

Key Points and Amendments From WHGARA Re: NDF DRAFT CORE POLICIES (February 2013)

This document refers to the West Hampstead Neighbourhood Area which was agreed by residents to be West Hampstead and Fortune Green wards as a single entity. The Neighbourhood Area of West Hampstead [and Fortune Green] has a distinctive character with its own historic character and village 'feel' for those who live and/or work here. It is also a major city-transport interchange with Tube, Overground and British Rail stations adjacent to each other. A critical factor in setting core policy shall be a presumption in favour of safeguarding the integrated community character of the Neighbourhood Area.

- 1. The overall social and architectural objective within the Neighborhood Area shall be to provide an architectural and planning environment for a vibrant, genuinely-mixed local community,** including young and old people, families, those from a range of social backgrounds as well as the disabled and disadvantaged, the wealthy and those who are less well off.
- 2. Our Neighbourhood has been identified as an area with an acute open space deficiency. Future development should preserve and enhance existing green/open space.** Green chains and corridors along the railway tracks and existing sites of natural conservation should be protected and improved. Planning permission for large new developments should, wherever reasonably possible, include a contribution or addition to green/open and public space.
- 3. All developments, whether residential or commercial, within the Neighbourhood Area will be of high quality design specifications and materials with robust consultation and input of the nearby community** so that they are appropriate to the character of the immediate surroundings (including height, front and rear elevations and roof line).
- 4. No distinctions should be made in principle between any different parts of the Neighbourhood Area which is to be treated as one coherent whole.** Large and small developments of residential and commercial buildings within the Neighbourhood Area should have due regard to, and respect for, the character, height and scale of the existing streetscape. This is regarded as particularly important in those streets where the architecture already has a largely consistent character, height and/or scale.
- 5. New residential development in the Neighbourhood Area should provide a mix of housing, including social and affordable housing and 3-4 bedroom homes for families.** Achieving the current Affordable Housing Policy objectives in Camden is vital. This gives an overall target of 50% of the total addition to housing floor space, which applies to all schemes throughout the Borough with a capacity for 50 dwellings or more. The Borough of Camden should also be rigorous in 'only considering payments in lieu on an exceptional basis for smaller schemes, where there are justifiable reasons why affordable housing cannot be provided on site.' (Payments in lieu Working Paper December 2010)

6. **The location and density of new developments across the integrated area of West Hampstead [and Fortune Green] should be balanced to avoid a development ‘ghetto’ arising around the West Hampstead interchange.** Whilst recognising that there is a designated “area of growth or intensification” the unity, scale, and unique character of the Neighbourhood Area as a whole should be maintained and enhanced as far as possible.

7. **For the avoidance of doubt, both within and outside the growth Area, new buildings should conform to the established streetscape, unless an exception can be both architecturally and environmentally justified.** Having regard to the Mayor’s London Plan which calls for a minimum of 800 new dwellings in the Growth Area and to the fact that approximately 500 + new dwellings are already provided by the 187-199 West End Lane development (given planning permission in November 2012) and the housing development in Blackburn Road (being built as at February 2013), further housing, mixed and commercial schemes should be ‘low rise in nature.’

8. **As for commercial and business properties, guidelines from the Mary Portas review (2011) of town centres should be applied to planning policies in the Neighbourhood Area** so as to: control the amount of street frontage allowed for any single shop or other commercial enterprise and develop a detailed Use Class to better control the type and mix of shops and other commercial enterprises that are given planning permission.

9. **Commercial, mixed and residential developments should generally (and wherever reasonably possible) mirror the prevailing height of buildings in the central (interchange) sector of the Area.** Whilst it is difficult to be prescriptive on exact height levels given such factors as buildings from different periods having different numbers of stories and land levels, the preponderant height of both historic commercial and residential buildings should be respected as a guide to future planning.

10. **Further development of, or the conversion of property with an existing commercial use into new supermarkets should be actively discouraged,** given the current existence of (i) branches of both Tesco and Sainsbury in West End Lane and (ii) the neighbouring large branches of Waitrose (Finchley Road) and Sainsbury (O2 Centre) . Particular regard should be had for the additional adverse impact created by deliveries to any new supermarket(s) and the likely extended hours of business of any new supermarket(s) on the local community and local traffic. Active support should be given for the funding of new and existing small retail shops and other businesses offering local services to the community. In every new development, planning permissions should promote a collaborative approach to ensure small units are provided for new start-ups at affordable rents or made affordable with business rates discounts.

11. **The NDF recognizes that there is an urgent need for ongoing improvements to public transport and both foot and car traffic problems in the Neighbourhood Area,** with an emphasis on (A) the three rail stations, (B) the siting of bus stops and routing of buses (especially during construction phases) and (C) the use of existing funding in a timely way to install lift or escalator access in the Overground and Tube stations as a matter of urgency, particularly to provide proper disabled access. Coherent and monitored traffic management, which is ‘fit for purpose’, should be made a priority on West End Lane. A pedestrian flow survey should underpin a coherent strategy to

enable the high volume of commuters to move efficiently between transport links, safeguard pedestrians and promote ease of access for all users.

12. **The planning process and all applications for planning approval should necessarily recognise that an urban Area subjected to an unusual amount of housing expansion cannot sustain its public services without significant financial and material investment** in infrastructure and transport improvements as well as parking and traffic controls, new schools, surgeries and secure utility supplies (especially water). ‘Intensification’ in West Hampstead and developments in Fortune Green will result in bringing thousands of new residents into an already strained community. The social impact of these residents must be given serious consideration at an early stage and appropriate services/facilities made available as the population of the Neighbourhood Area grows.