

Camden Town High Street London, UK

Lively Living on
Camden High Street

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Colorful and funky, Camden Town High Street draws around 300,000 visitors each weekend.



Camden Town High Street is located in Camden, a borough just east of the heart of London. Camden is among the most diverse neighborhoods in London and High Street is well-known and loved for its artisans, unique shops, lively markets and alternative culture.

Left Top: Camden High Street, from Google Street View

Left Bottom: Vicinity of Greater London, from cityoflond.gov.uk

Right: Camden High Street and immediate context, from Google Maps

CAMDEN TOWN, LONDON

"Working together strengthens and promotes a sense of community."
-Camden Together



Statistics | Facts

Population:
London- 7.5 million
Camden Town- 235,700

Area:
London- 1,706 square km
Camden- 22 square km

Employment: 67% technical/professional, 18% routine manual or service, 15% other

Governing bodies:
EU Parliament, UK Parliament, and London Assembly- Barnet & Camden Council

Housing: 35% of households are owner occupied, 65% of dwellings are rented

Parks & Green Spaces:
over 70

Nature reserves: 4

City Farm: 1



Neighborhood Character

Ethnic Diversity: 27% non-white (Black African, Bangladeshi, Indian, Black Caribbean Chinese among others), 20% non-British white, 53% British white

Languages spoken: more than 120 languages spoken including English, Bengali, Sylheti, Somali, Albanian, Arabic, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Lingala

Historic preservation: 39 Conservation Areas and over 5,600 structures and buildings listed as architectural or historical interest

Religion: 47% Christian, 12% Muslim, 6% Jewish, 4% Buddhist, Hindu and other, 22% non-religious, 10% no response to question

Social Deprivation: 66% "educated urbanites", 29% "inner city adversity"

Famous residents of Camden Town: George Orwell, Charles Dickens, Mary Shelley, and Liam Gallagher, lead vocalist for Oasis

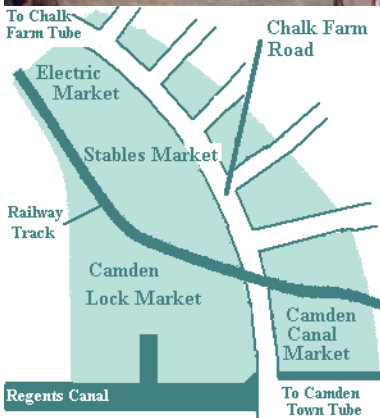
Demographics courtesy of the Camden Council's *Camden Profile 2009* report

Camden Road Railway Station, 1905



"A Cosmopolitan part of London, full of funky street markets."

Cathy Smith, Historical Travel



History of Camden Lock Market

1791 - Earl Camden began developing the rural land around Camden High Street

1812 - Parliament passed Act to build the Regent's Canal to link the Grand Junction Canal with the River Thames

1820 - Regent's Canal first opened connecting Camden Town to central London

1950 - Due to increasing reliance on the automobile, the canals fell into decline

1971 - Abandoned industrial buildings and land was leased from the British Waterways Board to be sublet as workshops for local artisans and craftspeople.

1974 - Weekend market was opened on some nearby cobbled yards where the artisans could sell their wares and handicrafts. The market soon expanded to include antiques, clothing and food.

1985 - Three other markets had opened in Camden Town due to the popularity of the original Camden Lock Market with locals and tourists. It's location along the canal gave it a unique flavor and Camden Town became known for its colorful, vibrant markets.

As more and more tourists came, the businesses and restaurants along Camden High Street began to reflect the desires of visitors rather than locals.

1990 - Renovation of old buildings at the Lock and the construction of a new Market Hall in a traditional Victorian trading hall style brought new life to the markets. The shops have become so well-loved that most of them are now open 7 days a week.

1997 - The street entrance to the market was improved for pedestrians by widening the sidewalks, adding seating and some landscape improvements.

