

# **MERCURE HOTEL** **130-134 SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON**

Townscape, Heritage & Visual Assessment  
July 2018



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# 1. Introduction

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This Townscape, Heritage & Visual Assessment (THVA) has been produced on behalf of the client, Fairview Hotels Limited, to accompany the full planning submission for proposed works at the Mercure Hotel, 130-134 Southampton Row WC1B 5AF (henceforth 'the Site'), as well as to assess the impact of the proposal on the Site and the surrounding area, which is to develop the Site for expansion of the existing hotel premises.

The Site is not statutorily listed nor is it a locally listed heritage asset, but is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Site is not adjacent to any listed buildings, but there are surrounding listed buildings close to the Site: 9 Cosmo Place (Grade-II); St George the Martyr Church (Grade-II\*); 6 Queen Square (Grade-II\*); and 7 Queen Square (Grade-II).

The report will:

- Set out the relevant legislative and policy framework within which to assess the site's heritage impact;
- Provide a proportionate and robust analysis of the Site and surrounding area's historic development;
- Offer a full description of the site and identify relevant designated heritage assets;
- Assess the significance of the Site within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area; and lastly,
- Provide a detailed assessment of impact for the proposal on the character and appearance of Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the existing townscape.

This document has been produced to inform the pre-application planning discussions and is submitted with full assessment of impact based on the finalised proposed development for the Mercure Hotel, Bloomsbury. This report provides a full, detailed assessment of the history and development of the Site, and provides a detailed analysis of the impact of the proposed development on the historic environment, primarily the setting and significance of the nearby heritage assets. As such, it is considered to



Figure 1.1: Location plan of the site and the surrounding area. The Site is outlined in red.

meet the requirements of paragraph 128 of the NPPF, and provides a basis on which to analyse the proposals against local, strategic, and national policies related to the historic environment. This THVA should be read alongside the Design & Access Statement produced by Dexter Moren Associates, which has been submitted as part of this application.

The report is by Icen Projects. Specifically, it is authored by Ailish Killilea BA(Hons), MSc, Senior Consultant, and reviewed by Laurie Handcock MA (Cantab) MSc IHBC, Director – Heritage & Townscape.

## **2. Planning Legislation, Policy & Guidance**

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## 2.1 Legislation

Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.

Primary legislation under Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority or Secretary of State, as relevant, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Act, meanwhile, states that:

‘In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.’

## 2.2 National Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”), which immediately replaced the previous policy regime, including the design and heritage policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1), and Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5).

This national policy framework encourages intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. Historic England has defined this approach, which is reflected in the NPPF, as ‘constructive conservation’: defined as ‘a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment’ (Constructive Conservation in Practice, Historic England, 2009).

The NPPF promotes sustainable development as a fundamental theme in planning and sets out a series of ‘Core Planning Principles’ (Paragraph 17). These core principles highlight that planning should be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives; that it should secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity; and that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Section 7, ‘Requiring Good Design’, reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. This section of the NPPF affirms, in paragraph 58, the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area, establish a strong sense of place, and respond to local character.

The guidance contained within Section 12, ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’, relates to the historic environment, and developments which may have an effect upon it.

Heritage Assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority. Listed buildings and Conservation Areas are both designated heritage assets.

‘Significance’ is defined as ‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

The ‘Setting of a heritage asset’ is defined as ‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

Paragraph 128 states that, when determining applications, local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance. According to Paragraph 129, local planning authorities are also obliged to identify and assess the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.

Paragraph 131 emphasises that local planning authorities should take account of: the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; the positive contribution



that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It emphasises that the weight given to an asset's conservation should be proportionate to its significance, and that clear and convincing justification will be required for loss and harm to heritage assets.

Paragraphs 133 and 134 address the balancing of harm against public benefits. If a balancing exercise is necessary (i.e. if there is any harm to the asset), considerable weight should be applied to the statutory duty where it arises. Proposals that would result in substantial harm or total loss of significance should be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (per Paragraph 133). Whereas, Paragraph 134 emphasises that where less than substantial harm will arise as a result of a proposed development, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

#### **Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG") (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2014)**

The guidance in the PPG supports the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change that requires a flexible and thoughtful approach, and that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

The PPG refers to key elements of a building's special architectural or historic interest when assessing harm. If proposed works adversely affect a

key element of the heritage asset's special interest, then those works could amount to substantial harm. It is the degree of harm rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed by the decision taker. Substantial harm is stated to be a high test that may not arise in many cases.

Harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. Setting is stated to include the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than its curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

The PPG also provides clear guidance on the meaning of 'public benefits', particularly in relation to historic environment policy, including paragraphs 132 to 135 of the NPPF. The PPG makes clear that public benefits should be measured according to the delivery of the three key drivers of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental outcomes, all of which are reflected in the roles of the planning system (per Paragraph 7 of the NPPF).

## 2.3 Strategic Policy

### The London Plan

Regional policy for the London area is defined by the London Plan (Greater London Authority/ Mayor of London 2011), Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan (Greater London Authority/ Mayor of London 2013) and Further Alterations to the London Plan 2014 Consultation Draft (Greater London Authority/ Mayor of London 2014), and defined by the London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (2016).

The current 2016 London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 remains the formally adopted Development Plan for London. However, as stated by the GLA, the Draft London Plan (2017) currently undergoing consultation, 'is a material consideration in planning decisions'. The Draft London Plan gains more weight as it moves through the process to adoption, however the weight given to it is a matter for the decision maker. The relevant proposed changes to strategic planning policy dealt with in this Heritage Statement concern those on Design and Heritage, but whose Core Principles remain largely the same. For the purposes of this report and considering the absence of response to consultation on this to date, the formally adopted London Plan policies will be applied here, unless otherwise requested by the Local Planning Authority.

### London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2011 (2016)

The London Plan (2016) incorporates the changes made in the Revised Minor Alterations to the London Plan (2013), Further Alterations to the London Plan (2015), and Minor Alterations to the London Plan (2016). The Revised Early Minor Alterations to the London Plan (REMA) set out minor alterations in relation to the London Plan and changes to UK legislation including the Localism Act (2011) and the NPPF. The revisions amend and split paragraph 7.31 supporting Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology with regard to developments affecting the setting of heritage assets, the need to weigh developments causing less than substantial harm on heritage assets against the public benefit and the reuse or

refurbishment of heritage assets to secure sustainable development. The Glossary for the REMA also contains definitions for ‘Heritage Assets’ and ‘Substantial Harm’. The Further Alterations to the London Plan (2015) updated policy in relation to World Heritage Sites in London and the assessment of their setting.

The London Plan deals with heritage issues in Chapter 7, London’s Living Spaces and Places – Historic environment and landscapes.

Policy 7.8 ‘Heritage assets and archaeology’ establishes the following clauses regarding heritage assets in London:

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

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

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

## 2.4 Local Development Plan

Camden’s Local Plan was adopted by the Council on 3 July 2017 and has replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies documents as the basis for planning decisions and future development in the borough. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) also form a key part of the Local Development Framework.

Relevant heritage policies contained within Local Development Plan documents are as follow:

- Local Plan: Policy D1 Design and Policy D2 Heritage; and,
- SPDs: Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal.

### New Local Plan Policy D1: Design

The Council will require development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality which improves the function, appearance, and character of the area.

We will require that development:

- a. is attractive and of the highest standard;
- b. respects local context and character and conserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets;
- c. is sustainable in design and construction;
- d. is carefully designed with regard to architectural detailing;
- e. uses attractive and high quality materials;
- f. contributes positively to the street frontage;
- g. is inclusive and accessible for all;
- h. promotes health;

i. improves movement through areas with direct, accessible, and easily recognisable routes (legibility);

j. is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;

k. is robust and flexible in use;

l. responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;

m. incorporates well designed landscape design;

n. incorporates outdoor amenity space;

o. preserves significant and protected views;

p. meets housing standards; and

q. carefully integrates building services equipment.

### New Local Plan Policy D2: Heritage

The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens. In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, we will:

a. take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;

b. require that development within conservation areas preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area;

c. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a

conservation area, unless circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

d. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and

e. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage. Development which causes harm to the significance of a conservation area will not be permitted unless there are public benefits to the development that outweigh that harm, taking into consideration the scale of the harm and the significance of the asset.

#### Listed Buildings

To preserve and enhance the borough's listed buildings, we will:

f. prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

g. resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and

h. resist development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

We will refuse permission for development which results in substantial harm to, or the loss of, a listed building unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all the following apply:

i. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

j. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

k. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

l. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets

We will seek to protect other heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list), Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and London Squares.

#### Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal (2011)

Camden has a duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (section 69 and 72) to designate as conservation areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or historic interest of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" and pay special attention to the preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of those areas. Designation provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance the special interest of such an area. Designation also, importantly, introduces greater control over the removal of trees and more stringent requirements when judging the acceptability of proposals to demolish unlisted buildings that contribute to the character of the area.



### **3. Historic Development of the Site and Surroundings**

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### 3.1 The Surrounding Area

The Site is located within the Bloomsbury Estate, the name deriving from William Blemond, a 13th century landowner whose 'bury', or fortified manor, was near what is now known as Bloomsbury Square. The estate came into the ownership of the Russell Family in 1669 when William, son of the 5th Earl of Bedford married Lady Rachel Vaughan, a young widow and daughter of the 4th Earl of Southampton. At this point the area we now know as Bloomsbury were mainly agricultural fields and roughly comprised the land between Tottenham Court Road, Euston Road, Southampton Row and New Oxford Street, plus two detached portions, one west of Tottenham Court Road and the other north of Euston Road. The 4th Earl of Southampton had begun developing the lands during the 1660s, having built Southampton House on a site known as Long Field for his own occupation and began laying out rural estates on the open lands, including Bloomsbury Square to the south of Southampton House.

It was the 5th Earl of Bedford whom continued this development. He and his architect, Inigo Jones, introduced Palladian architecture to England in the form of a public square, addressed by a church, arcaded terraced housing and surrounded by street grid layouts. This offered a more organised and efficient streetscape, departing from development based on the narrow medieval streets, alleys and courtyards, setting the scene for the following three centuries of development. Of notable development around this time was Montague House which later became home to the British Museum in 1759 following the bequest of Sir Hans Soane, the Royal Physician, of his substantial collection of antiquities to the Government. East of Southampton Row, the construction of Red Lion Square and Queen Square began in the late 1680s by speculative developer Nicholas Barbon, despite opposition of Gray's Inn who wished to retain their open views.

