



Public Open Space Briefing Note

Introduction

1. This briefing note sets out the justification in light of London Borough of Camden's policy requirements for public open space.
2. As a result of Crossrail and the station upgrade works at Tottenham Court Road, there is an anticipated rise in pedestrian numbers from 30 million in 2009 to 56 million in 2018. In this context, requirement for improved public realm and pedestrian permeability becomes vital for the success of the surrounding area moving forward.
3. London Borough of Camden is committed to delivering the West End Project which will be a £41 million project which will unlock the area's potential, boosting business and creating new public spaces for the community and visitors to enjoy. The opening of Crossrail is anticipated in 2018, when it is estimated that Tottenham Court Road station will be busier than Heathrow Airport. The intention is for the scheme to deliver:
 - High quality public spaces for everyone to enjoy;
 - Better streets that reduce traffic congestion, delays and collisions;
 - Brand new parks, green spaces and improved air quality;
 - Safe and attractive streets with wider tree-lined pavements;
 - Streets designed to make bus journeys simpler, faster and more reliable;
 - Improved streets for cycling including protected cycle lanes on Gower Street; and
 - A better place to do business.
4. The site falls within the area covered by the West End Project and the 125 Shaftesbury Avenue scheme architects, DSDHA, are working with Camden to also deliver the West End Project. Accordingly, DSDHA have been able to consider any future changes to highways, pedestrian movement and public realm, as a result of the West End Project, when designing the scheme for 125 Shaftesbury Avenue.

Policy Context

5. Policy 7.5 of the London Plan seeks to ensure amongst other objectives, that London's public spaces should be secure, accessible, easy to understand and maintain and incorporate the highest quality landscaping, planting, furniture and surfaces.



6. At a local level, Policy DP24 seeks to ensure that developments provide high quality landscaping proposals. Supporting paragraph 24.22 advises that new hard and soft landscaping should be of a high quality and should positively respond to its local character.
7. Furthermore, Policy DP31 states that development that will lead to an increased use of public open space will only be granted “where an appropriate contribution to the supply of open space is made” and that “priority will be given to the provision of publicly accessible open space”.
8. The open space requirement generated by the respective uses of the development is calculated according to a formula based on an allowance of 0.74sqm per worker (Figure 2, CPG 6 Amenity). A financial contribution may be payable if the requirement is not sufficiently offset by open space provision in the development.
9. Figure 5 in CPG 6 sets out the figures used to assess open space requirements for individual residential, student housing, commercial and higher education developments.
10. Shops are not considered by policy to generate any open space requirement.

Proposals

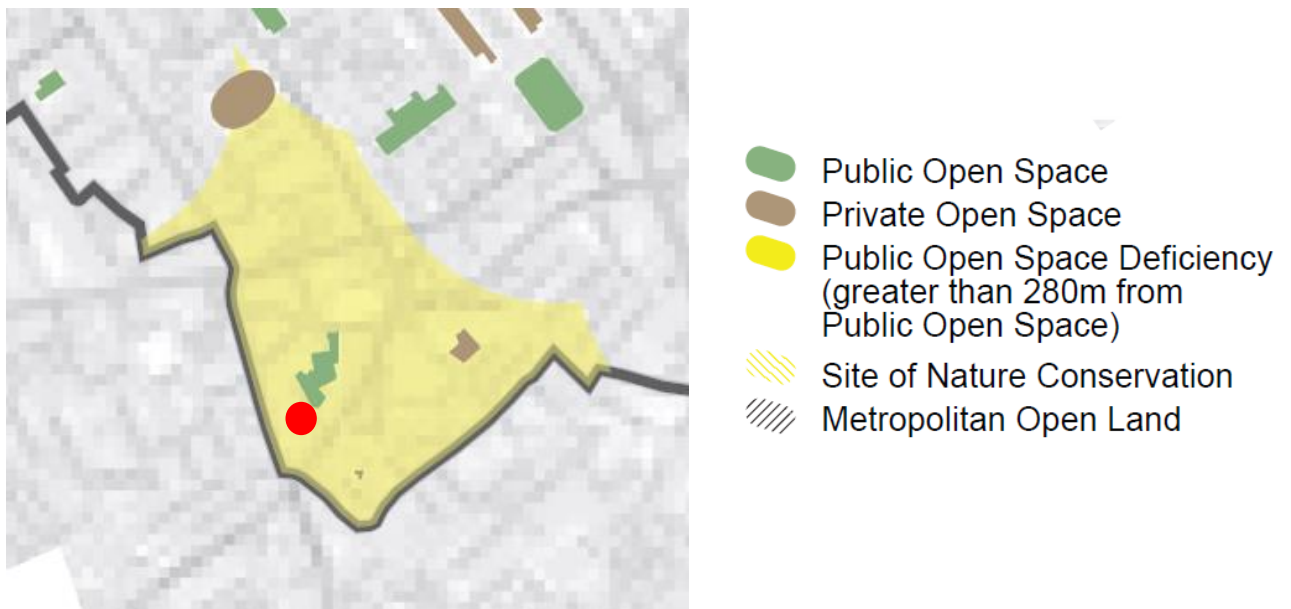
11. The existing and proposed areas of open space are as follows:

