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By post, and by email to:
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12th February 2016

Dear Ms. Wheat,

Application to designate the Covent Garden North neighbourhood area.

This application follows our letter of 5th March 2014 to Ed Watson, requesting designation of the Covent Garden neighbourhood area. We have subsequently met with officers and members from the council, and from City of Westminster, for further discussions.

We have found it difficult to progress designation of the full area that we serve as an amenity society as delineated in our constitution because of difficulties presented by City of Westminster. We are therefore submitting a revised application to you for the part of that area that falls within the London Borough of Camden alone. We will submit a separate application to City of Westminster for the remaining part of the area to be designated as the 'Covent Garden South Neighbourhood Area'.

Please accept this letter as a formal request for the designation of the **Covent Garden North Neighbourhood Area** under the Localism Act 2011.

Although it is appropriate for us as the Covent Garden Community Association, with our active involvement in planning matters, to take a lead on neighbourhood planning in our area, we also work closely with other groups as we detail below. Many of these represent and serve the local community, and others represent commercial interests. We have canvassed them on our plans, and there is an appetite to pursue the opportunities presented by localism.

Please let us know how to progress to the next stage.

1. The area proposed for designation

The area proposed for designation is the land bounded by High Holborn, New Oxford Street, Charing Cross Road, *West Street*, *Shelton Street*, *Drury Lane*, *Great Queen Street*, *Wild Street*, *Kemble Street* and Kingsway (the names in italics being at the border with City of Westminster). It includes a population of over 3,000 usual residents who, together with a large number of part-time residents and hundreds of businesses, make up the part of the Covent Garden Community that lies in Camden. A map of the area is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Why the area is appropriate for designation

This area is appropriate for designation since it is a cohesive neighbourhood already, with a strong community that functions across administrative borders and conservation area boundaries.

The Covent Garden area has arguably been a neighbourhood since the early 1700's, by which time the land from St. Giles down to the Thames was fully developed (see engraving of 1720 in Appendix 2).

A consortium was put together to redevelop the majority of the wider Covent Garden area in 1965, comprising the Greater London Council, Westminster and Camden council. It was in response to their proposals for 'comprehensive redevelopment' that the Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) was established in 1971. Local people were outraged at the plans to demolish their historic neighbourhood and replace it with high rise blocks, concrete walkways and 4 lane roads (see extract from the draft plan in Appendix 2). They won a battle against great odds that are hard to imagine now. As a result many hundreds of local families were rehoused in new and improved blocks of flats, forming the backbone of our residential community even today.

Illustrations are attached as Appendix 2.

3. The organisation making the application is capable of being designated a Neighbourhood Forum

There is no parish council covering this area. Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) is capable of being designated a Neighbourhood Forum based on our experience, expertise, the nature of our work in this area, our open and extensive membership, and our written constitution.

a) The nature of our work

We believe that CGCA is ideally placed to drive neighbourhood planning in our area because we understand sustainable development at a grass roots level. Covent Garden has become increasingly desirable in the last 40 years, and we have fought many battles to retain the area's character against fierce commercial pressures. Those who have driven development have often had the grace to admit the good sense in our arguments, when the result has been a better long term outcome for the area - for its residents and businesses alike.

CGCA is the amenity society recognised by both Camden and Westminster councils for the wider Covent Garden area. Our work nowadays mainly spans planning, licensing, community safety, the environment and public realm. Our activity extends right up to the border of our area, regularly addressing concerns in Charing Cross Road, New Oxford Street and Kingsway.

We work in the spirit of a neighbourhood forum in many ways already:

- Many interests are represented on our committees.
- Much of our activity involves negotiation with developers and businesses in order to reach consensus.
- We work closely with other community organisations, such as Dragon Hall, the Phoenix Garden, the Seven Dials Club and local schools. We reach out to others.
- We collaborate with our fellow amenity societies on the borders of our area: The Soho Society, Bloomsbury Association and Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association. What happens in each area affects those in the adjoining area, so we cannot work in isolation.
- We have dialogue with the BIDs that have interests in the area, the one relevant to this application being 'inMidtown'.
- We consult with the active local tenants associations, taking up their concerns, and we have strong links with housing associations in the area.
- We are represented on two police Safer Neighbourhood panels, The Covent Garden Area Trust, Friends of Lincoln's Inn Fields, The Jubilee Sports Hall, Save London's Theatres, Seven Dials

Trust, the West End Amenity Society Forum, the West End Community Network and the West End Partnership Board.

- We work in partnership with hands-on landowners on specific projects where our interests coincide. Those whom we deal with most regularly include Capital & Counties Properties PLC and Shaftesbury PLC. Those whom we have dealt with on current and recent developments include Almacantar, Consolidated Group, the Mercers' Company, Triangle Investment & Development, and Legal & General Group.

We have regular contact and effective dialogue with all those mentioned above, and many more. Individuals from some of these organisations have already indicated their interest to be a part of the Neighbourhood Forum committee.

To give a flavour of our work, a copy of our trustees' report for the last financial year is attached as Appendix 3.

b) Eligibility criteria for membership

Membership of CGCA is open to individuals who live in the area defined above, and to those working here including our elected representatives. Associate membership is open to others.

Business membership is open to any firm operating within our area.

c) Our wide membership

We have over 400 people and local businesses as full members. These include a number of active volunteers, some of whom are members of our Executive Committee and our various subcommittees. If you are minded to designate our area then we will establish a Neighbourhood Forum committee of at least 21 members from across the area. In order to achieve fair representation of residential and commercial interests we anticipate members being drawn from our current membership and from those organisations with whom we work in partnership.

d) Our constitution

CGCA has had a constitution in place since 1971, and this reflects the requirements of the Localism Act: that among our aims, we are established for the purposes of promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. A copy of our constitution is attached as Appendix 4.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding our application, and to working with you further on neighbourhood planning.

Yours sincerely,



Jo Weir
Chair