

5.0 Planning Policies and Government Guidance

- 5.1 The development plan relevant to the application site comprises the London Plan (July 2011) the Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025, and associated Development Policies (both adopted in 2010), and the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (March 2011). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is also considered within this section, which outlines the policies most relevant to the proposal, with a brief outline of the policy aims.

Camden Core Strategy

- 5.2 According to the Core Strategy Proposals Map, the application is within the Camden Square Conservation Area, and within close proximity to the Murray Street Neighbourhood Centre. The site is also within the designated view from the Kenwood Viewing Gazebo to St Paul's Cathedral, but as the proposal does not extend above the height of other buildings in the area, it will not have an impact upon this view.

Policy Description

CS1 Distribution of Growth

The Council will seek to focus development in suitable locations and achieve sustainable development, opportunities and benefits to make Camden an attractive place to live, work and visit. It will promote appropriate development in highly-accessible locations and limit growth elsewhere. The Council will encourage development to make full use of its site, while still taking into account its overall impact.

CS4 Areas of More Limited Change

Parts of the Borough outside of the growth areas and other highly accessible locations will experience more limited growth. Development within these areas will need to respect the character, heritage and other important features of the area.

CS5 Managing the Impact of Growth and Development

Development will need to meet the full range of objectives set out in the Core Strategy and other LDF documents, with particular consideration given to uses that meet the

needs of Camden's population, provide infrastructure and facilities needed to support Camden's population, providing sustainable buildings of the highest quality, and by protecting and enhancing the environment, heritage and amenity of the area. The impact of a proposed development will need to fully consider its impact on neighbours, and where required, provide mitigation measures.

CS6 Providing Quality Homes

The Council will make full use of Camden's capacity for housing by maximising the supply of additional housing, providing 4,370 self-contained homes between 2007 and 2017 and 6,550 self-contained homes between 2010 and 2025. The Council will seek to secure high quality affordable homes, with at least 50% of these targets providing affordable homes. A contribution to affordable homes may be required where it is found that it is not feasible to provide them on site.

Camden Development Policies

DP2 Making Full Use of Camden's Capacity for Housing

The Council will seek to maximise the supply of additional homes by expecting the maximum appropriate contribution to the supply of housing on sites that are underused or vacant, and by resisting alternative development of sites considered particularly suitable for housing.

DP3 Contributions to the Supply of Affordable Housing

The Council will expect all residential developments with a capacity for 10 or more additional dwellings to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing. The Council considers that a floorspace of 1,000 sq m (gross) is capable of accommodating 10 family dwellings, and will expect that all residential developments that would provide an additional floorspace of 1,000 sq m (gross) to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing.

DP5 Homes of Different Sizes

The Council will contribute to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities by securing a range of self-contained homes of different sizes. All residential development should contribute to meeting the priorities set out in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table.

Dwelling Size Priorities Table					
	1-bedroom (or studio)	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4-bedrooms or more	Aim
Social Rented	Lower	Medium	High	Very high	50% large
Intermediate affordable	Lower	Very high	Medium	Medium	10% large
Market	Lower	Very high	Medium	Medium	40% 2-bed

DP6 Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Housing

All housing developments should meet Lifetime Homes standards. 10% of homes developed should either meet wheelchair housing standards, or be easily adapted to meet them.

DP16 The Transport Implications of Development

The Council will seek to ensure that development is properly integrated with the transport network and is supported by adequate walking, cycling and public transport links. Developments should make appropriate connections to highways and street spaces, in accordance with Camden's road hierarchy, and to public transport networks. Developments will need to assess and address any need for additional transport capacity off-site.

DP17 Walking, Cycling and Public Transport

The Council will promote walking, cycling and public transport use, and developments should make suitable provisions for this. Where appropriate, development will also be required to provide for interchanging between different modes of transport. This may include improvements to footways and cycleways, signage, seating, cycle parking, workplace showers and lockers, safe road crossings, bus stops, shelters and timetable information. The council will resist development that would be dependent on travel by motor vehicles.

