

MR/P7707
9th July 2020

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

Dear Sirs

66-68 NEAL STREET, LONDON, WC2H 9PA

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR
ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING SHOPFRONT AND NEW HANGING SIGNAGE**

PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-08869295

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 66-68 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 – 24821 01-E
 - Existing Front Elevation – 24821 02-E
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan – 24821 01-P
 - Proposed Section A-A – 24821 02-P
 - Proposed Front Elevation – 24821 03-P
 - New Shopfront Alterations – 24821 04-P
- Design and Access Statement (this cover letter) – *prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning*
- Photo Schedule – *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 Description and Location

The application site is located on the eastern side of Neal Street and comprises a modern four storey building constructed from brick. The existing shopfront at ground floor level is constructed of timber

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and painted in black. The shopfront is dated, of poor quality and is in need of refurbishment.

The property comprises two retail units (Class A1) at basement and ground floor level with residential (Class C3) on the first, second, third floors. Residential access to the existing flats on the upper floors is via dedicated entry at 66A and 68A. This application relates largely to the ground floor shopfront but also seeks minor improvements to the entrances to the residential units, such as replacement timber doors.

The application site has a number of planning designations including the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) and 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:

66 Neal Street

- 2005/0286/A - Display of fascia sign with halo lit letters and a projecting sign at fascia level with back lit letters. – Granted 9th June 2005
- 2005/0287/P - Alterations to the shopfront including the installation of louvre panels to the fanlight and stallriser. – Granted 9th June 2005
- 2004/591/A - Display of back lit projecting sign and halo lit fascia sign. – Part Granted 24th December 2004
- 8700063 - Refurbishment of shopfront including installation of timber blindbox. As shown in drawing numbered 123/02A. Revised on 15th July 1987 and 6th September 1987. – Granted 7th October 1987
- 8600056 - Change of use of basement and rear of ground floor from storage to retail. – Granted 19th March 1986

68 Neal Street

- 8601017 - Installation of a traditional canvas awning to be fitted within the existing fascia as illustrated on the application form by a photograph. – Granted 16th July 1986
- 8600063 - Alterations to the ground floor frontage as shown on drawing number 68/NS/03/A revised 13th March 1986. – Granted 19th March 1986
- 8501251 - Change of use of the ground floor and basement from offices to retail. – Granted 19th March 1986

This application now seeks a new planning permission for the implementation of minor works across the existing shopfronts at 66 and 68 Neal Street, with the introduction of new hanging signage at first floor level.

The Proposal

This application seeks planning permission and advertisement consent for minor alterations to the

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existing shopfront and associated signage. Details of the proposal can be summarised as follows:

- External Alterations
 - The removal of the existing defective awning box and lead capping of the existing cornice;
 - Cutting down the existing fascia boxing to create consistency across both units;
 - Relocation of the existing security camera and signage at the entranceway to 68A Neal Street;
 - A new timber door to 68A Neal Street and a new traditional style timber pilaster;
 - New single panelled louvres in the existing stall risers;
 - A new glazed fan light at 66 Neal Street;
- Signage
 - 2 no. 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 minor works to the existing shopfront to create an improved, coherent frontage across 66-68 Neal Street. The existing shopfronts are dated, do not have a consistent form and are in need of restoration. The proposal seeks to ratify this, cutting down the existing fascia boxing, replacing the existing louvres and improving the existing residential entranceways. The proposal also seeks to remove a defective awning box 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 would be non-illuminated and would sit below the existing residential windows and would not therefore present any amenity concerns.

Please see the submitted drawings from Fresson & Tee Architects for further details.

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.

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The Seven Dial's 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 is dated and is in need of refurbishment. It does not present a coherent form across the two units and the overall quality is detracted by a defective awning box and a mismatched fascia board. The Seven Dials Renaissance Study (1998) notes that 68 Neal Street has a front elevation that is 'capable of improvement'. The study further states that 66 Neal Street has a shopfront which whilst appropriate in materiality, does not have a suitable finish.

The proposal seeks minor alterations to the existing shopfront to provide a comprehensive retail frontage for the wider building and improve the appearance of the two units. 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 retains the timber material of the existing shopfront but would improve the overall appearance of the units with minor alterations. It is considered the proposed shopfront remains appropriate and in line with other shopfronts within the conservation area and is therefore considered to remain acceptable.

The proposal also includes minor alterations at 68A, replacing and upgrading the existing timber door and introducing a new traditional style timber pilaster to integrate the residential access with the wider shopfront.

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 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 would not be illuminated and will therefore not impact upon the amenity of residents on the upper floors.

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 improvements to the

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existing shopfront at 66-68 Neal Street and for the introduction of 2 new 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, forming a coherent form across the two units and improving the access to 68A.

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