Later development, during the Georgian and Regency period, saw accelerated development to the north from Great Russell Street and Great Ormond Street towards Euston Road, much to the demand of expanding wealthy classes. Plans for Bedford Square were realised in the 1760s, but

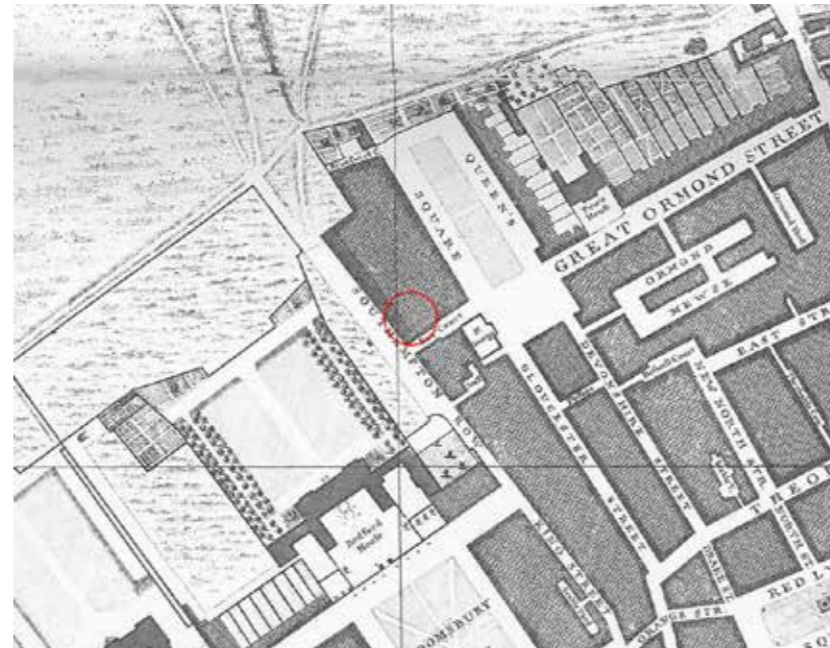


Figure 3.1: 1745 map by Rocque. The Site is circled in red.

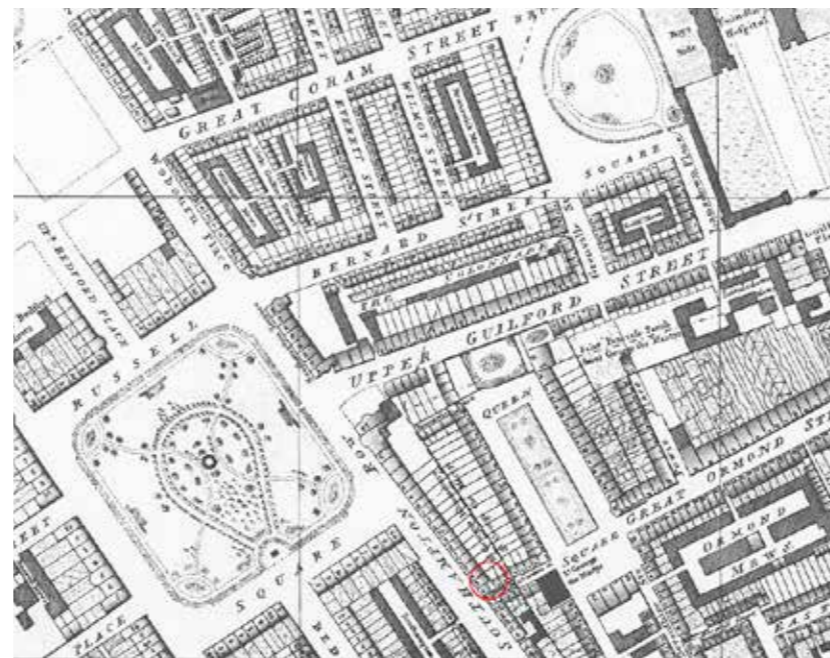


Figure 3.2: 1787 Corris map. The Site is circled in red.

it wasn't until the death of the Duke in 1771 that these were progressed by his then widow. The square was designed and built as a unified architectural composition by a number of builders with strict controls over the elevational designs. This would mark future systematic development of lands to the north, which were previously preserved for open views towards Hampstead Heath under the watch of the Duke of Bedford.

In 1742 the permanent premises of the Foundling Hospital, the first British home for abandoned children, was constructed west of Gray's Inn Lane and in 1790 the hospital decided to raise capital by releasing undeveloped lands for house building. This resulted in the twin squares of Brunswick and Mecklenburgh, original layouts were carried out by S. P. Cockerell in 1808. By the start of the 19th century development slowed down as a result of the Napoleonic Wars which prompted a rise in cost of building materials and scarce credit availability. As a consequence, the area between Russell Square and Euston Square remained undeveloped until 1820s. Owing to a significant increase in population during the first half of the 19th century many places of worship were erected around this time.

The area and its close proximity to the City of London and Westminster has attracted generations of talented writers, artists and intellectuals, including the early 20th century 'Bloomsbury Group' - Leonard and Virginia Woolf with their artistic and literary friends.

Victorian development continued the densely laid out terraced streets, being predominantly residential with a mix of uses: markets; cultural; hospitals; and churches. Extending development northwards, grandeur residential districts were laid out speculatively by a number of builders on leases from the major landowners. This reflected the preference of the time for wealthy families to live in more suburban surroundings at the time. This resulted in a decline of desirability of the Bloomsbury area for residential development and led to an increase in non-residential uses taking over former residential dwellings. These include a number of institutions

including University College, the British Museum and various specialist hospitals and institutions around Queen Square. The development of various railway termini along Euston Road also introduced expansion in hotel developments as temporary accommodation rose in demand.

For the first half of the 20th century major developments were largely in connection with the expansion of the University of London, between Gower Street and Russell Square, the continued hospital developments to the east and offices, hotel and shops along main arterial routes, such as High Holborn and Southampton Row.

During the second half of the 20th century hospital, academic and cultural institutions in the area continued to expand, particularly the hospitals and universities. Bomb damage of WWII led to much of the older housing stock to be replaced with large scale developments such as the Brunswick Centre, by Patrick Hodgkinson with Sir Leslie Martin, and Lasdun's Faculty of Education.

### Southampton Row

Once named Upper King Street, Southampton Row was a notorious traffic bottleneck in Edwardian times as extra traffic resulted from the newly opened Kingsway. The 1920s developments of Victoria House, including the whole eastern block of Bloomsbury Square, and the Headquarters of the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society gave opportunity for much needed widening of the road. It was at this time that the road was lengthened by two thirds beyond its original stretch between Russell Square to Bloomsbury Place. Prior to this Southampton Row was comparatively arcane, gaining higher status with connecting Kingsway and Woburn north towards Euston Road and St Pancras, and Kings Cross railway stations.

Southampton Row was originally of the Georgian character of the wider Bloomsbury area, but following bomb damage of WWI and WWII many terraces saw irreparable damage with new and large developments being



Figure 3.3: 1875 OS map ©100035207.

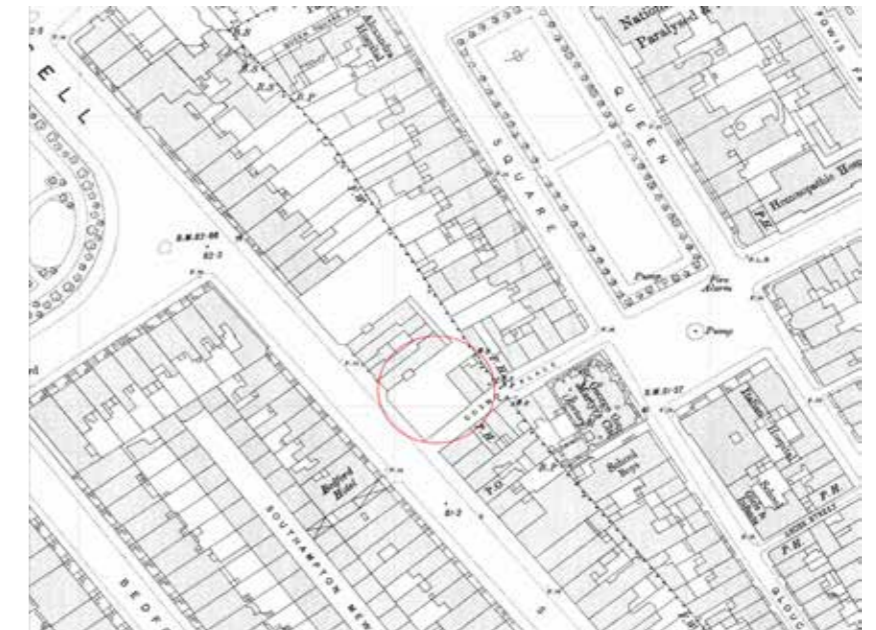


Figure 3.4: 1896 OS map ©100035207.



Figure 3.5: 1916 OS map ©100035207.



Figure 3.6: 1922 Russell Square looking south along Southampton Row.

constructed on these sites. Hotels in particular were constructed along here, as well as Russell Square and Woburn Place, in the post-war period which brought about increased tourist activity in the Bloomsbury area.

**The Site**

The Site would have been developed during the first swathes of development under the Duke of Bedford, on the northern limits of such. The John Rocque Map of 1745 (3.1) shows Southampton Row established to the east of Bedford House and development of the block most likely being residential, as can be identified later on the 1799 Horwood Map (3.2), the Site containing what appears to be 5 terraced houses. The church of St George the Martyr was built c.1706 and is shown on the John Rocque Map addressing the established Queen Square by this time.

The whole of Cosmo Place was named Fox Court in the mid-18th century, but later in the same century too on the names of Southampton Court to the west, and Little Ormond Street to the east, the division corresponding with the parishes of St George Bloomsbury and St George the Martyr respectively. The Site itself at this time would have fallen within the parish of St George Bloomsbury, being bounded to the south by Southampton Court.

By the mid-19th century Southampton Court became Cosmo Place, still leading onto Little Ormond Street, but by the late-19th century the whole street is indicated as Cosmo Place. By 1875, see map 3.3, the area would appear to have been redeveloped and the development of the Site intensified, now appearing to contain 7 terraced properties. This may possibly be connected to the depression in building trade earlier in this century, but the area experiencing a surge in population growth and resulting in intensification of the Site.

In 1896 the Site is shown to be cleared of buildings apart from the two residential properties to the east, see map 3.4. It is unclear why most buildings were cleared at this time, but with other sites north along

