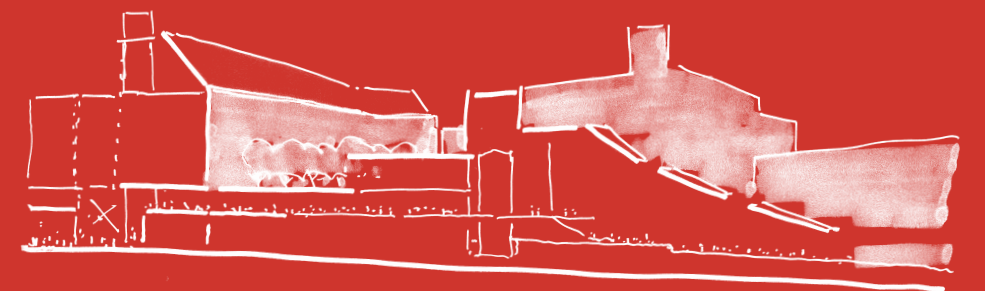


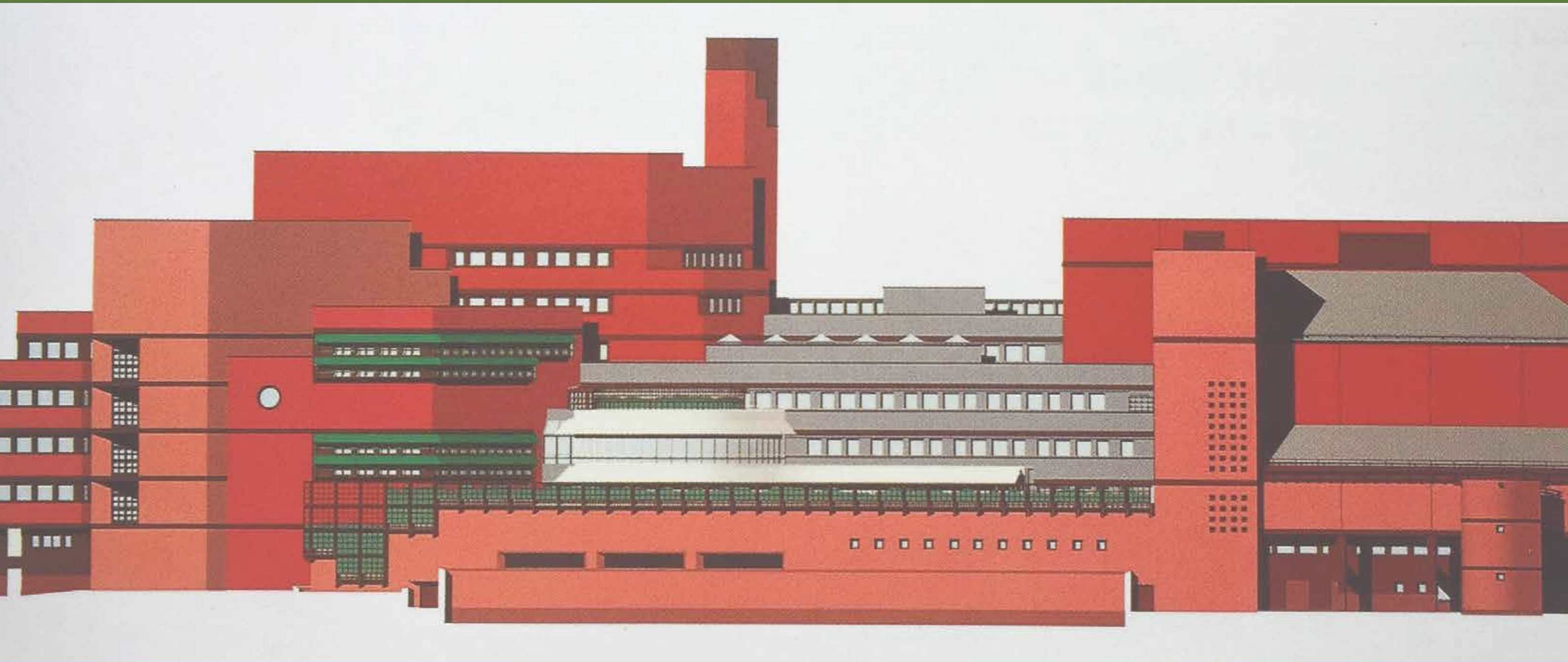
The British Library Extension
January 2022

Heritage Impact Assessment



The British Library Extension: Heritage Impact Assessment

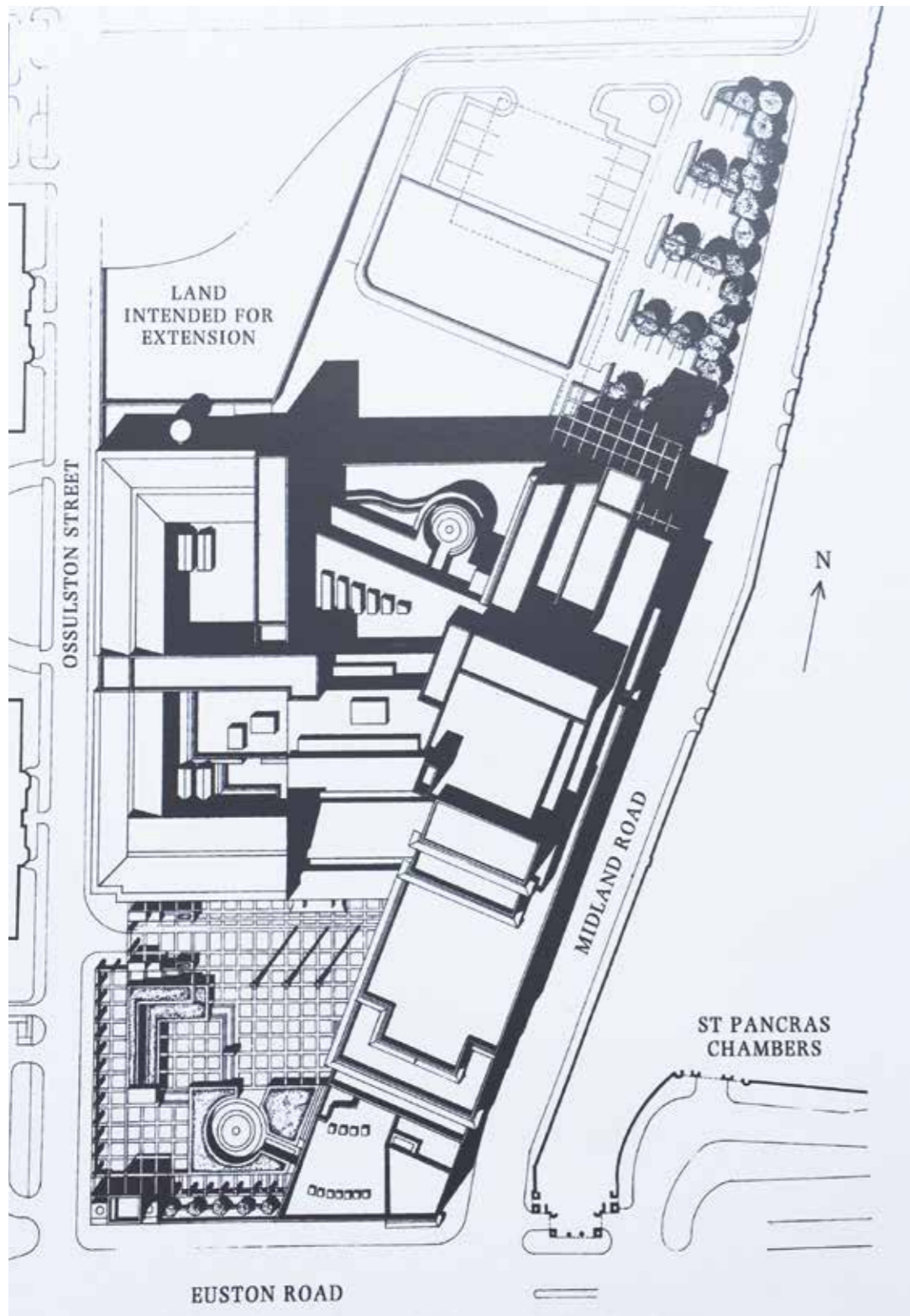
January 2022



Cordula Zeidler
Heritage Consultancy

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Above: Site plan of the British Library in c1999 (Wilson: The British Library).
 Cover: North elevation drawing of the British Library (Wilson: The British Library).

I. Introduction

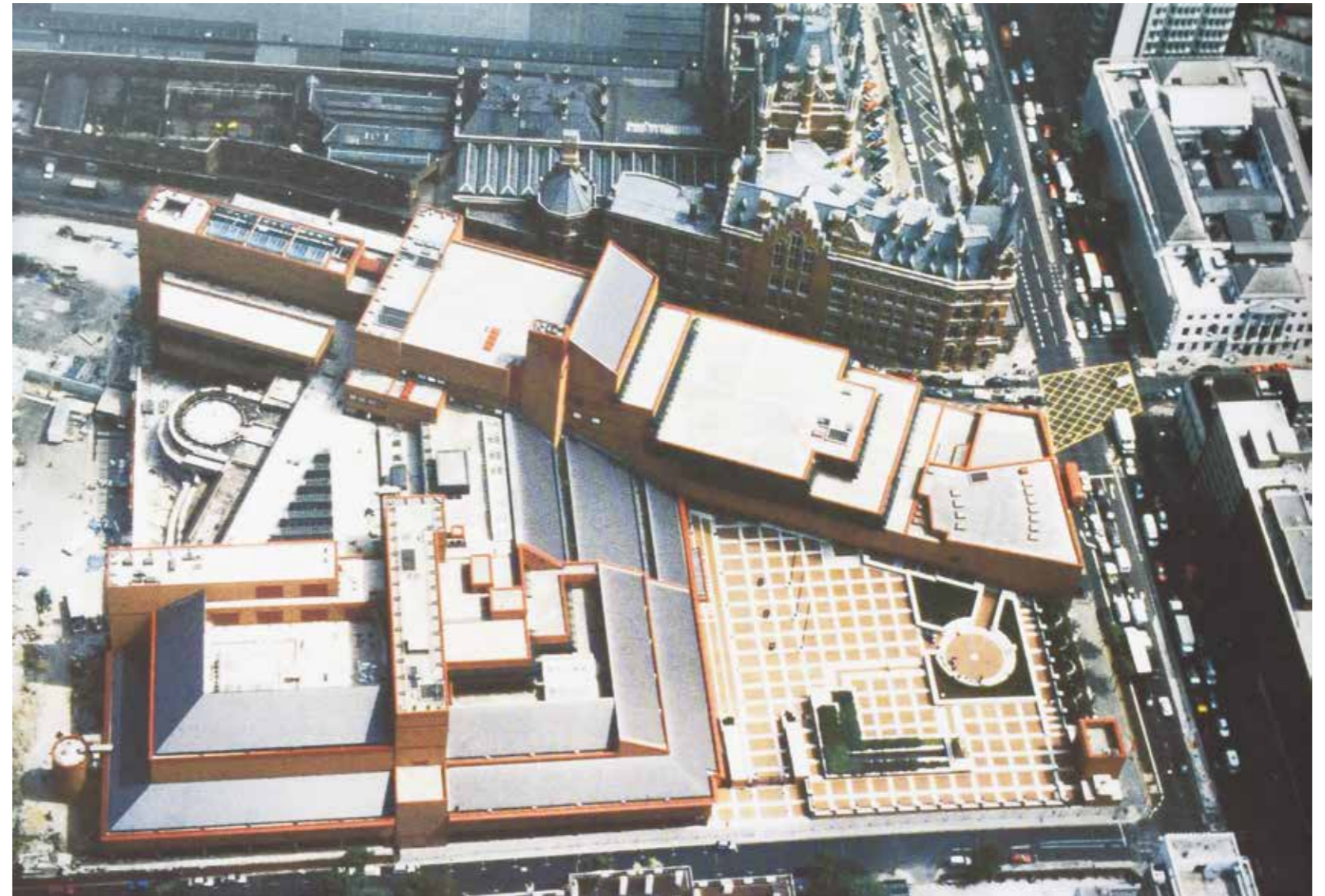
This Heritage Impact Assessment was commissioned by the British Library and SMBL Developments Ltd to assess the heritage impacts of an addition to the British Library for library and commercial uses on land to the north of the British Library, a site between Midland Road and Ossulston Street to the south of the Francis Crick Institute building, and for related internal alterations to the British Library, all to designs by Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners, and public realm designs by DSDHA.

This Assessment provides an overview of the history and development of the site and buildings, of the standing fabric and of its significance. It also provides an assessment of the design against planning law, policy and guidance for the historic environment. The report is based on research into primary and secondary sources and site inspections. It responds to a requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), paragraph 194, which asks that 'local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.'

This report assesses impacts on the significance and setting of the buildings on site, namely the British Library (Grade I listed) and the British Library Centre for Conservation (not listed). The proposals are assessed against sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which require that local authorities have special regard to the desirability of listed buildings and their settings being preserved; sections 199, 200, 202, 203 and 206 of the NPPF (2021) which ask that great weight is given to the conservation of heritage assets, that harm to significance requires clear and convincing justification, and should be outweighed by public benefits, that change to non-designated heritage assets be considered on balance, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset and that local authorities should look for opportunities for new development to enhance the setting of designated heritage assets; policy HC1 (C) of the London Plan (2021) which stipulates that development should conserve the significance of heritage assets and avoid harm; and policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan (2017) which provides that the Council will not permit development that causes less than substantial harm unless that harm is convincingly outweighed by public benefits.

Impacts on the setting of other heritage assets, including other listed buildings, conservation areas and on townscape views, are addressed in the Townscape, Visual and Built Heritage (Off-Site) Assessment in the ES by the Tavernor Consultancy. Built heritage impacts are also assessed in the built heritage chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment, by Cordula Zeidler Heritage Consultancy.

This report was written by Cordula Zeidler IHBC, a heritage professional and buildings historian with wide experience in the assessment of heritage significance and of proposals for alterations to heritage assets, and with particular expertise in buildings of the twentieth century. Cordula was previously a caseworker at the Twentieth Century Society, a conservation officer at the London Borough of Islington, a projects director at Publica, and a consultant at Donald Insall Associates.



Aerial view of British Library in c1999 (Wilson: The British Library)

II. Executive Summary

Heritage Designations

The British Library is one of few Grade I listed buildings dating to the second half of the twentieth century. It is in the setting of a number of heritage assets. The building is adjacent to the Grade I listed St Pancras Station and former Midland Grand Hotel which lie to the east. To the west are a number of Grade II listed housing blocks on Ossulston Street. Diagonally opposite, on the south side of Euston Road, is Camden Town Hall, listed Grade II. The site is not in a conservation area but to the east it adjoins the King's Cross St Pancras Conservation Area. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area boundary is to the south, one block south of Euston Road.

The British Library Centre for Conservation is not a listed building but has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021, and is not on Camden's local list.

Historic Development & Significance

The British Library is located on a site that has seen three radical transformations over the past 250 years: the land was originally built up with terraced houses following the construction of Marylebone Road (now Euston Road), a new important mid-18th century east-west route through London; in the mid 19th century its residential development was swept away when a new railway terminus was built, and the site was occupied by a large goods shed; and from 1978 the site was transformed for a third time when the British Library was built, replacing railway infrastructure with a national cultural institution.

The British Library was designed by Colin St John Wilson & Partners for this site from 1974. Wilson had originally been appointed in 1962 jointly with architect Leslie Martin to design a new library for the British Museum in Bloomsbury. When this project became controversial due to the loss of historic buildings and the scale of the new development, a new site was found adjacent to St Pancras station and occupied by a decommissioned goods yard. A masterplan for a new national library was developed and agreed in 1978. This had two long wings of reading rooms stretching northwards from Euston Road, embracing a central building for the King's Library and staff cafe set behind a forecourt and adjoined by a terrace to the north.

The site of the extension building which is now proposed was originally a part of the masterplan for Wilson's new British Library. Cost constraints resulted in the phasing of the project, and the library, begun in 1982, finally opened in 1998 on a reduced footprint, leaving part of the masterplan site to the north empty.

Externally the design was conceived to be contextual and relate to elements of its neighbours, including the red-brick and slate finish at St Pancras. Its organic planning and approach to the site was guided by the architecture of Alvar Aalto who had also been the inspiration for Wilson and Leslie Martin's earlier St Cross library in Oxford which had

square top-lit reading rooms. The library design incorporated specially commissioned and pre-existing art works, including major new pieces in the piazza and foyer.

The completed design of the British Library, despite set-backs in programme and a reduction in its size, was lauded for the quality of its interiors, but its exterior received a mixed reception. The building was listed at Grade I in 2015.

The British Library is of high significance as the nation's national library, designed by a well-respected firm of post-war architects whose main work it is. The BL is a building which has memorable, carefully detailed and beautifully executed public areas which are amongst the best modern public interiors in the country, including particularly its main foyer and reading rooms. Its external envelope is also of high significance. Its storage areas and back of house spaces are largely utilitarian, and they are expressly excluded from the listing. The list entry (see Appendix 1 of this report) also sets out other areas and elements of fabric that are not listed.

