

# Heythrop College Planning Brief

Supplementary Planning Document



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA



**Adopted** May 2016

## Summary

Heythrop College, on Kensington Square, is closing in December 2018. The Jesuits, who own the site, are selling it in order to release funds to help secure the long term future of the college elsewhere.

The Council has produced this supplementary planning document (SPD) to set the parameters for the redevelopment of the site.

This Council has explored some of the site constraints and looked at some issues and options to be considered in response to any development proposals. An 'issues and options' paper was consulted on between 20 October 2015 and 17 November 2015. Residents, businesses and any other interested parties were invited to comment and the responses fed into the production of a draft SPD. The next draft was consulted upon between 6 January 2016 and 3 February 2016. The responses received were considered by the Council before this final document was produced.

This document provides an outline of the context, opportunities and constraints associated with the site. It sets the framework for acceptable redevelopment both in terms of appropriate future uses and broad design principles, such as an indicative layout, massing and density for new buildings.

This Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by the Council on 31 May 2016.

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# 1 Introduction

## Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this supplementary planning document (SPD) is to provide design and planning guidance for the future development of the Heythrop College site. It will be used by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to make decisions about future development and investment on the site and in the area as a whole.
- 1.2 This SPD sets out the relevant planning policies that should be addressed by any redevelopment proposals for the site, any planning and design issues specific to the site, and some of the key information that an applicant should include in a future planning application.
- 1.3 The SPD for the site has been prepared to give the local community an early opportunity to comment on how the site could be used and/or redeveloped.

## Background

- 1.4 Heythrop College is a theology and philosophy college which forms part of the University of London. Student numbers have been falling in recent years as students struggle to afford tuition fees and accommodation locally; the buildings themselves are costly to run. As a result the college will cease to operate from this site in December 2018. The site is owned by the

Jesuits who acquired it in order to try to secure the long term future of the college. The site is the college's only remaining asset and the owners want its sale to release funds to secure the long term future of a new college elsewhere.

