

Maria Fidelis Convent School, North Gower Street Site

Development Proposal



Design and Access Statement

Maria Fidelis Convent School, North Gower Street Site
Design and Access Statement
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Fraser Brown MacKenna Architects for London Borough of Camden and
London & Continental Railways and it's advisors' purposes as part of a
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Scope

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the planning application for the proposal of a new Construction Skills Training Centre development at the Maria Fidelis Convent School North Gower Street, NW1 2LY. Reference should also be made to more detailed supplementary information submitted as part of the application, including the following:

- Planning Statement
- Transport Statement including servicing and delivery plan
- Travel Plan
- Noise, vibration and ventilation Assessment
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) design
- Energy Report
- Sustainability & BREEAM Assessment
- Ecological/habitat Survey
- Landscape - Included within this Design and Access Statement
- Tree Survey
- Application drawings, including landscape plan.

A number of elements of the design, including detailed particulars of the materials, lighting, security and landscaping, will be finalised at the detailed design stage and therefore will be either the subject of planning conditions to be agreed with the London Borough of Camden. Where these details are shown within this Design and Access Statement, they are included for illustrative purposes only.

The Team

The Applicant: London Borough of Camden and LCR

Architect: Fraser Brown MacKenna Architects

Landscape Architect: ME Studio

Planning Consultant: QUOD

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Energy & Services Consultant: Max Fordham

Sustainability Consultant: Max Fordham

Acoustics' Consultant: Spectrum

Biodiversity / Bird Management Consultant: ASW Ecology

Arboricultural Consultant: GHA

Air Quality: Aether

BREEAM: Max Fordham

Pre-demolition: ADW Developments

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1.0

Introduction

Maria Fidelis Convent School

1 Introduction

This document has been created for London Borough of Camden (LBC) and London & Continental Railways (LCR), who have appointed Fraser Brown MacKenna Architects to prepare 'Meanwhile' development proposals for a new Construction Skills Training Centre development at the Maria Fidelis Convent School North Gower Street, in the London Borough of Camden.

This Design & Access Statement forms part of a suite of documents prepared to support a planning application for the redevelopment of the site; which comprises of three main elements:

1. The construction of a new Construction Skills Training Centre (CSC)
2. The refurbishment of the existing Maria Fidelis School into managed Workspace.
3. The provision of Temporary Open Green Space.

This redevelopment will involve the demolition of three existing buildings on the site including a one storey mobile classroom built in the 1950's, a two storey modular expansion block, and a one storey Special Educational Needs building.

Drawings and diagrams are included where relevant, and reference images are provided to show the potential character of the building that is proposed.

The proposals are a result of an extensive pre-application consultation with the Council and respond to the planning officers' feedback. The submitted scheme has been developed to address the concerns raised and provide a viable scheme that can make a positive contribution to the wider area.

2.0

Context

Site Analysis

2 Context

2.1 Site Location

The site is located in the London Borough of Camden and occupies the corner of North Gower Street and Starcross Street. The location is at a prominent vantage point and is visible from many directions.

The entrance to Euston Station is just east of the site, which makes the location very accessible.

The site is 6231m² in area.



2.2 Site History

The site is occupied by a five-storey H plan Edwardian school building, which appears to have been built after 1908 and before 1922 as the 'Exmouth Street School for partially blind children.' The school is on a north south axis, at odds with the streetscape apart from the southern boundary of the nearby St. James gardens, which is now part of the HS2 works.

Other buildings on the site are a 1950's single storey on Starcross street with sunken garden to the front of it. To the rear a 1995 two storey 'portacabin' structure with light dash render. A sports hall adjacent to the pedestrianised North Gower Street is steel framed with London stock infill.

The archive photographs opposite illustrate the original layout of the school and adjacent street to the north, Little George Street, now within the extents of the site. From our research it appears that the original entrance to the school faced north towards St James' Gardens, accessed via Little George Street.