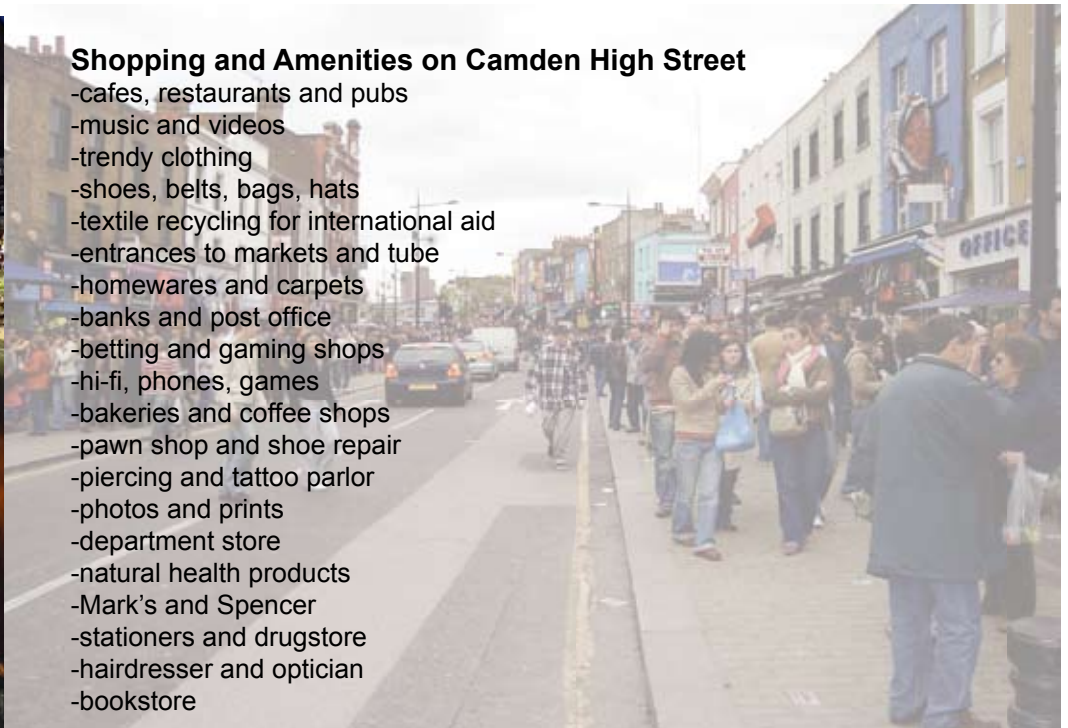
2008 - Devastating fire destroyed some 300 businesses in Camden Canal Market.

Camden Town currently has 6 thriving markets that draw tourists and locals alike.

Information courtesy of The Best of Camden at <http://www.camdenlock.net/camden.html>

Shopping and Amenities on Camden High Street

- cafes, restaurants and pubs
- music and videos
- trendy clothing
- shoes, belts, bags, hats
- textile recycling for international aid
- entrances to markets and tube
- homewares and carpets
- banks and post office
- betting and gaming shops
- hi-fi, phones, games
- bakeries and coffee shops
- pawn shop and shoe repair
- piercing and tattoo parlor
- photos and prints
- department store
- natural health products
- Mark's and Spencer
- stationers and drugstore
- hairdresser and optician
- bookstore



The Underground: Camden Town Station

Camden High Street is approximately .5 miles long and connects the Tube stations of Camden Town and Mornington Crescent. The tube stations both opened in 1907 and connected the once sleepy suburb to central London. Adjacent is the Camden Road Rail Station, which opened in 1870, that connects to a larger, regional network.

On weekends, the Camden High Street station is so congested that entrance to the station is closed on Sundays. In 2004 after assessing the changes needed to ease congestion, the London Underground group had proposed plans to demolish the existing tube station, the Camden Market and a few other buildings. In reaction to these plans, there were public complaints and a public hearing inquiry. In 2005, after the court ruled in favor of the residents, the demolition plan was cancelled and there is currently no alternative scheme proposed.