In 2007 an addition to the north of the BL was completed; this houses the British Library Centre for Conservation which has facilities for book conservation and the BL's sound archive. This building was designed by Long and Kentish with some input by Wilson. Both Long and Kentish had originally been involved in the design of the British Library, MJ Long as design partner and Kentish as an associate. The Conservation Centre building is a less elaborate design than the library, conceived as a subservient, garden-type structure which had to be built more economically, and it is specifically excluded from the listing. It is not locally listed but has some interest as a sympathetic addition to the Grade I listed library.

Other, relatively minor changes to the BL have been made in various areas to modernise it; this includes provision of step free access through ramps and lifts to some spaces, security measures, and modern facilities in some storage rooms, offices and in cafés. These are of neutral significance.

The Proposals

The proposal is for an extension to the British Library on the site of the last, unbuilt phase of the original BL masterplan. The proposed design of the extension is described in detail in section VI of this report. It entails the construction of a new building set at right angles to the BL's wings, with primary connections at the BL's upper ground and first floor levels. It would house library facilities, including galleries, exhibition, learning, business and events spaces, reception areas and some retail space at the lower floors and commercial offices above, in a glass-fronted building. It also includes an extension to the BL to house the BLCC whose current building of 2007 would be removed; the new BLCC would be elevated in matching red brick and be attached to the west wing of the BL on its north side.

The proposal overall is influenced by the forms employed by Alvar Aalto, an architect who had a formative influence on Colin St John Wilson's work and the BL. It is designed in response to the materiality and geometry of the BL, and also reflects the use of materials at St Pancras Station.

Internal changes to the Grade I listed building are localised and serve to make new connections to the proposed extension. The significance of the majority of internal areas that would be affected is low, because they are back-of-house spaces which are excluded from the listing. No harm would be caused by their remodelling. There are two areas of high significance on the upper ground and first floors in the west wing which would be affected by new openings towards the extension; they have high quality finishes and fittings, including two busts and a stamp collection, and the interventions to these areas have been carefully designed to relocate important elements of fabric and avoid harm by continuing matching finishes.

The external north elevation which would be altered in some localised areas has heritage significance but was always seen as a late solution and a compromise because the building was intended to be extended. A circular fire escape attached to the west wing illustrates the design skill of the architects who added this element to the building late and upon the government's decision not to complete the masterplan. It would be removed, and there would be other localised elements of fabric loss; these would cause some minor less than substantial harm to the BL.

The Conservation Centre of 2007 which would be removed is not listed and has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021, and whilst it is a well-considered building, its loss is necessary to allow the library to expand. Its removal would cause some low level harm and is outweighed by the substantial benefits of allowing the BL to expand, and other public benefits. The remainder of the site, a vacant plot which is in part used as a car park, detracts from the setting of the library, and its redevelopment would benefit the setting of the listed building.

The proposals were the subject to extensive pre-application consultation with Historic England, the GLA, the London Borough of Camden's planning and conservation/ design officers, and the public. Adjustments to the design for the interventions to the BL and the new building were made in response to feedback, minimising and mitigating against any heritage harm.

Overall, the proposals would result in substantial public benefits and some low level, less than substantial harm to the significance of the BL and the BLCC. This harm would be convincingly outweighed by the public benefits, so that overall the proposals would accord with planning law, policy and guidance.

III. Historic Background

III.A Development of the Area and Site

Euston Road was first formed in 1756 by Act of Parliament as part of a new route from Islington to Paddington. Originally the road was named New Road, but its central section was renamed Euston Road in 1857. It was conceived to allow fast access across London from its eastern and western suburbs. It also created a route for cattle to travel towards Smithfield Market whilst avoiding Oxford Street. When built, it was stipulated that 50ft either side had to remain free of construction to allow light and air to dry out the road surface and avoid adjoining residences being affected by dust. This resulted in garden squares and long front gardens adjoining the road. By the mid-19th century some of the individual gardens had been built on with commercial premises connected to the houses beyond.

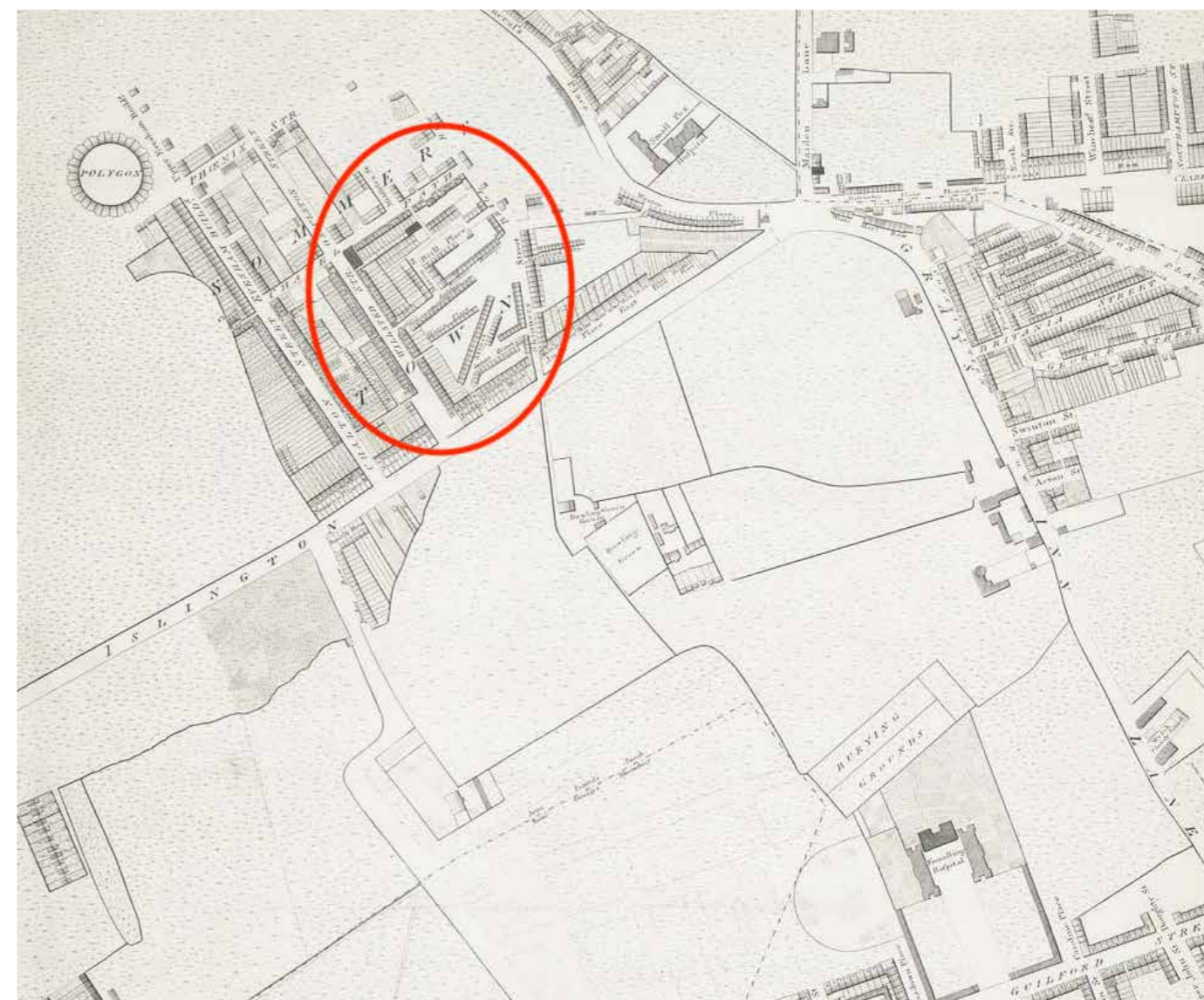
When Horwood's map was compiled in 1799 the site of the British Library was occupied by terraces of houses, mostly along perpendicular roads, with rear gardens, and those fronting Euston Road with ample space to the front. Further east was the Small Pox Hospital, built in 1767 and enlarged in 1793. The hospital was demolished in the 1840s to accommodate the new Great Northern Railway Terminus, now King's Cross Station, which opened in 1852.

The Metropolitan (Underground) Railway opened in 1863 and had a subterranean link to the rail terminus. At this time, the Midland Railway Company bought land west of the existing station, demolished the residential streets and buildings that existed, and began constructing a goods terminus and passenger station, opening in 1867 and 1868; this is today's St Pancras Station, built to designs by engineer William Henry Barlow and with a hotel fronting Euston Road by George Gilbert Scott, opening in 1873.

A photograph of 1881 (see following page) shows the hotel and station, and the site of the goods yard to its west, later the site of the British Library, still vacant. In 1893 the goods yard with a coal depot and milk shed to the north, were in existence and had replaced streets of terraced houses. A photograph of 1927 (see following page) shows its side elevation, with a continuous blind brick wall lining Ossulston Street.

The arrival of the railways fundamentally changed the area from being predominantly residential to an area of manufacture with print works and metal workshops, whilst some of the residential streets declined and turned into slums.

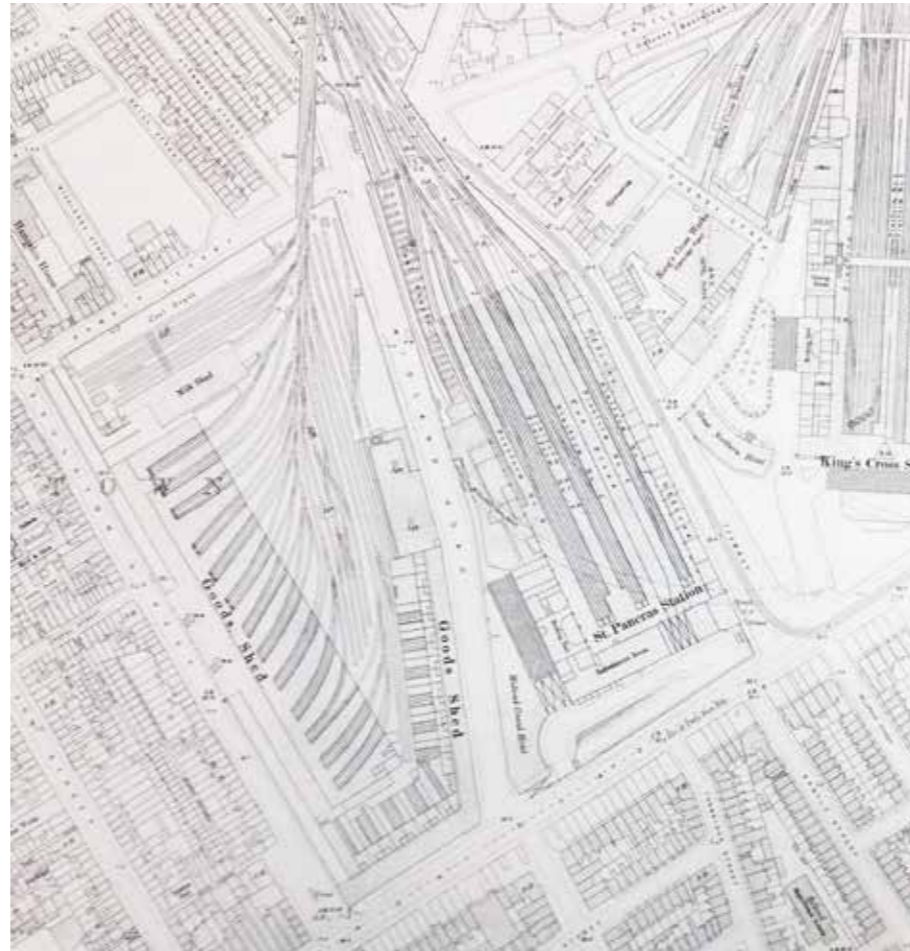
In the 20th century Euston Road became significantly more commercial, and large scale buildings replaced residential terraces where these had survived; this change was further perpetuated in the post-war years following bomb damage.



1. The site in 1799, newly developed with terraced housing (British Library)



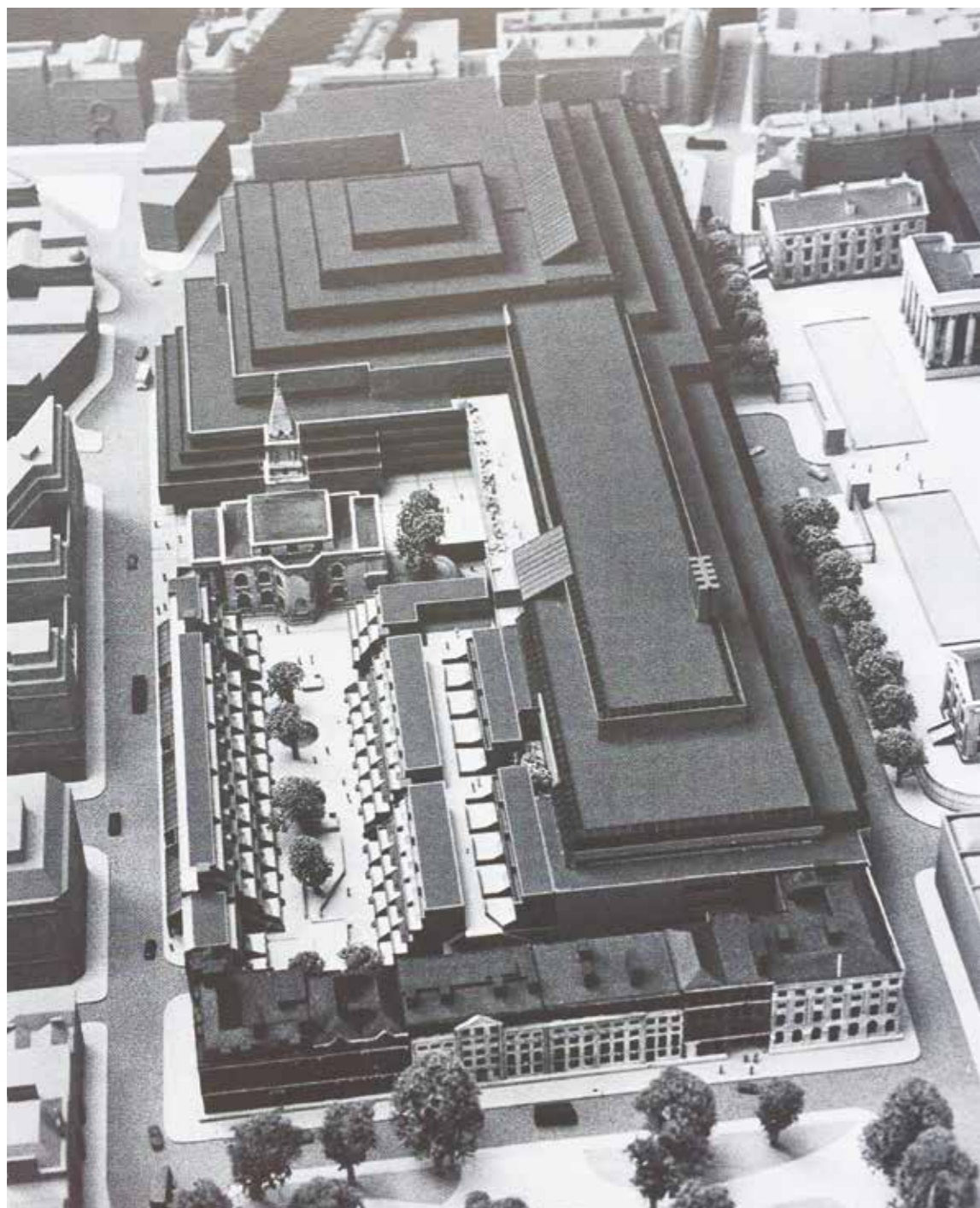
2. The Midland Hotel in 1881, with the British Library site still vacant



3. The site in 1893, occupied by a goods shed built for the station at St Pancras (British Library)



4. The goods yard buildings in 1927, seen from Ossulston Street looking south (LMA)



5. Model of the library building for the Bloomsbury site, 1972 (Wilson: *The British Library*).

III.B Beginnings and Early Designs

The Bloomsbury Site

The roots of the British Library lie in a decision of the mid twentieth century to provide a new, larger library for the British Museum. In 1943 the County of London Plan included an extension site for the museum, and this was to house the Library and Department of Prints and Drawings.

The design of new buildings for this purpose was awarded in 1962 by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works to architects Leslie Martin (1908 – 2000) and Colin St John Wilson (1922 – 2007) who had won the job as a result of an invited competitive interview process.

Wilson had worked with Martin at the London County Council's Housing Department after the war. From 1955 they were jointly in practice in Cambridge and from the following year Wilson was Professor Martin's Assistant at Cambridge where they taught architecture. They had designed a group of new library buildings at Manor Road for Oxford University with square top-lit reading rooms surrounded by carrel units, and Wilson suggests that this project was a deciding factor in winning the British Museum library competition.¹

A design for the first site in Bloomsbury was approved in 1964, necessitating the loss of a large area of historic buildings. The brief was then substantially changed and increased, demanding that the Science and Patents Department inter alia also be accommodated on site, resulting in a larger building shown in a model view of 1972; by this time Martin had stepped back and Wilson was the architect in charge of the project. A groundswell against the loss of this part of historic Bloomsbury, paired with the arrival of a new Labour government, resulted in the site being dropped in 1973.

