

Planning Framework for the Tottenham Court Road Station & St Giles High Street Area

Planning brief No 37 Adopted July 2004





Camden

Map 2: Map of St Giles' Area



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1 Purpose

Changes in the Area

1.1 The area around Tottenham Court Road Station and St Giles High Street is likely to experience considerable changes over the next ten years. Several projects and major redevelopment proposals in the area are at different stages of preparation. Chief amongst them are:

- » Enlargement of the **Tottenham Court Road Underground Station ticket hall**. Current proposals envisage the closure of Andrew Borde Street to create a site for the new main entrance to the station.
- » Implementation of the proposed **Crossrail 1 and Crossrail 2 schemes**. These are planned to intersect at a new Tottenham Court Road Station likely to be constructed immediately to the south of the underground station to which it would be linked.
- » Development of the 7,500m² (0.75 ha) **St Giles Court site**, now occupied by a post war 8 storey office building of little architectural merit.
- » Development of the 4,000m² (0.4ha) **Denmark Place Site** to the south of Centre Point.
- » Development of the vacant and boarded Old Post Office that occupies a 4,000m² (0.4ha) site at **Nos 21-31 New Oxford Street**
- » Development of **264-267 Tottenham Court Road**.

1.2 Camden Council has held discussions on all of these initiatives, each one of which will involve a substantial investment and each will have a significant effect on the area. Some are included in the Council's adopted UDP and/or Replacement UDP in the Proposals Schedules.

1.3 As well as the major sites under discussion, other properties within the area are likely to undergo refurbishment and change of use. Planning consent subject to the signing of a section 106 agreement was granted in June 2002 for the change of use of Selkirk House, at 166 High Holborn from Class B1 offices to a 184 bed hotel with a restaurant and bar at ground and lower ground level. In July 2003, consent was granted for the change of use of the ground and basement from a car park to wine bar, provision of a new 8th floor for office uses and alterations to all elevations of Albion House, 55 New Oxford Street.

1.4 Other changes initiated by the Council will also affect the area. In June 2004 after wide public consultation the Council adopted Central London Area Supplementary Planning Guidance (CL SPG) to protect specialist central London business uses and control over-concentration of food, drink and entertainment uses. This framework reflects the guidance in the CL SPG.

1.5 Under its Central London Clear Zone Initiative, the Council is also seeking to reprioritise road space away from private vehicles and towards encouraging walking, cycling and use of public transport. A first step involves the experimental closure of part of Museum Street north of New Oxford Street to motor traffic to improve pedestrian facilities connecting Bloomsbury, the home of the British Museum, and Covent Garden, a major cultural and visitor destination in Central London.

1.6 Immediately beyond the boundary of the borough, the City of Westminster is also embarking on a number of initiatives that will impact on this area. It has commenced drafting four site briefs at the Astoria, Charing Cross Road, Dean St and Newman St sites and it is preparing an Action Plan for Soho as part of the West End Initiative. In addition, the New West End Company (NWE), promoting a pilot Business Improvement District (BID) covering Oxford Street, Bond Street, and Regent Street, has been established. Working in collaboration with the City of Westminster, NWE is preparing a Masterplan for Oxford Street that will extend to the Camden border.

1.7 The West End Drugs partnership (WEDP) is a cross-border partnership between the boroughs of Camden and Westminster, to provide a coordinated multi-agency response to problems of drug abuse and related anti-social behaviour in the area. WEDP was formed early in 2003 and includes community organisations such as the Bloomsbury Association, Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA), Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and Soho Society (Westminster). Its activities concentrate on the area covered by this planning framework.

This Framework

1.8 These developments and initiatives create a highly complex set of planning issues. This Area Planning Framework seeks to bring them together to provide a guide for decision making in the area and to ensure that developments achieve maximum and widely distributed benefits to Camden as a whole. The framework should be considered to be a bridge between the general provisions of Camden's UDP and the more specific requirements of individual site briefs being prepared for the key sites in the area.

1.9 Having been adopted by the Council's Executive, this area framework has the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance, and as such it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for developments in the area.

1.10 This planning framework sets out a vision for the development of the area over the next ten years and so needs to reflect adopted planning policies as well as refer to emerging policies. It therefore reflects the Council's policies set down in the UDP adopted in March 2000 and the Alterations adopted in January 2004 as well as makes references to those in the Revised Deposit Draft Replacement UDP agreed by the Council March 2004. A public inquiry is programmed to commence in December 2004, and it is anticipated that the Council will adopt the Replacement Plan early in 2006. In March 2004 the Council also agreed to apply the policies in the Replacement UDP for development control purposes.

1.11 This framework is not a plan for the Tottenham Court Road Area for Intensification (Afl) which the 2004 London Plan envisages will be designated. The London Plan give indicative estimates of growth up to 2016, comprising 2,000 new jobs and 200 new homes in an area of 10ha in a Tottenham Court Road Afl within Camden and Westminster, and it says that policies for development in Afls should exploit their public transport accessibility through higher densities and more intensive use. The London Plan says that the detailed boundaries, capacity and policies will be developed in participation with local communities, in Subregional Frameworks and in UDPs. Where it coincides with the area covered by this framework, it would be expected to reflect this framework's objectives, priorities and constraints and take account of any development it helps to bring into effect.

1.12 The findings and recommendations of a number of other studies of the St Giles Area are also reflected in this planning framework. These include:

- » A 1998 study by Land Use Consultants who were commissioned by English Heritage working in partnership with Camden and Westminster Councils, GOL, LPAC, London Transport and MEPC who at that time owned Centre Point. This study examined opportunities for improving the environment around St Giles Circus and Princes Circus. Land Use Consultants published their recommendations in a two volume study entitled - 'St Giles and Princes Circus Urban Quality Project'.
- » report in 2000 by Intelligent Space, commissioned by Camden Council, examining Pedestrian Movements and accidents in St Giles Circus.
- » A March 2000 Report by Space Syntax, entitled 'Princes Circus: Report on the Strategic Redesign Study'. This study was commissioned by the London Borough of Camden to develop new public space designs for Princes Circus.
- » A report in 2001 by Urban Initiatives, commissioned by London Underground, into congestion relief for Covent Garden. This report discussed capacity issues of several West End Underground stations including

Tottenham Court Road and discussed the options for new pedestrian routes into Covent Garden, some of which ran through the area covered by this framework.

1.13 Very many other sources of useful information exist about St Giles and surrounding areas. The St Giles Renaissance Forum Website: <http://www.camdenet.org.uk/groups/stgiles/> carries links to many of these.

1.14 Concurrently with drafting this planning framework, the Council has also prepared planning briefs for 3 major sites within the area, which set out its more detailed expectations for each site. Further briefs may be prepared for other sites if and when they are required. These briefs, which also have the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance were written to be consistent with the contents of this framework as well as the UDP.

Consultation

1.15 There are many individuals, groups, businesses and organisations who the Council considers to be 'stakeholders' in this area. Those who are likely to be amongst the most active are included in Section 3 in a list of 'Major Stakeholders', and in preparing this planning framework the Council has sought to obtain the views of these groups and of the wider community as a whole.

1.16 An extensive two month public consultation programme on the Area Framework and the briefs for the three sites was therefore undertaken between 1 December 2003 and 30 January 2004. Approximately 1200 residents and local businesses were notified of the draft documents, together with approximately 80 local amenity groups, residents associations, tenants associations and community groups. Statutory consultees including the City of Westminster, GLA, TfL, London Underground, London Buses, Crossrail, English Heritage, the Metropolitan Police, and the major Heritage groups were also written to. An externally facilitated Community Planning Day was held in the area to foster community involvement. The major issues that arose from the consultation programme are summarised in Box 1 and the report to the 7 July 2004 Executive carries full details of the Council's response to them.

1.17 Over the coming years many different organisations and individuals will make decisions about the area that will affect the way that it changes and it is likely that this Area Planning Framework may need to be reviewed at some point in the future. In addition, further studies are likely to be required to supplement the present document. Such further work is likely to require further consultation.

1.18 Additional consultation will also occur in connection with individual planning applications and through the statutory processes for implementation of the proposed major transport improvements.

Box 1: Main Issues to Emerge from the Public Consultation

- » **Support for the Principle of a Planning Framework** Respondents acknowledged the area is likely to change and saw the framework as a useful way to manage it.
- » **Concern About Completeness** Many feel the framework does not resolve enough questions.
- » **The Framework Area Boundary** Arguments were made both for widening and narrowing the area boundary.
- » **Intensification** There is much local concern about the implications of any intensification of uses in this area.
- » **Building heights** Opinion diverges on the suitability of the area for taller buildings.
- » **Traffic Circulation** There are conflicting priorities on the best use of the limited public highway space.
- » **Public Realm** There is very wide support for improvements to the public realm.
- » **New Residential Uses** There is strong support for more homes and related community facilities.
- » **A3 and Entertainment Uses** Different views exist on the acceptability of new A3 and entertainment uses.
- » **Conservation** There is a strong consensus that the area's heritage must be preserved.
- » **Impact of Redevelopment** There is considerable local concern about the likely impact of major construction activities.

Structure of the Document

1.19 The document describes the main characteristics of the area and then suggests principles for guiding the changes that will occur over the next ten years.

1.20 Section 2 defines the Area, describes its main characteristics and identifies the major environmental issues that need to be addressed.

1.21 Section 3 sets out a vision that describes the way the Council would like to see the Area change in the future.

1.22 Sections 4 to 6 look at 3 topic areas - land use, transport and circulation, and heritage, public realm and design. Each section begins by detailing the broad objective for the topic area and continues by explaining the main measures required to pursue Camden's vision. The sections on land use and on heritage, public realm and design conclude with boxes that carry more detailed comments on the key corridors, sites and areas.

1.23 Section 7 concludes by identifying the first steps that Camden Council is taking to put these objectives into effect.

2 Description of the Area

The Boundary

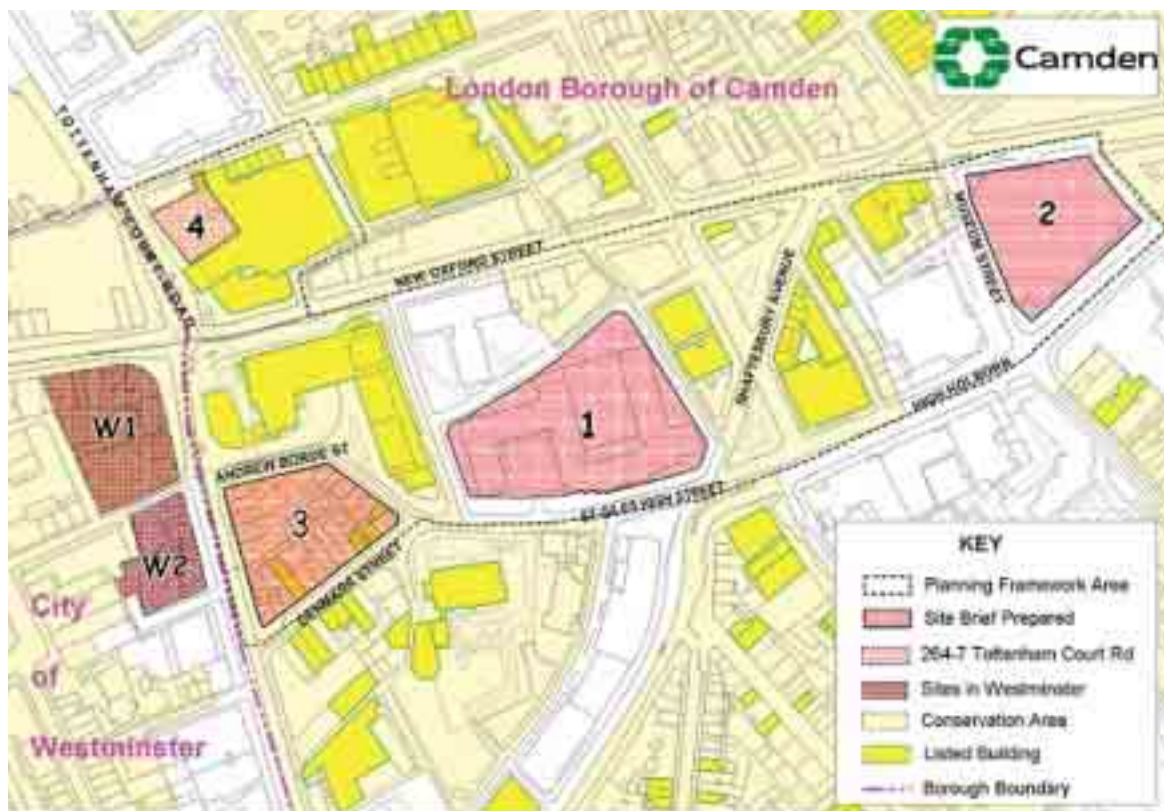
2.1 The Framework covers an area of 6.35 ha (Map2)

2.2 It includes those sites within the vicinity of Tottenham Court Road Underground Station and St Giles High Street where major change is likely to occur and where landowners have indicated to the Council that they are considering development of their sites.

