

From: Stephanie Marshall  
Sent: 21 June 2014 13:08  
To: Licensing  
Subject: Load of Hay license application, Watford Heath

Dear Mr Young

A neighbour has brought my attention to a planning application for The Load of Hay, copy letter attached.

It is not in my nature to raise objection to my fellow residents' activities as I am very much a believer in 'live and let live'; however the level of noise & traffic disturbance from The Load of Hay is fast reaching a regular nuisance level as it stands, before any proposed garden bar alterations are in place.

When I moved to Watford Heath 4 years ago, there was occasional noise & revelry from the pub, most of the time largely unnoticed, and certainly accommodated. In the past months, however, the activities at the pub have heightened drastically. Please bear in mind this is a quiet residential area with relatively little traffic or other ambient noise after rush hour to buffer the sound levels - on an average evening, normal conversation from the pub's outdoor area can be clearly heard from my doorstep. In addition to this, the arrangement & terrain of the residential properties surrounding the rear of The Load of Hay comprise low fences, lots of brick & masonry and very little foliage canopy, which result in an unfortunate acoustic amplifier and wind channel, enhancing the pub noise instead of deadening as it travels.

Smoke:

I know the pub has a barbecue area, and on regular occasions since the spring I have been unable to hang my laundry out or even go in my garden at all due to acrid smoke and cooking odours filling my garden from the pub's barbecue. I'm not averse to the odd barbecue myself, but it has got to the stage where the pub's activities on sunny weekends prevent me from any outdoor activity around my own home. Could they not do away with lunchtime burn-ups and save their barbecues for the evening, so their neighbours could at least have clean washing and be able to open their windows during the day? I fear a purpose-built garden area would exacerbate an already problematic disturbance on fair days.

Traffic:

As you may be aware, the parking bay in front of The Load of Hay is troublesome at best; always full, and as such creates a potentially hazardous blind spot at the junction of Watford Heath & Pinner Road for drivers & pedestrians alike. Pub customers use Watford Heath as overspill parking in the evenings and despite having "No Parking" painted on the road (which seems to be interpreted as an invitation), at best makes it very difficult at times to drive along Watford Heath, at worst my shared driveway is completely blocked well in to the next day, having to wait for the previous night's responsible drinkers to retrieve their vehicles. Improvements to the pub are unequivocally carried out with increased custom in mind; there simply is not the parking facility to support this.

Noise:

As said before, live and let live. I'm not a pub-going person, but I don't let my preferences bear on others' lifestyle choices. However, the increasing regularity of live mic/music nights are really becoming a nuisance. On chilly or wet evenings, when the pub's rear door to the outdoor area is closed, the noise is clearly audible from inside my house. I must confess, I have enjoyed taking part in the occasional Load of Hay pub quiz from the comfort of my living room. Whenever the pub door is opened (which is frequent and often constant, especially on fair nights) a wall of noise follows - you can forget TV, or trying to concentrate on work/study. Last night's experience of lying in bed serenaded by an endearing karaoke rendition of Spandau Ballet's 'Gold' with vuvuzela accompaniment was a particularly special moment among many. I appreciate that not many may find the bleak charm as I and as such, have had to get over the embarrassment of providing earplugs for occasional house guests - sadly I do not exaggerate - you're welcome to drop by on a Friday/Saturday evening and experience the pleasure for yourself. I don't like to complain and haven't until now, but the advent of fair weather has really upped the noise levels considerably. I cannot begin to conceive how much this will be increased by drawing the customers out into an improved garden area; quite frankly a power cut would be the only solution to the impending noise abatement, not plastic glasses.

In summary, without the prior knowledge of detail, I regrettably object to their planned outdoor improvements and furthermore, would like to register my concern of current nuisance levels before any proposed alterations commence. It is something I do with reluctance, firstly for not having spoken to the pub landlords before writing to you, and secondly because I appreciate the pub needs to earn a living, which will always go hand in hand with a certain degree of generic disturbance.

Please feel free to share my letter with The Load of Hay, I would be happy to start a dialogue with them to find out what their planned improvements may entail and whether they might, in fact, be designed to improve existing disturbance levels for their neighbours. On that note, I would like to stress that, in case it is raised, no other resident of Watford Heath has ever been given permission to speak on my behalf in matters of complaint - my views are my own and have not been voiced until this letter...

Yours

Stephanie Marshall  
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