

# Fitzrovia News

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## Toy museum closes at Scala Street

One of Fitzrovia's most famous and much-loved businesses has had to leave its home on the corner of Scala Street and Whitfield Street and is seeking help in setting up at a new location.

Pollock's Toy Museum has been at the same spot in Fitzrovia since 1969 and is the oldest toy museum in the UK. Its colourful frontage and unique collection of toys has attracted people from all over the world to its charming, and slightly rickety, historic buildings.

The museum closed for the festive period last year but was due to open its doors and welcome visitors again on Friday 13 January. Instead people were confronted with a locked door, a half empty shopfront, and a rather ominous note on a toy theatre in the window saying: "The End".

Now a statement has been released this week by Jack Fawdry-Tatham and Emily Baker, who run the museum, and the Pollock's Toy Museum Trust saying that the final curtain has fallen on their

long run at Scala Street but the business of running the museum will continue at a new location.

"Due to a change in circumstances regarding the ownership of the buildings, we have not been able to negotiate a sustainable future for the museum collection at its current premises," says a message on their website.

"We regret to announce that Pollock's Toy Museum is no longer open at No.1 Scala Street."

The famous historic collection of toy theatres, elderly teddy bears, dolls, games and toys has been put in storage and they are looking for another long-term home for the museum.

"We have already started exploring possibilities for a secure future for the museum and collection, in a location that will preserve its character while providing more space," said the statement.

They are now appealing for help in achieving the move to new premises.

"For this, major capital funding in cash or in kind will be needed. In the short term, we have expenses to cover and limited resources, so contributions at any level are very welcome.

"We are also seeking storage space at a favourable rate (probably a total of about 400 square feet) to work from as we raise funds," they say.

Although the museum struggled during the lockdowns of the covid pandemic it bounced back to generate a steady income.

The charming little museum and gift shop will be badly missed by local people and many of the local businesses that benefit from the visitors it attracts from all over the world.

You can look forward to an online Pollock's Mini-Museum, to see featured toys, articles and practical projects "drawn from our archives", they say.

Find out more and how to help at [pollockstoymuseum.co.uk](http://pollockstoymuseum.co.uk)

## 50 years of news

It was in March 1973 that the first community newspaper for Fitzrovia was published.

We are slowly completing the 50 year archive of every single issue from March 1973. Browse our back issues at [archive.fitzrovia.com](http://archive.fitzrovia.com)

## Rent rise for Camden tenants

Rents for thousands of council tenants in Camden are set to go up by seven per cent, after senior councillors approved the housing budget at a meeting this month, writes *Julia Gregory, Local Democracy Reporter*.

Camden Council will put the rents up in April to help boost the income for its housing revenue account by £8.2million as it struggles with the hike in inflation.

It will mean an £8.59 weekly increase on a two-bedroom home, taking the rent up to £131.31 a week. Service charges will also go up by five per cent.

Cabinet member for better homes, Cllr Meric Apak, said the council had to follow government rules to cut rents by one per cent a year between 2015 and 2019, which costs it £7m.

## Inflationary pressures are challenging council on its plan to deliver a 'Fairer Westminster'

Finance officers have told a cross-party group of councillors that the past year has been particularly "volatile", with rising costs creating a challenging environment for the Labour-controlled council to deliver on its "Fairer Westminster" priorities when setting its budget for 2023 to 2024.

Inflation has doubled since Westminster Council last set its budget in March 2022, when it was Conservative-controlled, causing an overspend on its projected expenditure. However, this has been slightly offset by an increased income from investments due to the Bank of England raising interest rates. "A net overspend of £5million is predicted this year," states a council report.

More news over page. ►

Fitzrovia News is produced by the Fitzrovia Community Newspaper Group, c/o Flat 2, 19 Tottenham Street, London W1T 2AN.

Editor: Linus Rees

[news@fitzrovia.com](mailto:news@fitzrovia.com)  
[fitzrovia.com](http://fitzrovia.com)  
[mastodon.social/@fitzrovia](https://mastodon.social/@fitzrovia)  
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## News in brief

**Camden Council** is removing the outside eating and drinking enclosure in **Conway Street** but making permanent the facility in **Whitfield Street**, in a decision taken as a result of public consultations and trials of the schemes.

Labour-controlled **Westminster Council's** plans for **Oxford Street** are in the design stage and details of what the road will look like are expected to be revealed in the coming months.

Restaurant and bar **Orion's Belt** has been given a licence by Camden Council for "on sales" of alcohol at **365 Euston Road** in a large two-storey space backing onto **Warren Street**.

Blocked drains, poorly laid paving and road surfaces in places are causing flooding, even after relatively light rain on **Tottenham Court Road**.

