

ST QUINTIN AND WOODLANDS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

APPLICATION TO THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON & CHELSEA AND THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM (UNDER SCHEDULE 9 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011)

This document constitutes an application from the St Helens Residents Association for designation of an area for Neighbourhood Planning purposes, and for the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum, under Schedule 9 of the Localism Act 2011.

The proposed name of the Forum is the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum. The geographic area covered lies mainly in RB Kensington & Chelsea and in part in LB Hammersmith and Fulham.

This application is submitted in accordance with Section 61c of the 1990 Act (Town and Country Planning Act) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. We ask both RB Kensington & Chelsea and LB Hammersmith & Fulham to determine this application in accordance with these regulations.

Designation of Neighbourhood Planning Area

The geographic area for which we are applying for designation is that bounded by Dalgarno Gardens to the north, St Marks Road to the east, Wood Lane to the west, and to the south a boundary along the line of the A40M Westway. A map showing the proposed area is attached.

This area combines that covered at present by the St Helens Residents Association, extended to the west to include the small area of residential housing around Eynham Road W12 (and the Woodlands site in Wood Lane)' These latter areas lie in the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Woodlands Area Residents are in support of this application, and would form part of the initial management body.

To the north, the present area covered by St Helens Residents Association would be extended up to the border of Little Wormwood Scrubs, and to the south side of Dalgarno Gardens. This allows for the fact that the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs and the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust are already active in the areas to the north of this line. These areas would therefore continue to lie outside the proposed Neighbourhood Forum and Plan area.

At present, the St Helens Residents Association is the only fully constituted and recognised residents association in the proposed area (for more details, see under Neighbourhood Forum below).

The logic of defining this area for neighbourhood planning purposes is as follows:

1. The RBKC Core Strategy identifies 18 'places' in the borough and includes a set of 'mini neighbourhood plans' for each of these. The area proposed for the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Plan lies outside these 18 areas. A neighbourhood plan will be needed to fine tune and put in place the wider Core Strategy objectives for this small part of London, along with those of LBHF for the Eynham Road area.
2. The proposed area includes most (but not all) of the Oxford Gardens/St Quintin Conservation Area. The Conservation Area policy document dates from 1975 and is in urgent need of updating. This would form part of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan exercise. The Neighbourhood Forum would seek to build local consensus around a set of detailed planning policies governing issues such as rooflights, basement development, and eco retrofitting. These would be designed to ensure the long-term protection of the heritage of the area while also recognising that the context has changed since 1975. (The remaining streets of the CA east of St Marks Road are of a different built form, and a different demographic, than what is now known as the St Quintin Estate. Hence they are not proposed for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Forum/Plan area, nor in updated CA policies)
3. The inclusion of the Eynham Road area in Hammersmith and Fulham is proposed because this small triangle of housing is of very similar built form (late Victorian terrace) and demographics, sharing the same shops and open spaces. This area is physically separated off from the remainder of LBHF by Wood Lane and the Westway. The area is experiencing the same development pressures as the current St Helens area, arising from the White City OAPF. Woodlands Area Residents (WAR) have been working very closely with the St Helens Residents Association to ameliorate the impact of these. In the longer term, the two areas will also experience the same impact of the HS2 plans for Old Oak and a potential Crossrail station at Kensal Rise.
4. The inclusion of the Woodlands site on Wood Lane is proposed because of the need to integrate the Imperial West development within the wider local community. This forms part of the vision of the development, as expressed by Imperial College. The development is premised on creating a permeable and accessible set of buildings that contributes to the local area, including a mixed use community space and garden area as well as the proposed public 'square'. The 600 postgraduates, and future occupants of the proposed 192 residential units, will have North Pole Road as their local shopping parade and a shared interest in the wider future of the area
5. Medium term plans to create an east west pedestrian/cycle link under the railway, between Imperial West and Latimer Road at this location are also a significant factor. The proposed underpass will radically change pedestrian and cycle movements in the wider area. While this link will be physically managed by Imperial College on the Wood Lane

side, the entrance/exit into Latimer Road will not. The proposed Neighbourhood Forum could play a valuable role in plans for design and management of this planned link between the two boroughs. For this reason, a small area of land managed by the Westway Development Trust, on which the key east/west pedestrian route will run, is also included in the proposed Forum and plan area.

6. There is by no means universal support for the principle of this proposed underpass, amongst residents of the Oxford Gardens CA. Hence a new local body, bringing together and mediating the views of residents on both sides of the railway line/borough boundary (and involving bodies such as the White City Forum) could prove critical to ensuring a successful outcome for this proposed project.
7. We are aware that there is already a draft Planning Brief and SPD for the Westway area, currently out to public consultation. The inclusion within the proposed Forum area of a small part of WDT land is not intended to conflict with this exercise, but to ensure that local residents can be involved in the detailed planning of an enhanced pedestrian/cycle route along the back of Oxford Gardens houses and on other elements of the draft SPD that will affect the local neighbourhood.
8. The boundary to the east of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area is bounded by St Marks Road, which forms a natural break point in terms of housing built form and demographics. The neighbouring Ladbroke Association is already a well-established local amenity body, covering the area around Ladbroke Grove.

The inclusion of areas in two neighbouring boroughs forms an integral part of this proposal for a St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum. Such cross boundary arrangements are explicitly provided for in the Localism Act. With the two boroughs already implementing Triborough working arrangements, and working together on other major planning developments along the boundary, it is hard to see that any administrative obstacles would arise.

Once the railway line ceases to be a major physical barrier, through the creation of proposed new pedestrian links north and south of Westway, fresh impetus will be needed to strengthen community links. A neighbourhood planning exercise would prove very helpful in this respect.

