



The London Borough of Camden  
Development Management  
Regeneration and Planning  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 5 Pancras Square  
C/O Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Our ref: E5583

14<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

**CAMDEN: THE WELL WALK THEATRE, 49 WILLOW ROAD, LONDON, NW3 1TS**  
**Planning Portal Reference: PP-14004227**

1. This covering letter is the Planning and Heritage Statement accompanying an application for advertisement consent in respect of the erection of 1 no. projecting non-illuminated hanging sign and replacement of the existing display board.
2. The applicant will pay the associated fee of £253.00 electronically via Planning Portal.
3. This application is accompanied by the following documents:
  - A completed application form; and
  - A copy of the following plans:

Title	Existing	Proposed
	Site location plan	
Existing and proposed plans	21004-00-600	21004-00-600

### The Site

4. In June 2024, *The Well Walk Theatre* opened. The building is an unlisted 3-storey plus basement and mansard roofed end terrace building in the Hampstead Conservation Area. Its appearance and location are below:

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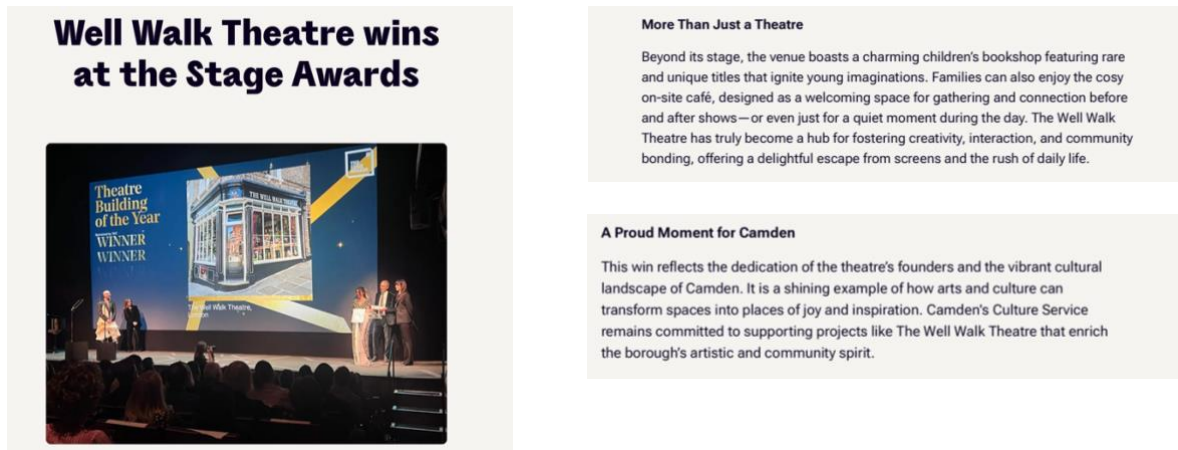
5. The site accommodates a 50-seat children's theatre at lower ground level with a bookshop and small café at ground floor. The upper floors at first, second and third floor levels are occupied by a single maisonette.
6. Heritage Assets in this area include:
  - Gardnor House (Grade II\*) to the rear on Flask Walk with its red brick with terracotta balustrade portion south east garden wall (Grade II);
  - Burgh House on the other side of New End (Grade I) and its entrance gates (Grade II); and
  - The residential terrace Nos 38 and 40 New End and 75 Flask Walk at the corner of New End and Flask Walk; No 75's garden walls and railings; and No 71 Flask Walk (Wells and Camden Baths and Washhouses) (Grade II).

### **The Proposal**

7. Following the opening of the Theatre in June 2024—and in anticipation of Camden Council's forthcoming *Safe & Healthy Streets Scheme*, which will create new pedestrian spaces and significantly widen the pavement along Willow Road—there is a clear public need for appropriate signage to help visitors locate the venue and support its role as a new cultural and community destination (see [Camden Council Safe and Healthy Streets Decision – Well Walk / Willow Road](#)).

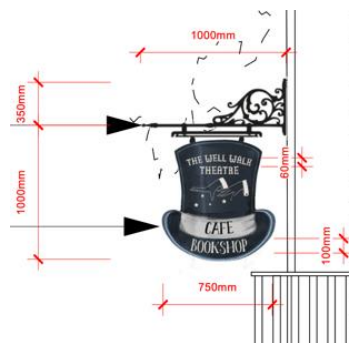
This application addresses these requirements by proposing the replacement of the existing display board and the erection of 1 no. projecting non-illuminated hanging sign on the Northeast flank wall.

8. The proposed signs will reflect the high design quality of the Theatre, which was recently named *Theatre Building of the Year* at the 2025 Stage Awards.



Courtesy: Camden's Culture Service

9. The proposed hanging sign has been carefully designed to complement both the architecture of the existing building and the character of the Hampstead Conservation Area. It will display the theatre name and insignia and serve a wayfinding function to assist visitors in locating the theatre entrance, while remaining fully sympathetic to the historic and architectural context of the site.
10. The projecting hanging sign will be made of traditional wrought iron and finished to evoke an aged appearance. It will measure 1000mm (L) x 750mm (B) x 1350mm (H) and will hang from a heritage-style decorative bracket.



11. The Wells Tavern just across the road on Christchurch Hill / Well Walk has a larger swinging sign which has been in place since 2008.



