

# SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR IMPROVED WINDOWS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST NOISE POLLUTION

FLAT 2, 13 SHELTON STREET, London, WC2H 9JN

## Background:

This report supports a formal application to Camden Council for the upgrading of the windows in Flat 2, 13 Shelton street.

**This application for the upgrading of the two-layer windows is to make the flat a healthier and safer living environment.**

The current double window units offer very little protection against the loud street level noise and the range and pitch of noises experienced daily inside this property.

As will be seen in this report, Shelton Street and 13 Shelton Street is subjected to a range of loud noise, the combination of which is probably unique in London.

The application will request the fitting of the necessary glass to a specification to prevent noise pollution, which will be prepared by a firm who specialises in producing such windows in hardwood timber which match existing historic designs.

The current owner of the property, who does not rent out the flat, and is a permanent resident to the area, is finding the level of noise is preventing him from sleeping, which is affecting both his mental and physical health. Effects of the lack of sleep include heightened stress levels and cognitive underperformance during the day. The long-term health consequences of this lack of sufficient sleep will only increase unless remedial action to better soundproof the windows takes place.

## Introduction:

Anyone moving into a flat in Central London can assume there will be some noise from traffic. As a side road, Shelton Street appears to escape large volumes of traffic when visited during the day or evening.



**13 Shelton Street**  
**View from St Martins Lane**



**13 Shelton Street**  
**View towards St Martins Lane**

The flat itself has two layers of windows to the front of the building and one would assume that this would deal with most of external noise.

But, as soon as one becomes a resident, it is very clear the noise from the street far exceeds what would be reasonably anticipated. The types of noise, and their levels, vary continuously which makes it very difficult to acclimatise and ignore the sounds, as one could with traffic noise alone.

### History of the building

The building was constructed before the current and varied range of prevalent motor transport, and the existing double windows appear to date back to that era. The existing double window arrangement does not provide residents with the necessary protection from today's range of noises.

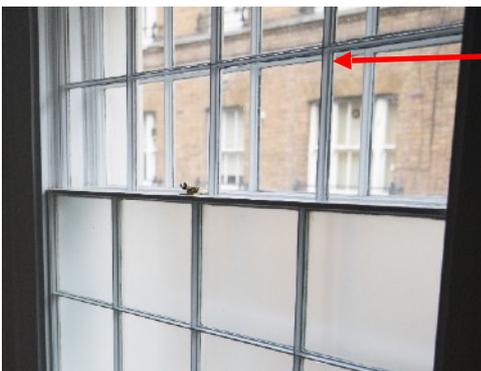
### The existing windows at 13 Shelton Street

The existing 'double windows' are a historic attempt to limit the level of direct noise pollution in the residential apartments. This double window system does not provide protection from the level of noise pollution that is now prevalent in Shelton Street.



External view

One of 2 windows



Internal view

One of 2 windows



Internal view

Showing existing solution to noise pollution... which is failing...double window frames

Development since the implantation of double windows and upgrade by Terry Farrel

Health and safety legislation has developed substantially and the understanding of what is and is not acceptable for the health of people in general, in the work place and in residential buildings is now at a higher level.

Cognitive neuroscience has also developed substantially which shows unequivocally that sleep deprivation and noise, particularly repetitive noise can destabilise the human brain and cause substantial mental health issues.

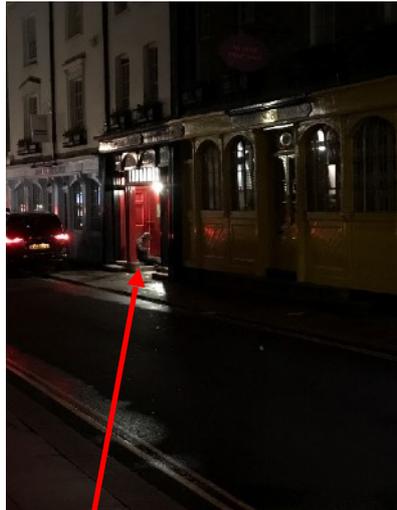
[A precedent was set in February 2018 \(Full planning permission - Application Number 2018/0371/P\) which acknowledged that urgent and immediate action was needed to modernise the historic buildings in 11 - 19 Shelton Street to provide for the health and safety of its residents due to changes in the local environment.](#)

The entrance way to the flats at 13 to 17 Shelton Street has just been granted planning permission to change the design providing two new entrances for residents and a new gateway, to prevent the very large number of drug addicts from using this area to take their drugs both during the day and during the night: these drug addicts were preventing residents from entering or leaving their flats in safety.

