

## Appendix 2

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Posted At:** 02 July 2013 09:10  
**Posted To:** [licensing@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@oxford.gov.uk)  
**Conversation:** 13/01527/SEL - The Private Shop,  
**Subject:** 13/01527/SEL - The Private Shop,

Sirs

I wish to put in a formal objection against the granting of this application on the basis that it is - "inappropriate having regard to the character of the locality". bearing in mind the child abuse problems in the Cowley road area.

It should be noted that the entrance to the subject property is from a residential side street and near a primary school.

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-----Original Message-----

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Sent: 15 July 2013 22:52

To: ALISON Julian

Subject: Licensing application for The Private Shop, Cowley Road OX4 1HZ, ref: 13/01527/SEL

Dear Mr Allison

I wish to object to the renewal of the licence for the Private Shop on Cowley Road.

I believe it is inappropriate, under the terms of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, to locate any such shop in the middle of one of the most densely-populated residential areas in Oxford, and so near to a church, primary schools and the many pre- school and toddler groups who meet in the vicinity.

I find it slightly odd that the original licence was allowed to be granted in the first place, given that some of these premises and activities must have existed at the time. However, the particular circumstances in this locality have changed markedly in the past couple of years, resulting in the police's Operation Bullfinch findings. This initiative showed that this particular part of East Oxford has become synonymous with sleaze and the sexual exploitation of children. The continuing presence of a sex shop can only exacerbate this impression, and is at odds with the character of the rest of the area.

I therefore urge the licensing committee to reject the license renewal application, on the grounds that it is not appropriate to locate this shop where it is at the moment, given the recent findings of the police in relation to sex crimes against children, perpetrated by people who lived and operated in the locality.

Yours sincerely

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**To:** [ALISON Julian](#)  
**Cc:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Subject:** The Private ShopOxford OX4 1HZ, ref: 13/01527/SEL - Closing date for objections 15th July 2013  
**Date:** 15 July 2013 12:43:56

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Dear Mr Alison,

I am writing to object to the application by Darker Enterprises Limited to renew the sex shop licence in relation to The Private Shop, 54 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ.

I am objecting on the grounds that the premises are located in a densely populated residential area, and that they are within 300m of two primary schools and one secondary school, a pre-school, a children's centre, at least three toddler groups, a playground, and nine places of worship. Accordingly, the renewal of the licence would be inappropriate having regard (i) to the character of the relevant locality (namely residential) and (ii) to the use to which various premises in the vicinity are put (namely the care and education of children, and religious worship).

I note that the licence may also be refused where the number of sex establishments in the relevant locality at the time the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which Oxford City Council Licensing Authority considers appropriate for that locality. I have been unable to establish from the Licensing Authority the number of sex shops which the Council considers appropriate for the locality. However, in view of the extremely serious and widespread problems in the area relating to sexual crimes, which Thames Valley Police uncovered in Operation Bullfinch, I would suggest that the number should be reviewed to "nil" (as permitted by the legislation).

It would also be highly "inappropriate" to renew the sex shop licence when the "character of the relevant locality" has degenerated to such a degree that targeting of children and young people in the locality by criminal gangs with sexual motives has been taking place in a systematic way. The renewal of the licence would reinforce the reputation the area obviously has in certain quarters that it is a part of the country where sexual crimes will be tolerated and even ignored.

I note that the Licensing Authority has previously relied heavily on *R v Birmingham City Council ex parte Sheptonhurst Ltd* (The Times, 29 June 1989) in supporting its recommendation that a licence renewal application be refused only where there has been a "change of circumstances" since the original grant of the licence. Many situations qualify as a "change of circumstances", including the emergence of an overriding matter of public concern and incidents of public disorder (not necessarily connected with the premises being considered). Accordingly, it would be consistent with the Licensing Authority's past history to recommend that this renewal application be refused in view of the great local and national public concern shown since the widespread sexual crimes uncovered by Operation Bullfinch came to the public's attention. The management of the sex shop in question, whether good or bad, is not directly relevant when considering a "change of circumstances" argument.

Yours sincerely,

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**To:** [ALISON Julian](#)  
**Cc:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subject:** The Private ShopOxford OX4 1HZ, ref: 13/01527/SEL - Closing date for objections 15th July 2013  
**Date:** 15 July 2013 13:54:02

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Dear Mr Alison

I totally support the objection letter from XXXXXXXXXX and also wish to object to the renewal of the licence for the Private Shop at 54 Cowley Road ref 13/01527/SEL.

In addition to the points XXXXXXXXXX makes there have been a number of sex attacks on women in the area unrelated to Operation Bullfinch.

