

## APPLICATION to Designate Fitzrovia (West) as a Neighbourhood Area

AREA NAME: FITZROVIA (WEST)

APPLICANT: FITZROVIA (WEST) FORUM STEERING COMMITTEE

Pursuant to Sections 61F and 61G of the TCPA 1990, the Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee submits to the City of Westminster this application for a Neighbourhood Area designation:

### RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA:

1. Fitzrovia is a central London neighbourhood, near London's West End. Fitzrovia lies partly in the City of Westminster and partly in the London Borough of Camden situated between Marylebone and Bloomsbury and north of Soho.
2. The proposed Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area includes the portion of Fitzrovia that lies within the City of Westminster. Specifically, that portion of the Marylebone High Street Ward east of Great Portland Street, and that portion of the West End Ward north of Oxford Street and east of Hallam Street, Langham Place and Regent Street.
3. We attach a boundary map showing the proposed Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area ("Fitzrovia (West)").

### REASON THAT FITZROVIA (WEST) IS APPROPRIATE FOR DESIGNATION AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA:

4. The Localism Act (2011) created new rights and powers for local communities. In its publication *A plain English guide to the Localism Act*, the Department for Communities and Local Government describes these new rights and powers as follows:

Greater freedom and flexibilities for local government are vital for achieving the shift in power the government wants to see. But, on their own, these measures will not be enough. Government alone does not make great places to live, people do. People who look out for their neighbours, who take pride in their street and get involved - from the retired teacher who volunteers in the village shop once a month, to the social entrepreneur who runs the nursery full time.

Until now, however, many people have found that their good ideas have been overlooked and they have little opportunity to get on and tackle problems in the way they want. Voluntary and community groups often find that their potential contribution is neglected, when, in fact, they carry out some of the most

innovative and effective work in public services and we should be encouraging them to get more involved.

This Act passes significant new rights direct to communities and individuals, making it easier for them to get things done and achieve their ambitions for the place where they live.

*A plain English Guide to the Localism Act, Communities and Local Government* (ISBN: 978 1 4098 3226-5), November 2011, page 8.

5. Fitzrovia (West) is and has, for many years, been regulated by different Westminster policies that reflect strategies and preferences for addressing the character, appearance, and special needs of our central London community, including the Cleveland Street Conservation Area Audit, the Charlotte Street West Conservation Area Audit, the Hanway Street Conservation Area Audit, the East Marylebone Conservation Area Audit, the East Marylebone Special Policy Area, and the Regent Street Conservation Area Audit.
6. The proposed Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area includes the whole of the following special plan areas: the Cleveland Street Conservation Area, the Charlotte Street West Conservation Area, the Hanway Street Conservation area, the East Marylebone Conservation Area and the East Marylebone Special Policy Area. The proposed Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area also includes a portion of the Regent Street Conservation Area.
7. Fitzrovia (West) currently has a variety of land uses, including residential, office and commercial, retail, and institutional, with no single dominate activity. Importantly, Fitzrovia (West) also has a diverse social and economic profile that is a positive example of a comprehensive, human scale urban community. The mix of uses currently and historically present in Fitzrovia fosters a rich dynamism, which is important for Westminster and London as a source of economic growth. (*See City of Westminster's Final Report - Westminster's Creative Industries*, dated October 2007.)
8. The City of Westminster's *Cleveland Street Conservation Area Audit* describes the area as London's "Old Latin Quarter." (*See Cleveland Street Conservation Area Audit*, para. 3.6, page 10.) Indeed, Fitzrovia (West) has long nurtured and supported people from a wide range of creative communities and businesses: writers, actors, artists, architects, furniture makers, fashion and garment designers, musicians and professionals working in advertising, radio, television, and, more recently, internet media. (*See, generally, Cleveland Street Conservation Area Audit*, para. 3.6, at 10; *East Marylebone Conservation Area Audit*, para. 3.7, page 9; and the City of Westminster's *Final Report - Westminster's Creative Industries*, dated October 2007.) Reflecting connections with the avant-garde, the Fitzrovia (West) area also has a significant concentration of commercial art galleries and dealers. This character of Fitzrovia (West) is discussed in detail in the City of Westminster's, *Final Report - Westminster's Creative Industries*

9. The Improvement & Development Agency for Local Government has issued a Planning Advice Service note regarding designated neighbourhood areas under the Localism Act (2011). (See *Designated neighbourhood areas*, published by Improvement & Development Agency for Local Government, <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=2497068>.) This advice note emphasizes, “[t]o assess the appropriate area a [local planning authority] must ensure neighbourhood areas are coherent, consistent and appropriate in planning terms. The neighbourhood area should not be dictated by Electoral Services or the potential logistics of undertaking the referendum. “ The note also observes that in addition to taking on board comments received from consultations other factors to consider might include man-made features (such as roads), and the catchment area for current and planned infrastructure and services (e.g., community centres and schools).
10. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee submits that its proposed boundaries for the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area are appropriate because they reflect the area within the City of Westminster widely regarded as “Fitzrovia” by those who live and work in the area. The Cleveland Street Conservation Area Audit correctly observes that this area has a special “social and cultural history, which in turn has contributed to a great sense of community pride.” (See *Cleveland Street Conservation Area Audit*, at para. 3.8, page 10.)
11. The proposed Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area is also generally consistent with the boundaries of area of benefit for the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association within the City of Westminster. The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association has been relatively inactive within the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area during recent years. For purposes of this application, however, it is important to note that the City of Westminster has for approximately the last thirty years recognized the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood as distinct from Soho to the south and Marylebone to the west.
12. The proposed Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area boundaries are consistent with the catchment areas of important community infrastructure, including the recently established Fitzrovia Community Centre and our local primary school, All Souls C of E Primary School both on Foley Street, Westminster.
13. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee has validated these understandings after a broad consultation with residents, business owners and traders, and community groups active in the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area.
14. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee and its members have attempted to agree neighbourhood area boundaries with groups active in adjacent areas. While we believe that there is general agreement regarding our proposed northern (Euston Road) and southern (New Oxford Street and Oxford Street) neighbourhood area

