

London Borough of Camden
Regeneration and Planning
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

11th June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

P09153 - 37A NEAL STREET, LONDON, WC2H 9PR

PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT OF EXTERNAL WINDOWS WITH DOUBLE DOORS AND NEW INTERNAL PLATFORM LIFT TO THE BASEMENT

PLANNING PORTAL REF. PP-13107104

On behalf of our client, Shaftesbury Covent Garden Limited, we write in support of a planning and listed building application for internal and external works at 37A Neal Street (also known as 22 Shorts Gardens).

This application seeks to renew previous permissions (refs. 2021/3809/P & 2021/4021/L), which are due to expire on 11th October 2024.

The following documents and supporting information have been submitted electronically online via the Planning Portal to accompany the application:

- Planning and Listed Building Application Forms – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning
- Site Location Plan – prepared by Fresson & Tee
- Existing and Proposed Drawings – prepared by Fresson & Tee
- Photographic Schedules – prepared by Fresson & Tee
- Planning and Heritage Statement (this Cover Letter) – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning

The requisite application fee of £293.00 has been paid online via the Planning Portal.

Site Location and Context

The property, 37A Neal Street, is located on the western side of Neal Street close to the junction with Shorts Gardens – the external works forming part of this application are limited to the existing windows on the side elevation fronting Shorts Gardens. The rear of the unit at ground level backs onto Thomas Neal Centre (now Seven Dials Market) and further extends internally at basement level.

The unit is currently within retail use (Class E), however previously benefited from a flexible use (ref. 2013/3942/P) for either retail (Class A1) or restaurant (Class A3) – now both falling under Class E of the amended Use Class Regulations 2020.

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The application site is located within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and is Grade II Listed.

Historic England's listed building description for 37 Neal Street and Thomas Neal's Centre states:

'37 Neal Street - Terraced house and later shop. c1695. Probably by J Stephens. Restored early C19. Multicoloured stock brick and plain stucco 1st floor sill band. Slate mansard roof with dormers. 4 storeys and basement. 2 windows. Early C19 wooden shopfront with pilasters carrying entablature with inswept frieze and projecting cornice. Shop window with shutters. House and shop doorways with fanlight and margin lights and partly glazed panelled doors (house doorway now leads into shop). Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows with original glazing bar'. Parapet. INTERIOR: not inspected.'

'Thomas Neals Centre (Craft Centre) - Includes: Nos.8-26 SHORT'S GARDENS. Warehouse, probably originally a brewery; now a crafts centre. Mid C19. Stock brick; roof not visible. 3 storeys. 19 bays to Earham Street, No.43 with splayed corner and return to Neal Street. Shorts Gardens elevation of 2 storeys. Brick band above ground floor. Segmental headed windows and doorways, those to ground floor on Earham Street elevation set in segmental headed reveals. INTERIOR: internal structure comprises brick barrel vaults supported by cast-iron columns. Nos 29-41 (odd) and Nos 8-26 (even) Shorts Gardens were listed on 10/03/88'.

The Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Appraisal (1998) describes the application site as:

'The triangle bounded by Short's Gardens, Earham Street and Neal Street was converted in 1992 to a shopping development known as Thomas Neal's. Entrances to the shops are mostly located internally to maintain the appearance of the original warehouse ground floor windows. The whole block is listed Grade II'.

As noted above, the application site and wider Thomas Neal's Centre (now Seven Dials Market) was redeveloped in 1992 to provide an extensive mixed used development. As a result, much of the interiors are modern and include large structural elements in steel and concrete. Those 'original' elements are now limited to parts of the external elevation, internal partition / structural walls and basement vaulted / barrel ceilings. The extent of the external changes since the 1992 redevelopment can be seen in the submitted historic building photographs. Specifically, the photos demonstrate the external changes to the elevation of the application site.

Relevant Planning History

Having reviewed the Council's online planning database, a variety of works have been consented over the years, largely for the alteration of internal walls and associated minor external works. Those consents deemed to be of relevance to this application are detailed below:

On 16th February 1989, planning permission was granted for 'the refurbishment alteration, extension, and change of use to provide a mixed development comprising theatre, residential, retail, restaurant and business uses' (ref. 8800273). An associated listed building consent was also issued for works to the historic building (ref. 8870111).

On 20th March 2006, listed building consent was granted for 'alterations to shopfront on Neal Street and two windows on Shorts Gardens and replacement of non-original internal staircase between ground floor and basement levels' (ref. 2006/0090/L).

On 20th March 2006, planning permission and listed building consent was granted for 'internal and external alterations involving the installation of an ATM and CCTV camera to the Shorts Gardens elevation of the retail shop (Class A1)' (ref. 2006/0091/L).