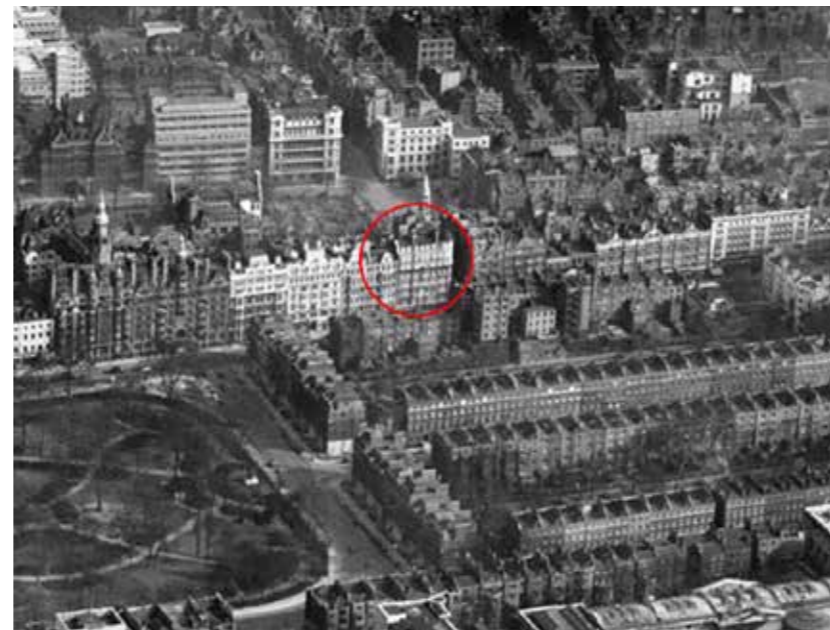


Figure 3.7: 1939 aerial photograph of Bloomsbury. Britain from Above

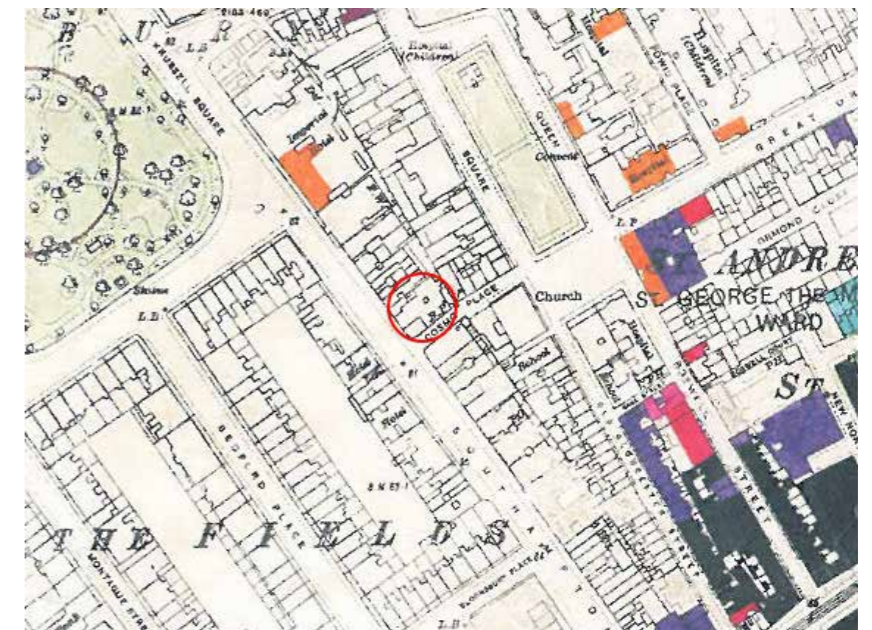


Figure 3.8: 1939-45 Bomb Damage Map.



Figure 3.9: 1951 OS map ©100035207.



Figure 3.10: 1965 OS map ©100035207.



Southampton Row experiencing the same or having been redeveloped already by this point that the Site was being prepared for further redevelopment. This would appear to be the case on reading of the 1916 OS Map (4.5), as the Site is occupied by this point a larger corner development. According to the Camden History Society, the Waverley Hotel was built on the Site in 1903 and was part of a temperance hotel empire. It is noted that the hotel was built under Scottish heraldry, with the Arms of Scotland still present above the hotel entrance. A pair of plans from 1926 give a limited snapshot of the building at this point in its history. These show the basement, which appears to have filled the entirety of the Site (stretching beyond the rear building line), and a limited section, which shows that the building's current bulk and massing was essentially the same at this point. Ultimately, the evidence suggests very limited change to the building prior to the 1950s onwards.

The Site did not suffer any bomb damage during WWII, see 1939-45 Bomb Damage Map at 3.8, and the Waverley Hotel remained the sole occupier of the Site throughout the rest of the century. Planning history for the Site indicates that the Site continued as the Waverley Hotel until at least 2008. It was following this, and at least by 2014, that the Mercure Hotel took over these premises, continuing its use as a hotel. From a reading of the building, it would appear that for much of the building's life, it retained its original L-shaped form, facing onto Southampton Row and Cosmo Place. In the late 1970s or early 1980s, the building's rear wing, which stood at three storeys in height at this point was extended vertically using light yellow brickwork, and concrete lintels and parapets. 1984 drainage plans by Iain Pattie Associates (3.11-3.14), who appear to have been the designers of this two-storey extension show that this element was extended up to fourth floor level (with the highest storey being detailed as a quasi-mansard) in 1984. The drainage plans and some applications from this period (8400142 and 8400343) also show the insertion of a new motor room at roof level, and the re-cladding of the lift shaft, which was noted as already being in place at this point.

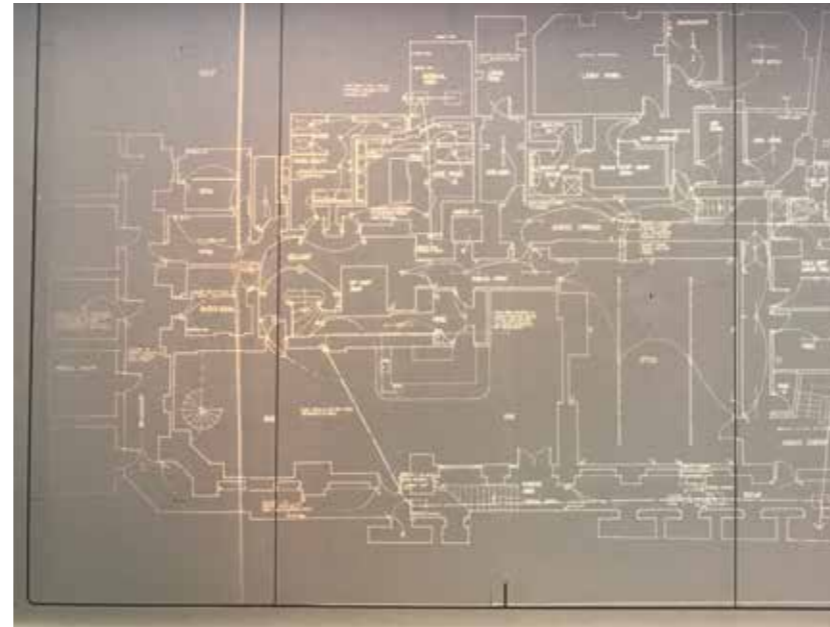


Figure 3.11: Basement level

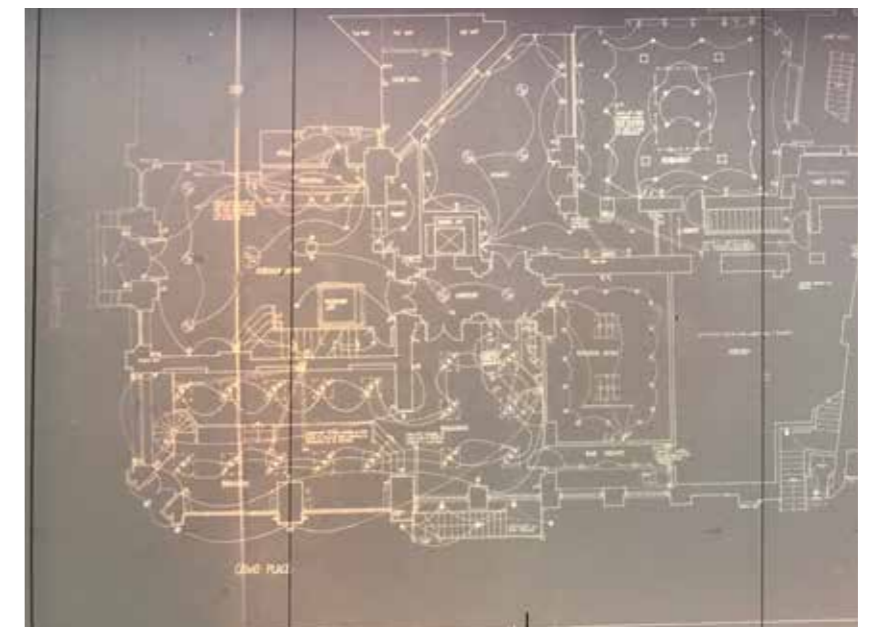


Figure 3.12: Ground-floor level



Figure 3.13: First-floor level



Figure 3.14: Fourth-floor level

Figures 3.11 - 3.14: 1984 drainage plans for the Waverley Hotel, 130-134 Southampton Row by Iain Pattie Associates. Source: Camden Local Studies and Archives.

### 3.3 Planning History

The following table highlights key planning permissions that relate to the Mercure Hotel, particularly those that concern extensions and alterations to the hotel. The Planning History indicates that the Mercure Hotel has been granted planning consent for a 7-storey side extension and 5-storey rear extension (2011/4011/P). In 2014 the hotel was also granted planning consent for a 5-storey rear extension with lightwells (2014/4209/P), confirmed by a Certificate of Lawfulness in 2017 (2016/6783/P).

The most recent planning application (2016/4188/P), refused in 2017, contained three principle elements: an extension at roof level, lit by rooflights to the front, and a long single dormer to the rear; a side extension, facing in part onto Cosmo Place of 8 storeys; and a pair of rear extensions, the first reflecting the previous consent of 2014, and the latter adding additional accommodation to the flat-roofed block t of the rear of the building. During the application process, it was confirmed by Camden officers that there were no concerns over the principle of an additional storey to be added to the hotel; to the introduction of rooflights to the front of the building to light this additional storey; or to the addition of the side extension to Cosmo Place.



Figure 3.15: 1982-87 OS map ©100035207.



Figure 3.16: 1991-95 OS map ©100035207.

Decision Issued Date	Reference	Decision	Summary of Proposal
02-02-2017	2016/6783/P	Application Permitted	Certificate of Lawfulness: Development works have commenced on site in relation to planning permission ref: 2014/4209/P (Erection of five storey rear extensions within lightwell and relocation of 46 x existing air conditioning units to the rear elevation of the proposed extension to hotel) works include: the installation of steel supporting beams to provide a supporting structure for the extension to the hotel (Certificate of Existing Lawful Development).
27-03-2014	2014/0673/P	Application Permitted	Erection of an infill enclosure over existing lightwell, with installation of 7 rooflights at ground floor level.
04-11-2014	2014/4209/P	Application Permitted	Erection of five storey rear extensions within lightwell and relocation of 46 x existing air conditioning units to the rear elevation of the proposed extension to hotel (Class C1).
22-11-2011	2011/4011/P	Application Permitted	Erection of a 7 storey side extension and 5 storey rear extension to provide enclosed fire escape stair and additional sitting rooms to guestrooms of existing hotel (Class C1).
28-06-2010	2010/2328/P	Application Permitted	Installation of openable shopfronts on Great Windmill Street and Coventry Street.
05-03-2010	2009/5705/P	Application Permitted	Erection of two glass and stainless steel canopies over main and brasserie entrances and erection of stainless steel handrails and glass balustrade to existing steps at main entrance to hotel (Class C1).



## **4. Site Assessment & Identification of Assets**

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## 4.1 Site Description

The Site is located to the southern part of the London Borough of Camden (LBC) and within the area known as Bloomsbury. The Site is occupied by one building, the Mercure Hotel, and faces onto Southampton Row which it is bounded by to the west. It is a corner Site and is bounded to the south by Cosmos Place. Abutting the Site to the north is Russell Mansions and to the east, The Swan public house, 1 Cosmos Place.

The building located on the Site is not a statutorily nor locally listed building, but it is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The conservation area is sub divided into areas of character consistency, the Site is located within the character Sub Area 11: Queen Square/Red Lion Square and is identified as a positive contributor. The building overall is therefore considered to make a positive contribution to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 4.2 Surrounding Designated Heritage Assets

### Listed Buildings

Within the borough of Camden there are a large number of buildings which are statutorily listed, over 5,600. The building located on the Site is not statutorily listed nor are either neighbouring buildings, but there are a small number of designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site and are discussed in the following section. To the east of the Site are 9 Cosmos Place, Grade-II (13m), and St George the Martyr, Grade-II\* (23m); and to the east of the Site are 1 Queen Square, Grade-II (31m); and 2 Queen Square, Grade-II (32m). Other surrounding listed buildings are either too far from the Site or are not intervisible with the Site for the proposal to have any impact on their setting or significance. For the full listed building descriptions for the following designated heritage assets, see appendix 2.



Figure 4.1: 9 Cosmo Place.

