

Fitzrovia News

Produced by residents and volunteers. Distributed free. Issue 158, 3 September 2020

Demolition declared

You would think that having declared a climate emergency and made a commitment to refurbish rather than demolish buildings, architects designing a building on Tottenham Court Road would be proposing a state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly refit.

But not so. Because it is business-as-usual for Fitzrovia's property developers who are yet again intending to demolish and rebuild on a large site, despite all the virtue signalling by their chosen architects Stiff + Trevillion.

Around 10,000 square metres of commercial and residential floorspace on a site bordering Bayley Street and Morwell Street is in line to be demolished, and the rubble carted away in a convoy of lorries ahead of a second flotilla of trucks inbound filled with materials for the rebuild. As well as the carbon emissions there is the air pollution associated with all this activity.

The new design will retain the same mix of office, residential, education and retail uses on the site but increase the total floor space by nearly 20 percent. As a concession, some of the rubble will be re-used in the foundations of the new building. There is no affordable or social housing proposed.

Architects Stiff + Trevillion are signatories to Architects Declare, a pledge by architects to combat climate change by refurbishing rather than demolishing buildings due to the amount of carbon released during the demolition and manufacture, and transport of materials. They are also signed up to *Architects Journal's* RetroFirst campaign, which is calling for greater re-use of existing buildings to slash carbon emissions in construction.

A letter by Gerald Eve on behalf of applicants Prudential UK Real Estate explains their reasons for demolition: "Sustainability has driven the project brief, with it being clear in this case that demolition is the most sustainable option when taking into account the embodied and operational carbon impacts of retaining and refurbishing the existing structure."

Camden Council, which has also declared a climate emergency, will make a decision on the plans.

Planning application: 2020/3583/P. Demolition of 247 Tottenham Court Road, 3 Bayley Street, 1 Morwell Street, 2-3 Morwell Street and 4 Morwell Street and the erection of a mixed use office led development.

'End of lockdown party' goes on through night

Police and an ambulance attended a large and noisy "end of lockdown party" at a short-let apartment after someone was taken ill.

The party, at 64 Charlotte Street, started at around midnight on Saturday 4 July and went on until the police arrived around 4am. Over a hundred young people could be seen in the building enjoying music and outside on junction of Charlotte Street and Tottenham Street.

The music stopped when the police arrived but revellers were still in the building and in the street until after 5am. Throughout the summer there were reports of several large parties at short-let apartments in Fitzrovia with people spilling out into the street.

Fire at Fitzroy Street

Firefighters say use of a disposable barbecue may have been the cause of a fire which damaged the roof of a hotel on Fitzroy Street near the junction with Warren Street in July.

Tributes to teenager

Flowers, photographs, candles, and messages have been left in tribute to a young man who died after being stabbed in Market Place on 8 August. Jeremy Chalarca-Meneses was aged just 17 and lived in Southwark. Three men have been arrested.

Where's the rest of the paper?

The more observant of you would have noticed that this issue of *Fitzrovia News* is only two pages of A4 and in miserable black and white with no photos.

Times are tough for many, including us, so we have to cut our paper to suit.

We hope to produce a 16 page tabloid in glorious colour in December. Deadline for articles: Sunday 1 November 2020.

Second World War POW cartoons

The Cartoon Museum is hosting an online exhibition of prisoner of war cartoons.

Laughter of our own making: Cartoons from the secret artists of Changi Prison Camp 1942-1945 celebrates the power of the arts in adversity through a selection of archival treasures from the collection of Jack Wood, a POW in Singapore in the Second World War.

The exhibition is digital-only, and will be hosted on the museum's website until 30 November 2020. Free to view, with a suggested donation of £8.50. cartoonmuseum.org/laughter-of-our-own-making

Students' art show online

Four Fitzrovia galleries are hosting exhibitions of Royal College of Art students' work.

The students' virtual graduation show has been created by The Net Gallery and can be viewed at: thenetgallery.com/rca-exhibition/

Cabaret celebrates songs of Julian and Sandy

Local musician Gary Yershon will take to the stage this month in a cabaret act celebrating the life and songs of gay theatrical composers Julian Slade and Sandy Wilson.

Yershon will be joined by Jason Carr and Elena Ferrari for the live event at Soho's Crazy Coqs (part of Brasserie Zedel) on 5 and 15 September. See brasseriezedel.com for tickets.

Fitzrovia News is produced by the Fitzrovia Community Newspaper Group, with support from the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association.

Editors: Pete Whyatt and Linus Rees

news@fitzrovia.org.uk
fitzrovia.com
twitter.com/fitzrovia
facebook.com/fitzrovia
instagram.com/fitzrovia

ISSN: 0967-1404

More news over ►

Fitzrovia gets ‘streateries’ but no traffic reduction

Camden council gave the go ahead over the summer for on-street car parking spaces to be replaced with “cattle pens” to enable outdoor eating and drinking to support the neighbourhood’s increasingly desperate restaurant, cafe and pub trade.

The move follows Westminster council which had previously approved similar plans to increase trading capacity while social distancing precautions continue.

