

Subject: Planning Applications 2014/6935/P and 2014/7338/P


Dear Mr Freeny

I would like to register my objection to the development proposed by these applications.

I believe the Albert Pub is an important community asset and amenity; therefore the applications should be refused.

Regards

Glen McGowan



Subject: The Albert, Primrose Hill, NW1 Planning Application 2014/6935/P & 2014/7338/P

Dear Mr Freeney

I wish to object to the two planning applications 2014/6935/P and 2014/7338/P regarding The Albert pub in Princess Rd, Primrose Hill.

The Albert is a much loved 'old style' London pub within our conservation area - very much a 'locals' pub that is very popular with and much valued by our community.

The garden is especially appreciated by those here who are flat dwellers with no outside space (like myself). The Albert's garden is somewhere to go to meet and share a meal and drink with friends. Somewhere where we can enjoy being outside in a pleasant green oasis in the city - especially in the warmer months.

Under the current proposals for a house and conservatory, the garden will be reduced to a small cramped space.

It is worth noting how many of the Albert's customer reviews on Trip Advisor mention the garden and how much they appreciate and enjoy it. It is an asset that keeps customers - visitors and locals alike - returning to The Albert time and again: http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g186338-d2479405-Reviews-The_Albert-London_England.html

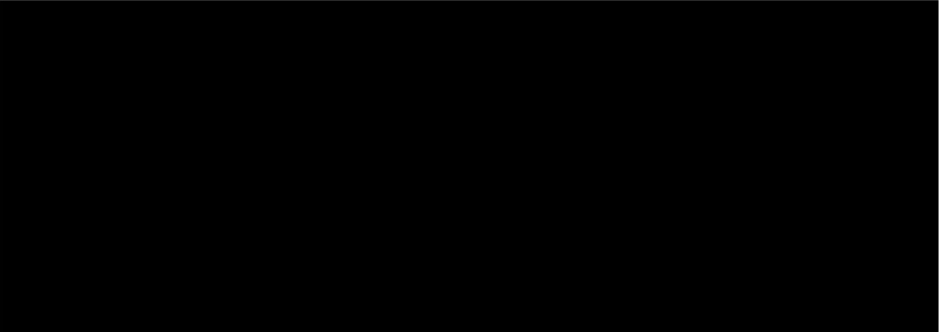
The popularity of the garden contributes greatly to The Albert's profitability. Take that amenity away from The Albert and we run the risk of yet another pub being closed in our area for allegedly being financially unviable, and then ultimately being turned into 'luxury' residential housing. We have already lost The Queens No.1 pub in the next road which is now a 'luxury home'.

Here in Primrose Hill we are facing a glut of proposed 'luxury flats'. Round the corner from the Albert in Chalcot Road Utopia Village's fate still hangs in the balance. We have lost the popular health and fitness centre Triyoga locally for the same reasons.

Primrose Hill is a vibrant community with a more diverse social demographic than the media portrays. We value our local amenities but it seems like we are losing them one by one to property developers. We do not wish our area to become a dormitory of new luxury developments for overseas investors or second home owners.

Reduce the Albert's garden to a small space and you ultimately risk the closure of the Albert.
It will lose the local customers who regularly use the garden and the visitors who for whom it
is a Primrose Hill destination pub.
I therefore strongly object to the current proposals

Patricia Bertram (Ms)
Gloucester Avenue
Primrose Hill, NW1



Subject: Planning applications 2014/6935/P and 2014/7338/P (The Albert)

Dear Mr Freeney.

I would like to object to the above application.

This is probably the best beer garden in the area. It provides important capacity for the pub which would otherwise overload at peak times with patrons going elsewhere.

The owner may have commented that no one uses the beer garden except at the height of the summer; however, it is surprising how heavily it is used.

