



KNOWLEDGE GARDEN

A Vision for the Future of Camden

“In the beginning we were part of the garden...

Then our desire for knowledge divorced us from the garden...

Now, our exploitation of knowledge is destroying the garden...

We must marry the garden and knowledge again...

For the garden is part of us...

This marriage of the garden and knowledge is now critical.

”





Food Foundations: A thriving, sustainable urban food system then, is absolutely foundational to Camden's long-term success.

Foundations Built on Food



The Future is Food

In the 21st Century, we are facing unprecedented challenges inherently linked to our global food supply chains. These supply chains contribute to one third of climate chaos, two thirds of global biodiversity loss, three quarters of the world's fresh water use, and dietary factors are linked to 50% of all Western Chronic Disease. And yet food is still an absolute requirement for life. In our present moment of uncertainty, the vital importance of food is being underlined by the unprecedented cost of living crisis.

The close relationship between food systems, and both environmental and human health, is beyond dispute. Many of the developed world's most troubling conditions and diseases, from obesity, diabetes and heart disease to numerous cancers, are definitively linked to eating the wrong kinds of food too much and too often.

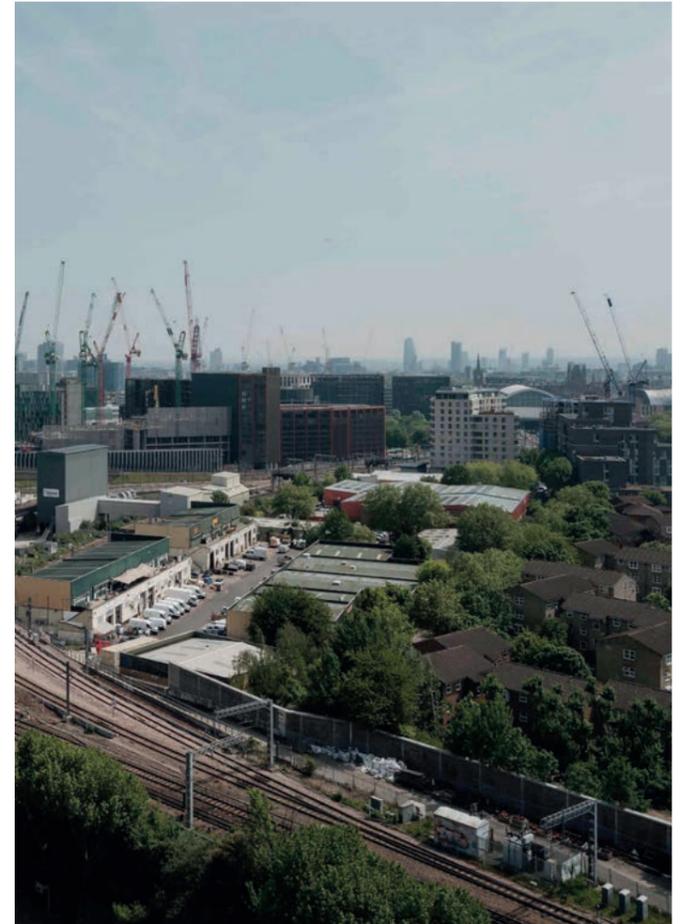
Food, and all its must be at the forefront of the change to a sustainable society

Food in Camden

In Camden, it is vital to recognise that the food sector underpins almost every aspect of life in the borough. This spans from issues of health and wellbeing, social and economic inclusion, education, economic opportunity, to the challenges of climate action, increasing biodiversity, waste management and many more. Ignoring the importance of food risks dangerously undermining Camden's future. There are 2900 businesses registered in Camden's food sector with an average size of 7 employees, putting the number employed in the sector at approximately 20,000. A thriving, sustainable urban food system then, is absolutely foundational to Camden's long-term success.

