

# The Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum

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30 September 2015

**Judith Dainton**

22a Calthorpe Street,  
London,  
WC1X 0JS

## Application for a Neighbourhood Area

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached the relevant documentation pertaining to the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum's application to proceed with designating a Neighbourhood Area for Mount Pleasant.

This application contains:

1. A map showing our neighbourhood area boundary;
2. A statement explaining the designated neighbourhood area;
3. And a statement that the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum is capable of being designated as a neighbourhood forum.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

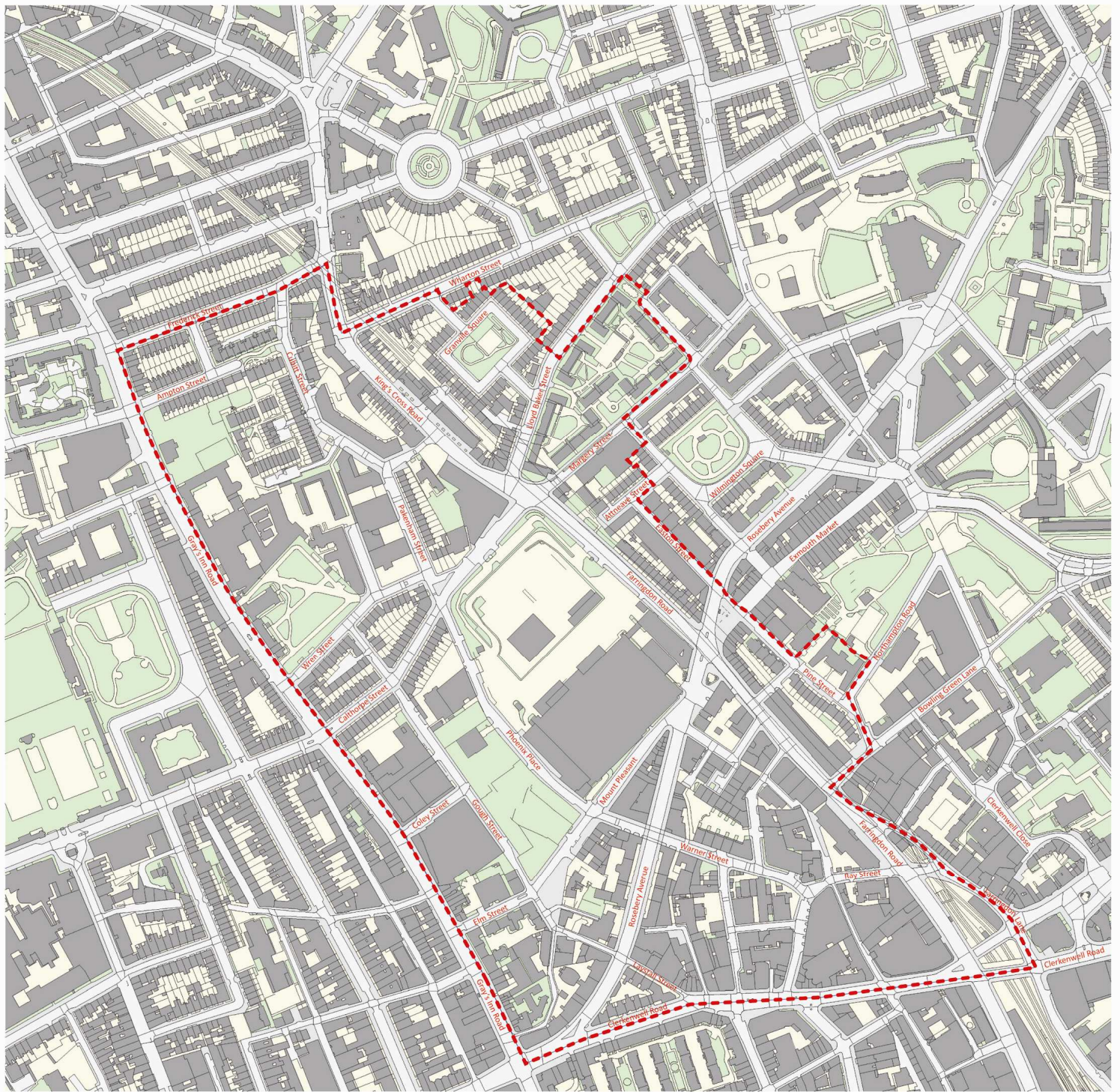
Kind regards,

Judy Dainton

*On behalf of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum*



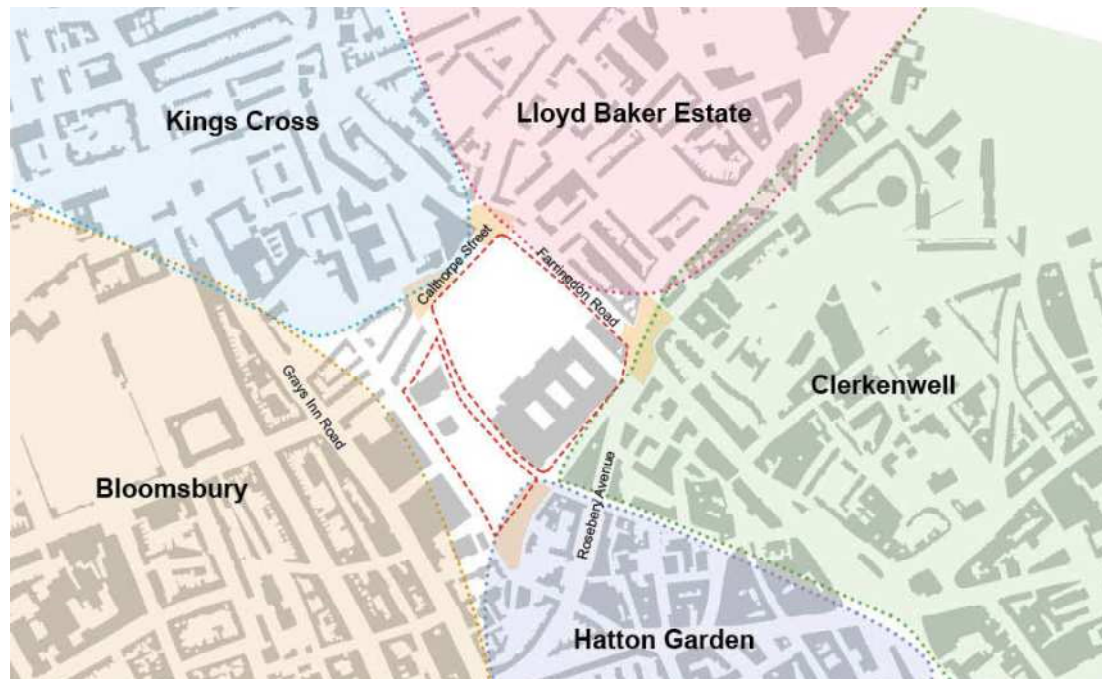
1. The Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Area Boundary (red dotted line) 1:2000 scale





## 2. Statement Explaining Neighbourhood Area

2.1 The proposed neighbourhood boundary encircles an area surrounded by five established neighbourhoods: King's Cross; Lloyd Baker Estate; Clerkenwell; Hatton Garden; and Bloomsbury – as defined in the Mount Pleasant Supplementary Planning Document, 2012 (see Fig 1). The creation of a new neighbourhood area derives from the successful integration of the Royal Mail Group's proposed Mount Pleasant development and the peripheries of the surrounding five established neighbourhoods.



*Fig 1. The five neighbourhoods surrounding Mount Pleasant, as identified in the Supplementary Planning Document, February, 2012.*

2.2 The neighbourhood area is unique in London for social, historical and geographical reasons. At its core is a 'black hole' or missing piece of an urban jigsaw created by London's expansion into the open fields that once formed the City of London's northern hinterland. The 'sweet waters' of the city's second river, the River Fleet, once ran through the heart of our neighbourhood defining its distinct topography of undulating slopes that have contributed significantly to its current urban form and social character.

