

1. Introduction

What is Camden Planning Guidance?

- 1.1 The Council has prepared this Camden Planning Guidance to support the policies in the Camden Local Plan 2017. This guidance is therefore consistent with the Local Plan and forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which is an additional “material consideration” in planning decisions.
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with, and within the context of, the relevant policies in the Camden’s Local Plan 2017.
- 1.3 The Council formally adopted this CPG on basements on 26th March 2018 following statutory consultation. This documents replaces Camden Planning Guidance 4: Basements and Lightwells (July 2015).

Basements in Camden

- 1.4 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 without having to relocate. Basements are also a typical feature of the Central London part of Camden and used for various purposes including commercial, retail and leisure uses, servicing and storage. However, while basement developments can help to make efficient use of the borough’s limited land, they have the potential to cause harm to the amenity of neighbours, affect the stability of buildings, cause drainage or flooding problems, or damage the character of areas and the natural environment.

Defining basements

- 1.5 The introduction to Policy A5 of the Local Plan states:
“When this policy refers to basement development this includes basements, lightwells and other underground development. ...
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. (Camden Local Plan paragraph 6.109)”
- 1.6 Whether a storey of a building should be considered a basement in applying Policy A5 of Camden’s Local Plan is a matter of fact and degree and the Council will consider each scheme on its merits.
- 1.7 When identifying a basement the Council will generally consider that a basement is a floor that is predominantly under the prevailing ground level of the site.
- 1.8 Where a building is located on sloping land and there is a change in level across a site, a storey which is accessed at ground level at one side of the site (with no steps or ramp) will generally not be considered a

basement, unless the site has been excavated to allow access to that floor.

What does this guidance cover?

- 1.9 This guidance gives detailed advice on how we will apply planning policies when making decisions on new basement development or extensions to existing basement accommodation.
- 1.10 Policy A5 of the Camden Local Plan requires applicants to consider a scheme's impact on local drainage and flooding and the potential effects on neighbouring properties including on groundwater conditions and ground movement. Section 3 of this guidance document sets out how basement impact assessments need to provide evidence on these matters.
- 1.11 This guidance supports policy A5 Basements in Camden's Local Plan. Other relevant policies in the Local Plan include:
- A1 Managing the impact of development
 - D2 Heritage
 - CC3 Water and flooding
 - A3 Biodiversity
- 1.12 Please note that there are other matters outside of the scope of this guidance that applicants should address when proposing new basement development. These include design, heritage, sustainability and the water environment. The Council's approach to these, and other issues, is set out in the Local Plan and Camden Planning Guidance.

When does this guidance apply?

- 1.13 This guidance applies to all developments in Camden that propose a new basement or other underground development, or an extension to existing basement or other underground development. Underground developments may include ground or lower ground floors where excavation is required, for example when a ground floor is extended further into sloping land requiring excavation.

Article 4 Direction for basement development

- 1.14 To manage the impacts of basement developments across the borough the Council has made a non-immediate Article 4 Direction which removes permitted development rights for basement development. The Article 4 direction came into force on 1 June 2017.
- 1.15 Previously under 'permitted development' rights planning permission was generally not required for a basement that is built entirely underneath a property and does not extend beyond it, for example, underneath the garden or surrounding land.
- 1.16 The Article 4 direction removed this right so that all basement or lightwell excavations in the borough will need planning permission and will be assessed against the Council's planning policies. The proposed Article 4 Direction applies to the whole of the London Borough of Camden. Further information on can be found at: www.camden.gov.uk/article4directions

Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.17 Many areas in Camden have neighbourhood plans or are in the process of developing them. Some neighbourhood plans have local policies on basement development. Basement development schemes should comply with policies in relevant neighbourhood plans as well as Local Plan policies (in particular policy A5 on basements) and this guidance. To identify if your property is affected by a neighbourhood plan please refer to www.camden.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

Basements and lightwells

KEY MESSAGES

- Basement development must not cause harm to:
 - neighbouring properties;
 - the structural, ground, or water conditions of the area;
 - the character and amenity of the area; and
 - the architectural character and heritage significance of the building and area.
- The siting, location, scale and design of basements must have minimal impact on, and be subordinate to, the host building and property.
- Basement development must be no more than one storey deep and must not exceed 50% of the garden of the property.
- Applicants will be required to submit information relating to the above within a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) which is specific to the site and particular proposed development.
- In some instances the Council will require a Basement Construction Plan to be provided.
- The Council strongly encourages applicants to use the Council's BIA proforma to ensure that all aspects of this assessment are addressed.
- To ensure the right people are engaged in the preparation of a BIA, the Council has published a 'Scope of Services' document.
- BIAs will require expert independent verification funded by the applicant. Applicants should use the Council's BIA proforma in preparing BIAs.
- An Article 4 Direction covers the whole of the London Borough of Camden meaning that all basement development requires planning permission.

