

Printed on: 13/05/2024 09:10:11

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/1187/P	Covent Garden Community Association (form completed by Amanda Rigby, Co-Chair)	12/05/2024 23:24:41	OBJ/NOT	<p>As the amenity society for the area, Covent Garden Community Association STRONGLY OBJECTS to this application to broadcast events from large screens outside dwellings until 20:00 all Summer for 3 months from 28/06/24 to 27/09/24.</p> <p>This type of activity is unsuitable for a residential area.</p> <p>—</p>

CONTEXT

The area is highly residential. There are over 109 flats in buildings only a few metres from the proposed screen, another 39 across the road to the West on Eamshaw Street, and more across the road to the South in St. Giles High Street. All have been poorly affected by the broadcast from a similar screen in the past.

The largest buildings are:

- Matilda apartments – 53 flats (social housing).
- 5 Central St. Giles – 56 flats (private housing).
- White Lion House – 13 flats (social housing).
- Centrepoint House – 36 flats (private housing).

All flats start at first floor level, and many are lived in by families with children. It is also important to note that many people living here are now expected to work from home, and that they therefore need an environment that is not too noisy during those hours too.

We have heard many complaints about the screen in the past, including:

1. Noise nuisance. This is caused by the broadcast itself, and also by live crowds shouting and cheering just outside people's flats during sporting events. It penetrates people's flats even with their windows closed. But in the Summer people have to open their windows. Then they are not be able to have meetings, conversations at mealtimes, or even watch their own televisions without even greater disturbance.
2. Obstruction. People find it difficult to get past the back of the screen's structure to access their homes, or struggle to push past standing crowds when it is busy.
3. Overlooking by crowds into people's homes on lower floors, so people are unable to enjoy their homes and/or small outside balconies.

Residents have repeatedly complained about this, and objected to the applications for Summer screens accordingly in the past. They are now exhausted and feel that they can't keep just saying the same thing to the council when the applicant relentlessly pursues this year after year.

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ISSUES WITH THIS APPLICATION

Context Response:

We disagree that the buildings listed by Amanda Rigby (White Lion House and Centrepont House) have been affected by the small temporary screen at Central Saint Giles, it seems that they have been affected by the LED experience screen at Outernet, outside Tottenham Court Road which is a permanent fixture. Again, this is unfair and unjust to the proposal we set out as objections are often (primarily) aimed to this different location rather than our location. Also, we have received positive comments from residents within the Matilda block regarding our temporary LED screen, as well as positive comments from the Private block of flats, so not all residents are opposing the screen but just a small proportion.

1. Noise Nuisance

We have taken on board comments regarding noise seriously and conducted and paid for two professional sound measurement tests, one being from the Piazza and the second from within a number of flats low level which are closest to the Piazza/Screen location. Testing identifies and reports that the screen sound is minimal and other background ambient noises are often louder, especially being based in Central London.

Regarding crowds and cheering, we do not envision loud cheering during the screen's operational times. Crowds again would be managed by our security, and we have a limited number of seats so we do not feel the Piazza will be overcrowded.

2. Obstruction

This comment is incorrect, at no time was anyone unable to pass through the walkway due to the screen being in place. Also, we do not believe this representative for Covent Garden has visited site as the Matilda block entrance is on Earnshaw Street so away from the Piazza and the Private block's entrance is on the other side of the screen and in no way does the screen impact people getting into their Concierge/ flats. We have also opted for a smaller screen this year as to help with any concerns on sizing.

3. Overlooking by crowds into people's homes on lower floors

The development of Central Saint Giles has not changed in terms of the residential flats and the space / Piazza outside. Regardless of a screen being in position or not, anyone from the ground can look up and see residential balconies so again, this comment is incorrect as the screen would not impact the Public being able to look at residential balconies or flats as this can already be done. However, from the position of our external seating / astro turf where people may sit and watch the screen you are unable to see into lower flats as the screen is in the eyeline view, rather than residential balconies.

