

Hi there, I'm sharing my objection to planning request for application numbers 2024/0993/P and 2024/1005/L.

My reasons are below

Policy A1 Managing the Impact of Development Phoenix Garden serves local communities seeking connection and respite from high density, overcrowded accommodation and an area already in England's 7% most deprived for green spaces & quality of living environment (Indices of Deprivation, 2019). This multi-year construction, with its noise, air & traffic pollution, plus a permanent reduction in sunlight and daylight once finished, will leave the Garden barely unusable for local people. Thus, we question if the proposal balances the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities, or exacerbates pre-existing, entrenched and nationally significant local deprivation.

Policy A2 Open Space People, especially from more disadvantaged communities, who live in places with rich green infrastructure tend to be happier, healthier and live longer lives ('Parks for Health Strategy')

- Access to high quality parks/ green spaces is associated with better health outcomes overall;
- Regular use of green space is associated with a 43% lower risk of poor general health and 40% are less likely to be overweight or obese;
- Parks access associated with increased physical activity: people with access to a park are 20% less at risk of physical inactivity & 24% more likely to meet physical activity recommendations;
- Access to parks associated with improved mental health and wellbeing... each additional use of any natural environment per week is associated with 6% lower risk of poor mental health.

Despite these known benefits, the proposal's construction & implementation will damage existing green infrastructure, seeing local communities denied access to community activities which promote physical activity, the mental wellbeing benefits of experiencing nature and opportunities for social connection. Clearly this proposal is detrimental to the setting of designated open spaces and fails to protect non- designated spaces with nature conservation, townscape and amenity value, including gardens.

Policy A3 Biodiversity The overshadowing effect of this proposal jeopardises Phoenix Garden's delicate biodiversity balance, denying direct sunlight to over 60% of the Garden and disrupting habitats of vital pollinators, insects and wildlife. YOO Capital's Ecology Report estates that the proposal has "a zone of influence which encompasses the Phoenix Garden" – directly connected to the "changes to the height" of the Odeon building to ecological impact on our 'Site of Importance for Nature Conservation'. This report sees the resulting reduction in light having a "differential effect", delaying "leaf and flower

development, a shortening of the flowering season and, at the extreme end, a potential loss of some species”, on the “varied nature of habitat with the Phoenix Garden”, especially for “exotic species, such as tree echium”. The significant increase in shade across the year risks a reduction in “the availability of nectar and pollen for invertebrates”. With “15 bee species”, this clearly has a damaging impact on ecological sustainability.

Of particular concern is the proposal’s impact on bats, with Report monitoring showing that “bats use this habitat for regular foraging and social activity”, whilst echolocation calls indicate “the garden to be bat breeding territory”. Finally, the report evidenced bat calls at a peak frequency of 39 khz, characteristic of the *Nathusius pipistrelle*, designated as a rare species in the UK.

Despite listing the proximity of Phoenix Garden as a key ecological issue, as a site of local importance for nature conservation and a foraging, socialisation & breeding habitat for bats, any mitigation linked to the proposal is “separate to any consideration of offsite impacts”. Interpreting this, any gains from this proposal do not counterbalance the significant and unrecoverable negative impacts on the Garden. Therefore, we question how this proposal supports Camden Council to protect and enhance sites of nature conservation and biodiversity, including gardens wherever possible. YOO Capital’s report presents evidence that the proposal will directly or indirectly result in the loss or harm to a designated nature conservation site or adversely affect the status or population of priority habitats or species”.

Policy D1 Design Construction of this proposed structure will have an overbearing impact on the skyline above the Phoenix Garden, creating a sense of enclosure for local communities and Garden users that will be impossible to escape. Covent Garden thrives on the historic and architectural beauty of its buildings, but the proposal adds no design benefits to the area, instead diminishing the current Grade II listed building’s visual charm and character. We challenge whether the proposal respects (or even recognises) local context and character, preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with policy or integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces.

Policy D2 Heritage We support Historic England’s objection regarding how the proposal will result in loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings. Their objection, alongside the Seven Dials Trust, Covent Garden Community Association and our own, indicates limited public benefit, which does not outweigh the substantial harm or irreparable loss.

Policy CC2 Adapting to Climate Change Camden & Islington’s ‘Park for Health Strategy’ notes that Parks and a green public realm also provide the habitats and natural ecosystems needed to improve air quality, and to tackle and adapt

to the effects of climate change such as heatwaves and flooding. Our Policy A3 response shows risks to the Garden's fragile ecosystem and the protection of existing green spaces.

We also challenge YOO Capital's 'Social Impact Report' regarding various 'We Make Camden' Ambitions.

