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**From:** Jane Palm-Gold [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 05 May 2024 08:55  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Re: 2024/0993/P - Odeon cinema, 135 - 149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8AH

[REDACTED]

### **Objection**

Re: 2024/0993/P - Odeon cinema, 135 - 149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8AH

I wish to strongly object to the above planned development on the Covent Garden Odeon cinema site, for the following reasons:

I am a longstanding local resident and have lived in Pendrell House, overlooking New Compton Street for 21 years. I am fed up that this development has gone full circle again and the views of residents, organisations and theatres heard at the previous planning hearing in 2020 (ref. APP/X510/W/19/3243781) and the findings of the Inspector from his report from March 2021 have been completely ignored and set aside. This found that the dominant use of the site MUST be for theatre or cinema use. This time we have an even bigger hotel proposed for this site, with some 200 rooms and an afterthought of a very small capacity dinner/theatre venue, sunk way down into the basement. Let's be clear: the bulk of the building above ground will be a hotel, with its amenities for hotel guests.

Here are my objections:

- 1) This development will have a massive impact upon my life and my right to peace and enjoyment in my own home. The demolition, excavations and digging out phases will cause huge disruption to us as long-standing residents and destroy our quality of life. There will be years of unacceptable noise, dirt and dust that will be imposed on us by some unwanted and unneeded hotel. I run my business from my home and this will be greatly affected by this too. How can I meet and talk to my clients here? I will not be compensated for this. And it will go on for years.
- 2) I have a Right to Light. My flat is already massively overshadowed, and in shadow, from 151 Shaftesbury Avenue opposite me but there is the daily transit of the sun overhead to look forward to for a few hours a day until it goes over the top of our building. I value this light from the sun enormously plus important additional light coming into my property from further down New Compton Street where the current cinema is. This is much lower than the new building will be - the Odeon is less than half the proposed height. The towering height and mass (the design of the new building does not step back higher up) of this new development will cut out a great deal of light to my property. As a professional artist, I need light to do my work in my front room. Access to light is a requirement of my profession. The building will overlook many homes here and be intrusive to our privacy and the noise from hotel residents will be unacceptable to us as residents.
- 3) The Saville Theatre/Odeon cinema is a very historic theatre building, with a rich and enormously culturally important history, which would be denigrated to a hotel facility. We, in the West End, are surrounded by a huge number of hotels - another one is not needed. The Saville Theatre is a Grade II listed

historic building, with an exterior of aesthetically pleasing proportions and a famous frieze by Gilbert Bayes. This planned 'extension' to sit on top of the existing building will cause serious damage to the proportions and appearance of this fine listed building. To plonk a further six stories of ill-conceived and ill-designed floors on top of such a beautiful building is cultural vandalism and will also destroy the integrity of this listed building. There is no design to this 'extension': it does not even remotely complement the existing grandeur of the building beneath it. The proposed development also includes the extensive demolition of the listed buildings' interior too - this is completely unacceptable, as we would lose all the internal theatre features, including the stage house and the scenery systems.

The previous planning enquiry found that the dominant use of the building must be as a theatre, which in this proposed development seems an afterthought, sunk and relegated to the basement and only included because the developers thought they had to have something to satisfy Camden Council's replacement of a theatre on the site. The previous planning application included a tiny cinema onsite - this proposal is much the same, including a small dinner/theatre venue, rather than a replacement of a 1400+ seated major cultural space which was the capacity of the old and very historic Saville Theatre. I'm sure even the current Odeon cinema has a greater capacity than what the developers are planning for underneath this hotel.

4) Proposed development and St. Giles Passage: The design of the proposed 200 room hotel development is way too large for the small footprint of the Odeon cinema site. In particular, my own (and other residents living here) discussions with the architects especially about the proposed bin servicing usage (or any proposed usage) of the tiny and very narrow St. Giles Passage has been completely ignored. Cars struggle to turn into this street as it is, bin lorries certainly cannot turn down it, which would mean the dragging of hotel bins onto New Compton Street. This will result in much noise and nuisance to residents of Pendrell House, plus any rubbish and overspill refuse and detritus left on the pavements of both St. Giles Passage and New Compton Street. The servicing to the hotel daily will be intensive and this is unacceptable to long-standing residents. Furthermore, the planned set of five doors opening outwards onto this narrow street with very narrow pavements is dangerous for pedestrians, forcing them onto the street in the path of traffic, possibly coming from behind them. This street is well used by cars and vans and is (when Shaftesbury Avenue is at a standstill), a rat run for traffic. This happens regularly. I have continually pointed out to the architects that Stacey Street is a much wider thoroughfare for this purpose and bins/recycling activity is already happening there, servicing 121 Shaftesbury Avenue.