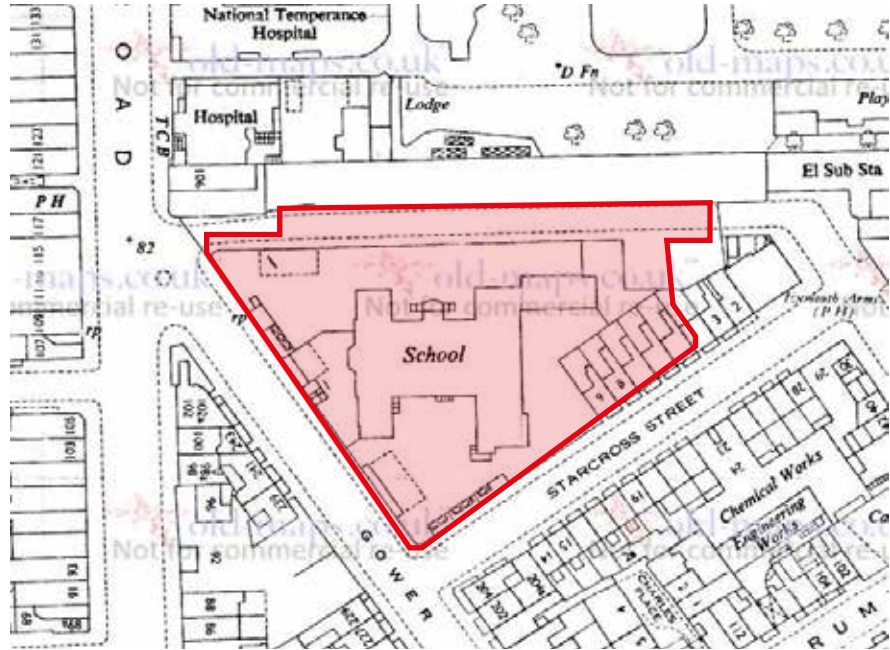
Circa 1873



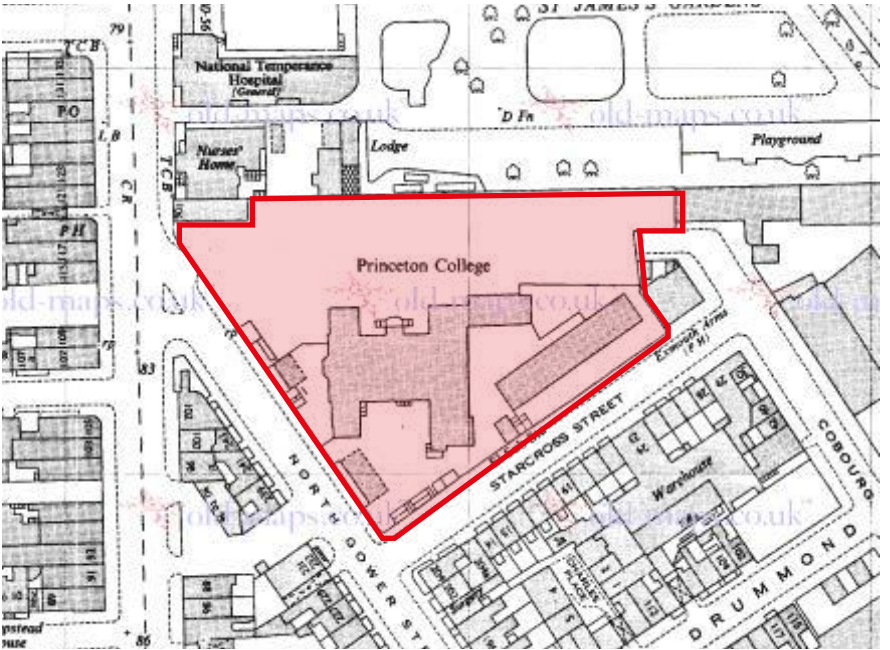
Circa 1911



Circa 1936, Aerofilms Collection - www.britainfromabove.org.uk



Circa 1953



Circa 1979

2.3 Site Analysis

Extensive site analysis has underpinned the evolution of the design proposals for the site. Through both desktop research and multiple site visits, various parameters have been assessed and recorded to provide a rigorous understanding of the factors which influence the design.

2.2.1 Surrounding Building Heights

The site’s immediate context varies in height and character, an example being the three-storey pub to the east of the site and to the south - four storey post war terrace housing which rises up to seven storeys in one location. The main school building is three storeys, but with high floor to ceiling heights it is similar to five domestic storey heights.

The section on the page opposite shows the heights of the existing buildings.



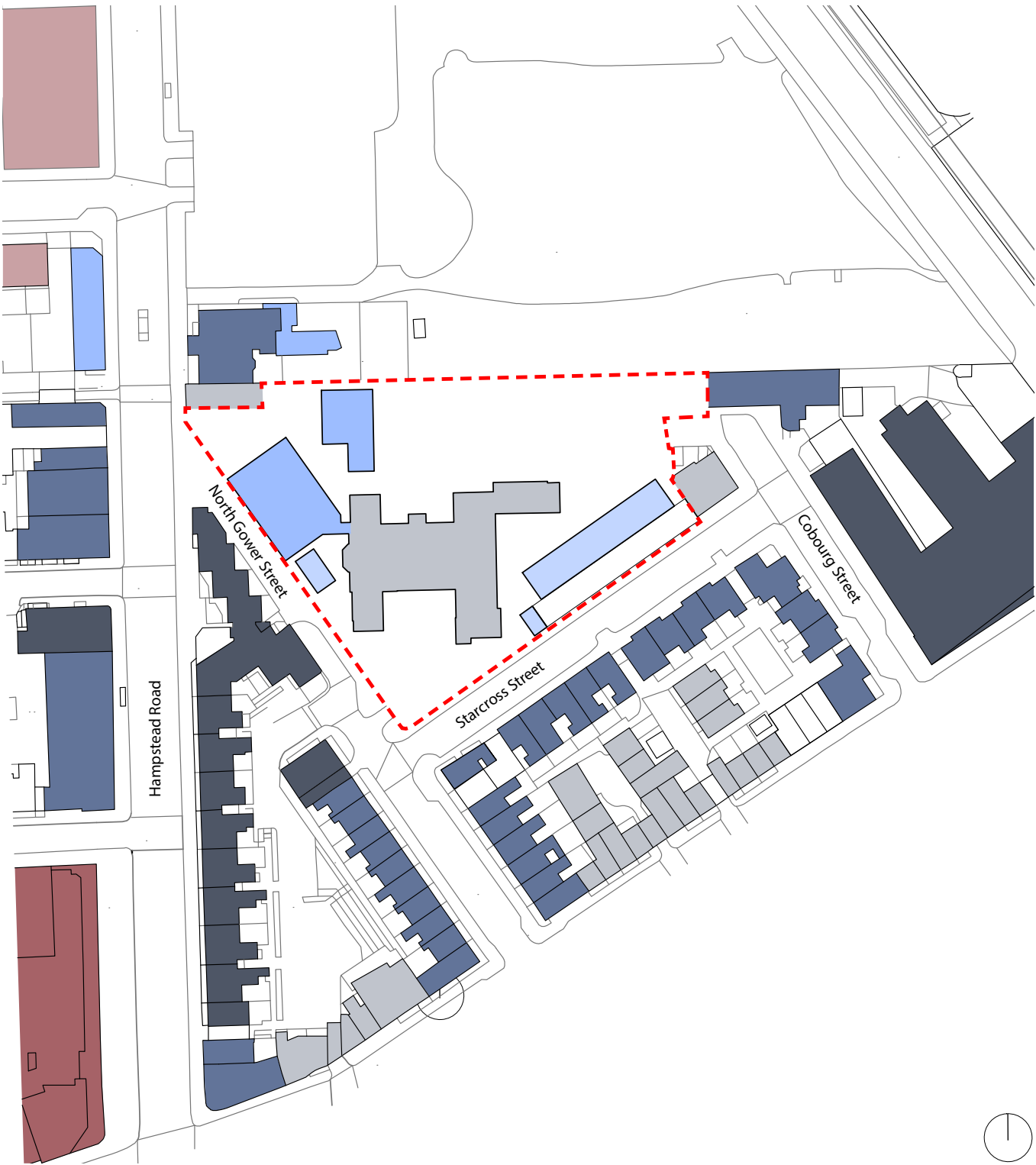
George Mews, Local Authority Housing



View towards Cobourg Street and Euston Station



View down North Gower Street with BT Tower and Euston Tower in background



Building Heights



2.3.1 Existing Building Uses in the Surrounding Area

The sites existing use is for educational purposes. The main surrounding uses are residential to the south and west with a few nonresidential uses such as the pub to the east and a place of worship to the south.

To the north of the site, the buildings are used as health facilities with a small business unit to the north west corner of the site. The plan shows hotel and office accommodation to the east which is soon to be demolished.

