

# WELCOME

## WELCOME TO OUR EXHIBITION FOR THE TEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARIA FIDELIS SCHOOL SITE, NORTH GOWER STREET

This is our first community feedback event for the Maria Fidelis School site. The site is jointly owned by The London Borough of Camden and LCR. It follows on from Cabinet’s approval last December to proceed to the next stage of design.

FBM Architects have been appointed as the lead designer to take forward the approved option for the site. This event is a chance to meet key members of the client and design team, see how we have analysed the site and how we have arrived at the initial arrangement of uses and facilities based on the constraints, opportunities and spatial requirements of the brief set to the team.

We’re at the beginning of the design process and limited detailed design work has taken place to date. Community views have been considered in the work that has transpired so far.



Location view



Key view of the site from the corner of North Gower Street and Starcross Street    From the roof looking down



# Site Analysis

Maria Fidelis School Site, North Gower Street

## Assessing the site and it's surroundings.

The first part of the design process is to analyse the site and it's surrounding context. This helps to understand how a proposal for the site can respond to its context. Our aim is to focus upon the uses of the site and their arrangement for this first feedback event before developing the appearance and scheme in detail.

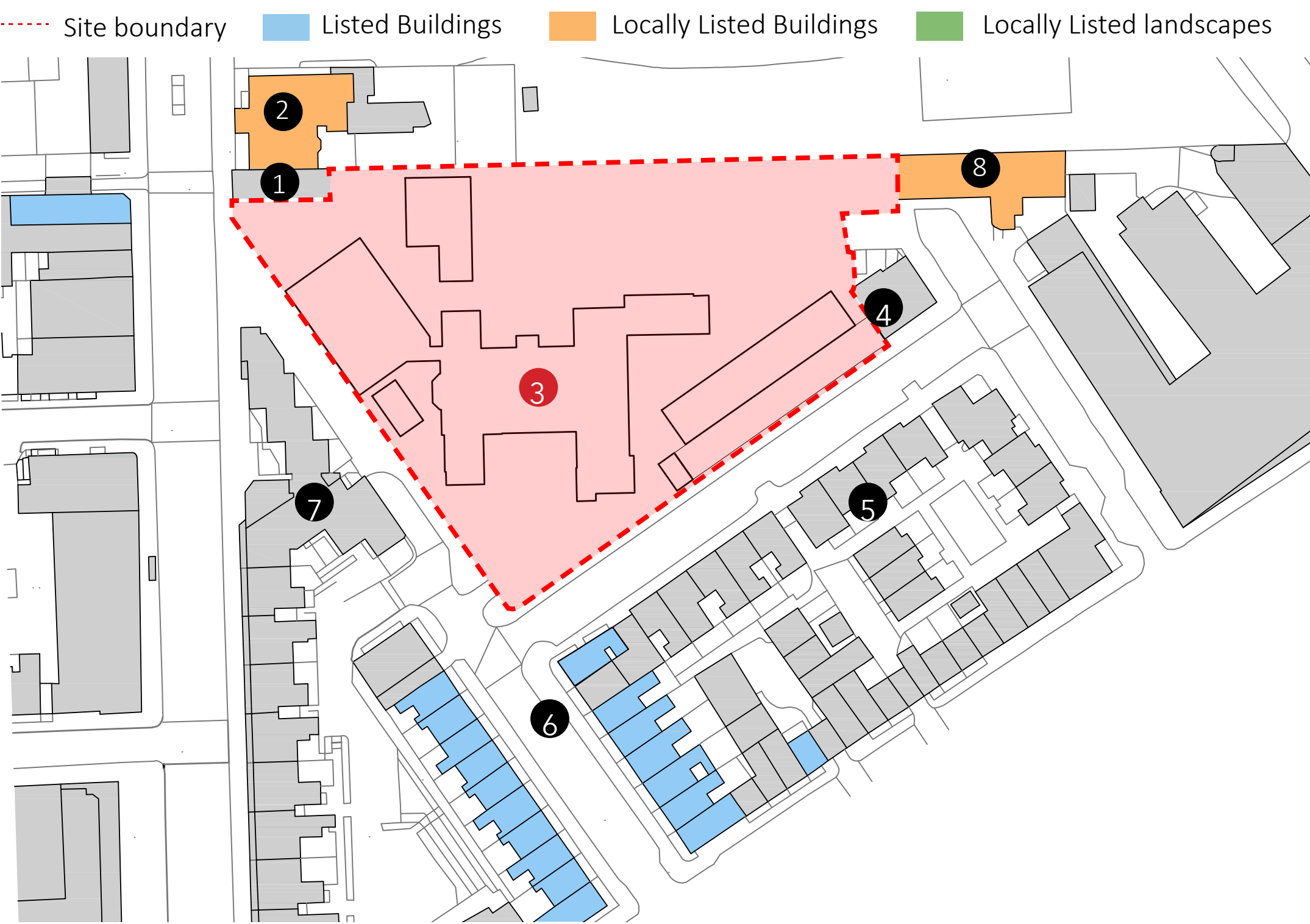
## Existing site - main structures

- 1 The main school building is to the centre of the site, almost due north, set back from the boundary.
- 2 Special Educational Needs (SEN) building.
- 3 Gym is aligned along the western boundary.
- 4 To the rear and generally unseen, is a two storey modular classroom block built in 1995.
- 5 1950's mobile classrooms block which runs parallel with the eastern boundary but set back away from Starcross Street due to the sunken 'garden'.
- 6 Mechanical plant.



## Architectural context - key buildings

- 1 Whitehall Park office- three storey, dark grey render/painted. Medium to low quality.
- 2 Former St. Pancras Charity School for Girls. 1904. Currently used by NHS health services. Key features : red brick, rusticated brick quoins and pilasters, ornamental roof line, central entrance bay is strongly emphasised, decorative iron gates, central gabled dormer which has an 'oeil de boeuf' window.
- 3 Proposed Site- Maria Fidelis School. Not listed or locally listed but building of quality and presence.
- 4 Exmouth Arms (Public House)- Mid to late 1800's. Active ground floor frontage, good quality, simple upper floor elevations.
- 5 Local Authority Housing- post 1955. Plain elevations, lacks refinement of original period properties.
- 6 Late Georgian Housing / Hotel- Terrace of 8 houses and Terrace of 10 houses to west side of North Gower Street. Early C19 Grade: II. Quality examples from this period.
- 7 Local Authority Housing- post 1955, interesting south facing cascading and projecting terraces/balconies.
- 8 Originally Late 19th century stabling since converted to offices but to be demolished due to HS2 works.



## Surrounding Uses

The sites existing use is for educational purposes. The main surrounding uses are residential to the south and west with a few nonresidential uses such as the pub to the east and place of worship to the south.

To the north of the site, the buildings are used as health facilities with a small business unit to the north-west corner of the site. The plan shows hotel and office accommodation to the east which is soon to be demolished.