### 9 Cosmo Place

To the east of the Site is 9 Cosmo Place, a Grade-II listed building. It was built as part of a residential terrace in the 18th century, the shop locating here later. It is three storeys with attic and cellar and the upper floors were refronted in Neo-Georgian style in the 20th century. It is constructed of multi-colour stock brick with red brick dressings and slated mansard roof. The wooden double shopfront is a good example of 19th century shopfront treatment with entablature having inswept frieze and patterned iron grille to cellar light beneath.

The setting of 9 Cosmo Place consists mainly of its siting, in the middle of a terrace which forms a historic grouping along the north of Cosmo Place. It is experienced within the more intimate scale of Cosmo Place. When approaching from the east, the Site is read within the backdrop of the building, rising in height and leading onto the wider route of Southampton Road. This backdrop of larger developments along Southampton Row, which the Site forms part of, contributes to the urban character setting of this designated heritage asset and thereby to the significance it holds.



Figure 4.2: Church of St George the Martyr.

### Church of St George the Martyr

Further east of the Site and facing onto Queen Square is the Grade-II\* listed Church of St George the Martyr. The Church was built c1706 by Arthur Tooley and was repaired later in the late-18th century by SS Teulon and restored in 1952 and 1989. The building is predominantly stucco with a rusticated lower portion. It is a single storey and rectangular plan with chancel to the south, added by Teulon who also almost entirely altered the exterior. The Queen Square façade has a central pedimented bay with 3 buttresses, the central buttress forming a column between two architraved and a Gothic porch to the right. Buttresses are surmounted by statues of praying angels and beneath the windows 4 roundels contain carved reliefs of symbols of the 4 Evangelists. The Cosmo Place return is pedimented with a central round-arched entrance and 4 windows.

The setting of the Church of George the Martyr is primarily read from Queen Square. Although the church returns onto Cosmo Place, the grand building is taken in in its entirety on a wider view, accommodated by the space afforded by the urban park it fronts, and best seen from the corner of Cosmo Place and Queen Square. The building forms part of the long block to the south of the Site, its steeple visible in parts and the larger buildings of Southampton Row glimpsing in parts, the Site forming part of this setting when approaching west on Cosmo Place.



Figure 4.3: 1 & 2 Queen Square.

### 1 Queen Square

To the east of the Site and facing onto Queen Square is the Grade-II Queen's Larder Public House at 1 Queen Square. It is the southern end of terraced house and today operates as a public house. Originally built in the early-18th century, it was altered in the early-19th century. Constructed of multi-coloured stock brick, it is a four-storey terraced building plus basement. The façade spans three windows with a four-window return, two which are blind, onto Cosmo Place. The doorcase is wooden architraved with shaped brackets carrying entablature with pulvinated frieze. The windows have gauged, reddened brick flat arches to recessed sashes. The return elevation with later 19th century ground floor public house frontage onto Cosmo Place is framed with pilasters carrying an entablature with dentil cornicing flanked by consoles.

The setting of 1 Queen Square is primarily experienced on approaching from Queen Square and along the eastern end of Cosmo Place. The

building survives, along with its neighbour abutting to the north, as part of the once complete historical terrace along the western side of Queen Square, now varied in its styles of architecture and heights, and to the south of the building and Cosmo Place is the Church of George the Martyr. Along Cosmo Place, the building is read as part of a more complete historical group of buildings, the Site visible within its background, at the other end of Cosmo Place and indicating the larger developments found along the more major route of Southampton Row.

### 2 Queen Square

Neighbouring 1 Queen Square to the north is the Grade-II listed 2 Queen Square. It is a terraced house of circa early 19th century and restored around 1971. The ground floor is done in painted brick with stucco and a plain 1st floor with a sill band and continuous balcony. It is a 4-storey building with attic and basement. The slate mansard roof with dormers is a 20th century addition. The façade spans 2 windows and the doorway is round-arched with radial fanlight and panelled door. The windows have gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes. Included within this listing are the attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

Similar to 1 Queen Square, the setting of 2 Queen Square is most apparent from Queen Square, forming part of the now varied terrace to the western side, framed by a remaining part of the historical terrace to the south and the modern and taller 3-5 Queen Square to the north. Within the background of the building are the larger buildings along Southampton Road, one being the Site, but only discernible in conjunction with 2 Queen Square from a wider view east of Queen Square, rather than in close views.

### Bloomsbury Conservation Area

The statutory definition of a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was first designated in 1968, with the main focus for protection on older developments rather than the larger, more recent developments. The Conservation Area has been extended at numerous points, mostly reflecting a growing appreciation for Victorian and Edwardian architecture. It is a large Conservation Area, covering approximately 160 hectares, and clearly covers a very significant area of historic townscape.

Today the Conservation Area extends from Lincoln’s Inn Fields and High Holborn to Euston Road and from Tottenham Court Road to King’s Cross Road. The development of the Bloomsbury area began in Stuart times, from around the mid-17th century and represents the early expansion of London northwards. Development of the area continued through the Georgian, Regency, Victorian and Edwardian periods, starting as mainly speculative housing developments and progressing to more educational institution and hospital developments as the trend of suburban living resulted in people moving further out of London.

The formally planned street network and contrasting landscaped squares are of particular note across the Bloomsbury area. The grid pattern of streets is mostly aligned running north-west to south-east and south-west to north-east. There is a hierarchy of street scales across the area, the wider arterial routes define the street grid, crossing the conservation area, with intersecting narrower secondary streets, rear mews and narrow connecting lanes. This street grid is enclosed predominantly by three and 4-storey developments, interspersed by formal squares and in general, larger scale buildings tend to address the broader and busier streets.

Housing blocks started to be developed in the area from the late-19th century as part of the housing trends of the time, tenement blocks for the less well-off and mansion blocks for the wealthier classes. These tend to be multi storey buildings, mostly of 4-8 storeys with public housing

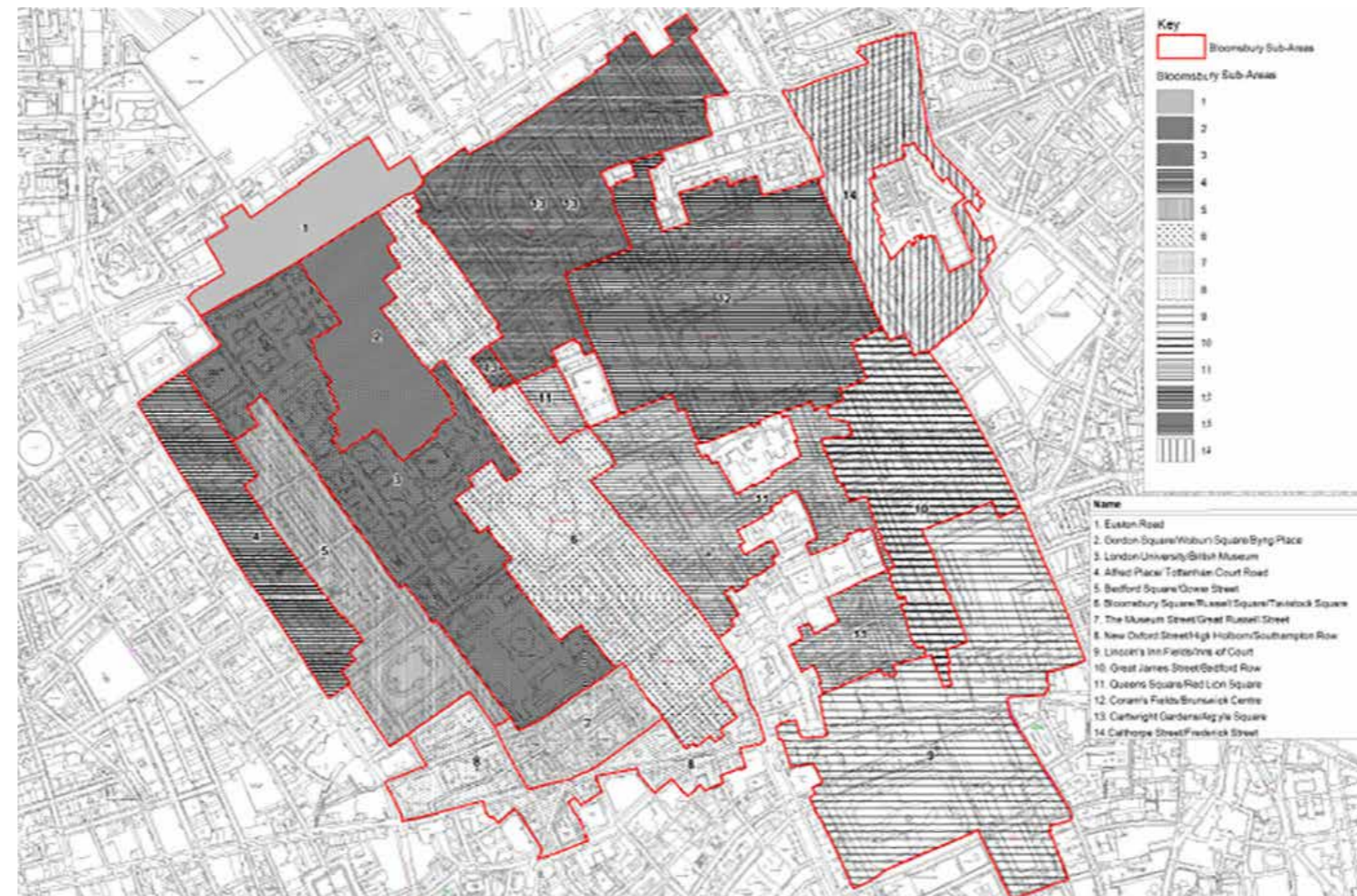


Figure 4.4: Bloomsbury Conservation Area map, showing the sub areas. The Site is located within Sub Area 11: Queen Square/Red Lion Square.

concentrated to the north of the conservation area and private blocks have tended to be smaller infill developments which are found throughout the area.

Brick is the most prevalent building material throughout the conservation area with stone used as cladding or decoration, but also widely used in the construction of churches, the British Museum and major institutional buildings. Developments of the late-19th and early 20th centuries are characterised as being more eclectic and more intricately detailed, using

ornamentation such as Gothic, Italianate, neo-Tudor, Baroque and Arts and Crafts. More recent developments, including examples of post-war modernist architecture, often associated with the universities, and new 21st century architecture, make use of concrete, glass and steel in their architectural approach, introducing a simplified, lighter character, which contrasts with the predominantly Georgian and Victorian character.



The Bloomsbury Conservation Area is vast and has developed over time at different times and under specific conditions which has resulted in many smaller pockets of more localised character, leading to a sub-division of character areas, 14 sub areas in total. The assessment of the character and appearance of the area is based on the present-day situation, consequently the interest in the area may derive from the combined effect of the historical fabric and street pattern and the subsequent developments that replaced original development. The Site is located within Sub Area 11: Queen Square/Red Lion Square and is identified as a Positive Contributor to the special architectural and historical character and appearance of the conservation area.

Sub Area 11: Queen Square/Red Lion Square is separated by large scale 20th-century developments along Theobald's Road, which are not included within the conservation area. Both areas are focused around the formal squares, Queen Square to the north and Red Lion Square to the south, which connects with the wider street grid layout and are characterised as such. Both of these secondary thoroughfares are characterised by a mix of commercial and residential uses, dating back to speculative developments of the late-17th and early-18th centuries. The formally planned and landscaped squares are encompassed by a variety of building types and scales, many of the earlier townhouses being redeveloped in the 19th and 20th centuries. The character of the built form and streetscape of the areas is mainly influenced by the building uses.