Uses to upper floors vary to some locations, such as the residential uses above ground floor commercial to Drummond Street



1. South Camden Health Services



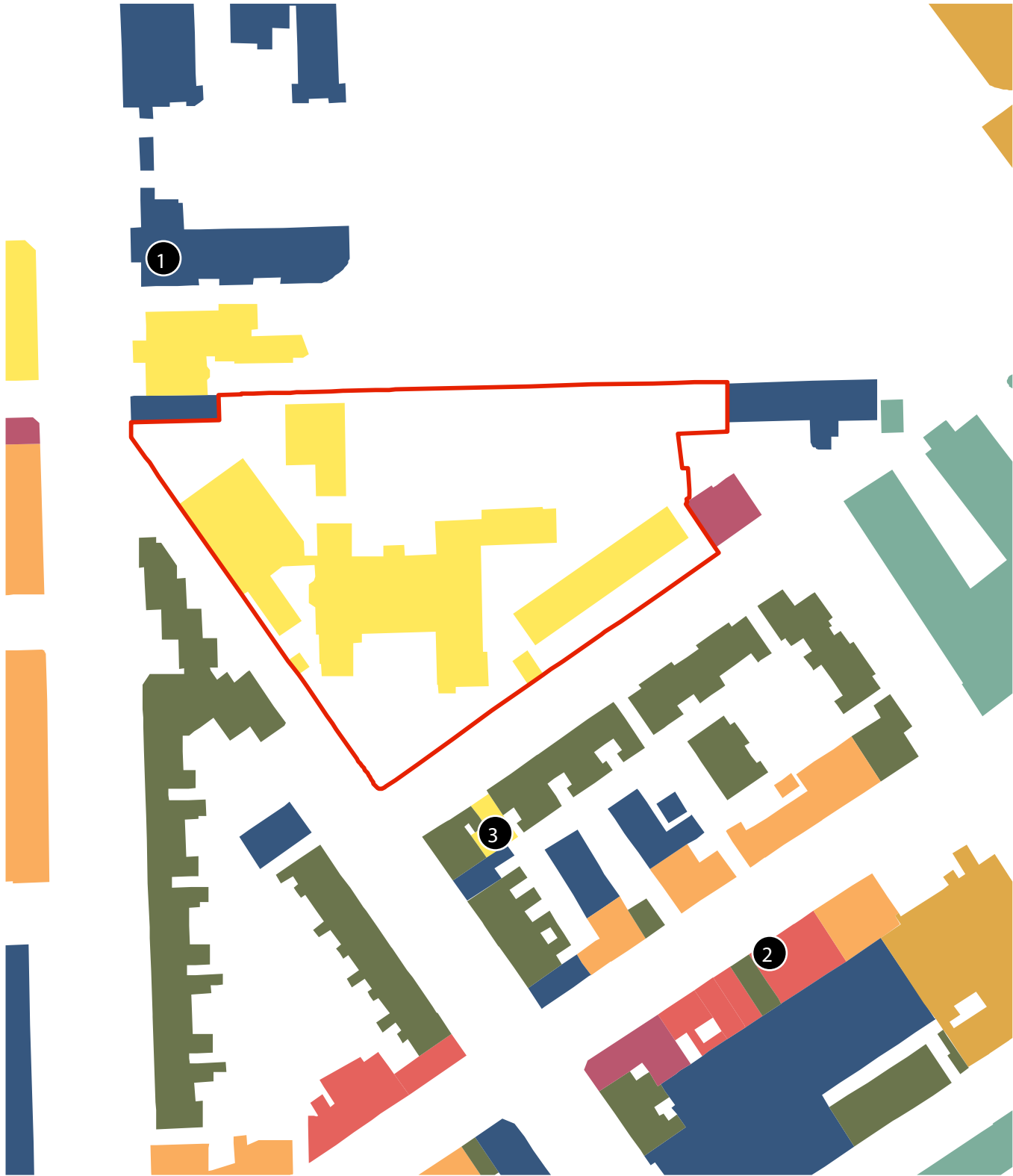
2. Local Restaurant



3. Euston Mosque

Key: Ground Floor Use

- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial & professional services
- A3 Restaurants and cafes
- A4 Drinking establishments
- A5 Hot food takeaways
- B1 Business
- B2 General industrial
- B8 Storage or distribution
- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential institutions
- C2A Secure Residential Institution
- C3 Dwelling houses
- C4 Houses in multiple occupation
- D1 Nonresidential institutions
- D2 Assembly and leisure
- Sui Generis
- Vacant