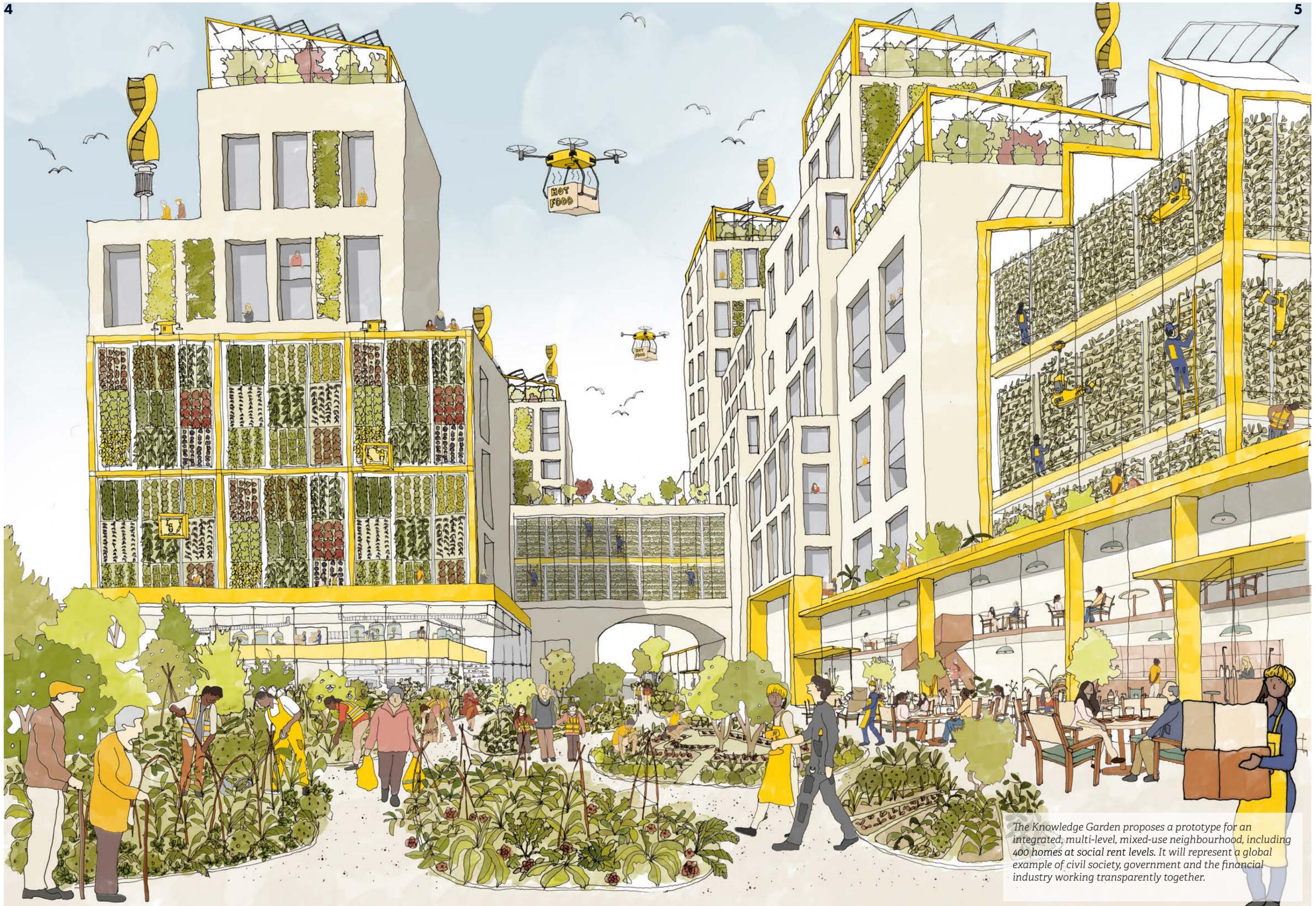
Camley Street

The area around Camley street presents a unique opportunity to develop a centre for this sustainable urban food system, grown from the remarkable combination of enterprises and talents working cheek by jowl in this corner of Camden. 300 people work in skilled jobs producing, processing and distributing food, supplying local schools,