The Site is located within the Queen Square section of Sub Area 11. Southampton Row is noted as a busy arterial route which contrasts with the character of the rest of the sub area. The townscape is described as being of coarser urban grain, essentially commercial in nature and buildings being mostly of late-19th century and 20th century buildings. Whereas the unifying elements of the sub area are described as being the diverse architectural range, in particular the historic terraces of townhouses facing onto the formal squares which create greater architectural variety than their more modern neighbours. Southampton Row is noted as being an important commercial street in the Bloomsbury area and known for

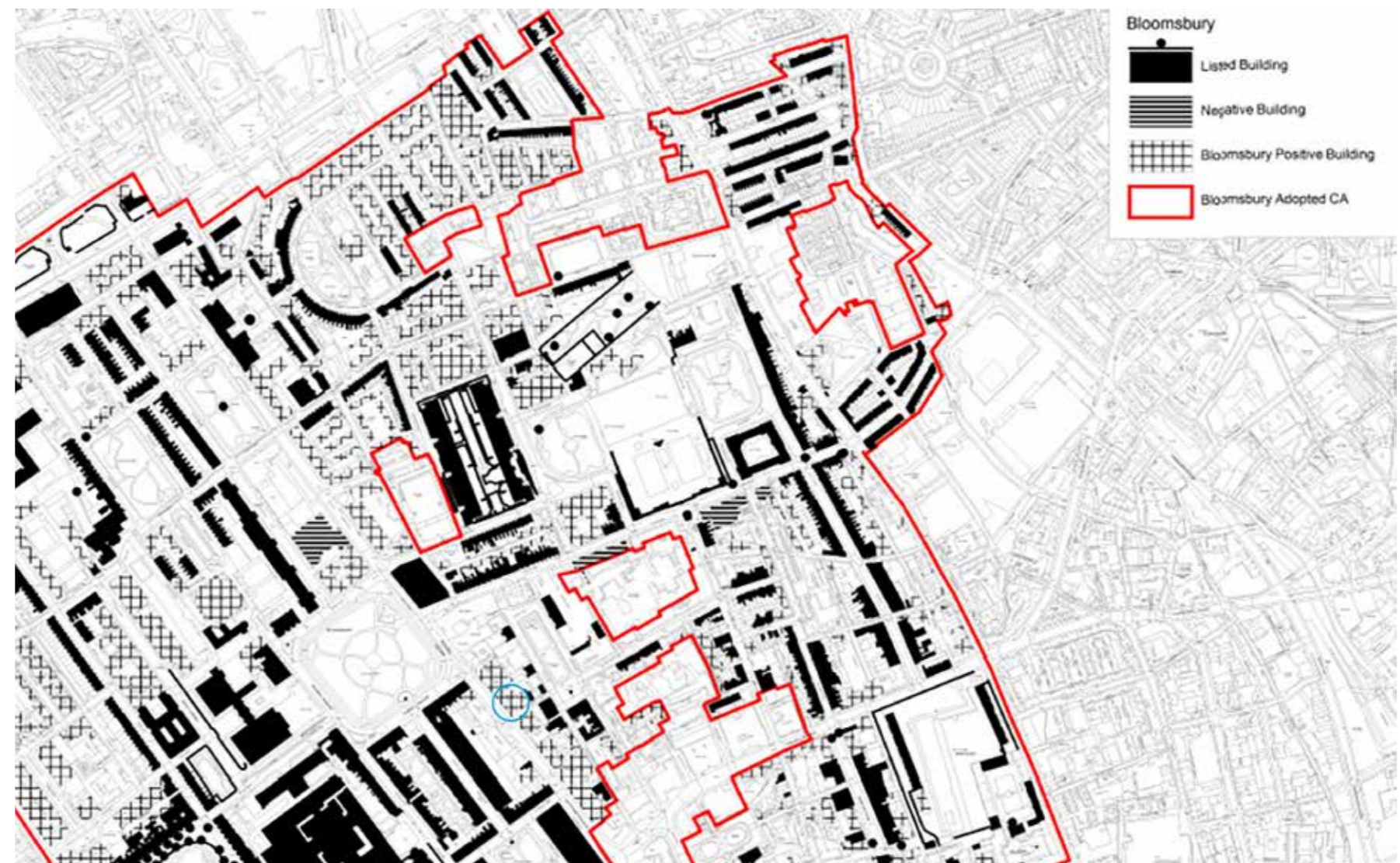


Figure 4.5: Bloomsbury Conservation Area map, showing listed buildings, negative buildings and Bloomsbury positive buildings. The Site is circled in blue.

its hotel buildings, an important function of the area. The predominant height along the eastern half of the street is 7- storeys, but there are some variations in height. Buildings lining the east of the street are mainly a mixture of Victorian, Edwardian and 20th-century developments, the site building being early-Edwardian.

The positive contribution of the Site to the Conservation Area is clearly predominantly restricted to its front and side facades. The former Waverley Hotel's decorative façade is limited largely to Southampton Row, with a slight return to Cosmo Place. The remainder of the façade to Cosmo Place, which being significantly simpler than the decorative Southampton Row façade, is contemporary with the original construction; typically for

this period, it shows an efficient and economic approach to design, with simplified detailing utilised wherever possible. The rear of the building is, in essence, a further step down in terms of detailing from the simplified Cosmo Place façade, with cheap stock bricks, and entirely utilitarian detailing utilised. In addition, this rear elevation, as shown earlier, has been significantly altered, largely through the addition of the 1980s vertical extension to the rear wing. More broadly, it is quite clear that in the context of the large, high quality Bloomsbury Conservation Area, this rear space, formed by the rear of the hotel, Russell Mansions, and other buildings is of a very poor quality. It is of relevance that paragraph 138 of the NPPF identifies that 'not all elements of a... Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance'. In light of the very significant streetscape and architectural detail found throughout the Conservation Area, it is our view that this area can be identified as not making a contribution towards significance, or being a detracting feature, including a large quantity of utilitarian architecture, pipework, and back of house uses.

## **5. Assessment of Significance**

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## 5.1 Assessment Methodology

The assessment methodology used here for assessing the significance of the identified heritage asset and its settings, and the non-designated heritage asset is the framework set out in Historic England's best-practice guidance document Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance (2008). Broadly, this proposes the use of four key heritage values – evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal – in assessing what makes a place and its wider context special.

The four values are defined summarily as follows:

**Evidential value** derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

**Historical value** derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative.

**Aesthetic value** derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

**Communal value** derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects.

As a guide in quantifying the hierarchy of significance value held by designated heritage assets of varying status, Icen Heritage 'measure' the level of significance in accordance with the hierarchy set out within the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB; HA208/07, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2, Table 6.1), jointly published by the Highways Agency, Transport Scotland, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland.

## 5.2 The Site

The building located on the Site is not statutorily listed and therefore, has not been recognised to hold architectural or historical significance of national importance. In addition to this, the building has not been added to the LBC Local List, which was last updated in 2015, and is therefore, not considered of local importance. This reflects the low heritage significance held by the building, being notably altered and later fabric holding negligible heritage value. The building is, however, located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is identified as a Positive Contributor, therefore contributing to the significance of the designated heritage asset. In the following we will assess the significance of the building in accordance with the assessment methodology provided at the beginning of this section. As identified above, however, this positive contribution needs to be understood in context; it is not the case that all elements of the building make a consistent or equal contribution towards character and appearance, and in our view, there are elements which, viewed individually, can be considered to detract from character and appearance.

The Mercure Hotel was built in 1903 and was first called the Waverley Hotel, see 1916 map. It would appear from the 1896 map that the Site was cleared of the existing buildings, most likely preparing the Site for the intended larger development of the hotel, corresponding with arterial route redevelopment of the time for larger scale buildings and many of which were for hotel use in this area. The building has been constructed with a grand façade facing onto Southampton Row, the original main points of entry to the hotel and a far less detailed flank elevation along Cosmo Place, an economical approach in building a more substantial building at this location. This frugal approach to construction of the building would make evident the comparatively low status of the building in terms of the hierarchy of London's Edwardian hotels, and leads in part to our conclusion that the building possesses low heritage significance.

There have been many updates made to the hotel in order to provide adequate hotel accommodation over its lifetime, which has altered the historical fabric of the building. For instance, in 1965 planning permission

was granted for a new entrance canopy to the hotel, retail use at basement and ground floor of 130 Southampton Row and internal alterations to the hotel, including installation of a new lift. The ground floor of the building was further altered later in the 20th century, as seen in the 1984 drainage plans, with both units either side of the original entrance to the hotel being separated from the main hotel, leased individually for food and beverage use and the corner entrance to the hotel closed off. These modifications have altered the fabric of the building, in particular the ground floor, and depleted the reading of the building in terms of its historic sole use as a hotel, therefore, now holding limited evidential and communal value. The additions are of little contribution to the building in terms of architecture and aesthetics, further contributing to the low heritage value held by the building. Most significantly, it is our view that the addition of a rear lift shaft (and its re-cladding in the 1980s), alongside the creation of additional storeys to the building's rear wing, have detracted from the building's significance and wider contribution in Conservation Area terms. This is due to the poor quality of the materiality and detailing used, principally; these elements are well concealed from the street, and do not impact materially on appreciations of the building's principal facades, but do create a poor quality appearance to the rear, in the less significant backland space.

### 5.3 Bloomsbury Conservation Area

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area is of high significance, which is reflected in its national designation. The significance of the conservation area is found in the juxtaposition of the historic streetscape, fine grain late-18th century/early-19th century developments and the large-scale developments of the 20th century and later. The building located on the Site addresses Southampton Row and relates with the character of large scale buildings, predominantly hotel use, contributing to the character and appearance along this main arterial route. The building makes less of a contribution along Cosmo Place, the muted elevation and visibility of building services making apparent the less considered architectural approach and regard for this pedestrian way. The building is a positive contributor to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, but this positive contribution is limited to the character and appearance of Southampton Row, and to a reduced extent, Cosmo Place. As per paragraph 138 of the NPPF: 'not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance.' As outlined above, we believe a positive contribution is made by the Site along Southampton Road and to a certain extent along Cosmo Place, but certainly the rear of the Site does not contribute to the significance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and indeed, when viewed in isolation its poor condition can be considered to detract from character and appearance.

### 5.4 Designated Heritage Assets

#### 9 Cosmo Place

9 Cosmo Place is of high significance, which is reflected in its national designation as a Grade-II listed building. The significance of the designated heritage asset is derived largely from the building's well preserved historical fabric and aesthetically pleasing shopfront.

#### Church of George the Martyr

Church of George the Martyr is of high significance, which is reflected in its national designation as a Grade-II\* listed building. The significance of this designated heritage asset is found in the building's age, fabric and aesthetic qualities, as an early eighteenth century church building with later 18th century alterations, its historical relationship to the square, as one of the early examples of Palladian square arrangement brought to the area by Inigo Jones.

#### 1 Queen Square

1 Queen Square is of medium significance, which is reflected in its national designation as a Grade-II listed building. The significance of this heritage asset is found largely in the fine and well preserved historical fabric, and the building's historic function as a public house from the late 19th century.

#### 2 Queen Square

2 Queen Square is of medium significance which is reflected in its national designation as a Grade-II listed building. The significance of this heritage asset is found in its fine architectural detail and well-preserved surviving historical fabric.



