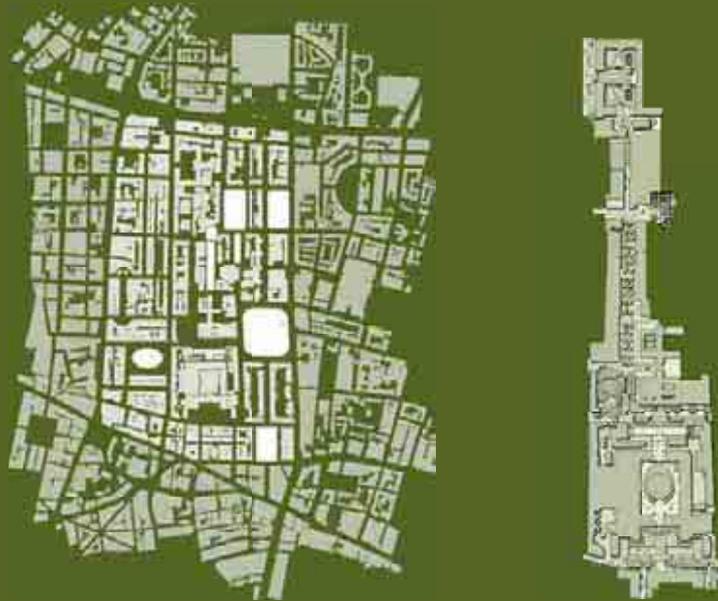




BLOOMSBURY

A Strategic Vision



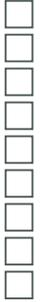
FARRELLS





FOREWORD





Bloomsbury is a distinctive and memorable place. It lies at the heart of London's intellectual and cultural life, and it contains some of its finest buildings, squares and street furniture.

In recent years, the area's landscape and public realm has deteriorated, and much of Bloomsbury is dominated by heavy traffic flows which create severance and discontinuity.

On behalf of our client group - the London Borough of Camden, University College London and the London Development Agency - we have put forward a series of 'mini masterplans' which aim to create an urban environment which respects Bloomsbury's rich history and its character as an oasis within the West End.

At the same time we have put forward ideas which allow the area to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This is reflected specifically in our ideas for Bloomsbury's famous squares and its streets, which we believe should be the best pedestrian environments in London. We have also thought very carefully about how the area's integration with Oxford Street, Fitzrovia, Covent Garden and Holborn can be improved.

We are convinced that a new University High Street focused on Malet Place is the best way to improve the relationship between the university campus, the hospital precinct and the museum quarter.

We have consulted widely with the people, institutions and landowners of Bloomsbury, and we are confident that our proposals, developed in collaboration with the client steering group consultants Hyder, EDCO and M3, offer a long term vision for Bloomsbury which does justice to the area's significance.

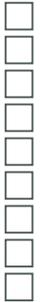
Sir Terry Farrell





CONTENTS





- 1 Introduction and Overview
- 2 Reinventing Bloomsbury's Squares
- 3 The Universities Plan: Creating a World Class Campus
- 4 The Museum Quarter
- 5 Introducing Two-Way Traffic Movement
- 6 Pedestrian Movement and Wayfinding
- 7 The Design Manual
- 8 The Strategic Vision
- 9 The Way Forward





1 | INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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1



LEARNING FROM HISTORY



Above Right: Endsleigh Street, 1893 showing the Bedford Estate's gates

Below: Bloomsbury Square, looking north, c. 1787

Bloomsbury is named after a Norman landowner William de Blemund who acquired the land in 1201. It remained largely rural until the 1660s when the Earl of Southampton built what was to become Bloomsbury Square. By the 18th Century Bloomsbury was established as a fashionable residential district within the Bedford Estate. At this time, Bloomsbury was what might be called a 'semi-gated community'. Access to the squares was reserved for the residents of adjacent houses, and through-traffic was strictly controlled by gates which closed off all of the major north-south streets to through traffic.





Institutional uses that now predominate in the area started appearing in Bloomsbury in the early nineteenth century. The rebuilding and expansion of the British Museum began in 1823; the main building of University College London was erected in 1827-29; and the first University College Hospital building, which replaced a dispensary of 1828, dates to 1833-34.

Metropolitan improvements of the same period included the opening in 1837 of Euston Station – London's first terminus – and the 1847 opening of the slum-clearance and road improvement scheme of New Oxford Street.

Between 1888 and 1910 major apartment buildings and hotels appeared – the Russell Hotel dates to 1900 and the Marlborough Hotel to 1910 but even more significantly the fundamental shift away from residential uses was recognised in

1893 when the squares were opened to the public and the surviving gates which had barred through traffic from the north-south streets were cleared away.

University expansion not only continued in the opening years of the 20th century, but began to change the basic configuration as well as the face of Bloomsbury.

In 1907 Malet Street was created by clearing and widening Keppel Mews North, and by the 1914 Ordnance Survey almost all of the buildings between Torrington Square and the British Museum had been demolished and replaced by a formal, tree-lined approach to the recently-built north wing of the museum.

The expiry of leases and the willingness of estates to dispose of some freeholds in the early 20th century led to expansion of the university in the heart of Bloomsbury.

A major sale of land was made to the University of London in 1927, when the whole of the area between the British Museum and University College – the 'Central Site' – was obtained for new headquarters buildings. Buildings began to be erected shortly afterwards, and in 1932 a masterplan for the precinct was prepared by Charles Holden, with its centrepiece of Holden's Senate House and Library.

A notable aspect of the post-war development was the extent to which the existing fabric of a residential suburb – seen merely as old rather than historic – was replaced with large structures which inevitably changed the grain of the area.

This continued throughout the 1960s, and in spite of conservation battles such as the demolition of Euston Arch in 1962, terraces such as those in Woburn Square were still being demolished as late as 1969.



1745 Rocque



1813 Horwood





Above (from facing page left): Early engraving of the British Museum; Nineteenth century view of the quadrangle at UCL; An unrealised masterplan proposal showing Senate House extending to Torrington Place

Whilst the 1960s' programme continued for some years, however, major institutional redevelopment ended with the completion in the mid 1970s of Wates House in Gordon Street and Denys Lasdun's buildings in Bedford Way. Subsequent building programmes have taken a more incremental approach.

A similar adaptation of existing buildings can be seen in the late 1990s' re-use of University College Hospital after the main building was deemed surplus to NHS requirements.

Although new hospital buildings were approved facing Euston Road, the late Edwardian complex was acquired in 1996 by University College London to expand teaching facilities, and its subsequent refurbishment and adaptation was different to the approach of the first three quarters of the 20th century – a time when the building would almost certainly have been demolished and replaced by new structures.



Above: Portraits of University College London founder Jeremy Bentham, and literary figure Virginia Woolf

1



1843 Davies



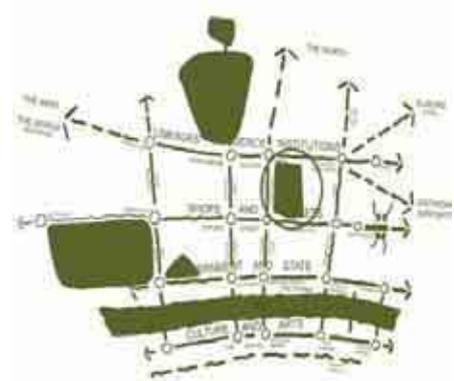
1960 Ordnance Survey



BLOOMSBURY TODAY

Bloomsbury has

- 30% of Camden's workforce, with 70,000 people working in the area
 - Four million hotel visitors per annum
 - A student population of 40,000
 - A substantial quantity of its land held between 5 landowners - University of London/UCLH, DCMS, Crown Estates, Bedford Estates & the Wellcome Foundation
- UCL has*
- An area of 52 hectares
 - 18,300 students
- The British Museum has*
- 1 million ft² of floor area within a Grade 1 listed building
 - 1,000 employees in Bloomsbury
 - One million objects on display
 - 4.5 million visitors per annum



This Page clockwise from top: Key statistics; Bloomsbury in the context of London's 'Big Grid'; main activity patterns; Plan showing the area as a green enclave within London's West End

Opposite Page: Aerial view of the site - the soft landscape in Bloomsbury contrasts strongly with the more urban character of the West End in general

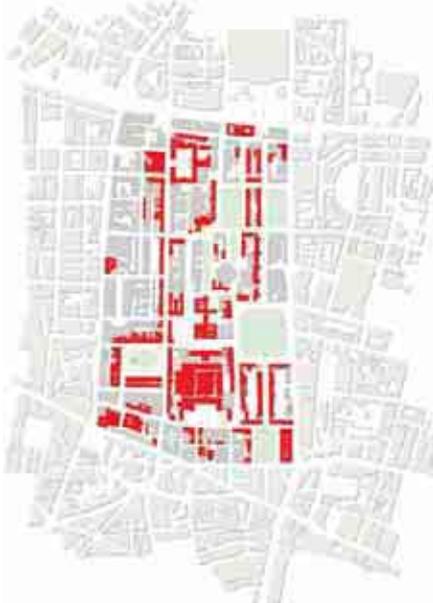


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Listed Buildings



Above Clockwise (from top left): Key buildings within Bloomsbury - University Church of Christ the King; University College London; Senate House; St George's Church and the British Museum

Below Left: Bloomsbury conservation area

Below: The character of Bloomsbury's finest public realm, much of it recently improved

Bloomsbury Conservation Area





THE KEY ISSUES

The facing page shows some of the buildings and spaces that give Bloomsbury its reputation for gracious and dignified public realm. Some of Britain's leading architects are responsible for the many fine buildings created here through the ages. Bedford Square is the best and most complete Georgian square in London. The project brief and subsequent consultation work we have undertaken reveal some key issues that need to be addressed if Bloomsbury is to retain its reputation as London's cultural and intellectual heart however:

Squares and Landscape

- Many of the public spaces do not have a clear identity and planting is inconsistent with the aim to provide 'defensible' space.

The Universities Area

- Piecemeal growth has resulted in an universities area lacking in functional clarity, coherent wayfinding, and confused circulation.

The Museums Area

- Wayfinding to both the north and south entrances of the British Museum is difficult.

Traffic

- Traffic has a divisive impact and there is heavy congestion on Torrington Place.

Pedestrian & Cycle Movement

- Connections to tube stations are poor, institutional uses pose obstacles to permeability.

Street furniture and signage

- Poorly co-ordinated signage and street furniture do little to aid pedestrian navigation.



1



This Page from top: Potential route from Gower Street into UCL obscured by building services; poorly coordinated streetscape and thoughtlessly implemented 'traffic calming'; street clutter



OUR APPROACH

The Project Brief sets out the objectives of the Strategic Vision, which are to:

- enhance the quality of public realm;
- improve identity of place;
- integrate the university, museum and hospital precincts with the rest of the area as well as improve links with the West End;
- propose improvements to pedestrian and vehicular circulation;
- produce a Bloomsbury Supplement to the Camden Streetscape Design Manual. This has been informed by work recently carried out in Russell, Bloomsbury and Bedford Squares.

The design team has met with representatives of the major institutions, the highway authorities, planning authorities, community groups, residents and major land owners to seek understanding of their aspirations for the area. This together with discussion in a series of design workshops has resulted in the idea of six 'mini-masterplans', each with a clear focus and set of objectives. The extent of these is clarified on the diagram opposite and described in the remainder of this report.

We have not tried to 'solve' all the area's problems. What this document does is to identify specific projects and prioritise actions within each mini-masterplan. Together, and in part, these will have a fundamentally positive impact on Bloomsbury over a period of time.

