



## APPEAL OF LISTED BUILDINGS ENFORCEMENT NOTICE

The notice calls for “the removal of two awnings, one green blind, LED uplighters, pavement heaters, and associated conduit” that have been placed on the exterior of The Seven Stars public house.

The appellant agrees that these were installed. A retrospective application for their Planning and Listed Building Consent was subsequently made, filed at Camden as 2021/5671/NEW: 53 Carey Street (incorporating The Wig Box at 51 Carey Street, Thomas More House), London WC2A 2JB.

This Appeal is on behalf of Roxy Beaujolais Limited.

Nathan Silver RIBA,  
Nathan Silver Architects  
19 Regency Street, London SW1P 4BY  
020 7834 9300, [ns@nathansilver.com](mailto:ns@nathansilver.com), [www.nathansilver.com](http://www.nathansilver.com)

## INTRODUCTION



ONE ROLLED AWNING, LEFT  
BAY; TWO EXTENDED  
AWNINGS, RIGHT  
(VIEW CA. 1975)

## MY DESIGN AND CRITICAL COMPETENCE

The Seven Stars public house (est. 1602), a Listed building Grade II, appeals for retrospective consent to new awnings, exterior lights, and exterior heaters. These were rapidly installed in late 2020, not to disregard proper application procedure, but as a way of quickly achieving safe outdoors pub service during the emergency measures of the ongoing pandemic. The suddenly apparent public health need to achieve outdoor customer service space is why the work was quickly done, with the planning and Listed building applications filed retrospectively.

Though the fittings might be removed at any time and the exterior reinstated as before, the application stated that it was not intended for the awnings to be temporary. As our photos show, since about 1964 and probably from long before, the exterior of the pub, as well as the next door bay of Thomas More House (marked no. 51), had installed awnings. The new awnings are therefore a reinstatement of a previous amenity. As both a historic and a popular asset, they should remain.

In summary, my professional design and historical building experience has included this background: US / UK registration; studio design master at the Columbia and Cambridge University schools of architecture; partner in a national UK practice supervising all the firm's building contracts in London; Head of the Department of Architecture at the University of East London, and Reader in charge of professional research; regular architectural correspondent for The New Statesman; contributor to numerous professional and lay journals; Fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation; Visiting Professor at the University of California San Diego; Professional Assessor for applications to the National Heritage Memorial Fund / the Heritage Lottery fund; chartered member of the Royal Institute of British Architects; member of the Academy of Experts and the Society of Expert Witnesses; author of four leading texts on design and architectural history, one of which, on architectural conservation, was nominated for the US National Book Award.

Currently, I am: consultant and expert witness on planning, design, interior design, building technology and construction; Senior Architectural Assessor for the RIBA Competitions Group; Awards chairman, director and member of Executive Committee, the Westminster Society; accredited RIBA Client Design Advisor; listed and nominated as expert by the RIBA, the Academy of Experts, the UK Register of Expert Witnesses, X-Pro and other directories; experienced in preparing reports for litigation and dealing authoritatively with examinations. As an expert I have

been instructed on over 150 cases since I began such work in 1991. Aspects of my work that are particularly relevant to the required expertise in this matter include two of my books on historical architecture; on my work for five years as a partner of Feilden & Mawson, a practice that specialised in architectural preservation and conservation, where I was managing architect for all the practice's work in London including property of the Church Commissioners, and the maintenance and refurbishment of St Martin-in-the-Fields.

## THE SEVEN STARS' IMPROVEMENT HISTORY, AND THE PUB'S RECOGNITION

Roxy Beaujolais, The Seven Stars' publican and cook, is my wife. She acquired the pub tenancy in 2001. Its public spaces allowed for no chairs and tables, no public access to the upstairs toilets, and no means of delivering food from the first floor kitchen to the ground floor public areas except by means of the single narrow staircase, which has a steep and winding stair configuration typical of its original building date, 1602.

In 2002 I obtained planning approval and Listed Building consent and was able to carry out extensive, though discreet, improvements: slightly shortening the main bar to make the stair behind it accessible to customers, and to create room for tables; redesigning the upstairs kitchen and toilets; and building a dumbwaiter so food delivery didn't have to compete with customers on the steep and narrow staircase. In 2004, the small legal wig shop next door (with an awning box and roll-down awning already in place) was acquired by the pub. I obtained planning and Listed building consent for the change of use, and permission to form an opening between the two Listed properties. More recently I obtained Listed building consent to re-clad the treads and risers of the historic staircase with durable oak.



