



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22nd July 2025

by Simon J Cater MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X5990/Z/25/3366784

Amorino, 41 Old Compton Street, London W1D 6HF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Roberta Alongi of H2C Gelati Limited against the decision of City of Westminster Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00784/FULL.
 - The development is the scope of works in this proposal includes the replacement of the previous timber and glass shopfront, which comprised double-hinged doors with fixed panels, with a sliding four-panel glazed and aluminium door set. The proposed alterations involve the replacement of the existing timber and glass shopfront with a contemporary sliding door system. The new shopfront consists of four aluminium-framed glazed panels, finished in black (RAL 9005) designed to enhance visual permeability, modernise the appearance, and improve accessibility.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installed 3no. glazed sliding door set and 1no. fixed glazed window within the existing shopfront at Amorino, 41 Old Compton Street, London W1D 6HF in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. 25/00784/FULL, and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development in the banner above reflects the wording provided in the original planning application form submitted by the appellant. However, it contains superfluous details. I have modified this within my decision above for sake of clarity and precision, and to accurately define the scope of works permitted. In this case that is a three-panel sliding door set and one fixed glazed window within the existing shopfront.
3. It noted during my site visit that works had already been carried out. Nonetheless, my assessment is based on the submitted plans and supporting documents, which form the basis of the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Soho Conservation Area, including the effect on the host building.

Reasons

5. The appeal property lies within the Soho Conservation Area. Insofar as it is relevant to this appeal, the significance of the conservation area resides in its dense urban

grain, historic street layout, and the architectural character of its buildings, many of which date from the 18th to early 20th centuries. No. 41 Old Compton Street forms part of a streetscape noted for its eclectic and historic shopfronts, which contribute significantly to the area's visual richness and townscape quality. The Soho Conservation Area Audit Supplementary Planning Guidance (the SPG) identifies features such as stallrisers, pilasters, and recessed entrances as important components of shopfront design, reflecting the fine grain and vertical emphasis typical of the conservation area.

6. No. 41 is identified in the SPG as an unlisted building of merit, though the document provides no specific commentary on its architectural or historic interest. While traditional panelled stallrisers are noted in the guidance as characteristic of the area, No. 41 is not directly referenced in this context. By contrast, Nos. 51–53 are described in detail for their historic shopfronts. The stallriser at No. 41 appears typical of the wider streetscape but is not individually distinguished within the SPG.
7. The image of the previous shopfront at No. 41, as shown in the Design and Access Statement¹, reinforces the view that traditional features, such as a panelled stallriser, substantial timber framing, and a single openable door, were not clearly present. The glazing extended to a low level, and the entrance was wide and modern in appearance. These characteristics suggest that the shopfront did not reflect the detailing typically associated with historic examples in the Soho Conservation Area and identified in the SPG. Its design was modern and generic, offering little visual interest or historic reference. Therefore, the contribution it made to the significance of the conservation area can be considered to have been neutral.
8. The glazing element of the shopfront has been replaced with a sliding three-panel full-height aluminium-framed glass door, alongside one fixed full-height glazed panel. The aluminium-framed door set is fully openable.
9. The Council considers the replacement, being fully glazed and largely openable, to lack the definition and character of the previous design, which included timber framing and a panelled stallriser. The Council also note that it introduces a discordant gap at ground level and is less sympathetic to the host building and conservation area.
10. However, the original structural opening and signage have been retained ensuring that the proportions and rhythm of the façade remain consistent with the host building and wider terrace. The restrained design of the contemporary glazing and aluminium framing, clear articulation, and alignment with the original opening ensure compatibility with the architectural character of the host building and wider terrace. The retained proportions and transparency contribute positively to the active commercial frontage typical of the Soho Conservation Area. In this context, the change can be considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the Conservation Area
11. From my site visit, I observed that the replacement respects the original opening and has been installed with regard to the building's scale and context. The materials are of high quality and do not disrupt the visual rhythm of the terrace. The

¹ Page 6, Paragraph 15.1, Existing Front Elevation, Design and Access Statement

glazing and door design sit comfortably within the host building and wider parade, maintaining the architectural coherence of the streetscape.

12. The openable frontage reflects the evolving commercial character of the area, where several nearby premises feature similar open designs. This variation is consistent with the diversity of shopfront styles within the parade and the wider Soho area. Rather than introducing a generic or uniform treatment, the development contributes to the individuality of the host building and supports the dynamic retail environment that characterises the Conservation Area.
13. I therefore conclude that the development preserves the character and appearance of the conservation area.
14. The development therefore complies with Westminster City Plan Policies 38, 39 and 40 which seek to secure high-quality, sustainable and inclusive design that responds positively to local context and heritage, and to ensure that development conserves and enhances the significance of heritage assets and their settings, and the Policies 4 and 7 of the Soho Neighbourhood Plan (2021), which seek to conserve and enhance the character of the Soho Conservation Area, encourages development that maintains a diversity of shopfronts while discouraging standardisation, and promotes active ground floor frontages to support street-level vibrancy and avoid underused space.

Conditions

15. The Officer Report recommended a condition requiring the shopfront to remain shut between 21:00 and 09:00 to protect residential amenity. However, no evidence has been provided of actual noise disturbance, and the site lies within a busy commercial street where commercial activity is commonplace. I am also not satisfied that such a condition could be effectively enforced and therefore fails to meet the tests of necessity, precision, and enforceability set out in paragraph 57 of the Framework. Accordingly, I have not imposed it.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Simon J Cater

INSPECTOR