

**Argles James**

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**From:** Planning Support  
**Subject:** FW: Finsbury Park Planning Objection

**Sent:** 02 May 2021 14:15  
**Subject:** Finsbury Park Planning Objection

Dear Councillor,

I wish to object to the construction of refreshment kiosks, a performance space and ancillary structures in Finsbury Park.

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**This objection relates to planning application HGY/2021/0992**

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<http://www.planningservices.haringey.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=405976>

Erection of four temporary refreshment kiosks performance space and ancillary structures

Please see the basis for my objections below.

Regards

Jerry Odlin

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## Summary

Haringey offers advice on how to comment on a planning application.

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-applications/current-planning-applications/view-and-comment-current-applications/comment-applications>

Following that advice I begin with the following comments

- *Principle - If you feel that the very nature of the proposal is inappropriate for example that the use of land/property should not change.*

The proposed development is on Metropolitan Open Land where planning law very strongly discourages development almost to the point of it being forbidden.

The proposed development is in a Historic Park which throughout Haringey policy is valued for its openness and greenness.

The very nature of the proposal is inappropriate.

Given that Planning policy for developments in parks and on Metropolitan Open Land are few, in the rest of this document other Haringey policies and strategies are also considered. The proposal also breaches:

- The Haringey Open Space Strategy
- Policy SP13 Open Space and Diversity
- The Borough Plan Priority 4 – Economy

- The Planning Application itself is faulty, nor has it been circulated to interested parties
- The Application does not comply with Haringey's events policy
- The Finsbury Park Management Plan

- *Overlooking - The proposal would lead to previously private areas being overlooked.*

The proposal will lead to previously public areas becoming private, contrary to many Haringey policies

- *Overshadowing - The height or closeness of the development would be such that unreasonable overshadowing would occur.*

The proposal will overshadow a substantial area of a Historic Park to the extent that it cannot be used for its traditional, intended purposes

- *Disturbance - There would be unacceptable intrusion in the form of noise nuisance, general disturbance, odour, etc.*

The proposal will create what is in effect a small High Street, with shops, a bar and entertainment, with the purpose of attracting crowds and selling food and alcohol. This represents an unacceptable intrusion into a historic Park and will certainly result in noise nuisance, general disturbance, odour from the primitive hygiene facilities and where there is the risk of anti-social behaviour and litter

- *Overbearing - The scale of the works means that the property/premises has an oppressive impact on surrounding areas/houses.*

The proposal substantial structures on a valued piece of Historic Park on the direct route from the Manor House Gate to the lake, the Finsbury Park Cafe and the athletics track. This will be physically overbearing by its very presence. Associated with licensed premises comes the possibility of anti-social behaviour and crowds which will create a psychologically overbearing obstacle to the normal use of the park.

- *Out-of-character - If the design of the development, its scale and use, is such that it appears to be out-of character with its surroundings.*

The proposal is sited on Metropolitan Open Land in a Historic Park. Almost every policy of the responsible Local Planning Authority sets out that the proposal is out of character with these surroundings.

- *Road Safety - The development may lead to a significant impact upon road safety.*

The proposal is sited in an entirely pedestrian area. Road Safety will not be affected.

# Objections based on the Finsbury Park Management Plan January 2021

[https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/finsbury\\_park\\_park\\_management\\_plan\\_0.pdf](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/finsbury_park_park_management_plan_0.pdf)

Still direct quotes from Haringey papers are in italics

*“It is no secret that Haringey – like all local authorities – has been affected by austerity, but we continue to work hard to fund and maintain our parks, as well as bringing in external investment to provide a much-needed boost.”*

The creation of a temporary food court by means of this application may bring short term rental income, but only at the cost of substantial loss of amenity to park users, and the fear of disturbance.

*Almost two thirds of crimes in parks were reported during British Summer Time (April to October) when the evenings are longer, and the parks are more heavily used. Over a third of all reported crimes took place when it was dark.*

To this statistic the granting of permission to build a food court and licensed bar would bring the summer long fear of crowds excited by the consumption of alcohol. This permission should not be granted.

## *14. Legislation*

*The park is not currently covered by any local bye-laws or legislation regarding dog control, alcohol consumption or anti-social behaviour in general.*

*It is recommended that consideration is given to the use of a Public Spaces Protection Order within the park to mitigate against some of **the current behaviours blighting it** and affecting those legitimate day-to-day users.*

*The use of Community Protection Notices can also be considered as a short-term solution for tackling such behaviour in the first instance.*

*15. Licensing The prevalence of street-**drinking within the park is a significant concern** and engagement needs to take place with local licensed premises to provide advice and guidance relating to their obligations in relation to the sale of alcohol. Targeted operations using test purchasing or marked cans can also be considered to identify offending premises.*

(My emphasis)

It would surely be counter productive to grant permission to create a substantial licenced premises within a park already blighted by alcohol and drug fuelled behaviours.