DP18 Parking Standards and Limiting the Availability of Car Parking

The Council will seek to ensure that developments produce the minimum necessary car parking provision. The Council will expect car free development in the Central London Area, the town centres, and other areas within Controlled Parking Zones that are easily accessible by public transport.

DP19 Managing the Impact of Parking

The Council will seek to ensure that the creation of additional car parking spaces will not have negative impacts on parking, highways or the environment.

DP22 Promoting Sustainable Design and Construction

The Council will require development to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures. Schemes must demonstrate how sustainable development principles have been incorporated into the design and proposed implementation. Development should also include green or brown roofs and green walls wherever suitable. New build housing should meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 by 2013 and for developments of 500 sqm or 5 or more residential dwellings to achieve “excellent” in EcoHomes assessments from 2013. The development should be resilient to climate change and include appropriate adaptation measures.

DP24 Securing High Quality Design

The Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider the character, setting, context, form and scale of neighbouring buildings. It should also consider the quality of materials used, the provision of a visually interesting frontage, the appropriate location for building services and equipment, existing natural features, hard and soft landscaping, the provision of amenity space and overall accessibility of the development.

DP25 Conserving Camden’s Heritage

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the council will take account of the conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans. The Council will only permit development that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

DP26 Managing the Impact of Development on Occupiers and Neighbours

The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to the amenity of both its occupants and neighbours.

The London Plan

Policy Description

3.4 Optimising Housing Potential

Taking into account local context and character, the design principles in Chapter 7 and public transport capacity, development should optimise housing output for different types of location within the relevant density range shown in Table 3.2. Development proposals which compromise this policy should be resisted.

3.5 Quality and Design of Housing Developments

Housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider environment, taking account of strategic policies in this Plan to protect and enhance London's residential environment and attractiveness as a place to live. Boroughs may in their LDFs introduce a presumption against development on back gardens or other private residential gardens where this can be locally justified.

The design of all new housing developments should enhance the quality of local places, taking into account physical context; local character; density; tenure and land use mix; and relationships with, and provision of, public communal and open spaces, taking particular account of the needs of children and older people.

LDFs should incorporate the minimum space standards that generally conform with Table 3.3. The Mayor will, and boroughs should seek to ensure that new development reflects these standards. The design of all new dwellings should also take account of factors relating to 'arrival' at the building and the 'home as a place of retreat', have adequately sized rooms and convenient and efficient room layouts, meet the changing needs of Londoners over their lifetimes, address climate change adaptation and mitigation and social inclusion objectives and should be conceived and developed through an effective design process.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**Para Description**

- 131 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 137 Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.
- 140 Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

6.0 Planning Assessment

- 6.1 The starting point for determining any planning application is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which states that “where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise”.

The six reasons for the Council’s refusal of the most recent application for residential use, 2010/6748/P can be summarised as follows:

1. Failing to preserve the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area.
 2. Placing unacceptable pressure on the Borough’s open space facilities.
 3. Generating an unacceptable impact on the local transport system.
 4. Placing undue pressure on the local education system.
 5. Failing to mitigate the impact on the local highway.
 6. Failing to meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 6.2 An informative attached to 2010/6748/P states that “notwithstanding any future application or appeal, the applicant is advised that reasons 2-6 may be resolved in a scheme that is acceptable in all other regards, by entering into a S106 planning obligation with the Council”. It can therefore be considered that the main issue regarding this site is the impact that the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area. This issue is addressed within the following paragraphs.

Appropriate Design within the Camden Square Conservation Area

- 6.3 Previous applications have failed to produce an appropriate design for this site, which lies in a prominent location at an important junction of the Conservation Area. One previous application was criticised for bearing little relation to the rest of the street, ambiguous notes relating to proposed materials and colours, failing to harmonise with the area, failing to maintain the rhythm of the area, and for raising security concerns by

not providing an appropriate frontage. The most recent application did not provide an appropriate response to its corner site.

