

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2023/3861/P	Kim Colin	27/10/2023 13:49:35	NOBJ	I thoroughly support this application and will bring many benefits to the local communities.
2023/3861/P	Jonathan Byatt	27/10/2023 12:00:35	OBJ	<p data-bbox="880 209 1619 231">Objection: may I protest in the strongest terms against this application.</p> <p data-bbox="880 272 2047 416">Primrose Hill has always been an open space, maintained by Royal Parks, for the people of the local area and London more generally. As such it is a space which is enjoyed during the day and in the evening's. Access to this park, and the view from the hill, is a tradition which has lasted amongst Londoners for decades and longer. Millions of people have marveled at the nighttime views across the city and revelled in access to one of the best spots in London without restriction.</p> <p data-bbox="880 456 2047 507">To remove this access and deny this opportunity to future generations completely goes against the mandate of the Royal Parks in preserving spaces for all Londoners.</p> <p data-bbox="880 547 2000 630">If there are some instances of bad behavior these can be addressed directly through collaboration with the relevant police forces or other security. Indeed, the local residents can be involved in such as scheme to protect and preserve the integrity of the park in collaboration with these security options.</p> <p data-bbox="880 670 2033 785">It is a sad day when we finally close off Primrose Hill and lose one more of London's greatest assets and widely shared experiences. We have already seen a restriction using covid regulations and other other claims to remove the bonfire night celebrations. This will be the final nail in the coffin in restricting a Freedom which we have all grown up with and which we would gladly pass on to future generations.</p> <p data-bbox="880 825 2033 908">This is a lazy option arrived at due to an unwillingness to approach the problem pragmatically, if bad behavior is the source. If this goes ahead Camden will be complicit in removing one of the greatest Delights offered for free in London, a nighttime walk through Primrose Hill and view across London from its heights.</p> <p data-bbox="880 948 2022 997">Once again, on behalf of so many who have often enjoyed that nighttime access and amazing view across London at all times of the evening, when entertaining guests, visitors and friends, I protest most strongly aga</p>

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2023/3861/P	Martin Sheppard	28/10/2023 09:34:14	NOBJ	<p>I support this application. The installation of gates is necessary and their design is unobtrusive and appropriate. While it is regrettable that there is a need for gates, it is much worse for the hill to be used for criminal and highly antisocial activities at night.</p>

As the main historian of Primrose Hill, and author of 'Primrose Hill: A History' (2013), I am aware that access to the hill and the park has changed over the years. Below are a few passages from my book describing some of these.

Martin Sheppard

Ruth Rendell sets scenes in *The Keys to the Street* in and around Regent's Park, and on Primrose Hill.^[i] A series of tramps, and then a dog-walker, are murdered in the two parks, with their bodies invariably impaled afterwards on the park railings. The victim on Primrose Hill, a tramp known as Pharaoh with an obsession with collecting keys, is found on the railings on the north side of the hill facing Primrose Hill Road. 'Where in other places fences might be hedges or walls, here were iron railings, straight, plain, usually painted black, crossed with two horizontal bars at foot and top, crowned with spikes'.^[ii]

[i] Ruth Rendell, *The Keys to the Street* (London, 1996). For Primrose Hill, see pp. 126, 153, 157-58, 164 and 184-85.

[ii] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

The oak palings around Primrose Hill, which had been put up in 1845, were in poor repair by 1913. They survived until 1929, when they were pulled down, leaving the park open to the south and east.^[i] Iron fencing had been planned as a replacement for the oak palings but this was postponed during the First World War. Rescheduled after the war as part of an Unemployment Relief Programme in 1925, at a cost of £1000, this scheme was never implemented. In the late 1920s the London Society and the Committee of London Squares ran a campaign to remove fencing around public spaces. As there were no gates to Primrose Hill, the fencing served no obvious purpose, while removing the fencing (which cost nothing to do, as the contractor took the wood in lieu) also saved the cost of erecting a replacement. The fencing was removed in July 1929, other than around the gymnasium and playground, and where there was a steep bank in Primrose Hill Road. According to Hugh Johnston, writing from 31 Fitzroy Road, 'It is difficult to explain just what a sense of open space, freedom and trustfulness the absence of a fence has created'.^[ii] Heavy wear near the entrance between Regent's Park Road and Primrose Hill Road led to a shrubbery being planted there.