Camley Street : Cedar way Industrial Estate (centre), with neighbouring Elm Village (Right) and the Knowledge Quarter behind

hospitals and restaurants, and supporting the functions of London's Central Activities Zone. A stone's throw away in the Knowledge Quarter, sit world leading institutions from the Francis Krick Institute, The Wellcome Trust, University College London Hospital and The British Library, to Meta and Google amongst others. These high-level knowledge networks encompass everything from medical research, artificial intelligence and genome sequencing to advanced robotics, computing and design.



The Knowledge Garden proposes a prototype for an integrated, multi-level, mixed-use neighbourhood, including 400 homes at social rent levels. It will represent a global example of civil society, government and the financial industry working transparently together.

02.1

The Knowledge Garden Vision



Sustainable Urban Food Hub

The Knowledge Garden is a vision for how, on Camley St, we can be a global beacon and inspiration for this marriage of food and knowledge, accommodating all the elements that a world leading sustainable urban development needs. It proposes a prototype for an integrated, multi-level, mixed-use neighbourhood, including 400 homes at social rent levels. It will represent a global example of civil society, government and the financial industry working transparently together.

The Knowledge Garden vision values and retains the current mainly food related jobs and businesses and integrates them with the knowledge quarter in a vibrant and sustainable landscape where food is valued as a foundation of life.

The vision will:

- Maintain and develop the strong community in the area of both residents and businesses.
- Provide long-term economic benefit to all stakeholders including Camden Council, who retain 100% freehold of the land.
- Constitute a fully transparent governance system across all stakeholders
- Provide a truly integrated social mix.
- Fully comply with the Camley Street Neighbourhood Plan, developed by the community.

Affordable Social Housing

Camden has a crying need for housing which local people on ordinary incomes can afford. This is a clearly outlined priority in both Camden's Local Plan, as well as the Camley Street Neighbourhood Plan. This plan outlines the requirement for a range of housing types including prioritising housing for families (3+ beds). The Knowledge Garden includes over 400 homes at social rent levels, partly funded by GLA housing grants. The remaining homes will be classed as 'genuinely affordable', meaning that rents are pegged to a third of the average Camden income. Properties rented at Social levels will be excluded from 'Right to Buy', as is common in Community Land Trust schemes, to ensure continued affordability.

Modern building and environmental technologies mean that residents of the hundreds of new homes in Camley Street can live symbiotically with their neighbours in mixed-use industries.



Key Priority: Camden has a crying need for housing which local people on ordinary incomes can afford.





High-Spec Industrial Space: The Knowledge Garden will develop a fully integrated ecosystem of industrial accommodation, mainly revolving around the production and distribution of food

The Knowledge Garden Vision



Industrial Accommodation

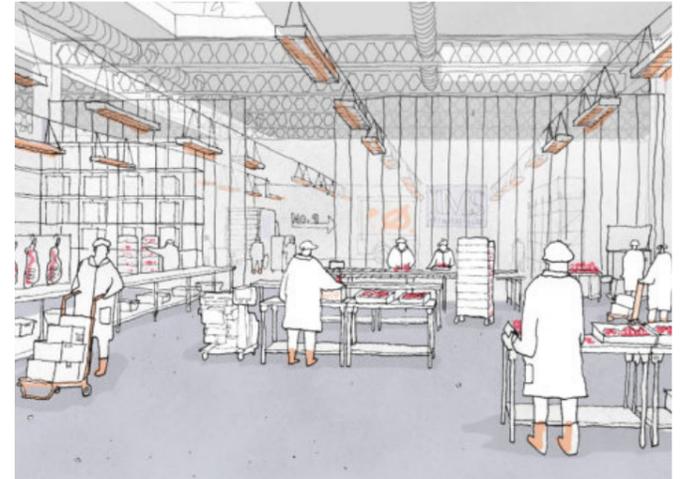
The Knowledge Garden will develop a fully integrated ecosystem of industrial accommodation, mainly revolving around the production and distribution of food. This will include **new high-spec accommodation** for the existing businesses in Camley Street, allowing them to maintain their deep-rooted local networks as well as expand their businesses to benefit more local people.

