

# Bloomsbury Vision Consultation draft

Evidence Base  
October 2025



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**A report to support the Bloomsbury Vision**

Produced by Camden Design and Place

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# 01 Introduction

Bloomsbury is in the heart of central London in an enviable location between the West End and the mainline railway stations at Euston, St Pancras and King's Cross, bringing commuters and tourists from the South East, the Midlands, the North, Scotland and Europe. Mainly covered by conservation, Bloomsbury has some exceptional examples of Georgian architecture and town planning including many formal squares and numerous listed buildings. Bloomsbury also includes Camden housing estates, world class institutions and hospitals therefore is an extremely varied part of Camden with areas of high activity as well as quiet backwaters.

We Make Camden sets out the council's vision for a sustainable and inclusive Camden. It aims to respond to key challenges, working collaboratively with Camden's partners and communities to help achieve the Missions. Camden's ambitions for Bloomsbury include creating a more diverse, inclusive and climate resilient public realm.

Bloomsbury is within the Knowledge Quarter, an area in which sustainable growth is encouraged, due to the world class educational institutions that sit within it. Due to this, there are several ongoing and planned developments in the Bloomsbury area by large scale landowners and stakeholders.

The Bloomsbury Vision is an opportunity to bring together these ideas and projects, to create a cohesive public realm strategy for Bloomsbury, moving towards a green, sustainable, safe, and climate resilient neighbourhood.

This document consists of an evidence base that will help to inform the Bloomsbury Vision, including a summary of findings. This document has been created in dialogue with a steering group formed of University College London, University of London, Birkbeck, and the British Museum.

# Bloomsbury Study Area

Bloomsbury lies between Holborn and Kings Cross and Euston, bordering LB Westminster to the west and LB Islington to the east. Bloomsbury is an area with many contrasts and is full of strong architectural heritage, with exemplar Georgian planning to the east, famed modernist estates to the west and contemporary institutional buildings.

Over time, uses of Georgian terraces have morphed from residential use to hotel, office and institutional use, examples of how an areas character can be maintained through adaptive reuse. Challenges today include how to decarbonise and continue to adapt this building stock through to the future.

In recent years, Bloomsbury has seen the arrival of new institutional buildings, and many highway projects to improve vehicle and pedestrian movements.

As the area grows and develops, it is pertinent that all available public space is safeguarded and enhanced to create better places.

The Focus area highlighted in this document is part of the Knowledge Quarter Innovation District, which is home to a network of knowledge producing organisations. Most of the site analysis, guidance and projects for the Bloomsbury Vision will focus on the western area of the neighbourhood, but the project will consider the wider area across to Gray's Inn Road.



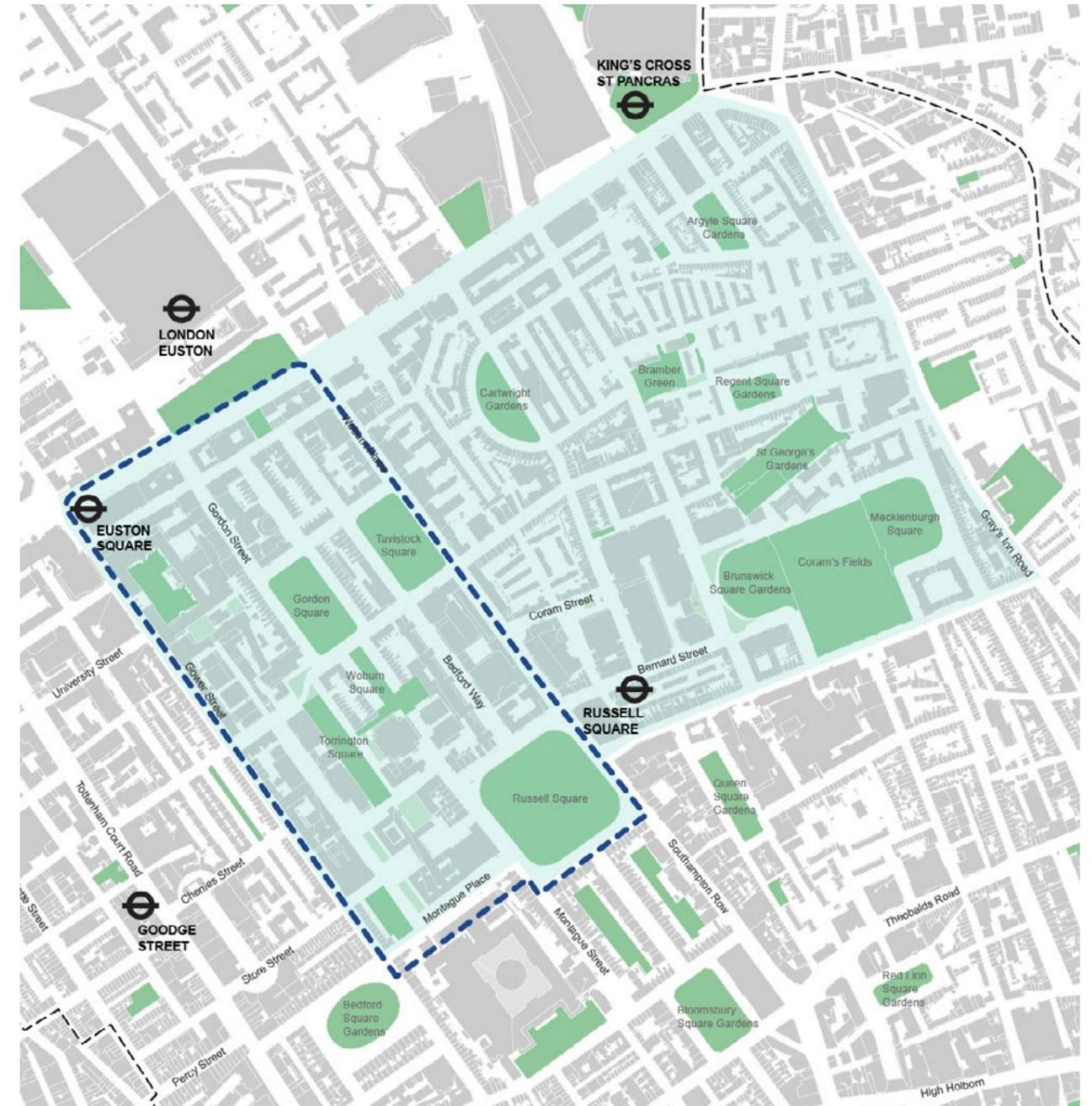
Tavistock Square



Georgian buildings



Gordon Square

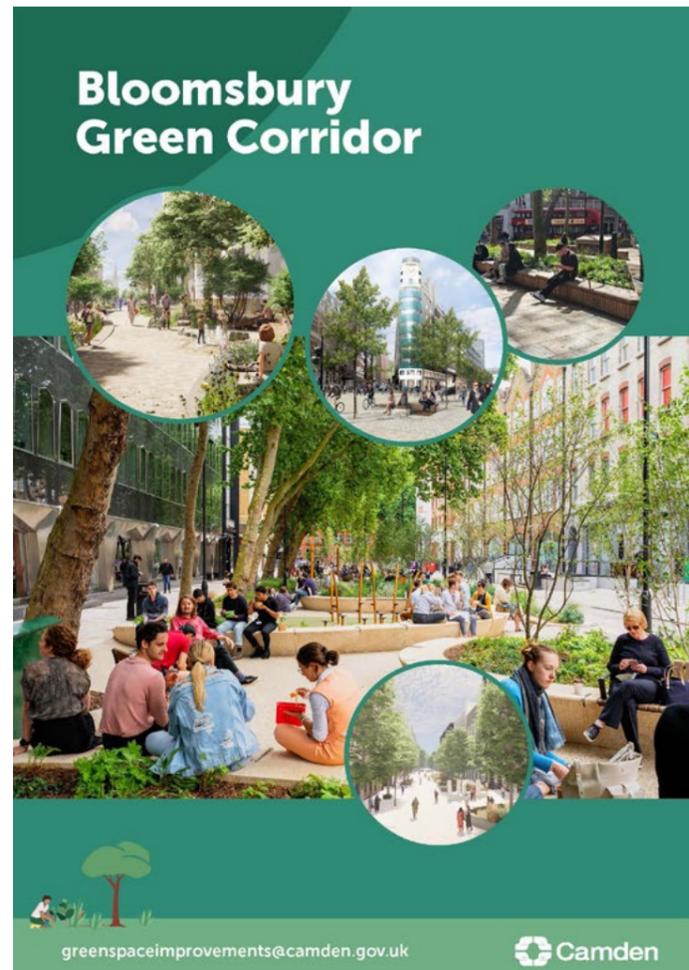


- Bloomsbury Vision wider area
- Bloomsbury Vision focus area

# Bloomsbury Green Corridor

## An overview

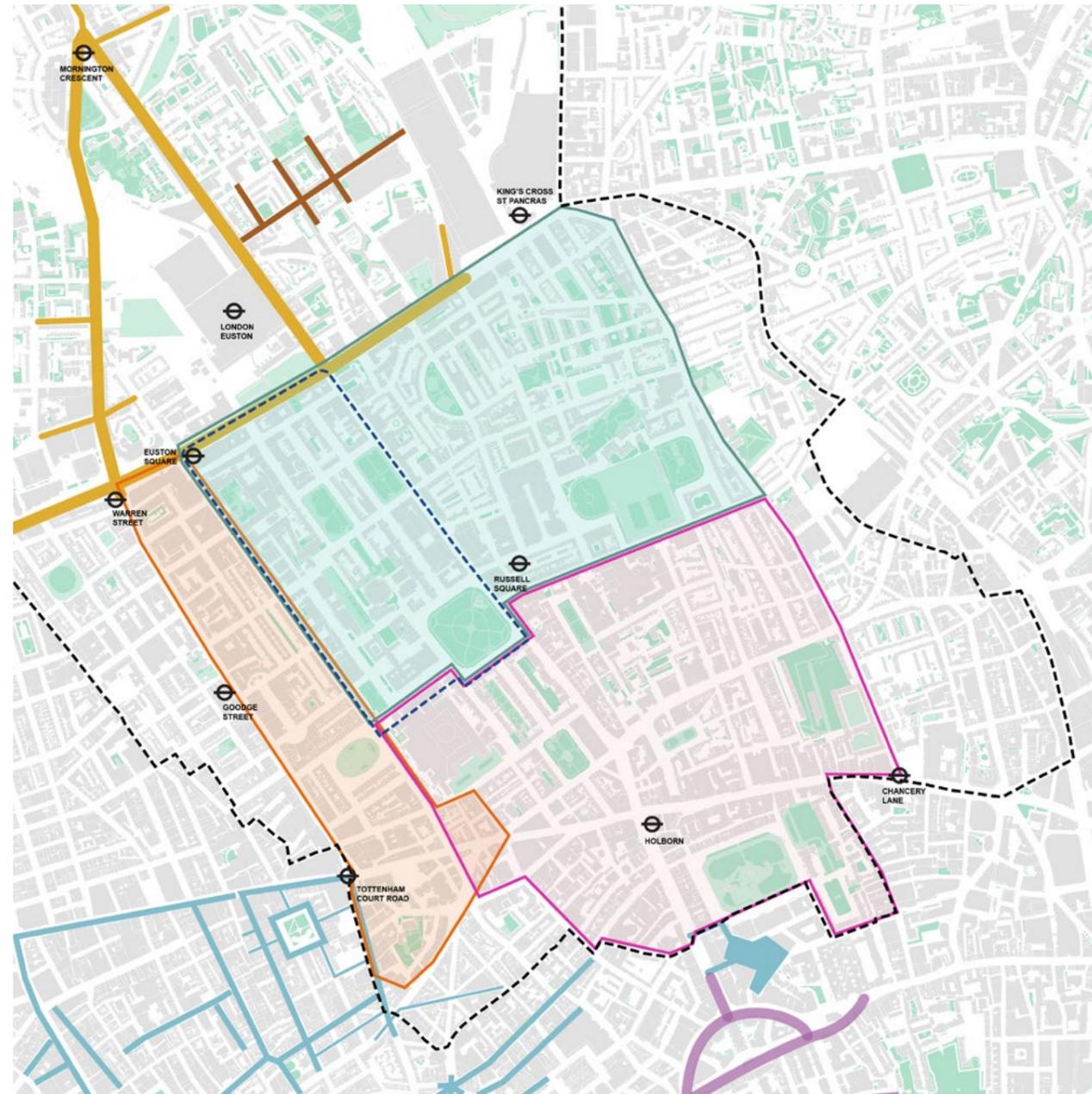
The Bloomsbury Green Corridor is Camden's vision to create a pedestrian and cyclist friendly network of green links between open spaces, institutions and transport hubs south of Euston Road. It offers the opportunity for collaboration between the area's residents, institutions, businesses, communities and the LB Camden. The Bloomsbury Vision aims to build on these aspirations.



Bloomsbury Green Corridor pamphlet

- |                       |                          |  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 EUSTON GREEN ROUTE  | 7 BYNG PLACE             | 13 BEDFORD PLACE                       |
| 2 EUSTON RD & SQUARE  | 8 QUIETWAY NETWORK       | 14 BLOOMSBURY SQUARE                   |
| 3 GORDON STREET NORTH | 9 TORRINGTON SQUARE      | 15 BRITISH MUSEUM                      |
| 4 GORDON STREET SOUTH | 10 WOBURN SQUARE GARDENS | 16 GREAT RUSSELL PLACE & MUSEUM STREET |
| 5 GORDON SQUARE NORTH | 11 MALET STREET          |  |
| 6 TAVITON STREET      | 12 MONTAGUE PLACE        |  |

# Wider development Projects and frameworks



**Key**

- Bloomsbury Vision focus area
- Bloomsbury Vision wider area
- Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood
- Camden West End Project
- Euston / HS2 & Euston Road TFL healthy streets
- Greening Phoenix Road
- Soho / Covent Garden
- Aldwych / Northbank

The south of LB Camden is covered by frameworks and visions that aim to help deliver sustainable development within the area, whilst also delivering social, economic and environmental benefits for Camden's residents.

