

MR/P7708
6th February 2020

London Borough of Camden
Regeneration and Planning
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

Dear Sirs

70-74 NEAL STREET, LONDON, WC2H 9PA

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR THE
INSTALLATION OF A REPLACEMENT SHOPFRONT AND ILLUMINATED HANGING SIGNAGE**

PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-08467157

On behalf of our client, Shaftesbury Covent Garden Limited, we write in support of a planning application for full planning permission and advertisement consent for works to the ground floor retail unit at 70-74 Neal Street ('the site').

In support of this application, the following documents and forms have been submitted electronically online via the Planning Portal:

- Planning Application Form – *prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning*
- Existing and Proposed Plans (including Site Location Plan) – *prepared by Fresson & Tee*
 - Existing Ground Floor Plan – *24343 01-E*
 - Existing Section A-A – *24343 02-E*
 - Existing Section B-B – *24343 03-E*
 - Existing Front Elevation – *24343 04-E*
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan – *24343 01-P*
 - Proposed Section A-A – *24343 02-P*
 - Proposed Section B-B – *24343 03-P*
 - Proposed Front Elevation – *24343 04-P*
- Design and Access Statement (this cover letter)
- Historic Photos – *prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning*

It is confirmed that the requisite application fee of £366.00 has been paid electronically online via the Council's website.

Site Location and Planning History

The application site is located on the eastern side of Neal Street and comprises of a modern five

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storey building constructed from red brick and concrete, with roof terraces and inset balconies on the first floor level. The existing shopfront at ground floor level includes a recently installed aluminium framed unit at 72 Neal Street, with an additional recessed opening at 70 Neal Street adjacent. An angled concrete fascia sits along the retail awning, with small fascia boards for each retail unit covering part of this detail.

The property comprises two large retail units (Class A1) at basement and ground floor level with residential (Class C3) on the first, second, third and fourth floors. Residential access to the existing flats on the upper floors is via 74 Neal Street through a dedicated access door. For clarity, this application relates solely to the ground floor shopfront and does not propose any alterations to the wider façade or residential entrance.

The application site is located within a number of planning designations, including, the Central London Activity Zone (CAZ) and within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The property is not statutorily listed nor located within close proximity of any designated heritage assets. The surrounding area is typical of central London and the local shopping district of Seven Dials, with commercial uses at ground floor and residential on the upper floors.

Relevant Planning History

The site has been subject to a number of planning permissions which are relevant in the determination of this application. This includes:

70 Neal Street

- CA1602 - A non-illuminated hanging sign at fascia level above the entrance to 70 Neal Street – Granted 7th May 1962
- 8900467 - Installation of a new shopfront as shown on drawings numbered FG/18/01 02A 04C and 05A. – Granted 20th September 1989
- 9300109 - Installation of security gates to shopfront as shown on drawing no. FG 18 30 and manufacturers catalogue. – Granted 28th January 1993
- 9380164 - Display of two non-illuminated curved vertical panels (each 2500mm x 600mm) mounted on a column adjacent to ground floor entrance. as shown on drawing numbers 01C/MK/004. – Granted 19th October 1993
- 2015/1059/P – Alterations to a shopfront (retrospective) – Granted 23rd March 2015
- 2015/1715/A – Installation of 1x externally illuminated fascia sign and 1x non-illuminated projecting sign replacing a previously installed fascia sign and projecting sign. – Granted 25th March 2015

72 Neal Street

- 8880115 - The display at fascia level of a hanging sign measuring 900mm x 845mm to be illuminated by 2 No. 150 watts Tunston Halogon lamps as shown on drawing number SK500/SF/A and revised by letter dated the 10th January 1989. – Granted 28th November 1988
- 9260043 - Removal of existing shopfront as shown on drawing number 740/01B revised by letters dated 10 June 1992 and 22 June 1992. – Granted 1st May 1992
- 9200427 - Installation of new fully glazed shopfront as shown on drawing number 740/01B revised by letters dated 10 June 1992 and 22 June 1992. – Granted 1st May 1992

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- PS9704765R3 - The continued display of two externally illuminated fascia signs, one on each part of the shopfront and one non- illuminated projecting sign, as shown on drawing number 2074/05D. – Granted 20th October 1997
- PS9705138 - The retention of the installation of a new shopfront and three spotlights together with an open lattice external security grille, as shown on drawing numbers 2074/01 to /04, /05E, /06A, /08, and /09A. – 28th October 1997
- PS9804316R1 - The erection of a single storey rear extension to two retail (Class A1) shops, as shown on drawing numbers 98016/1, /2, /3A, /4A, and /5. – Granted 13th October 1998
- 2010/0928/A - Display of two internally illuminated fascia signs at ground floor level, and one projecting box sign to the front elevation of existing retail unit (use class A1) – Granted 26th February 2010

70-74 Neal Street

- 32637 - Maisonette flats – Granted 12th February 2007

This application now seeks a new planning permission for the implementation an improved and unified shopfront across 70-72 Neal Street, with the introduction of new signage at first floor level.