Courtesy: The Wells Tavern

12. The proposed display board replaces one of similar size that was in place when the building was occupied by *S. Spall and Sons*, a grocer and provision merchants, from 1895 to 1957, as shown in the historical archives below. The original display was likely demolished around 1962, when an unsympathetic extension was added.



Courtesy: *Peril for the Guy* (1956), filmed in front of *S. Spall and Sons*, with the display board visible in the background.



Courtesy: Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre

13. The owners of *The Well Walk Theatre* have since replaced the 1962 extension with one that is far more sympathetic to the character of the original building. The proposed display board is therefore in keeping with the historic character of the area and represents the

reinstatement of a Victorian feature, contributing positively to both the building's appearance and the wider streetscape.



14. The proposed replacement display board will measure 2380mm (L) x 1200mm (H) and constructed of wood and paned in glass. The display board will marginally project beyond the flank wall by approximately 70-80mm and will display event information for the theatre, the bookshop and the café.

### Planning Policy

15. The relevant planning policies are:
  - The **NPPF** (December 2024);
  - The **Local Plan** (July 2017); and
  - **Supplementary Planning Guidance: Advertisements** (March 2018).

### The NPPF

16. **Para 139** says: *significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*
17. **Para 141** says: *the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.*
18. The proposed signage is in keeping with the form and layout of the site and neighbouring buildings. It will enhance the appearance of the venue by reinforcing the architectural rhythm of the façade: the display board reinstates a long-lost original feature, while the hanging sign introduces a balanced third element alongside the two aligned windows,

resulting in a more resolved and intentional composition. Both signs will also assist in clearly identifying the venue for visitors, contributing to improved accessibility and greater public engagement with the arts. Importantly, both signs are located on the new brick extension and do not obscure or impact any of the original historic fabric.

19. **Para 203** says: *in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: d) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; e) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; f) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and g) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.*
20. **Para 215** says: *where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*
21. The Conservation Area is the only designated heritage asset. The proposed hanging sign has been sensitively designed to respect and complement both the character of the host building and the wider Conservation Area. The replacement display board will reinstate a historically significant feature of the building, which was in place from 1895 until its removal around 1962.

#### **Local Plan**

22. **Policy D4 (Advertisements)** states that *all advertisements and signs should be designed to be complementary to and preserve the character of the host building and local area. The size, location, materials, details and illumination of signs must be carefully considered. Interesting and unique styles of advertisements and signs will be considered acceptable where they are compatible with the host buildings and surrounding environment. The Council will resist advertisements where they contribute to or constitute clutter or an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area.*
23. **Para 7.83** says: *advertisements in Conservation Areas and on or near Listed Buildings require particularly detailed consideration given the sensitivity and historic nature of these areas or buildings. Any advertisements on or near a listed building or in a conservation area must not harm their character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings.*



24. The dimensions of the proposed hanging sign ensure it remains visually subservient to the host building. Its use of wrought iron and a decorative bracket complements the building's architecture and the character of the Hampstead Conservation Area. The replacement display board draws on the design of the original 1895 feature, with construction in wood and glazed panes that reflect traditional materials and craftsmanship. This approach demonstrates a clear appreciation for the historic context.
25. The impact of the display board is neutral, with the use of time-worn, sympathetic materials further reinforcing the character of the Conservation Area. The projecting sign will be securely affixed above head height and will not present any obstruction or hazard to pedestrians. Its modest scale and discreet positioning ensure full compliance with public safety and amenity considerations, while also avoiding street clutter.

#### **Supplementary Planning Guidance: Advertisements**

26. **Para 1.8** states *advertisements and signs should respect the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and setting. All signs should serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings and be constructed of materials that are sympathetic to the host building and the surrounding area. Interesting and unique styles of advertisements and signs will be considered acceptable where they are compatible with the host buildings and surrounding environment.*
27. **Para 1.9** states *generally advertisements will only be acceptable at fascia level or below. Advertisements above fascia level can appear visually obtrusive and unattractive and, where illuminated, they can cause light pollution to neighbouring residential properties. If an advertisement is required at high level for a specific business use, then this will usually be restricted to non-illuminated images on windows.*
28. The proposed hanging sign and replacement display board will be situated beneath first-floor level. Their design and use of complementary materials ensure they are attractive yet sympathetic to the setting of the Conservation Area. Both are compatible with the use of the building and wider area.

#### **Conclusion**

29. From its inception in 2019, *The Well Walk Theatre* has received support from Camden's Culture Team, Camden Ward Councillors, the *Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum*, and the *Heath & Hampstead Society*. Since opening to the public less than a year ago, it has quickly established itself as a valued community asset, with strong local engagement. Its extensive and sensitive refurbishment was recently recognised with The Stage Awards 2025 for *Theatre Building of the Year*.

30. In that spirit, this signage proposal has been carefully designed to complement the host building and respect the character of the Hampstead Conservation Area. While its overall impact is neutral, it contributes positively to the building's appearance and reinstates a long-lost historic feature with care and purpose.
31. Finally, the signage proposal aligns with Camden's upcoming *Safe & Healthy Street Scheme* by providing clear, accessible information to pedestrians, therefore contributing to the area's cultural vitality and community engagement.

I look forward to discussing the application with the allocated Case Officer in due course.

Yours faithfully,

**Rebekah McCullough**

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