2.3 The crossroads at Tottenham Court Road Station, where Oxford Street/New Oxford Street intersects with Tottenham Court Road/Charing Cross Road, is a key visual and movement focus, marked by Centre Point. The Framework Area extends some 450 metres to the east of the station and includes the Dominion Theatre block on Tottenham Court Road and land bounded by New Oxford Street, High Holborn, St Giles High Street, Denmark Street and Charing Cross Road.

2.4 Map 2 shows that many buildings that are protected by Conservation Area and listed building designation are included within the Area. This is inevitable given the large number of historically and architecturally important buildings in this part of London. The fact that a particular building is included in the Area does not in any way imply that the Council considers that it is a candidate for redevelopment or that appropriate Conservation Areas or Listed Building policies will not apply.

Map 2: The Area Boundary



2.5 Map 2 highlights three important sites that have been the subject of recent informal redevelopment proposals. These are at (1) St Giles Court, (2) 21-31 New Oxford Street and (3) Denmark Place. Each of these three sites is the subject of a separate planning brief that provides site specific guidance explaining what the Council will seek when it is redeveloped.

2.6 A fourth site, at 264-267 Tottenham Court Road (4) has been the subject of a recent application for redevelopment (PSX0105269) accompanied by applications for Conservation Area Consent (CSX0105270) to demolish the unlisted property and Listed Building Consent (LSX0105268) for internal and external alterations to the attached Grade II listed building at 5 Great Russell Street. These proposals were the subject of planning appeals and were examined at a 2003 public inquiry. The Inspector found that demolition of 264-267 Tottenham

Court Road would be acceptable provided a replacement development was appropriate. The principles of such a replacement including its height, mix of uses, access arrangements, absence of parking and the treatment and appearance of the façade were all discussed at the inquiry and, where there was disagreement, ruled upon by the Inspector. The Council will consider any further proposals for this site in the context of the Inspector's decision, which is in line with the Council's policies, and it will not draft a separate planning brief for this site.

2.7 Situated as it is on the boundary between Camden and Westminster, the Framework Area is confined to the London Borough of Camden. Within Westminster, there are a number of important sites adjoining the framework area, most particularly the Astoria and Goslett Yard sites on the west side of Charing Cross Road (marked W1 and W2 on Map 2), that are likely to be redeveloped as part of the Tottenham Court Road Station and Crossrail schemes. It is understood that the City of Westminster is reviewing its longstanding briefs for these sites.

2.8 Just outside the Framework Area are buildings that have considerable importance in this part of city, and they form a crucial part of the context for future development in the Area. Foremost amongst these is the Grade 1 listed church of St Giles in the Fields and its historic churchyard. Also just outside the Framework boundary are several important residential buildings, including those on New Compton Street and Bedford Court Mansions. When new proposals are discussed, some of the most important matters to consider will be how best to maximise the benefits in the neighbouring areas and minimise impacts. The Framework reflects this importance by its frequent reference to nearby buildings and other features.

History of the Area

2.9 These days, the Area covered by this Framework lacks a strong identity, but it has a long and important history. From Roman times until the mid 19th century, St Giles High Street was the main road into London from the west, and the Area thus served as an important route into the City. In the Middle Ages the City's gallows at St Giles Circus and a prisoners' cage in St Giles High Street greeted visitors arriving into London. In the 18th and 19th century the area became a home to migrants pouring into London. It was known as 'the Rookery' and was notorious for its poverty, crime, disease and overcrowding.

2.10 The area changed from the second half of the 19th century when several new wide roads, including New Oxford Street to link Oxford Street with Holborn, Shaftesbury Avenue, Charing Cross Road, and Endell Street were driven through the jumble of unplanned streets. WWII bomb damage and subsequent reconstruction led to loss of much of the remaining original street pattern. In the 1960s the Centre Point Tower was constructed to a plan that included a large roundabout at its foot. The latter was abandoned together with other planned highway improvements along Charing Cross Road leaving the area looking unfinished and unresolved.

Area Characteristics

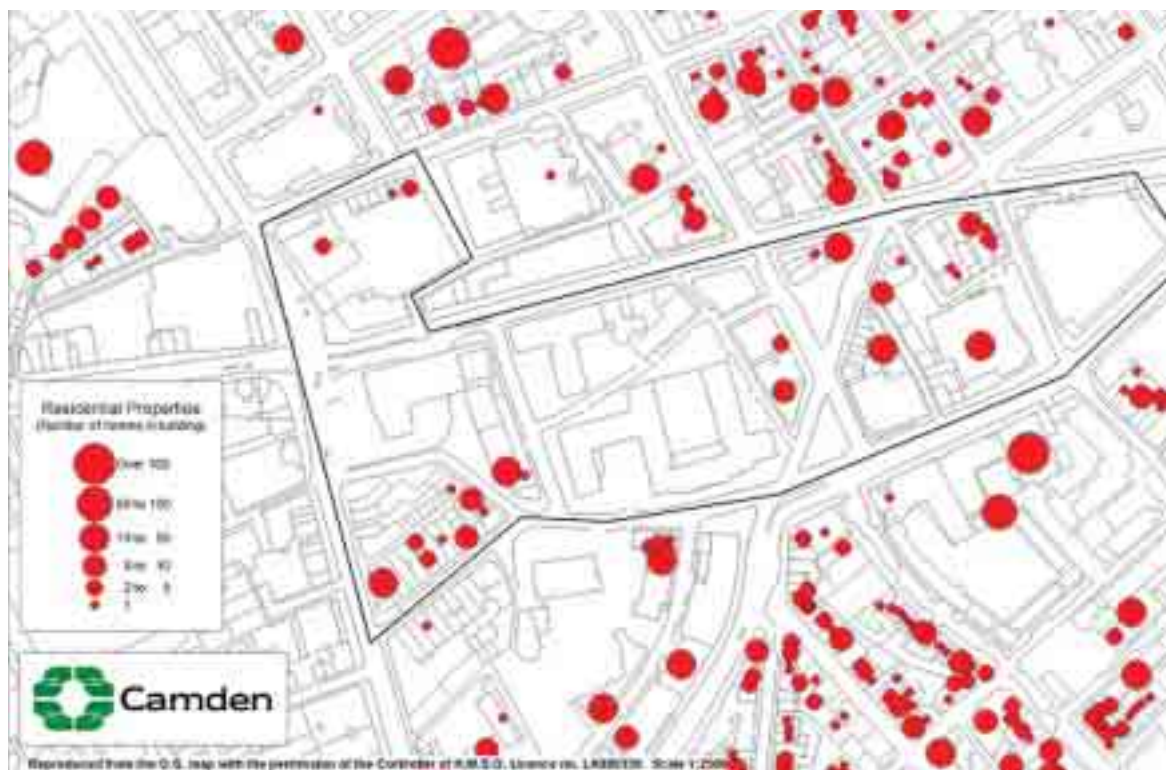
2.11 Today the Area is, by any measure, very mixed with few defining characteristics. A number of very old buildings remain alongside monumental postwar office developments. Building heights range from the 35 storey Centre Point tower to the intimate 3 and 4 storey terraces around Denmark Street. The quality of accommodation is similarly varied. There are some newly refurbished buildings that provide very high quality accommodation, but there are also properties that are vacant and boarded, and others that are dilapidated and have never been modernised.

2.12 The street pattern has a much broader grain than its surroundings. Main streets are wider and more open than in adjacent areas, but there is no rhythm or regularity to the street blocks. A dominance of vehicle traffic means that no advantage is taken of this openness in terms of townscape or the public realm. The area is full of odd spaces that are largely wasted. The two largest - the area around Centre Point and Princes Circus - are usually congested with traffic and pedestrians and work particularly badly.

2.13 The Framework Area is now used predominantly for commercial purposes, but the 2001 Census found that about 270 people live within it. The large majority of people rent their homes either from an RSL or the Council, but a third are owner occupiers. The Council's land use records, compiled from the electoral register, Council tax and business rates records and other sources, show there to be just 156 residential units within the boundary, all of them flats and most accommodating 1 or 2 person households. The location of these residential units in, and surrounding the Framework Area, is shown on Map 3. Buildings with multiple units (eg flats) are shown with dots proportional to the number of individual units they contain.

2.14 The best employment figures available indicate that around 10,000 people work in a somewhat larger area than that covered by this framework. There is a small number of manufacturing jobs, but the overwhelming majority of jobs are in the service sector, a third of which are in finance and banking, with smaller numbers working in public administration, transport and communications, shops, hotels and restaurants and in other services.

Map 3: Residential Properties



The Quality of the Environment

2.15 The area is highly accessible being very well served by public transport but it is also dominated by very heavy traffic flows. In the past the need to keep traffic moving has meant maximising road space and left little opportunity to improve bus, cycle or pedestrian routes or to create pleasant public spaces. However, the recent implementation of Congestion Charging has reduced the number of private motor vehicles in central London creating opportunities to reallocate street space to walking, cycling and public transport.

2.16 Despite the heavy traffic and complex pedestrian crossing facilities that create barriers to walking and cycling, pedestrian traffic can be very heavy in some parts of the Area. Studies undertaken for the Council¹ show that St Giles Circus experiences the highest rate of pedestrian accidents in the Borough. The estimated economic cost of these accidents is double what it is on Oxford Street or Tottenham Court Road.

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

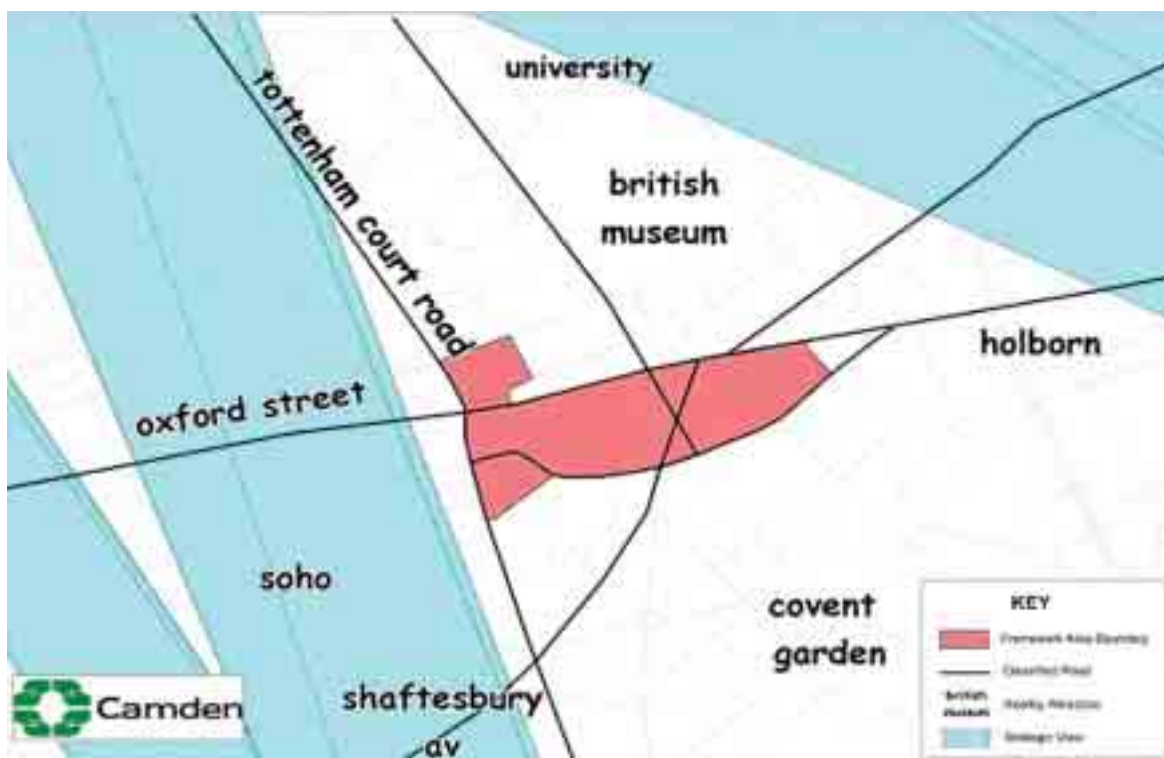
2.17 The Area has in recent years become associated with drug dealing and related activities, raising serious concerns for public safety. A major contributory cause of these problems is the absence of natural surveillance in the area, with long stretches of inactive frontages, poor lighting and numerous niches and hideaways. This situation creates areas and routes that look and feel unsafe and presents opportunities for anti-social behaviour. This is perhaps the problem that provides the most serious concern to residents and people who regularly use the area.