I would ask the Licensing Committee to take into consideration the impact Operation Bullfinch has had on the area. A defence barrister in his plea for mitigation, suggested his client (one of the perpetrators, who was sentenced to prison) had:

‘.....got caught up in the “culture of Cowley Road” .....“Our submission is that, given the nature of the culture of Cowley Road, he in 2004 was a 22-year-old young man. Two years after he was 24. “The reality is he was caught up with the culture. “If he had been fortunate enough not to be brought up in the Cowley Road area things may have been different, but that is where he was.” (*Oxford Mail* 27 June 2013).

This reference to the ‘culture of Cowley Road’ is clearly associated with a depraved community. If this is the case then measures have to be taken to rectify this as soon as possible in order to protect the public, particularly women and children. Refusing this application for a renewal of the licence would be a beginning to this process.

Yours sincerely

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**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**To:** [ALISON Julian](#)  
**Cc:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Subject:** Re: The Private ShopOxford OX4 1HZ, ref: 13/01527/SEL - Closing date for objections 15th July 2013  
**Date:** 15 July 2013 14:56:44

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Dear Mr Alison,

I have only just found out that the Private Shop's licence is up for renewal and that the deadline for comments regarding the application today, but I would like to say that I agree totally with XXXXX points raised below, particularly as a parent of three children living just off the Cowley Road and attending local schools, and consequentially I also wish to object to the application of Darker Enterprises Limited to renew their sex shop licence in relation to The Private Shop, 54 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ.

Yours sincerely,

On 15 July 2013 12:43, wrote:

Dear Mr Alison,

I am writing to object to the application by Darker Enterprises Limited to renew the sex shop licence in relation to The Private Shop, 54 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ.

I am objecting on the grounds that the premises are located in a densely populated residential area, and that they are within 300m of two primary schools and one secondary school, a pre-school, a children's centre, at least three toddler groups, a playground, and nine places of worship. Accordingly, the renewal of the licence would be inappropriate having regard (i) to the character of the relevant locality (namely residential) and (ii) to the use to which various premises in the vicinity are put (namely the care and education of children, and religious worship).

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Birmingham City Council ex parte Sheptonhurst Ltd (The Times, 29 June 1989) in supporting its recommendation that a licence renewal application be refused only where there has been a "change of circumstances" since the original grant of the licence. Many situations qualify as a "change of circumstances", including the emergence of an overriding matter of public concern and incidents of public disorder (not necessarily connected with the premises being considered). Accordingly, it would be consistent with the Licensing Authority's past history to recommend that this renewal application be refused in view of the great local and national public concern shown since the widespread sexual crimes uncovered by Operation Bullfinch came to the public's attention. The management of the sex shop in question, whether good or bad, is not directly relevant when considering a "change of circumstances" argument.

Yours sincerely,

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**To:** [ALISON Julian](#)  
**Cc:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Subject:** Sex Shop Licence renewal Cowley Road ref 13/01527/SEL.  
**Date:** 15 July 2013 14:30:40

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ref 13/01527/SEL.

Dear Mr Alison,

I am writing to object to the application to renew the sex shop licence in relation to The Private Shop, 54 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ. I believe the application is from Darker Enterprises Limited.

In the light of Operation Bullfinch and the fact that 50 girls in East Oxford - many in local schools, were targeted for sex trafficking by men within our community, it is time that Oxford City Council planning department looked again at the issue of the rapid increase in the night-time economy on Cowley road and any association with it as a potential red light district. Research has shown that sex trafficking is linked to areas and men who work within the night-time economy. Members of our community in East Oxford have been devastated by the revelations that Bullfinch took place in premises along the Cowley Road. This sex shop is located in exactly the same area - a densely populated residential area, within 300m of two primary schools and one secondary school, a pre-school, a children's centre, at least three toddler groups, a playground, and nine places of worship.

I understand that the licence may be refused where the number of sex establishments in the relevant locality at the time the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which Oxford City Council Licensing Authority considers appropriate for that locality. In the light of Bullfinch exactly how many sex shops does Oxford City Council consider appropriate for the locality?

Surely it would be highly "inappropriate" to renew the sex shop licence when the "character of the relevant locality" has degenerated to such a degree that targeting of children and young people in the area by criminal gangs with sexual motives has been taking place in such a terrible and systematic way.

All women and children in our community deserve to feel safe. We do not want Cowley road and this area linked with sex crimes or the sex industry.

Yours sincerely,

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**From:**  
**Posted At:** 15 July 2013 16:57  
**Posted To:** licensing@oxford.gov.uk  
**Conversation:** ref 13/01527/SEL. Objection  
**Subject:** ref 13/01527/SEL. Objection

ref 13/01527/SEL.

Dear Mr Alison,

I am writing to object to the application to renew the sex shop licence in relation to The Private Shop, 54 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1HZ. I believe the application is from Darker Enterprises Limited.