2.3 While the land inclines into our neighbourhood from adjacent Bloomsbury, Kings Cross and Clerkenwell, these distinct communities turn their back on Mount Pleasant for very practical reasons. As London grew, so too did its refuse and by the late eighteenth century Mount Pleasant had become the City's rubbish tip and the once life-giving Fleet its death-delivering sewer. Subsequent urban development abused Mount Pleasant and caused its surrounding areas to turn away from the now stinking valley.

2.4 From the mid-eighteenth century our neighbourhood went from being a rubbish tip to the home of a small pox hospital, the infamous Coldbath Fields Prison and nearby workhouse, and then the site for one of the largest postal distribution centres in the world. In the meantime, the modern metropolis of London with all its new industrial forms was building up around our neighbourhood further isolating it from the surrounding urban landscape. The Metropolitan Line, Farringdon Road, Rosebery Avenue viaduct, and dense

Victorian and inter-war housing estates all pushed up to the boundaries of our neighbourhood and hardened its edges.

2.5 Now, in the twenty-first century, the decision by the Royal Mail Group to redevelop the extensive brownfield sites surrounding their massive sorting office presents a unique and once in a quarter millennial opportunity to remedy the damage inflicted on this neighbourhood and sew it back into the surrounding urban fabric that has now become an essential part of the rich tapestry of London. London Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon Crossrail, Kings Cross Opportunity Area and St Pancras International are all elements of a regeneration corridor (acknowledged by TFL's current proposals for a north-south Cycle Superhighway passing through our neighbourhood along Phoenix Place) that passes through and could benefit from our neighbourhood's sensitive rejuvenation and reintegration.

### **Area Description and Explanation**

*Clockwise from the northwest corner (junction of Gray's Inn Road and Frederick Street)*

2.6 The single most influential feature to impact upon the definition of our Neighbourhood Area is the former River Fleet. Current administrative boundaries (Council and Ward) follow the line of the former river and existing developments 'turn their backs' on what became a sewer. Our aspiration as a neighbourhood is to remedy centuries of neglect by embracing the urban territory our forebears were keen to ignore and sewing it back into the wider urban fabric. The boundary of our Neighbourhood Area is defined more than anything else by this aspiration: including properties and spaces that turn in to the Fleet's valley while excluding those urban elements beyond the valley that have consequently become vital parts of adjacent areas.

2.7 The Forum has already and will continue to work closely and collaboratively with adjacent neighbourhood forums and other organisations on matters and areas of mutual interest. For example, where our boundary overlapped with the proposed boundary of neighbouring King's Cross, the issue was resolved through lengthy and polite discussion.

### **The Northern Perimeter**

*2.8 This section is predominantly residential and determined by the line of Frederick Street and streets containing mixture of mid-nineteenth century terraces and late-twentieth century social housing. The extent of northern perimeter was agreed at the request of the community centre, the Calthorpe Project, many of the regular users of which live in nearby Ampton Street and Frederick Street.*

- Marking the northern extent of the Fleet valley in our Neighbourhood Area, one of the most important features in this section is the Calthorpe Project, an invaluable community facility and urban garden serving the communities south of Kings Cross. The management of the Calthorpe Project expressed a wish to be within our proposed neighbourhood area and to be represented on our committee. At their request, the northern boundary was moved from Ampton Street to Frederick Street so that the Calthorpe Project would no longer form an outer corner of the Neighbourhood Area, but instead be comfortably inside along with residents of these streets who use the facility regularly.
- Consequently, the area's northern boundary follows Frederick Street, one block north of the Calthorpe Project's northern perimeter, passing Cubitt Street (the line of the Fleet) and taking the shortest and most logical route to the clear boundary of

King's Cross Road. Here the area is entirely residential beginning with imposing mid-nineteenth century terraces and culminating in late twentieth century low rise apartment blocks owned by the council and housing associations.

