

To: Kate Phillips  
Planning Services  
London Borough of Camden  
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planning@camden.gov.uk

re: Application 2015/7282/P

325 Kentish Town Road  
NW5 2TJ

Dear Kate Phillips

I am writing to object to this planning application from Treats Foods (Starbucks) for change of use of ground floor from retail (Class A1) to a coffee shop (mixed use Class A1/Class A3) for the following reasons:

At the present time the frontage in which these premises are situated is 62% A1 Retail. If this application were approved the percentage of A1 retail would drop to 54%. This very low percentage of retail would be completely contrary to Camden's policy DP12 (which states that "the Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the character, amenity, function, vitality and viability of the centre"), and CPG5 3.46 (which states that "the Council will generally resist proposals that would result in less than 75% of the premises in Core Frontages being in retail use".)

In the applicant's Planning & Development documents, these daunting figures are accepted. Nevertheless the applicant argues that the Council should make an exception to its Policy and Guidance for several reasons:

a. because the percentage of A1 Retail in the frontage is already below 74%. This is a non-argument – ideally the percentage should be 75% but historically non-retail took over a good many premises before Camden's policy and guidance were produced. The policies now exist to retain as much A1 Retail in Kentish Town Road as possible to prevent it from becoming a failing high street full of coffee shop chains, estate agents and betting shops, as has happened in so many parts of London and in the rest of the UK.

b. because "an acceptable proportion of non-A1 uses in town centres could be as high as 50% and still retain their vitality and viability". This is patently untrue. 50% of A1 Retail is the percentage recommended by Camden in Secondary Frontages. With this low percentage of Retail, Secondary Frontages in Kentish Town are failing – see Policy SW2 in the submitted Kentish Town Neighbourhood

Plan ([www.ktnf.org](http://www.ktnf.org)). The vitality and viability of the Core Frontage of Kentish Town Road is threatened by this application.

c. that Kentish Town must have a Starbucks because a Starbucks coffee shop is needed to increase the vitality, viability and vibrancy of the centre. It will be “conveniently located” and will have “an excellent level of accessibility [to public transport]” and that shoppers need it to take a break from shopping and it will “prolong shopper stay within retail frontages”. It is claimed that “Starbucks is a compatible use to existing shops and services in Kentish Town Road.”

In reply to these specious arguments we reply that Kentish Town centre already has plenty of coffee shops – quite enough for shoppers to relax in. Some of them have been there for decades and are owner run and administrated. Just next door to 325 is Tolli at 327, an independent coffee, tea and patisserie shop. Opposite under the canopy is the Bean About Town stall. Nearby at 341 is Pret A Manger. A few doors away at 315 is Flapjacks, a Council-owned coffee and tea shop. Nearby at 307 is Costa Coffee, and almost opposite at 244 is Café Renoir, an independent coffee, tea and food shop. That is six coffee shops for people to “take a break from shopping” within a few metres of 325. They are all “conveniently located” and have “an excellent level of accessibility [to public transport]”. There is absolutely no need for a multinational chain coffee shop to be set up in the middle of them. Starbucks is certainly not “a compatible use to existing shops and services in Kentish Town”. In fact Starbucks would endanger the viability of existing independent coffee shops, and we are sure that the company knows that.

Furthermore, Camden Council according to its magazine apparently supports 'localism.' Starbucks are anything but that. They are not paying tax at nearly the same rate as the ordinary coffee shops in Kentish Town would and are for this reason trading at an unfair advantage.

I would particularly like to draw attention to the proximity to Flapjacks which is a very necessary and valuable establishment which has already lost considerable amount of trade to Costa. Starbucks have recently been hauled through the courts because of there discriminatory practices which are in sharp relief to the valuable work done by The Camden Society and Flapjacks.

We have read the list of only 14 Appeals granted in favour of Starbucks in the whole of the UK and we noted that only one Appeal has been won in central London. We wonder how many Appeals have been lost. Strangely these are not mentioned.

We are asking for this application to be turned down in its entirety for the reasons given above and to protect the retail function and the vitality and viability of the

Kentish Town Centre. Should you recommend approval, we are asking for this application to be heard by the Development Committee.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter by email and keep me informed about the progress of this application.

Yours Sincerely

Julietta Cochrane  
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