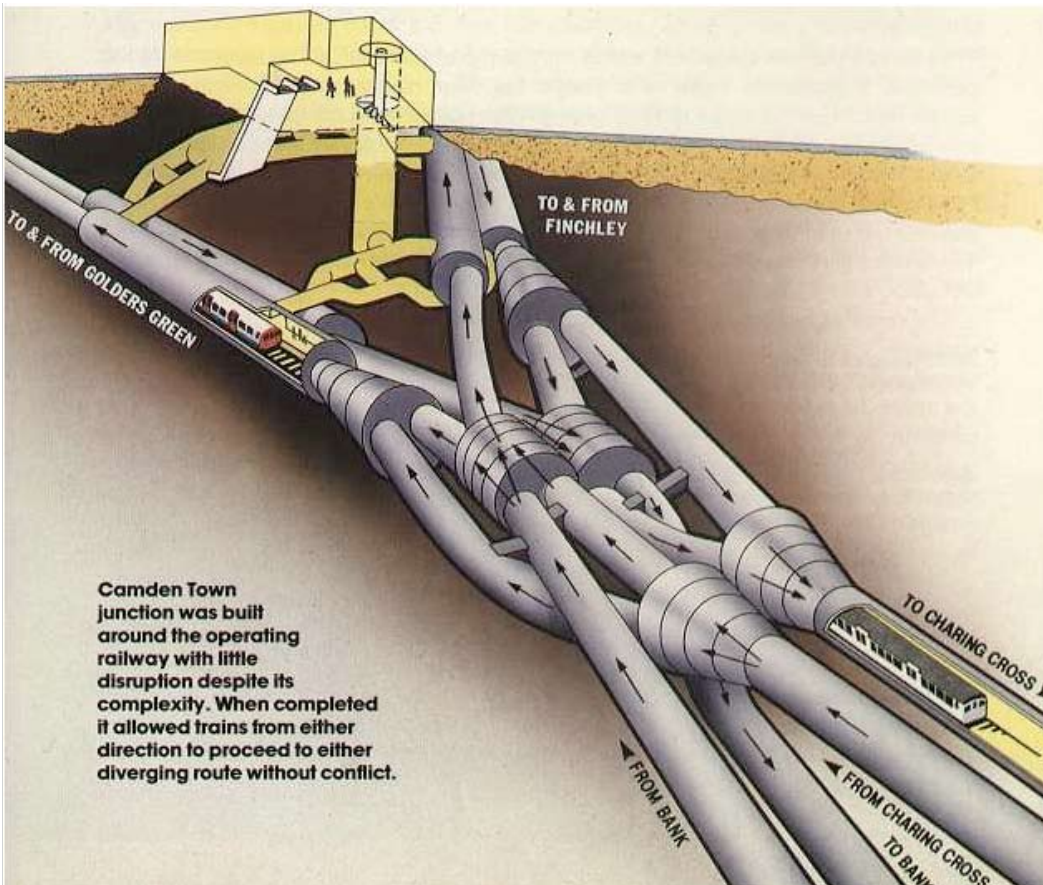
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Transportation in Camden

Private Transportation: 56% of households have no access to a car or van

Public Transportation: 3 railway stations, bus, tube and suburban rail networks



Camden Town junction was built around the operating railway with little disruption despite its complexity. When completed it allowed trains from either direction to proceed to either diverging route without conflict.

This is a below-ground diagram of the complex Camden Town Tube Junction. Camden Station is the transportation hub for the neighborhood and is heavily congested on weekends drawing people from around London to the neighborhood. It is London Underground policy to make this station exit and transfer only during peak traffic hours and Saturdays and Sundays to alleviate severe congestion.

illustration credit
http://husk.org_www.geocities.com_athens_acropolis_7069_ltcamden.jpg

"We will find ways to adapt to Camden's growing population while protecting, promoting and enhancing our environment for us and for future generations."

-Camden Together



Local Initiatives

The Children and Young People's Partnership

Oversees all service for children, including education, health, and safety

Camden Together

Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2012

Goals Are To Create:

- 1 - a sustainable Camden that adapts to a growing population
- 2 - a strong Camden economy that includes everyone
- 3 - a connected Camden community where people lead active, healthy lives
- 4 - a safe Camden that is a vibrant part of our world city

Balancing Growth with the Environment

- Make Camden a "low-carbon" borough.
- Ensure that new and refurbished buildings are extremely energy efficient.
- Encourage people to walk more and use public transport. Improve access to open spaces including local walking routes.
- Recycle more and in smarter ways to minimise energy use.
- Implement tough design standards to make sure that density comes with high quality in keeping with its surroundings.
- Ensure that new developments are designed to deter crime and anti-social behaviour and have decent public services and infrastructure.

Create a Borough of Opportunity:

- Provide more basic skills training, especially English language but also more general 'life skills' training that get people more ready to take up work.
- Provide all our secondary schools with 21st century facilities including Information Technology (IT) as well as buildings through the Building Schools for the Future programme.
- Concentrate support on our housing estates where 'worklessness' is concentrated – providing affordable childcare, offering life skills, coaching and mentoring, and offering routes to local job and training schemes, and education.

Build Strong, Healthy, Connected Communities

- Encourage community participation in the planning process.
- Ensure public space is well designed and makes people feel at home.
- Develop after school and breakfast clubs and children's centres.

Create a Safe and Vibrant Place at the Heart of a World City

- Encourage people to take more responsibility for their own behaviour and for the behaviour of their children.
- Improvements such as areas for teenage activity, control of dogs, longer opening hours in summer and better signage.
- Improve lighting, design and facilities such as cafes so that parks can be used safely in the evening.

