

Camden Development Policies 2010-2025

Local Development Framework



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DP4. Minimising the loss of affordable homes

- 4.1 Core Strategy policy CS6 sets out the Council’s intention to minimise the loss of affordable homes. Policy DP4 provides more detail on our approach (while DP2 seeks to protect housing against development for non-residential uses). DP4 is concerned with the loss of affordable housing floorspace in all forms, but does not directly address accommodation for older people, homeless people or other vulnerable people. It will be used to assess proposals affecting self-contained affordable housing, and proposals involving the loss of certain key worker accommodation with shared facilities (hostels and ancillary accommodation for key-workers such as nurses). Policies DP7 and DP8 give detailed guidance for assessing proposals that affect sheltered housing and care homes for older people, and accommodation for homeless people and vulnerable people.

DP POLICY

DP4 – Minimising the loss of affordable homes

The Council will resist development that would involve a net loss of affordable housing floorspace, including any affordable housing that takes the form of:

- a) hostels, bedsits or other housing with shared facilities; or
- b) an ancillary element of another use, but only where the development involves changing the primary use or separating the housing floorspace from the primary use.

- 4.2 It is likely that the Council’s investment in Decent Homes and its estate regeneration programme will involve redevelopment on some housing estates. Redevelopment proposals may also affect affordable housing provided by Housing Associations, employers and charitable or philanthropic bodies. In each case, we will expect the affordable housing floorspace to be re-provided in full, usually on-site and within the development. Replacement affordable housing may be provided on an alternative site provided that the replacement housing will:
- continue to give occupiers access to public transport, workplaces, shops, and community facilities, and
 - contribute to creating a mixed and inclusive community.
- 4.3 The estate regeneration programme is a long term strategy, and will involve relocating some occupiers while their homes are refurbished or redeveloped. Over the course of the programme, there may be redistribution of occupiers and of affordable housing floorspace from one part of an estate to another, or even from one estate to another. The Council will take a strategic approach to estate regeneration, taking into account the potential to attract investment and the benefits of mixed and inclusive communities. We will resist the loss of affordable housing floorspace across the programme as a whole, but may not resist localised or short-term losses provided a strategy is in place for their eventual replacement.
- 4.4 As noted in Core Strategy CS6 and policy DP5 below, there is a mismatch between the sizes of affordable housing most needed in Camden and the sizes available in the existing stock, with a particular shortage of affordable homes for large families. Therefore, policy DP4 protects affordable housing floorspace rather than seeking to retain each individual home, and provides for development that tailors the stock to meet existing and future needs. However, the Council will seek to ensure that arrangements are in place to re-house all existing occupiers.



- 4.5 Redevelopment of affordable housing should generally provide new social rented housing to replace existing social rented homes, and new intermediate affordable housing to replace existing intermediate affordable homes. However, if there is no longer a need for the type of stock being replaced (for example, where the existing stock contributes the over-supply of small social rented homes, or where employees that were previously housed are no longer part of the workforce), the Council may consider alternative proportions of social rented and intermediate housing, having regard to policy DP3 and paragraphs 3.22 – 3.23.
- 4.6 In the past, Camden had a significant stock of key-worker affordable housing that was not self-contained, in particular housing for student nurses and other healthcare staff. Some of this took the form of nurses' homes within hospital sites (and therefore were ancillary to Use Class C2), while some was provided as hostels located separately from the place of work. The demand for this particular form of housing has fallen because:
- nurses are no longer employed by NHS hospitals during their undergraduate training, and are not eligible for key-worker housing while they are students; and
 - a number of hospital trusts have arranged for their staff to have access to new Housing Association homes.
- Many nurses' homes and hostels have now been developed for other purposes, but some still exist, including newly developed staff housing at the Royal Free Hospital.
- 4.7 Similar considerations will apply to accommodation for nurses and subsidised accommodation for other workers such as caretakers. Where housing is ancillary to another use, such as a hospital, alterations between the proportion of floorspace in the main use and the ancillary housing use will generally be outside planning control. However, where development is subject to planning control, and affects affordable housing that is not self-contained, we will seek to ensure that this housing is retained or re-provided. The retained or replacement housing:
- should be available to the same group of occupiers or employees unless it is no longer needed by that group;
 - should be provided as social rented or intermediate affordable housing, subject to the considerations set out in paragraphs 3.22, 3.23 and 4.5; and
 - may be reconfigured or re-provided as self-contained housing if this does not compromise its affordability or prevent the needs of existing occupiers being met.
- 4.8 Housing and affordable housing required in association with mixed-use policy DP1 and affordable housing policy DP3 should be provided in addition to any retained or replacement affordable housing arising under policy DP4.