The Site at St Pancras

Following the decision to abandon Bloomsbury as the location for a new library, a decommissioned goods yard to the west of St Pancras Station was purchased instead by the government. In 1975 Wilson began to prepare new designs for a national British Library; this new institution had been brought into being in 1972 by the British Library Act. The new building was to house the British Museum Library, the National Central Library and the National Lending Library for Science and Technology.

Wilson explains in his 1998 biography of the building that the relocation, despite it meaning the loss of eleven years of work, was an enormous opportunity because of the character and qualities of the new site at St Pancras:

The status of the area would undergo significant transformation if the current intention to site the Channel Tunnel Terminal at St Pancras were to be carried out. For then the Library would be the first building to greet the visitor and the Piazza, which is the only large public space in the vicinity, would become the threshold to and from Europe, over and above its role as a place of relaxation for visitors to the Library.²

1. Wilson: 1998, p.10
2. Wilson: 1998, p. 14

III.C The Masterplan

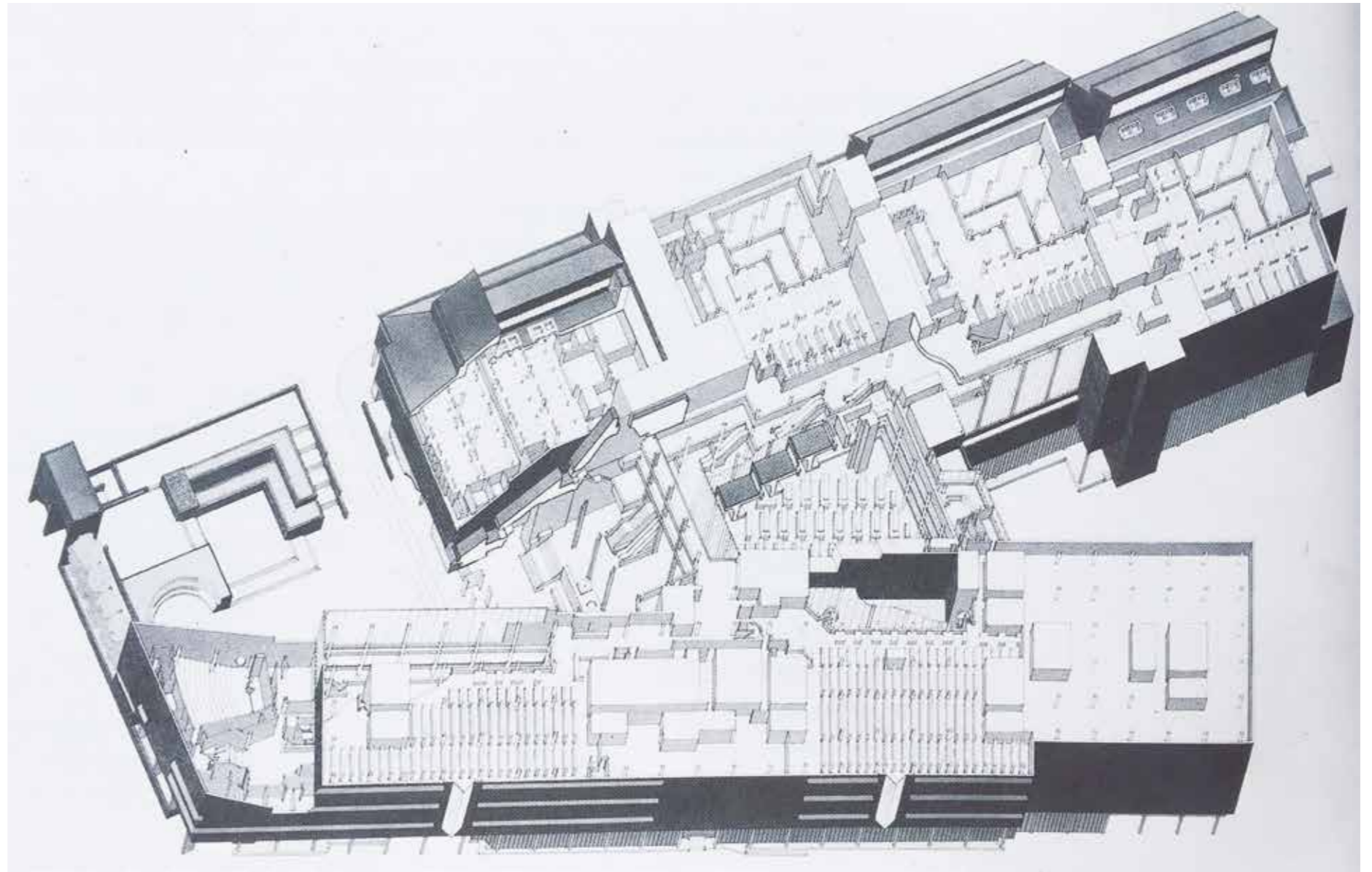
The masterplan that was developed from 1975 saw the creation of two wings that ran parallel to Midland Road and Ossulston Street, resulting in a splayed overall layout. There were two distinct ranges of reading rooms, humanities to the west and sciences to the east, embracing a core of offices and laboratories, and a public square located at the southern edge on Euston Road, with a conference centre adjoining it on the eastern side.

Wilson explains³ that the vertical distribution of the functions within the building was governed by the desire to create top-lit reading rooms, following the design established in his Oxford St Cross libraries. This meant that other functions, including exhibition spaces, were located below at ground floor level, and plant and book storage in basements. A wide entrance hall and a catalogue room were at the centre, just beyond the public square.

There was considerable national pride in the scale and design of this project, and Lord Eccles commented in 1978:

The strength and beauty of the design, its massing, materials and ingenuity of internal planning, will give London one of the few outstanding buildings of this century.⁴

The brief and design resulted in a 200,000 square meter large building. Outline planning permission had been granted by April 1978. The building was designed to house desks for 3500 readers and space for 2500 staff and up to 25 million volumes. The cost to achieve this programme proved to be too large to accomplish in one construction phase. It was decided in 1978, following the granting of planning permission and positive reception of the design by the client and in the press, that the project was to be split into three phases, of which a reduced version of Phase I was built. A site diagram (see following page) shows the extent of the completed building.



6. Axonometric view of the masterplan, 1975 (Wilson: The British Library)

3. Wilson: 1998, p. 21-22

4. RIBA Journal April 1978, p. 144

III.D The Completion Phase

Wilson and his team were clear that funding for each phase might not be forthcoming immediately, and therefore designed individual phases so that the building could operate as an entity after the completion of each phase. Phase I was further divided into sub-sections and a process of feasibility assessments followed to achieve a phased project that would meet the brief. This proved a long and painful redesign process, also made difficult by a lack of clarity on budget; this changed each year and was linked to the annual government budget for the arts, rather than being a capital sum. This process resulted in the provision of a largely reduced building with not much more capacity than that of the British Museum reading room. Construction began in 1982 and the building, representing a somewhat reduced version of the planned Phase I of the three-phase masterplan, opened in 1997 and was completed in 1999.

In 1987 it was decided that rather than allowing future extension, the agreed modified design for Phase I would be completed to create a self-sufficient library without future extensions. The original masterplan was altered to achieve this⁵, and included a different approach to circulation; rather than creating long corridors in the east and west wings on which would be aligned with the reading rooms, the shorter site had a large central circulation area which gave access to the reading rooms. It also entailed the insertion of the King's Library, replacing the catalogue room which was no longer needed because of computerisation; this became a key architectural exhibit, visible from the public foyer and with its books accommodated in a multi-storey glass case. Beyond this were cafés, and the concluding north elevation received a permanent rather than the previously planned temporary finish.

Wilson describes⁶ the completed design as a series of architectural elements that mediate between public areas of civic proportions, and the human scale which is introduced by furniture, architectural elements and through changes in scale. The bridges connecting the east and west wings have 'normal' ceiling heights, and seats and balustrades are all of a human scale, whilst the multi-storey foyer creates a dramatic sense of arrival befitting the task of welcoming visitors to the nation's library.

The completed building is rich in natural finishes, particularly internally, and art works throughout the site. Travertine was used for balustrades and built-in furniture; handrails in major spaces are wrapped in leather; the joinery is in oak. For the exterior a limited palette of materials was used, in part for contextual reasons; the elevations are faced in red brick and the huge pitched roofs are finished in slate, responding to the exterior of St Pancras Chambers to the east. Wilson built on a tradition of recent buildings which he called the 'other tradition of modernism'; he drew on the design approaches of architects including Alvar Aalto, Hans Scharoun, Gunnar

Asplund and Frank Lloyd Wright who, he felt, employed organic forms and 'sensuous' materials:

We touch, hear and smell a building as much as we see it... It is a tradition that, unlike the hard-line modernist obsession with 'Progress', never sought to cut itself off from the past or deny itself allusion to precedent and always retained a blood relationship with painting, sculpture and hand crafts.⁷

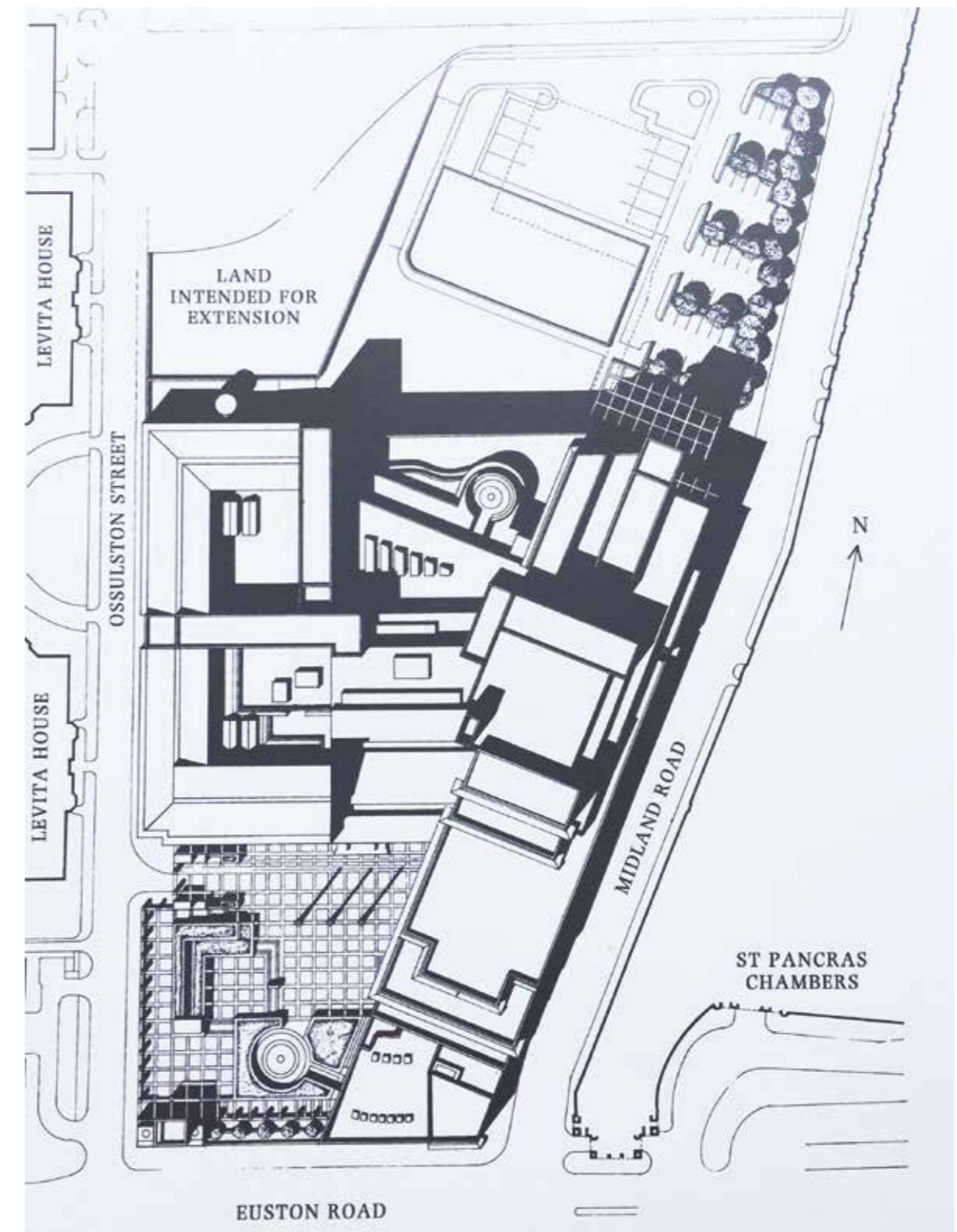
The building's programme of art works was intended to be part of the design, rather than act as applied decoration, incorporating existing art works as well as newly commissioned work. Major new commissions were a large tapestry in the foyer by RB Kitaj, and a sculpture in the forecourt by Eduardo Paolozzi of Sir Isaac Newton. The entrance gates and stone carving on Euston Road were designed by David Kindersley and Lida Cardozo. A number of further art works, including busts, were integrated from the library's existing collection or have been added since the library opened, and many of these are excluded from the listing, as noted in the list description.

III.E Alterations and Additions

Over time the library had to respond to changing legislation for access to public buildings, for security reasons and to satisfy modern requirements for library use. Key alterations have been the introduction of ramps in the public piazza; bollards at entrance gates; external lighting; changes to reading room counters; interior fittings in cafés and restaurant spaces and other minor alterations in various areas.

A key addition was the extension of the building to the north to house a new Conservation Centre to designs by Long and Kentish with Sandy Wilson as consultant. MJ Long and Rolfe Kentish were both key members of the library design team. They won a competition for the Conservation Centre in 2003, and the building was completed in 2007. It accommodates conservation facilities, the British Library Sound Archive and teaching spaces, and is set above a loading bay. A terrace at first floor level links the centre with the British Library building. Long and Kentish responded to the brief by designing a quiet building in sympathetic forms and materials, lower than the northern elements of the library and discreetly accessed via internal routes and a terrace. This addition occupies part of the eastern portion of the original 1978 masterplan site that was not built upon following the decision only to carry out phase I.

In 2009 Terry Farrell and Partners were commissioned to design a masterplan for the British Library site, but no built work resulted from this exercise.

