

# Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee

57 Camden Road  
London NW1

**Date: 6 March 2022**

**Planning application Reference: 2022/0068/P**

**Proposal: Change of use from Office (Class E) to Bar/Lounge (sui generis)**

## **Summary:**

1. I am writing to you as the Chair of the Camden Square Conservation Advisory Committee. Although the proposed development is not situated within the Camden Square Conservation Area, it will nonetheless have an impact on the area particularly for those, like me, who live nearby in Camden Road.
2. I should also point out that I have lived in the Camden Square area all my life and my family has lived here for more than a century. I am therefore familiar with the character and nature of the area.
3. Although the application describes the location of the proposed development as being within a shopping parade, it fails to mention that this is also a major residential area with homes above the shops in both Camden Road and Royal College Street and the premises sandwiched between a number of blocks of residential flats on Royal College Street and St Pancras Way.
  - 3.1. The Council in its licensing policy recognises that alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour are problems in many parts of the borough including the area around 57 Camden Road. There are also major problems with drug dealing
  - 3.2. There are already four licensed premises in the neighbourhood one of which is barely 5 metres from 57 Camden Road. There is no need for yet another bar.
  - 3.3. This proposal is likely to lead to unacceptable levels of noise pollution from both within the premises as well as from customers gathering outside to smoke, drink eat or leave All will have a significant impact on the lives of these local residents.
  - 3.4. At the licensing hearing, it was claimed that the bar would restrict attendance to maximum of 25 customers but offered little information about how this would be enforced. As has been seen elsewhere in the

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borough – around the Irish Centre for example - whilst staff might be able to control customers inside the premises, they have no control outside.

4. A major weakness in the current proposal is the inadequacy of fire safety measures
  - 4.1. On the plans, the fire exit is situated up a flight of steps between the toilets and the bar. There is nothing in the plans to indicate whether exit door itself, which opens onto the common hallway of the apartments that make up the rest of 57 Camden Road, is fire resistant. The hallway leads to the front door which in turn opens onto Camden Road.
  - 4.2. Nor is there anything in the application to suggest that
    - 4.2.1. the front door can be opened with ease at all times – not always possible when insurance companies demand high levels of security.
    - 4.2.2. there has been any effort to introduce precautionary measures to slow the spread of any fire in the basement to the other parts of the building.
  - 4.3. The potential for overcrowding in the bar and loss of life through fire would be a constant danger. In 2007 a terrible fire broke out in the building facing Royal College Street but adjacent to no 57 in which two people died after they were trapped in the basement. The current arrangements for the development of a bar in the basement suggest that there is a danger of history repeating itself.
5. I urge you to reject the application. To do so would spare residents a likely increase in noise pollution, antisocial behaviour and criminal activity and would protect and safeguard their wellbeing

Yours sincerely

**Signed:**  
David Blagbrough  
Chair  
Camden Square CAAC

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