

CITY OF WESTMINSTER			
PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB COMMITTEE	Date 18 June 2019	Classification For General Release	
Report of Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning		Ward(s) involved St James's	
Subject of Report	10-14 The Hippodrome , Cranbourn Street, London, WC2		
Proposal	Display of 15 barriers outside the corner entrance between Cranbourn Street and Charing Cross Road and 10 barriers outside the Cranbourn Street entrance (measuring 1.35m x 0.69m)		
Agent	Montagu Evans		
On behalf of	Hippodrome Casino Ltd		
Registered Number	19/01502/ADV	Date amended/ completed	27 February 2019
Date Application Received	27 February 2019		
Historic Building Grade	The Hippodrome is a grade II listed building.		
Conservation Area	Leicester Square		

1. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission on design and highways grounds

2. SUMMARY

The Hippodrome is a grade II listed building located at the corner of Cranbourn Street and Charing Cross Road within the Leicester Square Conservation Area.

Advertisement consent is sought for display of 'The Hippodrome Casino London' advertisements on crowd control barriers to be sited beneath the canopy of the Hippodrome Casino along Charing Cross Road and Cranbourn Street. Each barrier to measure 1.35m x 0.69m. There will be 10 barriers outside the Cranbourn Street entrance and 15 outside the corner entrance on Charing Cross Road and Cranbourn Street. It is proposed that the barriers will be removed between the hours of 06.00 and 12.00 to allow for cleaning which had the proposal been recommended for approval could be secured by condition.

Advertisement consent has previously been granted for 4 barriers each at the Cranbourn Street and Charing Cross Road entrance. These were required to signal where the two customer entrances are at the Hippodrome. These consents expired in 2018. This application seeks to increase the number of barriers to both entrances for the reasons set out below.

The applicant considers that the previously approved barriers have proven to be an important part of

the safe management of the casino. However, the applicant advises that there has been a marked increase in the number of people in the recent months which has given rise to several issues in the area. The applicant states that 'space taken up by rough sleepers [under the canopy] is extensive, causing the pavement to become congested and forcing pedestrians into the road presenting a safety hazard'. Also, that 'there has also been a rise in aggressive begging, with customers of the casino and the public at large feeling intimidated and unsafe. Belongings are regularly left unattended throughout the day which itself leads to security concerns given the high profile nature of the area.' The applicant has provided comments from the Metropolitan Police (provided as a background paper) which advises that taking ownership of this part of the pavement will reduce the amount of covered space making it less conducive for sleepers.

Letters of support have been received from local business organisations and landlords on the grounds that the barriers are an appropriate measure to deal with the rough-sleeping and beggar issue and the associated anti-social behaviour and safety concerns. The letters of support consider that the barriers do not obstruct pedestrian movement to the tube station and they are an adequate visual solution in the streetscene.

The key considerations for this application are the impact of the crowd control barriers on highway safety and visual amenity.

In terms of highways safety, the relevant policies are S41 (Pedestrian Movement and Sustainable Transport) of the City Plan and UDP Policy TRANS3 (Pedestrians). These policies seek to ensure that all development prioritises pedestrian movement and create a convenient, attractive and safe pedestrian environment, with particular emphasis in areas with high pedestrian volumes or peaks. The Westminster Way's public realm strategy is also a relevant consideration as it strives to promote walking rather than disadvantage pedestrians. For visual amenity the relevant policies are S25 (Heritage), S28 (Design) and DES8 (Signs and Advertisements) of the UDP. DES 8 seeks to secure the highest standards of design in all advertisements, and their compatibility with the townscape. Also relevant is guidance contained within the council's Advertising Design Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Highway Safety

This part of Charing Cross Road experiences extremely high levels of pedestrian traffic as it is adjacent to an entrance to Leicester Square Underground station, opposite a heavily used pedestrian crossing and adjacent to a key gateway to Leicester Square. The primary function of the highway is for the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and this is part of the city where obstructions for pedestrians must be contained to the bare minimum in order to keep the maximum area of footway clear. The barriers would obstruct the highway on Charing Cross Road which would be harmful to pedestrian movement. As the barriers would not be fixed to the ground there is a concern that they could easily be moved thus reducing the area of unobstructed footway still further.

Visual Amenity

It is considered that due their number and appearance the barriers and associated advertising would amount to intrusive and harmful visual clutter which would detract from the visual amenity of the area and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Leicester Square Conservation Area.

Conclusion

Officers are sympathetic to the concerns raised by the applicant about antisocial behaviour. However, it is not understood how the installation of barriers will address the problem of rough sleeping in any meaningful way. The barriers are only likely to displace the problem. In addition, from

the photographic evidence submitted by the applicant and from the officer's site visit, it is understood that the rough sleeping issue is largely concentrated near the Leicester Square Underground station entrance in Charing Cross Road. Therefore, it is not considered that the installation of many barriers along Cranbourn Street is justified in this instance.

It is considered that the proposals are unacceptable in design and highways terms resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the area and wider conservation area and obstruction to pedestrian movement therefore contrary to Policy S25, S28, S41 of the City Plan and Policies DES 8, DES 9 and TRANS 3 of the UDP and the Westminster Way.

