

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2018/0871/P	Ricci de Freitas	62C Marchmont Street WC1N 1AB	01/03/2018 16:18:29	OBJ	<p>The Marchmont Association objects in the strongest terms to the proposed replacement of the existing unsightly, redundant, New World telephone kiosk outside 40 Bernard Street with another even larger, unnecessary telephone kiosk.</p> <p>We have been lobbying Camden Council and BT for several years to remove all five kiosks in this location, including the one owned by New World, firstly because they have long been rendered redundant by the universal usage of mobile phones, and secondly because they occupy 50% of the footway which should be available for use by pedestrians. The kiosks have become glorified advertising hoardings in recent years. We believe the main source of income from these kiosks is advertising, as opposed to their intended purpose, phone calls, although BT has consistently refused to release details of telephone usage. They have also been abused excessively by the sex industry to promote services to the public, exposing the many children and young people who pass by them every day to offensive imagery, which the phone companies have been unwilling or unable to prevent.</p> <p>Pedestrian traffic along the footway outside 40 Bernard Street has grown exponentially in recent years, corresponding with the arrival of two extremely successful commercial outlets, which attract customers in droves – namely Tesco Express and Prêt à Manger. Camden Council responded positively to our request to relocate cycle stands from the middle of the footway to the kerb side which significantly increased pedestrian space, although the 5 kiosks continued to reduce the passing space by 50% in the most congested section of the footway (see attached photos).</p> <p>Other factors which have increased pedestrian footfall in this area include the growth in visitors/tourists staying in the area's many hotels and two large back-packers' hostels, as well as the throngs of visitors to our local World Heritage site, the British Museum, most of whom arrive at Russell Square station, directly opposite 40 Bernard Street, where they make use of the shops and ATM (see photo).</p> <p>Student numbers attending the University of London have also increased exponentially in recent years, with many students staying in halls of residence and other residential properties accessed via Bernard Street.</p> <p>There are frequently days when the footway outside 40 Bernard Street is impassable. The proposed replacement kiosk represents a missed opportunity to remove the existing redundant eyesore and create much needed space on this congested footway.</p> <p>Focussing on the design of the proposed kiosk, although it might appear to be more practical than the existing unit in terms of disabled access, it is not required in this location, which is already adequately served by wi-fi reception.</p> <p>The proposed kiosk also has a larger footprint than the existing object, which would take up even more valuable pedestrian space.</p> <p>The proposed illuminated advertising screen is completely at odds with the character of the area. The kiosk also faces a row of Georgian houses dating from the 1790s, all still fully occupied by residents, whose amenity would be affected detrimentally by such advertisements. The terrace, including Russell Square station, is also listed as a positive contributor to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. No such advertising has been permitted in this locality, despite many attempts by the occupants of the adjacent commercial properties over the years.</p>

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The Marchmont Association fully supports Camden Council's policies which aim to promote respect for and protection of the historical character of Bloomsbury, which has recently been significantly enhanced by the refurbishment of the Grade II* listed former Hotel Russell on the corner of Bernard Street and Russell Square, diagonally opposite 40 Bernard Street. The introduction of illuminated advertising hoardings would therefore be an affront to the conservation of the historical character of the vicinity.

We call upon the Council to reject this application and to use its powers to eradicate the existing kiosk and other such redundant kiosks from our local streets.