Latimer Road Employment Zone

The proposed area for the Forum and Neighbourhood Plan includes the Latimer Road Employment Zone. This is an area of mixed residential and employment use which at present is not functioning successfully and where a neighbourhood planning approach could achieve welcome regeneration.

The existing office and business units in Latimer Road have high vacancy levels, and the present mix of uses and activities in the area is clearly failing

to attract new tenants. At the same time, there are pressures for speculative development for new residential units and offices on the eastern side of the road, with applications for increased building heights,

Local people would like to see a scenario in which workshops, offices, studios and new residential units are integrated successfully, within a more coherent and attractive built form and accompanied by physical improvements to the street scene. This could achieve an attractive 'creative quarter' such as has emerged in other parts of London. In London-wide terms, the area is well located for such uses.

Initial discussions are being held with employers and landlords in the Latimer Road area, and so far there has been support and enthusiasm for a neighbourhood planning approach. RBKC will be undertaking a review of Employment Zones from mid 2102, including the Latimer Road area, and the Forum would feed in views and ideas from local businesses, into this exercise.

North Pole Road and St Helens Gardens

These two local shopping parades are experiencing severe stress as a result of the difficult financial climate. Several shop units in North Pole Road are lying vacant, and the North Pole pub is for sale. In St Helens Gardens a row of shop units owned by the same landlord has recently been refurbished, but these units have proved hard to let to A1 retail uses.

The Association has already been involved in seeking to facilitate uses for these shop units, and in helping with the successful 2011 St Helens Festival (to be repeated this year as a Diamond Jubilee event). Revival of these shopping parades would be a further key part of a Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Development Orders

At this early stage, no application is being made for a Neighbourhood Development Order, or under the Community Right to Build. Such applications may follow on from the Neighbourhood Planning exercise.

DESIGNATION OF ST QUINTIN AND WOODLANDS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM (SECTION 61F(5) REQUIREMENTS OF 1990 ACT)

The primary existing residents association and amenity body in the area is the St Helens Residents Association. This was formed in October 2008. It currently covers the area bounded by St Helens Gardens, St Quintins Avenue, Latimer Road and Oxford Gardens.

The Association is accredited by RBKC and received a Gold award for Excellence in representing local residents, in 2010. It has a current membership of 260 local residents, and is open to all living in the area and in the surrounding streets. All 700 households on the St Quintin Estate are regularly leafleted with information about open meetings and are invited to attend.

The Association is affiliated to the Kensington Society, and works with this body, the Norland Conservation Society, the Ladbroke Association, and the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs. It has also established links with the Hammersmith Society and the White City Forum, in LBHF.

The St Helens Residents Association deals with all issues affecting quality of life and the local environment such as local policing, local history, health services, planting of trees and social events such as the St Helen's Festival. The Association would continue as a separate entity to the proposed Neighbourhood Forum, and the social and community aspects of its work would continue unchanged.

In recent years, the main focus of the Association has been on planning issues. This reflects the series of major developments planned and proposed, in the area (new Academy, potential Kensal Rise Crossrail station and HS2 terminal) and in the White City Opportunity Area (Imperial West, Helical Bar, and Westfield 2). Woodlands Area Residents is a smaller and less formalised association, which has been working closely with SHRA in responding to the series of development proposals along Wood Lane.

In applying for the designation of a new Neighbourhood Forum, both these bodies are agreed in proposing an area that extends beyond the current SHRA boundary, for the reasons set out in the first part of this application.

The intention is that the Association's present management committee of 12 members, along with the chair of Woodlands Area Residents, would form the initial governance body for the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum (up until an AGM in November 2012 at which elections for a new merged management committee and set of officers for the Forum would be held).

The 260 present members of SHRA would become members of the new Forum, along with members of Woodlands Area Residents. The newly constituted joint body would then invite all members of the wider area to participate in the new Forum. Local ward councillors in Notting Barns and St Charles wards (RBKC) and in Old Oak and College Park ward (LBHF) would also be invited to join.

Local ward councillors in both boroughs have been consulted on, and support this application.

The St Helens Residents Association currently holds three open public meetings a year (at which attendance has exceeded 100 on occasions). RBKC Local ward councillors also attend these open meetings.

The St Helens Residents Association charges no membership fee, and has relied to date on voluntary contributions from members and some small one-off grants from RBKC (e.g. the Ward Fund). The Association's management committee has some capacity in terms of planning, sustainability, public law, and architectural expertise, and would be looking for the new Forum to be

able to supplement this (ideally with modest financial support from both councils) for the purpose of developing a Neighbourhood Plan. Contributions to the neighbourhood planning exercise will also be sought from local businesses

Proposed constitution for Neighbourhood Forum

A proposed constitution for the Neighbourhood Forum forms part of this application (separate attachment). This is broadly based on the existing SHRA constitution while differing in four respects:

- Narrows the remit, in focusing on the neighbourhood planning process as the means of improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing in the area.
- Widens membership to those working, as well as living in the area, in accordance with requirements of the Act and Regulations
- Extends membership to ward councillors of the relevant local authority wards
- Defines a new geographic area for the Forum, as per the enclosed map

Contact details

St Helens Residents Association, as follows:

Chair Henry Peterson, 95 Highlever Road, W106PW 0207 460 1743

Vice-chair Ruth Hillary, 69 Wallingford Avenue, W10

Email: sthelensassn@aol.com

The Association operates two websites at www.sthelensresidents.org.uk and an older site at www.casweb.org/shra/ from which archives are being migrated.

Woodlands Area Residents is a group of residents in the Eynham Road area convened by Dr William Cooper, which can be contacted at william.cooper@woodlandsarearesidents.org

Main contact point for proposed St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Henry Peterson, 95 Highlever Road, W106PW 0207 460 1743

Email sthelensassn@aol.com