

MR/P7447
24 May 2019

Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

Dear Sirs

Thomas Neal's Centre, 35 Earlham Street, London, WC2H 9LD

Advertisement application and listed building consent for the display of new façade graphics and text to the exterior of Thomas Neal's Centre

Planning Portal Ref: PP-07873303 and PP-07873309

On behalf of our client, Kerb Food Limited, we write in support of an application for advertisement and listed building consent for signage at the Thomas Neal's Centre, 35 Earlham Street, London, WC2H 9LD.

The application has been submitted electronically online via the Planning Portal along with the following documents for the Council's consideration:

- Planning Application Forms – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning
- Site Location Plan – prepared by Stiff and Trevillion Architects
- Existing & Proposed Drawings – prepared by Stiff and Trevillion Architects
- Photomontage – prepared by Stiff and Trevillion Architects
- Historic Photographic Sheet – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning

The requisite fee of £132 for advertisement consent has been submitted to the Council online. Accordingly, no fee is required for Listed Building Consent.

Site Location and Existing Use

This application refers to the historic warehouse building of Thomas Neal's Centre which comprises a variety of uses ranging from predominantly commercial retail (Class A1) and restaurant (Class A3) accommodation at basement and ground floors, to office (Class B1) and residential (Class C3) accommodation located on the building's upper floors. This application refers to the exterior façade of the building along Shorts Gardens and Earlham Street.

Thomas Neal's Centre is Grade II Listed and is located within the Covent Garden (Seven Dials)

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Conservation Area. Historic England describes the building, also known as The Craft Centre, as follows:

“Warehouse, probably originally a brewery; now a crafts centre. Mid C19. Stock brick; roof not visible. 3 storeys. 19 bays to Earlham Street, No.43 with splayed corner and return to Neal Street. Shorts Gardens elevation of 2 storeys. Brick band above ground floor. Segmental headed windows and doorways, those to ground floor on Earlham Street elevation set in segmental headed reveals. INTERIOR: internal structure comprises brick barrel vaults supported by cast-iron columns. Nos 29-41 (odd) and Nos 8-26 (even) Shorts Gardens were listed on 10/03/88”

Much of existing unit has been stripped back internally and has limited identified original or historic features. The existing floor is concrete and the adjoining party walls are constructed from modern block work. Similarly, it is recognised that the existing elevations are a mixture of original and modern brick work, much of which was implemented as part of the wider refurbishment works undertaken in the 1980's and 1990s.

Planning History

Having reviewed the Council's online planning database, numerous applications have been granted consent for external listed building works over the past 10 years. Those recent consents deemed to be of relevance to this application are detailed below:

On 16th February 1989, planning permission (ref. 8800273) was granted for *“the refurbishment alteration, extension, and change of use to provide a mixed development comprising theatre, residential, retail, restaurant and business uses”*. An associated listed building consent was also issued for works to the historic building (ref. 8870111).

On 11th April 1996, advertisement consent (ref. 9580173R1) was granted for *“the display of 6 externally illuminated projecting signs on the Earlham Street frontage”*.

On 17th July 2003, advertisement consent (ref. ASX0205379/A) was granted for the *“display of external painted banner signage”* at Thomas Neal's Centre.

On 16th July 2003, advertisement consent (ref. ASX0205376/A) was granted for the *“installation and display of externally and internally illuminated signage.”* at Thomas Neal's Centre.

On 5th June 2010, comprehensive works to the Thomas Neal's Centre was consented by the Council for *“internal and external works in association with use of shopping mall including Class A1 shop units and former ancillary circulation space at basement and ground floor (including 80sq.m of additional floor space created by part infilling to atrium at ground floor) for Class A1 (retail) use, dual use of existing Class A3 kiosk for either Class A3 (café) use or Class A1 (retail) use, change of use of 18sq.m of Class A1 (retail) floor space to Class D1 (theatre use) and erection of solar panels to the inward facing roof slope adjacent to Shorts Gardens”* (ref. 2010/2716/P and 2010/2742/L).

The above applications are not exhaustive and it is clear the existing exterior façade of the Thomas Neal Centre has been vastly altered during the wider refurbishment works undertaken in the 1980s alongside numerous signage requirements. Please refer to the submitted historic photographs for further evidence of those alterations to the existing façade.

