



**Historic
Buildings**

London and Middlesex Archaeological Society

For the attention of Alex Kresovic

Apps 2024/1005/L & 2024/0993/P - 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8AH –

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) promotes London's archaeology, local history, and historic buildings. The LAMAS Historic Buildings and Conservation Committee reviews planning applications relating to important historic buildings and seeks to ensure a sustainable future for vital aspects of London's built heritage.

We have serious objections to this proposal for the treatment of a Grade II listed building in three areas: the internal demolition; the external overdevelopment and the effect on local area.

The site was the Saville Theatre, built 1930-31 with one of the largest auditoria in London. Although this has been altered in the conversion to a cinema in the 1970s, many surrounding important features nonetheless remain. The proposal seeks to remove all these leaving just the façade intact. This represents a total loss of the remains of important heritage assets indicating the original purpose.

The façade shows that the building was cleverly and carefully designed to enhance the area. The proposed doubling of height with another six storeys would result in this turning into a tower block, completely losing the balance of the structure and representing a total lack of concern for the original architecture. The proposed height would also result in the over-shadowing of the only open space in the area, Phoenix Gardens, and the neighbouring churchyard of Grade I listed St Giles in the Fields.

The proposed benefits in no way justify these major losses. A previous proposal in 2017 for a lower but equally destructive project was rejected. A similarly crass scheme for piling further storeys on top of the listed hotel by Liverpool Street Station has received such a huge volume of objections from the public that the developers are currently re-considering their plans.

The committee therefore requests that Camden continues to resist this unjustified demolition and overdevelopment and refuses the applications.

Vicki Fox,
LAMAS – Historic Buildings & Conservation Committee

28 May 2024