

# Fitzrovia / East Marylebone Fore Document

## Draft 1 - Comments

To M Gazaleh, [committee@marylebone](mailto:committee@marylebone) yblumann  
From: michael bolt  
Sent: Wed 11/09/11 6:16 AM  
To: M Gazaleh  
Cc: committee@marylebone; yblumann

Dear Mark,

Apologies for the delay! I have now had a chance to read through the Arup draft document and have, as requested, set out below my comments. The document, on the whole, I feel make good sense; namely the policies concerning trees and greening, the de-cluttering polices and pavement and road renewals. I feel some of the other stuff may be unnecessary and may clash with some of the objectives of the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, as Yoram has pointed out. The ARUP proposals are in bold, my comments are underneath.

1. Unify the street through taking surface treatments to the building facade rather than the ownership line, management and street cleansing should also extend across

Not sure how you would achieve this as it would require negotiation with and consent of individual owners?

2. Under utilised urban spaces such as the Market Place have the potential to be transformed and provide a wider and more varied programme such as events, markets as well as food and drink / evening economy

Surely this is just what residents in the area want less of? Perhaps you need to liaise with the FNA over this.

3. Shared surfaces in the Langham Street and Carburton and Clipstone Street areas.

What is the rationale for this? Shared surfaces are usually proposed (but often not viable) in areas of high footfall and relatively low traffic volumes but these areas don't stand out on this basis.

Also their desirability is questionable in heritage areas as they change the nature of the street. They can break up the subtle proportional relationship between footways, the buildings and the carriageway. In fact the picture shown of a "high quality shared surface" proves the point. It may be high quality but would look entirely inappropriate within a relatively small scale heritage street context. Far from giving a "distinct sense of place" it gives a distinct sense of it could be just about anywhere. Arup says that Streets for All is one of the baseline documents used in the production of this draft but that document is generally against shared surfaces in an historic context:

"Maintaining kerb lines preserves the historical form of streets. Where the carriage way is still used for vehicles, even if in restricted hours and for deliveries only, it is important to keep a kerb height of at least 25mm and to use different materials to define the separation. Methods and consider life cycle costing Invest in quality and simplicity".

And again,

"The key to success is to maintain rather than eradicate common features of the street. Kerb lines should always be retained to maintain the visual continuity of the street and to eliminate the need for bollards. Wall to wall surfaces should be avoided, with a clear definition maintained between the footway and the carriageway to provide a plinth for the adjacent buildings. The proportions of the footway to carriageway".

This is echoed in Westminster's draft CMP

Policy CMP 5.1: Pedestrians

A5. the employment of current best practice in relation to shared space principles.

in historic settings there is a case for maintaining a small kerb line so that the original character of the street is preserved, which also has benefits for blind or partially sighted pedestrians.

Opportunities for the removal of guard-railing should be taken where safe to do so and accompanied by an appropriate road safety audit.

English heritage are also against small module paving (as shown in the photo) as being inappropriate in most heritage contexts

Paving:

London's streets were once characterised by the consistent use of rectangular slab paving in York stone, or more commonly, in concrete. The rectangular proportions echoed a proportional system used on many of the adjacent buildings creating an underlying sense of order and harmony and a neutral backdrop for the buildings. Many recent paving schemes have destroyed this established character – using small block materials in discordant patterns and colours with arbitrary rhythms unrelated to the overall street scene. The use of square paving slabs and random small block paving has undermined the subtle visual order for which London's streets were once internationally renowned

Finally ARUP themselves state in their document:

"The study hosts many historically and architecturally significant buildings and the proposed landscape interventions will be sensitive to these seeking to celebrate and enhance their overall settings."

I feel this philosophy should be adhered to with regard to the overall streetscape.

4. Green roofs

Fine for more recent buildings but they are probably not suitable for listed buildings/buildings of merit in conservation areas.

5. Installation of raised tables

If not careful these can result in a messy look carving the street up into sections which can give an inappropriate appearance in a heritage area. Traffic rarely manages to get over 20mph on these roads anyway. Again this is not a policy that will be found in the Streets for All document.

