

10 Minicab offices

KEY MESSAGES

- The Council will seek to minimise any impacts caused by minicab offices relating to emissions, noise, highway and traffic problems, and community safety
- The Council will resist minicab offices in locations which adjoin residential accommodation

- 10.1 This section provides guidance on the provision of minicab offices in Camden, setting out the main issues which should be considered in order to minimise their impact, and the most appropriate locations for them.
- 10.2 It relates to policy DP12 - *Supporting strong centres and managing the impact of food, drink, entertainment and other town uses* of the Camden Development Policies.

When does this apply?

- 10.3 This guidance applies to all applications concerning minicab hire offices, including both change of use applications and proposals for extensions and internal and external alterations to existing premises.
- 10.4 In some circumstances mini-cab offices fall within the B1a use class, specifically where cabs are controlled remotely from a small office. For a mini-cab office to be considered within such a use the premises would have no defined frontage distinct from the existing office accommodation and the presence of the mini-cab office would not be advertised outside. The intent therefore would be to remotely control drivers and not to attract passing trade to come into the premises to order cabs. There would be no element of taxis ranking up, whether formally or informally, to pick up customers from the premises.

How should minicab offices be provided?

- 10.5 Minicabs make a valuable contribution to the transport needs of Camden's residents and workers and provide new business opportunities and employment. However, we must balance the needs of minicab businesses with the need to minimise traffic congestion and protect residents from undue disturbance, particularly as minicab offices tend to operate for 24 hours a day. Particular issues that may arise from minicab offices are emissions and noise, highway and traffic problems, community safety and the fear of crime.

Location

- 10.6 Policy DP12 in Camden Development Policies acknowledges that town and neighbourhood centres are generally the most appropriate location for minicab offices although we will carefully consider their potential

impact when assessing planning applications to make sure that they do not harm the centre or the amenity of neighbours.

- 10.7 We will resist minicab offices in locations which adjoin residential accommodation.
- 10.8 We welcome the use of radio-controlled vehicles since this reduces the need for drivers to return to the office for each fare which, in turn, should reduce any disturbance to nearby residents and minimise traffic congestion.

Extensions

- 10.9 Should you wish to extend an existing minicab office, or change its appearance you may need to apply for planning permission, and you should contact the Council to check. If the building is listed you may need listed building consent for alterations both inside and outside. Further advice on listed buildings is contained within CPG1 Design (Heritage).
- 10.10 Extensions should not occupy car parking or access areas. Where this is proposed you will be required to reprovide parking and provide a new access. Extensions or alterations that make access for vehicles dangerous will not be permitted. Further general guidance is provided in CPG1 Design (Extensions, alterations and conservatories).

Additional controls

- 10.11 The following additional controls may apply to minicab offices:

Off-street parking

- 10.12 Minicab offices should, where possible, provide off-street car parking for drivers visiting the office. This parking should be located within or in close proximity to the office site.

Advertisements and shopfronts

- 10.13 Minicab offices will be subject to the same controls on advertising and shopfronts as other town centre uses. You should refer to CPG1 Design for detailed guidance on Advertisements, signs and hoardings and Shopfronts.

Soundproofing

- 10.14 Soundproofing may protect adjoining premises from noise disturbance. This is particularly important where minicab offices include waiting rooms for customers. Internal soundproofing cannot, however, reduce outdoor noise from car doors, slamming, engines, horns etc or alleviate the disadvantages of an inappropriate location.

Satellite dishes and antennae

- 10.15 Satellite dishes or radio antennae may be required and this equipment should be away from the view of nearby residential properties or public areas. If the building is listed, or in a conservation area, special care is required to ensure that the equipment does not affect the traditional character of the building or its setting. Additional guidance is contained within CPG1 Design (Heritage and Building services equipment). Please note that satellite dishes and radio antennae may require permission from the council before they are erected.

Access

- 10.16 If customers can visit your offices you should try to ensure that it is accessible to all members of the public. Further guidance on the measures that could be introduced to enable this is contained within Camden Planning Guidance on access for all.

Marshalled Taxi Ranks

- 10.17 The Council is keen to introduce marshalled taxi ranks in busier nightlife areas such as Camden Town, in order to ensure the safe loading of passengers into taxis and to help reduce any alcohol-related problems which may arise in such locations. Should a managed taxi rank be introduced, community safety will be a key issue and we will encourage the installation of additional lighting, security cameras and regular police patrols to monitor the area.