3. LOCATION PLAN



4. PHOTOGRAPHS



Cranbourn Street elevation



Entrance at the corner of Cranbourn Street and Charing Cross Road



Charing Cross Road elevation



Cranbourn Street elevation

5. CONSULTATIONS

WARD COUNCILLORS FOR ST JAMES'S: support the erection of barriers if they are well design and aesthetic as this micro location has been particularly troublesome for rough sleeping

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON: No objection following receipt of drawings showing remaining footway width.

METROPOLITAN POLICE: Any response to be reported verbally.

HIGHWAYS PLANNING: Refuse on the grounds of unnecessary obstruction of the highway in an area that experience extremely high levels of pedestrian traffic adversely affecting the safe, direct and convenient pedestrian traffic contrary to S41, TRANS3 and Westminster Way.

WASTE PROJECT OFFICER: No objection.

PUBLIC PROTECTION AND LICENSING: extra barriers are a good idea as many complaints with regards to rough sleepers bedding down in the area and this will stop that.

ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No. Consulted: 0

Total No. of replies: 6

No. of objections: 0

No. in support: 6

6 letters of support on the following grounds:

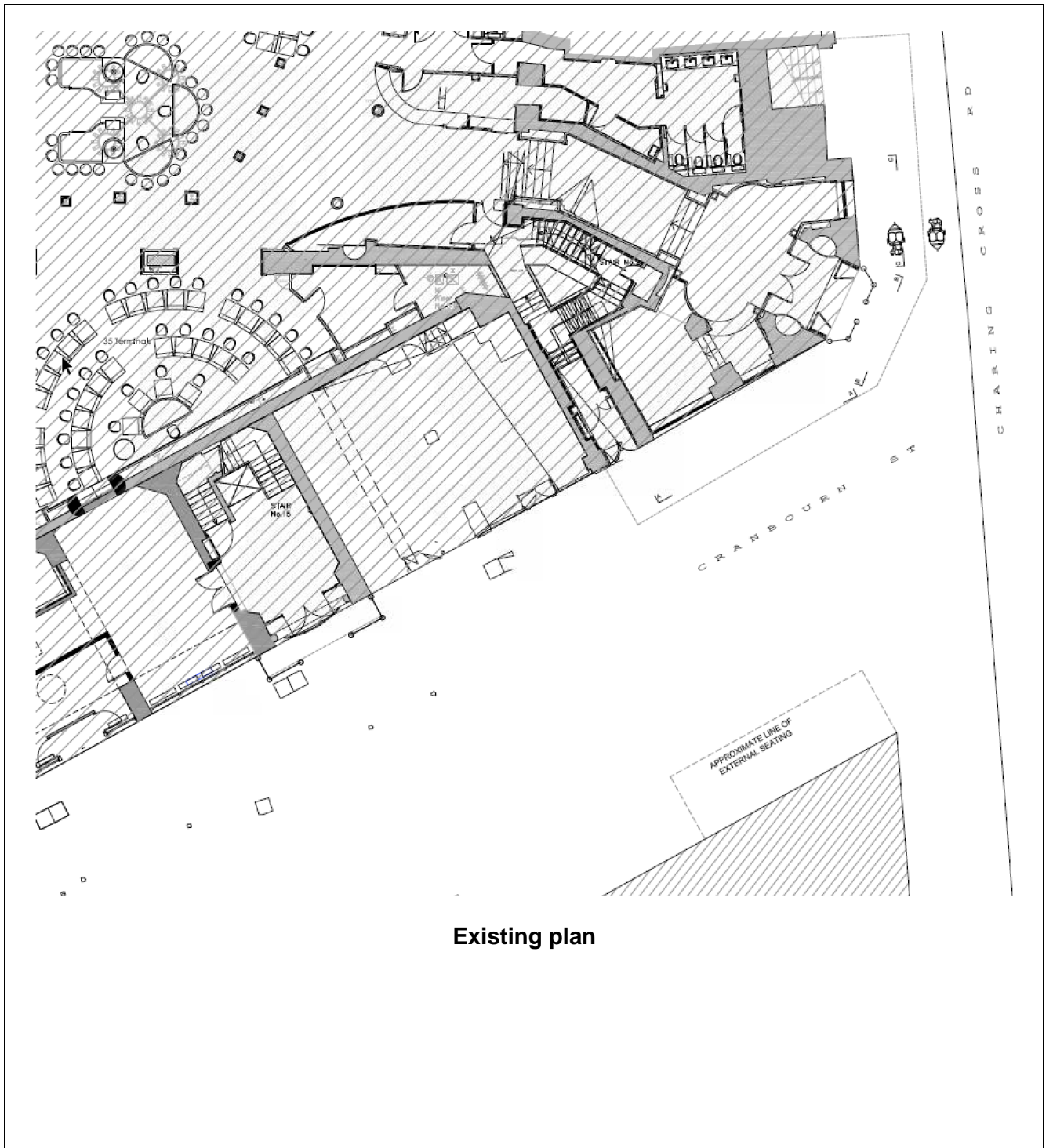
- No obstruction to the users entering/exiting the tube station and pedestrians and minimal impact on pedestrian safety considering the width of the pavement
- Help to reduce antisocial behaviour and health and safety problems created by rough sleepers and beggars, simple and effective solution to reduce attractiveness of the Hippodrome for rough sleepers
- Will bring character to the streetscene of Leicester Square which is the heart of the London tourist area, the barriers are in keeping with the local street scene

