

| Application No: | Consultees Name: | Consultees Addr: | Received: | Comment: | Response: |
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| 2018/0321/P | Meredith Whitten on behalf of the Covent Garden Community Association | Covent Garden Community Association 42 Earlham Street WC2H 9LA | 14/02/2018 18:04:56 | OBJ | <p>The CGCA strongly objects to the installation of a telephone kiosk at this prominent location in the conservation area.</p> <p>(1) The phone kiosk is unnecessary, as the proposed location is near other existing phone boxes. The applicant has not made a case at all that justifies why an additional phone kiosk is needed so near existing ones.</p> <p>(2) Like other areas in Camden, Covent Garden has its own character and identity (Local Plan D1 & D2). The proposed telephone kiosk fails to preserve or enhance the historic nature and unique character of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area (D1 & D2). According to Local Plan policy D1, 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. Para 7.46 of the Local Plan (see D2) specifies that the Council "will only grant planning permission for development in Camden's conservation areas that preserves and enhances the special character or appearance of the area." Also see CPG1 2.6 and CPG1 2.9.</p> <p>(3) The proposed telephone kiosk would result in visual street clutter that detracts from the character of the conservation area and 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. Local Plan policy C5 also specifies that the design of streets, public areas, and the spaces between buildings needs to be uncluttered.</p> <p>(4) The proposed telephone kiosk would further continue to visual clutter as its primary function would be to serve as an advertising presence. Indeed, the location chosen is a high-traffic area, both in terms of vehicles and pedestrians. 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>(5) Further, the proposed telephone kiosk 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.</p> <p>(6) Finally, as the Metropolitan Police have noted – and to which local residents can attest – phone boxes and kiosks are heavily used for crime and antisocial behaviour. As police constable and Design Out Crime Officer Jim Cope says, phone boxes in Camden are "crime generators" (see Met Police comments). Phone boxes and kiosks conceal criminal behaviour, including drug activity.</p> <p>Whilst the applicant claims a need for telephone kiosks still exists, the research and data contradict the need for increasing the number of public phone boxes and kiosks. According to Ofcom, for example, 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.</p> |

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The evidence strongly supports that the number of public telephone boxes and kiosks should be reduced, not increased.
