

THE WATCH HOUSE

BERMONDSEY STREET

Southwark Council Licensing Department,
Licensing Unit EH & TS,
160 Tooley Street, London,
SE1 2QH,

Date 15th August 2016

Dear Ms Mills,

Further to our conversation and the supplied documentation received to date, we wish to write to the Licensing Department to answer some of the queries raised by the local residents with a view to highlighting in more detail what The Watch House will be doing. We will attempt to deal with all the specific points which we can make reference to in the documentation for the avoidance of doubt.

Firstly The Watch House, based on Bermondsey Street is a well-known and respected coffee and food operator. Having won the Time Out Love London award in 2015 voted by local residents plus other local awards, we have always actively worked with our community as we believe this to not only be good business sense, but also vital to the ongoing sustainability of neighbourly relations. With that in mind, it is our view to be a sensitive and a conscientious partner with our new neighbours in Shad Thames.

To date we have actively look to engage everyone we possibly can and have had most communication with STAMP (a local organistaion joining together residents and other stakeholders) and also with Councilor Anood Al-Samerai who acts for this ward. We also have printed off drawings, a model and a sample menu onsite so that local residents can arrange meetings with us and we can talk through the proposed operation. Unfortunately many residents have not taken up our offer for information and furthermore we are aware of one active member distributing material through letterboxes advising people to write to you and present an objection – this is most unfortunate considering many of the points in the letter misrepresent what The Watch House is proposing to do at the site. I attach the said correspondence with this letter for your information.

Coming specifically to the points raised in some of the email objections received:

- **Noise and Disturbance:** The operation for which The Watch House is offering is a small plate plus a glass of wine set up. It is categorically not a bar in the truest sense and very much focuses around our core product which is specialty coffee with a seated meal of small plates. We will not be selling shots of alcohol, operating any kind of promotional discount for drinks nor advertising ourselves as so. All of our customers will be advised to leave the premises quietly on leaving our premises, and our doors closed during the evening hours to ensure no noise or disturbance is beset upon the local residents. We will be distributing our direct contact details to local residents so should they ever wish to communicate with us, they can easily and without hassle. This will be available 24 hours a day and operated under the understanding of reasonableness. No bottle recycling will take place post 18:00 unlike the other operators on the street as we too understand the annoying element of such a sound – our owner is in fact the chair of his residents association and

THE WATCH HOUSE

BERMONDSEY STREET

ensures local businesses also do the same. Our waste refuse will be kept onsite until closing at which point this will be moved to our designated waste area quietly and without disturbance.

- **Type of Use:** There are multiple references to The Watch House 'opening a bar' which is not the case. The license use for our premises permits that we are not classified as a bar. We are a coffee shop with an alcohol license for the provision of selling wine and a small number of coffee related cocktail drinks. This will be accompanied with small plate food such as charcuterie and cheese boards. To confirm, this is not a bar but a coffee shop with the provision of small plates and a glass of wine after work.
- **Music:** We will only be providing low level recorded music and not live music as some of the comments suggest. Unfortunately the application template did not allow for such detail but this kind of music will be low level jazz/relaxing music played indoors only and with our doors closed. This will operate at approximately 30dB.
- **Size of our Property:** We have seen comments like 'huge number of people making noise'. The reality is we only have a max seated space for 20 people and no customers will be allowed to be outside whilst at our property save as to when they are leaving. Smokers will be discouraged and will not be permitted standing outside our establishment smoking. Once we have 20 customers in our premises, no more will be permitted as it is a seating only venue at all times of the day with no permitted standing allowed.
- **Facilities:** We note a claim that The Watch House will not have the provision of toilets and people will urinate on the streets. In fact the premises has a brand new toilet facilities with more than adequate provision for our maximum 20 customers.
- **Bottle Bin Noise:** We will not be removing any bottles from the premises until the morning time. It is also worth noting that unlike other restaurants in the area we only have 20 covers as a maximum and as such the waste from our operation is quite minimal relative to the other larger operators such as Pizza Express, the D&D restaurants and Valentina.
- **Amount of Bars and Restaurants:** Currently there are no coffee establishments in the area with the closest being the Starbucks at the end of Shad Thames which closes early preventing evening guests from meeting over a coffee. Whilst there are a number of A3 restaurant operators, The Watch House will offer something completely different to those operators based strongly around specialty coffee. Consequently we do not accept that our application simply "adds to the already number of restaurants already in existence", and rather we offer the residents of the area a place to meet in a more informal environment compared to that of the existing restaurants or public houses.
- **Deliveries:** As discussed at the time of taking our lease, all of our deliveries are carried out in house by our nearby commercial kitchen team meaning absolutely no deliveries will take place for The Watch House – bar Royal Mail – outside of the hours of 09:00am to 17:00. We also note that the barriers for the area are closed from 11:00am to 16:00pm in any case.
- **Security:** We have installed a 1080p HD ready CCTV within the property which is linked and recorded to the internet. We note the Metropolitan Police condition to do so which has already been met. All senior staff, one of which must always be present onsite are trained in its use. CCTV footage is kept for 60 days.