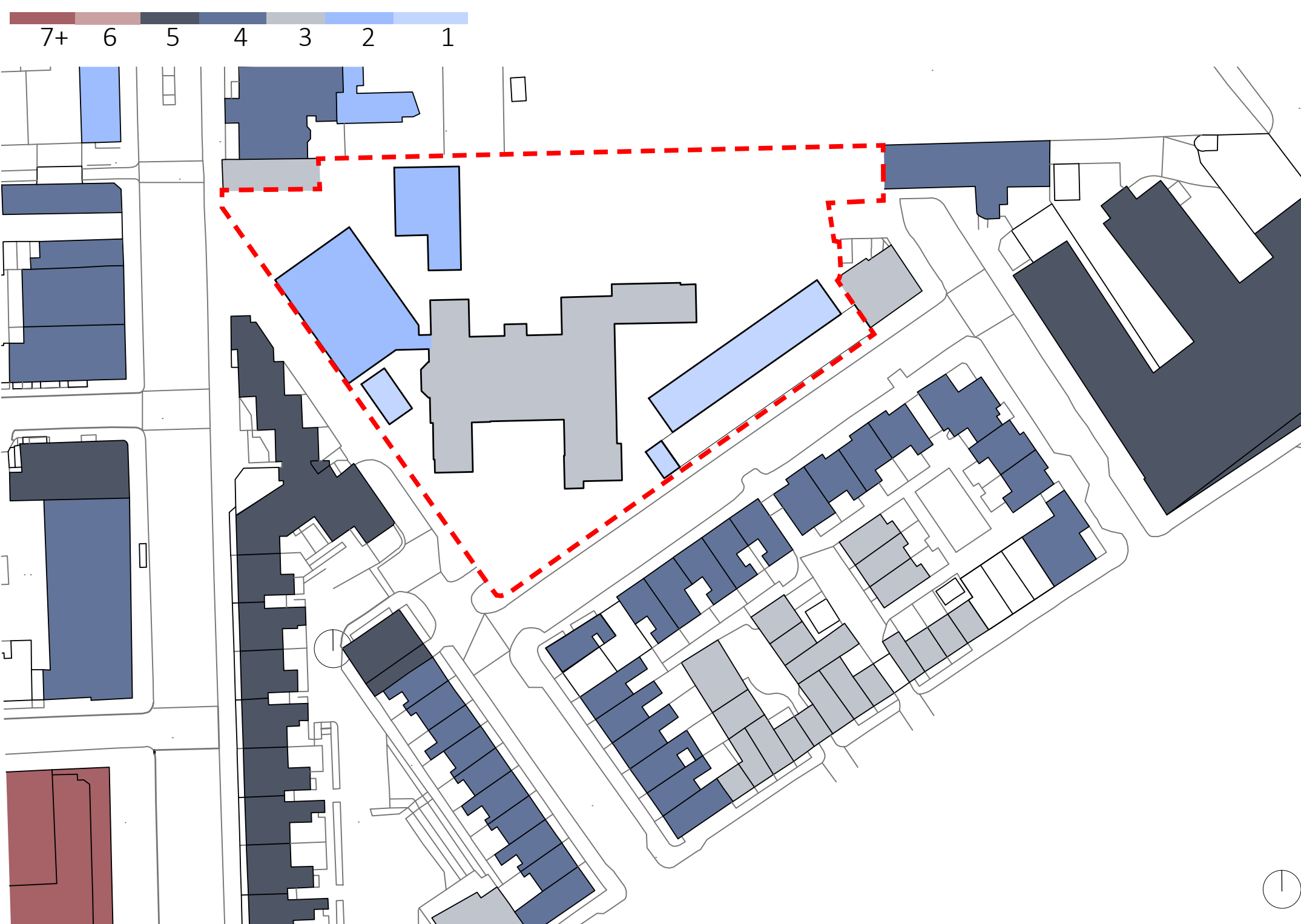
- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial & professional services
- A3 Restaurants and cafes
- A4 Drinking establishments
- A5 Hot food takeaways
- B1 Business
- B2 General industrial
- B8 Storage or distribution
- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential institutions
- C2A Secure Residential Institution
- C3 Dwelling houses
- C4 Houses in multiple occupation
- D1 Nonresidential institutions
- D2 Assembly and leisure
- Sui Generis
- Vacant



## Building Heights

There are a range of building heights across the site and surrounding area. The main school building is three storeys, but with high floor to ceiling heights it is similar to five domestic storey heights.

The pub to the east is two storeys in height. The housing to the south is four storeys whilst the post war housing to the west rises up to seven storeys in one location.





# Site Analysis

Maria Fidelis School Site, North Gower Street

## Constraints

There are several constraints to any proposal for the site - the key ones are;

- Residential properties to the south.
- HS2 - Noise and pollution due to site clearance and construction traffic. Utility and construction works in close proximity to northern boundary of site.
- Potential area of site to be lost due to HS2 construction works.
- Northern line underground tunnels to the north-east corner of the site.
- Access from the east and Cobourg street limited for several years.
- Position and layout of the existing buildings.
- Protected landmark viewing corridor through the west of the site.
- Sunken garden with mature trees.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| — Site Boundary                                | --- Potential site area lost during HS2 works |
| — Site Clearance, Utility Works & Construction | — Northern line underground tunnels           |
| — Utility Diversions (2018-2020)               | — Buildings to be retained                    |
| — Noise & Pollution                            | — Potential buildings to be retained          |
| — Construction Traffic Route (2018-2027)       | — Boiler House- TBC                           |
| — Matured trees in sunken garden               | — Landmark Viewing Corridor                   |