6. Implementation of legible London signs

Again maybe FNA should be consulted on this, I don't think that they are keen on bringing more tourists into the area, it's not the way they see the area progressing. Also Wayfinding and Legible London signs could clash with the de-cluttering initiative. Particularly the Legible London signs, they are often large, unsightly and intrusive and not something the Marylebone Association generally

supports other than on main thoroughfares. Again this would not be welcomed by English Heritage, although your general de-cluttering initiative would be:

"Less is more:

Nothing should be placed in the street unless it is unavoidable. 70% of street furniture is unnecessary, so reduce street furniture to a minimum, and take away redundant items. Where it is essential, co-ordinate its location carefully in relation to the buildings and the overall townscape. Use the whole street width. Wherever possible, locate signs and street furniture on buildings or at the back edge of the pavement to minimise their visual impact."

ENGLISHHERITAGE

#### 7. Illumination of key public buildings.

This doesn't sound like it will help the "heat island" effect much and as is pointed out would no doubt add to light pollution. Even with LED's it is still increasing unnecessarily carbon emissions. I think the photo of the BT tower actually shows the problem with over-illumination.

#### 8. Funding

Some of the proposed sources of funding for this sounds optimistic in the present climate, another reason to stick to the basic objectives, rather than to seek to re-design the streets. Seeking to capture S106 funding for this though sounds a good way forward. However this could clash with what FNA are seeking to achieve with such funding.

Arup mention that this document was produced in collaboration with Westminster City Council, it may be an idea to go into a little more detail on the form of this collaboration particularly as this is an "Area of Caution" for tree planing in the Westminster Way document. Arup state that the project reflects the wishes of the locals, a brief resume of the steps and methodology undertaken to obtain the views of local residents, surveys etc may be in order - and maybe look to extend it further; perhaps it would be a good idea to take up Yoram's offer to meet direct with the FNA with a view to adopting a common stance, particularly with regard to funding as so many of the ideas in this document reflect areas of concern that they are presently engaged with.

Finally it may be advisable to have something in the document about consulting disability organisations as some of the proposals may have access connotations which could run foul of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

I hope this is of some help.

Best wishes,

Michael

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On 8 Nov 2011, at 14:39, M Gazaleh wrote:

Dear Yoram,

Many thanks for your thoughtful and detailed reply. I would like to append these comments to the draft document. Would this be acceptable? This process may take some time as I waiting for other responses to be returned to me.

Best wishes,

Mark Gazaleh

From: [yblumann](#)

To: [mgazaleh](#)

CC: [michael.bolt](#)

Subject: RE: East Marylebone / Fitzrovia Public Realm Upgrade

Date: Thu, 3 Nov 2011 00:27:20 +0000

Thank you for your mail, and the link to this document.

I wanted to discuss it with some of my colleagues; as a local resident living in Little Portland Street, I wanted to consult some of my neighbours as well...

I believe you already met one of my colleagues- Linus Rees, and one of our former trustees & committee member- Denise Julien some time ago.

As you know, the FNA is the recognised amenity society for the area enclosed between Euston Road, Gower Street, Oxford Street, and Great Portland street]- falling within the boundaries of Camden, and within Westminster- which is precisely the area covered by the study.

At the moment, a key planning application- the redevelopment of the former Middlesex Hospital site- is under consideration.

We have already organised three 'open hours' at our office. The response was overwhelming: Usually planning is not something that interest residents very much, but this time, we got about 70-80 callers...

As well as discussing the application, comments were made regarding the public realm in the area surrounding the site.

Concerns were expressed regarding pavements, roads, street lighting, CCTVs, and the lack of maintenance. The latter was recognised by WCC, and the issue was discussed in the West End Forum meeting on 31st October.

In fact, this relates to the West End ward portion of Fitzrovia, which has it's boundary at around Mortimer Street,

The area north of it is more residential and forms part of Marylebone High Street ward.

Many of those 'priority issues' were mentioned in the draft- page 17, and the map on page 19 identifies some of the 'trouble spots'.

It is important to recognise that the issues I mentioned above dominate residents concerns. At the FNA, we are anxious to reflect local concerns and priorities accurately, and do our best to ensure that funds would be found to finance those improvements in accordance with those priorities.

As to the the public space area of the new development, I believe that a rep from the Westminster Tree Trust has been invited to the liaison committee meeting, when it start operating once planning consent has been granted.

On the Camden side, an area improvement programme is under consideration, with surveys and experts looking into it, including the issue of trees. As usual, we want to ensure that each potential plan would take account of the other... we note the draft's proposals for additional trees are dealing with the western side of Cleveland Street only- i.e. on the WCC side and do not mention the eastern side of the Street within Camden.