It will develop **light-industrial spaces** for enterprises pioneering new modes of food production and distribution. This will include facilities suitable for trailing emerging high-tech processes such as alternative protein manufacture. Other, **smaller workshop spaces** will be for small businesses in the knowledge, IT, craft and cultural industries.

Research and Development

The vision integrates cutting-edge facilities for **Research and Development** that link food and knowledge. These will tap in to Knowledge Quarter Institutions' research networks in fields such as biotechnology, soil fertility and biodiversity, genome sequencing, and artificial intelligence. Of particular interest is the emerging field of 'Nutraceuticals', which seeks to develop medicinal foods, and gut microbiome enhancement foods such as pre-biotics, pro-biotics and post-biotics. Research has linked these to disorders such as Alzheimer's, diabetes and a number of immune diseases.

“ [...] tap in to Knowledge Quarter Institutions' research networks in fields such as *biotechnology, soil fertility, genome sequencing, and artificial intelligence.* ”



Existing businesses: Camley Street's existing food businesses will be re-housed in expanded facilities



Linking Food and Knowledge: Laboratory spaces for cutting edge research



A Food Growing Spectrum : Community growing spaces, permaculture forests up to the latest developments in high-tech agriculture

The Knowledge Garden Vision



Food Growing

The project will maximise opportunities for a full spectrum of urban food growing.

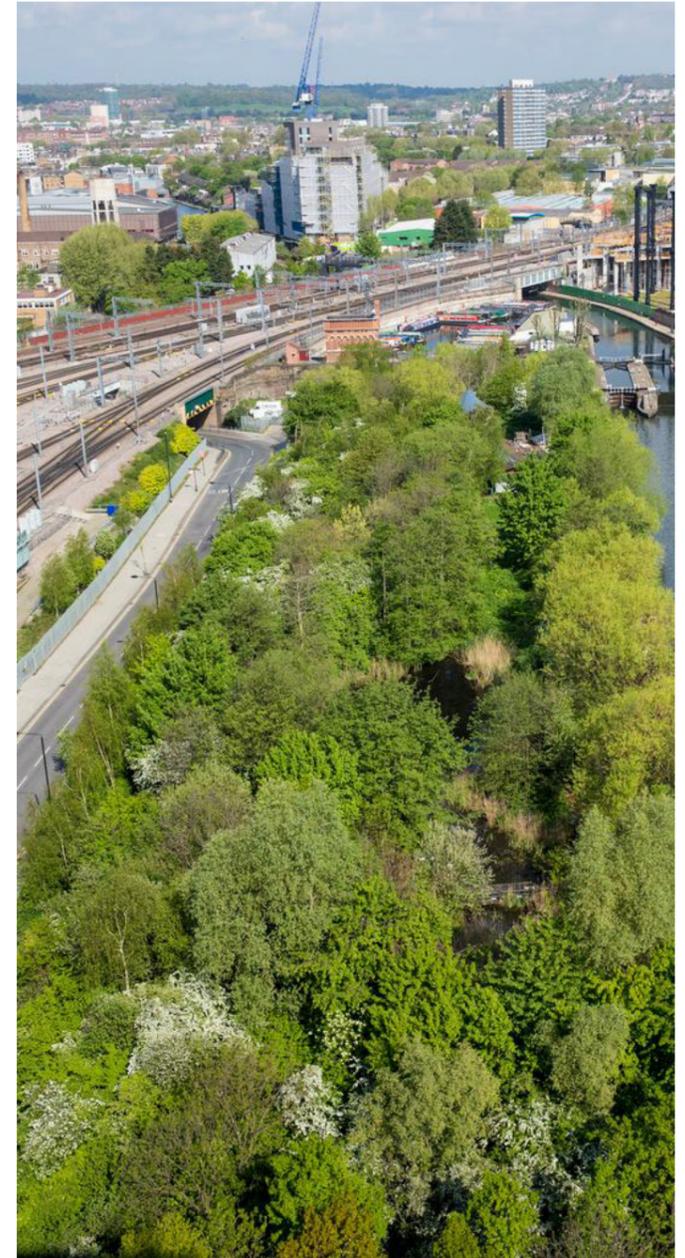
At one end of this spectrum are community growing spaces and permaculture forests, building on spaces that are already present in the neighbourhood. As well as providing volunteering opportunities and boosting social inclusion and cohesion, these spaces can springboard sustainable food enterprises and build wider cultural and educational networks. They enable neighbourhood recycling loops, where composting food waste allows nutrients to be re-used within the cultivation process, along with rainwater and greywater harvesting and re-use