Ground floor use plan

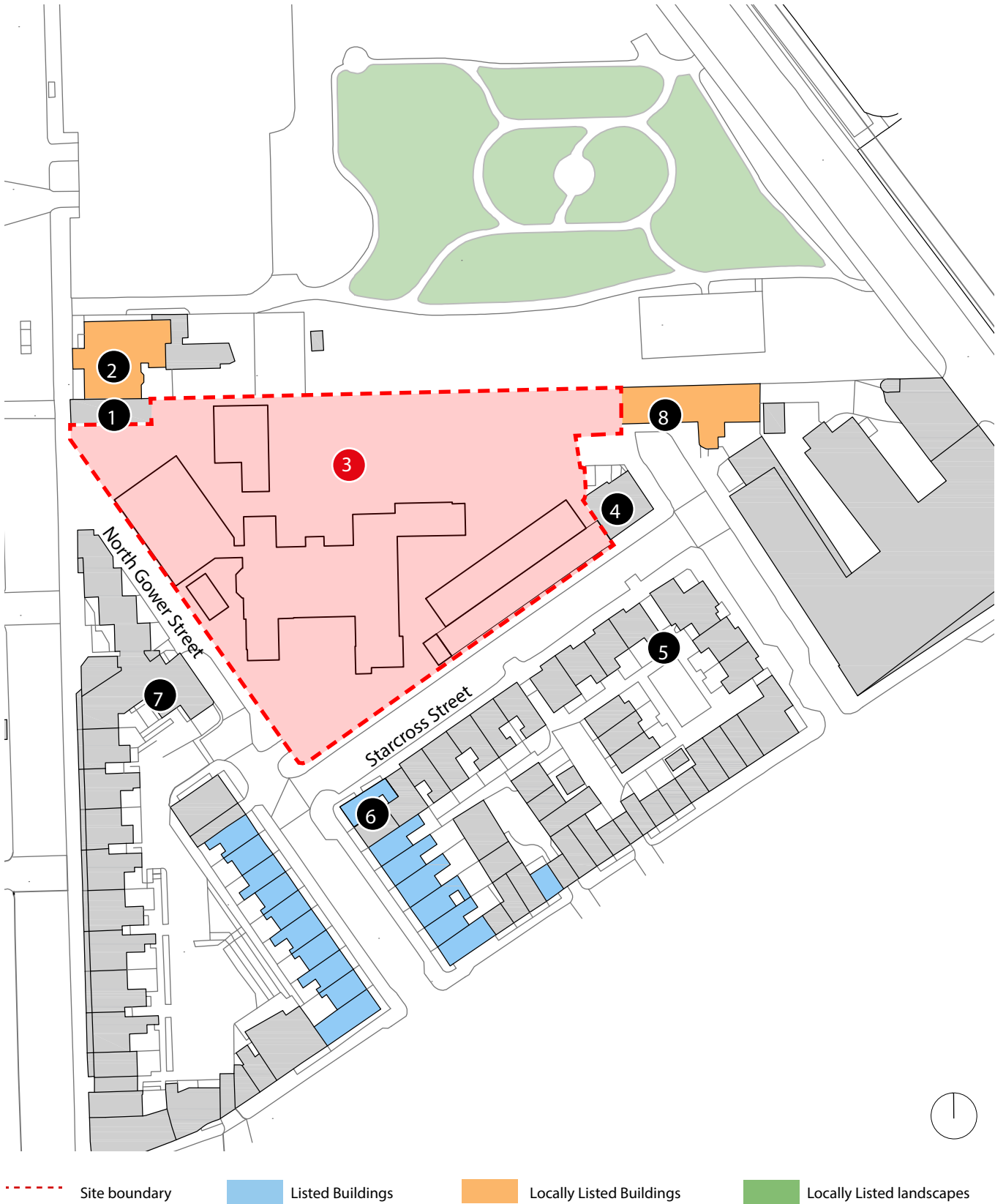
2.4 Site analysis - surrounding context

2.4.1 Approach

The starting point for the design investigation was based on the spatial requirements of the proposed uses provided in the brief, resulting in the proposed mass and scale of the CSC building which has been considered against the surrounding context.

2.4.2 Architectural Context

- 1 Whitehall Park office - three storey, dark grey render/painted. Medium to low quality.
- 2 Former St. Pancras Charity School for Girls. 1904. Currently used by NHS health services. Key features : red brick, rusticated brick quoins and pilasters, ornamental roof line, central entrance bay is strongly emphasised, decorative iron gates, central gabled dormer which has an 'oeil de boeuf' window.
- 3 Proposed Site - Maria Fidelis School. Not listed or locally listed but building of quality and presence.
- 4 Exmouth Arms (Public House) - Mid to late 1800's. Active ground floor frontage, good quality, simple upper floor elevations.
- 5 Local Authority Housing - post 1955. Plain elevations, lacks refinement of original period properties.
- 6 Late Georgian Housing / Hotel - Terrace of 8 houses and Terrace of 10 houses to west side of North Gower Street. Early C19 Grade: II. Quality examples from this period.
- 7 Local Authority Housing - post 1955, interesting south facing cascading and projecting terraces/ balconies.
- 8 Originally Late 19th century stabling since converted to offices but to be demolished due to HS2 works.



2.5 Site context: Existing buildings and landscape features

The plan opposite illustrates the current site layout. The existing school site contains the following group of buildings;

The main school building is to the centre of the site, orientated almost due north, set back from the boundary.

A 1950's mobile classrooms block which runs parallel with the eastern boundary but set back away from Starcross Street due to the sunken 'garden'.

To the rear and generally unseen, is a two storey modular classroom block built in 1995, with light dash render.

A gym is aligned along the western boundary adjacent to the pedestrianised North Gower street and is a steel framed structure with London stock infill.

There is a small mobile unit to the western boundary and to the south of the gym which provides Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision

A mechanical plant building is half way along the western boundary - it serves the mobile classrooms.

The external space is predominantly tarmac with a sunken garden to the eastern boundary.

Key:

- 1. 3 storey main building
- 2. Special Educational Needs (SEN) building
- 3. Gymnasium
- 4. 2 storey teaching building
- 5. 1950's teaching building
- 6. Mechanical Plant
- 7. Mature trees and pond
- 8. Playground & Sports courts
- 9. Corner of site at Cobourg Street lost due to new road layout construction
- 10. Mature trees and soft landscaping
- 11. Mature trees in lowered garden
- 12. Hard landscaped parking and entrance yard



Ground floor plan

2.6 Site Photographs



Key



1 View of pedestrianised North Gower Street



2 View of existing GYM



3 View of existing building housing general teaching



4 View from roof of existing Maria Fidelis Convent School towards the new HS2 works



5 View east from main school roof towards Starcross Street and Euston Station



6 View of existing Maria Fidelis School and teaching portacabin from playground



7 View of Sunken Garden along Starcross Street



8 View from school roof towards North Gower Street and Starcross Street junction



9 View of the main entrance with parking to Maria Fidelis Convent School



10 View of entrance to existing GYM



11 View from playground to back entrance of Maria Fidelis Convent school

2.6.1 Existing Building - Appearance and character

The main building on the Maria Fidelis site is a H plan Edwardian school building, which appears to have been built after 1908 and before 1911, and certainly existed on the site from 1922 as the 'Exmouth Street School for partially blind children'. The school is on a north south axis, at odds with the streetscape apart from the southern boundary of the nearby St James gardens which is now under construction as part of the HS2 works.

Predominantly a red brick three storey purpose built school building. The ground storey has blue engineering bricks to the base.

The fenestration is comprised of tall sash windows with six panes over and nine in lower sashes. There are rubbed brick lintels and spandrels between the first and second floors, with Portland stone cills and cornices. The rooftop playground has brick quoins with cast iron detailing to railings between the staircase towers and chimney stacks.

There are square windows to the stairs with oval windows on uppermost landings. On grade entrance from North Gower Street, with raised entry to rear via symmetrical steps that formerly faced the remains of little George Street (later Cobourg Street), and which appears to be the original entrance.

There is a low storey extension building to the east of the site.



View from Starcross Street / North Gower Street



View of North Elevation



View of two storey detached building



View of the 1950's extension and teaching portacabin



View of the current main entrance



View from the school roof

2.6.2 Site Photographs - Interior

The photographs opposite show some of the interior spaces of the Maria Fidelis School.

Central corridors are internally lit via borrowed lights from classrooms with timber parquet and green tiled dados. There are Georgian wired fire doors to staircases with walls clad in red glazed brick. Contemporary internal modifications are minor and include suspended ceilings and replacement toilet facilities. Some original joinery remains.