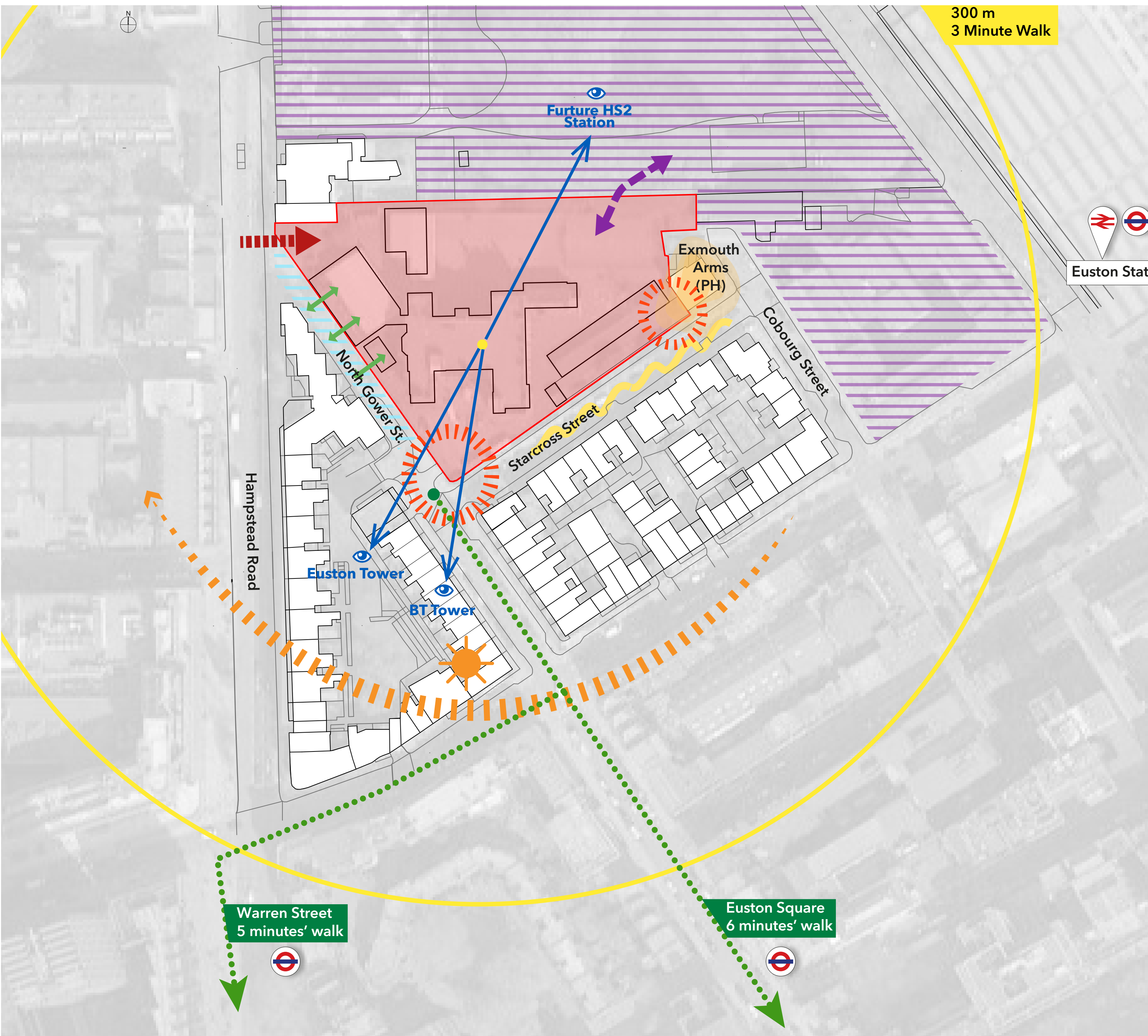


## Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities for this site - the key ones are;

- Improved frontages along North Gower Street and Starcross Street
- Buffer noise from the HS2 site.
- Improve access and permeability through the site.
- Improve appearance.
- Improve passive surveillance and activity.
- Prominent location opposite Euston Station.
- A good level of daylight and sunlight around the site due to south/east/west orientation.
- Excellent transport links.
- Corner site, visible.
- Consolidating servicing to a single point.
- Improving boundary conditions.
- Provide educational uses.
- Provide employment use.
- Provide community use.
- Re-provide public realm lost as a result of HS2 works.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| — Site Boundary                            | — Focal point/Emphasised corner       |
| — Walking distance to Underground Stations | — Relationship with new HS2 works     |
| — Views                                    | — Relationship with neighbouring bar/ |
| — Potential new route through              | — Services / Access from road         |
| — Pedestrian Road                          | — Enhance Activity / Frontage         |
| — Quiet / calm                             |                                       |





# Past, present and future

Maria Fidelis School site, North Gower Street

## Historical Context

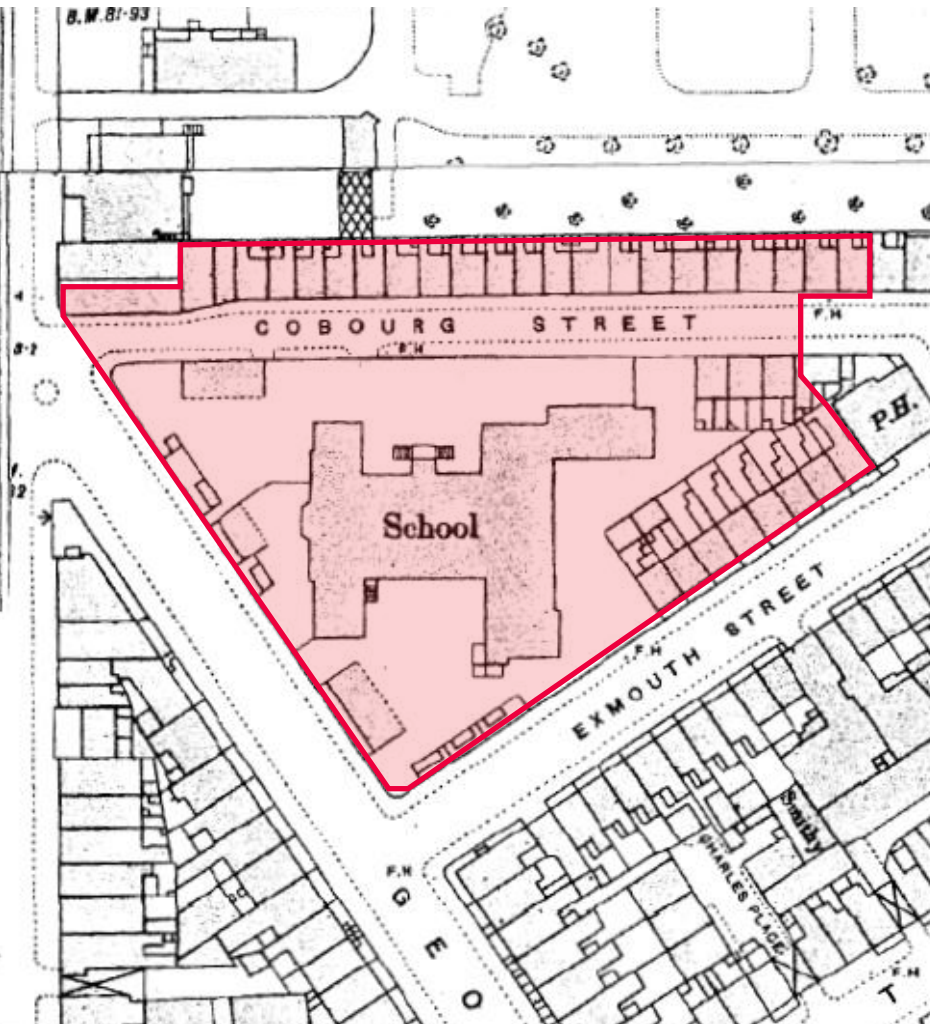
Prior to the current arrangement, the following maps chart the recent history of the site - from dense period housing to the open site of today.



Circa 1900- Period properties to all three streets.



Circa 1911- school completed



Circa 1920-



Circa 1950- Cobourg houses demolished

## Present context

The surrounding site is about to undergo major redevelopment. The proposal will need to address this changing context, whilst mindful of the future.

