

5.12 Camden Town South

Brief description

Camden Town South is defined by Camden High Street to the west, Crowndale Road / Somers Town to the south, the mainline rail corridor from St Pancras station to the east and Agar Grove to the north.

The western part of the area is laid out in a gridded pattern with the main routes north-south connecting Camden Town towards Euston Road and central London to the south. The eastern part of the area is fractured by infrastructure including the rail lines emanating from St Pancras mainline station and the Regents Canal. The London Overground line from Caledonian Road to Camden Road crossing east-west creates a further barrier to movement through the area.

The infrastructure has a major impact on the area isolating some parts. In places employment uses adjacent to this infrastructure reduces access and permeability further. This is particularly apparent in the eastern portion of the area where accessibility to the canal is restricted by large sheds, depots and by the St Pancras Hospital. Housing to the east is sandwiched between the canal and by storage and distribution facilities on Camley Street.

Much of the historic fabric has been replaced by post-war estates and some of these are laid out in a manner that restricts movement further and creates a fragmented urban fabric.



Figure 5.46: Camden Town South Context Analysis



Figure 5.47: Camden Town South Historic Plan 1862

Historical development

In 1800 the area was open fields and change came about following the opening of the Regents Canals in 1820, the Euston mainline in 1837 and St Pancras main line in 1868. A grid of streets was established across the western portion of the area, however the eastern portion was primarily utilised to support the new rail infrastructure with extensive goods yards and coal depots.



Figure 5.48: Camden Town South Historic Plan 1890

The area was heavily bombed in WWII and post-war redevelopment has introduced several residential estates where rows of terraced properties once stood with the loss of some connected streets.

In later years rail land has been developed with the Maiden Lane estate on a former coal depot, and housing and employment uses to either side of Camley Street on the site of goods and coal yards.

Public transport accessibility

The western part of the area benefits from good public transport accessibility and has a PTAL of 5-6a. There are three stations in the area Mornington Crescent, Camden Town and Camden Road and frequent bus services. However accessibility for areas to the east falls to level 1b to 3.

Socio-economic issues

The area is one of the most deprived in the Borough and ranks as:

- Within the 10% most deprived areas in respect of Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Within the 10% most deprived in respect of income deprivation and health and disability deprivation; and
- Within the 10-20% most deprived in respect of employment deprivation.

Existing character

The western portion of the area is structured on a grid of streets with Victorian development still evident on the northerly portion and a number of post-war estates on the southern portion. These estates are laid out on larger blocks and are of greater scale than the Victorian housing typically 4-6 storeys rather than 3 storeys. Interspersed with the Victorian housing are a number of substantial and impressive Victorian factories now converted to workspace. This area is integrated into Camden Town through a permeable network of streets.

To the east, and either side of the canal, the environment is less well integrated and poorly planned. Employment uses remain alongside the canal to the west side and these limit access; to the east the opportunity to create waterside living has not been fully exploited and this area has been developed with relatively low density inward looking housing.