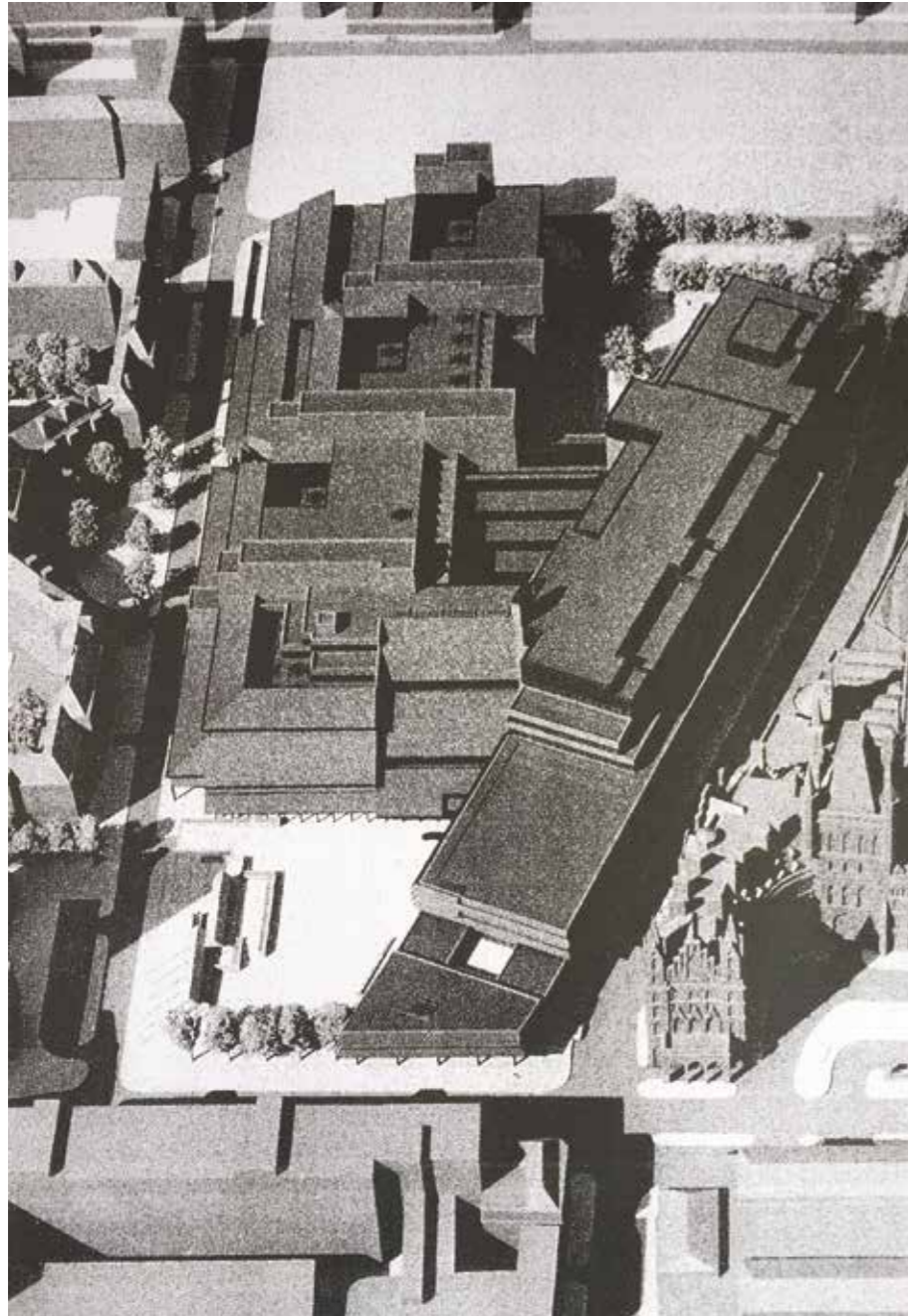


7. Site plan of completed building with land to north marked for later extension (Wilson: The British Library).

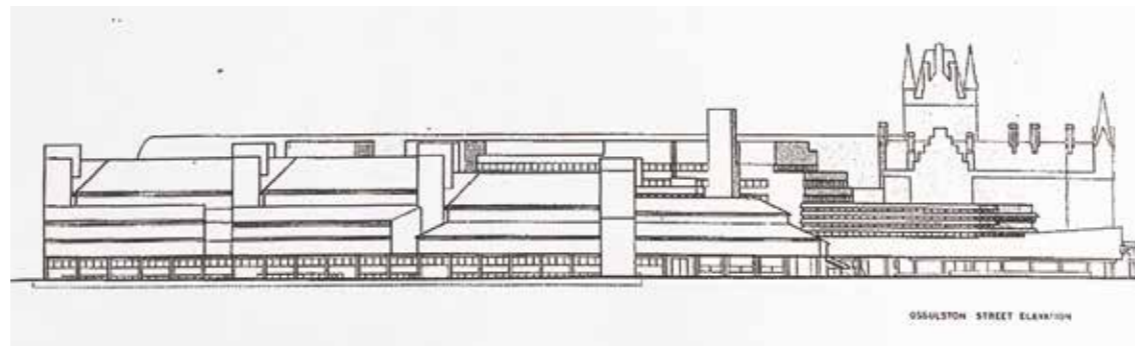
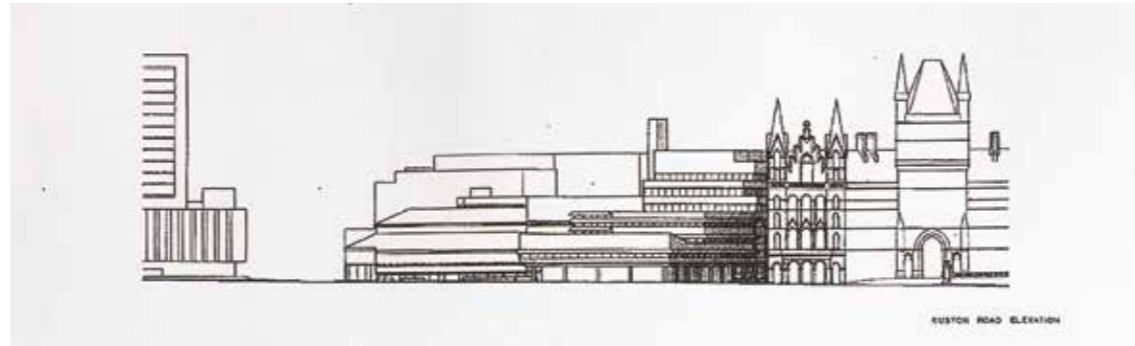
5. Stonehouse and Stromberg: 2004, p. 112-113

6. Wilson: 1998, p. 49-50

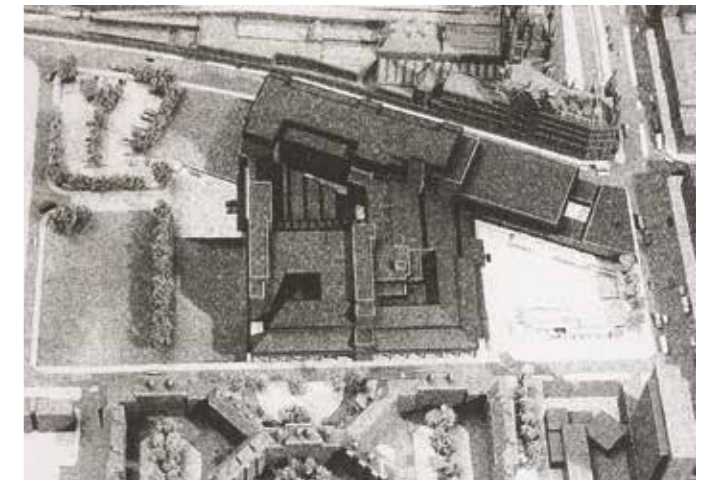
7. Wilson: 1998, p. 18



8. Model of the masterplan site seen from the south, 1977 (British Library)



9. South and west elevations of the masterplan design, 1977 (British Library)



10. Comparable aerial views from the west of the phase I design (top) and masterplan (British Library)



11. North elevation as completed in 1998 (Architecture Today Jan. 1998)

III.F The British Library Centre for Conservation

The British Library Centre for Conservation (BLCC) is an unlisted building which has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021. It was designed for the British Library to house their sound archive and paper and books conservation centre. The design was by architects Long & Kentish with Colin St John Wilson as consultant. The architects were appointed following a European design competition held in 2003, and the BLCC was built in 2005-7 on a two-stage design-and-build basis with contractor Sir Robert McAlpine.

The BLCC was constructed as an early addition to the British Library (BL). The BLCC was placed north of the BL, with an expectation that it may be adapted or even removed, and it was anticipated that as a minimum there would be more development on the remainder of the vacant site north of the BL.⁸

The BLCC was designed to house two departments of the British Library: the technical facilities of the BL's Sound Archive, namely for the recording of new collection pieces and restoration and transcription of out-of-date sound media, and as the workshops, training spaces and offices for the BL's book and paper conservation department which until then had been dispersed on a number of sites across London.

Pre-application negotiations for the BLCC building were under way in July 2004, and in January 2005 a planning application was submitted to Camden Council. Planning permission was granted in May of 2005. In 2005 the cost of the BLCC was calculated at £12.5m, and it was completed for £13.5m.

The building was designed as a back-of-house facility closed to the public except for its first-floor foyer which has an exhibition space. The BLCC was linked to the BL via the first-floor terrace north of the staff cafeteria; this terrace was extended to form a forecourt to the BLCC, described by Sandy Wilson as an 'acropolis'⁹. At upper ground floor level, beneath the terrace, a link corridor was built that gave BLCC staff access into the back-of-house spaces of the BL. The main BLCC building sat at right angles to Midland Road at three storeys tall, and had side wing at first floor level which over-sailed the BL loading bay; this wing was designed as the main, a top-lit conservation centre studio.

The BLCC had no public access other than via the BL, but 'Architecture Today' speculated when the building opened in 2007, that it may in the future be linked to the east to connect to activity generated by the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at St Pancras Station.¹⁰

Externally, the building was designed with reference to the BL but without copying its details, so that it could 'maintain a sense of continuity' but be 'subtly different'¹¹. It was clad in the same red brick (Charnwood Forest Dark Victorian red) as the British Library, but with flush rather than recessed pointing.

There are also pronounced differences: The BLCC has timber cladding, using green oak, on the two terrace elevations, the first floor return elevation towards Midland Road, under its entrance canopy, and in the form of a tall trellis over the east-facing link elevation; this is a material not found at the BL. The metal framed fenestration was designed to vary in size according to room configuration, rather than following the generally more disciplined fenestration pattern at the BL. The interior of the BLCC is considerably more restrained than that of the public spaces in the BL: walls and ceilings were designed with simple plaster finishes, the floors are covered in carpet tiles, linoleum or polished concrete, and door joinery is in beech. The two staircases are in steel and concrete for the fire fighting stair, and in beech for the main staircase.

The design team intended for the BLCC to sit quietly amongst taller neighbouring buildings, particularly the British Library and St Pancras Station which were recognised as institutions of national significance to which the BLCC was deferential. To this end, elements of the design, particularly the external timber cladding and trellises, reference garden structures.

Some rooms and elements of furniture required bespoke designs. The sound archive recording studios at the lower ground floor level were designed above a floating floor to mitigate vibration from train tunnels beneath, and the over fifty conservators' work benches were custom-made for their particular purpose. The building was designed to be fully air-conditioned to provide the required controlled environments for paper conservation and sound recording work, and with a robust structure to withstand bomb blast.

There have been very few alterations to the BLCC since it opened in 2007. Two rooms were converted from workshops for office use, a mesh screen towards the loading bay was replaced by a solid wall but there have been no structural alterations nor other changes to plan form.

8. Rolfe Kentish, interview with the author, 30 September 2020

9. Architecture Today: June 2007, p60. Building Design: 18 May 2007, p12.

10. ibid

11. Brick Bulletin: Autumn 2007, p10



12. The BLCC from the south in 2007 (Architecture Today, June 2007)



13. The BLCC from the southwest in 2007 (Architecture Today, June 2007)

III.G The Architects

Colin St John Wilson (1922-2007)

Colin Alexander St John Wilson, known as Sandy Wilson, was born on 14 March 1922 in Cheltenham, son of Henry Wilson, later Bishop of Chelmsford. He went to school at Felsted, where he was reportedly unhappy and the target of bullying, and then studied briefly history, followed by architecture at Cambridge University. He spent the war in the navy, returned in 1946 and continued his studies at the Bartlett under Sir Albert Richardson. His first employment (which he disliked) was with the classicist Verner Rees. He then joined the LCC's Housing Department under Leslie Martin, working with contemporaries James Stirling and Alison and Peter Smithson amongst others. After a year-long interlude at a development company, Wilson moved to Cambridge in 1956, joined Leslie Martin's practice and became his teaching assistant at Cambridge university. He worked on Martin's Harvey Court, a residential quad for Gonville and Caius College (1961, listed Grade II*), lauded for its innovative plan inspired by Alvar Aalto's designs; Liverpool Civic and Social Centre (1967), and the Law, English and Statistical Libraries on Manor Road, Oxford (1959-1964), before being appointed with Martin to design a new library for the British Museum in Bloomsbury, later the British Library and located at St Pancras, described by him as his '30-year war' (1962-1999).

Wilson's work and teaching were strongly influenced by Victorian architects of the mid-19th century, including Pugin, Butterfield, Waterhouse and others, whose architecture preceded the Arts and Crafts movement and who, as Wilson explained, 'took as their model the free asymmetries of an organic nature'¹². He also admired the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Finnish mid-century architect Alvar Aalto; Aalto's Saynatsalo town hall of 1952, whose expressive brick-faced volumes were arranged around a raised platform, responding to their site but also creating their own sense of place, was a formative influence for the design of the British Library.

Wilson became Professor of Architecture in Cambridge in 1975, was visiting professor at Yale and elsewhere, and held several honorary doctorates (Sheffield, Essex and Cambridge). Wilson was an enthusiastic painter and had a large collection of modern art which he gifted to the Pallant House gallery, newly designed by himself, in 2006. Wilson was knighted in 1998. He married twice, and the second marriage (1972 until his death) was with MJ Long, his design partner for the British Library.

Mary Jane Long, Lady Wilson, OBE (1939-2018) and Rolfe Kentish (*1954)

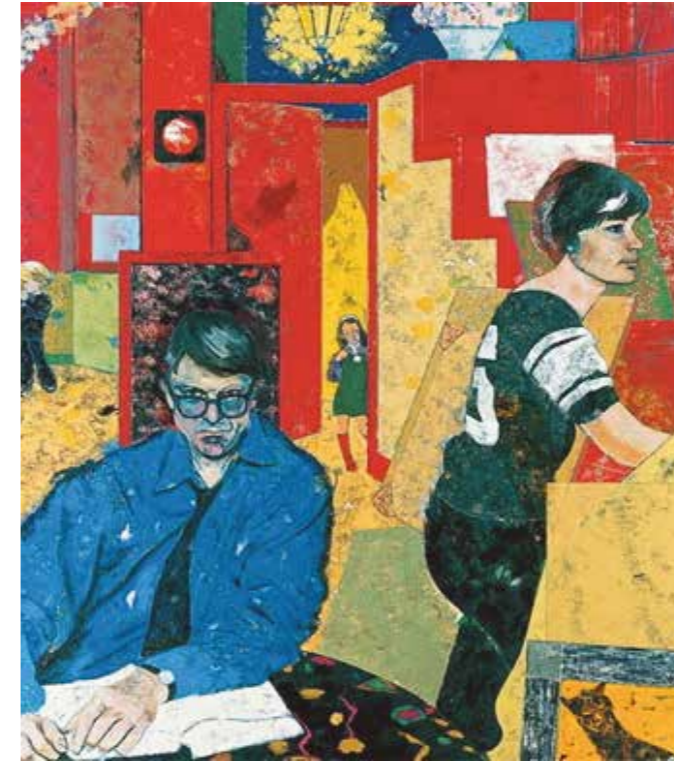
Mary Jane Long, known as MJ, was born in Summit, New Jersey. She attended high school in Montreal and studied at Smith College, Massachusetts, and then joined the architecture course at Yale, studying under Paul Rudolph and graduating in 1964. MJ Long met Colin St John (Sandy) Wilson at Yale in the 1960s as a student when he was a visiting professor from Cambridge. They married in 1972. MJ began working with Sandy in 1965 on a house for the painter Christopher Cornford in Cambridge. On the British Library project MJ was a design partner and 'in charge of the brief', reportedly marshalling Sandy's ideas, and her own, into built form¹³.

MJ also ran a separate practice, MJ Long Architect, from 1974 to 1996. During that time she designed a series of purpose-built studios for artists Peter Blake, RB Kitaj, Paul Huxley and Frank Auerbach.

In 1994 MJ formed the architectural practice of Long & Kentish with Rolfe Kentish who was an associate architect at the British Library. Their projects included work for the Jewish Museum in Camden, the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth, the Keeper's House at the Royal Academy, and Pallant House in Chichester (2006), housing Sandy Wilson's art collection.

MJ taught in Yale annually, and in the UK was a CABE commissioner and chair of CABE's design review panel, and a visiting professor at Falmouth University.

Rolfe Kentish was born in London in 1954 and received his MA and diploma in architecture from Cambridge in 1980, where he studied under Wilson, and his UK registration in 1982. He worked with Colin St John Wilson from 1982 to 1996 (as an associate from 1989), and was an associate of MJ Long architect 1990 to 1994. In 1994 he formed Long & Kentish with MJ Long. He continues to advise the British Library on maintenance and alteration works.



14. Wilson and MJ Long in a painting by RB Kitaj (RIBA 4 Oct. 2008)



15. Harvey Court, Martin and Wilson 1961 (Stonehouse: 2004)

12. Wilson 1998, p. 15

13. Saunt: Long. RIBA 2018

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IV. The British Library Building

IV.A The Site and its Setting

The site is located to the north of the British Library, with the newly built Francis Crick Institute directly adjoining to the north. The eastern half of the site is currently used as a car park and vehicle delivery route and ramp into the library's loading bay.

The western half of the site is used as a community garden, a meanwhile use that has planting and small temporary structures, and this is set behind temporary timber hoarding. It was previously used for construction-related activities for the Francis Crick Institute. Towards Midland Road the site is enclosed by original metal railings on a stone plinth, designed as part of the British Library development, behind which are paved and soft landscaped areas and car parking which adjoin the BLCC. The vacant site detracts from the setting of the library and other heritage assets which are addressed in the Townscape, Visual and Built Heritage (Off-Site) chapter in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

The BLCC extends into part of the eastern section of the site and is set away from the street, onto steel and concrete columns above the loading bay. It is a building on an L-shaped plan with simple elevations in brick, some timber cladding, and a projecting glass feature on the north elevation. The main conservation studio is at the top floor and has a saw-tooth roof. This building is not of the same high design quality as the library and excluded from the listing.

North of the site is the Francis Crick Institute, a building designed by HOK and PLP Architecture which opened in 2016. It has a striking tall metal and glass elevation that faces the site; this has a curved roof which rises taller than much of the library building. Its east and west elevations have elements of orange-coloured cladding with fully glazed elements. This is a 'signature' building with few direct references to its immediate context. It establishes considerable height in this area.

Between the Francis Crick Institute and the site is a narrow footpath, Dangoor Walk. This is enclosed by a temporary metal fence, but at the east end is a return of the British Library railings that are continuous with the original BL Midland Road railings.



Ossulston Street looking north towards site



British Library from the south west



Site and north elevation of the British Library prior to meanwhile use as a community garden



Site from the west



Eastern section of north elevation and Conservation Centre



North elevation, central and eastern section with circular fire escape stair tower



Loading bay



First floor terrace with former staff cafe (right) and Midland Road wing (left)

IV.B The BL's External Fabric

Elements of the British Library building that are to be altered as part of the proposals are limited; they relate to the elements of and attached to the north-facing elevation, and to a small number of internal spaces at lower ground, ground and first floors. The British Library Centre for Conservation would be removed and is described separately below.

