

Noise and vibration

- 6.84 This policy seeks to ensure that noise and vibration is appropriately considered at the design stage and that noise sensitive uses are not negatively impacted by noise and vibration or that existing uses (such as music venues, theatres and some employment uses) are not unduly restricted through the introduction of nearby noise sensitive uses.
- 6.85 Noise and vibration can have a major effect on health and amenity and quality of life. Camden's high density and mixed use nature means that disturbance from noise and vibration is a particularly important issue for health and wellbeing in the borough. The Council may seek to explore the identification and designation of Quiet Areas, which are local green spaces identified for their particular tranquility and amenity value.

Policy A4 Noise and vibration

The Council will seek to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed.

Development should have regard to Camden's Noise and Vibration Thresholds (Appendix 3). We will not grant planning permission for:

- a. development likely to generate unacceptable noise and vibration impacts; or
- b. development sensitive to noise in locations which experience high levels of noise, unless appropriate attenuation measures can be provided and will not harm the continued operation of existing uses.

We will only grant permission for noise generating development, including any plant and machinery, if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity. We will also seek to minimise the impact on local amenity from deliveries and from the demolition and construction phases of development.

Sources and the character of noise in Camden

- 6.86 The main sources of noise and vibration in Camden are; road traffic, railways, industrial uses, plant and mechanical equipment, food, drink and entertainment uses, and building sites. The top six sources of noise that receive the most complaints in Camden are; music, construction noise, general people noise (e.g. footsteps, gathering), parties, fixed machinery and burglar alarms.
- 6.87 There is a proliferation of fixed machinery, such as air conditioning units in Camden's centres which cumulatively can have a harmful impact. The borough is also home to a large number and variety of food, drink and entertainment uses, often close to where people live, and as a result, conflicts can arise (see "Policy TC4 Town centres uses"). Such sources of noise and the character of noise can increase stress levels and cause significant disturbance. Other sources of noise such as those associated with construction are considered in "Policy A1 Managing the impact of development", whereby measures required

to attenuate impacts are secured by legal agreement through a Construction Management Plan.

- 6.88 The aim within development proposals should be to design out noise prior to proposing mitigation. The effect of noise and vibration can be minimised by separating uses sensitive to noise and vibration from sources that generate them and by taking other design and operational measures to reduce any impact.

Assessing the impact of noise and vibration

- 6.89 Where uses sensitive to noise and vibration are proposed close to an existing source of noise or when development is likely to generate noise is proposed, the Council will require an acoustic report to accompany the application. In assessing applications, we will have regard to noise and vibration thresholds, set out in Appendix 3, and other relevant national and regional policy and guidance and British Standards. Further guidance on the application of these standards will be provided in supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on amenity.
- 6.90 Noise sensitive development includes housing, schools and hospitals as well as offices, workshops and open spaces. The impacts on external amenity spaces such as gardens and balconies will also be considered. Our supplementary planning document provides further information on how to minimise the impact of noise of developments; ways to mitigate noise emitted from developments and further detail on how the Council will assess the impact of noise and vibration.
- 6.91 Noise generating uses and fixed machinery will likely have a greater impact on amenity when the background noise level is lower or in areas where noise sensitive uses such as residential developments co-exist with other uses. The Council will take into consideration the general character of the noise (whether noise is intermittent, has a distinct screech, bang, hiss) and where appropriate, the cumulative impacts of noise from one or more noise sources and will assess whether tighter noise restrictions, secured by planning condition, should be imposed.
- 6.92 Planning permission will not normally be granted for development sensitive to noise in locations that have unacceptable levels of noise and vibration. The Council will only grant planning permission for development sensitive to noise and vibration, in locations that experience high levels of noise and for development likely to generate noise impacts, if appropriate attenuation measures can be taken. Such attenuation measures should be included on plans. Planning permission will not be granted in instances where there will be a significant adverse impact on external amenity areas including gardens, balconies and open spaces unless they can be appropriately mitigated.
- 6.93 In cases where noise sensitive development is proposed in close proximity to an existing noise generating use (such as music venues and pubs) the Council will determine whether the introduction of the sensitive use will be harmful to the existing premises continued operation. In some cases the Council may require the developer to be responsible for future costs of soundproofing (known as the “agent of change” principle), secured by a legal agreement.

- 6.94 The Council will also consider the impact of attenuation measures on the character and appearance of the building and locality (see “Policy D1 Design” and associated supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on design). Measures to mitigate the impacts of noise and vibration associated with demolition and construction will be secured by legal agreement through Construction Management Plans (“Policy A1 Managing the impact of development”).