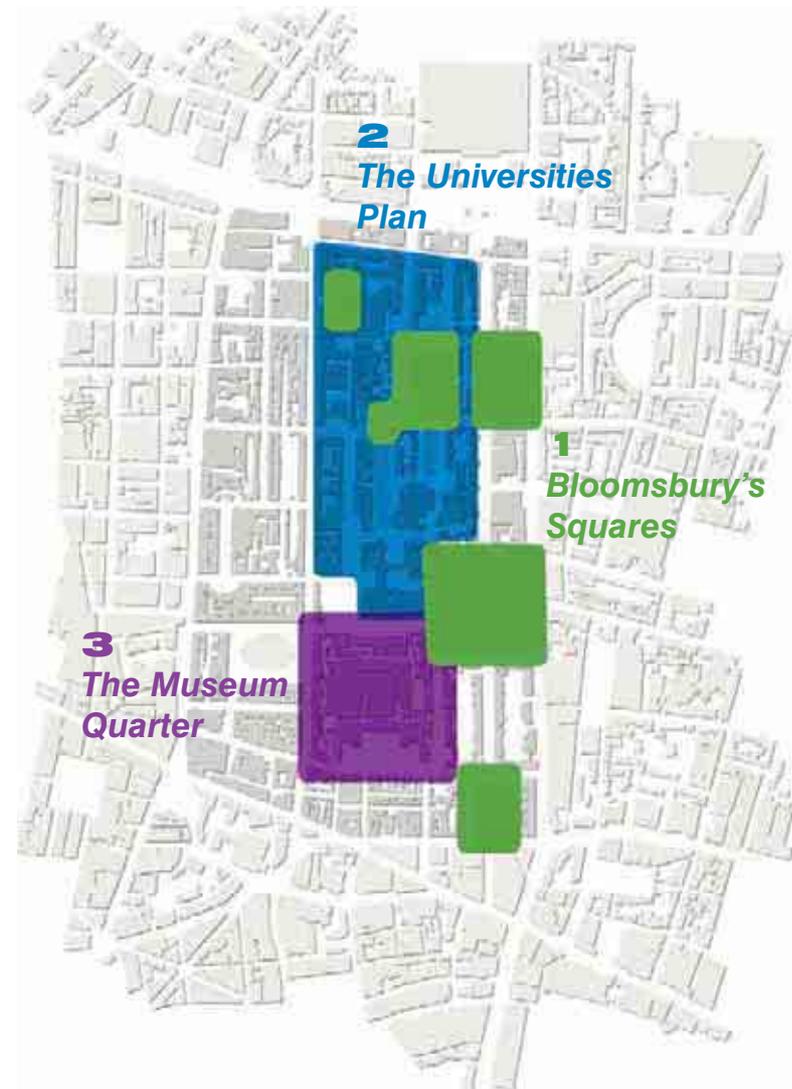
The document is intended as an ongoing reference document for improvements to public realm as opportunities arise.

Each intervention has been conceived as a project which can be implemented incrementally and as a stand-alone in its own right. This approach provides the flexibility that we believe is necessary in an area of this size and complexity.

List of CONSULTTEES

- Bedford Estate
- Wellcome Trust
- Crown Estate
- The British Museum
- English Heritage (informal)
- Bloomsbury Improvement Group
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Group (correspondence)
- Bloomsbury Association
- Fitzrovia Association affiliates (Charlotte Street Assoc., Gordon Mansions Assoc., Ridgemount Gardens Assoc.)
- University Of London
- University College London
- University College Hospital
- School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine
- Birkbeck College
- School of Oriental and African Studies
- Imperial Hotel Group
- Metropolitan Police, Holborn
- Bloomsbury Hoteliers (contact)
- Transport for London
- London Development Agency
- London Borough of Camden



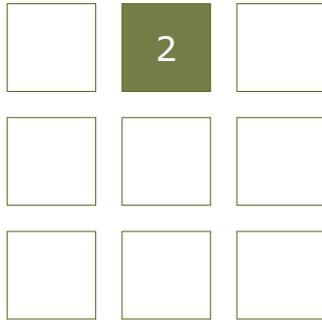


This Page: A series of 'mini-masterplans' are used as a means of identifying potential projects and areas of focus
 Below: Material from an early workshop exploring and presenting initial ideas and first thoughts





2 | REINVENTING BLOOMSBURY'S SQUARES

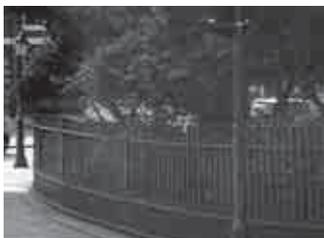




Russell, Bloomsbury, Torrington and Bedford Squares have all benefited from recent investment, and Gordon Square and Woburn Square are in the process of being upgraded by the University of London.

Much remains to be done to bring identity to each of Bloomsbury's main spaces and to apply a landscape strategy that recognises the fact that these are no longer 19th century residential squares, but an integral part of a 21st century mixed urban environment.

This section sets out principles which will define an approach to Bloomsbury's landscape. It also makes specific proposals for individual spaces, building on work that has already been done by others.



Above: Degraded landscape with no civic virtue; railing stubs on Malet Street; dying grass and muddy footpaths under dense canopy in Tavistock Square

Left: A Georgian love of display contrasts with a more secretive Victorian attitude to the design of the garden square





SQUARES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY Design Principles

These pages describe the overriding principles that should inform the design of Bloomsbury's squares.

The connection between the different spaces, as well as the preservation of Bloomsbury's character as an oasis is of principal importance.

It is proposed to 'green' parts of Bloomsbury that are relatively hard, for instance in the north east part of the study area in the vicinity of the hospitals precinct. This forms part of the overall masterplan or Strategic Vision for the area.

Some of Bloomsbury's squares are heavily shaded and it is suggested that a carefully conceived plan to improve light levels is considered, both in terms of canopy management and edge planting approach. This will help to improve sightlines into the spaces as well, which has clear benefits in terms of public safety and the enjoyment of the squares by as many people as possible.

Landscape architects EDCO have submitted a separate document which puts forward detail illustrative concepts for principal squares and spaces in Bloomsbury.

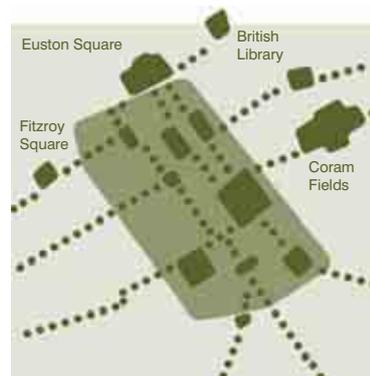


Above: Sketch showing recent improvements to Torrington Square, looking towards Senate House

Preserve Bloomsbury's character as a green oasis within the West End



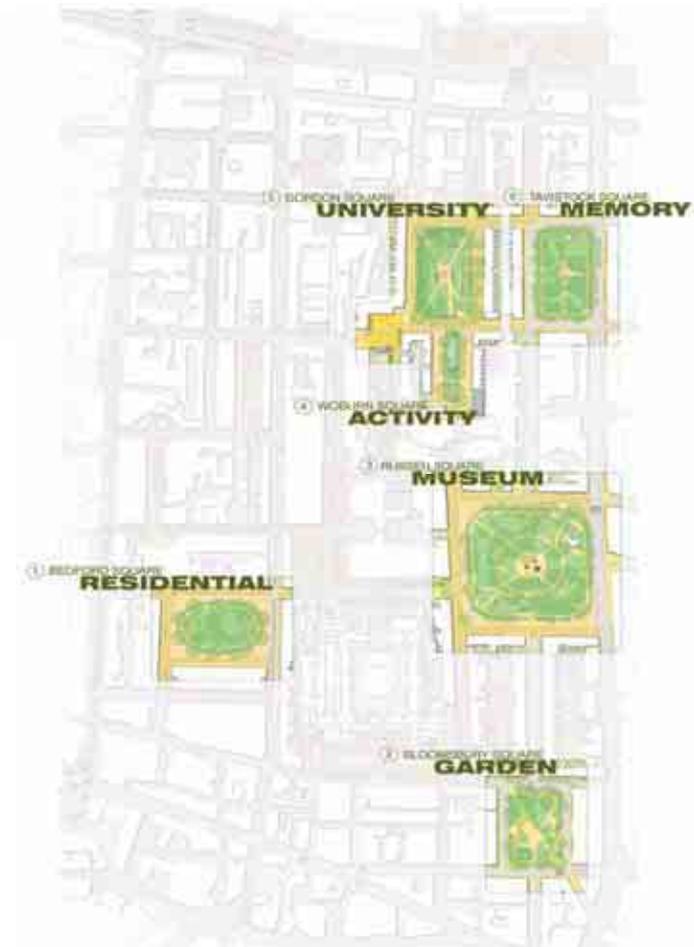
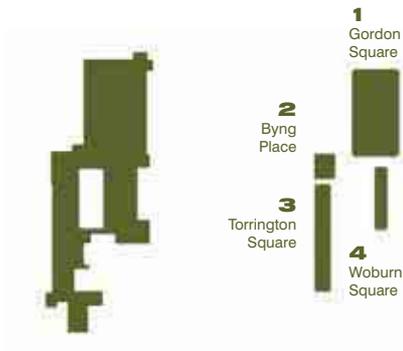
Create an integrated landscape network focused on Bloomsbury's squares and major places in the surrounding area



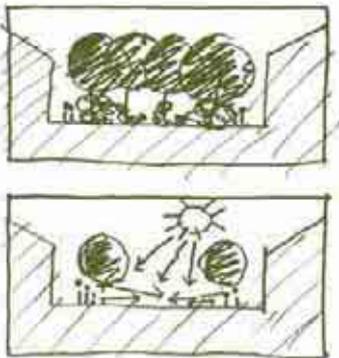


Bring coherence to the heart of Bloomsbury by defining edges

Each Square should have a unique identity



Improve sightlines and light levels in all Bloomsbury's squares





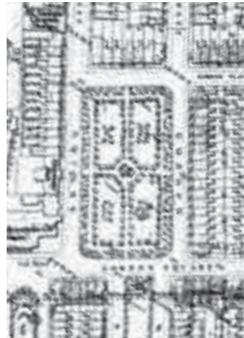
GORDON SQUARE: A New University Green



Gordon Square has the potential to be a major University address. A number of academic departments are located here, the Bloomsbury Theatre is located at its north west corner, a major new University front door is proposed on its west side, and it is on several strong pedestrian routes leading to Euston Square and elsewhere.



A scheme is currently on site to restore railings and gates, upgrade paths and improve planting within this and Woburn Square, which will greatly improve the quality of these spaces. It is led by the University of London with support from English Heritage, the Wolfson Foundation and the Heritage Lottery Fund.



The Design Team has concluded that further work will be necessary in order for Gordon Square to function as part of the University campus. The Strategic Vision proposes improvements to adjacent roads as well as the reconfiguration of Gordon Square. It is proposed that the gates be moved to the corners in the medium term to improve the permeability of Gordon Square.

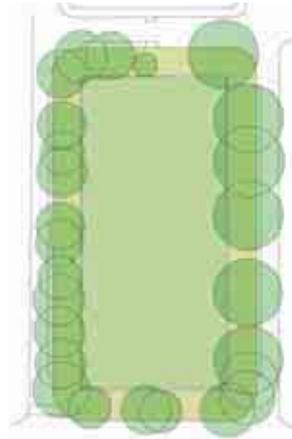
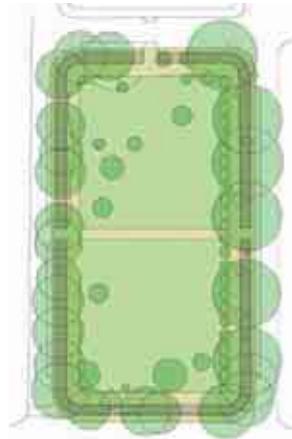


We have also put forward a more radical concept for the complete re-design of Gordon Square explicitly as a university green, as a longer term possibility for this space.



This page: View of Gordon Square; 1870, a formal design for residential use by Thomas Cubitt, with gates positioned at centres rather than at the corners; in 1914 after changes to the pathways were made; University of London scheme currently on site





Above: Diagonal pathways introduced to follow desire lines and then removed along with railings to provide more freedom of movement

Right: Illustrative view showing the possibility of creating a university green - this could become a place for key university functions, e.g graduation ceremonies





BYNG PLACE: Taming the Traffic



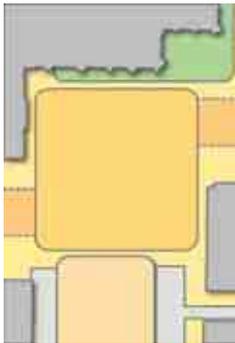
Byng Place is at the heart of Bloomsbury yet it is one of its least successful spaces. It lacks enclosure, it has no clear function and its layout is very confusing.

It is proposed that the segregated cycle ways and road surface be replaced by a shared surface consisting of granite setts. A number of options for doing this are illustrated below. Each approach

would encourage vehicular traffic to move at less than 20mph.

Enclosure is required at the southern end. It is proposed to build a light low rise structure or structures here to provide this, as well as provide an activity focus for the space. This could consist of a small cafe or works of art and seating.

