

RL/P6144  
19 January 2016

Regeneration and Planning  
Development Management  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 8ND

Dear Sir or Madam

**48 Neal Street, London, WC2H 9PJ**  
**Planning Application for the refurbishment of the existing Neal Street shopfront and the creation of a new shopfront fronting Shorts Gardens.**

**Planning Portal Ref. PP-04756538**

We write on behalf of our client and the applicant, Shaftesbury Covent Garden Limited, to submit a full planning application for works to the ground floor shopfront at 48 Neal Street. The application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal along with this supportive covering letter and the following planning documents and drawings:

- Existing and proposed drawings – prepared by Fresson & Tee
- Site Location Plan – prepared by Fresson & Tee
- Heritage Statement – prepared by Asset Heritage Consulting
- Design and Access Statement – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning
- Photographic Schedule – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning
- Completed CIL Form – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning

We confirm that a cheque for the requisite planning application fee of £195.00 is enclosed with this covering letter.

*Site Location and Description*

The application site is located on the eastern side of Neal Street, abutting the corner with Shorts Gardens. The existing terrace building is a four storey building with basement and roof terrace. This application relates solely to the ground floor which is in retail use (Class A1). The upper floors are all in residential use (Class C3). The building is of historic London Stock brick with a simple traditional timber shopfront comprising of fanlight, stall riser (with modern ventilation grilles) and fascia board with corncicing and pilaster detail. The flank elevation which fronts Shorts Gardens comprises three modern window openings and a rear access door.

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The building is located within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and although not statutorily listed, is designated as a building which makes a 'positive contribution'. The conservation area also designated the existing shopfront as a 'Shopfront of Merit'.

Relevant Planning History

In 1978, planning permission (ref. 26125) was granted for the 'formation of three windows at ground floor level in the flank wall fronting Shorts Gardens'.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2007, planning permission (ref. 2006/3670/P) was refused for the 'installation of a new shop front (A1 use class) to Neal Street and replacement of door to Short's Gardens with louvre panel in association with the internal installation of air conditioning units at ground floor level'. The Council's reasons for refusal stated that the 'replacement shopfront, by virtue of its proportion, rhythm, form and detailed design, would result in the loss of a 'historical shopfront of merit' and be harmful to the character and appearance of the building, failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area'.

On 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008, planning permission (ref. 2007/4640/P) was granted for the 'retention of 2 x ventilation grilles within existing panels within ground floor shopfront'.

Application Proposal

This application seeks to provide an improvement to the existing retail unit at 48 Neal Street and refurbish the existing shopfront of merit. The existing unit's floorplate is long and deep, with no return frontage to Shorts Gardens which limits internal light levels and minimises views into the shop from passing customers. The proposal therefore seeks to replace the existing three modern windows fronting Shorts Gardens with a traditional timber shopfront of traditional design and detail.

The existing 'Shopfront of Merit' fronting Neal Street will be retained and refurbished, with the removal of the existing ventilation grilles, which were previously approved in January 2008 by the Council. The existing grilles within the stall risers are poorly designed and detract from the traditional appearance and character of the historic building. The cornice and fascia will be repaired where necessary with new traditional lead flashing installed to replace the existing felt.

The proposed new shopfront fronting Shorts Gardens has been carefully designed to enhance the trading space of the ground floor retail accommodation and will follow in the historic style and detail of the existing Neal Street shopfront. The proposed shopfront will be constructed from timber with a traditional stall riser, panelled glazing and simple cornice detail with small fascia sign. A discreet ventilation grille will be provided between the glazing and fascia sign to allow for sufficient ventilation of the unit.

Design and Access Statement

Please refer to the submitted design and access statement which accompanies this application. We confirm that access will remain as existing from Neal Street into the ground floor unit.

Historic Building Assessment

Although the building is not listed, the conservation area appraisal recognises the building as being a

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'building which makes a positive contribution'. As a result, historic consultants Asset Heritage have provided an assessment of the existing building and the proposal. The existing shopfront and flank elevation fronting Shorts Gardens have been altered over the years with much of its original character and details being lost. Other unsympathetic detail such the front grilles and modern windows have been added at a later date and detract from the buildings historic character. The proposal includes the refurbishment of the existing Neal Street shopfront and the replacement of the modern brick windows fronting Shorts Gardens with a new traditional timber shopfront.

