

PLANNING STATEMENT

**BOSTON HOUSE, 36-38 FITZROY SQUARE,
LONDON, W1T 6EY**

&

COUNTY HOUSE, CONWAY MEWS, W1T 6AA



May 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by SM Planning on behalf of the New College of the Humanities (NCH) in support of a land use swap comprising:
- A planning and listed building consent application for the change of use of Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square, London, W1T 6EY from office (Class B1a) to a non-residential education institution (Class D1) including internal alterations, and
 - A planning application for the change of use of basement, ground and first floors of County House, Conway Mews, London, W1T 6AA from accountancy school (Class D1) to office (Class B1a)
- 1.2 The proposals represent a resubmission following the withdrawn application for the change of use of Boston House from office to a flexible use as either office and/or non-residential education institution. The application has been amended to address the concerns surrounding the potential loss of employment/office space through a proposed land use swap incorporating the change of use of floorspace at County House to office.
- 1.3 As part of the proposal, the existing site for NCH (19 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HH) is also to be converted to office space. Due to a flexible permission that exists at 19 Bedford Square, there is currently no restriction for the building to revert to office use. As such, no application for planning permission is required for this building.
- 1.4 The statement sets out the planning justification for the proposed development and assesses the proposals against national planning policy and the development plan. The statement should be read in conjunction with all other supporting documentation.

2. SITE & SURROUNDING CONTEXT

- 2.1 The application sites are located within the administrative area of the London Borough of Camden, a borough in north-west London (partly within inner London) divided into 18 three-member wards. The application sites are located within the administrative ward of Bloomsbury.



Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square

- 2.2 Boston House is located on the south side of Fitzroy Square which is a virtually intact Georgian square fronted by terraced townhouses forming a single formal composition, with a large central private garden.
- 2.3 It consists of a mid-terrace building centrally located to the south of Fitzroy Square, in between the junctions with Fitzroy Street to the east and Conway Street to the west. The building is part of a symmetrical terrace formerly known as the London Foot Hospital and is formed of four storeys plus basement to provide a total of five levels of accommodation.
- 2.4 The building has an established B1 use comprising 2131 sqm of floorspace. It is currently vacant but was most recently occupied (January 2019) by an architect's firm on the lower ground to first floors and the University College of London to the second and third floors. It is understood that when occupied the building employed approximately 200 people within the building.
- 2.5 Surrounding buildings on the square are predominantly office use with a range of other uses including residential. The immediate neighbouring buildings include a single residential dwelling at no 34-35 Fitzroy Square (Swiss House) whilst the property on the opposite side at no.39 (Kenana House) is occupied by James Lewis and Co, a property land agent and valuers. Further along the terrace at no.40 is an advanced hair studio clinic.

- 2.6 Boston House, along with the terraces on the south and east side of Fitzroy Square are Grade I listed. The building at Boston House was reconstructed as a replica in terms of its street façade with modern offices constructed behind the façade following extensive bomb damage during World War II. Therefore, whilst the façade of Boston House is of exceptional historic and architectural special interest, the interior of Boston House is now completely modern redevelopment. The terraces to the west and north side of the square are grade II* listed.



Boston House from Fitzroy Square (view northwest to southeast)



Boston House from Fitzroy Square (view northeast to southwest)

- 2.7 The application site is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation area which lies to the south west of the Borough of Camden. The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal describes the built environment of the Conservation Area as *'an area of urban character that is consistent with its central London location. The street pattern*

of the area is composed of a broadly north-south and east-west orientated grid of relatively narrow streets. The main focus of the area is Fitzroy Square'. The appraisal identifies that the area was originally developed as a residential district, but that its status as a residential area diminished during the later 19th century leading to a creation of a mix of uses including offices, flats, shops and commercial uses.

- 2.8 The site is located within 500 metres of Kings Cross and is situated in an area identified by the Camden Local Plan as 'The Knowledge Quarter', a cluster of academic, cultural, research, scientific and media organisations large and small, all within a one mile radius of King's Cross. The site is also located within the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan which seeks to help shape the future of Fitzrovia and the western part of Bloomsbury Ward.
- 2.9 The application site has a PTAL rating of 6B (Best) and is in close proximity to Euston Road and Tottenham Court Road with excellent access to public transport. This includes several bus routes along these roads as well as the London Underground Stations of Warren Street, Great Portland Street and Goodge Street all within a short walking distance from the site.

County House, Conway Mews

- 2.10 County House is a 1960's basement plus five storey building located within an urban block formed by terraced buildings on Fitzroy Square, Conway Street, Maple Street and Fitzroy Street. The site is located immediately to the rear (south) of Boston House and is currently accessed via a narrow archway on the east side of Conway Street.
- 2.11 Subject of this application are the basement, ground and first floors which have a floorspace of 680.7 sqm. The basement (171.1sqm), ground (264.3) and first (245.3 sqm) floors are currently occupied by First Intuition, an accountancy school (Class D1) offering a range of accountancy and management programmes. The accountancy school has a maximum of 175 students enrolled on courses at any one time, with courses run at different times and days of the week.
- 2.12 The second floor is currently occupied by Marie Stopes UK as an administration office as part of a reproductive health option clinic. The third and fourth floors of the building are in use as residential flats (Class C3). These floorspaces are not subject of the proposal.
- 2.13 The site is surrounded by a mix of uses including residential properties, and commercial uses which occupy both individual sites and/or are located to the ground floors of surrounding residential properties.
- 2.14 The building is not listed but is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area where the building is identified as making a neutral contribution (neither positive contributor or a detractor) to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The terrace to the north west on Fitzroy Square, part terraces to the south west on Conway Street and north east on Fitzroy Square are all listed.

2.15 Similar to that of Boston House, the site has a high accessibility to public transport with a PTAL rating of 6B (Best) and has excellent access to local bus routes and London Underground Stations.