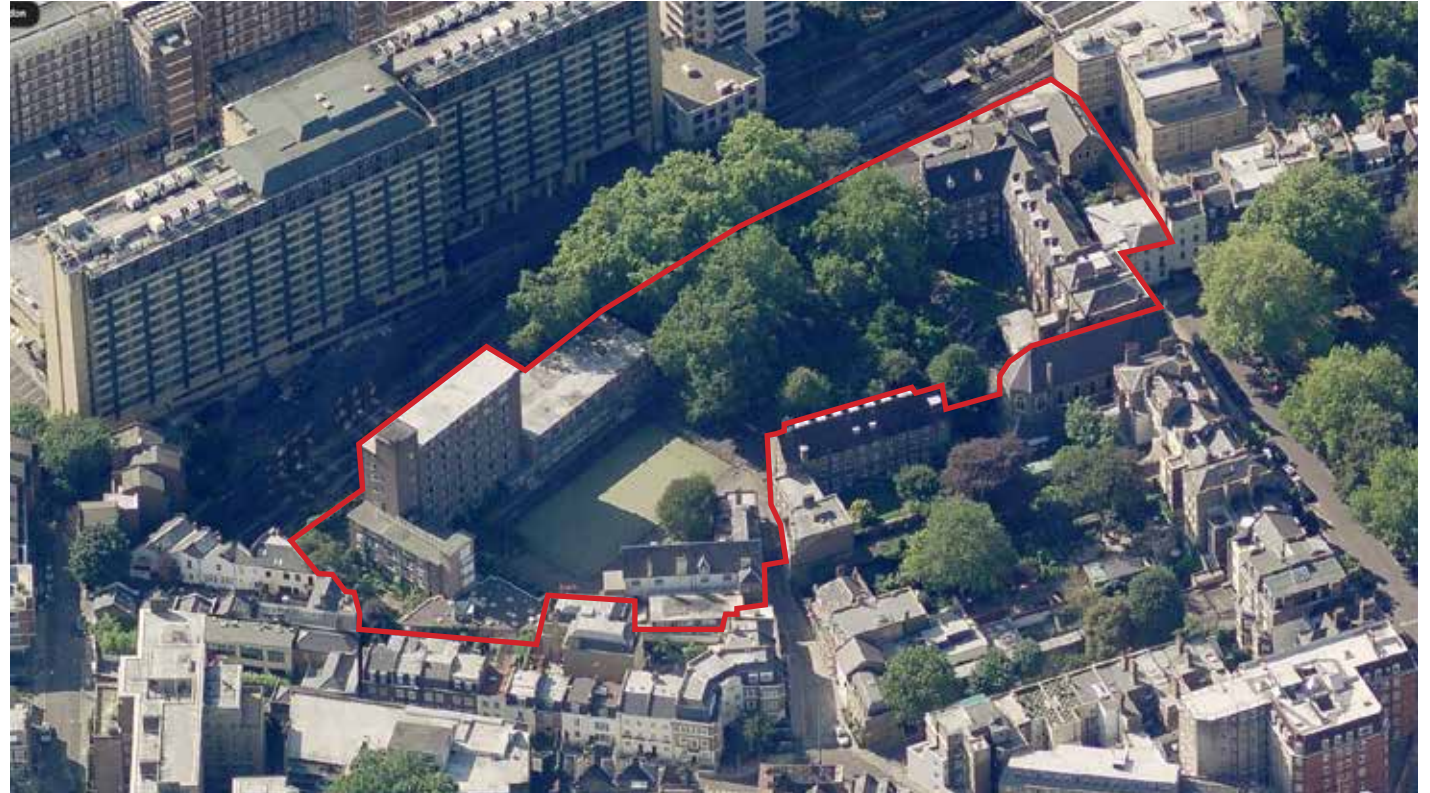
## Planning Policy Context

- 1.5 A supplementary planning document must be produced with regard to current national policies, the London Plan and the Local Plan policies and the Council's other SPDs.
- 1.6 Proposals for the development of this site should seek to further the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF emphasises the importance of delivering a wide choice of high quality homes and creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. It attaches importance to good design and enhancing the historic environment.
- 1.7 The NPPF says that "*SPDs should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications... and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.*" (para.153)
- 1.8 The Development Plan for the area consists of the London Plan (2011, as revised 2015), and the Council's Consolidated Local Plan (2010, as revised 2015). The Local Plan sets out the strategic vision for the Borough.
- 1.9 The adopted SPD will provide planning guidance for development management purposes and be considered as a material consideration in the determination of any planning applications for a change of use and/or redevelopment of the site.
- 1.10 The site comprises a number of buildings and houses a variety of social and community uses as well as student accommodation. The main use of the site is as a residential institution (Class C2 in the Use Classes Order). There is a student halls of residence on the site and this provides specialist housing which is protected by London Plan policy.
- 1.11 No. 24 Kensington Square is occupied by a primary and nursery school and is a planning unit in its own right. This use falls within Class D1 (Non-residential institution) of the Use Classes Order.
- 1.12 No. 24 Kensington Square and the chapel adjacent to the college are Grade II listed buildings. The listed status of the buildings on and adjacent to the site and the need to preserve their setting means that any work to the listed buildings must receive listed building consent as well as planning permission. It also means that there are constraints to the development of the site in terms of the height and scale of any new development.

## Development Objectives

The Council's principal objectives for development on the site are:

- to retain a social and community use on the site, and to ensure a good mix of uses in the area
- to preserve the tranquil and picturesque nature of the site;
- to maintain a high quality green space on the site;
- to preserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of the heritage assets.