Many projects and programmes are happening or have happened around Bloomsbury. The most relevant ones are:

- Development at Euston and improvements for Euston Road
- West End Project
- Holborn Vision
- Holborn Liveable Neighbourhood
- Bloomsbury Green Corridor (more detail on the project in the following pages)
- Aldwych Strand and Northbank



**Euston Road Healthy Street** Ideas for Euston Road  
*Camden Design and Place*



**West End Project** Alfred Place  
*maple.studio/LDA Design*

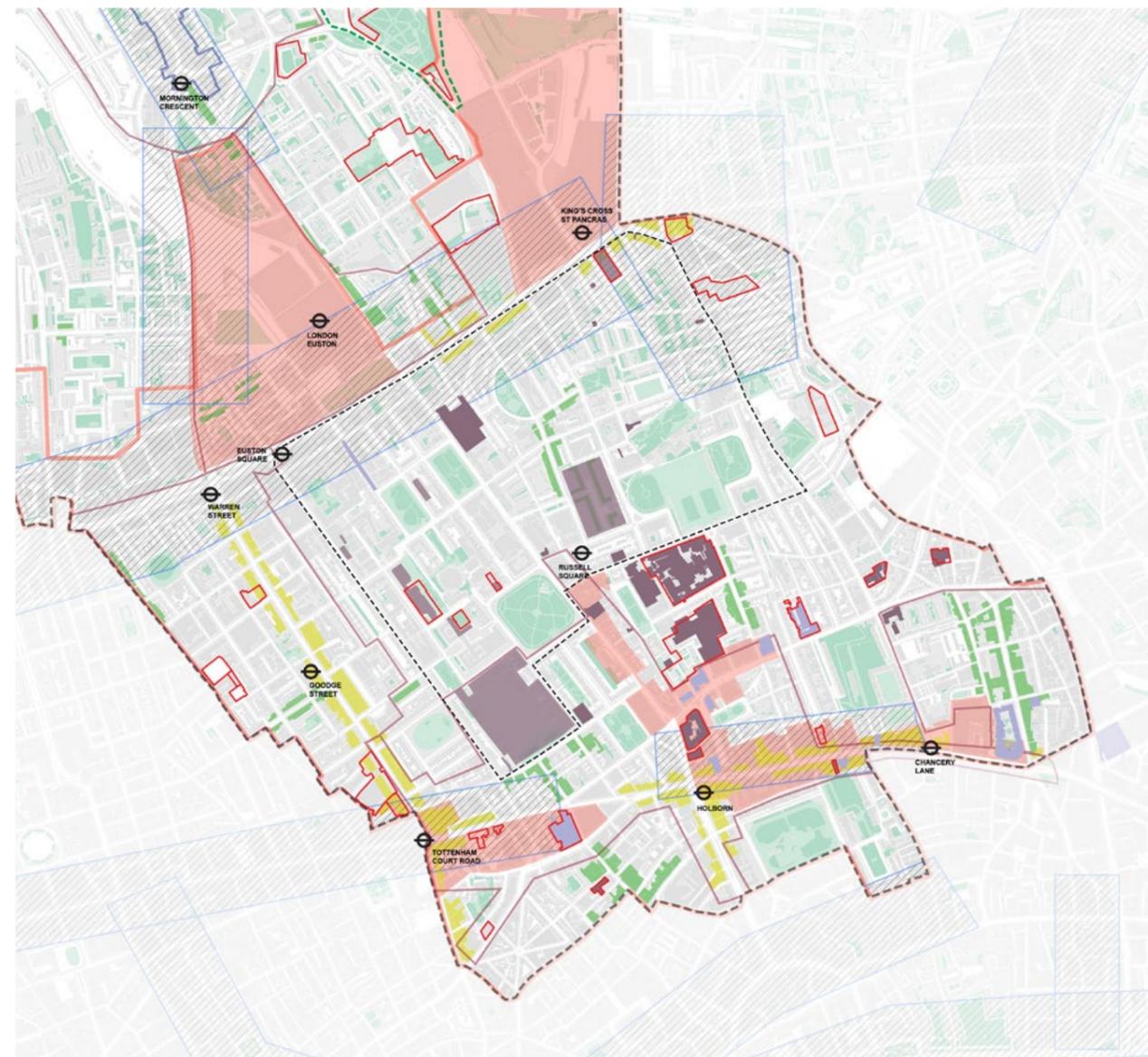


**Holborn Vision** Proposal for public realm improvement at Great Russell Street  
*LDA Design*

# Policy Context

**Key**

- |  |                           |   |                               |
|--|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Growth areas              |  | Site allocations              |
|  | Camden Primary Frontages  |  | Central Activity Zone         |
|  | Neighbourhood Centres     |  | Business Improvement District |
|  | Development with planning |  | Air Quality Zone              |
|  | Potential development     |  | Bloomsbury Vision area        |



Within the south of Camden, there are several site allocations and projects that have since seen development within them. Within the vision area there are currently four focussed within institutional areas. The highly conserved nature of the vision area means large scale built development in the area is not advisable. New and potential projects see increased development around Holborn and Kings Cross for housing, commercial and educational space. There area the Fitzrovia and Holborn BID districts that trace the edges of the vision area. Key Camden growth areas surround the area: Kings Cross, Holborn and Euston, which contain projects being delivered through Camden Council and stakeholders.

**Key policies and guidance for the area:**

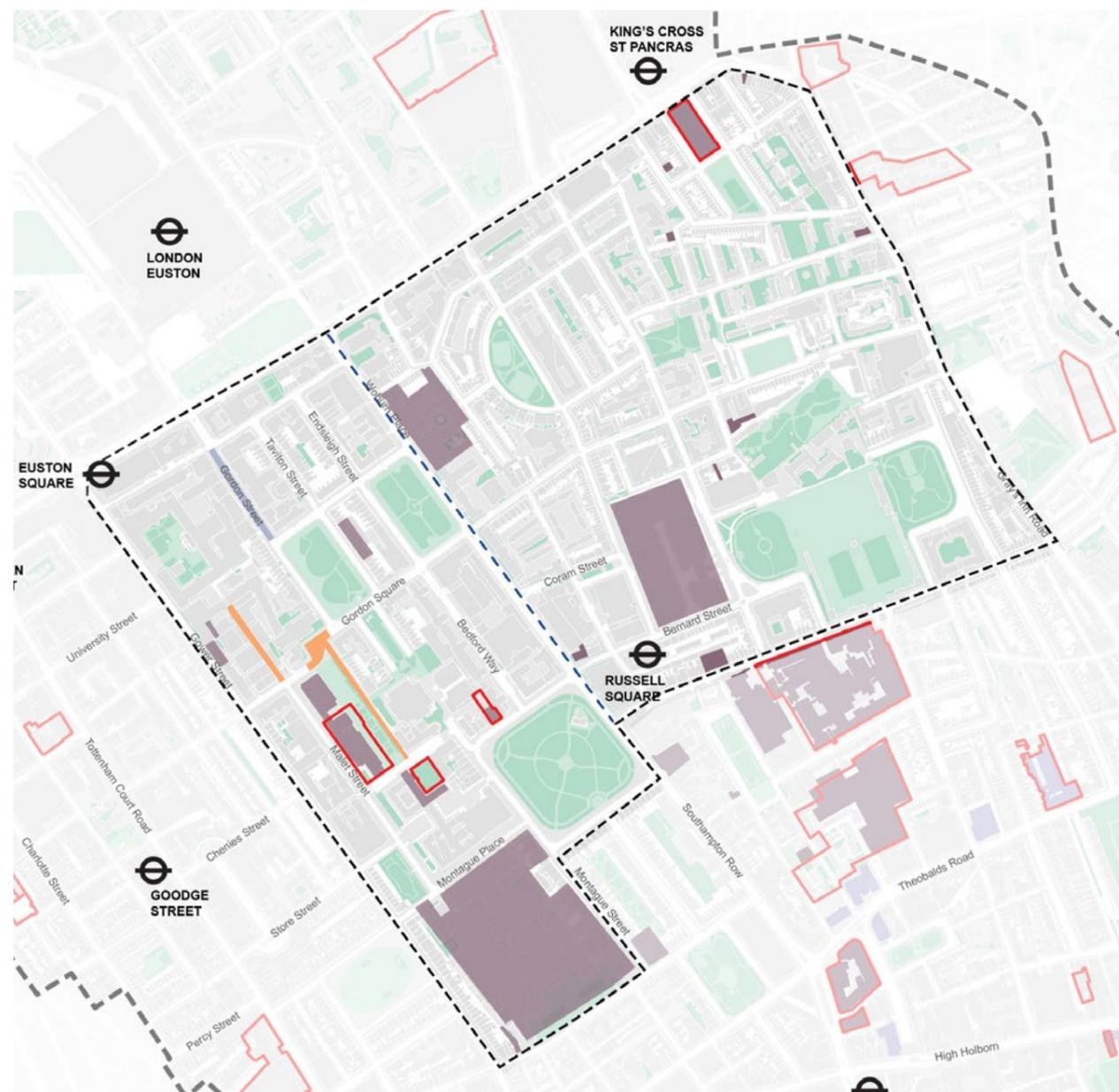
- Camden Local Plan 2017 and the draft new Local Plan
- Camden Transport Strategy 2019
- Camden Green Infrastructure
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011
- Camden Transport Strategy 2019, including Cycling Action Plan, Walking and Accessibility Action Plan, Three Year Investment Plan and Delivery Plan 2022

- Bloomsbury Green Corridor 2023
- Green Space Investment Strategy 2022
- Camden and Islington Parks for Health Strategy 2022
- Camden Highways Greening project
- Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2022
- Camden Climate Action Plan 2020
- Knowledge Quarter Spatial Plan 2023
- CLF CAZ Futures Action Plan 2022
- Draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2020
- Draft Holborn Vision and Urban Strategy 2019
- Bloomsbury - A Strategic Vision (Farrells 2006)
- King's Cross Public Realm (LDA Design 2014)
- Holborn Public Realm (LDA Design 2015)
- Farringdon Public Realm (LDA Design 2015)
- Wild Bloomsbury (Green Infrastructure for UCL 2022)
- Existing masterplans and vision for Bloomsbury - UCL, UoL, Birbeck, etc
- Wild West End Vision

# Development in and around Bloomsbury

Within Bloomsbury there are only a number of developments, some of the developments planned by institutions in the area are shown on the next page. Generally, planning applications within the area consist of minor interventions to existing buildings, including listed building consent.

- Key**
- Development with planning from 2023 & 2024
  - Potential development
  - Site allocations
  - Wider area
  - Focus area



**Brunswick Centre** Underground Hotel



**Selkirk House** South of Bloomsbury  
*Credit*



**Belgrove House** Euston Road  
*Credit*



**UCL Neurology building** East of Bloomsbury



**Gordon Square North** Closure to traffic, public realm improvements and cycle lane



**Torrington Place** cycle lane

# Steering Group Memembers Developments

## University College London (UCL)

- Improve spatial efficiency & reduce campus fragmentation through targeted interventions
- Pedestrianisation of Gordon square
- Main quad public realm improvements for UCL Bicentennial
- Allow UCL brand identity to permeate.
- Establish better legible connections and routes into campus.



**UCL Gordon Street pedestrianisation**  
Credit



**UCL Main Quad improvements**  
Credit

## University of London (UoL)

- Re-imagining Senate House & library and Stewart House
- Improving the public realm around campus
- Improving and increasing student accommodation across site
- Expanding commercial use of sites



**University of London Masterplan vision for campus**



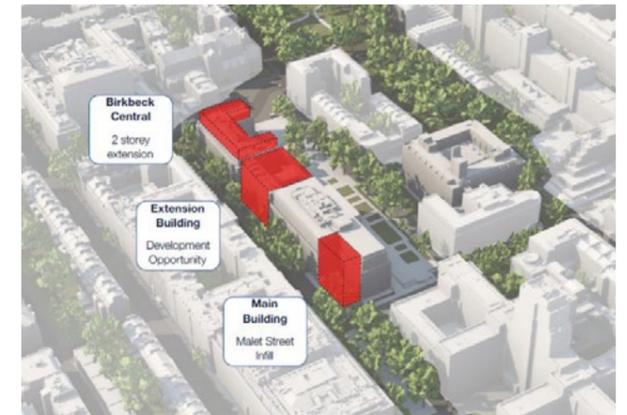
**University of London Improvements to public realm**

## Birkbeck University

- Building retrofit to achieve longevity
- Create a 'connected campus' combining high-quality teaching and research facilities in an environment which supports network building and informal peer interaction.
- Opportunity to activate and connect to Torrington Square.
- Extension to the Birkbeck central building & infill at Malet St. HQ



**Birkbeck Torrington Square public realm improvements**



**Birkbeck Building improvements and extensions**

## British Museum

- Building retrofit to achieve longevity
- Internal rearrangements to improve visitor experience
- Increase activation of the forecourt area with Visitor Welcome Pavilions
- Improved entrance and public realm at Montague Place



**British Museum Welcome Pavilion concept design by Studio Weave**



**British Museum South West Energy Centre**

# 02 Analysis

## History An Overview

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. With London expanding northwards rapidly, by the 18th Century Bloomsbury was established as a fashionable residential district within the Bedford Estate.

The area is largely characterised by formal landscaped, leafy squares and an interrelated grid of streets with mainly 3-4 storey terraced town houses with larger landmark institutional buildings interspersed throughout.

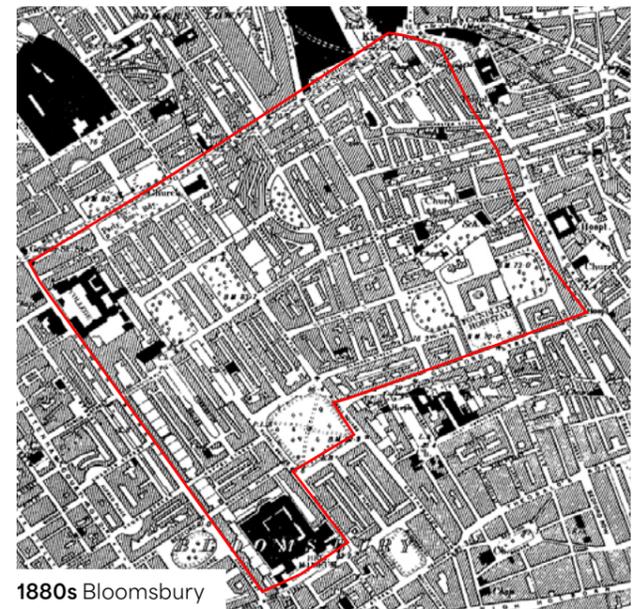
Through the 19th and 20th c. the expansion of UCL continues as well as other institution such as UoL, acquiring land and building large scale buildings throughout the area. By the start of the 20th century, there are more residential council blocks built to the east of Bloomsbury, as well as many purpose built hotel buildings along arterial routes.

Building use has changed over time, mainly the introduction of office and hotels into former residential terraces during the 19th & 20th centuries, however some original use has remained in the form of universities and cultural institutions.