5) Damage to two conservation areas - Denmark Street and Seven Dials:

The 'design' of the 'extension' fails to respect the Grade II listed building and the many other listed buildings surrounding it, including a Grade I listed church. The proposed development is too high, too bulky and too big and would tower over two fine Conservation Areas. It would overshadow the historic, 1690's period, Seven Dials and the even older, 1680s designed and built, Denmark Street. This proposed development would dominate the landscape and destroy our important London heritage. It's proposed purpose is too intensive to be placed within these two important historic areas.

6) There will be a severe impact on my local neighbourhood. The servicing of a 10 floor hotel and restaurant will have a hugely negative impact upon the residents of New Compton Street/Stacey Street. There are over 100 flats and homes here and we already put up with a lot of congestion, especially when New Compton Street is used as a rat run, which happens all the time when Shaftesbury Avenue is at a standstill with traffic. We have many daily deliveries here too which disturb us all: I cannot imagine the impact of a new 200-room hotel and all the servicing that this will require upon our street. It is unthinkable. It will utterly change the nature of our street and the environment here. The 200 planned hotel bathrooms will, I'm sure, cause drainage problems to our strained drainage and sewers here. There would be a massive upscale impact from this hotel upon our local waste water system.

7) Impact to Pendrell House. This huge redevelopment is just 40 feet away from the corner of our block and 27 Pendrell House homes. I am extremely worried about the danger from subsidence and damage to our block which would inevitably happen from the proposed extensive excavations, the digging out and construction stage. These excavations would go down way below other adjacent building's foundations. When Central Saint Giles was built, it caused extensive damage to our roof garden and the facing fell off

parts of the Grade I St. Giles-in-the-Fields church, especially to the south-east corner of it. The boring process threatened even the nearby Shaftesbury Theatre on one occasion when the theatre was full: the balconies were shaking from the vibrations, which we all felt round here. The Central Saint Giles development was much further away from us than the Odeon site. Many people live on New Compton Street/Stacey Street: we would all have to suffer years of noise, dirt and dust from the demolishing, excavating works and construction of the new hotel. This is something I do not relish as it is extremely close to my home.

8) Route of the Crossrail/Westbound Elizabeth line tunnel. As residents of Pendrell House, we are unsure where this tunnel has been routed. The plans originally showed it would go under Pendrell House and opposite under the higher 151 Shaftesbury Avenue building. In reality, we are unsure whether this happened, as I believe some residents living here were visited by a surveyor years ago, whilst the tunnel was being bored through. He told residents that the tunnel couldn't go underneath the building opposite (151) because of the depth of the foundations. If this indeed happened, where does the tunnel go? The only place might be underneath St. Giles Passage. I heard this from other people living here who he told this to, so I'm relating here what I heard. I cannot verify this is certain but it needs checking out.

9) Underground watercourse or river. Historically there has always been much water on this site - there was an extensive marsh behind St. Giles-in-the-Fields church which ran to Thorney Island (Westminster Abbey) and another marsh, upon all of Seven Dials. Old maps show that there was something called Le Pool Close on the site of the Odeon. The water table is high here and a well/underground river has been uncovered by the developers of Denmark Street (under 4 Flitcroft Street). This is continually being pumped out which leads me to believe it is a river, as it does not appear to be running dry. Thus it is quite likely that there is a connection to other ancient water pools, wells or courses locally.

10) Enormous loss of light to the Phoenix Garden. The Phoenix Garden is a multi-award winning eco-and wildlife-friendly garden, in which nature thrives. It won the only European Garden Award in the UK in 2016. The proposed 11 floor building, more than double its present size, with this 6-storey extension, would massively overshadow this valuable community green space and the severe loss of light to it will cause serious damage to plants, especially at the southern end and up to halfway across the garden. The sun is at a lower transit across the sky to the south of the cinema in the winter months when planting is yearly undertaken. No light means no growth, loss of vitally important flowers, bees and other insects, which in turn impacts upon birdlife in the garden. The building would destroy the ecology of the garden. This garden is treasured by residents, public and office workers alike. It is a historic garden, the last of the Covent Garden Open Spaces constructed by the local community from the 1970s onwards. The proposed development would severely impact it - even destroy it.

11) Loss of the Odeon cinema. The proposed hotel would mean the loss of yet another important arts/cultural space with the seated capacity that this space currently provides, replacing it with something much smaller. The cinema is very reasonably priced and accessible, conveniently positioned and shows mainstream films within this area of the West End. It's a valuable local facility that we do not want to lose.

Please dismiss this planning application. It's far worse than even the last one.

Jane Palm-Gold,  
Pendrell House, New Compton Street