

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:
2023/3285/P	William Miller	08/11/2023 11:08:33	COMMIT

Response:

Dear Camden Planning Team,

It has been almost one year since the Forge, the venue at 3-7 Delancey Street, re-opened its doors under new ownership. In its early months of operation - specifically November and December 2022, the venue was extremely disruptive as it (either unaware, or unconcerned by its planning restrictions) held high volume, thumping late night events lasting until 4/5 AM, culminating with its patrons spilling out into Delancey Street, Arlington Road and even Albert Street, shooting off sparklers, screaming and shouting. The operator was rightly reminded of the venue's planning conditions, and has since pared back the venue's operations to close by 11PM. While the venue continues to cause steady disruption several nights per week, this is somewhat mitigated by the currently in force planning conditions. However, the venue's operator is now seeking to vary these planning conditions to allow it play music until as late as 3AM. We are rightly concerned that such a variation would remove the existing checks on the venue and enable it to revert to a state where it will cause intolerable nuisance and harm to local residents. We do not live on either Delancey Street of the two neighbouring streets. We do however live within Camden Town where we are seriously effected by the challenges brought to local residents by the growing night economy. Venues of this size have a massive and adverse effect on the levels of Anti Social behaviour that plague the area and make the lives of residents of Camden Town hell in throughout the night. I have had to both walk and drive past the Forge late at night and have always been shocked by the scenes of drug dealing, fighting and noise that takes place in and around this venue. For this reason I urge you to refuse this application. Our supporting arguments for rejection are the following:

1. A precedent planning application (reference: 2013/0739/P) to allow the venue to open until 3AM was refused in 2014, on the stated basis that "the proposed hours of operation would create additional late night activity and disturbance to the detriment of the amenity of the occupiers of nearby residential properties". Since then, the surrounding area has only become more residential and composed of noise sensitive premises. For example, Chant House, a 10 unit apartment building housing around 25 people, was constructed in 2015 and The Hub hotel by Premier Inn (including 3 residential units dedicated to social housing) opened its doors earlier this year. Both of these buildings face the Forge on Delancey Street, a narrow street not more than circa 10 metres wide.
2. The venue is surrounded by noise sensitive premises on all sides. It is bordered to the east by the flats above the Blues Kitchen, to the west by the flats above 9 Delancey Street and the homes along Arlington Road and Delancey Street, to the south by the primarily residential housing units on Mary Terrace and to the north by The Hub Hotel and the Chant House apartment building. We note that the flat above 9 Delancey Street is 5 just metres removed from the venue's ground floor concert hall. We urge you to consider the physical and psychological stress & harm that would be felt by residents living so close by should this venue be allowed to play music until 3AM.
3. Irrespective of any stipulated noise conditions attached to the venue's new (and we stress - not yet issued) licence, it is critical to consider the adverse impacts of a 450 person venue emptying into the surrounding neighbourhood at 3AM. The plans submitted do not require the operator to retain tables and chairs and therefore the capacity for more people using the venue is a real concern – as this will lead to significantly more people coming and going – thus creating further noise and anti-social activity at the quietest time of night.

To this representation we have attached photographic evidence that clearly demonstrates how disruptive the venue's patrons can be. The attached evidence from June of this year took place at 10:19PM on a Sunday -

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				please consider how much worse this would have been at 3AM, after the patrons would have had an additional 4 hours to consume more alcohol. Not only were the patrons creating a noise disturbance, they were also creating extremely unsafe conditions for themselves, other pedestrians and vehicle traffic on Delancey Street, which despite only being a two-lane street, is fairly busy and frequently used by ambulances and fire trucks. 4. The operators have tried to get around licensing conditions by applying for dozens of TENS applications. It is only through the existing planning conditions that have protected us from extended licensable activities. Finally, a note on the LGBTQ+ statements & promises made in the venue's application: we as local residents fully welcome LGBTQ+ events, but we fail to see any logical connection between hosting LGBTQ+ events and the extension of the venue's music playing hours to 3AM. The venue already has permission to operate 7 days a week - effectively until 11PM on most nights - and has been hosting events, parties and concerts on most nights each week since re-opening. We note that hardly (if any) of these events have been LGBTQ+ events, and as far as we can tell, no LGBTQ+ "afternoon get-togethers" have ever been held. In other words, the venue has had (and continues to have) ample opportunity to schedule and host LGBTQ+ events, and yet has not. We therefore cannot help but conclude that the operator is seeking to cynically exploit LGBTQ+ in order to maximise the chance of this application being approved. We urge you to see through this transparent (and frankly distasteful) ploy. We ask that you reject this application in its entirety.