	Existing	Proposed	Net Change
Public Open Space	36.4sqm	36.4sqm	0
Privately Owned Highways Adopted Land	127.4sqm	29sqm	-98.4sqm
Privately Owned Public Open Space	498.9sqm	607.6sqm	+108.7sqm
Total Open Space	662.7sqm	673sqm	+10.3sqm

12. The existing and proposed areas are set out in the plans attached at Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.
13. In this case the office element has been calculated to generate a need for approximately 314sqm of open space. This is based on a net increase in office floorspace of 8,083sqm (GEA), and providing 38.9sqm of open space per 1,000sqm of additional GEA as set out in Figure 5 of CPG 6.

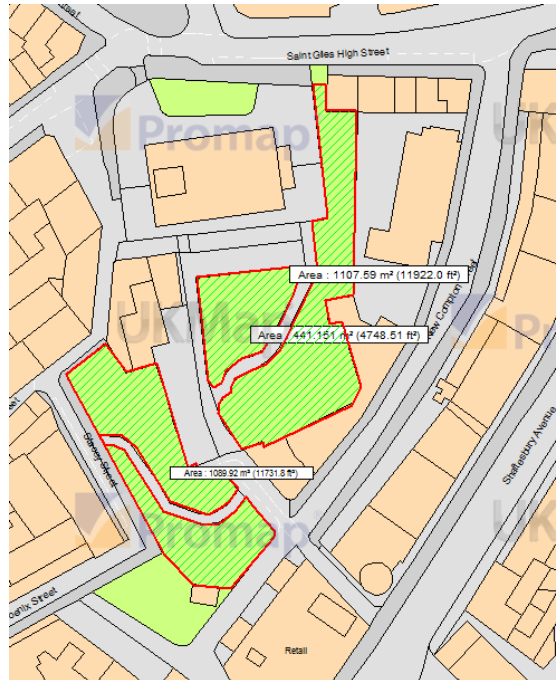
Assessment against Policy

14. In terms of publically accessible open space, the supporting text to Policy DP31 makes reference to the Council's identified areas of public open space deficiency as shown on the map of page 134 of the Core Strategy. In these areas, the priority is for the provision of open space on development sites. 125 Shaftesbury Avenue falls within an area of open space deficiency.
15. The definition of public open space deficiency is set out in Appendix A of CPG 6. It is considered to be an area, of more than 280 metres walking distance away, from a public open space with a multi-functional role, that is a space over 0.25ha (2,500sqm).
16. Set out below is an extract from the Core Strategy map at page 134. The site is shown in red.

