

Minutes

Covent Garden Community Association

Planning Sub-Committee meeting held on Monday, 25th March 2013
at 17:00 at Covent Garden Community Centre (Mercer Room), 42 Earlham Street, WC2H 9LA

1. Attendance

1.1 Apologies received: None

1.2 Present: Mike Leeson, Jo Weir, Elizabeth Bax, Robert Bent, Shirley Gray, Sam Kung, Rhu Weir, Meredith Whitten

2. Presentation – Alastair Roberts and Fiona Le Roy, Royal Opera House (see below for summary)

3. Planning Applications & Appeals

	Address	Proposal	Comments
CAMDEN APPLICATIONS			
3.1	7 Upper St Martin's Lane WC2H 9DL 2013/1037/P Site of China Travel Service/ <i>Shaftesbury; Rolfe Judd (agent)</i>	Installation of air handling units and heat pumps within an acoustic enclosure on the rear first floor roof of existing retail unit (Class A1).	No objection, provided conditions are imposed that require the hours of operation of the air-handling units be turned off after business hours to protect the amenity of the many residents living nearby, and that require the applicant to adhere to DP28.3 (under "Noise and Vibration"), namely that the air-handling units and associated equipment which may be a source of noise pollution is kept working efficiently and within the required noise limits and time restrictions. Conditions should also be imposed to ensure that attenuation measures are kept in place and effective throughout the life of the development. Photo: http://tiny.cc/a9abuw Documents: http://tiny.cc/zo08tw Note: Listed building
WESTMINSTER APPLICATIONS			
3.2	31-32 King Street WC2E 8JS 13/01187/FULL <i>Sandro/Gerald Eve (agent)</i>	Installation of two air conditioning units within an enclosure in the rear basement lightwell of 31-32 King Street and associated internal alterations at basement and ground floor level. Minor alterations to the existing shopfront.	No objection, provided hours conditions are imposed that require the hours of operation of the air-handling units be turned off after business hours to protect the amenity of the many residents living nearby, as "noise should not affect the individuals' right to a quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their property," as WCC policy states. Also, conditions should be imposed that require that the air-handling units and associated equipment which may be a source of noise pollution is kept working efficiently and within the required noise limits. Conditions should also be imposed to ensure that attenuation measures are kept in place and effective throughout the life of the development. Photo: http://tiny.cc/diabuw Documents: http://tiny.cc/h3y8tw Note: Listed building
3.3	12 Maiden Lane WC2E 7NA 13/00782/FULL <i>Maiden London Ltd./ Walsingham Planning (agent)</i>	Use of the basement as a food preparation, storage and distribution centre with ancillary facilities in connection with the restaurant at lower ground and ground floor level.	Objection. Given that the purpose of this proposal is to allow for food to be prepared at this site, then transported to the applicant's other restaurants in Central London, the CGCA finds it implausible that there will be only two deliveries per day, as indicated in the applicant's letter dated 19-02-13. We note that Maiden Lane consists of many residential units and,