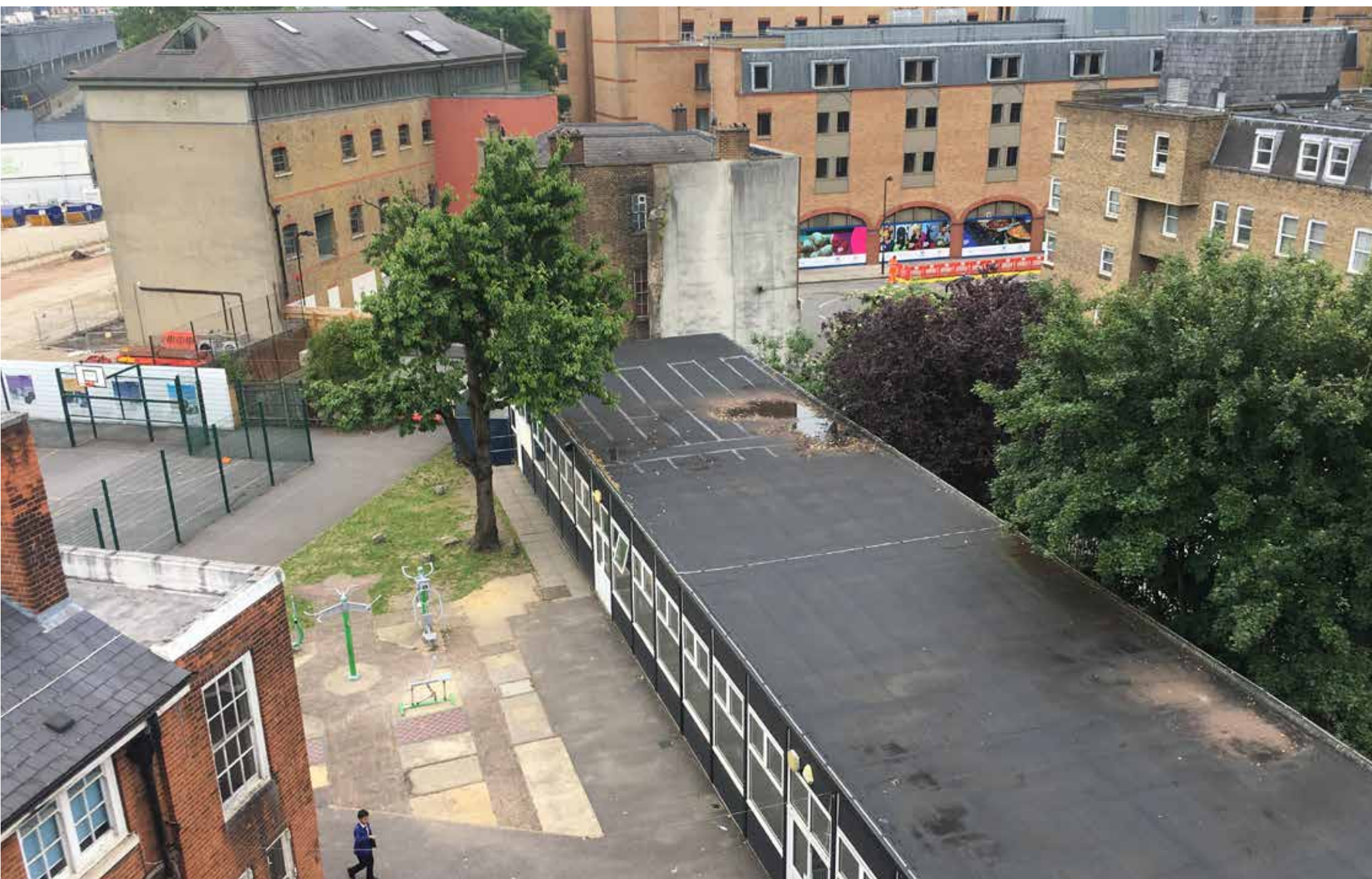
HS2 construction works will constrain the design in certain areas, especially to the north-east of the site and to the rear of the Exmouth Arms.

## Future Context

One of the main entrances to the redeveloped Euston Station will be to the north of the site. There will be a transport interchange and open space as part of the station forecourt. Immediately to the north-east corner of the site, a new norther line escape shaft will be built.

It is understood an additional public realm will be provided.

The detail of the proposals are still being developed by others.



Cobourg Street buildings closed and soon to be demolished.



St James Gardens closed and the start of archeological works and exhumation



Outline plan for the development of Euston Station (by others and subject to change).



# Brief and its initial development

Maria Fidelis School site, North Gower Street

## Brief provided to us

The design team have been provided a brief to develop with the key stakeholders. The three key elements of the brief are;

### 1 - Open green space

St James's Gardens offered facilities for passive and active recreation with flower beds, grassed areas, trees, a sports court, playground area and a extensive pergola was accessible to the public from 7.30am until dusk throughout the year.

High quality open green space is to be provided on this site to help mitigate for its loss. We have yet to develop designs for this but we have shown a few ideas of what sort of things could go into it. It will be a temporary use of the site until HS2 works are completed and permanent open space is provided.

The space needs to be multifunctional, offering something for everyone and providing opportunities for social interactions, play, sports and relaxation/ respite. We want to hear more of what you would like to see for these areas.



St James's Gardens prior to closure.

### 2 - Construction Skills Centre (CSC)

A Construction Skills Centre is proposed for the site to provide practical training for local people to work on local sites including HS2. The current facility on York Way is set to close in 2019 to make way for future development.

The provision of the CSC will see the continuation of educational uses on the site but in a purpose built facility with around 1900m2 of internal floorspace, similar in area to the existing school. It would have an external yard for teaching and a direct view of a major construction project in the form of HS2.

The design and aesthetic of the building should relate to the learning within and respond to the adjacent HS2 construction site.



