

<b>Address:</b>	52-53 Russell Square LONDON WC1B 4HP		<b>5</b>
<b>Application Number:</b>	2017/2285/P	<b>Officer: Rob Tulloch</b>	
<b>Ward:</b>	Bloomsbury		
<b>Date Received:</b>	<b>24/04/2017</b>		
<b>Proposal:</b> Change of use from office (Class B1) to non-residential institution (Class D1)			
<b>Background Papers, Supporting Documents and Drawing Numbers:</b>  AG(0)01 Rev A; 02 Rev A; 03; 04; 05; 06; 07; Design and Access Statement by Ellis Williams Architects dated April 2017 Rev 1; Loss of Office Report by Gerald Eve dated 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2017; Transport Statement by Stirling Maynard dated April 2017; School Development Travel Plan v2 dated February 2017; School Development Travel Plan v2 dated June 2017; School Travel Plan Review dated 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2017; Gerald Eve Letter dated 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2017; Gerald Eve letter dated 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2017; Energy & Sustainability Statement by Norman Bromley Partnership LLP dated April 2017; Energy & Sustainability Statement by Norman Bromley Partnership LLP dated 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2017; Supplementary Statement: Sustainable Design by Ellis Williams Architects dated 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2017; Energy Analysis BS1516; Supplementary Energy and Sustainability Information by Norman Bromley Partnership, Peter Joel and Associates, Ellis Williams Architects and Gerald Eve LLP dated 16 August 2017			
<b>RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant Conditional Planning Permission Subject to Section 106 Legal Agreement</b>			
<b>Applicant:</b>		<b>Agent:</b>	
École Jeannine Manuel UK c/o Agent		Gerald Eve LLP 72 Welbeck Street London W1G 0AY	

## ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace (GIA)
Existing	B1 (Offices)		1,388sqm
Proposed	D1 Non-residential institution		1,388sqm

Parking Details:		
	Parking Spaces (General)	Parking Spaces (Disabled)
Existing	0	n/a
Proposed	0	n/a

## **OFFICERS' REPORT**

**Reason for Referral to Committee:** This application is a major development involving the conversion of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> of non-residential floorspace (part 3(i)).

### **1. SITE**

- 1.1 The application relates to two buildings on the south side of Russell Square at its junction with Bedford Place. The site lies within sub-area 6 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the buildings form part of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed terrace by James Burton. The buildings are linked internally and currently in use as offices.
- 1.2 The site is within the Central London Area and Bloomsbury is characterised by a mix of uses including educational and residential.

### **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Change of use from office (Class B1) to non-residential institution (Class D1).
- 2.2 École Jeannine Manuel UK is a private fee paying school. It is an international school and teaches a bilingual (English/French) curriculum. It currently operates from 43-45 Bedford Square and has 297 pupils on its roll aged 3 to 14 (Year 10) and plans to gradually expand to Year 13. The proposal is that the Bedford Square site would continue to house pupils up to Year 9 with the Russell Square site becoming the senior school catering for children aged 14-18 (Years 10-13). The proposed school would provide 180 spaces for pupils.

### **3. RELEVANT HISTORY**

HB2295 Conversion and extension to provide residential and office accommodation (52-58 Russell Square). Granted 30/03/1981

8500189 & 8570027 Works of alteration and extension to form office accommodation. Granted 04/06/1985

PSX0104032 Change of use of existing management office suite on ground floor level to B1 office use. Granted 27/03/2001

PSX0105013 Certificate of Lawfulness (proposed) for part ground floor/part basement as B1 office use. Granted 02/10/2001

2005/1516/P Change of use of the lower ground floor from office (Class B1) to alternative uses of either non-residential institution or office use (Classes D1/B1). Granted 15/07/2005

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

### Statutory Consultees

- 4.1 Bloomsbury CAAC were notified but did not respond.

### Local Groups

- 4.2 Bloomsbury Association endorses the representations made by neighbouring residents, and further comments that the local community was not consulted prior to the application being submitted. They query whether comments from parents should be treated as public comments or further submissions by the applicant which are not relevant to the determination of application and should not be considered. In principle, the Association welcomes a diverse mix of uses, but the school does not meet local need, but there could be local economic and social benefits should the school open up more to the local community. The planned expansion of the University of London's campus could provide too great a concentration of D1 uses. Loss of business floorspace would be contrary to policy DP13, there are many instances where similar premises are suitable for continued use and should the Council be minded to approve a change of use it should be made personal to the applicant. The school had problems with obtaining listed building consent, construction and fit out, and vehicle management on initial occupation of the Bedford Square site. Transport impact could become worse as the school grows and the West End Project comes to fruition. The school is a considerate neighbour and has worked hard to manage these issues. The existing school is a high traffic generator with private cars, taxis and coaches picking up and dropping off, as well as trips and food/refuse deliveries collections, as well as pedestrian movement. A revised travel plan should be submitted for Bedford Square so both sites can be considered together. Secondary schools may have less reliance on private cars and coaches, but there would be no guarantee the site would remain a secondary school if permission were granted. The transport statement indicates 10% of the roll would be expected to arrive and leave by private car, which would not be less of an impact than the existing office use. The displacement of 40 secondary spaces from the Bedford Square site would increase the capacity of primary places and have a corresponding increase in traffic impact, which could be even worse if the Bedford Square site plans to increase its number of pupils by 50%. The Association also raises concerns, about servicing, refuse storage and collection (a refuse management plan should be required), school trips, internal and external noise, fire safety, accessibility, building regulation, amenity space, cycle parking, and air quality.

Residents of Bloomsbury Mansions object. Traffic impact as 80% of students will be from outside the borough. Cars are parked illegally on a daily basis outside the school's existing site in Bedford Square. The applicant's transport assessment is inadequate and a proper assessment should be carried out before a decision is made.

Commissioners of Russell Square object: Traffic congestion, food delivery vehicles already block Bedford Square and refuse bags block the pavement until collection at 10pm. With no playground the pupils will have to use Russell Square, the

existing school uses Bedford Square with the permission of the Bedford Estate between 10am and 12pm, but it is not used by the general public. 180 pupils using Russell Square at break times and lunch times is unacceptable and the school has made no effort to consult. The claim that no internal alteration will be required is implausible. Has a residential use been explored?

### **Adjoining Occupiers**

<i>Number of letters sent</i>	0
<i>Total number of responses received</i>	97
<i>Number in support</i>	85
<i>Number of objections</i>	13

- 4.3 A site notice was displayed on 26/01/2017 expiring on 16/02/2017. A press notice was published on 13/01/2017 expiring on 03/02/2017.
- 4.4 12 Objections were received from local residents, 6x from residents of 54 Russell Square and a further 6 from nos. 6, 11, 29, 42, 46 & 56 Bloomsbury Mansions Russell Square. An objection was also received from Porta Planning on behalf of residents of 54 Russell Square and Bloomsbury Mansions (13-16 Russell Square)

### **Land use**

- Loss of office contrary to policy DP13 as applicant has not demonstrated that site is no longer viable or suitable for a continued business use and applicant has not fully explored the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site for a similar or alternative business use
- Contrary to policy E1 as the change of use does not support the provision of floorspace available to support businesses and employment growth in Camden
- Contrary to parts a, b and g of E1 as these seek to support businesses of all sizes, maintain a 'stock of premises' that are suitable for a variety of business activities, and safeguard existing employment sites and premises
- Contrary to Policy E2 which states that the Council will protect premises or sites that are suitable for continued business use the Council will resist development of business premises and sites for non-business use unless it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.
- Contrary to CPG5 in terms of marketing exercise and duration
- Site is suitable for start-ups or small and medium enterprises
- No evidence of the information submitted on the various websites and marketing resources such as EGi, CoStar and social media
- Little evidence or information to support how the accommodation was presented to the market, including prices and terms
- The property lease does not end until 2019 – and is not being advertised by Michael Boardman or Edward Charles who acted on 25 Bedford Square and who current act on many of the other Bedford Estate properties now available

