

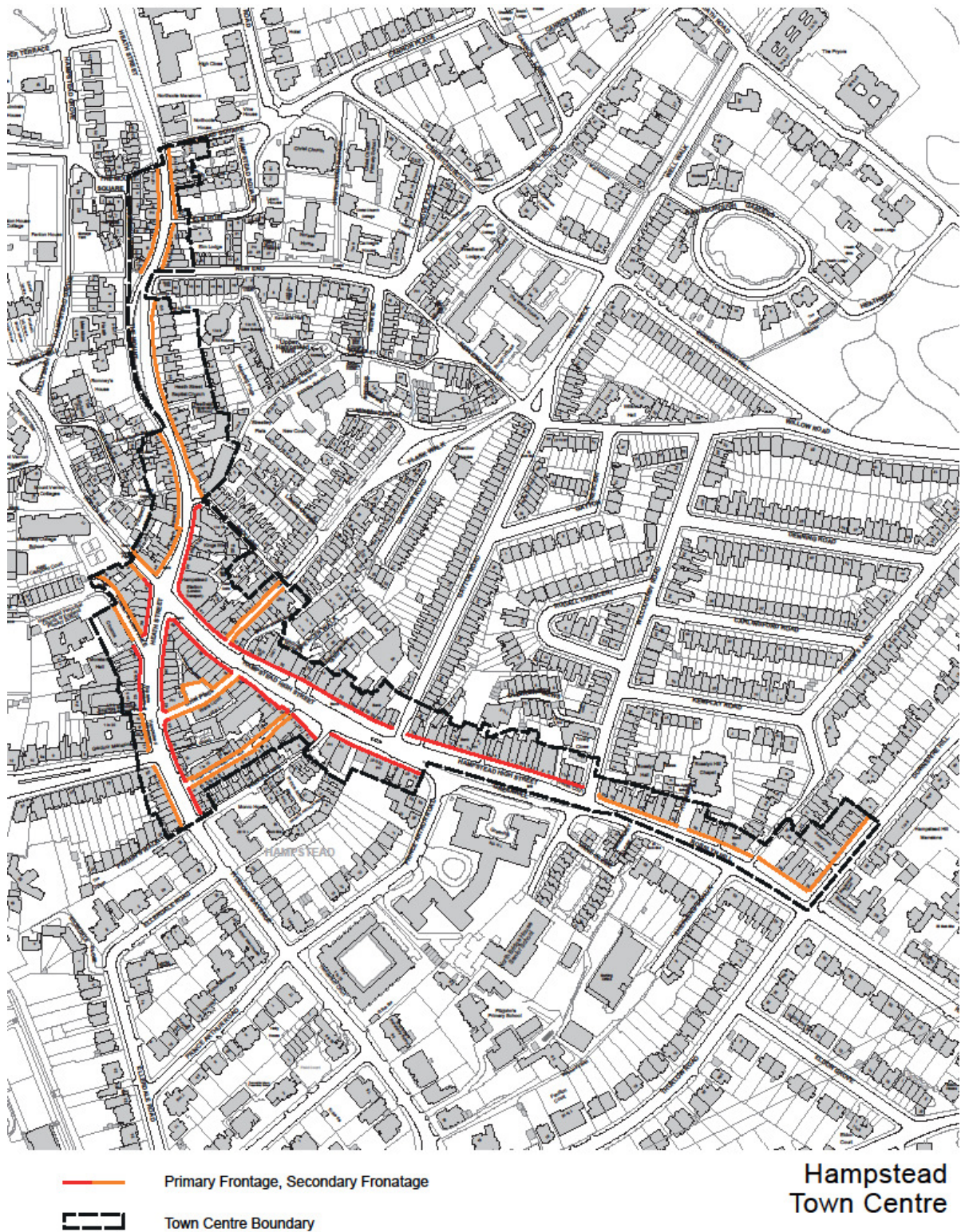
7. Economy



Introduction

- 7.1 It is vital for Hampstead's future that it retains a flourishing local economy that attracts businesses and creates jobs. This section seeks to build policies that will nurture and protect the local economy.
- 7.2 A very important reason for assuring the future of businesses in Hampstead is to meet the varied needs of local residents. The NPPF, paragraph 23, urges local plans to promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres.
- 7.3 The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum area contains two important retail centres: the centre of Hampstead itself, and the South End Green area. Each are briefly described below.