2.18 The West End Drugs Partnership, a multi-agency group including the two boroughs, the police, Government Office for London, health services, voluntary sector organisations and local representatives focuses on this area and provides a forum to address community safety issues and anti-social behaviour.

Neighbouring Areas

2.19 Map 4 shows that the Area lies at the very heart of London, amidst many of the capital's most important places and popular visitor attractions. Immediately to the north is Bloomsbury, the home of the British Museum and many of London's most prominent university colleges. To the east is Holborn, which has recently seen an increase in office floorspace, and new hotels. Covent Garden with its market, restaurants, Opera House and historic streets lies to the south east and London's theatreland, centred around Shaftesbury Avenue is to the South. South west of St Giles, across Charing Cross Road is Soho, popular as a home for media and film companies and for its many restaurants, bars and clubs. Oxford Street, Britain's largest shopping centre with a massive annual footfall lies to the west, and Tottenham Court Road the UK's leading electronic retail centre to the north west.

Map 4: The Area in its Setting



2.20 Beyond providing attractions to millions of visitors each year, the areas that surround this one are distinctive neighbourhoods in their own right, each with an established residential community. The 2001 Census provides the following approximate populations for these neighbourhoods - or Local Areas as they are defined in the UDP:

Local Area	Population (2001 Census)
Covent Garden (Camden part)	1220
Fitzrovia	1470
Museum Street	1220
University Precinct	720
Soho Sub-area (Westminster)	2285

2.21 Facilities to support these communities tend already to be operating at or above designed capacity. Demand for places in Camden's five primary schools south of the Euston Road is projected soon to exceed supply. All are deficient in external playspace and all are built on constricted sites with limited scope for expansion, although a further form entry (FE) is being planned for one school. The nearest secondary schools are north of the Euston Road at South Camden Community School (SCCS) and Maria Fidelis, and rolls have continued to grow at both. SCCS is already in the process of expanding by 1FE and, as part of the discussions on Kings Cross, the feasibility of expanding it by up to a further 2FE is being considered, but site restrictions present major problems.

2.22 Accommodation for GP and dental services in the area is also inadequate. Practices are oversubscribed which means that new patients have difficulty registering with a practice and the ratio of GPs to population is below the Primary Care Trust's standards. GP practices are small - single or two partners only - and their surgeries occupy premises that are cramped, do not provide wheelchair access and have little or no scope to expand on-site. The Primary Care Trust is reviewing its accommodation programme and the Council is working with the Trust to draw up detailed requirements for future health facilities in the area and in Camden more widely.

2.23 Leisure and recreational facilities tend also to be in short supply. The adopted UDP identifies this area as being deficient in the number of local and small parks and spaces that residents have access to. St Giles Churchyard and Phoenix Gardens offer facilities for passive recreation and both have small playgrounds for young children, but the nearest active areas are at The Warren at the northern end of Whitfield Street (basketball hoops) and Lincolns Inn Fields (tennis and netball courts). Other nearby leisure facilities include the Oasis Sports Centre adjacent to the Framework Area which can already be overcrowded at peak times and the library at Theobalds Road where there is some capacity to cater for additional demand. Facilities for organised children's play are also limited.

2.24 The Church of St Giles in the Fields provides well used facilities for community meetings etc. The Church is understood to be seeking to extend these activities but its accommodation is severely restricted.

2.25 High levels of drug related crime and anti-social behaviour in the wider St Giles area mean that it will be desirable to establish a stronger police presence here. The West End Drugs Partnership would support the provision of a Community Safety/Police Office similar to the centre that has been opened on Moor Street in the City of Westminster

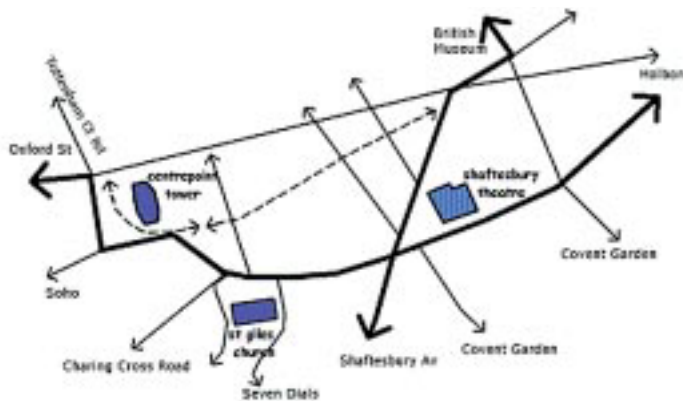
3 Camden's Aims - a Vision for the Future

3.1 Today, the Area is dominated by traffic, and a number of buildings are in need of renewal or are of poor design. The Area lacks identity, feels unfinished and unconnected with its surroundings, and experiences some social problems. The area is well located to contribute to housing needs and various aspects of the central London economy, but it is already built to relatively high densities, with existing open spaces showing the pressure upon them.

3.2 Significant new development in the area now offers a major challenge. Without good planning, design and management, it could simply add to existing problems. On the other hand, this section suggests the elements of a far more positive vision for the area to be developed through the expected extended period of change and redevelopment.

Quality Spaces and Pedestrian Linkages

3.3 The historic area of St Giles could again become a distinctive place, with outstandingly well-designed public realm at its heart, a place to enjoy being in as well as passing through.



Map 5: Pedestrian Movement Structure

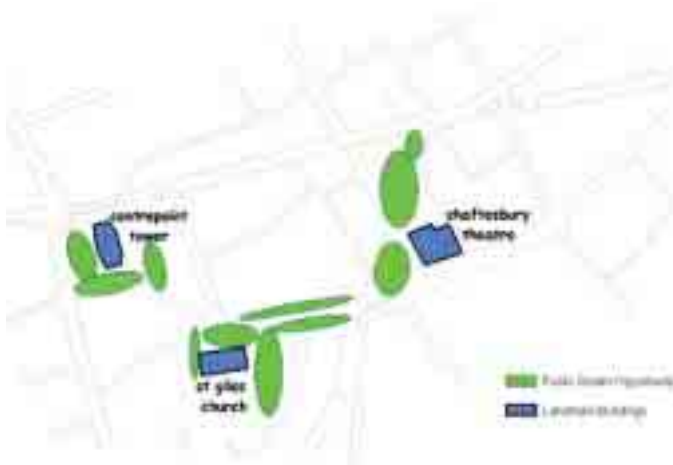
3.4 The Framework Area has potential to connect better to the places that surround it, in ways that encourage enjoyment of St Giles rather than just passing through it. An underlying pedestrian movement structure exists with a strong north-south axis along Shaftesbury Avenue and an equally strong east-west one along St Giles High Street (see Map 5). In addition, a series of secondary routes radiates in all directions away from these major axes.

setting of existing historic and valued places and buildings, to change the balance of space from motor vehicles to pedestrians and cyclists, and to improve the street environment, both for those living and working in the area, by offering more attractive places to spend time, and for those travelling through, by making the area more legible, safer and visually attractive. Map 6 identifies where the public realm opportunities appear to lie.

3.5 The priorities will be to enhance the

Map 6: The Public Realm Sequence

3.6 An improved network of safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists would radiate from these new public spaces, ensuring that they were well integrated within the area itself and as part of the improved linkages to surrounding areas, Bloomsbury, Covent Garden and Soho. It would provide, for example, an improved route for many of the four million people who visit the British Museum each year. These routes, which would be developed over time, will gradually make pedestrian movement more enjoyable and they would do much to encourage walking.



Regeneration - a Mix of New Homes, New Services and New Jobs

3.7 The Area is well located in central London to obtain great benefits from new investment, and with a right mix of uses there is potential to improve its character, quality and attractiveness. A better balance between commercial and residential uses, and a more varied mix of uses can make the area a more sustainable and vibrant place, and a more attractive place to spend time in.

3.8 New homes, the priority use for the Council, will add significantly to the resident population and enhance the mixed character of the area, provide natural surveillance and 'ownership' of its spaces and facilities, and support a wider range of facilities eg local retail and open space that would add its vitality.

3.9 The Area contains important concentrations of employment. Retained and strengthened to take advantage of the area's accessibility and linkages, there could be new job opportunities that would create a new sense of vitality and sense of security by increasing natural surveillance and presence. New investment should help to renew out-of-date accommodation, resolve environmental problems caused by vacant and under-utilised properties, reinvigorate surrounding spaces and encourage a wider range of people to use the area.

3.10 The area is also located amidst many of Central London's best renowned cultural and entertainment quarters and new investment can take advantage of the many opportunities this affords. However it will be essential that any new cultural or entertainment uses must be carefully located to improve the appearance and activity on less attractive streets and spaces, while not creating noise and other nuisance to harm the residential and business environment. These amenity considerations impose constraints on the scale and extent of these uses.

An Area of Distinctive Character, Excellence in Design and Sustainable Development

3.11 St Giles has a long and fascinating history and much evidence of this can be traced in its buildings and streets. But its best qualities are often unseen and under appreciated because too many recent buildings and most of its spaces are poorly designed. While new investment may bring regenerative benefits, the challenge will be to retain and enhance the best of the Area by insisting on excellent and sustainable design.

3.12 And while good design can make better use of land to meet modern business needs with new floorspace designed to modern standards, it will be vitally important to consider the impact of development on strategic and on close views and outlooks, and on the character and attractiveness of adjoining streets and spaces. The priority will be to build on aspects of the area's historic character to create a sense of place and to provide new developments with the highest quality design in their own right.

3.13 The need to protect the many historic buildings and spaces, and the substantial improvements required for the public realm, impose limits to the overall increase in floorspace the area can accommodate. Nevertheless, the Area presents opportunities to incorporate and address sustainable development principles that deal with issues such as social inclusion, land use and transport integration, access, enhancing heritage and environmental quality, energy and resource efficiency. Developments must provide a high quality of life for residents, workers and visitors and should be designed to minimise environmental impact throughout their lifetime.

Sharing the vision - the need for collaboration

3.14 Camden Council cannot pursue this vision alone. An uncommonly large number of interests converge at St Giles Circus and the complexity of reconciling them is one reason why the area has remained unfinished since the 1960s highway improvements were abandoned. The changes that will flow from further development in the area are a challenge for everyone with interests in it. Box 2 lists the main groups and individuals that the Council will seek to work with.

Box 2 Major Stakeholders

Landowners and developers Very significant private investment is required if the improvements to the environment that Camden seeks are to be achieved. Early and close collaboration between site developers and the Council on individual sites is essential.

Residents, community groups and local businesses Satisfying the needs of the many residents, groups and businesses in and around the area will be key to achieving a people-centred transformation of the area. Close consultation will be vital as plans for the area are prepared.

The City of Westminster is the neighbouring authority. Improvements to the area involving changes to the highway network and area management, must be jointly planned.

The Mayor of London is responsible for strategic planning in London. His duties include producing a Spatial Development Strategy for London (the London Plan) to which boroughs' development plans must conform. The Mayor can direct refusal of major planning applications not considered to be in the strategic planning interests of London.

Transport for London is the executive body of the Mayor charged with managing and investing in transport. It has a number of subsidiary organisations:

- ▶▶ London Underground are responsible for the design and implementation of improvements to Tottenham Court Road Station that will transform this area. Key elements include the location of entrances and ticket halls, transport interchanges, site works and the phasing.
- ▶▶ London Buses responsible for bus routes, which are a vital element in the public transport network in the area. The requirements of bus operators to provide a service for their passengers will be an important consideration in planning any changes to the road network.
- ▶▶ Public Carriage Office (PCO) responsible for regulation of taxis.

Cross London Rail Links Ltd, a subsidiary of TfL and the SRA, is responsible for Crossrail, and has proposals for Tottenham Court Road Station.

English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) are statutory consultees for redevelopment proposals for this historically important area.

