
Borough Plan

London Borough of Camden
Local Plan 1987

This first review of Camden's Borough Plan (formerly the District Plan) was approved by the Planning and Communications Committee on 2nd April 1987 and adopted by full Council on May 13th 1987.

Housing

General objectives

HG1. THE FUNDAMENTAL AIM OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY IS THE ELIMINATION OF HOUSING NEED BY ENSURING THAT ALL PEOPLE IN THE BOROUGH HAVE ACCESS TO HOUSING WHICH IS OF A SATISFACTORY STANDARD AND SUITED TO THEIR NEEDS. TO THAT END, THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK:

- (i) AN IMPROVEMENT IN HOUSING CONDITIONS;**
- (ii) AN INCREASE IN THE QUANTITY OF HOUSING; AND**
- (iii) A SATISFACTORY RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION, SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF THE BOROUGH'S POPULATION.**

HG2 PARTS OF THE BOROUGH HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN A RAPID REDUCTION IN THE RESIDENT POPULATION AND SEVERE HOUSING STRESS. THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE GLC'S DESIGNATION OF 'COMMUNITY AREAS'. THE COUNCIL SHARES AND WILL SUPPORT THE GLC'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF PROTECTING AND ASSISTING EXISTING RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES THREATENED BY SUCH COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (COMMUNITY AREAS ARE IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP).

The Council undertakes a comprehensive review of housing in the Borough on an annual basis as part of its Housing Strategy and Investment Programme. Research findings indicate that Camden faces a major housing crisis. Much of the Borough's housing stock is unsatisfactory in terms of structure, amenities and environmental conditions. It has been estimated that in April 1984 there were 9,950 unfit dwellings in Camden, a further 2,250 were fit but lacking amenities and another 10,562 were in need of renovation. A major effort must be put into improving dwellings in order to provide those in poor living conditions with adequate housing.

At the same time, there is a severe housing shortage in the Borough. When allowance was made for concealed households and households sharing

accommodation, for vacancies and second homes, the deficit of dwellings was estimated to be approximately 7,000 in April 1984. Rehabilitation and redevelopment has, in the past, resulted in a reduction in the amount of residential accommodation and contributed to a decline in the Borough's population. The Council wishes to bring land into residential use and to retain existing residential land in order to meet the pressing housing needs of the population.

Policies are also required to ensure that a suitable variety of accommodation is available to meet the differing needs of households in the Borough.

The scale and complexity of these housing issues necessitates a co-ordinated approach and the Council will seek to combine planning and other powers at its disposal to meet the needs identified in the Housing Strategy.

Particular efforts are required to maintain, increase and improve the housing stock in those areas towards the south of the Borough where development pressure is greatest and the loss of residential accommodation has been most marked. Here population decline is threatening the future of local residential communities because there is no longer sufficient support for, or access to, essential services and there is insufficient suitable accommodation to enable people to remain in the area of the Borough in which they grew up or have family ties. The GLC Community Areas Policy seeks to improve housing conditions, amenities and the environment for communities in these areas under threat from commercial pressures and is fully supported by the Council

Objectives and detailed policies in respect of housing quality are found in paragraphs HG3 to HG12; housing quantity and density in paragraphs HG13 to HG26; and housing variety in paragraphs HG27 to HG38. Paragraph HG39 provides a policy on Travellers. Paragraphs HG40 to HG44 set out policies for the Community Area.

HOUSING QUALITY

Objective

- HG3. TO USE THE EXTENSIVE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL TO ENSURE THAT HOUSING IN THE BOROUGH IS STRUCTURALLY SOUND, OF HIGH QUALITY, CONTAINS ADEQUATE AND SAFE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AMENITIES, IS ACCESSIBLE TO ESSENTIAL FACILITIES AND IS SET IN A SATISFACTORY ENVIRONMENT; AND TO TAKE OR ENCOURAGE ACTION TO IMPROVE HOUSING WHICH IS NOT SATISFACTORY IN THESE RESPECTS.

Policies

- HG4. THERE WILL BE A GENERAL PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF REHABILITATION, ALTHOUGH REDEVELOPMENT OF A SITE MAY BE PERMITTED IF IT WILL MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNCIL'S GENERAL HOUSING OBJECTIVES (HG1 AND HG2), AND IF SIMILAR BENEFITS COULD NOT BE ACHIEVED BY REHABILITATION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING.