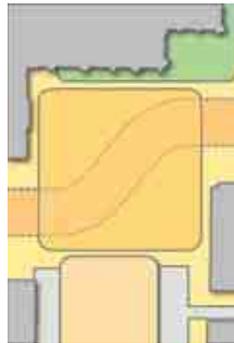
A number of landscape strategies for the space have been considered. The design team has concluded that soft landscape should be introduced in Byng Place, with due regard to the visual axis connecting the University Church and Senate House.



Option 1: No road markings to encourage caution and eye contact between motorists and pedestrians



Option 2: Layout with sculptures or other structures providing road termination event



Option 3: Minimal road markings guide motorists through the site whilst maintaining a cohesive pedestrian place



Option 4: A centre piece unites the space and provides a termination event in all directions



Above: Illustrative section showing tree planting in Byng Place

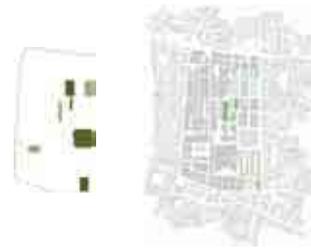
Opposite (from top): View of Byng Place as it is; as the lively pedestrian friendly space it should be







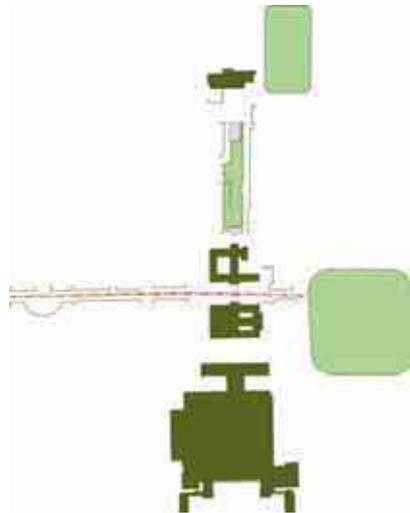
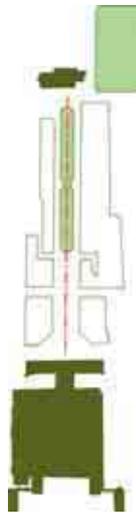
THE UNIVERSITY SQUARES: Building on recent renewal



The university squares create addresses within Bloomsbury's campus area and provide a focus for social interaction and informal discourse within the area's intellectual community.

The physical improvement of these spaces - Gordon Square, Woburn Square, Byng Place and Torrington Square - is the first step towards creating a campus worthy of the academic status enjoyed by the institutions.

It is suggested that further work be done to distinguish one space from another, so that each has a clear purpose, programme of activity and character that is distinctive. Focusing purely on physical improvement may result in places that are simply variations of one another.



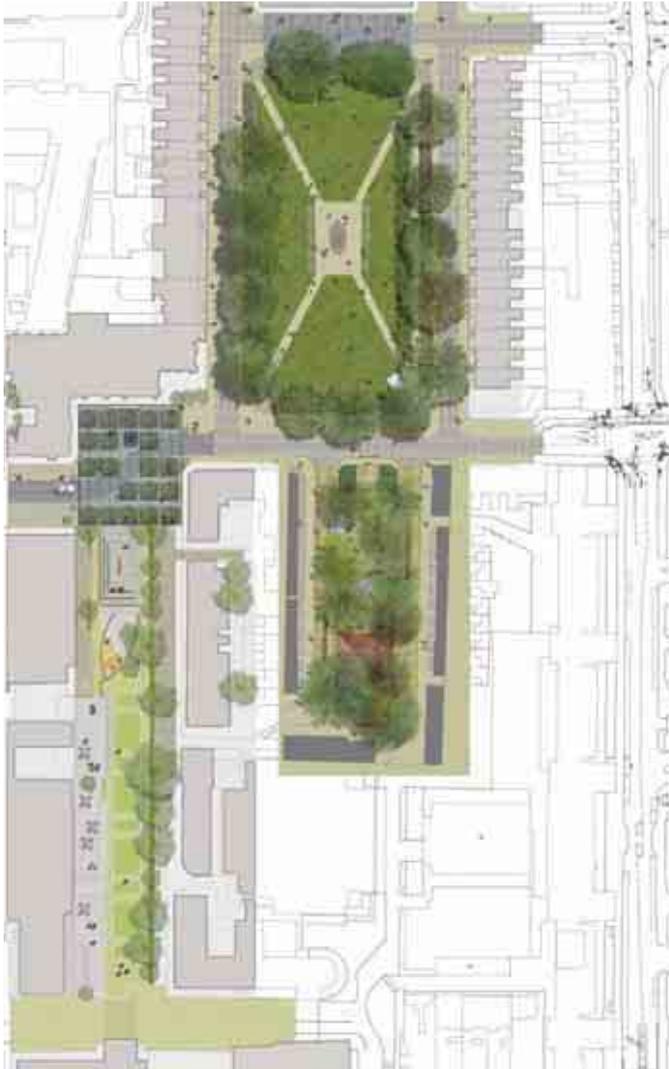
Above: Diagrams describing how Senate House has altered the relationship between University College London and the British Museum

Below: Opportunities to invigorate Torrington Square, particularly along its western edge





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This Page: Plan by EDCO showing an integrated approach to the university squares, and suggestions for activities which reinforce their separate identity



TAVISTOCK SQUARE: A Peace Garden

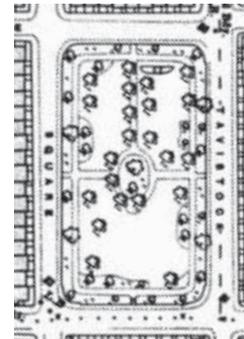
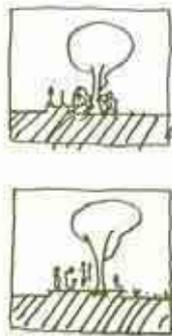


Tavistock Square was developed in the 1820s. Its centre-piece is a statue of Mahatma Gandhi. There is also a memorial to conscientious objectors and a cherry tree planted in memory of the victims of Hiroshima. The square has become a place of reflection. The simple original layout reinforces this and does not necessarily need to be changed, however it has been suggested that this could become London's principal memorial space, which could involve more substantial change. We propose at the least altering the edge treatment by removing railings in accordance with the sketch below, and introduction of a maintenance regime aimed at improving light levels and sight lines. The hard surfacing next to the Gandhi memorial should be increased in size.



Above: Existing view and plan of Tavistock Square

Below (from left): Existing View and plan of Tavistock Square; A 1914 plan shows how little the square has changed since it was first designed





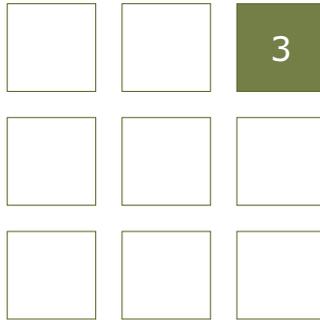
Left: The illustrative plan and section shows minor interventions relating mainly to the treatment of soft landscape and the edge treatment

Above (from top): Memorials already in the square for Gandhi, conscientious objectors, and Virginia Woolfe





3 | THE UNIVERSITIES PLAN: Creating a World Class Campus





Over the years the University in Bloomsbury has engaged some of the finest architects in the UK to build some of London's best buildings.

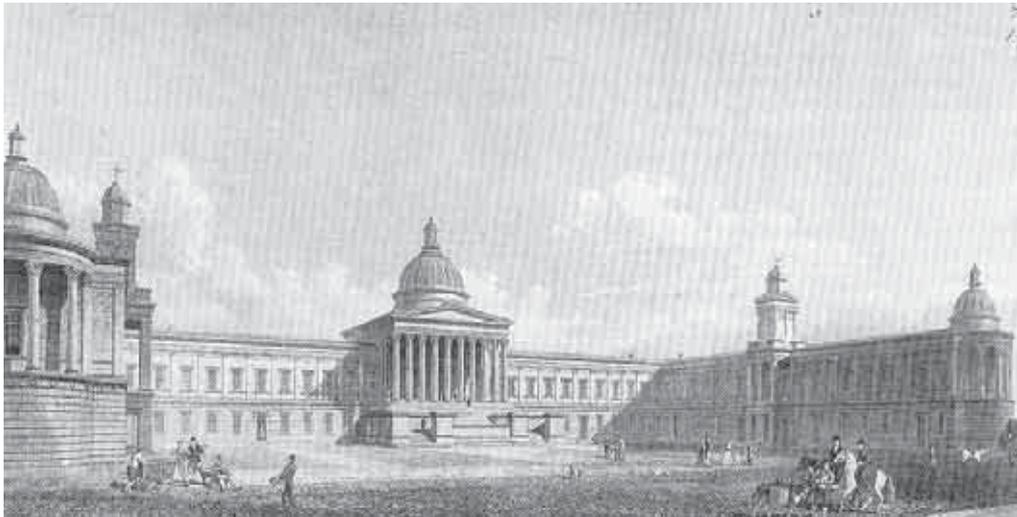
It has been difficult from the outset to create a rational and coherent campus - the residential estate has not easily accepted large scale institutional uses, which require an entirely different urban grain.

In this section we propose key interventions that will allow academic uses to integrate more successfully with the rest of Bloomsbury.



Right: Potential route from Gower Street to UCL locked and obstructed by escape stairs and building services

Below: Historic view of UCL with its distinctive portico from Gower Street, designed by Wilkins





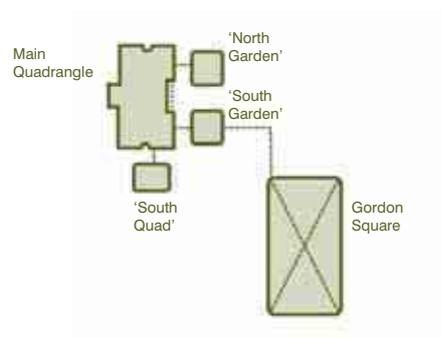
THE UNIVERSITY PLAN

Philosophy & Design Principles

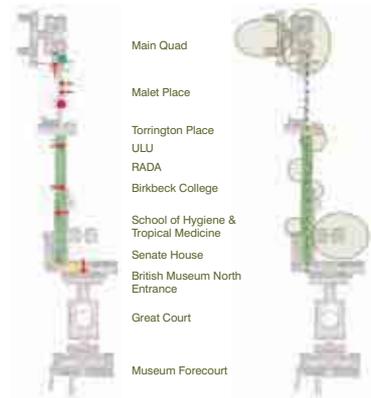
Reinforce Bloomsbury's status as London's intellectual heartland



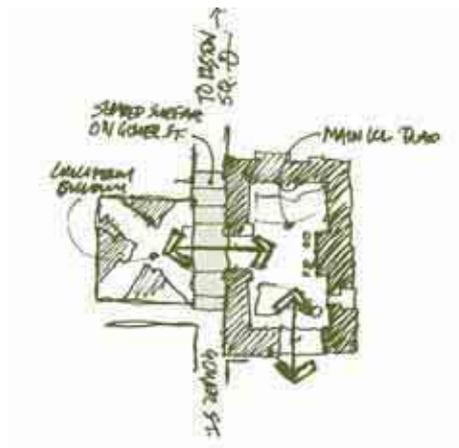
Create a coherent and continuous sequence of University spaces



Create a 'Universities' High Street' as the Principal Academic Address in Bloomsbury



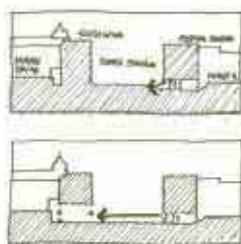
Celebrate UCL's main entrance on Gower Street



