

Peck, Amanda

From: Mount Pleasant Campaign <mountpleasantcampaign@yahoo.co.uk>
Sent: 04 April 2014 08:19
To: Matthews, Brian
Cc: Peck, Amanda
Subject: a reply from the Mount Pleasant Campaign

Categories: Blue Category

Brian,

We have now discussed your proposal to meet with representatives from our Campaign and the response I'm afraid was not positive. In light of your previous tricky behaviour and the attitude evident in your responses to objections to the planning application, opinion was that a meeting with you would simply allow you to claim further consultation has occurred whilst sticking to your plans in your usual manner.

Because of this we have decided to put to you the demands of local people to you directly. These were put forward in a recent petition against the 10pm closing time of the hostel courtyard and against the proposed lighting scheme. Residents from all the neighbouring mansion blocks as well as nearly every business along the affected stretch of Grays Inn Road put their names in support of this petition. In this respect, your continuing insistence that Community Council, attended often by just 2 individuals, has somehow come to an 'agreement' with local people and that it has somehow taken on board their views, can now be clearly seen by all who care for the wellbeing of the Borough and its citizens as patently untrue.

Before you present at Members Briefing, we're asking that you consider the following demands, all of them made in an effort to resolve problems that the Community Council has failed to solve and in fact is now making worse. It's not too late to start showing local people some good will, respecting their rights and local knowledge. This will win back the kind of trust and confidence that is vital if the hostel is to be a success for all who will be living with it.

DEMAND 1

The courtyard of the hostel facility should be closed for recreational purposes at 6pm. Lighting from this time on should be downlit and dimmed in a manner that simply provides safe access to accommodation.

Neighbours, who will still have to endure noise nuisance from the yard at all times, see this 6pm closing time as only reasonable. Social work professionals have informed us that it is also normal practice for hostel facilities. As for your proposed lighting scheme, it too is not usual for such a facility and indeed goes against all assurances given by Council officers in 2012 in a minuted meeting with representatives from the local community.

In fact, local people are alarmed by the existence of a regular recreational scene that will be going on in the yard until 10pm. With comings and goings from rooms and balconies over looking the space, the reality is a scene involving alcohol and fifty individuals hardened by life on the streets and in prison, many of whom with drug problems, sitting out until late, every night.

Along with all the local people we have talked to, we find that the solutions you and Community Council have come up with to managing this scene will prove unworkable, unrealistic and are likely to cause harm to all concerned, not least staff and clients too. Nobody we have spoken to believes that harassed overstretched night staff can, through 'a noise meter', headcounts and bravery in persuading intoxicated people inside, effect any real control. Or that they can stop this kind of social scene spilling out onto neighbouring streets.

Yes, immediate neighbours will suffer massive unnecessary and unreasonable noise and light pollution, key workers on shift stopped

from sleeping, but more than that, the effects will be felt throughout the wider neighbourhood as a **needless threat to public safety**. We and the police know from experience how the facility will attract visitors, many of whom are selling and using drugs and involved in crime. If these people are aware there is a regular nightly recreation going on in the yard will be attracted in large numbers. Your recent ‘additions’ to the design of so many balconies, especially overlooking Mount Pleasant, has created even more of a problem with more shouting up and down and coming and going. Drug dealers and users, clients and friends with alcohol issues will congregate in the surrounding streets and there will be more anti-social behavior and more thefts and serious assaults.

There will be a harmful impact on the entire area with woman afraid to come home after dark, parents concerned for their children and business owners worried for their properties. And this can so simply and sensibly be avoided...

Please revise your plans to a 6pm closure of the courtyard for recreation. Do not install uplighters and bright fixtures. Install downlights and reduce the lumen levels of these fixtures to health and safety standards compatible with access to accommodation only.

Because Council officers have gone back on their promises (see above), vague agreements on the above would not satisfy local people and we would want to see the 6pm closing-time written into the FLMP document. We’d also need to see hard evidence that alternative lighting fixtures will be installed.

DEMAND 2

Council security operated CCTV on Mount Pleasant must provide coverage of the entire street, including the entrances to Mullen Towers and Panther House. This CCTV should be permanent and not a 3-month trial.

Local people are extremely concerned and angry that you've recently gone back on your previous assurance concerning CCTV coverage for Mount Pleasant.

DEMAND 3

The installation of council security-operated CCTV on the affected stretch of Grays Inn Road should be a permanent fixture and made an urgent priority and not just a 'possibility'.

DEMAND 4

A proper security survey should be carried out of the perimeter of the facility site.

Both residential and commercial neighbours wanted this and they were not pleased by your dismissive comment that any break-ins would be impossible without climbing gear. They know from experience that highly motivated drug-dependent and criminally experienced individuals will find a way and now the flat roof areas around the main courtyard provide ready access to bedrooms and offices.

We appreciate that you've yet to appear before Members Briefing. You've got the facility built as you and the developers wanted, you could at least now show some genuine good will to local people. It will go a long way.

The Mount Pleasant Campaign