We note and thank the residents for providing commentary to our application. We would like to personally thank Councilor Anood Al-Samerai & Janet Morris of STAMP who have both actively discussed this with us. The former having met us on the 15th August 2016 to investigate further who we were and what we were looking to do. Many other local residents have been supportive both in person and social media when they have dropped in or emailed us excited about the new opening. We also would like to thank the Cardamom Building management who were supportive and understanding of our application, and also

THE WATCH HOUSE

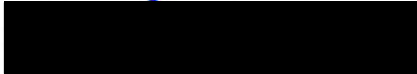
BERMONDSEY STREET

our landlord who also was very supportive. Many know us already from Bermondsey Street and understand the kind of operation we run and why we have been very successful to date. We also note and thank the 42 objections received and whilst not ideal their comments have been dually noted. We would also like to make reference to a centrally circulated letter by one organization urging people to make a last ditch attempt to contact the council to object. This was disappointing considering the open and transparent nature we approached our application and continue to do so. Many of the objections received are based upon ill-informed information which we hope the above clarifications resolve. We would like to extend an invitation to all of those who objected to attend an open evening at The Watch House to review drawings and meet we the owners. We would be happy to address all such queries and concerns at the meeting with a view to offering complete reassurance that our operation would not cause them additional nuisance from the existing commercial operations in the area.

Finally we would like to make note that should our application be accepted and granted, we are acutely aware that at any time our license can be revoked if we break the conditions of our license. We are open to having conditions placed upon our license to ratify the above points we have discussed so that should we break these, we can have our license terminated through the usual processes. We have three senior members of staff who all hold their personal alcohol licenses in addition to our DPS who will ensure the premises will be run in accordance to our license stipulations but also, and importantly, with the clear understanding of fairness and respect for our neighbours.

We thank you for your consideration and hope to hear from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,



Roland Marcelin-Horne
Owner

Information

From Hurford Salvi Carr Property Management

05 August 2016

Dear Resident

The Watch House

Residents may already be aware that the Tea Pod café, which is located within the Cardamom Building at 31 Shad Thames, has now closed.

The replacement unit, to be known as The Watch House, has applied for a licence to sell alcohol on the premises. The new owners are also applying for extended opening hours.

We are writing to make you aware that objections may be made to the application but only on the following grounds:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of nuisance
- The protection of children from harm.

We have been advised that comments received from individual residents will carry more weight than those submitted by a Managing Agent or Residents Association.

Please see details in the link below (obtained from Southwark Council)

<http://app.southwark.gov.uk/licensing/LicPremisesAppliedDetails.asp?systemkey=854652>

Ms Mills is the officer dealing with this application which closes on the 10 August 2016. Comments may also be submitted via a further link within the above noted site.

We understand Cardamom Residents Association will be objecting on the following grounds:

Public nuisance, noise, more people spilling out into the street, late clearing up (noise), and overall a worry about the proportion of bars coming into the area given the number already.

For and on behalf of Spice Quay Management Company Limited

HURFORD SALVI CARR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LIMITED

THE WATCH HOUSE

BERMONDSEY STREET

Southwark Council Licensing Department,
Licensing Unit EH &TS,
160 Tooley Street, London,
SE1 2QH,

Date 17th August 2016

Dear Ms Mills,

Further to you kindly forwarding over the responses to my response statement dated the 15th August 2016 I wish to make some final comments which I would appreciate you circulating to the group.

Firstly thank you all so much for sending through further responses to my note to you all and so quickly. It was refreshing to see many people did some more research on our company and what we are proposing to do, and it was greatly appreciated to those who wrote back to the Council confirming they are now withdrawing their objection following their own investigations and our clarifications.

That being said, some residents had further queries which I wish to now answer. I also would like to personally offer direct communication between ourselves and residents (rather than via the council employees where possible as to save time) and as such we are directly contactable on towerbridge@watchhousecoffee.com. Furthermore our telephone number is 0207 407 0000 although we are still waiting for BT to connect this up following Teapod's departure. We hope that number will be up and running in a few weeks.