## Additional rooms at underground hotel

Twenty additional rooms can be crammed into a windowless hotel being built deep underground at Great Russell Street.

Camden's planning committee voted in favour of approving the plans, despite concerns about guests struggling to escape in case of a fire.

Developers **Criterion Capital** can now increase the approved number of rooms in the subterranean shelter from 166 to 187.

## New cycle route

Camden and Westminster councils are creating a new cycle route along Cleveland Street and Newman Street and are asking for comments on the designs.

A drop-in community event about the plan is on from 3pm to 7.30pm on Tuesday 7 February at Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street, London W1W 6DL.

## Licensing applications

**64 Goodge Street.** Seeks permission for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises and for late night refreshment from 10am to 11.30pm from Monday to Thursday, 10am to midnight on Friday and Saturday, and 11am to 10.30pm on Sunday. Deadline 15 February.

**93 Charlotte Street.** Seeks to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises from 8am to 11pm from Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 11pm on Saturday and Sunday. D/L: 8 February.

**22-24 Great Portland Street.** Seeks "on sales" of alcohol from noon until 11pm Monday to Sunday. D/L: 10 February.

## Planning applications

**Camden Council** registered 38 planning applications during January 2023 in Bloomsbury ward, which includes Fitzrovia East.

Among the list is: alterations to a listed building at **41 Fitzroy Street, 28 Charlotte Street, and 23-28 Great Russell Street**; tables and chairs outside **28 Warren Street, 114 Tottenham Court Road, 4 Charlotte Street, 22 Charlotte Street, 64 Charlotte Street, and 104 New Oxford Street**; numerous details required by previous permission at **237-247 Tottenham Court Road**; and alterations to building at **14 Charlotte Street**.

See: [planningrecords.camden.gov.uk](http://planningrecords.camden.gov.uk) for details and the latest applications.

**Westminster Council** validated 13 planning applications in January 2023 in Fitzrovia West.

In the monthly list: alterations at rear of **5 Hanson Street**; change of user from office to residential at **110 New Cavendish Street**; change to extract duct at **19 Charlotte Street**.

See: [idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk](http://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk) for details.

## Advice for responding

Residents should check Camden and Westminster's sites for the latest applications.

In Westminster residents can contact [licensingadvice.org](http://licensingadvice.org) for free advice, and should also email the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association [fna@fitzrovia.org.uk](mailto:fna@fitzrovia.org.uk)

In Camden email the Charlotte Street Association at [csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk) where you can also seek advice.

It is also a good idea to contact your ward councillors well before the closing dates with your concerns about any planning or licensing applications.

*Fitzrovia News* publishes the latest planning and licensing applications on our website: [fitzrovia.org.uk](http://fitzrovia.org.uk)

There is more news about public consultations on our website: [fitzrovia.org.uk](http://fitzrovia.org.uk)

You can also keep up with the latest news by subscribing to our free email newsletter: [fitzrovia.org.uk](http://fitzrovia.org.uk)

## Free housing and welfare advice for residents

**The Fitzrovia Advice Service**, run by Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, is able to help residents 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](mailto:advice@fitzrovia.org.uk)

## Cost of living support

Camden has help at [camden.gov.uk/find-support-in-camden](http://camden.gov.uk/find-support-in-camden) Westminster has help at [westminster.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support](http://westminster.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

## Neighbourhood listings

**Covid-19** vaccine information is available from Camden and Westminster councils. See [camden.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://camden.gov.uk/coronavirus) and [westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Local councillors serving Fitzrovia** on the **Camden** side are: Adam Harrison, Sabrina Francis, and Rishi Madlani; telephone: 020 7974 2792. On the **Westminster** side they are: Paul Fisher, Patrick Lilley, and Jessica Toale; telephone: 020 7641 5377.

**Fitzrovia Community Centre** has activities available, and a community garden. [fitzroviacommunitycentre.org](http://fitzroviacommunitycentre.org) Visit 2 Foley Street, call 020 7580 8680.

**All Souls C of E Primary School**, Foley Street takes children from ages 3 to 11. See [allsoulsprimary.co.uk](http://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](http://fya.org.uk) or call at Basement 66-68 Warren Street or call 020 7388 7399.

**Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia** 54A Whitfield Street. More information at [rainbowangels.co.uk](http://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](http://ageuk.org.uk/camden); in Westminster call 020 3004 5610 or visit [ageuk.org.uk/westminster](http://ageuk.org.uk/westminster)

**American International Church** offers services including a soup kitchen for the homeless and those in need. See [amchurch.co.uk](http://amchurch.co.uk), call 020 7580 2791, or visit 79A Tottenham Court Road.

**Saturday morning gardening.** Contact [friends@crabtreefields.org.uk](mailto:friends@crabtreefields.org.uk)