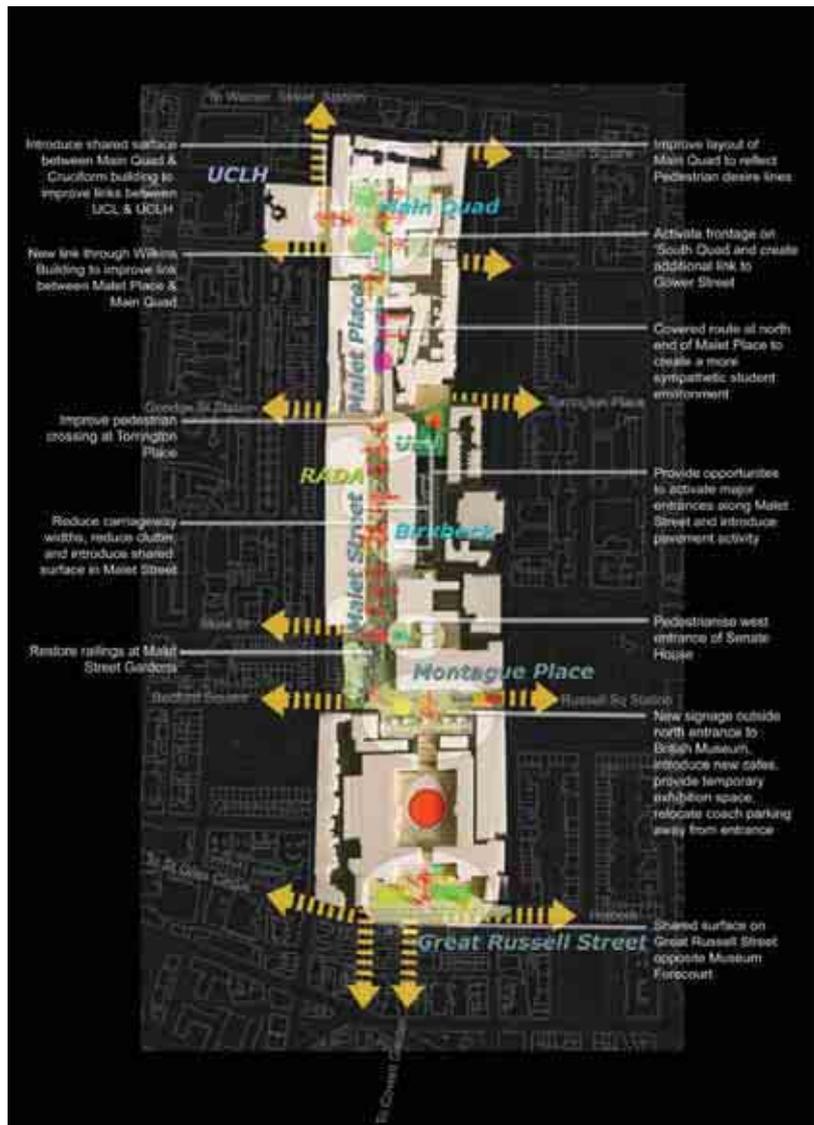


CREATING A UNIVERSITY HIGH STREET

Creating a 'university high street' is the fundamental idea behind unifying academic territory in Bloomsbury, and creating linkage between the university area in the north and the museum quarter in the south. Focused on Malet Street, the route provides a new address for the many world famous institutions lining its course.



This page clockwise from left: Sketch showing the University High Street forming the principal academic address in Bloomsbury; two main spaces 'anchor' the high street; sketch showing the removal of the major obstacle to this new route





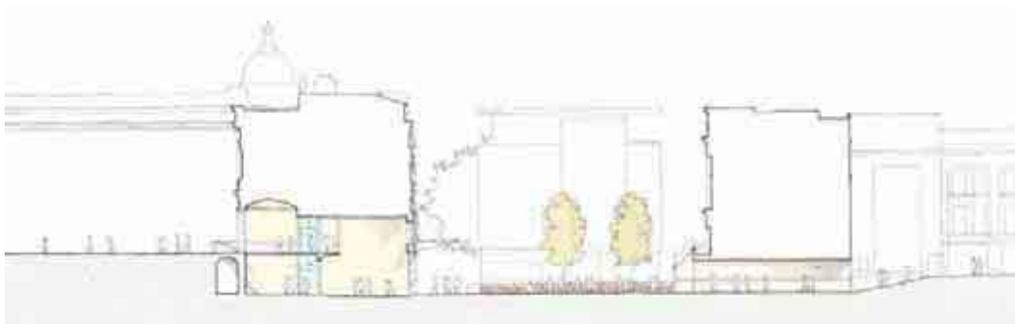
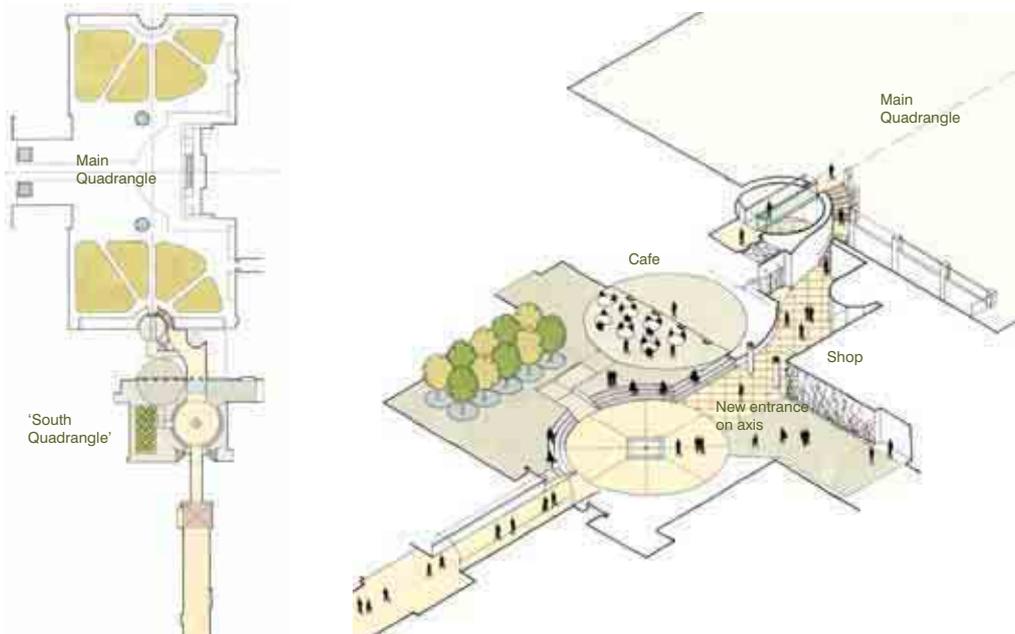
CONNECTING THE MAIN QUAD TO MALET PLACE

This spread shows an illustrative architectural study by Richard Portchmouth describing a new link through the south wing of the Wilkins Building. The concept includes new

stairs and lifts to achieve a link between the main quadrangle and the proposed new 'south quad'. A cafe and shop animate the space.

This Page: Plan, Axonometric and Section through the proposal for a new route connecting Malet Place and the main quad through the south wing of the Wilkins building.

Opposite: View of the 'South Quadrangle' before and after regeneration







CREATING A SERIES OF CONNECTED 'QUADRANGLES'

The interventions described on previous pages together with the proposed new building on Gordon Street adjacent to the Bloomsbury Theatre allows UCL to work as a university campus rather than as a series of individual buildings superimposed on a residential grid.

In addition to the ideas shown here, we believe that further work is required to resolve vehicular circulation within the campus, specifically servicing. The illustration to the right implies that the existing service in the north east corner is roofed over and that vehicular access along the northern half of Malet Place is restricted or removed entirely.

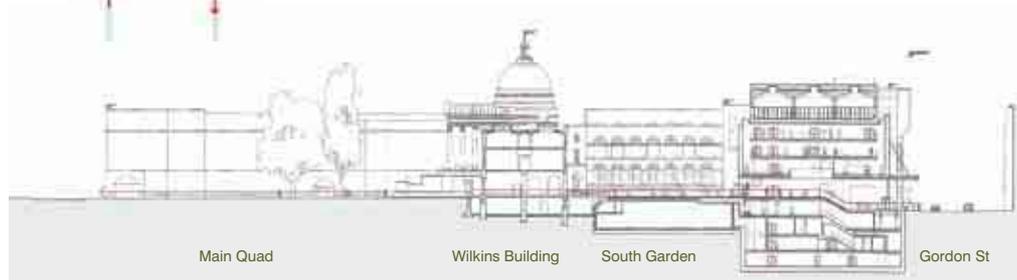
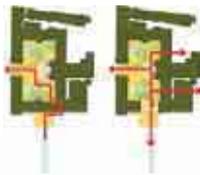


Right: Axonometric showing the effect of a new route through the Wilkins building on connectivity between the university's squares

Below: Section provided by Dixon Jones showing their proposed 'Panopticon' building - this shows a greatly improved route from Gordon Street to the main quad

Opposite: The main quad before and after reconfiguration of the landscape to better serve desire lines leading to existing and new entrances

Following Pages: Before and after the introduction of a canopy and enhancement of addresses along Malet Place



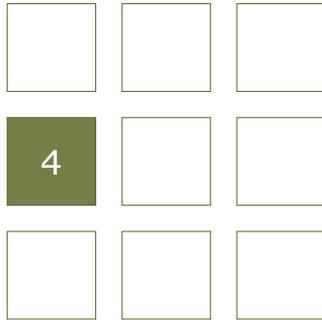








4 | THE MUSEUM QUARTER

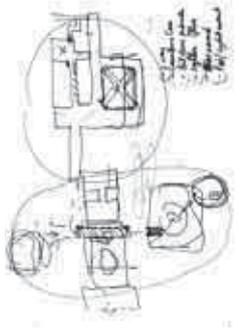




As the adjacent images show, the British Museum is poorly signified from surrounding areas, particularly nearby underground stations.

The proposals described in this section aim to make the museum's presence more greatly felt from Oxford Street, St Giles Circus, Covent Garden and Russell Square. Specific interventions are shown on Montague Place, outside the museum's North Entrance, which it is suggested should have greater prominence than at present. Many of the ideas presented here should be read in conjunction with Section 6, which deals with pedestrian circulation and wayfinding in general.

Clarifying routes to the British Museum is also about promoting all Bloomsbury's cultural assets. The Strategic Vision as a whole allows us to conceive of 'cultural circuits' within Bloomsbury and surrounding areas, with key assets such as the British Library and the university museums acting as anchors for cultural activity in the area.



Left: Current journeys from the four tube stations to the closest entry points of the British Museum shown by photos taken at 50m increments - there is nothing to indicate in the surrounding area that one of the world's greatest museums is on the doorstep

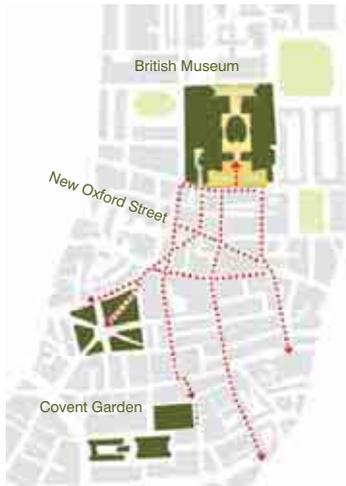




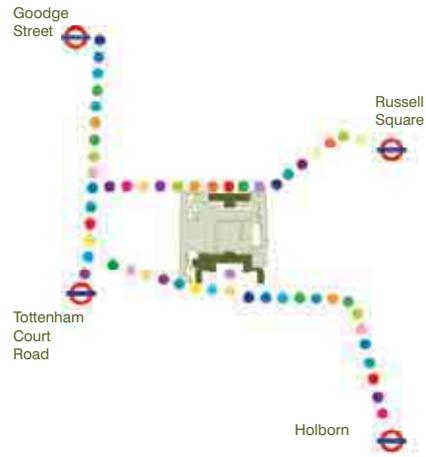
THE MUSEUM QUARTER

Design Principles

Strengthen Routes that connect the British Museum Quarter to Covent Garden



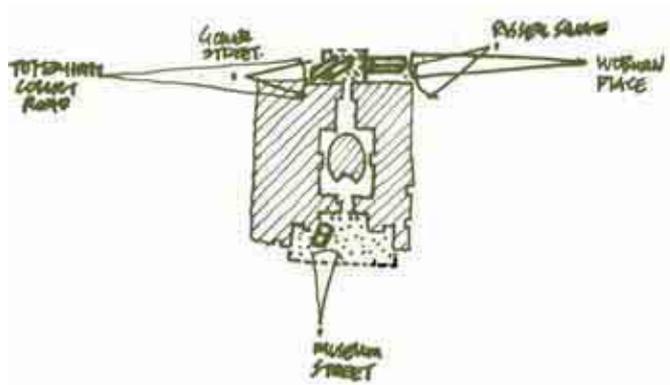
Create an objects trail from surrounding underground stations to the British Museum



Promote All Bloomsbury's Cultural Assets



Improve Visibility of the Museum



Opposite: View before and after proposed changes to Montague Place







WAYFINDING TO THE MUSEUM ENTRANCE

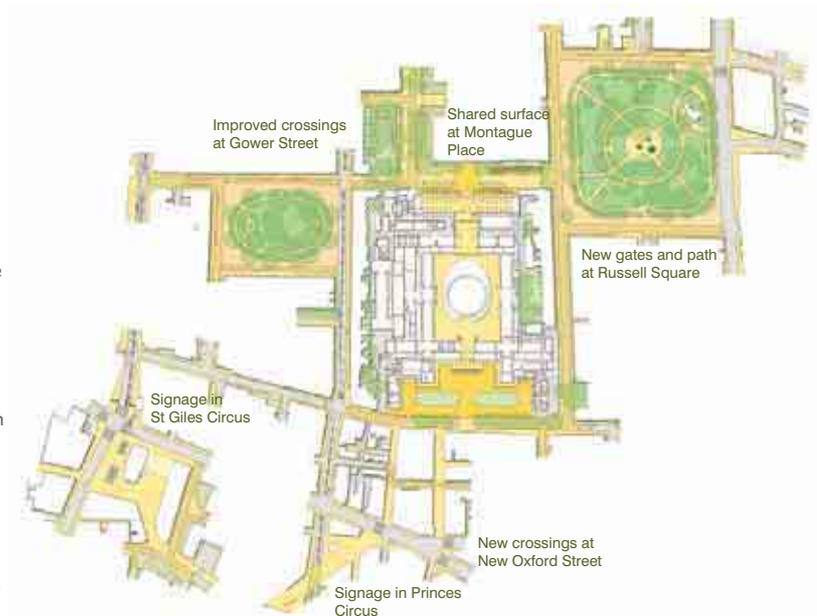
The adjacent drawing shows the British Museum's domain in public realm terms, as proposed by this Strategic Vision.