THE SEVEN STARS'  
TIME OUT-PERRIER LONDON  
BEST PUB TROPHY

The Seven Stars has achieved considerable recognition; partly due to its vintage age, and the sympathetic upkeep of its maintenance and renewal over the years—but mainly, of course, because of its very successful hospitality and cooking. In 2003 it received the Time Out-Perrier London Best Pub Award, a signal honour. In 2007, The Good Pub Guide declared The Seven Stars to be London Dining Pub of the Year. In Roxy's tenure it has received a continuous flow of favourable writeups from pub critics such as Bruce Anderson of The Spectator, and restaurant critics such as Fay Maschler of the Evening Standard.

## THE TRADITION OF AWNINGS

A good pub contributes urban vitality and congeniality to city life. The success of that can usually be read well in its design appearance on the street. Awnings in urban history have had a remarkable part to play in that respect. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and the

first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, they were fitted *ad lib* to the windows and doors of buildings of every type, partly for their useful functions <sup>1</sup> and partly as a kind of exterior decoration, often practiced by the building's users rather than its architects.



LISTED FORMER CHURCH,  
PRESTON

Awning forms and colours sometimes argued with their buildings, but usually, in addition to providing shade over heat-gaining plate glass windows and weather protection outside shops, they enriched them.



THE FEATHERS, BROADWAY,  
LONDON SW1

---

1 Cf. Chad Randl, "The Use of Awnings on Historic Buildings, Repair, Replacement and New Design," U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Preservation Briefs, April 2005. This monograph discusses the very beneficial environmental characteristics of awnings.

DO ADDED  
AWNINGS  
IMPAIR GRADE II-  
LISTED BUILDINGS?



REGENT STREET W1, CA. 1915



CARTIER'S, OLD BOND STREET  
W1, CONTEMPORARY VIEW



BROWN'S HOTEL, ALBEMARLE  
STREET W1, CONTEMPORARY  
VIEW

In the delegated assessment of our proposal by Camden's historic buildings officer, the awnings are said to produce harmful impact to the two listed buildings upon which they are attached, as well as to "the setting of the Law Courts." On the major question of "harmful impact," the delegated report's assessment refers to the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 for guidance, quoting it as follows:

"NPPF para 192 requires that those assessing applications take account of 'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation.' Para 193 states that, 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation,' and para 194 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.'"

In urban principle as well as my own design and professional sentiments, harming "the significance of a heritage asset" should be strongly opposed. But do such buildings have their heritage significance harmed by new awnings *per se*? I believe not, which appears convincingly illustrated by the unexceptionable examples that I have shown here.

A consideration characteristic of all building types is that while their ground floors are congruent parts of the whole building, ground floors need to take special account of entry, delivery, and the pedestrian traffic outside.<sup>2</sup> Architects learn that the design relationship of a building's ground floor to the street is at least as important as its relationship to the floors above. It follows that for buildings without entrance loggias or porticos, the provision of canopies and awnings are worthwhile, natural, and desirable features. Their retrospective allowance as functional improvements should be regarded by the NPPF and other policy authorities as normally to be permitted, and only to be subject to denial or orders for removal if they are deemed to be annoyingly disruptive. As the contemporary examples that I show indicate, that non-censuring principle seems to be fully accepted on Listed buildings and in conservation areas elsewhere in London.

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Nikolaus Pevsner: A History of Building Types. As a particular practical motivation for ground floor awnings, Pevsner in chapter 16 cites the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century adoption of plate glass for shopfronts.

## THE SEVEN STARS' AWNINGS

LEFT OF THE AWNINGS, THE ARCHED FORMER PASSAGEWAY TO NEW SQUARE THROUGH THOMAS MORE HOUSE IS KEPT LOCKED, AND THERE IS NO NEARBY RAIN SHELTER. A MAIN PURPOSE OF THE AWNINGS IS TO KEEP PEOPLE DRY



The pub facades of The Seven Stars and of Thomas More House call for three different awning widths, and they are set back three different distances from Carey Street. To avoid drawing attention to the awnings' width differences and lack of alignment, we used three different, but tonally related, pastel colours for the three awnings. The pastel orange of the eastern awning purposely recalls the brickwork colour of Thomas More House, to subtly strengthen the desirable sense of a building-street relationship.

THE AWNINGS' SETTING:

THE SEVEN STARS ABOVE GROUND FLOOR HAS A VERY PLAIN CLADDING OF PAINTED 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BRICKWORK

THE ADJACENT TWO BUILDINGS TO THE RIGHT, ALSO PLAIN, CANNOT FAIRLY BE SAID TO BE "HARMFULLY IMPACTED" BY THE PUB'S AWNINGS.



