

From:
Sent: 12 February 2018 17:06
To: Licensing
Subject: Fwd: Wafflemeister, 28 The Broadway SW19 1RE

FYI I left off my contact address. It is [REDACTED]. I trust you will accept this as a valid representation.

With apologies,
Leigh Terrafranca

Dear Sir/Madam:

I write on behalf of Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Association to voice our views on the application for a New Premises Licence for *Wafflemeister*. WEHRA has been involved in Licensing issues since 2001, when the concept of a CIZ was being considered, and prior to enactment of the Licensing Act.

Our homes are in a purely residential area on the perimeter of the town, and every year the impacts are becoming more challenging, deteriorating the neighbourhood and impinging on our right to quiet enjoyment. Hence this letter, to express our community's concerns about the Application.

Introduction

This little shop sells WAFFLES - mainly as dessert/treat but also as a meal. The shop is amidst a long and growing string of small, medium and large sized shops that have been converted to food/drink venues in the town area. It must be noted these businesses adjoin private family homes, many with young school-aged children who go to bed at 7/8 pm and are up at 6/7 am for work/school. It is acknowledged that we put up with a great deal of nuisance from licensed premises at present.

There are a number of concerns that we like you to consider, prior to your decision.

Enforcement of Licence Conditions

Like many, the shop is staffed by younger, lightly experienced people, untrained in the needs of a premises that would sell alcohol from 9 am until 10 pm seven days a week. We have had a number of situations in the town area, where a business becomes an easy target for 16/17 year olds wishing to source alcohol. The off-licence below the theatre was closed after Police intervention, because the manager couldn't resist the temptation to sell booze to sons and daughters of Wimbledon people, some of whom receive generous pocket money. PoNaNa was a similar offender, now closed.

What assurance will the owner provide, that no under-aged drinkers will be served in this premises?

The Applicant should guarantee it won't happen; otherwise this just creates another time-waster for Licensing officers, and also wastes precious Police time better spent on keeping our community safe.

It is wrong to seek both on and off premises sales, in our view. (If the Committee were minded to approve, then only on-sales, with a substantial meal.) We do not need one more drop of alcohol on the streets. The Council can't keep the litter clear as it stands, local residents don't wish further drunken disturbances around their homes, the NHS ER is clogged with drunks/druggies, and the Police resource shouldn't be taken for granted.

Their Food/Drink proposal is strategically weak

The business model is to sell sugar-drenched desert waffles; perhaps a few savouries. Any marketing professional will know that with such rates and rent, this type of business belongs in a very small kiosk in Centre Court or at the Station forecourt, with highest footfall and hungry commuters.

In our view it seems the applicant is either looking at a last ditch attempt to increase revenue by luring drinkers in, or else to enhance the ability to re-let to a new tenant. Either way, this proposal doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

Further, this sets an unsustainable precedent, whereby any of the dozens of coffee shop that sell biscuits will seek a similar licence. With Licensing lawyers quick to pounce, you will have no recourse but to agree.

The Cumulative Impact Zone is full to bursting

We understand the onus is on the applicant to prove they will not add to the cumulative impact of the area, already drenched and sticky dirty with food/drink/drunks/drugs, particularly after dark.

This CIZ is saturated as it stands: For every new restaurant/bar/deli that opens, another one closes. So what is the point of adding even one more Licence (particularly to one on such tenuous grounds as a *sugar-rich waffle that might go down better with alcohol*)?

From recent memory, an Asian noodle bar came and went in about six months; the ice cream store is about to fold, as they aren't drawing customers, Chimichanga sells alcohol on its own, as they can't lure enough people in to eat there, etc. Meanwhile, the Library 'coffee shop' is selling eat in meals and taking over more floor space, Joe & The Juice, Itsu, Darwin & Wallace (307 seat pub open 9 am-2 am) all are open or will do this spring, and BaBoom have been granted a licence and will open across from Centre Court.

Today, right now, there are four further new premises licences on the books: Vintage Fish (50 cover), Sound Lounge (30 cover), Smash (120), and a brand new Premier Inn wants to build a large, separate restaurant and bar, (200 cover). Not to mention we've just been told Paul Garrett has assured the owner of the Bank Buildings, Wimbledon Hill Road that he supports its demolition and replacement with a budget hotel of 100 rooms and a 200 seat GF restaurant and even an audacious new 'sky bar'. All within our so called Cumulative Impact Zone.

Surely the Committee must consider the cumulative impact of these new venues on the CPZ **CUMULATIVELY**. Many if not most of these new premises licences need to be **refused, not approved** in the coming months and years. It is the spirit and letter of the law that citizens expect Merton Council to honour, not the loopholes.

Brand Wimbledon deserves better

Wimbledon is a global asset and the *economic heart of the Borough*; if it is to prosper, it must be cherished. Wimbledon is a delightful conurbation of well used, attractive green spaces, family homes and a hub of creative & performing arts and learning, and this positioning must be further enhanced in the coming years.

Meanwhile it appears the town is heading instead toward become London's most Obesogenic High Street, with an increasing number of food/drink businesses crammed into the area, many serving foods that are unhealthy and yet enticing to young adults. 'Come to Wimbledon to over-indulge in alcohol (and often illegal drugs) and lots of cheap processed/sugary foods.' The Mayor of London's Draft Plan is entirely focussed on 'Healthy Streets' so we're headed in the wrong direction.

Merton Council leaders need to sit back and consider the wider implications of decisions such as this, because otherwise we (the Council, local leaders and citizens) are becoming complicit in creating **an undesirable place**, and one that cannot be easily fixed.

In sum

We urge the Council and this Committee to say 'enough is enough' and discourage any further retail (A1) and business (B1) premises conversion to food/drink. **Property Week** (w/c 5 Feb issue) has declared the High Street is resurgent, driven by consumers' wish for independent shops. We know this as fact, from the recent FutureWimbledon Workshops.

At the rate we're going, Wimbledon won't have any A1 premises left to offer those wonderful, trendy independents regenerating Marylebone High Street, Barnes and Richmond. We desperately need to secure a first class FutureWimbledon High Street, and that means **mixed use**, not food/drink establishments, nose to tail. Local people live here; we are here 24/7. We eat at home, yet to shop we are forced to go into London, Kingston, Wandsworth, Barnes or Richmond. Anywhere but Wimbledon town centre, because there is nothing of quality to buy.

For now, we urge you to refuse permission on the grounds of prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

We care profoundly for our shared future. Some but not all at Merton Council also care, and want the town to become a much better place. This can only happen by discouraging negative contributors such as bars/clubs and cheap restaurants, cheap takeaways, even fixed odds betting. All these encourage overeating/over-drinking/overindulging. Let's do our best to ensure the local population - including around ten thousand students and hundreds of thousands of visitors - is encouraged to enjoy Wimbledon, and come away fit and well.

In Croydon, many will tell you with a laugh, they come to Wimbledon on the 'free' tram to eat, drink, fight and leave blood on our streets. We all can and must do better. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Yours sincerely,

Leigh Terrafranca, on behalf of Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Assn (WEHRA)

WEHRA: Winners of the Future Wimbledon Design Competition - Creative Communities Award

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