

# Design and Access Statement

## Bloomsbury Farmers Market Amendment 2016

### SITE DESCRIPTION:

Bloomsbury Farmers Market takes place in Torrington Square every Thursday 9am – 2pm. Torrington Square is at the centre of the academic community in Bloomsbury and is privately owned by the University of London who use the square for other special events at different times of the year. The site is an open area with no buildings surrounded by trees. The northern end of the site is made up of a raised concrete terrace above a heating chamber which borders the recently refurbished Byng Place. The majority of the site is a gravel surface with some area laid to lawn. To the west of the site lies the University of London Student central building, to the east academic residential accommodation and to the south Senate House.

### SITE PROPOSAL

We have operated the market on site with full planning permission since October 2011 ref. 2011/5561/P. We seek a non material amendment to the existing permission to permit 35 stalls to trade at the market. This increase in stall numbers from 30 would be achieved without changing or increasing the site area of the market as there is space within the current permitted area to comfortably fit 35 stalls. Our initial application did not anticipate the success of the market or the demand during lunchtime so we did not foresee demand above 30 stalls. The past four years have demonstrated to the Council that the market can be operated professionally without any negative impact on the local community.

### CONSULTEES

Planning Department – email discussions with Neil Macdonald

Landowners- University of London and Bedford Estates; both aware of the application to expand stall numbers within the existing market area.

### SITE HISTORY

The site is currently used as a private, pedestrian square with public access for 6 days a week. The site is located at the heart of academic Bloomsbury where there is a shortage of fresh food outlets. Torrington Square is usually only used as a walk through by pedestrians and sometimes as picnic spot on sunny days. Special events are held there by universities at different times of the year.

Since 2011 the square has become one of the favourite lunch spots in town with local workers, residents and students visiting the area mainly between 12 and 2pm for lunch and grocery shopping. Each year the market has grown in popularity. The weekly farmers' market supplies regional food to residents and workers in the area and in the process installs a sense of community and benefits the environment through reduced food miles and reduced car journeys to surrounding supermarkets. Around 4000 customers use the market every week.

The market only uses around 50% of Torrington Square as agreed in permission 2011/5561/P. This enables the university to use the other part of the square for any regular commitments like Fresher's Week or graduation ceremonies when marquees are installed. The weekly farmers market requires no permanent physical alterations to the site.

The farmers' market is a good example of sustainable development by having minimum impact on its surroundings. The market reduces food miles (the distance food travels from farm to plate). Project for Public Spaces June 2015

<http://www.pps.org/reference/measuring-the-impact-of-public-markets-and-farmers-markets-on-local-economies/>

NEF (New Economics Foundation) commissioned by London Food; Mayor of London and London Development Agency Trading Places: the local economic impact of street produce and farmers' markets 2005

[http://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/65304e46a1279616ad\\_9hm6b8p2i.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/nefoundation/65304e46a1279616ad_9hm6b8p2i.pdf)

The NEF document uses Marylebone Farmers' Market as a case study, as well as Ealing Farmers' Market, an LFM-operated street market.

## **SITE MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS**

### Market hours

The trading hours of the market are 9am until 2pm. The period of setup runs from 7am until 10am, and the period of closedown from 2pm until 4pm at the latest, though the majority of closedown activity is completed by 3pm.

Stallholders obtain access from LFM staff, which coordinate all vehicle movements on the site during market hours. Most of the vehicles drive on to site to unload / load using the southern side of Torrington Square. Approximately 7 parking places are made available on site for stalls to park their vehicles. A majority of the other vehicles servicing the market drive to other market locations in London after servicing the market or park in nearby car parks.

### Market layout

The market layout is designed to give maximum benefit to pedestrians. Emergency Access is possible through the market; stalls can be moved in seconds if required. If wider emergency access was required at some time in the future this could be arranged with only a weeks' notice.

There is no vehicle access to the site during market hours. Customer's access the site freely as it is an open square. Public transport to the site is excellent with direct rail and bus links only five minutes' walk away.

Market stalls on average are 3m wide and are roofed with canvas material and weighted down, and they come in a range of attractive colours. Some stalls are larger if their products and popularity demand it. The market layout is designed to give maximum benefit to pedestrians and to maintain the pedestrian routes through the market. The market is located at the Northern end of the site which compliments the new Byng Place refurbishment. Torrington Square is now a great place to meet colleagues and friends and sit on the benches etc. As Torrington Square is a very open public space customers come and go in all directions, there is no main entrance or exit.

The farmers market compliments the exiting retail in the area by offering only local produce, permitted within the rules. For local businesses that are open, recent research from the New Economics Foundation has shown that farmers markets increase sales for local businesses. This boost to the local economy has been welcomed by many businesses that have welcomed the idea of market to the area. The Council licensed coffee stall in Byng Place reported increased sales on market day. We have already been told by many customers that they now have a reason to come out of their offices at lunchtime.

Overall the appearance of the market is perceived by many to enhance and improve the existing neighbourhood, if only for a very limited amount of time. For four hours each week the square turns into a hive of local community activity. Neighbours get to meet each other and the event encourages a sense of community. By having limited trading hours we increase the chances that the local community will come together and get to know each other. The limited trading hours also protect the amenity for our neighbours in the area who could be concerned about the market starting too early or finishing too late.

