

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2021/1927/P	Dorian Bowen	24/08/2021 10:08:38	OBJ	<p>I want to object to the planning application for the live theatre performance space. I am concerned about adding an extra 60 seat live venue to Page House because of the impact on our local amenity. The increased footfall will add to the noise nuisance in the evening at late at night, especially as they are applying for an additional alcohol licence. The two-screen cinema which was granted an application was just that, it is not a cultural centre with varied use which it is now being called by the owners.</p> <p>Adding another 60 seat live theatre to the cinema before it has even opened and their noise mitigation plan has been tested is not reasonable given there are so many residential properties nearby. Page House sits between Parker House on one side and Wimbledon Buildings on the other. These streets are packed with residents which I believe outnumber the businesses. A comedy/live theatre is not appropriate for this location. In addition we worried that the cinema has never been open to the public so the staggered audiences as a form of mitigation has never been put in practice and we are doubtful as to whether it will be effective due to the bar which is open to patrons before and after the screenings of films. How can they control when people leave the venue.</p> <p>A live theatre will have an adverse effect on the local residents and I urge Camden to take on board the impact on residents that such a business would have and deny this application to protect the local amenity.</p>

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2021/1927/P	SAMANTHA HARRIE	24/08/2021 10:43:55	COMMNT	

I am writing to object to the application for a live theatre space at Page House.
I am objecting broadly for three main reasons:

- This is not an appropriate location for a live theatre space
- Noise nuisance and questionable dispersal/staggered performance policy
- Change of use when office space is needed

Please note there has been no consultation with local residents and the existing cinema is not yet open, so cannot be used as a comparison or precedent for noise impacting on local residents.

APPROPRIATE LOCATION

The Applicant cites the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) which provides an overarching framework for the production of local policy documents and the consideration of development proposals:

- Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

5.5 Paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location..... avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life

6.3 Policy C3 of the Camden Local Plan similarly seeks to protect the Borough's cultural offer and encourages small-scale proposals, such as is proposed, providing they do not have an adverse impact on the surrounding area or local community.

The Applicant then goes on to state in 6.17 – “The site is situated within a predominantly commercial area which, by virtue, has a higher background noise level than other places, with fewer sensitive receptors”.

This planning application ignores the unique nature of Newton Street and Parker Street in that they, particularly Newton Street, are overwhelmingly residential streets in central London. Page House is not situated in a “predominantly commercial area”.

Newton Street has 195+ individual residences. Its residential population is mixed and includes many families with small children and key workers. The current businesses on Newton Street are - a barber, a sandwich shop, a nail bar and some office space including Page House which currently operates as an office block. Page House has cinema facilities which have never been open to the public and never operated under the terms outlined in its original planning application which was granted by Camden Council. All these businesses close at 5pm/6pm, none are night-time businesses and they do not increase footfall after 6pm. This is very important for our street and the local amenity. Parker Street also has many residential properties, including Parker House which has 40 flats and is next door to Page House, Aldwych Buildings and more than one residential building situated on the other side of Parker Street from Page House. Residents of Parker Street have talked about the Gillian Lynne Theatre and their experience of living close to it. In that case, they know what time the theatre empties, audiences tend to be families and there is no bar that people can drink at after the performance. It therefore has less impact on the residential amenity and is a different kind of venue from the one proposed by Page House which seeks pub licensing hours for a live theatre space.

A live theatre space used for stand-up comedy nights is very different from the audience we were told would be the target of the Garden Cinema, which was supposed to be an independent cinema that would attract an

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audience similar to the National Film Theatre.

In 6.1 The Applicant states, "The proposed use would involve the expansion of an existing established leisure and cultural facility, facilitating the growth of this established business by providing additional theatrical performance space".

References to the 'established cultural venue' are misleading and inaccurate.

It is very important to understand that there is no "established leisure and cultural facility" at Page House. The cinema has never opened and as yet still has no date for opening. The concern of the residents is that the owners would like to turn Page House into a cultural/entertainment centre which would be inappropriate given its location and was never part of the original application. Whilst we appreciate the space has cinema use, the use of the space for live theatre or other currently unspecified cultural use will increase noise disturbance for the residential amenity.

6.2 Policy HC5(A)(1) of the New London Plan states that development proposals should protect existing cultural venues..

Again, this is not an 'existing cultural venue' and therefore there is currently nothing to protect. It was granted permission as a two-screen cinema which so far has remained dormant with no opening date proposed. The New London Plan supports the development of new cultural venues only in appropriate locations.

The reason that this development is not appropriate for its' location is because of its impact on the residential amenity and the questionable nature of its staggered screenings and dispersal policy which underpins its mitigation against noise approach. A live theatre will have an adverse impact on the surrounding area and local amenity.

NOISE NUISANCE / STAGGERED PERFORMANCES / DISPERSAL

8.0 Predicted noise from additional patrons dispersing ¿

8.1 The three performance areas will, of course, be programmed with different start and finish times so that the full audience capacity of all would not be dispersing from the site all at the same time. In addition the added attraction of a after show bar means that some patrons will remain in the premises after the credits have rolled, and then depart in small numbers as their individual evening, in small social groups, comes to an end. ¿

6.18 In reaching this conclusion, the NIA takes into account the previously approved auditoria that allow for a capacity of 118 customers, while noting that staggered performance times would ensure that patron arrivals and departures for all three auditoria do not occur concurrently.

Both the Garden Cinema and this current application acknowledge their need for a dispersal policy. The noise mitigation intended by Page House is premised on their idea of staggered performances and managed dispersal.

