

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/X5210/W/15/3140916

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/X5210/W/15/3140916

Appeal By POWER LEISURE BOOKMAKERS LTD

Site Address
64 Kilburn High Road
LONDON
NW6 4HJ
Grid Ref Easting: 05254110
Grid Ref Northing: 01836820

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR COLIN BAIRD

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
- Interested Party / Person
- Land Owner
- Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- Final Comments
- Proof of Evidence
- Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- Other

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

I strongly object to any increase in the number of betting shops on Kilburn High Road and the addition of Paddy Power betting shop.

The purpose of any high road is to enhance the hub of the local community. As a Kingsgate Road homeowner-occupier, I am saddened at how Kilburn High Road seems increasingly neglected, which is indicated by the visible increase of begging and alcoholism on the High Road, particularly over the last six months, and I believe that an additional betting shop would exasperate this problem and put vulnerable people in danger, particularly those seeking support in the Quex Road homeless refuge which is a community resource which I fully support.

By adding another betting shop to those already on the High Road, along with the high number of payday loan providers, pubs, convenience stores with alcohol licences which seem to attract the vulnerable for profit, this would be further evidence that Kilburn High Road is not viewed as a community asset, but a place where vulnerable people can fritter away incomes to boost the profits of a company like Paddy Power, which in my opinion, thrives on exploiting any opportunity to put profit before long-term community investment, and, which has no interest in improving the aspirations of local people or communities

The addition of a local business should be a celebration. The hope is that it will add a positive social element, increase social cohesion and increase employment opportunities for locals - employed or unemployed who wish to grow their income or their careers, and for students to gain valuable working experience in a professional environment. But these days, betting shops like Paddy Power have an increasing focus on fixed-odd betting terminals and not traditional betting of taking a calculated risk on a regulated sporting event on which you can afford to lose.

These fixed-odd betting terminals which need no staff and which promote gambling in isolation can take £200 direct from a player's bank account on the spin of a wheel. Is this something we should be encouraging when the immediate locality has such a high proportion of people who rely on social welfare, where we have a local men's homeless shelter with a particular support with those with addition problems and where we see a visible increase in begging and alcoholism on the High Road? It seems ludicrous that even one more of these terminals, never mind shops, would be introduced.

I would draw your attention to Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, Problem Gambling and Deprivation: A Review of Recent Evidence from the ABB Howard Reed, Landman Economics April 2014 which counters the number of misleading and/or inaccurate claims in The Truth about Betting Shops and Gaming Machines (ABB, 2013) commissioned by the Association of British Bookmakers.

ABB, of which Paddy Power is a member, claim that

- Betting shops and Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) in betting shops make a substantial contribution to the UK economy, which would be lost if further regulatory restrictions on FOBTs were introduced;
- the potential consequence of a reduction in the maximum stake for FOBTs from £100 to £2 would be "catastrophic";
- there is no link between FOBTs and problem gambling;
- there has been no proliferation of betting shops over the last decade;
- bookmakers do not target vulnerable people in deprived areas.

I would ask you to read the Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, Problem Gambling and Deprivation: A Review of Recent Evidence from the ABB Howard Reed, Landman Economics April 2014 document to view the statistics on how betting shops indeed target poor areas and the vulnerable.

I do not for a second believe that bookmakers are the main reason for increasing vacancy rates in commercial properties or are to blame for a lack of investment in town centres. I think they highlight the lack of investment in town centres and are a symptom of council employees lacking commercial acumen, skills in urban planning or meaningful community engagement with residents on how to shape their community. When you see the symptom of anything unwanted, you deal with the cause, you don't encourage the symptom.

No matter how much betting shops deny it, their modern existence on any high road, especially one with as high footfall as Kilburn High Road, and surrounded by affluent local areas such as Queen Park, West Hampstead, Hampstead, South Hampstead, St Johns Wood and Belsize Park, is an indicator of

ghettoising the poor instead of focusing on integrating local communities.

In 2016, West Hampstead Square will open. It connects Kilburn High Road and West End Lane. Where are the initiatives to encourage these residents to spend more time socialising and shopping on Kilburn High Road?

On a final note, we tightly regulate drugs, guns and prostitution, we need to do more to protect people from financial exploitation typified by betting shops and payday loaners who suck money out of local communities and put nothing useful back. Hopefully

I hope you will take this objection into account before making a decision.