

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/0653/A	The Seven Dials Trust (form completed by Eric Stuart, voluntary Trustee	22/03/2024 23:00:08	OBJ	<p>I am writing on behalf of The Seven Dials Trust. The Trust works in partnership with local authorities, landowners, national agencies and local amenity groups to protect the historic fabric of Seven Dials and to promote and bring about exemplary environmental improvements in the area.</p> <p>The “Seven Dials Renaissance Study” is the key document in the work of the Trust. It provides a detailed framework for the care and enhancement of the total environment of the Seven Dials area. The first study was published in 1990. The latest revised and updated web-edition from 2023 has been extended across the borough boundary down to Long Acre in Westminster, covers an enlarged area in Camden and has been renamed “The Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study”.</p> <p>The Trust welcomes Keep Chaating to the Seven Dials area and hopes that they will be a successful and long-term addition to the area. We object, however, to certain aspects of the proposed signage. Although not listed, 63 Neal Street is a 19th century reconstruction in stock brick of the original property but retaining the 17th century scale. It is specified in Camden’s Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement as a building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Seven Dials Conservation Area and its shopfront, now occupied by Keep Chaating, is identified as a shopfront of merit. Neighbouring 61 Neal Street is a grade II listed, three-storey, late 18th-century property.</p> <p>The Trust objects to the internal illumination of the fascia sign and projecting sign. The Trust would also prefer it if the fascia sign was limited to lettering, centred rather than offset, without the logo of the projecting sign also repeated on the fascia sign next to the lettering, and if the fascia sign itself had a flat timber backing as it previously had been rather than the newly installed vertical battens. We refer the applicant to the relevant guidance contained in the Camden’s Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement and the Trust’s Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study.</p> <p>In the Conservation Area Statement, SD19 states that “shop signage should be appropriate for the Conservation Area, respecting the proportions of the shop frontages, and maintaining the division between units and reflect the plot widths of buildings. Internally illuminated box signs are unacceptable and generally signage should be non-illuminated or externally illuminated. Signage will usually consist of one fascia sign and one projecting sign. Shop signs should not normally be above ground floor level.”</p> <p>The Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study’s guidance on shopfronts (https://sevendialscoventgarden.study/specifications/shopfronts/fascia-hanging-signs/) recommends that “the lettering of signs should relate to the fascia size and be well laid out. Ideally, the letters should occupy two thirds of the space and be centred, leaving a gap above and below and at either end.” It also states that “standard internally illuminated Perspex fascias are inappropriate in a conservation area, as the day and night-time appearance will dominate the delicacy of traditional details. Indeed, any light sources must respect the historic qualities of the building without obscuring or damaging details with an overbearing design. Small fittings, brackets and cabling can allow complete concealment within the structure of a fascia sign.”</p> <p>The Trust notes that 63 Neal Street has an internally illuminated box sign at first floor level installed by the upper floor occupant. In the Trust’s “building by building” recommendation for 63 Neal Street in the Study (https://sevendialscoventgarden.study/63-neal-street/), the Trust has recommended removal of the sign at first floor level as well, although the Trust recognises that the sign at first floor level is a legacy sign that has been in place since before adoption of the Conservation Area Statement. The Trust would support the eventual</p>

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removal of the sign at first floor level and believes that the proposed additional illuminated signage at fascia level would further detract from the character of 63 Neal Street and the Conservation Area as a whole.

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2024/0653/A	Covent Garden Community Association (form completed by Amanda Rigby, Co-Chair)	23/03/2024 00:11:29	OBJNOT	<p>As the amenity society for the area, Covent Garden Community Association objects to this application.</p> <p>Our objection relates to the proposals for the internally illuminated fascia signs and the projecting blade sign on a historic frontage in the conservation area. Fascia lettering should be painted, and signs should be hung from iron brackets. Internal illumination is inappropriate.</p> <p>If the application were modified as follows, we would withdraw our objection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fascia lettering without internal illumination painted onto the wooden fascia board in a classic type-face of the sort used on the circular disc part of the fascia. - Fascia disc without internal illumination. - Sign without internal illumination, not projecting but hanging from an iron bracket. <p>We welcome creative hanging sign designs, however; these are a hallmark of the area, and have been so historically. The applicant does not yet have an established logo, but the cart icon in the current signage could be used to interesting effect in 3-D for example.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>CONTEXT</p> <p>The retail unit at 63 Neal Street lies at the heart of one of the Seven Dials conservation area, one of only 38 conservation areas (among 6,000 in England) given 'Outstanding' status in the 1970s.</p> <p>It is important that the shopfront of 63 Neal Street is conserved in a way that is sympathetic to this context. It was listed in the Conservation Area statement as a shopfront of merit, whilst the whole building was listed as one which makes a positive contribution.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>POLICY</p> <p>Planning guidance that applies here includes The Seven Dials Study produced by the Seven Dials Trust in partnership with Camden, in addition to The Seven Dials Conservation Area Guidelines and the SPG that urges signage to be use that is in keeping with the host building.</p> <p>Conservation Area Guideline states at SD19 that "signage should be appropriate for the Conservation Area, respecting the proportions of the shop frontages, and maintaining the division between units and reflect the plot widths of buildings. Internally illuminated box signs are unacceptable and generally signage should be non-illuminated or externally illuminated".</p> <p>The relevant section of The Seven Dials Study may be found at https://sevendialsc Covent Garden.study/specifications/shopfronts/fascia-hanging-signs/</p> <p>-----</p>

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HANGING SIGN

On the subject of hanging signs it is worth quoting page 29 of the Seven Dials Renaissance Study:

“A well-designed or imaginative sign suspended from a traditional iron bracket can enhance the quality of the shop front and add vitality to the street. Such signs should be related to the character and scale of the building to which they are fixed”

It is unfortunate that in the past some signs have been replaced with projecting models, in error. But this unsympathetic pattern is generally being reversed in recent years throughout Seven Dials.

A further advantage of hanging signs is that they support the council’s sustainability goals. When a shop changes hands, a sign like the ones proposed in this application must be thrown away and another one manufactured with all the resultant carbon release. Whereas a traditional wooden sign that follows the guidance can simply be repainted. Or, if it is a creative 3-dimensional sign then the bracket can still be retained.

FASCIA SIGN

On fascia signs, the Seven Dials Renaissance Study says:

“In the nineteenth century shop signs were a minor art form and Victorian Seven Dials contained several sign-painters among its resident craftsmen. The fascia should be related to the proportions of the shop front, and the materials and colours selected should be compatible with the building as a whole. The lettering of signs should relate to the fascia size and be well laid out. Ideally, the letters should occupy two thirds of the space and be centred, leaving a gap above and below and at either end. Painted lettering is always appropriate, though a range of gilded, enamel or other applied lettering can also be effective. In an area of this kind we believe that good classic type-faces are preferable to more transient ‘graphics’ but such details need to be treated on their own individual merits.”

We appreciate that businesses may have an established logo and identity. For this reason we do not wish to be overly prescriptive, but suggest that thought is given to the background colours, paint type and font size on the fascia sign to achieve a finish that is in keeping with the host building. In this case, however, the applicant is a new operator with no established branding, so it is an opportunity to create something truly in keeping with the context of the conservation area. We look forward to this, and would welcome the applicant engaging with us to generate ideas.
