

AMENITY GROUP CONSULTATION COMMENTS

Date 24 July 2017

Planning Application Address & Number

Pavement outside 10 Great Queen Street WC2B 5DG – 2017/3556/P

Proposal

Installation of 1 x telephone kiosk on the pavement.

COMMENTS

(1) The CGCA objects to the installation of a public call box at this location adjacent to the conservation area. This would be a new structure on the public highway, e.g. it is not replacing an existing phone box.

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.

(2) Further, 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. The location selected has a number of public art "stones," on which pedestrians sit (see photo).

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.

(3) Great Queen Street experiences excessively high



footfall, as it is a primary route between Holborn station and Covent Garden, notably the Piazza. Indeed, Transport for London advertises that people who want to visit Covent Garden should alight at Holborn station (and not Covent Garden station, which is often closed due to overcrowding and at times is even exit only). Further, as the attached photo shows, the footfall is so high that pedestrians are regularly seen walking in the road. Adding more clutter to the pavement will only exacerbate this safety concern.

(4) The CGCA notes that part of Great Queen Street lies in the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area and part of the road falls in the Kingsway Conservation Area. Only a small part of the street – three shopfronts in width – falls outside the boundaries of both conservation area. Yet, although these proposals fall outside the conservation area, the development would be visible from within both conservation areas and, thus, would have a negative impact on the setting and character of both, particularly the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. This 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.”

Comments submitted by

Meredith Whitten on behalf of the Covent Garden Community Association

0781 014 3326

meredith@coventgarden.org.uk