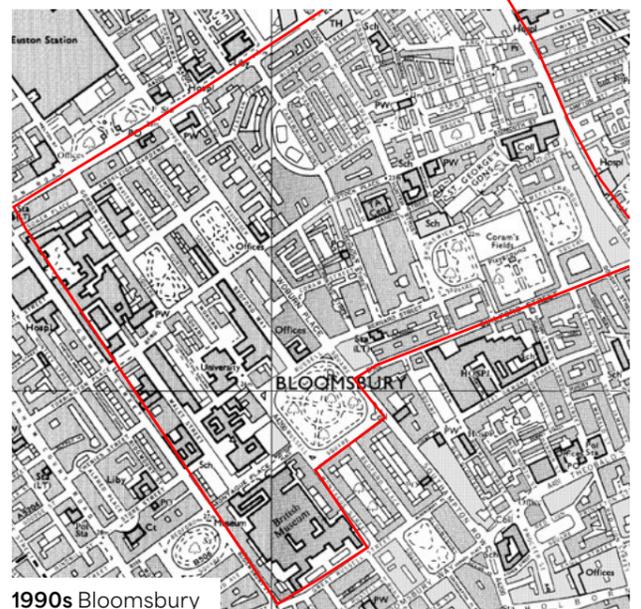
Most of Bloomsbury avoided serious bomb damage during WWII, apart from the north eastern end and part of the UCL building.

### Key

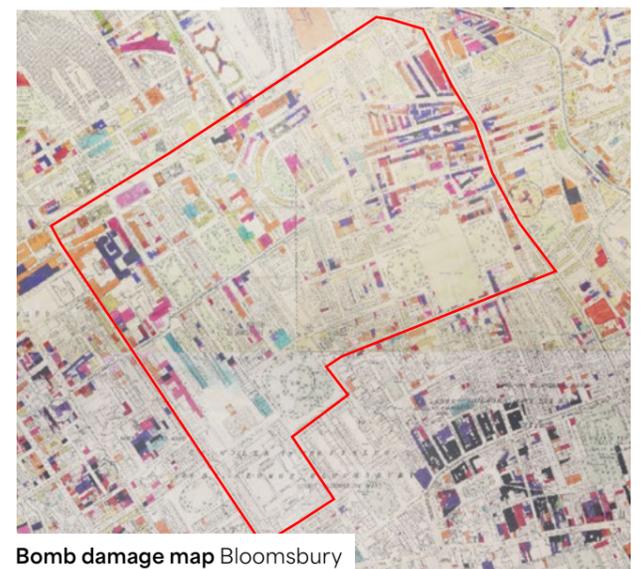
- Total destruction
- Damaged beyond repair
- Seriously damaged - repairable at cost
- General blast damage - not structural
- Blast damage - minor in nature
- Clearance areas



1880s Bloomsbury

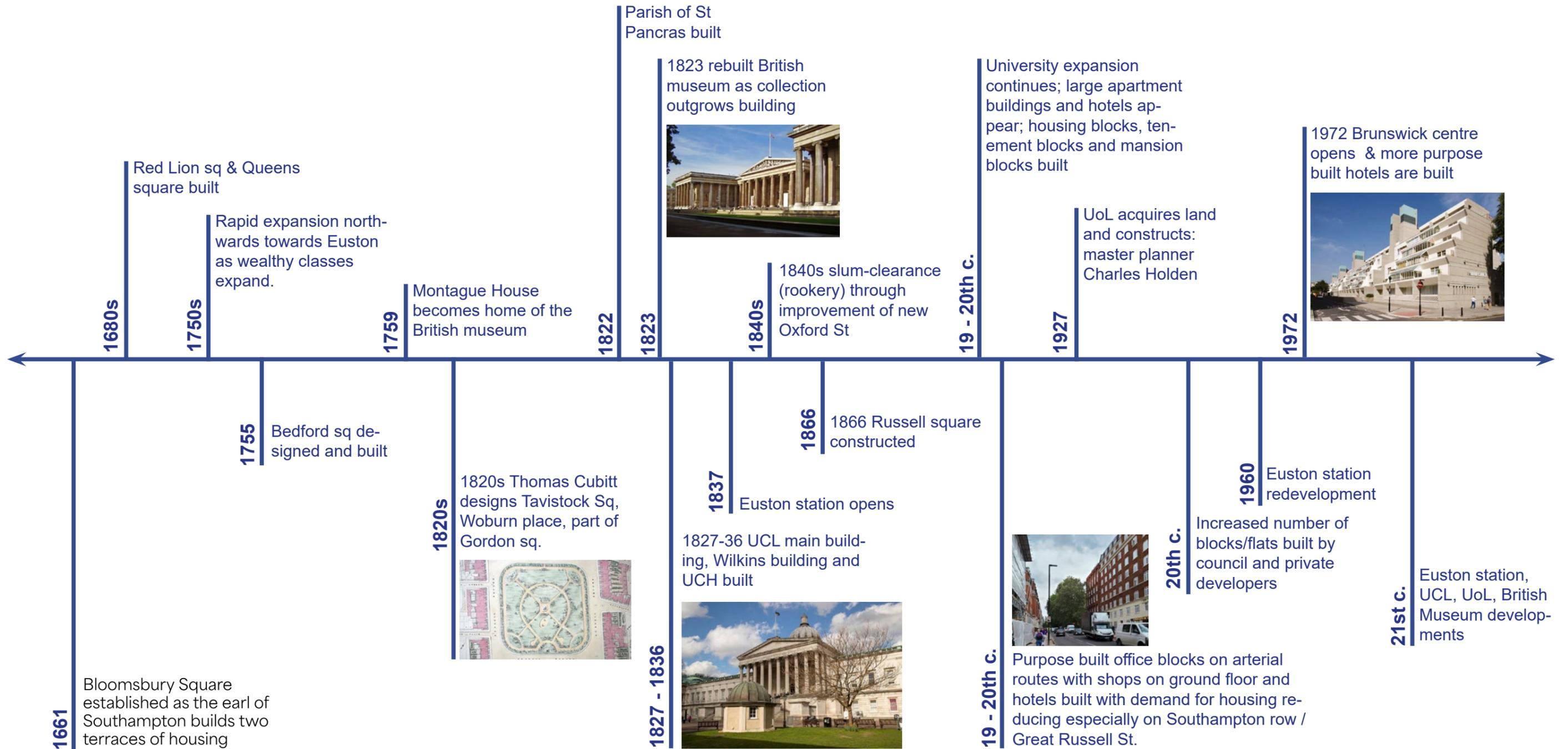


1990s Bloomsbury



Bomb damage map Bloomsbury

# Historical Timeline



# Character & Conservation

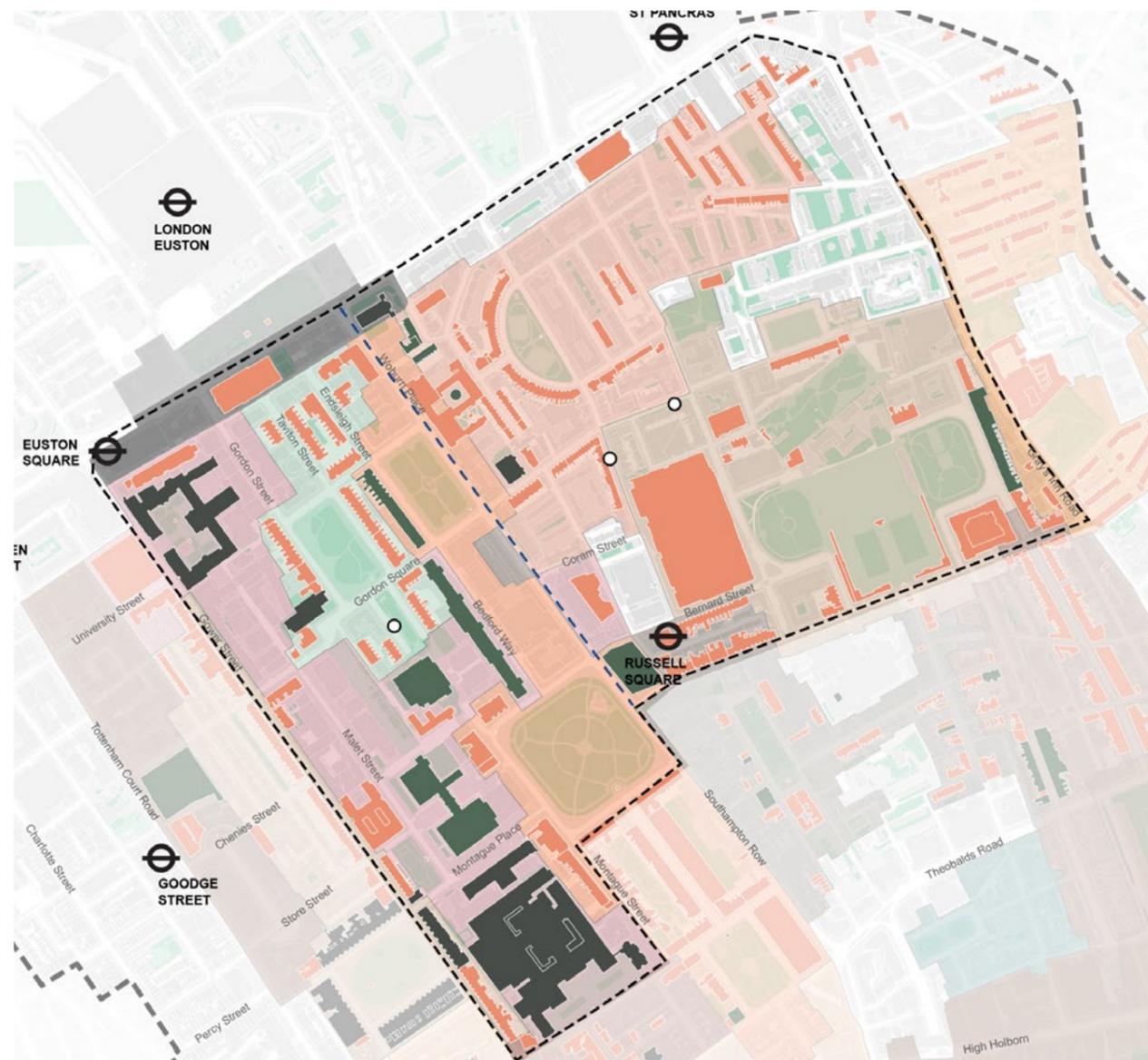
## Key

### CONSERVATION SUB-AREAS

- Euston Road
- Queens Square / Red Lion Square
- London University / British Museum
- Cartwright Gardens / Argyle Square
- Bloomsbury Sq / Russell Sq / Tavistock Sq
- Gordon Sq / Woburn Sq / Byng Place
- Coram's Fields / Brunswick Centre

### LISTED BUILDINGS

- Grade 1
- Grade 2\*
- Grade 2
- Locally listed markers



## Key Findings

The area is mostly covered by the Bloomsbury Conservation area, with a number of sub-areas that reflect the varied character of Bloomsbury.

Gordon Square character area is characterised by four storey early 19th C. terraces with set back basements below street level and iron railings to the frontage. Gordon square itself contains large mature trees which filter and frame views.

UoL/ British Museum area is characterised by large scale institutional buildings with UCL Wilkins building and the British Museum as notable landmark buildings.

Bloomsbury Square: three- and four-storey late 18th and 19th century terraces surrounding a sequence of linked formal spaces, namely Bloomsbury Square, Russell Square and Tavistock Square. Here there is strong consistency in the architectural vocabulary of the original terraced development.

Bloomsbury is also home to a large number of listed buildings, including Grade 1 listed such as the British Museum or UCL's main Quad.

There are a few examples of contemporary development within a historical context.

### Key Questions

Can contemporary design fit within the context of the existing character?

Can innovative uses be introduced into old building stock?



Russell Square terraces | Georgian terraced development



British Museum | Large scale institution

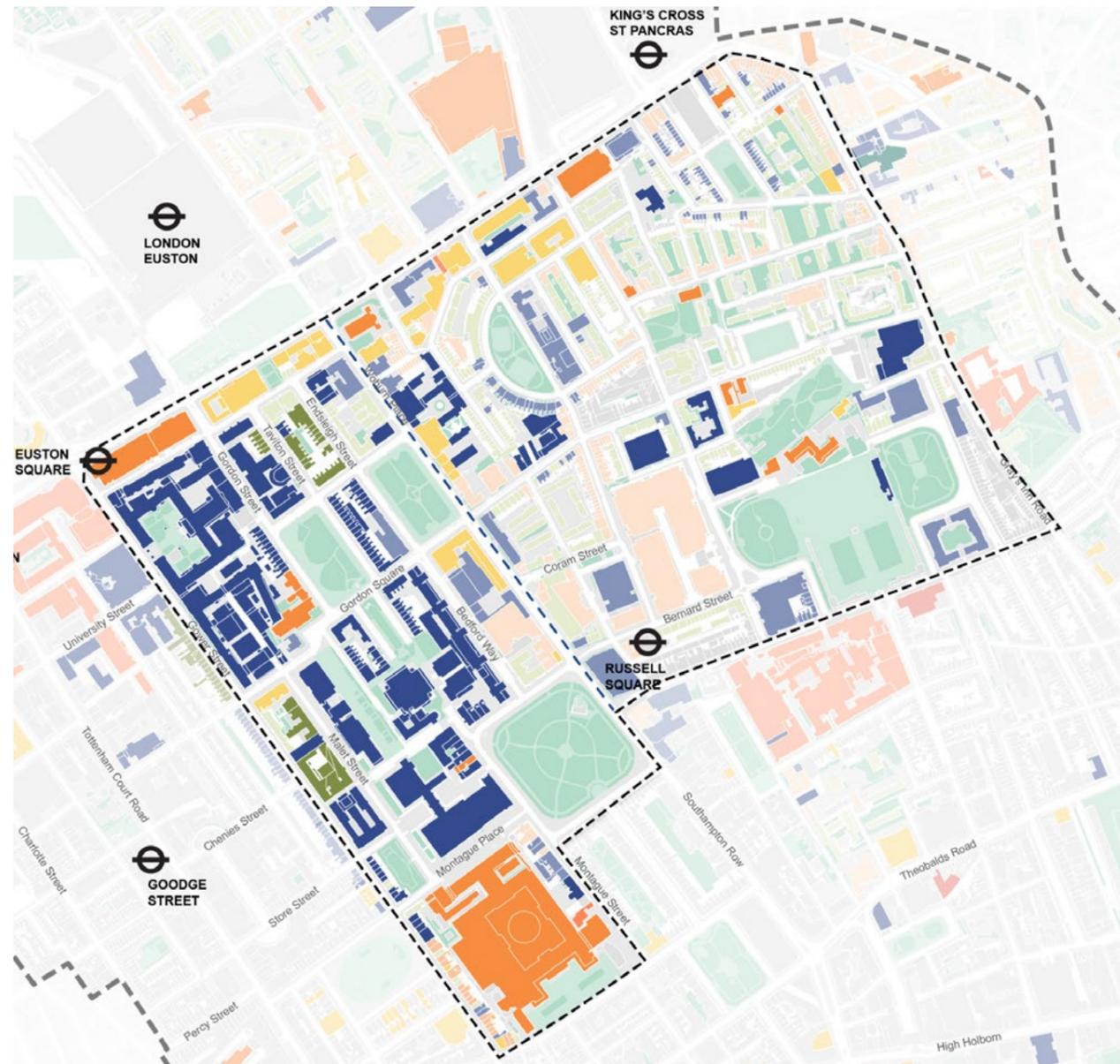


UCL | Student Centre built late 2010s

# Ground Floor Uses

## Key

- Universities
- Hotels
- Commercial
- Commercial / high street
- Institutions
- Residential
- Student Accommodation



## Key Findings

Predominantly educational uses and large scale institutional buildings in the area, combined with student accommodation.

