

Your most frequently asked questions

We've looked at your feedback from the summer consultation events and provided some more information on some of the areas you are most interested in or concerned about.

THE DESIGN OF THE MASTERPLAN

Questions Asked

1. Why are you proposing 1,900 homes here?

The O2 Centre site is bounded by four railway stations and plenty of bus stops. As one of the best connected sites in London it is an ideal location for a new community.

That is why it is designated for significant redevelopment in both local and regional planning policy. It will make a significant contribution to Camden and the Greater London Authorities housing targets, and we believe the masterplan we are consulting on can be something exciting and positive for the area.

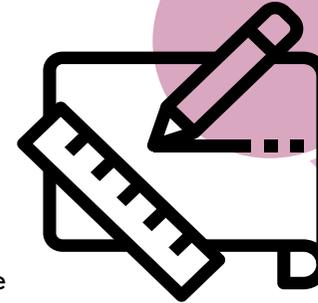
2. Why are you proposing taller buildings here?

We have carefully considered the location of buildings and in developing our latest masterplan have taken into account several important factors like sunlight, site levels and the need to deliver a significant number of new homes here along with public open space and community amenities.

The buildings will range from 3 to 16 storeys, so this will not be a uniform or regimented development but a varied design which also allows us to deliver the homes and affordable homes the area and London needs.

The site's nearest neighbour is some 60m away, and most surrounding buildings are further than this. This, in addition to the site being bounded by the railway line, forms a natural buffer zone. The taller buildings will therefore be focused to the north of the site, where the buffer zone between neighbouring buildings is the furthest. This will also ensure the homes and green spaces benefit from lots of natural light.

We know some of you are very concerned about the prospect of taller buildings here but it is important to recognise that by including taller buildings, we can make better use of this site and deliver a greater social and economic impact. We can provide more affordable homes, keep over 50% of the site as public and green open space (which we know from your feedback is very important locally) and the community and retail spaces people want to see.



3. What materials will you use to ensure the designs are in-keeping with the area?

We're very clear as a team that the buildings we design here should be of a very high standard and respond to the character of the area. Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) are the architects leading the designs and they have a tremendous amount of experience in Camden. They're looking closely at the architecture of the area and how we reflect the character as well as the historical uses of the site. We'll be making use of brick and will also be re-using existing materials from demolished buildings wherever possible to reduce our carbon emissions.



THE NEW HOMES

1. Will the new homes be affordable for local residents?

We know you want us to prioritise affordable housing that includes a range of properties to buy and to rent. We are proposing 35% affordable homes here, including in the first phases. We'll be discussing the exact mix of affordable housing with Camden, but this will include a significant proportion of low cost rented and family homes. We're keen that this is an inclusive development, with homes for all.

2. Why are you only committing to 35% affordable housing when Camden's target is 50%?

We are committed to providing 35% affordable housing here, of which a large proportion will be low cost rented homes, and this is part of a much larger and substantive package of benefits that we are proposing for the area and trying to find the right balance between.

This includes dedicating over half the site as public open space, with two large new green spaces, a linear park and a town square. We will also be providing new community spaces, affordable workspaces and a new health centre within the site. We are undertaking detailed studies on our impact on local transport, infrastructure and other local services to determine the level of appropriate contribution towards improvements.

3. How will this impact local services like schools and GP surgeries?

The impact on local social infrastructure is tested through Environmental Impact Assessments, which will form part of our planning application.

We know this is a big change and that people are worried about services like schools and GP surgeries. We are carefully considering both and are already speaking to the NHS, the local Clinical Commissioning Group and Camden Council about providing a health centre or GP surgery on site.

Our initial studies have shown that there is enough capacity in local primary and secondary schools, but we are looking at this carefully and all of our data will be tested by the Council. If a need is identified, we will be happy to contribute to this.





THE SHOPS

1. What will happen to all the current tenants and facilities in the O2 Centre?

The replacement of the O2 Centre comes in a later phase of the development and so it is likely that nothing will change at the centre for at least 5-7 years after we start on site. However, we are already talking to all the businesses and organisations that are in the O2 Centre now about the future.

We want this to be a place that has everything that local people want and need and it's been really useful to hear what local people like about the O2 Centre now and what could be improved on.

2. Will you provide space for a Cinema, Gym and Cafe?

We've heard during this consultation just how important a cinema, gym and cafe are to local people, with over 40% of respondents requesting these each. We will ensure that we provide space for all of these, along with a supermarket in our new Town Square, which will be brought forward in the later phases of development.

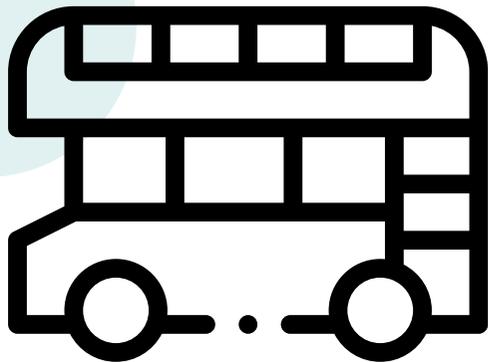
3. How will I shop at the supermarket without a car?

Planning policy clearly requires that major schemes like this in well-connected parts of London are car free, which is why we have been very open from the outset that this will be a car free development.

Camden Council has already declared a climate emergency and the area around Finchley Road suffers from high pollution levels and low air quality. It is for this reason that Camden Council and the Greater London Authority have stipulated that developments like this must be car-free. We will be providing blue badge parking for disabled residents and shoppers, as well as pick-up/drop-off spaces for taxis and ride shares but planning policy will simply not allow us to provide lots of parking.

4. How big will the new supermarket be?

We know the Sainsbury's is a really well used and liked local asset and we are already in discussion with them about coming back into the transformed space, at the Finchley Road end of the masterplan. We are still talking to them about the exact size of the store, which will depend on their needs and future demands.



TRANSPORT & SAFETY

1. Will you be improving access and capacity at local stations like West Hampstead?

We know this is a really important issue and we are working closely with Transport for London (TfL) and Camden Council to understand the issues at play. There are a number of complex challenges to consider; access and ticket hall capacity, platform capacity, interchange capacity and frequency of the trains (or a combination of factors). We are however committed to working with TfL to explore the potential for improved access to local stations and how we can safeguard these requirements in the design of our masterplan. The impact of our proposals will also be assessed and scrutinised in the Transport Assessment, a key part of our full planning application.

2. What will you be doing to keep this area safe?

This is something we feel passionate about. We asked several questions about this in our most recent survey, and you were clear that we need to ensure this development is well lit, well signposted, includes CCTV in key areas, and doesn't include any dark corners or blind spots. You were also clear that this should be a well-maintained site and that we should speak to local people, particularly women and young people, to ensure this is a safe place. We'll be doing just that, as we are committed to being long-term custodians of this new neighbourhood.

3. The recent floods in the area have shown that this area is at risk, surely a development of this scale will make things worse?

Currently, this site is dominated by materials like concrete and tarmac which do not allow good drainage, and therefore the risk of flooding is heightened.

Greening, and especially the inclusion of rain gardens and swales (sunken marshy borders), is the best possible way to mitigate flood risk. We are working with landscape and biodiversity specialists including the London Wildlife Trust on this and will also be including green roofs and sustainable drainage along with many other best practice sustainability and environmental measures across the new buildings.

We are also doing a full climate assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment and the findings will be published as part of the planning application.