

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing on behalf of The Seven Dials Trust in respect of applications made in respect of 50 Earlham Street London WC2H 9LJ (2024/2820/A; 2024/2858/L; and 2024/2819/P). The Trust works in partnership with local authorities, landowners, national agencies and local amenity groups to protect the historic fabric of Seven Dials and to promote and bring about exemplary environmental improvements in the area.

The “Seven Dials Renaissance Study” is the key document in the work of the Trust. It provides a detailed framework for the care and enhancement of the total environment of the Seven Dials area. The first study was published in 1990. The latest revised and updated web-edition from 2023 has been extended across the borough boundary down to Long Acre in Westminster, covers an enlarged area in Camden and has been renamed “The Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study” (<https://sevendialSCOVENTGARDEN.study>).

The Trust objects to certain elements of the above-referenced applications which cause harm to heritage assets without any public benefits to outweigh that harm.

The site, 50 Earlham Street, forms part of the Seven Dials Warehouse, itself a part of a group of substantially scaled, mid-19th century, London Stock brick-faced, former brewery buildings. Grade II listed, this group comprises a series of conjoined, five and six-storey buildings of similar scale and character extending for some sixteen bays along the street. The Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study notes that this listed complex of former industrial buildings is of particular special architectural and historic interest and considerable townscape value contributing substantially to the character, appearance and significance of the Seven Dials Conservation Area.

First, rather than an internally illuminated blade style projecting sign shown in drawing BB_CG_1020_08, the sign should be designed as an externally illuminated hanging sign instead which would be more appropriate for the listed building setting of the premises (we have no objection to the size, design or other specifications of the sign other than its projecting rather than hanging nature and internal rather than external illumination).

With respect to signage, The Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study’s guidance on shopfronts (<https://sevendialSCOVENTGARDEN.study/specifications/shopfronts/fascia-hanging-signs/>) states that: “A well-designed or imaginative sign suspended from a traditional iron bracket can enhance the quality of the shop front and add vitality to the street. Such signs should be related to the character and scale of the building to which they are fixed”. It is unfortunate that in the past some signs have been replaced with projecting models. However, this unsympathetic pattern is generally being reversed in recent years throughout Seven Dials. We note the good examples of sympathetic hanging signs recently installed by Urban Outfitters and Humble Crumble at 50a-56 Earlham Street which also forms part of the listed complex of former industrial buildings.

In the Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement, SD19 states that “shop signage should be appropriate for the Conservation Area, respecting the proportions of the shop frontages, and maintaining the division between units and reflect the plot widths of buildings. Internally illuminated box signs are unacceptable and *generally signage should be non-illuminated or externally illuminated* [emphasis added]. Signage will usually consist of one fascia sign and one projecting sign. Shop signs should not normally be above ground floor level.” Internally illuminated signage on any premises detracts from the nature of the Conservation Area by drawing excessive attention to the signage and thereby drowning out the other notable features of the Conservation Area.

Secondly, and similarly, the internally illuminated menu board shown in drawing BB_CG_1020_10 should be externally illuminated instead.

Finally, and also similarly, the Trust objects to the proposed lit signage on the interior back wall which is effectively an exterior wall as it is open to the pavement via the open arches flanking the opening leading to the main front door of the premises which is also located on that interior back wall shown in drawing BB_CG_1020_06. This type of illuminated advertisement would cause harm to the character of the listed building and would detract from the nature of the wider Seven Dials Conservation Area.

Sincerely

The Seven Dials Trust