The eastern part of Bloomsbury is mainly residential and mixed use.

Public uses exist within private/ educational buildings; for example, student cafés.

There are a lack of places for students to go to that are not on campus.

Commercial and high street uses are located beyond the focus area.



Waterstones Bookshop & Cafe



UCL Wilkins Building



Hotels on Gower Street

## Key Questions

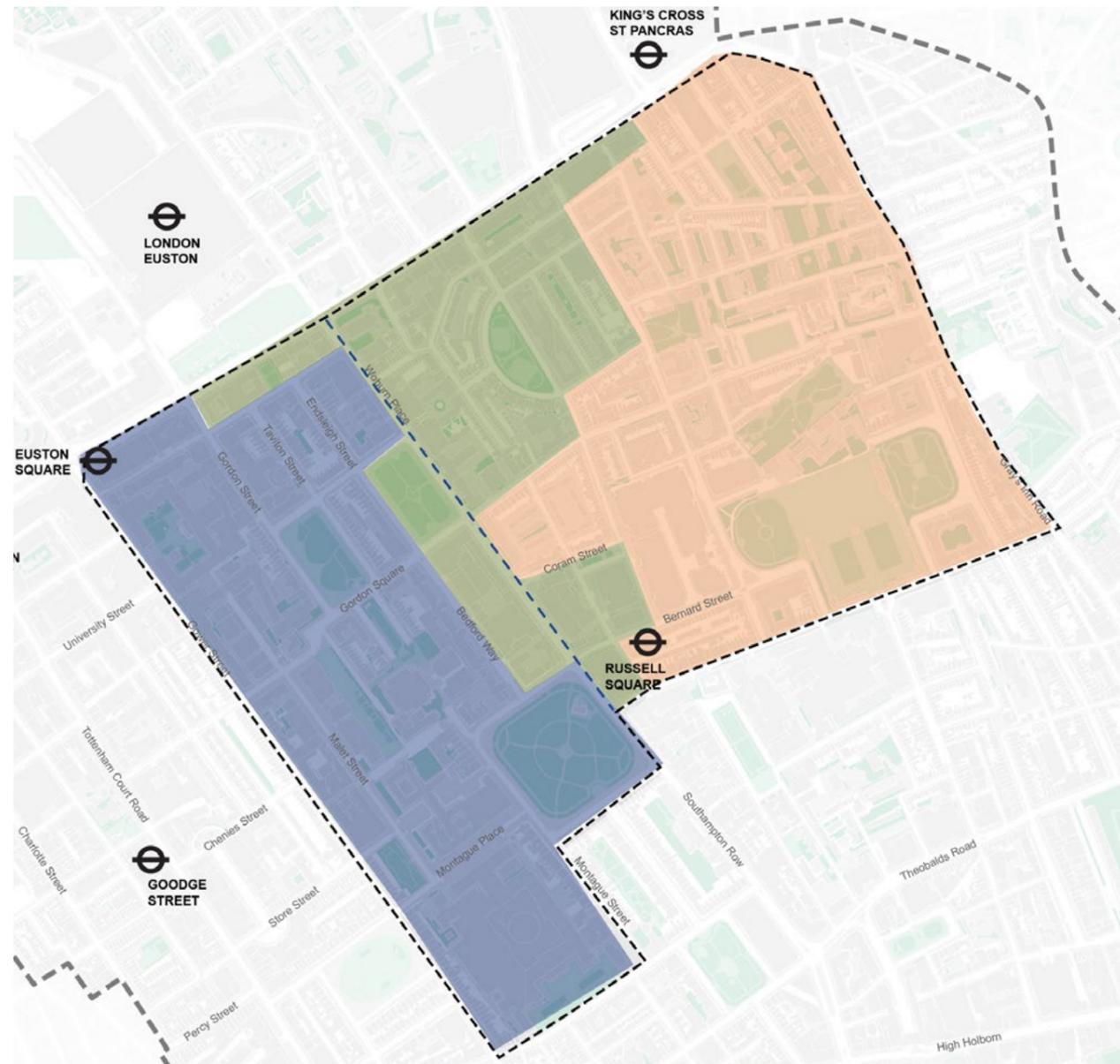
Can uses be diversified and operational hours extend to create provision for students and the wider public?

Can ground floor uses be more public?

# Character Areas By land use

### Key

- Universities/institutions
- Hotels
- Residential



### Key Findings

**Institutions:** Predominantly educational uses, with large scale institutional buildings combined with student accommodation.

**Hotels:** There are a cluster of hotels within the area stretching from Russell Square to Euston.

**Residential:** The eastern part of Bloomsbury is mainly residential, and mixed use with many council residents.



Birkbeck University at Torrington Square



Brunswick Estate



Hilton Hotel

### Key Questions

Can Camden support institutional links between universities and local enterprises that have a strong community focus, helping to deliver a more resilient and connected Bloomsbury?

# Places To Go

## Key

- Camden Primary Frontages
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Cafés / restaurants
- University cafés / student union bars
- Pubs

- ★ Market location
- ★ Street trader locations



## Key findings

Within the local and neighbourhood centres (Tottenham Court Road, Goodge street, Russell Square) there are a number of pubs, cafés and restaurants to visit.

In order to eat / drink off campus you need to venture a bit further to the neighbourhood centres and high streets in Holborn, Fitzrovia, east Bloomsbury and Euston.

Across campus, there are several cafés and a few places to eat that are also open to the public, though not easy to locate for the public.

Non campus related eating / drinking / meeting up in the focus area is resigned to a few more expensive restaurants in the block of hotels east of the focus area, that mainly cater for tourists.



Wellcome Collection | Cafe on Euston Road



UCL Campus | Print Room Cafe



The London Pub | Woburn Place

## Key Questions

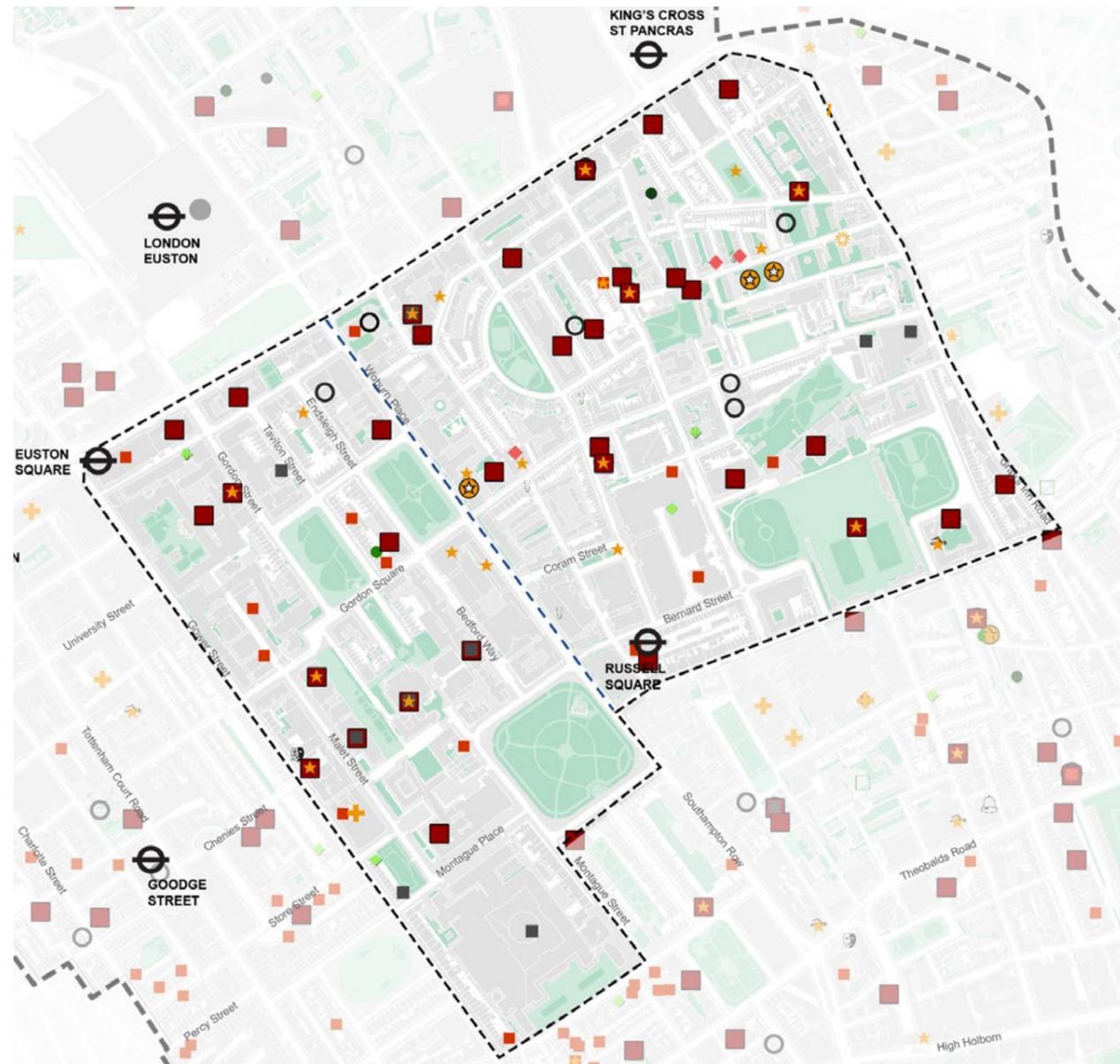
Can wayfinding improve access to public cafés and meeting places within campuses and private estates?

Can increased signage help identify wider spaces within the campus area that are available to use to socialise, work and hang out?

# Social & Cultural Infrastructure

## Key

- Art Galleries
- Halls for hire
- Higher Education
- GP
- Dentist
- Sports
- Places of worship
- Activity for older people
- Hospital
- Nursery
- Primary school
- Theatre
- Youth club



## Key Findings

The east of Bloomsbury contains more social infrastructure, such as GP's, youth clubs and places of worship. This is reflected in the land uses across the area.

There are many spaces that can be hired for events and activities within institutions and community venues.

There hardly any schools within Bloomsbury, meaning young residents must travel elsewhere for school.



Mary Ward House Hall for hire



Wellcome Collection Art Gallery



Nuffield Sports Centre

## Key Questions

Can social infrastructure be strengthened to help encourage integration within the communities that live in Bloomsbury?

# Demographics

## Key Findings

When compared to other character areas, there is a clear disparity in the residential area across many factors as outlined here. This tends to intersect with an increasing amount of people who rent socially and are from an ethnic minority background.

High population of social renters to the east of the area, where income deprivation is also the highest

BAME population is lower than the average for London

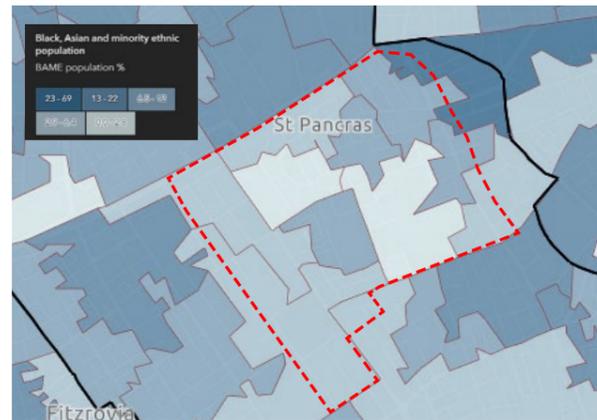
Under 5s population is concentrated in the east where more homes are located.

### Key Questions

Can health and wealth outcomes of people in residential areas in Bloomsbury, in the heart of the Knowledge Quarter, be improved through wider environmental improvements?



Social Renters  
Credit: GLA



BAME population  
Credit: GLA



Income Deprivation  
Credit: GLA



Under 5s population  
Credit: GLA

# Ownership Highways

## Key Findings

Camden owns much of the highway in the area. There are routes within university campuses, that are owned and managed by respective landowners.

### Key Questions

Can Camden work collaboratively with large landowners to create ambitious public highways schemes?

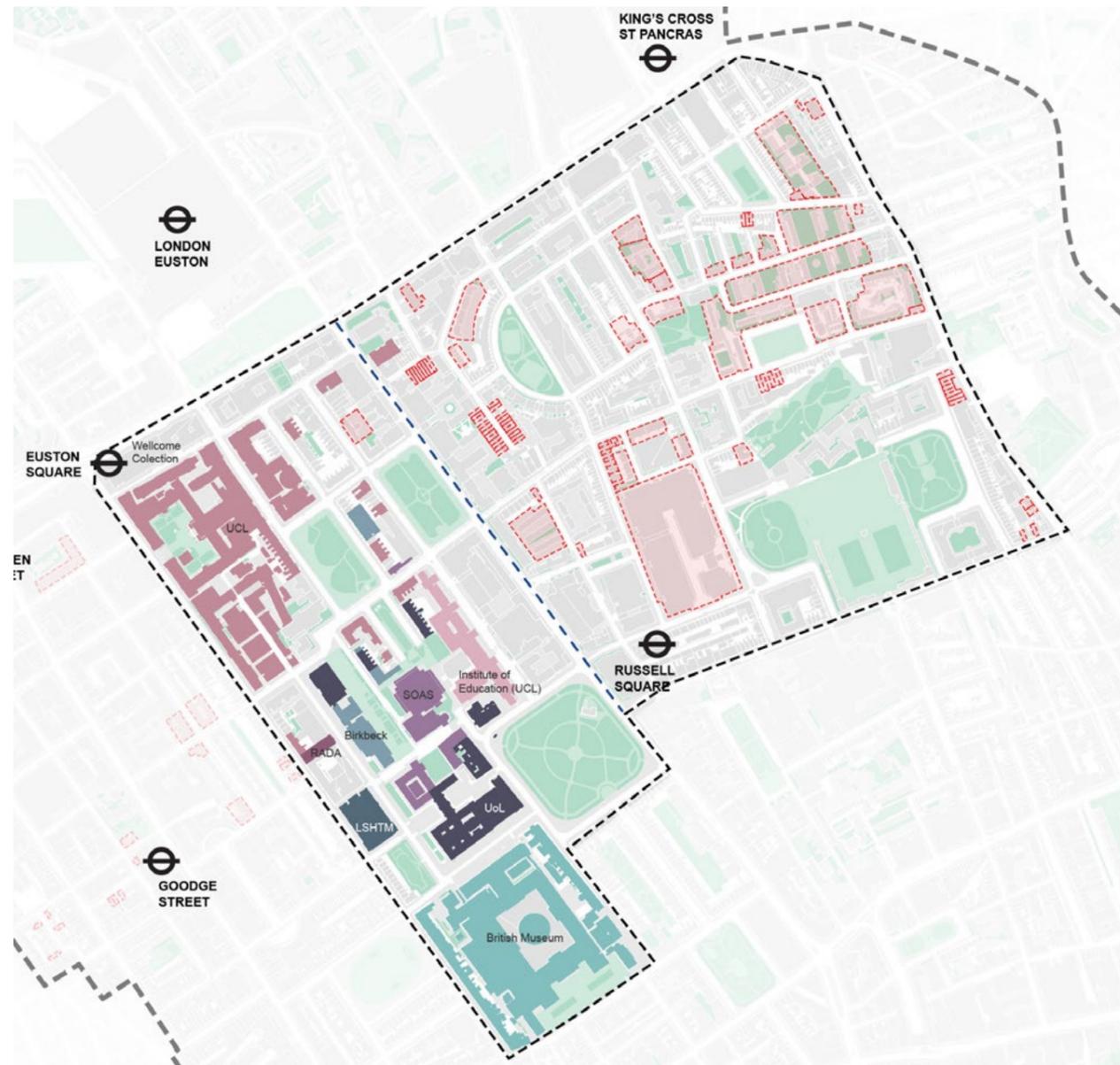


# Ownership

## Large Scale Owners in Bloomsbury

Key

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#c0392b; border:1px solid #c0392b;"></span> UCL	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#27ae60; border:1px solid #27ae60;"></span> British Museum
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#2c3e50; border:1px dashed #2c3e50;"></span> UoL	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#e67e22; border:1px dashed #e67e22;"></span> Camden estates
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#34495e; border:1px solid #34495e;"></span> Birkbeck	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#2c3e50; border:1px solid #2c3e50;"></span> LSHTM
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#8e44ad; border:1px solid #8e44ad;"></span> SOAS	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#8e44ad; border:1px solid #8e44ad;"></span> RADA



### Key Findings

Area of multiple ownerships, predominantly educational and cultural institutions within the focus area.