3. BACKGROUND: THE NEW COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES

- 3.1 The New College of the Humanities (NCH) is a University-level college founded in 2012 by AC Grayling with the aim of providing the highest quality education in the humanities and social sciences. The College has been very successful, and the number of students has increased each year, and there are now approximately 200 students enrolled at NCH.
- 3.2 NCH offers a unique and broad liberal arts-inspired curriculum with highly personalised teaching including a one-to-one tutorial system.
- 3.3 At the end of 2018, NCH merged with Northeastern University, which is ranked 44 in the US and is based in Boston with campuses in Charlotte, North Carolina; Seattle, Washington, San Jose, California, Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia. This has provided a network of institutions for NCH to learn from as it grows.
- 3.4 NCH are currently located at 19 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HH, which is approximately 700 metres to the south east of the application site at Boston House.
- 3.5 NCH has now outgrown its current building in Bedford Square. Given its ties to the area, the College is now looking to relocate to a larger building in the Bloomsbury area. The proposed development therefore seeks to relocate the College from the existing premises at Bedford Square to the Boston House site.
- 3.6 NCH seeks to be operational in these new premises by the Autumn 2020.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The proposed development comprises a land use swap involving two separate, but interlinked, applications. This includes:

- a planning and listed building consent application for the change of use of Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square from office (Class B1a) to a non-residential education institution (Class D1) including internal alterations, and
- a planning application for the change of use of basement, ground and first floors of County House, Conway Mews from accountancy school (Class D1) to office (Class B1a).

4.2 The proposals represent a resubmission following the withdrawal of planning and listed building consent applications for the change of use of Boston House from office to a flexible use as either office and/or non-residential education institution (2019/3961/P and 2019/4256/L). The application has been amended to address the concerns of the Planning officer surrounding the loss of office space through a land use swap including County House.

4.3 As part of the proposal, the existing site for NCH (19 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3HH) is also to be converted to office space. 19 Bedford Square was granted a flexible planning permission in 2012 for use either as offices (Class B1a) or a non-residential educational institution (Class D1), meaning whichever of those uses are in the building come 16th July 2022 will be the lawful use. Therefore, should planning permission be granted for the change of use of Boston House, NCH would vacate 19 Bedford Square with the building reverting back to office use (B1a). Due to the flexible permission that exists at 19 Bedford Square, planning permission would not be required for its conversion.

4.4 The following table sets out the existing and proposed accommodation:

Property	Existing	Proposed
Boston House	2132 sqm (B1a)	2132 sqm (D1)
County House (LG, G and 1 st floors)	680.7 sqm (D1)	680.7 sqm (B1a)
19 Bedford Square	929 sqm (D1)	929 sqm (B1a)

4.5 Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of 2131 sqm of office floorspace at Boston House, this would largely be replaced through the change of use of County House (680.7 sqm) and 19 Bedford Square (929 sqm). The proposal would therefore result in only a net loss of 521.3 sqm of office (Class B1a) space, but a net gain of the same space in D1 use.

Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square

- 4.6 The change of use is required for the relocation of the NCH from its current site in Bedford Square to Boston House. The building will provide the new headquarters for NCH and the building will provide the following main components:
- Office/admin space
 - Teaching classrooms
 - Office meeting rooms/student collaboration space
 - Kitchen facilities
 - Toilet/shower facilities
 - Internal cycle storage facilities
- 4.7 No residential accommodation is proposed as part of the proposed development.
- 4.8 No external alterations or extensions are proposed to the building. The proposed works are limited to internal alterations and the reconfiguration of space to include teaching space, office space and student areas.
- 4.9 Proposed student numbers for the 2019/20 academic year will consist of 250 full time NCH students, and 300 Northeastern University (NU) students (the majority of NU students who are only there for the autumn term). The site will not be attended by all students at any one time, and on average, it is expected that students will be on site for teaching for only 13 hours per week.
- 4.10 To give a better indication of the number of students expected on site at any one time, the current enrolment at NCH in 2018/9 (approximately 200 student and 50 staff), NCH recorded over a week in January 2019 a maximum of 70 access cards being used on a day to day basis. Whilst some entries may be of more than one person at a time it demonstrates that there is only a small percentage of the total number of staff and students on site at any one time.
- 4.11 Teaching of students will be carried out over three separate academic terms; September to December, January to March, and April to June; primarily between Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm (term time only). There will be occasional evening activities for students, including guest lectures and social evenings although it is envisaged that these would occur once a month.
- 4.12 There are currently 35 administrative staff employed by the college, and 28 full-time and 32 part-time academic staff. The current workload for teaching staff is approximately 14 contact hours per week for full time staff and as such teaching staff are not on site at the same time. For full details of the operations of NCH, please refer to the supporting Operational Plan submitted as part of this application.

County House, Conway Mews

- 4.13 The proposed works to County House relate solely to the change of use of the basement, ground and first floors of the building with no external alterations. Subject

to the requirements of the future occupiers of the building, the resulting office use may require internal alterations to be carried out, however, such works would not require planning permission.

- 4.14 At this stage there is no assigned future occupier of the building for the proposed office use and it is therefore not possible to provide the specific operations of how the building will be used and by how many people. However, it is envisaged that the building would continue to be operated within the hours of operation of the existing building/uses and that likely staff numbers of an office use would be similar, if not less, than the existing use.
- 4.15 The proposed change of use of County House is offered as part of an overall package to mitigate for the loss of the office space at Boston House. Therefore, the application is to be submitted concurrently with the proposal for Boston House so that, in the event that planning permission is granted, the two applications can be linked by a s106 legal agreement stipulating that both permissions are to be implemented in parallel or within a specified time period.

Existing NCH site - 19 Bedford Square

- 4.16 The existing site for NCH at 19 Bedford Square (929 sqm) is to be converted to office space as part of the land use swap to mitigate for the loss of office space at Boston House.
- 4.17 Due to a flexible permission that exists at 19 Bedford Square (**2012/1522/P**) there is no restriction for the building to revert to office use and as such no application for planning permission is required.
- 4.18 This site is to return to office use as part of the proposed land use swap and would be secured by a s106 legal agreement.