- Planning statement was commissioned by the school, not the Estate, and the site has only been marketed for a short while and 2 years before the lease expires
- Unnecessary, the landlord (Bedford Estates) should be able to find a new office tenant before the lease expires in 2019
- The estate claim that they would review the building if permission were not granted and would consider a continued or alternative use, to suggest that it is impossible to let office buildings in Russell Square is not supportable
- The residents of 54 Russell Square had a meeting with Bedford Estates at which it was clearly stated that Bedford Estates could very probably let the property as offices
- The estate claim they could find a tenant by 2019
- Property has only been on the market for 4 months
- No significant marketing as a major landmark HQ building with a new lease, only a small letting board.
- Not fit for a secondary school with 180 pupils
- 54 full time staff currently employed, proposal would result in loss of 31 full time jobs for Camden
- Original post war permission was temporary with the proviso that it return to a residential use, if office is no longer viable it should return to residential in line with policy as this is a key Camden priority
- Many properties in the area have returned to residential and this has not been explored
- Use as a school would be a fire hazard, no safe fire exit locations or procedures
- The building therefore has only a single full-height stair for the 200 children and staff which compromises the safety of the building without alterations to the listed historic fabric and puts the neighbouring residences at increased risk
- Fire escape could compromise security of neighbours
- The design of the building would allow fire to spread quickly and one central twisting staircase is inadequate for escape.
- Fire would spread easily through the voids between walls and ceilings
- A fire safety report should be commissioned
- A new school would require 2x laboratories which would create fire hazards from use and storage of chemicals
- Proposal would not be a community use
- Will not add to education provision in the area that will be available to Camden residents and taxpayers and will lead to a loss of employment
- The proposal will be for a private school with high fees and 80% of the students will come from outside the borough with no facilities available to Camden residents
- School would not offer the National Curriculum
- Fees of £16,410 p.a mean it would not be available to the wider Camden Community
- Would not comply with the DfE Area Guidelines for Mainstream Schools
- Russell Square is not an appropriate location for a 180 pupil school
- Already a large concentration of students in the area
- Contrary to the NPPF which states that applications must be determined in accordance with the development unless material considerations indicate

otherwise, and that developments should; ‘...always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings

- There is a new school opening within a few weeks at 46-47 Russell Square, and to maintain a balanced community, it is not appropriate to have another such use on the Square
- École Jeanine Manuel would have no playground, planning instead to use Russell Square for this purpose – whilst making no contribution whatsoever (the residents group deduces) to the upkeep of the Square.

### Amenity

- Harmful residential amenity
- 54 Russell Square is largely occupied by retirees who would lose the quiet enjoyment of their properties
- Schoolchildren will be much noisier than office workers
- There would be no playground so pupils would congregate outside and in Russell Square which should not be used as a playground
- Noise already perceptible from office use
- Harm fragile tranquillity of Russell Square
- Contrary to policy A1 which states development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network should be resisted
- The subject premises are listed Grade II and will have no effective sound insulation with adjacent buildings
- When occasional events have taken place at the office premises at no.53 and people at that building can plainly be heard speaking and moving around by those residents at no.54
- The Applicant has failed to submit any meaningful material relating to noise (and vibration)
- The laboratories would need to conform to legal standards, necessarily, and in our view that must presumably require water, power and specialised venting. The chemicals stored on site would also represent a hazard, increasing fire risk to the building and the terrace of which the property forms part
- With the windows open (understandably, on warm days and given classroom conditions), noise will be entirely un-attenuated
- As there will be no food deliveries the children would be free to leave the premises over an hour and half period at lunch time. École Jeanine Manuel were anticipating that the children would be free to enter the Russell Square Gardens, but the London University on behalf of Commissioners of Russell Square do not consider the Gardens to be a playground as this provides rest and recreation for the wider public
- The party walls are currently not sufficiently acoustically insulated and allow noise to be transmitted between buildings and with the residents of 54 Russell Square being retired and in residence during the day this will prevent their quiet enjoyment of their homes.
- In a non-air conditioned environment cooling and ventilation will require the windows to be open. To control the noise breakout will be particularly difficult if not impossible in the summer when windows will be open for all properties

- Russell Square Gardens are not a playground – and the Commissioners have already indicated their clear objection to any proposal that would bring about playground use for the garden square
- Inadequate refuse storage
- No information about catering deliveries

#### Heritage

- No information about toilets, laboratories, art rooms or catering or how this could be done without harming the special interest of the building
- Applicant should state all alterations that are necessary before a change of use is granted
- Bedford Square site made changes without the necessary listed building consent
- Government guidance for listed buildings generally, i.e. that any listed building ought wherever possible to be maintained in active use for the original purpose for which it was designed and built
- Policy D2, which seeks to resist proposals for a change of use to a listed building where this would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the building

#### Transport

- Increase in traffic congestion and pollution
- Transport report is misleading as many students at Bedford Square site are dropped off and collected by private cars parked illegally and the school makes no effort to control the situation
- At the Bedford Square site children and parents hang about before entering the school adding to congestion and affect pedestrian movement and road safety. 3 coaches drop off children and block traffic, as well as private cars, taxis and zip cars
- Local underground stations are already busy
- Cycling in central London is not safe
- Only 12x cycle spaces are being proposed
- The 54 Russell Square Residents and Bloomsbury Association did not state that they were very pleased with the progress made with the management of school buses compared to last year (for Bloomsbury Square)
- Russell Square is larger than Bloomsbury Square with twice as many ingress and egress points for traffic when compared to Bedford Square. It has a bus terminus on the north side and overflow bus stand on the south side, there are often up to 6-8 buses waiting.
- The British Museum has designated coach parking adjacent to their rear entrance but this often overflows with perhaps 20 coaches coming and going and taking up spaces designed for car parking or bus stands there have on occasions been 10 coaches. These spaces are not wide enough for coaches and damage occurs to the pedestrian foot path.
- A school would increase the congestion when compared to the existing office use and would be more serious than in Bedford Square

4.5 85 letters of support were received predominantly from parents of children at the existing school. 17 of these were from Camden residents and one local business:

Fitzroy Street, Chalcot Road, John Street, Regents Park Road, Steeles Road, Glenmore Road, Johns Mews, Russell Court, Falkland Road, St Augustine's Road, Canfield Gardens, Store Street (Salvi), Bloomsbury Square, Glenmore Road, Albert Street, Tavistock Place, Compayne Gardens, Hurford Salvi Carr

The remaining 68 letters of support were from parents who live in London, but outside the borough:

- Great addition to the community
- Would bring a much needed secondary school to the area
- Families are forced to move out of the area when their children reach secondary school age
- Existing school is very good
- Would allow the school to expand close to its existing location
- The school's mission of international understanding strongly resonates with our multi-cultural values
- The school is an asset to Camden and London and should be supported
- Bloomsbury has a history of education and educational institutions
- Good location
- Close to existing school
- École Jeannine Manuel is one of the best multi lingual schools in London Borough of Camden Would introduce more choice for parents in the local area

A doctor on behalf of the University of London states the junior school occasionally uses the Malet Street Garden of Senate House during lunch time which adds to the vibrancy of the area. The introduction of a secondary school would further enrich the academic activity and expose international students to the institutions of Bloomsbury.

## **5. POLICIES**

### **5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012**

### **5.2 London Plan 2016**

### **5.3 Camden Local Plan 2017**

G1 Delivery and location of growth

C2 Community Facilities

E1 Economic development

E2 Employment premises and sites

A1 Managing the impact of development

A4 Noise and vibration

CC1 Climate change mitigation

CC2 Adapting to climate change

CC5 Waste

D2 Heritage

T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

T2 Car-free development and limiting the availability of parking



T3 Transport infrastructure

#### **5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance**

##### **Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)**

CPG1 (Design) 2015

CPG3 (Sustainability) 2015

CPG5 (Town centres, retail and employment) 2013

CPG6 (Amenity) 2011

CPG7 (Transport) 2011

CPG8 (Planning obligations) 2015

#### **5.5 Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement/Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy (2011)**

### **6. ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The application is for the conversion of nos. 53 and 53 Russell Square from offices (B1) to an educational use (D1). The applicant, École Jeannine Manuel UK, already operates a school in Bedford Square and seeks a change of use at Russell Square so that the Bedford Square site will accommodate a junior school and the Russell Square site will house older children aged 14-18.

6.2 The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:

- Land use
- Heritage impact
- Amenity
- Sustainability
- Transport
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Planning obligations

#### **Land use**

6.3 The proposal seeks the change of use of the entire building (1,388sqm) from an office (Class B1) use to an education use (Class D1). Both the London Plan and the Camden Local Plan seek to retain office floorspace where there is the opportunity for such a use to continue. They also acknowledge that demand and provision is expected to rise and advise under what circumstances a change of use may be acceptable.

6.4 The main factors determining whether such a change of use is acceptable are whether the premises are suitable for a continued business use, whether the applicant has carried out the required marketing, and whether the proposed use is appropriate.

6.5 As London's economy is becoming increasingly service based the London Plan seeks to ensure that there is enough office space of the right kind in the right

location (4.1). And although office employment may grow by 303,000 between 2011 and 2031 requiring an additional 3.9 million sqm (net), local plans and strategies should support the conversion of surplus offices to other uses and promote mixed use development.

- 6.6 Local Plan Policy E1 (Economic development) acknowledges that premises suitable for small businesses as well as medium sized enterprises are currently under pressure from rising land values, limited land availability and 'permitted development' rights. The majority of Camden's office stock is in Central London, particularly in the area between the City and the West End, which is characterised by a high number of small to medium sized, multi-let buildings, with a smaller number of large, single occupier buildings.
- 6.7 Policy E1 further notes that The Camden Employment Land Review 2014 forecasts that the demand for offices will increase by 695,000sqm between 2014 and 2031. The majority of demand will be met at King's Cross, through the implementation of 444,000sqm of permitted office space in King's Cross Central. There are plans for further large-scale office development in Euston, where the Council envisages in the region of 180,000 to 280,000sqm of business floorspace being provided in the second half the plan period. Smaller scale office development will also occur at other sites across Central London, with some provision in Camden Town.