Major proposals have been put forward by others for Princes Circus and St Giles Circus. It is proposed that signifying the Museum from these, in addition to providing wide pedestrian crossings at New Oxford Street, should form a key part of the regeneration of this area.

In addition it is proposed that a new gate and realigned path be introduced in the south west corner of Russell Square to provide a direct link to Montague Place and the North Entrance to the British Museum. Further work is required to minimise the impact of coach parking in this area.

The sketches on this page show the introduction of tall elements which will assist in raising the profile of the North Entrance both from Russell Square to the East and Bedford Square to the west. These could consist of museum signage and could incorporate part of its collection, cafes, outdoor seating and information kiosks.

Montague Place should be redesigned as a shared surface, as should that part of Great Russell Street that is adjacent to the Museum Forecourt.

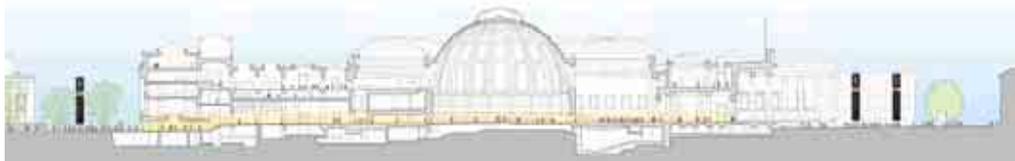


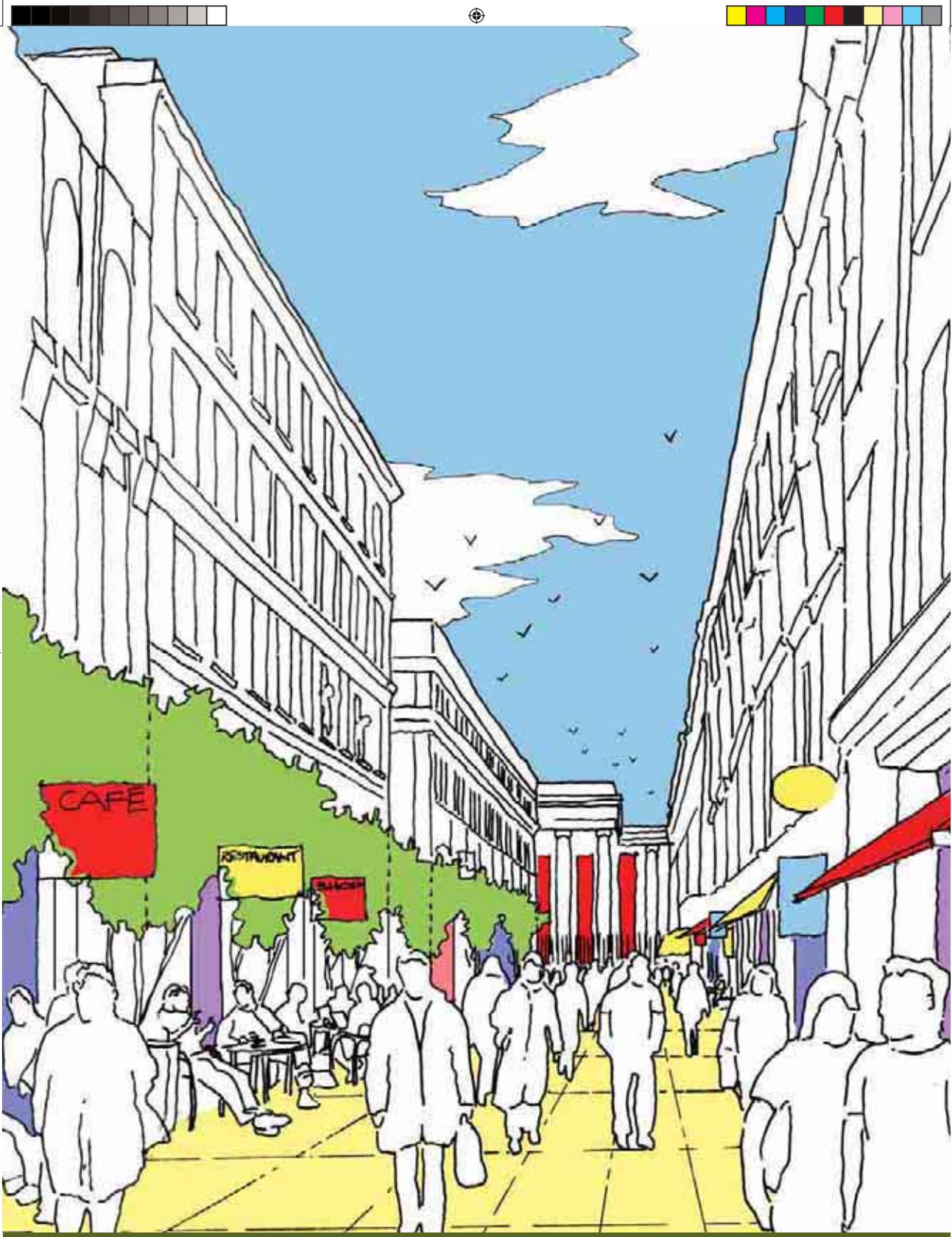
Above Left: View of banners with the new path and gate proposed for Russell Square to encourage use of the British Museum's north entrance



Below: Section through the British Museum
Opposite: Coptic Street pedestrianised along its entire length

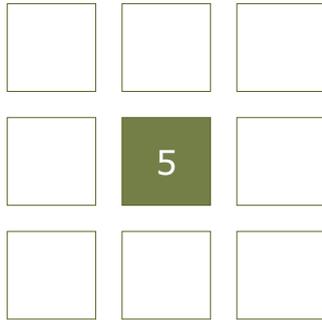
Above Right: The banners, visible as an event in the landscape from the improved Bedford Square







5 | INTRODUCING TWO-WAY TRAFFIC





Civilising traffic, and mitigating its negative impact in Bloomsbury, is a key strategic aim of this project. As part of the design team, traffic consultants Hyder Consulting have been examining a range of traffic options for the area. While much traffic modelling work continues in the area a number of principles specific to the Bloomsbury Strategic Vision have emerged:

- One-way roads are to be converted to two-way movement, as far as is possible.
- The existing Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street gyratory is to be removed and two-way working introduced.
- Shared surfacing is proposed in key locations. The carriageway could be raised so that pedestrians may cross at any location.
- All road markings on shared surface areas are to be removed except at signalised junctions. The effect causes caution and encourages drivers to reduce their speed, forcing eye to eye contact with pedestrians and cyclists. The highway design would encourage a shift of priority from motorists to pedestrians.
- The speed limit would be reduced to 20 mph with the introduction of traffic calming measures in the form of raised tables at junctions. To achieve a lower speed limit, additional physical measures are to be designed.
- Segregated cycle facilities would not be required due to the proposed reduction in the speed limit.
- Rationalization of street furniture ensuring use of bollards, pedestrian guardrail, signs and road markings are minimised.
- Additional zebra crossings are to be introduced and a review of pedestrian crossings within the area has taken place. Additional crossings are to be introduced where the need arises on a project by project basis at implementation.
- A detailed study of the redesign of Montague Place is to be undertaken, identifying the potential to create a shared surface. The existing coach parking provision is to be examined and potential sites for relocation identified.



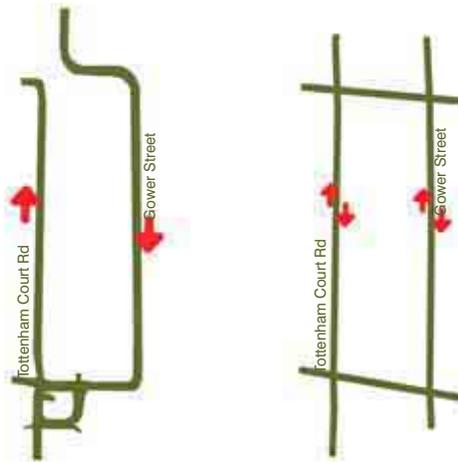
Above: Examples of traffic planning in the area. Cycle paths around the area can be confusing and are frequently obstructed by roadworks, pedestrians and other unauthorised vehicles



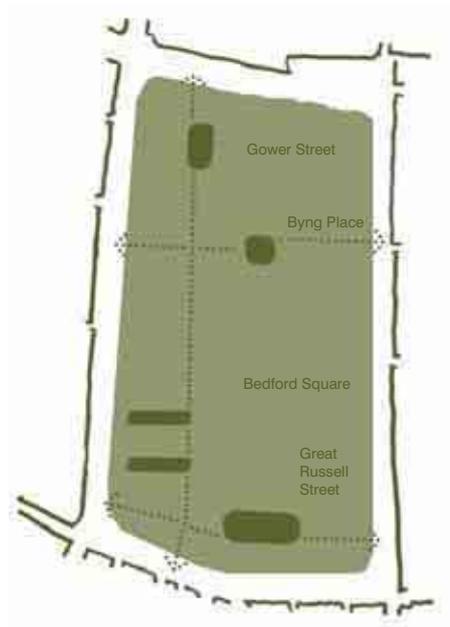


Keep Through Traffic Out of Bloomsbury

Introduce Two-Way Traffic on Gower Street and Tottenham Court Road



Bloomsbury Re-designed as a 20mph Environment Design with Shared Surfaces - Areas with high pedestrian flows have been designed to encourage motorists to travel at slower speeds





Remove Gyratories at Russell Square, St Giles Circus and the Euston Road Underpass

Euston Road Underpass



St Giles Circus

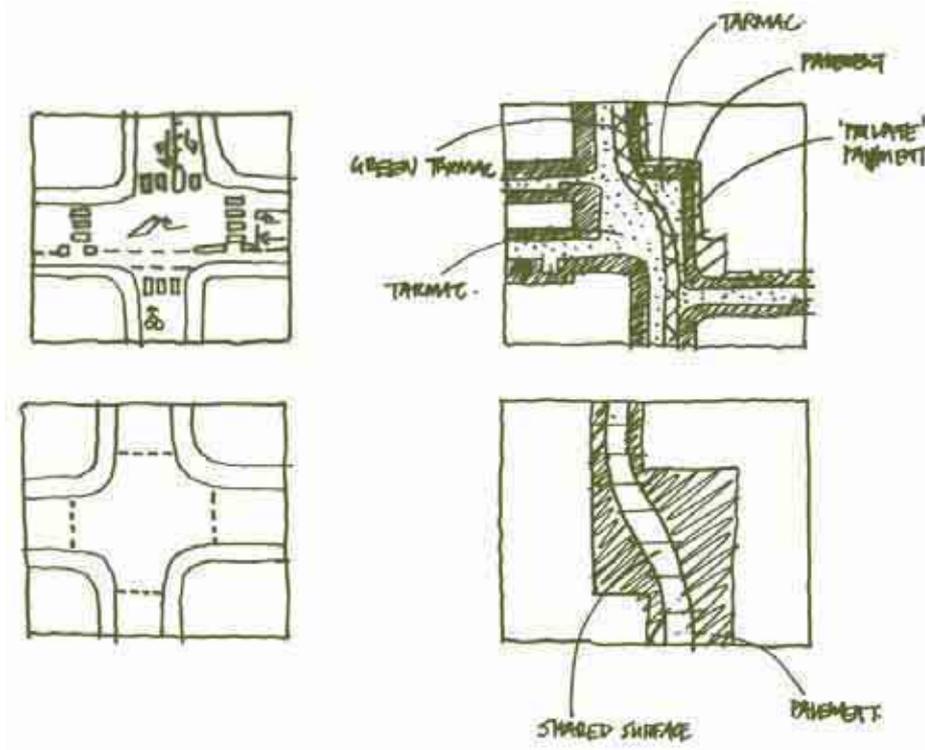


Russell Square



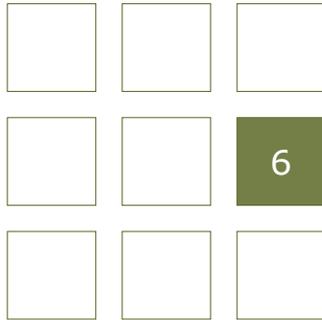
Remove Traffic Islands Where Possible & Introduce Raised Tables at all Intersections Where Possible

