

181 Drury Lane - 2019/1558/P



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## Site Photos



Photo 1: Pre-existing front elevation



Photo 2: Existing front elevation

<b>Delegated Report</b> <b>(Members Briefing)</b>		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	31/05/2019
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:	12/06/2019
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Kristina Smith			2019/1558/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
181 Drury Lane London WC2B 5QF			Refer to Draft Decision Notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Change of use from a shop (Class A1) to an 'Escape Room' (Sui Generis) at ground floor level (retrospective)					
Recommendation(s):		Grant Conditional Planning Permission			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

<b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b>	<b>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</b>			
<b>Informatives:</b>				
<b>Consultations</b>				
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>	No. of responses	<b>00</b>	No. of objections	<b>00</b>
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b> <i>Officer response in italics</i>	A site notice was displayed between 10/04/2019 and 04/05/2019 A press advert was published on 11/04/2019  No objections received			
<b>CAAC/Local groups* comments:</b> <small>*Please Specify</small>	An objection from Covent Garden Community Association was received on the following grounds:  1. Disturbance to neighbouring residents if hours of operation are permitted beyond that usually associated with retail premises.  <i>Officer response: please see amenity section of report</i>  2. No safety features in the plans.  <i>Officer response: the building is fitted with a smoke and heat alarm as well as fire alarm beacon. All doors are released when the fire alarm is activated. The proposals will also be subject to Building Regulations which is a separate regulatory process.</i>  3. Retrospective application from an operation that has started with no proper consents and which is advertising for staff in a way that boldly assumes consent.  <i>Officer response: Noted. This has been carried out at the operator's own risk.</i>			

## Site Description

The application site relates two storey building on the east side of Drury Lane. It is now in use as an escape room at ground floor level; however, the unit was previously a carpet store (Class A1) until its closure in early 2017.

The building is not listed; however it is identified as a positive contributor to the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area with the Conservation Area Statement identifying the building as a 'noteworthy 19th Century Building'. The ground floor unit is not identified as a shopfront of merit.

The unit is situated in a secondary frontage of the Covent Garden Central London Area (Specialist Retail Areas).

## Relevant History

2007/5352/P - Installation of new shop front to replace solid timber doors to existing retail unit (Class A1) – Granted 21/02/2008

## Relevant policies

### National Planning Policy Framework 2019

### The London Plan 2016

### *Draft London Plan 2018*

### Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 (Managing the impact of development)

A4 (Noise and vibration)

TC3 (Shops outside of centres)

### Camden Planning Guidance (2018)

CPG (Amenity)

CPG (Community uses, leisure facilities and pubs)

### Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Statement

## Assessment

### 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1. The applicant seeks permission for the change of use from retail (Class A1) to escape room (Sui Generis) at ground floor level. Escape rooms are a relatively new form of entertainment venue that involves teams of people solving puzzles to escape from a locked room. The unit has been subdivided to provide two themed escape rooms (Dr. Frankenstein and St. Angelo Castle in addition to a staff/observation room, a reception area and small WC.
- 1.2. The works have already been carried out and are the subject of an open Enforcement case (ref. EN18/0594) which the planning application seeks to remedy.
- 1.3. It is noted that the application is for the change of use only and not for the signage installed without Advertisement Consent. An Enforcement case has been opened in regards to the unauthorised signage and the applicant will be advised to submit an application to regularise the unauthorised signage.

### 2. ASSESSMENT

- 2.1. The planning considerations material to the determination of this application are as follows:
  - Land use
  - Amenity of surrounding occupiers
  - Transport considerations

### 3. Land use

- 3.1. The proposal is for a change of use from a shop (A1) to an 'escape room' (Sui Generis). The application site is situated in a secondary frontage of Covent Garden Central London Area. As such, the pre-existing A1 retail unit is subject to the following restrictions, as set out in Appendix 4 of the Camden Local Plan 2017:

- Max 25% of A3, A4, and A5 uses combined in each individual frontage

Response: The unit would be Sui Generis and therefore would not increase the proportion of A3, A4 or A5 units in the wider frontage.

- Max 100sqm of A3, A4, A5 and other non retail uses

Response: The floorspace subject to the change of use application is 52 sqm.

- No more than 2 consecutive food, drink or entertainment uses

Response: Whilst the use would be entertainment in nature, it would be situated between a beauty salon (Sui Generis) and a furniture designer shop (Class A1) that is now vacant.

