

Objection to Application Comments 1 - 2022/00010/LAPR | Licensing Act - Premises Licence | Open for Consultation | Tea Rooms Bishop's Park Bishop's Avenue London SW6 6EA

I am writing as a concerned local resident, a regular park user and as the chairman of Bishops Mansions Ltd. We are the residents' association of the 148 flats that are directly adjacent to and overlook Bishops Park.

I want to object to the application for a premises' license that has been submitted by Parklife Trading Ltd to sell alcohol at the Park Cafe, hereto referred to as the Tea Rooms in Bishops Park on the grounds that it will cause a public nuisance, increase the incidence of crime and disorder, endanger public safety and cause harm to children.

The applicants have applied to sell alcohol in the Park Cafe from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm on Saturday and Sunday to members of the public, save for match days. The applicants have also applied to sell / serve alcohol to guests attending events at the 'Venue' from 9am to 11pm. Monday to Sunday.

Granting a premises licence to the applicants would turn the park cafe into a licensed premises with a bar that can market itself as a venue to be hired out for parties and events as well as encourage members of the public who want to drink alcohol to visit the premises. The applicants have requested that they can serve alcohol outside as well as inside. Typically, this might involve portable outdoor beer taps/counters, wine and cocktail stations etc.

Impact within the Park:

The Park Cafe is located in the busiest area of the park, directly adjacent to the small children's play area with the nearest play equipment being approximately 15 meters away. The cafe is also some 30 meters away from the central play space in Bishops Park, which is used for skateboarding, basketball, outdoor gym equipment, table tennis, children learning to ride bikes and lots of other play and sports activities.

The path directly in front of the park cafe is the busiest walkway in the park and is often crowded with park users walking, cycling, running, skateboarding, roller blading and parents congregating with prams and young children.

Introducing alcohol into this environment for members of the public to day drink from 9am to 5pm is totally inappropriate. It would similarly be inappropriate and unnecessary to create a licensed venue that can be hired out for parties and celebrations during the day and night in this location primarily populated by 2-15 year olds and their parents. For example, an event with music and alcohol from 5pm to 11pm, where guests were quite reasonably expecting to drink and party, play music, both inside and outside would inevitably disturb/cause nuisance to other park users who are engaged in play and exercise very close by. It would also unacceptably impact on the

public safety and increase the occurrence of anti-social behaviour and crime/damage.

It is important to remember that the park is in a conservation area and is used for play, peaceful river walks, exercise and leisure until 9.30pm during the summer months. Turning the park cafe into a licensed venue would have a negative impact on the character and atmosphere of this historic park in this unique location.

Furthermore, playing music, partying and drinking alcohol at licensed venues is available in so many locations in Fulham and there is no sense whatsoever that granting an alcohol license in this location would be fulfilling any public need or creating a useful location amenity, in fact the very opposite would be the case.

Licensing the park cafe would also significantly impact on public safety in this crowded location. Mixing potentially large numbers of people drinking and partying outdoors with joggers cyclists, skateboarders would create a safety hazard.

This area of the park was specifically designed by the borough architect to be a safe space for young children to play in, (I was on the stakeholder group for the heritage lottery fund bid for the park), so turning the park cafe into a licensed premises for private and public consumption of alcohol indoors and outdoors significantly increases the risk of harm to children in their own designated play area. The idea that these children would be on the swings or the slide or the train right next to a licensed venue where private parties are taking place and adults would be drinking, being loud, wandering into the play area etc. would seem non sensical and a failure to protect these most vulnerable park users.

I note that the applicants have said that they would mitigate harm to children by making sure that any child that visits the cafe is accompanied by an adult. This is totally impractical. Is it being suggested that a 12 year old child who may not be in the park with their parent is not going to be able to buy an ice cream or a drink, or that all the skateboarders, basketball players and older children using play equipment can longer go to the cafe? If the local authority approves this license with this stipulation, then it will either be ignored from day 1 which will endanger children and if it is adhered to it will prevent children, particularly 10 to 15 year olds, from accessing the park cafe situated in the middle of a children's play area. This would be unfair to children and totally wrong.

Granting this license would also allow the applicants to sell alcohol to members of the public 7 days a week. As we all know during the spring and summer the park is crowded all day and evening with many park users spending significant periods of time in the park – sand and water play, picnicking, sunbathing exercising, cycling etc. As well as turning the park cafe into a sit down, indoor and outdoor drinking venue, granting this licence would also allow the applicants to sell alcohol from an indoor bar and or outdoor

mobile beer and wine stations to members of the public for consumption in the wider park.