### **The Eastern Perimeter**

*2.9 This section appears circuitous but its deliberate intricacy is most simply described as following the lower valley of the Fleet and defined by extensive consultation with residents and civic amenities groups in the area. In principle, the proposed boundary incorporates those developments and spaces that turn into rather than away from the course of the former river at the heart of our Neighbourhood Area. To achieve this, it is essential that the boundary does not follow the 'hard' line of Farringdon Road, the existing and proposed developments along which are already doing much to further isolate the heart of our Neighbourhood from the surrounding city, but where logical and feasible to take in at least one block to the east.*

*2.10 The character of the eastern perimeter starts with residential (late-Georgian terraces and squares, inter-war council housing and Victorian terraces) to the north of Rosebery Avenue and a mixture of residential and commercial (Exmouth Market) to the south. Topographically, this area follows the contour of the Fleet's valley as it descends towards the Thames.*

- The boundary turns south at King's Cross Road and takes the first opportunity to turn east at Wharton Street taking in the row of properties on the southwest end of the street closest to Mount Pleasant. The boundary follows the centre of the road until the junction of Granville Square. Here the urban character is defined by late Georgian brick terraces.
- At the request of the Granville Square Residents' Association (who have always been present at meetings since 2012) and the area boundary encircles Granville Square, taking in all the properties with frontages facing into the square and forming its distinctive and cohesive character.
- On exiting the square at Lloyd Baker Street, the boundary follows the centre of the street to encircle the Margery Street Estate via St Helena Gardens, Fernsbury Street and Margery Street (at the request of the Margery Street Estate Tenants' and Residents' Association, which represents the 225 homes on the estate).
- The boundary leaves Margery Street at Yardley Street, including the Children's Society offices but, at the request of the Wilmington Square Residents' Association, excludes the row of three properties (numbers 28-38) fronting Yardley Street before reaching Attneave Street. This request was made on the grounds that the entire architectural ensemble of Wilmington Square would be retained outside the boundary and not divided.
- The boundary joins the centre of Attneave Street between numbers 28-38 Yardley Street and the 1970s apartment buildings that extend down the north side of Attneave Street.
- The boundary turns south into Easton Street and continues in a straight line across Rosebery Avenue into Pine Street, taking in Exmouth House and the Finsbury Health Centre before joining Northampton Road. The general rule of this stretch of the boundary is to incorporate the buildings that front Farringdon Road and the

amenities that serve the community living in the area. Residents of Pine Street have been active participants in our meetings and are presently concerned about the proposed development of the NCP Car Park directly east of their terrace facing Farringdon Road.

- The boundary follows the south wall of the Finsbury Health Centre down Northampton Road to Bowling Green Lane, where it turns west to join Farringdon Road near the junction with Farringdon Lane.
- The boundary turns south and follows the centre of Farringdon Lane to the junction of Clerkenwell Road, taking in the land above the railway tracks.
- To the east is the distinct ensemble of Clerkenwell Green that makes its way up the hill away from the former Fleet, which we accept is having a distinct character and identity. We have been in correspondence with the Clerkenwell Green Preservation Society (CGPS) who support the proposed boundary. We acknowledge each other's respective interests and agree to collaborate and support each other where these interests are mutual, particularly with respect to 'enhancing the triangular south-west of space at the corner adjacent to Farringdon Road and opposite Clerkenwell Green' (see email provided separately from CPGS to MPA dated 04 May 2015).

### **The Southern Perimeter**

*2.11 This area is a mixture of high-density commercial and residential and the busiest section of the neighbourhood area. Topographically, the boundary line follows the line of the Thames valley but crosses the Fleet valley at Farringdon Road.*

- The boundary turns west at Clerkenwell Road, following the centre of the road as far as the junction with Gray's Inn Road. The buildings within our southern boundary contain a combination of commercial and residential and are identified as some of the 'hard to reach' areas. Extra effort will be made to engage the residents and users of these properties.

### **The Western Perimeter**

*2.12 This area is quieter than the southern perimeter but shares with it a similarly vibrant mix of commercial and residential, including the large ITN Headquarters. As the road proceeds northwards, the area becomes increasingly residential, including Calthorpe Street, Wren Street and the 1930s apartment building, Trinity Court.*

- At the Gray's Inn Road/Clerkenwell Road junction the boundary turns north and follows the centre of Gray's Inn Road all the way to the starting point at Frederick Street. The western perimeter is simpler than the eastern perimeter on account of the Gray's Inn Road and agreements with neighbouring fledgling Neighbourhood Forums (Holborn and Bloomsbury). Residents of the mansion blocks and council housing blocks, and council and housing association street properties within our western boundary have always participated in the community's work around Mount Pleasant and are represented on our committee.