			<p>thus, the deliveries and servicing will have a negative impact on the residential amenity. Maiden Lane is a narrow road with high volume of pedestrian traffic, particularly since the road and pavements were reconfigured.</p> <p>Photo: http://tiny.cc/Oybbuw</p> <p>Documents: http://tiny.cc/g9y8tw</p>
3.4	<p>43 King Street WC2E 8JY 13/01307/LBC Currently Ralph Lauren/SeeBee Design and Conservation</p>	<p>Fixing of a City of Westminster Green Commemorative Plaque to the front elevation of 43 King Street to commemorate the National Sporting Club boxing venue.</p>	<p>No objection to the plaque, however, we are concerned about the colour as indicated on the drawings. We would like to ensure that the appropriate heritage staff has been consulted about the shade of green to be used on the plaque.</p> <p>Photo: http://tiny.cc/f79auw</p> <p>Documents: http://tiny.cc/7kz8tw</p> <p>Note: Listed building. Applicant's photo.</p>
3.5	<p>10-11 Great Newport Street WC2H 7JA 13/01265/FULL Aviva Investors/Montagu Evans LLP (agent)</p>	<p>Use of existing office space to provide 15 residential units (3 x studios, 1 x 1-bed, 8 x 2-bed, 3 x 3-bed), demolition and rebuild of rear wing at 4th floor level, with associated alterations to facades including ground floor entrances, reconfiguration of roof plant, lift overrun and core services and installation of solar panels on roof. Creation of terraces to lightwell at first floor level and creation of roof terraces at rear second, third, fourth and fifth floor levels and two balconies at rear third floor level. Associated internal alterations at ground and basement.</p>	<p>No objection provided the officers are convinced that any possible overlooking issues onto existing neighbouring residential units has been appropriately dealt with by the applicant.</p> <p>Photo: http://tiny.cc/wnabuw</p> <p>Documents: http://tiny.cc/dsz8tw</p> <p>Note: Letter received from resident.</p>
3.6	<p>St. Martin's Lane 12/10058/COADV WCC/WCC</p>	<p>Display of 14 banners attached to lamp columns along St Martin's Lane each measuring 2.2m x 0.8m with commercial advertisement content.</p>	<p>Objection. The CGCA continues to strongly object to this application, which we consider wholly inappropriate in the Covent Garden Conservation Area. The proposed banners would result in long-term visual clutter that is obtrusive, visually impairs the skyline on one of the main streets in the conservation area as well as the view down St. Martin's Lane to St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and adds an unacceptable commercialisation of Covent Garden. The change in time frame from 18 weeks to 12 weeks is irrelevant – as we object to the proposals regardless of the proposed length that the banners will be on display.</p> <p>The proposal conflicts with WCC's UDP Policy DES 8: Signs and Advertisements. Policy 10.101 states: "Flags and banners can have an adverse impact on the appearance of buildings and the streetscape, by obscuring the façade of buildings and contributing to visual clutter. In streets throughout the city such displays will generally be unacceptable in principle."</p> <p>Policy 10.103 says: "Advertisements, such as promotional banners, on light columns and other street furniture, introduce visual clutter to streets and have a significantly adverse effect on the appearance of the streetscape and the amenity of areas." And, 10.95</p>

			<p>maintains that “promotional banners ... are inappropriate to the character of Westminster's streets.” These policies are particularly relevant in a conservation area.</p> <p>We question why WCC made such an effort to rid the conservation area of street clutter, only to propose such visual clutter in its place.</p> <p>The CGCA also objects to the open-endedness and vagueness of the proposal, which prevents the CGCA and others from commenting on specific content and design of the commercial advertisements on the banners for the next three years. In other words, we are being asked to comment on banners without knowing what the specific commercial advertisement content will be.</p> <p>No photo: See documents.</p> <p>Documents: http://tiny.cc/opz8tw</p>
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4. Tables and Chairs

CAMDEN APPLICATIONS			
4.1	42 Kingsway WC2B 6EX 2013/1438/TC Bills (Formerly Pitcher & Piano)/ <i>Bill's Restaurants Limited</i>	7 tables, 16 chairs and 4 barriers	<p>Without the accompanying documents, the CGCA cannot comment on this application, as we do not know the proposed tables-and-chairs layout or the design of the tables and chairs.</p> <p>Photo: http://tiny.cc/o5crsw</p> <p>No online documents</p> <p>Note: New application. Proposed hours: M-SA 08:00-24:00; SU 08:00-22:30. (Pitcher & Piano, had 4T, 16CH and 2 barriers, M-SU 11:00-23:00.)</p>
4.2	40 Monmouth Street WC2H 9EP 2013/1578/TC The Two Brewers/ <i>Spirit Pub Company (Services) Ltd.; TLT Solicitors (agent)</i>	2 tables, 8 chairs and 1 barrier	<p>Objection. The CGCA objects, as the pavement is too narrow and footfall on Monmouth Street is too heavy to accommodate the proposed tables and chairs and barrier. Although the premises currently does not have permission for tables and chairs, the attached photo, which was taken on 20-03-13, shows that tables and chairs and a barrier are in use without consent. This demonstrates the applicant's history of excessive use of the highway and disregard for the need for planning permission. See attached photo.</p> <p>Photos: http://tiny.cc/23abuw & http://tiny.cc/m4abuw</p> <p>No online documents</p> <p>Note: New application. Proposed hours: M-SU 11:00-21:00. Previous permission was refused (24-02-12) because: “Evidence provided to demonstrate an excessive use of the highway, including 5 barriers and 2 A-boards beyond the current consent.” (Permission before that was same as current application.) Note that T&CH are currently in use.</p>
WESTMINSTER APPLICATIONS			
4.3	6 King Street WC2R 3HU 12/12192/FULL Essex Serpent / <i>HB Surveyors & Valuers; Child Graddon Lewis (agent)</i>	Use of an area of the public highway for the placing of one table and four chairs for use by the pub.	<p>Objection. The CGCA continues to object to this proposal for tables and chairs. As illustrated in the attached photos, the pavement is much too narrow at this site to add street furniture to the public highway. Also, this is a main corridor for pedestrians to and from the piazza and, thus, King Street has consistently high footfall.</p> <p>According to the updated draft WCC Tables and Chairs policy, a 2m clear zone is required for tables and chairs. As show on the drawings, the proposed tables and chairs leave, at best, a 1.8m clearance. In addition, the draft update states that high-volume</p>