AMBITION 3: CAMDEN COMMUNITIES SUPPORT GOOD HEALTH, WELLBEING AND CONNECTION FOR EVERYONE SO THAT THEY CAN START WELL, LIVE WELL, AND AGE WELL. YOO Capital make reference to areas that Camden Council suggest partners focus on, including

1. Support people to look after their own health, build on their personal strengths and actively engage in their local communities. YOO Capital refers to work that proposal partners and their supply chain do internally, including the building's focus on wellbeing for their own staff. However, they fail to address how the health & wellbeing of local communities will be considered. Moreover, they do not recognise or address the proposal's negative impact on the existing community resource (Phoenix Garden), which, as indicated previously, is already delivering significant positive health benefits for local communities.

2. Take collective action to reduce social isolation and support people to build quality relationships and friendships in the community. YOO Capital makes no reference to reducing social isolation for immediate communities surrounding the Odeon. Again, they fail to concede the ramifications of this proposal on existing work by established community organisations such as the Garden. This lack of awareness, allied to almost no specificity, seen in their "this may include specific partnerships" comment, calls into question whether this is an area that they can be claiming to address. Finally, we fail to see how 'theatre' ticket prices ranging from £90 to £120 will serve any other purpose other than to further isolate and exclude local people at a time of economic crisis.

AMBITION 4: CAMDEN SHOULD BE A GREEN, CLEAN, VIBRANT, ACCESSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE PLACE WITH EVERYONE EMPOWERED TO CONTRIBUTE TO TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY. Camden Council's suggested focus for partners, include

1. Organisations in Camden will embed tackling the climate emergency throughout their operations, building on Camden's Clean Air Initiatives. According to the London Atmospheric Emissions Inventory 2019 Update (2023), site activities and machinery contribute 4% of London's total NO_x, 30% of the PM₁₀ and 8% of the PM_{2.5} emissions (not including supply chain emissions). Thus, in 2019 construction emissions were the largest single source of PM₁₀, equaling 30% of total emissions in London, followed by road transport (27%) and resuspension (15%). In Camden, construction activity is responsible for 4% of NO₂ emissions, 24% of PM₁₀ emissions and 9% of PM_{2.5} emissions. According to the GLA, an estimated 9,500 annual deaths in

London are attributable to particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions.

Yoo Capital include Hoare Lea's Air Quality Assessment in their documentation. Whilst a stakeholder communications plan is referred to, Hoare Lea offer no specificity on its contribution to delivery of the following aspects of Camden's Air Quality Action Plan, including:

- Ensuring all medium and high-risk sites have real-time particulate monitoring on site and that the information from this monitoring is easily accessible to the public;
- Improving communications with local communities about the pollution impact of large construction projects, how impacts will be minimised, and how residents can report concerns;
- Supporting the development of community-led Neighbourhood Construction Site Watch groups to assist in monitoring construction sites in line with air quality CMP requirements.

Furthermore, there is also no reference at all to how the proposal will deliver:

- Cumulative impact assessments (CIA) for developments in order to identify the impact on local air quality and identify methods to reduce impact on local communities.

Finally, it is unclear how and in what ways the proposal will deliver on

- Ensuring adequate, appropriate, and well located green space and infrastructure is included in new developments (including meeting correct nature conservation standards and the planning process ensuring that new development contributes positively to the surrounding environment).

AMBITION 5: CAMDEN IS A BOROUGH WHERE EVERY CHILD HAS THE BEST START IN LIFE.

Camden Council suggest areas of focus for partners, including

1. Make sure schools, streets, parks, and estates support good health for all children and tackle health inequalities from a young age;
2. Ensure communities work together to support families, parents and children that are more likely to be isolated and experience loneliness.

Similarly to Ambition 3, YOO Capital fails to acknowledge responsibilities around the health or isolation affecting local families, parents and children, or how this proposal will impair current work that takes place, by Phoenix Garden and key community partners who use our space and facilities, to both promote health & wellbeing for local children and reduce the extent to which they are excluded and isolated. The multi-year nature of construction will negatively affect local children's health in one of two ways. Either they will continue accessing the Garden and be exposed to the site's harmful emissions, or they will be forced to remove themselves from the Garden, with a detrimental impact on their physical & mental health and feelings of isolation and loneliness. Tokenistic efforts to be seen to address the lack of equality, diversity and inclusion in construction will not offset the wide-ranging impact on local families, parents and children living near the Odeon cinema.