Community Consultation

- 4.19 Kanda Consulting, a public affairs and consultation company has undertaken, on behalf of the applicant, a consultation as part of the pre-application process. This has included the distribution of letters and emails sent to local residents, businesses, Ward councillors and local stakeholders introducing the scheme to them and an inviting them to attend a virtual consultation meeting carried out on 12th May 2020.
- 4.20 Responses to the consultation exercise suggested that residents were keen to ensure that the proposed change of use was undertaken in a way that minimises disruption to the local area and amenity. To address these concerns, particularly surrounding the way NCH would operate from Boston House, student/staff numbers, hours of operation, and security have been duly considered as part of the proposal.
- 4.21 For further details please refer to the Statement of Community Involvement submitted in support of this application.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square

- 5.1 Full planning permission (**PSX0104652**) and listed building consent (**LSX0104653**) was granted on 21st September 2001 for internal and external alterations including installation of plant at roof level, external floodlighting and stone cleaning.
- 5.2 Full planning permission (**PSX0204871**) and listed building consent (**LSX0204872**) was granted on 7th October 2002 for the refurbishment of office building including works to enclose an existing lightwell, enclose an existing fire escape stair, alterations to windows to the rear elevations, alterations at roof level including the installation of air-handling equipment and associated internal works.
- 5.3 Full planning permission (**2003/3287/P**) and listed building consent (**2003/3285/L**) was granted on 12th December 2003 for new entrance signage, video and card door entry points, disabled access call points and door ironmongery to the front entrance.
- 5.4 Listed building consent (**2009/2365/L**) was granted on 5th August 2009 for internal alterations to include the demolition and reconfiguration of internal walls, suspended ceilings and raised floors, to existing offices.
- 5.5 Full planning permission (**2019/3961/P**) and listed building consent (**2019/4256/L**) applications were submitted in August 2019 for the Change of use from office (Class B1a) to a flexible use for use as either offices (B1a) and/or a non-residential education institution (Class D1). Following concerns raised to the principle of development, insofar that the information submitted to justify the loss of the existing office space was considered insufficient by the Planning Officer, both applications were withdrawn.
- 5.6 Most recently, a pre-application enquiry (**2020/0161/PRE**) was submitted to the local planning authority with a meeting held on 20th January 2020. In order to mitigate for the loss of the office use from Boston House, the proposal introduced the concept of offering up two buildings (County House and 19 Bedford Square) currently in Class D1 use to be converted to office space. The pre-application proposal was welcomed by the Planning Officer but it was still considered that detailed marketing evidence would be required to justify any net loss in office space from Boston House, along with stronger evidence of the building's unsuitability for its current use. The feedback received has been considered and addressed as part of the planning application.

County House, Conway Mews

- 5.7 Full planning permission (**2008/0556/P**) was granted on 1st April 2008 for the change of use from office (Class B1) to mixed use Class D1 (non residential institution) at basement,, ground and first floors and Class B1 (office) on the second floor.

- 5.8 Full planning permission (**2012/1263/P**) was granted on 24th April 2012 for the installation of communal digital TV reception equipment including 2 satellite dishes, an aerial and associated equipment
- 5.9 Full planning permission (**2019/1658/P**) was granted on 21st August 2019 for the installation of new recessed pedestrian and vehicular gates to Mews Entrance.

Existing NCH site - 19 Bedford Square

- 5.10 Full planning permission (**2012/1522/P**) was granted on 16 July 2012 for a change of use from offices (Class B1a) to either use as offices (Class B1a) or a non-residential educational institution (Class D1).
- 5.11 The Council considered the change of use acceptable due to the limitations of the building and that the permission sought was for a flexible use. In granting permission, an informative was attached to the decision stating that the alternative use permission gave flexibility of use for 10 years from the date of the permission but that after 10 years the lawful use would revert to whichever of the uses is taking place at the time.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1 This section provides an overview of national and local planning policy relevant to the determination of the planning application proposals, as well as any other relevant national or local planning guidance.

LEGISLATION

Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 6.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council, in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest in which it possesses. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- 6.3 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in formulating local planning policies and taking decisions on planning applications.
- 6.5 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a *golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking*. Paragraphs 7, 8 & 11 are helpful in applying this presumption.
- 6.6 Paragraph 11 sets out how this is to be applied. It states that, *for decision-taking, this means:*
- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
 - *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*
- 6.7 The NPPF introduces three objectives to ‘Sustainable development’ (Economic, Environmental & Social - para 8), and advises that they are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives).
- 6.8 Section 6 refers to building a strong competitive economy and paragraph 80 states that *‘planning policies decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development’*
- 6.9 Section 8 refers to promoting healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 94 highlights the importance of a sufficient choice of school places to meet existing and new communities. It states that *‘Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should: give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications’*.
- 6.10 Section 9 refers to promoting sustainable transport and paragraph 102 states that *opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued*, whilst paragraph 103 states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of such objectives and with development focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable. Paragraph 104 supports *an appropriate mix of uses across an area to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities*. In this instance, the application site has good links to alternative facilities, public transport and is an inherently sustainable location.
- 6.11 Section 16 refers to the historic environment and requires the decision maker to consider whether the proposal sustains and enhances the significance of the heritage asset, making a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraphs 193-197).

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 6.12 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was launched in March 2012 as a web-based resource to bring together planning practice guidance for England in an accessible and usable way.
- 6.13 The NPPG sets out guidance on a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, the historic environment; the determination of applications; health and well-being; planning obligations; transport; and planning conditions.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 6.14 For the purposes of this application, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden comprises the London Plan (2016), the Camden Local Plan (2017), the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014) and the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Documents.

London Plan 2016

- 6.15 The London Plan (2016) is the spatial development strategy for London and sets out policies to support delivery of the Mayor's vision and objectives – particularly those to ensure that London is a city that meets the challenges of economic and population growth.

- 6.16 The London Plan Policies of relevance to this application are:

- Policy 2.9: Inner London
- Policy 3.16: Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure
- Policy 3.18: Education facilities
- Policy 4.1: Developing London's economy
- Policy 4.10: New and emerging economic Sectors
- Policy 6.3: Assessing effects of development on transport capacity
- Policy 6.9: Cycling
- Policy 6.10: Walking
- Policy 6.13: Parking
- Policy 7.4: Local Character
- Policy 7.8: Heritage Assets
- Policy 7.15: Reducing and managing noise

Emerging London Plan

- 6.17 While the 2016 London Plan is still the adopted Development Plan and carries full weight, the Draft New London Plan is nevertheless a material consideration in planning decisions. The significance given to it is a matter for the decision maker, but it gains more weight as it moves through the process to adoption. In December 2019, the Mayor issued his intention to publish the New London Plan to the Secretary of State and in its current form, it therefore carries near to full weight.