			<p>areas should allow for more than a 2m minimum. We note that King Street is a residential street, including residents who live directly above this premises.</p> <p>Noise and smoke from customers at the tables and chairs would have a negative impact on residential amenity. Also, an extensive refurbishment of this street has recently occurred and, thus, allowing street furniture to clutter the street seems at odds with these improvements.</p> <p>See attached photos.</p> <p>Photos: http://tiny.cc/e7r5rw, http://tiny.cc/c8r5rw & http://tiny.cc/x8r5rw</p> <p>Documents: http://tiny.cc/zmz8tw</p> <p>Note: New application. Proposed hours: M-SA 11:00-23:00; SU 12:00-23:00. Original application considered at 110-02-13 meeting. Application has been resubmitted without the proposal to replace the shopfront.</p>
4.4	<p>389 Strand London WC2R 0LT 13/00497/TCH Wasabi Co. Ltd./ <i>GHOST (agent)</i></p>	<p>Use of four areas of public highway measuring 4.9m x 0.8m, 6.8m x 0.8m, 3m x 0.8 and 2.4m x 0.8 for the placement of nine tables and 18 chairs on the Strand and Southampton Street frontages.</p>	<p>The CGCA objects to the proposal for tables and chairs on the Strand frontage. This is an extremely busy location, with heavy footfall along Strand and to and from the Covent Garden Piazza via Southampton Street; a constant stream of vehicular traffic on Strand; a bus stop that is in constant use adjacent to the restaurant's frontage; and a crosswalk used by large crowds. The measurements on the drawings do not seem to agree with the actual pavement. Also, the pavement narrows at this location because of road access required for the bus stop. We also note that the previous tenant did not have permission for tables and chairs on the Strand frontage.</p> <p>The CGCA does not object to tables and chairs on the Southampton frontage, as the previous tenant had permission for tables and chairs at the same site without any problems.</p> <p>Photos: http://tiny.cc/2nbbuw & http://tiny.cc/dpbuw (photo is old – shopfront is different, but pavement is same)</p> <p>Documents: http://tiny.cc/94z8tw</p> <p>Note: New application. No hours proposed. Site has had permission for 4T and 8CH, M-SU 09:00-23:00.</p>
4.5	<p>36 Wellington Street WC2E 7BD 13/00036/TCH <i>Notes/Notes Music and Coffee</i></p>	<p>Use of an area of the public highway measuring 3.3m x 1.05m for the placing of three tables and six chairs in connection with the coffee shop.</p>	<p>The CGCA objects to this application because the pavement at this location simply is too narrow to accommodate tables and chairs and the constantly heavy footfall at this busy street in the conservation area. Tables and chairs would force pedestrians into the street, which creates a significant safety hazard given the constant vehicular traffic on Wellington Street.</p> <p>Should WCC be minded to grant permission, we would insist that the layout should be similar to other tables and chairs further along on the street. These configurations require that the chairs' backs are to the shopfront – in other words, no chairs can be pushed into pedestrian traffic. We strongly object to any use of a third chair at each table and would suggest that the furniture be fixed.</p> <p>See attached photos.</p> <p>Photos: http://tiny.cc/5jbbuw, http://tiny.cc/cjbbuw & http://tiny.cc/qibbuw</p> <p>No online documents</p> <p>Note: New application. No T&CH have had permission at this site. No proposed hours.</p>
4.6	<p>92-93 St. Martin's Lane</p>	<p>Use of an area of the public highway on the Cecil</p>	<p>No objection</p>

