# Camden Town Xchange proposes eight-storey mixed-use hub with student accommodation, affordable homes and an experiential cultural venue



Ahmm’s Camden Town Xchange project at 180 Arlington Road sits at a pivotal moment for Camden Town’s evolving edge, where a familiar cinema-bingo site could be reimagined as a mixed-use hub blending student accommodation, affordable homes, and a new experiential cultural venue. Architect AHMM has designed two eight-storey blocks that together would provide around 250 student beds and 50 affordable flats, with roughly 60% of the affordable homes at social or London Affordable Rent, the rest at intermediate tenures. The scheme also anticipates about 300 square metres of retail and 1,300 square metres of leisure and cultural space described as an “experiential cultural venue.” The site’s cinema and bingo hall history remains central to the conversation, with Mecca Bingo having departed in 2024 and the Odeon set to leave in 2026, opening the door for a new cultural use that Camden says could honour the area’s creative spirit while bringing new life to the heart of Camden Town. The developers emphasise a respect for the historic Parkway frontage, promising an adaptive restoration of the cinema’s façade as a key component of the proposal, alongside a network of green spaces, a courtyard for affordable-housing residents and a rooftop terrace for students. On sustainability, the plan includes heat pumps, solar panels and blue roofs to support a target BREEAM Excellent rating. A Camden Town Xchange spokesperson told Architects’ Journal that the scheme would “bring a new chapter to the heart of Camden, blending culture, community, and convenience to breathe new life into the underused site,” while acknowledging that the cinema’s closure marks the end of an era but opens the way for a new cultural use that will “honour Camden’s creative spirit”. The developer says it plans to submit a planning application to Camden Council in autumn this year.

The Camden Town Xchange project is pitched as a Camden Vision‑led initiative that foregrounds a mixed-use scheme with an experiential cultural venue, high-quality student accommodation and affordable housing, while prioritising accessibility and local engagement. The eight-storey form would accommodate retail and leisure spaces and is designed to activate the Arlington Road–Inverness Street corridor, with the Parkway frontage reinterpreted to reflect the site’s historic identity. The proposals emphasise green roofs, renewables and energy efficiency as core design principles, and position the development as a positive contribution to Camden Town’s conservation-area context, aligned with local priorities and a community‑led design process.

The project also outlines a path for ongoing public involvement. Camden Town Xchange describes its emerging proposals as a dynamic reimagining that reconnects Camden Town with the Inverness Street area, incorporating a street-front presence for retail and cafés alongside the experiential venue, affordable homes and student accommodation. The developers stress inclusive access, sustainability and high-quality materials to inspire Camden’s future, while inviting input through a public-engagement programme that included drop-in sessions and a survey during the June/July 2025 exhibitions. The Get Involved page emphasises two rounds of consultation in 2025 and provides opportunities to shape the evolving plans before planning submission.

The site’s history and planning context add further layers to the story. The Site page traces the corner’s trajectory from the Royal Alexandra Theatre to the current Odeon cinema and Mecca Bingo occupation, noting Odeon’s vacate planned for early 2026 and Mecca Bingo’s 2024 departure as a catalyst for reimagining the corner with a modern experiential cultural venue, sturdy affordable housing and student accommodation. Camden Town Town Xchange sits inside the Camden Town Conservation Area, where the Parkway frontage is a key heritage feature that the team says they aim to restore and re‑edge with active fronts along Inverness Street and Arlington Road. Civico’s planning listing for the site records prior deliberations by Camden’s Planning Committee on interactive entertainment and ancillary uses, illustrating the local authority’s sensitivity to the site’s evolving identity within Camden’s wider development narrative. Meanwhile, the Timeline page lays out a staged process from spring 2025, with Phase 1 public consultations in May and June and Phase 2 in July, and notes that updated designs would be refined in response to feedback ahead of a planning submission in autumn 2025, underscoring the ongoing, community‑driven dialogue that continues to shape the project.

