

Charlotte Street Association

39 Tottenham Street
London W1T 4RX

Development Management,
Regeneration & Planning,
London Borough of Camden,
Town Hall, Judd Street,
London WC1H 8ND.

25th March 2023

For the attention of Miriam Baptist, Planning Officer, Planning Solutions Team.

Dear Miriam Baptist,

Re: ref. 2022/5638/A: Cheatmeals, 33 Goodge Street, W1T 2PS:

Removal of existing canopy fascia sign and installation of internally illuminated fascia sign, projecting sign, and awning (retrospective).

I am writing on behalf of the Charlotte Street Association, concerning the above planning application.

Our Association wishes to object to (a). the new internally illuminated fascia sign; and (b). to the new internally illuminated projecting sign; for the reasons which are set out below.

Introduction:

It is regrettable that both these internally illuminated signs have already been installed without planning permission. From their website, it would appear that Cheatmeals already have other outlets (prior to Goodge Street) elsewhere in London, and thus, no doubt, were aware of the need to obtain planning permission before the installation of new fascia signage etc.

A local resident of Goodge Street reported the Cheatmeals' fascia signage to Camden's Planning enforcement team in October 2022, because the illumination of the signage was so bright and was affecting their flat at night time. Our understanding (from the resident) is that Camden Planning asked Cheatmeals to switch off the illumination/lighting of the signs until a planning decision had been made. But this illumination has not been turned off during this period; and is still switched on.

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Re: ref. 2022/5638/A: Cheatmeals, 33 Goodge Street, W1T 2PS - *continued:*

Applicant's drawings etc:

Although the application shows a photo of Cheatmeals' installed fascia (and shopfront) in their Planning & Heritage Statement letter (page 4), it is a pity that the applicant has not supplied a detailed drawing with notes of their proposal.

Please find **attached our Photograph**, which shows the Cheatmeals shopfront and fascia, **as lit up in the evening** - our photo shows both the new fascia sign and the new hanging sign (at right hand side)

(A). THE NEW INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA SIGN:

- (a). It needs to be appreciated that Goodge Street is in the Charlotte Street Conservation Area.
Also, the premises are next to a Listed Building (Grade II), next door at No. 35 Goodge Street. In addition, the next door shopfront at No. 35 is a Shopfront of Merit.
- (b). The large bright internally illuminated fascia signage is not appropriate to the Conservation Area, as well as to the setting of the Listed Building next door at No. 35. Internally-illuminated signage is not normally acceptable in a Conservation Area. The scale & proportions of the fascia board (its height from top to bottom) and the scale of the actual lettering are too large, and thus we think that they do not respect, preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. They especially do not respect the character and setting of the Listed Building next door at no. 35 and its Shopfront of Merit.
In addition, the Cheatmeals fascia board is extended up above the cornice line; and is thus hiding the stone window cills at First Floor level – this is unacceptable because it is not giving due respect to the existing architectural character of this existing terraced building in the conservation area.
By comparison, the fascia board next door at No. 35 is relatively narrow in height (top to bottom), of timber material, and with painted lettering; and is well below the First Floor window cills.
- (c). At a practical level, the illumination the lettering is too bright, and affects the residential flats opposite, which includes family flats with bedrooms at the front. The brightness of this signage was one of the main reasons it was reported by a local resident to Camden Planning because the brightness was affecting the flats opposite including bedrooms in the evening.

Because the letters are so “wide”, we are not convinced that even reducing the level of illumination (even to the proposed illumination level of 600cd/m²) will satisfactorily reduce the brightness, especially as the illumination is white LED-type lighting which tends to appear very bright.
- (d). Guidance in Camden's CPG “Design”; and in the Conservation Area Plan:
In order to support our objections, we would like to draw attention to Camden's policies which we think are relevant.

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Re: ref. 2022/5638/A: Cheatmeals, 33 Goodge Street, W1T 2PS - *continued*:

(1). Camden's CPG Design guidance: chapter 6 re. Shopfronts:

There is design guidance in this policy as follows:

para 6.2: *"It is important that ... alterations to existing shopfronts are sensitively designed."*

para 6.13 and 6.14:

There are a number of general principles regarding shopfront design, including:

"... should respect the character of adjacent properties." and

"Any corporate "house styles" or branding should be appropriately and sensitively adapted to respond to and fit in with the context of the building and surrounding street."