## **6. Assessment of Impact**

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## 6.1 The Proposal

The proposed development for the Site is to: retain the existing building and expand at existing roof level to convert the current 8th floor; add a 2 storey rear extension (5th to 6th floor levels); and a 7- storey extension to the eastern side (1st to 7th floor levels) with two attic level dormer windows. The proposed development will provide a better organised internal layout, provide 18 additional hotel bedrooms, with internalised circulation and an enclosed fire escape stairwell.

Following pre-application discussions with LBC, namely the pre-application meeting held on 11.12.17, the proposed design has gone under revision, resulting in the reduced massing of the initially proposed rear extension. Owing to this, the impact of the proposed development on the identified heritage assets and existing townscape has been reduced.

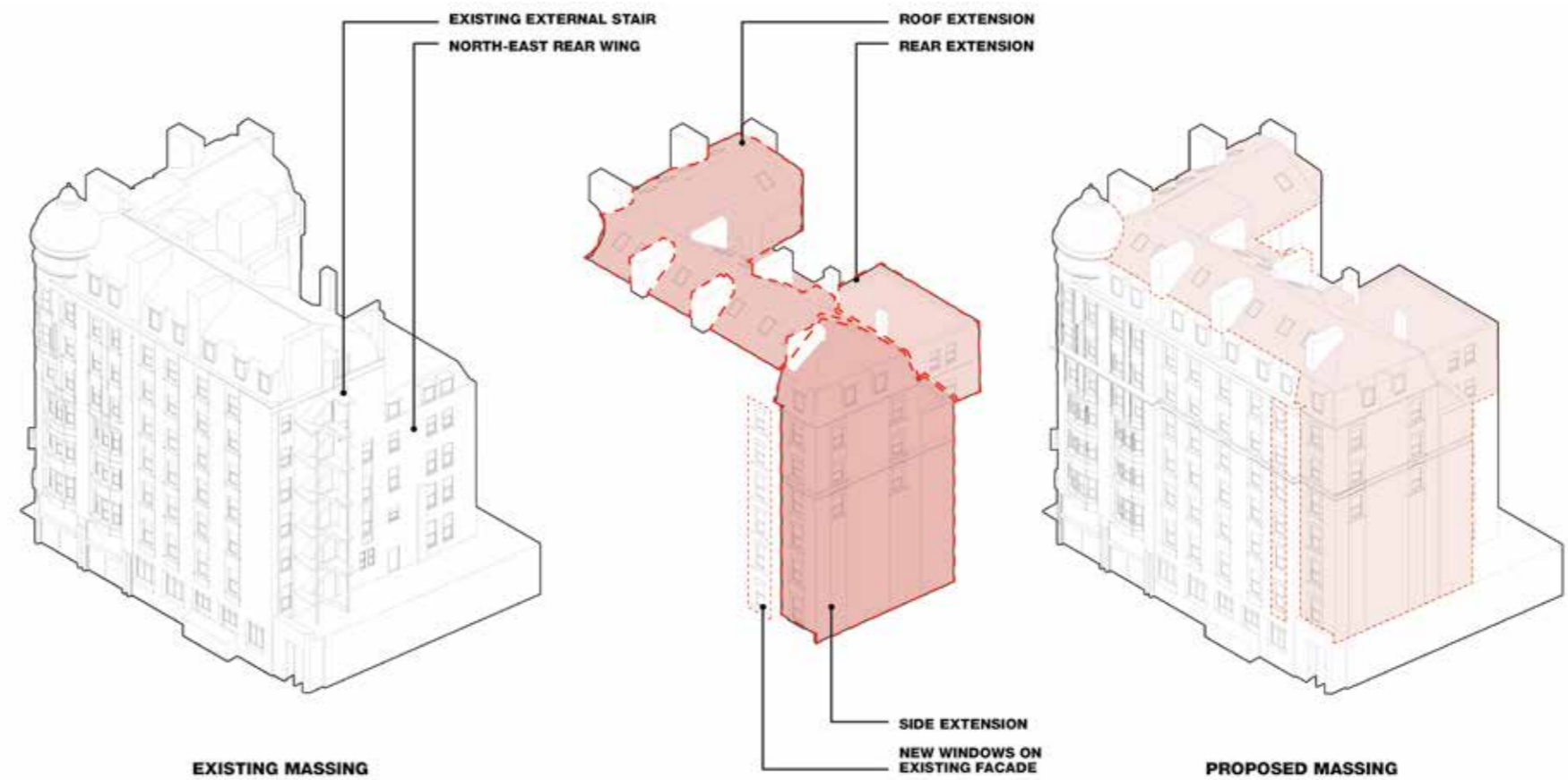


Figure 6.1: Massing study produced by Dexter Moren Associates demonstrating the areas of proposed additional massing through extension of the existing hotel property.



## 6.2 Assessment of Impact

### Methodology

The impact assessment uses as its basis the assessment methodology set out in paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and is applied in line with the interpretation established by current conservation guidance as set out in Section 2.0 of this report.

### Assessment

There are no designated heritage assets located on the Site. The closest designated heritage assets are: 9 Cosmo Place (Grade-II), approximately 15m; St George the Martyr Church (Grade-II\*), approximately 27m; 1 Queen Square (Grade-II), approximately 31m; and 2 Queen Square (Grade-II), approximately 32m. There are other surrounding designated heritage assets surrounding the Site but are not seen in conjunction with the Site, therefore these are not assessed in the following section. The Site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is identified as a positive contributor. The contribution made by the building to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be assessed in the following section.

The proposed development would take place at less prominent areas of the building, namely to the rear, partly along the secondary elevation of the building along Cosmo Place and at roof level. The side extension for 7 storeys from 1st floor level along Cosmo Place, enclosed fire escape staircase and 2-storey rear extension reflects, to a certain extent and particularly in its fenestrated form, a previous consent, see planning application 2011/4011/P. The design given approval in the previous consent was in keeping with the existing architecture of the building and was not deemed to have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The current proposed development proposes a similar approach in design, as well as the additional roof conversion and 2-storey rear extension. The proposed design is considered not just sympathetic to the existing building on the

Site and to the surrounding context but actively improves the surrounding character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area by concealing detracting features and offering completion to the building's current unfinished appearance.

The proposed side extension of 7 storeys is considered to be an improvement to the existing elevation along Cosmo Place, infilling what is currently a void in the streetscape, and is not considered to be an important gap by LB Camden; this extension would also conceal the unsightly clutter of the external fire escape stairwell and associated air conditioning units, which currently detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The side extension will seamlessly extend from the existing design of the existing building, mimicking the stepped elevation and continuing the parapet line along Cosmo Place to indicate discreetly this new addition while enhancing the existing building design. The mansard roof and proposed roof conversion will also be continued along here, completed by a hipped gable end, with dormers, providing a more holistic and definitive roof design. Overall these improvements and completeness in streetscape are considered to enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The proposed rear extensions would remain secondary to the host building and would not be visible above the silhouette of the building, or in street views from Cosmo Place or Queen Square. This approach is not at odds with the form of the Site, having historically been extended to the rear. Precedent for this proposed massing is found at the neighbouring, and of similar context, developments to the north, such as: Russell Mansions; Premier House; and St Giles College. All of which have been extended to the rear and step down just below the host building, gaining additional floor space internally while minimising the impact on the surrounding area.

None of the proposed rear extensions will be taller than the existing building and will therefore, for the most part, not be visible within the surrounding streetscape. The proposed rear extension will now not visible

from Queen Square when moving south to north along the square and looking towards the Site, due to the revised massing and reduction of one floor of the previously discussed rear extension. Views from Queen Square will be improved by the proposed side extension, where the new fenestration, continuation of string course and vertical bicoloured materials, to fully complete the building, so the impact would be one of enhancement through the completeness of form introduced by the side extension. This is a sympathetic approach to the existing design of the building while improving the accommodation standards of the hotel to secure its future optimal viable use.

The existing mansard roof, a feature found atop of many buildings along Southampton Row, is of low visibility along both Southampton Row and Cosmo Place, being only partially visible in very long views along both of these access routes. The double mansard is in keeping with local context, next to and also a corner site onto Southampton Row and Cosmo Place, the Grand Hotel at 126-128 Southampton Row, which has a double dormer mansard roof. The proposed design will be lower in scale by using rooflights flush with the roofline at the roof extension level. This is a thoughtful approach to the roof design and will remain a discreet contextual addition within the townscape and is judged to not cause harm to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area.

Given the tight nature of the rear of the building, and the form of its existing relationship with Russell Mansions where the proximity of the buildings is an existing condition, it is highly unlikely that there would be any views from ground level up towards the proposed dormer within the private realm area to the rear of the Hotel and its neighbours. The only positions from which this feature would be appreciable in any way would be the rear windows of nearby properties, and even then in a glimpsed form. It is not our view that this would detract materially from the contribution of the Mercure Hotel to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, given its existing unorganised and detracting rear form.

It is noted in Camden's CPG1 (Camden Planning Guidance 1: Design) states that 'full-length dormers, on both the front and rear of the property, will be discouraged to minimise the prominence of these structures.' Clearly, this specific piece of guidance is not restrictive, and is clearly focused on the aim of 'minimising prominence' rather than on identifying this form as, in principle, unacceptable. In this case, 'prominence' is indeed avoided, through ensuring that the long dormer is restricted to the rear of the building, in a location where they will not be almost entirely concealed. Furthermore, while this feature might not normally be acceptable, its functional value, and its ability to deliver much-needed hotel space, whilst avoiding harm to heritage assets, is clear. Allowing the creation of rear corridors to provide access to rooms, while the rooms themselves are discretely rooflit to the front, this approach is, in our view, clearly acceptable in this case.

In order to demonstrate most robustly the impact of the proposed development on the existing building and surrounding area, 4 viewpoints have been selected which best illustrate this and based on the response received from LBC on the previous application, and are assessed at Section 7.0 of this report.

### 9 Cosmo Place

9 Cosmo Place was built as part of a residential terrace along Cosmo Place in the 18th century, some of which survives today. This terrace influences the small scale feel of Cosmo Place and transitions from the large scale development of Southampton Row to the more intimate scale of Queen Square. The Site is two buildings east of 9 Cosmo Place and does not directly affect the significance of the designated heritage asset. The proposed development would be partially visible within the setting of 9 Cosmo Place when looking east along Cosmo Place. The proposed development would form part of the backdrop to 9 Cosmo Place, integrating with the existing large-scale building backdrop which exists, without causing any fundamental change in how this relationship is experienced. We therefore do not consider the proposed development to cause harm to the setting of the Grade-II listed building at 9 Cosmo Place.

### St George the Martyr Church

St George the Martyr Church was built in the early-18th century and has been added to since this time. It faces onto Queen Square, being part of the Palladian square arrangement. The Grade-II\* listed church is located east of the Site but not neighbouring, the significance of the former experiencing no direct impact by the proposed development. The Site is partially visible within the setting of the church when viewed at some points from Queen Square. The proposed development would be in keeping with the current backdrop to St George the Martyr Church and is considered to no cause harm to the setting of the designated heritage asset.

