

NOTICE OF OBJECTION

TO

THE APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE DATED 28 AUGUST 2020

In respect of 43/45 EASTCHEAP LONDON EC3M 1JA Ground floor & Basement

APPLICANT:- Fit kitchen Eastcheap Limited

OBJECTORS:- The Guild Vicar, Churchwardens and Guild Church Council of
St. Margaret Pattens Church, Rood Lane, Eastcheap, EC3M 1HS

Application Details

1. To permit the sale of alcohol on and off the premises 11 am – 11.30pm Monday to Saturday.
2. To provide late night refreshments 11.00pm to midnight Thursday, 11.00pm to 5.00am Friday to Sunday.
3. To Provide regulated entertainment such as Live Music 6.00pm to midnight Thursday to Saturday and recorded music 10.00am to 11.00pm Monday to Saturday, 11.00am to 9.00pm Sunday.

The Property

43/45 Eastcheap adjoins St Margaret Pattens Church and was formerly the Vicarage. The church is a Wren building, completed in 1687 after the Great Fire. There is a paved area in front of it, which was originally part of the Churchyard, at the junction of Rood Lane and Eastcheap. This churchyard is owned by the church and both are on consecrated land. The churchyard, with the Wren church and the tree in the centre, is an oasis of peace and tranquillity in our busy city. The main South door of the church is approached via the churchyard.

43/45 is a Georgian style building with ground floor, basement and two floors of offices above. The entrance is from Eastcheap and the west elevation overlooks the churchyard.

In recent decades appropriate office users have occupied the ground floor and basement, until recently when the use changed to catering. Manon Café struggled to find adequate clientele and closed sometime ago. A more recent attempt to set up a restaurant with a similar offering of food, alcohol, live music etc. as proposed by Fit Kitchen also failed, raising questions as to the economic viability of such a proposal. This part of the City is already well-supplied with restaurants, bars and other places of entertainment, many of which have struggled to return to 'normality' since Lockdown.

St Margaret Pattens Church is open every weekday for quiet prayer and contemplation for office workers and visitors to this tranquil environment and is used for meetings such as by Alcoholics Anonymous.

Regular services take place on weekdays and weekends both during the day and in the evenings. There are weddings, funerals, memorial services, Remembrance Day services as well as services for the Worshipful Companies of Pattenmakers and Basketmakers, who have long historical links with the church.

For financial sustainability, we rely on fee paying supporters who require a peaceful atmosphere and excellent acoustics, such as renowned choirs The Tallis Scholars and Stile Antico, during daytime and evenings and other regular users. We host such events most evenings of the working week. We also allow the coffee vendor to use the churchyard, he quietly provides for office workers from early morning until the afternoon.

Reasons for Objection

Prevention of Public Nuisance

Please refer to our objections to the prior proposal for this site. Our position has not changed.

This is not an appropriate location for a 10½ hours a day, evening and late night licensed premises providing alcohol, constant music and food throughout that time, seven days a week. Inevitably sound will be at a level to attract passers-by and entertain customers. This will cause disturbance and nuisance to users of the Church and others in the neighbourhood.

The occupiers of 43/45 Eastcheap have no rights or permission for staff or customers to use the churchyard. We fear staff will not be able to prevent customers spilling out on to the churchyard particularly in the evening. We specifically object to both the proposals for windows to open into our churchyard adjacent to our coffee seller and also for an entrance / exit onto the churchyard. This remains our freehold.

St Margaret Pattens churchyard is a quiet area of peace and calm, admired by countless city workers and visitors. It is precisely the type of space that the City of London Noise Strategy intended to protect.

Noise from the premises will create a Public nuisance and interfere with people seeking refuge. It will interrupt services and deter choirs and other potential users from coming to the church, causing cultural and financial damage. It will also cause nuisance to other properties and neighbours in the area. The church, given its listing, has no opportunity to improve its own sound insulation.

Prevention of Crime and Disorder

The requested hours of opening, 8.00am to 9.30pm Mondays to Wednesdays, 8.00am to Midnight on Thursdays and Friday and through to 5.00am on Sundays are excessive. This will attract customers who wish to continue drinking late into the night. It will also lead to outside drinking and raucous behaviour, which will spill over into the churchyard. We have found evidence of urinating and defecating in the churchyard in the past and this is likely to increase significantly.

Recently the steps to the church's South Door were vandalised and the matter reported to the City Police.

The churchyard with its tree, although small in area extends to within inches of the applicants' premises and provides a transitional space between the public pavement and the church interior. Its nature and use are particularly vulnerable to desecration and destruction by the proposed change of use to Licensed premises.

Conclusion

Most of the functions of the Church and supporters will be adversely affected by noise from continuous music, and people socialising and drinking next door and outside.

This is not an appropriate location for a day, evening and late-night licensed premises providing alcohol, music and food throughout that time, seven days a week. There are activities at the church that will be severely compromised with financial consequences and the public will lose an area of peace and quiet in our busy City.

From the City Licence Register we note that there are 10 licensed premises (plus the WeWork office building at 51 Eastcheap and Tesco's store) in Eastcheap plus 2 in St Mary at Hill.

Any amendments to the application will not satisfy our concerns.

We ask you to refuse the application.