Existing Circulation



Existing Staircase



Existing teaching space



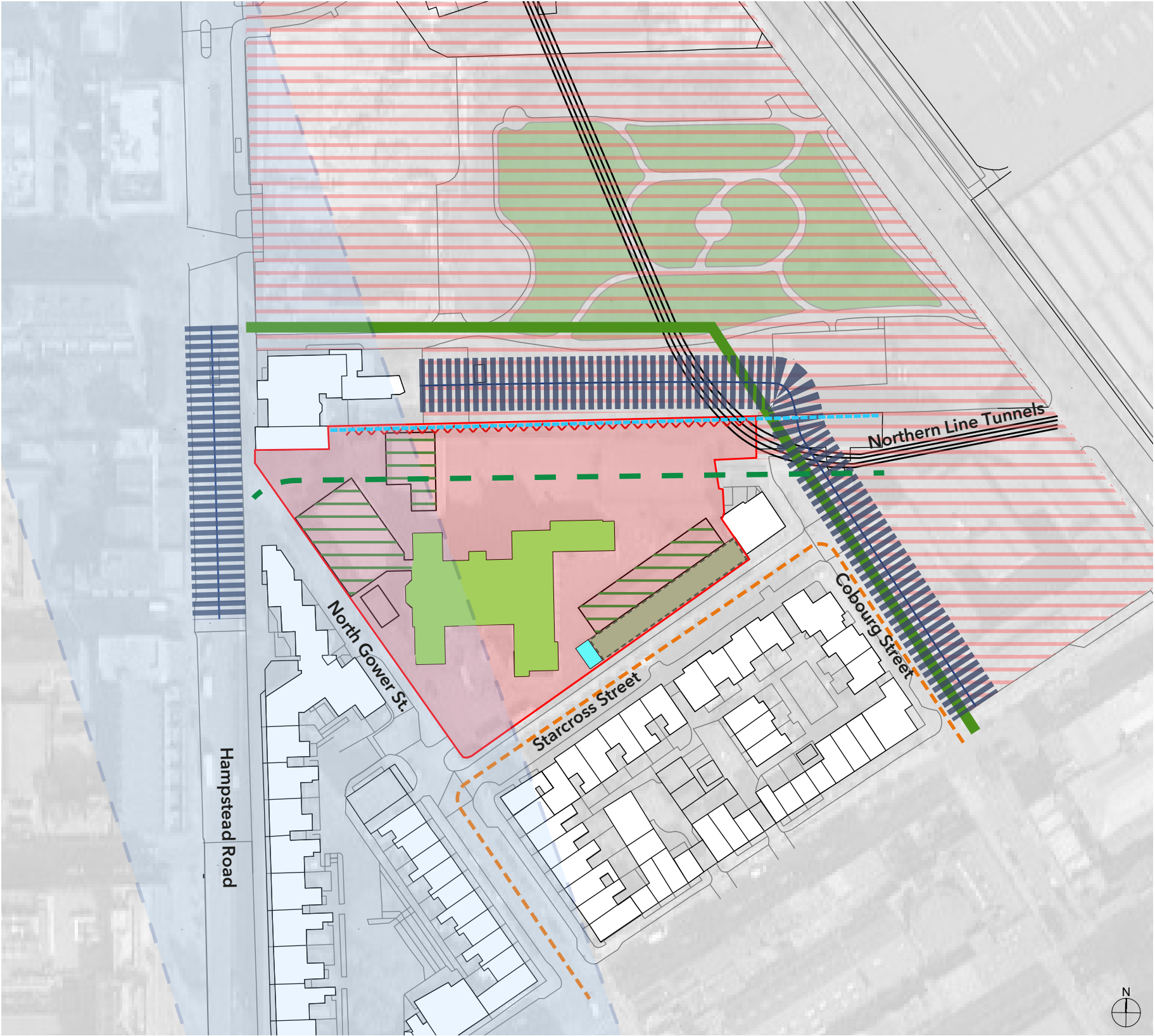
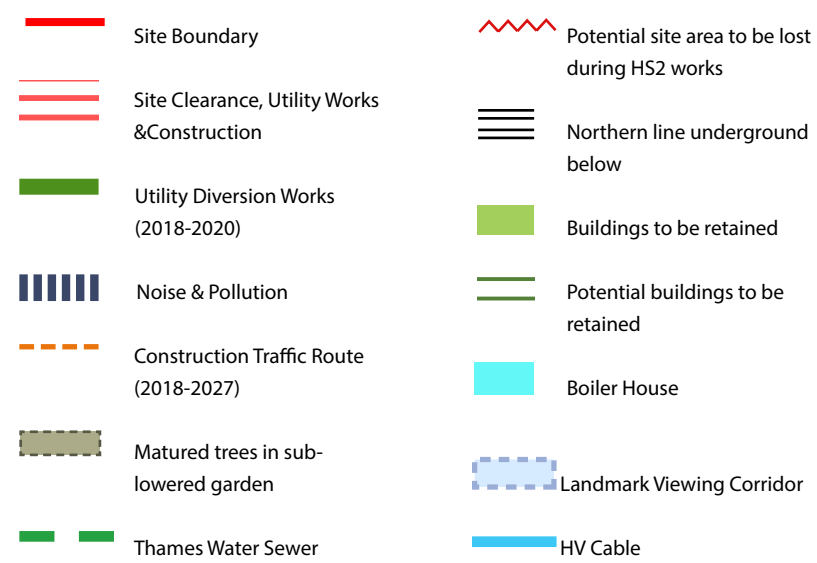
Existing Gymnasium