- 6.18 Relevant policies in the emerging London Plan include:

- Policy GG1: Building Strong and Inclusive Communities
- Policy GG5: Growing a Good Economy
- Policy SD4: The Central Activities Zone
- Policy D1: London's Form, Character and Capacity for Growth
- Policy D14: Noise
- Policy S1: Developing London's social infrastructure
- Policy S3: Education and childcare facilities
- Policy E1: Offices
- Policy E2: Providing Suitable Business Space
- Policy HC1: Heritage Conservation and Growth

- Policy SI 1: Improving air quality
- Policy SI 2: Minimising greenhouse gas emissions
- Policy SI 3: Energy Infrastructure
- Policy T1: Strategic approach to transport
- Policy T4: Assessing and mitigating transport impacts
- Policy T5: Cycling
- Policy T7: Deliveries, servicing and construction

Camden Local Plan 2017

6.19 The Camden Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies and covers the period from 2016-2031. The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Policy CG1: Delivery and location of growth
- Policy C2: Community facilities
- Policy E1: Economic development
- Policy E2: Employment premises and sites
- Policy A1: Managing the impact of development
- Policy A4: Noise and vibration
- Policy D1: Design
- Policy D2: Heritage
- Policy CC1: Climate change mitigation
- Policy CC2: Adapting to climate change
- Policy CC4: Air quality
- Policy T1: Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport
- Policy T2: Parking and car-free development
- Policy D1: Delivery and monitoring

Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014)

6.20 The Fitzrovia Area Action Plan sets out the development strategy for Fitzrovia and the western part of Bloomsbury. It seeks to ensure growth takes place in a way that balances the need for residential, institutional and commercial uses whilst ensuring that growth delivers the maximum benefits to the area. The following policies/principles are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Policy F1: Planning decisions in Fitzrovia
- Principle 3: Providing community facilities
- Principle 6: Educational, medical and research institutions
- Principle 9: Residential amenity
- Principle 10: Sustainability and local energy networks

Camden Planning Guidance Documents

6.21 Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) provides advice and information on how the Council will apply planning policies. The documents are largely linked to policies in the Local Plan and the following are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- CPG Amenity
- CPG Design
- CPG Developer contributions
- CPG Employment sites and business premises
- CPG Energy efficiency and adaptation
- CPG Transport

7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Boston House – Loss of existing business use

- 7.1 The proposed development seeks planning permission for the change of use of Boston House from the existing office (Class B1a) to a non-residential education institution (Class D1).
- 7.2 Policy 3.19 of the London Plan seeks to promote and enable the continued development of a strong and diverse economy across London, ensuring the availability of sufficient employment workspaces. This is echoed by the aims of Policy E1 of the Camden Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the Local Plan).
- 7.3 Policy E2 of the Local Plan encourages the provision of employment premises in the borough and seeks to protect premises that are suitable for continued business use (business uses are defined by the Local Plan as B use classes). In the context of this application, Policy E2 states:
- ‘We (the council) will resist development of business premises and sites for non-business use unless it is demonstrated to the Council’s satisfaction:*
- a. the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and*
 - b. that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate time’.*
- 7.4 To meet the aims of the above policy, the application proposes the conversion of County House (680.7sqm) to Class B1 office use whilst the use of 19 Bedford Square (929sqm) would return to office use. The proposed change of use of these buildings would offset the change of use of Boston House (2,131sqm) so that there would be a difference of office space provision of just 521sqm.
- 7.5 The change of use of County House has been sought via a planning application, lodged concurrently with this application. The change of use of 19 Bedford Square is permitted by an existing flexible planning permission at that site. To ensure the changes of use of these buildings occur concurrently, this can be secured by way of S106 agreement. It is considered that the difference of 521sqm represents an acceptable variation, given the large floor spaces involved, and the resulting improved office space provision that County House and 19 Bedford Square would provide.
- 7.6 In any case, the occupation of the site by NCH would continue to provide genuine office use associated with the operations and administrative functions of the college. In particular, the layout proposed to Boston House includes specific office space (measuring approximately 370 sqm) and meeting areas required for the administrative roles required for the day to day running of the college, and which would be similar to

that of a conventional office use. A strong office-based workforce would therefore continue to be present at the site and the proposed development would not result in the permanent loss of the employment use at the site. Taking into account the proposed 370sqm of office space as part of NCH occupying the site, the actual net loss of office space is in reality only 151sqm.

7.7 Further, the application would support the continued generation of employment numbers at the site creating a total of 35 full time administrative staff, and a total of 28 full time and 32 part time teaching staff. The proposed development would therefore continue to support permanent, full time and part time employment at the site, a large proportion of which would be in administrative roles and office based. It should also be acknowledged that the employment generated would be within an academic field which is wholly supported by the site's location within the Knowledge Quarter. The relevance of this is discussed further in paragraphs 7.13-7.26.

7.8 The supporting text to Policy E2 of the Local Plan (para 5.37) and the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) on Employment Sites and Business Premises (para 8) provides a list of various factors which will be taken into account when considering whether there is potential for the employment use to continue of a site. Whilst the proposal results in a limited net loss of overall office space when taking into account the proposed land use swap and the genuine office space to continue to be provided at Boston House, these factors have been listed and considered in turn below. For further details please also refer to the supporting marketing letter by Robert Irving Burns Property Consultants (RIB) dated 19th May 2020.

- *the suitability of the location for any business use;*

The supporting RIB marketing letter identifies that the layout/condition of the existing building does not allow an easy floor by floor letting policy for office space (B1a use). Without substantial and unviable major works, the building could realistically only be let as the basement and ground floor as one letting, and the top floors as a single unit or separate units for which there is no demand.