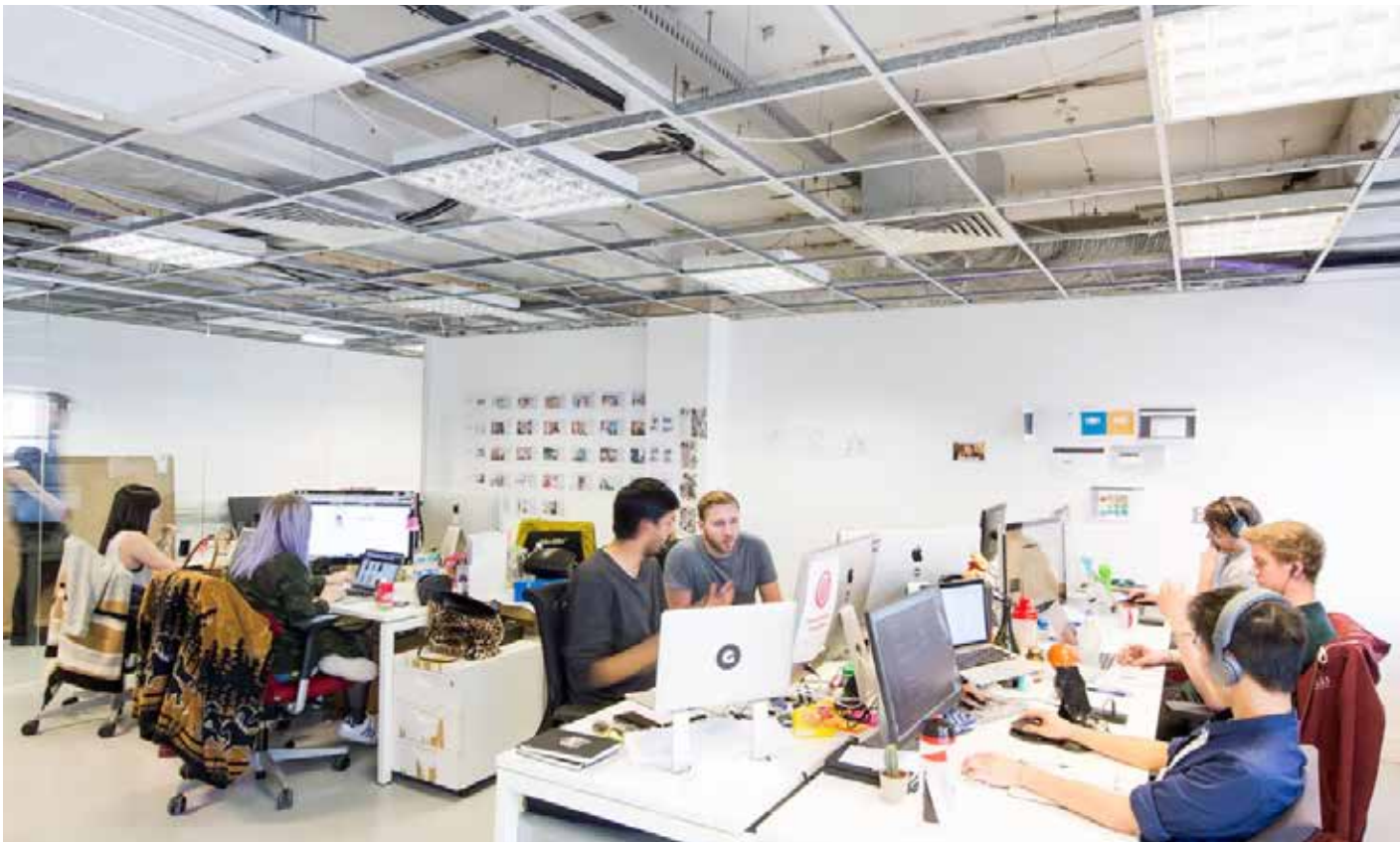
Construction training college in Southend on Sea by FBM Architects

### 3 - Managed workspace / pop up retail

Maria Fidelis School will relocate to a larger consolidated facility in Phoenix Road during Easter 2019. The existing building makes an excellent opportunity for its conversion to other uses including managed workspace, educational or as a bio-hub. Pop up retail could also form part of the proposals.

The building is in a good condition but needs to be made fully accessible via new lifts and infrastructure upgraded to provide quality space for individuals, small businesses and groups.

By providing office space, the number of people working in the area during the week will increase. This will help to bring additional trade to local shops, cafes, bars and restaurants.



An example of managed or co-work office space.

## Initial feasibility - 2017

A feasibility study for the site was undertaken in 2017. It looked at a range of options for the site and its uses.

The recommended option that secured Cabinet approval in 2017 is shown in the schematic plan to the right.

## Key aspects of this proposal

**Public open space** - located to the western part of the site and alongside the pedestrianised section of North Gower Street (3). Area is approximately 1350m2

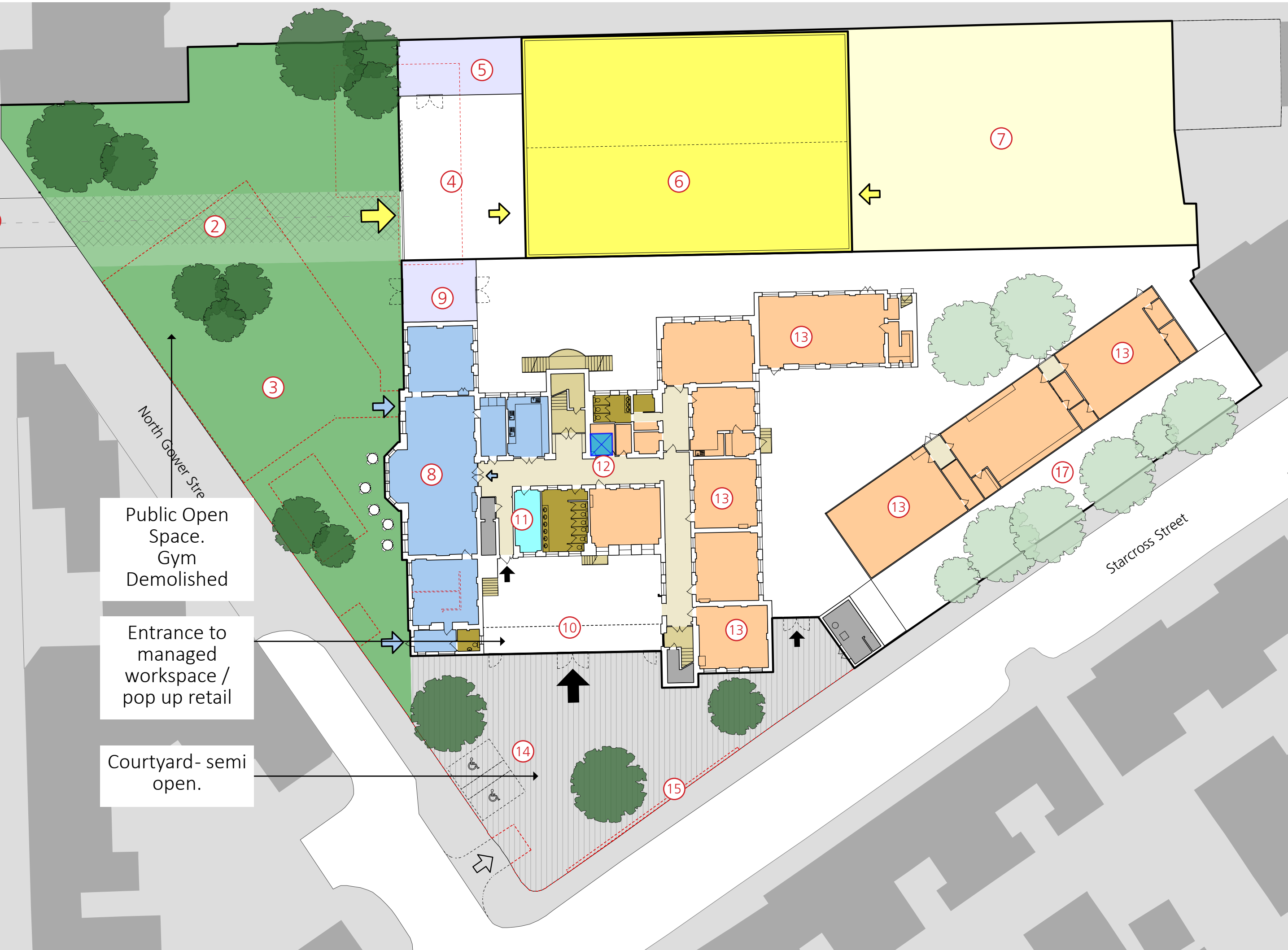
**Existing gym** - demolished to make way for the Public open space.

**Construction Skills Centre (6)** - accessed from the public open space with a vehicle access route across the park for deliveries and servicing (2) / (9). Training yard to the eastern part of the site (7). Existing two storey modular building removed (4).

