

Heritage Statement



BYREDO
25 Monmouth Street
London
WC2H 9DD

1 of 1

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement supports the application for Full Planning Permission for the alteration of the Shopfronts facing Monmouth Street and Neal's Yard.

This report has been prepared on behalf of Byredo who have appointed Gregori Chiarotti Projects to obtain the relevant statutory approvals.

This Heritage Statement forms part of the package of documents prepared to support this application and should be read in conjunction with the supporting drawings provided with the submission.

2. Site

The building is located in the Seven Dials Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden. It is not a listed building.

25 Monmouth Street is a four-story building, including a fourth-floor mansard, and two bays in width with a brick stock brick façade and rear elevation. Basement and Ground floor are designated for commercial activities and upper levels are residential.

It sits on the north-east side of Monmouth Street with access to both Monmouth St. to the west and Neal's Yard to the east.

The commercial property has never been changed since the early 1980's so the shopfront has remained mostly unaltered since then.

Both façades have a single stepped access that will remain unaltered with the new proposal.

Monmouth Street Façade is currently a timber façade colored in blue with a single entrance to the store. It has a backlit logo on the wooden fascia. Quite a large section of the top part of the shopwindow is blocked off by a metal plate and an external shutter box. On the north side of the façade there is quite a large top lit projecting sign. Since the store does not have access to the rooftop to provide refresh air to the unit the façade has small anti-aesthetical grills on the windows and timber stall riser.

Neal's Yard façade is currently a timber façade on no particular historical value colored in blue with a single entrance. There is a large roller shutter box that occupies the entire width of the building and to which a back lit logo is fixed. There is another access door on this façade that allows access to the residential properties above the store.

3. Proposal

The application proposes to alter the n. 2 shopfront façades of the store located on the ground floor of the building.

Monmouth Street Façade:

The existing external roller shutter, shutter guides and the metal plate above it will be removed in order to bring the entire shopwindow back to view. One-quarter of its height will no longer be hidden behind the roller shutter and metal plate. The timber frame will remain unaltered and will be painted a light grey color which is much more in tone with the colors of the surrounding properties. The gold coloured back lit fascia logo will be replaced with a matt black back lit logo. The big 650 x 800 mm top lit projecting sign will be replaced with a smaller 400 x 400 mm more elegant projecting sign with a single black back-lit letter on a light grey aluminum base. Since the shop does not have access to the roof area for supply and return air for the AC system, we have no other choice than to have return and supply air at the façade. We will remove the anti-aesthetical grills that there are currently on the shopfront and replace them with a wooden louvre painted the same color as the façade above the entrance door and n. 2 decorative metal grills will be installed in the decorative frames of the timber stall riser. There are many examples of these type of air supply and extract solutions on the facades all along Monmouth Street and in the Seven Dials Conservation area.

Neal's Yard Façade:

The existing external roller shutter, shutter guides and timber shopfront will be removed. New timber fascia will be installed on the storefront line similar to the fascia on the Monmouth St. façade. The timber fascia will have the same height as the current shutter box in order to maintain the current façade proportions. The gold coloured back lit fascia logo will be replaced with a matt black back lit logo. The existing timber shopfront will be removed and replaced with timber frame folding/sliding glazed doors. There are numerous examples of other stores facing Neils Yard that have this type of shopfront with traditional timber fascia and folding timber doors. See photorender drawing 2310-5000 here attached showing neighboring properties with this type of shopfront. The entire shopfront will be painted light grey.

No structural alterations are requested in this proposal.

4. Historical Information and Planning History

10th century: the area north of the Strand and south of Holborn had become part of the

Westminster Abbey estates.

11th century: land to the west of Drury Lane was used as a garden for the Abbey while the area around the Seven Dials was owned by The Hospital of St Giles, a leper hospital founded in 1117.

In 1537 the land was taken over by Henry VIII and let on a series of leases.

