

Breese, Robert

From: M&CP - Licensing
Sent: 22 December 2017 11:40
To: Aznar, Stephen; Blake, Steve; Breese, Robert; Butcher, Susan; Davenport, Peter; Hewitt, Andre; Minas, Aggie; Patel, Sangeeta
Subject: FW: Objection to a licensing Application by the Barbican Centre
Attachments: Barbican Centre - Beech Street 2018.docx

From: M Woodruff
Sent: Friday, December 22, 2017 11:39:58 AM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: M&CP - Licensing
Subject: Objection to a licensing Application by the Barbican Centre

Please find attached my Objection to the Application by the Barbican Centre for a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 to cover an event in "Beech Street Tunnel" from 16/03/2018 to 18/03/2018.

If you are unable to open this Word attachment then please let me know as soon as possible.

I have included my name and address at the foot of my objection and I note that for publication you will be redacting this.

If I have inadvertently omitted any required information then please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Woodruff
[REDACTED]

From: M&CP - Licensing <licensing@cityoflondon.gov.uk>
Sent: 19 December 2017 15:41
To: M Woodruff; M&CP - Licensing
Subject: RE: Query

Dear Ms Woodruff

I confirm that you can object to a licensing application by sending an email to this address.

Yours sincerely

A P Hewitt LLB (Hons) MIO
Licensing Officer
City of London
020 7332 3406

From: M Woodruff [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 December 2017 15:15
To: M&CP - Licensing <licensing@cityoflondon.gov.uk>
Subject: Query

I'd like to make an objection to a current Application. I wanted to check that sending my objection to you at this address will count as a formal objection, or whether I must write to you at Walbrook Wharf for this purpose?

Could you let me know please, it's in relation to an deadline that is about to expire.

Kind regards,

Margaret Woodruff

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Application by the Barbican Centre for a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 to cover an event in “Beech Street Tunnel (From Silk Street to Bridgewater Street)” from 16/03/2018 to 18/03/2018.

Objection

I am writing to object to the proposed use of Beech Street for public entertainment during the three-day period 16th to 18th March 2018, namely Friday 16th from 8 am to 6 pm; Saturday 17th from 8 am to 10.30 pm and Sunday 18th from 12 pm to 10.30 pm.

1 Beech Street is commonly known as “Beech Street Tunnel”, as per the Application, but it is in fact a street which is only partly covered along its length. It is not a fully enclosed space which might be capable of being acoustically isolated from the surrounding high-density residential areas during the proposed three-day event.

2 Sound from Beech Street carries upwards to flats from the open junctions with Bridgewater Street and Golden Lane which bracket the proposed event area. Sound also carries from the street via the air ducts which lead to outlets on the Podium area that runs above the street. Typically I can hear both traffic and the voices of passers-by from my flat.

3 The impact of the event upon my home will be precisely the same as though there were no part-covering to the street at all. The Applicant proposes to hold a multi-media event for three whole days continuously, a total of up to 35 hours of recorded music, in this area next to my home. This is wholly unreasonable.

4 The Application states that multiple speakers are to be installed, enabling a “relatively low sound pressure” and I have studied the plans which show this installation. The term “relatively low” is not, however, meaningful when attempting to judge the potential impact upon residential amenity. I note that sound tests are scheduled to be conducted, but these are in order to ensure the event is successful and not in order to gauge levels of potential harm to residents.

5 It is unlikely, I suggest, that an “immersive” street experience will be by its nature moderate in volume. In any event, noise does not have to be loud in order to cause a nuisance and music in particular is impossible to ignore. The windows of Barbican flats are poorly soundproofed and offer no protection. Sounds are carried over distance because of the hard materials used in the construction of the Estate. An “objective” measurement of sound levels, if proposed, would be misleading.

6 Aside from volume, I am also concerned that the music played is likely to be repeated on a cycle throughout the event in order to benefit passing audiences and this in itself will have a stressful effect upon those who are forced to hear it many times over and for lengthy periods.

7 The Barbican Centre in conjunction with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama recently held an “immersion” event for the composer Julian Anderson and did so successfully and with great acclaim without taking over the public street. The Barbican

Centre has many extensive purpose-built spaces of its own and there is no need for this event in this location: other alternatives, equally commercially viable, could easily be explored.

8 The proposals are insensitive to the rights of residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their own homes and have the potential to impact several hundred households in a number of blocks and towers bordering the area in question.

9 The Barbican Centre has expressed long-term plans to use Beech Street as an event space and I have objected to these on another occasion. Allowing the present Application will pave the way for the Barbican Centre to host disruptive events at will and with varying degrees of nuisance and duration for years to come. Much is made of the high cultural value of the present proposals but there will be nothing to prevent any type of street entertainment making use of this area in future. Residents will be powerless to stop this.

10 The Corporation has in place strategic environmental plans to minimise all forms of pollution including noise pollution in line with current Legislation. It is hard to see why an event involving noise should be permitted to take place continuously for 35 hours in the heart of a high-density residential estate and in the sure knowledge that it will cause distress. This is out of all reasonable proportion.

11 Vehicular access to Ben Jonson House: the entrance to the Breton House/ Ben Jonson House car park is located at the junction with Golden Lane. This entrance is used for residential car parking and for the numerous parcel deliveries which take place 24 hours a day. On the Application Plan, the junction with Golden Lane is the designated area for the event organisers' "Production cabins".

In fact this area not only has the car park entrance (and a separate exit on the opposite side of the road) but also one of the key fire exits for Ben Jonson House and (I believe) the sole street-level fire exit for Breton House, together with the residents' bin compound and the entrance to a large primary school complex. It is also a crucial point for Fire Engine access (below, 12). I suggest it is not suitable for use by the event organisers.

12 Fire Safety and pedestrian access: Ben Jonson House is a long low-rise building with four designated fire doors at street level: one at the junction of Bridgewater Street, one at the junction of Golden Lane, one halfway between Golden Lane and Whitecross Street and one at the Whitecross Street end of the building. It appears from the Plan that the third of these fire doors will be located within the event area and the other three doors just outside.

The fire doors are in constant use by residents for normal access throughout the day. The Application does not explain how residents' full and unimpeded access to their block will be preserved. More worryingly, it does not explain how the residents of the 204 flats in Ben Jonson House and the 111 flats in Breton House would exit in case of fire if thousands of visitors were gathered in and around the event area. It does not explain how Fire Engines would quickly access the roads surrounding the building to respond to fire. Indeed, it proposes to install cabins in one key access area in the middle of the building where Ben Jonson and Breton Houses join.

The Application focuses only on the safety of the event and the visiting public – there is not a word about the safety of the residents. I suggest the proposals are reckless in the extreme given the current climate of concern about fire safety in residential blocks.

13 Conclusion: The Barbican Estate has been described as an oasis of calm within the City of London. It seems that the Barbican Centre is seeking to destroy this peace and quiet in order to promote its own commercial ends whilst local residents are expected to pay a high cost. This is unfortunate.

Together with my many neighbours, I now face the real prospect of suffering prolonged distress whilst in my own home both on this occasion and on future similar occasions. I shall be unable to think and unable to rest for the duration. Must I seriously consider leaving my home in order to avoid this?

There is a clear conflict of interest for the Planning Committee in this Corporation matter and so respectfully I urge you to decide in favour of maintaining the existing use of this public street as a thoroughfare pure and simple and to protect the rights of local residents to the peaceful and safe enjoyment of their own homes.

14 I call upon you to reject the Application.

Margaret Woodruff



Dated 22/12/2017