

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

80 Neal Street London WC2

Context, character and description of the property

No 80 is located at the northern end of Neal Street on the east side of the street where it joins Shaftesbury Avenue. It is located within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was designated in 1971 and extended in '74, '91 and '98. No 80 is located within the Seven Dial sub-area of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area appraisal and management Statement published in 1998 describes Neal Street as follows:

“ Many of the properties retain the original 17th century plan form but had their facades re-constructed in the early 19th century and panelling replaced. Their narrow width give a character and rhythm to the street. The original terraced houses on Neal Street are four storeys and basement in yellow stock brick with red brick arches and date from the late 18th century to the early 19th century; Nos.27-37,61,64,78,80, are listed Grade II. During the 19th century shops were introduced at ground floor level and warehouses built. Many 19th century timber shopfronts can still be found along the street. Typically these shopfronts display classical proportions with pilasters supporting entablature and a projecting cornice. Generally shops have retained the single property width resulting in numerous small shops with a lively combination of shopfronts both modern and traditional. The prevailing scale of the street is broken at the south eastern junction of Neal Street and Shorts Gardens by Nottingham House a neo-Georgian block of flats designed in 1925. The original five storey block and the rear yard and mission hall were converted in 1997/8 into a mixed use development with shops at ground floor level, an additional floor of flats and a new mission hall. The development improved the street scene, particularly to Nottingham Court. Designed by the Peabody Design Group the scheme received a Civic Trust Award 2000. At the rear of Neal Street, Shorts Gardens, Monmouth Street is Neal's Yard; a courtyard area that has developed into a wholefood and complementary medicine centre which also serves as a well used small public open space. At the junction of Neal Street, Earham Street and Shelton Street the street widens to form a broad paved area in front of the Seven Dials Warehouse.” (Area statement page 12)

The building was listed, Grade II, at the same time that the GLC's Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) was approved in 1973 with some 250 other buildings within the overall Covent Garden neighbourhood. The simultaneous listing of so many properties made the CDP unimplementable. If this had not occurred most of Neal Street and the majority of the Seven Dials area would have been demolished to make way for a section of the proposed underground road network.

No.80 is one of the terraced houses typical to Neal Street and it dates from the early C18 with a refaced street elevation dated from the early C19. The property is physically linked to 82 Neal Street at basement and ground level. The Punjab Restaurant has occupied no 80 Neal Street since 1951 and purchased the building 1976. In 1984 the Punjab also acquired no 82 Neal Street. The Punjab restaurant also own the adjacent 78 Neal Street which is listed Grade 2 and the restaurant is linked and occupies part of the basement and the rear section of the ground floor of this property, the upper parts contain self contained flats. At ground/street level the front section of 78 contains a retail shop.

The Punjab Restaurant has the reputation as the oldest punjabi restaurant in London and next year the Maan family will be celebrating the restaurant's 75th anniversary. The Punjab Restaurant is famed for its high quality cuisine and is also visited for its cultural and historic heritage. It features in many guides of London and is regularly filmed for television. The Maan family has very close and strong links with the local community and has developed an international reputation and clientele. It is a cultural and heritage destination ,

Listing Particulars

The statutory register of listed buildings have the following description of no 80 Neal Street

No.80 NEAL STREET reference 798-1/105/1186 (North East side) date of listing 15/01/73

Grade II

Terraced house with later shop. Early C18, refaced early C19. Painted brick. 4 storeys and basement. 2 windows. C20 replica of early C19 shopfront. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed C20 casements. INTERIOR: has good panelling to 1st floor and above with fireplaces. Original dog-leg staircase with closed string, square newels and turned balusters.

Grid reference TQ3081SW

The statutory register of listed buildings have the following description of no 78 Neal Street

78 NEAL STREET reference 798-1/105/1185 (North East side) date of listing 15/01/73

Grade II

House with later shop. Late C17 or early C18, altered mid C19. Painted stucco with plain bands at 2nd floor level and below the parapet. Bitumen felt mansard roof with continuous workshop dormer window. 3 storeys and attic. 4 windows. Mid C19 stucco shopfront with Corinthian pilasters carrying entablature with bracketed cornice. Central house doorway and 2 shop doorways with fanlights. Shop windows altered. Slightly recessed sash windows with exposed boxing. INTERIOR: not inspected.

Grid reference TQ3081SW

It should be noted that in the listing description of both properties it is recorded that both properties have painted street elevations.

Planning history.

New shop fronts to both properties were installed to the designs requested and approved by Camden's conservation team and listed building consent granted in 1984 and following appeal the same year, listed building permission was granted for making an opening between 80 and 82 at ground level to the front of the property. Planning and listed building permissions were granted for internal alterations on 8 June 1995 ref P14/24/2. MBH Architects completed further internal alterations in 2001 when planning and listed building permission was granted to link the rear of 80 Neal Street at basement and ground floor to

the rear of 78 Neal Street. It has not been possible to find details of the applications on Camden's portal. In 2012 further alterations and repairs were approved for alterations to the first floor of house 80 Neal Street ref 2012/2240L. This planning history is not complete as it has been hampered by difficulties accessing Camden's planning records.