The consideration of any other business uses could include B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution). In view of the site's location within central London whereby access, parking and turning facilities for large based commercial vehicles is not provided and would be difficult, and that the site is not located within or adjacent to a strategic industrial area, these alternative business uses would not be appropriate. Furthermore, the site is located in an area primarily characterised by office-based employment and residential uses whereby B2/B8 uses are unlikely to be compatible in terms of their character and noise impact. Due to the site's location within the Knowledge Quarter, a use associated with an education/academic facility is considered the most suitable.

- *whether the premises are in a reasonable condition to allow the use to continue;*

The premises are in poor order and the Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) systems are at the end of their current useful life. As such, the future use of the building

requires significant investment which has deterred future occupiers of the building for office use. Please refer to the costs analysis (Appendix 3 to RIB Marketing Letter) carried out by Thirdway (a building fit-out company) which details the significant costs and investment required to refurbish the existing building into a habitable standard required by most office tenants would be between £2.5-£3m.

- *the range of unit sizes it provides, particularly suitability for small businesses;*

As outlined above, the building does not allow for an easy floor by floor letting policy and to do so would require significant investment and expenditure. Furthermore, having regard to the listed status of the building, derived from its façade, any external alterations required to sub-divide the building into a number of separate units are likely to require extensive works to the front elevation/entrances to the building. This could have a potentially harmful impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and it is considered most appropriate for the building to continue to operate as a single planning unit.

- *whether the business use is well related to nearby/neighbouring land uses;*

Boston House is located in an area primarily characterised by office and residential uses. The proposed D1 use is considered compatible with the neighbouring uses and is appropriate in this location. The proposed D1 use is well related to site's location within the Knowledge Quarter where similar education/academic facilities are located. Please refer to paragraphs 7.41 -7.50 of this statement which considers the impact on neighbouring uses in detail.

- *whether a lower quantum of replacement employment space is proposed as part of the development, and if so whether the nature of this space is considered to have the potential to offer equal or greater benefits to local people or businesses than the existing space.*

The proposed change of use of the existing office use at Boston House has been largely offset through the re-provision of office space at County House and the existing NCH site at 19 Bedford Square. Notwithstanding the small net loss in office space, the occupation of the site by NCH would continue to provide genuine office use associated with the operations and administrative functions of the college. Furthermore, the proposed use would continue to support permanent, full time and part time employment at the site, a large proportion of which would be in administrative roles and office based. Overall, the proposal is considered to have the potential to offer greater benefits to the local people or business in terms of employment, education, training, and community function.

Looking specifically at the demand and supply of employment space within the borough, paragraph 5.24 of the Local Plan identifies that the demand for offices by 695,000 sqm between 2014 and 2031 will largely be met at Kings Cross, through the implementation of 444,000sqm of permitted office space in Kings Cross Central. In addition, it is explained that the Council envisages that plans for further large-

scale office development in Euston in the region of 180,000 to 280,000 sqm of business floorspace will be provided in the second half of the plan period. The identified demand for office space is therefore likely to be exceeded within the borough and consequently allows a greater degree of flexibility to be applied to flexible office uses such as that proposed.

Marketing strategy

- 7.9 The supporting text to Policy E2 (para 5.39) and the Employment Sites and Business Premises CPG advise that where a change of use to a non-business use is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate that there is no real prospect or demand to use the site for an employment use and that evidence of a marketing exercise must be submitted.
- 7.10 As outlined within this statement, the proposed change of use of the existing employment space at of Boston House would largely be offset by the change of use of County House and re-provision of office space at 19 Bedford Square. Nevertheless, a marketing letter has been submitted to accompany the application which details the marketing which has been carried out at Boston House from May 2017 to March 2020. This demonstrates a lack of interest in the building and the building's unsuitability for a continued B1a office use. For further details please refer to the supporting marketing letter by RIB (19th May 2020).

Summary on existing business use

- 7.11 The proposed change of use of the existing office use at Boston House has been largely offset through the re-provision of office space at County House and the existing NCH site at 19 Bedford Square, whilst marketing information has been provided to evidence that there is no demand for Boston House to continue to use the site for office purposes. Additionally, the employment benefits of the proposed use have been identified as a suitable alternative to the existing B1a office use and would result in a use that contributes to the strong and diverse economy within the borough. For these reasons, the proposed development complies with the aims of Policies E1 and E2 of the Local Plan.
- 7.12 The proposed development has been sought as part of an overall package which seeks to offset the change of use of Boston House through the proposed change of use of County House and re-provision of office space at 19 Bedford Square. The applicant would therefore agree to a permission in which the two concurrent applications (Boston House and County House) and the existing NCH site at 19 Bedford Square can be linked by a s106 legal agreement.

Proposed non-residential education institution (Class D1)

- 7.13 Policy 3.18 of the London Plan is supportive of the provision of further and higher education facilities and to enable greater educational choice. This includes the expansion of existing or change of use to educational purposes.

- 7.14 Policy 4.10 of the London Plan requires boroughs to give strong support for London's higher and further education institutions and their development, recognising their needs for accommodation and the special status of the parts of London where they are located, particularly the Bloomsbury/Euston university precincts.
- 7.15 Policy C2 of the Local Plan supports the investment plans of educational research bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate for Camden.
- 7.16 Policy E1 of the Local Plan supports the development of Camden's education sectors and will promote the development of the Knowledge Quarter around Euston Square and Kings Cross. To give context, the Knowledge Quarter is a cluster of academic, cultural, research, scientific and media organisations large and small, all within a one-mile radius of King's Cross.
- 7.17 Paragraph 2.52 of the Local Plan recognises the unique role, character, and challenges of Central London in particular in balancing its economic, social, and cultural role. It states that the Council will *'support the concentration of medical, educational, cultural and research institutions within Central London that form an integral part of the Knowledge Quarter'*.
- 7.18 In addition, Paragraph 5.1 of the Local Plan recognises that Camden has one of the most successful economies in the country, the success of which relies on the wide variety of employment sectors including, the 'knowledge economy', and for example higher education and research uses.
- 7.19 Principle 3 of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (FAAP) states that the Council will support the development of community facilities throughout Fitzrovia provided the proposal is at an appropriate scale and character for the area in which it is situated. (The FAAP defines community uses as those including education facilities).
- 7.20 Principle 6 of the FAAP seeks to guide education uses to the area east of Tottenham Court Road (east of the site) and to the Howland Street Character Area (south of the site). It does nonetheless support educational facilities throughout Fitzrovia subject to it being acceptable to the scale and character of the area.
- 7.21 Having regard to the Policies of the London Plan and Local Plan there is clear support for the development of higher education facilities within Camden and central London, but more specifically to promote and encourage the development of such uses within the Knowledge Quarter.
- 7.22 The application site is located within the Knowledge Quarter of Camden, being located within 500 metres of Kings Cross and the proposed D1 use would therefore be wholly appropriate in this location, contributing to the provision and range of existing education facilities within the area locally.