Large landowners have ambitions for their estate and connection to the wider area.

There are many Camden residents living in the east of the wider Bloomsbury area.



Senate House as part of the UoL campus



Brunswick Centre One of many housing estates in Bloomsbury



Birkbeck Torrington Place

### Key Questions

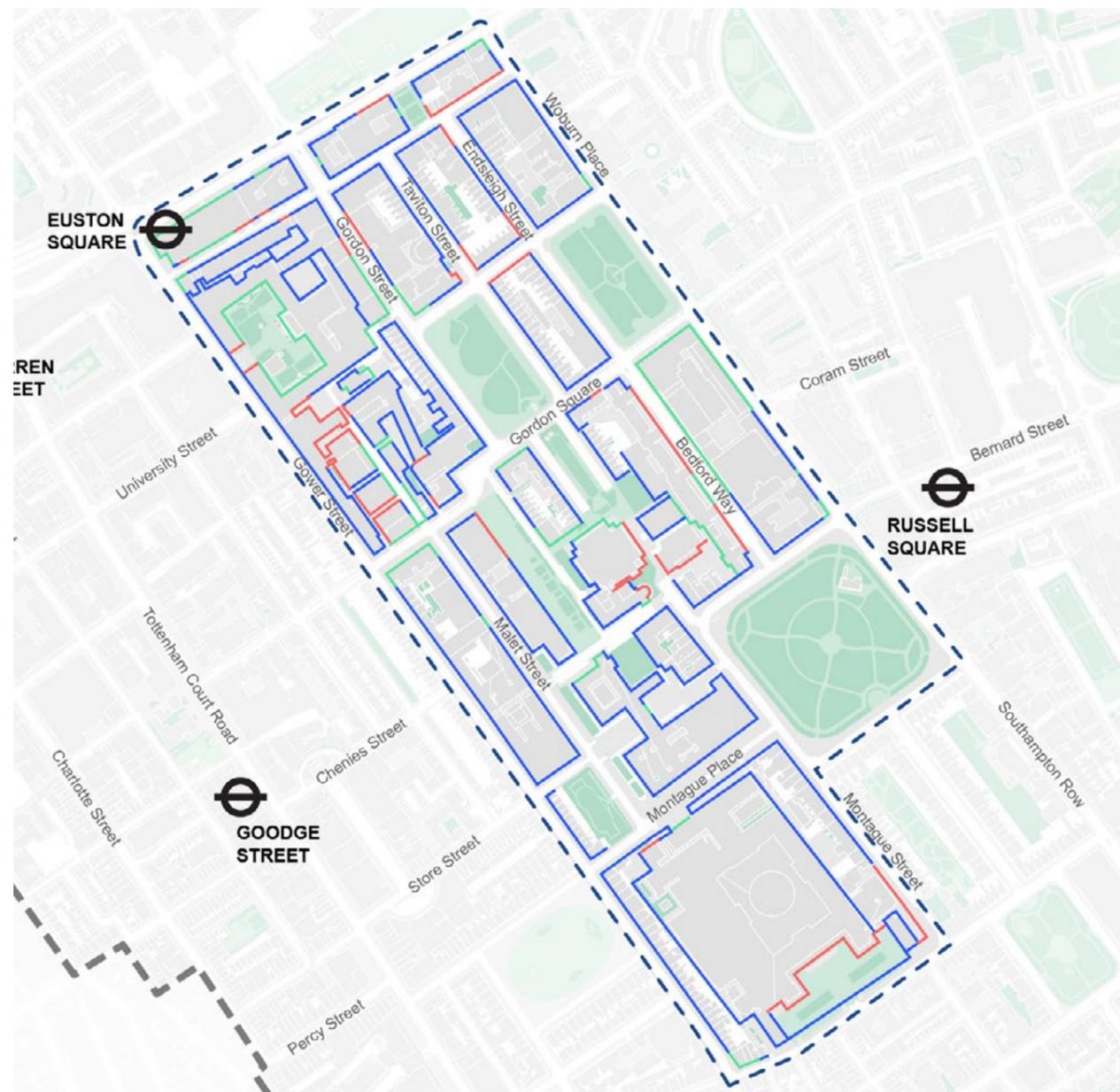
How can landowners work together to ensure a comprehensive long-term approach to the area?

How can public realm projects be developed in collaboration with the Bloomsbury communities?

# Frontages

## Key

- Active frontage
- Passive frontage
- Obscure / blank frontage



## Key Findings

At ground level, the building typology means many frontages sit behind a low fence or wall, often with set back basements, creating a disconnect between the building and street scape.

There are many gates and level changes across the area. Within the university owned buildings, this is often addressed through the addition of a ramp or external lift.

Many Georgian frontages with windows proportionally smaller, are often covered with blinds or other, reducing visibility through.



Georgian Terraces with set back basements



Passive frontage: Stairs up to internal finish level



Active frontage: UCL Bartlett

## Key Questions

Can we open up frontages to improve the relationship between inside and outside, showcasing innovative work, creating an exciting ground floor plane, activating the public realm?

# Movement & Connectivity

## Vehicles

**Key**

- Heavy Traffic
- Medium Traffic
- Low Traffic
- One way
- Loading bays
- Parking - permit holders
- Parking - blue badge
- Parking - paid for
- Bus stops
- Car parks



### Key Findings

Main roads surrounding focus area are busy vehicular routes: Euston Road, Gower Street, Woburn Place

Many large areas and streets area used for servicing and parking, serving the institutions and offices in the Bloomsbury area.

The areas within campuses are relatively quiet from traffic, but service and parking areas have an impact



Traffic along Tavistock Square



Car park within Senate House grounds



Coaches parked on Montague Place

**Key Questions**

How can we mitigate the impacts of vehicular traffic through public realm, taking into account the current and future needs for vehicles?

Can we reduce and/or relocate areas for servicing and parking?



No Cars or Motorbikes sign and parked lorry on cycle lane on Endsleigh Gardens

# Cycling

**Key**

-  Designated cycling route
-  Santander Bike docks
-  Lime Bike stations



**Key Findings**

Area well served by cycleways, including new Torrington / Tavistock Place cycle lane.

Public cycle parking provision available across the focus area, but usage varies depending on location.

Cycle infrastructure also provided within campuses but sometimes in leftover building space.

Designated areas for Lime bikes (and similar) but some are over saturated and become obstacles to movement.

**Key Questions**

How can cycling infrastructure respond to the needs of the local community?

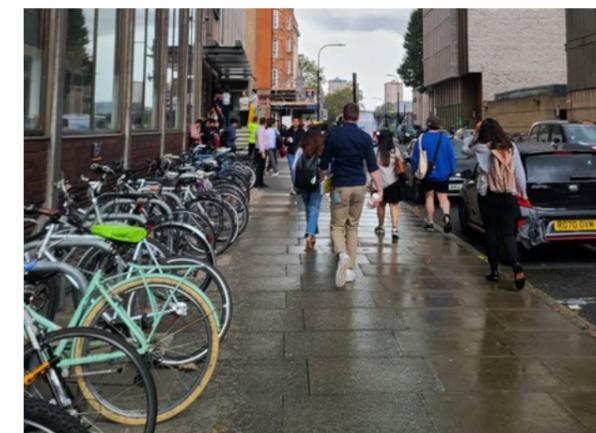
What is a suitable holistic cycling infrastructure strategy for the area?



Lime bike parking area outside Waterstones



Cycle parking within UCL campus



Cycle parking outside the UCL student centre



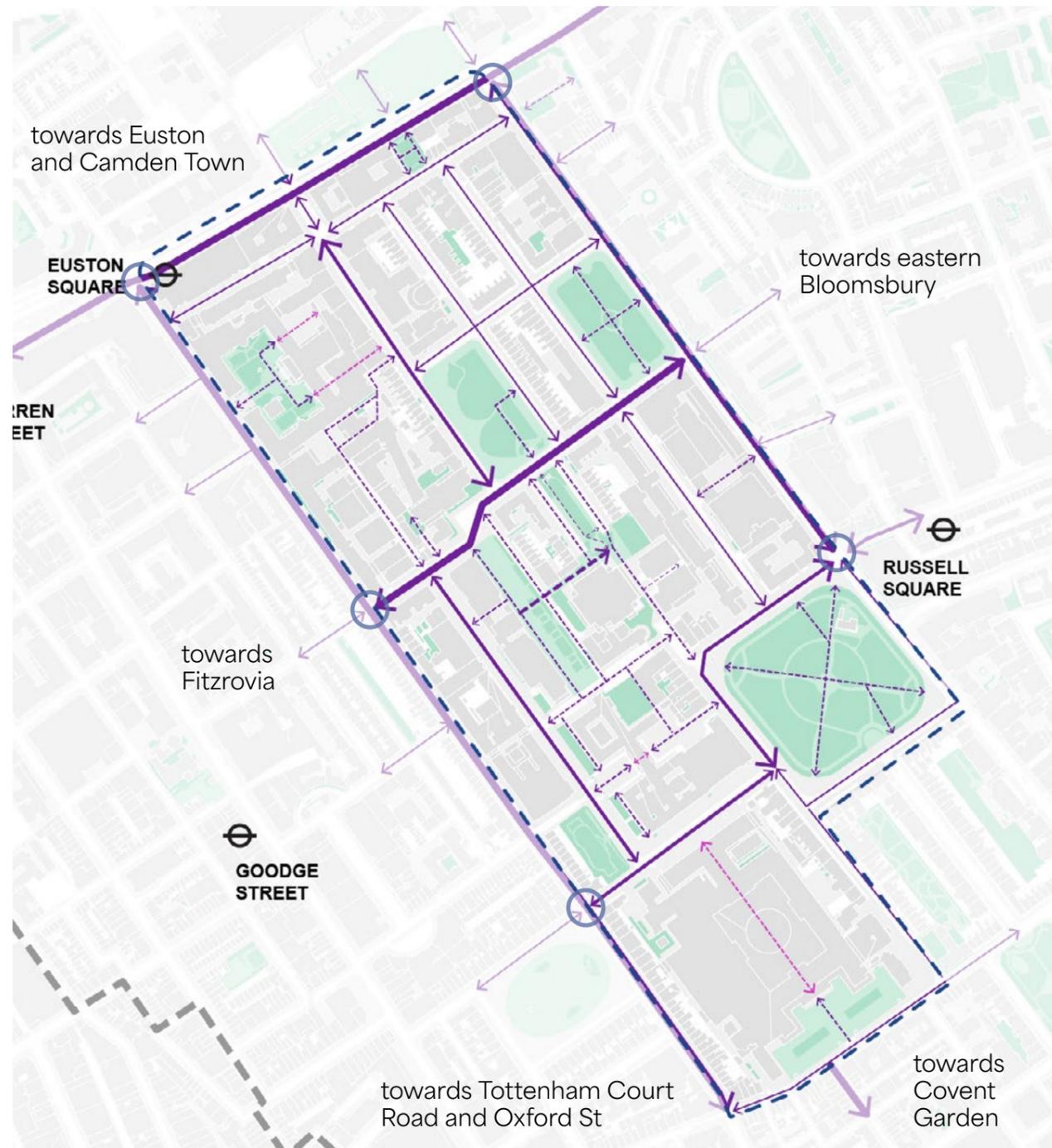
Lime bikes outside Torrington Place & personal bike storage racks

# Movement & Connectivity

## Pedestrian movement

**Key**

-  Pedestrian route through public highway
-  Pedestrian route through private private land/buildings
-  Pedestrian route through buildings
-  Key gateways/nodes into Bloomsbury



**Key Findings**

Main roads are used as key pedestrian routes, connecting to main arrival points into the area.

Alternative routes within the campuses and private land are well used by people studying and working in the area.

Many routes to travel around the area, but they are not always clearly indicated and legible, including routes to key institutions.

Key routes are congested at peak hours.



**Main roads** Tavistock Square/Woburn Place



**Alternative routes** Shortcut to Torrington Place



**Unlegible routes** Informal route within UCL campus

**Key Questions**

Can visibility and quality of routes be improved to help build on their character?