Rehabilitation will often prove the cheapest and least disruptive method of achieving improvements in housing conditions. However, there are circumstances where redevelopment can provide significant benefits or where it is a more economic approach in the longer term. Some housing and some residential environments may simply not be capable of improvement to satisfactory standards.

- HG5. THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE SO FAR AS RESOURCES PERMIT TO OFFER GRANTS TO ENCOURAGE PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR. OWNERS OF PROPERTIES CONTAINING RENTED ACCOMMODATION WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FACILITIES AND IMPROVE EXISTING STANDARDS WHERE NECESSARY, HAVING REGARD TO THE NEEDS OF EXISTING TENANTS.
- HG6. THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE IMPROVEMENT OF UNSATISFACTORY HOUSING BY DECLARING GENERAL IMPROVEMENT AREAS AND HOUSING ACTION AREAS AND ADOPTING A PROGRAMMED APPROACH TO OTHER AREAS WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED NECESSARY.
- WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE NOTICES UNDER THE HOUSING ACTS AND EXERCISE ITS COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS TO ENSURE THAT PREMISES ARE BROUGHT BACK INTO BENEFICIAL USE.
- THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE WITH A PROGRAMME OF REFURBISHMENT, IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNISATION IN ITS OWN HOUSING STOCK.
- HG7. IN CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR BOTH REFURBISHMENT AND NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, THE COUNCIL WILL BE GUIDED IN ITS ASSESSMENT OF THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT BY ITS ENVIRONMENTAL CODE, WHICH WILL BE REVIEWED FROM TIME TO TIME.

A concerted attack on poor housing in the Borough is necessary especially in areas where concentrations of unsatisfactory housing have been identified. The Council wishes to ensure that when property is rehabilitated or redeveloped the resulting accommodation is of the highest possible standard so that it will still be adequate when judged by the aspirations of society many years from now.

Much of the poor quality housing in the Borough is not sufficiently concentrated to merit declaration of either General Improvement Areas or Housing Action Areas. However, the Council considers that it is important to take a programmed approach to the removal of poor housing conditions, and will consider the declaration of broad areas as Housing Improvement Zones, where existing powers will be used on a programmed basis.

The Council's Environmental Code outlines criteria relating to the physical performance of a development (e.g. plot ratio and minimum room sizes).

HG8. WHILE AIMING TO ACHIEVE HIGH QUALITY HOUSING, THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO RESPECT THE WISHES OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO WILL ACCEPT A LOWER STANDARD OF AMENITIES BOTH WITHIN AND AROUND THEIR DWELLING IN RETURN FOR A CONVENIENT LOCATION. IN PARTICULAR, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OR NEW BUILDING WORKS WOULD NOT LEAD TO THE LOSS OF TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION WHICH CURRENTLY MEET THE NEEDS OF PARTICULAR SECTIONS OF THE BOROUGH'S POPULATION.

HG9. THE COUNCIL WILL, SO FAR AS POWERS PERMIT, ENSURE THAT PRIVATE SECTOR PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OR REHABILITATION OF EXISTING HOUSING ARE NOT DETRIMENTAL TO EXISTING RESIDENTS. THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE THE DISPLACEMENT OF EXISTING PRIVATE TENANTS TO MAKE SATISFACTORY PROVISION FOR THEIR REHOUSING.

The Council wishes to ensure that improvements to the quality of housing do not lead to the removal of particular forms of accommodation which are well suited to the needs of the resident population. In parts of the Borough, for example, non-self contained "bedsitting" accommodation is an important element of the housing stock which meets a particular housing need. The loss of such accommodation would frustrate the Council's desire to achieve and maintain a variety of housing accommodation and would lead to the displacement of the resident population.

So far as it is able, the Council wishes to ensure that improvements to the housing stock do not lead to the displacement of existing tenants who would not be able to obtain satisfactory alternative accommodation.

HG10. THE COUNCIL WILL UNDERTAKE AN ANNUAL PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN DESIGNATED AREAS AND OTHER PARTS OF THE BOROUGH WHERE THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED.

Many homes in the Borough lack access to a private garden, and it is therefore essential that play-areas, planting, sitting-out areas and other environmental amenities are included as an integral part of residential areas.