**Managed workspace / Pop up retail** - Refurbishment of the main school building and accessed from the south, through a courtyard area (10). Existing brickwork wall removed (15).

**1950's classroom blocks** - retained and refurbished into managed workspace (13).

**Sunken well/garden** - retained, no further utilisation proposed (17).



2017 Feasibility Report - selected option

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| ① Existing vehicle access from Hampstead Road upgraded - Fire gate removed       | ⑤ Construction Skills Centre - Refuse Storage                                    | ⑨ Refuse storage area for restaurant / cafe & Managed Workspaces | ⑬ Managed Workspaces   |
| ② New shared surface access road to the Construction Skills Centre               | ⑥ Construction Skills Centre - Main Building                                     | ⑩ New entrance gates & fence to Managed Workspaces               | ⑭ Hard landscaped shared surface forecourt area to front of Managed Workspaces including accessible parking spaces |
| ③ New Public Open Space - Existing gymnasium, SEN & Teaching building demolished | ⑦ Construction Skills Centre - 700 sqm External Training Area                    | ⑪ New reception / office for Managed Workspaces                  | ⑮ Existing fencing / brick wall removed  |
| ④ Construction Skills Centre - Entrance Yard                                     | ⑧ New pop-up restaurant / cafe in existing canteen area reusing existing kitchen | ⑫ Optional accessible elevator location                          | ⑯ Roof Area  |



## Assessing the existing buildings & features - retain, refurbish or remove.

Following on from the earlier site analysis and feasibility layout, the Client and design team have reconsidered the value of the existing buildings on site. Following this review, we have drawn up a summary of our findings and propose which elements are retained, refurbished or removed.

### (1) Main school building

**Architecture:**

- Good, high quality, retain and adapt

**Lifespan:**

- Well built and with additional maintenance can last for several years longer.
- Has recent boiler upgrade but power and IT infrastructure to be improved.

**Ease of conversion:**

- Load bearing structural walls so limited opportunity to remove walls. Existing layout will generally remain.

**Conclusion -** Retain & refurbishment



### (2) Gymnasium / Multi-use hall

**Architecture:**

- Limited, blank wall to public realm. Pupil mural.

**Life span:**

- Simple portal frame building in good condition. No obvious leaks or roofing degradation.
- Has recent boiler upgrade but changing and WC facilities are outdated

**Ease of conversion:**

- Blockwork walls in single storey element can be easily modified. Existing steel structure to remain.

**Conclusion -** Retain & limited refurbishment



### (3) 1950's built mobile classrooms

**Architecture:**

- Limited

**Life span:**

- Very limited - signs of leaks and settlement.

**Ease of conversion:**

- Additional walls could be added but unlikely they can be removed given modular unit form.
- Needs complete overhaul, costly against value to retain and inefficient use of the site.

**Conclusion -** Remove



### (4) 2000's built modular expansion block

**Architecture:**

- Limited

**Life span:**

- Reasonable but quality of the building is poor.

**Ease of conversion:**

- Additional walls could be added but unlikely they can be removed given modular unit form.
- Needs overhaul, costly against value to retain and better use of this part of the site is likely. Not ideal for CSC use.

**Conclusion -** Remove



### (5) Sunken garden - former basement to houses.

**Architecture:**

- An interesting opportunity that can enhance the site.

**Life span:**

- Trees appear good but low level planting needs attention.

**Ease of conversion:**

- Well established. Access needs to be improved

**Conclusion -** Retain & improve opportunity





# Outline proposal

Maria Fidelis School site, North Gower Street

## Key developments of the schematic plan, for the Approved Scheme

### (1) Retain the Gym / Multi-Use Hall

The building still has life left in it and has decent quality and can be utilised for a range of activities with a potential for a new entrance off North Gower Street. Uses for this building have not yet been decided but could suit a range of potential opportunities.

### (2) Keep servicing access

The existing access is close to Hampstead Road and would seem sensible to retain here to separate vehicle movements away from pedestrian access into the site. Its security and design will be improved to help reduce anti-social behaviour.

### (3) Demolish 50's mobiles

The low quality building would be costly to upgrade and most importantly, uses a lot of the site which could be better utilised as open space. The linear nature of the building isolates usable space behind it, with no easy means of providing access to it.

### (4) Relocate open space

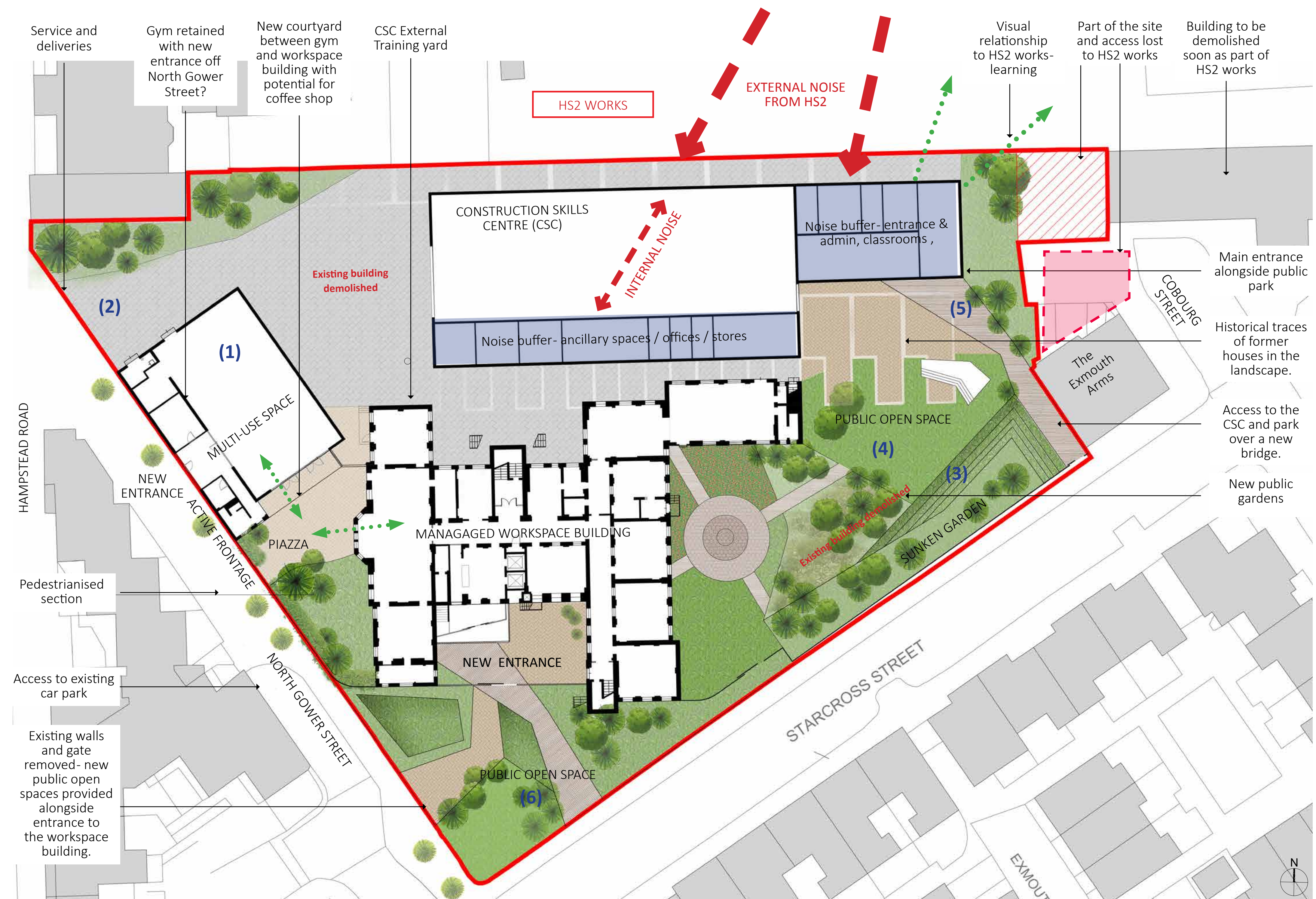
Demolition of the 1950's built classrooms allows for open space to the eastern part of the site, larger in size than the feasibility study proposed and importantly, without vehicle movements over it. This part of the site is quieter and impacted less by noise from Hampstead Road.

