

Fitzrovia News

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Fitzrovia West plan wins approval in referendum

Residents and businesses have voted to approve a neighbourhood plan for Fitzrovia West in a referendum which took place on Thursday 2 September, writes *Linus Rees*.

The Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum said they were “delighted” with the result and thanked everyone who supported the plan.

The plan will shortly be adopted by Westminster Council and will form part of the policy documents controlling land development in the neighbourhood area including how decisions on planning applications are made.

The full results were:
Residential Referendum — YES: 236 (79.19%); NO: 62 (20.81%).
Business Referendum — YES: 26 (86.67%); NO: 4 (13.33%).

The road to an approved neighbourhood plan has been more than seven years in the making and included a lengthy consultation and scrutiny period.

Westminster Council first agreed a Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Area in 2014 and the outcome of the decision was to declare the district “a neighbourhood business area, since the

area is predominantly business in nature” stated the Council — despite a densely packed, vocal and engaged community of around 3,500 residents.

That decision meant that any neighbourhood plan had to be developed in partnership with local businesses and would have to be approved by a vote of both the residents and business rate payers.

However, the neighbourhood forum and the final neighbourhood plan has been led and developed almost exclusively by a group of long-standing local residents.

Also in 2014 Camden Council approved a Fitzrovia East Neighbourhood Area. In its decision Camden stated that the larger Fitzrovia East area of nearly 4,500 residents is mostly residential.

“While the area does have a considerable business element, it is considered that the proposed area is predominantly residential and therefore, the Council does not consider that it should be designated as a business area in this instance,” stated Camden at the time.

However, since then a neighbourhood forum has not emerged and a neighbourhood plan has not been started, partly because — also in 2014 — a Fitzrovia Area Action Plan was adopted by Camden.

Fitzrovia East has not fared well despite the Action Plan allocating sites for housing and public open space. In 2016 an inspector overturned a decision by Camden Council to refuse planning permission for a mostly office development on a site allocated for housing, including affordable housing.

Nothing stands still in Fitzrovia for long and the Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum and its Neighbourhood Plan will be quickly put to the test by property developers who know how to work the planning system, and a council that seems all too happy to give them what they want.

Our autumn issue

This two-page edition brings you only a fraction of the articles we publish on our website. See fitzrovia.com for all the stories, and reports on public consultations. You can also subscribe to our free email newsletter at: newsletter@fitzrovia.com

Fitzrovia News is published in print every three months: usually in March, June, September, and December.

For over a year it has not been possible to produce a full-sized tabloid newspaper so we have produced these black and white sheets instead. Our printed newspapers are always available outside Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street. Browse our nearly complete 48 years of back issues at archive.fitzrovia.com

Auction of Fitzrovia Underground and street signs

A sale of historic London transport and street signs — including a number of Fitzrovia locations — will take place in September, writes *Jacob Phillips*, *Local Democracy Reporter*.

Over 400 railway and street signs are being put up for auction including the final part of Westminster City Council’s collection of signs.

But be careful as the signs may not come cheap. While some items start at £60 an Abbey Road NW8 sign sold for a whopping £37,200 in March this year at a previous auction.

A two-week auction will begin at Catherine Southon Auctioneers and Valuers on Friday (September 10).

A rare 1930s Highgate Station sign and an Oxford Circus enamel bullseye sign are among the items on sale.

While both the Tube signs are expected to go for up to £1,500 some items are expected to cost eye-watering amounts.

Also on auction is a Warren Street and a Tottenham Court Road station sign, together with Berners Mews, Great Titchfield Street, and Market Place street signs. See: cutt.ly/sign-auction

More news over page. ►

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Tottenham Court Road temporary art

They might look like someone's party balloons have floated off and got stuck in trees but they are actually part of a London-wide temporary art installation, and more distractions could follow this autumn which would mean Tottenham Court Road could be closed from several side streets, writes *Linus Rees*.

The inflatable eyeballs are designed by artist Filthy Luker and can be seen in trees across the city in August as part of the Mayor of London's plan to cajole families to come and enjoy what the capital has to offer this summer. You can see them hanging outside 101 Tottenham Court Road.

Also dreamt up by the Mayor's office is a plan to brighten up the road surface.

Camden Council is being asked to approve a project to paint up to 11 pedestrian crossings on the carriageway along Tottenham Court Road. The colourful crossings would be a temporary art installation to coincide with the London Design Festival but could be left in place for up to a year.