HG11. WITHIN PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO RESIDENTIAL PREMISES, NON-RESIDENTIAL USES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF THEY ARE COMPATIBLE WITH A RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT, AND THEIR PROVISION WILL BE ON A LIMITED SCALE AND BENEFICIAL TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. USES THAT MAY BE ACCEPTABLE WILL BE:

- (a) LOCAL OPEN SPACES, LOCAL SHOPS AND SHOPPING PARADES, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES SUCH AS CHURCHES, WOMEN'S CENTRES, NURSERIES, CRECHES, SOCIAL SERVICES AND OTHER COUNCIL SERVICES; AND
- (b) ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES THAT NEED TO BE LOCATED CLOSE TO THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE (E.G. SERVICES SUCH AS PLUMBERS AND SMALL BUILDERS) AND DO NOT CREATE ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE, PROVIDED THAT NO LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL FLOORSPACE IS BROUGHT ABOUT.

APPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSIONS TO CERTAIN ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL USES AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE KIND SET OUT IN PARA.HG11(b) ABOVE WILL BE VIEWED SYMPATHETICALLY IF THIS CAN TAKE PLACE WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO THE RESIDENTIAL SURROUNDINGS.

The availability of a range of compatible employment opportunities and local services within residential areas will widen choice and encourage a reduction in the number and length of journeys to work, school, shops, leisure facilities and Council services. This is in line with the Council's land use and transport policies as set out in Policy TR2.

HG12. THE COUNCIL WILL TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THE AMENITIES OF LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE SAFEGUARDED AND WHEREVER POSSIBLE, IMPROVED. TO THAT END, THERE WILL BE A GENERAL PRESUMPTION AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FURTHER RESTAURANT, WINE BAR, CLUB OR SIMILAR USES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO RESIDENTIAL PREMISES. EXCEPTIONS MAY BE ALLOWED WHERE THE COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT SUFFICIENT STEPS CAN AND WILL BE TAKEN TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF NOISE, FUMES AND REFUSE OR OTHER NUISANCES AND THE PROPOSAL IS OTHERWISE IN CONFORMITY WITH BOROUGH PLAN POLICIES.

THE COUNCIL WILL USE THE POWERS AVAILABLE TO IT TO ENSURE THAT ALL EXISTING BUSINESSES MAKE ADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR RUBBISH COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL, NOISE SUPPRESSION AND FUME DISPERSAL AND WILL OPPOSE THE GRANTING OR EXTENSION OF LICENCES WHERE A WORSENING OF AMENITIES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS CAN BE ANTICIPATED.

Experience indicates that restaurants and other activities can have a serious adverse effect on the amenities of residential occupants.

HOUSING QUANTITY

Objective

HG13. TO INCREASE THE QUANTITY OF DWELLINGS IN THE BOROUGH TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE BOROUGH'S EXISTING AND FUTURE POPULATION.

Policies

LAND USE

HG14. THE COUNCIL WILL RETAIN LAND ALREADY IN RESIDENTIAL USE. THIS POLICY WILL BE RELAXED ONLY IN RARE AND EXCEPTIONAL CASES WHERE IT CONFLICTS WITH OTHER HIGH PRIORITIES OF THE PLAN - FOR INSTANCE, PROVISION OF A NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE OR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT MAY INVOLVE SOME LOSS OF HOUSING.

HG15. APPLICATIONS FOR CHANGES OF USE WHICH RESULT IN A LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED EXCEPT FOR RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION WHICH CANNOT STILL BE USED WITH OR WITHOUT ADAPTATION FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES OF ANY KIND.

HG16. IN PARTICULAR, THE COUNCIL WILL USE SUCH POWERS AS ARE AVAILABLE TO IT TO RESIST THE CONVERSION OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION INTO HOTELS, SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION WHICH IS INTENDED FOR OCCUPATION FOR PERIODS OF LESS THAN 90 DAYS OR INTO "TIME-SHARED" ACCOMMODATION.

The population of Camden is facing a worsening housing crisis. The extent of this crisis is represented by the following statistics. In April 1984 900 priority homeless families were under consideration by the Council. In addition, there were over 11,000 households on the Council's Housing Needs Register which were considered to be in housing need.

Furthermore, 6,500 Council tenants required a transfer (over 3,000 of whom were regarded as being "priority" transfers). Taken together therefore, there were 18,400 households, (or 23% of all households) in Camden in housing need in April 1984. The Council's primary housing objective is the elimination of housing need in the Borough. Allied to this objective are the aims of maintaining communities at a viable level of population and the provision of a choice of accommodation wherever possible. The need is therefore for the fullest use of the existing stock and an overall increase in the number of dwellings. Falling occupancy rates and a reduction in average household size will increase the need for further dwellings.

