



The Review Officer (Tower Hamlets)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76-86 Turnmill Street
London
EC1M 5LG

Friday 4th January 2013

Dear Sir or Madam

Proposed Boundary Changes to the Mile End East Ward

I am writing on behalf of the East London Community Land Trust. We are a non-profit, community-owned and community-run housing provider – the first of its type in the UK – who are currently helping to redevelop the former St Clements Hospital site on the Mile End Road. We are owned and governed by over 1,000 local resident members, the vast majority most of whom reside within a 1 mile radius of the site, and it is on their behalf that I write to you.

Without wishing to go into excessive detail here about ‘Community Land Trusts’, it is fair to say that both the notions of ‘place’ and ‘community’ are at the heart of what we do, and that it is this which makes the St Clements redevelopment, which is already underway, very different to any other in the capital. (For more information about our organisation, you may find this informative piece in the Guardian useful: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/19/revolution-in-affordable-housing>)

We wish to make a small representation to you regarding your draft recommendations for the further electoral review (FER) of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, as published on 12th November 2012. Specifically, we would just like to contribute – helpfully, we hope – to your understanding of the local sense of community in the former Mile End East ward, of which we feel very much a part.

May we start by saying that you have an unenviable task! And that your initial proposals, broadly speaking, appear to be very well considered and appropriate. However, if we may, we would like to urge you to reconsider the excessive westerly extension you currently are proposing for the ‘Bromley North’ ward, which is set to run up to and include the St Clements Hospital site.

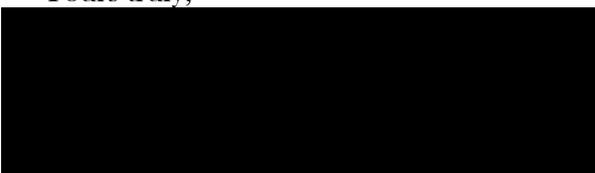
All of our work over the past five years in building up this project – which most recently involved over 350 local people from the neighbourhood drawing up plans with architects to create what we hope will become a ‘new heart for the local community’ http://www.jtp.co.uk/public/uploads/pdfs/st_clem_broadsheet_web.pdf – has been

predicated on the idea that this development will revitalise the 'Mile End' area. We have worked, over many years now, very closely with the Mile End Residents' Association (MERA), Mile End Old Town Residents' Association (MEOTRA) and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, all of whom feel united in by a certain sense of place, and are striving for the betterment of this particular area. The current proposals would clearly segregate, both in name and in representation, many of these commonly united interests. Chiefly, they would draw a line between the cemetery and the St Clements site which are set to become more interlinked once the latter is reopened, and they would divide the residents on British Street estate from the same elected representative of those on the Eric & Treby Estates, despite their both being governed by the same housing association, on which a local councillor is usually present.

Further, much of what is soon to be built on the St Clements site has been designed explicitly so as to use the site as a way of making that part of 'Mile End' a destination for people and creating a through-fall of pedestrians between the British Street Estate, Brokesley Street and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. This desire for a 'new heart to the local area' was the overriding sentiment to emerge from local people as recently as December 2012, through our community-led design workshops, and it would be a shame if this organic, clearly recognised sense locale of were to be ignored.

Whilst we appreciate that there are a very many number of factors you must consider, we would like to ask that you please address our chief concern: that few - if any - residents east of the Docklands Light Railway line feel like they live in 'Bromley North'. The local conception of 'Mile End' extends significantly further east than the current proposals allow for (although arguably not as far south and south west). The new boundary as currently proposed would, we believe, be to the detriment of the considerable amount of social cohesion which this project and others have built up in recent years, in what is an increasingly vibrant and self-defining local community.

With many thanks for your time in reading our submission,
Yours truly,



David Smith
Director
East London Community Land Trust



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