The prevalence of street drug addicts in Shelton Street has increased dramatically over the past two years, and their use of Ching Court was at epidemic proportions. This was a daily scene in the Ching Court entrance which affected the health and safety of residents.



**Two addicts entering, Ching Court entrance**



**Same two addicts preparing to take illicit substances (possibly heroin, cocaine or spice). Any resident wanting to enter their flat must literally walk over them**

This approved planning request recognises that modern technology and materials need to be part of the solution and in this instance will include the replacing of the old brass entry phone system and plates with a modern, video enabled entry phone system. There will also be the building of an internal corridor which will include upgraded security glass from the original glass.

This planning approval made this year, 2018, recognises the need to bring the 13-17 Shelton Street construction up to a modern standard, to deal with modern day problems which are

affecting the health and safety of residents who make the choice to live in the buildings at 11 - 19 Shelton Street.

### The intrusive noises

Residents in Shelton Street and 13 Shelton Street in particular are subjected to a range of noise pollution which has increased substantially even in the past 5 years. An additional factor is that a modern commercial rubbish depot has been given planning permission to operate directly opposite the windows of 13 Shelton Street.

Some of the noise is low level, but still cannot be ignored by someone trying to sleep because of the continual change in both noise levels and the wide spectrum of noise types.

Here is a list of the noises currently being experienced by 13 Shelton Street:

**NB. Most of these photographs were taken over one 48-hour period from one of the bedroom Windows of 13 Shelton Street**

### Traffic noise

This is accepted as part of living in Central London. The problem with 13 Shelton street, it is part of the stopping point for traffic waiting to go into the junction at the end of Shelton Street into Upper Saint Martin's Lane. As can be seen by the traffic chain in this photograph



**Junction Shelton Street and Upper Saint Martin's lane:** This causes a tail back of traffic, particularly around traditional 'closing times' with the result that cars with engines running and music on remain directly outside the 13 Shelton Street windows until the junction clears

<b><u>Noise penetration:</u></b>	<b>High</b>
<b><u>Duration:</u></b>	<b>10pm to 2am</b>
<b><u>Proximity to windows:</u></b>	<b>5 Metres (at closest point)</b>

### Music from cars

The sound systems in cars are much louder and sharper than ever. Cars drive along with their windows open in the early hours and this music immediately penetrates the existing two layers of glass in 13 Shelton Street. An example is seen in this next photograph of a car waiting directly outside 13 Shelton Street at about 12am, with its window open



**Music from cars:** The power of sound systems has increased substantially in the last decade. Drivers play these with their windows open.

**Example:** Here the nearside window is fully open - music is on 'full blast' and the car is in a stationary queue waiting to enter the junction at the end of Shelton Street.

**Noise penetration:** Very high

**Duration:** 10pm to 2am

**Proximity to windows:** 5 Metres (at

### Street cleaners

The design of vehicles to clean streets has resulted in the development of efficient large scale **industrial street cleaners** and these are being used in Shelton Street. They have replaced the much quieter hand cart used for street cleaning.

These new vehicles make a substantial noise. These street cleaners can be easily heard from 11pm to 6am. An example of such a street cleaner outside 13 Shelton Street can be seen here.



**New large industrial street cleaners** make a substantial noise from the brushes used to clean the road and the suction engines to draw up the dirt. The other problem is they move very slowly, so the sound is loud and constant over a longer period

**Noise penetration:** Very high

**Noise duration:** 10pm to 4am

**Proximity to windows:** 6 Metres (at closest point)

### Talking loudly, singing, shouting and fights

This is to be expected and people shouting, singing, laughing continues to the early hours. This noise exists every evening until about 1am

### Drug addicts in the street

This is not to be expected to the level that it happens in Shelton Street. **Shelton street is used by about 20 to 40 street drug addicts a day** who walk down the street either to cut through the Seven Dials area or to take their drugs

This means that residents are often subjected to drug addicts, under the influence of psychotic drugs, screaming at the top of their voice.

This photograph is of one such addict taken on Friday evening who screamed at the top of his voice for about half an hour, late at night. It is common for these addicts to also scream at each other, have fights, between individuals and gangs in the street and these sounds immediately penetrate 13 Shelton Street. This can happen at any time between 10pm and 6am.



Drug addicts, screaming/fighting This drug addict screamed out loud for about 30 minutes. It would have been impossible to sleep during this period. These addicts frequently use Shelton Street throughout the day and night.

