
SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

MADAME JOJO'S

Historical Context

1. The location of an a late-night entertainment use in Brewer Street was established when, if not before, Madame JoJo's originally opened under that name in 1986 - the site having been previously a nightclub since the 1950s.
2. Escape was at 10a Brewer Street and Madame Jojo's at 8 Brewer Street. Those two premises, combined, allowed nightclub use until 330am Monday to Saturday and 01:00 on Sundays, with a combined capacity of 300. Both had entrances on Brewer Street with queuing and smoking on both sides of the respective entrances.
3. Walker's Court and Brewer Street were dominated by sex uses, which brought with it a number of social, criminal and environmental issues. There was also a 'strip club' which the Boulevard theatre replaced.
4. In November 2014, Soho Estates obtained a Premises Licence for one combined unit ref 14/09057/LIDPS (and later a shadow of that licence ref 14/09062/LIDPSR) at 1 - 4 Walker's Court and 8 - 10 Brewer Street with the same use, capacity and hours as the original Jojo's and Escape licences. There was an exit on Brewer Street and an entrance on Walker's Court.
5. Shortly after the Applicant's licences were granted, licences which were, at the time, being operated by the tenant were revoked due to Tenant's misconduct. Soho Estates Ltd, being an interested party supported the responsible authorities in respect of its application. There was a substantial public outcry, leading to the creation of the Save Soho Campaign, of which Stephen Fry is Chair.
6. Soho Estates retained the Trade Mark of Madame Jojo's and always intended to re-open the venue as such. The Landlord's Premises Licences (being for a new development albeit on the

same site) were not reviewed, being current, extant and offered for surrender as part of this application.

7. This application is on the same terms as the existing licences, with the differences only being the layout and the entrance.

Concerns about Walker's Court as an entrance

8. Notwithstanding those licences were granted, there were representations from local residents in the following who were concerned about the entrance being in Walker's Court:

- a) **Kemp House Residents:** "We are also very concerned about potential problems with overcrowding in Walker's Court, both from the point of view of obstruction, noise nuisance and because of the risk of increased crime."

"There is already a problem at times when the queue for the Box causes a blockage to pedestrians. This can only be exacerbated by the proposal to move the entrance to the other nightclub into Walker's Court, and we are baffled as to why planning permission was granted for this. Walker's Court is not a private space, and so queues will need to be managed very efficiently, or avoided, if obstructions to pedestrians are to be prevented.

With the two entrances in Walker's Court increasing the numbers standing outside, the effect of noise is bound also to increase."

"Overcrowding within Walker's Court could increase the opportunities available to criminals."

- b) **Ulrike Schmidt, Flat 38, Kemp House:** "The premises would have a frontage at Walker's Court; however, with a large capacity I am very concerned about noise caused in the evening and into the early morning hours by queuing and overcrowding in Walker's Court, which is already a problem at the premises."

c) **Colin Vaines, 4 Tisbury Court** “The latter part in particular concerns me, in terms of likely noise and inconvenience to residents from even larger numbers of people congregating around the narrow area of Walker’s Court.”

9. There is also concern that patrons would be more likely to exit the premises and disperse towards the more residential areas of Peter Street and Berwick Street. Exiting onto Brewer Street will allow venue staff to direct customers towards the less residential Wardour Street and the superior transport connections that it offers.

10. Since 2014, Soho Estates have transformed Walker’s Court and Brewer Street by:

- a) Re-opening the Boulevard theatre, which has been launched to critical acclaim;
- b) The removal of 2 brothels and 3 sex shops and 1 sex cinema;
- c) Increasing retail frontages;
- d) Extensive public realm improvements,
- e) Improving lighting and CCTV;
- f) Installing a be-spoke security team for the Court and its environs.

The Proposals

11. Soho is rightly seen as London’s cultural and creative hub and Madame Jojo’s has been a long-time mainstay of its community and strong sentiments held by people towards the venue were displayed when it closed down in 2014.

12. From a cultural and historical perspective, Brewer Street has been the home of Madame Jojo’s for 27 years and the famous sign was seen as a beacon for people from all walks of life, particularly, but not exclusively, those from the LGBTQ+ and drag communities.

13. The revived venue will offer a unique dinner show experience with a substantial food offering alongside cabaret, live music, and the famous drag performances for which the club is most well-known.

16. The vision is to respect Madame Jojo’s legacy of inclusive, cabaret-burlesque based entertainment open to all, in a comfortable, well-designed environment which showcases what London has to offer not just the LGBTQ+ community but the entire community.

17. Dinner will be served from 7pm with the house orchestra entertaining diners until the Headline Act at 10pm. Entertainers will include drag, cabaret, dance, live music and comedy (the site being part of the 1980's revue).
18. The only difference between the existing licences (granted in 2014) and the new application is the layout of the premises and the location of the entrance. The smoking area will remain in Walker's Court, with a maximum number of 25 smokers, none of whom can take drinks outside.
19. In the 2014 scheme, the entrance was on Walker's Court and half of the premises was ground floor with direct entry from the street. The 2019 scheme is ground floor entrance on Brewer Street with upper and lower basement.
20. Whilst the 2014 scheme was laid out like a high-volume-vertical-drinking establishment, the 2019 is more akin to a performance venue with an auditorium-style layout.
21. The entrance is being moved back to Brewer Street for the following reasons:
 - a) Having listened to stakeholders about the entrance being in Walker's Court;
 - b) to maintain the cultural heritage of a Brewer Street entrance;
 - c) to ease congestion in Walker's Court, which already is home for the Box with a capacity of 288 and The Boulevard with a capacity of 480 (to not exceed 350 after core hours); and
 - d) Because it is believed to be a safer location and less likely to increase crime and disorder and nuisance.