Hampstead Town Centre



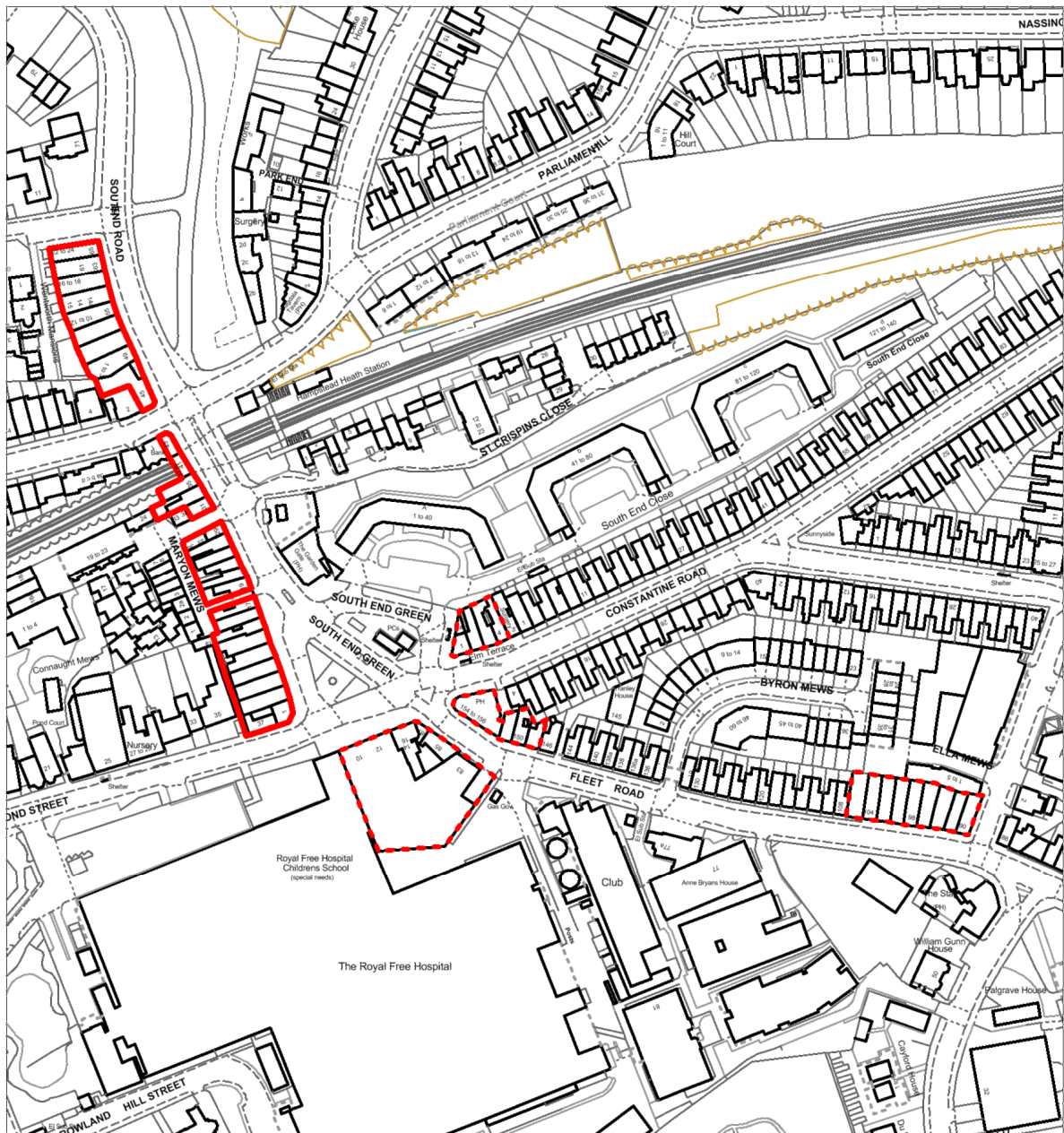
Map 9: Hampstead Town Centre

- 7.4 Hampstead Town Centre is the second smallest of Camden's six retail centres but one of the most attractive to visitors and local residents alike. According to the Camden Retail and Town Study 2013, half of visitors to Hampstead come from outside the area, attracted by the "village feel", the proximity of the Heath and opportunities to socialise with friends in the many restaurants and cafes.



- 7.5 A smaller proportion of visitors come for essential shopping, and there are independent butchers, greengrocers, bakers and off-licences that offer a high-quality range of food and drink. Perhaps as a result of high business rates and rents, the vast majority of retailers cater for the high end of the retail market.
- 7.6 In the Forum's consultations, and in other studies, negatives cited have included lack of parking, traffic congestion, the lack of floor space given to convenience goods and the overabundance of estate agents and mobile phone shops. Though the provision of retail services and financial services is good, Hampstead has a below average representation of pubs and drinking establishments according to the Retail Study 2013. This reflects the fact that over the past several decades, Hampstead has lost eight pubs that have been turned into residences, estate agents' offices and other businesses.
- 7.7 As in the rest of Camden, there is a lack of office space. Vacancy rates are lower than in the West End.

South End Green Neighbourhood Centre



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Map 10: South End Green Neighbourhood Centre

Proposed extension to South End Green Neighbourhood Centre



