

Dear Andrew,

We write as the local councillors for Hampstead Town ward – which includes The Magdala – and in support of the listing of its premises at 2A South Hill Park as an Asset of Community Value being renewed.

The pub is most famous as the location of the murder that led to Ruth Ellis becoming the last woman to be executed in the United Kingdom. Its fame is sufficient for it to be among the 5% of London pubs to have their own Wikipedia article.¹ However, we note that the Magdala is in its own right – although temporarily closed – a significant part of the South Hill Park and South End Green community, and it is in this regard that it is legally and factually an Asset of Community Value.

We understand the need in law to renew any listing every five years, per s87(3) of the Localism Act. We welcome the opportunity to express again our unequivocal support for the premises being listed.

We note that there are two limbs under the Localism Act s88(2) and subsequent Regulations that must be satisfied: first, that premises must in the recent past have advanced the social wellbeing or interests of the local community; and second, that it be realistic that that resume within five years. We will address them in turn.

First limb: contribution to social wellbeing and the local community

The Magdala is the only public venue or meeting place on the South Hill Park Estate. This area is a self-contained, non-thoroughfare to the east of South End Road, covering South Hill Park, South Hill Park Gardens, and Park End; Parliament Hill, Nassington Road, Tanza Road, and the Old Orchard. This area is home to 1,075 local governments electors and 1,600 residents.

Due to being self-contained, the South Hill Park Estate is a very tightly-knit community. It has its own highly-subscribed mailing list, Southhillsiders. It also forms a large part of the South End Green area, with much of the civic leadership of the South End a Green Association and the larger Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum living on the South Hill Park Estate.

Yet within this area, the Magdala was the only meeting location that residents congregated naturally. As a result of this, although the Magdala was frequented by some with a historic or macabre interest in a Ruth Ellis, it was and has always been a pub primarily serving local residents.

When open, the community use of the premises was extensive. Hampstead and South End have very strong community groups. Cindex lists 138 public services and organisations within half a mile of the Magdala.²

¹ Wikipedia: "[The Magdala](#)".

² [Cindex result for NW3 2SB](#)

As a result, the pub was very frequently used by community groups, including the Hampstead Forum and South End Green Association holding their committee meetings there, and the Hillsiders twice a year for their regular socials. Personally, the local Conservative Party, of which we are members, held local meetings in the Magdala; including bimonthly committee meetings, as well as the 2013 Annual General Meeting of the constituency association for Hampstead & Kilburn.

The pub hosted beer-tasting, stand-up comedy nights, live music, and a host of other themed events. Some of these were charged-for, and some free to attend. However, we note that the borough has found previously that the commercial rationale for holding such events is irrelevant to whether the premises contributed to social wellbeing and the local community.³

The pub became well-known for its food, especially its Sunday lunches, which ordinarily served two to three full covers by seat every Sunday. This also extended to December, where it was perennially packed with Christmas dinner bookings. The pub was recommended by the Michelin 'Eating Out' pub guide several years running (among the 40-50 pubs recommended each year across London for their food).

As a result of providing the only meeting space for South Hill Park, hosting community meetings, hosting regular events for the public, and being highly nationally recommended for its food, we believe it is uncontroversial to state that it had in the recent past advanced the social wellbeing of the local community.

Second limb: resumption of use for community benefit

On the second limb, there is undoubtedly a realistic prospect for the use to be resumed. An application was made last week for the re-opening of the ground floor and basement as a pub.⁴ The information in this application (the "**Licensing Application**") and the previous rejected planning application (the "**Planning Application**") is cited below.⁵

Because of the Licensing Application, it is clearly the case that the basement and ground floor will be used for the purposes expressed in the current listing as an Asset of Community Value. We further note that the Planning Application was refused, demonstrating that there is a realistic prospect that the first floor becomes used for such purposes within five years. This is supported by the further grounds.

Food, for which the Magdala developed its afore-mentioned good reputation, will continue to be served from the full-service kitchen, which is currently on site and which was proposed to be maintained in the Planning Application. The Licensing Application further notes that 'food will be available throughout the trading period', and 'hot food and hot beverages will be supplied [from the] fully equipped kitchen'.

³ [Decision regarding appeal against the listing of the Dartmouth Arms](#)

⁴ Camden Council (20 March 2019): "[Licensing application APP/PREMISES-NEW/094976](#)"

⁵ Camden Council (14 January 2019): "[Planning application 2018/6320/P](#)"

Providing a full-service kitchen incurs significant fixed costs (regardless of how many covers the kitchen serves), and incurring these fixed costs makes the use of the first floor – which would benefit from the fixed costs expended on running the kitchen – more affordable per cover, and thus more economically viable.

The widescale local opposition to the conversion of the function room to residential premises demonstrates the local support for it. 57 local residents responded to the application, and all 57 were in opposition to losing the function room.⁶ These objections include from the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum This indicates the strong interest in the local community in re-opening the pub, including its function room.

For these reasons, among others, we believe the Magdala recently contributed to social wellbeing and the local community and has a realistic prospect of being restored to that use within five years. As such, we unhesitatingly support the application for 2A South Hill Park to be relisted as an Asset of Community Value.

Kind regards,



Oliver Cooper



Maria Higson



Stephen Stark

Conservative Councillors for Hampstead Town ward

⁶ Camden Council (8 March 2019): "[Delegated Report](#)"