This is something which has never been tried and tested because the cinema has never opened to the public. If patrons have access to the bar after a performance how can their time of departure from the venue be managed in terms of numbers? If people can drink both before and after a performance how can the arrival and departure times be staggered? In truth people will come and go as they please, there can be no mitigation for the noise it will potentially bring.

Crucially the dispersal policy which the Noise Impact Assessment hinges on has never been actioned because

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the cinema is not open to the public. The Applicant is making an assumption which then forms the basis of their noise mitigation strategy.

"some patrons will remain in the premises after the credits have rolled, and then depart in small numbers as their individual evening, in small social groups, comes to an end." This is unknowable, it is in truth wishful thinking and they offer no noise mitigation ideas if this is not the case.

Surely the first step would be to allow the cinema to open and put into practice its proposed mitigation and dispersal policy. Consultation with the local residents could then be sought as to its effectiveness and how to resolve any problems. Adding what is essentially a completely different business of live theatre will only add to the problems if the dispersal policy is found wanting.

3.6 The noise climate at this location is characterised by road traffic from the surrounding roads, plant noise and other commercial activity. Commercial aircraft contribute to the day and evening noise profile too. Great Queen Street is a busy east-west street for traffic with significant pedestrian footfall and this is 60m to the south of the application site. 100m to the east is Kingsway. Parker Street is not as heavily trafficked but is certainly not deserted either: I am not alone in using it as a cut-through from Drury Lane to Kingsway/Holborn tube station simply to avoid a crowded Great Queen Street.

The Applicant admits to using a residential street as a cut-through. This is part of the problem for the local residents, when people use our quiet residential streets in the evening and late at night, it is a noise nuisance. Late night footfall is a huge problem which the applicant seems unaware of and a live theatre space is going to increase the noise nuisance for us in our homes.

. The Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs in 2010 is intended to apply to all forms of noise, including environmental noise, neighbour noise and neighbourhood noise. ;

Camden Planning Guidance - Amenity

4.24 The guidance suggests that food, drink, entertainment and leisure uses can pose particular difficulties in terms of noise and disturbance, as their peak operating time is usually in the evening and late at night.....It expects that assessments of noise from entertainment and leisure premises must include consideration of amplified and unamplified music, human voices, footfall.

4.31 The guidance also states that any appropriate conditions should normally focus on the most sensitive periods. For example, the most sensitive period for people being disturbed by unreasonably loud music is at night and into the early morning when residents in adjacent properties may be attempting to go to sleep or are sleeping.

As a local resident the above policy forms part of the basis on which I want to challenge this application. All forms of noise, including human voices and footfall must be taken into consideration. Given the density of the local residential population and the fact that a comedy venue wants to open with pub licensing hours and an untested dispersal policy which is questionable as to its real effectiveness, I believe this application shouldn't be granted.

The application does not acknowledge or address the real impact of increased late night footfall and the resulting disturbance from people talking and using our street as a cut through. Its NAI and the figures it shows regarding 20 people leaving the premises shows a purely theoretical finding. In reality the noise of 20 people (or even a couple of people) walking along our street talking, even in a normal voice level, is extremely intrusive. Most of us are social housing residents who cannot afford secondary glazing and human voices and footfall are something that affects all of us really badly. We are woken up at night and the disturbed sleep is

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horrible.

ACCESS close to residential properties -

6.23 Access to the proposed use will be via the entrance on Parker Street, currently used by the existing use at basement and part-ground level.

The reference to 'existing use' is misleading as the entrance on Parker Street is a newly constructed entrance and has not been used for the purpose outlined in the application for the cinema space. Residents particularly of Parker Street and the residential building directly next door to it have no sense of how it will be managed.

CHANGE OF USE WHEN OFFICE SPACE IS POTENTIALLY NEEDED

- that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.

We were told that this would be an office hub for production companies, film unit offices and hot desking for freelance workers in the film and tv industry. It was referred to by the owners as the 'Cine Centre' with offices for film and tv production. There is a demand for this kind of space in central London and we don't believe that this has been fully explored especially as COVID regulations have only recently been relaxed and filming schedules for film and tv production have only relatively recently begun to restart. The size and type of office accommodation which is important for the smaller SME involved with cultural activities adds to the important and valuable mix of different types of office space available in this area.

7.3 The development will facilitate the investment into, and expansion of, an existing established cultural venue;

Page House and the Garden Cinema cannot be described as an existing established cultural venue. The cinema has never opened and currently the building houses offices. This is not an existing nor an established cultural venue. The original application was granted as a two screening room cinema. It cannot be defined as a broad cultural venue and the previous application was not granted on that basis.

4.39 The Garden Cinema management team are committed to promoting good relationships with their commercial and residential neighbours and therefore, in addition to all statutory obligations, it is a primary operational objective that noise from the normal operation of the premises at 39-41 Parker Street does not have a detrimental impact on the neighbourhood.

The balance of new businesses must be balanced with the needs of the local residents and the maintaining of the local amenity.

I myself supported the idea of a small two screen cinema. At the time I was not told that there were plans to open a live theatre space and if I had known this at the time then I would not have supported the cinema application. I believe I have been misinformed of the intention and it shows disrespect for the local neighbourhood.

I personally have had conversations with the cinema where I have stressed the importance of the people living in this street and this application and the intensification of use and potentially flawed dispersal policy, given the bar and intended alcohol licence hours, are very disappointing as a local resident.