Coming to the specific additional points raised:

- We are happy to accept the wording of the Metropolitan Police conditions for CCTV and this is already all in place.
- There has been a suggestion that we keep our windows and doors closed in the evening as to avoid noise transfer up to the above apartments and we are in full agreement with this. Our window (we have only one) does not open and our double doors will be kept closed in the evening to keep the background music, albeit very low, inside the property only.
- We are happy to reduce our times for selling alcohol down to 22:00 in order to close that operation 1 hour earlier than we had requested. Looking to reduce our hours was a welcomed and workable suggestion from Councilor Al-Samerai. This is the minimum we can reduce our hours down by without significantly affecting the ability to have an offering starting at 20:00 for customers as you should always allow a 2 hour sitting as a minimum.
- Regarding the notion of saying a condition for the license would be for serving alcohol only with food. As we explained to Councilor Al-Samerai this really does pose a big problem for us. We have contemporaries who have gone down this route in the past (in the Borough of Hackney) who have had such trouble they had to close when a nearby operator, who was very aggressive with food pricing, led to pressure upon their small business which in turn restricted them from doing anything other than food. Furthermore, being effectively a coffee shop our offering is only small

THE WATCH HOUSE

BERMONDSEY STREET

plates based, meaning two customers can meet, enjoy a glass of wine or an espresso martini and eat as little or much as they want. Should two people meet, one eat and the other not then we would be in breach of our license if they were paying separately (which they would in such an instance). It places undue restriction on our operation and considering our willingness (and proposal) to enshrine what we are saying into the license conditions, this additional requirement is in our view unnecessary and more importantly unworkable for our business model. Finally however we would like to thank whoever made the suggestion nevertheless.

- **Bottle collection:** A resident wanted further clarification as to when this will happen as early mornings were an issue. All of our recycling is going to be collected directly by our kitchen staff on delivery of goods after 09:00 in the morning. So to confirm, no noisy bottle collection will occur outside of the hours of 09:00 and 18:00 although to be honest our operation is such that it will not be that horrible loud clanging sound you hear of bottles being dropped into a big bin, rather ours will be removed in a pre-sealed bag and taken to our kitchen on Riley Road.
- **Pont De La Tour and Others:** I am now acutely aware of previous experiences of existing operators (although I obviously have to say this is hearsay and I have no experience of the operators mentioned) who have post gaining a license effectively disappeared from the scene leaving their negative externalities in place to the displeasure of the residents. I can categorically tell you as a local SE1 resident (living in a 19th Century former warehouse), a business owner and chair of my residents association that The Watch House will not be one of these businesses. Indeed we did discuss with Councilor Al-Samerai the possibility of setting up a more direct access from residents to the business owners possibly via an election of a business representative who liaises back to larger owners to gain traction. As newbies to the block there appears (possibly just appearance) to be a disconnect between residents and the business owners (this could be because they are not local independents like us – Pizza Express/Zizzi's/Valentina etc). In our view this is a real oversight by all concerned as being a Bermondsey Street resident, I can tell you that the lifeblood of that thriving community is the clear relationship between local businesses and the residents. It creates a nice warm community feeling and at Bermondsey Street we don't even have the sheer density that Shad Thames has. I would be very interested in speaking with local residents, including organisations like the Shad Thames Residents Association and STAMP, to see what community events are organised each year to develop this relationship. I would also very much like to look at developing a new communication channel between businesses and residents/stakeholders in the area and I will bringing this to the agenda for the next STAMP meeting in October. Any suggestions to this effect would be welcomed.

Some residents made note that they were unaware of our two posters on our window and door which invited residents to contact us on the email address above to arrange a time to come and see the plans/menu and general set up. This may be because our lovely painters (!) have been removing and putting back said notes as they paint around the areas. Can I suggest that those interested in meeting both myself and Steph Gregg our Manager email us at towerbridge@watchhousecoffee.com so we can arrange a time to show you around our space. Once we are open we would also like to invite residents for a private evening in which all we ask is that you provide us with honest (and brutal!) feedback on our service/food and the like. We want to get to know you all and hope that we will be a long standing positive influence in the area.

We thank you for your consideration and hope to hear from you in the near future.

THE WATCH HOUSE

BERMONDSEY STREET

Yours sincerely,



Roland Marcelin-Horne
Owner