Existing Dinning Area

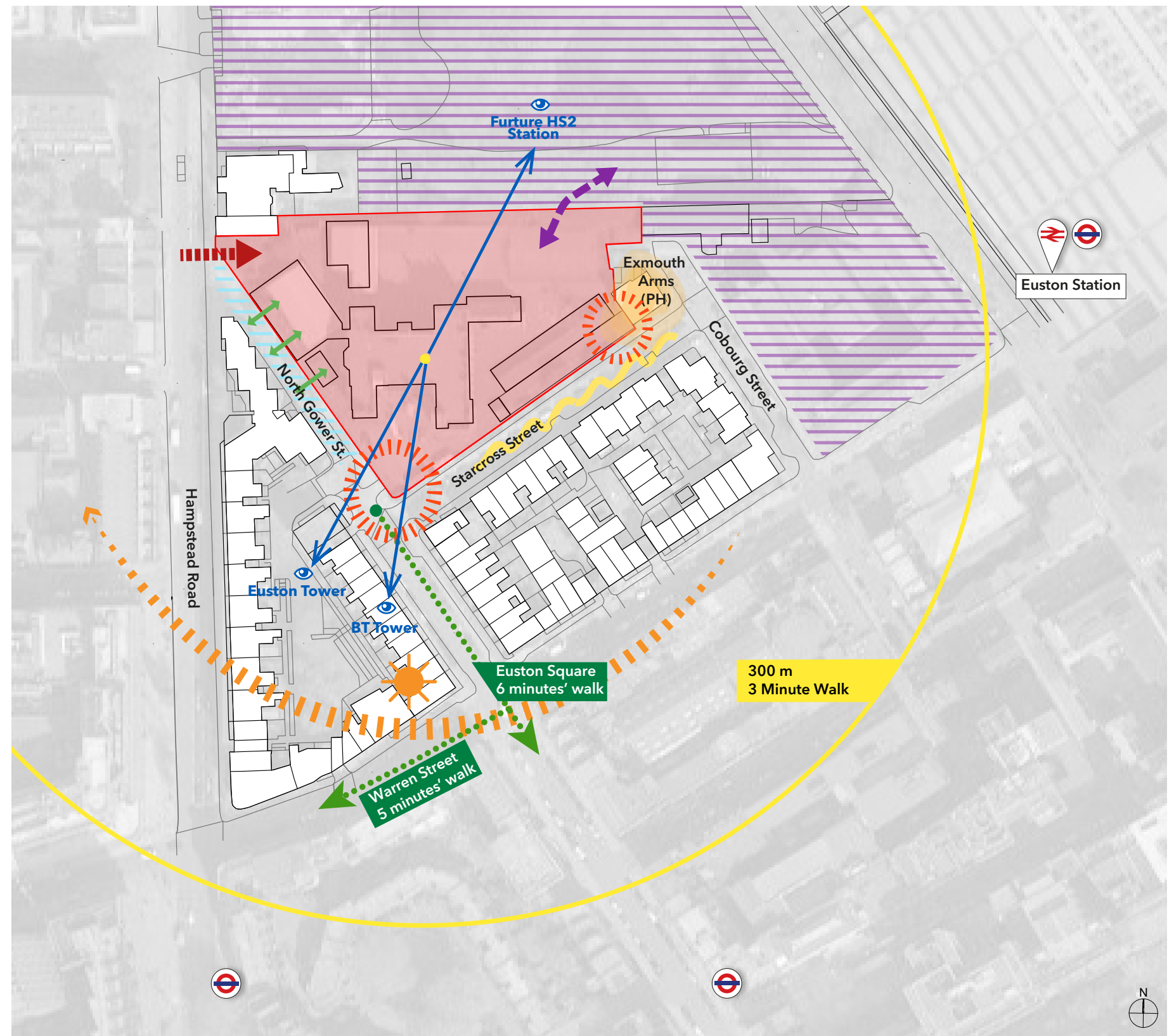
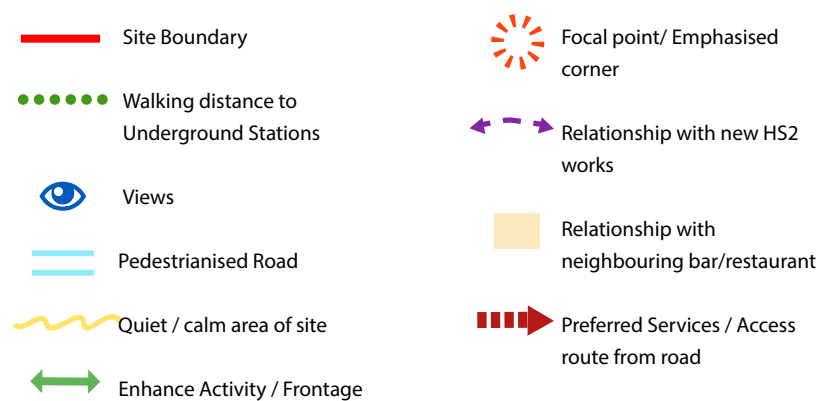
2.7 Site Constraints

- Residential properties to the south.
- HS2 - Noise and pollution due to site clearance and construction traffic. Utility and construction works in close proximity to northern boundary of site.
- Potential area of site to be lost due to HS2 construction works.
- Northern line underground tunnels to the north east corner of the site.
- Access from the east and Cobourg street limited for several years.
- Position and layout of the existing buildings.
- Protected landmark viewing corridor through the west of the site.
- Sunken garden with mature trees.



2.8 Site Opportunities

- Improved frontages along North Gower Street and Starcross Street
- Buffer noise from the HS2 site
- Improve access and permeability through the site.
- Improve appearance.
- Improve passive surveillance and activity.
- Prominent location opposite Euston Station .
- A good level of daylight and sunlight around the site due to south/east/west orientation.
- Excellent transport links
- Corner site, visible.
- Consolidating servicing to a single point.
- Improving boundary conditions.
- Provide educational uses
- Provide employment use
- Provide community use.
- Re-provide public realm lost as a result of HS2 works
- Use of the roof for communal or break out space as part of the managed workspace.
- The site is located in a flood zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding and therefore there is no need for a flood risk assessment.