4 Land Use Objectives

Objective: Development of the Area will bring a richer and more balanced mix of uses that will regenerate the area and make it a better place to live and work in or to visit or pass through.

4.1 The Area sits at the centre of one of the most vibrant and diverse parts of Central London. This is a place that has a unique mix of uses, national institutions, heritage and established local communities. Extending and continuing this diversity into the Area would be in line with Council's policies as it could regenerate the area by dramatically improving environmental quality, maximise opportunities for new housing, (the Council's priority land use), and build on the characteristics that distinguish the Area.

A Richer Mix of Uses

4.2 The most attractive areas of Central London are generally those that have a good mix of uses and a wide range of activities operating during different hours of the day. The St Giles area is not currently like this. At present, away from Charing Cross Road, there is a predominance of large office buildings. These tend to generate a surge of peak hour journeys that cause congestion on the public transport network, but during evenings and at weekends they mean that parts of the area away from the main routes have little activity which can create a perception that it is unsafe, and can create opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

4.3 A wider mix of uses in the area, particularly an increase in residential floorspace would help to remedy this. A better land use balance would help ease peak period congestion, make the area generally more interesting, increase a sense of public safety and security, increase opportunities for social interaction, help foster a greater diversity of communities and generally enhance consumer choice.

Maximising the Potential of the Area

4.4 Strategic and local development policies require that new developments make the best possible use of their sites to accommodate Camden's share of London's growth forecast for the next 10 years. This means achieving maximum densities compatible with local context, sustainable design principles and public transport capacity. By introducing significant new residential uses onto sites which are currently single use, maximising site usage also provides opportunities to achieve a better land use mix.

4.5 However a number of constraints impose limits to the densities that can realistically be achieved. The area is already well developed and most sites are already constructed to relatively high plot ratios. Much of the area is sensitive in terms of its character or its amenities. It is important to ensure that new development does not harm local amenity. New buildings, whether or not they lie within the boundaries of a Conservation Area, will be expected to make a positive contribution to the area and they should preserve and where possible enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and preserve the setting of listed buildings.

4.6 Public transport, walking and cycling networks must also be able to cope with any additional trips that new developments are likely to generate. Current congestion levels on the existing public transport network mean that new development could add to overcrowding especially during peak hours. The need to increase capacity on the public transport network is well recognised and proposals to address this are being developed, including the enlargement of Tottenham Court Road Underground Station and the implementation of Crossrail, though firm plans with associated funding and timescales are yet to be confirmed. The London Plan acknowledges that the phasing of development and transport improvements may be subject to some variation and matching demand to transport capacity is not mechanistic.

4.7 Camden will require proposals for development to make a Transport Assessment that should assess impact on public transport capacity. As most development will be reusing already developed sites it will be important to assess the additional journeys made on the public transport system as well as the total trips the development is likely to generate. The Council will carefully assess the relationship between additional trips and available capacity in the light of emerging certainty on infrastructure improvements.

Housing

4.8 Shortage of land, a growing population and high prices have created serious housing pressures in Camden and providing more housing, including affordable housing, is one of the most important issues facing the Borough. The adopted UDP policies reflect these pressures by defining housing as its priority use. Redevelopment to higher densities creates opportunities to introduce the new residential uses that are needed so urgently in Camden, and in London generally.

4.9 Increased residential provision in the area, particularly in the sites and buildings that are currently vacant or underused, will help to respond to the need for more housing. Policy HG8 of the adopted UDP seeks to increase the amount of residential accommodation by requiring that the fullest use be made of under utilised sites for residential development. The January 2004 Alterations to the UDP alter its mixed use and affordable housing policies to increase the supply of new housing and better bridge the gap between housing supply and need. These policies are further strengthened in the Replacement UDP due for Public Inquiry in December 2004.

4.10 The UDP also has policies to protect and enhance the mixed use character of Central London. The aim then is to achieve a better balance in the mix of uses in the area in favour of more residential uses by seeking to maximise the provision of additional homes. Increased residential provision will also enhance the vitality and security of the area, reduce the need to travel, support a wider range facilities and uses in the area, and generally accord with principles of sustainable development. Housing therefore should be a significant component of development on all sites in the area, and none of the sites in the area are considered to be in principle unsuitable for significant residential development.

4.11 Housing development should accord with Council UDP policy on affordable housing for which, under Alteration 2, where 15 or more new dwellings are proposed, up to 50% of housing should be affordable. It should also accord with the Council's adopted policies on mix of unit size, lifetime homes and wheelchair housing where appropriate. The predominant need is for affordable family accommodation, which in this area could respond to specifically local conditions of overcrowding. Such provision could reduce the impact on local facilities, and can, with careful design, be incorporated satisfactorily in higher density developments.

4.12 Where development involves the demolition or other loss of housing, the Council will require replacement dwellings of a similar or greater number to be provided. The quality of the new dwellings should be the same or better than those replaced.

Employment and Regeneration

4.13 As well as contributing to housing needs, new development can regenerate the area, by enhancing the Central London economy and making a significant contribution to employment opportunities in the Borough. Many new jobs may be provided through additional office floorspace, but in this Central London location a wide variety of other jobs will be created in new different service industries and activities.

4.14 The Covent Garden Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) extends into the Framework Area, and the Council would expect development to provide jobs for the local community and contribute to the regeneration by responding to the NRA's evolving priorities. Where appropriate, the Council may seek contributions from developers towards regeneration initiatives and employment and training schemes.

Community Uses

4.15 A major increase in residential provision will create a substantial increase in the demand for community services, particularly for schools, health and leisure facilities. Meeting these demands will be a major challenge to the providers of these services. As noted in Section 2 above, most facilities in the area are already operating at or above their existing capacity levels, and further work needs to be done to assess the scope for extending them to meet the needs of new residents.

4.16 While the Area's good accessibility makes this a highly suitable location for new community facilities they are likely to require long term planning and major capital expenditure. The timing and delivery of such facilities will be a major challenge as it is likely that new developments leading to growth in the residential population may be quite piecemeal compared with the provision of any new facilities, which will draw from different and normally wider catchment areas. However development of a number of major sites in the area provides a unique opportunity to accommodate some of these facilities, and the Council will seek their inclusion as appropriate.

4.17 Contributions to providing these facilities will be sought from developers by way of a Section 106 agreement. For example, based upon the number of new bedrooms provided, the Council has adopted a formula for financial contributions for new school places. Similar contributions may also be sought to assist provision of other social and community facilities.

Public and Amenity Space

4.18 The area is also deficient in open space and the spaces nearby are likely to be used more intensively once new developments, particularly new homes, are built.

4.19 Section 3 above outlines how a chain of new and improved public spaces can be provided through the area and these ideas are elaborated on in the individual boxes at the end of Section 6. The Council expect these to be taken into account in development proposals and will seek contributions from developers to assist in implementation of these new spaces, or to make major improvements to existing open spaces.

4.20 Providing amenity space as part of the design of new developments would add to the quality of developments, enhance the setting of buildings and views, and generally meet the needs of new residential users. The Council will seek public access to new amenity spaces.

4.21 Another way to provide amenity space and more generally, to improve biodiversity, is to give buildings green roofs. In addition to their amenity value, green roofs create habitat, add insulation and they provide a form of sustainable urban drainage by helping absorb storm water run off. Developers should refer to "Green Roofs: Research Advice" published by the Corporation of London and the British Council for Offices. (available at: http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/our_services/development_planning/planning/pdf/A5_Green_roofs.pdf)

Retail Uses

4.22 The area's very good public transport accessibility, and the activities and uses suggested indicatively in Map 7 for which the adjoining areas are renowned, suggests that the Area should have street level uses that would complement those of its neighbours.

4.23 Building on the principles of Policy RE4 in the adopted UDP, the draft replacement UDP introduces proposals for new Central London Frontages (CLF) to be designated, and these include Charing Cross Road, Tottenham Court Road, New Oxford Street (western end). These designations acknowledge existing roles and the Council will take care to protect the roles of these principal retail centres, and would not expect to see substantial new retail floorspace away from them.

4.24 The Central London Supplementary Planning Guidance (CL SPG), adopted by the Council in June 2004, confirms the protection of retail uses in these Central London Frontages. It also identifies other streets, including the remaining parts of New Oxford Street, that may be appropriate for some Central London Frontage expansion if it does not harm residential amenity.

4.25 Generally, the Council would support small retail developments to support local residential and working populations, and as a means of providing more attractive frontages and therefore a more attractive pedestrian environment than now exists. The CL SPG also states that it may be appropriate to provide breaks in commercial activities in locations adjacent to concentrations of residential development.

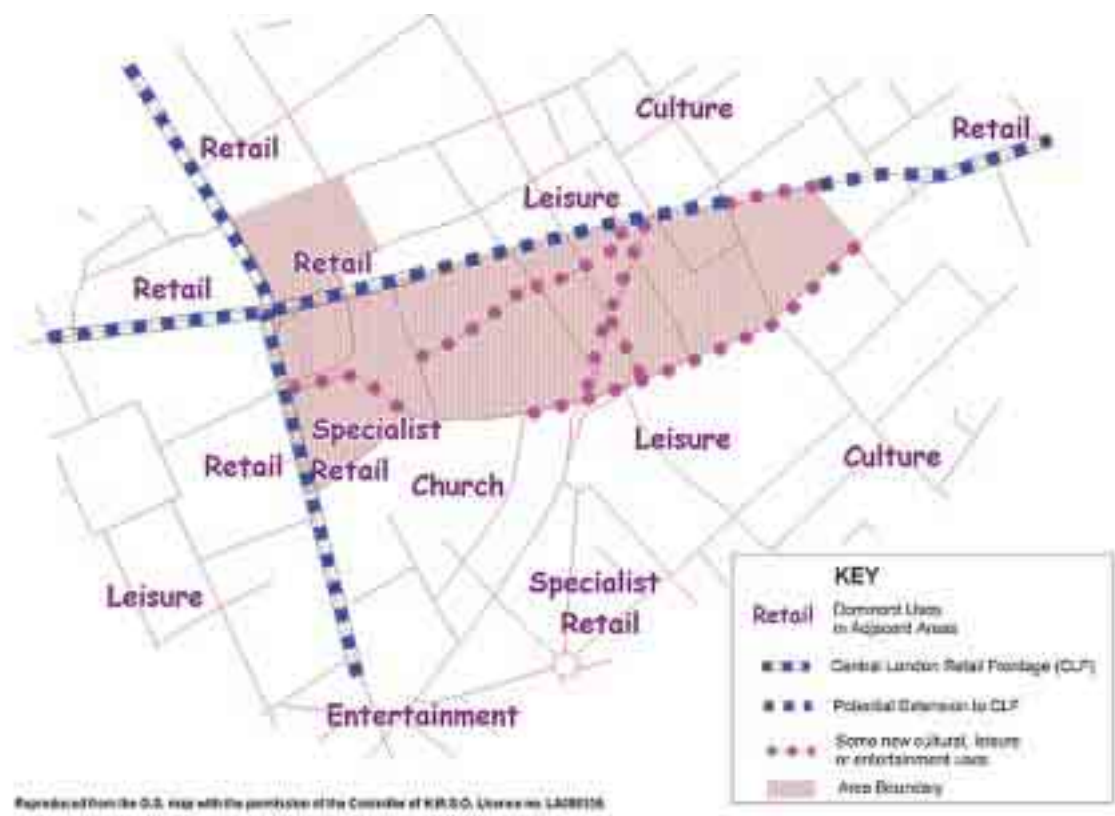
Food, Drink and Leisure and Entertainment Uses

4.26 While concerned to protect the environment from undesirable impacts, Camden's UDP guides new food and drink (Use Class A3) and entertainment uses (Use Class D2)2 to highly accessible locations such as Central London. Central London SPG confirms that Central London Frontages are generally appropriate locations for new food, drink and entertainment uses as they have good public transport (including late night services) and are busy commercial streets with limited residential developments. Other Council policies such as the Cultural Strategy also promote tourism in accessible locations such as this.

4.27 However, food, drink and entertainment uses can have adverse impacts including noise and fumes, traffic congestion and parking problems, litter and refuse, crime and anti-social behaviour. The Central London SPG adopted in June 2004 contains detailed guidance that seek to protect the local environment from the impacts and these will be applied to such proposals in the Framework Area.