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The one installation on top of the hill to be approved caused an unexpected amount of trouble. On 24 June 1952, the artist Arthur Kenyon had written to the Minister of Works, David Eccles, to offer the gift of a solid aluminium viewfinder, a guide to the identity of the buildings visible from the top of Primrose Hill: 'Before the war there was a bronze plaque on top of Primrose Hill indicating the buildings which could be seen from that position'.^[i] Kenyon's work would replace the indexed dial that had been placed on the hill in 1904. The offer was accepted and the viewfinder unveiled at a ceremony on 24 April 1953.

Unfortunately, the viewfinder proved a magnet to vandals, who had already damaged it by early May 1953. This was only the first of a series of attacks by 'hooligans', which culminated in severe damage to the viewfinder on the night of 5 October 1953, when it was 'prised from its base, carried some eight feet and dropped on the ground'. Additional damage by early 1956 included a Republican message, incised an eighth of inch deep in the metal, 'DOWN BLACK TANS HPIRA SLICO'. Neither a perspex cover, added in 1957, nor special armour-plated glass by Pilkington Brothers, fitted in 1960, provided adequate defence. Finally, the park admitted defeat and the viewfinder was removed in March 1962.^[ii]

Its disappearance was not regretted by everyone, as, apart from anything else, it contained a number of inaccuracies, including identifying Butterfield's All Saints Margaret Street as a non-existent Wells Street church. The viewfinder had also been placed, for its protection but to little avail, inside railings. As Muriel Holland, a neighbouring resident, complained in October 1953, 'The top of the hill is disfigured by a large square of hideous tall iron railings. ... The effect is of a tombstone on top of the hill'. She returned to the attack in 1955: 'It is with the greatest regret that I – and many of my friends living in this vicinity – notice the planned ruin of Primrose Hill. The very unnecessary monument stuck up on top of the hill to show people what they can well see with their own eyes is perched on the uneven and dangerous and hideous stone stand'.^[iii] Another local resident, John Willis, complained in October 1956, 'During the summer it has caused some embarrassment to hear visiting foreigners puzzling over the attitude of the English who allow a summit of a unique and breathtaking viewpoint to be crowned with a shabby paling adorned with a pair of litter bins'.^[iv]

The damage to the viewfinder had another, wider repercussion. Threatened by repeated hooliganism, the Ministry of Works decided to replace the fencing around the park, which had been open since 1929. Chain-link fencing was accordingly put round the park in 1954, but it was noted that 'the Minister has agreed not to close the gates at night pending a review of the behaviour of the public at night under the new conditions'.^[v]

Reflecting the growth of local activism, and their sense of ownership of the hill, local people strongly opposed an attempt by the Royal Parks Agency, justified by an alleged need to reduce vandalism, to close the gates of Primrose Hill at night in June 1976. This led to a sit-in on the hill from 7 to 18 June and to all the gates being manned to prevent their being shut. Padlocks were smashed and gates, and replacement gates, mysteriously disappeared. Finally, the parks police decided to go home, leaving the protesters in possession. Subsequent negotiations, with Baroness Birk at the Department of the Environment, ended with the views of local inhabitants being taken into account and to an agreement to leave the entrances to the hill open day and night.
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2023/3861/P	Aled Smith	27/10/2023 23:54:02	COMMNT	It would be a terrible shame to close of Primrose Hill. It is well lit at night and an iconic space in london. Covid incidents should be seen as exactly that. Do not extrapolate.
2023/3861/P	John Sebastian Crewe	02/11/2023 11:12:41	OBJ	I object to this proposal. No need for gates; the park should remain open as it has previously.
2023/3861/P	Alexander Simmonds	28/10/2023 08:39:11	COMMNT	I oppose this application. I have lived within walking distance of the park for many years and have often run through the park late in the evening or early in the morning to catch the sunrise. The park was abused during Covid but issues seem to have subsided since (even though the existing makeshift gates do not keep people intent on getting into the park out). Our parks should not be locked like a private garden, for use only by those who keep to „social“ hours.