Simplify Road Surfaces and Minimise Road Traffic Markings





6 | PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND WAYFINDING

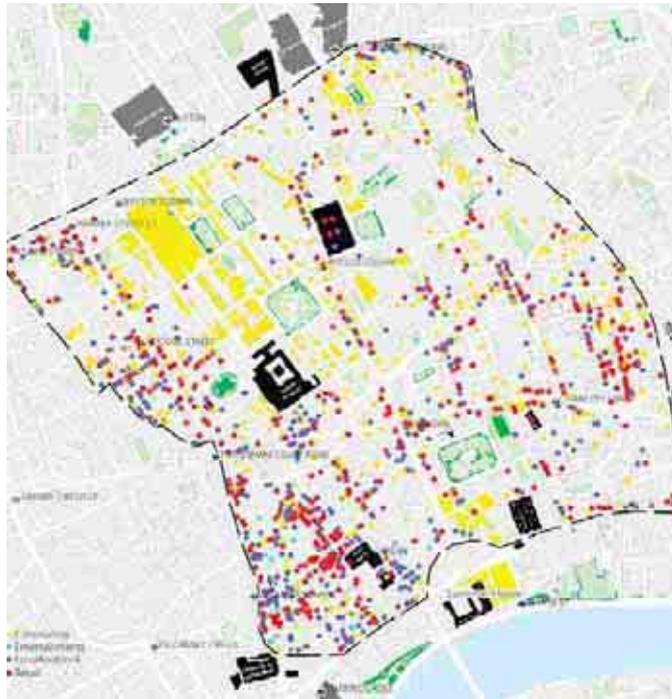




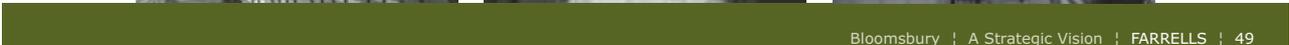
Much of this Strategic Vision is about achieving fundamental improvement in the state of the pedestrian environment in Bloomsbury. A key aim is to create the best people place in London, the vast majority of whom use the area as pedestrians.

We have focused on three areas of intervention: improving integration with surrounding areas, improving routes to public transport, and making physical improvements to the infrastructure itself. There is an obvious reference to proposals for vehicular circulation as described in the previous section, and the following section, which summarises the Street Design Manual separately produced by EDCO, and which is intended as a reference work specific to implementation of future public realm works.

These proposals are consistent with various initiatives undertaken by London Borough of Camden, neighbouring authorities and the Greater London Authority.



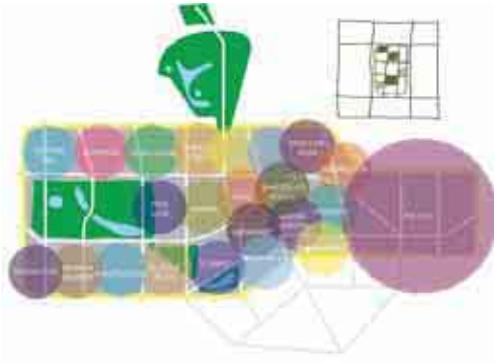
Above: Study by Intelligent Space of pedestrian flows in the area commissioned by the London Borough of Camden - this clearly shows the distribution of activities in the area, in particular the strong contrast in Bloomsbury between institution uses, and others more commonly associated with the rest of the West End



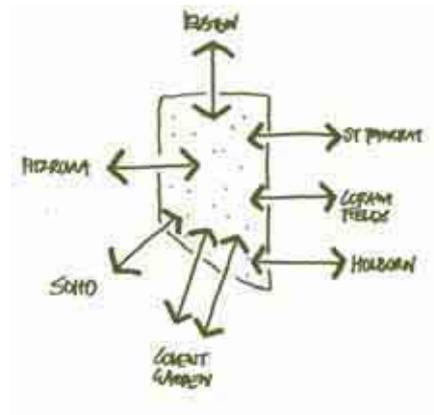


KEY PRINCIPLES

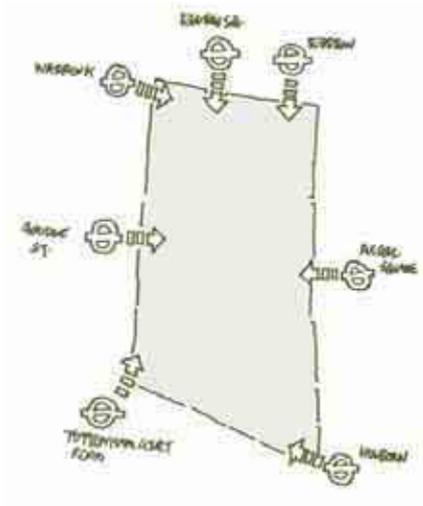
Promote a Clear Wayfinding & Mapping Strategy for Bloomsbury



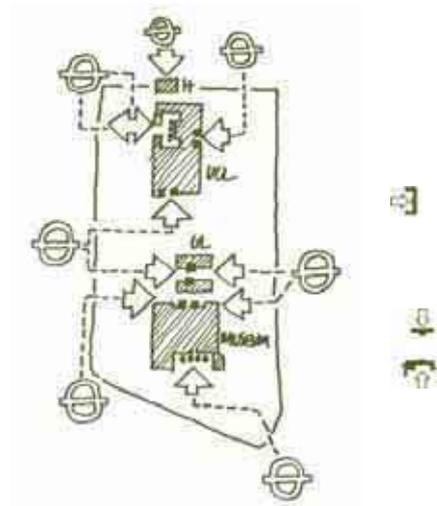
Improve Pedestrian Integration with Neighbours



Introduce Direct Widened Pedestrian Crossings to Bloomsbury from Surrounding Stations

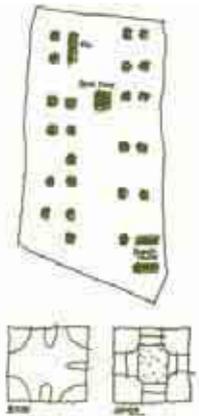


Improve Wayfinding to Bloomsbury's Front Doors





Remove Traffic Islands & Introduce Raised Tables and Direct Pedestrian Crossings at Intersections



Euston Road Underpass and the north entrance of Gower Street



Reconfiguration of Euston Square with a more direct pedestrian crossing across Euston Road to Endsleigh Gardens

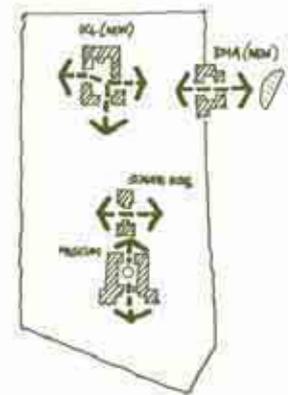


Store Street



Redesign of Byng Place into a pedestrian friendly space

Create New Pedestrian Routes Through Public Buildings



St Giles Circus



Shared surface and narrowing of the roads around Russell Square



Shaftesbury Avenue / New Oxford Street



Theobalds Road / Holborn







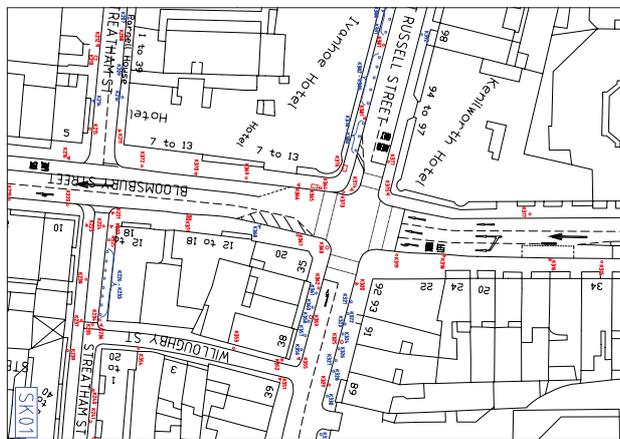
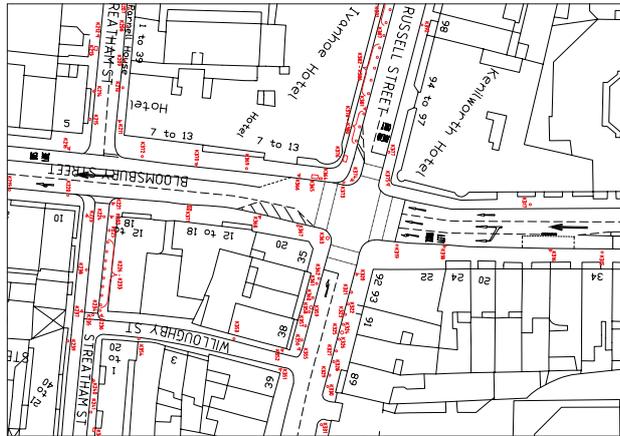
Left: Detail survey of pedestrian infrastructure in Bloomsbury. This can be compared to proposals put forward in section 8.



- Legend
- UNCONTROLLED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
 - SIGNALISED JUNCTION WITH PUSH BUTTONS
 - SIGNALISED JUNCTION WITHOUT PUSH BUTTONS
 - ZEBRA CROSSING
 - PELICAN CROSSING
 - PUFFIN CROSSING



REMOVING CLUTTER



Left: Unnecessary and badly coordinated signage within Bloomsbury

Above: Possible removal or relocation of signage and street furniture - removal of unnecessary elements indicated in blue on the diagram below: Study by Hyder Consulting





APPRAISAL BY SPACE SYNTAX

Proposals for pedestrian realm improvement have been appraised by specialist consultancy Space Syntax.

Their study concludes that the proposals will generally benefit the wider Bloomsbury area.

They have also identified further opportunities to improve permeability:

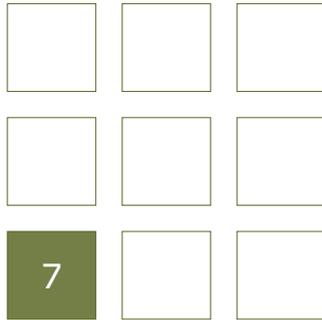
- a public space off the pedestrian route connecting Thomhaugh Street to Malet Street - this must be borne in mind should future proposals be put forward in this part of the University of London, and;
- a possible north-south route through Senate House, which would require detailed architectural study.

The analysis excludes the assessment of major developments in the area, such as Euston station and proposals for Crossrail at St Giles Circus. Such developments will undoubtedly impact on the study area, and should be addressed in the next stages of the design process in the light of what is proposed here.





7 | THE DESIGN MANUAL





KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Landscape architects EDCO have prepared a Street Design Manual (SDM) for Bloomsbury, which is summarised in this section. It points out that the road network is designed to cater for the movement of vehicles as well as by large numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.

All users need to be considered when designing for highway schemes and the street scene, which thus far unduly emphasises the requirements of vehicular movement. Key design principles are set out below - refer to the SDM for definitive guidance:

- 1) Uncluttered footways with street furniture placed in a co-ordinated and logical manner, with redundant items removed. Retention of heritage street furniture.
- 2) Adequately lit footways, carriageways and cycle ways to enable pedestrians and vehicles to be seen clearly at all times.
- 3) Routes designed to reflect best desire lines.
- 4) Routes that are practical, accessible and obvious by design, thus reducing the need for pedestrian signage.
- 5) Improve legibility so that the use of bollards, pedestrian guard rails, signs and road markings can be minimised.
- 6) Using materials and products that are flexible and adaptable, such as street lighting columns that can be utilised to take signs, signals and banners.
- 7) Footways and carriageways that are free from obstructions, including parked vehicles.
- 8) Streets that are free from hiding places that facilitate crime and fear of crime.
- 9) Provide a pedestrian friendly environment by the introduction of shared surfaces in accordance with the Strategic Vision.
- 10) Use individual elements that will not date and avoid fashionable products and excessive branding within institutional environments.