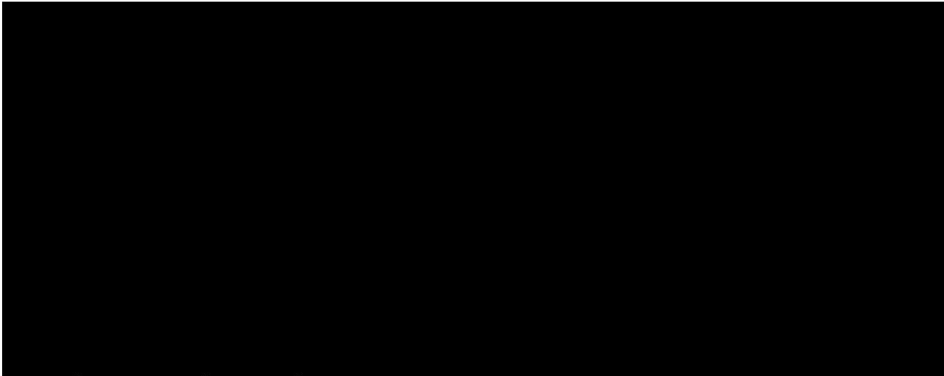
It is worth noting that this was never considered when the owners had a vested interest in keeping the establishment as a viable pub. It is only now that there is a mania for destroying areas by turning pubs into flats that the application has been put in.

The new owner does not appear to have an interest in running it as a pub. It is a pub that needs a considerable amount of effort to keep it attractive. The last time I was in there a few weeks ago. The food had lost its sparkle and the drains were blocked.

If the application were to be granted there is no doubt that it would be the start of a long term decline.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Jonny Bucknell.
4 Chamberlain St,
N.W.1 8XB



Subject: Albert Pub, Princess Road, Primrose Hill Planning Applications 2014/6935/P and 2014/7338/P

Dear Fergus Freeney,

I am writing to object to the planning applications for the Albert Pub in Princess Road, Primrose Hill as, if granted, they will lead to a loss of light to adjoining properties and reduce the viability of a public house which we have applied to have listed as a community asset.

The pub garden would be reduced in size by two thirds which would undermine the viability of the site as a public house. If a house is built on the site of the garden it would reduce the light quality for residents living in Auden Place just a few yards away.

The Albert Pub is one of the few real community pubs left in the area and local residents wish to keep it that way.

I hope this application will be refused.

Kind regards,

Richard

Cllr Richard Cotton
Labour Councillor for Camden Town
with Primrose Hill Ward

Twitter @richardcotton10

Camden Town and Primrose Hill ward surgeries – Cllr Lazzaro Pietragnoli, Cllr Richard Cotton & Cllr Patricia Callaghan


1st Friday of every month 6-7pm St Martins Carol Street

1st Saturday of every month 11-12pm Primrose Hill Community Library, Sharpleshall Street

2nd Friday of every month 6-7pm Primrose Hill Community Association, Hopkinson's Place

4th Thursday of every month 1-2pm Clarence Way Tenants Hall

4th Friday of every month 6-7pm Pirate Castle, Oval Road



Subject: Planning Applications 2014/6935/P and 2014/7338/P

Dear Mr Freeney,

I write not as a local resident but as someone who has enjoyed sitting in the pub garden at The Albert. There can be no doubt that it is a considerable local amenity to judge by the number of people attracted to sit there. I doubt that the pub without the garden could ever be the same and I would go further and suggest that without the garden the pub would not be financially viable. The present Applications would in my view be a necessary prequel to the re-development of the balance of the site.


Clearly in terms of planning policy, the Planning Authority should take care to avoid over-development such that the character of the area is changed in an unacceptable manner. If these Applications were allowed, it is hard to imagine what monstrosities would not come within the bounds of possibility and the great harm to the locality that could then result. I urge the elected Members to reject these Applications in order to preserve the current density of residential accommodation and not to allow it to be increased to an unreasonable level.

I believe the loss of amenity concerns (un-neighbourly and excessive development and the likely closure of The Albert) speak for themselves and should be found to be persuasive as are the "pure" planning considerations.

Best wishes,

David Graves

209 Seddon House
Barbican
London
EC2Y 8BX




Subject: Re: the Albert Public House 11 Princess Road London NW1 8JJ

Dear Mr Freeney

I now attach my objection. Please acknowledge receipt and it would be helpful to have a reply to my email below in due course when the holiday period is over. Can I take it that objections that are put in after the expiry date but before consideration by Committee will be accepted as valid?

Best wishes for the holidays

Alun Phillips



Subject: the Albert Public House 11 Princess Road London NW1 8JJ

Dear Mr Freeney,

I have just a few questions about process on the 2 applications

1 When does the consultation exercise expire as the details on line give different dates? I am assuming it is the latest 25 December (Christmas Day).