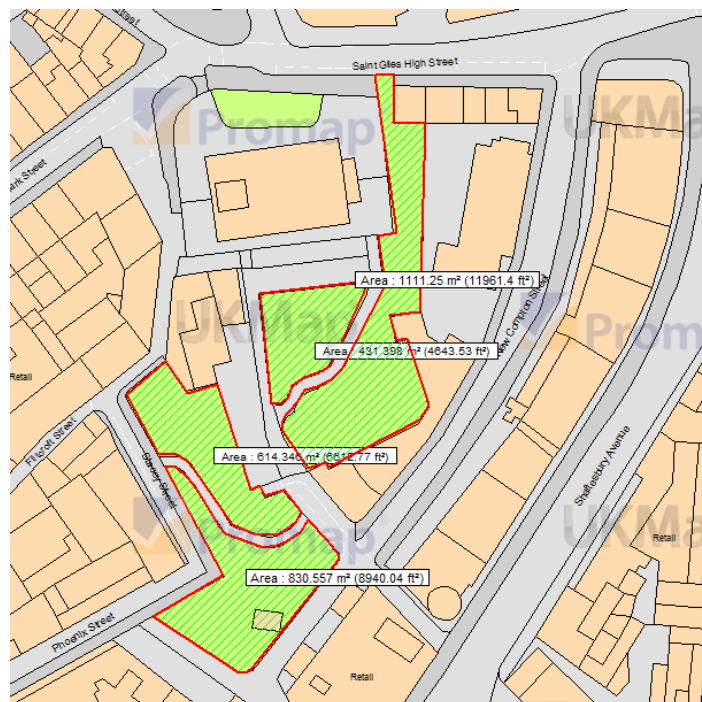


17. Notwithstanding the site's allocation as being within an area of public open space deficiency, we have sought to measure the public open space surrounding St Giles Church and Phoenix Gardens in line with the area of public open space shown on the Core Strategy map above. This is shown in the image below.
18. Furthermore, although since the adopted of the Core Strategy in 2010 a considerable amount of new publicly accessible open space is in the process of being delivered in the immediate vicinity of the site. It is worth considering whether, following the delivery of the West End Project, Crossrail over-site, Centre Point and St Giles Circus, the area is still categorised as deficient in public open space. Furthermore, whilst not within 280m of the site, The Post Building development will also provide a substantial public roof terrace which will provide additional open space in the area.

125 Shaftesbury Avenue



19. The total measured area, in line with the area identified in the Core Strategy map, is approximately 2,630sqm as set out in the image above. This is clearly above the 2,500sqm threshold required in relation to the public open space deficiency definition. This also excludes a significant proportion of Phoenix Gardens that could be considered public open space although it has been excluded from the Core Strategy map. If this area was included, the open space figure is nearly 3,000sqm, as shown in the image below.





125 Shaftesbury Avenue

20. Accordingly, there is a clear argument that the site should not be considered to be within an area of public open space deficiency.
21. Whether or not the site is considered to be within an area of open space deficiency, Policy DP31 sets out thresholds for open space provision on-site. The threshold for provision of public open space on site is 100 dwellings or 30,000sqm of any floorspace. Neither the number of proposed dwellings, nor the office floorspace (measured by uplift or new floorspace) reaches this threshold. Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that CPG 6 does not specifically state how the open space requirement should be calculated i.e. whether this should be on uplift or total proposed floorspace. However, clearly an argument can be made that the existing building at 125 Shaftesbury Avenue covers the entire site and the proposals for simply a refurbishment and extension of the existing building. Accordingly the opportunity to substantially increase the open space provision on the site is minimal. This approach has been adopted for other sites we have worked on within the London Borough of Camden.
22. Therefore, Camden's policy position in regard to open space provision on this site can be summarised as encouraging but not insistent upon the provision of publicly accessible open space as part of the development with the main emphasis being on securing improvements to the public realm. The introduction of a new route through the site, an improved public realm area to the rear of the site on Stacey Street and proposed streetscape improvement works to Shaftesbury Avenue, Charing Cross Road and Phoenix Street go a significant way to realising these objectives.
23. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed open space strategy and public realm works are in direct accordance with Camden's planning policy.



