

Date: 14/11/2020
Our Ref: 15224
Your Ref: PP-09417459



Planning
Westminster City Council
Westminster City Hall
64 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QP

6 New Bridge Street
London EC4V 6AB
T: 020 7489 0213
F: 020 7248 4743
E: info@dwdllp.com
W: dwdllp.com

Dear Sir or Madam

**APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION AND CONSENT TO DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS
17-21 ELIZABETH ST, BELGRAVIA, LONDON SW1W 9RP**

We write on behalf of our client, Sisbanco Ltd, to submit an application for full planning permission and consent to display advertisements at the ground floor of 17-21 Elizabeth St, Belgravia, London SW1W 9RP (the Site).

The former tenant of the ground floor unit has vacated. The application seeks to amend the frontage of the ground floor units to facilitate occupation by a new tenant. The 'Proposed Development' for which permission is sought is:

"Alterations to façade at ground floor and installation of 1 no. illuminated advertisement."

Application Submission

The application comprises this Cover Letter (including Planning Assessment) and the following documents:

- Application Form;
- Drawings:
 - Location and Site Plans. Prepared by Ideal Planning Permissions.
 - Shopfront as Existing. Drawing No. 02/016. Prepared by TGP International
 - Elevation. Drawing No. A-501. Rev 5. Prepared by TGP International
 - Signage Detail. Drawing No. A-901. Rev 4. Prepared by TGP International

This application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal.

The Site

The Site comprises 17-21 Elizabeth Street which was formerly occupied by Dominique Ansel Bakery. The ground floor is proposed to be occupied by Chestnut who will like the former tenant, also operate as a bakery.

Partners

R J Greeves BSc (Hons) MRICS
G Bullock BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI
A Vickery BSc MRICS IRRV (Hons)
S Price BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

A R Holden BSc (Hons) FRICS
G Denning B.Eng (Hons) MSc MRICS
B Murphy BA (Hons) MRUP MRTPI
A Meech BSc MRICS

S Page BA MA (Cantab) MSc MRTPI
P Roberts FRICS CEnv
T Lodeiro BA (Hons) PGDip MSc MRICS



17-21 Elizabeth Street form part of a group of unlisted terraced properties located in the Belgravia Conservation Area and is within the Core Central Activities Zone.

The Site is located between Victoria Railway Station and Victoria Coach Station, which is a highly commercial area. It is characterised by a mix of retail and restaurant ground floor use uses with a variety of frontages and advertisements.

The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is for alterations to the ground floor façade and installation of 1 no. illuminated advertisement.

The existing façade has been in place since 2016 following an approved application in April 2015 for the *“Change of use of 3 no. units to 1 no. Class A3 restaurant, 1 no. Class A1 shop and 1 no. flexible Class A1/Class A3 retail/restaurant unit; replacement of existing shopfronts; installation of awnings and projecting signage brackets; and installation of new plant equipment to the rear”* at 15A-23 Elizabeth Street (15/00429/FULL).

The existing façade incorporates a white painted frontage with the words Dominique Ansell Bakery written above the central window. The frontage provides a half height window split in to three groups of three. Images of this can be seen within the following sections of this Cover Letter and on the submitted plans.

The proposal seeks to amend the façade to provide two full height windows on either side of a central entrance featuring a glazed door with widows on either side. Surrounding each façade section will be a birch wood frame. A metallic side door is also proposed on each side of the elevation. The awning associated with the previous user is to be removed to create a more open street frontage.

In addition to the new façade, a new back-lit halo illuminated advertisement is proposed above the entrance door. This will say ‘Chestnut Air Flour’. This signage will replace the existing signage installed by the former tenant.

It is considered that the design provides a high quality and active frontage that supports the function of the local area and wider CAZ.

Full details of the proposed design are included within the submitted drawings.

Previous Signage

The images below identify the previous occupier’s signage for context. This existing signage has now been removed as part of the works currently taking place on Site.

As part of the approval for application 15/00429/FULL the Officers Report stated that *“The alterations to the ground floor frontages are welcome as they would introduce harmony to the terrace.”* It is considered the submitted details maintain this ‘harmony’ with a pleasing overall aesthetic.

Image 1 – Original Façade (Pre-2015)



Image 2 – 2015 Approved Façade



Local Frontages

The local area comprises a range of frontages with various forms of windows, materials and details. Examples of these from Elizabeth Street are identified in the below table:

29 Elizabeth Street

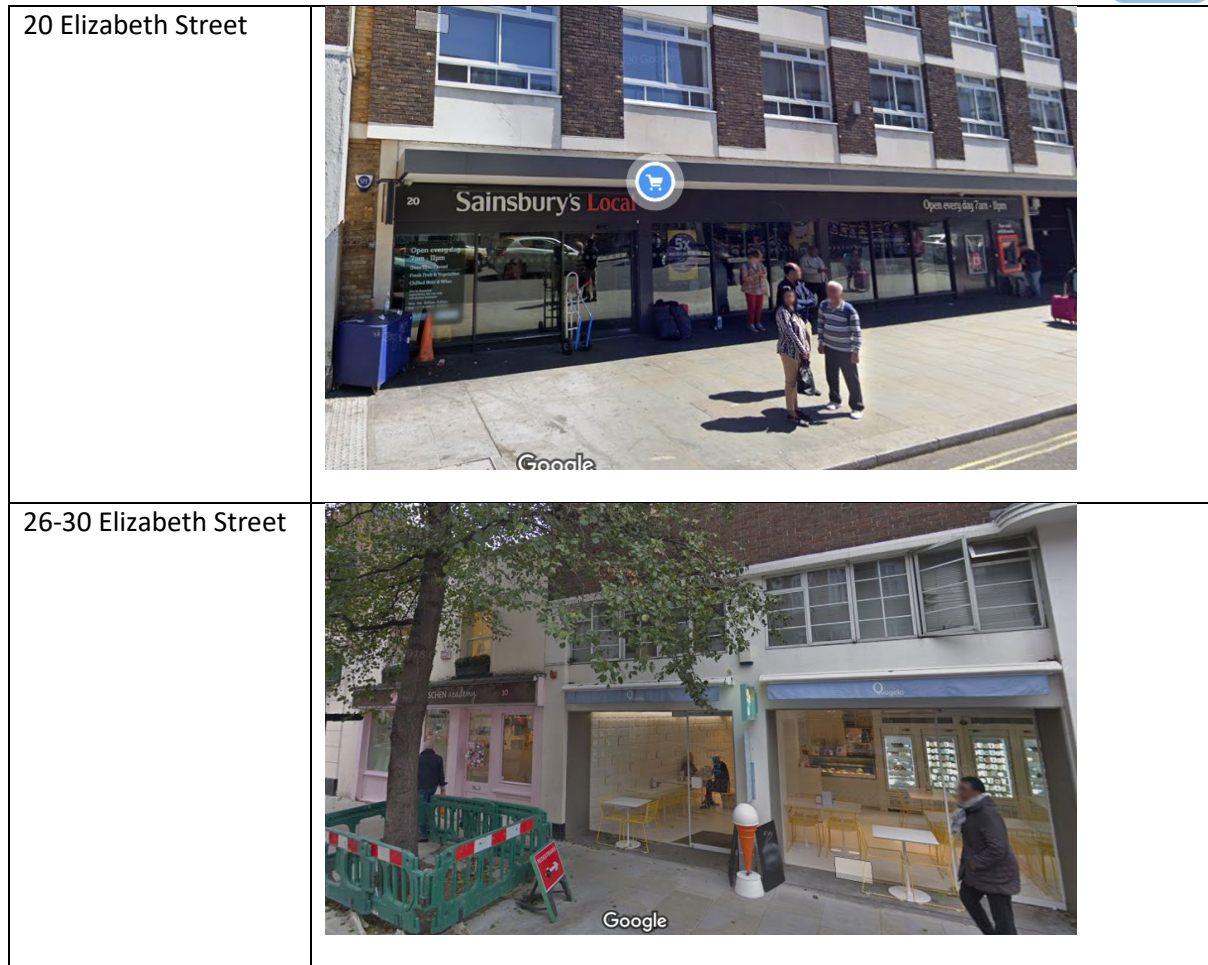


23-27 Elizabeth Street



8 Elizabeth Street





Planning Assessment

Heritage

Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (2007), within Policy DES9 'Conservation Areas', states the planning applications for alteration or extension of unlisted buildings will be granted for proposals which *"In locally appropriate situations, use modern or other atypical facing materials or detailing or innovative forms of building design and construction"*

The most up-to-date Conservation Area Audit is the 2013 Draft for Public Consultation. The below paragraphs highlight key parts of the document associated with Elizabeth Street. Matters relating to the design's impact on the Conservation Area are dealt with further as part of the 'Planning Assessment' section of this letter.

Paragraph 4.4 of the Audit states *"Some of these intermediate streets including Elizabeth and Eccleston Streets, have a more lively, commercial character with exclusive small shops and cafes to ground floors."*

Paragraph 5.3-5.4 of the Audit states *"5.3 Although commercial development was separated from the grand terraces of Belgravia, small shops are an important part of the character in parts of the south and west of the conservation area. Here, there are several attractive groups of traditionally"*

proportioned timber shops on Motcomb, Lower Belgrave, Eccleston and Elizabeth Streets, as well as in and around Orange Square, to the extreme south-west of the area.

5.4 The shopfronts to these streets have generally been designed and detailed as groups and are unified through consistent architectural treatment, most retaining consistent size of fascia set below projecting first floor balconies. Even where some of the single shop units have been altered, such groups are still of special interest, as many shops have retained their traditional proportions and parts of their original surrounds, including pilasters and decorative console brackets.”

The existing shopfront is a new installation that was consented in 2015 and implemented in 2016. The proposed revised shopfront design seeks to retain features of the existing shopfront, to create coherency with the neighbouring property at 15A Elizabeth Street, which also formed part of the 2015 planning permission, whilst also providing a shopfront that is better suited to the proposed occupier's requirements.