THE THIRD BUILDING TO THE RIGHT OF THE PUB HAS AN EAVE PROFILED LIKE AN AWNING, EXTENDING OVER THE PAVEMENT.

NEXT ALONG, THE SILVER MOUSTRAP, JEWELLERS, HAS A LONG EXTANT AWNING, SHAPED LIKE THOSE OF THE SEVEN STARS. WHEN IT IS OPEN, THE AWNINGS ALONG CAREY STREET ARE ALIGNED



## USING DIFFERENT COLOURS

"STRIP MALL" IN OPELIKA, ALABAMA, WITH AWNINGS VARIED IN COLOUR AND PATTERN TO EXPRESS MERCHANDISING INDIVIDUALITY



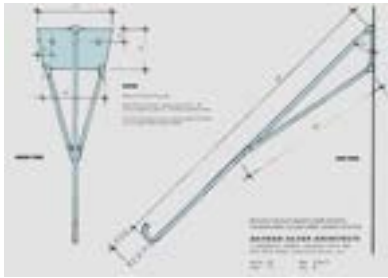
The use of different colours for The Seven Stars awnings isn't unusual. The deliberate use of different awning colours and patterns to achieve a visual patchwork on adjacent sites is often the strategy of a single designer, for example as employed by shopping centre builders trying to overcome the suspicion of consumers that the merchandise from one shop to the next is pretty much alike. In the Alabama "strip mall" shown above, the shops, all contemporary, were also given separate vintage particulars to express individuality.

The domestic awnings and fascia panels in the image below were the unregulated choices of individual occupants. The variety of colours and patterns is nevertheless attractive. Variety also overcomes the alignment issue: it isn't noticeable that the first awning on the left is mounted at a different height than the others.



DOMESTIC AWNINGS SHOWING A SUCCESSFUL MIX OF UNREGULATED COLOURS AND PATTERNS

## FLORAL BASKETS



NEW ANGLED BRACKETS

A firm design intention was to retain the admired floral displays that are professionally maintained for the pub and that are seasonally changed several times a year. The awnings were therefore fitted to directly underlie the plant containers on the pub's first floor windowsills, and to enable the continued presence of the drip-watered hanging baskets below. The five hanging baskets are attached to new stainless steel brackets tilted 45 degrees, which are bolted safely to the walls under the 45 degree slope of the awnings, open or closed. See the bracket detail left.



DESIGN RENDERING OF THE PROPOSED AWNINGS, PLANT BASKETS HANG FROM NEW ANGLED BRACKETS

## IMPACT ON THE SETTING OF THE LAW COURTS

The final claim that we want to take issue with is the awnings' allegedly harmful impact on "the setting of the Law Courts." Official disapprovals of new urban buildings or elements because they are deemed to cause harm to some cherished settings have had a long and often disastrous history (e.g., the pallid design of some of the controlled developments around St Paul's).

The Seven Stars was established in 1602 as an alehouse tavern adjacent to Lincoln's Inn. It evidently thrived, and certainly survived. It was a long time afterwards that the Royal Courts of Justice appeared, opened in 1882 by Queen Victoria. So it would be more historically correct, and perhaps justifiable, to be concerned that the setting of The Seven Stars hasn't been troubled by the Law Courts arrival in the neighbourhood 280 years later.

We believe that an equitable assessment of the visual appearance of the awnings on the north side of Carey Street should suggest that the only indecorum they might be accused of, when seen against adjacent, nearly featureless grey brickwork, is that they





A MAIN REASON FOR THE  
AWNINGS IS TO KEEP  
PEOPLE DRY

provide The Seven Stars with a clearer urban signal of a public house or café than was evident before. (And to raise even that eyebrow would indicate the questioning of a reasonable and appropriate mark of vitality in Carey Street as if it was indecorous or harmful.) Nor do the awnings detract from the more ornamental Thomas More House, as photos show that the awning on the east bay of the building's ground floor has been there for at least 55 years. The new awning colours enliven the building, and suggest its firm integration with the street.

The petition forming part of this appeal from local people and pub users shows that the hundreds of its signatories (including a number of judges) concur, urging that the awnings be kept.

In the ambiance of London's admirable and successful practice of allowing drinkers to stand about outside pubs, the part of Carey Street between The Seven Stars and the Royal Courts of Justice thrives with lively congeniality and urban vitality after the vehicle traffic dies down in late afternoons and evenings. For at least the many decades of elderly customers' memory, the Law Courts' stone balustrade opposite the pub then becomes an outdoor bar, with the court authorities' neighbourly tolerance. Far from their now thinking that their establishment is affronted, or "harmfully impacted" by The Seven Stars' new awnings, they have written to Roxy Beaujolais conveying their approval.

