

**From:** paula burnett [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 June 2021 12:18

**Subject:** Appl. Ref. WK/202105300 Centre Court, Wimbledon

[REDACTED]

Dear Madam/Sir,

As a Queens Road resident I wish to raise objections under each of the relevant heads to the above licence application for Unit 114 of Centre Court Shopping Centre, Wimbledon.

The manager of the Centre was kind enough to explain their plans to me last week, and I am grateful for the time of your staff member [REDACTED] who has elucidated some of the surrounding circumstances in response to my queries.

The licence applied for will cover a) alcohol consumption on the premises (as described to me by your officer, the curtilage of Unit 114 as defined on the plan attached to the application), and b) alcohol consumption off the premises. As I understand it the intention is for major sporting events to be shown on large television screens, which the management hopes will attract sufficient crowds for the bar facilities to be profitable.

I have not seen the plan attached to the application but assume it relates to the interior footprint of Unit 114, possibly accompanied by the small area of raised paving outside where astroturf and tables have been installed in the last week.

The on-site and off-site consumption of alcohol are both concerning.

1. This is a residential area, not a high street location. Queens Road from this point northwards, and both Princes Road and South Park Road which form green junctions with it at the side of the Centre Court building, are completely residential roads of a quiet, traffic-limited, leafy nature. South Park Gardens, which gives its name to the local Conservation Area, with its greenery and curving paths is just a couple of hundred yards away. In the past there have been issues with people drinking and using drugs there. On Queens Road, through access for traffic northwards is confined to buses and taxis, an arrangement implemented when Centre Court opened, to protect the residential character of the area.

2. There is no shortage of licensed premises in the town centre. There are two pubs close to Centre Court on the Broadway in the town centre, the Alexandra, opposite the end of Worple Road, and the Prince of Wales, directly opposite Centre Court itself. There is also the upstairs bar within Centre Court (adjacent to the former Town Hall frontage) which looks out onto the Broadway and the Prince of Wales. These premises are in central, suitable places, as is the pub on the one-way system opposite the bus station. However, the premises proposed to be licensed are quite a way down Queens Road, well off the Broadway, the main commercial street, and impinge immediately on the residential area.

3. The granting of an alcohol licence for Unit 114 risks introducing to this residential area both noise and other potential nuisance, particularly since the hours of opening are till 10.30pm seven days a week. The main Centre Court mall has always been closed in an evening, usually by 7pm and earlier on Sundays. Its facade along Queens Road is then peaceful. People coming home from the station even late in the evening have always had a quiet and safe walk along it. The introduction of a pub this far along Queens Road, away from the Broadway, particularly one attracting large, no doubt heavy-drinking crowds to watch sporting events on television, will transform the area. Instead of being quiet and safe it is likely to be noisy, busy, and feel unsafe for pedestrians wanting just to walk calmly by as they have always been able to do before.

4. If the management plans to erect a television screen or screens visible from outside (as I believe they can do at will), the problem will be compounded, as large, loud, excitable groups with drinks in their hands will mill around on the pavement, and probably also in the road and across the road. Little traffic is seen on Queens Road in the evenings, but this would create a real hazard for the traffic which does use it, including not only buses, but the police vehicles answering emergency calls, which turn from South Park Road into Queens Road and sometimes need to set off northwards at speed through the traffic lights with blue lights and sirens. The last thing their drivers want is to have to negotiate a crowd of merrymakers with drinks as they hurry to a crisis elsewhere.

5. In addition it should be noted that once the main Centre Court mall is closed, all public access to the licensed premises will have to be from Queens Road.

6. I understand from my conversation with the Centre's manager that the intention is to install tables and seating all the way along the side of the building on the pavement which falls within the Centre Court land ownership, from the estate agent's entrance northwards to the traffic lights, including the whole of the colonnade. I was informed that no special permission is required for this as the land is theirs. Presumably the thinking is that those purchasing drinks for off-site consumption can carry them out to these tables and chairs without the management having any responsibility for the behaviour of their clients.

7. I note the council licensing website raises the question of whether bar staff can visually supervise all the areas where people are drinking. Given the shape and location of Unit 114 this would be impossible. No direct line of sight from the bar can include the outside pavement area where I was told the management hope to install 30 tables and 120 chairs. These figures were attached to an earlier planning application which your staff have told me was refused - and which was in any case rendered unnecessary when the management realised how far their freehold extended.

8. I am concerned that the management may argue that where drinks for off-site consumption are consumed is none of their responsibility. There is a real danger that if the seating and tables are installed, the area could become known as a desirable place for all sorts of unsavoury gatherings and dealings, including possibly criminal activities. The end of the colonnade furthest from the Broadway will be a shaded, relatively private spot where young people particularly may gather for consumption (and possibly trading) not only of what can be purchased at a bar or supermarket. The safety of children is a real issue here.

9. To conclude, I therefore urge you to refuse this licence for the following reasons:

**i) The prevention of public nuisance.**

There is a primary risk of nuisance to local residents and Queens Road pedestrians, through noise, and crowds milling with drinks at odds with people walking by. There is an ancillary risk late into the evening of disruptive and possibly threatening behaviour from those who have been drinking, particularly those celebrating their team's win or drowning their sorrows at a defeat. The hitherto safe area will be replaced with one where many residents are likely to feel unsafe.

**ii) Public safety.**

There is a further risk to public safety with the likelihood that people will crowd to see televised sports by standing in the road. In addition, police cars attending to matters of public safety further afield risk being delayed. Pedestrians walking home along Queens Road may be at risk from disruptive or offensive behaviour from those who have been drinking. Fights in such situations are not unknown.

**iii) The prevention of crime and disorder.**

The management's intention to erect tables and seating all along their Queens Road pavement outside the building itself can be enacted, I fear, as it could be deemed to be covered by the off-site consumption aspect of the licence. However, this is of grave concern. It is likely to become a popular venue for all sorts of worrying and antisocial behaviours, as outlined above.

**iv) The protection of children from harm.**

The opportunities for unsupervised activities, not just alcohol consumption but the use and trading of drugs, poses a particular risk to the young and their safety and health. Underage drinking could become a real problem, as could all kinds of drug use. Yet the Centre Court management could perhaps legitimately argue that they have no responsibility for it, only for the tightly defined curtilage of Unit 114. The quiet streets nearby and South Park Gardens may have to face many of the problems associated with so many other urban centres which they have generally been spared, and many of the borough's children could be put at increased risk.

The licence applied for might deliver the Centre Court management a highly profitable pub, but it will deliver to our young people, and to the residents of this pleasant and safe area, some seriously worrying and undesirable changes.

There are plenty of pubs in Wimbledon town centre in the right places. This is not the right place, and is, I argue, even a potentially dangerous place.

Yours sincerely,

Paula Burnett.

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