### *Pollution reduction*

It is to be hoped that the power sources needed to provide chilled beers and hot food will not add to the pollution within the park. Open fires, barbecues or a diesel generator would all surely be unacceptable.

### *G3. Bulbs planting*

- *Scatter bulbs over lawn areas and plant in situ: Oct/Dec*

- o Winter/spring flowering Crocus.*

- o Snowdrops.*

- o Grape Hyacinths.*

- o Anemone blanda.*

- o Primroses*

- o Daffodils*

This paragraph in the management plan relates specifically to the area selected for the creation of the licensed premises. No mitigation is proposed to ensure no damage is done to the bulb planting programme.

It should also be noted that no arboricultural study has been presented to demonstrate the care needed for the many trees on the site.

*The historical importance of Finsbury Park has been identified by its Grade II designation on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special Historic Interest in England.*

*This ensures that English Heritage is consulted on any development issues.*

*The Garden History Society must be advised of any development proposals that may affect the historic character or setting of Finsbury Park.*

It is not clear that either English Heritage or The Garden History Society has been consulted in the preparation of this application. Without their prior approval the application should be rejected

*9.1 The marketing approach Marketing Finsbury Park involves more than simply publicising and promoting the park, it also involves **listening to the users of the park**. Our main aim is to put the needs and concerns of stakeholders, park users and residents at the centre of business marketing approach. This section outlines how facilities and activities at Finsbury Park are promoted and publicised and how users are positioned at the centre of the business.*

(My emphasis)

It is far from clear that users of the park were even actively informed of this planning application, and have not yet been listened to.

*Haringey is committed to listening to the views and ideas of our stakeholders, park users and residents.*

It is far from clear that the stakeholders in the park were even actively informed of this planning application, and have not yet been listened to.

EVA recommendations

*7. Wooden Shelter removal*

*10. Cricket Pavilion*

Both these structures were recommended for removal because their presence creates a focus for anti-social behaviour. The creation of the food court/ licensed premises would provide empty, untended buildings for two days a week to act as the focus for anti-social behaviour

## **Objection to Planning Application based on Haringey Open Space Strategy**

Objection

Haringey Open Space Strategy – the comments made in this section are based on the [Haringey Open Space Strategy Executive Summary](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/open_space_executive_summary.pdf)  
[https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/open\\_space\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/open_space_executive_summary.pdf)

Direct quotes from the strategy are in quotes and italics.

### **Foreword**

In the foreword we read

*“We are particularly fortunate in Haringey to be living in a borough where local people clearly value their parks. We currently have 27 ‘Friends’ of parks groups – local residents who meet on a regular basis to*

*advise on the management of their local green spaces and organise a variety of activities within those spaces “*

London Heathside greatly values Finsbury Park as a park and as a quiet, secluded venue for training for and competing in athletics at the track. This amenity would be greatly reduced by this set of buildings

## **Introduction**

*”Open space makes an important contribution to our overall quality of life. It provides a sense of freedom and relief from our built environment, somewhere to relax and leave behind the strains and pressures of day to day life, somewhere to play, to enjoy flora and fauna, to meet with our friends and family, to exercise and to learn about our natural environment.”*

The first paragraph of this strategy sets out the purpose of Open Space. Building on it is anathema to these ends. Particularly at the moment a stringent and socially distancing lock-down ends. The months of June , July and August are especially precious to all, families and those living alone. The area of the park chosen for the site of this event is one of those most used for play of the type envisaged in the introductory paragraph. There is rarely a time when it is not busy with those seeking relaxation.

To grant permission for the proposed structures over the course of the summer would run entirely contrary to the spirit of the open Spaces Strategy.

*“ In setting out our Strategy, we want particularly to stress the importance we will place on our desire to involve the whole community in shaping the future of our open space.“*

London Heathside is a sports club providing healthy athletic activity to a diverse membership ranging in age from seven to over seventy, from many different backgrounds, cultures and religions. London Heathside is a significant member of the Finsbury Park community and believes that this planning application should not be granted. London Heathside was not directly consulted at the preliminary stage in February, nor was it directly consulted about the licensing application, nor has it been on a list of consultees for this planning application.

The application should be rejected following Haringey and the applicant’s failure to honour this commitment to involvement.