HG17. WHERE AN UNAUTHORISED CHANGE OF USE IS UNDERTAKEN WHICH INVOLVES THE LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION CONTRARY TO POLICY HG15 ABOVE, THE COUNCIL WILL USE THE POWERS AVAILABLE TO IT WITH A VIEW TO ACHIEVING THE PROMPT RETURN OF THE ACCOMMODATION TO RESIDENTIAL USE.

HG18. THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE USE OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION.

Unauthorised changes to non-residential use and high levels of vacancy frustrate attempts to cater for pressing housing needs. The overall proportion of vacant dwellings is estimated at 7% of the Borough's stock. However, the vacancy rate by tenure gives the Council cause for concern. The vacancy rate in the public sector is 3%, whilst in the private sector it is over 10%. Apart from dwellings in the process of conversion or modernisation, much residential space is left vacant for long periods. This is especially common above shop premises where a lack of separate access may be a reason for vacancy (see Policies SH14 and SH17).

The Council will tackle the problem of vacant dwellings in its own stock and use the powers available to it to bring about a reduction in the high level of private sector vacancies. Prompt action against unauthorised changes of use is an important complementary measure.

HG19. THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF LAND IN RESIDENTIAL USE AND TO MAKE THE FULLEST USE OF ALL VACANT OR UNDER-UTILISED SITES SUITED TO RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SO FAR AS THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER BOROUGH PLAN POLICIES.

The worsening housing crisis in the Borough makes it essential that all suitable vacant or under-utilised land should be used for developing housing suited to the needs and resources of Camden residents, except where the land is required for other priority uses.

HG20. THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS TO PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL AND ANCILLARY COMMUNITY USES WITHIN MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.

Significant residential elements in mixed use developments can make an important contribution to the Borough's housing stock whilst helping to maintain viable local communities.

DENSITY

HG21. DENSITY WILL BE DETERMINED WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF SECURING THE MAXIMUM ACCOMMODATION OF AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD IN AN ACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENT. THE NORMAL MINIMUM DENSITY FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE 70 HRA. THE NORMAL MAXIMUM DENSITY WILL BE 100 HRA FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS WHICH INCLUDE ACCOMMODATION FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, AND WILL BE 140 HRA FOR OTHER NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

The draft alterations to the GLDP stipulate that housing densities should be in the range of 70-85 hra for family housing and 70-100 hra for mixed housing. The Council agrees that in general a minimum density of 70 hra is needed to avoid the wasteful use of housing land. However, the Council considers that environmental conditions in the Borough, including the scale and character of development, warrant the retention of higher maximum densities for guideline purposes.

In principle, densities should normally be below 100 hra where there is a need to provide families with children with a suitable environment, including access to private amenity space. In developments with a mix of accommodation, families with children may be given a satisfactory environment, for example, by placing them on the ground floor with smaller dwelling units restricted to the upper floors. Densities higher than 100 hra may be permitted for new developments which include accommodation suitable for families with children where the development contains only a small number of such dwellings and these are satisfactorily situated.

HG22. DENSITIES LOWER THAN 70 HRA MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE NEED FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THE ADJOINING DEVELOPMENT DICTATES A LOW DENSITY.

HG23. PROVIDED THAT SATISFACTORY CONDITIONS FOR RESIDENTS CAN BE ACHIEVED, DENSITIES HIGHER THAN THE MAXIMA SPECIFIED IN POLICY HG21 MAY BE PERMITTED IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES LISTED BELOW:

- (a) WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AREAS (SEE POLICY HG41)**
- (b) AT LOCATIONS WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE OF:**
 - (i) THE MAJOR SHOPPING CENTRES OF CAMDEN TOWN, KILBURN HIGH ROAD AND SWISS COTTAGE/FINCHLEY ROAD; OR**
 - (ii) PUBLIC OPEN SPACES AND OTHER LEISURE FACILITIES WHICH PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT PLAY AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.**
- (c) LOCATIONS WHICH ARE HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT.**
- (d) WHERE THE NEED FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND THE SCALE AND NATURE OF ADJOINING DEVELOPMENT DICTATES A HIGH DENSITY.**

HG24. WHERE PROPERTIES ARE TO BE REHABILITATED, DENSITY WILL BE DETERMINED LARGELY BY PHYSICAL FORM AND THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE STRUCTURE AND THE SITE SURROUNDINGS.

HG25. IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND THE FRINGES OF THE HEATH SPECIAL POLICY AREA (SEE POLICY PY34) DESIGN POLICIES FOR EACH AREA WILL DETERMINE THE SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT. FURTHER GUIDANCE ON APPROPRIATE DENSITIES FOR SPECIFIC SITES WILL BE CONTAINED IN DESIGN BRIEFS AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, IN LOCAL AREA PLANS.