The proposals were put forward by The Fitzrovia Partnership Business Improvement District and coral punters into eating and boozing street pens, dubbed “streateries” after a similar scheme in New York City. Several streets in the Camden part of Fitzrovia are on the drovers’ route including Charlotte Street, Goodge Street, Warren Street, and Cleveland Street.

A new application process for “Pavement Licences” to allow the placement and use of temporary outdoor tables and chairs on footways and carriageways has been opened by Camden and Westminster councils. It is designed to be a fast-track route with only a seven-day consultation period for people to comment on the applications.

The measures are temporary and enabled by the new Business and Planning Act and currently there are no plans for them to be extended beyond 30 September 2021.

While the removal of visitor car parking space — particularly the recidivist idling drivers — will be welcomed by many residents, the additional outside drinking will be an issue for those living above or near the area’s many troughing dens.

“There is concern that outdoor dining can lead to noise and disturbance on the street, especially in the later part of the evening, therefore it is necessary to achieve balance between helping businesses to recover, and providing more capacity to support walking and cycling as well as protecting residents’ interests,” says a Camden report included with the decision signed off by Bloomsbury ward councillor and cabinet member Adam Harrison.

However, both councils have so far declined to accept an invitation from residents to discuss plans for a Fitzrovia Low Traffic Neighbourhood. Instead the two boroughs have concerned themselves with prioritising commercial interests rather than implementing their policy for improving air quality and enabling safer walking and cycling, and despite widespread support for environmental improvements from residents in Camden and Westminster.

Initial feedback from Labour-controlled Camden Council is that reducing through

motor traffic in the neighbourhood “will be especially complicated” and beyond the wit of council officers who are rather busy elsewhere in the borough thwarting rat-running drivers. Westminster’s Tory-led council has had little to say as yet, despite its commitment to cleaner air, and some prodding by West End ward Labour councillor Pancho Lewis who is actively urging transport officers to meet with residents.

Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association measured pre-lockdown NO2 pollution on the corner of Charlotte Street and Goodge Street as significantly above the annual legal limit. Residents consider tackling air pollution and reducing through traffic as a priority environmental issue considering the vast majority of people in Fitzrovia don’t use cars.

With most office workers staying at home the amount of motor traffic in Fitzrovia is still very light, and so is the number of customers who would normally eat and drink out in the neighbourhood. Many offices will not see workers return in any numbers until September or even January.

But the threat of polluted and grid-locked streets remains a headache for government and local authorities as Covid-19 infection rates endure and with commuters shunning public transport in favour of private vehicles.

Only by enabling more people to walk and cycle safely across London will the challenge of getting many thousands of people safely from home to work — and to enjoy the West End — and back again will this challenge be met. Without safe active travel, Fitzrovia’s hospitality trade is on a hiding to nothing.

Camden hands idverde contract for new park at Alfred Place

Camden Council has awarded the contract for a new public open space to its parks maintenance partner idverde.

The works to create the new park at Alfred Place will begin in September and be completed by April 2021 in a deal worth £1.5m to idverde, which is currently working on another capital works contract for Camden, the “rejuvenation” of Whitfield Gardens public open space. Both projects are part of Camden’s West End Project to transform the Tottenham Court Road area.

Whitfield Gardens is expected to be completed in September when the restored Fitzrovia Mural will be unveiled.

FitzWest AGM to discuss planning and traffic

The Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum will hold a virtual annual general meeting this month to report on progress in developing a neighbourhood plan, and will feature a guest speaker who will talk about creating a low traffic neighbourhood.

Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum AGM 2020 virtual meeting will be held at 6pm Thursday 17 September.

To join the Forum (membership is free to local residents and businesses) and attend the AGM please email info@fitzwest.org by 4pm on 16 September for a link to the Zoom meeting. See fitzwest.org for information.

Planning and licensing

There were 24 planning applications registered by Camden Council in Fitzrovia during August 2020. See our website for the monthly list. For the latest applications see: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk

There were nine planning applications validated by Westminster Council in Fitzrovia during August 2020. See our website for the monthly list.

For the latest applications see idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

There were no current premises licence applications as we went to press. Check camden.gov.uk/public-licensing-register and idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk for the latest applications.

Neighbourhood briefing

Order **rubbish and recycling** bags and get information on collections:

camden.gov.uk/order-bins

westminster.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish

Get your cycle checked over by a qualified mechanic and **security marked** by the police this month at the southern end of **Great Titchfield Street** (near to Oxford Street junction) W1A 5UE on Tuesday 8 September from 11am to 2.30pm, Thursday 17 September from 3pm to 6.30pm, and Tuesday 29 September from 3pm to 6.30pm.

Goodge Street Station has re-opened with restricted hours: 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday only.

There is a **petition** submitted by **Cllr Pancho Lewis & Patrick Lilley** to limit noisy motor vehicles: petitions.westminster.gov.uk/noisycars

Subscribe to our email newsletter to keep up with all the latest news, features and comment.
Go to: bit.ly/fitzrovia-news