### **3. Statement supporting the MPA's capability in being designated as a neighbourhood forum**

3.1 We believe that the Mount Pleasant Association meets the conditions contained in section 61(F) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and is a relevant body capable of being designated as a Neighbourhood Forum. It has been established with more than 21 people and is a well-established and publicly recognised community group of diverse local residents and stakeholders living in and working around Mount Pleasant. Over the past two years, the Mount Pleasant Association has been working with local residents and stakeholders to raise awareness of the enormous potential this opportunity presents for our neighbourhood and for London more widely.

3.2 The Mount Pleasant Association is a public forum in which anyone can join or use to voice opinion and share views. We have always encouraged a healthy and respectful public debate about the potential and future of our neighbourhood using a wide range of traditional and social media. We have held a series of public meetings attended by Council Planning Officers Ward Councillors and local Members of Parliament, as well as other stakeholders in the area, including representatives of the Royal Mail Group. We have an active and diverse membership of individuals and other stakeholders from across the neighbourhood and in surrounding communities. Our members remain in regular contact through the group's email forum. Members regularly contribute to the local and national press and engage a global audience through our website and Twitter feeds. Our website ([www.mountpleasantforum.wordpress.com](http://www.mountpleasantforum.wordpress.com)) is an important resource for dissemination news and information. It has an archive containing all news items relating to our neighbourhood, responses to planning applications by members of our neighbourhood and the minutes of our public meetings.

3.3 The Mount Pleasant Association has been engaged in open and constructive dialogue with neighbouring groups intent on establishing Neighbourhood Plans, including groups in Bloomsbury, Holborn, Hatton Garden, Kings Cross and Finsbury. Our boundaries have been informed by these conversations and do not impinge on any known boundaries of neighbouring groups. The only potential overlap was in the north with Kings Cross group, who have listened to and accepted our justifications (*see separate document supplied for an extract of the email confirming this agreement*). We have produced posters and put them up at strategic points around the community since early Oct 2014 to explain our intentions to the public and invite opinion (*see appendix 1 & 2 for a copy of the poster and photographs of it in situ in a sample of locations around the neighbourhood*).

3.4 The Mount Pleasant Association has stood up for the neighbourhood in public meetings and forums, including deputations at Camden (28 February, 2014) and Islington (10 March, 2014) Town Halls and Great London Authority (3 October, 2014), communication with Members of Parliament, and the Greater London Authority, and voiced the views of the neighbourhood through a wide range of media outlets, including BBC London News, London Live, The Guardian, The Evening Standard, Camden New Journal, Islington Tribune, Islington Gazette, Monocle Radio, Building Design, Architectural Journal.

3.5 Please also refer to Sections 5 & 6 in the accompanying *Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum Application*.



## Appendix

1) The A3 poster produced and distributed around the neighbourhood since early Oct 2014:

