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24th November 2015

**MORROW
LORRAINE**

Dear Mr. Whittingham

Planning and Listed Building Application: 2015/5617/P & 2015/5969/L

I am writing to you in response to the Letter of Objection by Sir Terry Farrell CBE (the Objector) to the proposed works at St. Martins House, 65-75 Monmouth Street relating to the removal and replacement of the front apex 'corner windows'.

Whilst we respect Sir Terry Farrell's practice and his views and concerns in relation to his previous work on the Comyn Ching Triangle, we feel that in this instance our proposal is an improvement to the existing building, the immediate context of Seven Dials and the wider Conservation Area. Most importantly, it reflects the recent, permitted change in use and function of the building for residential occupation.


The proposals are respectful to the previous work undertaken by Sir Terry Farrell's practice and great care has been taken to minimise changes to the façade to Comyn Ching Court and to retain the character of the listed building.

However, in upgrading the building in association with the change of use from office to residential it is both natural and correct that some elements of the external envelope should respond and adapt accordingly.

The importance of the area's "Georgian scale" and the "elevation proportions of base, middle and top" are recognised and, as such, are entirely retained in our proposals. The contribution of the triangular motif window to this composition and its context at the junction of Shelton and Monmouth Streets, though, is highly questionable. Sir Terry Farrell vastly exaggerates both its architectural value and the significance of its removal.

Having undertaken a review of similar 'corner' buildings in the area it is clear that the typical condition is for these buildings to 'chamfer' at their intersection, providing functional upper-floor windows which formally address the street upon approach. This is immediately evident at neighbouring intersections at West Street, Tower Street and Seven Dials.

Our proposal to remove the existing triangular windows and replace them with inward-opening glazed doors and small Juliet balconies represents a modest alteration, sensitive to its context and future use. The proposal addresses the

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junction successfully in a similar way to period buildings in the vicinity. It also conveys the following, additional benefits:

- + Retains, and improves the urban presence at the key intersection of Shelton and Monmouth Streets;
- + Enlivens the street scene with activity and occupation through Juliet balconies, inward opening doors and planting boxes;
- + Provides a better quality of space for the residents with improved views, daylight and amenity space during summer months;
- + Creates a more welcoming and prominent entrance to the ground floor retail unit.

In summary, we consider that in this particular instance our approach enhances the appearance of the building, improves the quality of internal space for its occupants and complements its immediate surroundings. Furthermore, having reviewed the recent conservation appraisal for Seven Dials, no reference is made to the importance of the modern addition to Comyn Ching to the area's special character, or for its historic protection.

We strongly object to claims that our proposals are "insensitive" and sincerely hope that they are considered impartially, purely on the basis of architectural design and in recognition of the built environment's ever evolving appearance.

We therefore respectfully trust that our proposal can be recommended for approval by the Council.

Yours sincerely,

J-J Lorraine RIBA

Director

For and on behalf of Morrow + Lorraine Ltd