Noise penetration: Very high

Noise duration: 10.00pm to 6am

Proximity to windows: 15 Metres

### Bicycle taxis with external stereo systems

This is a very new development and one unique to the West End. Bicycle taxis fitted with powerful sound systems have become a common site in Shelton Street. Because the bicycles and their carriages are open at the back, the sound systems are not muffled and the music is very, very loud, again penetrating straight through the existing two layers of windows in 13 Shelton Street.

It is not uncommon to get a number of these bicycle taxis travelling at any one time down the street, boosting the loud sound even further during the hours of sleep. These bicycles work until about 2am.

The pictures below show the type of bicycle taxis that are using Shelton Street.



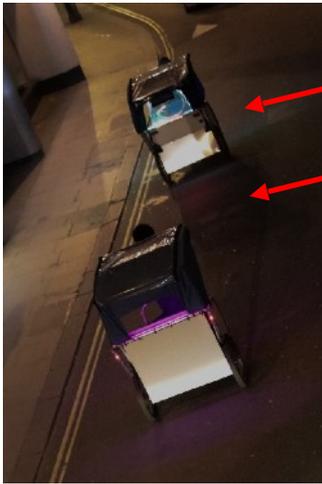
Bicycle taxis are now a common feature in the West End and frequently use Shelton Street.

Musical bicycle taxis, of which this is one, are a new addition. They now carry loud sound systems to attract/entertain their customers

Noise penetration: Very high

Noise duration: 10pm to 2am

Proximity to windows: 5 Metres (at closest point)



One musical bicycle taxi going past 13 Shelton Street is a substantial problem in terms of noise penetration.

Often there will be two or three in the street at a time.

### Old drain cover

A seemingly minor feature is a faulty/loose drain cover about 10 metres from 13 Shelton Street. Because of its position it is driven over continually and causes a continual thudding/clicking noise of steel hitting steel throughout sleep hours, 10pm to 7am. Once one becomes aware of the continual thudding/clicking noise it is then very difficult to mentally switch off and ignore it.



### The commercial refuse depot for deposit and collection of commercial waste

This is a relatively recent development and unique to 13 Shelton Street.

Directly opposite 13 Shelton Street is a refuse collection and deposit centre for local commercial buildings and restaurants.

This facility is not in any way evident to a person first deciding whether to live in Shelton Street as a permanent resident or not. From outside all anyone sees is two large gates and vehicles parked inside.

The reality of living opposite this refuse depot means that it is impossible to recover from any lack of sleep during the night. At about 5.30 to 5.45am workers start bringing in large refuse trolleys full of rubbish and taking out empty trolleys.

The noise these trolleys make penetrates the building immediately. The next problem is that after 7am up to three large refuse trucks come to take away the rubbish, one truck for general rubbish, one for recycled rubbish, and one for glass. When the glass refuse lorry crushes the loaded glass, the resulting noise is substantial.

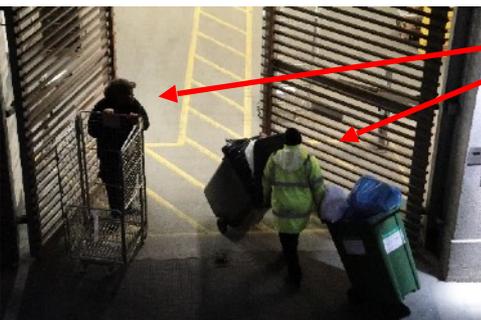


13 Shelton Street, directly opposite a modern Commercial rubbish depot



Commercial refuse depot workers start taking out empty metal cages and large plastic bins to local commercial buildings. This is directly opposite 13 Shelton Street

Noise penetration:	Very high
Noise duration:	5.30am to 8am
Proximity to windows:	7 Metres



Commercial refuse depot workers taking out empty bins and others bringing back full bins

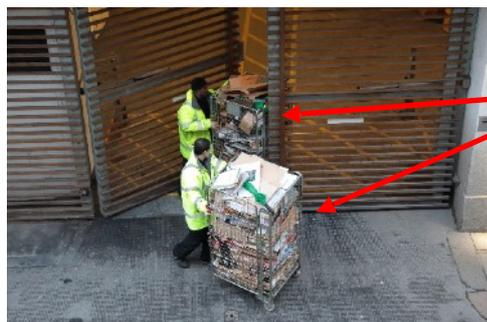
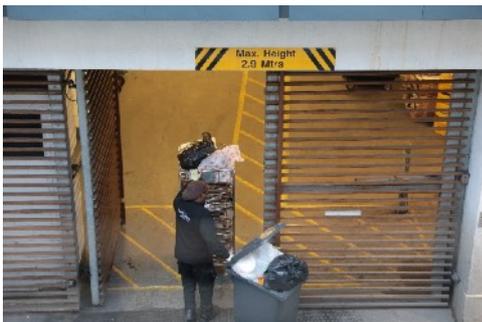