The current Bloomsbury Farmers' Market is composed of between 28 and 30 stalls and in recent weeks trials have been conducted up to around 33 stalls without any adverse consequences on neighbours. The existing site area could comfortably fit in the stalls and no adverse impact was observed on surrounding streets by way of traffic congestion or parking problems. Outside of the peak academic term periods there will be slightly less stalls; around 25.

## Management and operation

A manager, working for London Farmers' Markets, is on site at all times during setup, market operation and closedown to ensure all rules are enforced and to follow any planning or council recommendations. The manager liaises with trading standards and environmental health when necessary. The manager is also a public face of the organisation and is there to assist in the event of an emergency or just to answer customer's questions. A cleaner is on site for the last 3 hours to sort refuse and clean up the site thoroughly.

Managing markets according to strict operational protocol is very important to LFM. The managers work to a method statement which covers every single operational nuance of the market. A risk assessment is also in place as well as a noise prevention plan (see attached documents).

All stalls applying to sell at the market are assessed for health and safety and quality to check they are a suitable food business (see market rules) and must agree to the markets terms and conditions. All stalls must prebook and are inspected before they sell at the market. Stall pitches are not available on the day so no casual traders are permitted. This means the manager always knows the exact number of stalls to expect. If 35 stalls are scheduled no more stalls can attend, only less through cancellation or sickness.

## Refuse management

All traders are required to use compostable or biodegradable packaging. A cleaner is contracted to pick up rubbish on site and to bag up refuse at the end of the day. The market cleaner works with the University of London's in house team. Waste is disposed of by a private contractor through the University of London

## Contractual Agreement

Any expansion will be regulated by the agreement the market has with the University of London. The market needs to be responsibly managed at all times and adheres to the terms and conditions laid down by the University.

## Transport Assessment

Transport arrangements for the market are kept under review weekly by the market manager and routinely by the markets head office. A customer shopping survey is carried out annually which tracks modes of transport used to get to market. The University are currently introducing ANPR cameras on the estate to prevent illegal parking this will free up spaces and make loading for the market even easier.

## Stallholders Vehicles: Access and parking

Stallholder's vehicles access the site from Byng Place after 7am and up to 10am. They are instructed not to set up before this time and the manager on site enforces this each week. The manager controls vehicles onto the site. In addition, a three hour set up time ensures that stalls arrive over a staggered period of around 10 vehicles per hour or less. This minimises noise and prevents congestion on roads in the area. The proposed stall expansion would add 1-2 extra vehicle movements per hour.

Most stallholders use transit sized vans, the only larger vehicle is a Luton type van used by one stallholder. The rest of the stallholders use cars or small escort type vans. Around 7 vehicles park on site as mentioned above, a majority of the remainder unload and continue on to other markets in different parts of London.

The on site manager ensures that trading stops at 2pm each week. Vehicles access the site as directed by the manager, two or three at a time. Some stall holders will trolley goods off. Most stalls clear the site very quickly; however one or two sometimes have to wait to be collected especially if their transport is caught in traffic on route from another market in London.

## Customer Modes of Transport

An amazing 84% of market customers walked to market each week the rest use public transport or cycle. None of the market customers drive there. 43% of customers are students and 45% are workers in the areas the remainder are local residents.

### **Torrington Place Cycle Lane Trial**

The introduction of the one way system in Byng Place has made access to the site more difficult but it has also reduced traffic in the immediate area making it an even more pleasant environment for customers. There is a longer access route for delivery vehicles but this has now settled down and there are no reported problems with the cycle lane trial and servicing the market although traffic does seem heavier on approach roads.

### **THE OPERATORS**

London Farmers' Markets run FARMA-certified markets in London, having set up the first farmers' market in Islington in 1999. LFM now run 22 markets across London including 3 additional markets in the London Borough of Camden.

We pride ourselves on excellent relations with local residents, local businesses and local authorities. Local people love their market, and local businesses appreciate the fact that we bring shoppers to the area.

Only farmers and producers of local food can sell at our farmers' markets. The stallholders must grow, raise or produce everything they sell. We do not permit wholesalers or middlemen. So yes, we have no bananas. That makes our markets different from most food markets in London – where much of the produce is imported.

All our farmers come from within 100 miles of the M25, many of them from within 50 miles – places like Barnet and Hertfordshire. We welcome local and community growers. Our markets have strict rules and we are here to make sure they are enforced.

We are proud of the fact that products and food producers on our markets have to adhere to very strict rules and guidelines. This means our standards and food traceability are kept high. A copy of LFM's rules for food producers is included as part of this planning application (see rules)

We only run certified farmers' markets which mean that they are independently inspected by FARMA, the Farmers' Markets and Retail Association. Produce sold comes direct from farms, nurseries, fishing boats, trout farms, game shoots and bakeries and we only sell food and plants. The market supplies regional food to local people and in the process installs a sense of community and benefits the environment through reduced food miles and reduced car journeys to surrounding supermarkets.

The market is managed by London Farmers' Markets who supply a manager that is always present on site for the duration of the market to ensure a successful market operation by carrying out the method statement. This is achieved through the following duties of the manager:

- Enforce a no arrival rule on site before 7am
- Enforces a no illegal parking policy by traders
- Enforce a quiet set up policy- no music, no shouting. (stalls making a noise can be removed from the market)
- Enforce a no trading before 9am rule (stalls found trading would be removed from market)
- Sets up market layout to provide requested access points through the market
- Enforces market rules on what can be sold
- Enforces the end of trading at 2pm
- Enforces our clean up policy so the site is left tidy and rubbish is taken away by traders