On 23rd October 2013, planning permission and listed building consent was granted for 'a change of use of basement and ground floor premises from restaurant (Class A3) to alternative use for either retail (Class A1) or restaurant (Class A3) use, and creation of a new entrance door on Shorts Gardens elevation' (ref. 2013/3942/P and 2013/4048/L).

On 6th March 2018, listed building consent was granted for 'internal works and amendment of staircase' (ref. 2017/6587/L).

On 11th October 2021, planning permission and listed building consent was granted for 'alterations to Shorts Gardens elevation consisting of formation of two entrance doors (in existing openings) (and removal of ATM) reconfiguration of ground floor internal walls and provision of lift to basement in association with creation of separate units on ground floor (37a Neal Street) and in basement' (2021/3809/P and 2021/4021/L). These are the subject of this renewal application.

On 9th February 2023, listed building and advertisement consent were granted retrospectively for 'alterations to shopfronts on Neal Street and Short's Gardens elevations, including replacement entrance door and tiled step, painting of shopfront frames and installation of new signage' (ref. 2020/5257/L and 2020/4243/A).

Application Proposal

The applicant is seeking solely to renew the proposals that were approved in October 2021, with no additional works proposed.

These proposed works comprise the creation of a new basement unit (remaining Class E), which would involve the separation of the existing unit (known as 37A Neal's Yard) spanning across the part-ground and basement floor. As part of the separation, a new entrance from Shorts Gardens would be required, alongside minor internal works to the interior floor plan at ground level and a new DDA compliant platform lift to provide level access to the basement floor. No internal works are proposed to the basement (accept those associated with the new lift).

In summary, this application seeks the following works:

External:

- Replacement of existing modern retail window and boarded up opening with two traditional timber doors (with glazing bars).

Internal:

- Creation of new entrance at ground floor (to basement unit) – this would involve the removal of the existing modern enclosure and part internal wall to create an enlarged entrance area. All walls are of modern construction.
- Installation of new DDA compliant lift – this will involve a new opening in the modern basement-ground soffit / floor to allow for a new platform lift to be positioned in the middle of the stairs. None of the existing brick arches at basement level will be impacted by the works.

For further information, please refer to the existing and proposed drawings submitted in support of this application.

Heritage and Planning Policy Considerations

Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special regard should be had to preserving listed buildings and its features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 of the Act sets out a similar duty for special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states when determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

The heritage significance of the listed building is recognised in part to its external appearance and wider contribution to the surrounding conservation area. As previously described and demonstrated in the building's planning history, the interior has limited original fabric. Previous applications have recognised those few remaining historic features being the basement vaulted / barrel ceilings and a few original brick party walls. The 1992 redevelopments replaced much of the original fabric both internally and externally as demonstrated by the External Historic Building Photographs.

It is further recognised that the application site has been subject to similar proposals which were recently granted consent (ref. 2013/3942/P; 2013/4048/L; 2017/6587/L; and 2020/5257/L). Indeed, the works in question were considered acceptable by the LPA when previously assessed in October 2021.

Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) states the Council will seek to secure high quality design.

Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) states the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance designated heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. Policy will seek to preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings and resist proposals for alterations which would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

Policy C6 (Access for All) states that the Council will seek to promote fair access and remove the barriers that prevent everyone from accessing facilities and opportunities.

The conservation area appraisal (Seven Dials – 1998) adds that '...new development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area and should respect the built form and historic context of the area, local views as well as existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevational design, and where appropriate, architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjoining buildings'.

This application relates to two minor works to facilitate the creation of a new basement unit. This includes namely a new entrance fronting onto Shorts Gardens and the insertion of a platform lift. Both parts of works would be sensitively installed and would not harm any of the original historic fabric of the building. The new entrance doors would be positioned within the existing brick apertures and be constructed from timber in a style which replicates those doors found around the external perimeter of Thomas Neal's building. Traditional details such as panelling and glazing bars have been included. The platform lift would require the relocation of existing modern partition walls and removal of a modern concrete soffit to allow access to the basement. All works would be finished using materials to match the existing.

The proposed works would therefore comply with both local plan and national planning policy to preserve and

enhance the designated heritage asset and its setting within the conservation area.

Summary

This application seeks to renew previously granted planning permission and listed building consent for minor works to facilitate a new unit at basement level.

The proposal involves the creation of new timber doors (similar to those previously consented) within the existing window openings and minor internal alterations to the modern interior to provide for a new platform lift. The platform lift will provide DDA compliant level access to the basement. As demonstrated by the submitted drawings and as described in this letter, the proposed works would not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building but seek to preserve and enhance the building's future operational use. The works were previously considered acceptable by the LPA in the same adopted policy context.

We trust that the submitted information is sufficient for the Council to validate the application and we look forward to a swift and positive outcome. Should you require any further information or would like to arrange a site visit, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully

Barney Ray

For and on behalf of
Rolfe Judd Planning Ltd