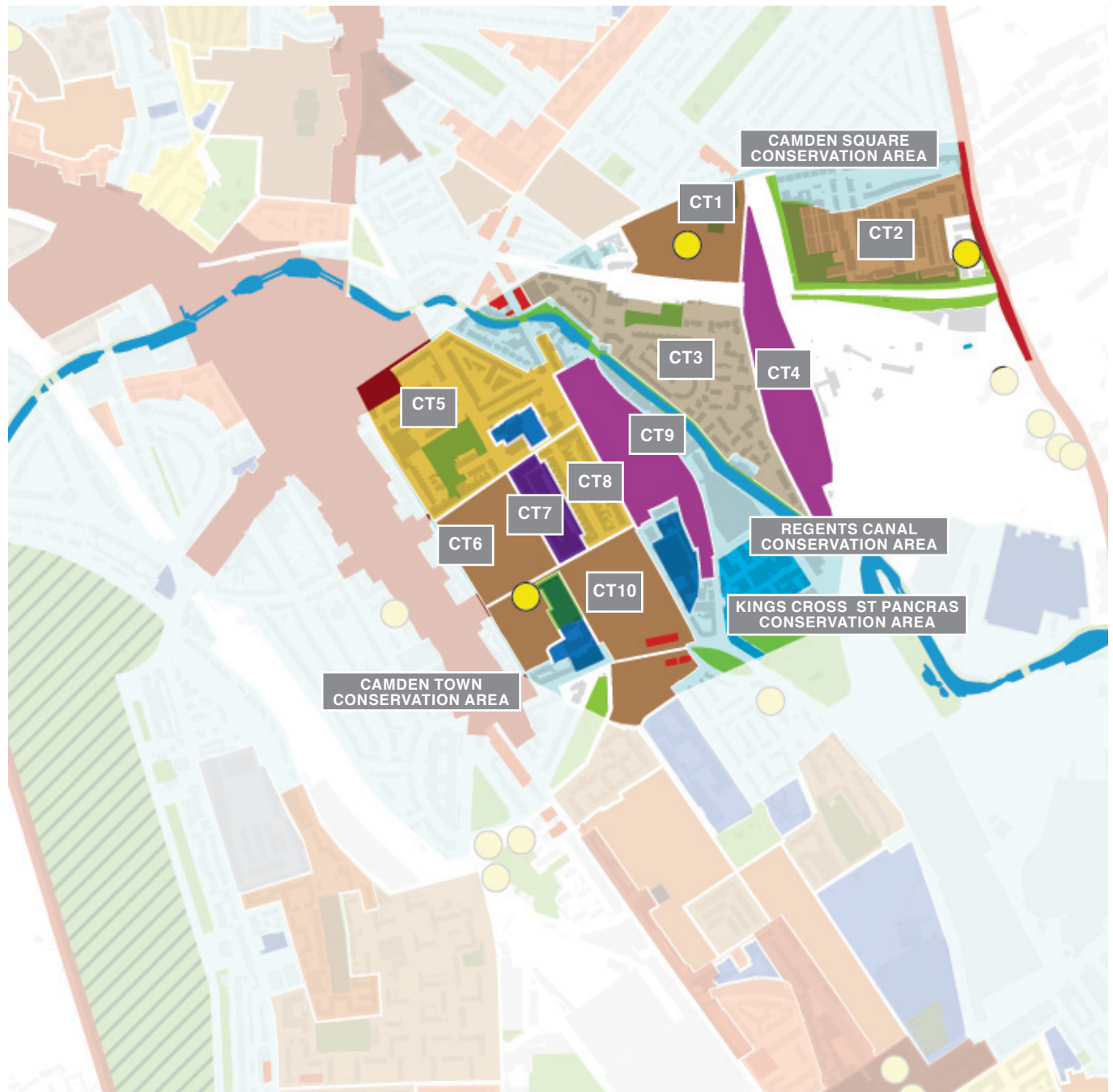


Figure 5.49: Camden Town South Character Areas

Further north Agar Grove and Maiden Lane Estates are isolated by both railway infrastructure and their internalised layouts.

Identity

This area turns to Camden Town for its centre. The former Victorian factories on Camden Street together with All Saints Greek Orthodox Church are the most notable buildings and help to provide identity. The canal feels like an underutilised asset.

Retaining character

The Victorian fabric provides a robust structure with properties fronting onto the residential streets. The character of these streets can be slowly eroded through paving over front gardens and changes to boundary conditions and this should be resisted.

The post-war estates provide a variety of models some of which function better than others. Estate regeneration is taking place in some areas and this seeks to remodel areas that work least well, replacing poorer homes and enhancing connections and animation of these connections. Where buildings are retained the simplicity of forms and the design aspiration that this embodies should be retained.

Opportunities for change

The larger space hungry employment sites on Camley Street and St Pancras Way offer opportunity to intensify development within this area and this could be promoted in conjunction with improvements in connectivity and public transport accessibility. Several post-war estates are laid out in a manner that exacerbates the poor connectivity in parts of the area. These could be remodeled or redeveloped to create a better functioning neighbourhood.



From top left, clockwise:
New development overlooking the canal; Victorian buildings on Camden Street; modest homes adjacent the canal; post-war development on Pratt Street and housing at Agar Grove.

CT1 - Agar Grove Estate



Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - MEDIUM/HIGH RISE

Building type / age	Post-war residential flatted estate
Scale and massing	Typically 4 storey blocks with 18 storey tower
Street character / building interface	Blocks set within a landscaped estate and with poor interface with street
Interface with surrounding area	Connectivity through the estate lacks legibility and movement restricted by rail lines to south and east
Public realm character	Blocks are set within open grass areas but these offer limited amenity. Some mature trees
Opportunity for improvements	HIGH: Potential to remodel estate and to intensify the site. Planning permission granted for redevelopment (see application 2013/8088/P)

CT2 - Maiden Lane Estate



Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - LOW RISE

Building type / age	Distinctive modernist residential flatted estate built in the late 1970's
Scale and massing	2- 4 storey blocks laid out as north-south terraces
Street character / building interface	Blocks front internal streets but layout is illegible. Poor interface with York Way to the east
Interface with surrounding area	Estate only accessible from two points and acts as a barrier to movement through the area.
Public realm character	Network of paved routes link internal spaces within the estate. Few street trees
Opportunity for improvements	MEDIUM: Former employment site on York Way being developed. Potential for some remodelling