- 7.23 Whilst it is noted that the proposed development is not to accommodate a new educational facility, but instead to relocate it, it would nevertheless support both its short- and long-term expansion.
- 7.24 The site has been identified by NCH as an appropriate location both in terms of the building itself, requiring very little internal works to facilitate the use, but more importantly its strong links and access to the existing network of educational uses that exist locally. In addition, the site is located in a sustainable location with excellent access to public transport links.
- 7.25 In response to Principle 6 of the FAAP which, as a preference, seeks to locate educational uses in specific character areas, a search was carried out by Robert Irving Burns Property Consultants on 28th April 2020 for self-contained premises between 19-23k sq ft. This confirmed that no self-contained properties, comparable to Boston House, were available within the identified character areas.
- 7.26 For these reasons, the proposed D1 use and occupation specifically by NCH is considered an appropriate use in this location supported directly by Policies E1 and C2 of the Local Plan, and Principles 3 and 6 of the FAAP.

County House - Loss of existing D1 use

- 7.27 The Local Plan refers to community facilities as consisting of a wide range of social infrastructure including education, and adult learning and training facilities. The existing accountancy school (D1 Use Class) at County House would therefore be considered a community use.
- 7.28 In this context, Local Plan policy C2(g) applies which states that the Council will ensure existing community facilities are retained unless either i) a replacement facility of a similar nature is provided that meets the needs of the local population or its current, or intended users, or ii) the existing premises are no longer required or viable in their existing use.
- 7.29 In this instance the proposed change of use of County House forms part of an overall package to deliver a community use at Boston House which will result in a net gain of D1 use. By virtue of the proposed education use of Boston House, the proposal would result in a facility of a similar nature (educational purposes) and for which there is an intended end user, in this case NCH. The proposal will result in an enhanced provision of D1 use within the locality with improved opportunities and facilities for students, training and learning and therefore complies with the aims of Policy C2.

HERITAGE IMPACTS

- 7.30 Case law requires decision makers to give *great weight* to any harm to the significance of a heritage asset and how this is to be applied is set out under section 16 of the NPPF. This refers to the historic environment and requires the decision maker to consider whether the proposal sustains and enhances the significance of the heritage

asset, making a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraphs 192-197).

- 7.31 Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires development to preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2.
- 7.32 Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. The policy requires development; within conversation areas to preserve or where possible enhance the character of an area (criterion e), and to resist proposals for a change of use or alterations that would cause harm to the special and historical interest of the building (criterion j).
- 7.33 Boston House forms part of a group of eight grade I listed buildings on the south side of Fitzroy Square. The application site and surrounding buildings also form part of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.
- 7.34 To give further background to Boston House, no's 36-38 were almost destroyed as a result of bomb damage during World War II. The building was reconstructed as a replica in terms of its street façade but with modern offices constructed behind the façade. The interior of Boston House is now completely modern and the party walls between the former houses have also been removed and there is no architectural or historic features, fabric or layout remaining.
- 7.35 Externally the front elevation of Boston House and its neighbouring buildings which form the south side of Fitzroy Square are of exceptional historic and architectural special interest. The buildings special interest lies solely in the contribution the façade makes to the overall composition of the terrace and Fitzroy Square as a whole.
- 7.36 The proposed change of use and the associated internal works would not disrupt, alter, or affect the significance of the listed building. Indeed, many of the buildings on the square are currently in B1 use and many buildings within the square were formally in D1 use without resulting in a negative impact of the special character or significance of the buildings. In fact, it is undeniable that it is only the architectural interest of the front façade - and the contribution it makes to the wider terrace on the south side of Fitzroy Square – that is of special interest in this instance.
- 7.37 The proposed development involves no external alterations or extensions to Boston House. Accordingly, the preservation of the special interest of the building would also result in no harm being caused to the character and appearance of Fitzroy Square and the wider Fitzroy Square conservation area. This would comply with national statute as well as Policy D2e of the Local Plan which requires “that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area”.
- 7.38 Turning to County House, this building is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area where the building is identified as making a neutral contribution (neither positive contributor or a detractor) to the character and appearance of the

Conservation Area. The building is not listed but the terrace to the north west on Fitzroy Square, part terraces to the south west on Conway Street and north east on Fitzroy Square are all listed.