### 1 & 2 Queen Square

1 & 2 Queen Square are listed separately, both are listed Grade-II, but are considered as a group as part of this impact assessment. Both buildings were built as part of the 18th century development of Queen Square, albeit not at the same time. These buildings are located to the east of the Site and would not be directly affected by the proposed development, therefore having no direct impact on the significance of these buildings. However, the proposed development would be visible within the setting of both designated heritage assets, but limited to when viewed from limited views east of Queen Square. As discussed, the Site currently forms part of the setting of these buildings and as the proposed development will replicate the existing architecture and will be read as part of the existing building which already backdrops within the setting of both buildings. It is the opinion of Icen Heritage that this additional massing of the side extension will not cause harm to the contribution made by the setting to the significance of either designated heritage assets, but will in fact result in an enhancement through the improvement of the character and appearance of the existing building.

### Bloomsbury Conservation Area

The Site is identified as a positive contributor to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This contribution is mainly found along Southampton Row, which the building faces onto. The Site makes a limited contribution along Cosmo Place, providing frontage, but inactive, along the streetscape but of a more diminutive design and the exposed external services result in detracting from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed side extension along Cosmo Place and the overall roof extension would be the most visible of the proposed works, albeit discreet in their approach and only partially visible within the overall Conservation Area, from Cosmo Place and parts of Queen Square. They are designed in a high quality and sympathetic manner, complimenting the existing fabric of the building and the surrounding environment. In particular, the side extension would provide a significant enhancement to the appearance of the building along Cosmo Place by enclosing the external fire escape stairwell, completing the elevation along here to close the void in townscape and would provide a more holistic overall appearance when viewed along Cosmo Place, resulting in an enhancement to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Partially visible along Southampton Row of the roof conversion would be the proposed roof lights, which would be flush with the mansard roof and slight modification of the roof massing, delivering a more complete mansard roof but going no higher than the existing, that the impact would be minimal. The roof extension would not interfere with the symmetry of the existing building design and will have a low impact on the overall character of the building. The fenestration proposed as part of the roof conversion would not be visible at close views along Southampton Row, but would be partially visible in longer views along here. The average building height along Southampton Row is 7 storeys but this is not consistent, with many buildings being of a higher height, nor is there a pattern to this. The Site would retain its appearance as a 7-storey with mansard along here, the proposed massing having no harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed rear extensions will not be visible from Southampton Row, being of a lower scale than that of the proposed roofline. The proposed side extension would extend slightly to the rear of the Site and together with the rear extension will not be visible from Queen Square or along Cosmo Place. The rear extensions would only be partially visible from properties to the rear of the Site and would only be privately accessible. The design and materials proposed would be in keeping with the surrounding context and supports the overall objective of the proposed scheme, to improve the appearance of the Site here by concealing detracting elements of the current environment while proposing a more complete design solution which would be considered an enhancement to the rear of the property and thereby any visibility of these proposed rear features, however restricted, are considered to be an enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area here.

Ultimately, it is clear that it is along Southampton Row, Cosmo Place and Queen Square that the Site makes a clear and discernible contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset. Here, it makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, but not a consistent one, its quality, appearance and contribution diminishing somewhat along Cosmo Place, with the flank wall stairwell clearly detracting from character and appearance. The rear of the Site does not make a positive contribution to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area and although it may be visible from private properties to the rear of the hotel, it is our view that this area does not, as a whole, make a positive contribution to the architectural quality or historic interest of the designated heritage asset. This area, clearly included in the Conservation Area as part of a consistent 'washing' of the designation, is clearly of a poor quality, dominated by utilitarian architecture, pipework, servicing, and back of house areas. It is not the case that the poor quality of this area justifies further poor quality development, but it is not our view that what is proposed represents a cumulative reduction in the quality of the building. Instead, it is our view that there is an opportunity to improve

the appearance of the building to the rear, to complete the building as a holistic piece of architecture, whilst improving the hotel's room capacity, and avoiding harm to significance.

On consideration of the above, it is the opinion of Icen Projects that the proposed development would generate an enhancement to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. When viewed cumulatively, it is also clear that there would be an enhancement, overall, to the significance of the Site, as a non designated heritage asset.



## **7. Viewpoint Assessment**

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## 7.1 Methodology

The following section assesses four viewpoints, and views 1 and 2 additionally presented in winter settings, selected following a thorough viewpoint study and analysis of the immediate and surrounding area, in order to better demonstrate the likely impact of the proposed development on the existing building, surrounding designated heritage assets and townscape. The selection of these viewpoints has been carefully considered and are based on previous discussions with LBC regarding the development of the Site.

Each view is presented as existing, the baseline condition, and proposed, the proposed future baseline. Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) have been produced by the visualisation specialists, Wadsworth 3D, with each view professionally photographed from a considered eye level of 1.6m and surveyed for full accuracy to illustrate the proposed development. The Methodology Statement for the production of these visuals can be found at Appendix IV of the Design & Access Statement.

The revised design has been updated in these AVRs by Dexter Moren Associates, but are still based on the same verified information produced by Wadsworth 3D.

The viewpoints assessed are as follows:

View 1 - West of the Water Pump on Queen Square (summer/winter)

View 2 - Further West of Queen Square (summer/winter)

View 3 - Corner of Cosmo Place

View 4 - East of Queen Square

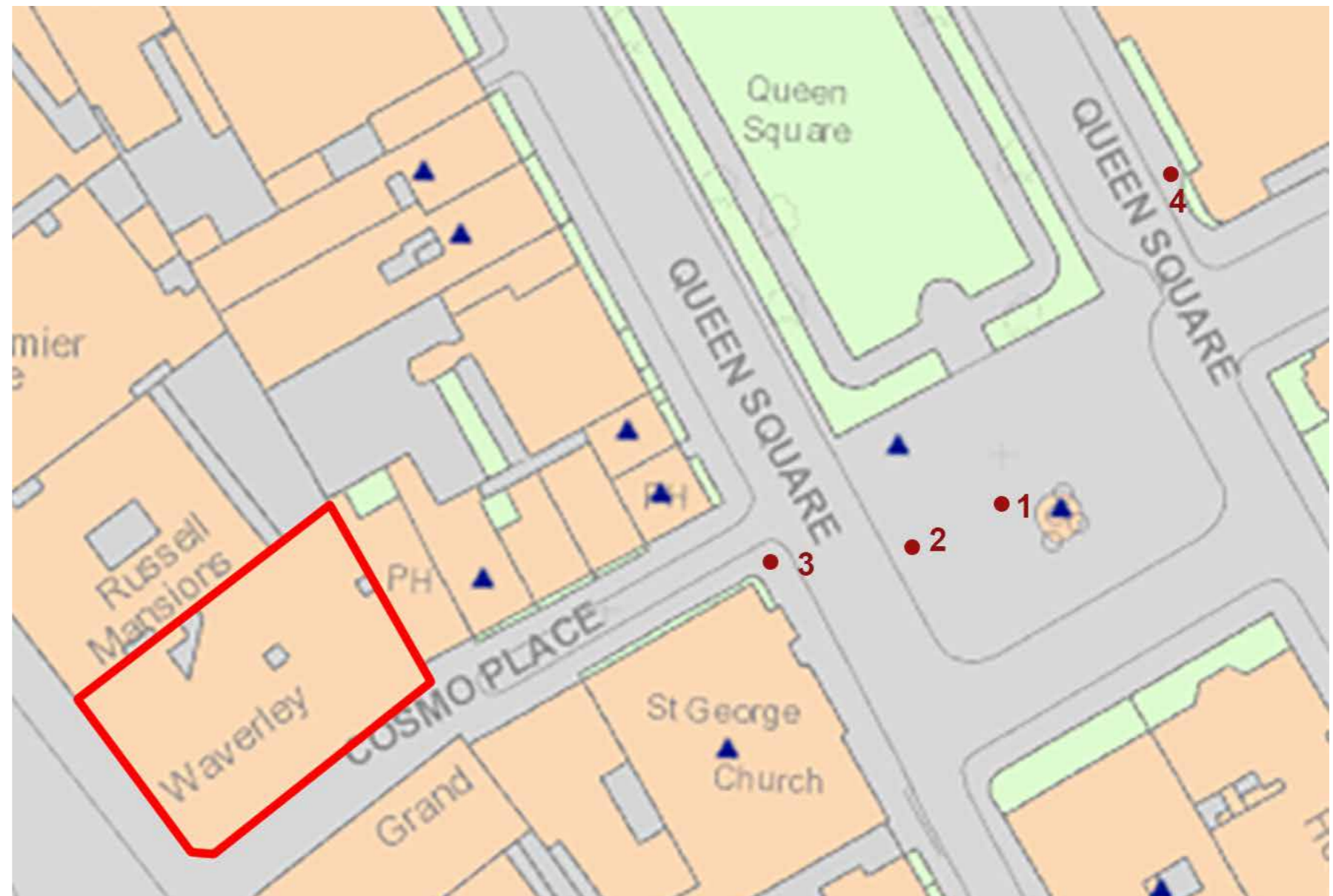


Figure 7.1: Map of the Site (outlined in red) and viewpoints 1-4. . Listed buildings marked with Blue triangle.

VIEW 1 (SUMMER) : WEST OF THE WATER FOUNTAIN ON QUEEN SQUARE, LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**Existing**

Approaching the Site from the east and to the south of Queen Square, the Mercure Hotel starts to come into view to the end of Cosmo Place. Framed here by the Grade-II\* listed St George the Martyr Church, to the left, and the Cosmo Place terrace, to the right, which directs the view towards the Site at the end of this narrow and pedestrianised route. From here the viewer experiences the more simplified elevation of Cosmo Place from quite an acute perspective, seeing mainly the first 4 floors and part of the upper levels at the corner with Southampton Row, just visible is the lower part of the dome of the cupola.

**Proposed**

As the upper levels of the existing building and the area proposed for development is occluded by tree foliage during Spring and Summer months, the area concealed from here has been depicted by a red wireline

in this AVR. The wireline demonstrates that the overall proposed massing will only minimally increase from what already exists on the Site, remaining a contextual urban block along the northern part of Cosmo Place. What is visible here is part of the side extension, floors 1-3, where floors are extended to the east and additional fenestration to the end of the existing elevation.

**Effect**

The overall massing of the proposed development is contextual to that of the existing building, only seeing an incremental increase and retaining the status it enjoys along Southampton Row, being one of the large hotel developments historically located along here. The side extension visible within this view, strengthens the northern edge along Cosmo Place, infilling the existing void in townscape along here and introducing more consistent frontage.





VIEW 1 (WINTER) : WEST OF THE WATER FOUNTAIN ON QUEEN SQUARE, LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE



**Existing**

Approaching the Site from the east and to the south of Queen Square, the Mercure Hotel starts to come into view to the end of Cosmo Place. Framed here by the Grade-II\* listed St George the Martyr Church, to the left, and the Cosmo Place terrace, to the right, which directs the view towards the Site at the end of this narrow and pedestrianised route. From here the viewer experiences the more simplified elevation of Cosmo Place from quite an acute perspective, seeing most of the existing building with some of the upper floors, in particular the east elevation, screened by the branches of the trees, even at a time of lighter foliage during winter months.

**Proposed**

Although some of the upper levels are occluded by the branches of the trees of Queen Square, even during winter months, much of the detail of the proposed side extension is apparent from this approach, in particular the enclosing of the external stairwell and now continuous street frontage.

**Effect**

Any perceived increase in massing is minimal and remains contextual to its surroundings. The eastern extension of the existing building completes the streetscape to the north along Cosmo Place, better organises external utilities which are currently exposed, and makes possible a greater appreciation of the neighbouring Cosmo Place terrace, in particular the Grade-II listed 9 Cosmo Place, through enhancement to its setting. Overall, the side extension completes the form of the existing building and through the use of the architecture of the host building would integrate seamlessly within the current context.