#### Loss of office floorspace

- 6.8 Policy E2 provides further guidance on the Council's approach to maintaining and securing a range of premises for businesses to support Camden's economy and provide employment opportunities for the borough's residents, and deals more specifically with the protection of employment uses.
- 6.9 It states that the Council will protect premises or sites that are suitable for continued business use, in particular premises for small businesses, businesses and services that provide employment for Camden residents and those that support the functioning of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) or the local economy. The Council will resist development of business premises and sites for non-business use unless it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction:
- a. the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and
  - b. that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.
- 6.10 In addition to the considerations above, where a change of use to a non-business use is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that there is no realistic prospect of demand to use the site for an employment use. The applicant must submit evidence of a thorough marketing exercise, sustained over at least two years.
- 6.11 Camden Planning Guidance (CPG5 – Town Centres, Retail and Employment) goes on to list various criteria to be taken into account when assessing applications for a change of use from business to a non-business use. These include factors such as the age and condition of premises; whether there are existing tenants in the

building; location and whether there is evidence of demand. Marketing information will be requested to assist in making an assessment of the premises for its suitability for continued business use.

- 6.12 The site comprises approximately 1,388sqm of office floorspace across two linked buildings. A site visit revealed that, whilst the principal floors largely retain their original plan form, the basement, rear ground and upper floors have been variously altered and extended and provide a rather convoluted, ad hoc collection of smaller workspaces. The layout and design features suggest that the premises are not suitable for any alternative business use, and the listed nature of the buildings could constrain opportunities to refurbish or further extend the premises to a level expected by modern business users. However, it is acknowledged that the local area comprises many former residential buildings, many of which are listed, and which have successfully evolved into commercial properties (primarily offices).
- 6.13 The building is currently let to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) who sub-let parts of the ground, 1<sup>st</sup> and entire 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the building, and rent out parts of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors on an hourly/daily basis as event/training space. It is estimated that there are a maximum of 54 people employed at the property.
- 6.14 The applicant has submitted a planning statement by Gerald Eve who are the Bedford Estate's primary property consultant, and although the Estate are not the applicant the purpose and instruction of the report was discussed and agreed with the Estate. The report advises that the property is not suitable for CIPR's continued use who have instructed a property advisor to market the space and look for more appropriate accommodation. Although their lease does not expire until 2019 the tenants have advised the Estate that they wish to activate their break clause and surrender their lease. The agents advise that although the Estate's preference would be for an office use the marketing has been unsuccessful and therefore the Estate is considering the conversion to an educational use.
- 6.15 One factor cited in the report as a reason for the site's unsuitability for the existing use is the configuration of the building which, as mentioned above, is heavily segregated and convoluted. The floorspace is split across 22 main rooms on six floors, and the majority of prospective tenants nowadays seek an open plan environment. The constraints of listing further restrict opportunities to adapt the premises and exclude the possibility of redeveloping the site.
- 6.16 In terms of marketing, the property has been on the market since February 2016 (20 months as of October 2017) with the applicant advising that little interest has been received from conventional office users after a full marketing campaign, and that what interest had been shown was from those seeking an alternative use.
- 6.17 The applicant advises that the building has been offered on three bases, being as flexible as possible, so delivering the widest appeal to B1 occupiers:
- As a whole unit, by way of an assignment of the existing lease, for a term to expire on 4th January 2019 at a rent of £480,000 per annum exclusive (£45.85 per sq ft). The lease is inside the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and is subject to 3 subleases earning an income rent.
  - Alternatively the accommodation being available by way of a sublease for a

term to expire on 4th December 2018.

- A new lease direct from the landlord.

- 6.18 Since commencement of the marketing campaign in June 2016, they have undertaken the following:
- Hosted an agent launch covering both West End and City agents, the purpose of which is to ensure that as many advisors who represent tenants are aware of the opportunity.
  - Produced marketing particulars
  - Circulated information to reach the widest audience on: WestEndAgents.com, CityAgentsClub.com, EGi, CoStar, Realla, and a variety of social media including Instagram and twitter.
- 6.19 The report has also undertaken research of the local market which indicates the quantity of offices available in the Fitzrovia area. The data from the fourth quarter of 2016 demonstrates that the quantity of office space available in the Fitzrovia & Bloomsbury sub-market exceeds the level of demand for this area. Q4 2016 Fitzrovia & Bloomsbury: Availability 822,276 sq ft, Under Offer 227,957 sq ft, Take up 103,140 sq ft.
- 6.20 The report suggests that this means that the most efficient and flexible offices will be let well ahead of poorly configured, multi floor buildings. Whether this is the case or not, it does indicate an oversupply of office accommodation in the area, and that whilst the site may be suitable for a variety of small businesses, similar to the current situation of sub-letting and room hire, there has been little interest in this, and there is a difficulty in marketing a premises as such. Furthermore, there has been no success in renting the premises out as whole as the layout and listed building constraints make it unattractive.
- 6.21 CPG5 details a number of considerations that the Council will take into account when assessing applications for a change of use from office to non-business use, including the age of the premises, whether the premises include features required by tenants seeking modern office accommodation; the quality of the premises and whether it is purpose built accommodation, the location of the premises and evidence of demand for office space in this location (7.4).
- 6.22 CPG5 also states that as a minimum the Council would expect marketing over at least 2 years from when the letting board is erected and the property is advertised, but the Council will consider shorter marketing periods for B1(a) office premises (7.18).
- 6.23 Policy E2 states that where a change of use to a non-business use is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that there is no realistic prospect of demand to use the site for an employment use. The applicant must submit evidence of a thorough marketing exercise, sustained over at least two years.
- 6.24 In light of the above it is considered that the site is not suitable for an alternative business use and only suitable for an office use, and that the applicant has undertaken the necessary marketing, but been unsuccessful in finding a

prospective lessee due to the constraints of the site, layout and oversupply of offices in the area. As such, the loss of office floorspace is considered in this instance to comply with policies E1 and E2 and Camden Planning Guidance.

- 6.25 It should be noted that an educational use also provides employment, albeit at a lower level than offices. Policy E1 recognises this and states that the Council will secure a successful and inclusive economy in Camden by creating the conditions for economic growth and harnessing the benefits for local residents and businesses and will recognise the importance of other employment generating uses, including retail, education, health, markets, leisure and tourism.
- 6.26 To ensure that local residents benefit from employment opportunities, the Council will require suitable developments to provide training and employment opportunities on-site. The King's Cross Construction Training Centre will provide a key point of contact to assist developments delivering benefits to local residents.
- 6.27 If it is accepted that the site is not suitable for a continued or alternative business use, the Council would seek a training and employment contribution to mitigate for the loss of employment floorspace in line with Camden Planning Guidance (CPG8 – Planning obligations). Such contributions would be secured via a Section 106 Agreement, and are sought where the net loss of employment space is 500sqm or more.
- 6.28 The formula for calculating the employment and training contribution is based on the number of full time jobs lost that are estimated to be held by Camden residents multiplied by the cost to provide training per employee. As the proposal would re-provide some employment on site the calculation would use the net number of full-time jobs lost by deducting the predicted number of full time employees from the gross number of full time jobs lost.
- 6.29 The site currently employs approximately 54 full time workers, whereas the proposed use would accommodate approximately 23 full time employees, thus resulting in a net loss of 31 full time jobs. Using the formula in CPG8 which estimates that 23% of jobs in the borough are held by Camden residents and the cost of training an employee is £2,750, the required contribution would be £19,607.50. [Full time jobs lost = 31 jobs x 23% (% of Camden residents in the workforce) x £2,750 (cost to provide training per employee) = contribution of £19,607.50].

#### Proposed education use

- 6.30 CPG5 states that the Council expects the supply of offices to meet the projected demand over the plan period and as a result may allow a change from B1(a) offices to another use in some circumstances, such as older office premises or buildings that were originally built as residential dwellings. It states that the Council's priority is for the replacement use to be permanent housing or community use.
- 6.31 The term "community facilities" in section 4 of the Local Plan refers to a wide range of social infrastructure that provides a service to the community. This includes childcare, education, adult learning and training, healthcare, police stations, youth

provision, libraries, public houses, community halls, places of worship and public toilets. These facilities are considered to form a vital part of town centres and neighbourhoods and address the local community's needs. It is acknowledged that some facilities offer large-scale or specialist provision, and can serve a wider catchment. The Local Plan makes no distinction between private schools or state schools, nor does the planning system which assigns both to use class D1 (non-residential institutions).

- 6.32 Policy C2 sets out how the Council will ensure that there is provision of community facilities to meet the needs of a growing population and safeguard against the loss of viable community facilities. It states that a diverse range of community facilities helps to enhance quality of life and social cohesion, improve personal health and wellbeing, instil a sense of community identity and belonging and may help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.33 Bloomsbury has long been recognised for having a strong educational provision amongst its variety of uses, as such the location of a new school in Russell Square is considered appropriate, as long as such a use does not present unacceptable impacts in terms of transport or amenity, or displace other protected uses. Other uses that come under the D1 use class such as galleries and places of worship may create a greater impact on amenity, and a condition will restrict the proposed use to a school use in order to protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers and the transport network.

