



# Bloomsbury Campus Area

## Policy BC1 – Bloomsbury Campus Area

4.1 The Bloomsbury Campus Area extends over 22 hectares between Euston Station and the British Museum, and contains a concentration of University-related buildings and activities. The area is at the heart of higher education in Camden, providing the main base for the University of London and several member institutions including UCL (University College London), SOAS

(the School of African and Oriental Studies), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Birkbeck.

4.2 The University provision in the Campus Area is complemented by many higher education institutions and facilities in other parts of the borough, such as the Royal Veterinary College and Central St Martins (University of the Arts),

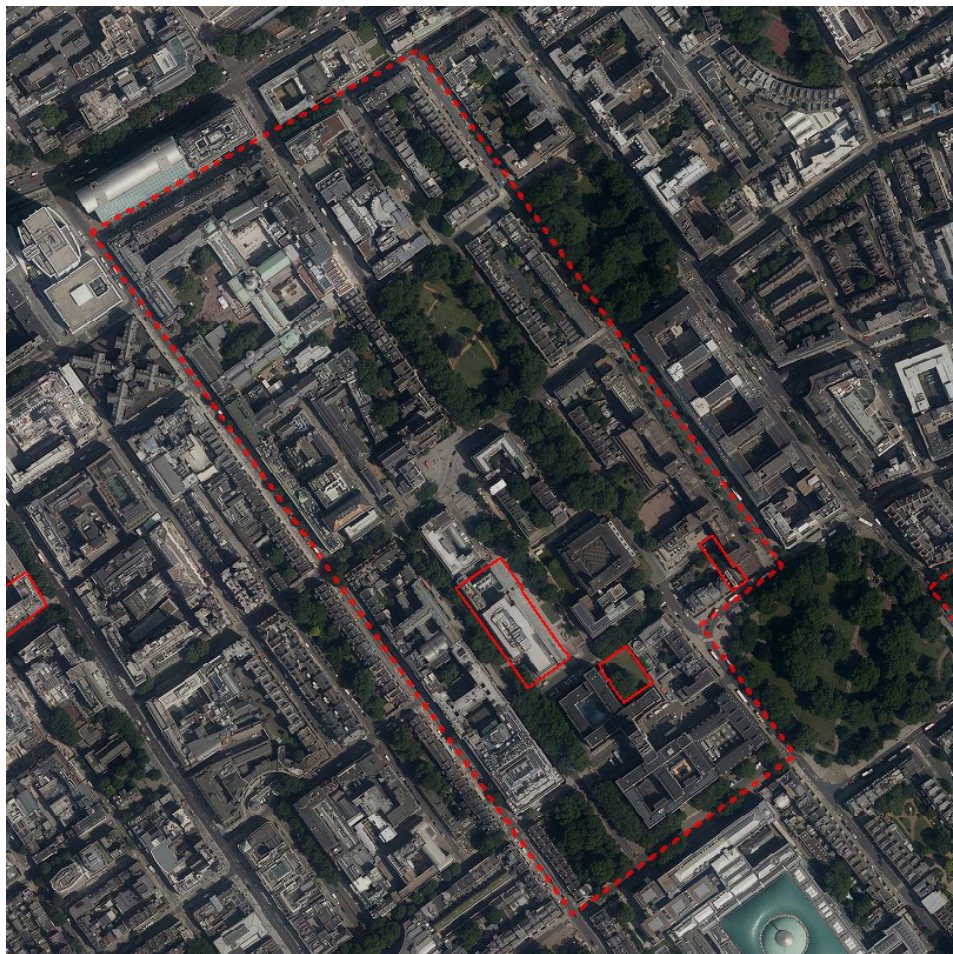


Figure 4.1: Policy BC1 - Bloomsbury Campus Area

## Policy BC1

The Plan's objectives for the Bloomsbury Campus Area are that it should:

- a. Maintain and expand its role as the heart of higher education in Camden
- b. Provide attractive and stimulating spaces for learning, research, sharing ideas, socialising, and supporting students
- c. Feel welcoming and inclusive to students, workers, residents and visitors.

