

L Terrafranca  
Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Assn  
(address supplied)

14 February 2018

Licensing Officer  
Merton Council  
Civic Centre  
London Road  
London SM4 5DX

**Re: PREMIER INN NEW PREMISES LICENCE APPLICATION**

Dear sir/madam:

I write on behalf of WEHRA to voice our views on the above application. We have requested some further details (layout, elevation, fascia, covers and conditions re: customer parking, waste mgmt., ASB etc.), and are disappointed no further information has been provided.

WEHRA has been involved in Licensing issues in Wimbledon since 2001, when the concept of a CIZ was being considered prior to enactment of the Licensing Act. Our homes are in a purely residential area on the perimeter of the town, and every year the impacts are becoming more challenging, deteriorating the neighbourhood and impinging on our right to quiet enjoyment. We also work with the Union of Wimbledon Residents Associations, some of whose views are also included in this letter.

**Background**

Permission for a 176 room Premier Inn was granted a few years ago, replacing an aged office block and Henry Bean hamburger restaurant on the ground floor. The neighbourhood worked closely with senior Whitbread Management to ensure that the plans were suited to the needs of the immediate area and wider Wimbledon.

Strangely the proposal associated with this Application is not what we were told would happen, regarding ground floor commercial space at 153-177 The Broadway.

We were told it would become a restaurant similar in design to a 'new template', the example given was in Hertfordshire, where a local product - Lavender - was included in the design, right down to the gifts sold in the reception area. We were told that Wimbledon would be in that same format, and that the Common/green community spaces and/or tennis would be our theme for the ground floor, and that the street scene would fit well with the immediate streetscape. We discussed how Metrobank was following a similar path, and it looked quite promising.

What has happened to all that? This application we now understand is for a huge stand alone bar/restaurant (perhaps 250-300 cover), to be open until midnight and to serve alcohol on/off premises, and also to allow the operator to serve to hotel

guests 24 hours of every day. Not a great setting, for the submission of such an ambitious application.

### **Possibility of a large stand alone bar/restaurant : Is it Bar & Block ?**

We have heard the venue is a chain <https://www.barandblock.co.uk/kings-cross>  
Normally that information wouldn't be a secret – it is an important component for the Licensing Committee Members when assessing a new premises application in Wimbledon.

In our view this type of venue would be unwelcomed here, where the bulk of footfall is daytime and early evening, from local residents, homeowners, families with school aged children.

We treasure Independent shops, cafes and restaurants; and big, shiny chain businesses that have no distinctive qualities or characteristics are not wanted/needed, and indeed are actively discouraged by the FutureWimbledon team. We've already got The Alexandra, Hand & Racquet, Darwin & Wallace, Gauge & Gadget, and don't need another, especially here. This narrow end of the Broadway, where footfall is low and night time disturbances and 'sirens' (incidents requiring police and ambulances) cause a great nuisance to local residents and their children who are trying to sleep.

### **Fascia/Front Elevation**

Apparently the frontage will be of a heavily commercial nature, despite what was presented by Whitbread and approved by Merton Council. Any 'noisy' frontage will jar with the make-up of this part of the Broadway. There are many wonderful community serving amenities such as Polka, YMCA, Trinity Church – and the streetscape will become more overtly commercial, and much less appealing. You are **joining** a community, and your business needs to complement the local area, not degrade it. We were told very clearly the restaurant was for the hotel guests. Now we understand the entrance will be from The Broadway, not inside the hotel. This is entirely unacceptable to us.

### **Cumulative Impact Zone: Full to Bursting**

This CIZ is saturated. For every new restaurant/bar/deli that opens, another closes. So what is the point of adding even one more Licence (particularly to one so large)?

From memory, an Asian noodle bar came and went in about six months; the ice cream store is about to fold, as they aren't drawing customers, Chimichanga sells alcohol on its own, as they can't lure enough people in to eat there, etc. Meanwhile, the Library 'coffee shop' is selling eat in meals and taking over more floor space, Joe & The Juice, Itsu, Darwin & Wallace (307 seat pub open 9 am-2 am) all are open or will do this spring, and BaBoom have been granted a licence and will open across from Centre Court, and 12 Hartfield will be wanting to resume their 300 cover venue in the coming year or so.

At this moment there are four further new premises licence applications on the books: Vintage Fish, Sound Lounge, Smash, and to all that we're asked to agree to a brand new, large, separate restaurant and bar.

Surely the Committee must consider the cumulative impact of these new venues on the CPZ **CUMULATIVELY**. Many if not most of these new premises licences need to be **refused, not approved** in the coming months and years. It is the spirit and letter of the law that citizens expect Merton Council to honour, not the loopholes.

Since the previous venue Henry Bean was failing for many years, was closed for perhaps five years or so, and the licence has expired, many new venues in the town have been granted permission in their stead. So now the Committee must consider what is best suited to this area today. We have too many large sized premises either open, or just about to re-open, and the Police, NHS and other emergency services cannot sustain any further degradation of community services and amenities by yet another huge drinking establishment. We certainly do not need another large restaurant open from dawn until midnight.

#### **On/Off Premises supply of Alcohol**

It is wrong to seek both on and off premises sales, in our view. (If the Committee were minded to approve, then only on-sales, with a substantial meal.) We do not need one more drop of alcohol on the streets. The Council can't keep the litter clear as it stands, local residents don't wish further drunken disturbances around their homes, St George's ER is clogged with drunks/druggies, and the Police resource shouldn't be taken for granted.

#### **Parking, noise, extraction, air pollution**

There are several other areas of concern with this proposal, related to the operation of such a large, mid-market venue. We know that around 30% of your customers will arrive by private vehicle. There is not one spare parking space in the area, and your customers would be stealing residents' parking bays. They will make our air quality worse by adding more NO2 and particulate, they will disturb locals as they leave, drop litter, cigarette packs and sadly, often also vomit/urine. Your cooking extractors will cause noise pollution, grease and smells in the atmosphere and further disturb local homeowners right to quiet enjoyment.

**To summarise, we urge the Committee to refuse permission on the grounds of prevention of crime, disorder and public nuisance.** Any new business on the ground floor – if not for the exclusive use of the hotel itself (as promised), must serve Wimbledon people. There are over 30,000 professional, upmarket households here, and as a first priority our needs must be provided for. We don't want or need another big shiny chain restaurant.

Sincerely yours,

Leigh Terrafranca, on behalf of Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Assn  
**WEHRA: Future Wimbledon Design Competition Winners – Creative Communities Award**

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