### **Heritage impact**

- 6.34 The site lies within sub-area 6 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the buildings form part of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed terrace. No external or internal alterations are proposed, and it is not considered that major changes to the buildings' layout would be required to accommodate an educational use.
- 6.35 It is accepted that a new education use would require some internal alterations which would require listed building consent, however this application is solely for a change of use with no alterations proposed. It is possible that a new school could operate in the existing building without any alterations, and private schools do not need to confirm to the DfE guidelines for mainstream schools buildings which consider issues such as minimum sizes for different categories of space. Furthermore, the DfE guidelines are flexible and not statutory.
- 6.36 However, as stated above, it is accepted that some internal changes would be required and the applicant is aware of the need to apply for listed building consent for any internal alteration. It is not considered likely that major changes to the plan form would be sought, nor would they be likely to be acceptable. Instead it would be alterations to services to facilitate science laboratories and toilets, and the applicant will be advised to engage in pre-application advice to determine the acceptability of any proposed changes.
- 6.37 The applicant runs a primary to year 11 school at 43-45 Bedford Square which is Grade I Listed. Although some works were carried out initially without the benefit of listed building consent, all work has now been regularised and has the required

consent.

- 6.38 The proposed use is not considered to affect the special interest of the listed buildings, and the conversion of listed, large former townhouses to private schools is not uncommon. However, if any physical changes are required they will require listed building consent and possibly planning permission.

### **Amenity**

- 6.39 The proposed school would have a roll of 180 pupils aged 14-18 and 23 full time staff. The school would be open from 8.00am to 6.00pm, with a school day of 8.30am to 4.30pm, with no planned pre-school or after activities outside these hours. There are neighbouring residential uses at 54 Russell Square and 20 Bedford Place adjacent to the site and other residential uses nearby.
- 6.40 Policy A1 seeks to ensure that the amenity of communities, neighbours and occupiers is protected. Policy C2 recognises that the scale and intensity of use of some community facilities, such as schools, colleges and higher education facilities can lead to adverse impacts on residential amenity. This is principally related to the movement of large numbers of people at certain times of day, impacts such as noise and air pollution and the pressure on the transport system.

### **Noise**

- 6.41 Noise emanating from within the school and outside the school has the potential to impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers. In terms of internal noise, the school will only operate during school hours, and not during the evening, nights or weekends so the proposed use would only affect residents at home during the day. Objectors from no. 54 Russell Square note that many of them are retired and can hear activity from the existing use, and that the proposed use would have much more of an impact.
- 6.42 The applicants have not proposed any noise attenuation methods. However, secondary glazing will be required in line with the energy statement, which will reduce noise emanating from the building. The objectors note that noise from the building may be more noticeable during the summer months when the windows, of the school and neighbouring properties, are open, but this must be considered in the context of a busy central London location with Russell Square itself and the surrounding traffic adding to ambient noise levels. The applicant has also referred to sound insulation, but any permanent fixtures that are attached to the original fabric would require listed building consent and may not be acceptable, however there are proprietary systems of mobile partitions that would not require listed building consent. A noise strategy demonstrating how adequate soundproofing can be achieved will be required by condition.
- 6.43 Objections have also referred to a loss of amenity from students using Russell Square for fire drills, taking their lunch and using it as a playground. The applicants advise that 14-16 year olds would not be allowed to leave the school, as they are the responsibility of the school during the day, unless they have special parental allowance, so only sixth form students would be out at lunch time which would have

minimal impact on local amenity. The applicant also advises that pupils would be encouraged to undertake further study and academic activities during the lunch hour and there would be a lunch break area allocated within the building. Fire drills would be infrequent and would not have a significant impact on the square or its neighbouring residents.

- 6.44 Another area of concern raised is students congregating outside the school immediately before and after school. The applicant is aware of this and has offered a member of staff to help manage drop-off and pick ups, which could also help prevent students loitering outside the school causing noise and disturbance. It is considered that the appropriate management of student behaviour would reduce the impact on local residents in terms of noise and general disturbance. As this can not really be controlled by condition a student management plan, outlining the steps required to be taken by the school to control the impact of student behaviour and protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers, will form part of the section 106 agreement if permission is granted.

#### Overlooking/loss of privacy

- 6.45 As no new windows are being proposed it is not considered that the change of use would lead to increased levels of overlooking.

#### Fire safety

- 6.46 Whilst pertinent, the issue of fire safety is one of the primary functions of the Building Regulations rather than the planning system. However, the applicant has responded to some of the objections raised by local residents. They note that there have been no issues with their other site which is also a listed building.
- 6.47 The applicant has submitted a letter from a Building Control Inspector which notes that whilst there is an emergency exit through the neighbouring building only occupants of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor will use the exit. As the 4<sup>th</sup> floor is proposed to be staff room and conference rooms and in accordance with the obligations regarding fire regulations would be used exclusively by adults, and in all likelihood staff would move down to assist the evacuation of pupils from the lower floors. As mentioned above, any fire drills are likely to be infrequent and would not need to be carried out on a regular basis.

#### **Transport**

- 6.48 The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6b (Excellent) with numerous bus stops nearby in Russell Square, Southampton Row and Bloomsbury Square. Russell Square and Holborn underground stations are 400m and 700m away respectively. The site is within the Bloomsbury/Kings Cross CA-E/D Controlled Parking Zone which operates Mon-Sat 08:30-18:30 and suffers from parking stress.
- 6.49 The proposed school would have a roll of 180 pupils aged 14-18 and 23 full time staff. School would be open from 8.00am to 6.00pm, with a school day of 8.30am to 4.30pm, and no planned pre-school or after activities outside these hours. No on-site catering is proposed.



## Travel Plan

- 6.50 Camden requires a School Development Travel Plan to satisfy policy A1 of the Local Plan and Camden Planning Guidance CPG7 (Transport), which includes references to TfL and DfT guidance. The travel plan would need to be secured by a Section 106 planning obligation if planning permission is granted.
- 6.51 The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement which shows that the existing office use, using the TRICS database, generates 360 daily person trips. The same analysis was done for the school use for 180 pupils and 23 staff, and the results were 406 daily person trips. The major difference between the two uses is that the trips associated with the school will mainly occur between 8am-9am and 4pm-5pm, whereas the trips for the B1 use are slightly more spread out over the day.
- 6.52 The predicted vehicle trips for the B1 use, using TRICS for a site of this size, is 37 vehicle trips per day. Using the same TRICS database for school use, the analysis predicts 36 vehicle trips per day. The on-site facilities are not planned to include school-catering, and servicing levels of the proposed school will remain similar to that of the current B1 use. A car free development should be secured via a legal agreement in order for the development to be in accordance with Policy T2 of the Local Plan.
- 6.53 As the children will be older there will be less reliance on private cars as the vast majority of pupils are expected to be independent travellers. The draft Travel Plan, which is to be secured and signed off via a Section 106 agreement, predicts that during the school's first year of operation, 2% (1-2 pupils) of pupils will arrive via private vehicle. This number is predicted/targeted to drop to 0% by the third year of operation. The remaining students are to use public transport (tube-66%, bus-22%) and walking (10%) to travel to school. Staff are predicted to use public transport, walking and cycling to travel to school.
- 6.54 The existing school on Bedford Square is serviced by private school buses which has caused issues during the school run periods. The draft Travel Plan and Transport Statement confirm that private buses will not be doing daily drop offs and pick-ups at the proposed site. This is welcomed by the Council and will be secured by condition. The Bedford Square site currently house children up to the age of 14, so the proposal would not increase the number of younger pupils at the site, so there would be no increased dependency on private car use at Bedford Square.
- 6.55 The applicants have also submitted a draft travel plan review for their Bedford Square site. This indicates that out of 297 pupils 35 travel by car/motorcycle, 4 by car share, and 82 by school bus, with none of the staff using these methods. The plan also targets reductions in the number of pupils travelling by car over a five year period (14% down to 9%), and school bus (40% down to 30%). The plan has been reviewed and deemed acceptable by the Travel Plan Officer.
- 6.56 The school at Bedford Square opened up in a building that was already in D1 use and therefore did not require planning permission. As such, the Council had no control over pupil and staff movements. Officers have requested that any travel

plan also covers the Bedford Square site which would alleviate some of the transport problems resulting from the existing use

- 6.57 A financial contribution of £6,244 would need to be secured to cover the costs of monitoring and reviewing the travel plan over a 5 year period. This would also need to be secured by a Section 106 planning obligation if planning permission is granted.