The Plan's priorities for development in the Campus Area are to:

- d. Consolidate and increase academic space (including student support facilities and other ancillary space) in a way that celebrates the Universities' achievements and creativity
- e. Deliver sustainable growth through collaboration across institutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, upgrade the decentralised energy network, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions
- f. Enhance open space, streets and footpaths, creating a coherent network which is publicly accessible and animated by cafes and restaurants wherever possible and appropriate
- g. Make it easier to walk and cycle within and across the area, improving east-west links, enhancing Malet Street as a University High Street, and supporting a central focal point at Byng Place
- h. Design improvements to public spaces and walking and cycling routes to integrate with the design of the West End Project
- i. Enhance the area's rich historic and architectural character, and respect its many heritage assets
- j. Seek provision of multi-purpose facilities that are shared with other organisations and the local community as far as possible

Where higher education development is proposed in the Campus Area for the University of London or its member institutions, the Council will not require the inclusion of self-contained homes provided the development is publicly funded or serves a public purpose. We will support the development of student housing in the Campus Area to serve the University of London or its member institutions where it will not compromise meeting the need for additional academic space.

Development in the Bloomsbury Campus Area, including the development of allocated sites, must contribute to the Plan's objectives and priorities set out above where these are relevant to the development and commensurate with its nature and scale.

Area name	Bloomsbury Campus Area
Area size	22 ha

located north of St Pancras and King's Cross stations respectively. Most of Camden's purpose-built student accommodation is also outside the area.

4.3 Higher education is a major contributor to the economy in Camden and London, both directly and through its influence on other activities (e.g. attracting international businesses and generating new start-up firms). Camden's universities are a key component of the Knowledge Quarter, and are a major factor in the growth of the science and creative sectors.

4.4 The higher education sector in Camden has been expanding rapidly in recent years, and we anticipate that it will continue to do so. The University of London's Master Plan estimates that it needs an additional 74,000 sqm of floorspace in Bloomsbury up to 2036, including 31,500 sqm for the Bloomsbury institutions in the next 5 years, and acknowledges that a proportion of the overall need may have to be met elsewhere (University of London Master Plan Report January 2016). The Master Plan also projects that the number of staff and students will grow by almost 50% up to 2036.

4.5 Given the importance of the University and the higher education sector to the Camden economy, a

key objective of Policy BC1 is for the Campus Area to maintain its higher education role. The Council aims to facilitate additional provision in the Campus Area, whilst providing for the sector to meet some needs elsewhere in the Knowledge Quarter and beyond.

4.6 The continued success of the University relies on its ability to attract students, including a high proportion of international students, in a highly competitive global marketplace. With continued rapid expansion in student numbers, ensuring that learning and social spaces still work well for students will become increasingly challenging. The second objective of Policy BC1 is therefore concerned with providing places that meet student needs.

4.7 There is a significant housing population in the Campus Area, including several hundred students living in halls managed by the University or its constituent institutions, although housing density is much lower than in neighbouring areas. In the daytime and evening, the Campus Area hosts many additional students who live elsewhere and workers associated with the University or other nearby employers. The area is also popular with visitors attracted by the British Museum, other historic buildings, London Squares and the concentration

of hotels around Woburn Place and Southampton Row. Each of these groups supports a distinct range of shops, cafes, restaurants and services, while adding to the demands on streets, footpaths, open spaces, and community and leisure facilities. The third objective of Policy BC1 is therefore concerned with delivering an area that works for residents, workers and visitors as well as students.

4.8 Policy BC1 incorporates a number of priorities drawn from University-produced masterplans, including those relating to academic space, open space, sustainability, streets and footpaths, a University High Street, walking and cycling, and the area's historical and architectural character. We will expect development in the area to contribute to these priorities as far as possible, for example by increasing the visibility of teaching, learning, and creative spaces, by improving the landscaping of poor quality places such as the north end of Torrington Square and by increasing the level of public access to privately owned open spaces such as Malet Street Gardens.

4.9 The University masterplans and zero-carbon estates handbook identify sustainability as a key objective, are consistent with the priority given to sustainable growth in Policy BC1, and provide catalysts for collaboration between member institutions to tackle climate change. The University and member institutions have formed the Bloomsbury Heat and Power

Consortium, which operates a combined heat and power network (a decentralised energy network), and is planning to upgrade and expand the existing plant as one way of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The sustainability and climate change requirements of the Camden Local Plan and the emerging London Plan will be applied to proposals in the Campus Area having regard to its particular characteristics and requirements.

4.10 The West End Project is a programme of works to the public realm west and south of the Campus Area, including works to Gower Street. The Project aims to create more people friendly streets with less traffic, lower traffic speeds, wider pavements and better public spaces. Improvements in the Campus Area to walking and cycling routes and the public realm will create an opportunity to extend the Project's principles and integrate the design of streets and spaces from Tottenham Court Road to Bedford Way.

