

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham – Licensing Authority.

**Objection to Premises Licence Application in respect of 206- 208 Hammersmith Road, London, W6 7DH (formerly Villagio restaurant)**

Dear Sirs,

We act on behalf of our client Sacred Heart High School which sits directly alongside the proposed premises at 212 Hammersmith Road, London, W6 7DG. **Our client objects to the application on the following four grounds:**

- **The prevention of crime and disorder**
- **Public safety**
- **Prevention of public nuisance**
- **The protection of children from harm**

**Background**

The Sacred Heart High School is state funded Catholic Comprehensive girl's school, with approximately 1200 pupils in the age range 11 – 18 years. Originally founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by St Madeleine Sophie Barat. Since then, the school has been a leading in all educational fields and is currently placed within the top 3% nationally. The school opens at 7am; but also offers numerous extracurricular activities the majority of which happen outside of regular 'teaching hours' with students leaving regularly post 7pm. Above all else, Sacred Heart is committed to keeping children safe.

Previously 206-208 Hammersmith Road was occupied by the Villagio restaurant which held a premises licence. However, this site predominantly operated as an Italian style restaurant which was reflected within the licensed conditions which included:

- Alcohol shall only be served by waiter/ waitress service
- The supply of alcohol on the ground floor shall only be to persons taking a substantive meal
- Food and non-intoxicating beverages shall be available in all parts of the premises where alcohol is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises.

However even with the above conditions in place The Villagio premises did cause some issues to the school. These issues included noise and disturbance from emptying bottles into bins during classroom hours; and blocking the school fire exit with bins and gates.

The proposed premises licence application is for a pub: predominantly an alcohol-led venture, with the Sale of Alcohol being proposed from 10:am until 00:00 (mid-night). This is a significant change from the previous restaurant use.

Our clients would like to emphasise that the proposed operators have made no attempt to engage with the school prior to the submission of the premises licence application, and so have missed an opportunity to address our client's concerns.

**The prevention of Crime and Disorder.**

Alcohol is a main cause of anti-social behaviour, nuisance and disturbances throughout the Hammersmith area. Allowing another predominantly wet-led licensed venue within a mile of numerous other licensed premises (Hop Holes, The William Morris, The Swan, Belushi's) will only increase the likelihood of individuals becoming drunken and disorderly, which in turn will increase pressure on the already drained resources of the metropolitan police services.

Our clients are very concerned at the proposed close proximity of a wet-led venue to the school. It is detailed in the LBHF licensing policy, at Theme 3: A safe licensing environment and night-time economy (page 9) that the licensed sector should be managed well in order to protect children, young people and vulnerable people - including the prevention of underage sales of alcohol. It seems to us that for a premises to be granted such a licence within a 5-metre walking distance of a school would represent a conflict with that policy.

### **Public Safety.**

The proposed premises is situated on the A315, with a very narrow pedestrian footpath from the entrance of the premises to the road. It is conceivable that an individual who has had too much to drink would stumble directly into on-coming traffic. Additionally, the site is a small sized venue, it is likely that large groups of individuals may stand on the pavement whilst drinking causing pedestrians to be forced to the edge of the footway, close to the road.

It is also considered that individuals having a drink whilst standing outside the premises would be in direct conflict with the movements of several hundred parents and children leaving at the end of the school day. This congestion would be of grave concern to the school.

We believe the previous premises had a tables and chairs application rejected due to concerns of the tables blocking the first exit of the rear of the school. It is foreseeable if this licence is granted a similar issue would arise.

### **The prevention of Public Nuisance.**

If this premises licence is granted, the venue would have the ability to hold live music events under the Live Music Act 2012, 7 days a week, from 8am until 11pm for 500 people. The premises will be afforded the opportunity to hold live bands, DJ's and recorded music all of which could have detrimental effects to school teachings taking place within the school grounds. Unfortunately, these concerns cannot be remedied by adding conditions to the licence. The school operates regularly until 7pm.

The site will be able to hold the screening of regular sporting events which usually leads to an increase in footfall within licensed premises. Again, this raises concerns as to the noise emanating from the venue while these events are taking place with students, or children trying to study next door.

Emptying of bottles bins and deliveries being taken during school hours - which has historically been an issue associated with the previous licence holders - only further adds to these concerns.

### **Protection of children from harm**

Placing an alcohol led venue directly next to a school is a significant cause for concern. It would significantly increase the chances of under-age individuals entering the premises and attempting to purchase alcohol. It is stated in the LBHF licensing policy, the Licensing Authority will require operating plans to specify the measures and controls put in place to protect children from harm. As of yet we have seen no evidence of any conditions or undertakings which would alleviate these concerns.

Historically, there have been incidents of individuals 'cat-calling;' and aggressive behaviour near the school grounds. The addition of an alcohol-based premises risks adding to these existing problems. We are concerned for the students leaving the school directly next to a venue filled with intoxicated individuals.

The premises proposed operating hours is for the entire duration of the school day and after, there are worries that this will enable young children the ability to enter and frequent the premises during the school day. It is simply not be appropriate for a venue of this nature to be directly next to a school.

While it is appreciated the proposed operator will attempt to alleviate the concerns raised above. It must be noted that this premise licence if granted will not be bound specifically to this operator. There may in the future be the opportunity for the licence to be transferred to a differing operator, who may attempt to utilise the proposed licence in an entirely different way.

It is for the reasons above that we ask the Licensing Authority to reject this premises licence application.