#### Cycle Parking

- 6.58 Policy T1 of the local plan requires developments to sufficiently provide for the needs of cyclists, in accordance with the requirements outlined in the London Plan and Camden planning guidance CPG7 (Transport).
- 6.59 The London Plan provides guidance on minimum cycle parking standards and these are outlined in Table 6.3 of the London Plan. The minimum requirements are:
- Long-stay: 1 space per 8 staff + 1 space per 8 students
  - Short-stay: 1 space per 100 students
- 6.60 Using the proposed pupil and staff numbers, the development is required to provide 26 long-stay spaces (23 for pupils and 3 for staff) and 2 short-stay spaces. The proposed plans and supporting information state that 12x cycle parking spaces will be provided in the internal courtyard of the site for staff use, in the form of 6x Sheffield stands which is below the London Plan target. However, the applicant has advised they will be able to provide 28x spaces and this will be secured by condition.

#### Servicing

- 6.61 The applicant has indicated no on site catering will be provided, or other activities that require regular service deliveries or collections. Details of refuse collection have not yet been finalised, but the applicant proposes using the provider they currently use for their Bedford Square site, or one of the providers already operating in the Square if their provider does not currently service Russell Square. A condition will require details of waste storage and removal to be submitted and approved before occupation.

#### **Sustainability**

- 6.62 Non-residential changes of use of more than 500sqm of floorspace are expected to provide an energy statement setting out how a development has been designed to follow the steps in the energy hierarchy set out in the London Plan. Policy CC1 requires all developments to achieve a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions through renewable technologies wherever feasible. Applicants are also expected to submit a sustainability statement, the detail of which is to be commensurate with the scale of the development, showing how the development will implement the sustainable design principles and achieve a BREEAM Non-Domestic Refurbishment/ BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment 'Excellent' rating

- 6.63 A BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' is targeted for the proposal with the following levels of credits achieved: 69% energy, 66% water, and 50% materials. Whilst this misses BREEAM Excellent targets, the applicant has confirmed mandatory credits have been achieved and that no further credits are possible at this stage.
- 6.64 Officers have suggested that solar PVs on a sunken area of roof may be acceptable subject to listed building consent. The applicant is required to investigate the feasibility of this option further and include further details on overshadowing and access issues. Sustainability officers advise that a feasibility assessment be secured by condition, and a sustainability plan indicating a BREEAM Very Good level and minimum credit targets in Energy (60%), Materials (40%) and Water (60%), and an energy efficiency/renewable energy plan demonstrating a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> of 44% beyond Part L 2013, be secured by section 106 agreement. It is also advised that the feasibility of other energy efficiency retrofit measures should be provided in the energy efficiency/renewable energy plan

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

- 6.65 As no new floorspace is proposed and the proposed use is for educational purposes the CIL charge is nil.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 The proposal would introduce a new school into an area that has a long and established educational tradition and allow an existing school to expand which has attracted a high level of support from parents. It is acknowledged that there would be a loss of office floorspace, but it is considered that the building, due to its age and listing, is not suitable for any business use other than office. The applicant has marketed the property for 20 months, which is slightly below the recommended 24 months, but Planning Guidance does allow for a shorter marketing period when office accommodation is involved. It is also noted that the proposed use is identified as a community use which the Local Plan advises is a preferred alternative, and the proposed use would also provide a level of employment floorspace with a training contribution compensating in some part for the loss of jobs to local residents.
- 7.2 The application does not include any changes to the listed building, but the applicant is aware of the need to apply for listed building consent for any future alterations, and Bloomsbury is characterised by listed buildings that were originally houses but have been converted to commercial uses. There is concern about the impact of the change of use on the amenity of adjoining occupiers, but it is considered that with soundproofing and a robust student management plan, disturbance could be kept to a minimum. Similarly, transport impacts can be controlled by an appropriate travel plan, which would have the added benefit of bringing the Bedford Square site under control.
- 7.3 Conditional planning permission is recommended subject to a section 106 legal agreement containing the following heads of terms:
- Sustainability plan

- Energy efficiency & renewable energy plan
- Car free
- School Development Travel Plan and associated financial contribution of £6,244
- Employment and training contribution £19,607.50
- Student management plan

## 8 **LEGAL COMMENTS**

8.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

AG(0)01 Rev A; 02 Rev A; 03; 04; 05; 06; 07; Design and Access Statement by Ellis Williams Architects dated April 2017 Rev 1; Loss of Office Report by Gerald Eve dated 21st March 2017; Transport Statement by Stirling Maynard dated April 2017; School Development Travel Plan v2 dated February 2017; School Development Travel Plan v2 dated June 2017; School Travel Plan Review dated 6th June 2017; Gerald Eve Letter dated 7th June 2017; Gerald Eve letter dated 25th September 2017; Energy & Sustainability Statement by Norman Bromley Partnership LLP dated April 2017; Energy & Sustainability Statement by Norman Bromley Partnership LLP dated 11th September 2017; Supplementary Statement: Sustainable Design by Ellis Williams Architects dated 28th July 2017; Energy Analysis BS1516; Supplementary Energy and Sustainability Information by Norman Bromley Partnership, Peter Joel and Associates, Ellis Williams Architects and Gerald Eve LLP dated 16 August 2017

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 3 Before the use commences details of a sound insulation strategy shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The use shall thereafter not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved strategy

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies G1, CC1, D1, D2, A1, and A4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 4 No minibuses, coaches or similar passenger carrying vehicles (PCV) shall be used to drop off or pick up pupils from the school.

Reason: To avoid obstruction of the surrounding streets and to safeguard amenities of adjacent premises in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and T4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 5 Before the development commences, details of secure and covered cycle storage area for 28x cycles shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The approved facility shall thereafter be provided in its entirety prior to the first occupation of any of the new units, and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development provides adequate cycle parking facilities in accordance with the requirements of policy T1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 6 Before the development commences:
- (i) a feasibility study considering how photovoltaic panels could be attached to the roof without harming the special interest of the listed building whilst providing the requisite sustainability benefits shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing.
  - (ii) Should the study conclude photovoltaics are acceptable in principle, detailed plans showing the location and extent of photovoltaic cells to be installed on the building shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The measures shall include the installation of a meter to monitor the energy output from the approved renewable energy systems. The cells shall be installed in full accordance with the details approved by the Local Planning Authority and permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the development provides adequate on-site renewable energy facilities and protects the special interest of the listed building in accordance with the requirements of Policies G1, D2, CC1 and CC2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 7 Notwithstanding the provisions of Class D1 of the Schedule of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, or any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order, the premises shall not be used for any purposes other than a school.

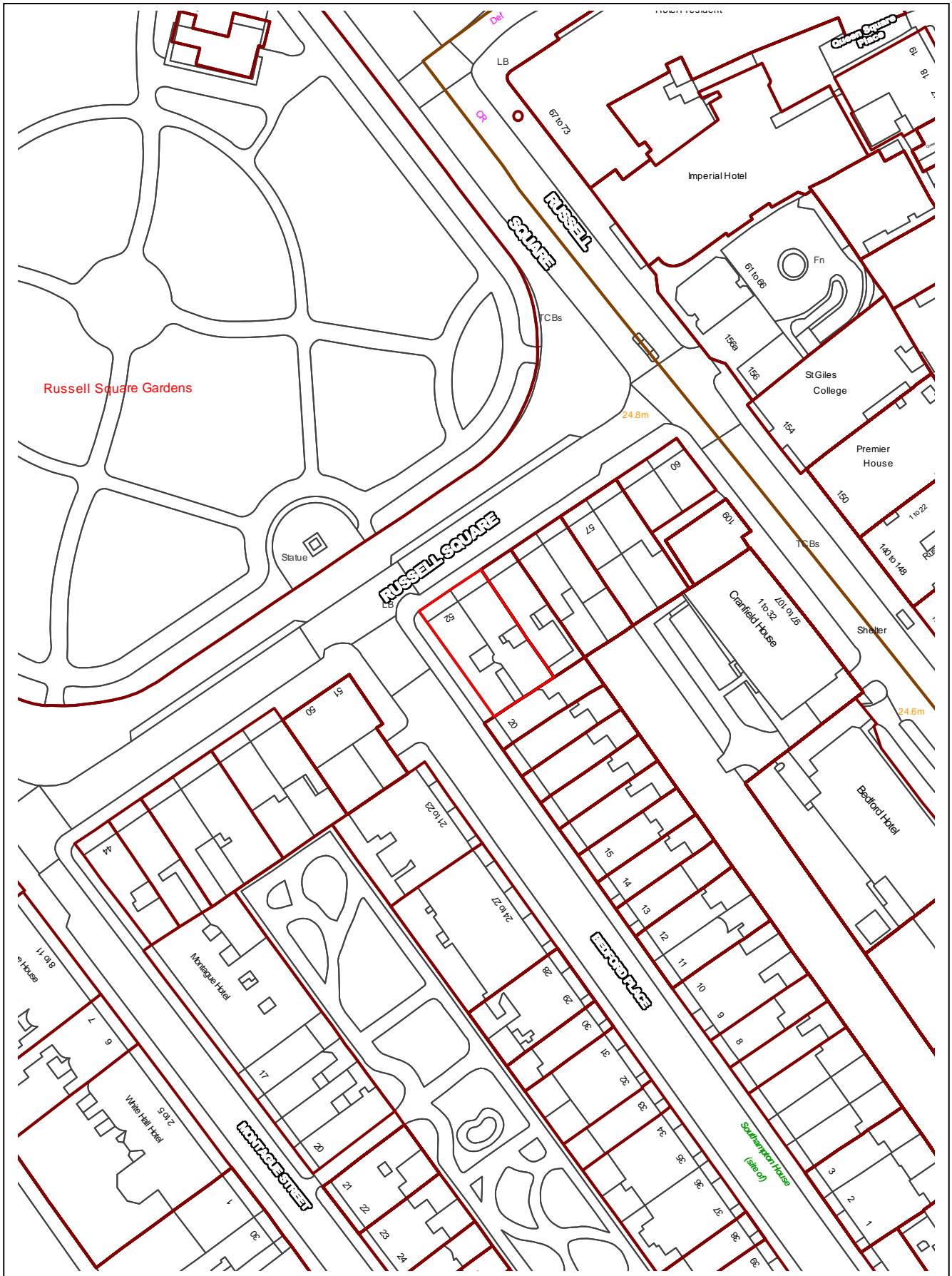
Reason: To ensure that the future occupation of the building does not adversely affect the adjoining premises/immediate area by reason of noise, traffic congestion and excessive on-street parking pressure in accordance with policies G1, CC1, D1, and A1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 8 Before the development commences, details of the location, design and method of waste storage and removal including recycled materials, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The facility as approved shall be provided prior to the first occupation of any of the new units and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient provision for the storage and collection of waste has been made in accordance with the requirements of policies CC5, A1 and A4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 2 Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You are advised to consult the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444 or search for 'environmental health' on the Camden website or seek prior approval under Section 61 of the Act if you anticipate any difficulty in carrying out construction other than within the hours stated above.
- 3 You are reminded that any works of alteration, internal or external, are likely to require listed building consent and planning permission.
- 4 Your attention is drawn to the fact that there is a separate legal agreement with the Council which relates to the development for which this permission is granted. Information/drawings relating to the discharge of matters covered by the Heads of Terms of the legal agreement should be marked for the attention of the Planning Obligations Officer, Sites Team, Camden Town Hall, Argyle Street, WC1H 8EQ.