# The Mount Pleasant Association

Unit 5, 21 Wren Street, WC1X 0HF

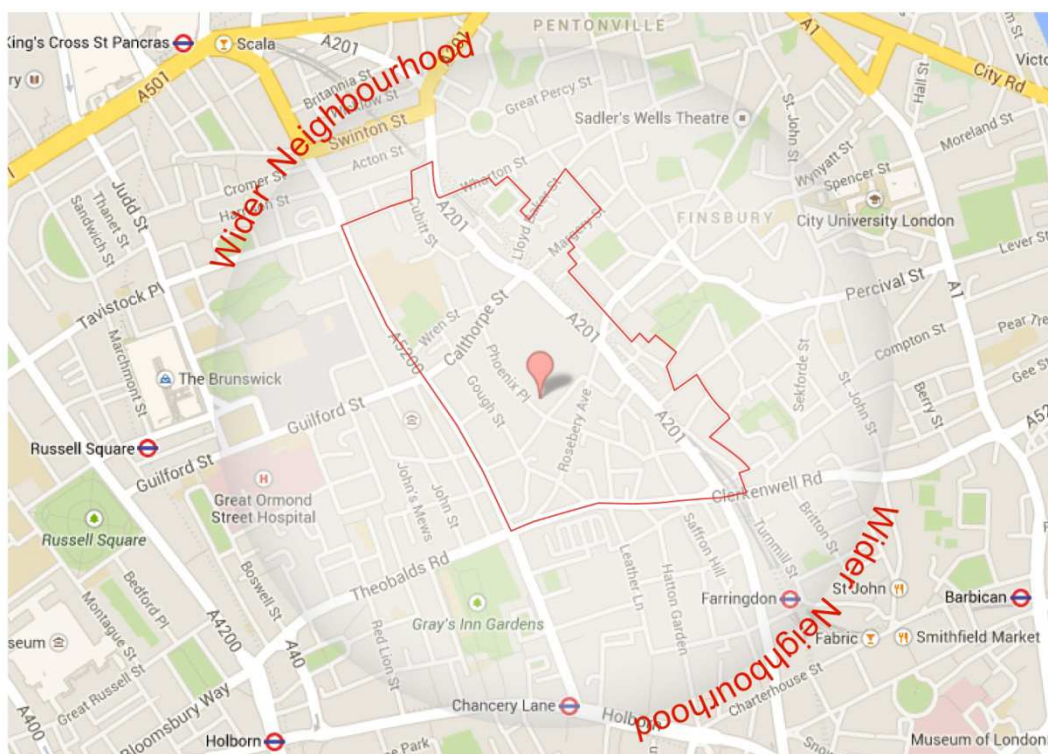
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## Neighbourhood Plan - *Your Future in Your Hands*

The Mount Pleasant Association (MPA) was formed over two years ago by the local community in response to major developments in our area posing a significant and potentially detrimental impact on our neighbourhood. Local communities across London are growing increasingly frustrated at being excluded from the planning process and getting little or nothing back from the developments reshaping our neighbourhoods.

Our neighbourhood is facing unprecedented change and the MPA is determined to ensure the community has a greater say in future developments and receives a fairer share of the compensation given to Councils by developers.

We aim to do this by producing a Neighbourhood Plan as an essential part of our commitment under the GLA's Community Right to Build programme, which the MPA applied successfully for in 2014.



### What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan establishes general planning policies for the development and use of land in your neighbourhood, such as where new homes, schools and offices should be built and what they should look like.

### What does a Neighbourhood Plan do?

A neighbourhood plan allows local people to get the right type of development for their community.

### Why have a Neighbourhood Plan?

Two of the most important benefits are that the local community has a statutory role in the planning process and that 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that developers pay to the Councils is spent within the neighbourhood area.

### Who decides on the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area?

You do. The MPA has already consulted local groups on this issue and has drawn a draft boundary (below) to invite feedback.

### How long does it take to produce a Neighbourhood Plan?

The MPA has been working on this for a year and will soon invite members of the local community to participate in a series of workshops to understand better local views on future development. We expect the Plan to be approved in 2015.

### What can you do?

Get involved by contacting us by post, email or Twitter (above). This is YOUR future, be a part of it.



2)

Examples of the poster on display throughout the neighbourhood:



The Welsh Centre (Gray's Inn Road)



The Calthorpe Arms (Gray's Inn Road)



The Calthorpe Project (Gray's Inn Road)



The Carpenter's Arms (Frederick Street/Kings Cross Rd)



Christopher Hatton Primary School



Farrington Lane and Clerkenwell Road



Clerkenwell Road



Elm Street and Gray's Inn Road





Fourways Newsagent, Gray's Inn Road



Granville Square



Grays Inn Road and Guildford Street



Grays Inn Road and Wren Street



Grays Inn Road - ITN



Grays Inn Road - ITN



Phoenix Place and Mount Pleasant



Mount Pleasant and Warner Street



Pine Street



Pine Street and Northampton Road





Laystall Court, Mount Pleasant