Key evidence and references

- Camden Housing Needs Study Update 2008
- The London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2004); Mayor of London; 2008
- Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 – Housing

DP6. Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing

- 6.1 Core Strategy policy CS6 indicates that Council will seek a variety of housing types suitable for people with mobility difficulties. Policy DP6 helps to deliver this by setting out our approach to lifetime homes and wheelchair housing.
- 6.2 Although mobility difficulties should be considered in the design of all forms of housing, the standards for lifetime homes and wheelchair accessibility relate primarily to the layout of self-contained homes. As occupants of student housing will only stay for a limited period, student housing is not expected to meet lifetime homes standards. The proportion of students who are wheelchair users should reflect the general population, therefore the Council expects 10% of student flats or study-bedrooms (together with supporting communal spaces) to meet wheelchair standards.

DP POLICY

DP6 – Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing

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

- 6.3 The Council considers that people with mobility difficulties, including disabled people, should have access to a range of housing types that match the range available to those without mobility constraints. Mobility difficulties can affect children, young people, adults and older people. They can affect people who live in large families, small households and people living alone. Where people have support needs related entirely to a physical disability, the Council will seek to provide them with support in their own home.
- 6.4 A lifetime home supports the changing needs of a family's lifecycle, from raising children through to mobility issues in old age, essentially allowing people to live in their home for as much of their life as possible. Lifetime homes involve design features that have been tailored to foster accessible living, helping to accommodate old age, injury, disability, pregnancy and pushchairs. These features also allow a dwelling to be easily adapted for even higher levels of accessibility in the future, if the need arises. Lifetime homes exceed the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 6.5 Lifetime homes standards will be applied to all developments of self-contained housing, including conversions, reconfigurations and changes of use (the standards do not apply to student housing). The standards will also be applied to proposals for bedsits or other permanent housing with shared facilities if the development could be occupied lawfully as self-contained dwellings in Use Class C3 without submission of a further planning application (please see paragraphs 9.2 to 9.3 for more details). The Council acknowledges that the design or nature of some existing properties means that it will not be possible to meet every element of the lifetime homes standard, for example in listed buildings, but considers that each scheme should achieve as many features as possible. All housing proposals should be accompanied by a submission showing how each of the lifetime homes standards will be met, with a full justification why any individual element will not be met. New build schemes are expected to incorporate all lifetime homes features. Further information on lifetime homes can be found in our Camden Planning Guidance supplementary planning document.
- 6.6 To provide independence and quality of life for wheelchair users, the Council will expect 10% of dwellings either to meet wheelchair housing standards, or be designed so a future occupier can easily adapt the dwelling to meet wheelchair housing standards. The percentage will be applied to all developments providing 10 or more self-contained homes, including conversions, reconfigurations and changes of use, and will also be applied to student housing. The percentage



will also be applied to proposals for bedsits or other permanent housing with shared facilities if the development could be lawfully occupied as 10 or more self-contained dwellings in Use Class C3 without submission of a further planning application (please see paragraphs 9.2 to 9.3 for more details). However, where proposals involve re-use of an existing building (particularly a listed building), the percentage will be applied flexibly taking into account of any constraints that limit adaptation to provide entrances and circulation spaces that are level and wide enough for a wheelchair user.

- 6.7 Ideally, wheelchair housing should be tailored to the specific needs of an individual wheelchair user and their household. Although tailoring housing to the occupier is rarely possible in proposals for speculative market housing, it can be achieved for affordable housing, where future occupiers can be identified by local housing managers, from the Housing Register (waiting list), and from transfer lists.
- 6.8 The Council will apply the wheelchair housing percentage across each affordability category in a scheme, generally seeking 10% of market housing, 10% of social housing and 10% of intermediate housing. For the 10% of market housing, future occupiers will often be unknown until after the homes have been fitted out. Where the 10% market housing is not fully fitted-out to meet the standards, it should be laid out to provide all the necessary circulation space within and between rooms, including bathrooms and toilets, as subsequent changes to these arrangements can be costly and difficult.
- 6.9 For social rented housing and intermediate housing, each type should include 10% of homes designed, built and fitted-out to meet wheelchair housing standards. The Council may use its affordable housing fund to support the creation of fully-fitted out affordable wheelchair accessible housing. We may seek to increase the percentage of affordable wheelchair accessible homes and reduce the percentage of market wheelchair accessible homes where this will enable us to meet the needs of identified future affordable housing occupiers. We may also agree to increase the percentage of social rented wheelchair homes and reduce the percentage of intermediate affordable wheelchair homes (or vice versa) where this will better enable us to meet the needs of identified future occupiers. More detailed information is included in our Camden Planning Guidance supplementary development document.