The fabric of the BL and its significance is described in detail in the list description (see Appendix 1). Areas that would be affected by the proposals are described below.

North elevation

The north elevation of the British Library's east wing has three distinct elements, an office section with window bands to the east, a vertical largely blind and taller tower at the centre, and a third section with projecting, paired brise soleil elements to the west. This is a complicated elevation which reflects the uses beyond and lacks the clarity of the side elevations. This is adjoined to the west by a glazed double height elevation and the curved glazed elevation of the former staff cafe (see photograph on the left).

The central part of the north elevation is largely concealed from public view by the BLCC and can be seen from the access road to the loading bay. At lower levels is the BL's loading bay, a open large area in utilitarian finishes, above this a largely blind elevation to the upper ground floor with small square windows into back-of-house areas surmounted by a restaurant terrace, and further up two receding storeys of office accommodation with continuous metal-framed window bands.

The western section of the north elevation which forms the end of the Ossulston Street wing is largely blind. It is faced in panellised brick, in two horizontal parts; its upper section is set back, the lower section stands on piloti above a recessed ground floor and has a heavy cornice which continues onto Ossulston Street. Both elements have pitched slate-covered roofs. Set forward of the lower element is a circular stair drum, blind, and in the style of Louis Kahn. This is linked to the building with a glazed double-height bridge. To the east is a full height brick tower with four columns of small square-shaped openings.



First floor terrace with former staff cafe and trellis looking west



Midland Road escape staircase

First Floor Rear Terrace

At the centre of the north elevation is a stone-paved terrace, originally constructed to serve the staff cafe which is today a public restaurant (see photograph on the far left). It was designed with a tall metal trellis painted burgundy red, set onto a brick wall with stone coping, designed for boundary protection and privacy. This boundary treatment survives in part but has been removed to the west when the terrace was extended to connect in 2007 to the BLCC. The terrace has stone paving in the form of stone slabs and granite sets with areas of soft landscaping.

Midland Road staircase

Attached to the north flank of the Midland Road wing is an escape staircase with a red-brick and trellis enclosure (see photographs on the left) with stone-paved treads and a metal handrail.

External stairs and railings

On Ossulston Street and located within the site boundary is a set of external concrete-built stone-faced stairs with metal handrails set behind a granite plinth surmounted by original railings on the street (see photograph far left, bottom row). Similar metal railings, some set onto a granite plinth, enclose the site to the east on Midland Row (see photograph centre, bottom row).



Ossulston Street external stairs and railings



Midland Road railings



Midland Road stair interior to street level

IV.C The British Library Centre for Conservation

This is a later addition of 2003-7 to designs by Long and Kentish, an intentionally more modest building than the BL. The BLCC has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021. Internally the building has office and workshop spaces off corridors with simple finishes. The conservation studio is a large and well-designed space on the top floor with a saw tooth roof to provide constant levels of light.

The building is not regarded as having special interest in the listing citation; its detailing is simpler than that of the library and it is of a more modest scale, being intentionally designed as a garden-type structure. The recently constructed Francis Crick Institute now dominates its setting, particularly in views from the south.

The building has an L-shaped footprint. Its elevations are finished in red brick laid in stretcher bond with flush pointing, with metal-framed fenestration in a variety of patterns and with some green oak cladding and trellises on elevations facing south and east. Because the BLCC is constructed over the pre-existing loading bay to the BL, the longer north-south leg of the 'L', housing the main conservation studio, only exists at the uppermost, first floor level and oversails the loading bay. The shorter leg, oriented east-west, is three storeys tall, equating to the British Library's lower ground, upper ground and first floor levels, and houses the sound archive and smaller workshops and offices of the conservation centre.

The BLCC is connected to the British Library via a covered link at upper ground floor level and a terrace at first floor level, the latter giving access to the former BL staff restaurant. The BLCC's main entrance faces this terrace. The terrace existed when the BL was completed in 1999, and was extended when the BLCC was built. It is finished in red brick pavers outside the BLCC, and in regularly-sized stone flags outside the BL. At the lowest level is a link into the BL loading bay.



Conservation Centre interior: conservation studio



Conservation Centre seen from the east



Conservation Centre from the south

The BLCC conservation studio wing:

The conservation studio wing, set at right angles to the main BLCC building, is a single storey space. It has a large, open plan main room which has north light and accommodates three rows of large work stations for the BL's book and paper conservators. The roof is supported by exposed steels with deep I-sections which allow for the interior to be free of columns. The studio is flanked to the east and west by corridors. That to the west accommodates the wet work stations for conservators, which according to the brief needed to be adjacent to but separate from the main studio (interview with Rolfe Kentish, 30 September 2020). This has large fixed window openings to the studio. To the east is an access corridor with three doors to the studio. The walls have a plain painted plaster finish, the floor is finished in linoleum. The internal joinery has plain profiles in beech as elsewhere in the building.



BLCC Entrance foyer



BLCC First floor lecture room

The BLCC east-west wing:

The three-storey wing, set at right angles to Midland Road, has rooms at three levels. Internal finishes are generally in the form of painted plaster on walls and ceilings, with joinery in beech and floors either in fair-faced concrete, carpet tiles or linoleum.

At either end is a full-height enclosed staircase set into a concrete stairwell, that to the east with a timber balustrade and carpeted treads, that to the west serving as an escape stair with a steel balustrade and concrete treads. There is a lift near the east staircase; this is of standard c2007 construction.

The top, first floor level is occupied by facilities for the conservation centre. Behind the terrace entrance is a publicly accessible lobby area used as an exhibition space, and to its west is a large room for lectures, with some rooflights to the north. There is a corridor running east-west with access to two large office/ workshop rooms facing north, each with a deep section of dropped ceiling housing services.

The upper ground floor has rooms either side of a central corridor used as offices, storage rooms and workshop areas with finishes similar to those on the first floor. There is a quarantine room with double steel doors near the lift. This level has a corridor link to the BL which has the same plain finishes.

The lower ground floor houses the sound archive which has outgrown its premises and has equipment stored in the corridor where this no longer fits its accommodation. The sound archive has recording studios and workshop rooms which have insulated walls. There is a central corridor with rooms either side. Recording studios to the north have a rectangular plan, and two are linked via an internal window for interview recording. To the south the studios have an angled wall to prevent sound reflection. At the west end is a fire escape door and at the east end is a connection to the loading bay with enclosing walls in breeze block.



BLCC Conservation studio with wetrooms beyond



BLCC Main Staircase



BLCC Fire escape staircase

IV.D The BL's Internal Fabric

First Floor

The spaces that would be affected are located to the west side of the restaurant which sits to the north of the King's Library. These spaces are:

- The northern end wall of the public circulation space west of the restaurant and east of the Humanities Reading Room, lined in Travertine, with an original panelled timber door and a bust of Sir Anthony Panizzi (1797-1879) by sculptor Baron Carlo Marochetti, of 1864. The sculpture is not covered in the list entry but of some historic significance to the development of the British Library because of the importance of Panizzi to the historic development of the library; after fleeing Italy and arriving in Britain in 1823, Panizzi was Head of the British Museum and principal librarian from 1856-66 and initiated the creation of the central round reading room in the British Museum.
- The first floor terrace itself, a significant part of the 'completion phase' and Wilson's carefully detailed compromise design of the originally intended larger project. The terrace was extended in the early 2000s when the BLCC was constructed and this later extension has no significance.
- Offices/ storage spaces west of the restaurant and north of the public areas, all with plain finishes and without significance (excluded from the listing).
- The kitchen directly to the west of the restaurant, also without significance.

Upper Ground Floor

The north wall of the public area at upper ground floor level is finished in travertine wall cladding and has a chequerboard marble floor which continues the external grid present in the Euston Road forecourt.

Set into a wall is a recess with a bronze bust of Dr. Walter Model von Thunen, a German Lutheran pastor who donated a collection of German post-war stamps which is also on display in pull out frames on the north and the west walls.

The original finishes are a significant part of the original library design and the philatelic exhibits and bust of Model, though not included in the list entry, have significance as an exhibit of the library's collections.



1st floor east of Humanities Reading Room with Panizzi bust



Upper ground floor north wall: Dr Walter Model von Thunen bust and philatelic collection



1st floor office west of restaurant kitchen

Back-of-House Areas

The non-public areas that would be affected are all back of houses spaces which are located in the northern section of the building close to the rear elevation. Spaces that directly adjoin the north elevation at lower levels are without exception rooms with plain finishes, and include offices, a large post room and storage areas. These are utilitarian spaces without significance, and they are illustrated in the photographs to the right. They are not included in the listing of the British Library.



Upper ground floor post room by loading bay



Interior of circular fire escape stair north of west wing



Basement 2 back wall



Upper ground floor office above loading bay

V. Assessment of Significance

The site of the British Library has been a place of radical transformation at least since the 18th century, and change rather than consistency has been a recurring driving force in its development. Transformative change is therefore an important part of the historic significance of the site, and has entailed the following:

- The Marylebone Road or New Road (later Euston Road) was established in 1756; this was a major achievement in town planning, and was formed on undeveloped land to create a new east-west connection across London. This resulted in the laying out of a new network of side streets and new urban residential development on and around the site.
- The arrival of the railway and the construction of St Pancras Station in 1868 prompted the removal of the residential neighbourhood north of Euston Road on the site, and the establishment of large building volumes, namely the station, hotel and associated railway buildings, including a goods shed on the site.
- The construction of the British Library necessitated the removal of the St Pancras goods shed and its replacement with a national cultural institution, which was executed only in part, leaving a site to the north, the subject of this current application, vacant.

More recently, parts of this area have been transformed again. This included the redevelopment of a large area north of King's Cross Station by Argent developers for residential, academic and commercial uses. Locally, the construction of the Francis Crick Institute to the north of the site, has resulted in a substantial building which is part of a wider cluster of academic and research institutions, the Knowledge Quarter, that includes *inter alia* the British Library, UCL and the Crick.

List Entry

A detailed account of the existing fabric of the British Library and its significance is given in the list description (see Appendix 1). This document also sets out the principal reasons for designation of the BL at Grade I as follows:

*** Architectural interest:**

For its stately yet accessible modernist design rooted in the English Free tradition with Arts and Crafts and classical influences, crisply and eloquently contextualised by its massing and use of materials which respect and contrast to the St Pancras station and hotel;

*** Materials:**

For its level of craftsmanship and skilful handling of a range of materials externally and internally, including Travertine, Portland and Purbeck stone, granite, Leicestershire brick, bronze and American white oak throughout, carefully and meticulously detailed;

*** Interior:**

For the well-planned interior spaces comprising the generously lit reading rooms and multi-level atrium, successfully fulfilling the brief to create the nation's Library;

*** Historic Interest:**

In the tradition of the Royal Festival Hall, it is a landmark public building incorporating at its heart the King's Library, given to the nation by George III;

*** Architect:**

A major work by the eminent architect and academic Sir Colin St John Wilson and his architectural partner, MJ Long. Wilson has a number of listed buildings to his name notably the St Cross libraries at the University of Oxford (Grade II*);

*** Artistic interest:**

For the fusion of art with architecture as a component of the design ethos, exemplified by Paolozzi's Newton in the piazza;

*** Group Value:**

With the Grade I St Pancras Hotel, Grade II Camden Town Hall and Grade II housing on Ossulston Street.

Hierarchy of Significance

In more detail, the heritage significance of the buildings on the site, in particular in relation to the areas that would be altered, is as follows:

High Significance:

- The external envelope of the building for its quality of design and execution and its contextual merit. Particularly its street elevations and southern forecourt are of the highest significance.
- The public interiors of the BL, particularly its foyer and reading rooms, for their high degree of craftsmanship, fine materials and spatial qualities.

The significance of the internal areas that would be affected by the proposed alterations is high in localised areas on the first and upper ground floors, namely:

- The first floor north wall adjoining the Humanities Reading Room which has a panelled oak door and Travertine-clad wall, with a bust of the mid-19th century head librarian Sir Anthony Panizzi (bust excluded from the listing)
- The upper ground floor travertine-clad north wall with Dr Walter Model von Thunen's stamp collection and his bust (bust excluded from the listing)

Secondary Significance (where affected by the proposals):

- The north elevation. Not of the same quality as the street elevations, and in the Conservation Management Plan (2019) described as 'secondary'. This elevation is in part excluded from the listing (loading bays), in part intact but in areas utilitarian, and in part altered. The north elevation in general resulted from a decision to only build phase 1 of Wilson's masterplan. It is part of the 'completion phase' of the library which was a compromise on the original design. A circular fire escape stair on the western end of the north elevation and the north elevation design otherwise resulted from the decision to abort the last phase of the project. This face was designed with care but its elevations were seen by the architects as 'expansion points'¹⁴.
- The first floor rear terrace which has been altered through the loss of some of its enclosing trellis when it was enlarged to connect to the BLCC has lost some of its original integrity.

Low Significance:

The BLCC, a later addition of 2007, is excluded from the list entry of the BL and has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021. It is not locally listed, but it has some contextual merit and design integrity as a quiet and subservient extension to the BL, designed by members of the architectural team for the BL.

No Significance:

Non-public areas, including the loading bay and back-of-house spaces north of the reading rooms and beyond the public circulation areas which are excluded from the listing and utilitarian.

14. Interview by the author with MJ Long, 2 August 2017

VI. The Proposals

VI.A The Proposals and their Impact

The proposals for planning permission and listed building consent were designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners (RSHP) for SMBL Developments Limited, a consortium of Stanhope Plc, Mitsui Fudosan and the British Library. DSDHA designed the external public realm landscaping. The proposals are shown on the application drawings and explained in RSHP's Design and Access Statement. They entail the construction of a new building on a largely vacant site to the north of the British Library which was originally intended to be occupied by the library. The new building is proposed to provide exhibition spaces, galleries, event spaces, learning spaces, shops, meeting and conference rooms and other facilities for the British Library on lower ground, upper ground and first floors. The ground floor would also have commercial retail units in the north wing, and a reception to commercial, including lab-enabled, floorspace which are proposed for the upper floors. The west wing of the British Library would be extended with a slender building to house the relocated British Library Centre for Conservation whose existing building which is not listed would be demolished. There would be two new links from the British Library to the extension, contained in the Ossulston Street wing at upper ground and first floor levels, and some localised alterations to the BL's north elevation, the Ossulston Street boundary and staircase, the external Midland Road staircase, and the first floor rear courtyard. On the Ossulston Street side is provision for access, ventilation structures and other areas for the proposed Crossrail 2 railway line; these are very largely contained below ground.

This chapter assesses the impact of the proposed development on the special interest of the British Library and on its setting, as well as on the BLCC building which is not listed but has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021. Impacts on the setting of other heritage assets, including nearby listed buildings, conservation areas and on townscape views are assessed by the Tavernor Consultancy in the Townscape, Visual and Built Heritage (Off-Site) chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Consultation

Stakeholder consultation was carried out with the Conservation and Design team at Camden Council, the Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector at Historic England, and the Twentieth Century Society, a statutory consultee for listed post-1914 buildings.

Camden Council officers were engaged during a series of pre-application meetings. Much of their commentary focused on the design of the public realm and the height and the materiality of the proposed new building, and they concurred with comments by Historic England as regards alterations to the Grade I listed British Library. In summary, officers asked that the Proposed Development include:

- high quality architecture where changes were made to sensitive areas inside the British Library and on its envelope
- a high quality new east-west route north of the new building
- animated frontages
- sympathetic/ contextual elevational treatments
- appropriate height in relation to the listed building and the wider historic context.

Design adjustments were made to respond to these points. As a consequence, the sensitivity and setting of the British Library were addressed during the process. No objections were raised to the demolition of the BLCC.

Historic England commented on the detail of all interventions in sensitive areas inside the British Library, on the first floor rear terrace and on the building envelope, and in regard to the height and visibility of the Proposed Development in relation to the British Library. No objections were raised to the demolition of the BLCC. The design was refined in response to their comments; this included lowering the new building to prevent its visibility in important views from the east over the 'Barlow shed' of St Pancras Station and over the south roof of the library in views from Euston Road, the continuation of high quality natural finishes in the extension corridors at upper ground and first floors inside the BL, and a stylistically sympathetic approach to the extension of the west wing of the BL with the relocated BLCC.

The design team also consulted with MJ Long, design partner of Colin St John Wilson at the BL and architect of the BLCC, before her death in 2018, and with Rolfe Kentish, associate architect at the BL and MJ Long's design partner for the BLCC, throughout the pre-application process. Their comments fed into the design development, namely: the central air space between the BL wings around the first-floor rear terrace was preserved, the new BLCC building was visually set away from the original BL building by means of a set-back connection and preservation of a cornice element to the north, and the British Library was honoured as an important building through a reflection in materials and suitable setbacks as well as discreet connections of the new building.

The Twentieth Century Society objected to the removal of the existing BLCC during the pre-application process. This element of the Proposed Development is fundamental to the design, would only cause a minor adverse effect and was therefore not changed.

The BLCC was issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021.