The Proposal

This application seeks planning permission and advertisement consent for the simple replacement of the existing shopfront and associated signage. Details of the proposal can be summarised as follows:

- External Alterations
 - A new modernised, powder coated steel framed shopfront with laminated glass;
 - A new glazing line to match the existing building line (upper floors) thereby removing the small under-croft and providing an additional 3.5 sqm of retail space at 70 Neal Street; and
 - A timber signage fascia board to cover up the angled concrete fascia.
- Signage
 - 2 no. illuminated hanging signs at first floor level, supported by wrought iron brackets. Brackets are located at first floor level due to the constraints of the existing fascia and elevation design.

The proposal seeks the installation of a modern shopfront to create a coherent frontage across 70-72 Neal Street. The existing shopfronts do not present a consistent building line and are in need of restoration. The proposal seeks to ratify this, creating a high quality glazing line to rationalise the street frontage, supported by a steel frame with anodised aluminium detailing. The proposal also seeks to cover up the existing angled concrete fascia that is of low quality with a full length fascia board and will therefore significantly increase the attractiveness of the retail units.

In addition, this application seeks advertisement consent for the installation of two hanging signs at the front elevation of the property to provide additional presence and visibility for the retail units. The supporting brackets will be constructed of wrought iron which will complement the surrounding characteristics of the Conservation Area. The hanging signs will be constructed of block board and will be decorated by the incoming tenants. The signage will be softly illuminated by downwards facing LED strips. The signage would sit below the existing residential windows and would not therefore present any amenity concerns.

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Please refer to the submitted drawings for further details and photographic schedule.

Planning Policy Considerations

Replacement Shopfront

Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) states the Council will require that development within a conservation area preserves or, where possible enhances, the character or appearance of the area.

Local Plan Policy D3 (Shopfronts) highlights that the quality of shopfronts and the way in which they relate to their surroundings make an important contribution to the character and attractiveness of an area. If a shopfront is replaced, the design should respect the characteristics of the building and, where appropriate, shopfront windows and framework features, such as pilasters, fascia's and console brackets, should be retained or restored.

CPG 'Shopfronts' further provides a number of design principles which all new shopfronts and alterations should consider.

The Seven Dials Conservation Area Appraisal recognises that a wide variety of design has taken place during the late twentieth century. Such design has been both modern and traditional, which together in combination has mostly enhanced the character and appearance of the area.

The existing shopfront does not present a coherent building line and is dominated by the dated, concrete angled detailing of the residential building above. Supporting this, the Seven Dials Renaissance Study (1998) refers to the building as a 'modern infill block' in a 'somewhat restless conservation area style'. The proposal seeks its removal and replacement with a simple shopfront design to provide a comprehensive retail frontage for the wider building which unifies the ground floor and upper parts of the building. The proposal has taken into consideration the design guidelines of both the CPG and conservation area appraisal, noting that appropriate design for the conservation area can reflect both the historic and the modern context and both traditional and contemporary materials can be appropriate. The proposal's use of a contemporary, powder coated steel frame with aluminium detailing is not materially different to other shopfronts within the conservation area (or those previously consented on-site) and is therefore considered to remain acceptable.

Further still, the proposal has given special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area, in accordance with section 74 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 (as amended).

Signage

The Council recognises that advertisements and signs are important to the vitality and function of retail areas. Local Plan Policy D4 (Advertisements) states that the Council will support advertisements which preserve the character and amenity of an area, including heritage assets such as listed buildings and conservation areas.

It is considered that the proposed signs will positively integrate with the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and the materials proposed are sympathetic to the proposed shopfront and those adjacent properties. The proposed signage is similar to that which already exists in the conservation

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area and so it is considered to integrate with the character of the surrounding streets. Pedestrian views and flows remain unaltered and the signage would not comprise highway safety.

The proposed signage will include a soft LED strip to provide subtle downward illumination which will not impact upon the amenity of residents. The proposed illumination will be akin to that existing signage and that consented by the Council in 2015 (reference 2015/1715/A).

It is considered the proposed signs are therefore 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.

Summary

This application seeks full planning permission with advertisement consent for a replacement shopfront at 70-72 Neal Street and for the introduction of 2 new illuminated hanging signs at first floor level. The shopfront and signage would both be consistent with that which is already seen within the conservation area and would revitalise a currently tired street frontage, restoring a coherent building line and positively modernising the retail units.

We trust that the enclosed information is sufficient for you to validate our client's planning application and we look forward to a swift and positive outcome. Should you require any further information and 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