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West Berkshire District Council  
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Environmental Health and Licensing  
Council Offices  
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By email on [licensing@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@westberks.gov.uk)

27th July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**Application for variation of a Premises Licence  
Watermill Theatre and Restaurant, Bagnor, Speen West Berkshire  
OBJECTION**

We represent Gerard Smith and Helene Whitmey-Smith of The Benhams Bagnor, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8AQ.

Mr Smith and Mrs Whitmey-Smith are neighbours of the applicant premises.

Our clients wish to oppose the grant of the variation of the Premises Licence for the Watermill Theatre and Restaurant (The Theatre) on the grounds of public nuisance.

The applicant proposes the addition of a new and very substantial external area to the premises which will allow the area to be used both for the consumption and sale of alcohol. The area is so substantial that it appears to encompass the entire site owned and occupied by the theatre.

The application indicates that it is the intention of the theatre to use this new additional external area during the summer to allow the sale of "alcohol and bar drinks from a temporary outside bar on our front or back

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lawns for pre-show and interval drinks". The theatre also indicates that "reception drinks could also be dispensed outside for invite only booked events".

This is a substantial area that is proposed be licensed. It would allow the erection of a bar or multiple bars at any point, as we understand it, within the red lined area.

Furthermore, whilst it is said within the introduction to the application for variation that it is the intention that the external area would only be used in connection with pre and interval drinks for theatre events during the summer the Licence is not conditioned in any way that would ensure that that is the case. Importantly and alarmingly, from our clients' perspective it would allow the use of the external area for any event (invite only or otherwise) because there is no condition to prevent it. For the avoidance of doubt our clients would be opposed to the use of the outside area on any basis for the sale of alcohol be it in conjunction with theatre events, invite only booked events or otherwise.

Whilst our clients do not believe that any area of the premise is currently authorised for use in conjunction with the consumption of alcohol purchased from the inside bar at the theatre our clients would not be opposed to such use in conjunction with theatre events which take place, indeed despite what we believe is the lack of authorisation, that use already appears to be taking place.

Whilst we note that concerns are raised about capacity at the premises and that the external area is required to assist with crowding at the bar there are surely other internal areas where a bar could be erected.

It is our clients' concern that the application as proposed could lead to a substantial increase in the use and therefore noise volumes arising from the new external area which will adversely impact on their quality of life.

The committee will be familiar with the fact that external drinking areas can be a significant source of nuisance to neighbours.

The application for variation also suggests that the opening hours of the premises be extended to 08.00 (we do not believe that it is the intention to carry out any licensable activities during the extended hours) and our clients would have no objection to that aspect of the variation.

We hope that you will take this objection into account. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you with a date and time of the hearing in due course.

Yours faithfully

**Flint Bishop LLP**