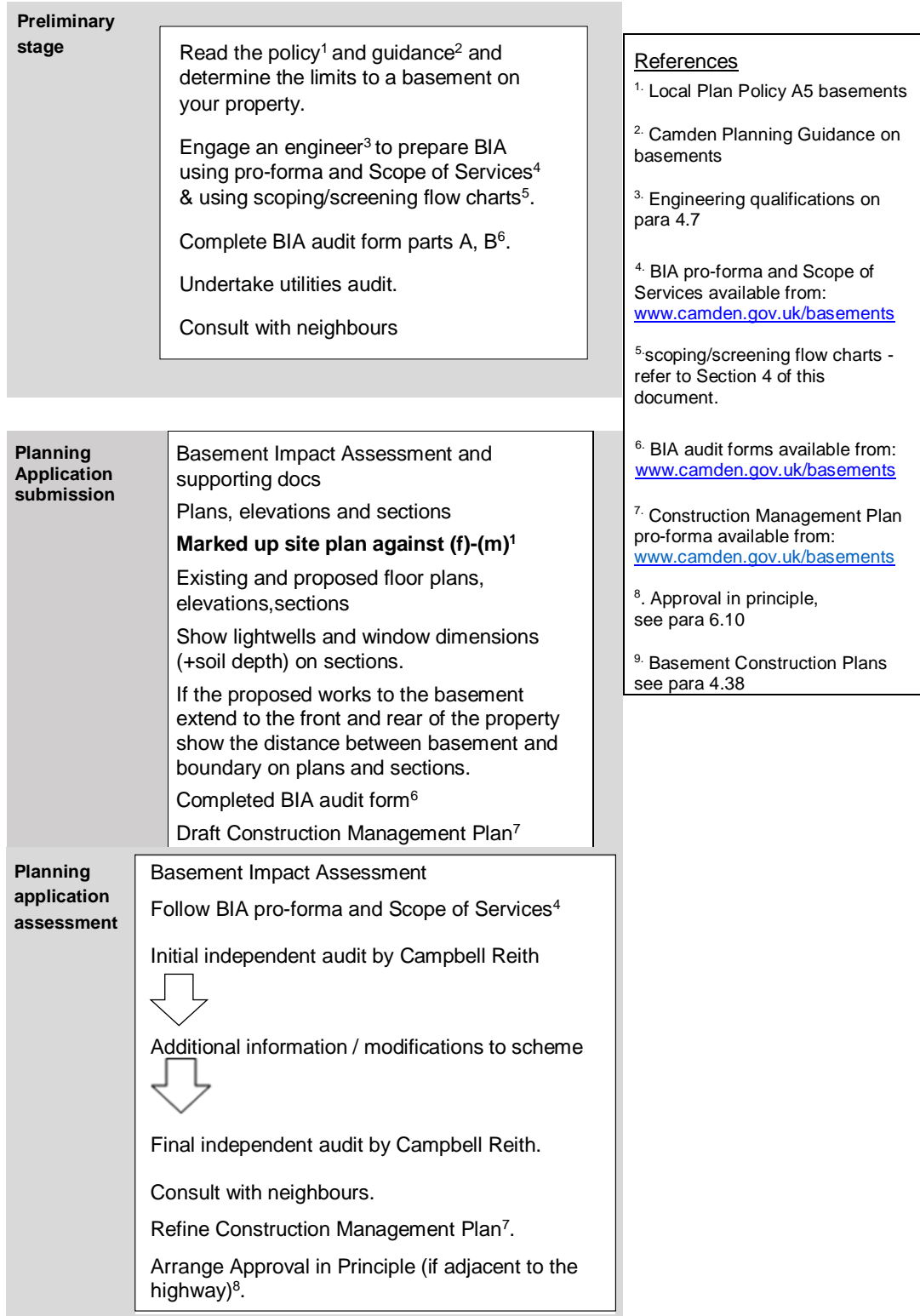
Planning and design considerations

- 1.18 Basements schemes should take place in a way that ensures they:
- do not harm neighbouring properties including not placing occupiers at risk or have any significant effects on the stability or bearing capacity of adjacent land generally;
 - do not harm the water environment including avoid adversely affecting drainage, run-off, or ground permeability;
 - avoid cumulative impacts including impacts on the structural stability or the water environment in the local area, including flooding;
 - do not harm the recognised architectural character of buildings and surrounding areas, including gardens and nearby trees, and that conservation area character is preserved or enhanced;
 - conserve the biodiversity value of the site; and
 - achieve sustainable development.

Summary flowchart

1.19 Basement development is a complex and technical process and developers need to be aware of the major tasks when planning to excavate a basement. The flowchart below has been produced to assist in this process.

Figure 1. Summary flowchart for basement developments



**Section 106 /
after
determination**

Construction Management Plan⁷

Approval in Principle (if adjacent to
the highway)⁸

Basement Construction Plan (if
required)⁹

Maintain engineer on site

Engage with neighbours throughout
construction