Key evidence and references

- Camden Housing Needs Study Update 2008
- The London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2004); Mayor of London; 2008
- Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment – London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance; Mayor of London; 2004

DP30. Shopfronts

- 30.1 Camden Core Strategy Policy CS7 – *Promoting Camden’s centres* and shops seeks to promote successful and vibrant centres throughout the borough. The approach includes seeking to improve Camden’s centres through environmental and design measures. It recognises that shopfronts can contribute greatly to the character of centres and their distinctiveness. Most of Camden’s town and neighbourhood centres date back to the 19th Century and earlier, having developed from commercial activities that first took place within dwellings, although there are some significant 20th Century shopping parades. Policy DP30 provides more detail on our approach to shopfronts.
- 30.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy DP24 – *Securing high quality design* and, where appropriate, policy DP25 – *Conserving Camden’s heritage*. It should also be read in conjunction with the centre specific planning objectives under Core Strategy policy CS7, which set out the Council’s approach to managing the proportion of units in retail use in each of Camden’s centres.

DP POLICY

DP30 – Shopfronts

The Council will expect a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts, canopies, blinds, security measures and other features. When considering proposals for shopfront development we will consider:

- a) the design of the shopfront or feature;
- b) the existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront;
- c) the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties, including the relationship between the shopfront and any forecourt or lightwell;
- d) the general characteristics of shopfronts in the area; and

- e) community safety and the contribution made by shopfronts to natural surveillance

We will resist the removal of shop windows without a suitable replacement and will ensure that in appropriate cases where shop, service, food, drink and entertainment uses are lost, a shop window and visual display is maintained.

Where an original shopfront of architectural or historic value survives, in whole or in substantial part, there will be a presumption in favour of its retention. Where a new shopfront forms part of a group where original shopfronts survive, its design should complement their quality and character.

Protecting existing shopfronts

- 30.3 Shopfronts form an essential part of the character and attractiveness of many areas in Camden, in particular its centres, and contribute to the creation of vibrant streets and public spaces. We will seek to protect existing shopfronts that make a highly significant contribution to the appearance and feel of an area, for example through their architectural and historic merit. We will consider the need to keep the appearance of the shopfront, taking into account the quality of its design, its historic importance and its location. Good examples of shopfronts should be retained wherever possible.
- 30.4 A number of Camden’s centres lie within conservation areas. The Council has prepared conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans for these which set out detailed information on the area and its character, and the Council’s approach to their preservation and enhancement including, where relevant, shopfronts.

Design of new shopfronts

- 30.5 The quality of shopfronts and the way in which they relate to their surroundings make an important contribution to the character and attractiveness of an area. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that new shopfronts are of a high quality and are sensitive to the area in which they are located. Transparent shopfronts will be sought for units containing shops and other town centre uses, due to the contribution that they make to the vitality and attraction of centres.
- 30.6 The Council considers that the attractiveness of shopfronts can usually best be maintained by taking inspiration from the architecture of the building and neighbouring units and reflecting the general scale and pattern of shopfront widths in the area. New shopfronts should contribute towards the maintenance of a cohesive streetscape appearance, retain a consistent building line and contribute to the character and attractiveness of the centre it is located in. As shopfronts are seen at close quarters the detailing, quality of materials, execution and finishes are very important. Contemporary shopfront designs will be supported in appropriate locations. All new and altered shopfronts should be designed to be fully accessible for all.
- 30.7 If a shopfront is replaced or altered, the design should respect the characteristics of the building and, where appropriate, shopfront windows and framework features, such as pilasters, fascias and console brackets, should be retained or restored. Careful consideration will be given to proposals for excavating or re-opening lightwells in front of shopfronts, particularly those in a group, as they can affect the cohesiveness of a frontage.
- 30.8 Folding/opening shopfronts will not generally be acceptable, as they can create a void at ground level that can harm the appearance of a building, and can also have a negative impact on local amenity, for example in terms of noise and disturbance.





Shop windows

- 30.9 Shop windows provide views into and from premises and can help bring activity and enhance feelings of security by providing natural surveillance. Displays in shop windows can add to the attractiveness of a premises and the vitality and attraction of the centre. Security features associated with shop window displays should generally be internal in order to avoid harming the appearance of shop premises and creating clutter. Solid shutters are generally not considered to be acceptable as they are unsightly and can generate feelings of insecurity in those walking by, hide internal intruders, and encourage graffiti.
- 30.10 As set out in Core Strategy Policy CS17 – *Making Camden a Safer Place*, lighting from shop windows can help to increase security after dark. The Council may therefore seek the maintenance of some shopfront lighting overnight, where appropriate, particularly in areas identified as having high levels of crime. However, this lighting should be well-designed so it does not cause light pollution.
- 30.11 The Camden Planning Guidance supplementary document provides more detail on the Council’s approach to the design of shopfronts.

Key evidence and references

- Conservation Area Statements/Appraisals/Management Plans; London Borough of Camden; various dates
- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering sustainable development; ODPM; 2005.