Policy

22. Because the licences are existing and ask for no amendment in terms of its capacity, activities or hours, the applicant does not need to establish exceptional circumstances in relation to cumulative impact, use, conditions or hours.

23. That said, following pre-application advice and a meeting with the Responsible Authorities, the following amendments to the conditions are agreed:
- a) The premises licence holder shall ensure that any patrons smoking outside the premises do so in an orderly manner and are supervised by staff;
 - b) The licence holder shall ensure that any queue to enter the premises which forms outside the premises is orderly and supervised by door staff; and
 - c) A minimum of 2 SIA licensed door supervisors shall be on duty at the premises for the first 100 customers, and an additional 1 for every additional 50 customers or part thereof while the premises remains open for business.
24. The premises already allows the provision of nudity, subject to the grant of a sexual entertainment venue licence, which may be applied for in due course.
25. The City Council welcomes *“the vital contribution that theatres, cinemas, concert halls and other performance venues make in providing the diverse cultural and entertainment that attracts people of all ages into Westminster, and maintains its status as a world class city. The council as the Licensing Authority accepts that these types of uses are unlikely to be linked with crime and disorder, and generally have less impact on residents than other licensable activities.”*¹ and .. *“The council wishes to see a less alcohol led and a more diverse range and variety of entertainment available later at night, and will **allow for greater flexibility to those premises that add to a more varied offer of entertainment and cultural activity.** The council wishes to encourage a wider range of people to frequent the West End, both so that they can enjoy what it has to offer and because a wider range of age groups can act to curb anti-social behaviour. In doing this **it will further the licensing objectives of prevention of crime and disorder and public nuisance.**”*²

¹ 2.5.36

² 2.3.3

Supporting material

Madame Jojo's, legendary Soho nightclub, forced to close

The Guardian 24 November 2014 by Hannah Ellis-Petersen

“Marcus Harris, who co-ran the now infamous White Heat night at the venue, hosting up and coming bands every week for more than 10 years, said the closure was a real loss for Soho. “There has been a venue in that place since the 1950s and it was given that name in the 1960s,” he said. “It’s a huge part of Soho’s history. Even the way the venue is decorated, there is nothing else like it in London. You can go there and see bands, you can see DJs, but you can also see cabaret and burlesque all sorts of unusual nights under one banner. It’s like a community of fringe culture.” “

“Alexander Parsonage, the artistic director of the Finger in The Pie theatre group, which performed a cabaret show at Madame Jojo’s every month for the past six years, said Madame Jojo’s was unique. “Jojo’s brought together gay culture and burlesque culture with mainstream music and club nights. Everyone went there. It was a rare place that brought together all these worlds.”

Au revoir, Madame Jojo’s

Time Out Article – 28 November 2014 by James Manning

“Madame Jojo’s holds a unique place in London’s nightlife history,’ adds Time Out’s former Cabaret editor Ben Walters. ‘It’s an emblem of a rich and provocative past, and a site for exciting new performance.’ “

Draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan

Existing music venues will be protected. The development of new live music venues will be supported, provided they are low impact in terms of noise and how the arrival and dispersal of customers is managed.

The Mayor’s adopted Culture and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

26. This states in its Executive Summary that: *“The benefits of broadening the range of evening and night-time activities in a centre should be explored “.* It is devastating to know that *“London has lost 103 nightclubs and live music venues since 2007, a decline of almost a third. The capital is set to lose 3,500 artist studios by 2019. That equates to a loss of a third of the capital’s creative workspace.....A phenomenal rate of growth puts London in danger of falling victim to its own success. **Sustainable growth means placing importance on those facilities***

*and services that help make London so attractive in the first place. Cultural venues are one such example.*³

27. “Boroughs should generally encourage a wide range of night-time activities including the expansion of existing culture and leisure venues (London Plan para 4.39)”⁴ and “making London’s night-time culture more diverse goes hand in hand with ensuring a wide range of evening and night-time activities are on offer to London’s diverse population.”⁵

Westminster City Plan 2019-2040

28. In the draft New City Plan, 6 Brewer Street and Walker’s Court fall within the designated West End Retail and Leisure Special Policy Area (WERLSPA). This states that the WERLSPA should deliver a diverse evening and night-time economy and will aim to enhance its cultural offer. In doing so, the Council will support applications which appropriately manage and enhance diversification of the evening and night-time economy.

29. *“The West End is home to the largest evening and night-time economy in the UK. It has a wealth of cultural uses, pubs, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, cinemas, theatres and other leisure uses. To ensure the area is welcoming and attractive to all communities, the appropriate management and further diversification of the evening and night-time economy will be supported.*

³ The Mayor’s adopted Culture and Night-time Economy SPG paragraph 3.1

⁴ The Mayor’s adopted Culture and Night-time Economy SPG paragraph 3.13

⁵ The Mayor’s adopted Culture and Night-time Economy SPG paragraph 4.1