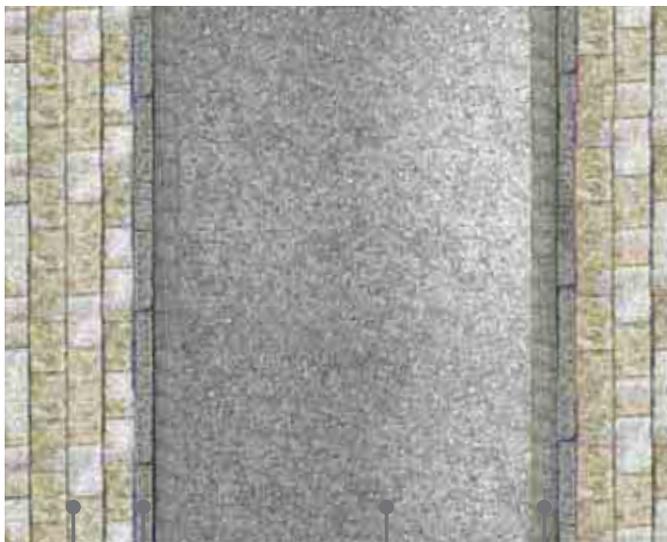


Above: Distinctive historic street furniture and signage - new elements should maintain these standards



STANDARD FOOTWAY/ CARRIAGEWAY

Raised Yorkstone footway with tarmacadam carriageway surface as general surface treatment approach to Bloomsbury.

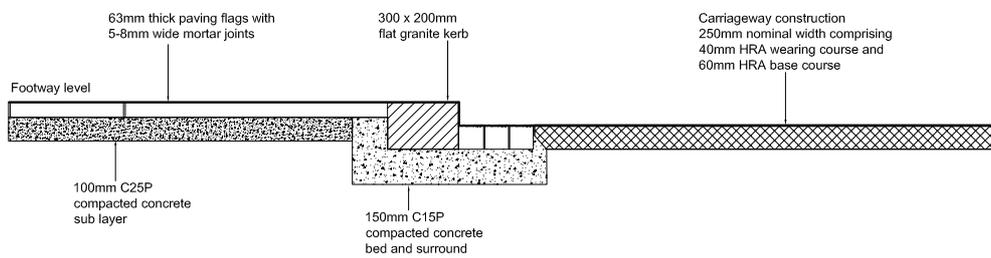


Existing surface treatments showing inappropriate surface materials



Yorkstone Paving
Granite Kerb
Rolled Asphalt
3 Width of Cropped Granite Setts

Tarmac

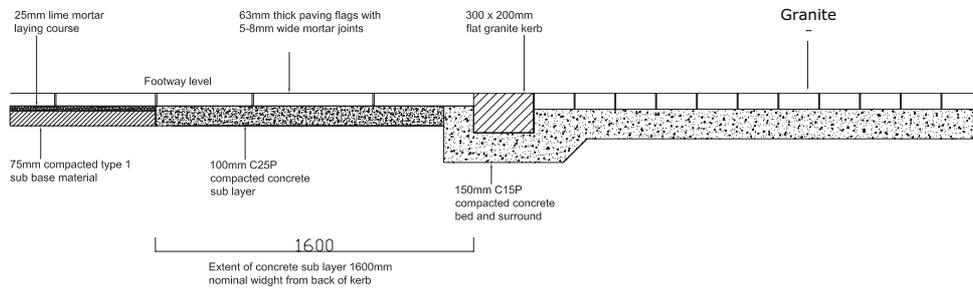




SHARED FOOTWAY/ CARRIAGEWAY



Granite



SPECIAL FOOTWAY/ CARRIAGEWAY

Larger scale granite surface treatment for special designated areas.



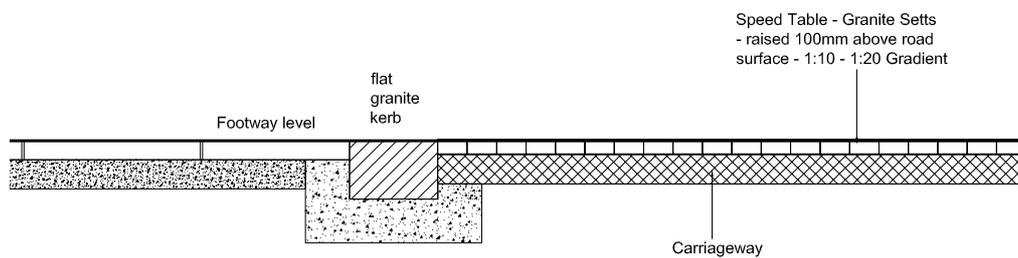
Granite sets as road surface





SPEED TABLE

Speed tables act a traffic calming device and, with a granite finish, create a visual link across the residential streets. Subject to consideration of noise intrusion.





STREET FURNITURE

Street benches are to be simple in form and robust and should be fixed into concrete foundations. Central arms should be considered to discourage anti-social behaviour.



Aim is to combine the need for a bin with the location of a column, such as street lighting post, thus reducing the amount of street clutter.



St Pancras bollard: To be used throughout Bloomsbury; very strong – not prone to shearing. Black finish required.



Cycle stands should be stainless steel due to the heavy nature of the cycles being chained to them.



Style: College - Root fixed, stainless steel finish. (Furnitubes International Limited)

Where opportunities exist, this is the preferred bus shelter.



Bus Shelter with no advertisement panel

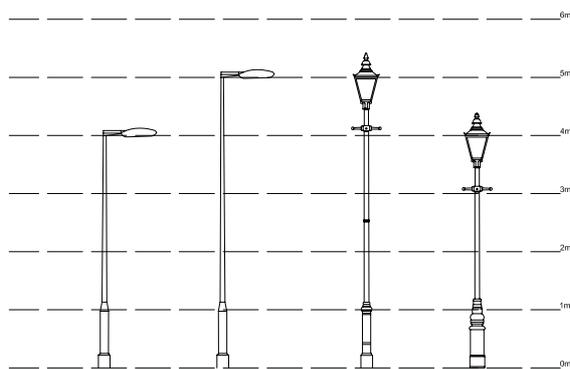




LIGHTING

The approach to lighting within Bloomsbury is to retain the existing heritage lighting features and provide a generic lighting column throughout the rest of Bloomsbury.

New lighting columns offer an opportunity to combine different uses such as traffic lights, bins & signs. The choice of lighting column is based on the type of road.





SIGNAGE

- **Identify buildings and institutions** - acknowledge arrival



- **Contextual and cognitive map signs** - i.e. showing exploded plans - used to explain the site as a whole



- **Wayfinding & directional signs** - set at important junctions within Bloomsbury



- **Goal signs** - confirm your arrival at destination points within the area

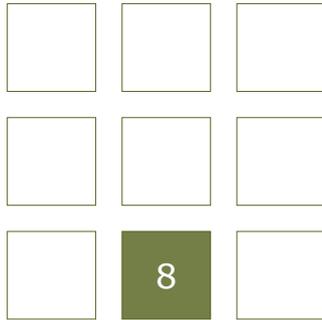


- **University Signs** - acknowledge arrival to the University Campus, with a simple rectangular form. Colour green, with option to include exploded view of site to assist orientation.





8 | THE STRATEGIC VISION





The annotated plan and aerial perspective on the following pages show the six mini-masterplans as a coherent whole.

In conclusion, its aims are to:

- create a public realm which is worthy of Bloomsbury's cultural and intellectual landscape;
- preserve the area's character as an oasis or haven within the West End;
- create a focus for the integration of major institutions along a new 'university high street' focused on Malet Street, and uniting the universities and hospitals area at the north to the museum quarter in the south;
- improve integration with Oxford Street, Fitzrovia, Covent Garden and Holborn.

We have drawn inspiration from the past, but this is very much a plan for the 21st century. This work is intended as a basis for the regeneration and improvement of the area over the next fifteen to twenty years. Some proposals can readily be implemented in the short term. Others are constrained by major infrastructure projects such as the redevelopment of Euston Station, which has lost its 'front door', and proposals for Crossrail, which are particularly influential at the southern end of Bloomsbury.

It is difficult to predict when large scale projects affecting the area will come to fruition, however it is intended that this Strategic Vision sets out shared ambitions for the key places and spaces which have helped make Bloomsbury famous.



- 01 Euston Road Underpass project
- 02 New raised crossing outside UCL main entrance
- 03 New crossing from Endsleigh Gardens to Euston Square
- 04 Atrium providing route through UCL south wing within existing building
- 05 'Panopticon' building to provide improved access to UCL from Gordon Street
- 06 Softer streetscape around west side of UCL campus
- 07 Pedestrian route from Gower Street through to UCL's new 'South Quad'
- 08 New square with perimeter cafe and Students Union shop
- 09 Covered atrium for Malet Place beginning north of service entrance
- 10 Diagonal paths across Gordon Square to create a 'University Green'
- 11 Shared surface surrounding Gordon Square
- 12 New gates at corners proposed for long term to facilitate diagonal paths
- 13 New surface at Byng Place with reduction in road width
- 14 Shared surface on Malet Place
- 15 Raised table at Gower Street/ Torrington Place junction
- 16 UCL building planned
- 17 New raised connection between Gordon Square/ Woburn Square
- 18 Shared surface along Torrington Place/ Gordon Square/ Tavistock Square
- 19 New cafe to complete Byng Place as a square and to provide activity
- 20 New activity such as an ice rink at Woburn Square to provide unique identity
- 21 Shared surface around Woburn Square with reduced and consolidated parking
- 22 Shared surface/ increased pavement width along Malet street creating 'University High Street' with option to close periodically
- 23 New landscape proposals for Torrington Square (under construction)
- 24 Improved frontage to be created along Torrington Square
- 25 Development opportunity with remodelling of rear of Institute of Education and Law under close consultation
- 26 Two-way traffic along Gower Street
- 27 Aesthetic improvements including improved seating, lighting and signage for pedestrian route from Thornhaugh Street to Malet Street
- 28 Development site
- 29 Two-way traffic along Tottenham Court Road
- 30 Parking replaced by new landscaped entrance at west entrance to Senate House proposed by UL

- 31 Raised table at Gower Street/ Store Street junction
- 32 Reconfigured coach parking/ circulation
- 33 New pedestrian route through Senate House
- 34 Clearly defined public space outside British Museum north entrance
- 35 External exhibition boards at north entrance to British Museum to increase activity and use of Montague Place
- 36 Montague Place pedestrianised with new cafe promoting it as a place to meet
- 37 Book market at east end of Montague Place to provide activity and reinforce 'Intellectual Quarter'
- 38 New path and gate provide more obvious pedestrian route from Russell Square to Montague Place
- 39 Bus stop/ stand simplified
- 40 Prominent signage/ museum exhibit signifying British Museum from Russell Square/ Tottenham Court Road/ Gower Street
- 41 New proposals for improved traffic and pedestrian circulation around Bedford Square recently implemented
- 42 Slip-ways around Russell Square removed and road narrowed to increase pedestrian area
- 43 Two-way shared surface around Russell Square reinforcing use as a public place
- 44 Shared surface along Great Russell Street in front of museum forecourt
- 45 St. Giles Circus junction simplified and minimised to give pedestrian priority
- 46 Option to incorporate proposed underground entrances in new Centre Point podium
- 47 Museum Street/ Coptic Street pedestrianised
- 48 Raised pedestrian crossing
- 49 New diagonal path across Bloomsbury Square to improve amenity use
- 50 New gates at North/ West & South East corners of Bloomsbury Square facilitating approach from Sicilian Avenue
- 51 Proposed building incorporating new entrance to Tottenham Court Road underground and new Crossrail station
- 52 Sutton Row widened to improve sightlines towards Soho Square from Gharng Cross Road
- 53 Create positive frontage along Andrew Borde Street
- 54 Denmark Street pedestrianised
- 55 Landscape to north and west of St. Giles-in-the-Fields Church enlarged and improved
- 56 Shared surface to encourage pedestrian use of Eamshaw Street to coincide with new retail development
- 57 North end of Shaftesbury Avenue pedestrianised
- 58 Crossing moved to align with Coptic Street
- 59 Pavement extended and crossings simplified at Museum Street/ Bloomsbury Way/ New Oxford Street junction