4.11 The priority given to the historic and architectural character of the Campus Area reflects its location wholly within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the wealth of listed buildings it contains, including large academic buildings and terraces of nineteenth century houses (many of which now have University-related uses). The Campus Area also encompasses a number of public and private open spaces, including Woburn Square and Gordon Square Garden, which are London Squares

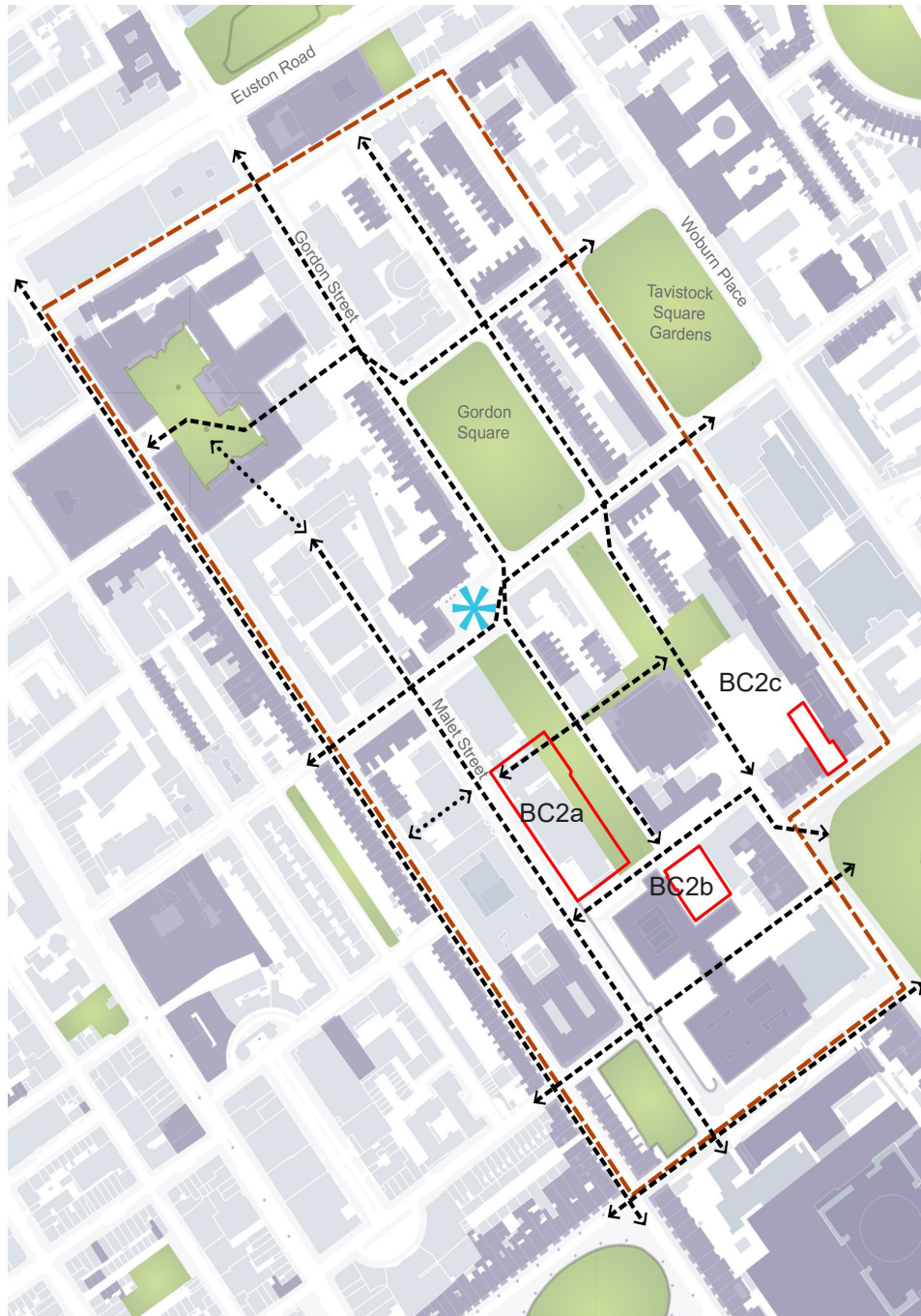


Figure 4.2: Policy BC1 - Bloomsbury Campus Area

with statutory protection. The north-eastern portion of the Campus Area is in the background of the London Plan landmark viewing-corridor from Greenwich Park (the General Wolfe Statue) to St Paul's Cathedral, and forms part of the wider setting consultation area for the view.