Refuse Depot workers bringing back full bins - metal cages make the most noise (directly outside windows of 13 Shelton Street)

Noise penetration of plastic bins: High

Noise penetration of metal cages: Very high

Noise duration: 5.30am to 8am



Refuse Depot workers bringing back full bins - metal cages make the most noise, two metal cages together even more so

Noise penetration of plastic bins: High

Noise penetration of metal cages: Very high

Noise duration: 5.30am to 8am

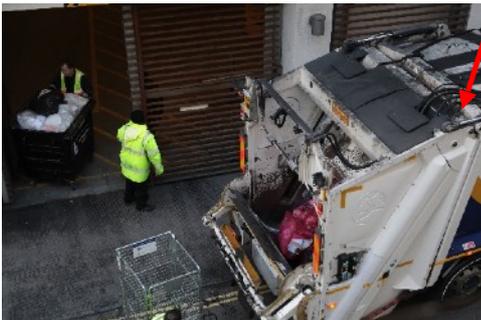
Proximity to windows: 7 Metres

### Commercial refuse depot for collection of commercial waste

The second impact that this commercial rubbish depot directly opposite the windows of 13 Shelton Street causes, is that it is also the location where three large commercial 'Bin Lorries' come to collect the waste.

There appear to be three separate collections daily

- General commercial waste
- Recycled waste
- Glass waste



Three commercial refuse collection carts (two of which are seen here) collect the rubbish from the rubbish depot directly opposite 13 Shelton Street. There are up to three individual collections, one for general rubbish, one for recycling and one for glass.

The rubbish is then 'ground' and 'compacted' by the refuse lorries directly outside the windows of 13 Shelton Street.

<u>Number of lorries visiting:</u>	3
<u>Noise penetration of lorries:</u>	Very high
<u>Noise penetration of glass lorry:</u>	Very high
<u>Noise duration:</u>	6.30am to 8am
<u>Proximity to windows:</u>	6 Metres

Any one of these noises are an issue and are currently penetrating the double window system at 13 Shelton Street.

The combination of these noises and sounds outside 13 Shelton Street on a 24-hour basis present a real danger to the health and safety of the residents. The resulting lack of sleep impacts upon both mental and physical health.

### Overview of times of noise outside the residential windows of 13 Shelton Street

#### Detailing:

- Times of noise duration which vary depending on day
- Level of noise penetration through the current two layers of windows

The noise range is most prevalent between three approximate time bands

**10pm to 2am** - Modern car sound systems with or without open car windows, people shouting, people screaming, drug addicts screaming/fighting, Musical bicycle taxis with open air sound systems, large industrial street suction cleaners, clicking of loose steel manhole cover

**2am to 5.30am** - General traffic, clicking of loose, steel manhole cover, people talking loudly/fighting, drug addicts screaming/having arguments/fights, large industrial street suction cleaners

**5.30am to 8am** - Clicking of steel manhole cover, operation of commercial rubbish depot, the moving of large metal rubbish cages, moving of large rubbish bins, the collection of rubbish by three different refuse lorries who then grind their rubbish directly outside the windows.

### Historic noise pollution for 13 Shelton Street and still current/ongoing

- People laughing/shouting** - Duration: **10pm to 2am** - Noise penetration: **Low to very high**
- Traffic with loud music playing** - Duration: **10pm to 2am** - Noise penetration: **Medium to very high**
- Traffic** - Duration: **10pm to 8am** - Noise penetration: **Medium**
- Clicking of old manhole cover** - Duration: **10pm to 8am** - Noise penetration: **Medium**

### New noise pollution for 13 Shelton Street and current/ongoing

- Large Industrial street cleaners** - Duration: **10pm to 8am** - Noise penetration: **High**
- Drug addicts screaming** - Duration: **10pm to 4am** - Noise penetration: **High to very high**
- Bicycle taxis with sound system** - Duration: **10pm to 2am** - Noise penetration: **High to very high**
- Refuse plastic bins on pavement** - Duration: **5.30am to 7am** - Noise penetration: **Medium**
- Refuse metal cages on pavement** - Duration: **5.30am to 7am** - Noise penetration: **High to very high**
- Refuse lorries, two general** - Duration: **7am to 8am** - Noise penetration: **High**
- Refuse lorry, one for glass** - Duration: **7am to 8am** - Noise penetration: **Very High**

### **Summary**

There is noise throughout the night. Some of the noise is 'natural city noise' traffic moving, people talking, laughing, sometimes shouting... and is acceptable as the 'price one pays' for living in the centre of a large city.