- 6.4 The need for a sensitive design has been recognised from the outset and the client has commissioned CZWG Architects for their extensive experience working in conservation areas and Piers Gough in particular, who worked as an English Heritage Commissioner. The input from both the Council and Public Consultation has helped to produce a sensitive, respectful and complimentary scheme. The heritage of the Camden Square Conservation area will be enhanced by the addition of a newly built, contemporary interpretation of the local character. While the surrounding area has a rich architectural history, there are no listed buildings or other significant heritage assets in the immediate area. The design responds to its context, makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and will not have a detrimental impact on the setting or character of the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 6.5 It has been noted in the Officer Report relating to 2008/4783/P that the application site is able to accommodate additional height when compared to the surrounding area, given that corner plot occupies a prominent and open location, however, the proposal has considered the context and maintained the same parapet and roof ridge levels as properties such as No. 18 St. Augustine's Road. It was also noted that the materials and quality of finish is of the utmost importance given the prominence of the site. It has been demonstrated in section four that the materials used have been chosen following careful research, observation and discussions with the Council.
- 6.6 The design of the proposed development is intended to respond to the architectural features of nearby buildings, to maintain the character of the area. The proportions of brick and render, windows, doors and tree planting is intended to extend the rhythm of the street bridge the gap in the built environment, created by this vacant site. The scale and massing of the building is intended to respond to its neighbours, and security issues are addressed by the removal of vehicular access and the positioning of pedestrian access adjacent to its neighbours, and by providing an appropriate frontage around the entire building.

- 6.7 It can therefore be concluded that the proposal would successfully preserve and enhance the existing perimeter wall, respond to the character of the area and successfully enhances the quality and vitality of the Camden Square Conservation Area, adhering to Policy DP25.

Principle of Residential Use

- 6.8 The application site has long been identified as being suitable for residential use, and applications for other uses have been refused on this basis. The main issue restricting residential development on the site is the acceptability of a proposed scheme in relation to the Camden Square Conservation Area. The proposed scheme has been designed to enhance the conservation area and meet the requirements of Policy DP25.
- 6.9 In a written letter of pre-application advice for a previous application, dated 6 November 2007, the Council accepted the principle of residential use, and has refused permission for other uses stating that “it has not been demonstrated that the site is unsuitable for residential use” and that “the vacant site should be retained for housing development in accordance with UDP Policy H1. This advice was written with regard to a previous application ref. 2008/2989/P.
- 6.10 Supported by Policy DP2, Camden seeks to make full use of Camden’s capacity for housing. While the application site is not within an area designated for growth, it has for many years been earmarked as a suitable site for residential use, and permitting this use would fill a long-term void in the built environment and provide this area of restricted development with the purpose-built, self-contained homes that the borough can benefit from. The density of the proposed dwellings is acceptable given the size of the site, and the range of 2 and 3 bedroom flats make a positive contribution to the housing needs of the borough, according to the priorities set out in DP5. According to the Sustainable residential quality density matrix of the London Plan, the 1,214 sqm site in an area achieving at PTAL 3 rating would be expected to provide at least 5 units and a maximum of 14. The proposal sits comfortably within this range.

- 6.11 According to the officers report relating to 2010/6748/P:

(6.3) "There are a number of constraints specific to this site which restricts there being additional residents units (and therefore affordable units) including the triangular shape of the site and the position above a railway bridge...The applicants have submitted justification explaining why only nine units were provided and no affordable housing included as part of the scheme. The applicants designed all of the units to be in accordance with lifetime homes which have created larger units to accommodation [sic] the necessary circulation spaces."

(6.7) "It is therefore considered that given the constraints of the site that no affordable housing would be required at this application site."

Whilst this application was refused, provision for affordable housing was not a reason for refusal.

- 6.12 The quality of homes, site constraints and sensitivity of the Camden Square Conservation Area suggest that 9 units is the most appropriate use of the site without causing any detrimental harm to the character of the area. Therefore no affordable housing is provided on the site.