**Application No: 2017/2285/P**

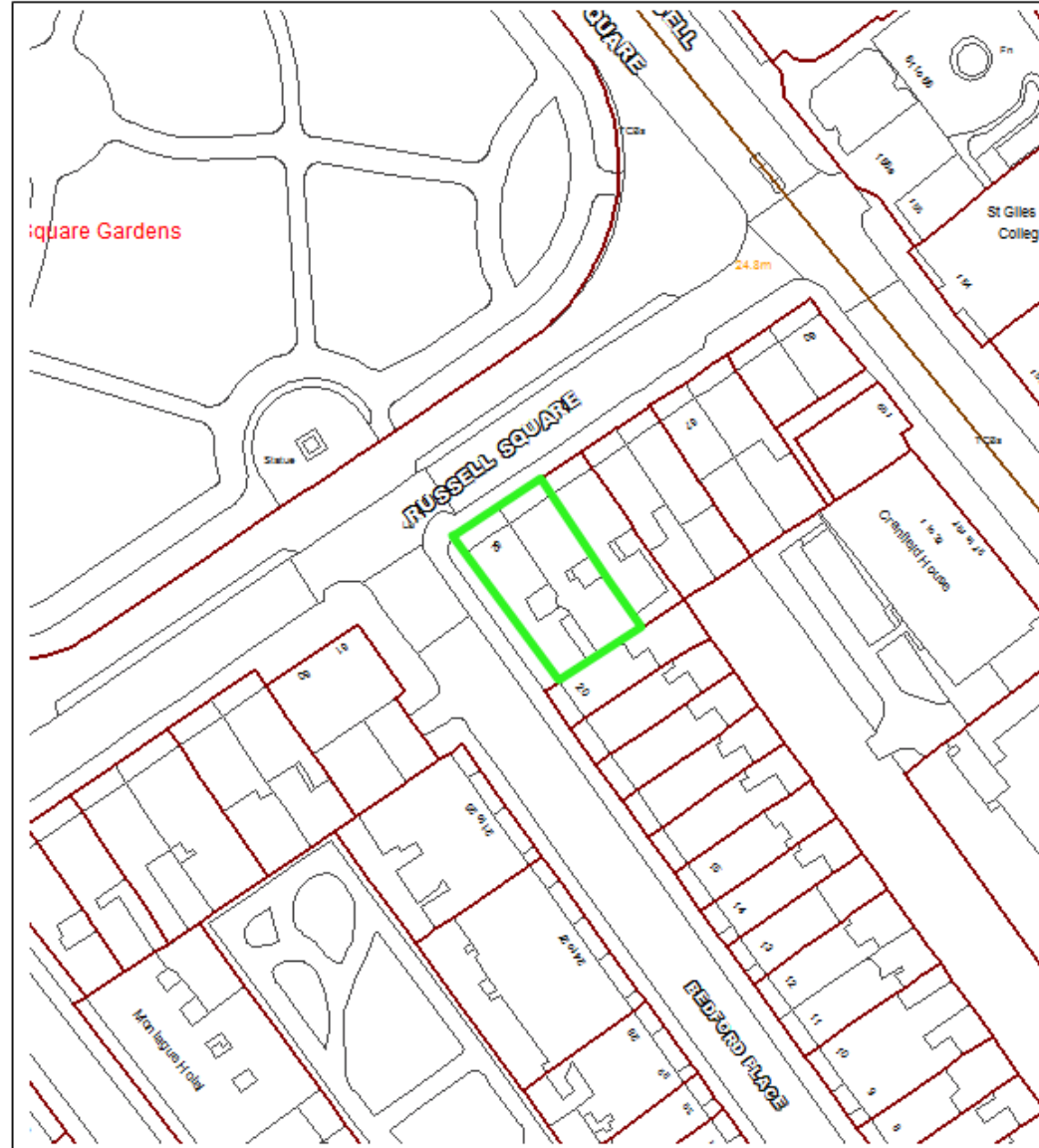
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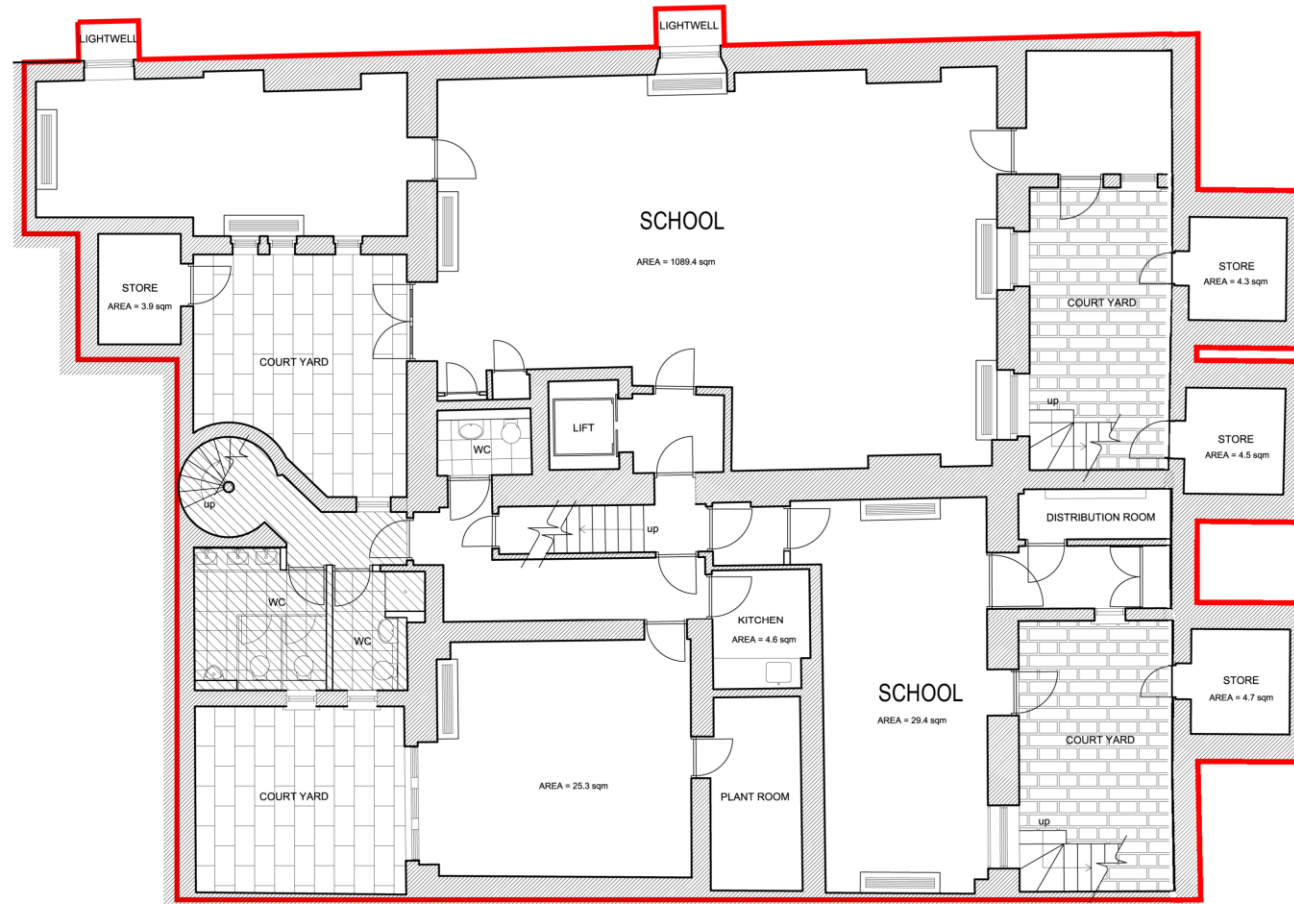


