

OBJECTION

I refer to the current application for listed building consent for:

Variation of condition 5 (connection to the water mains) of listed building consent ref 2020/1446/L, granted on 23/02/2023 for the dismantling, cleaning, refurbishment, storage and relocation of the Princes Circus drinking fountain to a site in front of Shaftesbury Theatre, as part of wider West End Project relandscaping scheme.

I am writing on behalf of the Seven Dials Trust, of which I am a trustee.

The Trust objects strongly to the proposed variation of this condition. The Trust does not accept that there are good reasons for not restoring the water supply to the fountain at this time. If it is not done now it is highly likely that it never will be done.

A drinking fountain without water is nonsensical. The purpose of the structure is to provide drinking water to the public and this is a service the Council should be happy and proud to support. It also has environmental benefits in cutting down the demand for plastic water bottles.

There are many precedents for restoring historic fountains back into use. For example the Hamilton Memorial Fountain in Portman Square, London W1.

<https://portmanestate.co.uk/archive/hamilton-water-fountain/>

This was carried out recently by the Portman Estate. Their web site states:

Hamilton Water Fountain restored

The public drinking fountain and memorial of pink Scottish granite has stood on Portman Square since 1887 when it was generously donated by Lady Hamilton – wife of Sir James Hamilton 2nd Baronet, through the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. Founded in 1859, the Association provided free, freshwater to people and animals at a time when ale and spirits were easier to obtain and sometimes safer to drink than water.

Now, at a time when bottled water is more readily available to the public than free-flowing water, and approximately half of Britain's water fountains are no longer in use, The Portman Estate has funded the restoration of this fountain, bringing it back to life once again.

It is hoped that by providing this free and constant supply of clean freshwater people visiting Portman Square will choose to take a drink or refill their water bottles. This in turn will help reduce waste and bring back a little piece of Marylebone's history.

This a good example which the London Borough of Camden should follow.

The current application should be refused.

Kind Regards

Robert Ayton
Trustee
On behalf of The Seven Dials Trust