
From: Joanne Scott [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 March 2023 11:43
To: Kate Henry
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Planning Application 2022/4514/P - The Unicorn, 227 Camden Road

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Hi Kate

Thank you contacting CAMRA North London Pub Protection. Our original objection still stands. In response to the comments raised by the application, please see my response below.

The proposal would lead to loss of the sui generis floor space on the ground floor, which would mean that the venue may be unviable, contrary to Policy HC7, London Plan, 2021. The applicant should be asked to provide evidence that they have advertised the pub and music venue for a reasonable length of time, they can't make statements about the venue being unviable, without evidence to back this up. This is contrary to Camden Local Plan 2017, policy C2, loss of community facilities. Loss of pub space on the ground floor may well make the pub unattractive to potential future licensees and operators, thereby causing recruitment problems. The proposed development would result in a smaller trading area on the ground floor, then the applicant needs to prove whether it would be big enough to be viable. Many of the overheads will stay the same so a reduction in size doesn't automatically mean significantly lower outgoings.

Moving the music area to the basement, may lead to the loss of the grass roots music venue to the local community. Customers may be less likely to visit the venue if music was only played in the basement. The Unicorn Camden Live was part of a national initiative launched by the Music Venue Trust to prevent the closure of 100s of independent music venues in August 2020 and they successfully raised money to save the venue. Save The Unicorn Crowdfunding campaign:

"The Unicorn has long been a stand alone, grass roots music venue serving not just the local Camden and Holloway underground music scene but has a reputation for accommodating touring artistes from all over the world. Run with passion and love by a small team of music lovers (many of them musicians themselves) we have always been the destination venue for music lovers .

We have a particular appeal to the "alternative" audience and strive to welcome and give a platform for new talent as well as established artistes."

We welcome the news that the the applicants has attracted support of potential music operators, but we would request that the council insist that music venue must have an operator and must be open and trading before any occupation of the flats, or supermarket is allowed. If permission is granted and the live music moves to the basement, then there should be adequate sound proofing and storage for beer barrels and other cellar storage for the venue and public house.

We would welcome Camden Council consulting with the Music Venue Trust and the London Night Tsar on this application, to ensure that this important grass roots venue isn't lost to the local community.

Best regards
Joanne

Joanne Scott
Pub Protection
Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) North London Branch

On Thu, 23 Mar 2023 at 14:30, Kate Henry <Kate.Henry@camden.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Joanne,

Further to the applicant's email below, which responded to your objection to the application, I wondered if you wanted to make any further comments on the application.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kate

Kate Henry
Principal Planning Officer

Telephone: 020 7974 3794



From: Jessica Thomson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 02 February 2023 10:43
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Planning Application 2022/4514/P - The Unicorn, 227 Camden Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Beware – This email originated outside Camden Council and may be malicious Please take extra care with any links, attachments, requests to take action or for you to verify your password etc. Please note there have been reports of emails purporting to be about Covid 19 being used as cover for scams so extra vigilance is required.

Dear Joanne,

I am writing from Child Graddon Lewis, the Architects of planning application 2022/4514/P, in response to your letter of objection to the proposed development at 227 Camden Road. We have read your comments and are making contact to ensure we have understood your concerns correctly, to give some further detail and background of the proposal and, in doing so, hopefully address your queries.

For clarity, the blue text below has been extracted from your objection letter and our response is written in black.

Sui Generis Floor Space

“The proposal would lead to loss of the sui generis floor space on the ground floor, which would mean that the venue would be unviable, contrary to Policy HC7, London Plan, 2021.”

We understand your concern for the loss of sui generis floorspace. However, as I’m sure you are aware, public houses and music venues have been hugely impacted by COVID-19 and, even prior to this, many were becoming unviable and shutting. Sadly, The Unicorn has been closed for a number of years despite extensive and innovative attempts to revive it. A fundamental issue with the existing property has been the lack of separation between the music and bar areas. This prevented selling tickets exclusively for the music area while operating the bar independently due to the sound from the music filling the whole pub. This, in turn, restricted flexibility and prevented the two uses from operating simultaneously to generate income.