"At the heart of the community strategy is a commitment for Camden to develop in a way that improves the quality of life for us and for future generations."

-Camden Together

"Naked Street Plan", effective Nov. 2009

London's Only "Naked" Street

Changes Include:

- Removing all street signs and street markings
- There will be no formal crosswalks, instead pedestrians can cross wherever they choose.
- Pavements will be widened by up to 8ft, reducing the road to a single-file lanes
- Restricting Deliveries to Weekdays, with Parking Made Available in Designated Parking Bays Made of Cobbled Pavestones
- Allowing Drivers to Park in the Delivery Bays on Weekends



Public Space	Street Furniture	Quality of Lighting	Physical Condition	Environmental Character	Legibility	Ease of Pedestrian Movement	Pedestrian Space	Sense of Place	
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	BRITANNIA JUNCTION
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	MORNINGTON CRESCENT JUNCTION
P	P	P	F	P	P	P	P	P	CAMDEN HIGH STREET SOUTH
P	P	P	P	P	P	F	P	F	CAMDEN HIGH STREET NORTH
P	P	F	F	F	F	F	P	F	PARKWAY

G Good F Fair P Poor

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Concerns Raised by Residents:

- Lack of Affordable Housing**
- Increase provision for amount of affordable housing
 - Improve quality of affordable housing
 - Prevent homelessness

Tackle Drugs and Other Crime

Preserve Local, Independent Shops and Businesses

Make it Easier for More People to Protect the Environment

- Increase amount of waste that is recycle or composted
- Reduce amount of waste collected per resident
- Reduce traffic levels

Managing Growth

- Bring empty properties into use

Support Ethnic Diversity

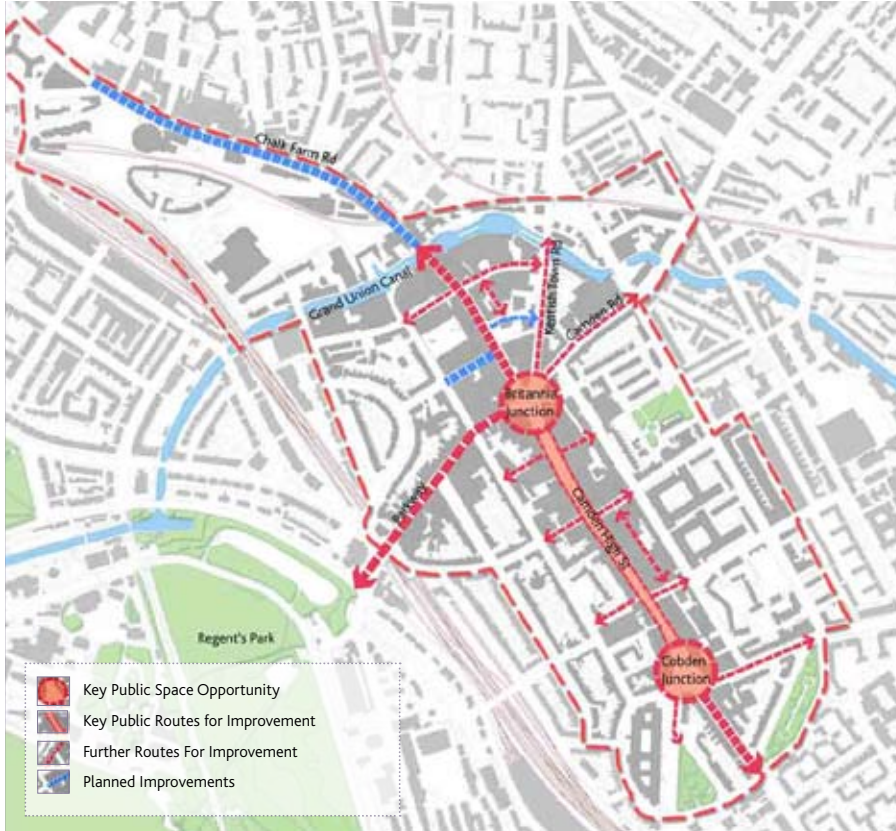
Encouraging Personal Responsibility

- Increase number of community volunteers
- Reduce smoking, and encourage physical activity

"The Vision of Camden Town will deliver a compelling and identifiable urban environment, which is legible, pedestrian-friendly and unique."