4.12 The Camden Local Plan and the London Plan encourage multiple or shared use of educational facilities to provide access to the wider community and for social, cultural and leisure activities. In the Campus Area, the Council will encourage higher education development that includes multi-use facilities to serve residents, workers and visitors as well as students, and potentially provide a source of income.

#### Housing in the Campus Area

4.13 Camden's planning policies identify self-contained housing as our priority land use across the borough. However, given the existing concentration of higher education in the Campus Area, the benefits of co-locating University facilities, and the high value/ limited supply of land, the Council will give a high priority to development of academic and ancillary facilities for the University of London. Consequently, Policy BC1 indicates that in specific circumstances we will not seek the inclusion of self-contained homes as part of development in the area.

4.14 Around a fifth of London's higher education students attend

institutions in Camden, but we estimate that less than 1% live in the Campus Area. Additional student housing would benefit the Area by increasing its sustainability and the levels of out-of-hours activity. These benefits do not outweigh the high priority we give to academic facilities for the University of London, however Policy BC1 indicates that we will support proposals for student housing in specific circumstances provided academic needs can also be met. Where these circumstances apply, we will also support suitable mixed-use proposals for academic space and student housing.



## Policy BC2 Development sites in the Bloomsbury Campus Area

4.15 Within the Bloomsbury Campus Area there are a number of development sites. These sites are listed in Figure 4.3. We consider that Policies KQ1, BC1 and the Camden Local Plan 2017 provide a robust

basis for considering proposals for development in these locations. As such the Plan does not include a detailed allocation policy for these sites and seeks to allocate them through Policy BC2.

### Policy BC2

Sites identified in Figure 4.3 will be safeguarded for the use(s) for which they have been allocated.

Allocation reference	Site name	Proposed uses
BC2a	Birkbeck College, Malet Street	Higher education (academic and ancillary space)
BC2b	Senate House (NE quadrant), Malet Street	Higher education (academic and ancillary space)
BC2c	20 Russell Square	Higher education (academic and ancillary space)

Figure 4.3: Site allocations in the Bloomsbury Campus Area

4.16 Proposals for sites identified in Figure 4.3 will be considered having regard to Policies BC1 and BC2, any other relevant policies in this Site Allocations Local Plan, all relevant development plan policies and any other relevant material considerations.

match more closely the scale and form of neighbouring buildings on the Torrington Square frontage. At the southern end of the site, adjacent to Senate House, there may be potential to infill a planted area located where part of Birkbeck's main building steps back from the alignment of the buildings to the north on Malet Street.

4.17 The Plan allocates the Birkbeck site in Malet Street for development based on two opportunities to provide additional space. At the north end of the site, adjacent to the University of London Union, there is a 1960s block which has potential for infilling or redevelopment to

### Question box

Q16. Do you support Policy BC1? If not, what changes are needed and why?

Q17. Is the boundary shown in Figure 4.2 appropriate in the context of Policy BC1? If not, what changes are needed and why?

Q18. Are there any other key sites which should be referred to in Figure 4.2? If yes, please include additional information about the site. If it is a site which has been discounted by the authority during the assessment process please state the site reference and name. If the site is a new site please state the site address, a clear description of the type and scale of development that you believe could be accommodated on the site, and if possible attach a site plan.

4.18 The Plan also allocates two sites in the Campus Area identified by the University of London as opportunities to provide additional space. The first is a grassed area north of Senate House (a Grade II\* Listed Building) which could provide a new fourth quadrant as envisaged by the original design for the building. The mature tree on this site has a high amenity value, and in accordance with Local Plan policy, proposals involving the loss of this tree should be supported by evidence showing that the harm from its loss is outweighed by the benefits of the development, and be mitigated by replacement planting of equivalent value nearby. The second site is a vacant plot at 20 Russell Square, flanked on the west by an early nineteenth century terrace and on the east by the brutalist twentieth century building (respectively Grade II and Grade II\* Listed Buildings). Development of this site would close a gap in the frontage on the north side of the Square.

