

And ... action! £1bn Camden Film Quarter gets planning go-ahead

Oxygen Studios will operate the major new film-making centre in north London, helping to position Britain as a blockbuster alternative to Hollywood



Camden council said the development would “transform an underused area”

CAMDENFILMQUARTER.COM



Emily Formstone and Andy Silvester, London Editor

Tuesday June 16 2026, 5.30pm, The Times

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Plans for a £1 billion “film quarter” in north London have been given the go-ahead, boosting Britain’s efforts to establish itself as the movie industry’s chosen alternative to Hollywood.

A series of studio developments and expansions in recent years have led directors, crews and A-list stars to cross the Pond for the filming of blockbusters such as *Wicked*, *Barbie* and *Avengers: Doomsday*.

Eleven further sound studios are now set to be built in Kentish Town using an innovative “stacking” technique that allows multiple studios to sit on top of each other, in a new development backed by Yoo Capital, the developer behind [the £1.3 billion makeover of the Olympia](#) in Kensington.

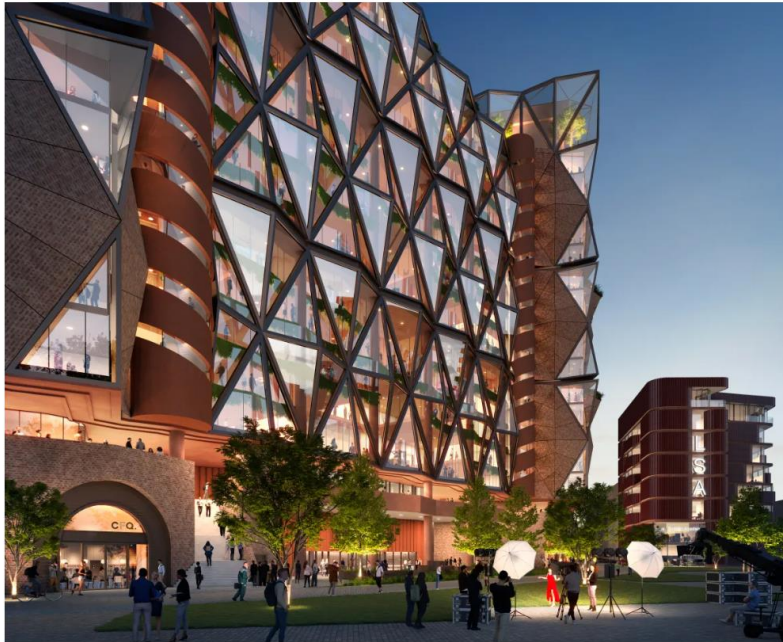
- [Marvel Universe’s favourite directors ditch Hollywood for London](#)

The Camden Film Quarter will include almost 500 new homes, around half of which will be classified as “affordable”, plus production and post-production studios and new bases for the National Film and Television School and the London Screen Academy.

The film-making facilities will be operated by Oxygen Studios, which has worked on movies from the *James Bond*, *Mission: Impossible* and *Star Wars* franchises. The site is presently occupied by a UPS warehouse, wholesale retailers, “[dark kitchens](#)” used for catering services, and a recycling centre, which will be rebuilt.

Camden council had approved the use of the land for studios, homes and improved public realm but the developers ran into [local opposition over the scale of the project](#). The stacking of the studios means that buildings at the heart of the project will rise to 24 and 22 storeys, higher than anything in the surrounding area.

Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum wrote to councillors last year warning that “the cumulative impacts of the development are far too excessive for the area” and complained of “noise, dust and vibration” during works. Backers of the film quarter claim that the project will directly create 4,000 jobs and support many more in the local economy.



The development includes plans for 500 homes but locals are not all in favour
ROCKHUNTER

“[The stacked studios] bring with them scale and volume and we think these are very elegant, beautiful buildings — but they are large-format buildings and that transition of scale is always going to attract attention,” Trevor Morris, of the architecture firm SPPARC, said when interviewed by The Times earlier this year.

The studio has taken inspiration from the [Robert De Niro](#)-backed Wildflower Studios, in New York, the only other stacked studio space of this scale.

Yoo’s managing partner Lloyd Lee told The Times earlier this year the project was about responding to demand for studio space in central London. He said London remained a hotspot for the creative industries because “the talent pool is here” and “location decision-makers genuinely love London” even though other locations can appear to be cheaper options for production.

“We were given some level of anecdotal evidence that if you decide to film in a location where you don’t have the talent pool, you have to move 400 people, put them up in hotels, get them on transportation,” Lee said, when asked why Yoo was banking on production studios in the heart of central London. “And if the camera breaks, you have to get the new camera shipped in. And what they’d realised is that filming [somewhere else] isn’t as inexpensive as they’d thought.”

James Slater, the Camden council planning and sustainability cabinet member, said: “The approval of this application will transform an underused area into a thriving, creative, sustainable and better-connected neighbourhood; including improvements to Kentish Town station and the creation of cycling and walking routes.”

The mayor of London, [Sir Sadiq Khan](#), has two weeks to intervene. Kentish Town Neighborhood Forum was contacted for comment.

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