The project is a creation by London-based artist Yinka Ilori and designed to draw people back to Camden's streets to support local businesses.

The designs have yet to be decided upon but the report states that a short engagement period will take place with the involvement of all stakeholders.

An equalities impact assessment for Camden cautions it is "possible that the vibrant nature of the artwork could cause sensory overload" for some people, and that any "proposed design change from the 'norm' at signalised crossings is likely to confuse older and disabled people as well as drivers".

However, Camden officers have responded saying: "We do not consider that this would affect driver behaviour or interpretation as drivers would observe the same patterns as the wider public but would see the specific colours differently. There are many instances of coloured/patterned crossings in London that are on bus routes, including on the TfL road network," states the EIA.

Camden have advertised a number of temporary road closures for September and November to accommodate the art project. If implemented all at once the temporary restrictions could divert a large amount of motor traffic through Charlotte Street and Goodge Street if Maple Street is closed at the junction with Tottenham Court Road.

Fitzrovia News has asked Camden for more information about the road closures.

Planning applications

As we went to press there were 24 planning applications registered during August 2021 by Camden Council in Bloomsbury ward.

The list includes an application for a roof extension at 86-90 Cleveland Street (building with launderette); an application for alterations including new terraces at first, second and fourth floors at the Met Building, 22 Percy Street (includes elevation on Windmill Street); change of use of mezzanine level from office to provide four self-contained flats with associated external alterations at 37-39 Conway Street; various applications associated with the demolition and redevelopment of 247 Tottenham Court Road; pavement licences in Charlotte Street and Gresse Street; and a replacement shopfront at 52 Fitzroy Street. See: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk

Twenty planning applications were validated during August 2021 by Westminster Council in Fitzrovia.

The list includes details for construction practice at 204A Great Portland Street; alterations to a listed building at 141 Cleveland Street; tables and chairs on the Bolsover Street elevation of 246-248 Great Portland Street; variation of a condition of planning permission at 87-125 Cleveland Street; a roof extension at 22 Foley Street; table and chairs at 24-25 Foley Street; and use of basement for education and clinical services at 73 Newman Street. See idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

Licensing applications

There were no current licensing applications as we went to press.

Advice for responding

Residents should check camden.gov.uk/public-licensing-register and idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk for the latest applications.

Residents in Westminster can contact licensingadvice.org for free advice, and should also email the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association with a copy of their comments to fna@fitzrovia.org.uk

Residents in Camden should email a copy of their comments to the Charlotte Street Association at csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk where they can also seek advice.

Fitzrovia News publishes the latest planning and licensing applications on our website: fitzrovianews.com

Free housing and welfare advice for residents

The Fitzrovia Advice Service, run by Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, is able to help residents in Fitzrovia with private and social housing problems, housing and council tax benefits, disability benefits, Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance, pensions and Pension Credit, Working and Child Tax Credits, fuel poverty; and help with benefit, passport and other forms.

Advice is available to Camden and Westminster residents by telephone and email only, three days a week, and for speakers of English, Bengali, Sylheti, Urdu and Hindi.

Contact 020 3984 6364; or email: advice@fitzrovia.org.uk

Neighbourhood listings

Covid-19 advice and vaccine information is available from Camden and Westminster councils. See Camden.gov.uk/coronavirus and Westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus

Covid-19 booster jabs are likely to be offered to most adults this autumn.

Fitzrovia Community Centre brings together local residents, businesses, public services and community organisations to share skills, talents and ideas. You can find out more about what they offer from their website or by paying a visit to their building at 2 Foley Street or call 020 7580 8680.

All Souls C of E Primary School, Foley Street takes children from ages 3 to 11. See allsoulsprimary.co.uk for more.

Fitzrovia Youth in Action is a local charity for young people. They provide a number of activities. See fya.org.uk or call at Basement 66-68 Warren Street or call 020 7388 7399.

Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia is a new nursery located at 54A Whitfield Street, Fitzrovia. More information at rainbowangels.co.uk

Age UK provides services for people over 50 years old. In Camden call 020 7239 0400 or visit ageuk.org.uk/camden; in Westminster call 020 3004 5610 or visit ageuk.org.uk/westminster

American International Church provides a number of services including worship, a soup kitchen for the homeless and those in need as well as rooms for hire. See amchurch.co.uk, call 020 7580 2791, or visit 79A Tottenham Court Road.

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