

Annex 65

6 Broadbent Close,
Rownhams
Southampton
SO16 8LQ
May 4 2009

Licensing Manager
Legal & Democratic Service,
Test Valley Borough Council,
Beech Hurst,
Weyhill Road,
ANDOVER,
SP10 3AJ

**Re: Application for a Premises Licence, Rownhams House, Rownhams , Southampton.
(R.J. and P.J Barber)**

Dear Sir,

As residents, for the past 17 years, of the former Heron Homes estate, with a property backing directly onto the grounds of Rownhams House, we write with reference to the above application for a premises licence.

We most strongly object to this licence being granted on the following grounds:

a)All encompassing nature of the application.

We believe the application to result from Mr Barber having staged a theatre production last summer without a licence for the provision of alcohol. This may never have been an issue, had it not been for the noise created by drinkers late into the night. The application, if granted, would give unlimited support of and legal protection to very late, unrestricted drinking in close proximity to private dwellings on, potentially, any night of the year, with resulting unacceptable noise levels.

“Provision of Facilities for Regulated entertainment:” Regulated: by whom?

Comprising what, exactly?” this could give a blanket permit for extra structures to be erected, providing entertainment on a potentially enormous scale.

It may be that the applicants would claim to intend few and low-key events, but there would be no way of ensuring this, once the licence is granted. It could then be utilised and even sold on for purposes far removed from the production last summer.

Sale of alcohol and provision of late night refreshment

This will directly affect the comfort and security of hundreds of residents. **Late- night noise levels** will be excessive, since events will either be outside in the summer months, or the clientele will have obvious access to the grounds, however “sound-proof” the house may be claimed to be, thus ensuring misery for those living nearby. Parts of our area have been declared alcohol-free zones, to cut down on anti-social behaviour. The rise in “mini-gangs” roaming these quiet roads and congregating in the nearby Park had been disquieting and we are thankful for the renewed efforts of police, with extra funds providing Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSO’s. We should surely not encourage late night drinking close by in Rownhams house grounds, which will inevitably spill out to surrounding roads, with all the potential for nuisance, vandalism “under the influence,” excessive noise and crime. On one hand, youngsters, often disadvantaged, are severely penalised for disturbing the peace, on the

other, Rownhams House visitors will be legally allowed to drink to excess , with all its implications, through the provision of the above licence.... Hardly justice!

Potential for crime is therefore a definite issue. While we sleep, late-night visitors will be in a position to wander the Closes, examine our properties and cars, enter our gardens, drive around with excessive speed and noise, and probably park on every road and grass “pavement” as parking facilities are so limited. Friends have experienced the horrifying effects of such a licence in a residential area elsewhere, with people parking on their property, urinating or worse in their bushes as the night wore on, or have even found a stranger in their garden on waking

Parking and road safety: Implications for Fire and Rescue services here are serious, as roads are so narrow and easily obstructed. Parking, as already mentioned, is very limited. We are understanding if neighbours hold a “one- off” event, with mutual courtesy observed; we usually have prior warning of unusual noise or parking situations. Occasional, private neighbourhood events are fine. Potentially every weekend or even more, on a commercial basis? Definitely not!

Change of use of Rownhams House Premises:

My street map designates Rownhams House an”Industrial Site”, being at present used for offices, as we understand. It would be deemed ridiculous if we or our neighbours were to apply for the above license in this residential area, and we would rightly be refused. The Barber’s property is in the centre of a sizeable residential area of their own volition, through the sale of a large area of their land for development, (no doubt at handsome profit). That being the case, should they now be permitted to hold an all-encompassing Premises licence right in the midst of it? We think not.

Stealth of Application:

“Publicity” for this application was absolutely minimal, being, for us, a small notice pinned near the drive of Rownhams House, seen only by accident, as we usually leave the estate by car. Nothing in the Village News, whereas we have ample warning of temporary closures or work to local roads or motorway lanes. Nothing in the reports by the local Borough Councillors, although plenty about the “war” on local crime. A cynic would say that it was hoped the application would go through without anyone realising, and with the tacit agreement of the local authority.. As we are not cynics, we appeal to justice and common sense from yourself at Test Valley, trusting that you will listen to the “groundswell of opinion” as well as the very valid arguments contra, and turn down this application, now and on appeal. Please prove wrong those who deem it a foregone conclusion, with nothing anyone can do.

We appreciate living in this location and indeed paid extra for the privilege of backing on to Rownhams House and grounds! Its occupants/tenants have up to now been good neighbours, as we believe we have been. It is quiet here, with vast sums having been spent on tree planting and resurfacing of the M27, to cut down motorway noise. Garden-shed and car crime, which we have experienced in the past, has decreased We thank you for reading this letter, apologise for its length, and trust you will turn down the above application forthwith, showing TVBC to be impartial to both rich and poor and truly on the side of law, order, justice and sanity.

Yours faithfully,

Mr and Mrs R.B. and A. Withers