2 Having said that, given the volume of documentation (over 30 statements and plans) and the run up to Christmas this timescale and time of year hardly assists in getting local community feedback on these applications. I am sure that the applicant would not object if the exercise was extended to the 15 January or an earlier date after the New Year if that is a problem. Can you please let me know if the local community can be accommodated

3 It is difficult to determine from the plans the square footage of residential accommodation that will (1) be brought back into good use i.e. the floors upstairs in the pub and (2) will be additional residential accommodation i.e. the extra flat above and the house to be built in the garden area. Can you provide those details for each unit. Thank you

4 I take it there will be a members' committee report and decision on this rather than an exercise of officer delegated authority.

5 Why is the garden area of the pub's existing use said to be A5 (hot food) rather than A4. Surely that is wrong and if not please explain.

Kind regards

Alun Phillips

18A Princess Road

Objection to Planning Application 2014/6935/P submitted on behalf of
TXL Capital Limited (British Virgin Islands registered) by
Springcroft Constructions (Agent) and Brooks Murray (Architects)

Specific Planning Grounds of Objection

(A) Inappropriate Land Use

The proposal to erect a 2-storey house, including basement & sunken garden, and to demolish the garage will have a seriously damaging effect on the remainder of the garden and its future use by customers. This will undermine the Albert's overall viability as a public house, and with other incentives for the applicant, will lead to eventual closure.

Policy DP15 states that the Council will resist the loss of public houses particularly those that provide a community function or where facilities are used by the community unless it can be demonstrated that alternative provision can be made elsewhere or that the premises are no longer economically viable.

This policy follows the overriding policy statement in Paragraph 70 of NPPF that public houses enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. The Localism Acts 2011 underpins both these policies by allowing Councils to list premises as has happened here to the garden and the pub. The Act particularly had public houses in mind (with church and village halls) when determining what was meant by assets of community value.

The change of use of a significant part of the garden area should be refused because the remainder will be much less attractive to customers and will lead first to closure of the garden (a major attraction) and then to the closure of the pub itself. To maintain otherwise is commercially disingenuous.

(B) Failure to meet housing need

The applicant's planning statement is predicated on the basis that housing need is being met by the provision of the two storey house in the garden. The NPPF, the London Plan and Local Development Framework policies are referred to, but without any detailed examination of the wording of those policies and circumstances contemplated by such policies.

The location, the internal configuration (with a basement living area) and a gross internal area of approximately 1,000+ sq. ft. mean that it is highly unlikely that the house would be bought by ordinary market purchasers as the price of the house if built would be in excess of £1.4 million or more if the pub faces closure at the time of negotiation.

A profile of who will buy such a property is emerging from very recent activity in Primrose Hill. This house, as designed, will most likely attract an overseas buyer as a second home as Primrose Hill is now attracting the same interest that have tended to dominate the markets in St John's Wood and Marylebone in the last ten years. If this is not accurate, the applicant can refute this by providing statements to that effect from knowledgeable local agents such as Jeremy Bass and John D Wood.

The contention that the house will meet the needs of those market purchasers contemplated by central and local housing policy is a sham and is specifically a ground for refusal especially as it would involve sacrificing a lovely garden and much valued open space.

(C) Threat to Trees, Plants and Wildlife

The construction will require the removal of a tree and could have serious consequences for the roots of the remaining trees in the retained garden.

The Arboricultural report does not give the required assurances that the remaining trees will not be threatened. It only says that it is unlikely and refers to relatively standard measures of protection. The basement excavation work together with the inevitable loss of some daylighting/sunlighting, if the house is built, will also have a detrimental effect on plant and shrubs etc in the garden.

The Council must insist on the highest level of evidence that this will not be the case and then subject it to detailed scrutiny to ensure that a healthy environment is maintained. That has not been forthcoming up until now and this application should be refused for that deficiency.

(D) Lack of consultation

The NPPF encourages applicants to engage in meaningful consultation with the community pre- application. This can be by exhibitions, meetings, leafletting or a well published dedicated web site for comments to be made. Above all it must be genuine and address reasonable concerns of the community. What it must not be is a simple check list process.

