

From: Kerrie Gibbons
Sent: 05 April 2022 12:57
To: Licensing (MBC) <LicensingMBC@maidstone.gov.uk>
Cc: ; Louise Davis <LouiseDavis@Maidstone.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: FW: Objection to application Ref. No: 22/00310/LAPRE - Allington Castle

Hi Everyone,

Please see our response to the objection and hope we manage to appease Mr. and Mrs. Dimmick through mediation via Lorraine .

Dear Lorraine,

Many thanks for contacting me.

Our relationship with all of our neighbours has always been excellent and we take their concerns seriously. The fact that we received only one objection and none from our immediate neighbours gives us great relief. I would like to invite Mr. and Mrs. Dimmick to the castle with you to discuss the matter further, but if they do not wish to visit, I welcome the opportunity to address their concerns. See the yellow text below for my response.

- The location is close to quiet residential housing, with the access road being a single-track road. This road is not suitable for the volume of traffic that would be generated by this sort of venue.

We fully understand why this is a concern but let us reassure you that our intention is not to be open to the public. When we host a private wedding, traffic will increase only for an hour or two a week. Guests arrive on mass, mostly by taxi. To avoid a backup of traffic on the narrower part of the single-lane road, our security staff are instructed to keep gates open and allow traffic to flow.

- The only route to this venue is down a residential street and therefore goes straight through a residential area.

We agree. Despite this, the castle has stood for 800 years and has been accessible from Castle Rd since the road was established, and much longer than the surrounding homes. There are five businesses that share access to this road, which accounts for much more traffic than the castle on a daily basis.

- In addition, there are no pavements on this route leading down to the castle and therefore the potential amount of increased traffic poses a safety risk to the number of pedestrians that use this road every day. This is a very popular route for people to take to and from the river. Currently, when cars travel down this part of the access road to the castle, there is not enough space for prams/wheelchairs/mobility scooters alongside the car, meaning that cars have to reverse to allow them through. Increased volume of traffic will exacerbate this situation and vastly increase the risk of a serious accident.

The castle rarely has more than 8 or 10 cars travelling down Castle Road each day; if monitored, you will find that the majority of traffic is generated by nearby businesses. Even with the private events at the castle taking place once or twice a week at maximum, the traffic that enters the castle makes up a tiny fraction of the traffic that travels down Castle road to the Environment Agency, to the boatyard, to the ambulance service, to the marina, and to the water board.

- As an alcohol licence has been sought for 7 days a week, the possibility for inappropriate behaviour is increased. Any activity involving increased numbers of people, vehicles, music, and alcohol after 11.30 pm is not appropriate for a residential area, particularly during the working week. A concern is the increased risk of public nuisance.

Though I fear this has been misinterpreted, I also understand why. To be in compliance with the law, we needed a seven-day permit. This does not imply we will host events seven days a week. Allington Castle is primarily someone's home, and as such will not be open to the general public, who would more likely display inappropriate conduct. Our guests are all traceable. There have been many such events each year without incident. The facilities are managed by our staff and there is plenty of security present. Since most visitors arrive via taxi, there is little risk of dangerous or anti-social driving, and most of the music is played by our in-house DJ, who is a close family member of our event manager and observes our noise restrictions.

Finally, I want to reassure Mr and Mrs Dimmick that no licensable activity we've applied for will negatively impact their or another neighbour's enjoyment of this peaceful area. If it ever does we will do everything in our power to rectify this.

We would be grateful for these concerns to be considered in granting this application.

Many thanks,

Kerrie Gibbons & Peter Olliver