The distinct layout around the Seven Dials is the legacy of an ambitious building plan devised by Thomas Neale at the end of the 17th century. The plan was unique, the only one of the 17th and 18th century developments in the West End which departs from a grid plan. A radiating plan of streets was formed around a small central polygonal circus with a Doric column at the centre surmounted by sundials. The column was removed in 1773 probably by order of the Paving Commissioners to rid the area of the undesirables who congregated around it. The column was later re-erected on Weybridge Green. A replica of the column was erected in 1989 by the Seven Dials Monument Charity and unveiled by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

West Street and Tower Street on the western side of the Conservation Area were laid out in the early 17th century before the Thomas Neale plan, and had to be incorporated into the radiating street plan.

The Thomas Neale development created domestic terraced buildings, some of which have survived. Even where the original buildings have been demolished the plot width, depth and scale is still apparent. The large triangular blocks that radiate from the Seven Dials column remain a distinctive feature of the area despite 200 years of urban development. Thomas Neale imposed building agreements on the leases he granted which specified the materials and size of the houses to be built. In addition, the Act for the rebuilding of the City of London, passed in 1667, had introduced comprehensive building regulations which began to influence the materials, heights and details of buildings.

Compressed into the same streets is the commercial development of the 18th and 19th century, in particular the brewery industry dating from the early 18th century. Over the next century the brewery industry expanded and eventually filled the area between Long Acre and Shorts Gardens with large stock brick warehouse buildings linked by high-level cast-iron bridges causing the demolition of many of the original houses, for example on the south side of Shorts Gardens between Seven Dials and Neal Street. This altered the scale and character of parts of the area, although the street layout stayed the same. The brewery industry has not functioned in the area for over 80 years, yet most of the brewery buildings have survived.

During the 19th century the character changed as the houses were divided into lodgings. Seven Dials became notorious for its links with crime and corruption.

Towards the end of the 19th century slum clearance and traffic management along the north west edge of Seven Dials by the Metropolitan Board of Works led to Shaftesbury Avenue being created in 1889 through the widening of the original Monmouth Street.

Monmouth Street runs north to south through Seven Dials. It retains some 17th century; Nos.14,16,18,21,27,61-63, and 18th century buildings; Nos.35,37,39, 42- 50, 53-55, 57-59, 65-71. At the southern end is the Comyn Ching Triangle. The site was owned by Comyn Ching & Co (est.1723) an entirely British architectural ironmongers who retained a showroom at Nos.15-21 Shelton Street until July 1995. The 'triangle' which is bounded by Mercer Street, Shelton Street and Monmouth Street is a good example of the changing character and vitality of Covent Garden. The 1980s development placed Terry Farrell designed corner buildings adjacent to restored Grade II listed 17th century buildings and created a mix of residential, retail and office use. The Shelton Street frontage has a particularly good restoration of 19th century shopfronts. A public courtyard was created at the centre of the triangle, an important urban space for the area. The scheme demonstrates how modern design can successfully integrate with the historic environment. The yard has a restrained, semi-formal air with crisp Yorkstone paving, wall top benches and ornamental trees in iron grilles. This contrasts strongly with Neal's Yard.

Neal's Yard formerly King's Head Court, owes its name to Thomas Neale, who received a piece of land in 1690 from William III and created the Seven Dials area in which Neal's Yard is situated.

We could not find applications relating to 25 Monmouth street on the Camden Planning website. Probably there are applications that are previous to the date at which this information is updated on the website

5. Heritage Appraisal

The architectural and historical interest of 25 Monmouth Street shopfronts will be enhanced by the proposed scheme.

The Façade on Monmouth Street will be cleared from external roller shutter and metal plates that have been added to the original façade. The original façade will be brought back to its original status. Also, the large-scale projecting sign will be replaced with a more discreet and less imposing projecting sign. All add on un-coordinated ventilation grills will be removed and replaced with decorative grilles and louvres that are well integrated with the shopfront style and decorative value.

The facade on Neal's Yard will also be cleared on the external roller shutter that was installed in place of the old wooden fascia. Our intent is to remove the shutter and install a wooden fascia hopefully reinstating the original configuration of the façade. The introduction of folding doors in place of the current timber shopfront has the intent to create a more open and welcoming entrance from the yard and align with the neighboring properties that all have timber folding doors therefore creating a continuity with the other buildings facing the yard. The current shopfront has no particular historical or decorative value.

There is strong precedent for similar works to neighboring buildings in this area.