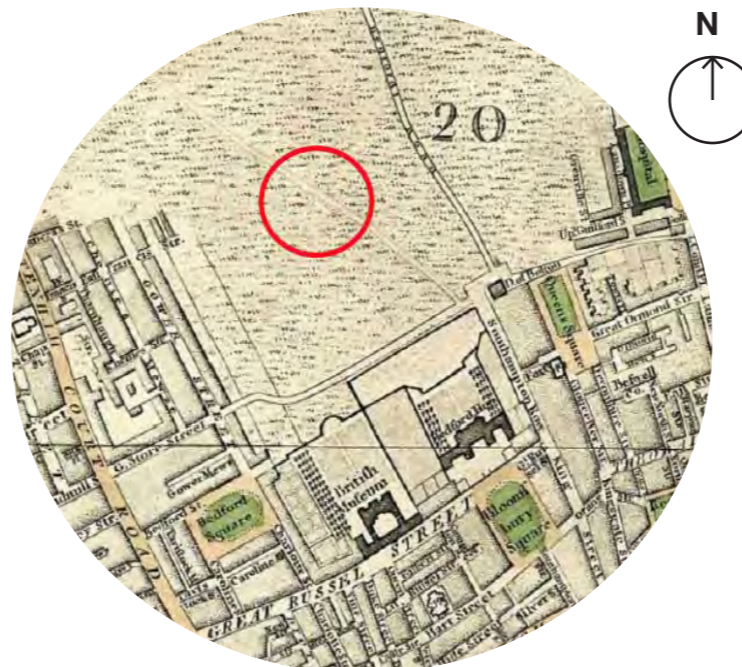


Figure 2.31. 1795 map with the approximate Site location marked in red13.



Figure 2.32. 1817 plan with the approximate Site location marked in red14.

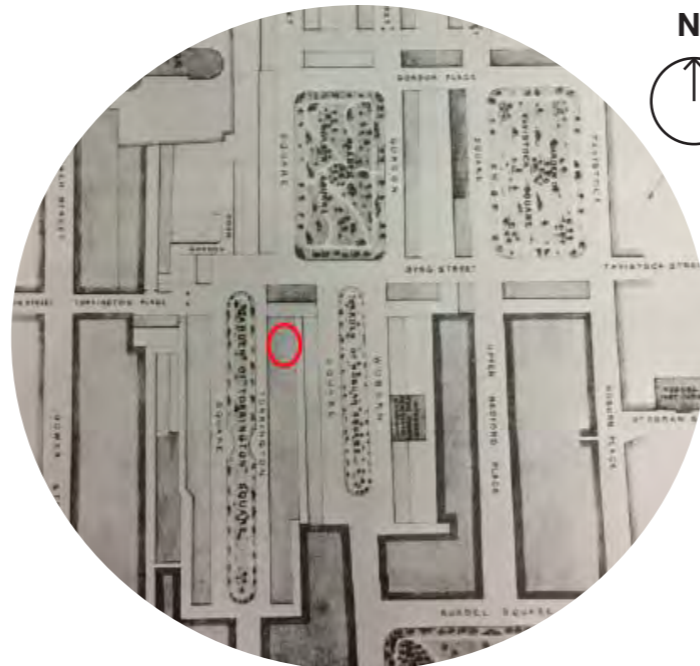


Figure 2.33. Bedford Estate plan from 183015.



Figure 2.34. London County Council Bomb Damage map with the Site marked in red

● Building site

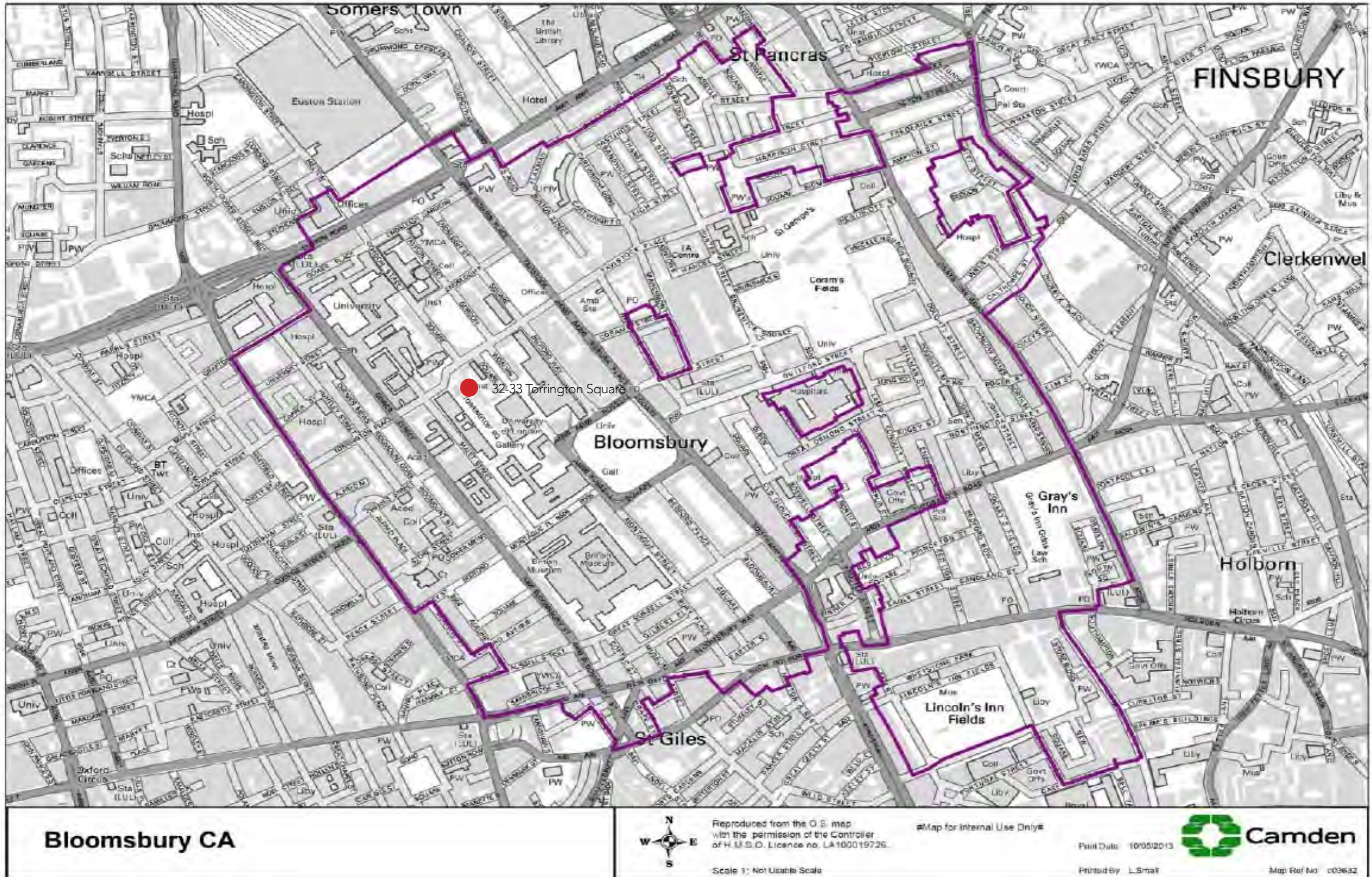


Figure 2.35. Bloomsbury Conservation Area map