

The Fitzrovia News

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Plan to merge Soho and Fitzrovia primary schools

Soho Parish primary school might close and be merged with All Souls primary and join it at Foley Street in Fitzrovia, according to a leaked document that reveals the move could be underway as early as next April, *writes Ben Lynch, Local Democracy Reporter.*

A draft proposal shared with the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) details how All Souls and Soho Parish primary schools are to potentially be combined due to falling pupil numbers.

Soho Parish on Great Windmill Street has seen a significant drop, recording just 81 pupils on the roll as of April, leaving 94 places vacant.

If approved by governors a public consultation is to be launched in early June, with the proposed new school to open on the current All Souls site in April 2027.

Westminster schools are facing particularly acute financial challenges as a result of falling pupil intakes.

Fewer pupils means less Government funding, with Soho Parish among those raising the alarm regarding their future sustainability.

In the report it is revealed that Soho Parish's pupil roll is expected to have reduced further by September, when it is projected to record 107 vacant places.

All Souls is reported as having more stable numbers though still has unfilled places.

A source has however described the

proposal as representing a “done deal” agreed behind closed doors.

They said: “The proposed school amalgamation strategy currently being fast-tracked across specific central London sites is not a response to an inevitable demographic crisis — it is the result of deliberate financial engineering.

“Historically, these communities have successfully weathered periods of low enrolment — including the 1980s when class sizes dropped down to single digits — without their future ever being questioned. These schools remain robust, entirely viable, and vital cornerstones of the community.”

Concept for hotel-led development on BT Tower site unveiled

Early designs for the transformation of London's iconic BT Tower into a hotel with a new public square have been revealed, *writes Josef Steen, Local Democracy Reporter.*

After purchasing the site for £275mn in 2024, US hospitality giant MCR Hotels has begun consulting the public on its early plans to revamp the Grade II listed building into a “vibrant hotel that celebrates the landmark's place in history”.

MCR plans to submit a full application to Camden Council in September. The “heritage sensitive” redevelopment, led by Orms Architects, will include a restoration of the tower while granting public access to the site for the first time in nearly half a century, the company said.

The designs feature a publicly accessible square beside the hotel's reception along with spaces for retail and food outlets, plus pedestrian walkways allowing visitors to stand at the tower's base for the “first time ever”.

Above the square, the restored “podium” building will house hotel bedrooms and a rooftop swimming pool, and hotel rooms will be built inside the tower's shaft itself, known as “The Stick”.

The developer proposes to restore the observation deck to offer the public “spectacular, 360-degree, panoramic views of London that it has been missing for nearly 50 years”.

No housing has been included in the

design despite Camden's Local Plan having a policy to include new self-contained homes — including affordable homes — on developments where there is a significant increase in commercial floorspace.

Any increase in commercial activity on the site will put pressure on surrounding streets which were originally laid out in the mid-18th century.

Community groups in Fitzrovia will be looking carefully at the plans as revealed but will be seeking to examine the detail of the proposals ahead of a decision by Camden Council to ensure that public benefit is maximised.

Fitzrovia Arts Festival

Fitzrovia Arts Festival is on again, running from Monday 15 to Sunday 21 June.

On offer is a free programme of more than 20 events — including classical music, jazz, exhibitions, poetry readings, walks and talks — taking place in many venues and spaces across the neighbourhood.

“Entering its tenth edition, the Fitzrovia Arts Festival celebrates the rich artistic past and present of London's beloved bohemian postcode,” say the organisers.

Fitzrovia Fete

Fitzrovia Fete will take place from 1pm to 5pm on Sunday 9 August — if you want to have a stall or provide an activity, or are able to offer sponsorship, please contact Lucia at artdevelopment@fitzroviacommunitycentre.org to get involved.

Plan to demolish building crafts college for luxury apartments at Great Titchfield Street

More noise and disruption from demolition and building work could be heading for the northern end of Fitzrovia West if plans for the redevelopment of a

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college to deliver luxury apartments get the go ahead, writes *Linus Rees*.

The Building Crafts College has been at 153 Great Titchfield Street since 1893, when as the Trades Training Schools it took over the West London School of Art building which had been constructed in 1879.

During the Second World War, over 3,000 servicemen were trained as carpenters, blacksmiths and sheet-metal workers at the site. After the war it trained apprentices for the construction industry and was known as the Building Crafts Training School.