The control of residential density only by numbers of rooms per acre is a crude method of achieving environmental standards and needs to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances. The densities quoted in paragraph HG21 cannot therefore be regarded as either an entitlement or a rigid upper limit and final decisions on the permissible density will need to be made in the light of individual circumstances. The minimum density of 70 hra will be relaxed, or will not be exceeded, where higher densities would threaten the area's character, destroy views or otherwise be detrimental to the environment.

The reasoning for high densities within the Community Areas is set out after policies HG40 and HG41.

Higher population densities in locations close to major shopping centres or highly accessible to public transport will be justified both by the additional facilities they offer residents and by the more efficient and full use of such retail and transport resources (in line with Policy TR2). Higher densities will also be justified in areas within easy walking distance of a satisfactory level of good open space and leisure facilities which offer suitable amenities for all local residents, including play and sitting-out spaces.

A location within easy walking distance will normally be within about 400 metres for the major shopping centres. In the case of leisure facilities this distance will sometimes be less, particularly if there are serious barriers to pedestrian access such as main roads where there is no safe and convenient crossing point.

In some situations, such as redevelopment of part of a terrace or an area of uniform building height, densities higher than the maxima laid down in Policy HG21, may be required to ensure that structures are compatible with their neighbours and the character of the area.

HOUSING VARIETY

Objective

HG26. TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION, IN TERMS OF TENURE, SIZE AND TYPE, IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF HOUSEHOLDS AT EACH STAGE OF THE LIFE CYCLE, TO CATER FOR THE DIFFERING LIFE-STYLES OF A COSMOPOLITAN INNER CITY POPULATION AND TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS. THE RANGE OF ACCOMMODATION SHOULD THEREFORE INCLUDE PROPERTY FOR BOTH RENT AND OWNER-OCCUPATION, CONVENTIONAL SELF-CONTAINED HOUSES AND FLATS OF VARYING SIZES, ACCOMMODATION SUITED TO THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF WOMEN, ETHNIC MINORITIES, THE ELDERLY AND THE HANDICAPPED, LESBIANS AND GAY MEN, AND A VARIETY OF SMALL HOSTELS AND OTHER FORMS OF SHARED ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING CLUSTER UNITS AND CO-OPERATIVE DWELLINGS, WHICH PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT FOR SINGLE PEOPLE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE NO SETTLED PLACE OF RESIDENCE (SEE POLICIES SS2 and SS3(iii)).

Policies

TENURE

HG27. THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY IN THE TENURE OF ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE WITHIN A LOCALITY. IN PARTICULAR THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF HOUSING FOR RENT IN THE BOROUGH IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS AND IN THIS RESPECT WILL:

(i) INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE FOR RENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, THROUGH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, COMPLEMENTED BY HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND FORMS OF CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES PERMITTED BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR LAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPEMNT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

(ii) SO FAR AS POWERS PERMIT, RESIST PRIVATE SECTOR PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF PRIVATELY RENTED ACCOMMODATION.

An important contribution to the character of the Borough is made by the variety and choice of accommodation and type of tenure available and the associated diversity in background and type of its residents. The Council recognises that many people wish to own their own homes. However, many households in Camden cannot afford the high costs of owner-occupation in the Borough. The Council will continue to increase its own housing stock in the Borough, so far as it can with the limited resources available; Housing Co-operatives and Housing Associations can also make a contribution to the supply of low cost rented housing in the Borough. However, many of Camden's households are, and will continue to be, dependent upon the privately rented sector to meet their housing needs. This sector declined by 58% between 1971 and 1981; if it is to continue to make an important contribution to the supply of rented housing in Camden then further decline must be resisted.

UNIT SIZE & TYPE

- HG28. THE MIX OF UNITS IN THE COUNCIL'S OWN DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE DETERMINED PRIMARILY BY ALLOCATION POLICIES AND A TARGET MIX WILL BE SET. TARGETS WILL NOT BE SET FOR HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES, BUT THEY WILL BE EXPECTED TO HAVE REGARD TO THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY.
- HG29. THE MIX OF UNITS IN ALL TENURE SECTORS (THE COUNCIL, HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES, OTHER ORGANISATIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR) SHALL HAVE REGARD TO:
- (a) THE SUITABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES AND SITES:
 - (b) THE PRINCIPLES CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPHS HG31 - HG36 BELOW; AND
 - (c) THE POLICIES ON SPECIAL NEEDS ACCOMMODATION SET DOWN IN POLICIES SS2 and SS3(iii).

WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AREAS, THE MIX OF UNITS WITHIN ALL TENURE SECTORS WILL BE DETERMINED BY REFERENCE TO POLICY HG44 BELOW.

Whilst the Council wishes to achieve a range of units within each tenure, in its own programmes the Council must give priority to the provision of housing which firstly meets the needs of households which it is statutorily required to rehouse, and secondly meets the needs of households on the waiting list. The mix of units required to meet these needs varies from year to year and is subject to an annual review when a target mix for the year is set. In November 1983, the mix was set at 30% x one bedroom units, 30% x two bedroom units, 20% x three bedroom units and 20% x four bedroom units.

The nature of Housing Associations and Co-operative activity is such that targets for dwelling mix cannot be set in the same manner. The Council wishes to ensure, however, that their contribution to the Council's housing strategy is adequately reviewed.

The mix of units approved in all tenure sectors will be reviewed annually to monitor how far the principles recorded in paragraphs HG31 to HG38 and HG40-44 below are being achieved.

- HG30. THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF FAMILY SIZED ACCOMMODATION. FAMILY SIZED ACCOMMODATION SHOULD COMPRISE AT LEAST TWO BEDROOMS (FOUR BED SPACES) AND WHERE EVER POSSIBLE, SHOULD BE AT GROUND LEVEL WITH ACCESS TO A GARDEN OR OTHER SUITABLE AMENITY SPACE. THE COUNCIL PARTICULARLY WELCOMES THE PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION SUITABLE FOR LARGE FAMILIES.
- HG31. WHENEVER THERE IS ACCESS TO A GARDEN OR OTHER SUITABLE AMENITY SPACE, PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WHICH PROVIDE FAMILY SIZED ACCOMMODATION.
- HG32. ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE SOME FAMILY SIZED DWELLINGS WHERE SITE CONDITIONS PERMIT.

There is a demand for all types and sizes of accommodation in the Borough, including accommodation for single persons and two person households, but the Council is particularly concerned at the high proportionate loss of families with children from the Borough. One of the most important reasons for the decreasing proportion of families is the shortage and high costs of family accommodation in the Borough. Developers find it more profitable to provide small units on redevelopment or conversion and families are at a disadvantage in competing for the shrinking supply of privately rented accommodation.

Open space for play is important for children; where ever possible, therefore, families should have easy access to private garden space where children can play in safety. The relative shortage of properties with gardens makes it essential that the fullest advantage is taken of this resource. The absence of access to a garden is not, however, in itself considered proof of unsuitability for family accommodation.

New development schemes can provide a good opportunity to increase the supply of family sized dwellings. This needs to be exploited to the full because the provision of larger dwellings is restricted in some conversion schemes by the layout of the existing building.

HG33. CONVERSIONS SHOULD NORMALLY CONTAIN AN ELEMENT OF FAMILY SIZED ACCOMMODATION UNLESS:

- (a) SUCH CONVERSION IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE AMENITY AND/OR SELF-CONTAINED UNITS FOR EXISTING TENANTS; OR
- (b) THE PROPERTIES ARE UNSUITABLE FOR FAMILY ACCOMMODATION BY REASON OF THEIR LOCATION, VOLUME AND ARRANGEMENTS.

THE COUNCIL WILL HOWEVER NEED TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE INTERESTS OF EXISTING TENANTS ARE PROTECTED.

HG34. THE PHYSICAL DIVISION OF DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR SINGLE FAMILY OCCUPATION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS:

- (a) SUCH CONVERSION IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE AMENITY AND/OR SELF-CONTAINED UNITS FOR EXISTING TENANTS; OR
- (b) THE PROPOSAL IS DESIGNED TO CATER FOR THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF A PARTICULAR GROUP OF PEOPLE AND A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE LOCATION IS NOT AVAILABLE WITHIN THE LOCALITY. FURTHER GUIDANCE ON LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS WILL BE PROVIDED IN LOCAL AREA PLANS.

THE COUNCIL WILL HOWEVER NEED TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE INTERESTS OF EXISTING TENANTS ARE PROTECTED.

Most families now comprise three or four people and therefore, require less space than the larger families, sometimes with servants, of earlier periods. The Council is not normally therefore opposed to the sub-division of very large houses into units suitable for the smaller modern day family.