- 7.39 The change of use of County House proposes no external alterations or extensions to the building, and on the basis that the part of the existing building is already used as an office, the proposal would not significantly alter the way the building currently operates. As a result, the proposed change of use of this building will have no discernible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of surrounding listed properties.
- 7.40 For the reasons outlined above, the proposed works would therefore preserve the special interest and significance of Boston House, the setting of surrounding listed buildings and the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area in compliance with national statute and local policy. For further details please refer to the supporting Heritage Impact Appraisal.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 7.41 Policy A1 of the Local Plan seeks to manage the impact of development in terms of residential amenity, transport impact and general community impacts. This covers a wide range of matters including noise and vibration levels, odour impact etc. Policy A4 further seeks to ensure that noise from development is managed. This is echoed by Principle 9 of the FAAP which requires the Council to prevent harm to residential amenity from noise, mechanical ventilation, light pollution, deliveries, and waste collection.
- 7.42 Boston House was most recently occupied in February 2019 as a large office/call centre employing approximately 200 people within the building. In comparison, proposed student numbers for the college for the 2019/20 academic year will be up to 250 full time NCH students and 300 Northeastern University (NU) students (the majority of whom are only there for the autumn term). There are currently 35 administrative staff employed by the college and the college also employs 28 full-time and 32 part-time academic staff.
- 7.43 Students will only be on site for teaching for 13 hours per week and full-time teaching staff for approximately 14 hours per week. NCH recorded over a week in January 2019 a maximum of 70 access cards being used on a day to day basis. Whilst some entries may be of more than one person at a time it demonstrates that there is only a small percentage of the total number of staff and students on site at any one time. As such level of activity generated at the site would be staggered at different times of the day.
- 7.44 The potential for noise and disturbance to neighbouring uses will therefore be no more significant, if not less, than the current operations of the B1 use whereby approximately 200 plus office workers could arrive and depart at a similar time.
- 7.45 Teaching of students will be carried out over three separate academic terms; September to December, January to March, and April to June; primarily between

Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm (term time only). In effect, the building will only be occupied by students and teaching staff for 22 weeks a year when there is teaching in the building. Having regard to the temporary occupation of the building by students/teaching staff throughout the year and that the hours of operation would be similar to a conventional B1a use, the proposed D1 use would not generate an intensification of use beyond the previous operations of the building.

- 7.46 The nature of the D1 use is as an administrative headquarters and teaching location. The building does not have large internal or external areas on site for social interaction where students are likely to congregate before or after teaching periods. No students are to reside on site and students/teaching staff would shortly arrive before and depart after classes. The teaching methods will not include the use of live music. Consequently, the operations of the D1 use will not generate any significant levels of noise that would cause disturbance to neighbours.
- 7.47 NCH are committed to ensuring the operations of the building and the working practices of staff and students are sensitive and respectful to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. This includes the managed operations of staff and students, and students adhering to the college's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy that sets the expected standard of behaviour from students. For further details please refer to the NCH proposed Operational Plan submitted as part of this application.
- 7.48 No external alterations or extensions are proposed to the building and accordingly no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity will occur by virtue of a loss of day/sunlight, overlooking, or effects of artificial lighting or odour.
- 7.49 Turning to the change of use of County House, the proposed conversion from accountancy school to office would have an intangible impact on the surrounding residential properties. No changes to external features (doors or windows) are proposed, so there will be no impact on overlooking. No further extensions of the building are proposed. The proposed office use would have daytime operating hours, with a similar number, if not less, people using the existing site during these hours. Therefore, there would be no additional impact on comings and goings from the site. As a place of work, noise levels would not be above what would be expected in a normal daytime residential area.
- 7.50 For the above reasons the proposed development will not result in any harm to residential amenity and complies with Policies A1 and A4 of the Local Plan.

TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

- 7.51 Paragraphs 102, 103 and 108 of the NPPF seek development to be focussed at locations which are sustainable through identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 7.52 Policy 6.9 of the London Plan requires development to provide secure, integrated, convenient and accessible cycle parking in line with the minimum standards including on site changing and shower facilities. Policy 6.13 advises that excessive car parking which can undermine cycling, walking and public transport use should be avoided. Policy T6 of the New London Plan specifically advises that car parking should be restricted in line with levels of existing and future public transport accessibility and connectivity, and that car-free development should be the starting point for development proposals in places that are well-connected by public transport.
- 7.53 Policies T1 and T2 of the Local Plan highlight the importance of prioritising walking and cycling as a sustainable mode of transport and indicate that car-free development across the borough is a key aim. This is echoed by the CPG on Transport which states that all new non-residential developments will also be expected to be car free in accordance with Policy T2.

Parking and accessibility

- 7.54 Boston House and Country House are both situated close to the bus corridors of the A501 Euston Road and A400 Tottenham Court Road and have good access to the London Underground stations of Warren Street, Great Portland Street and Goodge Street. Furthermore, onward connections can be made to national rail, London Overground and Eurostar services from Euston and London Kings Cross St Pancras stations which are all within walking distance from the site. Consequently, the PTAL for both sites is the highest obtainable PTAL score of 6b which is 'excellent'.
- 7.55 Considering the excellent links to public transport, no vehicular parking is proposed for Boston House and no additional parking is proposed for County House. With regard to Boston House, visitors and blue badge holders shall however be able to utilise the on-site car parking on nearby streets, including on-street disabled bays near the site on Grafton Way.
- 7.56 The proposed development will provide 42 cycle parking spaces for staff and students for users of Boston House which is in excess of the London Plan standards for the likely number of students and staff on-site at any one time. The proposed level of cycle parking provision would also provide an additional cycle parking capacity to meet extra demand between classes if required.
- 7.57 A detailed assessment of the parking and transport issues of the development are provided in the accompanying Transport Statement.

Delivery and servicing

- 7.58 Delivery and servicing is proposed to be consistent with the existing delivery and servicing arrangements at both sites. It is anticipated that delivery and servicing would be undertaken using refuse vehicles and small vans and the development proposals would result in no increase or changes to the existing delivery and servicing arrangements.

Trip generation

- 7.59 As outlined with the submitted Transport Statement, the proposed conversion of Boston House is anticipated to result in a net decrease in daily trips during the peak hours and over the course of a day. In addition to a net reduction in daily and peak hour two-way trips, the NCH operate a three-term system. Two terms of twelve weeks in the autumn and spring, and a summer term of eight weeks. In effect there would only be 22 weeks a year when there is teaching in the building. In contrast, should Boston House be used solely as an office the site would be operational all year round.
- 7.60 At this stage there is no end users for County House, however it is considered that there would be no discernible impact on trip generation. Therefore, the proposed development is not anticipated to have a material impact on the operation of the local highway network.

Travel Plan

- 7.61 For Boston House a Travel Plan (TP) shall be implemented once the site is operational to encourage staff, students, and visitors to reduce private car mileage in favour of more sustainable modes of travel. In support of the application a TP has been submitted which establishes the specific travel plan objectives of NCH, how these are to be delivered and the timeline for when regular monitoring is to be undertaken. The TP further highlights that a Travel Plan Coordinator (TPC) is to be appointed by the NCH and shall be responsible for the coordination of the TP and its successful implementation. Please refer to the accompanying TP for further which set out the long-term strategy for reducing dependence on travel by private car at Boston House.