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125 Shaftesbury Avenue

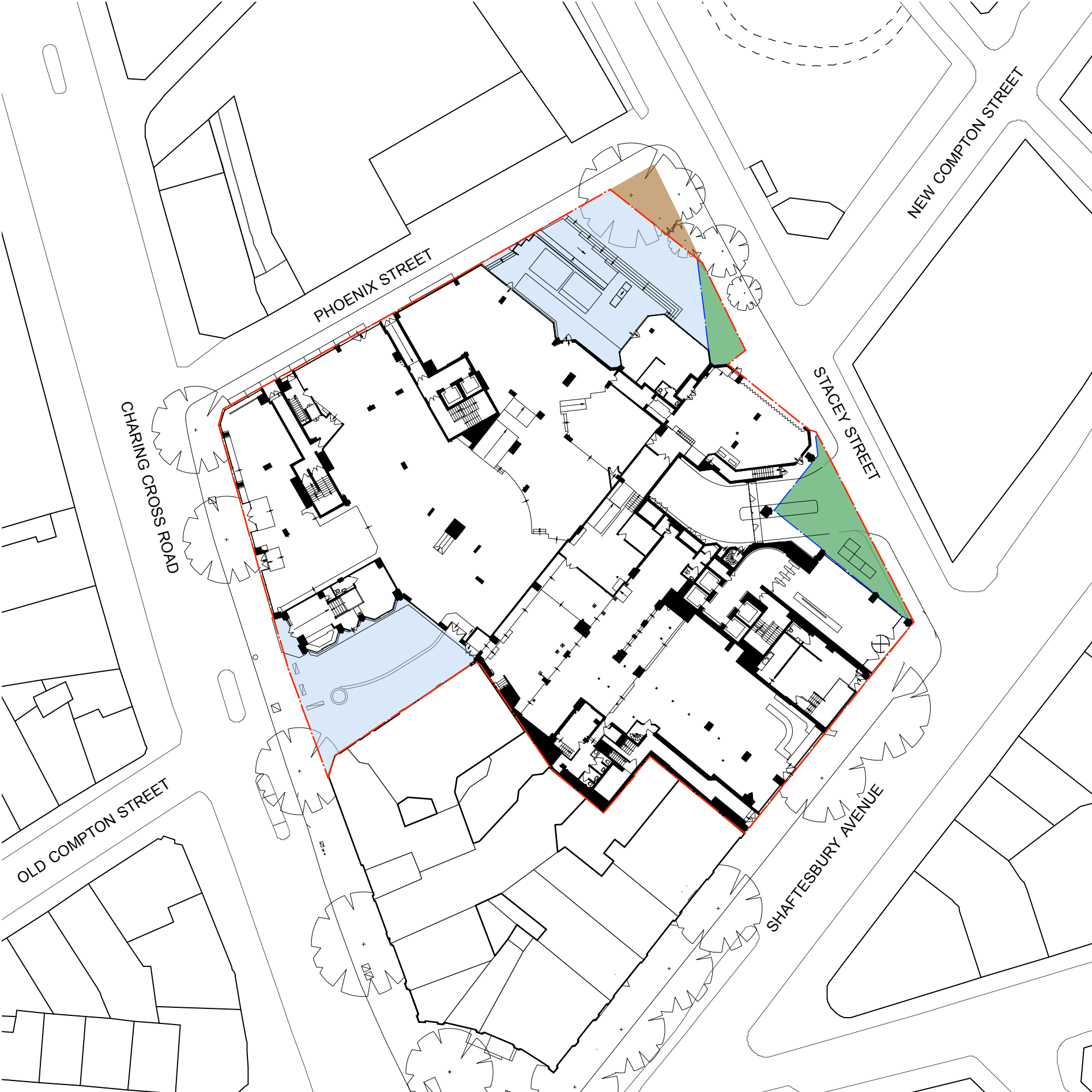
Appendix 1

Existing Public Space

- Site Boundary
- Highways Boundary

Areas

Public Open Space	36.4 sq.m
Privately Owned Highways Adopted Land	127.4 sq.m
Privately Owned Public Space	498.9 sq.m
Total Area Public Space	662.7 sq.m





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125 Shaftesbury Avenue

Appendix 2

Proposed Public Space

- - - Site Boundary
- - - Highways Boundary

Areas

Public Open Space 36.4 sq.m

Privately Owned Highways Adopted Land 29 sq.m

Lost Privately Owned Highways Adopted Land 98.3 sq.m

Therefore: Change Area Privately Owned Highways Adopted Land - 98.3 sq.m

Privately Owned Public Space 364.3 sq.m

Lost Privately Owned Public Space 133.3 sq.m

Additional Privately Owned Public Space 243.3 sq.m

Total Area Privately Owned Public Space 607.6 sq.m

Therefore: Change Area Privately Owned Public Space + 108.7 sq.m

Total Area Public Space 673 sq.m

Therefore: Change Area Public Space + 10 sq.m

