

Monmouth Planning Ltd

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London WC2H 9EP
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Our ref: LP/20Endell

Camden Council
Planning Department
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

8th August 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Regularising of the shopfront
20 Endell Street, London, WC2H 9BD

Planning portal ref- PP-12375269

On behalf of our client, Baudry & Greene, we write in support of the application submitted via the planning portal for the retention of the shopfront.

To assist the Council in the consideration of this application we enclose with this letter the following documents:

- Application form
- Certificates
- Site location plan
- Existing and Proposed plans/ elevations and sections
- CIL Form

The planning application fee has been paid separately online via the planning portal.

The site

The application site is a five-storey property located on the corner of Endell Street and Betterton Street within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and Central Area. The property is not listed but does adjoin (33 Betterton Street) and is adjacent to (22 Betterton Street) listed buildings.

The ground floor is in Class E use. The street is mixed in nature with predominately commercial on the ground floors and residential above. Endell Street also has an interesting architectural diversity.

VAT REGISTRATION NUMBER: 203 0372 68

The existing shopfront currently detracts from the building and the local area. Part of the shopfront faces Endell Street, a wide shopping street, however the other part faces Betterton Street which has a very short stretch of commercial parade and as such the current openable element on this part (which replaces the existing opening) enhances the functionality and operation of the shopfront by supporting the business takeaway service through the creation of a takeaway bar and serves the existing outdoor seating area.

Relevant Planning History

There is limited available planning history online for the site.

A pavement license was recently granted for tables and chairs- 2023/1587/PVL.

Proposal

The previous shopfront was of modern design and rather drab. It was not in keeping with the building and contrasted with the other shopfront's in the local area. The materials such as metal shutters are not consistent with the age of the building and detracts from the building and adjoining listed buildings. Overall, the result was a discordant appearance to the shopfront that appears incongruous within the street scene.

The proposal is for the retention of the partially openable serving hatch and to regularise the current shopfront. Whilst the replacement shopfront has resulted in more openable elements, the proportion of solid-to-glazing on the shopfront remains the same (and is similar to other local shopfronts) and furthermore, although the side-facing doorway has been transformed into a serving hatch, this provides further interest to the ground floor façade and brings activity to the shop's frontage. The replacement shopfront is therefore considered to maintain and enhance the distinctive character and appearance of the local area.

Access

Access to the unit will remain as existing from Endell Street.

Planning Policy Considerations

The openable element represents an opportunity to improve the operation and functionality of the ground floor operation within Class E of the use class order. The part openable shopfront is significantly more inviting and engaging than the existing fixed shopfront and shutters and will add to the visitor experience within the local area and will add to the vitality and vibrancy of the street.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the need for commercial premises to provide adequate ventilation and openable windows. The Government scientists have confirmed that opening windows dramatically cuts the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted inside buildings. The guidance advises on businesses to identify any poorly ventilated spaces and advises on taking steps to improve fresh air flow in these spaces. Whilst the pandemic is luckily now behind us, Covid still exists, and this is a preventative measure for any future possible issues.

Design and Heritage

As the application site is located on a corner and at the end of a very small parade of shops on Betterton Street, it is not a visually prominent part of the street scene. The area is generally characterised more by 20th century architecture and as such it is considered there is less of a need to ensure that development responds to local distinctiveness and instead focuses on ensuring high design standards within itself.

The shopfront retains some of the existing traditional features including a fixed stall riser. Generally, only the serving hatch will be open and, in this instance, only a small section of the shopfront will be openable. Given the large scale of the shop unit and the fact that the majority of the existing shopfront windows are likely to be closed, this proposal would have little impact on the character and appearance to this building and will not affect the setting of Seven Dials Conservation Area.

The replacement shopfront features are little different to local units along Endell Street and is considered to be an acceptable contemporary reworking of the shopfront, as such, the proposed development is in general accordance with policies D1, D2 and D3 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 and the Design CPG. The proposed development also accords with the London Plan 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Protection of Amenity

The unit has recently been refurbished to provide for a Class E use.

The unit as current already benefits from a license for table and chairs to be positioned outside the property in associated with the sale and consumption of food and drink. Other commercial units along Endell Street also have outdoor seating areas open late into the evening. It is not considered the noise created by the openable windows will materially differ from the levels of background noise that already exists on this street.

The applicant will try to manage any queues by trying to adhere to only 5 persons waiting on the pavement at any one time to try and manage any congestion, however it is not considered to be a very busy junction, and the pavement is wide allowing for people to pass by with ease. There are no tables and chairs directly outside the serving hatch to create space for customers to wait outside without causing obstruction.

Due to the proposed openings of the windows being very minimal the scheme will not harm local amenity in terms of noise from the partially openable shopfront. It must, however, be recognised that the site is within the heart of London and given its position in a central position it plays a pivotal role in adding to the vitality and vibrancy of the surrounding area and enjoyment for pedestrians experiencing the area.

In amenity terms, there will be no increase in noise above the surrounding background noise level as a result of the proposal. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable against Camden's design and noise criteria. In particular policies A1 and A4 of the CLP.

Conclusion

This application represents an opportunity to significantly enhance and upgrade the previous shopfront. It seeks planning permission to utilise and retain the existing openable shopfront to maximise the unit's potential.

We trust you have all the information required to determine the proposal, however, should you require anything further or wish to discuss any of the enclosures please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully

Lucy Pitham

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