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Neasa Hourigan TD  
Leinster House, Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

Dublin City Council,  
Civic Offices, Wood Quay  
Dublin D08 RF3F

4th November 2021

Re: 3617/21 - 77-80 King Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 TP22.

Dear Sir/Madam,

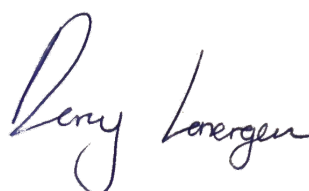
We wish to comment on the above planning application. We have included our observations below and submitted the required fee.

Kind Regards,



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Neasa Hourigan TD, Dublin Central



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Cllr. Darcy Lonergan, Cabra-Glasnevin



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Cllr. Janet Horner, North Inner City

And co-signatories listed in Appendix A

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## Observations

It is our desire to see the site developed in a manner appropriate to the location and appropriate to the housing needs of the city. Much of the site has been allowed to fall into dereliction by the current owner. There are a number of issues we have with the current application that we feel make it an unsuitable application.

### 1. Cultural heritage

Dublin City Council Cultural Strategy (2015 -2021)<sup>1</sup> lists as a priority the:

*“Planning and delivering improved cultural infrastructure in the City and its neighbourhoods”*

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016–2022 lists the following objective:

*“CHC37: To protect and support Dublin city’s **existing cultural assets** by facilitating the enhancement and/or growth of existing cultural spaces, including performance and entertainment spaces, while protecting the existing amenities of an area.”*

The Cobblestone is an existing cultural asset. There are few authentic traditional music venues in the city and fewer still that do as much as The Cobblestone to foster the development of traditional music in the city.

The development as proposed will materially damage the Cobblestone’s standing as a cultural asset:

- The significant loss of floor space available to the Cobblestone, in particular the loss of the music venue.
- We do not find it credible that the Cobblestone will be able to operate during construction works. We do not feel that the level of construction noise, dust and traffic will be conducive to operating a public bar.

### 2. Overwhelming of protected structures

We note that the two protected structures on the site have largely been left as is presumably with a view to meeting the obligations placed on development of protected structures.

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://councilmeetings.dublincity.ie/documents/s1704/4.%20Report%20on%20Draft%20Culture%20Strategy.pdf>

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However the development as proposed overwhelms both structures. We would ask that the planning authority factors into its deliberations the recent Board Direction<sup>2</sup> from An Bord Pleanála on a planning application for the nearby Hendron’s protected structure (relevant except below, emphasis ours):

*“The Board is not satisfied that Block C is the most appropriate design response and considers that the scale of the proposed development in respect of this element, immediately adjacent to the protected structure, overwhelms the size, and scale of the Hendron’s Building, and its **unique architectural language is overwhelmed by the scale and design of Block C.**”*

### 3. Plot Ratio and Site Coverage

The Plot Ratio for the site is 6.3. The indicative Plot Ratio for the “Z5 City Centre” zone is from 2.5 to 3.0. The maximum indicative Site Coverage for the “Z5 City Centre” zone is 90%. The development seems to exceed this limit. We believe these breaches, taken together with the daylight/sunlight issues below, represent an overdevelopment of this site.

### 4. Daylight/sunlight issues

The applicant’s report recognises that 46% of the windows assessed for Vertical sky component do not meet the BRE guidelines. The development would have a moderate to profound effect on 24% of windows assessed for Annual Probable Sunlight Hours. The applicant’s rationale is simply that any development of the site will have some impact. While this may be the case it is clear that other alternatives (e.g. fewer stories, tiered set back floors, etc.) would have a lesser impact on the surrounding residents.

### 5. Mix of uses

Section 3.2 of the “Urban Development and Building Heights”<sup>3</sup> says

“The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.”

There is an overconcentration of existing or proposed visitor accommodation (hotels, hostels and aparthotels) in the area. Off Smithfield Square alone there is

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<sup>2</sup> Board Direction BD-007786-21 ABP-308841-20, 30th March 2021

<https://www.pleanala.ie/anbordpleanala/media/abp/cases/directions/308/s308841.pdf?r=829507793057>

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/urban\\_development\\_and\\_building\\_height\\_guidelines\\_for\\_planning\\_authorities\\_december\\_2018\\_0.pdf](https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/urban_development_and_building_height_guidelines_for_planning_authorities_december_2018_0.pdf)

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The Generator Hostel, The Maldron Smithfield and The Hendrick Smithfield. The planner's report for a hotel development for nearby Capel Street (3609/20) identified nearly 2,000 visitor rooms in consented visitor accommodation planning applications in the vicinity.

As such we do not believe that the development of yet another hotel "positively contributes to the mix of uses".

## 6. Scale relative to neighbouring properties

We feel that the height of the proposed building would be incongruous in terms of its excessive height and would be out of character with the streetscape.

We also query whether the structures that appear above the parapet mean that the building breaches the 23m height restriction.

## 7. Promote tourism

Dublin City Development Plan policy CEE12(ii) is:

*To promote and enhance Dublin as a world class tourist destination for leisure, culture, business and student visitors.*

The Cobblestone ranks 11th on a list of 314 entries for Nightlife in Dublin on the popular TripAdvisor website. It is clearly a draw for tourists who wish to experience traditional Irish music and culture.

While ostensibly another hotel supports this goal, the loss (as outlined above) of a key cultural amenity will have a detrimental effect on tourism.

We would also draw attention to the fact that Liverpool lost its UNESCO World Heritage Status due to overdevelopment<sup>4</sup>. Similar overdevelopment of Dublin will make Dublin's pending application less likely to succeed. This in turn will have a negative impact on tourism.

## 8. Energy and Sustainability

Dublin City Development Plan policy CC1 is:

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<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/liverpool-loses-unesco-world-heritage-status-180978252/>

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*To prioritise measures to address climate change by way of both effective mitigation and adaptation responses in accordance with available guidance and best practice.*

Given the scale of the building proposed we ask that, if permission is granted, a condition of such grant is that a suite of environmental measures are agreed with Dublin City Council covering energy, water, waste or a more formal LEED (or similar) certification.

## 9. Cost of safeguarding works

We gather that Dublin City Council has funded the safeguarding works required to conserve the current structures on the site. If permission is granted we would ask that repayment of all amounts due as a result of such remedial works is made a condition of the grant.

## Appendix A - Co-signatories

1. <Names redacted>