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				<p>We are concerned that large crowds, distracted by looking at a screen outdoors in fine weather, will attract street crime. Incidence of 'thefts from the person' is likely to increase.</p> <p>Aggressive begging is also a problem around Tottenham Court Road station, Charing Cross Road, St. Giles churchyard and Seven Dials during the day. It leads to safety, security and noise problems for residents, tourists and other users of public space. It is of particular worry to female residents when they are alone. The presence of these outdoor crowds is likely to amplify the issue and to carry it later into the evening.</p> <p>We are doubtful that one dedicated private security officer will be able to manage this. The OMP states that the officer and his non-dedicated colleagues will call the police if back-up is needed. However, such incidents are unlikely to be prioritised ('Category S') and police response is typically over an hour, so we do not believe that this is a workable solution. There are, however, private security teams employed at sites very close by such as Outernet and Centrepoint. We would like to see an agreement attached to the OMP, by planning condition, that arrangements will be made that these neighbouring teams will provide immediate back up if needed in addition to the applicant's own team.</p> <p>---</p> <p>CONCLUSION</p> <p>Notwithstanding our view that this application should be refused, we would withdraw our objection if it were modified in the following respects as discussed above:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sound to be accessed only using mobile apps or headphones (ie: no broadcast speakers and therefore no amplified sound in the public realm).2. The screen is moved further away from the two nearest residential blocks, and turned at an angle to ensure that the audience is not facing towards people's living spaces.3. The number of days on which events are screened is limited to a 1 month time period during school holidays, not an entire 3 month period as applied for.4. Intermittent reminders are flashed on the full screen, asking the audience to keep their personal noise down and to respect their neighbours since they are in a residential area. We suggest that this is shown every 20 minutes for 30 seconds.5. The OMP is augmented to provide immediate back-up security in the event of an incident. <p>---</p>

Security is 24/7 onsite and we will have a dedicated Piazza officer patrolling the Piazza during the day. In all past times when we have had the screen, we have had no crime or thefts happen because of it. In fact, having one of our officers patrolling the area in a Hi Vis deters crime opportunists from the Piazza space.

Aggressive Begging – This does not happen at Central Saint Giles, but presume they are thinking of Outernet/ St. Giles Square. We also do not allow buskers on our property. If buskers did come on to our Piazza or property, they would be moved on by our security. Again, this is not aimed at Central Saint Giles and feel it is directed towards the other location outside Tottenham Court Road tube station.

We take all public safety seriously including female safety onsite, so much so we have security 24/7. There will be a dedicated Piazza officer as already mentioned who will intervene if anything suspicious is noticed, as well as being visibly seen should anyone need assistance they can approach them for help. We then have a wider team of 6 security officers onsite should back-up be required in any incident; this is not a 1-man site as we have a team of security. Our Security Company, Ward also has other security officers in the area that could come to site if required for additional assistance. Our security teams also work closely with the Central District Alliance (CDA), and they often visit our site to patrol, this can be seen as another form of assistance. Within the building we have separate Security teams working for Google and NBCUniversal, we additionally have a detection dog and their handler onsite, so we feel we have a very secure site compared to others. It is worth noting we recently scored 100% in our H&S audit onsite and rarely have any accidents on our premises to further counter the claim.

We have many female workers here at the CSG offices, including 2 from the management team onsite and 3 within our security team and we all feel that the screen does not cause additional worry to our safety. The screen will only be in operation from 8am until 8pm each evening, so no there will be no crowds past this point, if there are any at all. We have an open reception space should any one wish to seek help, this is manned 24/7, as well as a 24/7 manned control room.

We have never had any criminal instances at Central Saint Giles when we have had the screen previously, so we do not believe we will have any this year if the screen does go up. We are not envisioning masses of crowds either as we are quite a secluded place compared to other locations nearby, we envision the screen being watched mostly by occupiers and residents to our building. In terms of security or crime, as mentioned this has never been an issue previously when we have had the screen, and this is proof that we have a good working operational management procedure.

To note, most of the objections raised by Covent Garden Community Association are factually incorrect. Central Saint Giles has been in situ for over 14 years, so we have been here a lot longer than other newer surrounding buildings, such as Outernet and feel a lot of the objections are being aimed at us but with a focus on them.