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**From:** Kester Rattenbury [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 26 November 2023 13:18  
**To:** Daren Zuk  
**Subject:** OBJECTION to 2023/3861/P Primrose Hill gates

OBJECTION to 2023/3861/P Primrose Hill gates

I have lived in close proximity to Primrose Hill for more than 30 years, on the corner of two roads leading to the Park itself, and I am entirely opposed to the closure of the park.

Primrose Hill is a really remarkable example of an entirely successful 24 hour public park in a built-up urban area, which is a huge free resource and source of both solace and delight both for those of us lucky enough to live nearby, and to the wider visitors who've increasingly come to visit and use it. In a city where so many people work in low paid or uncertain jobs, often shift work, it is a truly wonderful place to be able to come, free, to view the skyline and meet other people in a safe, green, and beautiful space.

In my thirty years here, I've been able to enjoy sunset, sunrises, moonlit nights, wonderful moments, years of dog walking in all weathers, social contact, raised children, made friends, and brought visitors. Because it is kept fully open, it effectively polices itself, and though all kinds of people may come here it has always felt - more than any park I've ever been in - an essentially safe space, where neighbours can actually meet and chat, where even if there is misbehaviour (and this is exceptionally rare), you will always be surrounded by other peaceable people who are there simply to enjoy the wonderful green space with its exceptional views of London.

Locking the park changes this - definitely for the worse. I have often been there as it is being closed and have noticed how groups of peaceful people relaxing and picnicking can sometimes start to become hostile, noisier and worse behaved when corralled up and driven out of the park -- and the sense that this is being done because a few local residents have complained raises a sense of 'them and us' which is totally unnecessary. Then the closures mean it has become known as a place to go if you are prepared to break the law - so peaceful, law-abiding dog walkers like me are kept out, while those prepared to break the law break in and do whatever they want -- without the calming presence of the local dog walkers and other users who would otherwise reinforce and passively police this remarkable 24 hour public space - and who do so when it is kept open.

Under the extraordinary pressures of lockdown, the park performed astonishingly well, accommodating huge numbers of people who had absolutely nowhere else to go. Under the circumstances major problems were rare and could easily have been dealt with in other way. (Richmond riverside provided 24 hour portaloos; Primrose Hill kept loos locked). Because of the shape of the park, even music noise is not that close to residents. The whole public consultation around this has been utterly scandalous, writing questions in such a way as to make it impossible to register alternative opinions to closure as part of a positive sense of civic space. Even in this hugely loaded survey (locally based, thereby stacked against more diverse and younger users) 'never close gates' got as many as 'always close', and the actual feedback comments describing this much wider picture have never been collated.

We should be studying why this park works so well on a 24 hour basis, not closing it down. (A proper research project from the University of Westminster's specialist Parks research?) Instead, this proposal

is making more moves which normalise the gradual closing down (through private pressure) of one of our most exceptional public park success stories of this great and inclusive city.

Yours faithfully,

LK Rattenbury