- 3.2. In the same frontage, approximately 5 of the 9 units are in A1 use and provide a range of goods and services.
- 3.3. Although not required by policy, it is noted that there is online evidence the unit was vacant prior to the current occupant moving in. There is marketing evidence from 27th June 2017 and it is thought the escape rooms started operating approximately one year later when an alleged breach of planning was reported to the Council on 20th June 2018. This does not indicate the retail use is not viable; however, it does reveal that the property was marketed for a period of time as a

potential retail unit before it was let to Komnata, the escape room operator.

#### **4. Amenity**

- 4.1. There is one residential unit located at first floor level above the escape room. Given the size of the facility, which is understood to have a maximum capacity of 10 people (5 in Dr Frankenstein and 5 in St Angelo), the potential for noise and disturbance is limited.
- 4.2. At present the unit is advertised as being open between the hours of 10.00 – 23.45 Monday to Sunday although it is understood that later closing times can occur. It is acknowledged the area is by no means quiet and there are several late night opening establishments nearby, including the White Hart Public House. Nevertheless, the existing hours are considered to be too late for the immediate locale where there are several noise sensitive residential units nearby, including directly above.
- 4.3. Although the 'escape room' is not a licensed venue and does not serve alcohol, it is likely that visitors, particularly on an evening or a weekend, will have consumed alcohol and are therefore more prone to noisy behaviour. That said, it is noted the maximum capacity of the escape room is 10 people across both rooms and therefore the potential for noise and disturbance is limited.
- 4.4. The permission shall therefore limit the opening hours to 10.00 – 23.00 Monday to Sunday. This is felt to be sufficient to protect residential amenities to an extent that is commensurate with the local context.
- 4.5. It is understood that the 'escape room' experience involves playing recorded music. A condition shall be attached to the permission that prevents the music from being audible in nearby premises.

#### **5. Transport Considerations**

- 5.1. Given the space constraints of the site, there is no room for visitor or staff cycle parking; however, it is considered there is sufficient on-street provision nearby.
- 5.2. The new use is not considered to generate a significant increase in the number of trips to the site for a Travel Plan or Operation Management Plan to be required.

#### **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1. Grant conditional planning permission

***The decision to refer an application to Planning Committee lies with the Director of Regeneration and Planning. Following the Members Briefing panel Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019, nominated members will advise whether they consider this application should be reported to the Planning Committee. For further information, please go to [www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk) and search for 'Members Briefing'.***



Application ref: 2019/1558/P  
Contact: Kristina Smith  
Tel: 020 7974 4986  
Date: 18 July 2019

**Development Management**  
Regeneration and Planning  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Phone: 020 7974 4444

[planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)  
[www.camden.gov.uk](http://www.camden.gov.uk)

Planning Direct  
Felaw Maltings  
44 Felaw Street  
Ipswich  
IP2 8SJ  
UK

# DRAFT

Dear Sir/Madam

## DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

### Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:  
**181 Drury Lane**  
**London**  
**WC2B 5QF**

Proposal:  
Change of use from a shop (Class A1) to an 'Escape Room' (Sui Generis) at ground floor level (retrospective)

Drawing Nos: 1; R181CG-001 (dated 11.06.18); GSC982 (includes site location plan; dated Feb 18); Planning statement (dated 15/02/2019)

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1; R181CG-001 (dated 11.06.18); GSC982 (includes site location plan; dated Feb 18); Planning statement (dated 15/02/2019)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 2 The use hereby permitted shall not be carried out outside 10.00 - 23.00 Mondays - Sundays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and A4 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 3 No sound emanating from the use shall be audible within any adjoining premises.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies G1, A1, A4, D1, TC1, TC2, TC3, TC4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 All works should be conducted in accordance with the Camden Minimum Requirements - a copy is available on the Council's website at <https://beta.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/1269042/Camden+Minimum+Requirements+%281%29.pdf/bb2cd0a2-88b1-aa6d-61f9-525ca0f71319> or contact the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444)

Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You must secure the approval of the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team prior to undertaking such activities outside these hours.

- 2 This permission is granted without prejudice to the necessity of obtaining consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Application forms may be obtained from the Council's website, [www.camden.gov.uk/planning](http://www.camden.gov.uk/planning) or the Camden Contact Centre on Tel: 020 7974 4444 or email [env.devcon@camden.gov.uk](mailto:env.devcon@camden.gov.uk).

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance/guidancecontent>

Yours faithfully

Director of Regeneration and Planning