The proposed lowering and extension of the existing basement will have several positive impacts. The larger basement will provide additional pub accommodation, and will enhance and protect the existing provision of live music. Relocating this aspect of the premises to a sound-proofed basement venue will mitigate potential future noise complaint, and thus significantly improve upon on the existing situation. The basement extension will also create future flexibility for the premises, giving the public house a greater chance of long term viability. The works will also facilitate a new and improved temperature-controlled cellar critical for ensuring preservation and quality of beer; the sales of which provide a vital financial margin required for the successful operation of an sui generis unit.

Moreover, the balance of proposed land uses has been carefully determined through a thorough design process, local research and extensive consultation with the Local Authority. The commercial and residential elements are crucial to the viability of the scheme, and therefore crucial in protecting the future of the pub and live music venue. Our clients have worked hard alongside Camden to create a scheme which is both financially viable and in keeping with the aims of the Local and London Plans. By integrating the existing land uses within a viable and efficient strategy for the site overall, the proposals deliver vital new housing units and present a holistic proposition which will enable the pub to re-establish itself and protect this valuable community asset for years to come.

Venue Operator

“If planning permission is granted we would request that the council impose a condition that the pub and live music venue must have an operator and must be open and trading before any occupation of the flats, or supermarket is allowed.”

The proposal has attracted the support and involvement of a highly respected pub/music venue operator already established in the London Borough of Camden. They have extensive experience and success with both bars and music venues, including establishing institutions in the Borough of Camden such as the Jazz Café, Forum (Kentish Town) and recently reopening the venue formerly known as Dingwalls as Powerhaus Camden. This knowledgeable and accomplished operator is enthusiastic about the potential of the proposal to facilitate a successful venue. In addition to the points highlighted earlier in this email, the scheme will amplify the original importance of the building as a local landmark and the new pub garden will become an external focal amenity for the local community. In collaboration with the potential operator we have developed a Venue Management Plan to support the planning application which outlines strategies which will be implemented to appropriately and successfully manage the venue. We collectively believe the proposals provide a positive and balanced approach to the redevelopment and restoration of the existing building, which will reinstate the original tavern to its former glory and protect the once popular live music venue.

Noise

“The conversion of rooms over a music venue to residential use can lead to complaints from future residents, and the eventual closure of the venue. If permission is granted, the Planning Officer should insist on noise insulation being a material consideration, secured by condition to protect the music venue from future complaints from the flats upstairs. The developers should work with the council to ensure that live music is protected at the Unicorn.”

We agree that sound management is of key importance, especially given the close proximity of a variety of land uses. As previously discussed, this has been a driving factor behind the relocation of the live music to basement level; where sound and vibrations are more easily insulated and more remote from residential units above. It is also worth noting that both residential and pub/music venue uses currently exist within the existing building; so the proposed reconfiguration and upgrade of the building’s fabric significantly improves upon the existing scenario.

Nonetheless, as you rightly highlight, noise and vibration mitigation measures will certainly be a condition of planning compliance. This will also form a key part of the detailed design going forwards as well as the management of the construction project. We are highly experienced in the delivery of mixed-use schemes in urban locations, including music venues, and are familiar with the measures that need to be put in place. Moreover, noise restriction will be central to the Venue Management Plan which will be a requirement of the building’s operation. All of these measures are to ensure that neighbouring units are protected from external noise intrusion from The Unicorn pub and therefore the successful operation of the venue. We

hope this provides you with reassurance and welcome further conversation to keep you informed moving forwards.

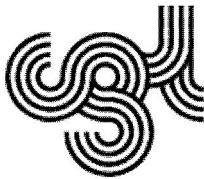
Conclusion

I hope you feel that we have understood and addressed your concerns. The main driver of the proposal is to turn an unviable, closed public house and music venue into a viable long term establishment. A highly visible local historic building will be restored and its uses will be re-established to benefit both the local and wider communities, and we are invested in preserving this local asset. We value your knowledge of the industry and recognise the importance of open dialogue with the wider community, so we welcome further conversation and hope that we can gain your support to ensure this wonderful pub can be brought back to life.

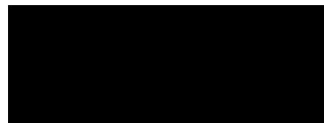
If you have any further queries please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Jessica Thomson | Architect | She/Her



—
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