

Forum Application

Application for designation of “Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum” as a neighbourhood forum as described in the neighbourhood planning (general) regulations 2012.

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1 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE FORUM

We believe the Camley Street Area has characteristics that make it suitable for having a neighbourhood forum. In particular:

1.1 IT HAS NATURAL BOUNDARIES

The area is an hour-glass shape bounded almost entirely by existing features of the built landscape – to the north by railway lines, to the east and west by Regents Canal and railway lines, and to the south by Goods Way and Pancras Road.

1.2 IT IS AN AREA OF MIXED USE

- Residential - owner occupied houses and apartments, private rented, social housing and sheltered accommodation.
- Business - small businesses (fashion, photography, garages, etc.), medium size businesses (Alara Wholefoods, IMS of Smithfield, Marigold Health Foods, Bookers, etc.) and national and multinational businesses (Network Rail, Hewlett Packard, DPD La Poste, etc.)
- Institutions and places of social amenity – Barker Drive Gardens, St Pancras Gardens, historic St Pancras Old Church and Churchyard, Regents Canal and St Pancras Basin, Camley Street Nature Park, Camden Garden Centre (a non-profit social enterprise).

1.3 IT HAS A TRADITION OF RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES BEING ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ITS IMPROVEMENT

The Elm Village Tenants and Residents Association (EVTRA) has been continuously active since the area was rebuilt in the mid-1980s. It has an active web site <http://www.evtra.org.uk> and Twitter account <http://www.twitter.com/ElmVillage>, an twice-yearly newsletter, an active garden society, and an active neighbourhood watch group with email 'alert' lists and regular contact with Metropolitan Police officers and Camden council officials. Businesses in Camley Street and Cedar Way have been actively involved in initiating and supporting local environmental projects and improvements. Many of these businesses support the Camley Street Business Network.

1.4 IT IS UNDER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

The work on King's Cross Station is nearing completion and the development of King's Cross Central is underway. Also just to the south the Francis Crick Institute is under construction and to the north the HS2 link line is planned. These developments and more, combined with a location midway between Camden Town and King's Cross, will increase the pressure for development in the Camley Street Area.

1.5 IT OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGENERATION

The adjacent King's Cross Central area will need the many small businesses in the Camley Street Area that are keen to share in the growing economy which development is likely to

bring. For this to happen there will need to be co-ordinated planning and funding (of routes, crossings, signage and transport) together with more effective collaboration of resident and business groups. Though there have been efforts to brighten up individual buildings, investments in improvements will be much more effective if the energy and enthusiasm of individual building owners can be harnessed to develop a shared plan.

1.6 IT HAS MIXED TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Sustained and co-ordinated effort is needed to ensure that traffic management arrangements meet the requirements of all users, including local residents, businesses, visitors and commuters.

Existing, proposed and absent traffic flows include:

- Cycleway routes to Agar Grove and Kentish Town in the north, Camden Town in the west, Regents canal in the centre and King's Cross and St Pancras in the south.
- Road access for Network Rail maintenance and construction traffic to the London Overground line.
- The HS1-HS2 railway link line to be constructed parallel to the existing London Overground line.
- HGV and other vehicular traffic to the businesses on the eastern side of Camley Street.
- Footpaths, footbridges and walkway links to the Maiden Lane estate, Agar Grove and Kentish Town in the north, the Regents Canal in the centre and to King's Cross and St Pancras in the south.
- Residential and business street parking.
- A complete absence of any public transport.

Some steps have been taken in the right direction but there remains much to improve.

1.7 IT IS THE SUBJECT OF A PLACE-SHAPING EXERCISE

Prior work by the London Borough of Camden has laid useful ground on which to build. Parts of our neighbourhood plan might be constructed just by adding detail to the Place Shaping exercise after consultation with residents and businesses.

1.8 IT IS AN AREA OF OPPORTUNITY BUT ALSO ONE OF DEPRIVATION

Drug dealers regularly frequent the corner of Barker Drive and Camley Street, the footpath connecting Rossendale Way and Bergholt Mews, and the canal towpath.