However, a lot of the noise experienced is unique to the West End and to Shelton Street/13 Shelton Street; it is this that greatly impacts health and safety of the residents of 13 Shelton Street.

This is despite the current windows in question having double windows on the front of the building.

## There is 'new noise'

Some of the key noises being experienced now, did not exist even 10 years ago, which is many years after the installation of the double window system currently in place in the property and the upgrading by Terry Farrell redevelopment of the area.

This new noise pollution particularly impacts health and safety:

- Drug addicts intoxicated by spice and other psychotic drugs, screaming and fighting,
- Large industrial street cleaners
- Musical bicycle taxis with open air sound systems
- A commercial rubbish depot where large metal caged trolleys are pushed in and out (which has been built directly opposite 13 Shelton Street)
- Three separate rubbish collections, which 'compact' and 'grind' rubbish including glass.

The combination of all these noises together, all outside 13 Shelton Street, is probably unique in London.

## Overview of distances between noise sources and the windows of the application

People laughing/shouting - Distance to windows: 5 metres (closest point)

Traffic with loud music playing - Distance to windows: 6 metres (closest point)

Traffic - Distance to windows: 6 metres (closest point)

Clicking of faulty manhole - Distance to windows: 10 metres (fixed point)

Large Industrial street cleaners - Distance to windows: 6 metres (closest point)

Drug addicts screaming - Distance to windows: 5 metres (closest point)

Bicycle taxis with sound system - Distance to windows: 6 metres (closest point)

Commercial rubbish depot - Distance to windows: 7 metres (fixed point)

Refuse trolleys along pavement- Distance to windows: 7 metres (closest point)

Refuse lorries, two general - Distance to windows: 6 metres (fixed point)

Refuse lorry, one for glass - Distance to windows: 6 metres (fixed point)

**Summary:** The distances between the source of the noise disturbances and the windows of the application 13 Shelton Street are very narrow because of the narrow width of the street overall. They range from between 5 metres and 10 metres.

Some of the sounds carry long distances and can be heard 20 to 30 metres away such as the musical taxis, the crushing of glass by refuse lorries in Upper Saint Martin's Lane, and the fighting and screaming of drug addicts.

Other sounds are at a fixed point, the worst being the commercial rubbish depot which is approximately only 7 metres from the windows of the application. This means it is impossible to sleep from about 5.30am onwards.

## Conclusion

### This application is about Health and safety.

The noise pollution experienced by residents at 13 Shelton Street is greatly impacting the immediate health and safety of the residents. The result of the high level of noise pollution is sleep deprivation which is negatively impacting both mental and physical health and this will continue to worsen.

**The existing double window system in 13 Shelton Street does not protect residents from the current level of noise pollution.**

**The combination and variety of sounds making up the noise pollution experienced by 13 Shelton Street is unique:**

Very few locations in the UK, on top of the usual night time street sounds of traffic and late night revellers, also suffer from a series of unique 'noise pollutants' namely:

- **Bicycle taxis with external sound systems playing loud music to attract customers**
- **Drug addicts high on spice and other synthetic drugs screaming, shouting and fighting**
- **Large industrial suction street cleaners**
- **A new commercial rubbish depot (directly opposite 13 Shelton Street) which a) uses large industrial metal trollies pushed by hand through the street and b) has three collections by separate waste lorries all of which grind/compact their rubbish (directly opposite 13 Shelton Street)**

The severity of the unique problems faced by 13 Shelton Street and how these are affecting the health and safety of residents daily, 24/7 has recently been recognised as being a serious issue, requiring new solutions, as can be seen by a planning application approval in February 2018 to upgrade the entrance way to 11 to 19 Shelton Street. This was another health and safety issue, namely the threat of attack by drug addicts for residents of 11 to 19 Shelton Street, including 13 Shelton Street.

Residents of 13 Shelton Street cannot escape the noise pollution with the current historic two window system. It takes place, quite literally 24/7, although it is during the night-time/sleeping hours of 10pm to 8am, when residential streets should fall quiet, that the excessive noise pollution in Shelton Street becomes the biggest problem. This leads to immediate and cumulative sleep deprivation to residents of 13 Shelton Street.