4.28 Map 7 describes in an indicative way the main, non-residential, activities in the areas neighbouring the Area covered by this framework. While care must be taken to ensure new facilities do not harm the character or viability of adjoining centres, or existing communities or future residential amenity, redevelopment of major sites in the Area creates some opportunities to extend these successful Central London uses - including shops, cultural and specialist uses, food and drink uses, leisure and entertainment - into the Area itself. This will help to create a greater diversity of activity and will provide new facilities for residents and workers.

Map 7: Indicative Uses on Main Frontages



4.29 With more active ground floor frontages the area will become better connected with its neighbours, and feel safer and more attractive to pass through. Desirable levels of diversity and activity can be created however without giving over all ground floor areas to such uses, and careful location can provide the essential improvements to the street environment without leading to amenity problems. CL SPG provides detailed guidance of how the Council will assess such proposals.

Notes on Land Use in Main Corridors and on Major Sites

4.30 These land use objectives for the Area are more clearly illustrated in the following summaries that explain how they would apply to the two main corridors through the area and to the three main sites for which briefs have been prepared.

Box 3: The New Oxford Street frontages

The western end of New Oxford Street has strong links to the neighbouring major shopping streets of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road and performs an important retail function in its own right. Further east, the retail element becomes fragmented until in some blocks it ceases to exist entirely.

Redevelopment of sites within the Area provides an opportunity to introduce some additional retail activities along New Oxford Street in an edge of centre expansion that could improve the vitality of the link between Tottenham Court Road and Holborn.

Subject to viability, the Council will therefore support the provision of some new small ground floor retailing uses on these streets; uses that might either complement or strengthen the stores on surrounding shopping streets such as Oxford Street, the more specialist electrical and furnishing stores on Tottenham Court Road or the museum related stores that cluster around the British Museum.

New Oxford Street may also be an appropriate location for some evening entertainment or leisure uses. People departing events late in the evening should be able to leave New Oxford Street quickly because night buses and taxis run along it and it leads directly to Tottenham Court Road and Holborn Underground stations, providing potential to contain activity to main routes and away from more sensitive side streets.

However, such development must not have unacceptable impact on nearby residential areas, and it may be necessary to provide breaks in locations close to residential uses. Central London SPG provides details of how the Council will assess developments to minimise impacts

Box 4: The St Giles High Street/Shafesbury Avenue Frontages

St Giles High Street and Shafesbury Avenue, which now have many inactive or low-activity frontages, lie close to the cultural, leisure and entertainment activities in nearby Bloomsbury, Covent Garden and in Shafesbury Avenue's Theatreland.

The wide range of food and drink uses, specialist shops and tourist and entertainment attractions in these areas could be continued into the Framework Area by introducing more comparable or complementary uses along St Giles High Street and Shafesbury Avenue. These uses could include a retail component, but they may also contain some new food and drink, entertainment, leisure or tourist uses towards Princes Circus, as well as community facilities to support the new and existing residential communities. Introducing a wider range of facilities and activities could have a beneficial effect in encouraging more people to use the streets through the day including the night time and make the area feel vibrant and safer.

It will be important to ensure that clusters of late night activities in this area do not cause the streets at night to become noisy and disturbing to residents wanting to rest and sleep. Food and drink and leisure uses, particularly licensed premises and uses that operate in the evening and night-time, must therefore be carefully located, designed and controlled to protect the amenity of both existing residents and new residents who will occupy the new homes that are to be provided. The Council has prepared Central London Supplementary Planning Guidance to address these issues, and will assess proposals in accordance with the SPG.

Box 5: St Giles Court Site

Camden's brief for the development of the St Giles Court Site envisages a mixed use development that provides a significant number of new homes, including affordable housing, together with appropriate supporting facilities, introduces some new leisure, retail, and tourism uses to frontages reflecting uses and character of the surrounding area, and commercial floorspace.

It expects development to facilitate improvements to the public realm and new public spaces around the site, improve the environment of St Giles High Street and around Princes Circus. It also expects development to respect and enhance the heritage in the area including the setting of Grade I listed St Giles Church, and the neighbouring conservation areas.

Some additional active frontage will also be sought along Bucknall Street to take advantage of the proposed pedestrian route between Tottenham Court Road Underground Station and the British Museum.

Box 6: 21 - 31 New Oxford Street Site

Camden's brief for the development of the 21-31 New Oxford Street Site seeks a mixed-use development that will include residential use, including affordable housing, provide new business and commercial development, as well as some new community, cultural, retail, and tourism uses. The site is considered particularly suitable for residential use being close to the predominantly residential areas to its north and located in a relatively quiet part of the Framework Area. The Council will seek to maximise residential use in development, compatible with providing satisfactory standards of amenity, and the retention of the Class D1 Non-residential Institutions use which formed part of the 1999 planning permission and for which there are significant local demands.

Box 7: Denmark Place Site

Camden's brief for the development of the Denmark Place Site envisages a mixed use development that would be part redevelopment and part refurbishment, would restore the listed buildings and would provide a significant number of new homes, new jobs, and new vitality through new retail and leisure activities.

The brief envisages that properties fronting Denmark Street should be refurbished to retain and enhance their historic character and specialist use as a centre for retailing popular music instruments. It also envisages that the residential properties on St Giles High Street should be refurbished to bring them back into residential use and enhance the character of the conservation area.

The brief envisages that additional retail units be provided on the Charing Cross Road frontage, and that A3 uses (ie cafes, bars and restaurants) would be located on the Andrew Borde Street frontage looking north, where they could contribute to any pedestrian space proposed as part of improvements to the station ticket hall.

5 Transport and Circulation Objectives

Objective: Development will assist in reducing the dominance of traffic and improving walking, cycling, public transport and the environment.

5.1 The Area is very accessible by public transport and proposed investment will increase this further. The introduction of Congestion Charging in Central London has now reduced the number of private motor vehicles, and the Council's Clear Zones initiatives will reduce the traffic levels in the area further. These improvements are in line with the Council's general aim for Central London to minimise and calm motor traffic and change the overall balance away from the car and towards improving the quality of the street environment for pedestrians, cyclists and for those living and working in the area.

5.2 The Council seeks to retain the character of streets and a good level of activity to maintain surveillance and the sense of security this engenders. The Council does not therefore normally support extended pedestrian-only or gated streets or spaces.

Public Transport

5.3 The Area's high public transport accessibility underpins its potential for new, mixed use development. Tottenham Court Road Underground Station is served by the Central and Northern Lines. The area is within close walking distance of the Piccadilly Line stations at Holborn, Covent Garden and Leicester Square. In the longer-term, future public transport provision may include the London Underground's "congestion relief" scheme at Tottenham Court Road Station, which will provide new entrances and a new ticket hall, and the Crossrail 1 and Crossrail 2 (formerly the Chelsea-Hackney Line) schemes.

5.4 The area is also extremely well served by buses. No fewer than 19 routes pass its boundaries (four of them terminating there) and it is the central point in the capital for night buses, with 25 routes from the area to all parts of London. There had been significant improvements to buses including their reliability and frequency.

5.5 Many taxis also use St Giles Circus and these have their own requirements for pick-up facilities, ranking and route circulation.

5.6 The Area is also one of the busiest parts of Central London. At present, public transport operates close to or over its capacity, especially at peak times. This is particularly the case for the Tottenham Court Road station, which has been on the list of congested stations at least since 1992. London Underground applied for planning permission in 2000 to enlarge the ticket hall and create new entrances, but later withdrew its proposals. It is now considering but has not yet formally submitted new proposals that may be tied to a decision on Crossrail. A new station is unlikely to be open before 2012.

5.7 However, improvements to services on the Central and Northern Lines are due to be made as part of the Underground PPP. On the Central Line, it is planned to introduce seven new trains into peak service in 2005 (a 10% increase in service levels) and by 2011 there will be improvements in rolling stock which is expected to increase reliability by six times. A new Northern Line signalling system will be implemented by 2011, and this should produce an 18% improvement in capacity.

5.8 Despite the area's good access to underground, bus and taxi services, each mode is primarily used to access the area and there is limited interchange between the various modes, although this is likely to change in the future with an enlarged station. Development and implementation of the planned new transport infrastructure presents an opportunity to improve the way interchange facilities are used as well as increasing overall capacity and more efficient routing.

5.9 It is important these developments also improve the environment. For example, while serving an essential public transport function, several bus routes terminate at the foot of or around Centre Point. This results in a large number of standing buses in the area which can be environmentally detrimental because they become visually dominant, noisy and polluting. The Council will continue to work with TfL and others to maintain and enhance bus services and interchange facilities. In this area it is desirable to reduce their local impact and the Council will encourage measures to achieve this.

Highways and Traffic Management

5.10 Past attempts to cope with large traffic flows by introducing one-way systems have been detrimental to the quality of the environment and have led to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists being insufficiently provided for. The aim now is to create streets that are accessible, safe, convenient, secure, nuisance free and provide an attractive environment for all road users. Where it is practical to do so, restoring one-way streets in the area to two-way working will help as a medium-term objective, to calm traffic and give streets a more local feel. The Council has commenced working with TfL on examining the feasibility of restoring two way working on Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street, immediately to the north of the Framework Area. The study will also consider the options for reducing through traffic, improving the circulation and reducing the impact of buses and enhancing interchange facilities.

5.11 There are significant opportunities at key locations in the area to create pedestrian routes and public areas and spaces by closing or redesigning short sections of streets. These would be included in the feasibility study and the approaches outlined below are indicative. The Council will expect developments to address these opportunities. Paragraphs 6.9 to 6.11 below and Boxes 13 to 16 outline the opportunities for enhancing public spaces that would be created.

- » **Reorganising traffic circulation around Princes Circus** This is likely to involve closing Shaftesbury Avenue between St Giles High Street and New Oxford Street and rerouting the north bound traffic that now uses this section of Shaftesbury Avenue via High Holborn and Museum Street. This approach is considered preferable to an alternative idea of closing the lower part of Bloomsbury Street as it would retain good vehicular access into Endell Street which is an important route into the Covent Garden area. Box 16 explains in more detail how new pedestrian space could be used.
- » **Full or partial closure of Andrew Borde Street** This is likely to be required for the improvements to the underground station ticket hall and entrances. Through traffic would probably be re-routed through Earnshaw Street and/or Shaftesbury Avenue via Cambridge Circus, but the full implications need to be studied and it will be necessary to ensure that the environment of Denmark Street is protected. Box 13 explains how the space that Andrew Borde Street now occupies could be combined with the site of the Centre Point fountains to provide a new pedestrian piazza.
- » **Narrowing St Giles High Street** This would provide a single westbound lane on St Giles High Street and space for an attractive pedestrian boulevard between the potential public spaces at either end - Princes Circus and the new Centre Point Piazza. A single lane road could also provide space for a much needed cycle lane. Box 14 describes the measures that might be taken to enhance the environment for pedestrians. This measure is currently preferred to an alternative suggestion to restore St Giles High Street to two-way working. Two-way working could offer benefits in terms of restoring a more human feel to St Giles High Street but it has disadvantages. Introducing east bound traffic along the High Street would mean restoring either Denmark Street or Earnshaw Street (or both) to two-way running but both are unsuitable for this - Denmark Street is too narrow and there would be conflicts with the buses and taxis that use Earnshaw Street. Otherwise the only eastbound traffic will be the few vehicles leaving premises on Bucknall Street. Two-way running on St Giles High Street would also require the creation of a new right turn into Shaftesbury Avenue and add an extra light phase at the junction that would inconvenience pedestrians and add to congestion on Shaftesbury Avenue. Development should where possible ensure that other options for future traffic management solutions are safeguarded.

Transport Assessments

5.13 A comprehensive Transport Assessment will be required for all major developments. It will be necessary to assess changes in the number, type and the pattern of journeys that a new development will generate. Developers should address how their proposals can help improve local transport infrastructure and services, and propose measures to alleviate any adverse impact. The main opportunities for their doing so include:

- » Improving pedestrian accessibility to public transport and maximising connectivity within the area and its surroundings;
- » Reducing travel demand and changing user patterns such as mode shifts and peak spreading through more mixed use developments, better linkages with complementary uses and green travel plans;
- » Providing creative temporary routes and high standards of safety, convenience, legibility and design during what will be extended periods of implementation.

5.14 The phasing of new development is important and the Council would be concerned that new developments should not generate large numbers of new journeys before the proposed increases to public transport capacity have been completed. However, the London Plan cautions that matching demand to capacity is not a mechanistic exercise. The phasing of developments and transport improvements can be subject to some variation and transport assessments should take this into account.

Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

5.15 Pedestrian flows are very high in some parts of the area, but there are many impediments to convenient movement. Wide carriageways, narrow, or non-existent footways, complex pedestrian crossing facilities and a generally unfriendly environment create barriers to walking and cycling. For example, St Giles Circus has the highest number of pedestrian casualties in the Borough. The poor quality of the existing environment and the inadequate route signs cause many people to use the underground to travel between destinations that are well within walking distance of one another.

5.16 The Council is therefore working in collaboration with Westminster City Council and TfL to establish a network of continuous, well-designed and well-signed pedestrian routes that connect the nearby major attractors e.g., the British Museum, Covent Garden and Trafalgar Square and generally improve the walking environment. These routes should encourage walking in the area and help to ease congestion at several major underground stations.

5.17 Camden's UDP includes the section of Shaftesbury Avenue that runs through Princes Circus as part of City Walk 2, a Metropolitan Walk linking Hampstead Heath with Covent Garden.

5.18 For the most part these routes use existing roads, and require reprioritisation of the road space away from vehicle traffic. The opportunities for implementing them and the design principles that should be pursued are considered under the Section on Public Realm (Paras 6.9 - 6.12) and Key Areas (Paras 6.30 and Boxes 13 to 16).

5.19 A potential new pedestrian route could run along Bucknall Street and the northern edge of Princes Circus to create what could become an attractive new link for pedestrians between the new Tottenham Court Road Underground Station, the much improved crossroads at Centre Point, Princes Circus and The British Museum and beyond. This route would require that two shop units in the rear block of Centre Point be opened to pedestrians, possibly as an arcade. If this could be done it would provide an opportunity to make more use of a street with little vehicle traffic and it would greatly increase permeability in a part of London with an undesirably broad grain street pattern.

5.20 Where possible, individual developments in the area should promote this network, by improving existing facilities. Over time they may also develop new routes or extend existing ones to create a finer grain for pedestrian movement and linkages to the surrounding area. The pedestrian environment at major crossroads such as the vicinity of Tottenham Court Road Station and major routes where the pedestrian flows are highest require special attention.

5.21 Individual developments also need to pay attention to increasing pedestrian accessibility, convenience, safety, and permeability within sites and into the surrounding area and to reducing the risk of accidents.

5.22 New cycle routes to run across the St Giles Area along sensible desire lines will help to promote cycling in the area and in London as a whole. New routes would be designed to a standard that facilitates cycling through the area and beyond and this may mean that cyclists follow straight lines where car traffic has a more indirect route. Possible cycle routes are described in Box 8. Route D is currently being implemented by the Council.

Box 8: Proposed Cycle Routes

a Eastbound route (and possibly westbound), running east along Andrew Borde and St Giles High Streets and up Museum St to join Bloomsbury Way.

b Westbound route along New Oxford Street and into Oxford Street using the bus lane.

c Northbound from Drury Lane, across High Holborn, along Museum Street, east along Bloomsbury Way and north in to Bury Place.

d South down Bury Place, crossing Bloomsbury Way into Bury Place, east along New Oxford Street and High Holborn and then south into Newton Street.

e South down Bloomsbury Street, crossing New Oxford Street, to Bloomsbury Way and Endell Street.

5.23 Developments will be expected to make provision for these routes in their designs and to provide safe and secure bicycle storage facilities. These will be particularly welcome around Tottenham Court Road Station to encourage cycling as an access mode to the station.

Servicing

5.24 New development is expected to provide for off-street servicing for commercial premises wherever practicable and must not hinder the servicing of adjacent buildings. Time controlled access and sustainable freight delivery arrangements should be considered to protect residential and pedestrian activities at busy times. On-street servicing will be allowed for residential uses.

5.25 Service areas and routes must be located and designed carefully with regard for safety and aesthetics. They should be designed to be out of the public view - basement servicing may be the most appropriate for the larger sites in this area. Entrances to off-street service areas need to be designed to minimise visual impact and avoid lengthy breaks in the street frontage.

5.26 Service arrangements must cater for the efficient removal of trade and domestic material for recycling and waste disposal. Building designs should ensure that cleansing vehicles have suitable access arrangements.

Parking

5.27 Parking control is the most appropriate and effective mechanism for reducing vehicular traffic, and thereby for improving the street environment. Given the high accessibility of the Area, a minimum amount of private car parking will be accepted. Except where it is provided for those who are disabled, car parking in residential developments should be kept to an absolute minimum, and indeed, new homes could be car free given the high transport accessibility of the location.

5.28 Public parking would only be allowed if an essential need is demonstrated and if based on short-term parking requirements.

Status of New Streets or Spaces

5.29 The Council would normally expect to adopt all new streets and public space created by new development as public highway.

6 Heritage, Public Realm and Design Objectives

Objective: New development and public spaces will be designed to the highest standards, befitting their location in an historic area at the heart of the capital city.

6.1 The Area's heritage and its landmark buildings provide major opportunities to build a more distinctive character for the area, and create attractive public spaces, framed by good architecture and high quality design. In addition, the development of sites in the Area creates opportunities for new and improved linkages that reconnect it with the rest of Central London. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in partnership with the then DETR has set out some important principles³ for integrating major projects with their surroundings and these offer valuable guidance on approaches to the design of this area.

Heritage

6.2 Map 2 shows that every site within the Area lies either within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, 18 listed buildings lie within the boundary of the Area and many others border it. Special regard must be paid to the importance of preserving all of these listed buildings and their setting, and to the need to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.

6.3 The characteristics of each of the nearby Conservation Areas are described in Conservation Area statements produced by Camden and Westminster City Councils and they are summarised here in Box 9. These statements identify the principal characteristics of each Area and the characteristics the Councils want to preserve or enhance. They should be considered when drawing up development proposals and referred to in the design statement submitted with each planning application.

Box 9: Conservation Areas

Bloomsbury Conservation Area, Camden's largest CA, covers the Bloomsbury Area to the north and extends into the Area around Princes Circus. Characterized by its rectangular street pattern, open squares and 3 to 4 storey Georgian terrace houses, Bloomsbury is recognized as an example of urban development of international significance. As home to the British Museum and its eponymous intellectual tradition the Bloomsbury area enjoys equal repute as a centre of cultural and historic importance.

About half of the Denmark Street Conservation Area lies within the Area. This historic area is dominated by the Grade I listed Church of St Giles in the Fields which stands immediately outside the Area. A churchyard lies behind the Church which, with Phoenix Gardens next door, is the only open green space in the Area. Denmark Street has enjoyed more recent note as the centre of the UK popular music industry. It also features Centre Point, an iconic 1960s office tower.

The Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area borders the Area to the south east. With its highly distinctive radiating street pattern the Seven Dials area was laid out at the end of the 17th century. Many of the original domestic terraced buildings remain, and even where they have been replaced their original plot width, depth and scale remain.

Soho Conservation Area in the City of Westminster borders the Area across Charing Cross Road. Post war rebuilding on Charing Cross Road means only the buildings north of Sutton Row lie within the CA, however Sutton Row and Manette Street afford enticing views into Soho Square and Greek Street which date from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Hanway Street Conservation Area, also in Westminster lies on the north side of Oxford Street. The buildings that front the Area of this framework are late Victorian and Edwardian.

6.4 The general presumption in PPG15 is that all listed buildings are to be retained and that permission will not be given for their total or substantial demolition. Government guidance provides that demolition may be acceptable in exceptional cases if it brings forward other benefits, for example, where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community which have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation. Demolition of unlisted buildings in a Conservation area can be similarly justified if relevant criteria are met.

6.5 New development should not treat historic buildings as separate 'heritage zones'. However, the design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general it is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community. Where a listed building forms an important visual element in the street new development should take care to preserve its setting.

6.6 Useful guidance on designing new development in historically sensitive contexts such as this can be obtained from the English Heritage and CABE publication 'Building in Context'.

Groups of Historic Buildings

6.7 Three parts of the area covered by this Framework have groups of buildings of particular historic and architectural importance. Their distinctive elements are described in Box 10, which also identifies the opportunities these groups provide for restoring some of the historic character to this part of London.

6.8 Design notes for enhancing the setting of these buildings and to maximise the opportunities they provide are included at the end of this section.

Box 10: Groups of Buildings with Historic Character

1. St Giles Church and Flitcroft Street: The first church of St Giles in the Fields was built in the second decade of the 12th century by Queen Maud who founded a hospital of St Giles in the Fields on land now bounded by Charing Cross Road, St Giles High Street and Shaftesbury Avenue. The hospital closed in 1539 and its lands were apportioned. The area was developed during the 17th century around a street pattern that remains largely in place. St Giles Church, which was built in Palladian style in 1733, its Vestry and west facing Resurrection Gate, together with No 59 St Giles High Street, Nos 1-5 Flitcroft Street and No 6 Flitcroft Street help to characterise Flitcroft Street as a secluded, peaceful enclave that contrasts with the busy streets nearby. There is great potential to build upon the characteristics of this group of buildings and to integrate them better with St Giles High Street.

2. Denmark Street: This is a vibrant shopping street with a distinctive retail specialism in popular music. With many listed buildings (at Nos 5, 6 and 7, 9 and 10, 20, 26, and 27) Denmark Street is thought to be the last street in London where original 17th century terraced buildings survive on both sides of the road.

3. Princes Circus: The two triangles of Princes Circus were formed in the late 19th century when Shaftesbury Avenue was cut through the old medieval streets to provide an improved route between Holborn and Westminster. The Circus is bordered almost entirely by 19th and early 20th century listed buildings while even the undesignated buildings add character and interest to this traffic choked space. The buildings that front onto Princes Circus have been constructed in a great variety of styles and for different uses - there is a church, a theatre, mansion buildings, shops, a school now used as a hostel for the homeless and office buildings.

Public Realm

6.9 The present congested road network, poor street legibility, paucity and poor design of public space and a high proportion of dead frontages all discourage pedestrian movement into, within as well as through the Area.

6.10 Improving the public realm and transforming the area into an attractive, safe and vibrant place is one of Council's priorities. Map 6 in Section 3 shows public realm opportunities in the area including a number of under-

used open spaces that can be enhanced and extended to create 'places' in their own right. These will improve the setting of landmark buildings and promote the regeneration of the area. They include the crossroads around Tottenham Court Road Underground Station, together with the land around Centre Point, the two triangles that constitute Princes Circus, St Giles High Street and the St Giles Church.

6.11 The land at the foot of Centre Point, particularly if enlarged to take in Andrew Borde Street, could be transformed into a new piazza that would bring a much needed new sense of place to the Tottenham Court Road crossroads and enhance the setting of Centre Point. Most important of all, it could make pedestrian movement around this junction easier and safer. New transport infrastructure can also be accommodated within this area and close cooperation between Camden and Westminster and TfL is required to make the most of this opportunity.

6.12 The Princes Circus Spaces can be greatly enhanced and enlarged, possibly into an integrated single space, with traffic management changes. This would provide an important new facility and a focus for the area around this part of Shaftesbury Avenue.

6.13 The two enhanced spaces of the Centre Point Piazza and Princes Circus, are connected by St Giles High Street. The High Street itself could be transformed into a pedestrian-friendly street, with improved spaces enhancing the setting of St Giles Church and churchyard, and exploring opportunities for more green space.

6.14 The spaces created would be linked to a network of improved pedestrian routes whose main design elements will be:

- » Wider, more continuous footways,
- » Raised crossing facilities across roads
- » Enhanced legibility,
- » Improved lighting,
- » Improved street furniture, fittings, and materials,
- » Clear and simple signage,
- » Landscape features eg street trees,
- » Removal of street clutter.

6.15 This framework will become a primary consideration in planning any site development. Development proposals must be designed to fit the framework and to help effect it. As well as short stretches of highway closure, they would require the support and ownership of other key stakeholders, including transport operators. The more detailed notes in Boxes 13 to 16 assume this support can be established and they describe the key objectives for each of the spaces.

6.16 The success of all developments in the Framework area will be much enhanced by the quality of the public realm that is created around them. It is thus important that new developments contribute to improving the public realm and adjacent street spaces and surrounding areas. They should be designed in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance and other current best practice in order to enhance the local environment and reduce clutter.