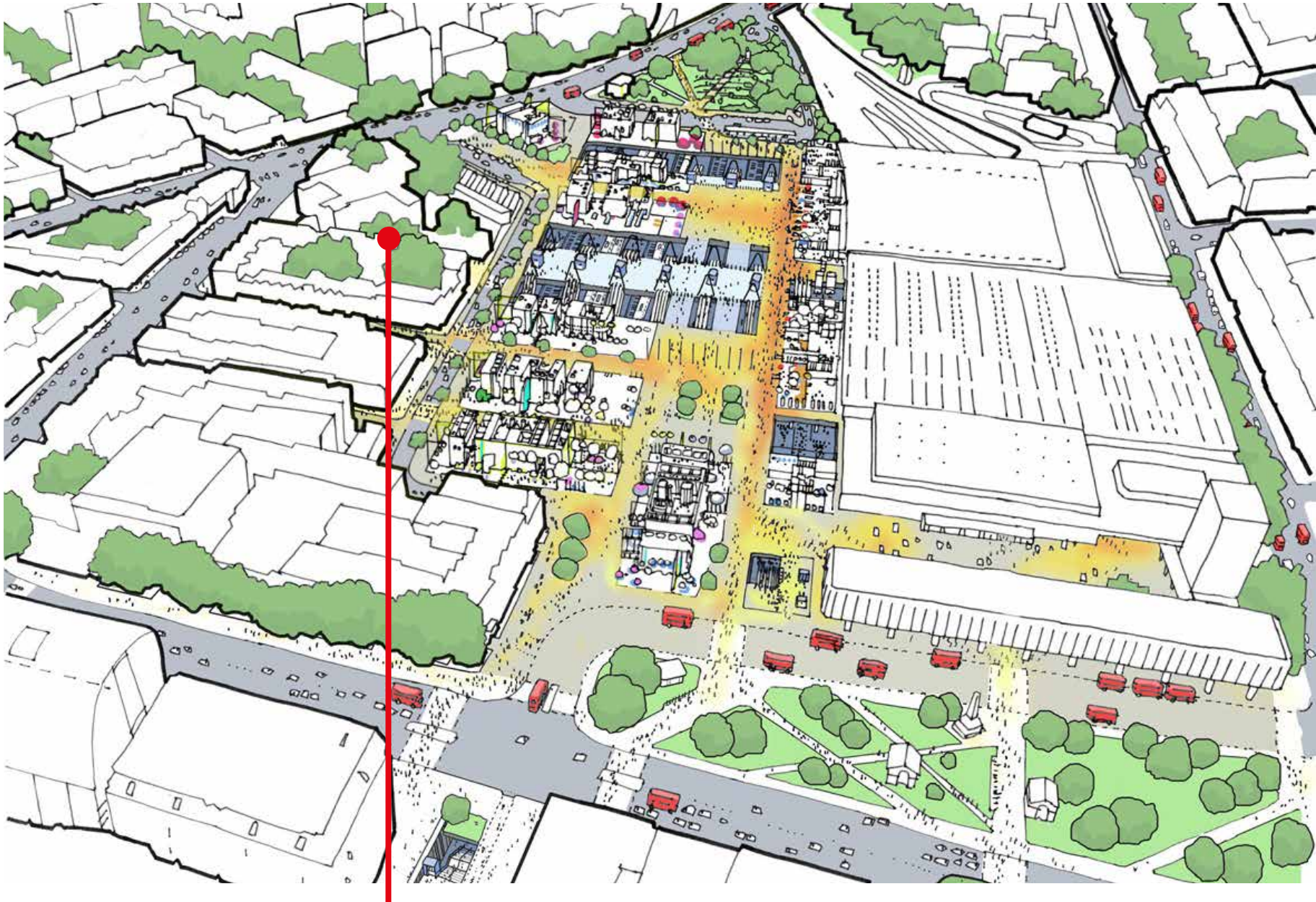
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3.0
High Speed Two
Euston Station Area

3 High Speed Two

High Speed 2 (HS2) is a new high speed railway line connecting London with the major cities of the UK. Euston has been chosen as the station where HS2 trains begin and terminate their journeys. To support this, Euston Station will be modernised, including the addition of 11 new platforms.

The Maria Fidelis site is in very close proximity to the enlarged Euston / HS2 Station both during the construction phase and following the completion of the works. A portion of the site will be lost due to the creation of an extended street along the western edge of the enlarged station.



Existing Maria Fidelis Convent School

3.1 Present context

The surrounding site is about to undergo major redevelopment. The proposal will need to address this changing context, whilst mindful of the future.



Cobourg Street buildings closed and soon to be demolished.



St James Gardens closed and the start of archeological works and exhumation

3.2 Future Context

One of the main entrances to the redeveloped St Pancras Station will be to the north of the site. There will be a transport interchange and open space as part of the station forecourt. Immediately to the north east corner of the site, a new norther line escape shaft will be built.

It is understood an additional public realm with green space will be provided.



