

(Appendix 1) Email from Alan Fitchett dated 5-5-12

Dear Mr Fisher

I thank you for your telephone call returning mine of the day previously and for your patient attention to what I had to say. I refer to the telephone conversation of Friday 4th May wherein I confirmed that as the proprietor of The North Laine Antiques and Flea Market, 5 Upper Gardner Street I should like to appeal the Council's decision not to allow us to place remote A Boards to indicate the location of our premises targeting casual out of town visitors and which we have displayed with great success for more than ten and a half years without incident and initially with the approval of an Officer of the Council, Mr Ian Denyer, who I understand is no longer in that position. I understand the reason for the Council's decision as a general principle but as we explained those good many years ago to Mr Denyer we believed and still do that the display of the boards was essential bearing in mind the location of our premises and the difficulty in finding means of advertising to target visitors from many parts of the Country and indeed from overseas. This proved to be highly successful and over the years I can honestly say that not a week has gone past when a number of visitors have actually thanked us for displaying the boards, allowing them to discover our premises. Mr Denyer kindly arranged to visit us and asked to be escorted around the sites of the boards. He understood our need and expressed his approval of the siting, emphasising that we must ensure that the boards were always placed in the same locations and monitored regularly to ensure they retained those positions. Until we received a letter from the Council Highways department some while ago we rigidly adhered to this agreement. When we were forced to remove the A Boards from these locations it became almost immediately evident that we were loosing footfall and consequently sales. As I said to you on the telephone our figures show a fall in the number of items sold on weekdays and Sundays of approaching 50% (or sometimes more) with a slightly smaller fall on Saturdays when the street market helps to attract footfall. We will not pretend that we have not built up a regular clientele over the years which affords some regular trade but the nature of the business requires an additional constant flow of new customers like most shops of this type. The problem with our location is that the flow of foot traffic tends to be from Bond Street, through to Gardner Street and then the enlarged pedestrian crossing to the right of Gardner Street leads the casual browser into Kensington Gardens after which the area where our main remote board was positioned leads the natural flow into Sidney Street. The situation naturally reverses for those approaching from Sidney Street. All of these streets have excellent shops of an independent nature and it seems that the casual visitor will find and visit these without problem. Our premises is not even at right angles to any of these streets so does not allow the natural discovery; we are in fact parallel to Kensington Garden just to the west which is why we felt all those years ago that there was a need to point to our location along the natural track of the flow for those who might be interested. Mr Denyer understood this hence his approval. We understand that the Council are trialling signs to help visitors to discover businesses off the main thoroughfares and we would support these if it were decided that they

should be located in our area but it would be difficult for these to indicate the location of our premises which the boards do, informing those who might be interested that they need to turn left, then left again and they will find that in 100 yards or so they will find a Market that may well be of interest to them. This is achieved by a bright sign with our name and a chalkboard lower section with an arrow and then the words below 'first left then 100 yards' This may prove to be difficult on alternative signs which may well allow the mention of the existence of a business but unless it is immediately off the location of the sign would be difficult to provide directions. Our problem is exacerbated by the need to keep our stallholders to allow the business to maintain its interest to the public with its ever changing supply of interesting and useful goods which can only be achieved by relatively constant sales. Such stallholders as any Antiques or Flea Market proprietor will tell are somewhat fickle and make decisions as to continuance based on relatively short term results. We have already received notice from one stallholder who is unhappy with the fall in sales and regrettably if this continues in even a relatively small way the flow away becomes unstoppable as each follows the trend. This would very quickly threaten the viability of the business and closure would be the only choice which after more than ten years of hard work to build up a business which regularly we are told is the 'favourite shop' of many would be a great shame, a loss to the City and its visitors not to mention the loss of jobs and livelihoods and yet another closed and blank premises. We hope that the Council will view our appeal with sympathy and understanding and look forward to hearing from you further.

With Kind Regards

Alan Fitchett