The existing horizontal elements of the shop front will be retained. When read from ground floor upwards the shopfront comprises of four elements: solid panelling, tall glazing, narrow glazing and solid panelling. This style will be retained. The existing shopfront also reads as three distinct vertical elements, which match the neighbouring property at 15a. This will also be retained. The shopfront will therefore retain the existing proportions, to align with the neighbouring shopfronts.

In order to better suit the future occupier's requirements, elements specific to the proposed tenant will be introduced. For example, larger windows will be installed, as opposed to three individual panes per section. The narrow windows will continue to be 3 panes per section, but additional wire detailing will be introduced. At the bottom of the façade, below the glazing a different style of wooden panelling. Glazed metal framed doors will replace the existing panelled doors.

The shopfront is therefore considered to retain traditional elements and to retain coherency with neighbouring shopfront within the group, whilst introducing new detailing to meet the future occupier's requirements.

There are a number of shopfronts in the local area of different designs and which do not follow a traditional pattern. The proposed shopfront is considered to be sympathetic to the style and design of the neighbouring shopfronts, within its group.

The proposed design accords with policy DES9 by ensuring that it appropriately responds to the design and proportions of the neighbouring shop fronts whilst introducing new design features.

Design

Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (2007), within Policy DES1 'Principles of Urban Design and Conservation' seeks to ensure the highest quality in the form and quality of new development in order to preserve or enhance the townscape of Westminster.

Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (2007), within Policy DES8 'Signs and Advertisements' confirms that consent will be granted for signs and advertisements which:

- a) are well designed and sensitively located within the street scene*
- b) relate to the character, scale and architectural features of the building on which they are to be fixed*
- c) in the case of shop signs, are located at fascia level*
- d) in the case of signs on shop blinds, comprise traditional, retractable canvas awnings.”*

The Westminster Planning Guidance 'Shopfronts, Blinds and Signs - A Guide to their Design' (the 'Guidance') was adopted in 2004 and whilst considered relatively out-of-date is still of relevance for the application.

Page 2 of the Guidance confirms that *"the retail industry requires adaptability and flexibility in shopfront design in order to respond to the rapidly changing market and consumer pressures"*.

Page 5 of the Guidance states that *"Contemporary design can be used to good effect where shopfronts are integrated into a new development with a consistent design principle running throughout. Shopfronts of modern design can also be successfully incorporated into traditional facades if respect is paid to the architectural form of the building and to its surroundings. The Council does not have a preference for either approach, however, to ensure a high standard of design that enhances the street scene, the principles of design discussed in this guide should be respected."*

Page 9 of the Guidance states *"The character of a shopping street is largely determined by the design and detailing of individual buildings. A long stretch of flat shopfronts with little or no modelling or recession of the various planes, can be bland and dull. A more interesting effect can be created by modelling facades and juxtaposing the various elements, such as fascia, lettering, glass, and doors."*

The Proposed Development accords with the Shopfront Guidance by creating a unit to suit the new operator's needs, whilst also ensuring that the proportions and style remain coherency with the neighbouring shopfronts. The proposal creates a high quality visually interesting fascia.

The quantum of signage proposed and the size of the signage is considered to be appropriate in the context of the Site's location, the size of the unit and its position within the street. The dimensions of the signage ensure that it is visible whilst avoiding having an overbearing impact on the locality. The backlighting to the signage is also considered appropriate and sensitive to the Conservation Area.

Similarly, the design of the facade is considered suitable in relation to the Site's location, the size of the unit and its position within the street.

It is considered that the design of the proposal therefore accords with Policies DES1 and DES8 and is suitable for a commercial area like Elizabeth Street.

Amenity

Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.

As previously identified the area is characterised by its commercial nature. The Site is located in a Conservation Area, however, it is not considered that the proposals, which are contained to ground floor level and in keeping with existing consented signage in this location, will have any detrimental impact upon the character of the buildings or wider conservation area.

The company branding faces on to a main pedestrian and traffic thoroughfare and would not impact the amenity of commercial properties located on the opposite side of the road or at upper floors.

Public Safety

Factors relevant to public safety and this proposal include the safety of persons using the highway and whether the display of the advertisements in question are likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic sign.

The proposed intensity of illumination is considered relatively low. The illumination will be static and will not provide a distraction for passers-by. The signage will also not obscure or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic sign.

Cumulative Impacts

The proposed signage and façade alterations are considered to be appropriate for the size of the building and also aligns with the quantum of signage that the previous occupier had consented at this property.

The proposals will therefore not result in clutter and they are not considered to be excessive or inappropriate due to their modest number, size, design and considered location.

Conclusion

We consider that, for the reasons given above, the proposed façade design and advertisement should be considered to be acceptable and, as such, should be approved.

We trust that this application contains sufficient information to validate the application as soon as possible, and we look forward to receiving your decision within the statutory determination period.

However, if you require any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact James Smith (james.smith@dwdllp.com/ 02074894833) or Emma Penson (emma.penson@dwdllp.com/ 020 7332 2115) of this office.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DWD'.

DWD