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## **Key facts about Haringey’s Open Space**

- *“However, in terms of population there is 590 people per hectare of open space in Haringey compared with the London average of 363 persons per hectare (2001 census data).*
- *There are 1.7 hectares per 1000 population which is below the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) standard of 2.43 hectares per 1000. “*

Haringey can ill afford to give up more of its precious Parks space, especially at the height of the summer, when it is most needed, and especially this particular plot of land which is among the most heavily used in the park.

## **Key findings concerning the use and condition of open space**

- “85% of residents had visited a park or open space in the last year, 82% within the last six months, 70% in the last month and 44% in the last week.
- People from the Asian and black Caribbean communities use open space less than other ethnic groups.
- Walking is the most frequently cited reason for use of open space.
- Taking children to play is also a major reason and people who take children to play use parks more frequently than any other type of user.
- Concerns for safety and security are the most frequently cited reasons for not using open space.
- Walking is the dominant mode of transport to access open space.
- Usage of open space would increase if residents felt safer. Improving the condition of open space and increasing perceptions of safety and security through the presence of rangers or wardens were the measures most frequently identified to address concerns for safety and security.”

In giving consideration to this planning application representatives of the London Borough of Haringey will be aware of the concurrent licensing application, and of the concerns that have been raised by a very great many respondents to the associated consultation.

Granting this planning application, thereby enabling the associated premises licence would, in the view of the community currently based in and around the park rewrite the final sentence of these bullet points

*DIS-Improving the condition of open space and ~~DE~~increasing perceptions of safety and security through the presence of ~~rangers or wardens~~ alcohol consumption*

*were the measures most frequently identified to ~~address~~ INCREASE concerns for safety and security.”*

This is a sound and convincing reason to reject the planning application based entirely in Haringey’s own words.

## **Ecological Value**

The presence of the proposed buildings and their occupation during the hours of dusk will certainly not add to the ecological value of the Park. There is nothing in the planning application to indicate that the organisers have given this aspect any thought.

I am well aware that the floodlights for the athletic track, and the low level lighting leading to and from the track and Manor House Gate (and which run along the proposed site) have been designed and adjusted to minimise interference with bats, a protected species. A bat survey and impact analysis is an absolute prerequisite for the granting of any permission.

## **Providing local area identity**

The Park is Metropolitan Open Land on which the Strategy comments

“These sites are afforded the highest level of protection from development because of their importance; “

Granting permission would breach this commitment to protection.

## **Contributing to healthier, happier lifestyles**

*“Parks and open spaces [ . . . ] can also provide a place to relax or de-stress from the strains and tensions of living within an urban environment.”*

The proposed development goes hand-in-hand with an application for a premises licence. If both are granted then the area will essentially become a public-house and off-licence. Recent government thinking (minimum pricing) has involved a large element of making the purchase of alcohol more difficult. Allowing the building of a pub-in-a-park would achieve the exact opposite.

Far from being relaxed from the stresses of the urban environment, park users will find the urban environment deposited right in their midst, the exact opposite of what Haringey’s strategy proposes.

## **Key issues which the Strategy will seek to address in the future management and development of open space**

*“Seeking to extend local community involvement in the management of parks by developing the already large number of Friends of Parks groups operating in the borough.”*

I am aware that the Friends of Finsbury Park have expressed concern over the licensing aspects of this multi-pronged application. I understand that the Friends also have concerns with this planning application. Consistency with the Open Space Strategy would surely require that these concerns be given due weight.

I understand that other stakeholders in the Park have concerns about the proposed development. These include (but are probably not limited to)

- The Finsbury Park Sports Partnership
- Pedal Power

. . . *“Extend[ing] local community management”* demands that the views of these stakeholders also be heard.

## **Objections to the planning application based on SP13 Open Space and Biodiversity**

Haringey’s policy SP13 is taken from Haringey’s local plan Strategic Policies  
[https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/haringey\\_local\\_plan\\_strategic\\_policies\\_feb\\_2013.pdf](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/haringey_local_plan_strategic_policies_feb_2013.pdf)

In particular we refer to paragraph 6.3.3

*“6.3.3 The council will protect the borough’s designated and other open spaces as well as other suitable land with the potential to be used as open space. Development will not be permitted on these open spaces, unless it is for limited small scale development ancillary to an existing use on the land and for which there is a demonstrable need. The Council will only allow development on designated open spaces or sites*

*adjacent to an open space that respects the size, form and use of that open space and does not detract from the overall openness and character of the site, the appearance and historical significance of the setting, or harms the public enjoyment “*

Finsbury Park is a designated park, It is also formally a Historic Park and Metropolitan Open Land.

This paragraph clearly states “ *Development will not be permitted on these open spaces “* therefore the planning application should be refused.

The exceptions to the unequivocal prohibition of development “*is for limited small scale development ancillary to an existing use on the land and for which there is a demonstrable need.*”

There is no existing use to which this proposed development is ancillary. The need for it has been created by the business model put forward by the applicants.