Another issue, concerning us very much is the 'night time activity' & the 'work and play' theme.

Residents are opposed to the extension of night time activity in Fitzrovia; we are constantly struggling to prevent turning Fitzrovia into an extension of Soho; Market Place is a good example of the failure of good intentions; one pub - The Market Place- lets the whole thing down. Visiting Market Place at night is a fairly unpleasant experience due to the pub. Maybe the photo on page 22 should be replaced by one taken at 2200 on a Thursday night to illustrate my point [sad smile].

We are not particularly keen on the 'play' aspect either- encouraging more residential accommodation does not go hand in hand with turning more of our area to be a 'destination' for tourists and visitors.

Our final concern relates to a term used in page 15 and the 'Neighbourhood Development Plan'- associated with the Localism bill.

As you know, the Localism bill is still going through the stages in Parliament; Already we can see the emergence of 'competing' claims in our area, for example- NWEC- each with their own agenda. Our preferred option is to wait and see till the legal process is completed before we commit ourselves to anything like that.

Looking specifically at some of the proposals raised in this document, we have some specific concerns over some of the 'non tree' issues raised- such as 'road tables', and we do not support the provision of 'wayfinders' in Fitzrovia, something we already explained at length when the issue was raised at our community liaison committee [with WCC and NWEC] a couple of years ago, so their distribution within Fitzrovia was restricted. We would prefer to emphasise tackling the concerns raised by residents first...

We would welcome another meeting, and we would also like invite our sister organisation Charlotte Street Association- they take the lead on the Camden

side. I hope you found those lengthy comments useful....

Thanks and regards

Yoram Blumann.

Date: Wed, 11 Jan 2012 08:08:20 -0800  
From: clevelandstreetnw@yahoo.com  
Subject: Document support  
To: [mgazaleh](mailto:mgazaleh); w1w.trees@live.co.uk

Please accept Howard house & Cleveland St (north) Neighbourhood Watch endorsement, with comments, for:  
Fitzrovia and East Marylebone Landscape and Public Realm Visioning Plan, DRAFT, Oct 2011

Yours sincerely

Peter Bauer

For neighbourhood watch enquiries: [neighbourhood-watch@excite.com](mailto:neighbourhood-watch@excite.com)

START:

Howard House & Cleveland St (north) Neighbourhood Watch review and support for:

Fitzrovia and East Marylebone Landscape and Public Realm Visioning Plan  
DRAFT | 60032366 | Oct 2011

General starting point.

-New trees are very welcome as long as they do not have a negative obscuration on the area's historical architectural to which we have a wider definition than the Council's Conservation Area designation. There is some resident concern about effects on light levels for homes on narrow inner London streets, so the selection emphasis of wall mid-points between windows rather than directly outside windows. Both points are recognised in the document.

-Legible signs on the main roads and transport junctions but not necessarily on the smaller streets and streets which have a residential component. For example, a GVA notice board at Gt Portland St tube station advertising small businesses (but not corporate sites) would be acceptable. There is some reservation inside the periphery of Fitzrovia. The matter is open-ended.

-we are supportive of small businesses during the day and early evening, up until 8 pm. At that time, increased custom would tend to come into conflict with residential sleep pattern requirements, particularly, for example, for residents with young families and shift-workers who have unusual sleep patterns. Disregarding this would draw out organised resident opposition and would mean that as a neighbourhood watch we would not be able to support the plan.

-Similarly, sensitivity to light pollution is required to the implementation of LED street lighting, as acknowledged in the document.

The document is broadly welcomed and seen favourably. The following are particular points that are noted for comment.

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION AND VISION

Residential lead initiative is very welcome and to be encouraged where the intention is the general improvement and well-being of the area as a whole, and not for personal profit or regard.

The existing planning process appears weighted too much in favour of lawyers and paid lobbyists and in the interests of business that can afford high sums over lengthy periods. This is creating suspicion, eroding confidence in the consultation process and democratic participation in general. A successful and thriving area is desired but this is not to be achieved by riding rough-shod over the residential constituency - a barometer of how well the area is doing. The document is NOT to be used as the basis for argument against residential interest.

High quality public space is very much desired. Cooperation with Camden Council on this is sought.