Proposal

The application seeks advertisement and listed building consent for the display of new façade graphics and text to the exterior of the listed building. For the Council's reference, each aspect of the proposed signage is referenced and detailed below:

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- SG_001 – Shorts Gardens Text
 - Replacement text to the Shorts Gardens façade of the building
 - ‘Thomas Neals’ text to be replaced with ‘seven dials market’
 - Text to be painted on with wash on/removable paint
 - 7344mm height, 560mm width
- SG_003 – Shorts Gardens Artwork
 - New artwork mural on the Shorts Gardens façade of the building, and part Neal Street
 - Artwork to be painted on with wash on/removable paint
 - 6000mm height, 7000mm width
- ES_001 – Earlham Street Text
 - Replacement text to the Earlham Street façade of the building
 - ‘Thomas Neals’ text to be replaced with ‘seven dials market’
 - Text to be painted on with wash on/removable paint
 - 6631mm height, 506mm width
- ES_002 – Earlham Street Text
 - Replacement text to the Earlham Street façade of the building
 - ‘Thomas Neals’ text to be replaced with ‘seven dials market’
 - Text to be painted on with wash on/removable paint
 - 6631mm height, 506mm width

Please refer to the submitted drawings for further details and context of the proposed signage.

Policy Considerations

The Council recognises that advertisements and signs are important to the vitality and function of retail areas. The principle of signage is well established in the area and the signage proposed is believed to be acceptable giving consideration to both signage detail and design.

Thomas Neal’s was formerly a large 1980’s shopping centre with a number of different uses and operators located within the building. As part of its former redevelopment, a number of ‘Thomas Neal’s’ signage proposals were installed across the exterior of the building.

The applicant, Kerb, is now in the process of refurbishing the premises and requires a new signage strategy which relates to the future operation of the building and promotes the internal operations of Thomas Neal’s Centre. As part of this, the building’s former external signage associated with ‘Thomas Neals’ is to be replaced.

Policy D4 (Advertisements) notes that the Council will support advertisements that preserve the character and amenity of the area and preserve or enhance heritage assets and conservation areas. It is considered that the proposed signage will positively integrate with the form, fabric, design and scale of the building and the materials proposed are sympathetic to the proposed shopfront and those adjacent properties.

Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) states the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance designated heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.

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Policy will seek to preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings and resist proposals for alterations which would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building

The proposed vertical text (Seven Dials Market) signage is considered to integrate with the character of the surrounding streets and represent a simple replacement of the existing 'Thomas Neals' painted text – associated with the former development. As demonstrated by the historic photographic schedule, this text is not historic and therefore would not impact upon the associated heritage of the building or its past operations. The proposed signage would be largely similar to that which already exists in the Seven Dials Conservation area. It is not considered the introduction of the proposed signage would harmfully alter the appearance of the building or the character of the wider conservation area.

In addition to the replacement text, a new bold and decorative artwork associated with Kerb's future operations is proposed for the corner of Shorts Gardens and Neal Street at upper level. The artwork will include a number of painted bananas in an abstract and decorative manner. The use of bananas is a playful message relating to the former use of the original warehouses to store bananas. The proposal would create a vibrant and lively addition to the streetscape and shopping experience for Seven Dials.

Importantly, neither signage has the potential to alter pedestrian views, flows or highway safety.

It is considered the proposed signs are in accordance with Policies D1 (Design); D2 (Heritage); D3 (Shopfronts) and D4 (Advertisements). Further, the proposed sign has taken consideration of the Council's advertisement guidance outlined within CPG – Advertisements and CPG – Design.

Conclusion

The proposed signage is considered to complement and enhance the appearance of the existing building and would make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The advertisements would give the area a lively and vibrant street scene. It is considered that the proposals are consistent with and supported by the Council's planning policies and planning guidance.

We trust the Council has sufficient information to determine this application and we look forward to a swift and positive outcome. However, should you require any further information or would like to arrange a site visit, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully

Mark Rattue

For and on behalf of Rolfe Judd Planning Limited