# 2 Site Description

## Site Location and Context

- 2.1 The site, currently the Heythrop College campus lies just off the busy Kensington High Street. It has a frontage onto Kensington Square, which is situated behind the former Barkers building towards the eastern end of Kensington High Street. It is very accessible, only 200m from High Street Kensington Underground Station and a five minute walk from Kensington Gardens. The site is approximately 1 hectare (11,000sq.m) and sits within the Kensington Square Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The construction of the buildings forming Kensington Square began in 1685 and was completed by around 1700. The square was the first one to be built outside the centre of London and it is the sixth oldest square in the capital.
- 2.3 With regard to the site itself, a four storey convent building forms the eastern boundary. To the west the London Underground Circle and District Lines form the site boundary, set in a deep cutting with retaining walls.
- 2.4 The railway forms a clear edge to the site. West of the railway cutting the urban form is of a very different character to the Kensington Square Conservation Area. The buildings here are of a larger and comparatively tall scale, with the Copthorne Tara Hotel at 13 storeys tall and 120m long being particularly dominant.
- 2.5 To the east and south the surrounding context is generally smaller scale consisting of three to four storey terraces and mews with the historic street pattern largely intact.
- 2.6 The existing college buildings are located mainly to the north and south of the site with a large open landscaped garden area and enclosed tennis court set between these two developed clusters.
- 2.7 To the north the main college buildings form the southwest corner of Kensington Square.
- 2.8 Development on the south of the site comprises several buildings constructed in the post-war period, many of which are not sympathetic or characteristic of the conservation area.
- 2.9 A nine storey block of residential student accommodation runs alongside the railway in the south western corner of the site and contains 109 rooms.
- 2.10 Buildings along the southeastern boundary are of a much lower scale and back onto the two and three storey houses on South End Row.



- Main building - academic, teaching
- 24 Kensington Square - let to Kensington School and Kensington Nursery School (Class D1 in the Use Classes Order)
- Loyola Hall
- Isabel block - let to Fordham University
- Copleston Wing - library and academic space
- Alban Hall - student residential
- St Catherine's - Heythrop took over the lease in 2012
- Mary Ward Centre
- Cottages - rooms J8/J9 let to Counselling in Companies
- St Andrew's Hall - ground floor let to the Dyslexia Training Centre. First floor let to Counselling in Companies



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1. Plan of the Heythrop College site showing buiding uses
2. View looking west across the sports court towards the Copleston Wing
3. Rear of main building (23 Kensington Square)
4. View from the rear of the main building looking towards the centre of the site
5. Looking towards the Convent and Cottages and vehicular access to the site
6. View of Albarn Hall
7. View of Convent and open space at the centre of the site



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## Site Summary

### Strengths

- The site is well connected to the wider area through public transport. It is less than five minutes walk to High Street Kensington Underground Station and close to a number of bus routes on Kensington High Street.
- It is located close to a number of major headquarters in the borough including Sony, EMI, Mulberry Group and The White Company.
- There is a large area of green open space within the site, providing good visual amenity, which features a number of mature trees.
- The Chapel of the Assumption and 24 Kensington Square are both listed buildings. Together with the main college building, these contribute positively to the character and appearance of Kensington Square and the wider conservation area.
- It is a quiet enclave which is unusual in central London.
- It is within a highly sought after area.

### Weaknesses

- Access to the site is extremely limited. There is one vehicle access point via South End, which is not wide enough to accommodate a significant increase in traffic or large lorries.
- The site is very insular with no frontage onto streets aside from the main college building on Kensington Square. Whilst it happily accommodates a college campus with a relatively small number of students who generally use public transport, the site may be unsuitable for more intensive use.
- The mid-20th century buildings adjacent to the railway are of poor quality and out of keeping with the townscape found in the rest of the conservation area.

### Opportunities

- There is an opportunity to make better use of the site, by replacing or renewing the buildings to the rear of the site with high quality architecture that is more sympathetic to its historic setting and could make a positive contribution to the conservation area.
- The blocks to the rear of the site could be replaced with buildings to support new uses on the site.

- The site is large and could accommodate a higher density development, taking into account the sensitivities and constraints presented.
- The open space within the site could be made accessible to the public.

### Threats

- Certain uses, particularly ones that increase traffic in the area, could have a harmful impact on the amenity of local residents, especially in Kensington Square, South End and South End Row.
- New development on the site that is not sensitively designed and of appropriate massing, could have a negative impact on the character of Kensington Square and the amenity of residents, particularly those living in the low rise housing at South End and South End Row.
- The listed buildings on site and heritage value may limit the extent of development achievable on the site.
- Loss of open space could threaten the ecological and biological diversity of the site and compromise some of the mature trees.
- The loss of the student halls of residence would be contrary to policy in the London Plan, which resists the loss of specialist housing including shared accommodation.



