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BUSINESS



Protest to mark three year anniversary of Black Cap pub closure

Campaigners vow to see famous gay pub re-opened, as owner says firm is waiting for right deal

12 April, 2018 — By **Dan Carrier**

How the Black Cap looks after being unused since 2015

WE will never surrender!

This is the defiant cry by campaigners who this weekend will mark the third anniversary of the closure of Camden Town's world-famous gay pub, The Black Cap.

The Black Cap Foundation want owners Kicking Horse to re-open the venue as it was and will protest outside the pub on Saturday. They say the investment firm has had long enough to find new operators, but are asking for an unrealistic price. The campaigners say at least 25 potential operators have looked at the building, which remains unused.

Kicking Horse director Steve Cox said it was still on the market and they were waiting for the right offer. The firm bought the pub from Faucet Inn.

Foundation spokesman Alex Green told the New Journal: "Its continued closure is nothing but a massive insult to the area, and the LGBT community in particular. This is a disgrace that such a wonderful, historic building is being left to decay."

He added: "We say we are winning. The pub may not be open yet, but it is still there, it isn't a coffee shop or restaurant, they have not built flats. It may be closed but it is still the Black Cap, and we are not going to go away." The protests, pickets and petitions have garnered the support of the Greater London Authority, Camden Council, the Campaign for Real Ale and civic groups. Mr Cox met the Foundation for talks in January 2017.

Mr Green said: "We had six meetings and put a case forward. We felt it was productive, but then it did not go anywhere. He [Mr Cox] says no one wants it, but we say, for how much?" Mr Green added: "We had groups who expressed serious interest and asked for information regarding surveys and leases, but got nowhere. Kicking Horse asked for £300,000 a year on the lease. It means they are simply not listening to what the market is saying. We say it could be opened by now by its owners, without the need for it to be sold, or it should be offered at a realistic price."

Mr Cox said yesterday (Wednesday) he is continuing to seek a resolution. He added: "It is frustrating for all parties. We would dearly like to have it open. We have conducted a marketing exercise to find the right tenant. That is still ongoing but we still have not found someone to satisfy both parties."

He said the Black Cap was being marketed as a pub with a cabaret venue, "as it was in its heyday." Mr Cox added that the economic weather was not in their favour.

He said: "This time five years ago, we had a lot more pubs. There have been so many headwinds in this industry against us. It is a tough climate. We would love to see some kind of conclusion, but it's got to be right for all parties."