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE: Yes

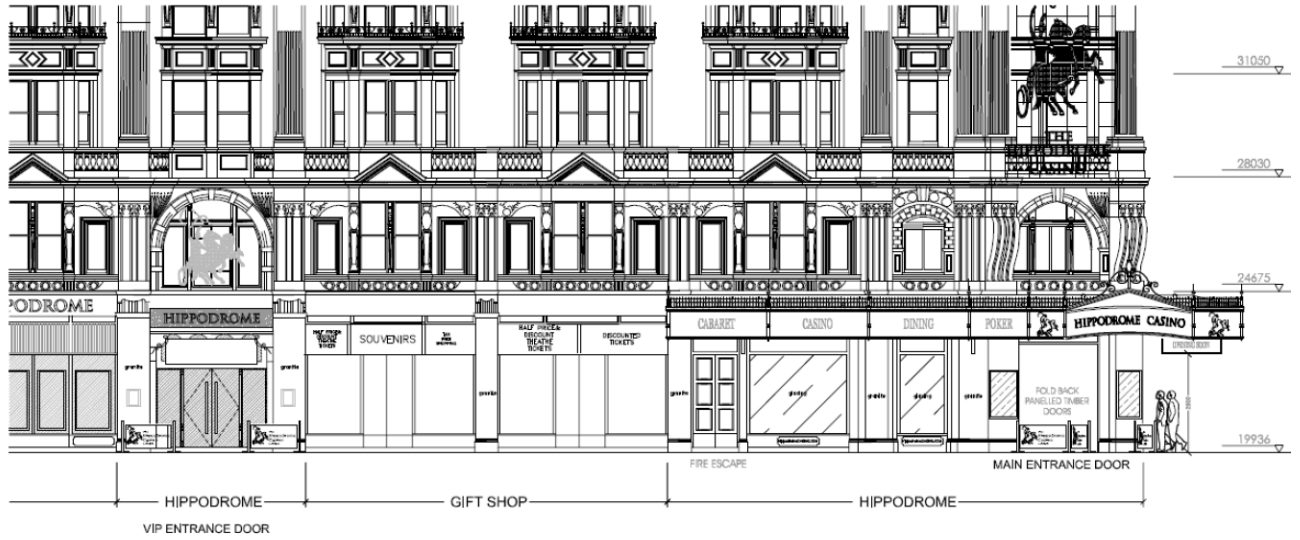
(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE PRESENTING OFFICER: MATTHEW MASON BY EMAIL AT mmason@westminster.gov.uk