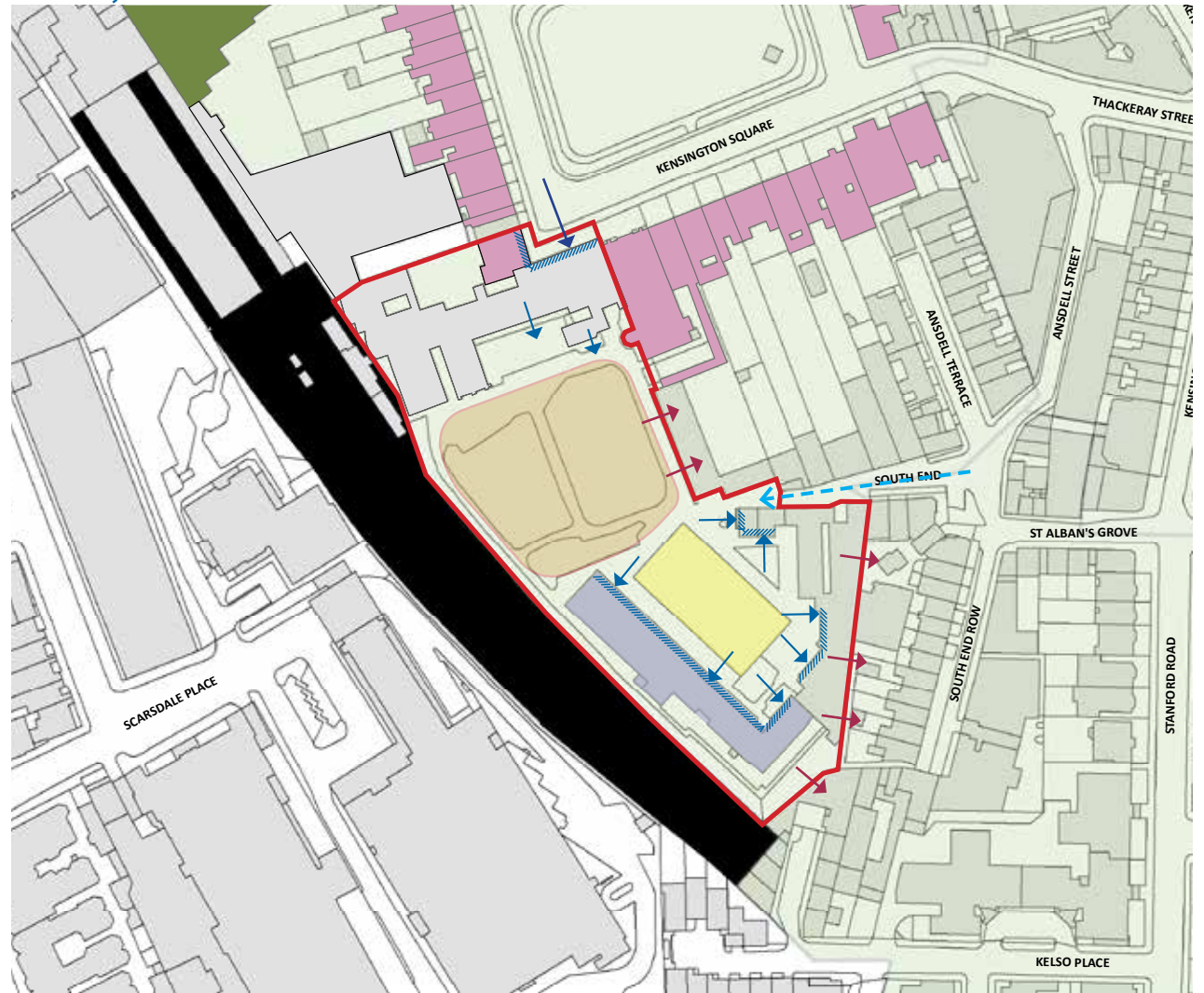


View from vehicular entrance into site



Aerial view of the Heythrop College site showing the Copthorne hotel to the west of the railway

