

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2020/4253/L	Covent Garden Community Association (Elizabeth Bax, Chair of Planning Subcommittee)	08/11/2020 22:49:08	OBJNOT	<p>Covent Garden Community Association objects to the applications referenced by 2020/4253/L and 2020/4257/A - not in principle, but in terms of design. We ask that the applicant revise the design to deal with our concerns as detailed below.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>The applicant wishes to put a large iron bracket and wooden sign between the first floor windows above a shop at 55 Monmouth Street. The bracket projects 1.5 metres from the façade and the sign is 1 metre wide; these are large dimensions in a neighbourhood of small buildings and narrow streets.</p> <p>Our objections relate to:</p> <p>a) the high, first floor position of the bracket and sign and</p> <p>b) the size of the sign.</p> <p>These factors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead to loss of residential amenity;</li> <li>- Harm the listed building;</li> <li>- Neither preserve nor enhance the special interest of the Seven Dials conservation area.</li> </ul> <p>-----</p> <p>The first floor at this address has, until now, been in B1 office use. It is the process of being converted into the main living room of a residential maisonette with C3 dwelling use. The view from both windows will be obstructed by the sign. These windows are the only outlook for the living room and are therefore a valuable amenity for residents who, here as in other buildings nearby, rely on them for light and for a sense of a little outdoor space.</p> <p>We are not sure that the application is correct in stating that the existing and proposed land use is "A1 Shop".</p> <p>The applicant provides, by way of justification, a photograph showing similar signs on buildings nearby. However, NONE OF THE PROPERTIES PHOTOGRAPHED CLOSE BY HAVE BEEN IN RESIDENTIAL USE at first floor level to date.</p> <p>Number 53, next door, is in the process of being converted into a residential maisonette too; the new occupants will likewise suffer if the sign above that shop is not lowered and reduced in size as can be seen in the photograph below. This is what the sign on number 55 will also look like if as permitted as proposed.</p> <p>(See full letter of objection for photograph)</p> <p>Lowering the position of the sign would accord with the 'CPG – Design' section on Projecting and hanging signs 6.30 ("Projecting and hanging signs should normally be level with the fascia rather than below or above it. They should be positioned to the side of the shopfront at fascia level") and 6.31 ("Signs at upper floor levels will be discouraged").</p> <p>With reference to the host building and the site's position at the very heart of the Seven Dials conservation</p>

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area, the Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement's 'Design and alterations to buildings' section is relevant. It states that "Where new development is thought to have harmed the character or appearance of the area it has usually been caused by one or more of the following reasons ... Signs erected on upper floors ... Signage of inappropriate size, proportions and materials."

The Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement's guideline S19 states that "Signage will usually consist of one fascia sign and one projecting sign. Shop signs should not normally be above ground floor level."

While still not ideal, a sign a little further along the street is of a similar design, but smaller and lower as shown in the photograph below. The sign on number 55 (and on 53) could be set even lower than this.

(See full letter of objection for photograph)

The Seven Dials Renaissance study recommends that signs are no more than 0.6 metres high or deep.

It should be noted that, while the Seven Dials Renaissance study does refer to hanging signs at first floor level, this was not intended to allow interference with views from first floor windows where these were in residential use. The only examples shown in the Study at anything approaching window level are where the first floor is in commercial use. We understand that the Study, which dates from the 1990's, is being revised at present and that points such as these are to be clarified.

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In conclusion, we support the use of hanging signs, but not at this height. The brackets need to be positioned much lower, and probably be smaller, so that the signs are hanging over the shop fascias alone. Longer chain could be used to aid this too. The sign should also be reduced to 60cm deep. Please ask the applicant to amend the application to achieve this.

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Finally, we would like it to be noted that we have always objected to these types of application being made as an 'Application for consent to display an advertisement(s)' rather than full planning applications.

The advertisement itself is not at issue here, it is the bracket and accessories that we think would be better dealt with by a policy requiring a planning application to allow for proper consultation and LPA consideration – particularly when proposed fixtures are so prominent.

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