Summary

- 7.62 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on the local highway network and is acceptable in accordance with the development plan and the NPPF. In conclusion, it is considered there are no reasons relating to transport and highways matters for not permitting the proposed development.

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.63 The NPPF seeks development proposals to use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. Paragraph 150(b) states that new development should be planned in ways that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 7.64 Policy 5.2 of the London Plan requires development proposals to make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emissions and to ensure that major development includes a 'zero carbon' target for 2019. Policy 5.3 of the London Plan requires development proposals to demonstrate that sustainable design standards are integral to the proposal, including its construction and operation, and that they are considered at the beginning of the design process.

- 7.65 Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires development to be sustainable with regards to design and construction. Policy CC1 promotes zero carbon development, consideration of the Energy Hierarchy (encouraging connection to District Energy Networks), reduced reliance on transport by car and resource efficiency, whilst Policy CC2 requires development to adopt appropriate climate change adaptation measures.
- 7.66 Principle 10 of the FAAP states the Council will expect all development in Fitzrovia to incorporate appropriate measures to make the area more sustainable and tackle climate change.
- 7.67 The application is accompanied by a Sustainability statement and an Energy statement for Boston House and County House which demonstrate how the proposed development will satisfy the relevant sustainable development and carbon reduction planning policies. In addition, a Thermal Comfort Analysis has been undertaken for Boston House which confirms that the proposal is able to deliver acceptable thermal comfort levels for the building's occupants.
- 7.68 Overall, the proposals for the scheme are in line with the overarching principles of sustainable development and the proposed energy strategy for each building will, when implemented, provide an efficient and low carbon development. The development is therefore compliant with the policies within the development plan and the NPPF. For full details please refer to the Sustainability, Energy, and Thermal Comfort statements which support the application.

AIR QUALITY

- 7.69 Policy 7.14 of the London Plan recognises the importance of tackling air pollution and improving air quality to London's development and the health and well-being of its people. Policy SI1 of the emerging London Plan states that development proposals should be at least Air Quality Neutral and use design solutions to prevent or minimise increased exposure to existing air pollution.
- 7.70 Policy CC4 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that the impact of development on air quality is mitigated and ensure that exposure to poor air quality is reduced. It advises that Air Quality Assessments (AQAs) are required where development is likely to expose residents, or in this case staff/students, to high levels of air pollution.
- 7.71 In support of the application an Air Quality Assessment has been submitted which concludes that, following the adoption of recommended mitigation measures during the construction phase, the risk of adverse effects due to emissions from construction will not be significant. The impact of emissions from traffic associated with the scheme will be negligible. The development is considered 'neutral' in terms of air quality for both building and transport emissions.
- 7.72 The proposed development will therefore lead to no reduction in air quality and is in accordance with the relevant national and local planning policies. For further details please refer to the supporting Air Quality Assessment.

S106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 7.73 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following CIL tests:
- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - Directly related to the development; and
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.74 The tests above are known as the 'CIL Tests' after the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations which made them statutory requirements.
- 7.75 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that the Council will use planning contributions where appropriate to support sustainable development, secure infrastructure, facilities, and services to meet the needs generated by development and to mitigate the impact of development. The Developer Contributions CPG provides further guidance on the use of obligations.
- 7.76 Specific to employment uses and the proposal, the Employment and Business Use CPG states that the Council will expect developers to assist with training and employment initiatives where developments could offer local employment opportunities or would have the potential based on its floorspace.
- 7.77 In accordance with the Employment and Business Use CPG, NCH are committed to providing training and employment support. In addition, and whilst not required by policy, a package of benefits supporting economic growth within the borough, are also to be offered by NCH and secured by a s106 legal agreement. These are set out below:
- Training and employment support
 - Business training courses/classes for start-up businesses
 - Provision of online training courses/programs
 - Car Free Development
- 7.78 Please note the applicant would welcome the opportunity to liaise further with the Council should further contributions be considered necessary to support the proposal and to make the development acceptable. In this regard the applicant is willing to work with the Council to explore the best options to deliver a suitable package of economic/community benefits.

8. SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed change of use of the existing office use at Boston House has been largely offset through the re-provision of office space at County House and the existing NCH site at 19 Bedford Square, whilst marketing information has been provided to evidence that there is no demand for Boston House to continue to use the site for office purposes. Additionally, the employment benefits of the proposed college use have been identified as a suitable alternative to the existing B1a office use and would result in a use that contributes to the strong and diverse economy within the borough.
- 8.2 There is clear support for the development of higher education facilities within Camden and central London, but more specifically to promote and encourage the development of such uses within the Knowledge Quarter. The application site is located within the Knowledge Quarter of Camden, being located within 500 metres of Kings Cross. The proposed D1 use would be appropriate in this location, contributing to the provision and range of existing education facilities locally.
- 8.3 The proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity given that the number of site users, opening times, servicing and deliveries, and travel to and from the site would all be consistent with the existing site uses.
- 8.4 The proposed internal works to Boston House would not disrupt, alter, or affect the significance of the listed building. The proposed development involves no external alterations or extensions to either existing building. Accordingly, the proposals would result in no harm being caused to the character and appearance of Boston House, surrounding listed buildings or the Fitzroy Square conservation area.
- 8.5 The proposed development will not have a material impact on the operation of the local highway network. Both sites are accessible by a wide range of non-car modes with a number of services, multi modal opportunities and amenities easily accessible within a walking and cycling distance of the site. Boston House shall be provided with staff and student cycle parking spaces which exceed the London Plan cycle parking standards.
- 8.6 The proposed development fulfils the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. The proposal is fully in accordance with national and local planning policy providing a scheme that contributes to a strong and diverse economy whilst improving the range of education facilities within the borough.
- 8.7 This Planning Statement should be read alongside the other supporting documentation and drawings which have been submitted as part of the full planning application.