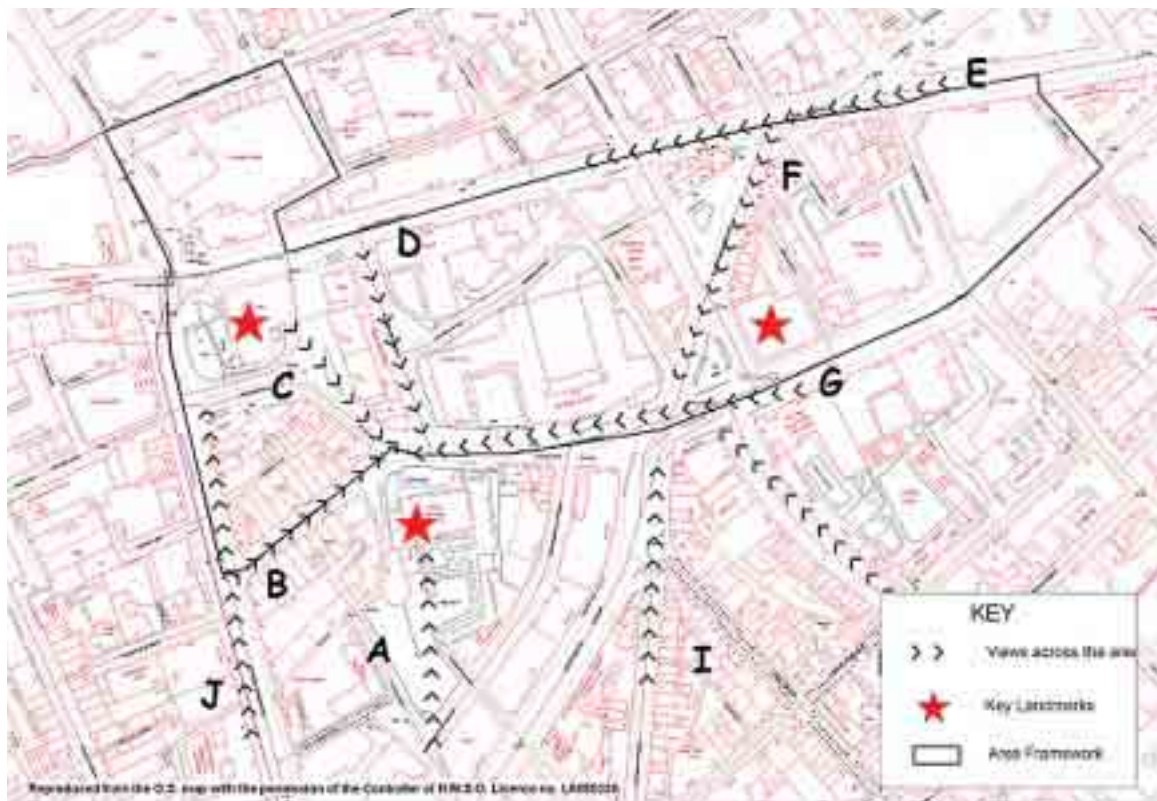
6.17 Good quality materials should be used, and they should be chosen for their appropriateness for their setting, their lifetime maintenance requirements and the objectives of designing out crime. Developers will need to liaise closely with the Council to ensure that their proposals achieve this.

6.18 Management arrangements for all public space must also be discussed and agreed early on.

Views

6.19 Map 8 shows the important views in the Area - also described in Box 11 - and the key landmarks. Exploiting these views and the vistas that provide interesting backdrops to the street scene will enhance the network of pedestrian routes, contribute to a sense of place, and assist orientation and way finding. They can reveal interesting buildings and their attractive features help to develop the area's identity. Enhancing these views and landmarks will be important design considerations in assessing development proposals.

Map 8: Views and Landmarks



Box 11: Views Across the Area

- a** From Stacey Street, NNE to the Tower of St Giles in the Fields.
- b** From Charing Cross Road, along Denmark Street and into the site.
- c** From the south east corner of Centre Point, towards Flitcroft St and the Church of St Giles in the Fields.
- d** From New Oxford Street, south along Earnshaw Street towards the Church of St Giles in the Fields.
- e** Centre Point viewed from the east along new Oxford Street.
- f** From the north east corner of Shaftesbury Avenue, past Princes Circus
- g** Looking west along High Holborn and St Giles High Street towards the Church of St Giles in the Fields.
- h** North West along Endell Street towards St Giles Court.
- i** North from Monmouth Street, past St Giles Court towards Princes Circus.
- j** Charing Cross Road, north towards Centre Point.

6.20 Occasional glimpses of landmarks within and outside the development sites should be retained where possible or created to provide reference points and add interest. There are three important landmarks that help visitors to orient themselves around the area. Two of these, Centre Point, and the Shaftesbury Theatre lie within the boundary of the Area and the other, the Grade 1 Listed tower of the Church of St Giles in the Fields, lies just outside. The views of St Giles Church are one of the defining characteristics of this area and all proposals will be assessed for the effect of their massing, scale and height on these views, in either the foreground or background. Consideration will also be paid to views of the Centre Point tower which commands many views both in the local and the wider area, and views of more distant landmarks including St George's Church and the British Museum if development proposals are likely to affect them.

6.21 It is significant that most of the important views identified in Map 8 pass or terminate at prominent corners which are also the points where most pedestrians enter or leave the Area, and so they have an important role in establishing its identity and character of the area. This means that the treatment of these corners must be carefully considered. It is important that they should be visually interesting and wherever possible, contain active frontages.

Building Scale and Massing

6.22 Taller buildings can make a positive contribution to the strategic and local skyline, and bring other design benefits. The accessibility of the area indicates that developments of higher densities may in principle be appropriate. However, as has already been pointed out, the St Giles area is already developed to relatively high densities, and there is not in any event a necessary correlation between taller buildings and higher densities. The area is also considered to be sensitive to taller buildings, and it is not appropriate in these circumstances to consider height of buildings in isolation from massing and design.

6.23 The Area is outside the Strategic Viewing Corridors that restrict the building heights across much of Camden, and it contains the 35 storey Centre Point Tower. It is not however considered that a cluster of tall buildings, related to Centre Point, would be acceptable because of the particular sensitivity of the local skylines and views identified in this framework, the character of the nearby buildings, particularly St Giles Church with its tower, and the character of nearby streets and spaces. A taller building separated from Centre Point is likely to raise significant concerns both in terms of its effect on the strategic skyline and on more local views and building relationships. Urban design assessments in this area may be required (see para 7.5) which would include an appraisal of the area in line with advice in 'Guidance on Tall Buildings' published by English Heritage and CABE.

6.24 The scale and massing of all new buildings therefore will need very careful consideration and new developments will be carefully appraised for their visual impact strategic and local skylines, on the setting and backdrop of important listed buildings, particularly St Giles Church and Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, on relationships with existing buildings and on the character and appearance of conservation areas.

General Principles of Design

6.25 A very high standard of design will be expected for all aspects of each development proposal. Buildings and spaces should be attractive, add visual interest and be functional, sustainable, robust, durable and safe. The physical appearance of a building should reflect its uses and the architectural expression should be appropriate to its context and status.

6.26 It is essential that development account of the context of the site and the following design principles should apply across the Area:

- » Developments should relate effectively to the existing pattern and sizes of streets and blocks.
- » It should be designed to provide easy movement into and through the site for everyone using or passing through it.
- » It must take account of the adjoining buildings, the general pattern of heights in the area, and the main views, vistas and landmarks.
- » Building and landscape materials used should be of a high standard, in terms of visual appearance and quality, and enhance the setting of adjoining conservation areas and listed buildings;
- » Much of the success of new development will be determined by careful attention to the architectural detailing of the buildings, together with equal consideration to the landscape that integrates them;

- » The design of new development should incorporate principles for environmental sustainability, particularly in respect of ventilation, energy and water use, materials, and flexibility of layout.

The Council provides extensive advice on these issues in separate Supplementary Planning Guidance.

6.27 Major redevelopment involving large buildings could have an impact on the micro-climate of this area - particularly the loss of light due to shading and the effects of wind - and the Council may require that an Environmental Impact Assessment is prepared to assess this.

Public Art

6.27 Public art can establish a sense of place and identity for the area, contribute to local distinctiveness, enhance the quality of the environment, improve people's experience and perception of the area and create new points of interest especially after normal business hours and at weekends. Public art can also help integrate the new mix of uses, it can help to connect St Giles to its wider surroundings and it can contribute to community safety, for example, through improved and imaginative lighting and signing of the area.

6.28 The area presents a major opportunity for a public art scheme with an overall design concept or theme as opposed to more piecemeal 'add-on works'. Such a scheme would relate to the design of new open spaces and public realm generally including pedestrian environment, street furniture, finishes and landscaping as well as the design of new buildings and structures.

6.29 New art works could draw from the rich historical, archeological and cultural heritage of St Giles and its surroundings, or from more recent associations such as those relating to the music, film and publishing industries. Artworks within the improved public spaces could become landmarks in their own right - though they should be successfully integrated within the overall design and landscaping.

6.30 To maximise the potential for art and artists to contribute to the high quality design of the public realm, on-site residencies could be considered, which will help to engage and reflect local aspirations and opinions. On-site residencies would also help to encourage social interaction between the area's diverse communities.

Box 12: Active Frontages

People prefer to walk through city areas that are lively and interesting. This means that buildings lying on main pedestrian routes should be designed to provide life and vitality especially at street level. In other words they should have 'active frontages'.

Active frontages are created where there are frequent doors and windows and few blank walls at ground floor level, and ground floor land uses are open to the public directly from the street.

Active frontages are more likely to be created when buildings overlook public areas and the fronts of all buildings face onto the street. Retail, food & drink and entertainment and a wide range of community uses offer the best opportunities to create active frontages.

Careful design can create active frontages even for more passive uses such as residential, offices, health clubs and/or leisure facilities. This could involve providing views into and out of buildings, by using transparent glass for windows, or with projections to buildings such as balconies, bays, awnings or colonnades.

Designing in Surveillance

6.31 Problems of antisocial and criminal behaviour, particularly associated with drug abuse, are major concerns for residents and visitors to this area and the creation of safer spaces must be a high priority for any new development here. A great deal of research has recently been undertaken into how this can be achieved and much of this has been distilled into a recent publication by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister titled 'Safer Places: the Planning System and Crime Prevention'⁴.

6.32 Careful consideration must be given to how public spaces will be used especially after dark. Interesting and vibrant streetscapes with active ground floor uses will significantly help to reduce street crime, drug dealing and anti social behaviour in the area but a balance must be maintained with mixed use developments to ensure that noise and disturbance do not unduly compromise the amenity of existing and new residential occupiers. Box 12 explains active frontages and how they can be created.

6.33 All public spaces and thoroughfares should be designed with actual and perceived safety and security in mind. Buildings should directly overlook public areas and the active fronts of all buildings should face onto the street. Good lighting is also important, but this must be designed to avoid light pollution. Advice on how the Council would assess and manage light pollution is provided as separate Supplementary Planning Guidance.

6.34 Obtrusive security features such as fences, gates or steel shutters can make an area feel less safe and therefore more threatening to pedestrians. Creation of gated buildings or spaces or otherwise 'fortifying' territory using unsightly grills, shutters or fencing represents an admission of failure of design and should be avoided.

Archaeology

6.35 The entire area once formed part of the suburbs of Roman Londinium, part of Saxon Lundenwic and was an area of extensive medieval and post medieval settlement. It has therefore been designated as an Archaeological Priority Area and the Council will consult with and be guided by English Heritage on the archaeological implications of development proposals.

Notes on the Key Sub Areas of Public Realm:

6.36 The area covered by this planning framework is diverse and made up of a number of streets and spaces that each have their own identity and design requirements. The broad design principles relating to the area as a whole are discussed above, but the boxes below outline the approach relevant to the key sub areas:

Box 13: The Tottenham Court Road Crossroads and St Giles Circus

Tottenham Court Road Crossroads and St Giles Circus is a precious area of underused space at the intersection of London's busiest shopping streets. The provision for pedestrian movement around the crossroads is extremely inadequate, particularly the lack of pavement space on the east side of Charing Cross Road and the network of pedestrian subways around Centre Point. Some recent changes have created a pedestrian forecourt that improves pedestrian access to Centre Point, but these have not significantly enhanced the public realm.

What is required is a place whose first function is to facilitate pedestrian movement between the various public transport services at Tottenham Court Road and the numerous facilities, activities and visitor attractions that lie in every direction. London Underground's proposals to improve the ticket hall and the entrances to the underground station could be the catalyst for transforming this area at street level by creating a new pedestrian plaza of very high quality with excellent facilities for pedestrians. This is likely to involve the following:

- ▶▶ Total or partial closure of Andrew Borde Street
- ▶▶ Redesign of land at the foot of Centre Point including the Pool
- ▶▶ Reorganisation of bus and taxi routes and standing areas.
- ▶▶ Resolving the truncated group of buildings to the south of Andrew Borde Street.