View of Euston Station from the north-west, Cobourg Street Station entrance

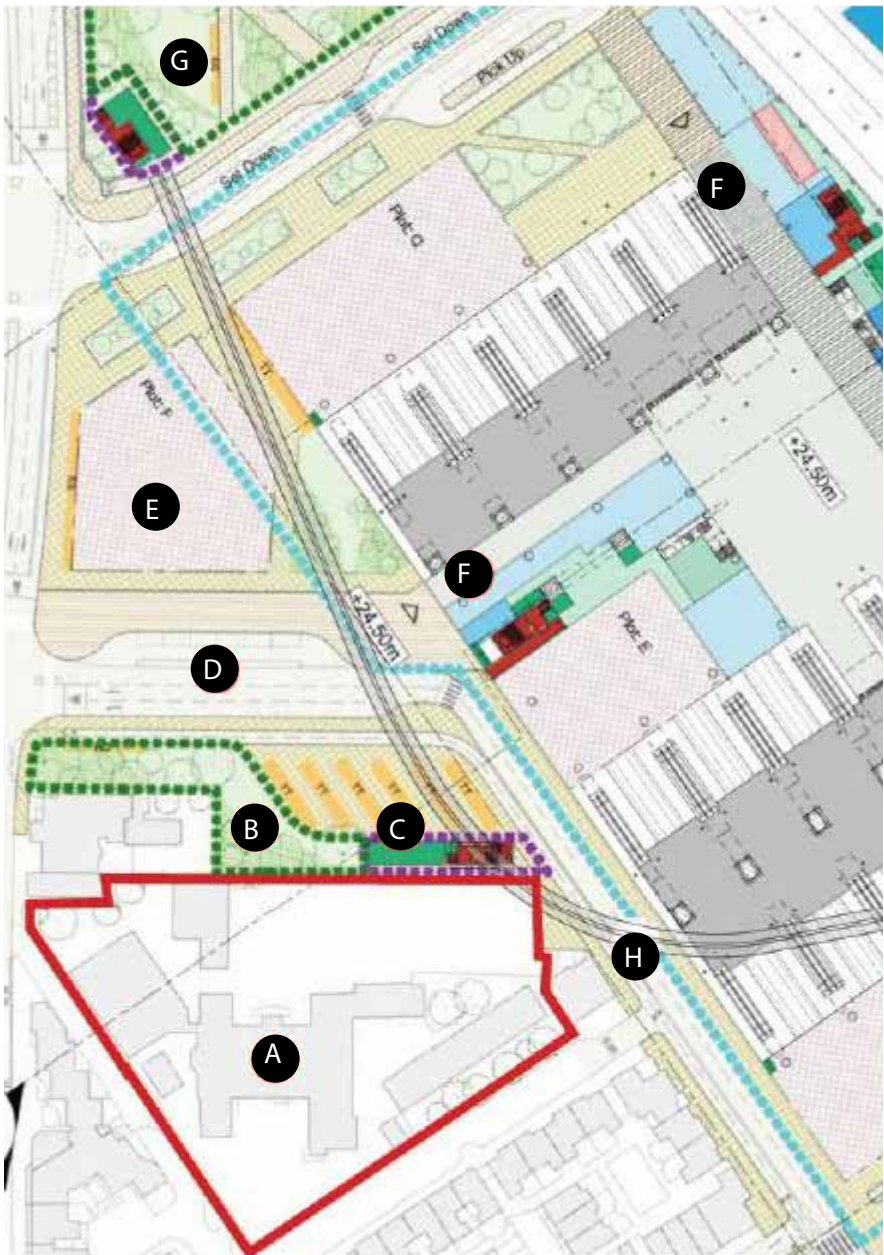
Existing Maria Fidelis Convent School

3.3 HS2 Euston Proposal

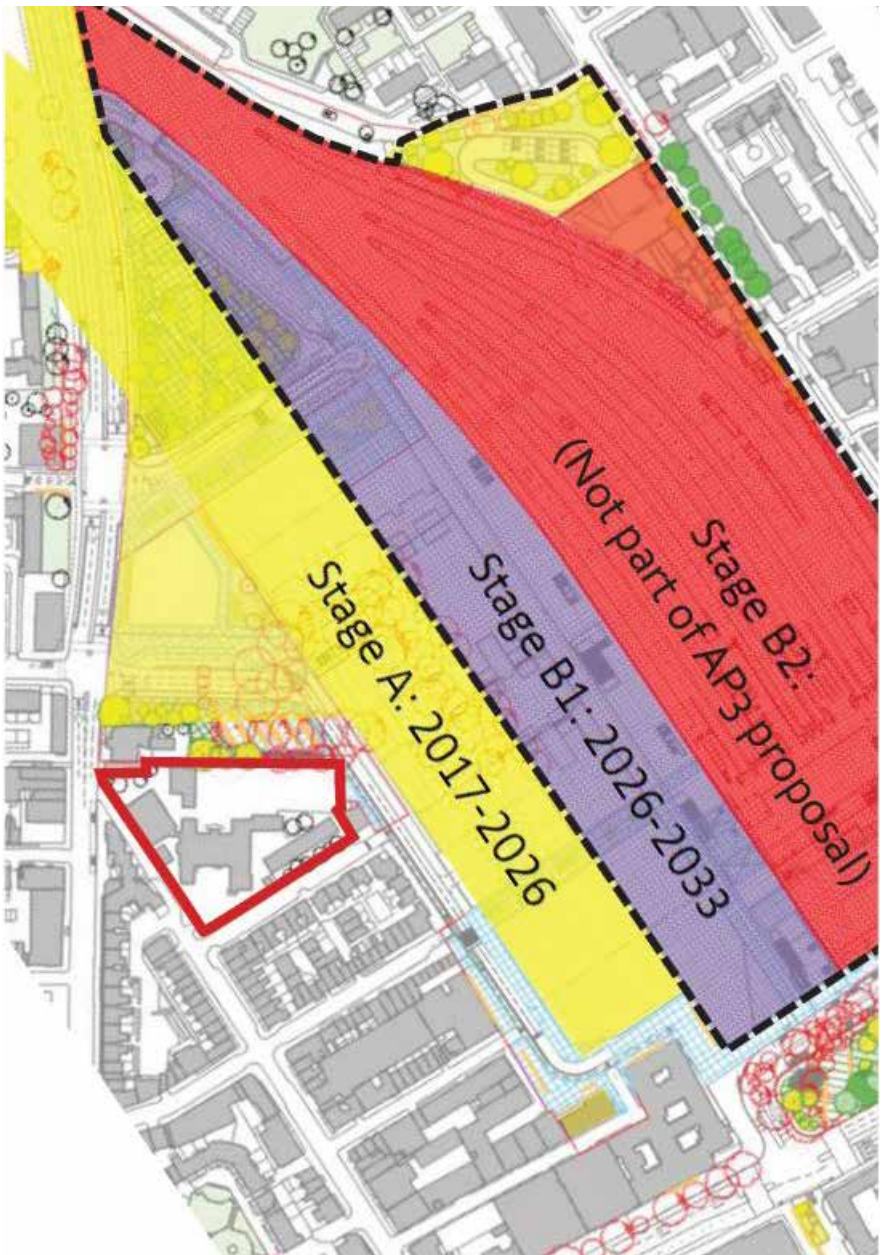
The concourse level plan to the right shows the proposed concourse level plan for Euston Station following completion of the HS2 project. It includes the following:

- A The Maria Fidelis School Site
- B New public realm space
- C New evacuation building
- D New road layout
- E New development plot
- F New entrances to Euston Station
- G New public gardens / park
- H Northern line underground below

The diagram on the right shows the projected delivery timetable for HS2 at Euston Station, the following pages illustrate in greater detail the impact the construction works will have upon the site.



Concourse Level Plan



Delivery Timetable

4.0

Site Strategy
Development

Construction Skills Training Centre and
Workspace

4 Site Strategy Development

4.1 The Brief

The three key elements of the brief are;

4.1.1 Managed Workspace

The existing Maria Fidelis school will be relocating to a new building on Drummond Crescent towards the end of 2018. The building is in a good condition. After several options were considered, it makes an excellent opportunity for its conversion to managed workspace.

The building needs to be made fully accessible via new lifts and infrastructure upgraded to provide quality workspace provision for individuals and small businesses.

By providing office space, the number of people working in the area during the week will increase. This will help to bring additional trade to local shops, cafes, bars and restaurants.



An example of managed or co-work office space.

4.1.2 Construction Skills Centre (CSC)

A Construction Skills Centre is proposed for the site to provide practical training for local people to work on local sites including HS2. The current facility on York Way is set to close in 2019 to make way for future development.

The provision of the CSC will see the continuation of educational uses on the site but in a purpose built facility with around 1900m2 of internal floorspace, similar in area to the existing school. It would have an external yard for teaching and a direct view of a major construction project in the form of HS2.

The design and aesthetic of the building will relate to the learning within and respond to the adjacent HS2 construction site.



Construction training college in Southend on Sea by FBM Architects

4.1.3 Temporary Open Space

St James’s Gardens was accessible to the public from 7.30am until dusk throughout the year offering facilities for passive and active recreation with flower beds, grassed areas, trees, a hard surfaced sports court, playground area and a extensive pergola.

High quality open space is to be provided on the Maria Fidelis site to help compensate for its loss. Other sites within Camden will further mitigate this.

The space needs to be multifunctional, offering something for everyone and providing opportunities for social interactions, play, sports and relaxation/respite.



St James’s Gardens prior to closure.