### Site Analysis



- Vehicle access
- // Building frontage
- Building entrance
- Relationship with neighbouring buildings
- Grade II\* listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Conservation area
- Communal open space
- Sports pitch

# 3 Development Guidelines

- 3.1 This section outlines the key guidelines for the redevelopment of the Heythrop College site. It consists of development objectives, an indicative site layout, and planning considerations. These guidelines are grouped by the physical site characteristics and based on current best practice.
- 3.2 The relevant policies and physical site characteristics have been used to arrive at the design objectives. The objectives also derive from a public realm survey and analysis of the area.
- 3.3 The Council's Local Plan identifies strategic objectives that should be achieved by any new development. Information about planning considerations is provided later in this chapter.
- 3.4 The key issues and constraints below have informed the design objectives for future development proposals:

## Issues:

### Heritage

- The site is in Kensington Square Conservation Area and sits within the context of the Grade II listed buildings on Kensington Square.

### Land Use

- The site is currently in social and community use, which includes a student halls of residence.

### Access

- The site is isolated with vehicle access only from South End and this access is narrow and close to residential properties.

### Open Space





- The site contains a large area of open space, including sports facilities, and numerous mature trees.

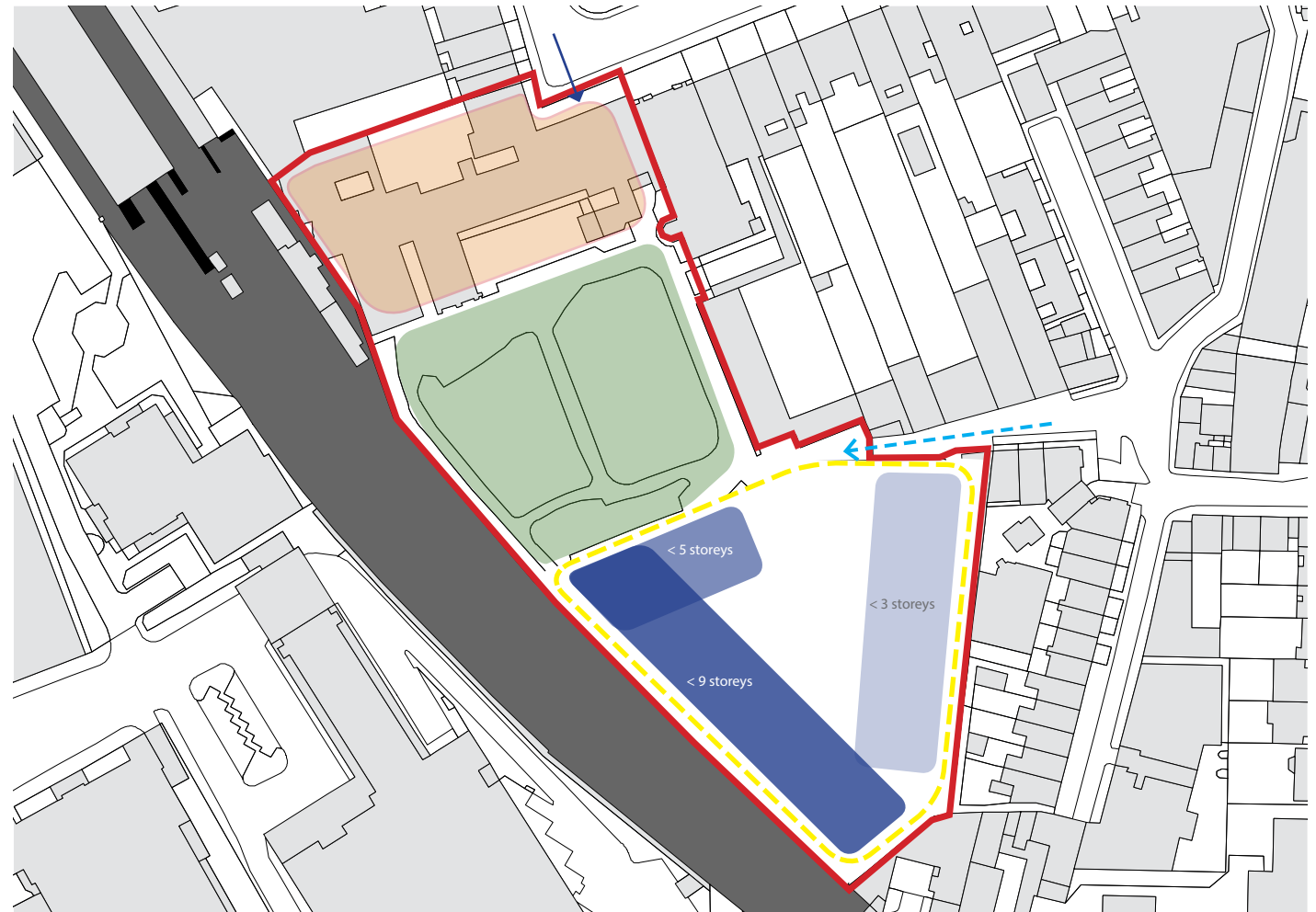
## Constraints:

- Impact on the amenity of the existing dwellings. The proximity of South End Row to the buildings at the south will make significant increases in height challenging.
- Proximity of listed buildings and heritage assets. To the north, the site is constrained by the abundance of open space and the listed chapel and main college building.
- Setting - the picturesque grounds of Heythrop College provide a unique and tranquil setting. However, this severely limits the ability to redevelop much of the site. These historic grounds contain numerous trees which severely limit the development of new buildings.
- Playspace - the sports courts within the grounds serve the college and local primary school. Preservation of this space with appropriate facilities will need to be considered in future plans for the site.
- Student halls of residence - the existing residential rooms contribute to the London Plan housing targets within the Royal Borough, their loss would be contrary to London Plan policy.

## Indicative site layout

- 3.5 The constrained nature of the site will inform the site layout.
- 3.6 Access - a single point of vehicular access should remain from South End. Pedestrian access from Kensington Square.
- 3.7 Massing - the southwestern area of the site along the railway lends itself to a taller building, where the student halls of residence currently exists.
- 3.8 Where the site looks onto the rear of the properties on South End Row, buildings will be expected to be of a much smaller scale to respect the amenity of the rear aspect and gardens.
- 3.9 Open Space - we would expect an area of open space to be retained in the centre of the site. Redevelopment of the site offers an opportunity to make this open space publicly accessible.

-  Area of new development
-  Communal open space
-  Restored/refurbished buildings
-  Indicative massing/building heights



## Planning Considerations

### Heritage

- 3.10 The impact on the amenity of the existing neighbouring dwellings. The proximity of the buildings in South End, South End Row and Kelso Place will make significant increases in height along the southern boundary of the site challenging (Policy CL5, Chapter 34, RBKC Consolidated Local Plan).
- 3.11 The proximity of listed buildings and heritage assets will affect the scale and nature of new development (Policy CL3, CL4 and CL12, Chapter 34, CLP).
- 3.12 Consideration of heritage assets will be assessed in detail at planning application stage with reference to adopted planning policies and national, regional and local planning guidance. Any redevelopment of the site will be expected to acknowledge the historical context of this site (NPPG Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, paragraph 4).
- 3.13 The site is located within the Kensington Square Conservation Area (see Kensington Square Conservation Area Appraisal); the south and eastern boundary of the site adjoins the De Vere Conservation Area. The Chapel of the Assumption and 24 Kensington Square are both listed buildings.

- 3.14 The picturesque grounds of Heythrop College provide a unique and tranquil setting. These historic grounds play host to numerous trees which severely limit the development of new buildings. The relationship of any new buildings to the setting of the listed buildings on the site is a key consideration.
- 3.15 The site is located close to Kensington High Street, which is an old Roman Road and therefore may have archaeological significance. Any development proposals on the site may therefore be subject to a desk based archaeological assessment (Policy CL4, Chapter 34, CLP). For more detail contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service.

### Land Use

- 3.16 The main use of the site is as a residential institution (Class C2 in the Use Class Order). This use class comprises residential care homes and sheltered housing where there is an element of care, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres. Extra care housing, offering a sufficient level of care for residents, would also fall under a Class C2 use. Policy CH2(c) (Chapter 35, CLP) encourages extra care housing in C2 use. This benign use could complement other uses on the site.