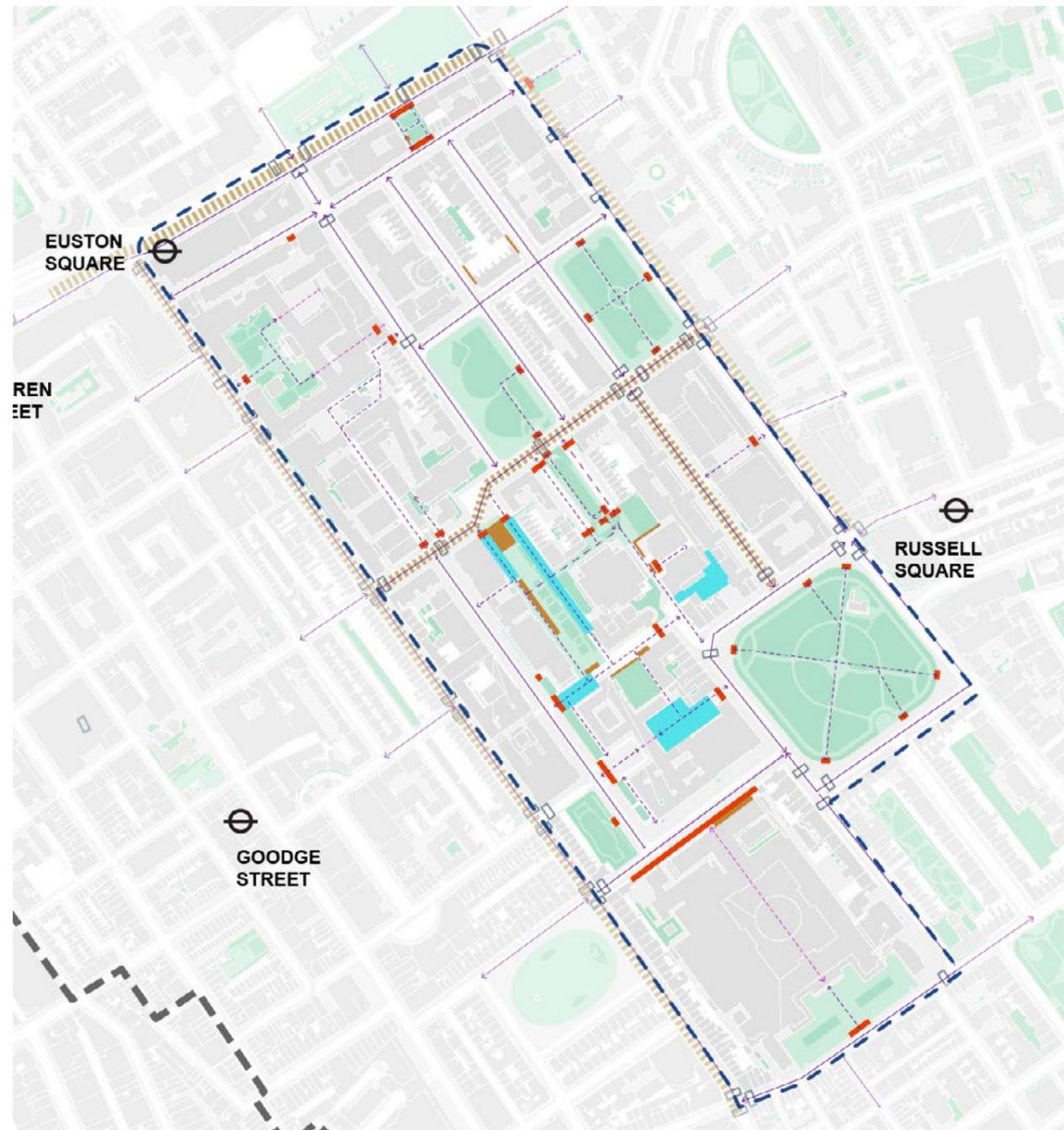
Can the use of alternative routes be increased?

# Movement & Connectivity

## Barriers to movement

**Key**

- Gates / fences / bollards
- Servicing and parking area
- Changes in level
- Crossings
- Pedestrian routes
- Busy road



**Key Findings**

The pedestrian experience within and around the focus area is mixed: low quality along the main busy roads due to air pollution, difficult crossings and public realm conditions; more pleasant in quieter streets with less traffic.

Euston Road borders the north of the focus area and is often perceived as a physical and psychological barrier due to its width, multiple crossing points and vehicular traffic.

Within the focus area, crossing is relatively easy due to relatively low levels of vehicular traffic.

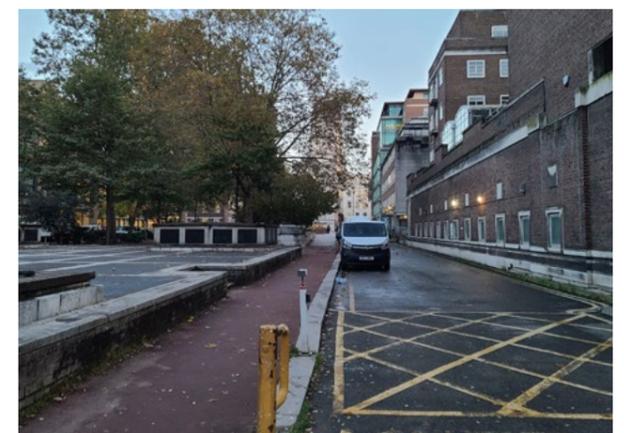
However, pedestrian navigation at ground floor is affected by many barriers, such as gates, fences, bollards, changes in levels, areas of parking/servicing. This is particularly noticeable within and around campuses.



Wide and busy roads Euston Road



Gates and fences Entry point on Malet Street



Change in levels and areas of parking Torrington Place

**Key Questions**

How to remove obstacles to movement to make the area accessible and easy to navigate?

How to promote more pleasant and alternative routes?

# Movement & Connectivity

## Signage and wayfinding

Moving around and within campuses is often not straightforward due to multiple routes which are not always clearly indicated.

Approaching the focus area from multiple points, it is clear there is a lack of signage directing to specific destinations: for example routes to British Museum are not clearly indicated.

Whilst creating physical barriers, gates and fences also contribute to difficult legibility and in moving around.

When institutions clearly signpost and bring branding to gateway, wayfinding is legible and successful.

**Key Questions**

Can wayfinding be improved from key locations, to signpost more clearly?

Can the identity of institutions be more present in the public realm?



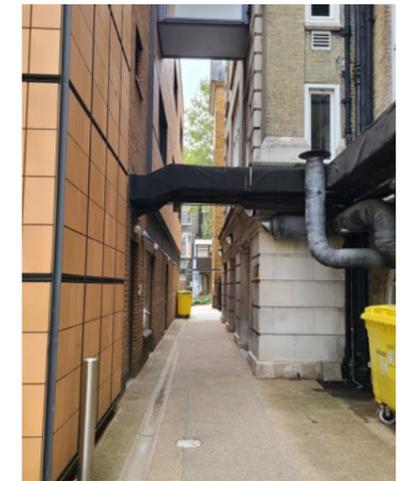
SOAS Banners outside the campus gateway



UCL Wikins Terrace Internal campus routes



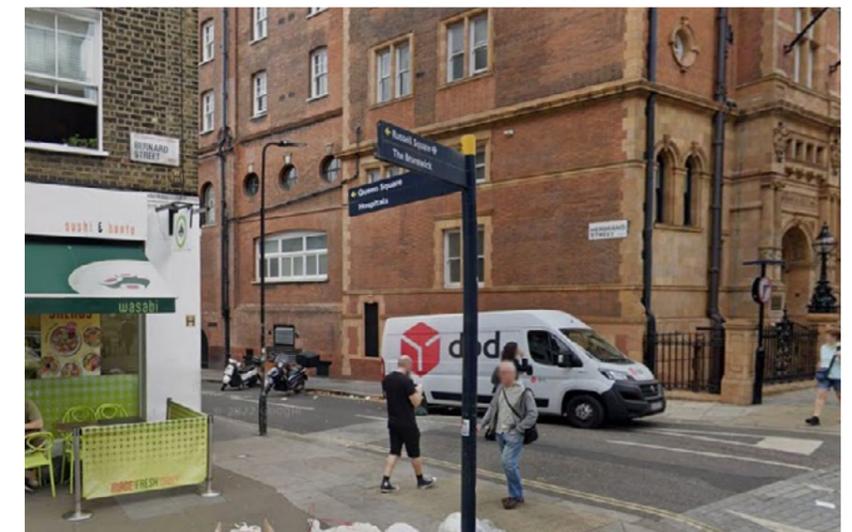
UCL Location map of the UCL campus to aid wayfinding



Unlegible routes Informal route within UCL campus



UoL Wayfinding



Signposts Outside Russell Square station. There are no clear directions to the British Museum from here.



UCL Gateway to UCL campus at Malet Place



UCL Access to the Darwin Centre from Malet Place

# Public Realm

## Street typology

**Key**

- Main thoroughfare
- Secondary street
- Neighbourhood street
- Pedestrian street
- Alleyway/passageway/mews
- Servicing
- Open space/public square



### Key Findings

The street network within Bloomsbury's focus area is characterised by multiple street typologies, defined by pedestrian and transport movement and how people use them.

Main thoroughfares are mostly located on the perimeter of the focus area and are characterised by vehicular traffic, bus routes, and high levels of pedestrian footfall. They are strategic routes connecting Bloomsbury to other neighbourhoods.

Secondary streets are movement routes with consistent vehicular traffic and pedestrian footfall.

Neighbourhood streets are local streets with relatively low levels of traffic. They provide alternative routes to main thoroughfares and are the predominant category of street in the focus area.

Pedestrian streets are streets that have been closed to traffic.

Alleys, passageways and mews are traffic free routes, used as alternative routes and cut throughs by people more familiar with the area. They are publicly accessible but mostly within private land.

Servicing streets are used for servicing and parking and are located within private land.



**Pedestrian streets** Gordon Square north



**Neighbourhood Streets** Endsleigh Street

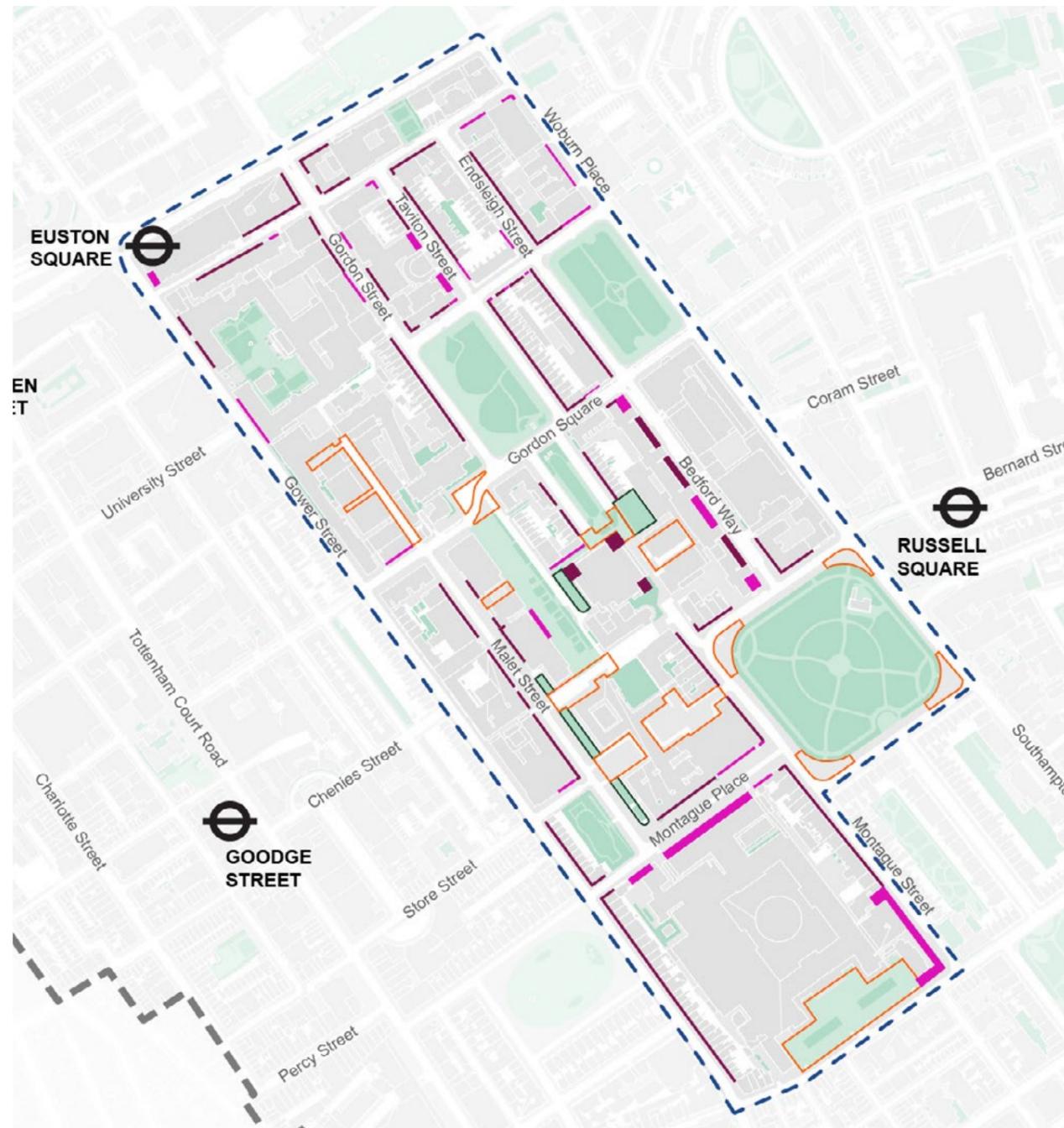


**Alleyways and mews** Malet Place

# Public Realm Underused space

### Key

- Publicly accessible underused space
- Underused green space
- Ground floor private forecourt
- Private set back lower ground



### Key Findings

Whilst the area is densely built, there are still pockets of underused space both within the public highway and private land

Four categories of underused space

South of Bloomsbury has many publicly accessible underused spaces

The architecture of the area is characterised by many buildings with light wells and basements onto the streets.



Underused space within the ground floor of buildings on Bedford Way



Large spaces around Torrington Square are not fully used or are only inhabited at specific times of the week



Underused green space near the Institute of Education

### Key Questions

Can underused space be turned into public places, creating connection and community?

Can private forecourts and light wells be used to increase connection with the street and provide valuable amenity?

# Public Realm

## Quality of public spaces

### Key Findings

A mix in the quality of public spaces - new/ recently developed public realm and some in need of improvement.

Street clutter - bikes, refuse, redundant street furniture.

Hostile Vehicle Mitigation also creates visual clutter and contributes to an unwelcoming public realm; this is particularly relevant on Montague Place.

Pavement width varies across the area, sometimes busy routes have a narrow foot path.

Paving materials and quality vary and are inconsistent across the Bloomsbury area.

A number of uninviting spaces due to lack of amenity and greening, active frontage, street clutter, lack of visual permeability, low quality paving.



Recently developed public realm Byng Place



Wide pavements Gordon Square



Storage and refuse on Torrington Square



Public realm in need of improvement Torrington Square



Narrow pavements with high footfall Euston Road



Waste bins on the public footway on Malet Place

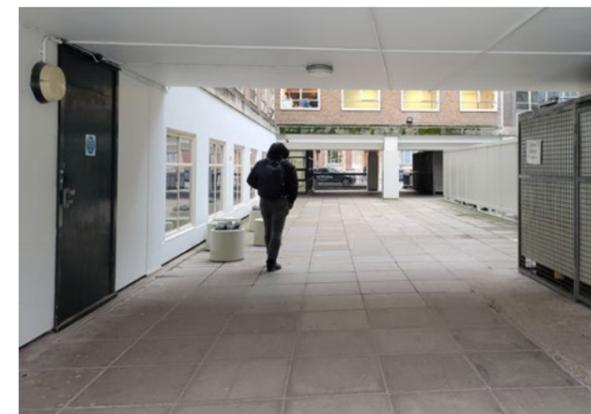
### Opportunities

How can a holistic public realm strategy promote successful public space?