If the final planning submission proceeds as hoped, Camden Town Xchange could mark a notable moment for the borough—a bold mix of affordable housing, student spaces and a cultural venue housed in a historic context. Yet challenges remain, including the scale of the eight-storey massing within a conservation area and the capacity of local services and transport to absorb a new, active edge at Arlington Road. As the project argues for a contemporary cultural anchor on a site with a storied past, the coming months will be decisive for how the community’s input, heritage constraints and planning considerations converge on a final scheme.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/ahmm-unveils-plans-for-mixed-use-housing-and-venue-scheme-in-camden), [[4]](https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/emerging-proposals/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/ahmm-unveils-plans-for-mixed-use-housing-and-venue-scheme-in-camden), [[2]](https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/), [[5]](https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/Get-Involved)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/the-site/), [[6]](https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/timeline/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/ahmm-unveils-plans-for-mixed-use-housing-and-venue-scheme-in-camden> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/> - Camden Town Xchange is a Camden Vision-led initiative for the site at 180 Arlington Road in Camden Town. The proposals aim to deliver a mixed-use scheme featuring an experiential cultural venue, high-quality student accommodation, and affordable housing, with a focus on accessibility and local engagement. The project foresees an eight-storey form, welcoming retail and leisure spaces, and improved street activity from Arlington Road to Inverness Street. The design responds to the historic Parkway frontage, proposes green roofs and renewables, and seeks a positive contribution to the conservation area while aligning with local priorities and a community-led process for Camden Town.
3. <https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/the-site/> - The Site page outlines Camden Town Xchange’s historic context at 180 Arlington Road, tracing the site from the Royal Alexandra Theatre to the current Odeon cinema and Mecca Bingo occupation. It notes Odeon’s planned vacate in early 2026 and Mecca Bingo’s departure in 2024, creating an opportunity to reimagine the corner with a modern experiential cultural venue, affordable housing, and student accommodation. Located within Camden Town Conservation Area, the proposal seeks to restore the Parkway frontage and reintroduce active edges to Inverness Street and Arlington Road. The materials emphasise inclusive access, sustainability, and alignment with Camden’s cultural ambitions for all.
4. <https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/emerging-proposals/> - Our emerging proposals describe a dynamic reimagining that re-links Camden Town with the Inverness Street area. The programme combines an experiential cultural or leisure venue with high-quality affordable housing and purpose-built student accommodation, supplemented by street-front retail and cafés. The affordable homes are anticipated to number around 50, with two entrances on Arlington Road and shared courtyard spaces; the student accommodation is intended to include dual aspect rooms and family-friendly options. Sustainability features include blue roofs for flood management, solar panels, energy-efficient fixtures, and ambitious aims for net-zero carbon performance alongside biodiversity targets and high-quality materials to inspire Camden’s future.
5. <https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/Get-Involved> - The Get Involved page invites local residents and businesses to help shape Camden Town Xchange, highlighting two June/July 2025 consultation rounds and updated designs. It notes drop-in events at 180 Arlington Road, enabling direct dialogue with the project team, and a survey for feedback before the planning submission. The page provides links to materials from June and July exhibitions and presents the project’s aims to deliver an experiential cultural venue, affordable housing, and student accommodation while embedding energy efficiency and safety through active frontages. Contact details and a clear route to participate emphasise inclusivity and transparency in the design process.
6. <https://camdentownxchange.co.uk/timeline/> - The Timeline page sets out a staged process from April 2025 onward, detailing Phase 1 public consultation in May and June 2025, Phase 2 in July 2025, and August 2025 as the point we are here. It explains that updated designs will be refined in response to feedback ahead of planning submission in autumn 2025. The page emphasises community engagement and ongoing dialogue with residents and businesses, alongside a commitment to reviewing materials from the June and July events. It notes the intention to apply to the London Borough of Camden and for stakeholders to monitor planning reference once validated.
7. <https://civico.net/camden/18951-Planning-Committee> - This Civico listing records a Camden Planning Committee discussion about 180 Arlington Road, the former bingo hall and cinema site. The item, reference 2023/4355/P, concerns the use of basement, ground and first floors for interactive entertainment including immersive theatre and an ancillary bar (Sui Generis). The document illustrates the site’s recent planning history alongside the property’s cinema and bingo hall past. It demonstrates that the council has examined planning considerations for the site and that a conditional grant had been discussed, providing context for the current Camden Town Xchange proposals and the site's evolving identity within Camden’s wider development narrative.