In conclusion, the issues that we have highlighted, when viewed in totality, present an existential threat to the future sustainability of Phoenix Garden. Beyond the significant risks to the fragile environmental ecosystem and degrading of the lives and experiences of local communities, this proposal threatens the financial viability of the Garden. In 2023/ 24, the Phoenix Garden generated £91,452 from commercial hire of the building and garden spaces. The reason for this level of income generation is entirely due to the very nature of a tranquil garden space set in a built up, urban environment. Removal of our ability to be self-financing, both during and beyond the multi-year period of construction, will have a devastating and unsustainable impact on income generation. And the loss of this £91,452 will mean that our free-at-the-point-of-access services for isolated older residents, children and families, volunteering opportunities and lifelong learning for all our local communities will be lost, permanently.

Thanks
Remi

I would like to object to application numbers 2024/0993/P and 2024/1005/L.

This development goes against Camden Planning Policies under Policy A1 managing development impacts, this development will have a large impact on others, from light loss particularly to the Phoenix Garden, to disturbance for everyone due to large increases in traffic from goods and services deliveries, to affects on a listed building, from an aesthetic viewpoint, this also Aligns directly with the proposed new local plan policy A1 Protecting Amenity. Policy A2 Open Space should be protected in an area so deprived of this, the Phoenix garden is a small oasis of calm and biodiversity in line with Policy A3 on protecting biodiversity the effects of shade on this garden would indirectly cause excessive damage, and PolicyC2 protecting community facilities this is an area with very few community facilities and the health and wellbeing of local people would be much affected by the de facto loss of the Phoenix Garden.

Please reconsider these developments impacts on such a precious resource. Our city will suffer if we lose pockets of nature like Phoenix. As a Camden Council tenant who relies heavily on green spaces like this in the borough I can't imagine how detrimental this will be for all the other people who use this space.

Hi Planning

Please accept my objections to the application in a area which has an overcapacity of hotel rooms and this application is not suitable for the building as outlined below. In particular the loss of light and disruption to the residents is significant and requires careful consideration, whilst the Phoenix garden has community asset value and should be maintained

Can you also confirm if this blocks one of the protected vistas which is constantly ignored by constructions in Covent Garden. I also have concerns regarding the following aspects of these applications:

- **Damage to the Phoenix Garden, the only community green space within Covent Garden together with its neighbour St. Giles Churchyard and the playground. The garden already struggles with minimal light and this would make its main area dark most of the time.**
- **Serious damage to the appearance and proportions of the listed building, due to the mass and height of the proposed roof extension which looks like an alien building plonked on top.**
- **Damage to the context of the building, being the Seven Dials and Denmark Street conservation areas, between which it sits and from which the extension would be visible.**
- **Serious damage to the character of the listed building, which would no longer primarily be a place of entertainment but yet another anodyne hotel (proposed operator Citizen M). It would lose all the internal theatre features that it still has, including the entire stage house and the scenery systems.**
- **Damage to the integrity of the listed building, retaining only the front façade and parts of the external walls – essentially creating a completely new building with parts of the old as window-dressing.**
- **Harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents in New Compton Street, Stacey Street and Phoenix Street. They will be overlooked and lose sunlight.**
- **Nuisance from servicing a 10 floor hotel; the back streets already suffer from congestion and delivery noise. There may also be drainage problems when 200+ bathrooms are added to our strained waste water system.**
- **Huge disruption from building an unnecessarily massive development, including the painful noise of demolition and deep basement excavations.**
- **Danger of subsidence from digging out far below other buildings' basements in the area. From old maps, we also believe that an underground river or water course may be there.**
- **A massively destructive and unsustainable approach, going against all the modern planning policies that favour preservation of as much fabric as possible.**

Look forward to your response

Best regards
Gary Hayes

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Dear Camden Planning Application team

I am writing to oppose in the strongest terms the above application for the "Part demolition, restoration and refurbishment of the existing Grade II listed building, roof extension, and excavation of basement space, to provide a theatre at lower levels, with ancillary restaurant/bar space" at 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue.

I am writing as a resident of central London. My details are set out at the end of this email.

Shaftesbury Avenue is very much a part of my neighbourhood and I have been a frequent user of the cinema at 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue for many years. In the summer months I often go to the Phoenix Gardens and value it as an oasis of calm.

Grounds for objection

My reasons for objecting to the proposals are set out below:

I do not know whether, legally, the proposals constitute a change of use, but whether they do or not, the use of the site for a hotel of any sort, but especially one of this size and type, is deeply inappropriate for the location. The site is situated in a conservation area, made up of relatively modestly-scaled buildings of a very diverse, mixed use, including small shops, apartment buildings. Many of the buildings are older and very distinctive. Situated directly behind the site is the Phoenix Garden. The streets and pavements are generally not wide, contributing to the specific character of the area. There is good reason why this is a conservation area. It is special place for its residents and for people who work and live in the wider neighbourhood. I am sure that it is precisely these qualities that attract tourists and visitors to the area. And of course people have been drawn in large numbers to the cinema that has operated on the site for many years.