### (5) Relocate CSC entrance

The pedestrian entrance is located to the eastern part of the site, away from vehicle deliveries and servicing. It is closer to the HS2 site, allowing for potential relationships between study and work. The shape and positioning of the building acts as a noise buffer for the site and beyond from HS2.

### (6) Open green space

Removing the existing brick perimeter wall to the school, can create more open space to the corner of the site. This could be open throughout the day, a mixture of green and hard landscape facing south but well overlooked by the public realm and those working in the managed workspace.



## Open space - what kind of space would you want to see? Here are some ideas.

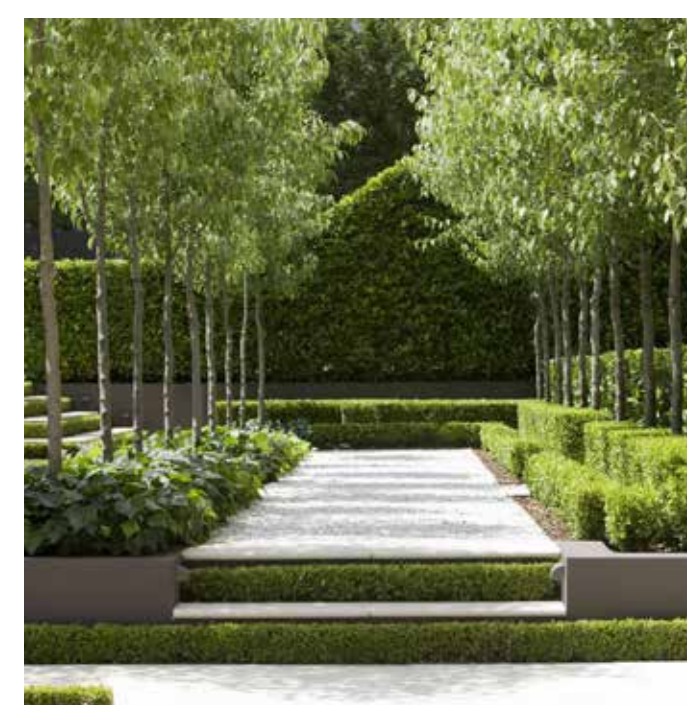
### Public open space

Used by all, alongside the office a place to sit, a place to rest or simply enjoying walking through? Faces south with good natural surveillance over it.



### Formal Gardens

Seasonal planting, traditional in design or contemporary? Gardening clubs?



### Wild flower & sensory

Planting could be more organic, fragrant or used as a sensory or relaxing experience. Pathways are less formal with breeze creating movement and sound.





# Outline proposal

Maria Fidelis School site, North Gower Street

## Aerial view showing key elements

The plan and the views shown here are just a concept at this stage. They follow on from the earlier site analysis work and look to work within the site constraints and make best use of its opportunities. They are a development of the 2017 feasibility, that informed the recommended scheme approved by Camden Cabinet members.

Two of the buildings exist already and the proposed position of the new Construction Skills Centre is limited due to its specific needs in terms of overall area and internal arrangements. We have suggested how and where entrances should go but these can be developed and changed.

Our core aim is to maximise the amount of public open green space throughout the site. The space wraps around the entire site, opening out into and between the buildings to create a campus like setting shared by lots of different user groups. Like St James's Gardens, some of it might be closed in the evenings with other parts open.

### (1) Multi-Use Hall & Courtyard

Part of the single storey school link attached to the gym building and smaller mobile block would be removed, allowing the main space within the gym to open out into a new courtyard space to the south.

This courtyard could be a place to site and enjoy a coffee from a small retail offer in the managed workspace and open out during the day to the pedestrianised section of North Gower Street. Or it could be more enclosed as a small oasis within the locality.

### (2) Servicing access

The servicing point will serve the Multi-Use Hall, CSC and Workspace in a single cohesive location. Refuse bins and material stores would be out of site behind the buildings.

The gates and fence will be made more secure and current setback to the gate line would be brought forward to avoid the current opportunity for anti-social behaviour. Railed fencing to this location might be better than the current solid fence to ensure its visibly open.

### (3) Workspace & pop-up retail entrance

The original main entrance to the school appears to have been on the northern side of the building - off the former Cobourg Street.

The south elevation of the school has a very small entrance, not suitable as the main access into the building. A new single storey pavilion will be added to the building, creating a new entrance hub which in turn connects to new lifts. Spaces within will be opened up where possible and the character and quality of the school maintained and celebrated.

### (4) CSC building

Based on the area and spatial requirements, there is limited locations where this building could be provided on the site.

The pedestrian access is shown alongside the open green space. The area in front of the CSC could be shared, showcasing student work and also opportunities for other groups to use and share.

The placement of the building has also been considered to help buffer the open green space from noise created by the HS2 site. There are underground tunnels to the east which limit where the building can be placed. Space to the west will be used for material stores and outdoor training but screened from view by the Gym and Workspace buildings.

### (5) Open green space

Removing the 1950's mobile classrooms will allow better permeability and openness through the site and provide more land for use as open green space. There is a significant level change due to the previous terrace basements. This provides an option for there to be a sunken garden. There are several mature trees in this space that provide Starcross Street with rich visual amenity. A sunken garden could be incorporated into the overall open green space whilst avoiding the loss of trees from the site.

The level change makes for an interesting opportunity for a space with a variety of levels - open and visible throughout but offering something different. It also provides a historical link to the former uses of the site and basements of the period properties once part of the site. Other areas will be green, open and for a range of uses. These will be designed in more detail as the project develops.



## Open space - other ideas and themes.

### Flexible open space

Part formal, part grassed but open for various activities and uses?