The rooting of the plan in the area's "history and creativity, hosting a wide range of industries" is important.

## 2.0. LOCAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION AREAS

"The study hosts many historically and architecturally significant buildings and the proposed landscape interventions will be sensitive to these seeking to celebrate and enhance their overall settings." Excellent.

## 3.0. BASELINE REVIEW

The document comments on the large developments taking place in and on the fringes of Fitzrovia/east Marylebone and welcomes the new public space and routes. To this should be added components/sections/corners of developments which aspire to preserving and installing fractured and small developments on a human scale in keeping with the historical three and four story baseline. The proposed Newman Place/post-office sorting office and the former Middlesex Hospital are provided as example. Big business argument of economies of scale and profit must be resisted in this regard. Large developments do not have to be entirely uniform and disproportionate to surrounding period buildings. Owner-occupied main resident houses are to be encouraged as opposed to investment orientated flats. Turning the area into solely a property portfolio opportunity will be counter-productive to attaining the support which this document is seeking.

The ten baseline rules are welcome but there is some suspicion over the term sustainability where it is applied to buildings which have stood the test of time for decades and even centuries to be replaced for structures where length of durable design is not factored. Designs which will become redundant in 2 or 3 decades, as is the case with many local post-1960's buildings is not to be emulated. Georgian and Victorian buildings which have proven their sustainable credibility by their durability and the appreciation and value of their aesthetic contribution.

Climate change is not going to be effected by a few buildings in this area but needs to be looked at at an international level. Growth in the BRIC countries has more of an effect on

climate change than building requirements in Fitzrovia/east Marylebone. Long-term, well designed, desirable buildings that owners are proud of are sustainable: short-termist by solely profit-driven motives will be exposed as unsustainable by the requirement to re-develop after a few short years/decades.

"Recognition of local context, distinctiveness and also the activity, vitality and distinctiveness of the local community," rooted in the British Nation.

As a neighbourhood watch, naturally, reduced crime is an honourable objective.

#### 4.1. SITE APPRAISAL ISSUES

A fragmented approach to building design as opposed to street consistency is to be welcomed, in keeping with the area's variety of historical owners and small-scale land-holders.

#### 4.2. OPPORTUNITIES

In relation to urban heat-island effects, we have been led to understand, by former employees of the Middlesex Hospital Annex, that there be an underwater course across lower Cleveland St, the exposure of which would mitigate for heat-island effect.

#### 6.3. GREEN ROOFS

Please add Howard House for the possibility of a Green Roof. There is already an effort to have a roof garden but the result of a structural survey is as yet inconclusive. A Green Roof for butterflies and bumble bees would be viable.

#### 6.5. LEGIBLE LONDON WAYFINDING MARKERS AND INTEGRATED PUBLIC ART

The legible London Way Finding Markers away from the main thoroughfares is more controversial.

Art installations are good in theory especially rooted in the area's historical accomplishments and personages and high in quality rather than in experimental, ephemeral and egocentric art. The reference to local education providers may not be especially inspiring if the art is ideologically based which so many educational establishments seek to influence. Providing a public platform for ideological views is not to be welcomed.



Date: Mon, 21 Nov 2011 22:03:54 -0500  
CC:  
To: neighbourhood-watch@excite.com  
From: neighbourhood-watch@excite.com  
Subject: Traffic Consultation, Open Space, Landscaping

There was another mugging of a young ...

...exhibited towards passers by to any significant degree, beyond being a Londoner?

Peter

- 1) Protection by occupation for Cleveland St Work House
  - 2) Finding New Open Space in Fitzrovia
  - 3) Oldest building on Goodge Street under threat from proposed redevelopment
  - 4) Fitzrovia Traffic and Street Proposals, Camden Council Public Consultation
  - 5) Criticisms about Fitzrovia Landscape and Visioning Plan
  - 6) #7 Fitzroy Sq + #11 Grafton Mews
  - 7) Frontagers Christmas Party, 5th December
  - 8) Westminster Parking Charges
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#### 5) CRITICISMS ABOUT FITZROVIA LANDSCAPE AND VISIONING PLAN

The last e-alert issues sent out end of October/beginning of November contained a request for feedback about the Fitzrovia and East Marylebone Landscape and Public Realm Visioning Plan put together by Arup on behalf of local resident Mark Gazaleh.