A week notice for a meeting in early October was hardly sufficient for many working or travelling abroad. No serious details, other than there were to be new managers, were given about the future of the pub. Suspicions about true motives behind these applications have not been allayed. All that has happened is that minor changes have been made about the design of the house. That has been done to demonstrate that the applicant has "listened"

The threat is now much more obvious and demonstrable with the erection of scaffolding and the closure of the pub at weekday lunchtimes. If the applicant does not have further high level consultations to address the significant increase in local concerns, then the application should be refused for insufficient consultation as well

(E) Lack of detail on future viability of the Albert

A material planning consideration

The applicant has carefully constructed the applications in an attempt to dissuade the Council from examining the future viability of the pub. He maintains that the public house will continue but other than having new managers (under what terms?), no serious evidence, with appraisals by experts, has been provided on its future sustainability.

The Albert's future viability represents a fundamental material consideration under Section 70 Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Sections 38-39 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and fits squarely within the terms of information that the Council is entitled to receive under Section 6 of the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013

Lack of evidence

An appraisal should have been provided as part of the application and as far back as the consultation exercise which would have allowed for detailed scrutiny and challenge. Any prudent developer would have commissioned such an appraisal and if such an appraisal does exist why has it not been disclosed? It could be either because the conclusions are damaging or it is being held back to allow for "re-shaping" for submitting on appeal to the Planning inspectorate should the Council refuse. This would not be unusual in such cases.

If it has not been commissioned at all the Council should ask for it to be done.

The Council is under a specific duty to give special attention as to whether an application will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Section 72 of Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990). Such an expert appraisal must be before the Council in some form to allow for proper and informed

deliberations to take place on the effect the loss of the garden will have on the future viability on the operation specifically and on the conservation area generally.

Asset of Community Value

The listing under the Localism Act 2011 places an additional onus on the Council to consider carefully any planning application that will directly or indirectly increase the prospect of that asset being lost permanently to the community.

As there is little or no likelihood that the community would be able to buy and run the premises by implementing the acquisition provisions, then the Council must treat listing as a fundamental material planning consideration to rebut the presumption for sustainable development especially where a much valued open space is at stake.

General Planning Grounds of Objection

(E) The Critical Need for Retention

The retention of the whole garden area for full A4 use is absolutely critical as it is the only pub locally that has a proper garden with trees. It is much valued by residents in Princess Road and Primrose Hill especially elderly residents and those whose flats have no outside space or back garden. It also had a steady clientele from tourists visiting in the Regents Park and the zoo and those using the Park for sporting activity. There are other crucial reasons for resisting the threat to the Albert.

(i) The recent closure of the Queens in Edis Road means that the Albert is only pub in this part of Primrose Hill looking towards Regents Park.

(ii) Recent interest by, and offerings to, developers threaten the other pubs in the Primrose Hill south of Regents Park Road which are seen as ripe for residential conversion if the Council does not refuse this application. Approvals for change of use from A4 (drinking establishments) to C3 (residential) will secure a massive return on investment after construction circa £1,800 per sq. ft. Hence there is little incentive for owners or purchasers of pubs in Primrose Hill to retain them other than being forced to comply with Council policy.

(iii) The Albert and the newsagents are the bookends of a parade of shop in Princess Road. The mix of A1-A3 provision with the La Collina restaurant, solicitors, gardeners, dry cleaners hairdressers etc makes this a vibrant area of commercial activity and employment much valued by the locals. The redevelopment of the Albert, already with the closure at weekday lunchtimes, places a gradual threat to the future existence of the other businesses in the parade as their attraction to passing trade decreases, put off by the eye sore that is the Albert.

Conclusion

Planning officers in reporting to members may be tempted to take a position that the application is only about housing provision and not about the loss of a small garden area or the future of the Albert. Reliance on the owner's statement that the pub will continue could be taken in that context as being sufficient.

That would be wrong in planning terms and would fetter the discretion members have in carefully examining all aspects of this planning application including future viability. For the reasons stated above, the Council has clear and compelling grounds to refuse if the report to members and the grounds of refusal are carefully drafted. It may be that the applicant should be encouraged to rethink the application in the light of community concerns but on no account should this application receive consent.

Alun Phillips
18 Princess Road, London NW1 8JJ