
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 June 2020 21:23
To: Smith, Kristina
Subject: London Irish Centre redevelopment Application 2020/1481P and attached
Attachments: LIC Comments and Objection.docx

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Beware – This email originated outside Camden Council and may be malicious Please take extra care with any links, attachments, requests to take action or for you to verify your password etc. Please note there have been reports of emails purporting to be about Covid 19 being used as cover for scams so extra vigilance is required.

Dear Ms Smith,

I write to comment on the proposals for the redevelopment of the London Irish Centre (also attached).

I have been a resident of Murray Street for over 10 years and am generally supportive of the LIC and the operation of the centre with Sliced Events.

Whilst I recognise the need to redevelop aspects of the LIC, I feel that the current large-scale plans are not in keeping with character of what is primarily a quiet residential street – particularly in relation to proposed usage, the radical expansion of the venue, and the character of the proposed building on Murray Street, including the change of entrance and purpose. I would also question the plans / undertakings on the demolition of the existing building and construction of the proposed venue, as well as the heavy impact that this will have on surrounding properties, residents, traffic - and air quality.

Since the closure of The Murray Arms, Murray Street has been a residential street with a school and traffic calming measures, including speed bumps, restricted entrance and bollards. This has already been somewhat negatively disrupted by the use of heavy construction vehicles for the redevelopment of the nearby estate and ride-sharing traffic, to the extent that there has been significant damage to the traffic restriction point and bollards at the entrance to Murray Street from Agar Grove due to a lack of traffic or planning enforcement.

The recent increase in “heavy” traffic (coaches, skip haulage, cement mixer lorries, heavy goods traffic) on and around Murray Street and Agar Grove has already caused damage to buildings and road surfacing, contributed to in part by heavy vehicles driving over speedhumps at speed. There is also, of course, the related negative impact on air quality, something which I believe the Mayor of London is also particularly exercised on. I am therefore concerned about the effect of further heavy building works on surrounding residential structures on a quiet street - and the effect on “heavy” traffic in the long-term, both from works and the development of the usage of the venue.

Whilst I support and recognise the value of the outreach of the LIC to the Irish community, and to some extent the need to update the venue's Main Hall, the capacity increase proposed would not seem in keeping with the location, nor the current usage. I would remind the council that this is a conservation area – and that it has itself, on a number of occasions, blocked the installation of double glazing as a replacement for sash windows on Murray Street. How odd then that it seems to support the installation of a new 3+ story building with a bar, with all the attendant noise and social issues that this will bring.

At the same time, Camden High Street and nearby Kentish Town, much busier commercial areas, have considerable empty capacity in established commercial areas more in keeping with the proposed (much changed) usage of the LIC as a large commercial business, social drinking spot, concert venue and bar.

On nights when the LIC is hired out for weddings, discos, New Year events and student parties, there are already issues with parking and late-night noise – and there have been recorded instances of antisocial behaviour extending into the early hours, resulting in police action. Such a marked increase in capacity is only likely to exacerbate these issues, causing conflict - and disruption to residents.

As a resident of Murray Street I am of course concerned about the impact that demolition of the existing building, excavations, re-piling and preparation of the site is likely to have on the quality of life for people in the area over a prolonged period, particularly those with young children – notably the many users of the rare green space in the square adjacent to the school. I also note the significant objections of Thames Water, One Housing, several residents' groups, residents and others – as well as the rather vague general expressions of support from various far-flung people not impacted.

As well as issues with traffic, there are already subterranean problems relating to water drainage to the railway which runs under Murray Street and Camden Square – and the council will be aware of the subsidence issue further up Agar Grove which has been exacerbated by traffic and subterranean development from new building works and the nearby railway.

Whilst I appreciate the moves made to consult with the local community, the new LIC building, in particular the modern-looking building and frontage for Murray Street, looks decidedly out-of-keeping with the tenor of the architecture of the area (a residential conservation area). The council has previously rejected plans to use a local restaurant (Temptations) on Murray Street as a live music venue – it is odd then that it should now be considering the erection of a large modern-building with vastly-increased capacity for a bar, roof terrace and large entrance, causing crowding and noise on a small residential street with existing parking and traffic issues. The new frontage and expanded commercial venue threaten to dominate and obliterate Murray Street as a residential area. In particular, the proposed roof terrace / bar on the upper floors / roof would also lead to an increase in noise levels and nuisance from antisocial behaviour, bringing hundreds more people to a small street with infrastructure ill-suited for the purpose - and in conflict with the primary residential setting.

On a personal note, the development of anything on the 3rd floor or above is likely to lead to the front bedroom of my property being overlooked by drinkers, a loss of privacy and the sleep of my child (and myself) being disturbed by both building works and ongoing usage, not least as I work from home 3 days a week and my child studies here between 15:30 and 17:30 on weekdays.

I would like to stress that I am in general a long-time supporter of the LIC and its underlying aims to support and give a home and voice to the Irish community, as well as supporting community cohesion. How sad then, that this project seems to have morphed into something much more commercial and large scale, not sympathetic to the local area, not in keeping with the LIC's own longstanding aims, nor maintaining and promoting harmonious community relations.

This would seem to be a very large construction project which will significantly change the character of both the LIC and blight the local community for years to come - in ways which have not been fully explored or consulted on. I would urge the council and the LIC to consult further and to amend the plans to develop something more sympathetic, which is more in keeping with the character of the area and focusing more on the vibrant Irish community, rather than a soulless, large-scale commercial undertaking which is not in keeping with the location or the needs, wants and desires of much of the local community.

I would ask that you confirm receipt of this letter and that it has been submitted for consideration to the planning process. I would also ask that you notify me of any further updates and / or mitigations to this plan and the consultation. Thank you in advance for your consideration and the opportunity to comment during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.