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Care of Brian O'Donnell and Nicola Tulley
Camden Council Culture and Environment
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall extension
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Dear Officers

CHURCH ROW AND PERRINS WALK NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM APPLICATION

1. This is an application to approve the formation of a Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum (the "Forum").
2. The organisation making this application is the proposed "Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum" which is a relevant body capable of being designated a Neighbourhood Forum in accordance with section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act.
3. The "Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum" is capable of being a qualifying body for the purposes of the Localism Act 2011.

Forum Area

4. The proposed "Area", shown in the attached map, comprises the streets of Church Row and Perrins Walk (formerly Church Row Mews). The Area includes St John's Church and the associated Churchyards either side of Church Row. The Area is the subject of an associated Area Application. The boundaries have been discussed and agreed with the neighbouring Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum and Frogna Way Association.
5. The Area is predominantly residential, but includes a church, a nursery school, a physiotherapist practice, a rare textile business, a sculptor of ceramics, a design studio, an estate agent, and a restaurant.

6. Church Row is a street almost entirely lined with early 18th century houses of brown brick with red dressings. Many have cast iron railings, and arched cellars that run under most of the road. The graveyard set in a mature landscape provides a backdrop to the Church. There are clear views of the rear elevations of the south side from the lane leading to Frognal Way. Gardner Mansions, built in 1898, have a different style and scale, more similar to the north side of Heath Street.



Church Row 1905

7. Set in a Conservation Area, Church Row is a key feature of many Hampstead walking tours. The twin lines of terraced houses form one of the most complete Georgian streets in London, with much original detail. Most of the buildings are Grade II or II*. St Johns Church looks across to Hampstead Tower, and the views of Church Row and the graveyards (painted by Constable) are listed in Camden Council's conservation statement.
8. The site of St John's Church has a very long history. It has been a site of worship for over 1,000 years. The Churchyards contain many monuments and gravestones of historic interest some of which date back to before 1560. The Church, rebuilt in 1747, is listed grade I, and the graveyards contain a further twenty separate listings. The gravestones provide a wealth of social history and architectural interest. Of concern is that a number of graves appear to be falling into disrepair, and many in the southern section have become overgrown with brambles.



Listed Buildings in Church Row – From The English Heritage website

9. The Area has been “home” to many famous people. Here are just a few:

- John Constable (1776-1837) lived and painted in Hampstead and is buried in the Southern Churchyard;
- Rt Hon. Hugh Gaitskell (1906-1963) was the leader of the Labour party 1955-1963 lived in Frognaal Gardens and is buried in the North Churchyard;
- George Du Maurier(1834-1896) the author lived at 27 Church Row, and is buried in the North Churchyard;
- The author HG Wells lived with his family at Number 17 Church Row;
- Peter Cook (1937-1995) the comedian also lived at 17 Church Row; and
- Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965) author of poetry and children’s stories lived at 20 Perrins Walk. Her hymn “Morning has broken” was popularised by Cat Stevens.

10. The Churchyards’ graves and monuments are sheltered by sycamores, horse-chestnuts, cypress, cedar-of-Lebanon, maidenhair tree, and oaks. Between the graves are grasses (rye-grass, sheep’s-sorrel, hairy sedge, and field wood-rush) and unusually (for London) four types of ferns (lady’s-fern, male-fern, broad buckler fern and hart’s-tongue). In total there are more than one hundred different plant species, two of which are uncommon to London: a type of primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) and a fern (*Anthyrium filix-femina*). As a result of this diversity, the site is designated a “Borough Grade I Site of Importance for Nature Conservation” by Camden Council and the London Ecology Unit.

Rational For The Area

11. The many and varied features of the Area makes it unique to London. It is an identifiable Area with a clearly defined community with strong local support. The residents of Church Row, Perrins Walk and the Church Row Association (founded 1973) all support the creation of the Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum.

12. Current concerns include:

- The streets’ fabric, the listed trees, listed buildings and cellars that extend under a substantial part of the road. The internal construction of most of the buildings in Church Row, and the presence of extensive cellars that extend under the road, make them very different from equivalent Hampstead buildings constructed a century later, and make them particularly vulnerable to both inappropriate development and the ravages of HGVs, LGVs, and excessive school run traffic.
- The cast iron railings are a feature of the streets historic character. It is believed that they are an important element of the street’s heritage, and that inappropriate alterations can harm their historic character and the contribution they make to the overall appearance of the street. Unfortunately, and despite resident opposition, permission is being obtained to amend these historic features.
- The former house and gardens of Eleanor Farjeon at 20 Perrins Walk is currently being allowed to deteriorate whilst the owner deliberates over development plans.
- A number of graves in the Churchyard need conserving.