"standardised "house style" branded frontages may have to be amended in order to harmonise with the surrounding context ... particularly in a conservation area."

"Any lettering should respect the character and design of the building."

para 6.16:

Guidance on the main elements of shopfront design includes guidance on the design of Fascias, as follows:

"... should be of suitable size and proportion to the building."

"...Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront."

Main fascias should not project above ... the cornice level, obscuring upper floor windows."

(2). Camden's Charlotte Street Conservation Area Plan:

The Conservation Area Plan points out that inappropriate alterations and/or replacements to existing buildings can have a detrimental impact, and gives examples which include:

overly large fascias;

inappropriate, excessive and illuminated signage.

Para 13.1: there can be "incremental deterioration". Thus need to encourage enhancement of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Para 13.3: a range of small scale changes can cumulatively have a significant impact, detrimentally.

Para 12.3: Alterations to Existing Buildings:

Alterations can have a detrimental impact either cumulatively or individually on the character and appearance of the area.

Examples include:

- overly large fascias;

- inappropriate, excessive and illuminated signage.

Para 13.22: Small scale non-residential development:

The same attention to detailed design should be applied to smaller alterations such as shopfronts, signage

These can harm the character of the area to an extent belied by their individual scale.

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Re: ref. 2022/5638/A: Cheatmeals, 33 Goodge Street, W1T 2PS - *continued*:

(B). THE NEW INTERNALLY PROJECTING SIGN:

We also wish to object to the projecting/hanging sign which has been fixed to the existing decorative console bracket, because:

- it is also very brightly lit, and is internally illuminated;
- at this location, it is likely to detrimentally affect the residential flats at First Floor level of both no. 33 and no. 35 Goodge Street, due to light through the nearby First Floor windows.

As in Camden's CPG Design Guidance (para 6.30), the projecting sign should be level with the fascia (rather than above), to help avoid the problem of light into the immediate First Floor flats.

Conclusions:

For our reasons given above, we do not agree with the applicant's Planning & Heritage Statement which says that the proposed signage & fascia are proportionate to the scale of the shopfront and that the lettering is modest; and that the signage respects the character of the building and the (Conservation) area.

No. 33 was occupied by a Japanese Restaurant "Yoi Sho" for many years. We do not know the planning history of its large canopy; and it is not clear what the size of its fascia board was under the canopy. Nonetheless, we would agree that its size would not be appropriate now in the Conservation Area.

Also, we appreciate that there are some other internally illuminated signs in Goodge Street; although generally they are not bright, and their lettering is generally much thinner than the proposed Cheatmeals lettering and thus are not bright.

We do not think that this is a reason for allowing the proposed Cheatmeals signage and the size of the large fascia board.

Instead, the proposals should be assessed on the current policies and guidance in Camden's SPG for Design (chapter 6: Shopfronts) and in the Charlotte Street Conservation Area Plan, which we have referred to above in our letter.

We would suggest that consideration be given to:

- (a). a fascia board that is smaller (in height, top to bottom) so that the First Floor window cills are not hidden, and more in keeping with the fascia of the Listed Building next door at No. 35;
- (b). signage/lettering that is not **internally** illuminated, but is **externally** lit.
- (c). the corporate "house style" of the Cheatmeals lettering is adapted so that it is smaller in scale and is more appropriate to the setting of the Listed Building next door and is more appropriate to the Conservation Area; and is not internally illuminated.

Unfortunately, Goodge Street appears to have become somewhat run down in recent years. Thus, as encouraged in the Conservation Plan, it is important that inappropriate signage is not allowed, and that applicants are encouraged to follow the guidance in the CPG and Conservation Area Plan – as the way to help revive the look of Goodge Street.

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CHARLOTTE STREET ASSOCIATION

25th March 2023: Page 5

Re: ref. 2022/5638/A: Cheatmeals, 33 Goodge Street, W1T 2PS - *continued*:

For the above reasons, we would ask that this application is refused.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Henderson,

On behalf of Charlotte Street Association.

Attached: Our Photograph of Cheatmeals shopfront & signage at 33 Goodge Street
(taken in evening).