The Proposals for the Extension:

The proposed building is oriented at right angles to Ossulston Street and Midland Road, and cranked southwards at the eastern end of the site in response to the geometry of the British Library and the road layout. It is formed from two parallel, connected wings of eleven and nine storeys above ground, the southern wing being deeper and with a taller roof element. This roof slopes away from the south and relates to the southern roof of the British Library whose form it continues. The building is set back from the streets to the east and west. It has substantial soft-landscaped spaces in organic forms on Ossulston Street and Dangoor Walk, and predominantly hard landscaping with some greening on Midland Road where it is proposed to locate the main entrances to the library and the upper floor commercial spaces.

The architectural treatment of the proposed building is composed from glazed elevations with interstitial blinds in some areas. The elevations of the main body of the building have a double-height framework of green-coloured mullions, and set between these are expressed floorplates and internal mullion surfaces in red-coloured, glass reinforced concrete; this colouration, dark green and red, relates to the British Library and St Pancras which both have red brick elevations and Welsh slate roofs, and to the BL's green metalwork. The upper floors of the taller southern wing are sloping northwards and have a simple glazed treatment. On the roof are lift overruns, M&E plant and plant enclosures which are set back from the elevations and largely concealed from street views. On the street, the ground and first floor levels have curved, timber framed glass elevations onto Dangoor Walk to frame shops and the commercial reception, and otherwise have glazed elevations on rectangular alignments.

The Impact of the Extension on Setting:

The impact on the setting of the British Library would be beneficial. At present, the site to the north of the British Library is largely vacant and has been awaiting development since the BL opened. The Grade I listed building is poorly served by the empty site which was not intended to be left undeveloped. In fact, it was built up since the mid-18th century, originally with housing and later with a goods yard. Colin St John Wilson and Partners had designed further, continuous accommodation for the library on this site, and once the library opened on a reduced footprint, they had marked the vacant site as 'land intended for extension'. The BLCC which occupies part of the site would be removed, and the impact of this is described in detail below.

The proposed building is taller and has different forms to those designed by Wilson's team. This is so that the various uses that are required can be being provided as part of the development. But the taller form is not in itself harmful. The proposed new building has been skilfully modelled so that it sits comfortably behind the British Library and preserves important views of the listed building. This is demonstrated in the verified views shown in the Environmental Impact Assessment. The most important views of the library from the south across its forecourt are largely unchanged; the new building is substantially concealed, and only the uppermost part of its southern wing appears above the BL, but sits lower than the clock tower and the west wing.

In views from Ossulston Street and Midland Road, the BL retains primacy because the new building is set back from the street, a move made as a result of pre-application discussion with officers and response to local community consultation. In views from the north the BL is considerably less prominent and already much concealed, and the extension causes no harm to its setting.

In architectural terms, great care has been taken to relate the new building to the BL. The forms of the elevations are different, but the material and proportions resonate with the BL and St Pancras, in particular the proposed colouration which matches the BL's bricks and metalwork. The sloping roof forms to the south are designed to be recessive in form and expression, and are inspired by the architecture of Alvar Aalto whose buildings were a major influence on Wilson's work. For all these reasons, namely the careful modelling of the building's height, building lines, elevational treatment and materials, it would enhance the setting of the Grade I listed British Library building.

Proposals for the existing BLCC:

The demolition of the existing BLCC, a building added in 2007 which is not listed but was issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021, would result in the loss of a sympathetic and subservient addition to the BL.

Impact of the Demolition of the BLCC:

This building is not listed and not on Camden's local list. It has some local interest as a work by MJ Long and Rolfe Kentish who were both involved in the design of the BL, and it houses functioning spaces that have served the conservation centre and sound archive well, albeit requiring some localised modification. The building can therefore be seen as a non-designated heritage asset of some limited local interest, and its loss, causing less than substantial harm, therefore has to be weighed in the balance of the proposals and against the benefits they provide.

The Proposals for the New BLCC:

The west wing of the existing library would be extended by a new three-storey element on a shallow footprint. This extension would house the conservation studio, offices

and other facilities of the BLCC. The extension would be of comparable height to the BL's west wing but sit below its roof. It would be externally treated in matching red brick at first floor level, and have glazed elevations at ground and lower ground level which would be set behind a colonnade; this would have columns in red and black, matching those at the BL's southern part of the west elevation. On the street, the original retaining wall would be continued. On the roof would be a setback glazed volume to provide top-lit spaces. The construction of this element would result in the removal of a circular fire escape stair drum which is attached to the west wing, and the removal of most of the north elevation cornice but with a return element preserved. Otherwise the north elevation of this wing would be concealed but preserved. An external escape staircase set against the site boundary with Ossulston Street, and some of this boundary, would be removed to enable the construction of the new BLCC.

Impact of the BLCC extension:

The proposed BLCC extension would substantially preserve the special interest of the listed library building. It would conceal but not remove the north elevation of the library's west wing, and appear as a sympathetic addition in largely matching materials, including red brick and street columns. It would necessitate the demolition or alteration of small areas of localised original fabric, namely: removal of a circular red brick stair enclosure (pepper pot stair) around an external fire escape staircase and its glazed link to the west wing of the library; removal of an element of boundary wall on Ossulston Road, consisting of a granite base and metal railings; as well as a removal of a section of cornice in the BL's north elevation. In the western main stair tower at first floor level, a small number of square ventilation openings in the north wall would be closed off, but this would be concealed from view. The removal and alteration of these localised elements would have a small impact on the significance of the listed building; this impact would cause a small degree of harm at the low end of the less than substantial spectrum. This harm is set against the benefit of being able to construct additional facilities for the BL which is predicated on the removal of the 2007 BLCC and its re-provision in this new location. The Ossulston Street external staircase is not included in the listing (Purcell CMP) and its loss causes no harm.

The North Terrace Proposals:

At first floor level, the north terrace would be extended, enclosed with a curved glazed screen to the west and north, and landscaped. The brick wall to Midland Road would be heightened, perforated for small windows to St Pancras and adjoined by a canopy stretching between the existing east wing door onto the terrace and the new extension. East of the café an area of brickwork, part of the north elevation, would be removed to enable a link to the new building.

Impact of the North Terrace Proposals:

The proposals would result in a further remodelling of the north terrace which adjoins the former staff café and which

was enlarged and altered in 2007 when the BLCC was built. The proposed addition of elements of soft landscaping, a curved cloistered walkway to the west and north, and a low canopy to the east all would cause no harm but enhance this space and allow for a well-designed connection between the library and extension, and this is a benefit. The removal of a section of metal trellis, originally designed to screen the terrace from the loading bay beneath but already truncated in 2007 when the terrace was extended to the north, would cause a low level of less than substantial harm, as would the removal of a small section of north elevation and of the east-facing return of the adjoining stair tower to enable the new link. The proposed heightening of the eastern brick wall, and the inclusion of small windows in that wall to allow for glimpses of St Pancras sit well in their context and cause no harm.

Proposals for the Interior to Create Links:

Internally in the BL, two links would be made between the public areas of the BL and the extension, one at upper ground floor and one at first floor level. These links would be slim and would result in the relocation of original wall finishes and artefacts of two small sections of wall, including a bust of Walter Model von Thunen and his German mid-century stamp collection at upper ground floor level, and a bust of a mid-19th century Chief Librarian, Sir Anthony Panizzi, at first floor, as well as the reconfiguration of unlisted back-of-house spaces to the north of these two walls. The new links through these spaces would be finished in the same palette of materials as found in the adjoining public spaces, including Travertine wall cladding and stone flooring, but with simplified floor patterns.

Impact of the Proposals for the Interior to Create Links:

The proposed interventions are small in scale and necessary to connect the BL and the new building. They concern two areas of high significance, namely two internal north walls in the public part of the west wing. Because of this great sensitivity, the interventions have been designed with care, and they are appropriate. They would result in the relocation of original fabric, including the stamp collection and von Thunen bust to the immediate corridor extension. The Panizzi bust will be relocated following determination by the BL's curator team, and it is not listed. The treatment of the extended corridor through unlisted back of house spaces is well-handled, with similar but slightly simplified finishes to those in the BL's main adjoining public areas, and sits comfortably adjacent to the public BL spaces. Therefore, no harm would be caused by these proposals.

Other External and Internal Proposals:

- The external escape stair which abuts the north elevation of the east wing near Midland Road requires to be adapted to function with the new extension, and this necessitate new openings at lower ground level in its brick enclosure, and removal of its bottom flight of stairs. Other fabric would be preserved.
- The enclosure of the site on Midland Road and Ossulston Street, constructed from original metal railings, would be altered in two places to the north to allow the construction of the new BLCC, new access from Midland Road, and include a relocated element on Midland Road.
- At basement level 1, and in the north stair tower east of the Humanities reading room wing there would be a small amount of localised internal demolition and small scale alterations for services, all near the north wall.
- The north stair and service tower, an existing tall element that adjoins the western reading room wing, would be adapted in two places: at first floor level, 16 small square openings on its north elevation would be infilled, but this area would be concealed by the new BLCC block described above; on the roof of this wing which already houses plant there would be a new plant enclosure with integrated fans, of a similar size and height to those that exist.
- The landscaping includes provision for cycle stands in the western undercroft on Ossulston Street and in other areas on Midland Road, and limited car parking on Ossulston Street, alongside a comprehensive landscaping scheme with planting contained in organic forms across the site at street level.

Impact of Other Proposals:

- The new openings in the Midland Road stair tower are minimal and would not cause harm, and the removal of the bottom flight of stairs concerns unlisted fabric (see Purcell's CMP).
- The part removal and part relocation of relatively small elements of the original boundary enclosure would cause at worst low level less than substantial harm where fabric would be removed, but this should be seen in the context of the survival of most of this boundary enclosure and its part relocation which largely mitigate the harm.
- The internal basement demolition and internal north stair tower changes relate to unlisted fabric and would not cause harm.
- The adjustments to the northern stair tower would be small in scale and concealed from view and would not cause harm.
- The landscaping scheme overall would be beneficial and enhance the setting of the British Library, and the cycle stands and car parking would be discreetly placed and small in scale; they are necessary and cause no harm.

Crossrail 2 Proposals:

Much design work has been devoted to locate ventilation shafts, access routes and other spaces required for Crossrail 2 below ground, and it is only a small number of external single storey staircases to lower levels which will be externally expressed as separate structures outside the building envelope.

Impact of the Crossrail 2 Proposals:

There will be no harmful impact on the setting of the British Library caused by these small structures.

VI.B Justification

The proposed building would impact on the setting of a number of heritage assets and on townscape views. The impact on nearby listed buildings, conservation areas and on views is assessed in the Townscape, Visual and Built Heritage (Off-Site) Assessment in the ES by the Tavernor Consultancy. This report assesses the impact on the Grade I listed British Library building, its setting and the BLCC only.

The proposals and their impacts on heritage significance need to be assessed under the policies in Camden's local plan (2017), the stipulations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the London Plan (2021), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

The Local Plan

Development proposals should be determined in accordance with the local plan. Camden's policy for heritage, D2, reflects the requirements of the NPPF, namely to balance harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, including listed buildings, against public benefits, and asks that harm is convincingly outweighed. Regarding non-designated heritage assets, it also reflects the NPPF in stating that impacts on such assets have to be weighed against public benefits by balancing harm against the relative significance of the asset.

There would be small elements of harm arising to localised areas of the British Library. The harm to the BL is less than substantial and at the low end of that spectrum and consists of the loss of the following elements of the building:

- North elevation pepper pot staircase on west wing
- North elevation return cornice on west wing
- North terrace sections of trellis
- North elevation elements of wall, including to the east of the former staff café and adjacent elements of the return wall of the west wing stair tower
- Elements of boundary enclosure on Midland Road and Ossulston Street
- Closing off of square ventilation openings in west wing stair projection at first floor level.

All other interventions can be achieved without causing harm to the BL's heritage significance, as set out above.

The demolition of the BLCC which has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021 would also cause some harm. This building would be lost in its entirety, but it is neither listed nor locally listed, and its significance is limited to its quality as a competent and subservient neighbour to the BL. This harm is therefore also less than substantial, and needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.

The proposals would bring many substantial and varied public benefits which are explained in detail in Gerald Eve's Planning Statement, submitted with this application. They include:

- Substantial modern fit for purpose exhibition and meeting rooms and other spaces for the British Library, a national asset and institution of national and international importance, the Alan Turing Institute and other related occupants, enabling them to remain in St Pancras in the long term and supporting the long term optimum viable use of the Grade I listed British Library building as the nation's foremost library, enabling the BL to pursue their 'Living Knowledge' and 'Library for Everyone' initiatives
- The completion of Colin St John Wilson and Partners' masterplan for the St Pancras site through the enlargement of the British Library on a site 'intended for extension'
- The creation of a new building of outstanding architectural quality to enhance the setting of the Grade I listed British Library and other heritage assets, in the place of the detracting vacant site that exists today
- The creation of a substantial amount of commercial, including lab-enabled, floorspace in a key location in the Knowledge Quarter
- Improvements to the public realm on Ossulston Street, Midland Road and Dangoor Walk through soft and hard landscaping, including the delivery of a significant number of cycle spaces, improving the sustainable transport options at the site
- A concealed design solution for Crossrail 2 infrastructure, avoiding harm to the setting of the Grade I listed BL and other heritage assets

These and other public benefits convincingly outweigh the localised, low scale less than substantial harm to the British Library and the BLCC. For these reasons, the proposals accord with Policy D2 of the local plan.

The Planning Act

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in sections 16 and 66, seeks to protect the special interest and the setting of listed buildings and stipulates the following:

[...] in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. (Section 16)

Similarly, section 66 of the above Act states that:

In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. (Section 66)

Section 72 of the Act is addressed in the Townscape, Visual and Built Heritage (Off-Site) Assessment in the ES.

The British Library will be substantially preserved and its special interest would remain largely unaffected by the proposals. The British Library will retain its internal public areas which are of the highest significance, and the great majority of its exterior. The Court of Appeal in *Jones v Mordue* [2015] EWHC 539 (Admin) confirmed that the series of paragraphs within Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF lay down an approach which corresponds with the duty in section 66(1). As such, generally a decision-maker who works through those paragraphs in accordance with their terms will have complied with the section 66(1) duty (see paragraph 28 of the decision).

This Heritage Statement has assessed the Proposed Development in a systematic way working through the series of paragraphs in the NPPF referred to above, and testing their requirements against the Proposed Development. It has concluded that the policy requirements of the NPPF are met in respect of the Proposed Development. Therefore, the Proposed Development also complies with the duty set out in the 1990 Act.

The London Plan

Policy HC1 (C) of the London Plan (2021) stipulates that development should conserve heritage assets and avoid harm. As set out above, the heritage significance of the British Library as a national institution with fine public rooms and a contextual exterior would be substantially preserved, and the development would result in many public benefits, most crucially allowing the library to continue its beneficial occupation of the site, whilst causing low levels of harm in an area of secondary importance to the north, where the library was always intended for extension. Whilst harm cannot be avoided completely, it has been minimised and is of such a low order that it weighs very lightly, and the building and its setting are therefore considered to be conserved, and policy HC1 (C) complied with.

The NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is the national policy basis for decision making for applications that affect the historic environment. It sets out that great weight is given to the conservation of heritage assets (199), that harm to significance requires clear and convincing justification (200), and that less than substantial harm should be outweighed by public benefits (202), that change to non-designated heritage assets be considered on balance, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (203), and that local authorities should look for opportunities for new development to enhance the setting of designated heritage assets (206).

Starting with 199, 'great weight' has very clearly been given to the conservation of the British Library and its setting. The interventions into the listed building itself are minimal and very well handled, and the new building has been placed and moulded to enhance the setting of the BL and avoid compromising its setting. In regard to 200, 'clear and convincing justification', the small elements of harm which are proposed are all without exception necessary to enable the construction of the new building and BLCC extension, and have also been minimised. They are of a low order and clearly outweighed by substantial public benefits, complying with 202. The loss of the BLCC building which has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021 was not a preference but a necessity in order to allow a usable building to be constructed to the north; its significance is low and of a local order only, and it is neither listed nor locally listed. Its loss is necessary, the harm that will arise is limited (less than substantial), and this is outweighed by the many public benefits the scheme provides; this satisfies 203. 206, taking opportunities to enhance and better reveal the significance of heritage assets, will be met because the site will now be filled by a high quality building which serves the library, directly and indirectly, as the original architects had intended but through the creation of exceptional architecture which will be a clear improvement on the vacant site that exists today. For these reasons, the policy requirements of the NPPF are met.

VI.C Conclusion

The proposals for an extension to the British Library will provide the library with spaces that it requires to be able to continue operating successfully as it has outgrown its existing accommodation, serving the public as the nation's foremost library, and allowing activities that could not be accommodated when the building was first built in truncated form. This will allow the British Library building to continue in its optimum viable use, as originally intended, and cater for modern needs. This is an overwhelming public benefit. In order to achieve this, a large building would be constructed on the site of the unfinished Colin St John Wilson and Partners masterplan area to the north of the library. This new building takes inspiration from the forms and materiality of the BL, and from the architecture of Alvar Aalto who shaped Wilson's approach to design and to this site. As a result, the proposal sits well in its context. It relates well to the BL whose setting it complements, and is an exceptional building in its own right. The localised interventions which are required to the listed building fabric, including on the north elevation, first floor rear terrace, and upper ground and first floor western corridors, have been tailored to be minimally intrusive and appropriate. Only small areas of original fabric would be lost, and these are for the most part in secondary areas, and in unlisted back of house spaces. Harm to the significance of the BL is therefore minimal. The loss of the BLCC which has been issued with a Certificate of Immunity from Listing in October 2021 is considered to cause less than substantial harm which is outweighed by the substantial public benefits its demolition will enable.

