

Gary Backlund

To: Camden Planning Officer Rachel English
Ref: 2019/1163/P 87-89 Marchmont Street WC1 Change of Use from A1 to A3 (Johnny Custard)

Date: 23 March 2019

My name is Gary Backlund and I reside [REDACTED] above the commercial premises which are the subject of this application.

I wish to object to this planning proposal for the following reasons:

1. The Applicant has made no attempt to engage in any prior consultation with me or (to my knowledge) any other residents in our building. As you will be aware, prior consultation with stakeholders is now recommended procedure for any such application; particularly as this change of use, despite the Applicant's views to the contrary, could have a detrimental impact upon my enjoyment of my residence. This is despite the Applicant stating in the supporting statement that 'full consideration' has been given to neighbours, and yet there has been no prior consultation of any kind.
2. My apartment lies within the red line boundary as shown on the submitted location plan. Despite this, the Applicant has served no formal notice upon me, nor to my knowledge on the other residents or leaseholders within the red line boundary; nor has the Applicant completed any such details on the Certificate B. I contend therefore that this application is seriously flawed.
3. Turning to Council policies in respect of the application. The Applicant's supporting Design and Access and Planning Statement simply refers to adding vibrancy and employment to the area without any reference to any specific policy. It also fails to distinguish between the generic term of 'a neighbourhood' and the specific Neighbourhood Centre of Marchmont Street/Leigh Street/Tavistock Place, which the site lies within, as referred to in Appendix 4 of the current Camden Local Plan 2017. The application states it will add to local employment benefits without giving any detail of current number of employees of the existing occupant of the commercial premises who will be displaced. This is therefore a weak Design and Access Planning Statement that fails to properly examine relevant planning issues, particularly Policies TC1 and TC2 of the current Camden Local Plan 2017.
4. Policy TC1 requires an appropriate provision of shopping in Neighbourhood Centres. An appropriate provision of cafe type, or as referred to in the statement 'soft A3 uses', already exists in the Marchmont Street/Leigh Street/Tavistock Place Neighbourhood Centre and acceptance of this proposed change of use would lead to an over provision. There are already two cafes on Tavistock Place of 9 frontagers, six on Marchmont Street of 36 frontagers and two on Leigh Street of 15 frontagers. Additionally, there are a further seven restaurant/pub A3 uses on Marchmont Street, four on Tavistock Place and four on Leigh Street; making a further 15 such uses, and so a total of 26 of 60 frontagers - being 43% of all frontagers.

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5. Policy TC2 clearly requires a maximum percentage of A3 uses of 25% in Neighbourhood Centres. As stated at paragraph 4 above, the existing provision in the Marchmont Street/Leigh Street/Tavistock Place Neighbourhood Centre is already in excess of this 25% Policy requirement. Furthermore, Policy TC2 states that no more than two such A3 uses should appear consecutively. The commercial premises which are the subject of this application lie between the Lord John Russell Public House and the Fork Deli Café (both A3 uses); this proposed change of use would therefore lead to three consecutive A3 uses, in further breach of Policy TC2.
6. In addition, Policy TC2 requires protection of A1 retail. Currently only four similar A1 use retail stores exist in the Neighbourhood Centre and this includes one specialist health and one specialist halal food store. This proposed change of use would lead to a reduction of 20% in such food retail stores of which only two would remain as convenience and generalist independent stores. This application therefore represents a serious disregard for this Policy.
7. I also question the Applicant's contention that this proposed change of use requires no extraction, as no detail has been submitted in respect of the relevant cooking equipment.
8. The Applicant gives no indication of the extent of acoustic or fire separation (existing or proposed) between the commercial premises and the residential apartments above. This application proposes a material change of use in building regulations terms, and so details regarding acoustic and fire separation should be considered extremely carefully and should at the very least be indicated in the application.
9. I am also concerned that the additional noise generated by the proposed new A3 use/Applicant under this application will be seriously detrimental to my enjoyment of my residence. This concern is of particular note given the on-going noise issues I, and other residents in our building, have been experiencing with various A3 use commercial premises on Marchmont Street. The proposed change of use under this application would only serve to further exacerbate these noise problems.

In summary, I ask that this application be summarily refused consent. It is contrary to various Council Policies – as outlined above - and will have a potentially adverse impact upon both the Neighbourhood Centre and occupiers of the residential apartments above the premises.

I should also be grateful if you would please notify me of the relevant Committee Date in respect of this application in the event one is set.

Best wishes

Gary Backlund