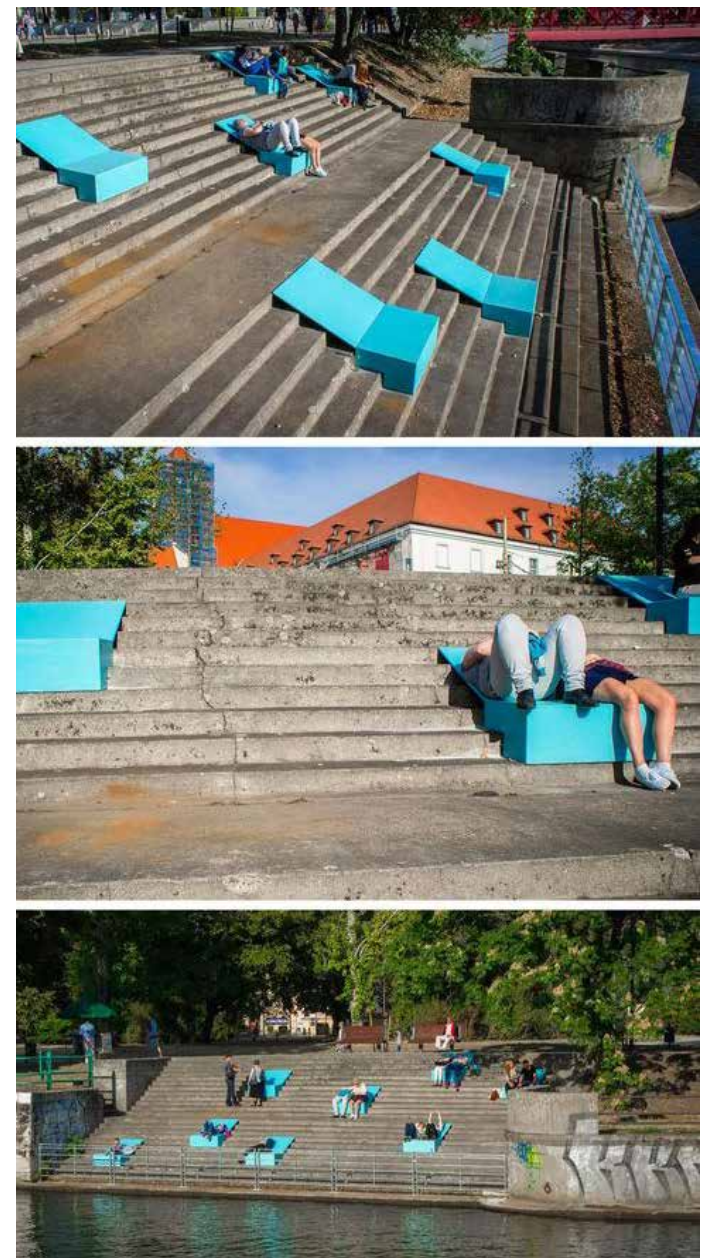
### Play & fun

Should playground equipment be provided? For what ages? What can be added for other groups including adults?



### Space to sit / perform

Steps that are seats and places to sit or slide, facing south and of multiple levels.



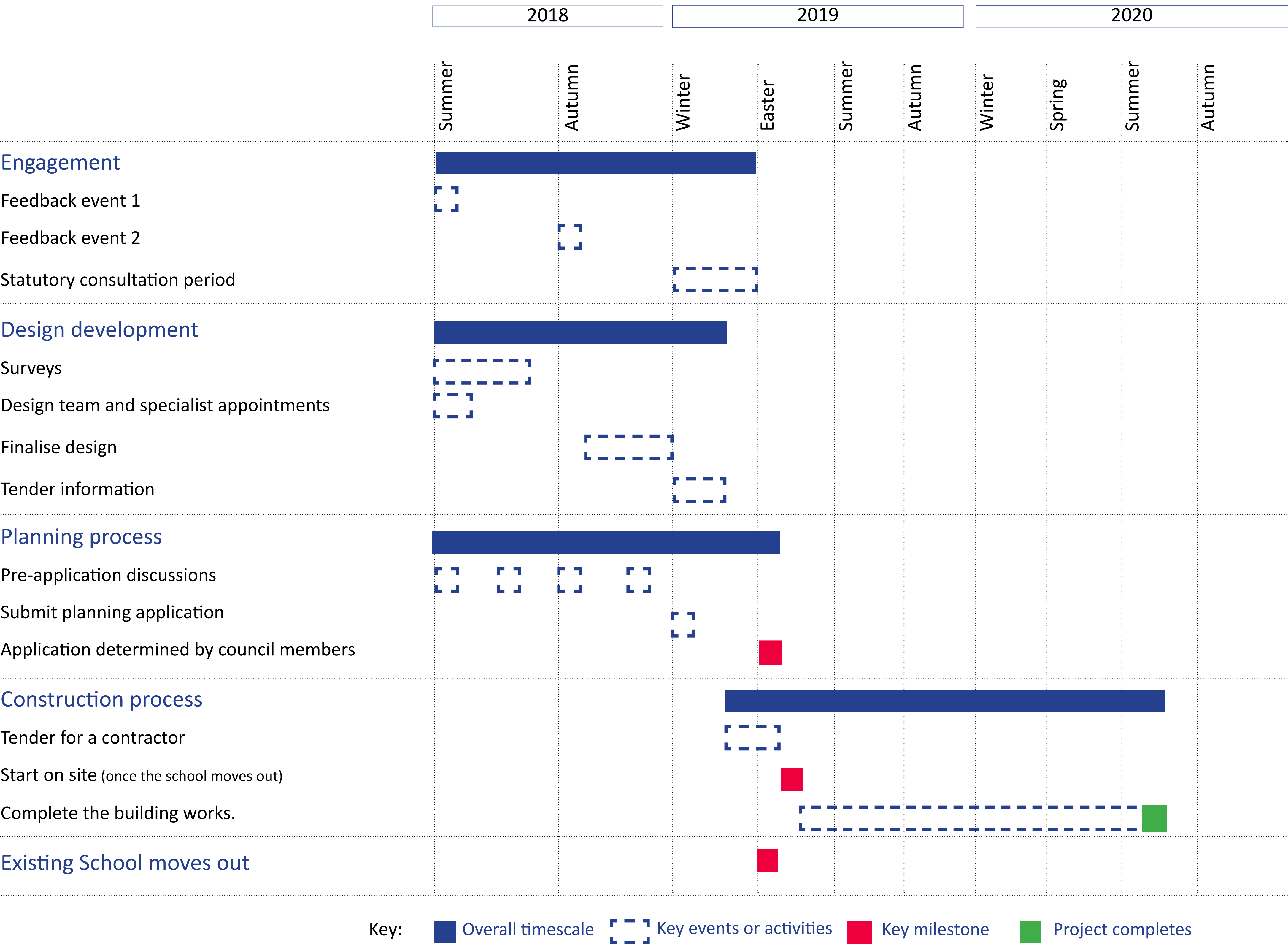


# NEXT STEPS

Maria Fidelis School site, North Gower Street

## Timeline - Key Stages

There are several stages of the project prior to the final design and it being built. The key stages are;



Please note all target dates subject to confirmation.

Thank you for coming today so see these outline proposals. We welcome your feedback and look forward to seeing you at the next event in the Autumn which will provide an update on the design and provide greater detail on the appearance of the proposed buildings.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Camden Council using the following details: [moira.ugoji@camden.gov.uk](mailto:moira.ugoji@camden.gov.uk)

Thank you for coming today