

Mount Pleasant Forum

Email: mountpleasant@email.com
twitter: @MtPleasantForum
website: mountpleasantforum.wordpress.com

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Re: Royal Mail Group and Mount Pleasant

Dear Mayor Boris Johnson,

Following your decision to call in the Royal Mail Group's (RMG) planning applications for Mount Pleasant, we would like to invite you to join us in a bracing walk around the site to bring the proposals to life, explain our concerns and suggest some considered alternatives.

The Mount Pleasant Forum (MPF) is a community resource group established over 18 months ago with a broad-based mandate to promote wider stakeholder participation in the debate about RMG's proposals. The future of what was then publicly owned land aroused strong feelings amongst residents of five distinct communities. Their genuine desire is to ensure that any development will mend, not further damage, this gaping hole in the fabric of our capital. But we have not been heard and people have been angered by the token consultation – reminiscent of the 1960s – that RMG has pursued. This is not 'localism.'

In response, we have worked with limited resources but considerable support to disseminate information and hold open meetings at which councillors, planners and industry professionals have helped us understand the proposals. The RMG has refused every invitation.

Profound concerns about the urban design quality of this exclusive fortress-like scheme and the economic and social offer run counter to the unprecedented opportunity to heal scars that run as deep as the River Fleet, a dominant and formative historic element of the site that has been left out of the plan. Turning The Garden round by 90 degrees would align it with the Fleet Valley. This in turn unlocks the site's potential and can resolve significant changes at the site's boundaries that are currently ignored, not least a forthcoming co-educational community secondary school.

Centuries of neglect and ruthless Victorian 'improvements' have caused London to turn its back on what was once a 'sweet water' valley. Rather than resolve these problems, this scheme continues this damaging trend. Dickens had Mount Pleasant in mind when writing *Oliver Twist*; it would be a damning indictment on us all if we allowed the scheme to blight the future.

You announced last week that you will now "consider the planning issues and address the concerns expressed by the boroughs and local residents." In the interests of speeding up the search for this missing piece of the intricate urban jigsaw that extends from Kings Cross to the Thames, we welcome you to Mount Pleasant. To date, no actual developer has emerged suggesting to us that this proposal is simply a stalking horse for a future bid. So there is more than enough time for bold decisions that embrace the interests of the local communities **and** our beloved capital, as well as RMG shareholders. Together, let us build a scheme we can all be proud of.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Denison

Secretary to the Forum