13/01151/TCH Chipotle Mexican Grill /Woods Whur LLP (agent)	Court elevation measuring 8.3m x 2.5m for the placing of six tables and 24 chairs.	Photo: http://tiny.cc/d29auw Documents: http://tiny.cc/s9z8tw Note: Renewal. No change in hours or usage. Current hours: M-SU 11:00-23:00.
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5. **Camden Advertising Applications** – None
6. **Licensing matters**
7. **Miscellaneous consultations**
8. **Information or up-dates received**
9. **Next meetings & future presentations**
 - 9.1 Monday, 8th April 2013, 17:00
 - 9.2 Monday, 22nd April 2013, 17:00
10. **Other Business**

Summary for 2. – Alastair Roberts and Fiona Le Roy from the Royal Opera House presented a draft proposal regarding the ROH’s kiosk at the corner of Bow and Russell streets. Currently, planning permission limits use of the kiosk to being an information kiosk. (Note that this language is imposed as a planning condition on the planning consent and is not included in the section 106 that was required for approval. Regardless of where the condition is mentioned, it has the same effect.) WCC has indicated that they are receptive to using the kiosk as a retail shop, but require the ROH to get letters of support from both CGAT and CGCA. CGAT has already indicated their support for a retail shop, and has given ROH a letter of support. (CGAT previously objected to initials proposals for a café. Also, note that providing for community information does not fall within CGAT’s responsibilities and, thus, was not part of CGAT’s decision to support the ROH proposals.)

The current site is an eyesore in a very busy, highly visible part of Covent Garden; this area has gotten even more highly visible with the opening of Balthazar and the improvements along Russell Street. The kiosk currently has two ashtrays on either side, so the most use the corner gets is from smokers standing in front of it.

The ROH’s first idea for the kiosk was to operate a café. However, the CGAT indicated this was not acceptable. Thus, the ROH now proposes to turn the kiosk into an A1 retail satellite ROH shop. Although there is a shop inside the ROH, it gets little traffic and most of its sales come from people attending shows at the ROH. Opening a satellite shop, with doors opening onto Russell Street, would allow the ROH to capture traffic from outside of the ROH. The shop inside the ROH would remain. Also, the shop inside the ROH is closed on Sundays, but the satellite shop would be open on Sundays. Alastair noted that other places, such as the Tate Modern, have multiple gift shops within one site.

Committee members made several comments, including:

1. Jo Weir asked if the ROH would be making a financial contribution to CGCA or the community. ROH did not respond.
2. The shopfront should be flushed and not recessed as it currently is (and is it is in the proposed drawings), as this will help deter drug use and rough sleeping.
3. Plate glass could invite theft and breakage. Roller shutters would need to be inside the glass, if used at all. An alarm system to detect theft during opening hours should be used. (Note, this is used in the ROH’s current shop.)
4. Expressed concern that the shop will not be financially viable. Alastair and Fiona said the board was confident it would work.
5. Concern that the ROH satellite shop will not be successful, resulting in the ROH subletting the space out, such as to a coffee shop. However, Alastair and Fiona assured the committee members that this would not happen. They said that the ROH is so desperate for space that they would close the interior shop and use that space and keep the satellite shop open, if it came to that.
6. Small sites tend to get overcrowded, particularly with student and tour groups.
7. Advertisements for West End shows could be displayed. (Note that some committee members thought this might make the kiosk look like a half-price tickets booth.)

Committee members asked the ROH representatives what was in their proposals for the community.

They said that they felt that the ROH had upheld its end of the section 106 over the past 14 years. Committee members said they'd like for the ROH to provide a community notice board and display information about the CGCA's Christmas Carol each year.

Alastair and Fiona will take the CGCA's comments to the board and see what kind of response and ideas they get.