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# 52-52 Russell Square 2017/2285/P

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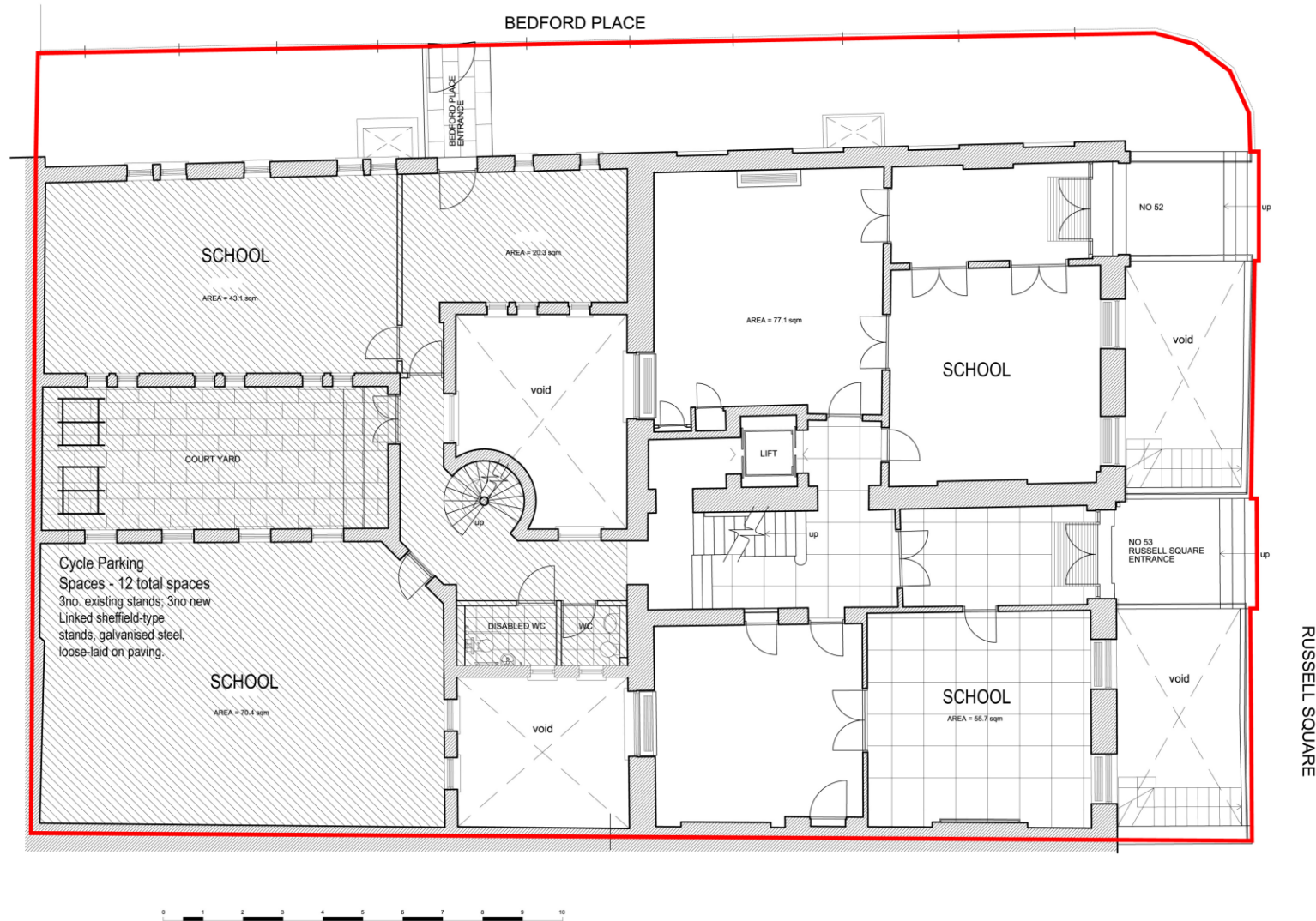


