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Dear Sir or Madam

Objection to Licensing Application in respect of Ground Floor, One Millennium Bridge House

I wish to object to this application on the grounds that to grant it as set out would go against the licensing objectives with regard to the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety and public nuisance¹, and would be contrary to the City of London's objective to protect the residential amenity for the residents of this area².

The summary of the matter is that:

- Queenhithe is a significant residential district.
- The application includes off sales. This is liable to result in large crowds outside the premises, creating significant nuisance and damage to the amenity of the area for residents and other non-patrons of the premises, as well as public safety risks given the proximity to the river.
- The proposed licensing hours go well beyond other premises within the Queenhithe district.
- The application is likely to result in significantly increased crime and disorder and public nuisance due to the late night presence of inebriated patrons.

Background

1. The Queenhithe area contains a large number of residential premises, with Norfolk House, John Lyon House, Globe View and Queen's Quay. The City has noted that Queenhithe is a residential area in its licensing policy³.
2. Residents are already subjected to nuisance from the Samuel Pepys. Those premises have been the subject of numerous noise complaints over a period of years, with issues of anti-social behaviour and vandalism to surround premises also resulting from its patrons.

¹ Paragraph 8a, 8b and 8c, City of London Statement of Licensing Policy 2022.

² Paragraph 14, City of London Statement of Licensing Policy 2022.

³ Paragraph 13, City of London Statement of Licensing Policy 2022.

3. What is proposed here goes far beyond what is presently permitted for the Samuel Pepys. The premises are of significantly greater size, are surrounded by significant open riverside space, and the application is for much later opening hours than anything presently permitted within Queenhithe.
4. A comparable premises in terms of size would be the Oyster Shed further east along the riverside walk. However, it should be noted that the Oyster Shed is not within a residential district as is the case here.
5. There are a number of issues with the Oyster Shed which are likely to be repeated here should this licensing application be approved. Many hundreds of patrons gather on a daily basis at the Oyster Shed. As off sales are permitted and patrons are permitted to take drinks outside, this results in large numbers standing along the riverbank, and often obstructs those walking alongside the river. This particularly impacts disabled individuals or those with mobility impairments, as the resultant crowds can be quite problematic to navigate.
6. It also results in significant crime and disorder, public nuisance and anti-social behaviour, including noise, littering, fighting, damage to property, and public urination. The effects are typically not confined to the immediate vicinity, and can be spread around the surrounding area, particularly after closing time.

Issues regarding prevention of crime and disorder

7. The proposed hours of the premises, beyond 11pm every day, and the proposed provision of off sales, at any time, are likely to result in even worse behaviour than that which plagues the Oyster Shed and the Samuel Pepys. Fighting, damage to property, and public urination can be expected from inebriated patrons permitted to stay into the evening.

Issues regarding anti-social behaviour

8. Beyond the effects which would fall under crime and disorder, there is likely to be significant public nuisance both for residents and other non-patrons of the premises due to the noise, littering and obstruction of the pavements likely to result from this application.
9. Given the proximity to the Queenhithe residential district, and Norflok House in particular, any permission for unsealed off sales will result in issues. No time restriction on unsealed off sales will be sufficient in mitigating the issues that will result.
10. The premises itself is likely to create significant noise nuisance for residents and other in the vicinity, as there is a high likelihood that music or other noise from entertainment will escape the premises.

Issues regarding public safety

11. Given the proximity of access to the riverbed from this area, there are public safety issues resulting from a licensed premises of this size, and at this location, being permitted off sales. Any crowds can cause problems with free movement along the walkway or potentially cause crushes; individuals sitting on the ledges abutting the river could potentially fall in, and individuals foolishly wandering the riverbanks at low tide after dark risk being swept away.

Proposed Mitigations

12. In order to address the concerns, I would propose the following restrictions to the premises licensing conditions. These include measures to make the venue suitable for a residential area, and in line with existing restrictions for premises such as the Samuel Pepys:
 - a. The licencing hours should be restricted to no later than 11pm, in line with the Samuel Pepys, as befits a residential area. Should the City permit outdoor facilities, patrons should be brought inside by 9pm.
 - b. No off sales to be permitted. Should off sales be permitted, these should be restricted to sealed bottles of wine costing at least £15.
 - c. The proposed dispersal plan also needs to be visible and appended to the application.
 - d. No music (amplified or otherwise) should be played outdoors at any time.
 - e. All internal speakers should be angled inwards.
 - f. No noise should be permitted to travel beyond the premises, with noise limiters fitted to all audio equipment to ensure compliance.
 - g. Use of a double acoustic lobby to prevent music and noise from traveling beyond the premises.
 - h. All doors and windows must be kept shut when any entertainment or music is underway.
 - i. Entrance and exit doors to have an airlock mechanism for quiet and automatic closure.
 - j. The proposed noise management plan needs to be visible and appended to the application.

Yours sincerely

Caspar Housden