

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/5469/P	Covent Garden Community Association	20/01/2025 16:36:28	OBJ	<p>As the amenity society for the area, Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) objects to these proposals. Unfortunately they fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and would have a harmful effect on its significance. The Seven Dials Conservation Area was designated with 'outstanding status', one of only 38 such areas out of c. 6,000 conservation areas in England. It is the only quarter of London remaining from the late Stuart period in England, it has an unusual number of early 19th century shopfronts and many of the original houses remain. See http://www.sevendials.com/history for more information.</p> <p>We ask that the applicant submit revised proposals, incorporating a traditional wooden shopfront with a stall riser.</p> <p>We also request that the proposed blade sign is replaced with a hanging sign, and that signage is not internally illuminated.</p> <p>---</p> <p>SHOPFRONT</p> <p>CPG Design, paragraph 6.16 states that "Stall risers ... generally should be incorporated to any new shopfront on a period building."</p> <p>It also states that "Traditional materials such as timber, stone and render will be the most appropriate for new shopfronts in conservation areas ...".</p> <p>The 'Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study' planning & design guidance sits within Camden's policy documents hierarchy. See https://sevendialscoventgarden.study/. Its section on windows states that "Modern flat sectioned glazing bars are not appropriate in a conservation area. Windows should always be made of timber". It also has a section on stall risers.</p> <p>25 Neal Street is a period building at the heart of this prime conservation area. In policy terms any new shopfront here should therefore be made of timber and incorporate a stall riser. In aesthetic terms it will be more pleasing, too.</p> <p>25 Neal Street is a particularly important frontage because it can be seen at the centre of the view from the Dial Pillar itself, as, together with its neighbour the Crown & Anchor pub, it forms the end of Earlham Street.</p> <p>This is an opportunity for the building to be returned to a state more suited to its own character and that of the conservation area.</p> <p>SIGNAGE</p> <p>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.</p>

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CPG Design, paragraph 6.28 states that "Signs should relate well to the character, scale and architectural features of the building and respect their local context." Paragraph 6.32 states that "Advertisement signs, including those on canopies/blinds, should ... be in harmony with the existing building, and neighbouring ones, in terms of their proportions, design and materials."

The 'Seven Dials in Covent Garden Study' has a section on Signage at <https://sevendialscoventgarden.study/specifications/shopfronts/fascia-hanging-signs>. This states that "a well-designed, imaginative sign suspended from a traditional iron bracket can enhance the quality of a shopfront and add vitality to a street. Such signs should be related to the character and scale of their building".

The Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement at SD19 states that generally signage should be non-illuminated or externally illuminated.

As noted under our 'Shopfront' section above, 25 Neal Street is a period building at the heart of the conservation area. In policy terms any new signs here should therefore be painted wood, unless they are of a genuinely interesting and individual design in keeping with a long tradition in the area. They should not be internally illuminated.

Projecting signs should also be hanging, preferably from iron brackets.

The pattern of painted wooden signs hanging from decorative iron brackets can be seen on the neighbouring shops along Neal Street, as shown in the accompanying photograph.

The proposed blade style of projecting sign in this application does not complement the historic building, nor the setting of the conservation area particularly along Neal Street. We ask that the applicant come back with a revised design.

Further, blade signs are 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 can be 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 applicants, as it would seem at odds with the prevailing corporate culture. We would be happy to meet with them to discuss this.