- 7.8 At the heart of South End Green stands the impressive 1881 Gothic Revival drinking fountain located in part of what remains of the “green.” The long parade of shops along South End Road, numbers 1-65, and 37 Pond Street, are defined by Camden as the South End Green Neighbourhood Centre. We discovered during our forum area boundary consultation, however, that local opinion strongly supports the view that the shopping area more broadly includes both sides of South End Road, part of Constantine Road (1-4 Elm Terrace and no.4), the parade of shops adjacent to the Royal Free Hospital and the first block of Fleet Road (nos. 90-106, 148-156 and 83-87).
- 7.9 These local parades provide essential shopping and services, especially to the nearby neighbourhoods of South Hill Park and the Mansfield area. They also service the thousands of workers and visitors brought to the area by the Royal Free and Hampstead Heath.
- 7.10 For purposes of our Plan, we propose to include these areas as part of the South End Green Neighbourhood Centre.
- 7.11 Small independent shops, delicatessens, convenience stores, pubs, cafes and restaurants make up the majority of the retail units, though a number of chains also have a presence. There is a broad range of other A1 class retailers, such as hairdressers, dry cleaning, shoe repair shops, locksmiths and undertakers and a number of A2 class businesses such as estate agents and a betting shop; however, there is no bank branch or post office.



Policy EC1: Encouraging a healthy retail mix

- 7.12 The Plan supports sustainable development that helps retain jobs and encourages a vibrant mix of shops and services.
- 7.13 There is also a lack of office space with vacancy rates lower than in the West End, as noted in the Camden Office to Residential Impact Study of 2013.
- 7.14 Commercial premises, once converted to homes, are likely to stay in residential use, as noted in the Camden Local Plan. In both centres, many first floor premises are homes to dentists, gyms, banks, law offices and other businesses.

