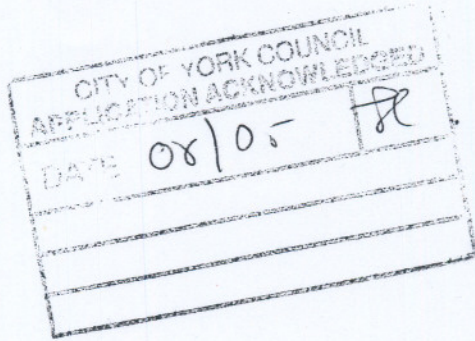


[redacted] Kings Staith,
York,
YO [redacted]

4th. May 2007



Dear Licensing,

The Lowther, 8 Cumberland Street, and Plonkers Wine Bar. CYC-012921&2

I am writing to object to this proposal to have an outside seating area on Kings Staith, for use by the Lowther and Plonkers Wine Bar, on the grounds of public nuisance and public safety.

Firstly, the noise problem in this area has got worse since the introduction of the new Licensing Act, as evidenced by the February 2007 Council report on the first year of operation of the new Act. I am concerned that this proposal will increase the daytime and early evening noise, by virtue of the noise the patrons make. One only has to hear the row that comes from those at the Kings' Arms tables to know what will happen here. Any time there is an 'attraction', such as someone jumping from Ouse Bridge, a 'mooner' on one of the river boats or even a ladies rowing eight going past, a great chorus of jeers and whistles goes up from the patrons at the Kings Arms' tables.

The area requested for the outside seating area is practically outside my house and so any noise will represent a considerable intrusion on the peace and quiet of the area. It is all very well for the applicants to claim that they will control noise with staff and CCTV; last year the Kings' Arms had both and they had singularly little success – how will the present applicants be able to do any better? Anyway, how exactly are the staff supposed to control noisy patrons? By the time the noise has happened it is too late and the Police certainly have better things to do than chase people who appear as noisy on CCTV footage, even were it to have sound.

One of the great hopes of the new Licensing Act was that the changes would encourage civilised drinking in the UK, although it was appreciated that it might take up to a generation for such to happen. Judging from the behaviour of those at the Kings Arms tables, there is no sign of an improvement so far. Please do not sacrifice the welfare of the residents in this area for the sake of an experiment, when you only have to look along the Staith to the Kings Arms to see what will happen. Look for several years of peace and quiet from the Kings Arms, before throwing us to the same wolves – the British drinker shows no signs of changing his, or her, rowdy behaviour yet.

When the Lowther last had outside drinkers, under the present Landlord's father in 1994, there were sometimes up to 100 drinkers in the street and on the Staith, right outside my bedroom window. The noise was intolerable and, should you wish to hear it, I have a tape recording made in September 1994 from my bedroom window sill. The photograph below shows a typical scene, this time from April 1994.



The photograph above also demonstrates the disregard drinkers have for their own safety; some are sitting on the street and could easily have been hit by a car coming round the corner, especially if the driver's sight line was obscured by a parked car. The applicants will say that their patrons will be safe behind the bollards, but what about when they need to go to the lavatory? How will the applicant's staff, to whom they have a duty of care, be protected from the traffic? There will be constant pedestrian traffic to and from the tables, in conflict with the cars in this busy street.

I am concerned that there may be a conflict of interest within the Council over this application. As I understand it, one arm of the Council (highways) will stand to gain financially from charging rental for the area, if this proposal is granted by the same Council's licensing authorities. Is there any provision within the Licensing Act to resolve potential conflicts of interest, apart from relying on the integrity of those concerned (which I am not casting any aspersions on).

In summary, how would you like this lot outside your bedroom window?



Please reject this application.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

A.J.G. Crawshaw

P.S. More colour copies available, on paper or disc, if needed.