We are a community struggling to come to terms with the fact that a number children and young girls have been raped and abused in East Oxford by a number of men from this community - much of the abuse and the abusers are connected with the Cowley Road and the night time economy that operates there.

This sex shop is located in exactly the same area - a densely populated residential area, within 300m of two primary schools and one secondary school, a pre-school, a children's centre, at least three toddler groups, a playground, and nine places of worship.

I understand that the licence may be refused where the number of sex establishments in the relevant locality at the time the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which Oxford City Council Licensing Authority considers appropriate for that locality. In the light of Bullfinch exactly how many sex shops does Oxford City Council consider appropriate for the locality?

Surely it would be highly "inappropriate" to renew the sex shop licence when the "character of the relevant locality" has degenerated to such a degree that targeting of children and young people in the area by criminal gangs with sexual motives has been taking place in such a terrible and systematic way.

I do not want my community linked with sex crimes or the sex industry and I feel that Oxford City Council should take a firm stand against the renewal of this licence.

Yours sincerely,



13/01527/SEL

### Comments from St Marys Councillor

1. I ask the Committee to note that there are schools, religious establishments and places of worship close by; I accept that there's nothing objectively on the outside that can cause offence (though it's not attractive, that's a planning not a licensing issue).
2. The issue of the 'character of the area', slippery though that is, does seem to be a factor that the committee is allowed to take into account, and I would ask the Committee to consider the impact the shop has in this regard. One local resident has quoted from the Bullfinch court case documents and the comments are very telling, implying that the character of the area played a role in the terrible crimes uncovered. It's hard to deny that the presence of the shop does contribute something to the character of the area – or detract, depending on your point of view.

***In the present climate, I ask the committee to take into account the present sensitivities in the area when considering this licence application.***

I believe the residents have the right to determine the 'character of an area' rather than have it imposed on them – and there is nothing fixed about 'the character of an area'. It can change, for better or worse, and permanent residents of St Marys, whilst generally enjoying its variety and life, are very clear that they do not want the 'character' to deteriorate through excessive late night drinking licences, for example. This shop, it is clear from some residents' responses, does not enhance the character of the area.

3. I appreciate the need to protect people's right to do whatever they wish in private provided it's within the law, and for the most part sexual behaviour is conducted in private.

***I think that before approving this application (if that is what it is minded to do) the committee should make sure that appropriate enforcement officers have visited the establishment to ensure that whatever goes on in there is within the law.***

4. Personally I've not picked up anything about antisocial behaviour associated with the shop. In fact I've never seen anyone going into or coming out of it; it's all rather mysterious. However, given that noone I know was aware either of the terrible sexual crimes going on in the immediate vicinity of this shop, I would ask the committee to satisfy themselves that there is no evidence whatsoever
  - a. of a connection between antisocial behaviour generally or, more importantly and more specifically,
  - b. no connection between people associated with the Bullfinch gang and its activities and the customers or activities of the Private Shop.

***I ask the committee to press the police and other investigating officers to be specific about any evidence of connection they have come across.***



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**From:**  
**Posted At:** 15 July 2013 22:05  
**Posted To:** licensing@oxford.gov.uk  
**Conversation:** 13/01527/SEL 54 Cowley Road  
**Subject:** Ref: 13/01527/SEL 54 Cowley Road

The Divinity Road Area Residents Association wishes to object to the above application.

DRARA believes that the number of sex establishments which local authority considers appropriate for this locality, regardless of precedent, should now be nil.

The renewal of this licence should be deemed inappropriate given the character of the area and given the residential, commercial and institutional uses of the premises in the vicinity.

, on behalf of Divinity Road Area Residents Association

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_ **On Behalf Of** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sent:** 15 July 2013 21:39  
**To:** ALISON Julian  
**Subject:** The Private Shop, Oxford OX4 1HZ, ref: 13/01527/SEL

Julian,

After much consideration, I have decided to express opposition to the renewal of The Private Shop licence.

Whilst I am generally liberally minded, and have no evidence that the current premises are in any way badly run, I am acutely aware that the character of the Cowley Road, which some have described as 'seedy' or 'shady', was cited as a contributory factor in the Bullfinch case.

The prevalence of such premises does, rightly or wrongly, add to this perception.

I therefore wish to object on the grounds of the premises impact on the 'character of the relevant locality' - which I believe is a legitimate reason for refusal.

In support of this objection I would state that the lower end of the Cowley Road is increasing being promoted as an area for tourism and an area of historic interest. The designation of this area as a conservation area, and the recent addition of many local buildings to the heritage register is evidence of this as is the emergence of a new tour guide service.

The area is also close to schools, play areas and similar areas as well as shops, residential areas and places of worship.

Regards

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