

Dear Sirs,

The Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Forum covers that part of Westminster bounded by Oxford Street, Great Portland Street, Marylebone Road, Cleveland Street and Charlotte Street. It was formed in 2015 and has a membership of over 200 local residents and businesses.

We welcome the permanent closure of Riding House Street to traffic in principle and see it as an important opportunity to reduce traffic noise and pollution for local residents and the All Souls school. It is also an opportunity to provide much needed open space with an emphasis on greening. We are also proposing a green wall on the rear elevation of the UCL research centre in Cleveland Street which will be visible from the school and Riding House Street.

However, we have a number of comments and recommendations:

1. We note that the existing trees are not indicated on the plan and we understood that the Mayor of Westminster was expected to plant an additional tree in the near future in recognition of the tree planting project covering most of Fitzrovia.
2. We would like to see more trees included in the scheme and larger planters with a wide range of shrubs and plants.
3. Rather than placing the seats and planters against the wall of the school and the frontage of the buildings on the south side, we would like to see a more imaginative arrangement of seats and planters which would facilitate social interaction and provide a pleasant environment. We appreciate that space has to be left for emergency vehicles in the centre but seating and planters could be distributed more informally on the current pavements.
4. We have reservations about the use of precast concrete paving. Whilst it's more expensive, granite sets add much more character and are typical of the Georgian street pattern in the area. See for example Goodge Place, off Tottenham Street, which has recently been relaid with sets. Perhaps part of the paved area could be treated with granite sets for example at each end where the bollards are proposed.

We have been in touch with some residents in the recently completed housing in Fitzroy Place and understand that they are concerned about noise and anti-social behaviour. We have tried to allay their fears but feel that they should receive additional consultation to ensure that their concerns are taken fully into account.

With best wishes

Nick Bailey
Secretary
FitzWest Neighbourhood Forum