At the high-tech end of this spectrum, vertical growing and aquaponic cultivation practices can be integrated with advances in Agricultural robotics and A.I. technology.

Increasing Biodiversity

Through the extension of existing gardens, habitats and cultivation spaces across the entire site, and the addition of new enhanced permaculture forests and vertical growing, the Knowledge Garden vision looks to dramatically increase local biodiversity and provide habitats for numerous wildlife species from birds to bees.

A natural capital account assessment of neighbouring Camley Street Natural Park, undertaken in 2015, showed that its habitats provided an estimated £2.8m of benefits to the locality annually. The Knowledge Garden envisions a greatly expanded 'Green Corridor' along the full length of Camley Street.



Green Corridor : Camley Street Natural Park is a resounding success story of urban biodiversity



Opportunity for All: affordable incubator space for new food enterprises, with more informal workspace that offers flexibility and opportunity for collaboration with other organisations. This is co-located with vital social infrastructure

02.4

The Knowledge Garden Vision



Affordable Incubator Space

A sustainable local economy will be promoted which supports businesses and social enterprises to be thriving, resilient, responsible, innovative and inclusive. This means providing affordable incubator space especially for new food enterprises, with more informal workspace that offers flexibility and opportunity for collaboration with other organisations. These incubators will provide wider links to education and skills training, acting as a resource-hub for smart innovation and exchange, while promoting supply chain sustainability. Through these spaces the Knowledge Garden will seek to develop an interface between start-ups, social enterprises, and the knowledge-based medical and biotech research associated with the large nearby institutions.

Restaurants, Cafes, Shops, Delivery

Alongside developing an offer of cafes, shops and restaurants and food preparation spaces offering mainly local produce, the Knowledge Garden will look to pioneer innovative infrastructure for logistics and delivery.

Aside from reducing and managing the impact of industrial traffic on the local area, the ambition is to integrate a fully electric fleet of delivery vehicles, plugged in to a local area power network. This network will harvest excess heat energy produced by refrigeration processes to produce electricity, as well as being used to homes. This electricity is

supplemented by micro-generation from solar and wind sources, and connected back to the national grid.

A particular example of novel logistics infrastructure, would be the use of delivery drones for the transportation of medicinal foods prescribed as part of an immunotherapy treatment program. This highlights the opportunity for Camley Street to emerge as a fully integrated, multi-level research, production and logistics hub.