boundaries, there are conflicting proposals in respect to our proposed western area boundary (Great Portland Street, Hallam Street, Langham Place and Regent Street).

15. The Marylebone Forum has proposed a neighbourhood area designation for the Marylebone neighbourhood area that includes the area between Regent's Canal (to the north) and Oxford Street (to the south) and an eastern boundary at the City of Westminster local government boundary with London Borough of Camden. In its neighbourhood area designation application, the Marylebone Forum omits any mention of the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood or its character as a distinct neighbourhood, and provides no explanation regarding why the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood should be combined with Marylebone for purposes of neighbourhood planning. Rather, the Marylebone Forum simply asserts that its proposed neighbourhood area "forms a broadly coherent whole" and that the area is "popularly known as Marylebone." We beg to disagree.
16. Our proposed neighbourhood boundary with the Marylebone Forum is at Great Portland Street, Hallam Street, Langham Place and Regent Street because historically it has been seen as the western boundary of Fitzrovia and it marks a change in social condition and built form. The Marylebone neighbourhood area proposed by the Marylebone Forum includes the Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area and would embrace community infrastructure important to Fitzrovia, including the Fitzrovia Community Centre and All Souls C of E Primary School both on Foley Street, Westminster. The proposed eastern boundary of the Marylebone neighbourhood area is neither coherent, consistent nor appropriate in planning terms, and should be refused.
17. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee has written to the Marylebone Forum Chairman, Mr Stephen Quinn, requesting a meeting to agree an appropriate neighbourhood area boundary. We remain ready to discuss an appropriate boundary between Fitzrovia (West) and Marylebone, and to collaborate with the Marylebone Forum as it develops and implements a neighbourhood plan for Marylebone.
18. The Fitzrovia Forum has proposed a cross-border neighbourhood area that would include area within the London Borough of Camden with an eastern boundary at Gower Street, Bedford Square and Bloomsbury Street.
19. Our proposed neighbourhood boundary with the Fitzrovia Forum would be the governmental boundary between the City of Westminster and the London Borough of Camden.
20. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee has written to the Fitzrovia Forum Chairman, Mr Wesley Skow, requesting a meeting to agree an appropriate neighbourhood area boundary. We remain ready to discuss an appropriate boundary between Fitzrovia (West) and Fitzrovia, and to collaborate with the

Fitzrovia Forum as it develops and implements a neighbourhood plan for the portions of Fitzrovia in the London Borough of Camden.

21. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee intends to work closely with neighbouring forums and with communities that do not have a forum, in developing our Neighbourhood Forum and any Neighbourhood Plan, and we will cooperate fully to benefit mutual interests.
22. The Fitzrovia (West) neighbourhood area does not include the whole or any part of the area of a parish council and no part of the Fitzrovia (West) area has previously been designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

RELEVANT BODY STATEMENT:

23. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee is a “relevant body” to make this application under the terms of the Section 61G of the TCPA 1990 being an organization or body which is capable of being designated as a Neighbourhood Forum.

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS IN SECTION 61F(5) of the TCPA 1990:

24. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee was organized to investigate and advance community interest in a neighbourhood area designation for Fitzrovia and the formation of a neighbourhood forum under the TCPA 1990. The Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee will see that the Fitzrovia (west) Forum complies with the following conditions:

- It will be established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well being of the Fitzrovia (west).
- Its membership will be open to (a) individuals who live in the Fitzrovia (west), (b) individuals who work in Fitzrovia (West) (whether for business carried on in Fitzrovia (West) or otherwise), and (c) individuals who are elected to represent Fitzrovia (west) namely the Ward Councillors of the Marylebone High Street Ward and the West End Ward.
- Its membership will include a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom (a) lives in Fitzrovia (West) or (b) works in Fitzrovia (West)(whether for a business carried on there or otherwise).
- Its membership will be drawn from different locations in Fitzrovia (West) and from different sections so the community in Fitzrovia (West).
- Its purposes will reflect in general terms the character of Fitzrovia (West).

For the purposes intended of this application we represent an intention to form a Fitzrovia (West) Forum and adopt a written constitution with the objectives, purposes and membership discussed above.

ATTACHMENTS:

Boundary Map

Wendy Shillam  
for Fitzrovia (West) Forum Steering Committee  
26 September 2013