Locating an hotel of any size at this site would greatly impair the qualities which the conservation area status is intended to protect and an hotel of the capacity and dimensions proposed by the applicant would have a particularly negative impact. It would dwarf the streetscape. It would result in the influx to the area of a destabilising number of additional tourists, and associated disturbance in the surrounding very narrow streets from vehicles servicing the hotel. This would compromise the quiet enjoyment and residential amenity of the people living in the apartment buildings behind the building, and users of the Phoenix Garden.

As has been noted the architectural form and style of the building reflects elements of Modernism and Art Deco and is in harmony with the structure, which is large steel framed building with a flat roof. Its shape is broadly cuboid and box-like. The destruction of so much of the existing building and the construction of such a large edifice, of completely different dimensions, materials and use behind and above the retained facade would destroy the visual and structural relationship between the facade and the building.

I understand that there are original, or at least historic features within the structure, dating back to the original use of the building as a theatre, and it seem possible that there are important features which have not been properly identified and assessed for their heritage value. Indeed, previously unknown features have been identified very recently. It would surely be an act of vandalism to consent the complete destruction of the interior when there is a real possibility of finding more important heritage content. At the very least, a full inventory should be taken to ensure that the heritage content is well understood and proposals can then put forward which preserve that content and, if possible, incorporate it into the design and use so that the features can be admitted and enjoyed by as many people as possible.

The provision, several floors below ground level, of a modest entertainment space in no way compensates for the present facilities which would be lost as a result of the redevelopment. I understand that there is an appetite in the theatrical world for more, larger venues in the area. It seems ridiculous not to return this invaluable theatre building to its original use.

I wish to object to these plans:

- This destroys a listed building, maintaining only a thin and irrelevant skin
- It destroys an important cultural historical venue, where the Beatles, The Who, The Rolling Stones and other significant cultural icons have performed.
- This proposal seriously damages the appearance and proportions of a notable and finely-proportioned listed building. It creates a monstrous hood over the delicate and refined facade, destroying its integrity.
- It destroys all the retained internal parts related to the function and character of the building- important historical artefacts in themselves: it could no longer operate as a place of entertainment, its original purpose. A small 'cabaret-style' space as proposed is no replacement.
- It will erode the historic character and varied texture of this area.
- We have plenty of hotels - which can be built anywhere - but a diminishing number of theatres which give 'The West End' its social context both locally and internationally.
- It will be visible and is damaging to the appearance and grain of the Seven Dials and Denmark Street Conservation areas.
- It will severely damage the award-winning Phoenix Garden which gives the local community much needed green space for mental well-being and social cohesion and a refuge for wild-life.
- It will cause overlooking and a loss of sunlight to local residential buildings.
- The massive building works which could last 3 years will be damaging for the mental and physical health of residents and workers.
- Servicing such a large hotel will cause disruption and increased congestion to the local environment and residents with small unsuitable roads in the vicinity.
- The carbon releases and unsustainable building practices required will be environmentally damaging.
- A previous appeal was lost against refusal for a much lower extension - the same factors should determine that this damaging scheme should be refused.

Alan Selwyn
38 Howitt Rd
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Hello,

I am writing as a Seven Dials freehold homeowner and resident to express my strong opposition to the latest development proposal for the former Saville Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue.

While the scheme has been revised, it still poses many of the same concerns that led to the rejection of earlier versions – namely the overdevelopment of a rare and largely unspoiled Art Deco building, the loss of genuine cultural use, and the damaging impact on the surrounding community and conservation areas.

Of particular concern to me is the significant reduction in sunlight to the Phoenix Garden, a vital green space for those of us living in an area with no private gardens. This space is already under significant pressure, and the proposed height and bulk of the new structure would further overshadow it while increasing the sense of enclosure and overlooking for nearby homes.

More broadly, the Seven Dials area is already struggling with severe overcrowding. Public spaces and pavements are being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of people being drawn in. The addition of a large-scale hotel and entertainment venue of this size would only intensify this pressure, making life even more difficult for residents trying to navigate their own neighbourhood. The cumulative impact is becoming unmanageable.

I urge you to reject this application and uphold the values that led to the rejection of previous versions – protecting heritage, supporting meaningful cultural use, and preserving the quality of life for local residents.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Churchwell, 12 Earlham St London WC2H 9LN