

## **EUSTON AREA PLAN -- JAN 2014 DRAFT**

### **Comments by Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee**

Headings below refer to the relevant headings in the draft Plan:

#### 2. CONTEXT

*2.3. Character Areas, p. 18. Euston Road:* it should be stated that this character area and its important historic buildings include the original Euston Square. Euston Square Gardens are described as a historic protected square without acknowledging that they are the remaining part of that square. The historic Euston Square should be stated to be the basic template for any conservation and regeneration opportunities. It comes under the protection of the London Squares Preservation Act of 1931. It now also has a number of dominant buildings in classical and Greek Revival style on and around its boundaries, including the Wellcome Building, 1-9 Melton, Friends' House, and St. Pancras Church, which are now the characteristic feature of the former Euston Square and the Euston Road Character Area.

#### 3. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

*3.3 Design Strategy, fig. 3.4, p. 50:* this shows buildings of heights 9-10 storeys over most of the redeveloped station area - far too high. The concept should be that of a station building of architectural merit in its own right, like St. Pancras and Kings Cross. The remarks on the lack of architectural quality of the existing station suggest no appreciation of the importance of its low rise nature to the surrounding townscape, and the potential harmful nature of any high rise overdevelopment, especially on the historic townscape to the south of world renown known as 'Bloomsbury.' Indeed, the essentially horizontal form of the front block can be said to echo that of the traditional terraces, so characteristic of Bloomsbury and which are at the very core of its underlying character and attraction.

#### 4. PLACES

*4.1, Euston Station and Tracks, p. 74, Euston Arch:* St. Pancras Church, the Wellcome Building, 1-9 Melton Street and Friends' House should be stated to be a compelling justification for the Euston Arch as they provide an appropriate setting for the reconstructed/restored arch.

*4.2 Euston Road, p. 80:* it should be stated that these commercial, research and institutional buildings, which include the Wellcome Building, 1-9 Melton Street, Friends' House, and British Library, are also of architectural and heritage importance.

*Development Principles, B, p. 80:* it should also be stated that the original configuration of Euston Square Gardens should be taken into account as the basis for all future decisions taken on the basis of historic design.

*Enhancing Heritage Assets, p. 82:* 1-9 Melton Street, 14-15 Melton Street, Friends House and Wellcome Building should also be specifically mentioned here. Also the Georgian Grade II listed 14-15 Melton Street in particular are rare survivors of early development of Euston Square. The former Euston Underground Station is also one of a limited number of fine Leslie Green stations.

*Environment, p. 84:* after 'its status as a historic London square', add: 'by enhancing its setting by reference to the original plan and layout of Euston Square'.

Note: the historic architectural importance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, which includes Euston Square Gardens, needs to be stated and emphasised as the basis of this Plan. Its streets and squares are an early example of town planning of not just national, but international importance. Famous architects of the area include Nicholas Barbon, Jacob Leroux, Robert Adam, George Dance the Younger, Thomas Leverton, James Burton, S.P. Cockerell, Joseph Kay, Thomas Cubitt, John Nash, Humphrey Repton, Sir Robert and Sydney Smirke and Sir John Burnet. There is a huge number and density of listed buildings in the part of Bloomsbury that borders on Euston Road. These constitute a very significant part of our national heritage. The importance of the area cannot be overstated and any redevelopment plan for the Euston Road Character Area must take full and sensitive account of this context in terms of scale, design and materials in order to protect it and neighbouring areas from harm for the benefit of future generations.

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