

APPENDIX D - Review Application to Lancaster Lounge

Other Persons Valid Representations in Support of the Review Application

Name	Email	Comments
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED], supported by evidence, of antisocial behaviour, which includes unnecessary noise, customers urinating in public and on our property, swearing, threatening language, and loud, thumping music. There have also been instances of criminal activity, such as fights and drug use. These incidents have caused us a great deal of stress and alarm. As I have explained to the Licensing Department of Huntingdonshire District Council and Environmental Health, [REDACTED] and the unruly running of this business has restricted our use of both our home and garden, as well as dictating our bedtime. We also need to make [REDACTED] and while we accept that we live near a pub, neither venue on Main Street posed a problem at the time of our house purchase. The evidence we have provided shows that our complaints are not an exaggeration. Your report, along with evidence from neighbours, has shown that Dominic Ricciardi has no intention of abiding by the law or honouring conditions set by the local authority, including those imposed by both the Licensing Department and the police. I believe that any individual who refuses to respect authority and comply with the laws and conditions set by the local authority is irresponsible and poses a serious danger to the community. I ask that this be taken into full consideration when reviewing the licence agreement.

		I am writing to you in support of the review of the licence for The Lancaster Lounge in Yaxley. We have lived in our home, [REDACTED] The Lancaster Lounge, for 52 years, and during that time we have never made a complaint about any business or premises. However, we have recently been subjected to antisocial behaviour and excessive noise that has disrupted our peace and restricted the enjoyment of our own home. We often have our grandchildren to stay, and the language and level of late-night noise—frequently continuing past 11 p.m.—have been upsetting to them and have disrupted their sleep. The final straw for us was the recent firework display, which took place at the [REDACTED]. Debris from the fireworks landed all over our property, and we believe they were set off far too close [REDACTED]. There appeared to be no risk assessment, no paramedics present, and no proper monitoring of the display. We are concerned that if Mr. Dominic Ricciardi continues to run his business in this manner, a serious incident or accident could occur, potentially causing harm to someone. The way this business is currently being operated has not only been of breach of licencing conditions but had been detrimental to our mental health and has restricted our ability to enjoy our home. We therefore fully support a review of the licence and ask that our concerns are taken seriously.
		We write as residents of Yaxley who have lived adjacent to the premises now known as the Lancaster Lounge (formerly the RAFA Lancaster Club) for nearly 35

