

Subject: FW: Pakenham Arms, 1 Pakenham Street, London, WC1X 0LA - 2016/6930/P & 2016/6931/P

From: James Watson [mailto:]
Sent: 12 March 2017 10:46
To: Diver, John
Cc: Geoff Strawbridge
Subject: Re: Pakenham Arms, 1 Pakenham Street, London, WC1X 0LA - 2016/6930/P & 2016/6931/P

John,

John Cryne has been very busy at the London Drinker Beer Festival in Camden Centre these last few weeks. I shall respond on behalf of CAMRA London Region.

This is a very depressing and regrettable situation all round. We are pleased that the Council has finally come to realise the very real danger of Trojan Horse attacks, which all too often will spell the end of an historic pub. We fear however that it may be too little too late, as substantial damage to the borough's pub stock has already been done.

The Pakenham was one of my favourite London pubs. It is a lovely spot. I have frequented this pub since my student days in the late 1990s and my CAMRA colleagues will have been drinking there for decades. It was a simple fuss free boozer with great beer, a decent affordable food offer, a good welcome and a nice mixed crowd. It was everything a London pub should be. For me, it was a solid 'banker' on the Clerkenwell / Farringdon / Camden scene as it had a 2am licence and you knew there was always a good choice of decent beer. I used to love sitting out on those picnic tables on a summers afternoon, watching the postal workers drop in for a pint at the end of their shift from Mount Pleasant. I was horrified when it closed.

I am not in the least bit surprised that the owner of this handsome site, in a prime London location, has come to the Council with the "non viability" card in his hand. He would say that. Wouldn't he? That was clearly the intention all along, just like the Carpenters Arms in Kings Cross, the Black Cap on the High Street and countless others all over London with which we are sadly familiar. We have known for some time that in spite of a handful of successful 'lock up' pubs with independent flats above (Wenlock Arms in Hoxton, Dartmouth Arms in Dartmouth Park by the skin of its teeth), the norm is that you rarely get a pub use continued below, and if you do it resembles little of the former pub with ancillary accommodation as it necessarily has to be a different business model to meet the rental demands from the new owners. I was in a great example / demonstrator of this very point last night. The Grade II* listed Widow's Son in Bow had its ancillary accommodation converted to C4 use without consent. Tower Hamlets Planning Service gave retrospective consent and allowed this. The pub is an ACV and has some heritage value so the Council insisted on A4 use remaining. After many months empty, it has now reopened on a lease of some £70,000 annually for a very small servery and cellar only. The new operators sell high end cocktails, craft beer, wine, hipster food. The cheapest bottle of half decent beer is £4.90. Certainly not a community pub any more and I cannot blame them. That rent in that area with flats above and all around is difficult to achieve selling Fosters and John Smiths and relying on your pool table and fruit machines. We understand that pubs modernise and evolve and in the main we support this but we also recognise the way traditional pubs are being squeezed out of existence by asset stripping and land conversion.

Our Regional Director, Geoff Strawbridge, has neatly summed up the developer strategy and you will notice that this model is being exploited to the letter by the owners at the Pakenham arms:

If only we could somehow get across the mischief that PD rights encourage whereby pubcos sell to developers at speculation-fuelled prices and developers then get permission for 'Trojan horse' conversions of upper floors on the basis that the lower parts will remain a pub; instead they take the money and run, leaving the gutted pub unviable pending eventual application to turn that into more flats if they can't find a supermarket or estate agent who'd like to move in.

This is precisely what they do. You should be aware that the Tower Hamlets draft local plan even includes the phrase "Trojan Horse" in its emerging pub protection policy.

I am pretty busy at work all the time but I will try to comment formally on the proposals. Can you let me know the timescales please? If you wish to chat, I am on [REDACTED] Leave a message if I do not pick up.

I attach some before and after pics of what the planning system has sadly allowed to happen.

James





----- Original Message -----

From: [Diver, John](#)

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, March 10, 2017 11:00 AM

Subject: Pakenham Arms, 1 Pakenham Street, London, WC1X 0LA - 2016/6930/P & 2016/6931/P

Dear James,

Re: Pakenham Arms, 1 Pakenham Street, London, WC1X 0LA

I was given your contact details from a colleague (Jonathan McClue) and was just wanting to notify you of two case that I am currently dealing with for the above public house. I was just wondering whether you might have any comments regarding the applications and in particular, whether you might be able to provide any insight into the former quality of the pub (which was not registered as an ACV) and its offer to the community.

A few years ago the upper floors of the pub were approved for conversion into residential units on the basis that the ground floor pub would still be viable and would continue to provide for the

community. The two application now submitted are requesting a change of use at ground floor as well (one application for retail, and one for office uses) based on the justification that the lock up pub is not viable. The applicants are also suggesting that the pub was of limited importance to the local community.

In retrospect the former determination regarding upper floors is regrettable and the Council has since altered its approach with regard to the conversion of upper floors. Notwithstanding, these applications are quite important test cases for the Council as they emphasise the importance of upper floors to the functioning of the traditional public house.

If you would like to give your comments on the applications, your views would be much appreciated and of great importance to the assessment. The plans and associated documents for the applications can be found on our website [here](#), searching with the reference numbers 2016/6930/P & 2016/6931/P .

If you would be free for a conversation regarding the above, I would also greatly appreciate any advice that you might be able to provide.

Kind regards,

John Diver
Planning Officer
Regeneration and Planning
Supporting Communities
London Borough of Camden

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