Support

13. Over the last six months the vast majority of the one hundred (100) residents and workers in the Area have been canvassed on the proposed Forum. 87 have been contacted, and individual meetings to discuss and consult on local issues have been held with 60 (i.e. 87% and 60% of the Area population). The formation of the proposed forum is supported by 57 founder members comprising 51 residents and 5 workers and a Camden Councillor.
14. Twenty-six residents of Church Row and Perrins Walk, and Camden Councillor Gio Spinella held an inaugural meeting of the Forum on the 9th of January 2014.
15. The Forum has strong local support that is representative, inclusive and reflective of the Area.

Membership

16. The Forum membership is open to individuals who live, and or work within the Area and individuals who are elected members.
17. The Neighbourhood Forum is a-political, and does not seek to endorse any political parties.
18. The Forum committee currently comprises: Camden Councillor Gio Spinella; David Milne (22 Church Row); David Soskice (19 Church Row); and Michael Patchett-Joyce (25 Church Row).

Constitution

19. The Constitution (attached) has been circulated to residents and workers, and has been approved by the founding members.

Objectives

20. The Forum is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well being of the Area.
21. The Forum will seek to preserve the architectural, environmental and historical features of the Area that makes it unique to London.
22. Whilst the extensive canvassing and consultation used to create the Forum has already brought it into contact with a significant cross section of the local community, it is intended that during the next phase, consultation will be still further broadened, to *inter alia* additional contacts who live outside the Area e.g. The council of the Church; the Trustees of the Churchyards; Camden Council; those responsible at the nursery etc.
23. The area attracts a significant number of tourists, both individuals and those on group tours. Whilst much has been written about the forty odd listed buildings, centuries of history and famous people who have lived or buried here, the information can be hard to access. The Forum will seek to promote awareness of the history of Church Row, Perrins Walk, St John's Church and the associated Churchyards. It will do this in part by devoting a section of the Forum's website to its history, its habitats and its diversity. It is hope that this activity will grow interest in the Area, with benefits to residents, local shops and businesses.
24. Whilst the Church owns the Churchyards, it is Camden Council maintains them under section 18 of the 1855 Burial Act. The Forum intends to work with the Trustees of the Churchyards, Camden Council, and the Church to preserve both the graves, and the habitats.

25. The Forum will seek to work closely with neighbouring Neighbourhood Forums, local street associations and to co-operate on issues of mutual interest. In this context it should be noted that the Church Row Association currently has joint initiatives with the Arkwright Road Residents Association and the Netherhall Neighbourhood Association.

The Plan

26. The Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Development Plan (the “Plan”) will set out policies for the development and use of land within the Area. As provided for in the Act, it will be subject to consultation and examination, including where appropriate a referendum held in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions.

27. The Plan will include, where appropriate, specific policies for the Area. The Plan will aim to:

- Preserve the character and nature of the listed buildings in the Area;
- Complement Camden Council’s Local Development Framework and the Hampstead Conservation Area Statement to ensure that all development is sympathetic to the character of the Area;
- Identify locations for potential sensitive development and support local development;
- Express aspirations for the future development of traffic and transport serving or passing through the Area, and guide Camden Council towards improvements;
- Provide for the preservation and improvement of private and public open space;
- Nominate Assets of Community Value for listing;
- Pay due attention to sustainability; and
- Pay due attention to the surface and underground water environment and soil stability.

Conclusion

28. The church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood forum is a relevant body to make this application under the terms of the Neighbourhood Forum Regulations and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations because the Forum:

- has an appropriate Area;
- membership is open to everyone who lives or works in the area and to Councillors;
- has more than 21 members;
- has a written Constitution;
- has been established to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of our area;
- membership is drawn from different places in the neighbourhood area; and
- membership is drawn from different sections of the community in the area.

29. It is requested that Camden Council approves the formation of the Church Row and Perrins Walk Neighbourhood Forum.

Yours sincerely

David Milne