However, the Council is opposed to the sub-division of smaller houses and flats when these are suitable for the modern day family. Small houses with gardens are particularly scarce in the Borough and so it is essential that these are not sub-divided unless exceptional circumstances arise.

The Council is anxious to ensure that local housing needs, including the special needs of often disadvantaged groups such as women, ethnic minorities, the handicapped and the elderly, are satisfactorily catered for. Hence the Council would welcome the provision of some large dwellings suited to the needs of extended families.

HG35 THE COUNCIL WILL RESIST PROPOSALS FOR THE CONVERSION OF DWELLINGS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF EXISTING NON SELF-CONTAINED UNITS OR BEDSITTING ROOMS THAT PROVIDE A REASONABLE STANDARD OF ACCOMMODATION.

The Council's concern to secure an adequate variety of housing encompasses not just family sized accommodation, but also other forms of housing such as non self-contained, 'shared' accommodation and bedsitting rooms. Such housing is well suited to many local people's needs.

For example, a large number of Camden residents have lived in accommodation of this type for some time and, finding it suits their needs, wish to continue doing so. Furthermore, it provides a vital source of temporary housing for the transient population; those unable to gain access to other forms of housing; and people who would otherwise be homeless (especially single "non-priority" homeless). There is also a significant proportion of young and relatively mobile people in Camden who need similar accommodation, albeit often for limited periods of time (e.g. students). When considering the accommodation needs of all these groups it is important to bear in mind policy HG8.

HG36. THE COUNCIL WILL RESIST PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVES THE LOSS OF EXISTING HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR SINGLE PEOPLE UNLESS AN EQUIVALENT AMOUNT OF SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION, CATERING FOR THE NEEDS OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL HOSTEL OCCUPIERS IS TO BE PROVIDED. TO THIS END:

- (i) THE CHANGE OF USE OF PART OR ALL OF AN EXISTING HOSTEL BUILDING WILL NORMALLY BE REFUSED. IN CASE WHERE IT IS SATISFIED THAT THE CONTINUED USE OF PREMISES AS A HOSTEL WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE, THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THE WHOLE PREMISES TO BE CONVERTED INTO OTHER FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL HOSTEL OCCUPIERS. WHERE THE PROPERTY DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO CONVERSION FOR SINGLE PEOPLE, OTHER FORMS OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING FAMILY ACCOMMODATION, WILL BE CONSIDERED.
- (ii) WHERE PROPOSALS ARE MADE FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PREMISES CONTAINING EXISTING HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION, PROVISION WILL NORMALLY BE REQUIRED FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF AN EQUIVALENT AMOUNT OF FLOORSPACE FOR HOSTEL OR OTHER FORMS OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL HOSTEL OCCUPIERS.

The Council recognises that the Borough contains a number of single people who are unable to secure accommodation, some of whom need a degree of support to help establish a suitable way of life. Hostels will continue to play an important role in housing these people and should not be lost until such time as appropriate replacement accommodation is available.

HG37. THE COUNCIL WILL LIMIT THE PROVISION OF HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER FORMS OF SHARED ACCOMMODATION BY EMPLOYERS FOR ESSENTIAL STAFF TO SITES WHERE FAMILY ACCOMMODATION WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE.

Some employers are concerned that essential staff are able to live close to their place of work on account of either the irregular hours they work or their need to be able to reach their place of work at short notice. The Council accepts the need for such accommodation, but considers that this provision should not pre-empt the use of sites suited for family housing purposes.

HG38. THE COUNCIL WILL LIMIT THE PROVISION OF PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION AND NORMALLY CONFINE ANY DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH ACCOMMODATION TO THOSE AREAS UNSUITABLE FOR OTHER RESIDENTIAL USES, ESPECIALLY FAMILY ACCOMMODATION.

Camden already accommodates an exceptionally large number of students. The supply of housing is insufficient to meet demand and the needs of other residents must be considered a high priority. The Council will work with the University of London and other organisations to try to identify sites for student accommodation that are acceptable under other policies in the Plan, as part of a five year process.

TRAVELLERS

HG39. THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE NEEDS OF TRAVELLERS THROUGH THE IDENTIFICATION, ALLOCATION AND EQUIPPING OF SITES SUITABLE FOR THE TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION OF TRAVELLERS.

There is a severe shortage of permanent, official sites for travellers in London. As a result many travellers are forced to live on unofficial sites which often lack even the most basic amenities. There are several well designed and properly managed sites in Inner London which clearly demonstrate that such sites can fit comfortably within a highly developed and densely populated urban area.