A large part of the proposed development will be devoted to the provision of food. Unless demand is artificially expanded there is no need for this as there are already two successful and popular cafes within the park (Finsbury Park Cafe, and Park View Cafe by the Manor House gate).

The proposed development is certainly not small scale. Three food outlets, a substantial drinks counter and a venue capable of supporting theatrical presentations is on the same scale as a shopping arcade in a town centre.

Another large part of the development will be devoted to the sale of alcohol. There is no demand for the creation of further outlets of alcohol. The Finsbury is situated close to the Manor House Gate and is still in business despite the strictures of the pandemic lock-down. To permit a rival business within a stone’s throw would be an act of commercial sabotage running counter to every protestation Haringey has ever made about supporting local businesses.

The Twelve Pins and The Blackwood would suffer similar interference in their positions by two main entrances to the park.

There are innumerable convenience stores surrounding the park which depend in large part on off sales of alcohol. All have taken the time and trouble to gain the appropriate licence and to conform with the strict rules associated with licensing. Far from there being a demonstrable need for this proposed structure, there is the high probability of harm to existing suppliers.

It should be noted that the management of the Finsbury Park Cafe, situated beside the lake, has deliberately decided not to have a liquor licence, precisely in order to preserve the calm, family friendly nature of the park.

## **Objections to the planning application based on the Borough Plan 2019 – 23 – Priority 4 Economy**

The statement of this priority can be found at <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/policies-and-strategies/building-stronger-haringey-together/priority-4-drive-growth-and-employment-which-everyone-can-benefit/economy-strategies-and-policies>

*“We are committed to achieving the following outcomes:*

- *A growing economy and thriving local businesses, supported by a community wealth building approach”*

The construction of a temporary public house / food court at the heart of Metropolitan Open Land in a Historic Park will do nothing to build the wealth of the local community. The business running this event will profit. It is based outside Haringey.

There will be some short term employment for staff servicing the food and drink operation, probably drawn from a pool already known to the operator. Some may come from Haringey.

The local businesses listed above, public houses near the park and convenience stores in the area, are currently far from thriving. It would be inappropriate at a time of economic stress to permit the creation of a rival to all of this and to grant it access to what is easily the best prime outdoor space in the area.

We must not forget that there is also the opportunity to build cultural wealth. It is on this basis that the applicants have based their offer. Assembled Gala was awarded a grant of £271,201 by The Arts Council (The Arts Council spreadsheet is here <https://t.co/EjQ28turo8?amp=1> ). Arts Council backing does lend some credibility to the Assembled Gala offer, but a recent note put out by the applicant fails to list a single date or performance to take place at the Open Arms. Rather there is much written of the hope of collaboration with many of Haringey’s well-known arts organisations, but nothing substantial. The licensing application includes permission to play recorded music, but the latest note from Assembled Gala refers only to low-volume acoustic offerings. If the hoped for collaborations do not come about then it seems likely that amplified recorded music will be the fallback.

This planning application should be rejected as it guarantees nothing positive, and proffers a great deal of negative effect on the local business sphere.

## **Objection based on the Planning Application**

There is no list of consultees. It is not clear how formal consultation is to take place with:

- The Fire Brigade
- The Metropolitan Police
- Thames Water
- The relevant power network

It is clear that the Haringey Statement of Community Involvement has not been followed.

The consultees defined for a major development are

This substantial incursion onto Metropolitan Open Land in a Historic Park must surely rank as major by any criteria, and yet there is no list of consultees.

Those considered to be directly affected must surely include both the cafes currently operating in the park, neighbouring licensed premises, and those with off licences in adjoining streets.

Additionally all the stakeholders to whom the original, anodyne, non-specific circular was sent in February should also be informed. The original circular made no mention of licensed premises or semi-permanent structures.

The Statement of Community Involvement promises that consultation will be effective, transparent, proportional, inclusive and coherent. The simple addition of a planning application to a web site achieves none of these things.

## **Objections based on the Events policy**

The following criteria in the Haringey Events policy will lead to the refusal of permission for the event.

- *Any event which is not able to demonstrate to Haringey Safety Advisory Group members that it can be delivered in a safe and robust manner.*
- *Any event which is refused support by one of the Emergency Services*

It is not clear that either the Haringey Safety Advisory Group or any of the Emergency Services has been consulted. Therefore the planning application should not be granted permission

*No more than one event (other than private events) will normally be approved on the same day in any park or open space.*

If this policy is adhered to then it will give the applicant for this planning application exclusive event use of the park for the entire summer.

Kind regards,

Joe Pennington

Finsbury Park Resident