- 3.17 The site is located close to world class tertiary education institutions. It has excellent public transport links. As such, it may be suitable for continued use as a residential college and has student accommodation on site. This residential use should be retained (Draft Interim Housing SPG, May 2015).
- 3.18 Certain uses may not be suitable, particularly where these may result in a significant increase in vehicle movement and traffic congestion around the site.
- 3.19 Any proposed change of use would need to satisfy Policy CK1 (Chapter 30, CLP), which protects social and community uses. The policy provides a sequential test and lists the circumstances by which land can be converted, or in extreme cases lost, to provide alternative uses. In all cases, this must be to the overall benefit to social and community provision within the borough.
- 3.20 Subject to meeting the requirements of Policy CK1, a modest amount of enabling residential development may be acceptable on the site where this provides a greater benefit to social and community provision in the borough. Residential use on part of the site would be appropriate in the respect, including affordable housing unless it could be demonstrated that this was not possible for viability reasons.

3.21 A gated community would not, however, be supported (Policy CR1, Chapter 33, CLP).

### Access

3.22 The site has a single point of vehicular access via quiet residential streets. New development will need to prove it does not significantly impact on local traffic and parking conditions. This will affect the scale and nature of development on site (Policy CT1, Chapter 32, CLP).

3.23 A transport assessment will be required as part of any planning application for new development. Proposals for a new school or a childcare facility would also require a Travel Plan (see Transport and Streets SPD, April 2016). Any new development would not qualify for additional on street parking permits (Policy CT1, Chapter 32, CLP). Given that South End, the sole means of vehicular access, is unsuited to accommodating additional traffic the Council would expect any additional development to be car free (Policy 6.13, The London Plan, March 2015).

3.24 Should significant development occur, the Council will require a Construction Traffic Management Plan (see Transport and Streets SPD, April 2016) to ensure the works are undertaken in a considerate manner in line with the Code of Construction Practice policy for major projects.

3.25 Secure, covered, accessible and convenient bicycle parking will need to be provided.

### Open Space

3.26 The mature trees on the site are protected. This may constrain the development of new buildings (Policy CR6, Chapter 33, CLP).

3.27 The sports courts within the grounds provide a resource for local schools and clubs that lack sufficient outdoor space. Preservation of the use of this facility or one like it will need to be considered in future plans for the site (Policy 3.6 of the London Plan; Policy CR5, Chapter 33, CLP, Sport England policy).

3.28 The Consolidated Local Plan (Policy CR5) and the London Plan (Policy 7.18) both require high quality design of public open spaces. New development should provide open space.

3.29 On site external play space should be reprovided to a high standard of design (London Plan Policy 3.6; Policy CR5, Chapter 33, CLP).

### Design and Accessibility

3.30 The Council will seek to ensure that all new development will make a positive contribution to the townscape.

3.31 Building heights will need to be justified from a townscape perspective in accordance with Policy CL2 (Chapter 34, CLP) and the Building Heights SPD.

3.32 The existing buildings to the south of site tend to be of a small scale, with the exception of the student residential block, which is nine storeys. Development adjacent to the rear of South End Row would be expected to respect the amenity of these buildings regarding daylight and sunlight.

3.33 The proximity of South End Row to the buildings at the south will make significant increases in height challenging. To the north, the setting of the listed chapel and main college building will need to be considered.

3.34 A taller block may be acceptable along the railway to replace the student residence, subject to the quality of the design and its impact on the setting of the listed buildings and the character of the conservation area.

3.35 New development will be assessed against a range of design issues, including:

- how the proposals address the character of the site;
- the relationship with the existing homes at South End and South End Row, not appearing overly dominant or creating a sense of enclosure and poor outlook;

- not creating a detrimental impact on views;
- how the buildings relate to the surrounding listed buildings and open space.

3.36 At present vehicle access is via South End, which is not of sufficient size to withstand a significant increase in traffic. Traffic generation and parking on site will be a prime consideration for any future use for the site.

