



Planning and Transportation Department
Director : Carl Powell

This matter is being dealt with by:
Ron Lavers
(Direct Line: 020 7641 7093)

Westminster District Surveyors Services

My Reference: PT/BC/RAL/RJG/SN.1240
Your reference:

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Date: 3 April 2000

Mr Roy Bailey,
Vice-Chairman,
The John Hampden Society,
The Malt House,
Great Shefford,
Berkshire, RG17 7ED

I have carefully considered the points you put forward. However, taking all the factors above into consideration, I cannot, therefore, support your suggestion to change the name of Downing Street to 'Hampden Street'.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Rt.Hon. Chris Smith MP for his information only.

Yours sincerely

RON LAVERS
HEAD OF DISTRICT SURVEYORS' SERVICE.

Dear Mr Bailey,

CHANGE IN STREET NOMENCLATURE – DOWNING STREET, LONDON, SW1

I have now looked into the correspondence which was forwarded to me on 7 March 2000 by the Rt. Hon. Chris Smith, MP in which you have suggested that the name Downing Street should be altered to 'Hampden Street' so as to commemorate the association of the street with John Hampden the Patriot.

My information is that the name 'Downing Street' is derived from Sir John Downing (1623-1684) a diplomat, who built the street, and around 1680 built a cul-de-sac of plain bricked terrace houses fit for persons of honour and quality. He sat in both parliaments called by Oliver Cromwell. Since 1732 it has been the official residence of the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Judge Advocate General's office and the Party Whips' office.

I always approach with sympathy any suggestion for marking the links of famous historical persons with the City and I know that the Council shares my attitude. At the same time my experience compels me to say that renaming of any street in the City more often than not provokes opposition, particular from the occupiers of premises in the street who, of course, suffer the inconvenience of altering their stationary and making all their correspondents acquainted with the change of address.

I have no doubt that changing the name of Downing Street will result in opposition for the same reason. Furthermore, the existing name is associated at home and abroad with the London residence of not only the political leader of the country but also the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There would in my opinion be a considerable opposition to such a change.

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