CT Streets and Spaces, Camden Town Unlimited

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Camden High Street**



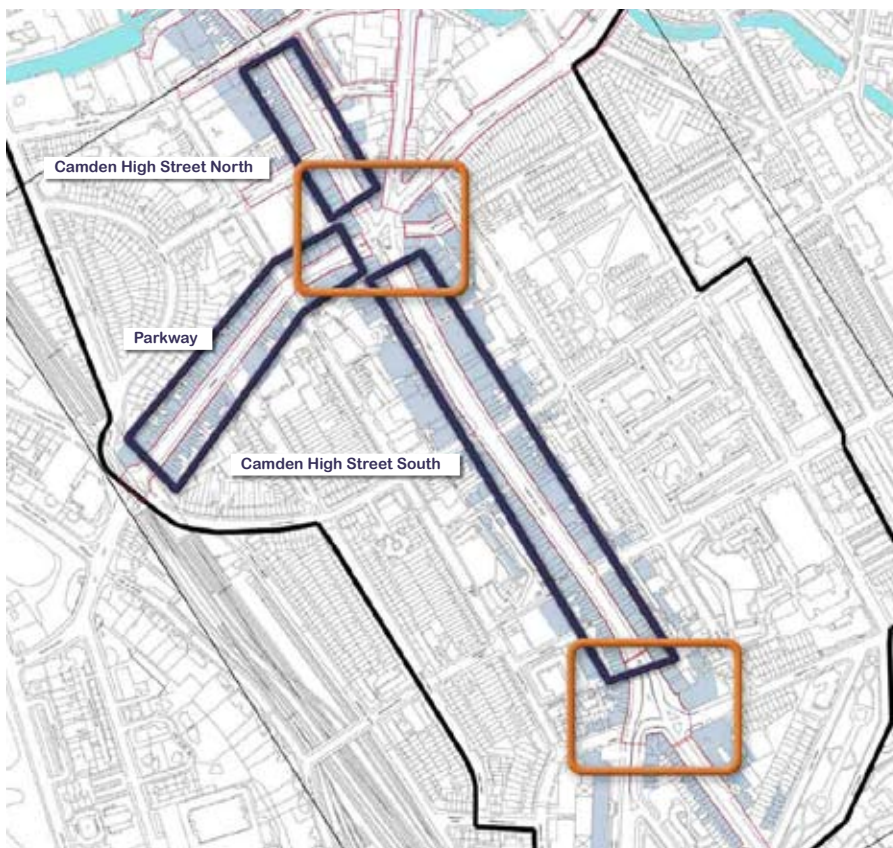
Camden Town First Streets, Spaces and Places A Visions for Change

KEY ISSUES

- A compromised pedestrian space in key areas
- Fragmentation of the High Street
- Limited sense of arrival and poor environmental quality
- Underutilized space due to the poor configuration of traffic routes
- Poor lighting of pedestrian areas, contributing to poor perceptions of personal safety
- Absence of a cohesive core to Camden Town as an identifiable destination

OPPORTUNITIES

- Creation of two gateway public spaces to provide a balance to both ends of Camden High Street and to complement the existing Lock and markets
- Increased pedestrian width at junctions and along Camden High Street, providing enhanced connections between north and south
- Improvements to the quality of the public realm, lighting, and public art potential
- Creation of a cohesive identity for Camden Town's streets and spaces



HIGH QUALITY PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

Proposals for the street improvements are simpler to achieve than the main junction schemes, and don't require a phasing approach although they could be delivered in sections if necessary.

The following pages present section and plan diagrams which will aid the development of detailed design proposals to achieve the aims of the vision.

"Place making is at the heart of our Vision."
CT Streets and Spaces, Camden Town Unlimited

