

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2023/2472/L	Covent Garden Community Association (Elizabeth Bax, Chair of Planning Subcommittee)	18/07/2023 23:58:08	COMNOT	<p>As the amenity society for the area, Covent Garden Community Association must object to this application in its current form.</p> <p>However, if the application were modified in these respects, we would withdraw our objection:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ordering point removed from the frontage and replaced with alternative arrangements (inside the building and/or mobile app based) to eliminate congestion from customers queuing on the narrow pavement. 2. Hours of use of the unit, and hours of use of air handling equipment, limited to 08:00 – 22:00 hours Monday to Saturday, and 09:00 to 21:00 on Sundays. 3. Hours of deliveries and servicing limited to 08:00 – 20:00 hours Monday to Saturday, except for any Camden waste collections. <p>We have spoken with, and corresponded with, the applicant. He is content with the suggested hours in points 2 and 3, above, and is consulting with his team to seek a solution to the problems outlined in point 1. We are submitting this objection as a set of holding comments, pending any revision submitted by the applicant.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>CONTEXT</p> <p>This unit is at the East end of Earlham Street, near the busy junction with Neal Street. Both streets carry low levels of vehicular traffic, but very high volumes of pedestrian traffic. On afternoons, in good weather, the pavements are truly heaving with people. Many of these are families with children in pushchairs. There are also many elderly and/or disabled people passing this unit, fairly unstable with walking aids or using mobility scooters.</p> <p>The pavement outside this unit is 1.9 metres wide at its widest point. In front of the window there is a bicycle rack which reduces the width to 1.7 metres when no bicycles are present. When bicycles are present this width can reduce below 1.4 metres.</p> <p>The area is highly residential, with 8 flats very close by at 31 and 40 Earlham Street, over 100 flats at Odhams Walk around the corner, and more along Neal Street. Earlham Street has tall buildings on either side so, after the area has quietened down at night, any sound echoes and acts as a noise peak that disturbs people. The area quietens down after the theatres close, from about 10pm.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>FRONTAGE</p> <p>The applicant's initial drawings that accompanied his application show the current flush window replaced with a shuttered hatch that is designed to swing open and reveal a screen that customers would use to make orders while they stand on the pavement.</p>

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As explained above, the pavement here already has less than the width required by, for example, Camden's Tables & Chairs guidance (1.8m) or TfL's pedestrian comfort guidance (2.0m) for locations with moderate pedestrian flow. It is even more challenging here because of the very high pedestrian flow.

The presence of customers at the window would reduce the width even further and create serious obstruction on the pavement. Also, the applicant has told us that he has large queues at his existing branches in Borough and Spitalfields markets, and he is likely to have the same here. So there will not just be one or two people standing on the pavement making an order, but many people all along the pavement.

We hope that the business will thrive in Seven Dials, but in order to do so without causing a problem, the pavement has to be left clear. We ask you to require the applicant to amend the application so that the ordering point is removed from the frontage and replaced with alternative arrangements to eliminate congestion from customers queuing on the narrow pavement. This could involve an ordering point inside the building and/or a mobile phone app with a Click & Collect arrangement, for example.

From a conservation point of view, we do not object to the installation of a wooden shuttered window in the place of the current window. The former could be designed to have more sympathy with the listed building. It would be appropriate to reflect the pattern of the attractive, shuttered wooden frontages on 36-38 Earham Street.

We await clarification on the colours suggested for painting the frontage. We would, however, prefer that the frontage was returned to its state of clean brickwork as recommended in the Seven Dials Study planning policy document where it is remarked that "Most regrettably, some several bays of the London Stock brickwork at ground floor level have been overpainted in black and in red and one bay (no. 50A) between, in light grey" - see the section on this building, at: <https://sevendialsoventgarden.study/43-earham-street-2/>.

HOURS

If a change of use is granted then the unit could be used to serve food at any time. If this activity were to continue beyond the hours when the area quiets down in the evening, then it would harm neighbouring amenity.

The applicant does not require late hours for the operation of his business, but a future tenant might want to operate much later. To protect neighbouring amenity in the future we therefore ask that the hours of use be limited to 08:00 – 22:00 hours Monday to Saturday, and 09:00 to 21:00 on Sundays. The applicant has indicated to us that he is content with this.

Air handling equipment, such as the kitchen extraction, can cause similar problems if left on at night. To protect neighbouring amenity we therefore ask that the hours of use of any air handling equipment be limited the hours at which the unit is open, if necessary via the use of a timer switch. The applicant has indicated to us that he is content with this.

Deliveries and servicing also harm neighbouring amenity if carried out at antisocial hours. We therefore ask

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that they are limited to 08:00 – 20:00 hours Monday to Saturday, except for any Camden waste collections which are in the area anyway. The applicant has indicated to us that he is content with this.

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