



The Soho Society
Saint Anne's Tower
55 Dean Street
London
W1D 6AF

Office: 0300 302 1301
www.thesohosociety.org.uk

Licensing Service
Public Protection and Licensing
Westminster City Council
15th Floor
Westminster City Hall
64, Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QP

Sent via email to licensing@westminster.gov.uk

22nd November 2019

[Reference:19/13568/LIPN, 44, Old Compton Street, W1D 4TY](#)

We write to make a relevant representation to the above application on behalf of The Soho Society.

The Soho Society objects to this application as it is currently presented, on the grounds that it will fail to promote the licensing objective of the crime and disorder and prevention of public nuisance and cumulative impact.

About The Soho Society

The Soho Society is a charitable company limited by guarantee established in 1972. The society is a recognised amenity group and was formed to make Soho a better place to live, work or visit by preserving and enhancing the area's existing diversity of character and uses, and by improving its facilities, amenities and environment. In particular, the society supports the Westminster City Council's policies, including the cumulative impact policy, as set out in the Statement of Licensing Policy.

Application summary

New Premises Licence

Supply of alcohol : Mon - Sat 10:00 to 00:00, Sun 12:00 to 23:30

Late night refreshment: Mon - Sat 23:00 to 00:30, Sun 23:00 to 00:00

Hours open to the public: Mon - Sat 10:00 to 00:30, Sun 12:00 to 00:00

Live music: Mon - Sat 10:00 to 00:30, Sun 12:00 to 00:00

Recorded music: Mon - Sat 10:00 to 00:30, Sun 12:00 to 00:00

The application

This is a new premises licence, we object to this application as it is outside core hours. Policies CIP1 and HRS1 apply and the applicant needs to demonstrate they will not add to cumulative impact. This will be a new licensed restaurant, playing recorded music and/or live music with a capacity of 92 customers in an area already saturated with late night licences and with residents living nearby. In our view 92 customers leaving these premises at 00:30 Monday to Saturday and at 00:00 on Sunday will add to the cumulative

impact in the West End Cumulative Area. Furthermore, the applicant provides few details in relation to the operation of the restaurant and how they plan to support the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Objectives

We now consider the impact of this application on the licensing objectives.

Prevention of crime and disorder

These premises are situated in the middle of at Old Compton Street and we believe this area has the highest concentration of late night licensed venues in Soho and Westminster. This part of Soho is a vibrant and diverse place offering a range of mixed uses, the predominant being restaurants, residential accommodation, retail shops, bars and pubs. It attracts large numbers of people during the daytime but even higher numbers at night due to the large number of evening / late licences in Old Compton Street itself, as well as in the surrounding streets of Wardour Street, Dean Street, Frith Street and Greek Street.

At night this area of Old Compton Street transforms in nature, as witnessed by members of the Soho Society Licensing Committee. The Street becomes the 'venue' where large numbers of people gather outside the bars and restaurants or walk through (see photographs attached).

In addition, as the Committee will no doubt be aware, large numbers of people on the streets at night attract criminal activity. There are more drug dealers in Old Compton Street and the surrounding streets than during the daytime. These drug dealers were clearly visible alongside other criminal elements intent on capitalising on the vulnerabilities of people on a night out. The area where these premises are situated is a particular hotspot for drug dealing, it is near Cambridge Circus which is known to be the area where drug dealers and users congregate and then disperse into Soho.

It is also well known that gangs are also present at night, loitering outside late night venues waiting for people to leave in order to rob them, as evidenced by the crime figures. Criminal activity associated with the night time economy / venues and large numbers of people on the streets results in high levels of serious crime. In Soho the majority of robberies take place at night. The police acknowledge they peak between the hours of 00:00 - 04:00, people being targeted as they leave venues which is evidenced by the available crime statistics. Recent figures for Soho highlight a huge increase in robberies - 111 robberies took place within the four month period from November to February 2017/18, and for the same period in 2018/19 the figure was 266 - an increase of 140%. Figures for theft from person also show a similar increase, 401 for the same period in 2017/18 to 1,028 in 2018/19 an increase of 156%.

Prevention of public nuisance

The applicant provides few details in relation to the operation of the restaurant and how they plan to support the licensing objectives. However, under the prevention of public nuisance they state... *recorded music will be kept at a background level, any live music performance will be acoustic only.* We are concerned that nearby residents will be disturbed by customers leaving these premises and through potential music breakout from any form of openable shopfront or windows late at night. The area is already very noisy, with loud music escaping from other bars and restaurants with open doors and shop fronts, pedicabs parked up blaring out loud music and just from the sheer numbers of people on the street.

Licensing Policy - Cumulative Impact

This area has been identified by the Westminster City Council (2.4.1 of the Statement of Licensing Policy, as amended) as under stress because the cumulative effect of the concentration of late night and drink led premises and night cafes has led to serious problems of disorder and/or public nuisance affecting residents, visitors and other businesses.

The policies in relation to the stress areas are directed at the global and cumulative effects of licences on the area as a whole (2.4.5 of the policy). The policies are intended to be strict and will only be overridden in genuinely exceptional circumstances (2.4.2 of the policy). The growth in the entertainment industry in Soho

has led to a marked deterioration in the quality of life and wellbeing of local residents and it has jeopardised the sustainability of the community. Soho has a substantial residential community and many of these residents suffer from problems such as, but not limited to, high levels of noise nuisance, problems with waste, urinating and defecating in the streets, threats to public safety, antisocial behaviour, crime and disorder and the change in character of a historic area.

We would ask that, for all these reasons, this application is refused. However, If the Sub-Committee is minded to grant this application in whole or in part we would ask that the following conditions be imposed:

- (1) The supply of alcohol and the hours open to the public to be within core hours.
- (2) A condition that all external doors and windows to be kept closed after 21:00, and in addition at any time when live music is being played.
- (3) No noise shall be generated from the premises (and no vibration be transmitted through the structure of the premises) which may give rise to nuisance.
- (4) We would also ask that smoking on the street is limited to no more than four people at any one time, and if people do leave to smoke they do not take alcohol with them.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can help in any other way.

Yours faithfully,

The Soho Society Licensing Committee