How can street furniture be rationalised and coordinated within the focus area?



Public realm in need of improvement Gordon Street



Uninviting spaces Passageway to Torrington Square



Hostile Vehicle Mitigation outside the British Museum on Montague Place

# Public Realm Seating

## Key Findings

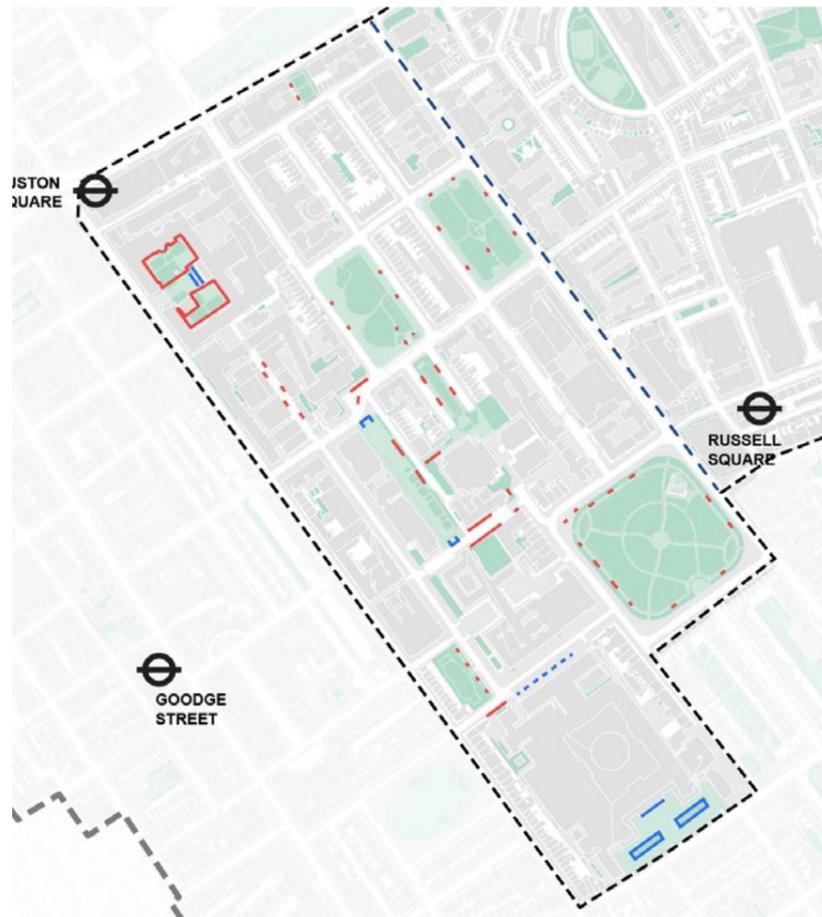
Much of the seating within the focus area is located within publicly accessible formal squares with closing times.

Apart from this there is a limited amount of seating. The formal square grass areas, become informal seating during warmer months.

People tend to use stairs and ledges as informal seating.

### Key

- Areas with purpose built public seating
- Ad-hoc informal seating



### Key Questions

Can public seating areas increase in the public realm in a way that creates a safe environment for all?

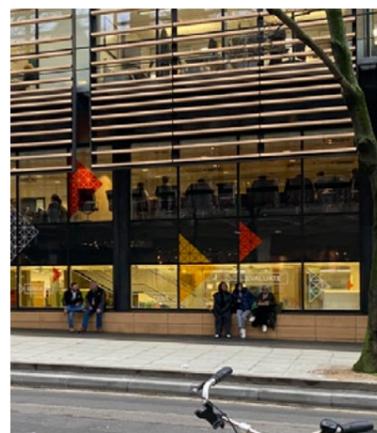
How does new public street furniture enhance the character of the area whilst encouraging social connection?



**British Museum** Hostile Vehicle mitigation as seating



**Public Square** Public benches



**UCL Roberts building** ledges used as informal seating

# Public Realm Street use and activity

## Key Findings

Some areas are used as gathering spaces, particularly by the student community and visitors at specific hours of the day.

Some spill out zones from buildings within the focus area, however these are limited.

Little street activity within the focus area in the evening, after work and university hours, and at weekends.

Temporary street activity is common in the area, especially during key academic events such as Freshers Week.

Specific local events and programmes take place on a regular basis within the wider Bloomsbury area, such as the weekly Bloomsbury Farmers Market or the Bloomsbury festival every Autumn.



**Well used public space:** Torrington Square during the weekly food market



**People congregating** outside UCL's Student Centre building during lunchtime peak

### Key Questions

How can streets better provide for people to spend time in and become successful public spaces?

Can streets be designed for both temporary and permanent street activity?



**Little street activity** along Malet Place

# Open Space & Green Infrastructure

## Open Space

### Key

- Private Parks (publicly accessible)
- Camden Parks
- Pocket Green Space
- Access Gates



### Key Findings

Much of the green space is not within public ownership, but some are still publicly accessible. Given this, collaboration will be needed on how to improve and enhance existing squares.

Many mature trees are contained within the historic squares.

Access to some of the gated squares is via a very small paving.

Most parks are open from dusk till dawn.



Woburn Square Gardens



Pocket of green space near the SOAS campus



Gordon Square Garden Formal green space

### Key Questions

Can underused space be turned into public places?

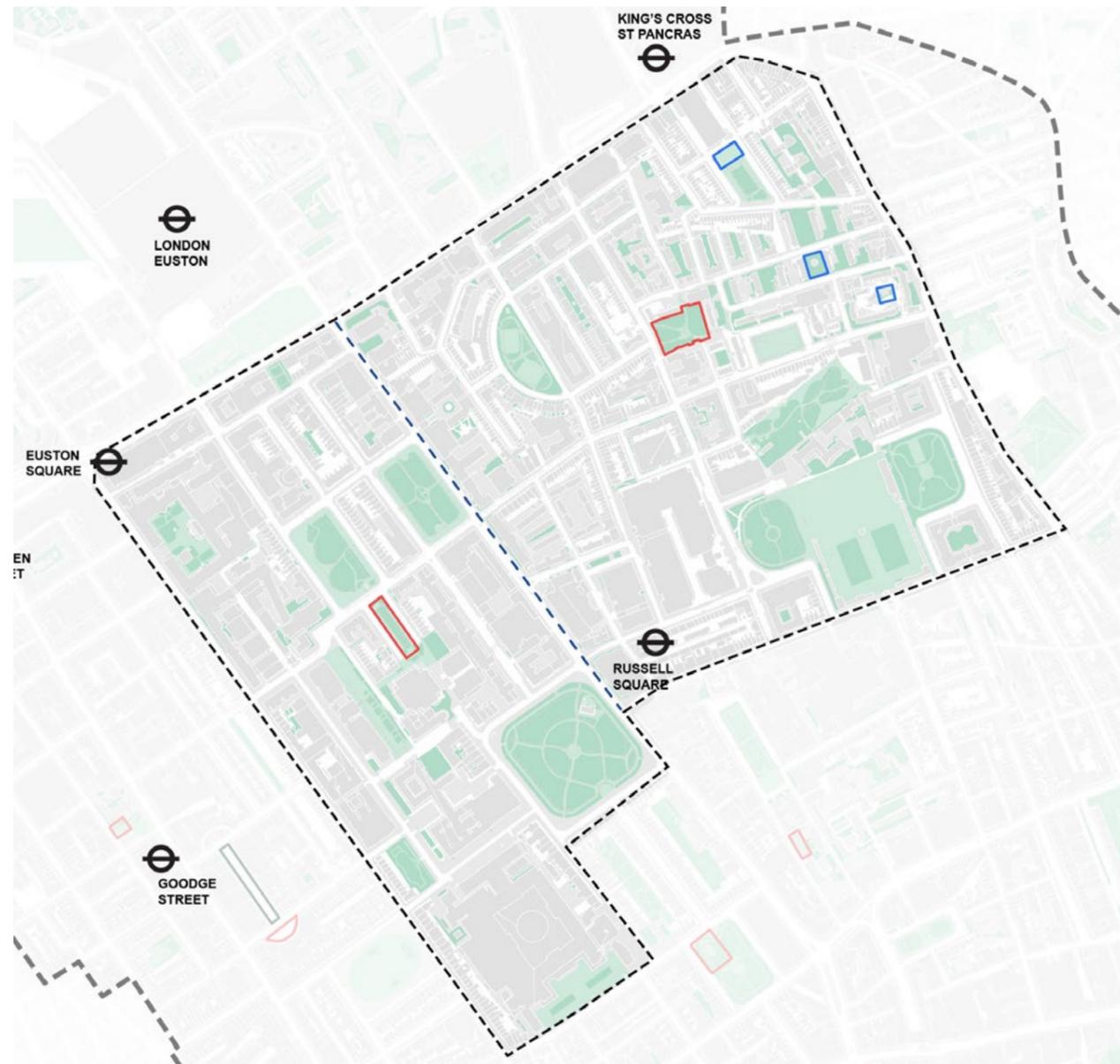
Can private forecourts and light wells be used to increase connection with the street and provide valuable amenity?

# Open Space & Green Infrastructure

## Play space

### Key

- Formal play areas
- Play areas within Camden estates
- Informal play areas



### Key Findings

There is a lack of formal and informal play space within the focus area as well as lack of informal play areas due to lack of street furniture.

Most formal play areas are within estates on the east side of the area, even so, these are limited and not spaced evenly within the area.



Woburn Square gardens play area



Alfred place informal play area



Estate play area

### Key Questions

Can increased street furniture for dwelling / shade etc. also function as informal play areas?

How do we diversify the public realm to allow space for play?

# Open Space & Green Infrastructure Canopy / Tree Preservation

### Key

- Canopy Cover
- Area with high numbers of TPOs
- ★ Tree Preservation Orders



### Key Findings

Most of the canopy cover is concentrated within the formal green squares and there are some streets with little to no canopy cover.

Trees that dominate the area are plane and whitebeam trees. East of Bloomsbury contains a wider variety of trees including ash, apple, hornbeam and cherry.



Young trees outside SOAS



Trees on Bedford Way and Malet Street

### Key Questions

City trees play a key role in reducing the heat island effect and in a warming climate, create shading. How do we find opportune spaces for tree planting?

How can we introduce a range of tree types that help mitigate biodiversity loss and also allow for city foraging?



Gower Street - lack of canopy

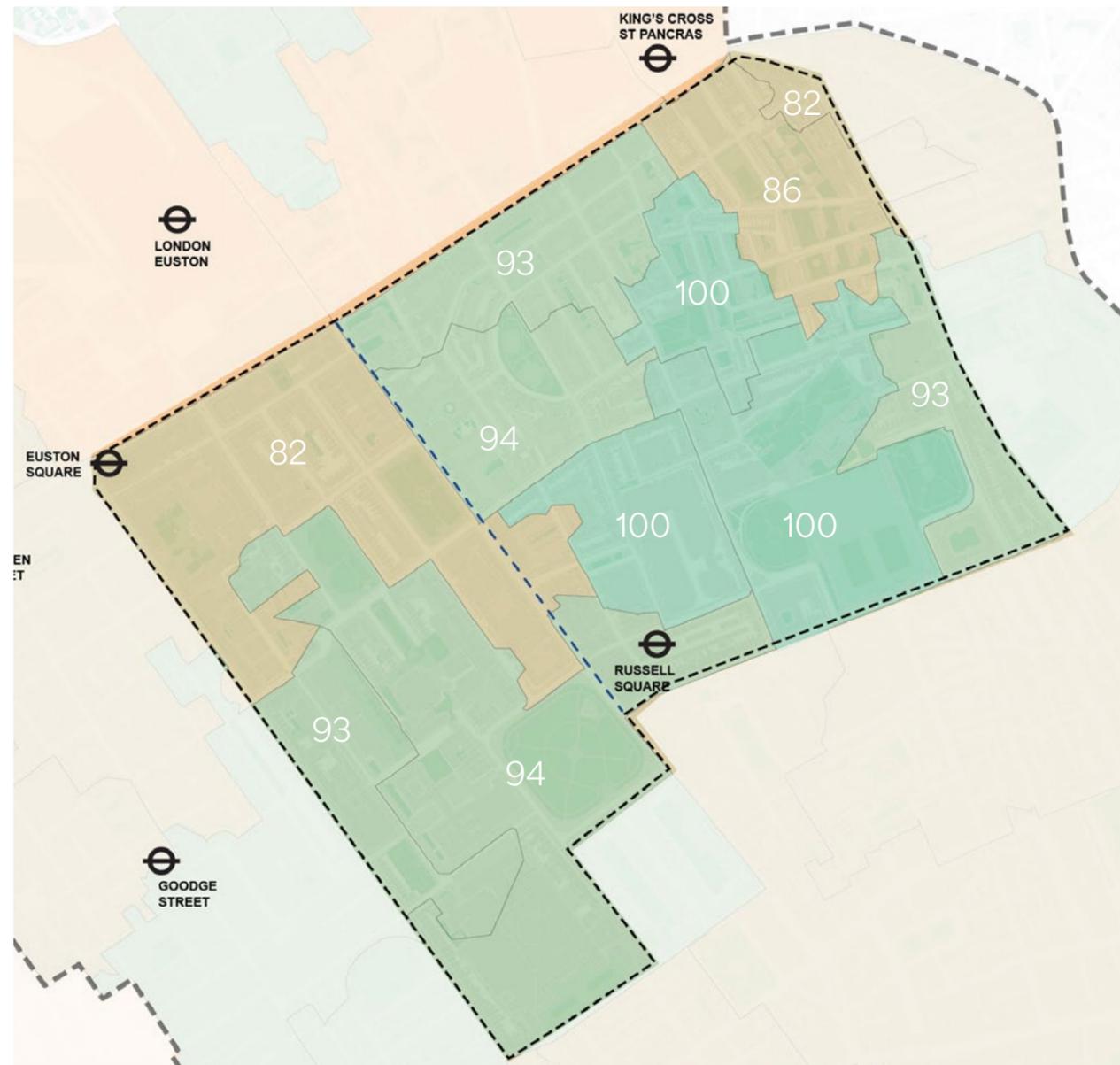
# Open Space & Green Infrastructure

## Tree Equity Score

### Key: Tree Equity Score

- 100%
- 90-100%
- 80-90%

Tree Equity Score sets a national standard in each UK country to help make the case for investment in areas with greatest need.