After sunset, Camley Street is a dark, deserted and sometimes intimidating place to be which does not reflect its importance as an important cycle and pedestrian link between the north of the borough and the new developments and existing city to the south.

2 STATUS OF THE FORUM

2.1 PURPOSE

We are forming an organisation that is a 'relevant body' for the purposes of section 61G(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in that it is capable of being designated as a neighbourhood forum.

The purpose of this forum is to promote and improve the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the Camley Street area.

2.2 CONSTITUTION

The forum's constitution is defined in the document "*Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum Constitution*" and specifies a purpose and membership that conform with section 61F(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. At this stage do not wish to constrain the purpose of the Neighbourhood Forum in ways beyond those in the Localism Act of 2011.

2.3 GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The area of the Forum is defined in the document "*Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum Area*"

2.4 MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

We have attracted a range of residents, community organisations and businesses to support us many of whom are already involved with significant community and/or business activities.

We also have the support of Camden Councillors Peter Brayshaw, Samata Khatoon and Roger Robinson.

All residents and businesses will be re-invited to get involved in the next phase of the Forum's work.

2.5 ORGANISATION

An acting steering group has been formed from the volunteers working on the formation of the Forum.

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the acting steering group are:

- Peter McGinty, Chair (Resident member)
- David Powell, Secretary (Resident member)
- John Hayes, Treasurer (Enterprise member)

Working parties on Strategy, Planning and Communications have already started work on some of the deliverables of the Forum.

A new steering group will be elected within 90 days of the formal recognition of the Forum.

2.6 CONTACT DETAILS

Requests for contact should be directed to Peter McGinty, Chairman of the Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum, who can be contacted via email at: Peter.McGinty@CamleyStreet.org.uk

2.7 ENGAGING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Our engagement activities are targeted at the individuals who live and work in the Forum Area and the businesses and community organisations that represent them.

During 2012 and 2013 we held a number of events aimed at increasing our visibility and membership amongst residents and businesses within the forum area including:

- November 2012 – Invited all residents and business to a ‘neighbourhood party’ to hear about the proposed neighbourhood forum and to help set it up.
- December 2012 – A Christmas Carol event
- February 2013 – A Wassailing party
- June 2013 – A ‘big lunch’ event
- September 2013 – A ‘harvest festival’

These outreach efforts have helped to expand our membership from nil in mid-2012 to 60+ now and we plan more events in future.

News, updates, activities information and notes of previous meetings are publicised on our website at <http://www.CamleyStreetNeighbourhoodForum.org.uk> (mirrored at <http://www.camleystreet.org.uk> and <http://www.csnf.org.uk>). We also have an email distribution system to broadcast news promptly and have at least twice delivered leaflets to every address within the forum area.

Future community engagement activities aimed at increasing membership and involvement will include:

- Organising email and letterbox surveys to see what people would like.
- Holding ‘virtual’ meetings on-line to encourage those who are uncomfortable in formal meetings to join in.
- Adding a social dimension to meetings to encourage attendance.
- Identifying ‘quick win’ projects that will help sustain interest.

The physical size of the Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum Area means it is feasible to consider delivering leaflets to every resident and business whenever this is justified.

Our aim is to reach out to all those who live and work in the forum area and involve them in the creation of the neighbourhood plan, ideally by their direct participation in the plan creation process. At the very least we will be making sure that everybody is aware of what is being done, their voice is being heard and their views are being included within the construction of the plan.

2.8 FORMULATING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Residents and businesses have formed a joint team to tackle local issues and will be establishing processes for resident and business engagement which will enable the production of an agreed plan for this neighbourhood in accordance with the new legal requirements.

We are virtually next-door-neighbours to UCL, University of the Arts Central St Martins and other world-class academic institutions. We already have associate members from these communities working with us and plan to engage more.

We will work closely with nearby neighbourhood forums and other organisations on matters of mutual interest. In the immediate vicinity we border Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum, King's Cross Development Forum, and the proposed Kings Cross Neighbourhood Forum. Bloomsbury, Fitzrovia, Kentish Town and Highgate are also areas we follow with interest.