In summary, the proposed building would improve the setting of the listed British Library building which is poorly served by the partially vacant site to its north, and which will be improved through the proposed high quality building. Physical links between old and new have been carefully chosen and designed to avoid, or, at worst, minimise harm. The public benefits of the proposals which are required to outweigh this low level of less than substantial harm are wide and strong. For these reasons, the proposals are considered to be acceptable and indeed welcome. They comply with Policy D2 of Camden's Local Plan; Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy HC1 (C) of the London Plan, and sections 199, 200, 202, 203 and 206 of the NPPF.

Appendix 1: List Description

The British Library, piazza, boundary wall and railings to Ossulston Street, Euston Road and Midland Road

96 Euston Rd, London NW1 2DB

County: Greater London Authority

District: Camden

Grade: I

Date first listed: 31-Jul-2015

List entry Description Summary of Building

Public Library, the present design based on that of 1975-8, built 1982-99, though opened in 1997; architect Sir Colin St John Wilson, with MJ Long, Douglas Lanham, John Collier, John Honer and many more.

Reasons for Designation

The British Library designed by Sir Colin St John Wilson with MJ Long, built 1982-99, is listed at Grade I for the following principal reasons:

- **Architectural interest:** for its stately yet accessible modernist design rooted in the English Free tradition with Arts and Crafts and classical influences, crisply and eloquently contextualised by its massing and use of materials which respect and contrast to the St Pancras station and hotel;
- **Materials:** for its level of craftsmanship and skilful handling of a range of materials externally and internally, including Travertine, Portland and Purbeck stone, granite, Leicestershire brick, bronze and American white oak throughout, carefully and meticulously detailed;
- **Interior:** for the well-planned interior spaces comprising the generously lit reading rooms and multi-level atrium, successfully fulfilling the brief to create the nation's Library;
- **Historic Interest:** in the tradition of the Royal Festival Hall, it is a landmark public building incorporating at its heart the King's Library, given to the nation by George III;
- **Architect:** a major work by the eminent architect and academic Sir Colin St John Wilson and his architectural partner, MJ Long. Wilson has a number of listed buildings to his name notably the St Cross libraries at the University of Oxford (Grade II*);
- **Artistic interest:** for the fusion of art with architecture as a component of the design ethos, exemplified by Paolozzi's Newton in the piazza;
- **Group Value:** with the Grade I St Pancras Hotel, Grade II Camden Town Hall and Grade II housing on Ossulston Street.

History

The British Library has a long and complex history before it was even imagined on its current site. In 1757 George II presented the Royal Library of 10,500 volumes collected by British monarchs from Henry VIII to Charles II, a gift which brought with it the privilege of receiving a copy of every book registered at Stationers' Hall. Further donations of manuscripts and state papers followed including the gift of George III's books by George IV, and the building of the King's Library was the first phase of the British Museum built in Great Russell Street in 1823-6. In 1852-7 the courtyard of Sir Robert Smirke's building was infilled by a new Reading Room, designed by his brother Sydney. In 1911 the Copyright Act granted the Library a copy of every book, periodical or newspaper published in Britain. The Newspaper Library had been built at Colindale in 1904-5; in 1914 the Edward VII galleries were opened and in 1937 the North Library was constructed within them. The congestion was intense and delays in waiting for books notorious.

The 1943 'County of London Plan' suggested the opening up of land south of the British Museum in Bloomsbury to form an open space and provision for new library facilities, although ideas of opening up a vista from the British Museum go back much further, for example to W. R. Lethaby's idea of the 'Sacred Way' linking it to Waterloo Bridge made in 1891. In 1962 Sir Leslie Martin and Colin St John Wilson were among a number of architects invited to compete by interview for the project, just as they were completing the St Cross group of libraries for Oxford University. These were three libraries, reached at different levels off an external staircase that forms the centrepiece of the design. The small library for the Institute of Statistics has gone, but the English and Law libraries are both square and top lit, with galleries and peripheral carrels. For Leslie Martin evolution was more important than innovation, something he noted that Alvar Aalto had identified in his own library work, and he suggested in his 'Buildings and Ideas', 1933-83, from the Studio of Leslie Martin and his Associates, Cambridge University Press, 1983, that having determined an ideal plan at St Cross, which was repeated for each of the three libraries there, it only needed refinement elsewhere. This idea was developed further by Wilson.

Wilson felt that the success of the St Cross libraries recommended him and Martin to the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. Nevertheless their first proposals combined the stepped internal courtyard plan of St Cross (and their other university work) within a larger context. The first scheme, approved early in 1964, was an ambitious project that created a piazza south of the British Museum down to Nicholas Hawksmoor's St George's, Bloomsbury. To the east would be a new library for books, maps, music and manuscripts, while to the west would be a gallery, archives for prints and drawings, and a conference centre. There would also be a residential development, with shops, publishers' offices and a public house.

Elements of Martin and Wilson's St Cross scheme can be seen in the eastern block of the proposal, and of the practice's Harvey Court, Cambridge, in the western, but on a scale and grandeur that was unprecedented, and with a basement archive going down some seven storeys under the piazza. Then a new Labour Government asked for a scheme that would also include the Science and Patents departments as well as the Library's humanities collections. The desire for a doubling of the library accommodation coincided with growing conservation pressure, always sensitive in Bloomsbury, which demanded the retention of properties on Bloomsbury Square and a consequent reduction in the size of the development site. Martin withdrew in 1970. In 1972 Wilson produced a dense scheme for a large new British Library - a square, stepped block for the main collections and a long wing for the Science Collections, together with a residential precinct of stepped terraces running eastwards from St George's Bloomsbury. Recognising the scale of what was required, in 1973 the Government instead purchased nine acres of the St Pancras Goods Yard then being vacated by British Rail, and Wilson set to work on a new scheme in 1975. The brief was now to serve an independent British Library, formed by the British Library Act of 1972 that brought together the British Museum Library, the National Central Library and the National Lending Library for Science and Technology. In 1980 a small extension by Wilson to the British Museum on Museum Street was opened.

The BL site is a wedge-shaped piece of land bounded by Euston Road to the south, by Midland Road to the east and by Ossulston Street to the west. Wilson's designs, which rapidly gained approval in 1978, retained the idea of placing the Science and Patent collections in a long wing, which with conference facilities and staff offices lines Midland Road. A series of square, top-lit libraries with galleries, serve the remaining collections, with a large general reading room, and specialised libraries for studying rare books, music and maps. Between the two areas was planned a vast Reference Reading Room an entrance hall, and a new piazza on to the Euston Road. Wilson's aim was to create an environment that was 'vivid, pleasurable and memorable, while fitting with responsibility and sensitivity into its context'. The RIBA Journal for April 1978 (from which that quotation is taken) estimated that it would take twenty years to build. The Bloomsbury scheme was described as 'monumental' and 'classical', that at St Pancras 'a contemporary, stripped vernacular look' (Building Design, 10 March 1978) yet within the context of Wilson's whole body of work the similarities are greater than the differences, and show the evolution of his designs in the manner Martin and Aalto considered so important.

In 1978 the decision was made to build the design in three phases. Work began in 1982, when Princes Charles laid the foundation stone, but following extensive tests to the foundations the main building campaign began in 1984. The engineers, Ove Arup and Partners, faced a monumental task in constructing such a deep basement area out of the London clay so near major London Underground tunnels and next to the Grade I-listed St Pancras Station and Hotel. Phase 1, representing c 60% of the whole project, was sub-divided into three for the purposes of measuring annual expenditure targets. Phase 1a provided an equivalent space to that existing in Bloomsbury, with Phases 1b and 1c allowing for moderate expansion. The existing building is essentially a reduced version of phase 1 - following a decision made in December 1987 to complete the building to this reduced scale, leaving the scheme with scarcely more seats than had the old Reading room in Bloomsbury. Wilson commented that 'it was like constantly pulling a plant up by the roots to see if it was still alive and then cutting a bit off before shoving it back in the ground' (Stonehouse, 2007, 111). The design as built was more sophisticated than the original. The Humanities and specialist reading rooms were already grouped in two square, top-lit areas (making for a larger entrance courtyard than in the 1978 design) and the Science collections given their separate wing. In 1986-7 Wilson replaced the original Reference Reading Room with a central glazed casquet or shrine, the King's Library - likened by him to the Kaaba at Mecca but also with similarities to the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University in New Haven by Gordon Bunshaft of SOM, and placed comprehensive café facilities behind it. A library for the India Office collection and exhibition areas were designed at this stage. To the rear, the north elevation was designed to allow for future extension. The principal works of art, including Eduardo Paolozzi's Newton (1995) after William Blake and a tapestry based on R. B. Kitaj's If Not, Not, were commissioned at this time. The leather reader chairs were specially designed by Ron Carter.

It was also in 1990 that the National Audit Office complained that it was the very decision to phase the work that had cost so much time and money, made worse by the subsequent sub-division of that phasing, and the stop-go funding of the project throughout the 1980s. The project was split between the Office of Arts and Libraries and the Property Services Agency - in fact the only people not to be criticised by the National Audit Commission were Wilson and his design team, who provided the only continuity through the project.

Sir Colin St John Wilson (1922-2007), Professor of Architecture at Cambridge University between 1975 and 1989, began his career at London County Council where he collaborated with (Sir) Leslie Martin, among many others, before becoming a lecturer in Architecture at Cambridge in 1956 where Martin was Professor. Wilson and Martin worked together on a number of projects, but Wilson is undoubtedly best known for his design of the British Library, a project of some 30 years duration. A highly influential architect of the post-war period, his renown is attested by 10 of his buildings being designated, including the Oxford University St Cross Library building (1961-5) and Harvey Court halls of residence at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge (1961-2) both listed at Grade II*. Wilson's principal architect partner was M.J Long (b.1939). MJ Long studied at Smith College in

Massachusetts, and received her MArch from Yale in 1939. She worked for Sir Colin St John Wilson from 1965 to 1996, as a partner from 1974, and latterly a director. She also ran a separate practice (MJ Long architect) from 1974 to 1996.

ALTERATIONS: there have been a number of minor alterations to the Library's fabric, primarily to adapt the facilities to changing needs of the public and to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) provisions. These include: - External installation of DDA-compliant ramps and handrails, bollards to external entrances and lighting to the Newton statue and clock tower; - Reading Rooms: altering reading room counters; installing electronic resource desks in the Rare Books Reading Room; converting a shelved storage area on the Lower Ground floor and installing a glass partition in Science 1 Reading Room; - Public realm: installation of automated door openers in public areas to improve access; - Conference Centre: refurbished in 2010, including the recovering of the auditorium seating.

In addition, the British Library have carried out ongoing maintenance and upgrading of office spaces, lifts, lighting, CCTV, fire alarms and access controls.

Details

Public Library, the present design based on that of 1975-8, built 1982-99, though opened in 1997; architect (Sir) Colin St John Wilson, with M.J.Long, Douglas Lanham, John Collier, John Honer and many more. The structural engineers were Ove Arup and Partners, with mechanical engineering services from Steensen Varming and Mulcahy and quantity surveyors Davis Langdon and Everest. William Lam advised on lighting.

The Conservation Centre: although attached to the rear north elevation (Long and Kentish, 2006), the centre is a separate building and very recent in date. It is not part of the special interest of the Library.

Works of art: some significant internal and external works of art associated with the design of the library, contemporary with its completion and opening, and supported by outside sponsorship are of special interest and included in the listing. Where this is the case, these are specifically mentioned in the List entry. Other free-standing or 'curated' works are not included.

Structure and Materials

The building has a concrete frame, based on 7.8m x 7.8m column centres, clad inside and out in red brick (hand-made, sand-faced dark Victorian Reds from Leicestershire) laid in stretcher bond, chosen because they were made of the same clay as those used for the adjoining St Pancras Station and Hotel immediately to the east. In a contrasting red to the brick there are metal sills and cornice bands, and cladding to the columns, the latter with stylized classical motifs, and dark green metal fascias to the science rooms, colours inspired by the adjacent St Pancras Station and Hotel. Special stainless steel wall ties allow vertical movement between the series of sub-frames and the brick skin. There is a granite plinth to the Midland Road elevation, with plaster and panelling contrasted with brick and tile within; external columns are clad in steel. The stepped roofs are slate-covered, again akin to St Pancras Hotel, contrasting with the steel screens shielding the clerestory glazing. The brick and stone pavours to the forecourt are continued within the building.

Interior joinery throughout is in American White Oak, with maple used only in the Conference Centre. The floor and wall finishes are of Travertine, Portland Whitbed, and Purbeck limestone, with contrasting Travertine and brick pavours on the ground floor of the atrium. In general the door furniture and stair handrails are in brass, the latter over bound with leather, with a bronze structure to the King's Library.

Plan

The building comprises two main blocks of libraries above ground, linked by a central entrance range, with a large piazza over four tiers of basement stacks on piled foundations, and small additions to the rear. The basement is divided by the tunnels of the Northern and Victoria Lines, with resilient bearings separating the conference centre structure from the Hammersmith and City/Circle Lines. The frontage parallel to Euston Road contains the main entrance and atrium, with the King's Library and restaurants behind; to the west (left) are the humanities, rare books and music libraries; to the east (right) the science and patent libraries adjoin the conference centre (with its own entrance) parallel to Midland Road, making an acute angle, with a vertical clock tower containing service shafts between the west block and entrance range. Additional public and staff entrances are along Midland Road.

Exterior

The south elevation facing the piazza includes the main ENTRANCE. Steps lead to the sliding entrance doors, set at grade under a canopy with a display window to the gift shop to the left; the ramp to the right of the steps was constructed in 2014. To the left (west) of the entrance, each panel of the five-bay, four-storey frontage (housing internally the exhibition rooms and shop), has two metal roundels, above which is an additional step and clerestory to the roof. The western block is itself divided into two six-bay blocks, each of six bays, to the west with double-stepped pitched roofs, and a flat roof to the raised set-back block in between.

A ten-bay block to the east (right) rises to six main storeys with staff facilities behind, its height determined in relation to the hotel and station across the road to the east; panels of brushed metal sun shields are repeated on the east and west elevations. The CLOCK TOWER rises above the junction between the east block and the stepped roofscape of the entrance. The clock near to the apex faces south with stepped brick and red metal detailing above. Feature spotlighting added to the base of the clock tower in 2014 is not of special interest.

The CONFERENCE CENTRE adjoins seamlessly to the south, its entrance at the forecourt elevation, with a large porthole opening above to light the stairs within, and its raked pent roof-line presenting a bold face to Euston Road, broken by two bands of projecting triple-glazed fenestration with sun screens at the south-east corner. To Euston Road, a modest kiosk café and an undercover ramp (added in 2010) that leads through to the piazza are not of special interest. On the Midland Road elevation a colonnade, with metal railings in between, rises from a Royken granite plinth and supports the projecting and stepped east wing above with long strip windows defined by louvred metal sun screens and interrupted by a projecting 'V'-shaped staircase 'oriel' window; the soffit is coffered. The north elevation has landscaped roof terraces incorporating a circular pergola and a projecting stair tower.

The rear (north) elevation was intended by Wilson to allow for further phases of building (see history above). It has a series of stepped terraces repeating the same idiom of brick panels and pavours, with planters and a square-patterned trellis and balustrade somewhat reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright. There is a broad public terrace with planting boxes leading out from the large staff restaurant, which has a fully-glazed facade shielded by metal screens; above it is an enclosed terrace, including a circular pergola surrounding fixed wooden seating.

The west elevation (to Ossulston Street) and rear elevation of the western block is supported on red columns with deep bracketed eaves and has a stepped roof; an external circular escape stair for the humanities reading room, constructed with radial bricks, is attached to the rear.

Despite the contrast of square and diagonal, the structure of the two blocks is on a strong square grid, reminiscent of that which governs Wilson's nos. 2 and 2a Granchester Road, Cambridge (a pair of houses of 1961-64, one of which with a studio for himself, listed at Grade II, NHLE ref 1392069), and which appears in details such as coffering, doors and screens, the supports of the uplighters, glazing, grilles and trellises. Common ingredients are set out in Stonehouse (2007).