Policy EC1: Healthy retail mix

The Plan supports development that enhances the vitality and viability of Hampstead Town Centre and the South End Green Neighbourhood Centre by:

1. Providing office and retail units at first floor level.
2. Resisting the change of use from A1 (retail) to A2 (estate agents, banks, building societies) that would result in less than 75% of premises in core frontages being in retail use or less than 50% of premises in secondary frontages being in retail use.
3. Preserving small shop and retail premises that enhance the character and vibrancy of the area.
4. Where permission is required, the change of use of space in Class A or B1a uses at first floor or higher above shops to residential occupation will not be supported unless it can be shown that there is a long history of vacancy.

- 7.15 The Forum supports the provision of opportunities to small/independent shops and businesses, which contribute positively to the vitality of the centres. Therefore, the Plan resists the aggregation of shop fronts that would result in the loss of viable small retail premises.
- 7.16 One factor in the health of Hampstead's retail businesses is the existence of businesses located in the spaces directly above shops. The people who work in businesses in Hampstead are customers for other businesses, such as restaurants and cafes.

- 7.17 South End Green lost its post office in 2008. Post offices – or sub post offices – provide easy public access to essential services including mailing, access to cash and retail goods. The Plan would support a business opening a sub post office in the SEG area.
- 7.18 Preserving ancillary space, such as storage and workrooms, is important to the long-term viability of primary and secondary frontage buildings. In order to show that premises located directly above shops are no longer viable for business or employment use, the applicant must submit evidence of a marketing strategy for the property, covering a period of at least two years. The premises must be marketed at a realistic price reflecting market rents in the local area and the condition of the property.

Policy EC2: Retail centre environment

- 7.19 The appearance of a high street is one of the key factors in its vitality. Despite existing guidance, many inappropriate and poorly designed shopfronts have been inserted into existing frames. Some fascias use inappropriate materials and depths, resulting in a lack of harmony with the original buildings, quite a number of which are listed.
- 7.20 The Plan supports the development of shopfronts in the Hampstead Town Centre and South End Green Neighbourhood Centre that contribute positively to the character and visual quality of their surroundings.

Policy EC2: Contributing positively to the retail environment

1. New shop fronts or alterations to existing shop fronts will be supported where the proposals respect the proportions, rhythm and form of original frontages. Where possible, lost original features such as unpainted surfaces, pilasters, corbels, glazing bars, part-glazed doors and fascias should be restored.
2. The retention of any shop front that is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies will be encouraged.
3. Any shop front of historical or architectural quality should be retained, even if its use has changed.
4. Security measures that do not detract from the streetscape, including toughened glass and the strengthening of shop fronts will be supported. External security shutters, grilles or meshes will not be supported.
5. All “house-style” signage should be sensitively adapted to the streetscape.
6. Internally illuminated projecting signs will not be supported. Signage should either be non-illuminated or externally illuminated, though “halo lit” or illuminated letters may be acceptable if subservient to the general design.
7. Where possible timber fascias should be used on traditional shop fronts with either painted lettering or applied individual letters of another material.
8. Excessive signage will not be supported and generally signage should be limited to one fascia sign and one projecting sign at ground level.
9. The visual clutter of shop fronts should be minimised.

- 7.21 External illumination of signs is generally preferable; it should be discreetly fixed and the minimum to allow the sign to be seen at night. The colour and brightness of the illumination and its ability to distract or confuse passing drivers will be taken into account. The size of lettering and logos should be in proportion to the detailing of the building.

- 7.22 The house-style of multiple stores will often not be acceptable as they generally involve the use of designs and materials not visually related to, or developed from, the conservation area context.
- 7.23 On 19th century buildings, a painted timber fascia with painted lettering or letters in another material would be the most appropriate.
- 7.24 Temporary banners should not be employed as a long-term substitute for permanent signage.
- 7.25 The Plan encourages shopkeepers to keep windows of shopfronts clear of posters and signs that create visual clutter. Camden Planning Guidance 1 and the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies provide further details on shopfront guidance.



Inappropriate use of materials and unsympathetic treatment of architectural details



Good examples respect the scale, style and materials appropriate to the architecture of the buildings and provide attractive settings for the display of goods