



Matthew Dempsey

Development Control
Planning Department
Camden Council
5 Pancras Square,
Kings Cross, London
N1C 4AG

By email and post

Your Reference 2019/5741P

8 January 2020

Dear Sir

Re: 76 Neal Street WC2H 9PA

I wish to record my objection to this application for the change of use of the basement and ground floor retail premises (class A1) to restaurant use (class A3).

Notwithstanding the inadequate information submitted which to my mind is insufficient for the Council to have validated the application, on a point of principle the application should not receive permission from the Council

This is because:

1. The Council recognise that the intensification of more A3 uses in Neal Street indeed anywhere within the Seven Dials Conservation Area is likely to cause yet more disruption and disturbance to the residents who live in the area. The premise has residential accommodation directly above and in properties either side and also opposite in line with the very high concentration of residential accommodation that exists in Neal Street above the retail units. The Council's relatively recently adopted supplementary planning guidance (Town Centres and Retail Guidance 2018) is quite clear that the Council's presumption is to refuse the change of use from retail to restaurant/A3 use, precisely because of the disruption and damage to the local amenity such an activity will cause to the locality and also because the Council seeks to protect the retail units in this destination shopping street. In this part of Neal Street there is already a number of A3 uses and the density of such uses adjacent to 76 Neal Street needs to be taken into account in accordance with the planning guidance, and that the intensification of yet more A3 uses will have a bad cumulative effect on the amenity and a negative impact on the living conditions of residents living over, besides and opposite 76 Neal Street.

2. In addition the proposals is contrary to Camden's Plan Policy A4 (Protecting Amenity) in particular Policy A1 that states that the Council will not grant development that will be harmful to the local amenity and communities, and that occupiers and neighbourhoods would be protected. Policy D2 seeks to enhance the character of the conservation area. This application will do the opposite. The application will increase disruption, worsen air quality and damage the neighbourhoods amenity and is also contrary to Policy CC4 para 4.14. The Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement explicitly states that the increase of A3 uses has caused disruption and causes conflict and additional A3 uses should be considered on the impact on local residential amenity and the retail users. In this location another A3 use will clearly have a very negative impact

on the existing residential accommodation that surrounds 76 Neal Street. It is not surprising that immediate residential neighbours are extremely concerned by the application and object.

The property has retail use; there is a very high demand for retail outlets in this part of Covent Garden, and there is no question that if a reasonable rental was expected the unit would be let and in use very quickly.

I do wonder why the application was validated at all when it fails to give any details as to the plant that will be required. The suggestion that a 100mm(?) pipe will accommodate the necessary extraction from the basement kitchen is frankly laughable and the assertion that the construction of the unit and separation between the restaurant use and upper residential parts and entrance passageway is sufficient is very misleading when no internal layout plans accompany the application. No details are given as to how refuse will be accommodated, what storage facilities there will be, how air handling requirements (which clearly will be required) will be provided and what mechanical ventilation is proposed; the applicant blandly says that the use will cause no disruption to the residential accommodation directly above. There is also the suggestion that the existing shopfront will be retained but no photographs or any visual evidence has been provided as part of the application as to what actually exists or what is the context of the property from the rear and from the public domain. Finally there is no Design and Access Statement which is a basic required document when considering a planning application within the Conservation Area and where a number of adjacent properties are listed of architectural merit.

It is a thoroughly bad application and it should be refused without any further ado.

Yours sincerely

