

7 Employment sites and business premises

KEY MESSAGES

- Camden has a very restricted supply of sites and premises suitable for light industrial, storage and distribution uses.
- We will categorise sites according to their characteristics to determine which sites and premises should be retained.
- In instances where we accept the principle of redevelopment of an employment site, our priority will be to secure permanent housing and/or community uses.

7.1 This guidance supports Camden Core Strategy policy CS8 *Promoting a successful and inclusive economy* and policy DP13 *Employment premises and sites* in the Camden Development Policies. These policies work together to provide our approach to the provision and protection of employment sites and business premises.

7.2 We will protect existing employment sites and premises that meet the needs of businesses and employers. This guidance explains the circumstances when we will consider alternative uses for an employment site. It also provides more information on marketing requirements and our approach to Hatton Garden, the Industry Area and mixed use developments.

Offices

7.3 Camden's Core Strategy sets out the projected demand and planned supply of office floorspace in the borough. We expect the supply of offices to meet the projected demand over the plan period and as a result we may allow a change from B1(a) offices to another use in some circumstances, such as older office premises or buildings that were originally built as residential dwellings. Our priority is for the replacement use to be permanent housing or community use. This approach is in line with policy DP13 *Employment premises and sites* in the Camden Development Policies.

7.4 There are a number of considerations that we will take into account when assessing applications for a change of use from office to a non-business use, specifically:

- the criteria listed in paragraph 13.3 of policy DP13 of the Camden Development Policies;
- the age of the premises. Some older premises may be more suitable to conversion;
- whether the premises include features required by tenants seeking modern office accommodation;

- the quality of the premises and whether it is purpose built accommodation. Poor quality premises that require significant investment to bring up to modern standards may be suitable for conversion;
- whether there are existing tenants in the building, and whether these tenants intend to relocate;
- the location of the premises and evidence of demand for office space in this location; and
- whether the premises currently provide accommodation for small and medium businesses.

7.5 When it would be difficult to make an assessment using the above, we may also ask for additional evidence in the form of a marketing assessment. Paragraph 6.18 below provides more information on marketing.

Hatton Garden

7.6 As set out in the Core Strategy policy CS8 and policies DP1 and DP13 of the Camden Development Policies, the Council takes a different approach to development in Hatton Garden. Here the conversion of office premises to residential or D1 use will only be permitted where 50% of the floorspace is provided as affordable B1c space for use as jewellery sector workshops. Where proposals involve an increase in B1a or residential floorspace then 50% of the uplift must be provided as jewellery sector B1c space. In addition, the conversion of office premises will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they have been vacant and marketed for at least two years. Paragraph 6.18 below provides more information on what we expect to be included in any marketing exercise.

7.7 Where it has been agreed by the Council that the provision of jewellery workshop space is not possible, we will still require the provision of residential floorspace in line with Policy DP1 of the Camden Development Policies. In addition we will require a financial contribution towards the support of the jewellery industry. The level of contribution will be related to the area of workspace that would otherwise have been expected. Where jewellery sector workshop space is provided, we will require the space to be marketed at rents comparable to average rents paid by existing jewellery manufacturers for comparable premises in Hatton Garden. Please see CPG 8 – Planning Obligations for our detailed approach.

Light industrial, industrial, storage and distribution

7.8 Camden has a very restricted supply of sites and premises suitable for light industrial, storage and distribution uses. This means that there is a high level of demand for the remaining sites and that the majority of sites are well occupied and able to secure relatively high rents as long as they have good access and separation from conflicting premises.

7.9 We have identified three main categories of sites and premises in the borough:

Category 1

7.10 Sites in this category provide the highest quality accommodation. Typically, they provide:

- purpose built accommodation;
- predominantly single storey premises;
- clear, high ceiling heights;
- high loading bays and doors (min 5.5m or 18ft high);
- access for large delivery and servicing vehicles both into and around the site;
- 24 hour operation with unrestricted loading access; and
- minimal risk that the 24-hour operation will adversely harm the amenity of neighbouring properties.



Category 2

7.11 The majority of Camden's industrial stock falls into Category 2. They usually have a selection of the following characteristics:

- good access for servicing and delivery;
- slightly more restricted hours of operation than Category 1 sites;
- roller shutter doors;
- clear, high floor to ceiling heights (3-5m);
- lots of natural light;
- level access – normally ground floor;
- flexible neighbouring uses;
- limited number of upper floors with goods lift access; and
- some off street parking.