The following line was included:

"Please let me have any comments, alterations or detailed objections as soon as you can which will be incorporated into any formal response, which will then be used to amend the draft and demonstrate local support for the objectives contained; but I shall be proceeding on the broad basis that the plan is good for the area unless comments are received otherwise. Peter"

[http://w1wtrees.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/fitzrovia\\_east\\_marylebone\\_landsc\\_ape\\_public\\_realm\\_final\\_draft\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://w1wtrees.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/fitzrovia_east_marylebone_landsc_ape_public_realm_final_draft_low_res.pdf)

It may take some time to download completely.

<http://w1wtrees.wordpress.com/2011/11/01/fitzrovia-forest/>

The following were received from Linus Rees, Deputy Editor of the Fitzrovia News and ex-Chairman of the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association. Received 1st November:

"Peter

I have today seen the document by Arup that Mark Gazeleh has commissioned. What has started off as a project to bring trees to the streets to Fitzrovia and East Marylebone (broadly welcomed) now seems to have suddenly leaped to a rather different project of public realm "improvements".

I am particularly disturbed by the encroachment of legible London signs onto our streets and the examples of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street (ORB) "improvements" being uncritically discussed. Scattered throughout the

Arup document is reference to increasing footfall and talk of "animating streets" with cafes and retail. I am also concerned about the lighting projects. While normal street lighting is essential and a deterrent to crime the lighting being suggested is more like the "fairy light" and night-club LED variety. Some of these lighting projects will draw people towards them. Is that something we want at 3 O'Clock in the morning?

Planting trees is one thing. But this document is some sort of commercial "neighbourhood plan". Mark is also interviewed in a new estate agents magazine that came through my door today. In it he talks about the Portland Village Association. In it he talks about bringing "a sense of place to the area". I'm sure Scott from the Jet Lag bar on Cleveland Street would welcome all this.

What's good about Fitzrovia is that it is not Covent Garden. But this plan talks too much about attracting people. This tree project looks more like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Linus"

Received 1st November: "Peter

I suggest the Watch members read the Arup document with a critical eye. Pass on my comments by all means. They are my personal views, of course. But people ought to make their own minds up. But this is clearly more than just tree planting going on here. Mark is looking for 106 money to be put into these projects and has the ear of both the Mddx Hosp developers (Exemplar said Mark had met with them) and Westminster City Council.

This Arup document covers the whole of the Westminster part of Fitzrovia. We should be finding out who funded the production of this and what were the terms of reference.

I'm quite happy to debate the merits or otherwise of the document with Mark and watch members.

Page 15 of the document says:

"The Fitzrovia Forest Project is a collaborative effort to help shape the living and working environment of the area. It is an environmentally-conscious 'neighbourhood development plan' seeking to balance out the impact of large-scale construction and redevelopment projects proposed for the area. The project also reflects the wish of locals to improve their streets and their area's amenities. It is intended that this plan will be supported by area residents, residents associations, businesses, stakeholders and local amenity societies."

A neighbourhood development plan is described here:  
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/inyourarea/neighbourhood/>

This is very much more than just about trees. While much of the document may seem innocuous and be welcomed other parts are cause for concern. Page 13 says "Social improvements such as reduced crime and increased footfall". While reduced crime is obviously a plus, is "increased footfall" an improvement for the residential community?

Page 19 says: "Under utilised urban spaces such as the Market Place have the potential to be transformed and provide a wider and more varied programme such as events, markets as well as food and drink / evening economy".

However, Market place is already heavily used and a cause of concern to residents due to the activities of licensed premises.

Again page 19 "Active and busy streets with high levels of footfall provide

the basis for thriving business and education sectors.

The area lies to the north one of London's most important retail and business area with opportunities to capitalise on this proximity."

This is beginning to sound more like a "business improvement district" bring the bustle of Oxford and Regent Streets into Fitzrovia's "under used" quiet streets. Is that something we want?

There are proposals on the map on page 20 for 18 Legible London street signs to be placed throughout the Westminster part of Fitzrovia. Is this so that tourists can find themselves into or out of Fitzrovia? On the same map it suggests illuminating 18 buildings. You want to live beneath a light show?

Linus"

Responses are still being collated for a Watch submission. If you have any comments, for, against, neutral or matters which you want to be questioned then please send them in as soon as you can.

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