

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/1867/L	Covent Garden Community Association (form completed by Amanda Rigby, Co-Chair)	20/06/2024 12:05:11	OBJNOT	<p>As the amenity society for the area, Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) objects to this application, specifically to the removal of mullions and transoms from 5 large ground floor windows, and to the use of non-hanging signage. The amount of signage proposed also seems excessive.</p> <p>Both of these changes would harm the historic building and the conservation area.</p> <p>Further, we object to the relocation of a street light.</p> <p>We cannot comment meaningfully on the proposed new swing door due to lack of detailed information.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Seven Dials is one of the UK's prime conservation areas. It was among only 38 given 'outstanding' status in 1974 amongst many thousands of conservation areas across England. The application site is a prominent building; it is the initial view of Seven Dials that many people have when approaching from Covent Garden underground station. It is therefore important that its appearance is treated with great care.</p> <p><b>WINDOWS</b></p> <p>The application proposes removal of all the transoms and mullions from windows on the ground floor and the installation of a standard, modern plate glass window in each case.</p> <p>When the Seven Dials area was refurbished in the 1980s, great efforts were made to repair or reinstate historic features. The ground floor windows on this building are an example, following the pattern of the 19th century windows whilst also providing 3 large panes in each window for the display of goods. The glazing bars are in-line with those on the upper floors, tying the whole building together.</p> <p>This proposal would ruin the cohesive pattern of the glazing on the building whilst bringing minimal commercial benefit given the already large panes of glass at ground floor level. Indeed, we find that customers visiting Covent Garden are drawn more to historic windows with panes than they are to modern windows that look like those on any high street.</p> <p>Please refer to the Seven Dials In Covent Garden Study planning policy &amp; design guide for this part of Camden (<a href="https://sevendialsc Covent Garden Study/specifications/shopfronts/shopfront-windows">https://sevendialsc Covent Garden Study/specifications/shopfronts/shopfront-windows</a>). This states clearly that shopfront design should be considered in relation to the appearance of the upper parts of the elevation and the building as a whole.</p> <p>Likewise, Camden's Local Plan at Policy D3c stresses the need to consider the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building. At 7.72 it states that good examples of shopfronts should be retained wherever possible, and at 7.76 it states that shopfront windows and framework features should be retained or restored.</p> <p>The proposal for plate glass windows would also alter the view as one enters the conservation area, detracting from the historic scene as one looks along Earham Street and Neal Street.</p>

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#### SIGNAGE

The proposed internally-illuminated projecting blade signs and halo-lit lettering are entirely unsuitable for this site. Projecting signs should be hanging from iron brackets, and preferably painted wood - or of a design that is interesting and individual. This pattern can be seen on the neighbouring shops along Neal Street.

Please refer to the Seven Dials In Covent Garden Study planning policy & design guide for this part of Camden, the section on Signage at (<https://sevendialscoventgarden.study/specifications/shopfronts/fascia-hanging-signs>).

Likewise, Camden's Local Plan at Policy D4 requires advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building. At 7.83 it states that advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings require particularly detailed consideration and must not harm their character and appearance.

Specifically, the Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement at SD19 states that internally illuminated box signs are not acceptable, and generally signage should be non-illuminated or externally illuminated.

The proposal would be out of keeping with the historic building and the conservation area; we ask the applicant to come back with a revised design.

Blade signs are also far less sustainable than hanging signs as, with a new tenant, the bracket on a hanging sign can be left in place and the sign itself repainted - or if necessary just that part replaced. With a blade sign the whole apparatus has to be thrown away. It would be helpful if you could point this out to the applicant as it would seem at odds with their corporate culture. Their website states that "we work to make the Alo culture authentic to a yoga lifestyle — we have a solar-powered office, yoga twice a day at our studio, electric-car charging stations, an advanced recycling program that reduces waste to that of a small household.." (<https://www.aloyoga.com/pages/about>). We would be happy to meet with them to discuss this.

Finally, we find the total amount of signage proposed to be excessive and to constitute 'clutter' in a way that is resisted in Camden's Local Plan at Policy D4c and D4d. This shop has been successful for many years with no projecting signage. We ask that the applicant either remove the proposal for two projecting signs, or remove the proposal for two pin-mounted signs on the Neal Street and Earlham Street elevations.

#### DOOR

The application says that the door is being replaced. However, we would like to understand what is wrong with the current door as we cannot see any design changes on the drawing.

Please ask the applicant to provide a more detailed drawing and details of proposed materials for the proposed new swing door. We would ask that you do not validate applications that do not include this type of information; the situation requires us to read and re-read the documents in case we have missed something, and then we are unable to comment fully if the information is missing.

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We would object to use of anything but a timber frame in this case as the frames elsewhere on the building are timber.

**STREET LIGHT**

We object to the removal of a street light from the Neal Street façade of the building and its relocation to the corner of Earham Street. This lantern is part of a cohesive street lighting project carried out by Camden in partnership, and each light is precisely placed to give the required coverage for the whole street.

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