4.19 The University and its member institutions regularly review development opportunities and priorities, and update their masterplans. We are aware of this ongoing process, and understand that firm proposals are likely to emerge for other sites during preparation of this Plan and throughout the Plan period. We have drafted Policy BC1 to provide broad objectives and priorities rather than site-specific requirements so that it remains suitable for the assessment of development proposals that may emerge elsewhere within the Campus Area.

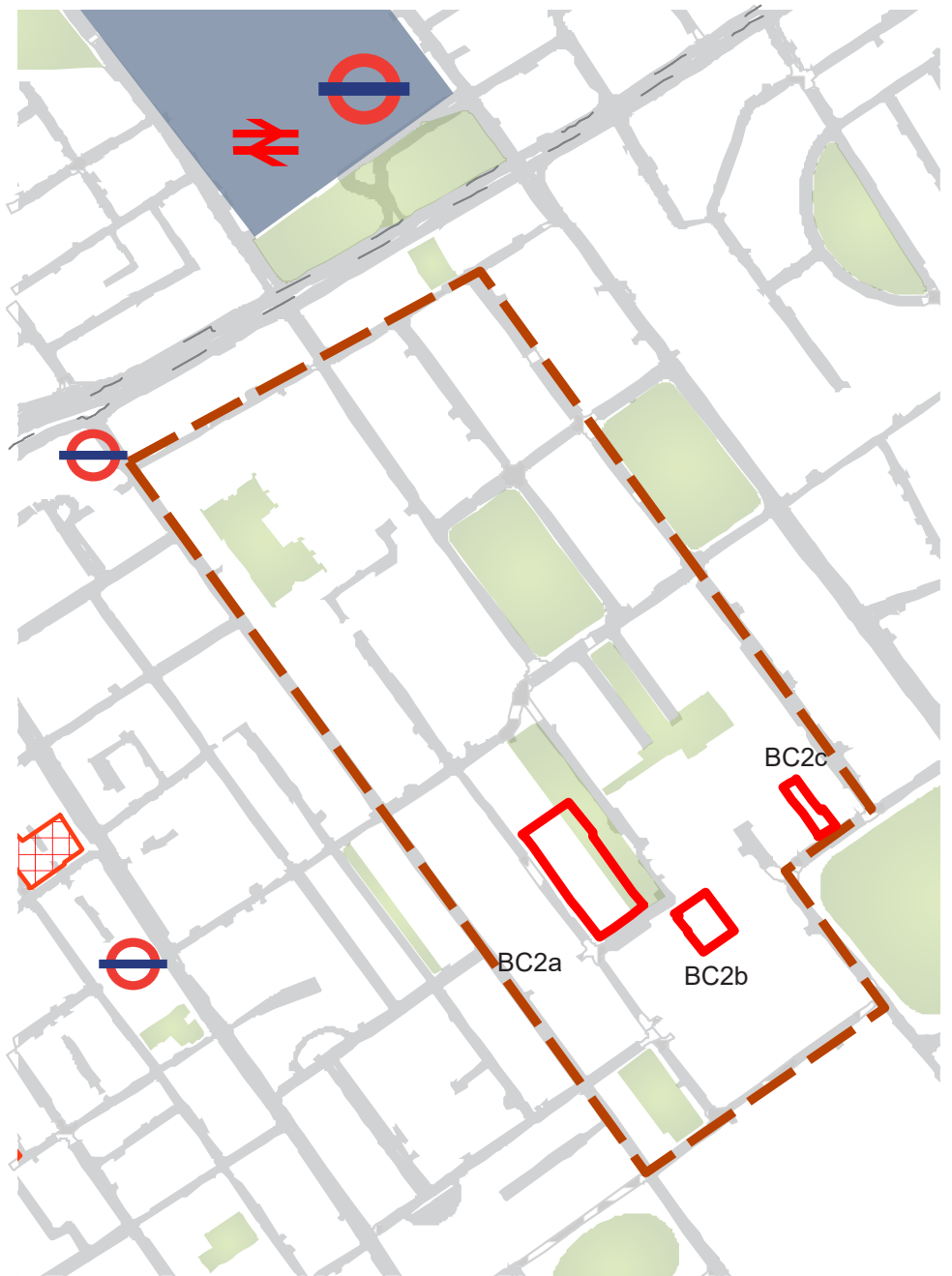


Figure 4.4: Policy BC2 - Bloomsbury Campus Area

Question box

Q19. Do you support Policy BC2? If not, what changes are needed and why?

Q20. Are the boundaries shown in Figure 4.4 appropriate in the context of Policy BC2? If not, what changes are needed and why?