Introducing the sale of alcohol into this environment would certainly increase the incidence of drunk people, particularly in the younger drinking age group (18-30) throughout the whole of Bishops Park. Whilst the applicants might be able to make good profits from this activity, I cannot see how the local authority would see this as a desirable or a progressive move. Granting this licence and introducing instant access to alcohol in the middle of this diverse park user community will cause a public nuisance, increase the incidence of crime and disorder, endanger public safety, promote antisocial behaviour and potentially harm children.

Impact in the vicinity of the park;

The park cafe is situated 75 metres from the nearest residential dwellings which are Bishops Mansions apartments. These apartments have balconies and living and sleeping spaces that overlook the park and approximately 40 of the 148 apartments directly overlook the area of the park where the park cafe, bowling green and club house are situated.

Granting this licence and creating a venue for private hire, for parties and events indoors and outdoors would cause a totally unacceptable noise nuisance for local residents until late at night.

I note that the applicants have said that no amplified music is to be heard outside the premises. I am afraid that this statement is at best naïve and at worst disingenuous. I live in one of the apartments overlooking the park cafe area and the river. We are able to hear the words of songs being played at licensed weekend events at the boat houses on the other side of the river which are 400 meters away. We also clearly hear the noise of people socializing and drinking outside at these events.

Any amplified music being played in the park cafe would be very clearly audible to many residents in Bishops Mansions in their homes, even if every door and window was closed at an event. The reality of course is that doors and windows will be open during events and people will be moving from indoor and outdoor seating, to and from the bar, potentially dancing, especially in the spring and summer months. The park cafe has an outdoor seating area at the back as well as the front of the building and music noise will carry right the way down Bishops Park Road.

Down the years many Bishops Mansions residents have called the police because 3 or 4 loud and or drunk young people have jumped over the fence and are making noise in the park. The parks police have done an excellent job in attending in these instances. The idea therefore that the local authority would now give a licence for any number of guests to sit outside the front and back of the park cafe drinking, partying and socializing until 11pm at night in this residential location would be completely nonsensical.

Allowing amplified music and outdoor socializing/ partying with alcohol in this location 7 days a week until 11pm at night would therefore cause a significant noise nuisance and ignore the rights of local resident to peaceful enjoyment of their own homes. It would affect their ability to open windows and balcony doors, sit on their balconies, watch TV and go to sleep on school/ work nights as well as weekends. To be clear, the staging of a well-managed licensed event in the park cafe would cause an unacceptable nuisance to local residents specifically because it is a totally unsuitable location to hold such an event.

I note that the applicants have talked about staff training, CCTV and managing dispersal of groups following events. Event guests and party goers will naturally spread out into the wider park, particularly the central play area, children play area, river walk and duck pond. There is no structural way of fencing or meaningfully segregating off the cafe for an event save for the usual bar barriers that will be stepped past easily. There is a hammock style children's swing right next to the park cafe which would be an irresistible draw to party goers, who are drinking after the park has closed at night!

These events therefore will still cause a significant nuisance, promote criminal damage and disorder and disturb local residents in their homes very close to the park at night when the park would normally be closed.

It is reasonable to assume that attendees leaving licensed events at the Park Cafe at 11pm at night will be at their most inebriated and voluble as they exit the park into the local vicinity. Security staff will not be accompanying these people down public roads e.g. Stevenage road, Bishops Park Road and Bishops Avenue.

These staff will be closing the facility and going home leaving many people who are potentially drunk to hang around the edge of the park, the tennis courts and the allotment as well as walk past Bishops Mansions apartments, with front gardens, balconies, living rooms and bedrooms just feet away.

Park benches down Bishops Avenue will be perfect spaces for attendees to carry on socialising and the walkway that splits the tennis courts will also be used.

The public nuisance would be inevitable and immediate and not adequately mitigated. The risk of crime and disorder would be significantly increased and not adequately mitigated. The threat to public safety for night time walkers, dog walkers and joggers, often out on their own around the park perimeter, would be greatly increased and not adequately mitigated against. Preventing children being able to sleep, particularly on school nights would cause harm to children, which has not adequately been mitigated against.

In my view and the view of many others I have spoken to this week, the reason that these four licensing objectives have not been adequately mitigated against by the applicants, both inside the park and its immediate

vicinity, is because it is simply not possible to do so as this is a totally unsuitable location for a licensed premises and event venue.

I sincerely hope that the licensing committee will agree and not grant this licence application and thereby protect the rights and the safety of the vast majority of park users and local residents in this instance.

Marc Medina
Chairman Bishops Mansions Ltd