

Date: 1 February 2024
Our reference: n/a
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Planning Policy
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Launderette
86a-88 Cleveland Street
London
W1T 6NJ

Dear Sirs

Launderette, 86a-88 Cleveland Street, London W1T 6NJ

I am writing to inform you that the nomination of the Launderette, 86a - 88 Cleveland Street, as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) has been successful. The nomination relates specifically to the ground floor and basement of the premises. The designation will commence from the date of this letter.

The legislation (also known as the "community right to bid") allows defined community groups to ask a Council to list certain assets as being of "community value". The Council must accept the nomination if the property has been nominated by an eligible community group and if it meets the criteria for community value as set out in the legislation. The legislation imposes certain restrictions on the sale of a property which has been listed as an asset of community value. These are summarised in this letter.

The nomination for the Launderette has been made by the Charlotte Street Association, which is an 'unincorporated body' that meets the statutory requirements for making nominations.

Based on the information provided as part of the nomination and our own investigations, the Council is satisfied that the Launderette meets the criteria in the legislation for an asset of community value; that is, that in the opinion of the authority, the actual current use of the building or land (that is not an ancillary use) furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, or has done so in the recent past, and it is realistic to consider that it will do so again during the next five years.

In the opinion of the local authority:

- The nominating organisation (the Charlotte Street Association, a long-established local community group) has a considerable proportion of its membership living close to the premises.
- The Launderette is located on Cleveland Street, Fitzrovia, near to the intersection of Cleveland Street and Grafton Way. It is situated in a parade of shops on the ground floor of Cleveland Court, the middle of a dense residential area of at least 8,000 residents on a street that forms the border between Camden and the City of Westminster.

- The site is located just northwest of the centre of the Fitzrovia neighbourhood and within a 15 minute walk from anywhere in Fitzrovia. In addition to serving the Camden side of Fitzrovia the Launderette served people on the Westminster side in Marylebone and Soho.
- The site is within the Cleveland Street neighbourhood centre designated by the Camden Local Plan / Policies Map.
- The launderette closed in February 2022 and has remained empty ever since. It had been at 86a-88 Cleveland Street for more than 40 years, as evidenced by a photo in the London Picture Archive from 1980 - <https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk/view-item?i=113204>
- The Launderette had at least eight washing machines of various sizes, and six tumble driers. The premises were self-service and open from 6.30am to 9.30pm, seven days a week. In the mornings from Monday to Friday there was also a staff member in attendance who would provide a service wash.
- The nearest launderettes are at Albany Street to the north, near the junction with Robert Street (after crossing the busy Euston and Marylebone Road); in Marchmont Street to the east, about a mile away; and at Crawford Street near Marylebone Station, a similar distance away. There is no similar facility within walking distance to the south.
- Fitzrovia has a significant residential community and a substantial student population (over 1,500 students over 18 in 2021). Fitzrovia's population (excluding students in halls and hostels) is dominated by young adults, with those aged 16-34 making up over 42% in 2021. There is a higher proportion of homes with only one or two rooms in Fitzrovia (excluding halls, bathrooms, toilets and storage). (Fitzrovia Area Action Plan)
- More than a third of the residents in the Camden part of Fitzrovia live in privately rented accommodation, higher than the borough average. A quarter of Fitzrovia residents are owner occupiers compared to more than a third of total Camden residents who own their own home.
- The characteristics of the area's population, with a greater than average numbers of students and young people, and a high proportion of people living in shared accommodation and smaller dwellings that are less likely to be provided with dedicated washing facilities, mean that it is likely to have a particular need for services such as a launderettes.
- Camden's planning policies consider launderettes to be community facilities that merit protection. The Council's supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on Community Uses, Leisure Uses and Pubs recognises the important role that launderettes play within the borough and their contribution to neighbourhood centres (paragraph 2.17): *"There is a small but important supply of launderettes in the Borough which help local communities to meet their day-to-day needs. These valued facilities can provide an essential service for residents without access to a washing machine at home, including people living in temporary forms of accommodation. They can also be a useful resource for larger households and residents who share facilities, where the demand for washing facilities is greater. Launderettes have a role in supporting social interaction and make an important contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of centres (especially 'neighbourhood centres')."*
- The nomination from the Charlotte Street Association states that the Launderette was: *"an essential destination facility attracting people into the street who would perhaps also use nearby shops and services. [...] It was quite a social centre where neighbours could meet each other and keep in touch and keep an eye on each other's washing while they popped out to do some shopping nearby. [...] Once this launderette site is lost it will be very unlikely that it will be replaced elsewhere in the neighbourhood."*

- An article in the [Camden New Journal, Thursday 23 November 2023](#) about a planning application to change the use of the premises from a launderette reported that people in nearby flats and student halls had valued the service of the launderette and quoted a local resident who said that: *“It was also a good place to meet locals and check on local vulnerable people. Losing a community service such as a launderette makes things even more difficult for vulnerable residents and their families who can’t afford a washing machine or the energy prices to use them.”*
- Planning permission has been granted for the change of use of the premises to a coffee shop (class E) but this has not as yet been implemented. The location and the premises are suitable for a launderette and it is considered that, at the current time, it is realistic to consider the premises could be used as a launderette in the future.
- No objections have been received and no evidence has been provided to the Council to suggest that the Launderette does not meet the criteria for being designated as an Asset of Community Value.
- It is considered that the nomination provides sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Launderette was a well-used community asset, which furthered the social wellbeing of the local community.

Therefore, the Launderette will be added to the list of assets of community value on the Council’s website at www.camden.gov.uk/acv and it will stay on the list for up to five years starting from the date shown on this decision letter. In addition, we will also place this asset on the local land charges register and will apply for a restriction on the Land Register.

In accordance with statutory requirements, if you intend to sell the asset, you must inform the Council in writing. Once you have informed us, you must not sell the asset for 6 weeks. If within 6 weeks of our receipt of your notification of intent to sell, the Council receives a written request to be treated as a potential bidder from the nominating organisation or any other Community Interest Group, then a full moratorium comes into effect: a period of six months from the original notification to us of your intent to sell. If we do not receive a written request from a potential bidder, then the asset is no longer subject to restrictions on its sale.

The purpose of the six month moratorium is to allow the community time to raise funds to purchase the asset at market value. Please note that the legislation does not prevent you from selling the asset to whoever you choose and at what price at the end of the six month moratorium period.

You have the right to appeal against the decision to list the asset within eight weeks of the date of this letter. Further details are available on our website at www.camden.gov.uk/acv.

If the appeal is successful, the asset will be moved to the list of unsuccessful nominations. The intention of this is to ensure transparency and to avoid multiple nominations of an asset that does not meet the definition.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Policy Team if you wish to discuss this further or if we can be of any assistance with this process. If you require further information on assets of community value in Camden, please visit the website: www.camden.gov.uk/acv.

Yours sincerely



Dan Pope
Chief Planning Officer
Supporting Communities