

David Oakhill Esq
Head of Planning
Municipal Offices
The Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 9SA

10th April 2021

Dear Mr Oakhill,

**Retrospective Planning Application: 21/00583/FUL
Construction of a Pergola at Clarence Court Hotel, Clarence Square, Cheltenham GL50 4JR**

As residents of Clarence Square, we write to wholly object to the unauthorised construction and proposed commercial use of a permanent and substantial pergola-type building situated in what was the garden at the end of the car park of the Clarence Court Hotel, Clarence Square.

Clarence Square is an important part of the original Pittville Estate and is well known as the most complete Regency square in Cheltenham and is an important historic asset of the town and has regional and national value. The square is in a designated Conservation Area and comprises detached family villas and 50 town houses in four terraces. Clarence Court Hotel is exceptional in that it is the only non-residential, commercially operated property in the square.

For some decades, the hotel has operated as a privately-run residential hotel; it is understood that the property has recently been acquired by a small hotels group. The residents have successfully coexisted with the hotel until now and there is local support. However, the new owners have precipitated action that has generated great unease and concern to the square residents as they have constructed the pergola without any notice to, or consultation with house owners, or consideration of the impact. In particular, the affect on the day to day lives of the residents of the square and denial of their right to a quiet enjoyment of their homes in the Conservation Area.

We request the Planning Department to reject the retrospective application currently submitted to CBC Planning Department in consideration of the material matters as noted below:


- The legal planning requirements have not been met and the hotel owners have unilaterally disregarded proper process.
- It is clear that given the construction already executed, this structure is not designed or intended to be temporary. It should not then be considered as a temporary Covid business recovery tactic.
- The reason presented for the application as a desire to enhance the garden area is wholly disingenuous and the applicants are attempting to mislead the planning authorities and the residents.
- The residents were not consulted and accordingly, no accommodation of their views has been considered.
- The structure is an oversized, permanent pergola-like building on hard standing butted up against two boundary walls with adjacent properties and is not in-keeping with the dominant property style in the square. Any pergola like structure betrays the Regency architecture of the square.
- The pergola is in full view from the road and at circa 50 square meters this substantial new outdoor restaurant area will not be easily serviced as it is away from the main building, which suggests, despite a lack of detail in the application, that integrated barbecue and/or other cooking equipment will be employed.

- The scale of the development is disproportionate to the surroundings with estimated occupancy of circa 50 seated covers at one sq metre/person. That is, around 100 people standing in drinking events. The planning application does not detail how toilet facilities will be managed to accommodate substantial additional customers or how numbers will be controlled.
- The hotel owners cannot expect to create facilities in a quiet residential area that are akin to the town centre restaurants and bars.
- Police patrols are concentrated in the town centre and do not situate themselves in Clarence Square. Having large numbers of customers under the influence of alcohol will be threatening to women and families in the square.
- With uncontrolled access from the road, any number of persons may occupy the area. Through the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme, residents are actively involved with the local police and have been most successful in minimising anti-social behaviour and drug/alcohol misuse in the area over the past ten years and this change of use would go against these successful protocols.
- It would be reasonable to forecast that permissions will be subsequently granted for late licenses for special events especially those on a regular basis such as Cheltenham races. This again will totally impact the quiet enjoyment of the area by the residents.
- Obvious outcomes arising from increased numbers of food and beverage customers being served outside of the main hotel structure will be:
 - noise nuisance to residents
 - littering
 - light pollution from additional lighting for the dining and drinking area
 - impact on residential parking where there is already limited parking available in the square
 - compromised security issues where the pergola structure gives direct access to neighbouring gardens

In summary, this retrospective application is misaligned with the dominant residential nature of the properties in the square and entirely out of step with the architecture and purpose of design of Clarence Square. It is thus misconceived and disrespects the wishes of the residents and has failed as outlined above. Permission should not be granted as it will have a detrimental and irreversible impact on the quiet residential nature of the area and will lead to further strains on policing measures, both by residents, CBC wardens and the police.

We wholly object to the pergola construction and any retrospective application to approve such.

Yours sincerely


39 Clarence Square

From: 46 Clarendon Square

10.04.21



Hotel garden 2007- no waste or derelict areas,
no dining



Hotel garden 2019 - lawn replaced by gravel,
well-tended, no waste or derelict areas, no
dining.



Hotel garden, 5th March 2021 - Over 50% of garden lost, parking space lost, pergola extending beyond rear of 19 Wellington Lane plus planter box beneath creates security threat to No. 46.

