

Business Manifesto

Successful local (second tier) shops always contribute to the liveliness and well-being of a community, but in Camberwell many businesses have been forced to close. It is vitally important to preserve "second tier shopping areas" outside centres as places offering rents low enough to encourage local entrepreneurs and creative Camberwell. Such businesses need to be attractive, safe and accessible both by foot and by car.

suggestions follow inside this leaflet:

BUSINESS PARKING

Principle

Insufficient parking for businesses has contributed to the closure of many Camberwell businesses

Proposals

1. Dedicated visitor parking for all businesses, equating to at least one visitor space per shop within a 1 minute walk (such spaces to be nearer than the nearest residents' spaces)
2. Protection for businesses from parking on pavements outside or near shop fronts.
3. Protection for businesses from residents and goods vehicles parking long-term on-street outside shop fronts.
4. One business vehicle permit per independent business to be issued to the owner at residential rates (excluding cab firms), and dedicated business permit spaces to be introduced within a 5 minute walk of businesses (current rates are £334.40 for business permits, and £99.30 for residents' permits)

RENTAL

Principle

Property developers have purchased retail properties with a view to conversion to residential use, having previously demanded unrealistic rents.

Proposals

1. A moratorium on all conversions from shop retail to residential, pending a full review by the Council of trading conditions (thus keeping rents lower)
2. Compulsory purchase of empty shops, reducing average rents for business
3. Forced advertising of all shops for which landlords seek conversion to residential on the Southwark Council website for 6 months minimum, with all rent and purchase offers coming through Southwark Council's rates team in order to establish true market demand at that location
4. Identification of specific areas for which the "market rate" of rent could be challenged direct to the Valuations Office, based on poor infrastructure, high crime and empty shops locally.

5. A commitment to highlight the injustice of "upwards-only" rent clauses in leases

TRADER INFLUENCE

Principle

Small traders need to be able to contribute to decisions about their locality.

Proposals

1. Sole traders and businesses to be consulted prior to the installation of street furniture within a radius of 20 metres of their frontage.
2. Sole traders and business owners to have the right to transfer their vote to their ward of trading.

SHOP FRONT GRANTS

Grants should not be released until full compliance with planning rules including conservation by all parts of the building has been achieved.

SECURITY

Well-functioning shops contribute to the security of a neighbourhood, and their own security needs should be better recognised and helped by the council.

PUBLIC REALM

Principle

The commercial impact on local businesses of pedestrian areas and the streetscape is not recognised.

Proposals

Continuing focus from councillors and Planning and Highways managers on:

1. Maximising pavement space
2. Decluttering
3. Discouraging street furniture installations other than cycle racks and essential lighting,
4. Ensuring existing street furniture installations comply fully with local planning and conservation area guidelines, near local businesses.