COMMUNITY AREAS

The preceding paragraphs set out the objectives and policies which are to be followed throughout the Plan area and will be of general relevance to the land within the Community Area. The ensuing paragraphs detail policies which are of particular relevance to the Community Area. These represent additions to or refinements of the policies in the preceding paragraphs and are designed to take account of the special needs of the Community Area.

HG40. WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AREA, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO INCREASE THE STOCK OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUITABLE VACANT OR UNDERUTILISED SITES AND THE USE OF EMPTY PROPERTY. IN ADDITION TO THE POLICIES DETAILED IN PARAGRAPHS HG14 - HG20 ABOVE, THE COUNCIL WILL ASSIST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY TRUST WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING THE REHABILITATION AND RENEWED USE OF HITHERTO VACANT RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN MIXED USE PROPERTIES.

The loss of residential accommodation has been most marked in the areas of the Borough closest to the centre of London where development pressures have been greatest. Particular difficulties arise from the large number of vacant mixed use properties within these areas where residential accommodation is located above commercial activities. In the past, the private sector has shown an unwillingness to rehabilitate such premises and neither the local authority nor housing associations have been able to acquire them. The Council envisages the use of the powers available under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to achieve a rolling programme of rehabilitation work which will bring residential (and commercial) floorspace back into beneficial use. The operation of the Community Trust will be kept under review with a view to extending its use to other areas which would benefit from this type of organisation.

HG41. WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AREA, DENSITIES HIGHER THAN 140 HRA MAY BE PERMITTED, PROVIDED THAT SATISFACTORY CONDITIONS FOR RESIDENTS CAN BE ACHIEVED.

In the Community Area, normal density conditions do not apply. Here population loss has been heavy but pressure for accommodation remains high and the Plan seeks to increase population wherever possible. There is excellent access to a wide range of facilities for which residents are willing to sacrifice some amenities. Higher densities are also justified by the need for compatibility with the character and scale of adjoining developments and the area generally.

HG42. WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AREA, DEVELOPMENTS WHICH INCLUDE ACCOMMODATION FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN MAY BE ACCEPTABLE AT DENSITIES HIGHER THAN 100 HRA, PROVIDED THAT SATISFACTORY CONDITIONS FOR RESIDENTS CAN BE ACHIEVED.

Whilst the maximum density for developments containing family accommodation is ideally 100 hra, development at this density is not realistic within the Community Area. It is desirable that a sizeable family population is restored and maintained within the Community Area (see Policy HG43) and yet the need to make the fullest use of scarce land resources and the need for compatability with the character of the area dictate that higher densities should prevail. Families can enjoy a satisfactory environment even within the high density developments through careful design to maximise access to amenity space.

HG43. WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AREA, THE COUNCIL WILL MAKE PARTICULAR EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THE HOUSING STOCK IS AVAILABLE TO, AND SUITED TO THE NEEDS OF, THE LOCAL RESIDENT POPULATION. IN PARTICULAR, THE COUNCIL WILL:

(i) SEEK, SO FAR AS POWERS AND RESOURCES PERMIT, TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF ACCOMMODATION FOR RENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, THROUGH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND CO-OPERATIVES.

(ii) RESIST PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE LOSS OF PRIVATELY RENTED ACCOMMODATION WHERE THIS MEETS OR IS CAPABLE OF MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL RESIDENT POPULATION.

(iii) SEEK TO ENSURE THROUGH NEGOTIATION AND AGREEMENT THAT PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL POPULATION.

As described above (see para.HG27), although demand does exist for increased home ownership, for many people home ownership is not a practical proposition. This is especially true of the Community Area where prices for flats and houses are so high. There is a pressing need for rented accommodation at a reasonable price to meet the needs of local residents, many of whom have lived within the area for many years and whose work sustains the local economy.

HG44. THE COUNCIL WILL PLACE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON ENSURING THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PROVISION OF FAMILY-SIZED ACCOMMODATION IN THE COMMUNITY AREA ARE MAXIMISED. TO THAT END, FULL ADVANTAGE SHOULD BE TAKEN OF SITES AND BUILDINGS WHICH ARE SUITED FOR FAMILY OCCUPATION.

Loss of families with children has been especially acute within the Community Area and has threatened the residential structure of this part of the inner city. The Council is anxious to enable people to remain in the area whilst raising families and to prevent a downward spiral of activities whereby a reduced number of families removes the need for various local services which in turn, increases the rate at which families wish to leave the area.