		years. In all that time, we have never previously needed to raise a complaint about this premises or the nearby Three Horseshoes Pub. We are just from the Lancaster Lounge and from the Three Horseshoes. However, since the current owner took over the Lancaster Lounge approximately 4 years ago, the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that our quality of life, the safety of our neighbourhood, and the character of our conservation area are all under serious threat. Throughout the build the owners cut corners on health and safety, make promises he had no intention of honouring and became abusive when challenged. Since it opened approximately 18 months ago, the owner appears to have gone out of his way to upset the community, being totally disrespectful of all social norms, for example delighting in parking his car on the double yellow outside club (to protect access for the fire station). 1. The Role and Importance of a Conservation Area A conservation area is designated to protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place, ensuring that its character and appearance are preserved or enhanced for current and future generations. In Yaxley, this means maintaining the tranquillity, visual harmony, and community spirit that have defined the village for decades. Developments within a conservation area must be sympathetic to their surroundings, respect local heritage, and avoid causing harm to the environment or the amenity of residents. The operation of the Lancaster Lounge under its current management is fundamentally at odds with all these principles. Instead of enhancing the area, the venue has become a source of persistent disruption, environmental degradation, and social discord. The disregard for planning and licensing conditions, the unsympathetic alterations to the property, and the encouragement of anti-social behaviour all undermine the very purpose of conservation area status.
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		2. Planning and Licensing Breaches and Failures of Enforcement 1. a) Non-Compliance with Licensing Conditions - Parking Requirements Ignored: The original planning approval (Condition 6) required the car park to be completed, marked out, and available for use before opening, <u>and for it to remain as parking in perpetuity and for no other purpose</u>. This has not been enforced. The car park remains unfinished, unmarked, and is often used for storage or as an extension of the outdoor drinking area. This is a direct breach of both planning and licensing conditions. - Outdoor Area Expansion: The outdoor seating and drinking area has been expanded well beyond the original plans, encroaching on land designated for parking only. Retrospective planning applications have been submitted after works were completed without permission, setting a dangerous precedent that rules can be ignored with impunity. This happened twice and the problems of today are directly caused by, not enforcing the original planning permission. Almost certainly Dommy did this deliberately, knowing that he would not be challenged by the council. - Pavement Licence Violations: Despite not holding a pavement licence, the owner has placed tables and allowed drinking and smoking on the public pavement. These were unlawful and created a hostile and intimidating environment for passers-by, especially those with mobility issues, children, or visual impairments. 1. b) Failure to Consult and Misrepresentation
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		- Lack of Transparency: Revised plans, including the addition of windows and other alterations, have been submitted without proper consultation, depriving affected parties of the opportunity to voice objections. - Misleading Descriptions: The venue was initially described as a small plates restaurant and piano bar, but has become a loud, late-night drinking establishment with frequent outdoor music and events. This bait-and-switch approach has eroded trust and demonstrates a lack of respect for the community and the licensing process. 1. c) Anti-Social Behaviour and Public Nuisance - Noise Disturbance: Loud music, shouting, swearing, and other disruptive behaviour regularly continue late into the night, far beyond what is reasonable or permitted. The noise is audible inside our home, including bedrooms, and has repeatedly disturbed our sleep and family life. - Public Disorder: We have witnessed and experienced a catalogue of anti-social behaviours, including public urination, glass smashing, vomiting, and even dangerous pranks such as placing glasses under car tyres, displaying of sex dolls on weekend lunchtimes. These incidents are not isolated but have become a regular feature of life since the current management took over. - Intimidation and Loss of Amenity: The behaviour of patrons, often fuelled by excessive alcohol consumption, has made us and our neighbours feel unsafe in our own homes. We have been forced to alter our routines, including leaving our home at weekends to avoid the worst disturbances.
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		1. d) The ‘Ibiza Party’ Incident – A Case Study in Licensing Failure and Community Harm A particularly egregious example of the problems caused by the current management was the so-called “Ibiza party” held over the August bank holiday weekend. This event marked a new low in the operation of the Lancaster Lounge and was wholly incompatible with the conservation area and the venue’s supposed identity as a small plates restaurant. The music was not only played outside of licensed hours (again), but was so loud that it could be physically felt inside our kitchen. At one point, we attempted to record commentary on video footage, but the music drowned out our voices entirely. This level of noise pollution is unacceptable in any residential setting, let alone a designated conservation area. In a reckless and dangerous move, the venue hosted a firework display during one of the driest and hottest periods in recent years. The fireworks were launched just [REDACTED] tinder-dry trees, and it is nothing short of a miracle that they did not catch fire. This demonstrates a complete disregard for public safety and environmental responsibility. To accommodate the firework display, the owner cleared the car park—on a day when the venue appeared to host upwards of 200 people. This led to even more traffic congestion than usual, with vehicles blocking the road and creating serious risks for emergency access. The adjacent fire station could have been obstructed, endangering lives in the event of an emergency. The car park also became a hotspot for disorderly conduct, including physical fighting and public urination—both of which we have captured on video. These
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		behaviours are not isolated incidents but part of a disturbing pattern that has emerged since the current owner took over. The Ibiza party followed several consecutive nights of rowdy events: a loud Thursday and Friday, a 21st birthday celebration on Saturday, the main Ibiza-themed party on Sunday, and an after-party on Monday. This relentless schedule of disruptive activity left residents with no respite and further illustrates the venue's unsuitability for its location. We reiterate that such events are entirely incompatible with the expectations of a conservation area and the licensing conditions that should govern a responsible hospitality business. As noted by the council at the time: "Over the August bank holiday weekend, the Lounge and its owner/operator plunged to new depths, it really was an horrific weekend here and something MUST be done... ...Time for a re-think here and removal of the music license seems necessary." Despite this detailed complaint and the clear evidence of licensing breaches and public nuisance, there has been little evidence of effective enforcement or meaningful consequences for the venue. 1. e) Drug Use and Associated Nuisance In addition to the catalogue of anti-social behaviour already outlined, we must also highlight the regular and unmistakable smell of cannabis (weed) emanating from the Lancaster Lounge, particularly during busy evenings and events.
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		Moreover, there is frequent talk around the village of harder drugs being used or circulated in connection with the venue. While we cannot personally verify every rumour, the persistent nature of these reports, combined with the clear evidence of cannabis use, is deeply concerning. 3. Detrimental Impact on the Conservation Area and Community 1. a) Environmental Harm - Destruction of Protected Trees - Loss of Wildlife and Biodiversity - Visual Blight - the owner deliberately set about killing the mature horse chestnut tree, right from the moment of construction, we complained to the council but told that they had other priorities. He is trying to kill the other mature tree on his land by compaction of roots and nailing his make shift fencing to it. The required replanting of mature trees, never seem to have happened, again Dommy thinks that no enforcement will happen to him and he does seem to be correct! Maybe it time the council realised that they are not dealing with a normal human and a different course of action is needed. 1. b) Highway Safety and Accessibility - Congestion and Obstruction - Accessibility Issues
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		1. c) Community Wellbeing - Loss of Peace and Quiet - Erosion of Trust 4. Request for Immediate and Decisive Action We have always supported local businesses and wish to see them thrive in harmony with the community. However, the current operation of the Lancaster Lounge is incompatible with the needs and character of this residential conservation area. We respectfully request that: - No further licensing or planning permissions are granted until all existing breaches are rectified and conditions enforced. - The council ensures strict compliance with original planning conditions. - Stronger enforcement action is taken to address ongoing anti-social behaviour, public nuisance, and environmental harm. - The special status of the conservation area is upheld, and the interests of residents are prioritised. We urge the council to act decisively to protect the character of Yaxley, the wellbeing of its residents, and the integrity of its conservation area. Anything less would be a dereliction of duty to the community you serve.
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		Please confirm receipt of this objection and advise on any further steps required. Yours faithfully,  Appendum Has it got any better since the license review was instigated by the police? Absolutely not. The smell of weed has been intense on some occasions, there has been a violent disturbance in the outside area resulting in whole sections of the garden boundary fencing being destroyed, and members of their clientele have been hiding bottles of vodka and coke in our garden for pre-loading before going into the club. This was at 2 pm in the afternoon and indicates that this is being run as a club and not as a restaurant. I can't think of any restaurant that I've ever been in where the diners would need to pre-load. Recommendations for Police Action Given the persistent and escalating issues surrounding the Lancaster Lounge, we respectfully request the following actions from the police:
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		• Increased police patrols during peak hours (especially Thursday to Sunday evenings) to deter anti-social behaviour and provide visible reassurance to residents. • Undercover visits to monitor suspected drug use and assess the general conduct of patrons, particularly during advertised events. • Regular checks for licensing compliance, including permitted hours, outdoor drinking, and pavement usage. • Close collaboration with the licensing authority to share evidence of breaches and community impact. • Consideration of a formal review or suspension of the premises licence if breaches continue or escalate, in line with the Licensing Act 2003. We believe these measures are necessary to restore safety, peace, and lawful operation in our community.
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