



Attn. Rachel English  
Planning Department  
Camden Council  
5 Pancras Rd  
London N1C 4AG

3 April 2019

Dear Rachel,

**Application - 2019/1163/P**

**Site Address - 87-89 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AL**

BRAG (Bloomsbury Residents Action Group) was founded in 2016 to provide a Voice for people who live in streets south of the Euston Road. We campaign for developments that do not undermine residents' quality of life.

On behalf of the many residents who live in close proximity to 87-89 Marchmont Street, we object to the proposal for commercial change of use from retail (class A1) to restaurant (class A3).

**Harm to residential amenity**

The site lies in a mixed-use area which is predominantly residential. The loss of a grocery store at this location would impact negatively on less mobile residents who are unable, or who do not wish to walk a long distance for daily provisions.

Upper Marchmont Street provides local residents with a grocery store (subject of this application), a pub, a laundrette, a betting shop, a jewellers, an estate agent and two cafes which do not have late opening hours. To permit a change from retail to restaurant will change the character and impact negatively on this important historic street with the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The proposed restaurant layout plan includes space for a waffle station and crepe machine, which implies some element of cooking, which will result in smells and fumes that cannot be removed due to the absence of any ventilation or extraction equipment.

A Google search using the words 'crepes and smells' revealed the following quote: *"There's this crepe place near my apartment and you can smell their crepes from a block away."* Upstairs is far closer than "a block away". Smells from the proposed cooking of waffles and crepes will inevitably go upwards and into any open windows of residents above. This would certainly lead to a poorer quality of life and have a negative impact on residential amenity.

The increase in late night footfall (desserts are intended to be eaten at the end of the evening) will cause harm to the quality of life of all residents who live above the ground floor shops, on both sides of the road. Potential noise nuisance will inevitably spill into the surrounding streets.

### **Misleading statements**

The statement in support of the change of use is misleading in its description of the local area. It says it is "...a retail premises, located near Saint Pancras and King's Cross stations". This gives the impression the stations are close by, when in fact they are several streets away and located in a completely different character area.

From the same statement we are informed that "The local occupiers consist of multiple late-night operators, bars and restaurants." This is misleading as very few of the local occupiers are late-night operators. Again, the wording gives an inaccurate representation of the surrounding environment. The neighbouring pub closes at 11pm.

87-89 Marchmont Street is NOT located in a central London commercial and entertainment district, or adjacent to any mainline station, or but in a dense residential area, whose needs are served by a range of shops and cafes, pubs and restaurants which are adequately provided for in the Marchmont Street / Leigh Street Neighbourhood Centre.

### **Camden policies**

Policy TC4 of Camden's Local Plan seeks to make sure that new food, drink and entertainment uses do not cause harm to our centres, the local area or the amenity of residents.

Policy TC2 seeks to a) protect and enhance the role and unique character of each of Camden's centres, ensuring that new development is of an appropriate scale and character for the centre in which it is located; b) provide for and maintain, a range of shops including independent shops, services, food, drink and entertainment and other suitable uses to provide variety, vibrancy and choice; c) make sure that food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses do not have a harmful impact on residents and the local area.

Camden Council gives clear guidance for this particular Neighbourhood Centre in the table on page 47 of CPG Town Centres (adopted March 2018)

- Maximum proportion of A3, A4, and A5 uses combined in each individual frontage: 25%
- A3 A4 A5 food, drink, and entertainment uses and other non-retail uses: Max. 100sqm
- Other restrictions: No more than 2 consecutive food, drink, or entertainment uses

The application fails in all points:

- The Costcutter grocery store lies between the Lord John Russell (a pub) and Fork (a cafe) - and the change of use will provide more than 25% in A3, A4 and A5 uses within the individual street frontage.
- According to the application form, the site area is 201.24sqm, therefore double the maximum 100sqm permitted.
- Situated between a pub and café, the addition of a Johnny Custard and dessert parlour will provide more than 2 consecutive food, drink or entertainment uses.

The nature of the proposed 'dessert parlour' business may not require extensive cooking facilities at the moment but giving permission to this retail property to change from A3 to A1 use will mean that ANY type of restaurant will be able to apply to operate from these premises in the future. **This is unacceptable.**

The application for Change of Use from A1 to A3 at 87-89 Marchmont Street should be refused.

Kind regards,

Debbie Radcliffe  
Chair, BRAG (Bloomsbury Residents Action Group)  
[debbie@brag.org.uk](mailto:debbie@brag.org.uk)  
[www.brag.org.uk](http://www.brag.org.uk)