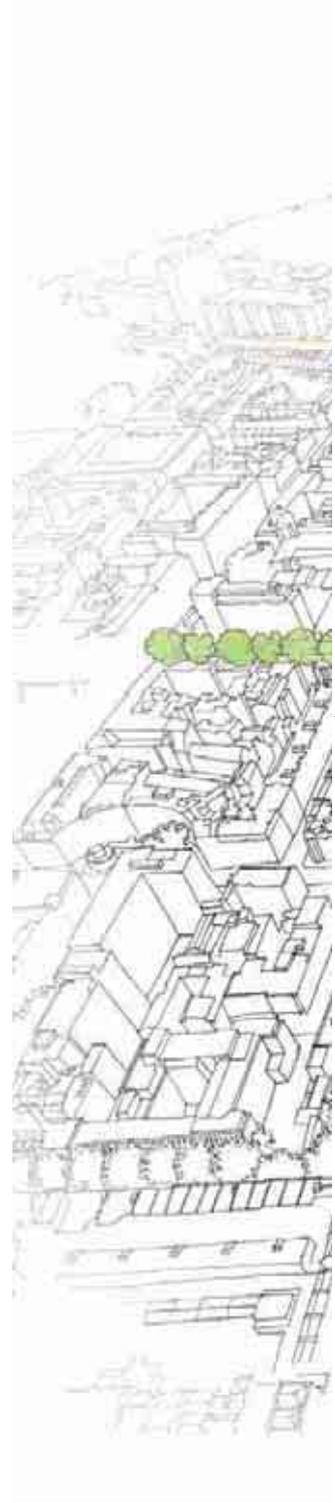


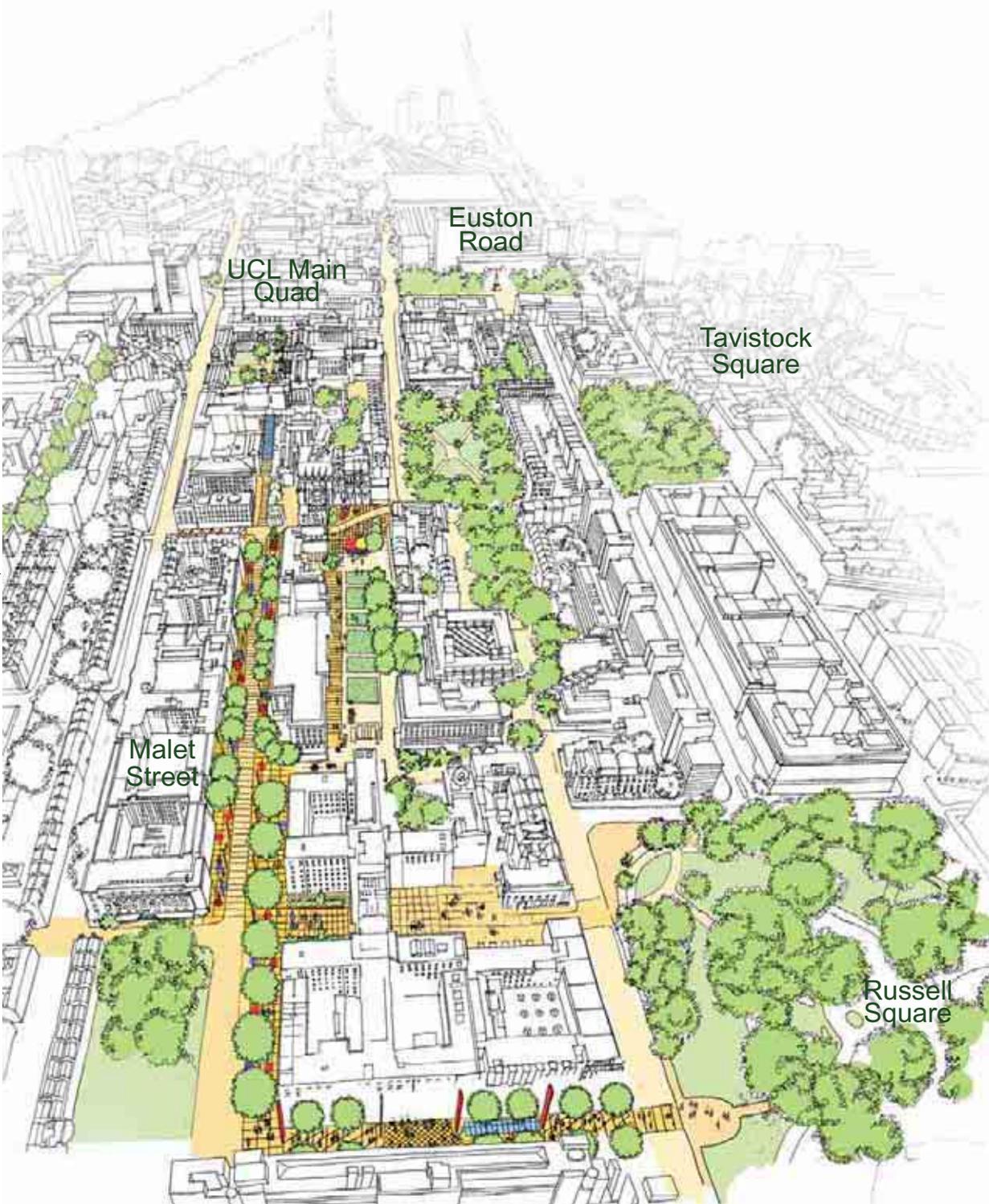
KEY

- Pavement
- Shared Surface
- Hard Landscape
- Public Squares
- Landscape (private)
- Landscape (public)
- Road
- Development Site



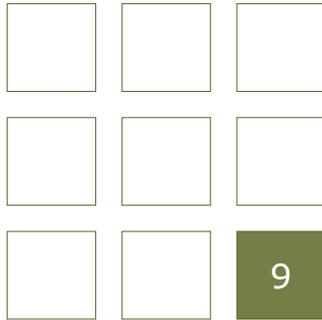
Opposite: Bloomsbury as it could be
 Below: As it is







9 | THE WAY FORWARD





The following page shows a project list and plan identifying priorities, projects dependent on major third party collaboration, and projects that can be implemented incrementally in conjunction with stakeholder collaboration. The latter are self-contained.

We recommend that the way forward is as follows:

- Use this document as the basis for public realm regeneration as part of the normal redevelopment process.
- Use this document as the basis for improvements to key projects in the area including improvements to underground stations, the Crossrail Project, the Cross River Tram, improvements to Euston Road and Euston Station, proposals to improve Oxford Street, and the implementation of two way streets in the area.
- Initiate a dialogue with landowners about improvements to buildings which could have a positive impact on Bloomsbury's public realm.
- Identify specific public realm projects as pilot projects for comprehensive regeneration. We have identified a number of possible "quick wins" as follows:
 - 1) Byng Place.
 - 2) Russell Square: addition of new gates opposite Montague Place.
 - 3) Tavistock Square: create London's new memorial garden.
 - 4) Initiate a lighting, security and signage project.





KEY



Major 3rd party collaborations



Incremental projects to be implemented in conjunction with stakeholders



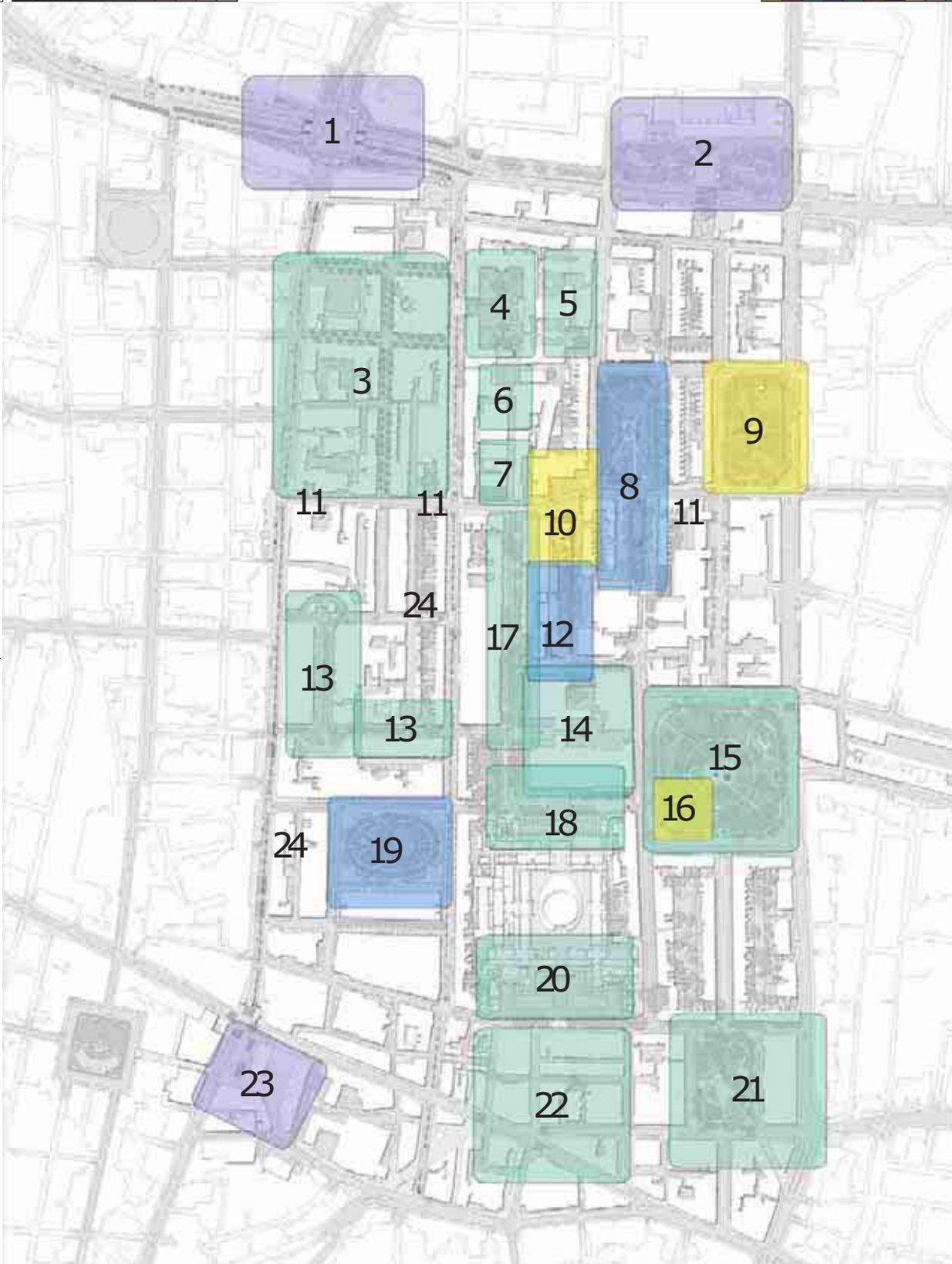
Priority projects



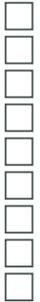
Projects underway / Recently complete

- 1) Euston Circus
- 2) Euston Square
- 3) Greening the NW Quarter
- 4) The University Front Door
- 5) The North + South gardens
- 6) The Wilkins building + South Quad
- 7) Malet Place
- 8) Gordon + Woburn Square
- 9) Tavistock Square
- 10) Byng Place
- 11) Torrington Place
- 12) Torrington Square
- 13) The Store Street area
- 14) Senate House
- 15) Russell Square Two Way streets
- 16) Russell Square new gates
- 17) Malet Street
- 18) Montague Place
- 19) Bedford Square
- 20) Museum Forecourt
- 21) Bloomsbury Square
- 22) Little Bloomsbury
- 23) St Giles Circus
- 24) Two Way Traffic on Gower Street & Tottenham Court Road









Client
London Borough of Camden
University College London
London Development Agency

Architect & Masterplanner
Farrells

Project Manager
M3 Consulting

Landscape Architect
EDCO

Traffic Engineer
Hyder



Bloomsbury | A Strategic Vision | FARRELLS



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ARCHITECTS • PLANNERS • DESIGNERS • LONDON • HONG KONG • EDINBURGH • 7 HATTON STREET LONDON NW8 8PL • TEL 020 7258 3433 • FAX 020 7723 7059
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