3 THE CAMLEY STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Our Forum has as its main goal the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation and referendum within the next two or three years.

Though we regard it as premature to put forward detailed expectations for the plan, we envisage that it will examine the following aspects of "sustainable development":

3.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH

We recognise the need for strong economic development and growth to underpin all work and that this must happen in a way that supports and encourages the healthy lives of the individuals who live and work in the Camley Street Area.

The neighbourhood plan will seek to promote ways in which the existing economic base of small local businesses, medium-sized enterprises and large corporations can be encouraged to stay and grow; start-ups generated by local graduates can be offered affordable workspace; social, community and employer-owned enterprises can be strengthened; and larger businesses can be encouraged to play an active role in training and recruitment from the boroughs economically less active groups.

3.2 CONSERVATION

It is essential we retain and preserve quality buildings and features from the Forum Area's heritage past - St Pancras Gardens (adjacent to St Pancras Old Church), Regents Canal and the various railway structures - and present these in a sympathetic modern context. There is ample evidence of the economic benefits of doing so over and above the contribution to enhancing the aesthetic environment.

The fact that the residencies in Rossendale Way, constructed in 1984/5, are included in Pevsner's "Buildings of England" published by Yale University Press is evidence that this is eminently achievable.

3.3 ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

The Camley Street Natural Park is a significant resource but apart from this we are in danger of neglecting the substantial biodiversity of the rest of the Forum Area, particularly the plant and animal species associated with the canal and railway embankments.

Green corridors and spaces are important for species diversity, beauty and shading, and general environmental well-being. Unfortunately some existing spaces are underused or even unused and contribute to the neglected look of some parts of the area. We intend to encourage the use of small pockets of land for 'mini-parks' and 'mini-gardens' in a way which nurtures the presence of natural growth in the Area.

The London area currently breaches the air quality targets required by the World Health Organisation and EU and trees have especial value in helping to address this: they catch pollutant particles from traffic fumes and atmospheric dust, provide oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. Progress has already been made with the planting of apple trees in the unused strips of land around the industrial units but much more still needs to be done.

3.4 AMENITY MANAGEMENT

Apart from the Constitution public house and the Jubilee water Sports Centre/Frank Barnes School (only accessible out of school hours/weeks) there is no community space for meetings or other community gatherings.

There are no shops within the Forum Area.

3.5 TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

The proposed forum area includes land designated for use by HS2, some temporarily during construction and some permanently to accommodate the HS1-HS2 link line. In addition, for the duration of the HS2 construction project, there will be significant increases to the traffic on Camley Street. Although HS2 is part of the national transport strategy and therefore outwith the remit of this forum and Neighbourhood Planning the duration and magnitude of the construction project means that consideration of its short and long term effects will be unavoidable.

The Camley Street Area should be a place where people want to walk. The impediments to this are the unwelcoming nature and occasional insecurity of the existing pedestrian routes, particularly Camley Street itself. Remedying this will place emphasis on developing a congenial environment for residents and visitors, rather than simply providing a walkway.

The proposed links across the canal adjacent to St Pancras Locks present an opportunity for integrating access to Camley Street Natural Park, St Pancras Church and Churchyard and potential developments in what is now St Pancras Hospital.

Canal-side interactions with the new 103 Camley Street mixed-use development will mean that the canal itself will come under increasing pressure as the consequent increase in pedestrians coincides with it becoming an ever more popular cycle route. This will present us with the challenge of maintaining the amenity and simple beauty of the canal side walkway as well as a productive social space.

3.6 ACCOMMODATION BALANCE

Increasing the quantity and quality of affordable accommodation in the Borough is still a priority for Camden and the plan will take this into account.

3.7 SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Camley Street Area should be a place where people feel that their person and property is safe and secure at all times – in their homes, their workplaces and all shared spaces.

Improving this sense of safety and security will be an important objective of our plan.

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