

Planning Applications Committee: 19 January 2012

Updates to reports for consideration.

Application No: 11/01893/VC – Item 5(1) Page 19

First and Second Floors of 13 and 15-21 Dove Street, and First and Second Floors of 2-4 Lobster Lane, Norwich NR2 1DE

Updates:

The second application referred to in the Planning History section of the officer report was referred to as being 'refused subsequent to this meeting' and this sentence should be deleted from the report. A recommendation has not yet been made on this application.

Additional Representations:

(1) From Ms Jessica Goldfinch:

If there must be lap dancing venues then let them stay in the 'adult' domain – evenings and in non-family locations. There is already a negative atmosphere of drunk and disorderly behaviour with aroused males, seen exiting and entering the establishment, making sexual and lewd comments to women passing by. This has been my and some of my friends' experience – if this spills over into the day then school children, girls in particular, and families and other adults will be exposed to this type of lewd behaviour. We no longer use Dove Street in the evenings because of this behaviour directly related to clients frequenting the club.

It is the wrong location for these type of opening hours. A major thoroughfare for children, especially those buying treats from Tesco.

I make objections under the following:

The prevention of Crime and Disorder: Walking down Dove Street in the evenings, one can see men exiting and entering, often drunk and in a state of arousal. Some make lewd and suggestive comments to women pedestrians. This will most likely continue into the proposed daytime hours when children are present or older girls may well be the target for such harassment.

Public Safety: As above. Drink is often a driver for aggressive, threatening, harassing and violent behaviour and for 'us' Dove Street is already a no-go area, with the locus being the clients clearly seen entering and exiting this club.

The prevention of public nuisance: As above. There is already a nuisance from the clients of this club. I believe longitudinal research would bear this out; research that I have felt uncomfortable in carrying out myself. The nuisance will simply spill out into the daytime.

The protection of children from harm (DCMS 2005): Children, school children coming home and meeting friends in the city frequent this street in particular after buying snacks in Tesco. With the nuisance already caused by some clients I think it can be assumed that it will then spill into the child

domain in the day time. I would not want my 14 year old daughter walking down this street when the club is open. They will be possible targets to sexually aroused and inebriated males and the same lewd comments subjected to women at night. They will be exposed to the advertising and general footfall and natural curiosity can mean exposure to age inappropriate situations and sexualisation which can cause psychological harm – also well documented.

Under Gender Equality Duty (2007) – At present I am prevented as a woman from entering this street in the evening and thus to local services – taxis, shops, restaurants etc. Eden (2003) research bears out claims of increased sexual crime around sex entertainment establishments and also inside the venues. Women's freedom of movement is already affected and my daughter's freedom of movement and access to local services is being curtailed due to the planning application which will allow even more exposure to sexual behaviour in our own city.

If the club were in a different non-family location I would not be objecting.

(2) From the Occupier of 3 Middletons lane, Norwich

Thank you for updating me on application 11/01893/VC. I wish to register my objection to such early opening hours. 22:00hrs surely would be more appropriate in such a city centre location. There are many young teenagers still about and they should be protected against this unfortunate abuse and lack of respect for the sexual body.

(3) From Jessica Goldfinch

I would like to raise objections to the extended afternoon hours for 'Platinum Lace' Lap dancing venue.

Whilst I wish that lap dancing did not exist as a form of entertainment I understand that it does and is here in Norwich. The extended hours are inappropriate.

1. I have already noticed unsavoury activity outside of 'Platinum Lace' on my rare nights out and do not want to see this extend into afternoon hours, when families and children are in the city. The behaviours I have witnessed are drunken men leeching at females in the street, calling out to them with sexual language - obviously wound up by what they have seen inside the venue or are about to see. This has made me very uncomfortable and I now avoid Dove Street at these times. I don't understand why my rights to walk unhindered have to be curtailed in this way and do not want the same for my daughter and friends, particularly as they are in the throws of puberty and all the body consciousness which goes with that.
2. I have also seen scantily clad women, (dressed in 'show' gear), presumably workers at the venue.
3. Teenagers are naturally curious, but the adult domain of stripping is for adults and as a parent I want my child, (her female and male friends), to be able to walk down Dove Street without having to make sense of it just yet.
4. The sexualisation of our children is a well documented creeping phenomenon and finding default family space is decreasing.
5. Please keep our streets for all and not for the few males.

6. These venues are known, also for targeting student towns to offer young women an 'easy' option to pay ever increasing tuition fees.

(4) From the occupier of 13 Cintra Road, Norwich

I am a resident of Thorpe Hamlet and a mum to 3 children. I wish to object to the above application. The following are my objections:

- Under Paragraph 2A of Schedule 3 (Local Government Act 1982) as inserted by section 27 and under section 2A (14), a lap dancing club falls under the definition of a 'sexual entertainment venue'. Since April 2011 at least 8 councils have brought in a "nil policy" – saying sex entertainment venues are unsuitable in their borough; others have brought in restrictions on numbers of SEVs and stringent restrictions such as annual licensing renewal and no advertising. Therefore to grant this application is out of keeping with a growing trend in the rest of the country.
- The demand for sex entertainment is already well met in this city. Any increase in the local strip scene is likely to increase the competition for this trade. A video made by OBJECT of ex-lap dancers testimonies (1), demonstrates that the clubs and women respond to this increase in competition by being in frequent breach of their code of conduct. In fact it is argued in the video that the code of conduct is only there to placate local authorities. The breaches reported include sex and sex acts being performed in these premises.
- The Platinum Lace website is advertising its plans to extend the Norwich premises amongst a couple of others. They state that they plan to have more private booths. As a resident of this city I do not feel reassured that any code of conduct can be properly enforced in a private booth.
- The increasing mainstreaming of sex-entertainment through increased premises in this city cannot be ignored by people who do not wish to access it.
- Vulnerable young people, even underage boys and girls will be tempted to make use of this service which is inappropriate and harmful for their age and well-being.
- The site is opposite a games shop and is a popular hang out for young people.
- Sex entertainment objectifies women. The increasing mainstreaming of the commercial sex industry in all its forms is leading to a normalisation of the sex industry and its practices. This normalisation is reflected in the increasing numbers of young vulnerable girls entering the sex entertainment industry believing that it represents sexual liberation and empowerment. However, an article in The Guardian 10th November, 2011, about the book 'Stripped: The Bare Reality of Lap Dancing' (2), outlines that the reality for these women is degrading and psychologically damaging. There are further such worrying testimonials on the OBJECT website (www.object.org – campaigns/lap dancing/testimonies). Despite the prevalence of these 'sex entertainment venues' few of us understand what really happens behind closed doors and we should be mindful that unless strict conditions are applied and enforced by the council or another

overseeing body, sex entertainment venues are open to exploitation of these women in any number of ways.

- It has long been established that sexual objectification of women in society plays a role in maintaining inequality between men and women. This has been recognised at the international level by the United Nations Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW has since repeatedly identified the links between the portrayal of women as sex objects by the media and sex industry with attitudes that underpin discrimination against women. A semi-naked woman performing a service of lap dancing for a fully-clothed paying man or group of men does not reflect equality; rather it offends all sense of true equality and respect.

Additional representation response (1)

The comments of Norfolk Police and Detective Sergeant Flatt (3215) confirm that there is a low number of reported incidents from this premises. With regards to public safety, the prevention of crime and disorder and the prevention of public nuisance, this is one of the better trading establishments in Norwich. They have demonstrated to the satisfaction of Planning Officers and Norfolk Police by virtue of their previous record and submission of the rigorous staff and customer policies which are operated in the premises, that the increase in hours of operation by 2 hours (1 hour earlier and 1 hour later) will not result in a detrimental impact on amenity or an increased threat of crime and public nuisance.

Public Safety, Prevention of Public Nuisance, Protection of Children and Prevention of Crime and Disorder are considered under Licensing Legislation when the Licence for the premises is granted.

Equality: It is not considered that the extension of hours results in any discrimination for women with regards to access for services. Use of Dove Street during the opening times of the club is a matter of personal choice, the extension of hours of operation does not result in certain groups not being able to use the facilities and services available in this location.

Additional representation response (2)

The officer report addresses the issues raised by this objection letter.

Additional representation response (3)

The officer report and the response to additional representation (1) address the issues raised by this objection letter.

Additional representation response (4)

This letter raises objections under Licensing legislation not Planning Legislation or as material planning considerations.

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17 Beatty Road Norwich NR4 6RQ

Updates:

N/A

Further Consultation Responses:

Tree officer

The council's tree officer notes the position of the conifer on no.19's boundary stating that the tree's protection can be addressed by a condition requiring a tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement.

Representations:

(1) From no.19 Beatty Road dated 2nd January

There is only one window facing the boundary between 17 and 19 Beatty Road and as this is at ground floor level, there will be some loss of light and view by the proposed extension. I was therefore relieved to note that a hip roofline is proposed and consider that this is an essential part of the design that should not be altered.

Also, I note that in response to question '**7. Trees and Hedges** Are there any trees or hedges on your own property or on adjoining properties which are within falling distance of your proposed development?' the "No" box has been selected whereas in fact there is a 10m+ conifer tree on the land of 19 Beatty Road but immediately adjacent to 17 Beatty Road and which is approximately at the corner of the existing floor plan of 17 Beatty Road.

(2) From no. 71, Welsford Road (2nd rep)

One problem I have is that the new residents at 17, Beatty Road have been on site for just a few weeks and have never made contact with me. Thus I have not been able to examine the area for the extension.

However, if the planned near seven metres in depth were reduced to a more reasonable five metres, still a big extension at 16.25 feet and if the cross garden trellis you refer to were retained I would withdraw my objection.

Hopefully this would save any further action for all parties.

Responses:

Tree issues

A further condition is recommended:

Before development commences a tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the conifer tree on the northern boundary is protected during demolition and construction in accordance with saved policy NE3 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted November 2004).

Additional representation response (1)

Their representation was acknowledged on 13th January.

It is noted that the representation raised some concern about the relationship of their ground floor window and that the extension would result in some loss of light and view. They did however state that the hip roofline proposed is an essential part of the design and should not be altered

Potential loss of light and privacy issues are addressed in paragraphs 14-18 of the report including recommendation of a boundary treatment condition to ensure that the privacy of each property is protected.

It is assumed that the representation refers to loss of view from their SW facing window in their single storey extension. Loss of view is not considered to be a material planning consideration.

Additional representation response (2)

Their representation was acknowledged on 13th January.

They reconfirmed their concerns about the projection of the extension stating that they would withdraw their objection if the applicant reduced this projection and retained the trellis and hedging running along the centre of the garden.

It was explained that that officers were making a recommendation for approval based upon the current plans and that members would make the final decision.

Graham Nelson
Head of Planning Services
19 January 2012