Proposal

Listed Building Consent is requested to formalise repainting of the front facade of No. 80. This maintenance work will transform from very dirty and damaged off white paintwork colour to a light blue colour matching the paint to No.82.

Principles and justification for the proposal

As there is no article 4 attached to the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area, the front elevation brickwork to 82 Neal Street, which is not listed, has been painted a light blue closest to RAL 5105. This complements the colour of the blue shopfront and awning of both properties. No planning application was required for this work. In order to see the paint colour in context it has been now applied to 82 Neal Street and photographs of which are attached to the application.

The colour blue has been chosen in part because it is culturally and religiously connected to Sikhism the predominant religion of the Punjab. It is a Sikh Khalsa colour, also worn on days of religious observance or special commemorative events. Blue is the colour of the warrior and of protection. Light blue is particularly associated with the Nihang sect of Sikhism. In addition the colour is practically suited to weather well and will fair considerably better than a light white colour with regards to the long term appearance of the facades of both properties.

The painted front facade of no 80, which is listed, apparently requires listed building consent if a change of colour from off white is applied. It is not clear on what criteria the Council will make judgement of an appropriate colour; clearly it will be a very subjective decision. Be that as it may, the existing white colour and any other light white colour would appear very out of keeping given that the ground floor shop fronts and awning of the Punjab Restaurant stretching over the two properties is unified. To have separate and distinctive colours to their street facades above the shop fronts would look discordant whereas a unified colour for the brickwork facades of both 80 and 82 Neal Street would be consistent. In addition the adjacent 78 Neal Street is painted a deep green, and has a street elevation of the same length as the combined street facade of 80 and 82 Neal Street.

The condition of the current paint applied to the front of 80 Neal Street is very poor and there is extensive mould growth and discolouration. The quantity of pollution at the top end of Neal Street where it joins with Shaftesbury Avenue is significant and this is quickly made manifest on white coloured paint. House no 78, which is listed has a strong and prominent deep green colour. This paint was applied earlier than the white paint on 80 Neal Street, yet it appears in reasonable decorative order, whereas the adjoining no 80 which is painted off-white looks very down at heel and tatty. The present visual condition of the paintwork to 80 Neal Street detracts from the overall appearance of the Conservation Area, whereas No 78 Neal Street adjacent which is painted the deep green colour does not, despite not having been repainted for over 28 years.

The choice of paint has been carefully considered, so that the brickwork can breathe. A non breathable paint has been applied to 80 Neal Street in the past which has to be stripped

off to both facilitate the repainting as well as to assure that no surface water gets trapped behind the paint which will in time damage the historic facing brickwork. To this end Kiem external paint has been chosen, and has already been applied to no 82 Neal Street. This paint manufacturer is recommended by Historic England and has a sound track record, being applied to many listed buildings from Grade 1 * to Grade II buildings.

The product range that will be applied is Kiem's Royalan mineral paint and this is most suitable for harsh conditions and is one of the best paints on the market able to withstand continual pollutants and contaminants that exist in the air in Central London. As previously stated this pollution is particularly bad in this section of Neal Street close to Shaftesbury Avenue.

Technical information concerning the paint is attached to the application. Kiem's strong colour range was recently used when Stirling Castle Grade 1* was decorated, and there are many precedents when the strong colours in Kiem's paint range have been applied very successful to listed buildings.

Affect of proposal on the street scene and Conservation Area

The application of the light blue paint that has been chosen will improve the street scene and contribute to the Conservation Area., The colour will unify the two Punjab restaurant properties and will ensure a durable and long term maintenance free appearance. A light colour being applied to No.80 Neal Street, a choice that apparently would not require listed building consent, would give the top end of Neal Street a disjointed look, fail to unify the Punjab premises, be far less durable and would require considerably more maintenance and expense. Moreover 78 Neal Street the adjoining listed building has an approved strong colour paint applied to its Neal Street elevation and the chosen colour for 80 and 82 Neal Street will complement no 78's painted facade.

Conclusion

We contend that the repainting of 80 Neal Street will demonstrably improve the setting of the listed building and the overall appearance of the Conservation Area, and the blue colour chosen will contribute to the area and certainly not cause any harm or loss of significance to the listed building or the appearance of the Conservation Area.

The fact that the Maan family are prepared to significantly improve the visual appearance of 80 Neal Street is commendable and a fine way to celebrate the 75th anniversary of their family run restaurant in Neal Street.

Design and Access

There are no Access issues involved with this application and the design is only concerned with the type of paint that is being used and the colour chosen. The paint being proposed is the best on the market and the colour will enhance the conservation area and ensure long durability.

MBH Architects
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