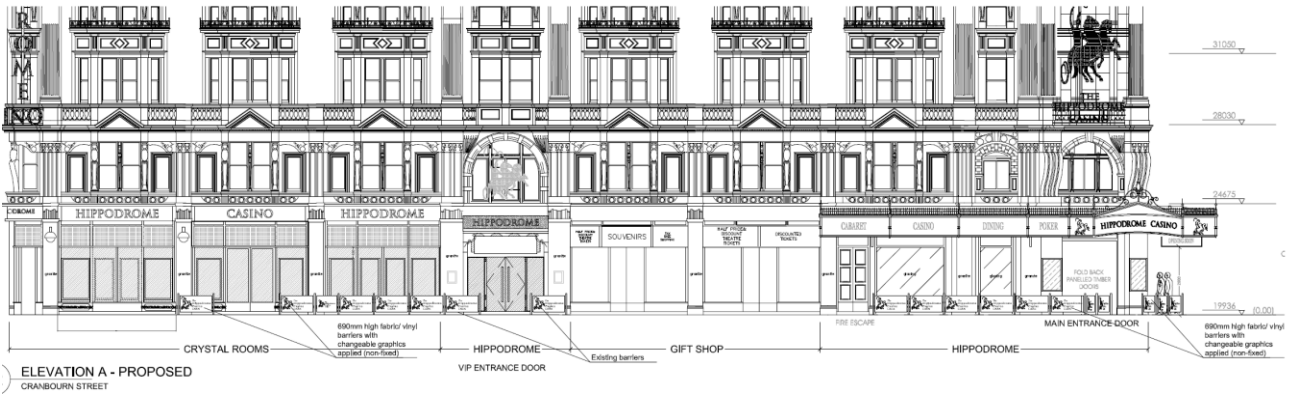
6. KEY DRAWINGS



Existing plan



Existing Cranbourn Street elevation



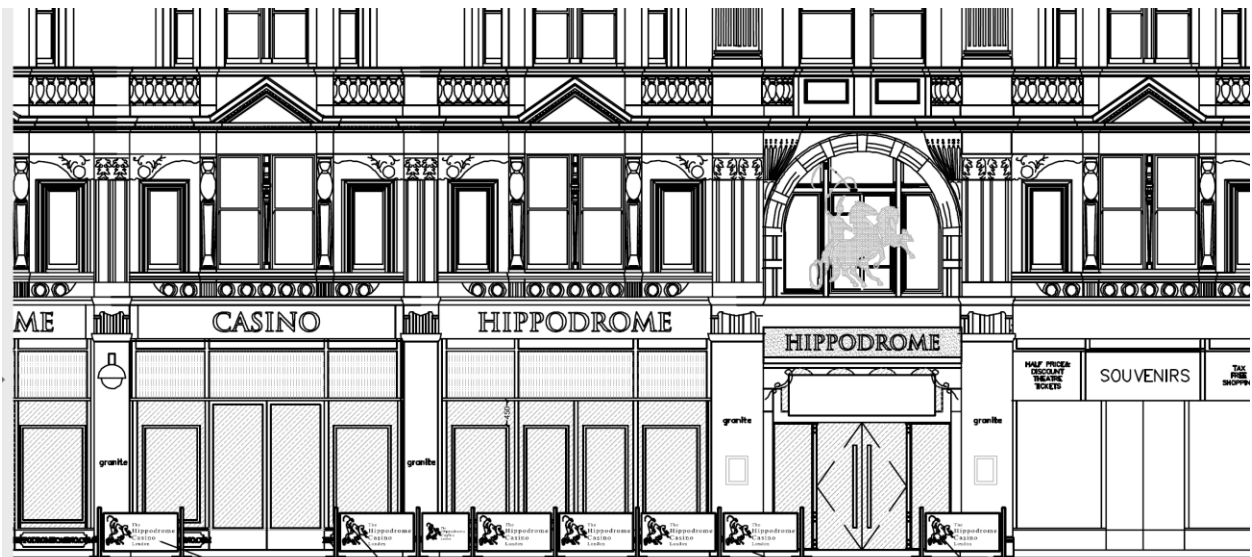
Proposed Cranbourn Street elevation