RUSSELL SQUARE



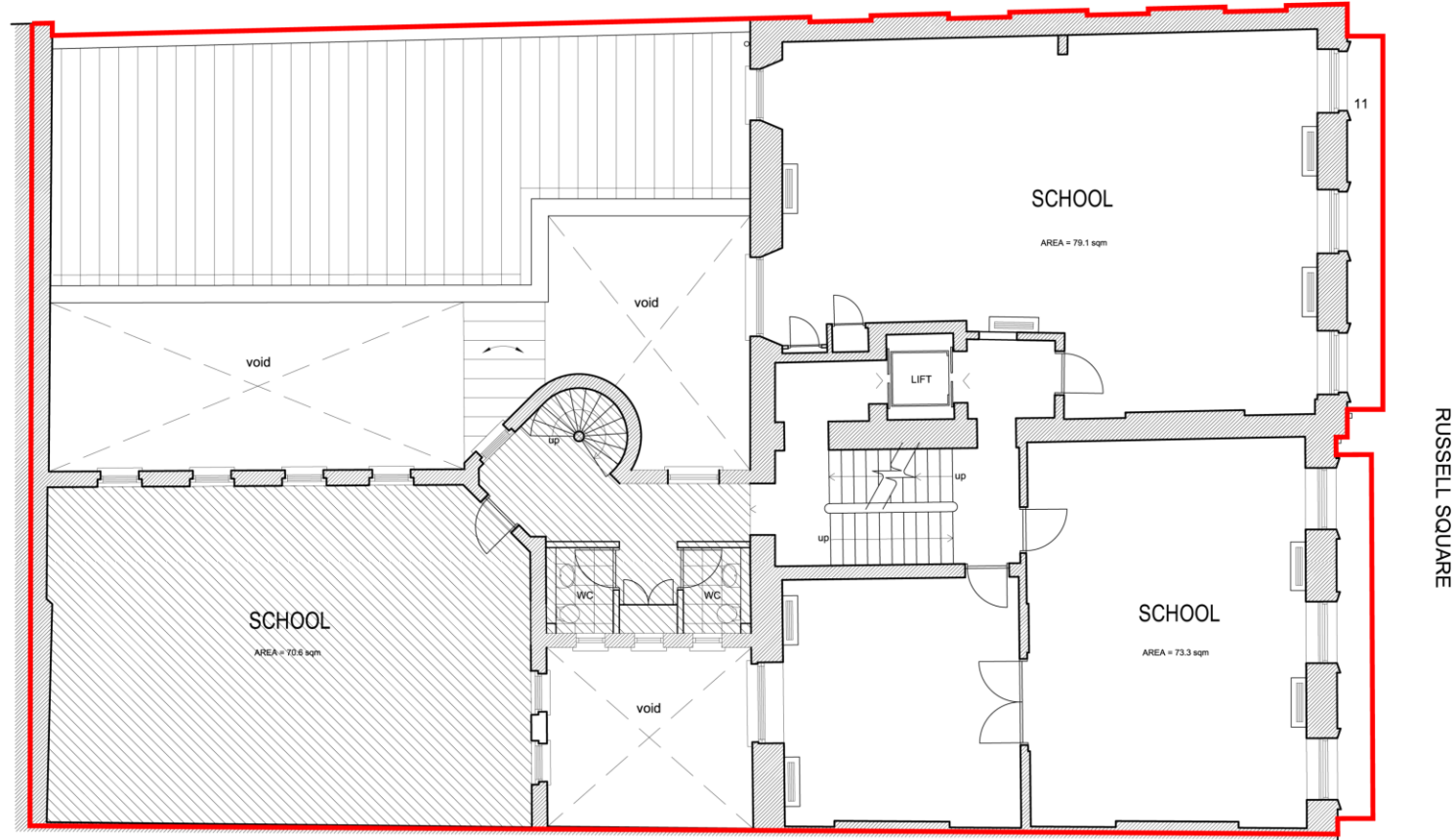


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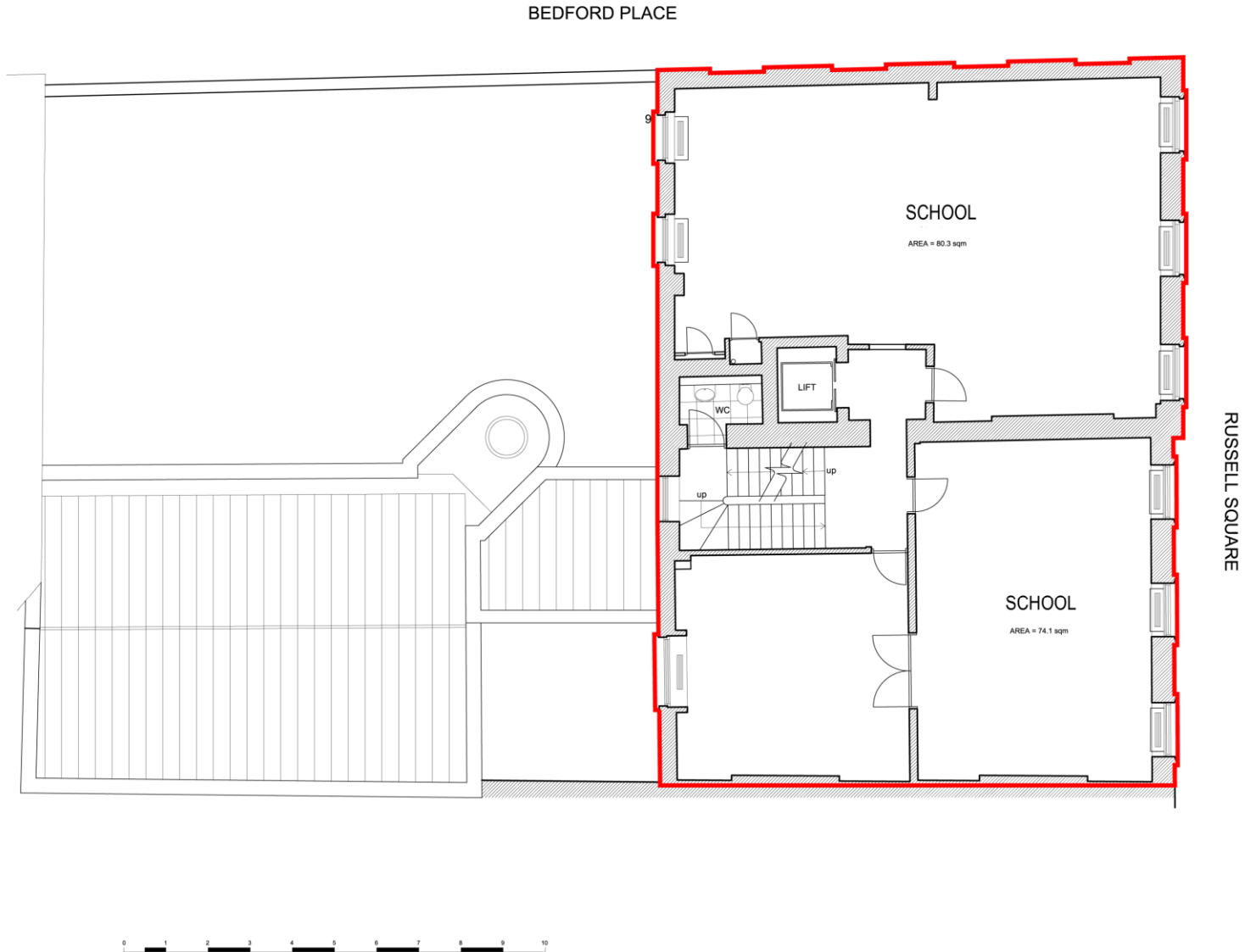


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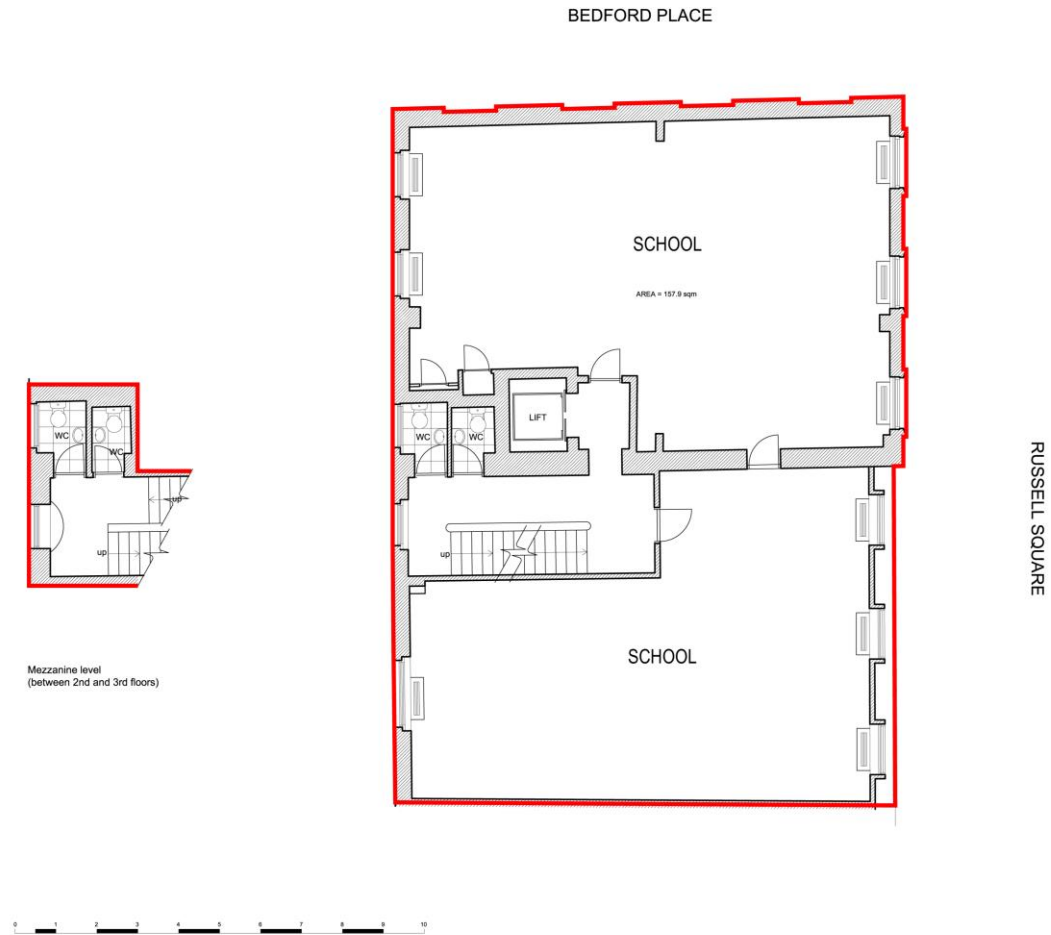
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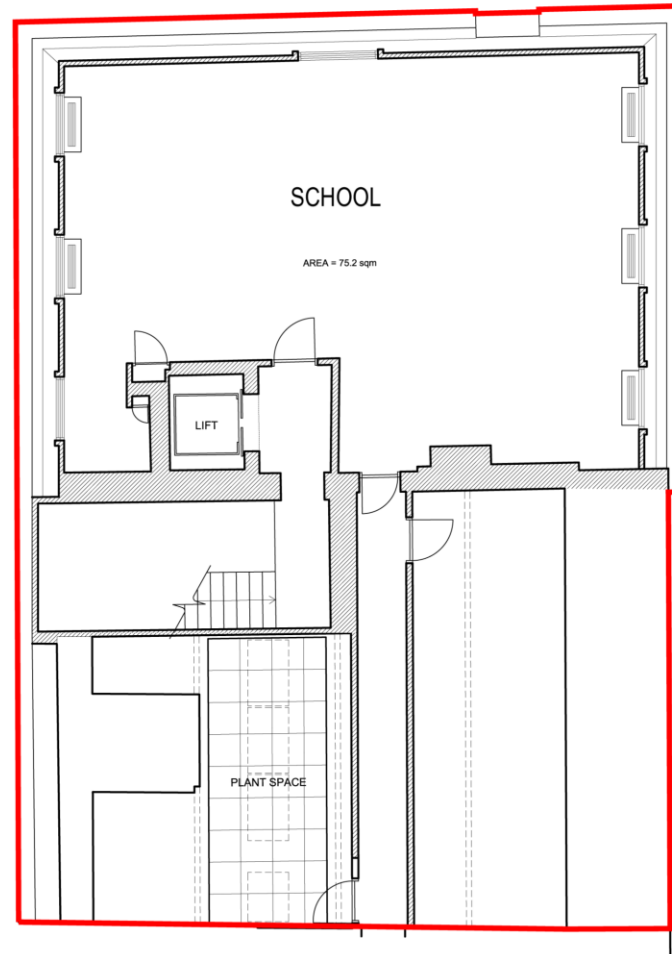


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