Acoustic reports

- 6.95 Where uses sensitive to noise and vibration are proposed close to an existing source of noise or when development that is likely to generate noise is proposed, the Council will require an acoustic report to accompany the application. Supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on amenity provides further detail of the key information expected to be reported in acoustic reports.
- 6.96 Camden noise thresholds (see Appendix 3) reflect observed effect levels outlined in National Planning Practice Guidance and will be explained further in the Camden Planning Guidance on amenity supplementary planning document. The thresholds set noise levels for:
- noise sensitive development in areas of existing noise; and
 - noise generating development in areas sensitive to noise.

Internal noise levels and vibration

- 6.97 Planning permission will not be granted where it is not possible to achieve suitable and sufficient internal noise levels with reference to the most up to date and appropriate guidance. This will be of particular relevance to new residential developments in areas of existing noise but will also include other noise sensitive uses. Conditions may be imposed to require that suitable internal noise levels are achieved and where appropriate, post installation testing to demonstrate that the standards have been met.
- 6.98 The most common sources of vibration that a development is likely to be exposed to are railways and industrial or commercial sites. Where a development sensitive to vibration is proposed in an area that vibration is anticipated to be present, an appropriate vibration survey should be carried out. Where vibration levels exceed those set out in Appendix 3 the proposal should demonstrate that vibration can be mitigated to acceptable levels.

Plant and other noise generating equipment

- 6.99 Planning conditions will be imposed to require that plant and equipment which may be a source of noise is kept working efficiently and within the required noise limits and time restrictions. Air conditioning will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is a clear need for it after other measures have been considered (“Policy CC2 Adapting to climate change”). Conditions may also be imposed to ensure that attenuation measures are kept in place and are effective throughout the life of the development.
- 6.100 Emergency equipment such as generators which are only to be used for short periods of time will be required to meet the noise criteria of no more than

10dB above the background level (L90 15 minutes). During standby periods, emergency equipment will be required to meet the usual criteria for plant and machinery. Conditions to this effect may be imposed in instances where emergency equipment forms part of the application.

- 6.101 Security alarms cause significant disruption to local amenity and wellbeing. Whilst security alarms would generally not require planning permission, we would strongly encourage developers and householders to install silent alarms or alarms with a maximum of a 20 minute cut out.

Food, drink, entertainment and leisure noise

- 6.102 Assessments for noise and vibration from entertainment and leisure premises must include consideration of amplified and unamplified music, human voices, footfall and vehicle movements and general activity. The impact of noise and vibration from food, drink and entertainment uses is outlined in “Policy TC4 Town centres uses”. Generally, these uses and noise from leisure uses alter the noise environment through audio devices, amplified and unamplified music, footfall, congregations of people, plant and equipment, deliveries and transport and can be particularly evident when the background noise level is quieter.
- 6.103 Where such uses are considered acceptable planning conditions restricting opening hours will be imposed to ensure that they do not adversely impact nearby noise sensitive uses.

Delivery management

- 6.104 Deliveries, collections and the loading and unloading of goods and refuse can be a source of disruption and cause noise nuisance to nearby residential properties, particularly when undertaken at night. Therefore, to manage potential noise issues from deliveries, conditions will usually be applied to require deliveries, collections and the loading and unloading of goods and refuse take place between the hours of 08:00 to 20:00.
- 6.105 Developments requiring deliveries outside of these times will be required to provide an acoustic report to demonstrate there will be no adverse impact on the acoustic environment with particular reference to residential occupiers as a result of these activities. This could be inserted within the wider Delivery and Servicing Management Plan of the site. Regard should also be taken to the Noise Abatement Society’s silent approach quiet time delivery scheme and TfL ‘Retimed Deliveries’ to mitigate the negative effects of possible out of hours deliveries.
- 6.106 Please see “Policy T4 Sustainable movement of goods and materials” and “Policy A1 Managing the impact of development”.

Basements

- 6.107 With a shortage of development land and high land values in the borough, the development of basements is a popular way of gaining additional space in homes. Basements are also often included in developments in the Central London part of Camden and used for various purposes including commercial, retail and leisure uses, servicing and storage.
- 6.108 Basement development and other development that involves excavation changes the ground and water conditions of the area which can potentially lead to ground instability or flooding. Basement development can also have significant construction impacts due to the need to remove spoil and the general complexities of excavation. The Council recognises the need to protect the environment and adjoining neighbours properties and buildings from these impacts.
- 6.109 When this policy refers to basement development this includes basements, lightwells and other underground development.
- 6.110 A basement is a floor of a building which is partly or entirely below ground level. A ground or lower ground floor with a floor level partly below the ground level (for example on a steeply sloping site) will therefore generally be considered basement development.
- 6.111 When this policy refers to gardens and garden space this includes all outdoor (unbuilt) space on the property, including paved areas, driveways, as well as grassed or landscaped areas.
- 6.112 The following policies in this Local Plan are also relevant to basement development and will be taken into account when assessing basement schemes:
- “Policy A2 Open space”;
 - “Policy A3 Biodiversity”;
 - “Policy D1 Design”;
 - “Policy D2 Heritage”; and
 - “Policy CC3 Water and flooding”.