

**In the Matter of a Review of a Premises Licence for  
Bond, 27-28 Tombland, Norwich**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF**

**GLEN SARABI**

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My name is Glen Sarabi and I am the Operations Manager for Bond 27-28 Tombland, Norwich ("Bond/the Premises") and its sister venues. I am also the Designated Premises Supervisor for Bond and make this statement in response to the application for Review of Bond's Premises Licence by Mr Toby Matthews.

I became the Deputy General Manager of the Premises on March 2018 and have been promoted in post since then. Full details of my role and responsibilities, along with my relevant employment history can be found in my CV, attached at Exhibit GS001.

**The Premises**

Bond is an upmarket venue, comprising Ground Floor and Basement of 27-28 Tombland. We trade as a champagne/cocktail bar on the ground floor and whisky bar in the basement. We also have a private terrace to the rear of the Premises, laid to tables and chairs, that is used by customers when eating, drinking and leaving the Premises temporarily to smoke. This terrace is overlooked by a former office building that has recently been converted into residential apartments. I understand that Mr Matthews is a resident of this building.

The Premises is ultimately owned and operated by Mr Gary Powers, a Norwich resident and successful businessman. Gary is the owner of Regency Security, one of the largest providers of private security services in the country and holder of Approved Contractor status under the Security Industry Authority's stringent Approved Contractor Scheme.

Before Gary took over the Premises, it had traded as BamBam's, a "Rave" style club, with blacked-out windows and very loud music levels. They even had a substantial outdoor speaker in the terrace area to keep music going outside. Gary invested £80,000 in the refurbishment and restoration of this fantastic building, brining it up to the standard you can see in the photographs attached at Exhibit GS002. Gary also had the outdoor speaker disconnected and then removed,

despite Bond's Premises Licence allowing the playing of music outside. Please see the aerial photographs of the outside of the Premises at Exhibit GS009.

As well as bringing the Premises back to its former glory, Gary changed the music policy, moving away from the nightclub volumes of the previous operation, to something more conducive to conversation while at the same time, being upbeat and entertaining. This has proven very successful in attracting a more mature crowd (we have identified that our average customer age is 35 with a spread of 25 to 64, interestingly we also attract a predominantly female crowd with a 60/40 female/male split) who prefer a "busy" but less crowded venue and a soundtrack that doesn't prevent chatter. That's why we have a good number of regular customers who use Bond as a location to network with business contacts.

I am pleased to be able to attach a number of testimonials from customers at Exhibit GS003.

### **St Cuthbert's House**

The former office building overlooks the rear of Bond and our terrace. I was surprised when this building was turned into apartments as it is located in an area surrounded by late night entertainment venues (please see Exhibit GS004, Schedule of Neighbouring Licences). One side of the building is even attached to two premises, one being a loud music led venue. I am informed that purchasers of flats in St Cuthbert's House have to be warned that they are buying a home in a busy late-night entertainment area (Exhibit GS005). That makes sense to me given that, after the building had been turned into flats, the outside looks the same as it did when it was an office that didn't have anyone sleeping in it. I can't see that any soundproofing measures have been put in place. For example, some of the windows seem to be the same office windows as before, that swing open from the bottom (hinged at the top) no doubt directing noise into the building.

### **Response to the Review**

I should start by saying that we were contacted a number of times in 2018 by a resident of St Cuthbert's House, regarding music noise from Bond as well as the noise of glass being emptied into our recycling bin that was stored outside at the time (please see Exhibit GS006). We were also contacted by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, specifically on the matter of noise from glass recycling.

Following those comments, we changed our recycling policy and now there is no external handling of glass (other than collection of empty glassware from the terrace) after 9pm.

Also, although Bond's sound system is not capable of producing the music levels you would expect from a nightclub or late bar (and certainly not the bass frequencies associated with those types of venues) we did use the system mixer to limit the bass DJ's were able to produce and increased our monitoring of noise levels.

Once that revised policy was in place, we didn't hear anything further from the EHO and so I was surprised to receive notice that Bond's Premises Licence was being Reviewed. I informed Gary and he immediately instructed an expert acoustician (Mr Richard Vivian) to visit the premises and review our noise management policies. He also instructed our licensing consultant (Mr Gavin Tempest) to carry out a due diligence inspection to ensure staff were working to the policies we had in place.

We also wrote to the residents of St Cuthbert's House (copy letter at Exhibit GS007), inviting them to discuss their issues with us. We did not receive any responses to this invitation. This is disappointing for all of us at Bond as we work hard to be a good neighbour and the complaints we have seen in the review have left us confused. I have seen a number of references to "bass" noise disturbing residents. That really does come as a shock given the nature of Bond's sound system. It was specified on the basis of quality of sound, not quantity. We went for high quality monitors with no "bass bin" speakers that you would find in a nightclub or most late bars, as I say above. Richard Vivian noted this when he visited and remarks on it in his documentation.

When carrying out his due diligence inspection, Gavin Tempest noted that, although staff were working well to prevent noise nuisance being caused by customers or music escape, there were some points of best practice that we could implement on other issues. These have been acted upon by Bond and we have now:

- Enshrined our Drugs Awareness Policy in a written document attached at Exhibit GS008.
- Paid for 3 members of staff to take the NCPLH qualification, all of who have passed and are now applying for their Personal Licences.
- Reorganised the way we utilised and store our incident records.

Given the concerns raised in this Review, I can confirm that Bond would suggest the following condition be added to the Premises Licence:

- The Premises shall produce and adhere to a Noise Management Plan. A copy of the Noise Management Plan shall be lodged with the Licensing Authority and Environmental Health Service.

I will attend the Review hearing on 25 March 2019 and would be happy to address any concerns the Committee may have once they have read this statement and the Review documents.

The facts stated in the above statement are true to the best of my knowledge.

Glen Sarabi