

Taste of India

33-34 Salisbury Square, Hatfield, AL9 5AF

10 January 2019

Dear Sirs,

Re: APP/C1950/W/18/3205963: 33 -34 Salisbury Square, AL9 5AF

I write further to the objections received in respect of the above planning permission and say as follows: -

I confirm that the freeholder of the property is Mr. Mohammed Assi Hussein-Hiam. I am the leaseholder and have been since taking occupation of the premises since 1998. I have never owned the freehold title. I would refer any interested parties to Land Registry for confirmation.

During my occupation, Salisbury Square has always been very quiet with little passing trade. However, previously there used to be a parade of shops and other food establishments. This unfortunately has changed with the closure of many of the businesses and limiting the footfall into the Square. I took the decision to refurbish the restaurant in 2017 at a cost of £60,000.00 to encourage business, however this has been limiting.

In 2007 I was led to believe that the Gascoyne Cecil Estates ('GCE') would be investing heavily into the Square and encouraging substantial retail and restaurant enterprises, to make it into a social hub. This led to the closure of the parade of shops except for 1 convenience store since 2014.

The train station was opened over 2 years ago with 5 retail spaces, however even till today only 1 unit is occupied with the others remaining vacant. This is a reflection of the economy and the lack of confidence in business not willing to invest in Old Hatfield.

The Red Lion Pub which is located on a busy junction with substantial passing trade, sold off their car park to developers around 2006/7 who subsequently built approximately 24 properties. They also refurbished the Pub on 2 occasions and have spent in excess of £500,000.00. It is absurd to compare Taste of India to the Red Lion.

The Great Northern Pub, formerly known as The Hatfield Arms is located directly opposite the train station has also undergone 2 major renovations, and 3 changes in tenancies since I have been in the Square, and it is still struggling for business.

The Eight Bells Pub, located at the bottom of Fore Street, Old Hatfield has also gone through several tenancy changes and the current Landlord is unable to open the establishment on a regular basis due to the lack of trade.

The New Dynasty establishment had been a restaurant when I first came to Salisbury Square. After being closed for several years, they re-opened as a take away and it is also had 3 changes in leaseholder.

The former Moviebank shop, a few doors away from us, after being closed for approximately 10 years has only recently opened as a kitchen show room.

In 2014 – 2016 I had several articles written about my difficulties in running the restaurant published in Welwyn & Hatfield Times. The GCE where nowhere to be found during these times.

Peter Clegg and Anthony Downing, the former Managers of GCE who use to regularly dine in my restaurant used to advise that the development of Salisbury Square would 'complete sooner then I thought'. Sadly the Managers are no longer there and it is now coming up to 12 years. I am saddened that GCE have developed properties in Dunham Mews and Arm and Sword Lane, Church Lane, Jacobs Ladder and Hatfield Station and Salisbury Square is yet to be completed. The road outside of the restaurant has still not been opened.

With all due respect to the those concerned, the Taste of India is not considered to be expensive compared to other similar establishments in the area. Our prices are fair and have not changed over the last five years. We have regular promotions including offering 20 per cent discounts on Wednesday evenings. I have also been actively promoting the restaurant via sponsoring charity events and marketing on Google. I have 55 reviews on Google with an average of 4.1 out of 5. This highlights that I have been maintaining my quality. Unfortunately, this has had very little impact on the trade.

Despite all of the above, I cannot sustain the restaurant, it is not financially feasible and I would implore that the planning permission is granted.

Yours faithfully, ,

Mo Ullah
Manager
Taste of India