

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Southbank Centre Limited v. Laurieral Mario
Case No. D2026-3075

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Southbank Centre Limited, United Kingdom ("UK"), represented by Winston Taylor International LLP, UK.

The Respondent is Laurieral Mario, UK.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <londonlitfest.com> (the "Domain Name") is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 13, 2026. On July 13, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On the same date, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 14, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on July 17, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Policy" or "UDRP"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on July 23, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 12, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on August 17, 2026.

The Center appointed Ian Lowe as the sole panelist in this matter on August 26, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant is a prominent and active UK arts organization, operating the Southbank Centre, the largest arts center in the UK that has been in operation since 1951. It has more than 11.6 million visitors a year. The Complainant is the organizer and proprietor of the London Literature Festival, a literature and spoken word festival that has been running in London for 19 years. It typically runs across approximately two weeks in October and November each year filling the Complainant's various spaces, including the Royal Festival Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Purcell Room, and the National Poetry Library, with readings, live performances, panel discussions, workshops, slam poetry, and free public events.

In recent years, the festival has increased its national and international public profile through the adoption of a "high-profile guest curator model". In 2026, the festival's 19th edition has attracted substantial press and public attention through the appointment of global music artist Dua Lipa as guest curator.

The Complainant is the proprietor of UK registered trademark number UK00002584307 LONDON LITERATURE FESTIVAL (the "Mark") registered on January 4, 2013. The Complainant also claims substantial unregistered rights and goodwill in the name LONDON LITERATURE FESTIVAL through extensive and continuous use since the festival's inception.

The Domain Name was registered on May 21, 2008. It resolves to a website (the "Website") headed "London Lit Fest" providing what purports to be detailed information about the 2026 London Literature Festival and the history and background to the festival. It includes "GET TICKETS" and "BOOK TICKETS" links that both resolve to the Complainant's website. It also includes an invitation for the user to enter their email address purportedly to subscribe to a newsletter. The Website gives no indication as to the operator of the website or any contact details. The footer of the home page of the Website is:

"© 2026 londonlitfest.com · Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London SE1 8XX An unofficial fan guide to the London Literature Festival"

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that the Domain Name is confusingly similar to the Mark, that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name and that the Respondent registered and is using the Domain Name in bad faith.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

For this Complaint to succeed in relation to the Domain Name the Complainant must prove that:

- (i) the Domain Name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights;

- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name; and
- (iii) the Domain Name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the Domain Name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1. The Panel accepts the Complainant's assertion that "londonlitfest" clearly serves as an abbreviation for "London Literature Festival" hence the Mark. A domain name which consists of a variation of a trademark is considered by panels to be confusingly similar to the relevant mark for purposes of the first element, and examples of such variations include plays on the mark (e.g., abbreviations). [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.9. Also considering the Respondent's use of the Domain Name for a website purporting to be an unofficial fan guide to the Complainant's London Literature Festival, the Panel finds that the Domain Name is confusingly similar to the Mark.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. Accordingly, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1.

The Complainant has made out a prima facie case that the Respondent could have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name. The Respondent has used the Domain Name for the Website which is expressed to be an unofficial fan guide to the Complainant's London Literature Festival. Panels have held that for the purposes of assessing fair use, a respondent's fan or informational website must be active, genuine and clearly distinct from any official Complainant site. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.7. Although the Website is active, it is not clear whether it is genuine. It invites users to provide personal details in order purportedly to subscribe for updates. It is not clearly distinct from the official Complainant site. The Website gives no information as to the operator of the site. It includes links to purchase tickets that resolve to the Complainant's site and the copyright notice in the footer of all web pages includes the address of the Complainant. Save for the indication in very small print in the footer, there is no indication that the Website is not an official website authorised and/or operated by the Complainant. Furthermore, the Domain Name is substantially identical to the Mark, comprising an obvious abbreviation of the Mark, and Panels have tended to find that a general right to operate a fan site does not extend to registering or using a domain name identical to the Complainant's mark; the same concept can be said to hold true for a slight variation or abbreviation. In light of these factors, the Panel considers that it is not clear to Internet users visiting the Website that it is not operated by the Complainant, accordingly the Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the Domain Name. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), sections 2.1, 2.5.2, and 2.7.2.

There is no suggestion that the Respondent has ever been known by the Domain Name. The Respondent has chosen not to respond to the Complaint or take any steps to counter the prima facie case established by the Complainant and has failed to come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name such as those enumerated in the Policy. In the circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent does not have any rights or legitimate interests in respect of the Domain Name.

Further, to the extent the “mailing list” might be used for nefarious purposes, panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity would not confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent.

[WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

The Domain Name is an obvious abbreviation and reference to the Complainant’s London Literature Festival and its Mark. Accordingly, the Panel is satisfied that the Respondent had the Complainant and its rights in the Mark in mind when it registered the Domain Name.

In the Panel’s view the Respondent’s failure to participate in the proceedings and to refute the Complainant’s claims supports a finding of bad faith registration and use. According to the information provided by the Registrar, the Respondent has an address in the UK but gives a telephone contact number in the United States of America.

The Panel considers that the Website is likely to mislead Internet users into believing that the Domain Name is operated or authorized by the Complainant, attracting Internet users by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Mark.

The invitation on the Website to provide personal information raises a legitimate suspicion that the Domain Name was intended to be used for phishing or other inappropriate activity. Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity such as claimed potential phishing or passing off constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the evidence, the Panel finds the Respondent’s registration and use of the Domain Name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds the third element of the Policy has been established.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the Domain Name <londonlitfest.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Ian Lowe/

Ian Lowe

Sole Panelist

Date: September 9, 2026