



Thursday 19 January 2017

CHARITY PETITIONS MAYOR OVER CLOSED FIRE STATION

The charity seeking to save the former Clerkenwell Fire Station has applied to City Hall to present a petition to London Mayor Sadiq Khan calling on him to re-open the public sale process so the historic building's future can be secured.

Water Incorporated has collected 1100 signatures in recent weeks on the streets around the Fire Station, notably in Exmouth Market, Chapel Market and St John Street, mostly from people who live and/or work in the Clerkenwell area.

The charity has been frustrated in all its attempts since last September to have its proposals - which embrace the local wishes from Islington Council's public consultation - considered by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA), and is now appealing directly to the London Mayor.

Trustee Peter Ulrich, who led the street team, says he was overwhelmed by the strength of local interest in the building's future. "As soon as people heard us say the words 'Clerkenwell Fire Station', they would stop or even turn back to ask what it was about.

"Once we explained, people would go and fetch friends and relatives to sign, we had market traders sending their customers over, and we heard many fascinating recollections - family members who had been firefighters at Clerkenwell, people who had played there as kids (pre- 'health and safety' era), and one long-time resident who recalled pigs being kept in the yard during the War!

"There can be no doubt that there is huge support for the Station to have a new role in the heart of the community rather than becoming another faceless block of luxury flats.

"And there is considerable anger that Clerkenwell Fire Station was closed over three years ago and still nothing has been done with it, other than reportedly spending well over £250,000 on security. The Mayor could put a stop to this waste by instructing LFEPA to re-market the Fire Station and allow us to make our formal bid."

Water Incorporated has published architectural plans which satisfy all the planning requirements and meet the community's wishes for preservation of the Grade II listed building, public access to the site, a museum celebrating the history of Clerkenwell's firefighters and the provision of new affordable homes, as well as housing the charity's planned water resources education centre. Most importantly, there will be no resale of any part of the property - no sell-off to the super rich.

END.

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