The current three-storey building was constructed in 1970, and a stone laid in 1969 commemorates the rebuilding of the school for the Worshipful Company of Carpenters.

The College vacated the building in 2001 and moved to larger premises in Stratford, East London. From 2003 it was used as an educational branch of art dealers Christies. Currently the building is part of Regent College London who plan to move to another site.

Plans are now being put forward for 22 apartments on the site complete with a reception on the ground floor in a building rising eight storeys above ground level and higher than the buildings either side.

The homes will be well beyond the reach of the average building crafts worker and no social housing or other “affordable” accommodation is being considered for the site.

News in brief

Fitzrovia is again a district for the **London Festival of Architecture**, with more than 20 events across the neighbourhood throughout June.

At the first full **Camden Council** meeting post-election, **Cllr Sagal Abdi-Wali** (Labour, Camden Square) officially became the leader of the council, making history as the first Black woman to do so.

Cllr Paul Swaddle (Conservative, Regent's Park) is now the new leader of **Westminster City Council**.

Rachel Blake, MP for Cities of London and Westminster, has been appointed as a government minister as part of a small reshuffle triggered by the resignation of health secretary Wes Streeting.

A small **community of homeless people** who sleep in tents under the colonnade of a furniture shop on **Tottenham Court Road** have been told they are no longer welcome to spend the night there.

Planning applications

Camden Council registered 30 new planning applications in Bloomsbury ward, which includes Fitzrovia East, during May 2026..

See: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk

Westminster Council validated 18 planning applications in Fitzrovia West, during May 2026.

See: idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

Licensing applications

Inkd Ltd has applied to Westminster Council for a new premises licence for the basement and ground floor at **85 Great Portland Street** in Fitzrovia West.

Permission is sought for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises from 10am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday, and from 8am to 7pm from Monday to Friday. Deadline: 10 June.

See: idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

Advice for responding

Residents should check Camden and Westminster's websites for the latest.

In Westminster residents can contact licensingadvice.org for free advice, and should also email the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association fna@fitzrovia.org.uk

In Camden email the Charlotte Street Association at csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk where you can also seek advice.

It is also a good idea to contact your ward councillors well before the closing dates with your concerns about any planning or licensing applications.

This news-sheet is produced usually four times or more a year and is available from outside Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street. More news, features and comment on our website: fitzrovia.com
Subscribe to our free email newsletter: fitzrovia.com

Free housing and welfare advice for residents

The Fitzrovia Advice Service, run by Fitzrovia Community Centre, is able to help residents with private and social housing problems, housing and council tax benefits, disability benefits, Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance, pensions and Pension Credit, Working and Child Tax Credits, fuel poverty; and help with benefit, passport and other forms.

Advice is available to Camden and Westminster residents by telephone, email and in person, for speakers of English, Bengali, Sylheti, Urdu and Hindi. Telephone: 020 3984 6364.

Cost of living support

Camden has help at camden.gov.uk/find-support-in-camden
Westminster has help at westminster.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

Neighbourhood listings

Covid-19 vaccine information is available from Camden and Westminster councils. See Camden.gov.uk and Westminster.gov.uk

Local councillors serving Fitzrovia on the **Camden** side are: Lilac Carr, Sabrina Francis, and Adam Harrison; telephone: 020 7974 2792. On the **Westminster** side they are: Elizabeth Amos, Tim Barnes, and Paul Fisher; telephone: 020 7641 5377.

Fitzrovia Community Centre has activities available, and a community garden. fitzroviacommunitycentre.org
Visit 2 Foley Street, call 020 7580 8680.
All Souls C of E Primary School, Foley Street takes children from ages 3 to 11. See allsoulsprimary.co.uk for more.

Fitzrovia Youth in Action is a local charity for young people. See fya.org.uk or call at Basement 66-68 Warren Street or call 020 7388 7399.

Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia 54A Whitfield Street. More information at rainbowangels.co.uk

Little Raccoons Day Nursery, Holcroft Court, Carburton Street, Fitzrovia, London W1W 5AL. littleraccoons.co.uk
Age UK provides services for people over 50 years old. In Camden call 020 7239 0400 or visit ageuk.org.uk/camden; in Westminster call 020 3004 5610 or visit ageuk.org.uk/westminster

American International Church offers services including a soup kitchen for the homeless and those in need. See amchurch.co.uk, call 020 7580 2791, or visit 79A Tottenham Court Road.