### Key Findings

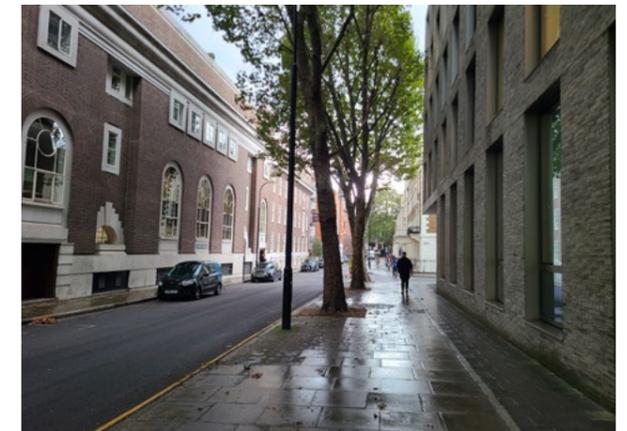
The Tree Equity Score varies across the wider Bloomsbury area, meaning that some areas would require more tree planting than others.

The north of the focus area and the north eastern corner of the wider area have the lowest score.

The south of the focus area has a higher scoring of 94 whilst the area around Coram's Fields and around have the highest scoring of 100%.



Lack of street trees on Argyle Street



Few street trees on Endsleigh Gardens / Gower Place



Lack of street trees and planting on Gordon Street

### Key Questions

Can trees be planted strategically to enhance the Tree Equity Score in areas not performing as well?

To help establish maintenance for new tree plants, can Camden collaborate with universities to ensure new trees survive and thrive?

# Open Space & Green Infrastructure

## Ecological network map

### Key Findings

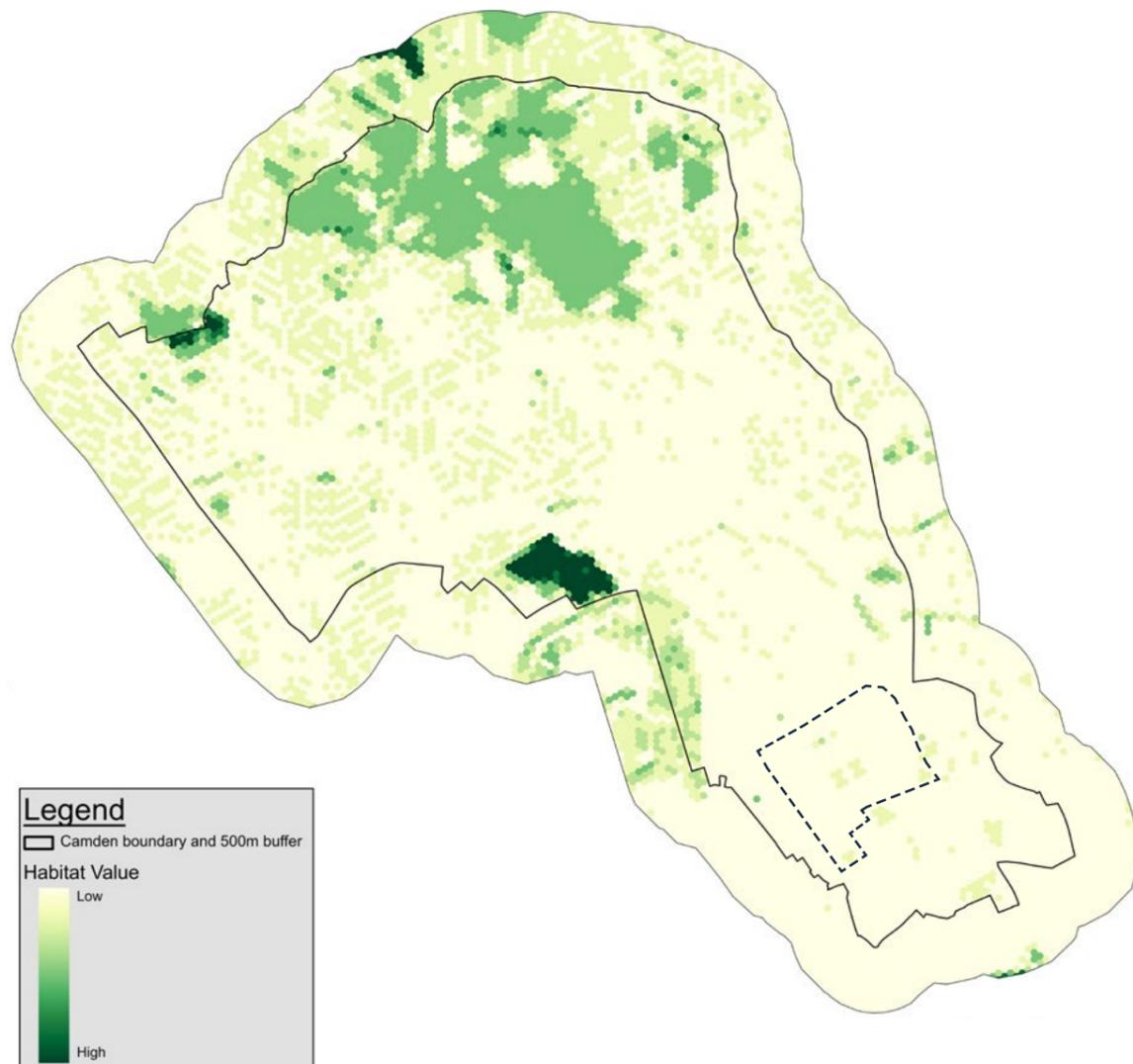
There are a high number of plane trees that have TPOs.

Habitat value in Bloomsbury is low due to the lack of diversity in green space and character of open space.

### Opportunities

Can we help mitigate biodiversity loss through the implementation of green habitat routes through Bloomsbury?

Can we take into account both human and non-human needs?



# Climate Risk

## Environmental context

### Key Findings

This GLA climate risk map shows the exposure and vulnerability to climate risk, relating to exposure to climate impacts like flooding or heatwaves, but also to personal and social factors that affect their ability to cope with and respond to extreme events.

In most factors, a disparity appears between the east and west sides of Bloomsbury, however it is clear that the entire area sits within medium to high risk.

### Key Questions

Can sustainable development be supported by focusing on climate resilience?

Can institutions continue to make positive influence through supporting climate resilience projects?

How can we mitigate climate risk through collaboration and engagement?



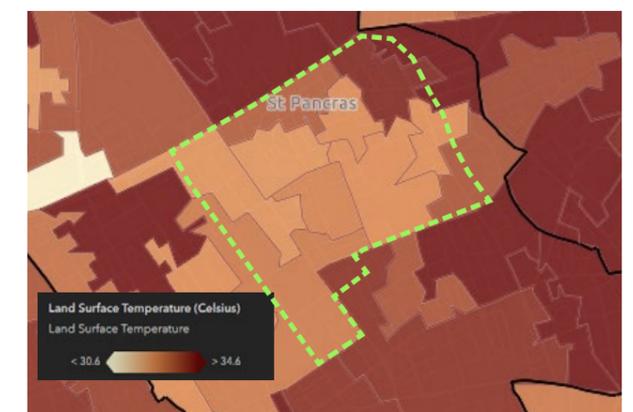
Total Value (High to Low)



Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Spaces



Mean NO2 Concentration

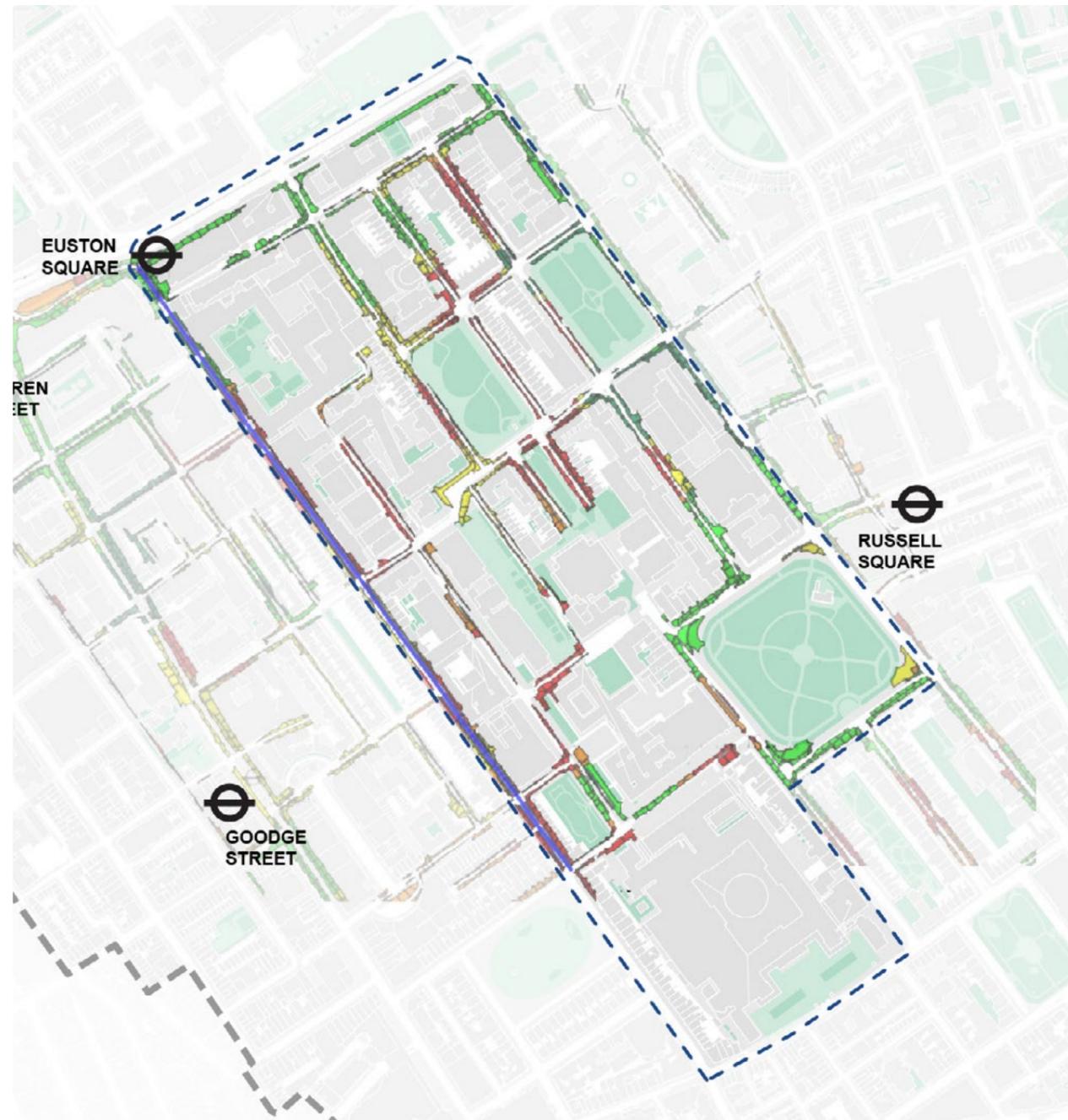


Land Surface Temperature (Celsius)

# SuDS Opportunity

## Key

- Least effective for SuDS
- 
- 
- Most effective for SuDS



## Key Findings

Surface water flooding is a risk in the area due to the amount of hard surfacing; this is predicted to further increase with climate change bringing change in weather patterns such as heavier flash rainfall.



Taviton Street | Hard standing pavement



Malet Street | Identified as an effective area for SuDS



Torrington Square | Identified as an effective area for SuDS

## Key Questions

Are there opportunities to mitigate against surface flood risk through the introduction of SuDS?

How do we identify various greening opportunities through the use of data to inform decisions?

# Evening & Night Time

## Key: Closing windows

- 5-7pm
- 7-9pm
- 9-12am
- 24 Hours



## Key Findings

Within the focus area, mainly universities and associated student union bars are open late into the night. Notably, UCL's main campus is 24 hours.

There is not much that is open beyond 6pm in the evening. This means the roads feel quiet and eerie and streets are mainly used by students and night time staff members at the university.

The British Museum closes at 5pm.

The squares open and close with the day-light hours so during winter they close early.

Unequal street lighting within the focus area: more street lighting in northern area and darker in the south, including Malet Street and Montague Place.

Neighbouring Fitzrovia and King's Cross have a more established nighttime economy.

### Key Questions

- How do we promote recreation in the evening / night time to create safe resources?
- Can cultural institutions within the area programme late openings?
- How can a lighting strategy provide a sense of safety and promote evening and night time activity?



Street lighting on Malet Street



Streets illuminated by light coming from inside buildings



Malet Place at dark

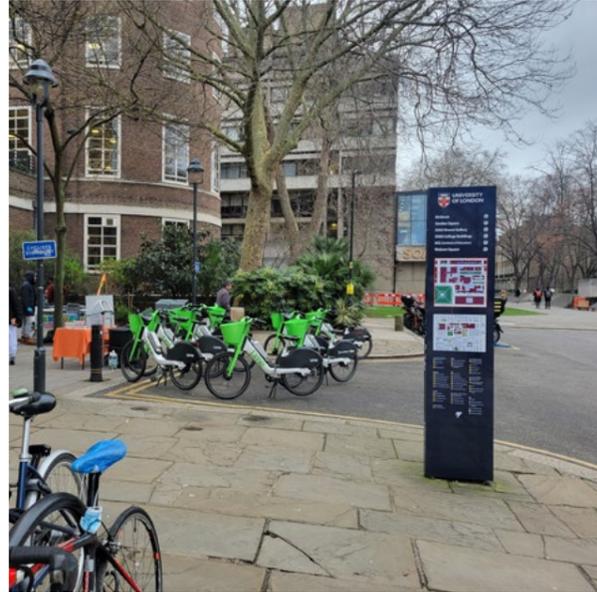
# 03 Summary

# Issues & Opportunities

## Summary of key challenges



Underused areas and lack of high quality public realm



Difficult legibility and navigation within and around campuses



Lack of active street frontage and activity



Historic setting of area can create development challenges



Lack of permeability at ground floor



Limited green infrastructure and access to some open spaces



Competing modes of transport requiring a coordinated approach to movement



Different ownerships and the need for a coordinated approach

# Issues & Opportunities

## Summary of key opportunities



Transform underused spaces and enhance quality of public realm



Improve navigation and permeability



Unlock development opportunities within the historic context



Enhance history and character



Increase green infrastructure and access to green space



Increase activity and dwelling on streets



Prioritise pedestrian movement and cycling



Promote collaboration between all stakeholders

# Issues & Opportunities

## Potential projects

### Key

- 1 Malet Street
- 2 Montague Place
- 3 Senate House surrounds
- 4 Torrington Square
- 5 Thornhaugh Square/Place
- 6 Woburn Square
- 7 Institute of Education Square

- 8 UCL campus mews
- 9 Gordon Street
- 10 UCL Main Quad
- 11 British Museum forecourt/Great Russell Street

An initial list of projects to be reviewed and refined as part of the Bloomsbury public realm strategy.



Malet Street



Montague Place



Senate House



Torrington Square



Thornhaugh Square



Gordon Street

