

THE CHING COURT ASSOCIATION

19-25 Mercer Street, and 1-19 Shelton Street, and 45-75 Monmouth Street, and 2-5 Ching Court
in Seven Dials, Covent Garden, London WC2H
email: info@ChingCourt.com

Samir Benmbarek
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Floor 2, 5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

Via: Samir.Benmbarek@camden.gov.uk

19th January 2017

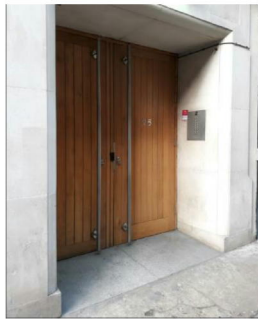
Dear Mr. Benmbarek,

Objection to application no. 2017/6997/P, 25 Shelton Street London WC2H 9HW

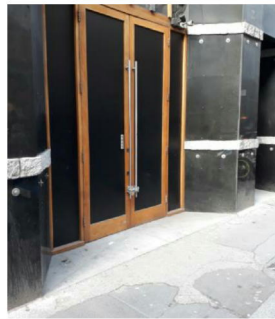
As the association representing several offices and more than 20 dwellings not far from these premises, five of which belong to families with children, we ask you to refuse this application as it stands.

We understand that the new owners of the building wish to freshen-up its appearance, and we support this. However, while the aesthetics of the redesigned shopfront are acceptable, we believe that the design of the doorways in terms of crime prevention requires revision.

The application includes replacement of three doors opening to the street, all of which are recessed as these photographs show:



Doorway to flats



Doorway to shop



Doorway to refuse room

The doors will be made of new materials to match a new finish on the walls around them. However, the doorways as shown in the applicant's plans would be recessed in the same sort of way. We ask that all these doorways be redesigned to be flush with the building line.

You will be aware of the appalling safety issues that have escalated in the Seven Dials area during 2016 and 2017, mainly related to street drug crime. To alleviate these, we have already had emergency works done to a recessed gateway nearby in Shelton Street that was acting as a hub for gang activity including violence at night. A permanent solution, more appropriate to the conservation area, is being designed to eliminate the recess.

And our residents are working on plans to add gates or bring forward doors on other recessed doorways in Shelton Street and Mercer Street that attract antisocial behaviour, drug taking, drug dealing and violence on a regular basis. This activity actually prevents people from entering and leaving their homes, as numerous 999 calls attest.

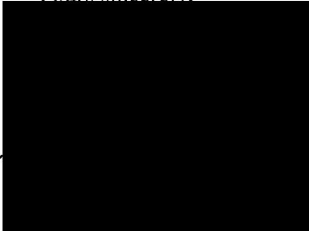
Likewise, the Cambridge theatre next to 25 Shelton Street is considering how to eliminate recesses from its fire doors and stage door.

These exercises are supported by the police. But, to be effective, everyone needs to play their part. If 25 Shelton Street retains recessed doorways, the problem of street drug crime is much less likely to fall to a manageable level in the area. Drug activity already takes place in the recesses at 25 Shelton Street because they are quite deep and well hidden by parked cars. One resident there even reported that a female addict had threatened to tell the police, falsely, that he had tried to rape her when he politely tried to move her from the entrance to the refuse room so that he could enter.

We understand that your own planning policy (eg: under CPG Section 9 'Designing safer environments') discourages recesses because of these sorts of problems. Solutions such as bringing the doors forward, allowing the doors to open inwards, or using grille shutters or collapsible gates are all suggested. Please ask the applicant to consider such options and find one that is appropriate to change or adapt each of these doorways while they are rebuilding them anyway.

Our community is already under a lot of pressure, as you know, with residents and local business workers finding the situation with street crime quite difficult and often frightening. We appeal to you to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,



*Please post any hard copy documents to 21 Mercer Street, London WC2H 9QR
email address: info@ChingCourt.com*