VIEW 2 (SUMMER): FURTHER WEST OF QUEEN SQUARE, LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**Existing**

Moving closer towards the Site from View 1, these viewpoints illustrate the kinetic experience of the Site, approaching from the east along the western side of Queen Square. The majority of the building is visible from here, only a small portion of the upper level and roofscape concealed by tree foliage. What becomes more evident in this view is the prominence of the black cast iron external fire escape stairwell at the eastern elevation of the building, making it more evident that this is the secondary and service parts of the building and contributes little in terms of having a relationship with the Cosmo Place street scene.

**Proposed**

As in View 1, part of the upper level and roofscape of the existing building and proposed development is occluded by existing vegetation from here, the same method of illustration has been employed here, rendered where visible and a red wireline depicts the area occluded. More of the side

extension is apparent from here, extending the Cosmo Place frontage further east and enclosing the fire escape stairwell. There is a minimal increase in massing of the overall building, mainly by the newly introduced hipped gabled completion of the mansard roof.

**Effect**

By designing the newer elements to the building in the same materials and architectural style of that of the existing building, they are subtle in addition and celebrate the hotel building rather than compete with it. It is evident in this view that the concealment of the external fire escape stairwell and building associated utilities is a major improvement to the building, enhancing the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in which it stands. The Site forms part of the setting of the Grade-II listed 9 Cosmo Place and The Queen’s Larder Pubic House in this view, both of which it would introduce a more holistic backdrop to and make a positive contribution to.



VIEW 2 (WINTER) : FURTHER WEST OF QUEEN SQUARE, LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**Existing**

Moving closer towards the Site from View 1, these viewpoints illustrate the kinetic experience of the Site, approaching from the east along the western side of Queen Square, gaining higher visibility along Cosmo Place as the site is approached. Under winter conditions the existing building is fully visible from here, a small portion on the upper level is occluded by tree foliage during summer season. What becomes more evident in this view is the prominence of the black cast iron external fire escape stairwell at the eastern elevation of the building, making it more evident that this is the secondary and service area of the building and contributes little in terms of having a relationship with the Cosmo Place street scene.

**Proposed**

The proposed development can be seen from here during months of less foliage. Evident from here is the side extension, part of the rear extension and eastern extension of the roof. The external fire escape stairwell and

external clutter from utilities added over time is now internalised and the roof completed by a hipped mansard.

**Effect**

This increase in massing is minimal and where it extends to the rear, establishes a stronger connection to the footprint of the overall building, acknowledging the status held by it along Southampton Row, while strengthening streetscape along Cosmo Place. The building is more effectively completed by the proposed development, which celebrates the existing architectural style, and results in an enhancement to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in which it sits, through concealment of visually detracting clutter and better appreciation of other designated heritage assets along here through enhancement to their setting.



VIEW 3: CORNER OF COSMO PLACE



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**Existing**

At this eastern point of Cosmo Place and standing north of St George the Martyr Church, the Site is now in full view. The change in building heights, lower scale of Queen Square transitioning to the higher developments along Southampton Road, is more apparent here and guides the viewer down towards the anticipated more major route. In addition to the clutter of the external fire escape stairwell and less formalised openings, the most eastern chimney stack sits uncomfortably within the existing hipped gable mansard, as does a secondary flue output to the north, collective detracting from the quaint character of Cosmo Place.

**Proposed**

The proposed development will extend the building to the east, introducing a stepped addition in matching materials and architecture to that of the existing, internalising and reorganising the fire escape stairwell and building associated utilities. The mansard roof would also be

extended east, albeit without interference with the existing chimney stacks, remaining a roofscape feature of the building. The fenestration would be more regularised along Cosmo Place with the addition of fenestration to the eastern end of the building and that of the side extension.

**Effect**

Overall the proposed development better completes the building along Cosmo Place, decluttering the detracting elements existing at this part of the building and engaging more positively with the surrounding townscape. The proposed and more complete mansard roof form with dormers, the continuing pattern of fenestration, string course and bicrome materiality combine in a more holistic design solution for this part of the hotel building, acting as more of a complimentary element within the townscape and thereby enhancing the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.



VIEW 4: EAST OF QUEEN SQUARE



EXISTING



PROPOSED

**Existing**

Standing to the east of Queen Square and looking across Queen Square Park and Garden, through this gap in tree planting and towards the Site, just visible above 1 and 2 Queen Square is the most eastern chimney stack, the eastern end of the mansard roof, two secondary flue outputs and part of the chimney stack attached to the rear of the Southampton Row elevation. There is little organisation of the existing building, appearing in the backdrop of these two designated heritage assets here, and is untidy in appearance. The Site is not an element to be appreciated within this view, detracting from the experience of the two Grade-II listed buildings from here and, therefore, detract from the contribution made by the setting to their significance. Furthermore, the Site is considered to be contributing negatively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**Proposed**

The eastern extension to the existing building, at upper level would be visible above 1 and 2 Queen Square where it appears already to the left.

The new and more complete roof form of the Proposed Development would remain a discreet background element to the listed buildings, effectively arranged and in keeping with the existing character within this view and internalise much of the associated utilities which are currently visible externally.

**Effect**

By better defining the envelope of the hotel building, it can be more clearly identified as a separate element within this view, relating better with its backdrop role and thereby making a more positive contribution to the setting of the two designated heritage assets, whereby their significance can be better appreciated. Although there is a marginal increase in massing, the mansard of the north section is raised minimally in order to level the roofscape, it is a more simplified form which replicates the architecture of the existing building, reaffirming the host building's status and providing a form in keeping with the existing roofscape.





## 8. Conclusion

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This report presents a detailed heritage analysis of the Site, which seeks to understand the condition of the existing site, as well as its sensitivities in terms of heritage and contribution to the local character of the area. The purpose of this report is to support the pre-application submission for proposed works to the Site.

Through a detailed understanding of the historic development of the Site and wider area, the relative significance of the Site and surrounding designated heritage assets has been identified, as required by NPPF Paragraph 128.

Of the identified designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site, the proposed development would not result in any harmful impact on their significance or setting. In addition, the proposed development would not result in harm to the architectural quality or historic interest of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and would in fact, result in an overall enhancement to the designated heritage asset. This enhancement should be granted considerable importance and weight in the planning process, as it achieves the statutory duties outlined within Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The impact of the proposed development on the surrounding townscape is minimal, being works to less prominent areas of the building and benefiting from the narrow streetscape along Cosmo Place. The proposals should be viewed on balance as a whole, the improvements made to the character and appearance along Cosmo Place and the overall sympathetic, contextual and high quality design considered enhancements to the overall character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

It is therefore clear that the proposed development meets the requirements of NPPF paragraphs 131 and 137, as well as the statutory duties set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990, and as such the development, in our view, should be viewed positively in design and conservation terms.



## **Appendix I. References**

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### Archives Accessed

Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre

### Websites Accessed

Bedford Estates, <http://www.bedfordstates.com/the-estate/history/>

Britain from Above, <https://britainfromabove.org.uk/>

British Library Georeferencer, <http://www.bl.uk/georeferencer/georeferencingmap.html>

British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol47>

LMA Collage, <https://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>

### Books

Camden History Society, (2016) *The Streets of Bloomsbury*. London.

Cherry, B. & Pevsner, N., (2002) *The Buildings of England London 4: North*. London: Yale University Press.

Girling, Brian, (1999) *Images of England: Holborn, Bloomsbury and Clerkenwell*. England: The History Press Ltd.

Gordon, E. and Deeson, A., (1950) *The Book of Bloomsbury*. Great Britain: C. Tinling & Co.

### Primary Sources Consulted

Ordnance Survey historic map series

## **Appendix II. Designated Heritage Asset Listings**

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**9 Cosmos Place**

List entry Number: 1245252

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

Terraced house with later shop. Early C18, with C20 Neo-Georgian refronting of upper storeys. Multi-colour stock brick with red brick dressings. Slated mansard roof. 3 storeys, attic and cellar. 3 windows. Good early C19 wooden double shopfront with entablature having inswept frieze and projecting egg-and-dart cornice. Slightly projecting shop window with small panes and patterned iron grille to cellar light beneath. Doorway overlights with patterned iron grilles; panelled house door and C20 half glazed shop door. Gauged brick flat arches to flush frame sashes with exposed boxing. Parapet. INTERIOR: not inspected but noted to retain some panelling and cornices; stairs with turned balusters and shaped ends.

Listing NGR: TQ3033681920

**Church of St George the Martyr**

List entry Number: 1245485

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

Grade: II\*

Date first listed: 24-Oct-1951

Church. c1706. Built by Arthur Tooley, repaired late C18. Recast 1867-9 by SS Teulon and restored 1952 and 1989. Stucco with rusticated lower portion. Single storey, rectangular plan with chancel to the south added by Teulon who almost entirely altered the exterior. EXTERIOR: Queen Square facade with Gothic porch to right of pedimented central projecting bay with 3 buttresses, the central buttress forming a column between two architraved, round-headed windows and an architraved oculus above. Buttresses surmounted by statues of praying angels. Beneath the windows 4 roundels containing carved reliefs of the symbols of the 4 Evangelists. To either side of this bay, 3 rounded-arched, traceried windows. Entablature and projecting cornice. Cosmo Place return pedimented with central round-arched entrance and 4 windows. Over west end, small square-plan tower with Gothic canopies (east face shielding a clock), and surmounted by zinc covered spirelet with louvred gablets. INTERIOR: also remodelled, the present column and roof system being inserted by Teulon who took down all the galleries save that to the north which he retained and remodelled. Fittings: the fine original reredos was retained on the east wall when Teulon reordered the church with a new south chancel with full fittings including a reredos with mosaic inlay. Stalls, pulpit, lectern, parclose screen and altar rails also by Teulon; other fittings include font, organ and case. HISTORICAL NOTE: St George the Martyr was built as a chapel of ease for St Andrew's, Holborn, and became a parish church in 1723.

Listing NGR: TQ3036281901

**Queen's Larder Public House, 1 Queen Square**

List entry Number: 1139089

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

CAMDEN QUEEN SQUARE (West side) No.1, Queen's Larder Public House (Formerly Listed as: QUEEN SQUARE Nos.1 AND 2 Queen's Larder Public House (No.1))

GV II Terraced house, now a public house. Early C18, altered early C19. Multi-coloured stock brick. Four storeys storeys and basements. Three windows and four-window return, two blind, to Cosmo Place. Wooden architraved doorcase with shaped brackets carrying entablature with pulvinated frieze. Gauged, reddened brick flat arches to recessed sashes. Return elevation with later C19 ground floor public house frontage with pilasters carrying entablature with dentil cornice flanked by consoles.

INTERIOR: retains C20 matchboarding to frieze height, C19 ribbed ceiling.

Listing NGR: TQ3035581925

**Number 2 and attached railings, 2 Queen Square**

List entry Number: 1139090

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

Date of most recent amendment: 11-Jan-1999

QUEEN SQUARE 798-1/100/1359 (West side) 14/05/74 No.2 and attached railings (Formerly Listed as: QUEEN SQUARE Nos.1 AND 2 Queen's Larder Public House (No.1))

Terraced house. Probably early C19, restored c1971. Painted brick with stucco ground floor and plain 1st floor sill band. C20 slate mansard roof with dormers. 4 storeys, attic and basement. 2 windows. Round-arched doorway with radial fanlight and panelled door. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor with continuous balcony. Parapet. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas.

Listing NGR: TQ3035081932









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