HIPPODROME

GIFT SHOP

VIP ENTRANCE DOOR
Existing Cranbourn Street entrance



CRYSTAL ROOMS

HIPPODROME

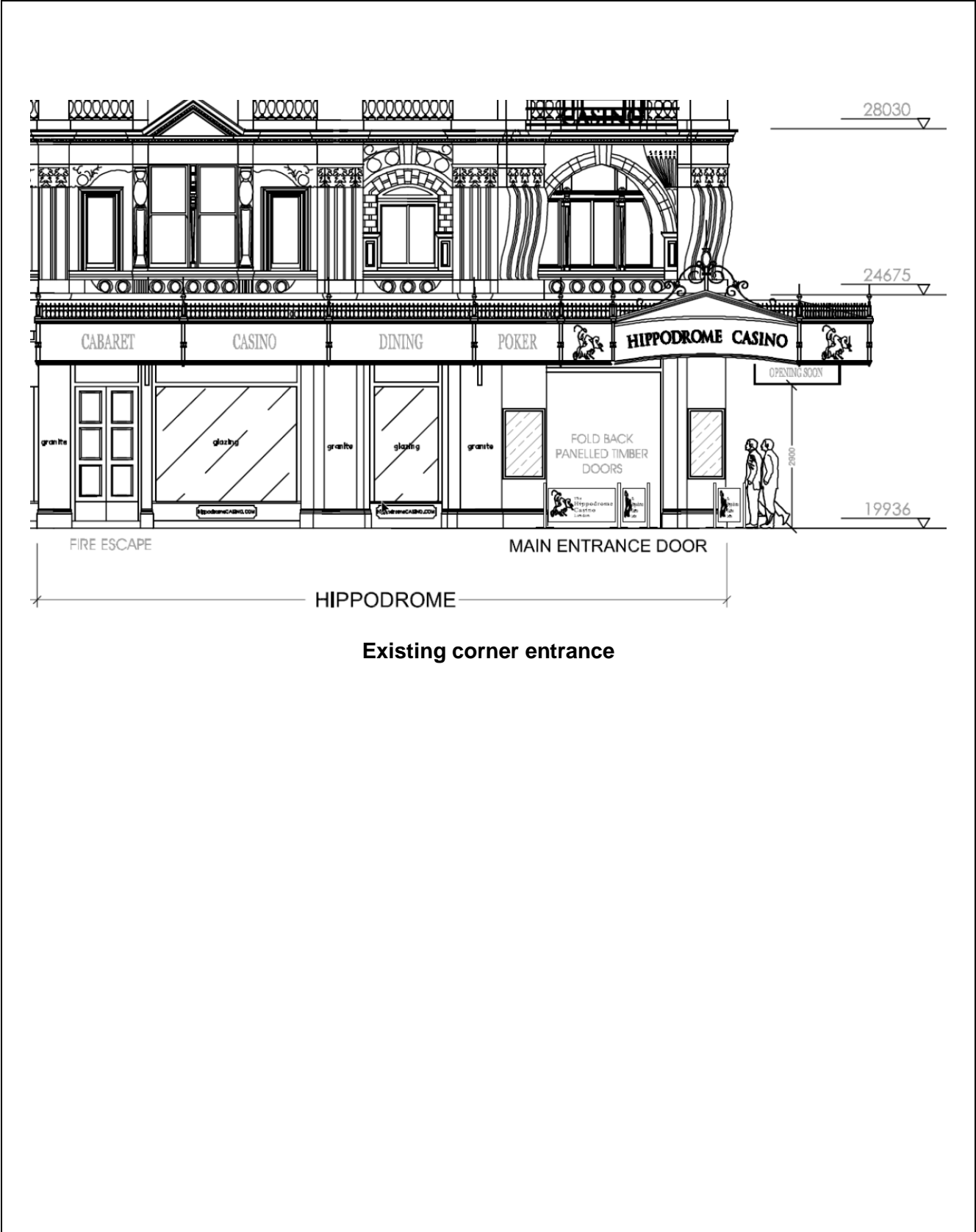
Existing barriers

PROPOSED

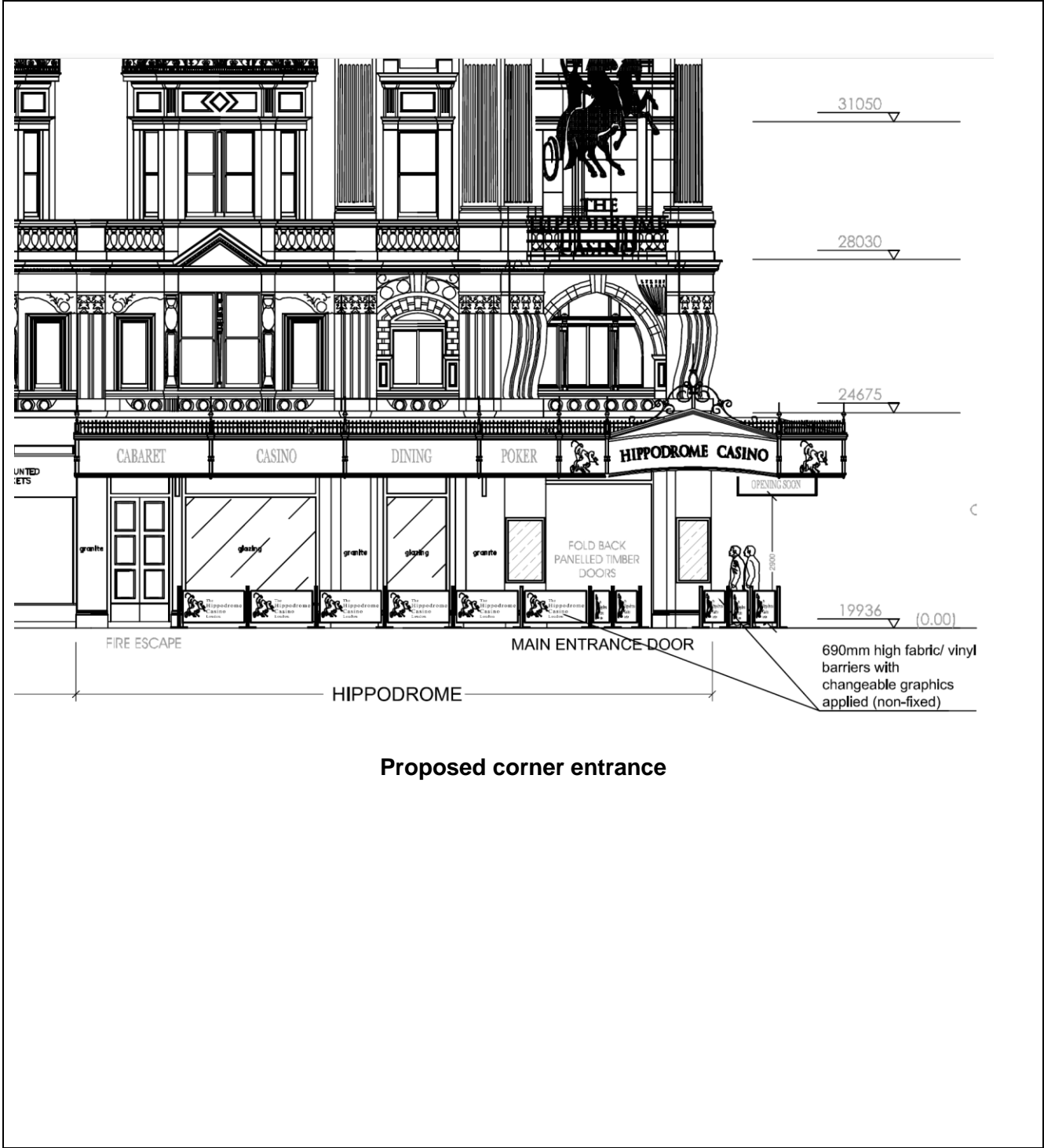