- 6.13 The design of the residential units, access corridors and surrounding amenity space accord with all relevant policies including CS4, CS5, CS6, DP2, DP5, DP6, DP16, DP17, DP18, DP19, DP22, DP24, DP25 and DP26. The size of each residential dwelling adheres to and exceeds the minimum space standards for new development, as set out in Table 3.3 of the London Plan. The proposed design has been influenced by comments from the Council, local residents and other stakeholders.

Access to Public Services

- 6.14 The site provides all the amenities one would expect of a residential site. With 2 convenience shops immediately opposite the site and a larger supermarket located 0.5 miles to the west, the day-to-day shopping needs of the residents are fulfilled. Camden Town, 0.5 miles west and a 10 minute walk away, provides the nearest focus of

commercial activity, with a wide range of shops, cafes, restaurants, bars and other services.

- 6.15 As noted in Section 2, public transport is easily accessible from the site, meeting the requirements of DP17. Bus Services are available immediately opposite the site and Camden Road Train Station and Camden Town tube station are a 5 and 10 minute walk respectively.

Impact upon Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.16 The proposals have responded to comments made by the Council and local residents, and ensure that the development will have no detrimental impact on the amenities of both the area and neighbouring residents. This has been a priority, as the site has been vacant or underused for decades and any proposal would be a significant improvement.
- 6.17 As public transport is easily accessible from the application site, the development has been designed to be virtually car free. It is proposed that one parking space and charging point for electric vehicles be provided, and positioned to replace the redundant vehicular access on St. Augustine's Road. In addition to this, 18 bicycle parking spaces are provided.

Access to and Impact upon the Public Highway

- 6.18 Pedestrian access will be suitably located adjacent to the entrance gate to No. 4 St. Augustine's road. All vehicular access onto the site will be removed as part of this application, and so there are no issues of highway or pedestrian safety.

Overall Assessment

- 6.19 The proposal meets the requirements of all aspects of the development plan, including CS1, CS4, CS5 CS6, DP2, DP3, DP5, DP6, DP16, DP17, DP18, DP19, DP22, DP24, DP26 of the Camden Local Development Framework. The development would provide a range high-quality dwellings that meet and exceed the minimum space requirements of residential dwellings as set out in 3.3 of the London Plan, built at a density appropriate to the character and capacity of the surrounding area.

- 6.20 The proposed development would have no negative impact on the amenity of the surrounding area, and would be a welcome addition to the rich architectural heritage of the Camden Square Conservation Area. The application site has been an eyesore for many years, and the development would provide a sensitive design and help enhance the character of the area.

7.0 Conditions and Legal Agreement

- 7.1 The applicant is willing to accept the imposition of appropriate, reasonable and necessary conditions upon the granting of planning permission, and is also willing to enter into a legal agreement with the Council, the precise content of which can be discussed during the determination process.
- 7.2 It should be noted that the refusal of 2010/6748/P was largely based on the lack of any legal agreement that would secure contributions to public open space, local transport, highways and education. The applicant is open to discussion on these matters.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The application site has been vacant since 1996, and has been identified by the Council as a key development site, most suited to residential use. The surrounding area is mostly residential, and is well served by public transport and other local services. The principle of residential use is therefore accepted.
- 8.2 The application site is located adjacent to a key entrance into the Conservation Area, and the design responds to this accordingly. While the site, as existing, has been identified as a negative influence on the character of the area, its function as a gateway into the Conservation Area means that the Council will only accept proposals of the highest quality. As demonstrated throughout this planning statement, the sensitivity of the area has been a key consideration in the design, and all policy requirements have been met, which will ensure that the proposal will both preserve and enhance the appearance of the conservation.
- 8.3 Compliance with all relevant aspects of the development plan has been met, and it is considered that the issues raised in the refusal of previous applications have been resolved. Given that the applicant is also willing to accept the imposition of appropriate, reasonable and necessary conditions, and willing to discuss a legal agreement prior to determination, it is concluded that planning permission should be granted.