Piazza, Portico and External Artworks

To the south (front) of the main entrance is a forecourt known as the piazza with brick pavements set within a grid of limestone slabs that includes steps, raised levels and a rotunda defined by walls topped with granite boulders at the entrances; Sir Antony Gormley's 'Planets' installation of 2002, noted but at the time of the inspection (2015) but is not part of the special interest of the building. There are flag poles and a temporary, free-standing café on the piazza; neither the café here* nor other cafes* within the building's envelope, or the flagpoles* are included in the listing. DDA compliant handrails have been added in a number of places and are not of special interest. A raised plinth at the point of intersection between the main south and angled, ramped south-eastern entrance incorporates Eduardo Paolozzi's Newton (after Blake), installed in 1995, an integral part of Wilson's composition and made by the Morris Singer Foundry with raised planting behind. Feature lighting for Newton, with an associated plinth made by East Coast Casting, was added in 2014 and is not part of the special interest of the building. To the south on the Euston Road entrance, the square brick entrance gateway, known as the Portico, forms a rectangular frame to an angled entrance, with a stone panel incised with the name 'The British Library' repeated in the pattern of the iron gates and their high overthrow, by David Kindersley and Lida Cardozo. The bronze chair, Witness, by Sir Antony Gormley, installed in 2011, is noted but is not part of the special interest of the building.

Interior

The interior of the Library combines quiet, top-lit reading rooms in the west and east blocks joined centrally by a complex space of multiple entrance concourses arranged in terraces organised with the King's Library at the core.

Freestanding furniture throughout is noted because it was designed by the architects (with Reading Room chairs by Ron Carter) but cannot be included in the listing. Fixed furniture is included in the listing unless stated otherwise.

Interior artworks: the British Library retains numerous works of art as part of their collections, some of which are displayed within the building. However, for ease of their curation, and in recognition that they may be donated items, these works of art* are not included in the listing, although purpose-built architectural elements for housing them may be included and will be specified.

Public Realm

Entrance and catering areas: bronze sliding and double entrance doors lead to a low vestibule with shop and exhibition halls to the west (left), from which stairs rise to an atrium on four main levels with galleries reached off dog-leg stairs to left, a ramp and a more dramatic spiral stair to right, set behind stairs to the lower ground and a low fountain. Travertine columns contrast with Portland limestone floors in two colours; internal porthole openings light the spaces to the right. The cyma curve roof incorporates clerestory glazing with top lighting to the rear and inset spots; the hanging lights are by Juha Leviska. The central control desk divides access to this main space into two. The main foyer at ground level is defined by built-in seating and balustrading of travertine, with plant troughs. A bronze chair* by Gormley, was installed on the ground floor c.2012 but is not part of the special interest of the building.

The lower ground floor has travertine columns, beams, dado and lift surrounds (as repeated in the rest of the building), limestone and brick pavement floors. The cloakroom has a sinuous counter* and banks of oak lockers* are attached to the walls; these are not included in the listing. Access to offices lie through double doors to the left. Fixed sculptures integral with the building are Anne Frank by Doreen Kern was installed in this location in 2003 and is not of special interest. Paradoxymoron is a painting of 1996 by Patrick Hughes. The reconfigured education space* on this floor is not included in the listing.

To the centre of the ground floor are sets of escalators next to the stairs of limestone with Travertine balustrades leading to the Upper Ground Level and Level 1; handrails – like the door handles – here and through the building are wrapped in leather with brass curves, inspired by those of Gunnar Asplund and Alvar Aalto. In the lift lobby at Upper Ground Level is a model* of the Library set on a plinth*, cut to reveal the basement stacks below the piazza, which is not included in the listing.

There is much art on display in the entrance atrium. A wall tapestry, conceived as part of Wilson's original design, based on R. B. Kitaj's *If Not, Not*, made by Edinburgh Weavers was moved to the side of the front entrance in 2013. A statue of Shakespeare* (a replica based on that by Roubiliac 1758) stands to the left of the stairs to the west wing above a stepped, inscribed plinth marking the opening of the Library by Queen Elizabeth II on 25 June 1998. On the west wall of the atrium, four busts* in red steel roundels of the donors to the collections (Sir Thomas Grenville, Joseph Banks, Sir Robert Cotton and Sir Hans Sloane) are also replicas. The statue of Shakespeare* and busts of the donors* are noted because of their prominence in the atrium but are replicas and are not included in the listing although their architectural plinths are included.

Banks of lifts serve the two sets of reading rooms either side of the atrium, the lobbies of which have travertine detailing and limestone borders to the carpeted floors. All carpet* is of standard contract range and not included in the listing. All lifts* in the library are utilitarian and are not included in the listing. Other balustrading is formed of simple steel uprights with a brass top rail. There is built-in

bench seating within travertine walls, and black fossil limestone paving to the rear gallery serving the cafe at Upper Ground Level, with kitchen and staff restaurants behind on Level 1, separated by oak doors and louvres. The fixtures* and fittings* of all catering areas, restaurants and lounges for both public and staff use, including seating*, counters*, vending equipment and kitchen equipment*, are not included in the listing.

A belvedere at Level 1 gives views across the foyer. Two more floors above this level have walkways and balconies at the rear over the entrance to the servery. A corridor, with a built-in travertine seat, leads to the staff restaurant and outside terraces for staff and public, including the pergola garden. Limestone floors also serve the lower restaurant area, the stair to which has a built-in travertine handrail and inset lights; there are travertine stall risers to the servery.

Exhibitions: at the Upper Ground floor of the western range, beneath the Rare Books Library, is the Sir John Ritblat Gallery, a permanent display of the 'Treasures of the British Library', with a central service core and concrete columns with afromosia veneer coating. Here there is a combination of free standing temporary cases which not of special interest and, attached to the enclosing walls, permanent cases contemporary with the building. Stairs lead down to the Paccar Gallery for temporary exhibitions, which partly underlies the 'Treasures' exhibition, with access points from both the Ground and Lower Ground floors; the wall partitions in the Paccar exhibition and the stairs between the Paccar and Treasures exhibition spaces* are functional and do not form part of the listing. The adjacent exhibition workshops* are classed as office areas and are not included in the listing. Stairs with travertine risers and steel and brass handrails lead down from the ground floor to the Paccar Exhibition space but beyond this point the exhibition partition walls*, fixtures* and fittings* are temporary, not fixed and not included in the listing. At the Upper Ground floor, to the rear of the foyer, is a temporary exhibition area, again with free standing fittings, masking the view of the King's Library at this point; the exhibition panels* and structure* are not included in the listing because of their temporary nature.

Shop and Box office: flanking each side of the atrium's ground floor, both the shop* and box office* have C21 shop fronts* and fittings* and are not included in the listing.

Reader Registration* is a remodelled office area at Upper Ground level which is not included in the listing. Toilets* for staff and public throughout the building are utilitarian and are not included in the listing.

Reading Rooms and The King's Library

There are 11 reading rooms in total, divided broadly into humanities on Levels 1 to 3 in the west block, fronting Ossulston Road, and science in the east block on Levels 1 to 3, fronting Midland Road.

King's Library: rising in the centre of the building behind the foyer, the King's Library is accessed from a bridge over a narrow 'moat' at the Upper Ground floor through heavy bronze double doors. It is a six-storey glazed casket, served by an internal lift and escape stairs, with an independent structure comprising a bronze framed curtain wall set within a trough or moat, travertine walled with a glass balustrade and black marble base. Wilson described it (1998, references below) as 'an object in its own right ... simultaneously a celebration of beautifully bound books, a towering gesture that announces the invisible presence of treasures housed below and a hard-working source of material studied in presence of treasures housed below and a hard-working source of material studied the Rare Book Reading Room opposite: the symbolic is at one with the use'. The books are placed on outward-facing shelving as close to the glass as is feasible, on stacks which move inwards while allowing air movement for the preservation of the books, so that the bindings can be enjoyed. Subtle lighting within alternate mullions inside the cases highlights the bindings. At the centre are fixed stacks. There is a bust of George III* by Peter Turnerelli, 1812 on a black marble plinth, of note, but not included in the listing.

Humanities Reading Room: access to the Humanities Reading Room is at level 1 in the west block. This lofty, triple-height and essentially square space, receives generous daylight through rooflights and clerestories with a coved ceiling sweeping up to the top-floor clerestory. Inserted on two sides are the two projecting and stepped upper floors, enclosed by giant square piers accessed by internal timber-lined stairs; the third being the map room. The piers are panelled to shoulder height in American White Oak incised with delicate lines, imitating fluting; all timber detailing used for the balustrades, desks and wall shelving and joinery is American White Oak. The pierced oak balustrading to the upper floors has elongated stanchions, repeated as a vertical motif in the cornice that makes a feature of the air ducts and lighting troughs below, and countered by the multiple vertical shafts of the up-lighters; the built-in oak desks have square patterns incorporating lights and sockets, and brushed black steel built-in lights. Other finishes are in impact-resistant, glass reinforced gypsum (GRG) rather than plaster, for ease of maintenance, plain or sparsely detailed with stylized classical motifs with Japanese overtones. All these square and vertical patterns have sources in Frank Lloyd Wright, whose Robie House Wilson particularly admired. This plan form derives from that of Leslie Martin's Law Library at St Cross, Oxford, designed in association with Wilson and built in 1959-63. The Control and issue desks match the American White Oak panelling and shelving of the walls, and like the desks and chairs are by the architects. The chairs are not fixed, thus are ineligible for listing, but the reading desks, with leather tops, mostly are; some are modified for DDA compliance, others altered to take computer processor units with additional electrical supply for lap-tops.

Adjacent to Humanities is the Rare Books and Music Reading Room, with the Manuscript Reading Room on the single balcony above. The details here are repeated on a more modest scale, with conoid-topped columns and flatter slopes to the ceiling. Carrels or sound booths against the perimeter wall are built in to the music library, originally, it is said to accommodate those wishing to use portable type writers; the film reader room is alongside. Doors throughout the reading rooms are of American White Oak with brass and bound leather handles, glazed to the booths and film-reader room.

Science Reading Rooms: the eastern block housing the science and social science collections is on three floors, topped by a coffered ceiling that is upswept to the top of the main windows, with a balustrade protecting the ducting below. On the other side are two stepped back galleries with broad timber ledges topped by brass handrails. To the street (Midland Road) it has large, continuous side windows, with in between carrels, desks and a connecting stair with glass balustrades. There are more bookcases for material on open shelves than is found in the humanities libraries; those in freestanding, moveable units* are not included in the listing. There are broad timber ledges to the balconies. Control and issue desks match the oak panelling and shelving of the walls, and like the tables and chairs (not fixed, and the same as those in the humanities reading rooms and not included in the listing) are designed by the architects. Some additional internal glass partitioning was added in 2012 and is not of special interest.

Business and IP Centre: on Level 1 of the east block, formerly a science reading room, the Business and IP Centre has a modernised entrance foyer and inserted glass meeting rooms; the foyer and meeting room partitions* are not included in the listing. The high windows are over-built in shelving and a single gallery whose balustrade is lined in timber (former Science North reading room), linked by a spiral stair (also with a timber balustrade) and with shelving on both levels. Ducts form a cornice, the square columns are timber lined to dado height, and there are built-in desks, not all with reading lamps; the wall shelving is lit with downlights.

Newsroom: on Level 2 in the east block, the newsroom created from a former science reading room in 2014, has a reconfigured foyer* and renewed fixtures* and fittings* and a digital screen* installed. It is not included in the listing.

Asian and African Studies Reading Room: on Level 3 in the east block, formerly the Indian Office Library, is a double-height space so that the historic picture collection can be hung. The fittings are similar to those in the other Reading Rooms.

Offices and Basement

The staff offices are located to the rear of the east and central blocks, the principal entrance being the staff entrance gate (gate 8) from Midland Road. The offices* are adaptable spaces with standard furniture*, fixtures* and fittings* and are not included in the listing with the exception of the 4th Floor Executive office which is included in the listing as a representative example.

Access to the reading rooms and public realm is via stairs to the rear and lifts; there are no notable fixtures and fittings here except for the carved, timber war memorial to all Library Association librarians from the Commonwealth lost in the First and Second World Wars which is fixed to the wall opposite the main lifts to the science reading rooms and is included in the listing. At the rear also is the staff restaurant with timber dado repeated in the maple battens fixed to the bases of circular columns and hanging lights by Louis Poulsen. On Level 4 of the east block is the Board room and its adjacent Executive Office suite, a 'staff' area with meticulous travertine and American White Oak finishes; the Board room furniture is by Ron Carter and where fixed is included in the listing.

Beneath the piazza are four vast basement floors* with overpainted brick walls, mechanical and motorised stacking and secure pens for rare and valuable items. On Basement level two is the control room for the Mechanical Book Handling System (MBHS), a bespoke conveyor belt system transporting items in trays to and from the basement to the reading rooms' service desks via lifts. As part of the integral design of the Library the basements and MBHS are noted here, but none of the basement levels*, their fixtures and fittings* are included in the listing. Collection item storage areas* on other floors, including large areas of the Lower Ground Floor, Manuscripts and Philatelic Storage Rooms are not included in the listing.

Loading bays*, plantrooms*, cores*, lift-shafts*, and other utility and service areas* are not of special interest and are not included in the listing.

Conference Centre

Refurbished in 2010, the centre serves the Library and external functions and is entered from the forecourt through bronze doors, with lower and upper foyers, served by a travertine lined stair well, the treads in Purbeck marble and Portland stone. The lift wall and dado are in travertine with limestone floors and maple joinery. There is a 250-seat auditorium accessed on two levels (seating recovered in 2010) and four seminar rooms seating 20-65 people, of these only the double-height Elliott Room is of special interest; the others have standard fixtures* and fittings*. A large foyer with a bar is reached by a broad travertine-lined stair incorporating built-in seating, and leather-bound brass handrails, dubbed the 'Spanish Steps' by Wilson to denote his intention that they be a meeting and conversation place. The toilets* and cloakroom* are not included in the listing.

Subsidiary Features

The entrance adjoins walls to Euston Road and Ossulston Street; the latter has two pairs of set-back gates, the first into the forecourt, the second to the rear of the western wing, and railings set on a low, stone-capped wall with brick piers. The semi-circular planters* to the Euston Road frontage and railings between and including Gate 10 and Gate 9* fronting Midland Road (installed in 2008) are not included in the listing.

* Pursuant to s.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') it is declared that these aforementioned features are not of special architectural or historic interest.

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on the 17/08/2016
Selected Sources
Books and journals

- Cherry, B, Pevsner, N, The Buildings of England: London North, (1998), 372-375
- Colin St.John Wilson, Sir , The Design and Construction of the British Library, (1998)
- Frampton, , Richardson, , Colin St John Wilson, (1997)
- Stonehouse, R, Colin St John Wilson, (2007)
- Stonehouse, R, Stromberg, G, The Architecture of the British Library at St Pancras, (2004)

National Grid Reference: TQ2997082897

Appendix 2: Planning Law & Policy

Proposals for alterations to listed building and applications for planning permission within the setting of listed buildings have to be assessed against national and local policy and guidance set out in the national planning policy framework, the local plan, and any other relevant adopted guidance and statute. The policies and guidance quoted below are relevant for this application.

A. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is the legislative basis in determining applications that have an impact on the historic environment. Sections 16 and 66 impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings:

In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. (Paragraph 16 (2))

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. (Paragraph 66 (1))

Section 72(l) of the above Act sets out considerations for development that would affect conservation areas:

... with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

B. National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and PPG

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance. It has the following relevant policies which should be taken into account for proposals such as this one:

As regards to the significance of a heritage asset, the framework contains the following policies:

194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

And:

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The NPPF states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets:

199. 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

As regards any 'harm' to the significance designated heritage asset, the framework states:

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

As regards any 'less than substantial harm' :

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

And in relation to non-designated heritage assets:

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The NPPF also has a policy specifically dealing with the setting of designated heritage assets, and its aim is that the setting is preserved or enhanced where possible:

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Planning Practice Guidance (2019) sets out definitions of terms that are used on the NPPF. On significance it states:

What is 'significance'?

'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

[...] architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms 'special architectural or historic interest' of a listed building and the 'national importance' of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance. (paragraph 6)

On harm:

How can the possibility of harm to a heritage asset be assessed?

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial

harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 194-196) apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings' significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional (see National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 194). (paragraph 18)

On public benefits:

What is meant by the term public benefits?

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy

Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation (paragraph 20)

C. The London Borough of Camden's local plan

Camden's Local Plan (2017) has policies regarding heritage, as follows:.

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 and locally listed heritage assets.

Designated heritage assets

Designated heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings.

The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, 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 of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Council will:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;

f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;

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

h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

i. resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;

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

k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

[...]

Other heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets

The Council will seek to protect other heritage assets including non-designated heritage assets (including those on and off the local list), Registered Parks and Gardens and London Squares. The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, balancing the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

D The London Plan

Policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth of The London Plan (March 2021) stipulates that:

'(C) Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.'

Appendix 3: BLCC Certificate of Immunity from Listing

British Library Centre for Conservation

Overview

Heritage Category: Certificate of Immunity

Certificate of Immunity Number:1474618

A Certificate of Immunity was issued under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended, as the Secretary of State does not intend to list this building or these buildings to which the notice relates for the period set out below.

Start Date of Certificate:

05-Oct-2021

Expiry Date of Certificate:

04-Oct-2026

Location Description:

Please note that this application is not for the main building but for the British Library Centre of Conservation to the rear.

Statutory Address:

British Library Centre for Conservation, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Location

Statutory Address:

British Library Centre for Conservation, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

Greater London Authority

District:

Camden (London Borough)

Parish:

Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference:

TQ2995582966