CT3 - Barkers Drive

Typology: LATE 20TH CENTURY ESTATES



Building type / age	Late 20th Century residential estate
Scale and massing	2-4 storey houses and flats
Street character / building interface	Homes accessed off a series of cul de sacs and housing courts. Front and back conflicts
Interface with surrounding area	Illegible network of streets. Railway line, canal and employment areas restrict connections and integration
Public realm character	Street design depends on role with shared surface minor routes well landscaped; main routes are less attractive. Public realm needs renewal in places
Opportunity for improvements	LOW: Some investment required in public realm. Could take better advantage of views of canal

CT4 - Camley Street

Typology: INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



Building type / age	Small and medium scale industrial and storage sheds
Scale and massing	Single storey sheds
Street character / building interface	Poor frontage to street
Interface with surrounding area	Accessed off north-south Camley Street but east-west movement restricted by rail line to the east
Public realm character	Unattractive hardstandings
Opportunity for improvements	HIGH: Potential to redevelop the area to intensify uses and enhance environment although connections to Camden Town are limited



CT5 - Pratt Street North



Typology: VICTORIAN TERRACES (LARGE)

Building type / age	Terraces of Victorian homes, some listed
Scale and massing	Typically 3 storey
Street character / building interface	Buildings provide positive interface with street. Some workspace in backlands. On street parking
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network
Public realm character	Properties are set behind front gardens with railings providing the boundary treatment. Street trees and planting in front gardens adds to character of street
Opportunity for improvements	LOW: Resist loss of front gardens and introduce more street tree planting

CT6 - Curnock Street Estate



Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - MEDIUM/HIGH RISE

Building type / age	Post-war residential flatted estates
Scale and massing	4-6 storey blocks
Street character / building interface	Blocks arranged around internal courts with mature trees. Frontage to main streets but internal; layout confusing
Interface with surrounding area	Contrasts with surrounding built form and barrier to movement as estate is impenetrable
Public realm character	Public realm in need of investment but mature trees and planting enhance the character
Opportunity for improvements	MEDIUM: Investment required in public realm and there may be potential to address urban design weaknesses



CT7 - Mandela Street



Typology: CONVERTED FACTORIES / STUDIOS

Building type / age	Turn of the Century factories converted to studios
Scale and massing	4-5 storey but high floor to ceilings
Street character / building interface	Substantial buildings on the main street corners and employment space fronting onto mews street to the rear
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network
Public realm character	High quality public realm treatment with street street recently introduced
Opportunity for improvements	LOW: Public realm recently enhanced

CT8 - College Place



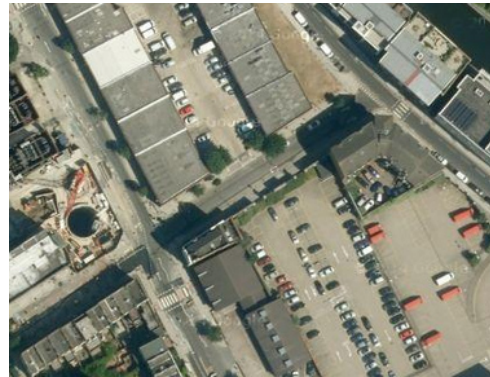
Typology: VICTORIAN TERRACES (LARGE)

Building type / age	Terraces of Victorian homes
Scale and massing	Typically 3 storey. On street car parking
Street character / building interface	Buildings provide positive interface with street.
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network but movement eastwards constrained by uses and canal
Public realm character	Properties are set behind front gardens with low walls providing the boundary treatment. Street trees and planting in front gardens adds to character of street
Opportunity for improvements	LOW: Resist loss of front gardens and introduce more street tree planting



CT9 - St Pancras Way

Typology: INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



Building type / age	Small scale industrial sheds and depot site
Scale and massing	Single storey
Street character / building interface	Internally focused and providing no frontage to the surrounding streets
Interface with surrounding area	Incongruous use adjacent residential uses and the canal
Public realm character	Basic footways and hardstandings
Opportunity for improvements	HIGH: Potential to redevelop site for mixed-use and to improve connectivity between Camden Town and Camley Street / King Cross

CT10 - Camden Street Estates

Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - MEDIUM/HIGH RISE



Building type / age	Post-war brick built residential estates
Scale and massing	Typically 4 storey
Street character / building interface	Blocks structured around internal courtyards and entrances internalised resulting in a lack of direct frontage to the street
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network but movement eastwards constrained by uses and canal
Public realm character	Blocks structured around courtyards but amenity value of spaces is poor. Public realm needs investment
Opportunity for improvements	MEDIUM - investment required in public realm and there may be potential to address urban design weaknesses