3.37 The majority of the site is very insular with no frontage onto streets. Whilst this makes sense for a college campus or another Class C2 use, it does not easily make for an appropriate and benign development should another use come forward.

## Housing

3.38 The site accommodates 109 residential student units. Student housing forms part of the borough's housing targets (Draft Interim Housing SPG, May 2015).

3.39 The London Plan identifies a strategic need for student accommodation. The loss of this form of housing would add to the identified need for the plan period and, as with conventional housing, its loss should be resisted or it should be replaced with at least equivalent floorspace (Policy 3,14, London Plan).

3.40 Housing tenure can change in the life-cycle of homes; dwellings must be designed without obvious differentiation between tenures, particularly in terms of their exterior appearance. High standards of design will be expected for all housing irrespective of whether it is owner-occupied, private rental, intermediate or affordable housing.

3.41 Minimum regional and local standards apply on floor areas, layouts, internal dimensions, refuse, noise and right to light.

3.42 The Mayor of London sets out minimum housing standards in the London Plan in Policy 3.5/Table 3.3. Space standards that must be met as a minimum for new developments are contained within the Mayor's Housing SPG.

## Sustainability

3.43 The Council is concerned with social, environmental and economic sustainability. Regional and national standards apply. Detailed local policies are set out in Chapter 36 'Respecting Environmental Limits'.

3.44 The Council seeks to ensure that sustainability is integrated into the architectural approach from the beginning of the design process.

3.45 The Council will require the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition

waste on-site wherever practicable (Policy CE3). Where mobile facilities are proposed, the applicant must present the appropriate EPA 1990 Part B Authorisation for inspection. Operations must not result in unacceptable levels of dust and noise, and have unacceptable impacts on air quality. The plant must be sited sensitively not to impact on residential amenity. The Council will control dust and noise through the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and Section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 should nuisance occur.

## Landscape and Biodiversity

3.46 There is a requirement to protect existing biodiversity and attract new biodiversity, (Policy CE4).

3.47 The Council will encourage proposals and design solutions that minimise the impact on air quality and noise, particularly in light of the proximity of the railway line.

3.48 New planting should be an integral part of any new development from the outset and should be purposefully designed to complement any new or existing built works. The species and location of new planting should be carefully considered to avoid damage to underground infrastructure and ensure that any below ground infrastructure is easily accessible.

## Drainage

3.49 As part of this assessment surface water run-off (peak rate) from the site should be to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency. The Council will expect an appropriate sustainable drainage system (SUDs) to be developed and implemented to ensure that run-off either soaks away on-site or is re-used (Policy CE2). Some SUDs can also be used to enhance biodiversity.

## Delivery

3.50 Consolidated Local Plan Policy C1 deals with planning obligations. It sets out the policy in respect of securing measures to meet needs generated by development.

3.51 Other borough-wide contributions are set out in the Planning Obligations SPD (adopted July 2011).

3.52 In addition to those contributions there are site specific benefits that could be met from the development, especially improvements to the public realm. Developments in this area will therefore be expected to contribute to the cost of these works.

3.53 Any provisions of a s.106 Agreement would be in accordance with the NPPF and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010), and will only be sought where absolutely necessary to make a scheme, if approved, acceptable.

3.54 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will apply to development on the site. There will be a fixed charge payable on development that creates new additional floorspace. The site lies within Zone C in accordance with the Borough's CIL Charging Schedule (adopted April 2015). CIL collections will be used to help to deliver infrastructure to support development of the area.

# Appendices



## Appendix 1 Material and Information to be Submitted

The Council will expect any future applications (planning permission and listed building consent, if applicable) to include (but be not limited to) the following:

- Design and Access Statement
- Transport Assessment
- Sustainability Statement
- Energy Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Noise Report
- Environmental Management Plan
- Drainage Strategy
- Sunlight/daylight analysis
- Sample materials and potential colour palettes
- Statement demonstrating how relevant policies in the Local Plan have been addressed.
- Green Space management plan
- Heritage Statement
- Townscape and visual analysis assessment

The full list of documents required for a valid submission of planning applications is available on the Council's website:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/guidance-and-advice/how-make-application>



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