VIP ENTRANCE DOOR

Proposed Cranbourn Street entrance

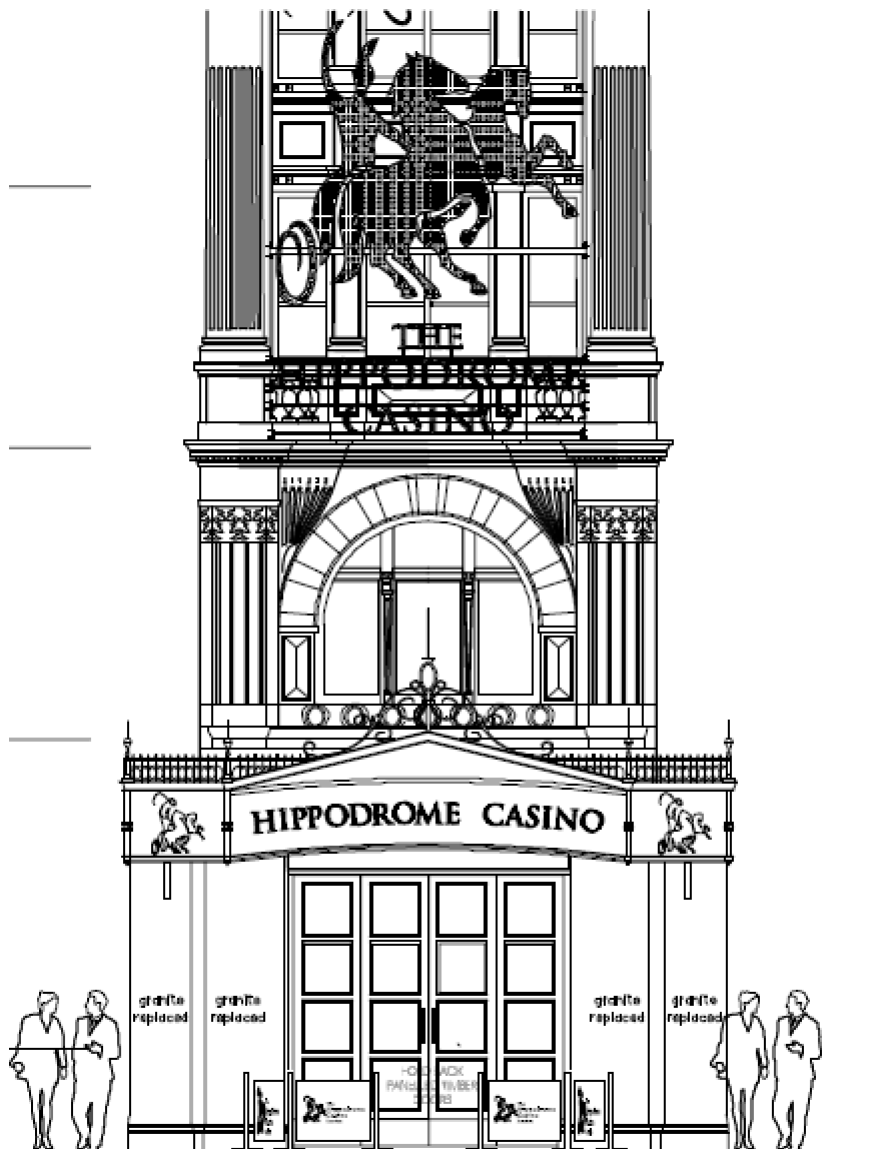
690mm high fabric/ vinyl
barriers with
changeable graphics
applied (non-fixed)



