

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2023/3079/P	Birgit Maass	17/11/2023 11:39:36	SUPPRT	Kafi has been a lovely neighbour for several years, engaged with the community, and I support their application!
2023/3079/P	Andrew Maynard	17/11/2023 18:26:49	COMMNT	Fully support this - we need a coffee shop on Cleveland Street

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2023/3079/P	Linus Rees	19/11/2023 09:10:57	OBJ	<p>I am writing this representation on behalf of the Charlotte Street Association. The application site comes within our area of interest.</p> <p>We strongly object to this application for a change of use from launderette (Sui Generis) to coffee shop (Class E). We ask for the application to be refused to protect this site for use as a launderette which is an important community facility. There are a great number of households in the neighbourhood that do not have a washing machine and rely on laundrettes and handwashing, and there is no other nearby facility.</p> <p>There is already a good supply of coffee shops in the neighbourhood and there are a number of vacant Class E premises available.</p> <p>There are good policy reasons for refusing this application.</p> <p>Location and context</p> <p>The premises are situated in a parade of shops on the ground floor of Cleveland Court, an art deco-influenced building in the middle of a dense residential area of at least 8,000 residents on a street that borders the City of Westminster.</p> <p>The application site is within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area. Cleveland Street is a listed "neighbourhood centre" in local planning policy.</p> <p>The launderette closed in February 2022 and has remained empty ever since. Before it closed it had a steady stream of customers throughout the day, seven days a week.</p> <p>The launderette has been at 86a-88 Cleveland Street for more than 43 years, as evidenced by a photo in the London Picture Archive from 1980 shows. https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk/view-item?i=113204</p> <p>It had at least eight washing machines of various sizes, and six tumble driers. The premises was self-service and payment was made by inserting coins to a central control unit which operated the machines. The door was on a timer and was open from 6.30am to 9.30pm, seven days a week. In the mornings from Monday to Friday there was also a worker who would provide a service wash.</p> <p>In addition to serving the Camden side of Fitzrovia it would serve people on the Westminster side in Marylebone and Soho.</p> <p>The site is conveniently located just north west of the centre of the neighbourhood and within a 15 minute walk from anywhere in Fitzrovia. It was an essential destination facility attracting people into the street who would perhaps also use nearby shops and services.</p> <p>Customers would come in, load their washing into a machine and could return home to do other chores before returning 30 to 45 minutes later when the wash cycle had ended.</p> <p>It was quite a social centre where neighbours could meet each other and keep in touch and keep an eye on each other's washing while they popped out to do some shopping nearby.</p>

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There is now no other facility in the neighbourhood.

The nearest launderettes are to the north at Albany Street near the junction with Robert Street in the Regent's Park ward (after crossing the busy Euston and Marylebone Road) and to the east in Marchmont Street on the boundary with Kings Cross ward. To the west, and much farther away, there is a launderette at Crawford Street near Marylebone Station. There is no similar facility within walking distance to the south.

Once this launderette site is lost it will be very unlikely that it will be replaced elsewhere in the neighbourhood.

Planning policy

Camden's planning policy is to protect launderettes and the vitality of the surroundings they are located.

Camden Local plan (2017)

Policy C2 of the Local Plan seeks to protect launderettes as they are a "community facility"

Paragraph 4.43 of the Local Plan states that: "Community facilities are vulnerable to pressure from uses which attract higher land values and once they are lost cannot easily be replaced. The Council will normally seek the retention of community facilities.

Cleveland Street is one of three "neighbourhood centre" streets in the Camden part of Fitzrovia. Policy TC2 of the Local Plan seeks to protect these centres throughout the borough to serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors.

Camden Planning Guidance

Neighbourhood centres provide for the day-to-day needs of local people. Uses that provide a positive contribution to these streets include launderettes. (Camden Planning Guidance: Town Centres and Retail, 2021 page 47)

Community facilities refers to a wide range of social infrastructure that provides a service to the community. This includes, among other uses, launderettes. (Camden Planning Guidance: Community uses, leisure facilities and pubs, 2021, para 1.8).

The above planning guidance has three paragraphs with regard to Protecting launderettes

Para 2.17 states the importance of launderettes in meeting the day-to-day needs of local people, particularly those who do not have a washing machine at home, people living in temporary accommodation, and larger households and residents who share facilities. Launderettes support social interaction and contribute to the character, function, vitality and viability of centres (especially 'neighbourhood centres').

Para 2.18 states that where the loss of a launderette is proposed, the Council wishes to ensure that the impact on local residents is assessed, in particular the effect of the reduction in launderette facilities on the

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community. National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) states planning decisions should take into account the wellbeing of all sections of the community and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

It also notes: "As part of their assessment, the applicant should consider the presence of different population groups in the locality such as students and house/flat sharers (using census data) and evidence of transient populations."

Para 2.19 states that launderettes are considered a 'sui generis' use and despite permitted development rights allowing a change of use of launderettes to residential (Use Class C3) without the need for a full planning application, this does not apply in conservation areas.

The launderette at Cleveland Street is located in the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and therefore is protected from permitted development rights.

Fitzrovia Area Action Plan

Fitzrovia has "a significant residential community, a large number of jobs based in the area, a substantial student population and a lack of affordable homes"

At the 2001 Census the area was home to approx. 4,700 people and 28,600 jobs. More than a third of the residents in Fitzrovia live in privately rented accommodation, higher than the Camden average. A quarter of Fitzrovia residents are owner occupiers compared to more than a third of Camden residents who own their own home.

Over a quarter of Camden residents live in council rented properties, while in Fitzrovia the figure is 17%. Fitzrovia has a large student population (over 1,500 students over 18 in 2001) giving a large part of the community a transient nature. Close to 9% of all the higher education students living in Camden are Fitzrovia residents.

Fitzrovia's population (excluding students in halls and hostels) is dominated by young adults, with those aged 16-34 making up over 42% in 2001. Fitzrovia's population also has a significantly lower proportion of children than Camden generally. There is a higher proportion of homes with only one or two rooms in Fitzrovia (excluding halls, bathrooms, toilets and storage). – Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, adopted March 2014. Pages 16-17.

Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Plan

The plan states that the population of the Westminster side of the neighbourhood is about 3,848. The plan also seeks to protect community facilities.

Marketing of the site

The rateable value of the premises is £42,250. The premises is being marketed by commercial property agents for £48,000 per year. The agents' sign on the shop unit incorrectly describes the premises as "use class E" (although the online advert describes it as "sui generis"). The asking rental is much higher than the

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rateable value and it is possible that the rateable value is set at a level that is too high for a launderette use and could be successfully challenged.

No evidence has been provided that this site is being advertised to the launderette business market and the asking rent is likely unrealistic for such a use. The ground floor part of the property is only 54 square metres, with a further 43 square metres of storage in the basement.

Closing comments

The launderette site at 86a-88 Cleveland Street is the only such site in the neighbourhood and Camden's planning policies seek to preserve such important community facilities and the neighbourhood centres they are located in.

As evidenced by the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan the neighbourhood has a population that is in need of a launderette.

The applicant has provided no evidence that there is no demand for this facility. No has the owner of the site demonstrated that any effort has been made to properly market the premises to an incoming launderette business.

Finally I draw attention to the other respondents objecting to this application because of their concern that it would mean the permanent loss of this important service for local people.

For the above reasons the application should be refused.