Category 3

- small, isolated premises;
- poor access - narrow streets, small doors, steps;
- no goods lifts;

- little or no space for servicing;
- incompatible neighbouring uses (most often residential); and
- lower ground or basement level.

- 7.12 Category 1 sites are rare in Camden and will always be protected. Category 2 sites are more common in Camden and will usually be protected unless there is very strong marketing evidence (see below for details of our marketing expectations) to show that they are no longer suitable. The Business Premises Study 2011 advises that most sites within categories 1 and 2 can be marketed and let successfully. Category 3 sites are heavily compromised and may not be suitable for continued industrial use when they become empty or need significant investment, although they could be suitable for office B1(a) space.
- 7.13 We will use these categories to determine which sites and premises should be retained and which can be released for redevelopment. The characteristics of categories 1 and 2 will also be used to guide the design of new business premises.

Refurbishment and improvements

- 7.14 Many industrial buildings only require a small amount of investment to maintain them or to bring them back into a reasonable condition. As long as the site has good access other factors, such as the age of a building, are irrelevant for most occupiers as the specification for an industrial unit has not changed in many years.

New industrial premises

- 7.15 The characteristics that make new industrial premises successful are similar to categories 1 and 2 above. Ideally, new space should resemble category 1 as closely as possible. The most important features are good delivery/servicing access, separation from other uses, freedom to operate at all times and a 50-70% site coverage. Where mixed use development is planned employment and residential uses should normally be provided in separate blocks. Whilst it may be difficult to achieve all of these features in Camden, we will expect new developments to include as many as practically possible.

Industry area

- 7.16 Camden's Industry Area is one of the few areas where there is a concentration of industrial, storage and distribution uses (within classes B1, B2, B8 or related Sui Generis) where no other uses prejudice the operation of business in the area.
- 7.17 As stated in Core Strategy Policy CS8 and in paragraph 8.15, the Industry Area will be safeguarded by resisting any proposals which jeopardise the continued use of sites for industrial, storage and distribution purposes. This includes proposals which would introduce any of the following uses: residential, student accommodation, community facilities, retail, food, drink or entertainment premises.

Marketing

- 7.18 We will require evidence of a marketing exercise for the loss of employment uses, in line with Core Strategy Policy CS8 and policy DP13 of the Camden Development Policies. As a minimum, we will expect marketing exercises to include the following:
- Use of a reputable local or national agent with a track record of letting employment space in the borough;
 - A visible letting board on the property (constant throughout the marketing period);
 - Marketing material should be published on the internet, including popular online property databases such as Focus;
 - Continuous over at least 2 years from when the letting board is erected and the property is advertised online (i.e. not simply from when agents were appointed). We will consider shorter marketing periods for B1(a) office premises;
 - Advertised rents should be reasonable, reflecting market rents in the local area and the condition of the property;
 - Lease terms should be attractive to the market:
 - at least three years, with longer terms, up to five years or longer, if the occupier needs to undertake some works
 - and/or short term flexible leases for smaller premises which are appropriate for SMEs;
 - A commentary on the interest shown in the building, including any details of why the interest was not pursued; and
 - Where there is an existing employment use then we will require evidence that the tenant intends to move out.

Further information

- Camden Business Premises Study, 2011, Roger Tym and Partners
- The Demand for premises of London's SMEs, 2006, London Development Agency
- Industrial Capacity Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2008. Greater London Authority

8 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Properties located within Camden's Centres

8.1 The following tables contain all the addresses which are within Camden's centres.

Properties located within the town centre core retail frontages

Camden Town	Core frontages south: 38-224 Camden High Street (E side) 57-265 Camden High Street (W side) Core frontages north: 267- 289 Camden High Street (W side) East yard, Chalk Farm Road (W side) 226-250 Camden High Street (E side) 1-89 Chalk Farm Road (E side) 2-18a Haverstock Hill (E side)
Hampstead	Core frontages: 1-47 (N side) and 55-84 (S side) Hampstead High Street, 4-62 (E side) and 23-47 (W side) Heath Street, 1-10 and 12-16 Perrins Court, 1-17 (NW side) and 2-10 (SE side) Flask Walk
Kentish Town	Core frontages: 124-282 (E side) and 189-345 (W side) Kentish Town Road
Kilburn High Road	Core frontages: 42-218 Kilburn High Road (E side)
Swiss Cottage	Core frontages: 135-265 Finchley Road O2 Centre
West Hampstead	Core frontages: 176-280 West End Lane (E side)