Camden High Street North

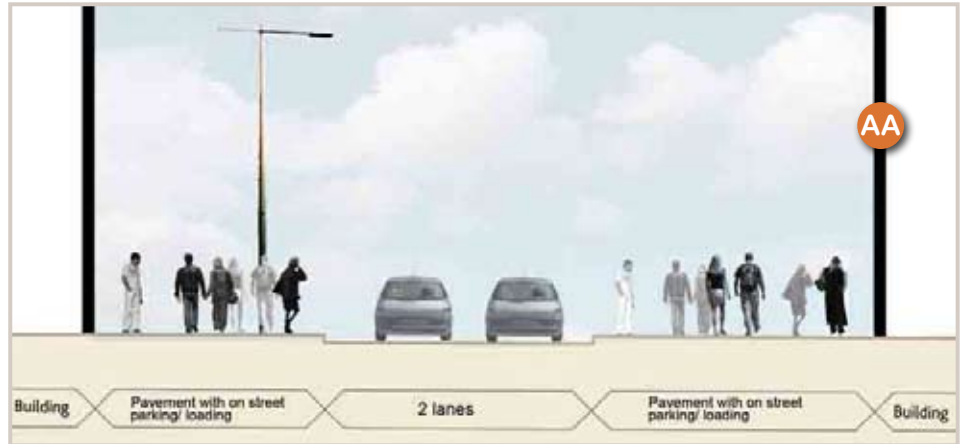
Transformation of Camden High Street

Spatial reconfiguration proposals will achieve increased footway width for the High Street. If Camden Town is to be presented as a cohesive environment - a single and substantial place - then it is critical that Camden High Street provides the link in quality and character between the other key projects.

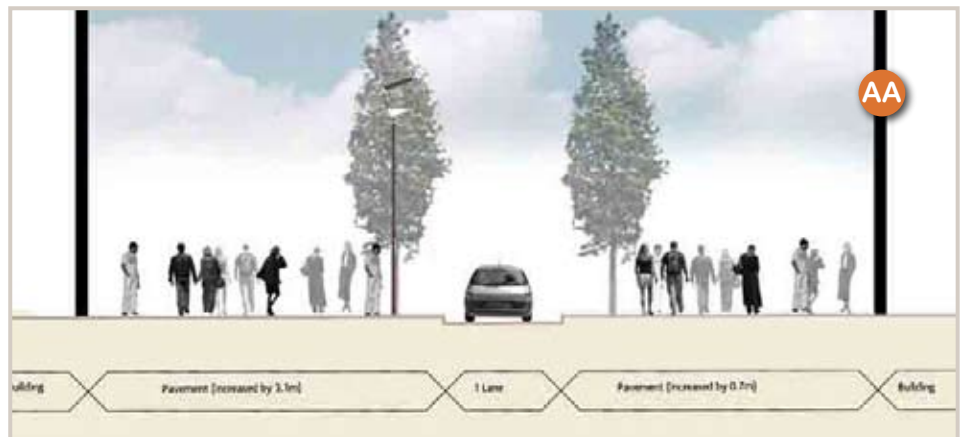


- Reconfiguration at Britannia Junction to facilitate easier pedestrian movement
- Appropriate pavement detailing to create a strong sense of arrival to a high profile public site
- Consolidation of underused carriageway space to generate wider footways
- Landmark piece of public art
- facilitating removal of unnecessary street lighting clutter
- Street trees to create a green pedestrian link with the Lock and canal
- Consistent paving and street furniture

EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED



"It is essential that Camden Town adapts and evolves to serve the present and future needs of its thriving eclectic community of residents."
CT Streets and Spaces, Camden Town Unlimited

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If the quality of Camden High Street remains poor, then Britannia Junction and Camden Plaza will feel like disconnected places and the critical mass required for transformation is far less likely to be achieved. In this way Britannia Junction also needs to be connected to the Lock and markets with a high quality pedestrian-friendly street.

To this end the Camden High Street proposals are characterized as a transformation. The emphasis here is to be upon communicating an appropriate scale for the street through the dimensions of the paving and curb units. It is proposed that consistent lighting columns will be applied throughout the Camden Town study area. Street trees will be utilized within the street to create an enhanced environmental character. The placement of trees will inevitably need to be guided by the location of existing services, but additional footway width may create opportunities for tree lines which avoid existing services.



▲ Illustrative view north along Camden High Street from the tube station



▲ Britannia Junction is a significant movement hub within the local road network and also represents a point of arrival at the heart of Camden Town. The landmark/feature potential of the location has not been considered in the existing configuration.



▲ From the south the wide traffic corridor splits between Camden High Street and Kentish Town Road. There is an isolated public toilet on the traffic island, and the landmark potential of the prominent building used by HSBC is not realised. There is very little to signify a particular sense of place or arrival at one of London's most visited destinations.

Camden High Street to the north of Camden Town tube will remain a significant pedestrian destination, with concentrations above the levels envisioned for the enhanced streetscape between the tube stations. In response to this and the existing character of the street and Lock, it is proposed that the northern sections will have a slightly different character than the southern. This will be realized through a block paved carriageway which will convey a more pedestrian-friendly environment, whilst maintaining clarity for vehicles and pedestrians in relation to how the road should be used. A small upstand curb and loading bays at footway level will reinforce the difference in character. Block paved loading and parking bays will also be a feature of the southern High Street.

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