The report is submitted as part of the application, however in conclusion it is considered that the proposed refurbishment of the existing shopfront and new shopfront opening to Shorts Gardens would provide a positive addition and enhance the surrounding conservation area. This being in compliance with "the policies on conserving and enhancing the historic environment contained in the NPPF, the relevant planning policies of Camden Council, and, most importantly of all, the statutory tests set by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990".

#### Planning Policy Considerations

The key considerations in respect of this application is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the wider Covent Garden Conservation Area and the historic qualities of the existing shopfront. The proposed works are considered to be in accordance with and supportive of Camden's Development Plan policies for those reasons detailed below.

Core Strategy Policy CS7 (Promoting Camden's centres and shops) and Development Policy DP10 (Helping and promoting small and independent shops) seeks to encourage initiatives to support and promote retail diversity within the borough. The Council seek to ensure that all development improves the character, function, viability and vibrancy of the retail provision within designated town centres and specialist retail areas. The proposal would allow the promotion of the retail unit along Shorts Garden through a proportionally designed new frontage which opens up the slender floor plate. The refurbishment of the existing shopfront and new retail frontage along Shorts Gardens will therefore represent a benefit to the existing small retail accommodation and maximise its future operational use.

Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) and Development Policy DP24 (Securing high quality design) requires all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design, having specific consideration of; the character, setting, context of the existing building and those surrounding, the quality of materials proposed, and the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level. The existing shopfront is recognised as a shopfront of merit and as a result will be sensitively refurbished and a replacement stall riser provided to remove the existing grilles. The new shopfront fronting Shorts Gardens has been carefully designed to follow in the style of the existing Neal Street shopfront to ensure it is complementary to the buildings character and setting. The proposed shopfront will be constructed from timber with traditional detailing, with glazing panels and lead dressing to the top cornicing. These details and high quality materials are considered to be traditional and appropriately suited to the context of Seven Dials. A small portion of grilles has also been sensitively incorporated within the design to allow for the appropriate ventilation of the retail store. The grilles will be painted to matched the proposed shopfront.

Development Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) seeks development within conservation

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areas to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the wider historic environment and buildings, spaces and features of local historic value. The building is not statutorily listed but is recognised as a 'positive contributor' to the character and appearance of Seven Dials conservation area. The proposal has been carefully considered in light of this designation and the assessment completed by consultants Asset Heritage. The proposal is sympathetic in its detailed design and proportion while careful not to detrimentally impact upon the building's historic interest. The proposed refurbishment works to the existing shopfront on Neal Street would be carefully restored to preserve its historic interest while the proposed works to Shorts Garden would provide a positive enhancement to the surrounding character of the conservation area.

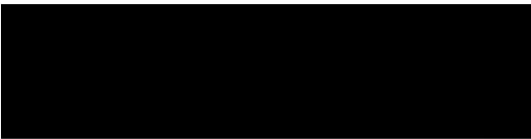
Development Policy DP30 (Shopfronts) expects a high standard of design in new and altered shop front design. Specific design consideration should be given to the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and those surrounding properties. The proposal has been carefully designed to ensure the preservation and enhancement of conservation area, while meeting the needs of future retailers; this being to maximise customer views into the long and slender retail unit. The proposed return frontage further allows pedestrians to 'see through' the building onto each street before turning the corner allowing for increased customer interest and improved natural surveillance. The historic signage fronting Shorts Gardens will be retained and refurbished where necessary upon inspection. The proposed shopfront and new fascia sign will not be illuminated and therefore falls under deemed consented, Class 5 of Schedule 3 of the Advertisements Regulations 2007.

Conclusion

This application seeks planning permission for the refurbishment of the existing Neal Street shopfront and installation of a new shopfront fronting Shorts Gardens. The proposal has been sympathetically designed to follow the historic design and detail of the existing building, therefore ensuring that the development preserves and enhances the historic interest of the building and surrounding conservation area. The proposal would allow for a positive improvement to the trading space of the existing retail accommodation at ground floor; improving internal daylight levels and maximising internal views from passing footfall along Shorts Gardens.

We trust that the application along with its submitted information is sufficient for the Council to validate the application and we look forward to a swift and positive outcome. However, should you require any further information or would like to arrange a site visit, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully



Rupert Litherland  
Rolfe Judd Planning Limited

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Encl. Cheque for £195.00