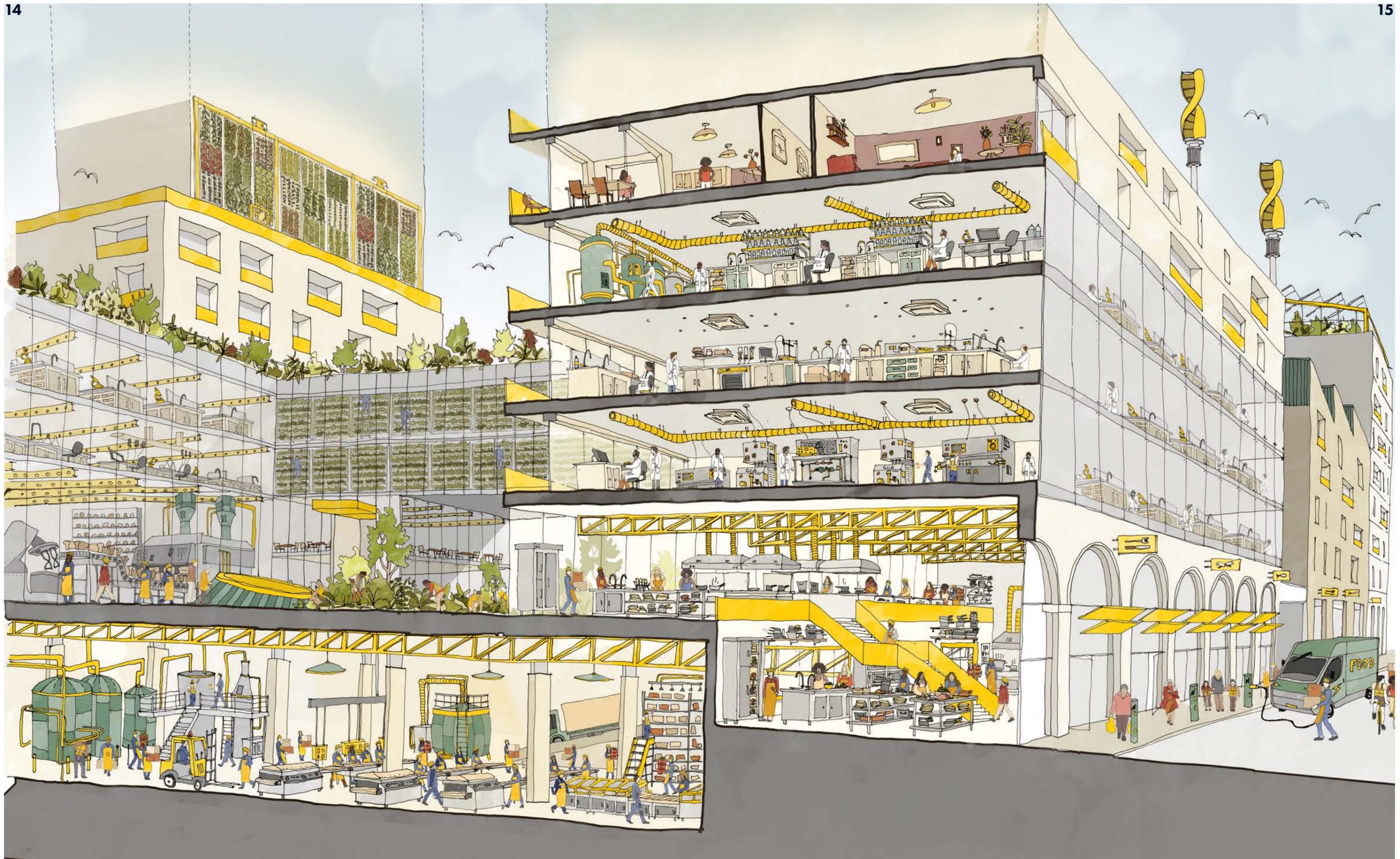
Social Infrastructure

The Camley Street Neighbourhood Plan identifies the pressing need for an increased number and quality of social spaces in the area, which further build community spirit and are accessible to all residents. There is an opportunity to closely integrate this social infrastructure with the aforementioned food incubator spaces, through the development of a 'Community Food Hub'. This could include a community café and kitchen where programs such as cookery clubs, holiday meals, lunch clubs and a Food for All Pantry are accommodated, alongside a Refectory space where residents and workers from the different local industries can come together over shared meals.

