

Penny Creed

From: Penny Creed <vicechair@columbiatra.org.uk>
Sent: 24 February 2020 12:50
To: gareth.gwynne@towerhamlets.gov.uk; 'Isaac Clayton';
development.control@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Cc: John Pierce; mayor@towerhamlets.gov.uk; Cllr.Rachel.Blake@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Subject: Planning Application - PA/20/00034/A2
Attachments: Local Hotels.pdf

Dear Gareth and Isaac

As Vice Chair of the Columbia Tenants and Residents Association and on behalf and at the behest of our members I am writing to strongly object to the planning application for a hotel to be built on 114-150 Hackney Road. The proposed hotel is surrounded by properties on the Dorset, Vaughan and Newling Estates and our residents believe would cause huge issues for them.

It has been noted that many new hotels have been granted permission in this area in the last ten years. So much so that with this application was submitted the CTRA decided it would a useful exercise to look at just how many there are (see attached document). We were astonished to find that 27 hotels have been built within a mile of this proposed new hotel site adding 4,426 rooms. Whilst we understand that the London plan includes a provision for more hotel rooms, we would argue that our area has accommodated more than its fair share and of course this doesn't include AirBnB accommodation of which there is also a disproportionately large amount here. As we've seen with 'car bars' and disruption from the Shoreditch Night Economy, this area is struggling to cope with the amount of transient visitors who have no social investment in the area it attracts each weekend. You should be aware, that should this hotel go ahead, there will be added pressure from residents on the CTRA to demand that the Council and police provide services to support the short-stay visitors that this and other hotels bring to the area that have sadly been lacking to date.

I should also point out that the London Plan states that hotels should be 'focused in town centres' however this proposed hotel is very much in a residential and not 'town centre' area.

On closer examination of the hotel chain linked with this development we have found that Nyx Hotels (incidentally, in case you weren't already aware, Nyx was the 'goddess of the night' in Greek mythology) is clearly in business to attract a party crowd and as such its other hotels around the world tend to invite DJs to guest in their cocktail bars. Users of the Shoreditch Night Economy will surely be targeted leading to stag and hen groups traipsing up and down Hackney road in the early hours disturbing residents. Residents of Pelter Street and other local roads in the area are already starting to be disturbed on a nightly basis by the 'car bars' we have seen so much of on the Boundary Estate. The footfall of hotel users along Hackney Road may also encourage other late night venues to open in the area further moving the late night economy closer to people's homes.

A major concern of residents is also related to the inevitable daily deliveries a hotel bring. The plans indicate that a service yard would be built with access on Diss Street. This will inevitably lead to early morning deliveries and pickups, given the narrowness of Diss Street we believe this would lead to the road regularly being blocked. Diss Street provides access to around 270 Tower Hamlets Homes properties (including the 20 new flats at Baroness Road). Blocking Diss Street on a regular basis would put those residents at risk in the event of an emergency should vehicles not be able to access Baroness Road or Old Market Square. I would also lead to more traffic along Pelter Street and Strout's Place as vans and lorries use it to exit the area. Pelter Street and Strout's Place are cobbled and narrow with little room for pedestrians. Increased traffic on these roads could lead to accidents. Not only that but these rat runs and constant deliveries will bring noise. We've heard how disruptive it is to live near a hotel from residents of the Boundary Estate who live behind the Ace Hotel. They have told us about how early morning recycling pick-ups wake them as bottles from the bar smash into the trucks. We have noted that the developer's submitted consultation Travel Plan does not mention deliveries.

The hotel plans involve increasing the number of floors, height and bulk of the building. This will have a profound adverse effect on residents of the Vaughan Estate and Pelter Street. Not only will it block the evening light but the Vaughan Estate will lose all their privacy. Until now this block has been primarily an office block. A hotel would mean that residents have to cope with being overlooked 24/7. The Vaughan Estate is not four meters away from the proposed hotel.

We hope that the additional height and bulk haven't been added to allow the developers to have something to offer i.e. a reduction in height planners in return for getting a rubber stamp on their change of use application.

Given that the height and bulk of the building has already been negotiated and agreed in the previous application we can only assume that these have been increased to ensure the developers have reason to open a negotiation with planners. "We'll reduce the height if we can have our hotel". I'm sure the planners will see this coming. You have already ruled on height, given the 24hr/7 nature of this proposed change of use, for the privacy of residents of the Vaughan Estate, just a couple of meters away from the back of the hotel height and bulk should be less not more than the previous application for 9-5pm office use.

There is a great deal of concern that the creaking sewerage and water systems will not be able to cope with another 273 bathrooms on a daily basis. This is of course on top of the new builds going in on the opposite side of Hackney Road by the same builders and Baroness Road. We hope this is something you are assessing and considering very carefully.

Paragraph 68 of National Planning Policy Framework states planning policies and decisions should "aim to achieve places which promote... safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. "Additionally, policy 7.1, paragraph C states "Development... should contribute to people's sense of place, safety and security." This planning application contravenes this for a number of reasons:

1. As you know the Weavers Community Action Group has spent the last years trying to stem the tide of Class A drug users dealing and using crack and heroin in and around these residential streets. The users earn money for their drugs through begging and pick pocketing people using late night Shoreditch. This hotel would bring this source of cash even closer to the areas they like to use their drugs in and will likely lead to an increase in ASB
2. There is a concern about how hotel users and LGBTQ+ venue users will interact. Drunk people walking past the bar may cause issues for LGBTQ+ patrons.
3. Of course there is also a general concern about the noise a 24 hour venue will create late at night

The CTRA has met with the Friends of the Joiners' Arms and we welcome their return, the area has lost so many LGBTQ spaces in the last decade. Conscious that the bar is very close to some of our residents we are pleased that we know this group and will be able to have an open dialogue with them about how the bar is run going forward to ensure a smooth transition back to the area. We were also pleased to hear that the FoftJA want to run the bar as a community space which will provide services for local residents. However, we are conscious that their return isn't set in stone and will depend on the developers offer and of course their terms and conditions. For this reason we strongly urge planners to help ensure something is put in writing at the earliest opportunity. Residents worry that if a faceless chain bar were to be installed in that venue that we wouldn't have the same ability to address issues in the future.

We would like it to be noted that many local residents we have spoken to who live in the streets immediately adjacent to the development were completely unaware that a planning application for a hotel had been submitted. The planning application's Community Involvement Statement states that an invitation to the consultation exhibition was sent to approximately 1,884 local households. However we know this isn't true. I, as a resident of Pelter Street was not invited to this or the last consultation exhibition and neither was anyone else in my block [REDACTED] Pelter Street. The developer hasn't at any time arranged a meeting with the CTRA to discuss the development. We would also point out that we live on the border with the London Borough of Hackney. The developer hasn't consulted with anyone living opposite the proposed hotel as it is in a neighbouring Borough. This may be allowed in policy but morally it is very wrong. We hope the Council has liaised with Hackney Council to discuss this development given the size and scope of this change of use and its likely effect on local residents there.

The Columbia TRA did not object to the original application for a predominately office use development it essentially wouldn't have had that much of an adverse effect on the area. However, this application turns the block from a mostly 9 to 5pm block to a 24hr/7 one which will have a profound effect on the area. It also threatens to fundamentally change the character of the residential area. For this reason I hope you will reject this application in favour of something that fits into or even enhances our community.

I am attaching my own address to this consultation response since the CTRA does not currently have a community space to work from - [REDACTED].

Kind regards

Penny Creed

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