The approach to the design of a new area of public realm needs to be agreed between Camden and Westminster as the larger space lies within both Boroughs. To maximize the benefit of the plaza as an area of public realm Camden will seek:

- ▶▶ A design that maximises and makes best use of space available in this crowded part of the city.
- ▶▶ A comprehensive design for the entire area that extends at least to the west side of Charing Cross Road, and responds to the varied character of the surrounding buildings, particularly Centre Point and the other historic buildings around the crossroads.
- ▶▶ Station entrances that are sited and designed to complement this new area of public realm.
- ▶▶ Improved linkages with surrounding areas to facilitate the arrival and dispersal of public transport users through the area.
- ▶▶ Architecture and materials that are of high quality and that build upon the design and enhance the setting of the many buildings of character in and around the crossroads.
- ▶▶ New developments with active ground floor uses and lively architectural detail and lighting on their full height.
- ▶▶ To minimise street clutter for example by designing out tube ventilation shaft on New Oxford St

Redevelopment at Denmark Place will provide the chance to define the south side of this space, and a crucial issue to address will be how it turns the corner into Charing Cross Road.

Achieving a new space which meets these requirements will be seriously hampered by the likely length of construction activity related to the underground and Crossrail. It will be vital to consider interim solutions which hold to the long term vision but ensure the space achieves the essential goals at each stage.

Box 14: St Giles High Street

St Giles High Street provides the southern link between Princes Circus and the new plaza around Centre Point, the Underground station and beyond. At present St Giles High Street presents an unattractive pedestrian environment. It is dominated by the looming presence of St Giles Court with its inactive frontages while pedestrian movement through the area is discouraged by a lack of legibility in the street pattern and by poor crossing facilities and signage.

However, the High Street contains a number of attractive buildings. St Giles Church in particular is a fine but undervalued Grade I listed building surrounded by a generous area of churchyard. Redevelopment of the St Giles Court site will provide an opportunity to improve the entire length of the High Street and in particular to enhance the setting of the Church and the quality of the churchyard.

The main improvements to the St Giles High Street are likely to include:

- » Increasing the width of pavements on both sides of the road to create a wide pedestrian boulevard that links Princes Circus and the Tottenham Court Road interchange
- » Reducing the width of the carriageway, whilst retaining one-way working and reducing the flow of traffic
- » Active ground floor uses
- » Improvements to the churchyard gates and boundary railings

To maximize the benefit of the High Street as an area of public realm the Council will seek:

- » The enhancement of St Giles High Street as a place for pedestrians to walk in and through.
- » A comprehensive design for the entire stretch of St Giles High Street from Shaftesbury Avenue to Denmark Street and one that integrates and unifies the two sides of the High Street.
- » Materials, street furniture and soft landscaping that are of very high quality and chosen to complement the Grade I listed building and the Conservation Area.
- » Better paving, lighting and signage to improve the pedestrian link through to Seven Dials.
- » To minimise street clutter for instance by designing street lighting and signage where practicable as part of the facade

New developments fronting the Church and St Giles High Street should contribute to the vitality of the area by containing some active ground floor uses and lively architectural detail and appropriate lighting design.

Box 15: St Giles Church and Churchyard

The Grade I listed St Giles Church which was built in Palladian style in 1733 is a very important local landmark, and together with its churchyard provides a more peaceful, secluded enclave that contrasts with the busy streets nearby.

The Church is already examining how it could redesign its forecourt on the north side of the Church so that it might relate better to St Giles High Street and a new development on its north side. This could involve removing the railings and gates from St Giles High Street, and paving the churchyard, although it will be important to ensure that a significant indication of the boundary of the churchyard is retained. The relationship of the space in front of the church to the redesigned High Street and new development at St Giles Court in particular will be critical, and should respect the historic configuration of streets and buildings.

The churchyard to the east and south of the church provides valuable public open space but it is not used to its potential. Measures to upgrade the churchyard could include better signage to advertise its presence and better integration with Phoenix Gardens, next door. The church would also like to provide a kiosk for selling drinks and snacks to people using the churchyard, and this would provide additional surveillance, but would need careful design.

The area between the west side of the church and Flitcroft Street, is potentially extremely attractive but it is underused and has little natural surveillance. The situation will be improved with the demolition of the link between the Church and the Vestry to provide access to this side of the Church from the churchyard. Consent for this has recently been granted. The Church is proposing to encourage greater use of this area, such as for small-scale outdoor musical events.

Box 16: Princes Circus

The two triangles that make up Princes Circus stand at the centre of the Framework Area and provide its largest area of unbuilt space. On a wider scale, Princes Circus occupies a strategic position between the British Museum, Covent Garden, London's Theatreland and Oxford Street.

At present, the two triangles of unbuilt space are isolated, underused, fragmented and confusing for pedestrians. Dominated by traffic, Princes Circus acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement rather than a link between the surrounding areas. However, Princes Circus does provide a major opportunity to improve the public realm and to integrate St Giles with the places that surround it.



The design aim is to create a space that links the areas surrounding the Circus and unifies the two triangles to create one space in which pedestrians, essential vehicles and other needs are all met. Improvements must also be designed to show off the qualities of the many listed and other attractive buildings that front the Circus.

It is proposed that Shaftesbury Avenue should be closed to traffic through Princes Circus and the east side of Bloomsbury Street is narrowed to improve the setting of Shaftesbury Theatre. These measures will enable a more attractive pedestrian route to be provided between the British Museum and the key destinations to the south and west. Easy pedestrian access into the Circus would be provided through new pedestrian crossings over all main roads. Attractive and distinctive spaces will be created through high quality paving, new benches, lighting and signing.

This option would best exploit the potential of Princes Circus in terms of improving pedestrian access to it from all directions, enhancing the views into and out of the Circus, easy orientation and active frontages. The large spaces in front of St Giles Court in the southern triangle, and 219-229 Shaftesbury Avenue in the northern one would be designed to be enjoyed or to allow pedestrians to pause and orientate themselves, particularly on the southern triangle which has the best views out of the Circus. Sense of place and space would be enhanced by more active frontages to properties and by careful consideration of the contribution that existing and possible future tree planting can make.

An alternative proposal is to close the southern part of Bloomsbury St in front of Shaftesbury Theatre and to retain southbound traffic on the section of Shaftesbury Avenue southwest of Bloomsbury St. This arrangement would keep the pedestrian parts of the two triangles together and enhance the setting of Shaftesbury Theatre but it might not best integrate Princes Circus with areas to the west as it would maintain the severance of the Circus from all its west fronting properties. Also the benefits of the improved setting for Shaftesbury Theatre would generally be fully enjoyed only for the short periods before and after evening performances. As Para 5.11 explains, this option also has major traffic management implications.



7 First Steps to Implementation

7.1 The Council is taking some first steps in pursuing its objectives for the area. These can be summarised as follows:

Working with Partners

7.2 The issues raised by this framework are exceedingly wide-ranging and complex and call for close cooperation between a large number of stakeholders. Closer relationships between Camden Council and other partners, particularly Westminster City Council, the GLA and TfL will help ensure that policy development and urban management are coordinated and consistent.

A Clear Policy Framework

7.3 Opportunities for improving the area can only be realised if new investment is forthcoming. In an area with such complex and competing policy demands it is vital to ensure that investors understand the policy framework in which they are operating. The Council is seeking to provide this initial clarity through the preparation of this framework, which sits between the general, borough-wide policies of the UDP and the more detailed requirements of individual site briefs.

Preparation of Site Briefs

7.4 In addition to this framework, planning briefs have been prepared for three important sites within the Area. These sites are St Giles Court, Denmark Place and 21-31 New Oxford Street and can be identified on Map 2 of this document. The briefs reflect the objectives set out in this document as well as the more general UDP policies. The briefs are to be put to public consultation, following which they will be adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Further Studies

7.5 Further more detailed work would provide greater definition to a number of areas covered in this framework, including:

- » traffic circulation studies,
- » further urban design studies including developing the opportunities for enhancing the public realm and the pedestrian environment, and
- » defining the capacity of existing, and the need for, further community facilities.

Such studies would provide a basis for formulating specific proposals. They should be related to the framework objectives and coordinated to ensure consistency.

Addressing the Problems of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

7.6 The Council has recently initiated a number of further measures to address other crime and anti-social behaviour problems in the area. These include joint working with the City of Westminster, and commencement of work on a Central London Supplementary Planning Guidance which is intended to contain policies to control and excessive concentration of Class A3 (food and drink) and entertainment uses. In February 2003 planning consent was granted as a temporary measure for the night time gating of the entrances to Denmark Place to curb its use for antisocial purposes.

Neighbourhood Renewal

7.7 Part of this Area lies within the Covent Garden Neighbourhood Renewal area. The Council approved its Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in September 2002, which sets out the rationale for taking a neighbourhood based approach to tackling deprivation in Camden and has identified 10 areas. Each area has an agreed or evolving set of priorities set out in an agreed or draft action plan. The thrust of renewal in this area is centred on:

- » Community development - focuses to develop a local partnership that is working as the voice of the community to influence and improve the delivery of local services,
- » Crime and Community Safety - is the priority issue for Covent Garden, particularly drug use, drug related crime and anti-social behaviour. A multi-agency approach to this is being fostered in this area,
- » Sustainable community resources - relates to a new community centre being delivered in Covent Garden, the services it provides are being examined.

Further details of the Strategy, the Action Plans, and the Neighbourhood Renewal fund which has been set up to commission interventions to deliver the strategy, are available on the Council's website www.camden.gov.uk

Planning Conditions and Obligations

7.8 Much emphasis is made in this framework of the opportunities that exist for enhancing the area through the various redevelopment schemes and transport improvements that have been proposed. To realise these opportunities it will be important to ensure that each development contributes to Camden Council's overall vision for the area, although these contributions must be fairly and reasonably related to the level of demand created by the development. The Council will use its range of powers for this purpose. In granting any planning permission, the Council will seek to apply planning conditions and to negotiate planning agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) in accordance with Government Circular 1/97 on planning obligations, Policy RE6 of the adopted UDP and Policy SD2 of the Replacement UDP.

7.9 If it would be of benefit to all of them and to the community as a whole, the Council may seek that a number of developers contribute jointly to improving the public realm or a local transport facility. But they would only be expected to do so if their proposals create a need for these improvements. The level of contribution will need to be fairly related to the level of demand created by the development.

7.10 Details of the items the Council may seek for the redevelopment of individual sites are set out in the Planning Briefs for individual sites.

Management of Construction

7.11 The Area lies in an already congested part of the very heart of London. Unfortunately, in the short term, construction activity is likely to degrade the quality of the environment for pedestrians still further. It is likely for instance to become more difficult for pedestrians to navigate around the area and sites will be boarded so that the sense of permeability in the area will reduce.

7.12 Measures are therefore required to minimise the impact of construction on the day-to-day life of this very busy area. They will be designed to:

- » ensure that construction activity does not deter visitors from visiting the area;
- » ensure that all public transport facilities remain open and accessible throughout the construction period;
- » route construction traffic into and out of the area to minimise congestion for all groups of highway user;
- » treat community safety as a priority
- » contain construction activities, as far as practicable, within the development site..

7.13 The Council will take a comprehensive approach to dealing with construction issues, involving Environmental Health, Planning and Highways and other parts of the Council that may have an interest such as Education or Housing. A probable way of dealing with these issues will be to set up a Construction Impact Group that will monitor activities that will take place over a number of years. Environmental impacts and changes to highways (for pedestrians and motor vehicles) will be very important issues that need controlling. Further information on the Council's approach is explained in Supplementary Planning Guidance together with the Council's Contractor's Guidance Note On Noise And Dust Control From Construction And Demolition Sites (1999).

7.14 Measures for managing construction would be secured through the signing of a Section 106 agreement. They are likely to require a detailed Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) which will include details of:

- » Noise and vibration
- » Protection of water courses/drainage
- » Disposal of contaminated land
- » Hours of working
- » Roads, footpaths, construction lorry routing and mud on roads
- » Dust and air pollution
- » Urban ecology
- » Site boundaries and hoardings
- » Fire brigade access
- » Site activities and good housekeeping, site clearance
- » Lighting
- » Potential damage to adjoining buildings, settlement, repairs
- » Liaison with local authority and public; dealing with complaints

Notes

Notes



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