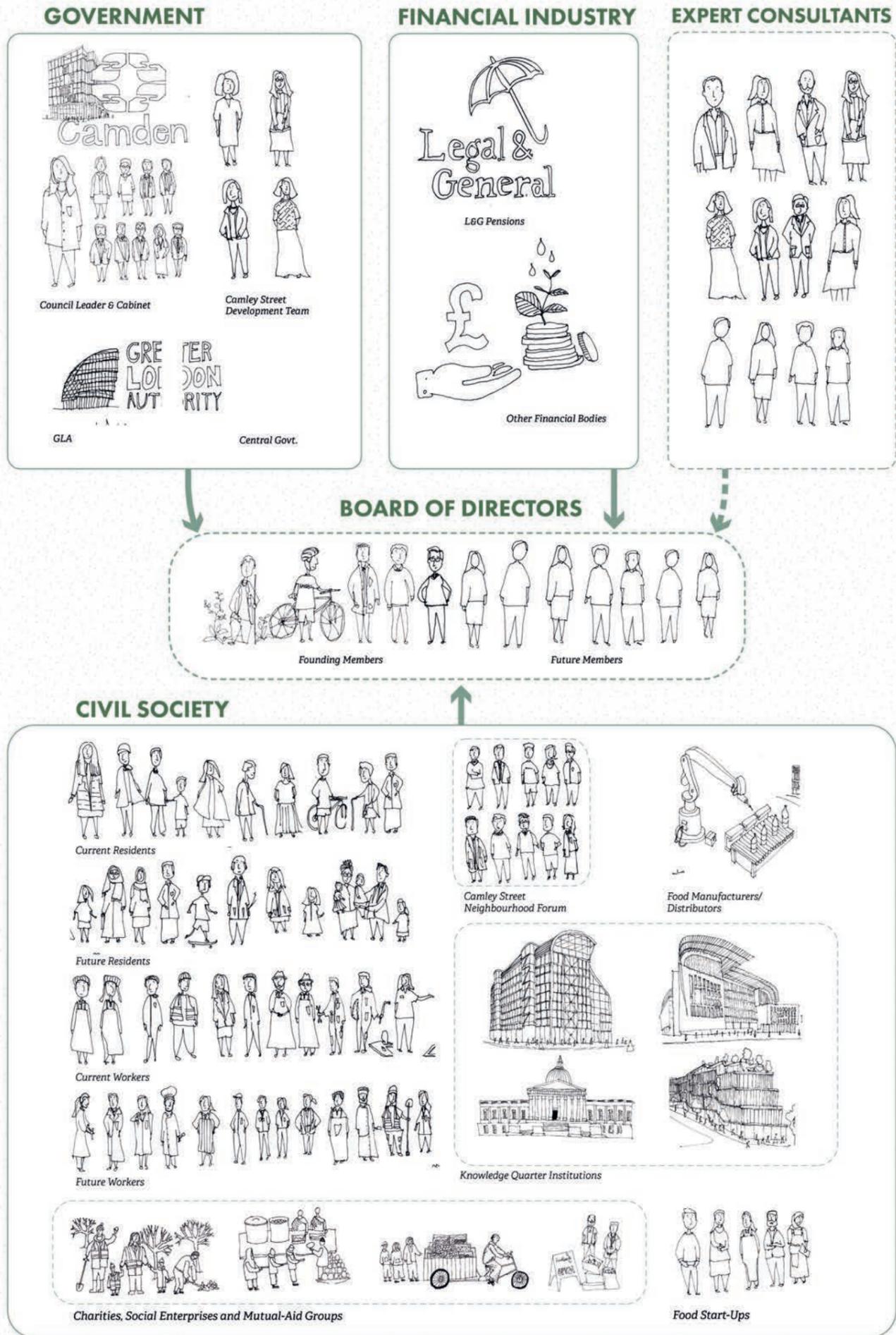
This feeds into one of The key tenets of the Knowledge Garden: to foster a sustainable local community which includes the talents and resources of all, promoting inter-cultural exchange and mutual aid. This will mean forging wider links beyond the neighbourhood with local public health bodies, educational institutions, social enterprises, and cultural networks, with a particular emphasis on inclusion of youth, elderly and minority groups.