Existing corner entrance

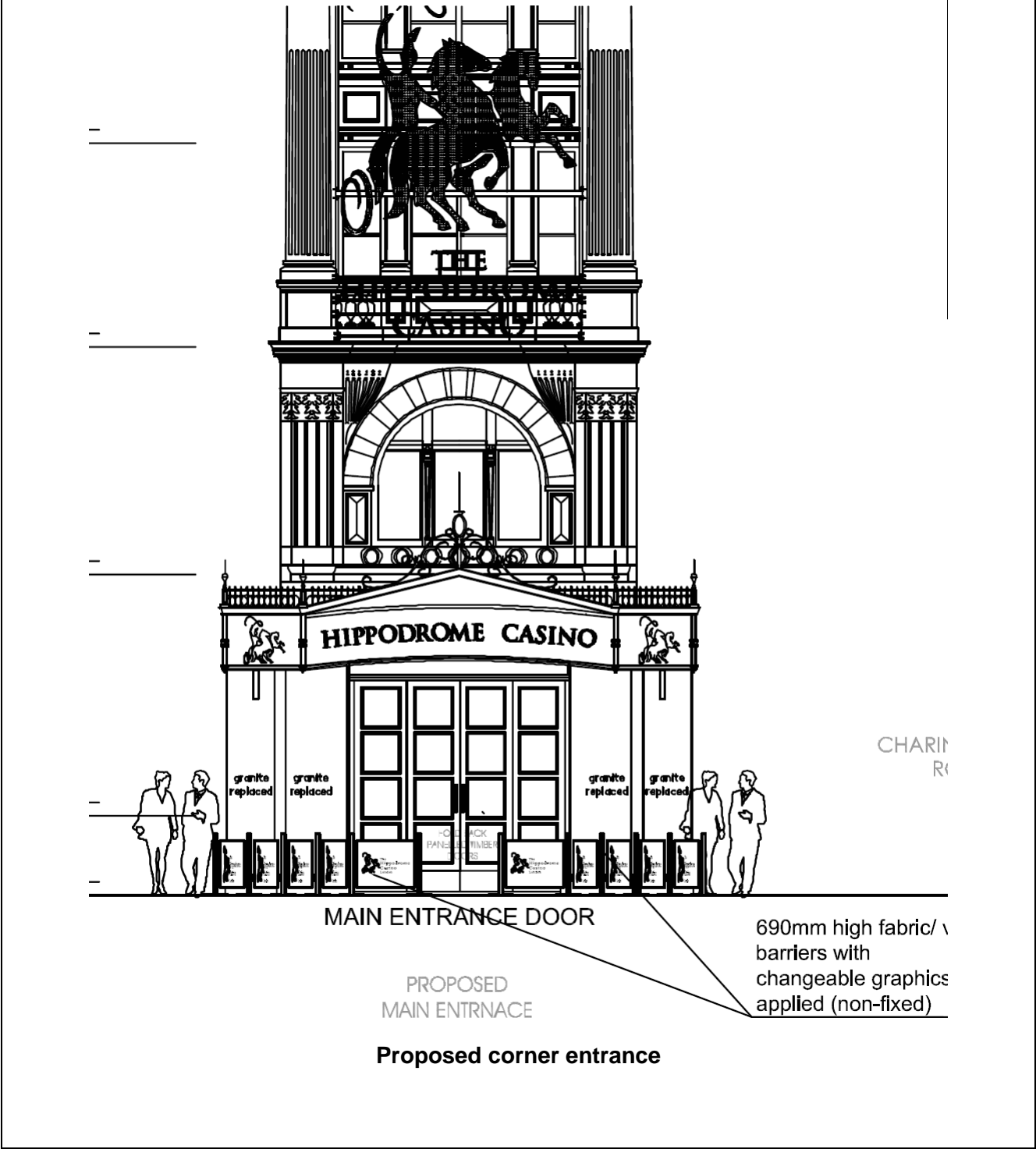


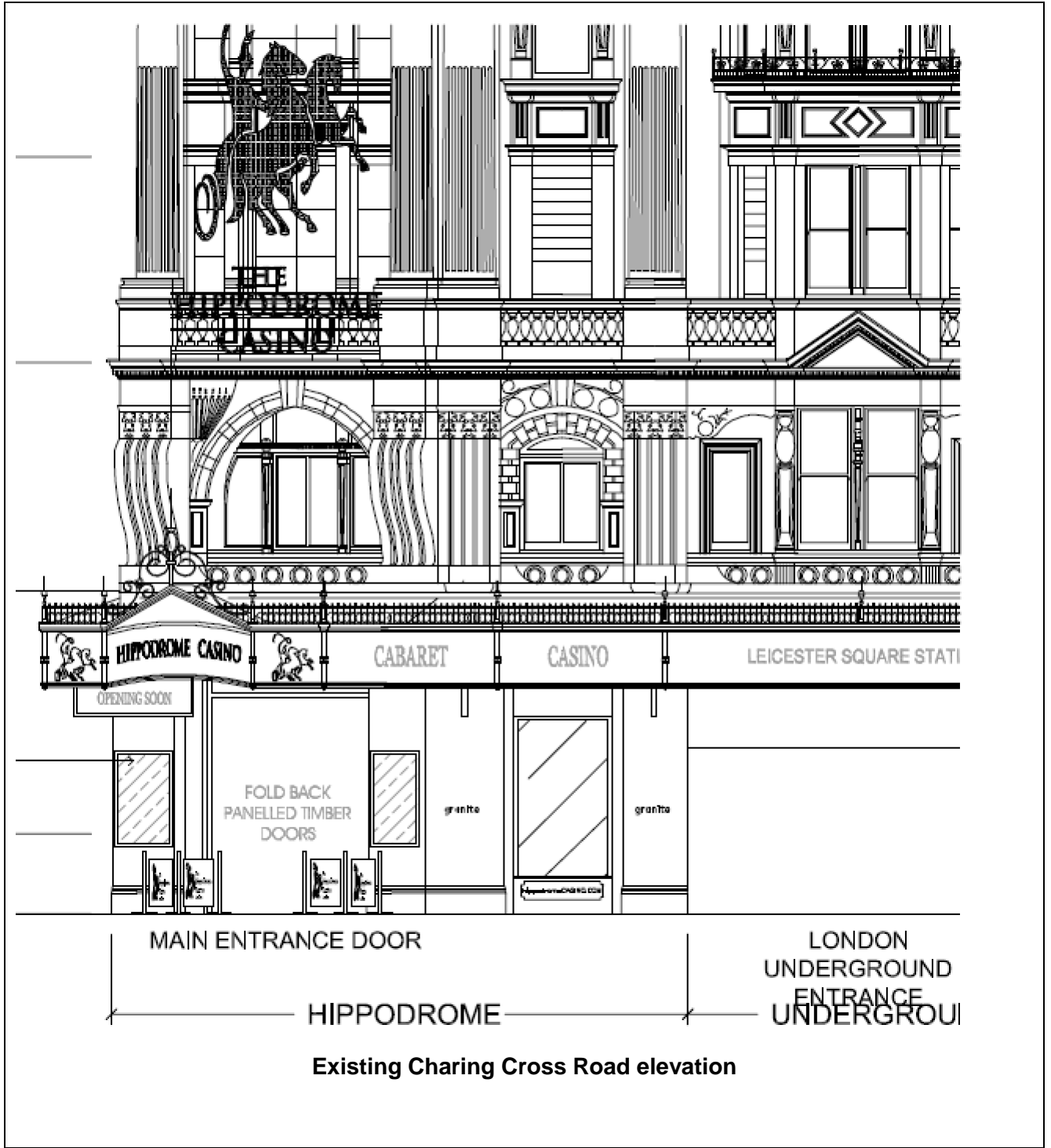
Proposed corner entrance

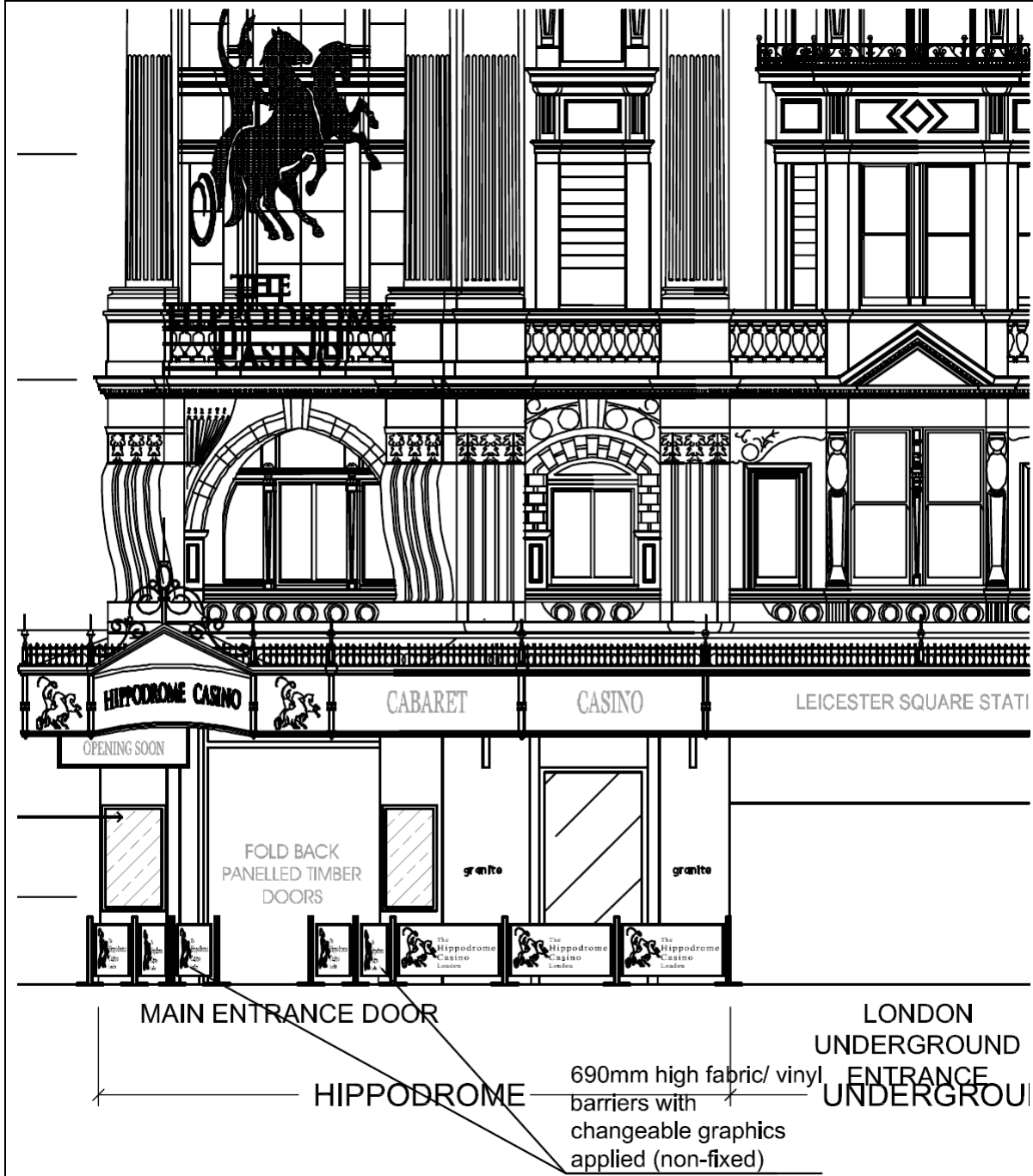


MAIN ENTRANCE DOOR

Existing corner entrance







Proposed Charing Cross Road elevation

DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: 10-14 The Hippodrome , Cranbourn Street, London, WC2H 7JH

Proposal: Display of 15 barriers outside the corner entrance between Cranbourn Street and Charing Cross Road and 10 barriers outside the Cranbourn Street entrance (measuring 1.35m x 0.69m)

Reference: 19/01502/ADV

Plan Nos: P-E1600 A; P-P1600 D; Site location plan; 15 photographs of the highways

Case Officer: Aurore Manceau

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 7013

Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s)**Reason:**

Because of their number and design the barriers would harm the appearance of the building and the appearance (amenity) of the area. It would also fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character and appearance of the Leicester Square Conservation Area. This would not meet S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 8 and paras 10.108 to 10.128 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (X15AD)

Reason:

The proposal will result in an unnecessary obstruction of the highway in an area that experience extremely high levels of pedestrian traffic adversely affecting the safe, direct and convenient pedestrian traffic contrary to S41 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016), TRANS 3 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007 and Supplementary Planning Guidance Westminster Way (September 2011).

Informative(s):

- 1 In dealing with this application the City Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way so far as practicable. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in Westminster's City Plan (November 2016), Unitary Development Plan, neighbourhood plan (where relevant), supplementary planning documents, planning briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre application advice service. However, we have been unable to seek solutions to problems as the principle of the proposal is clearly contrary to our statutory policies and negotiation could not overcome the reasons for refusal.

Item No.

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Please note: the full text for informatives can be found in the Council's Conditions, Reasons & Policies handbook, copies of which can be found in the Committee Room whilst the meeting is in progress, and on the Council's website.