

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2017/1030/P	Meredith Whitten on behalf of the Covent Garden Community Association	Covent Garden Community Association 42 Earlham Street WC2H 9LA	20/03/2017 14:55:15	OBJ	<p>The CGCA strongly objects to the installation of a public call box at this location adjacent to the conservation area.</p> <p>(1) Although these proposals fall outside the conservation area, the development is adjacent to the conservation area and, thus, would have a negative impact on the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area, which goes against Camden's planning policy. DP25.9 specifies that "The Council will therefore not permit development in locations outside conservation areas that it considers would cause harm to the character, appearance or setting of such an area." Like other areas in Camden, Covent Garden has its own character and identity (CS9.1). The proposed telephone box fails to preserve or enhance the historic nature and unique character of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area (CS5, CS9, CS14). According to DP24, careful consideration must be given to the characteristics of a development site, features of local distinctiveness, and the wider context in order to achieve high-quality development which integrates into its surroundings. Camden's planning policy is clear that the Council expects development to retain the distinctive characters of the conservation area and new development must contribute positively to this (DP25, CPG1 2.6 and CPG1 2.9).</p> <p>(2) In the cover letter, the applicant states that the proposed location for the call box "is not in a conservation area or within the setting of any heritage asset" (see p. 4). However, as discussed in (1) above, the proposed location is adjacent to the conservation area. Additionally, the proposed location is adjacent to listed buildings, which are heritage assets. Thus, the CGCA refutes the applicant's claim.</p> <p>(2) The proposed telephone box would result in visual street clutter that goes against Camden's aim of reducing visual street clutter (see Streetscape Design Manual, Chapter 4). Such street clutter has a significantly adverse effect on the appearance of the streetscape and the amenity of the area. CS17.5 also specifies that the design of streets, public areas, and the spaces between buildings needs to be uncluttered.</p> <p>(3) The proposed telephone box would further contribute to visual clutter as its primary function would be to serve as an advertising presence. CPG1 para 8.9 says advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings require 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.</p> <p>(4) Further, the proposed public call box presents a safety hazard, as it obstructs the flow of pedestrian traffic, as well as wheelchairs and prams, at this location, which experiences high footfall. Whilst the applicant claims a need for public call boxes still exists, the research and data contradict the need for increasing the number of call boxes. According to Ofcom, the money that BT received from phone boxes went down by nearly half between 2000 and 2006. Further, Ofcom's 2016 Communications Market Report found that 93 percent of UK adults own or use a mobile phone in the UK; 71 percent of adults own a smartphone. Research in 2013 also found that only 3 percent of UK residents made a call from a public phone box in the previous month. The evidence strongly supports that the number of public call boxes should be reduced, not increased.</p>