“

[...] a sustainable local community which includes the talents and resources of all, promoting inter-cultural exchange and mutual aid.”



Multi-Layered Integration: A full ecosystem of productive space can be incorporated seamlessly using intelligent design. The aim is to develop new typologies for spacious, public-facing industrial space that is flooded in natural light. Housing sits above, with multi-level public space knitting together the different uses.



Governance and Finance



Community Land Trust Model

A core facet of solidifying and growing this sustainable local community, is the creation of a Community Land Trust. This funding and governance model will ensure that the project retains its affordability for local people and businesses, while providing a stable, long-term source of income for Camden Council.

A Community Land Trust ensures a fully democratic and fully transparent governance system across all stakeholders, meaning that all collaboration and decision-making is participative, inclusive and equitable. A CLT is steered by a board made up of residents, businesses, professionals, representatives of local government, and other stakeholders, and all board positions are voted for by the CLT's members. The board positions are paid but non-profit, and it would engage a wider community of relevant experts with appropriate skills and experience.

Sustainable financing is understood not simply in terms of direct project viability, but in providing long-term benefits to all involved. The CLT provides a development vehicle to cross-subsidise zero-carbon, affordable homes, business space, green space and public facilities. In the Longer term it provides a rolling re-investment fund in which stakeholders have long-term interests and returns.

Funding

The Knowledge Garden vision has engagement from pension providers to fund the development through Loan Finance with a 40 year repayment timeline. Camden would retain 100% of the freehold throughout this time, with the assets developed transferred to council ownership after this period, ensuring them a secure long-term income. What is needed now is for these loans to be guaranteed by either Camden Council itself, or another government body.

Camley Street Sustainability Zone

The Camley Street Sustainability Zone was formed in 2015, as a Company Limited by Guarantee by members of the Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum and the Elm Village Tenants and Residents association. The CCSZ acts as an intermediate vehicle to gain access to multiple forms of fundraising. Along with the Current Camley Street Steering Group, which is soon coming to an end, this has the potential to be reconfigured to appraise the Knowledge Garden vision.

Camley Street Steering Group

With camden cabinet recently approving continuation of Camley Street steering group, with the many stakeholders who make up its membership, we think theres a real opportunity for this group to explore the Knowledge Garden vision as one of its key workstreams.

All Round Wins

This sustainable governance and financing model has the potential to deliver all-round wins:

- Win for Camden
- Win for camden's coffers
- Win for community
- Win for residents
- Win for jobs and local economy
- Win beyond the development
- Win for the environment
- Win for the land
- Win for the long term



Summary



Leading the Way

The opportunity presented by this vision, is the chance to create a world-leading prototype of what a sustainable, context-specific and community-led urban development can look like. Opportunities to transform such large pockets of built-up land in Central London are incredibly rare, and nowhere else does such a unique mix of deep-rooted community networks exist alongside a cutting-edge cluster of nationally significant knowledge institutions. The Knowledge Garden would see highly democratic forms of community governance plugged into regional and international knowledge networks.

Missions

Camden has a reputation as a ground-breaking and socially progressive borough. The council's Renewal Commission sets out a series of 'bold and ambitious missions' that aim to address social and economic equalities faced by its residents. These cover:

- Food poverty and sustainability
- Economic opportunity for young people
- Diversity in positions of power

What the Knowledge Garden proposes, is a means of directly addressing each of these missions, in a way which can be held up as an example to other local governments. Delivering a mission like this requires close and transparent collaboration between government, civil society and industry.

In the words of one CSSZ board member:

“ There is potential for this approach to be repeated not just across London or even the UK but the whole world if we can prove that it can be done. A possible and viable answer to many people’s problems today [...] It will change people’s lives ”



05 Directory



