

Mr Ben Farrant  
Camden Council Planning Office  
Camden Town Hall

Somerton House  
Duke's Road  
London WC1H 9AA

3rd February 2020

Dear Mr Farrant,

I object to the proposed planning application 2019/5214P Premier Inn 1 Duke's Road WC1 on the following grounds:

- 1 - Health and Safety**
- 2 - Collective Impact**
- 3 - Air Quality**
- 4 - Personal Impact**

### **1 - Health and Safety**

#### **1.1 - Fire Safety in the Undercroft and Car Park**

Premier Inn / Whitbread have not included a fire suppressant system in the proposed planning application for the undercroft area of the building, and at a recent meeting with Somerton House residents stated this was not a requirement.

The car park (where most construction vehicles and workers will be based) is located directly beside this open undercroft, which is located in close proximity to several store rooms containing combustible material, including linens, cleaning products, rubbish and paint. The area does not have any existing fire suppressant system or fire sensors, and is therefore already a high risk area for a fire to start.

Premier Inn / Whitbread admitted to residents at the same meeting that the bin store and linen store in this area were installed without planning or building control permission and are not fit-for-purpose. As such, they already constitute a fire risk, and are unlawful and dangerous.

I would ask for the current laundry store and bin store be removed immediately, and sprinklers be added retrospectively in the interest of Fire Prevention Management for the building as a whole.

#### **1.2 - Fire Systems**

The hotel's fire alarm system is linked to Somerton House. However, there is no direct communication between hotel and residents when either a fire drill is planned or false alarm occurs. Fire drills occur weekly, and false alarms regularly. An increase in the size

of the hotel will lead to an increase in false alarms. Residents are already unsure whether to evacuate due to their regularity.

### **1.3 - Emergency Routes From Somerton House**

Somerton House's secondary fire route is partially maintained by Camden Council and partially by Whitbread (the lower five floors.) The areas maintained by Whitbread were previously kept in a poor state of repair and cleanliness, with obvious lack of lighting and trip hazards from debris and faecal matter from nesting birds. This area is classed as a fire route for the hotel as well and provides direct access to Somerton House corridors.

### **1.4 - Food Hygiene**

I have witnessed ongoing failings in basic Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) of Premier Inn Euston at the point of delivery, that are either not being noticed by management, or are accepted as normal practice. I believe these will inevitably increase with the hotel expansion.

The loading bay for deliveries is located at the back of the building, away from public view. Food in both closed and open containers is processed through the same area used for disposal of rubbish, re-cycling and dirty linen. This area has a moderate infestation of both mice and rats. This area is also visited by foxes and other wildlife.

It is also used for urination by hotel guests using the carpark and rough sleepers. This area has never been cleaned or maintained in a professional manner to process food deliveries.

In the current proposals, there are no plans to upgrade this area to improve food hygiene.

### **1.5 - HGV Deliveries**

Premier Inn/ Whitbread receives 25 deliveries per week, many of which are delivered by HGVs. I have regularly witnessed and reported significant violations by these HGV drivers. These incidents have resulted in several near misses and one fatality on Duke's Road. TfL has already assessed the junction of Duke's Road and Euston Road as dangerous. Reported in The Camden New Journal. Beyond the increase in construction traffic during the build phase, an increase in operations post-redevelopment is highly likely to increase deliveries in an already dangerous area.

## **2 - Collective Impact**

### **2.1 - Loss of light to residents.**

The proposed plans will totally block the light and views of 12 flats and restrict the light and views of a further 4 flats. light and view. Two of the most affected are very elderly, and many residents in the building are housebound.

### **2.2 - Impact from Construction.**

During the construction phase, there will inevitably be an increase in noise, dust and construction traffic in the building and surrounding areas. Due to the age of the building and the acoustic properties of the structure and car park, this noise will be amplified significantly.

Although Premier Inn / Whitbread has undertaken noise assessments from the hotel building, no noise assessment has been undertaken from Somerton House.

An increase in construction vehicles will also significantly increase the risk of road traffic incidents on Dukes Road, which as documented in point 1.5, is already a high-risk junction.

## **2.3 - Anti-Social Behaviour**

Premier Inn night security stopped without notice mid 2000. Since then, hotel staff and duty management have picked up this role, latterly Costa Coffee staff.

Since the 2007 smoking ban, the area outside the Costa coffee shop (part of Premier Inn's hospitality offer) has seen a marked increase in smoking. This area is directly beside the entrance to Somerton House.

Both this and the outside seating area outside the current Premier Inn entrance have been problematic since installation. This includes incidences of drug-taking, drunkenness, intimidation and other antisocial behaviour from both Premier Inn customers and members of the public using the area. This area is poorly maintained, with little enforcement or management from Premier Inn, particularly at night. Hotel guests and street population currently use the area at night to drink alcohol from local off-licences.

The proposed plan wishes to retain the Costa coffee out door area as hotel smoking area and install disabled access to the hotel. Costa coffee is no longer a Whitbread company, current hotel management cannot enforce non smoking areas, or manage anti social behaviour.

This anti-social behaviour has affected me personally. I was assaulted by a hotel guest and received no help from Premier Inn staff on duty. The Night Manager dismissed me as I was not a hotel guest, and was instead obstructive and rude. Despite the incident being reported to police (CAD No. available) hotel staff refused to supply CCTV footage of the assault.

With the expected increase in business activity following the hotel expansion, and based on previous mismanagement of the problem by Premier Inn / Whitbread, I expect this antisocial behaviour to significantly increase.

## **3 - Air Quality**

### **3.1 Hotel Kitchen Extraction**

The current hotel kitchen extractor from Thyme restaurant has been polluting my home, neighbours homes and communal corridors for several years. The filters don't appear to be cleaned, serviced, or work often enough. The extract vent fills the carpark/goods yard with greasy kitchen fumes that then rise and enter flats above. I can't chance leaving my bedroom windows open when I'm not at home incase the wind direction changes and fills my flat with disgusting rank smelling hotel kitchen fumes.

Living beside Euston Road the quality of Air is already very poor, but improving. I feel the proposed extension and bar&block 200 cover steakhouse will only make matters worse and disagree with the submitted Air Quality Report (Air Quality and Over Assessment doc).

Personally I feel the plan to build a bespoke Steak House at a time when Globally we should be eating less red meat and farming less cows I feel is shortsighted by Whitbread. Foresight and community investment in my mind would be to invest in new sustainable greener restaurants, rather to remodelling 1970's Steak Houses.

#### **4 - Personal impact.**

##### **4.1 - Noise**

I have hyperacusis - a debilitating hearing disorder that is triggered by noise. This unseen disability will be affected daily during the construction phase of the proposed extension from construction and vehicle noise.

Due to the shape and acoustic qualities of the car-park beside Premier Inn/Somerton House, the current level of noise generated by the hotel's operations (including noise from HGV engines, chillers, and reversing sounders) is significantly amplified up to my home. This already causes me distress and pain, aggravating hyperacusis and tinnitus throughout the day.

The inevitable increase in noise production in the area around the building during construction will affect these conditions further, causing anxiety and stress, and potentially lead me to consider leaving a home and community I love, and play an active part in.

##### **4.2 - Privacy**

The proposed two story roof annex along Euston Road would block my view of St Pancras. Hotel guests would be able to look directly into my bedroom and kitchen, I will therefore lose privacy within my home.