

# 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