



Brent Licensing Team
Brent Council

Harlesden Town Centre Team
Harlesden Police station
76 Craven Park
Harlesden
NW10 8RJ

Telephone: 0208 733 3835

Email: www.met.police.uk
Your ref: Palm Island Lounge -
Application: 27896
Our ref: Representation
05/06/2023

Dear Licensing,

Re, licensing application;
Palm Island Lounge
1 Craven Park Road
London
NW10 8SE

I am Police Sergeant Cesar Sanguinetti, based at Harlesden Police station, a member of Harlesden Town Centre Team.

Before undertaking this role, I was a sergeant in Emergency Response in Wembley, previously having worked as sergeant in Safer Neighbourhoods in Camden, additionally, my policing experience extends to: first responder in a response team, Designated Ward officer, 999 call handler, Partnership work in hate crime / ASB, etc. In my 8 years of police service, I have been fortunate enough to have gained substantial police experience.

Harlesden Town Centre was created and launched on 14th February 2022; the main aims:

- Target and reduce violence, especially against Women and girls
- Decrease ASB / Crime in the Harlesden town centre area
- Engage with the community, building trust between police, as well as engaging with local stakeholders and partner agencies, such as Brent Council.

From our inception to June 2023, Harlesden has been successful in many of our goals, working in partnership with the local community and partner agencies. Inspector Le Geyt's statement refers to this achievements in more details.

The address 1 Craven Park Road NW10 8SE is the location for Vybzs Bar. Over years Vybzs bar was a synonym with violent crime (including GBH), drug crime, public disorder (including racially aggravated incidents), sexual offences, and more.

As consequence, Vybzs bar was making a very small number of people wealthy but was a curse for the local area, causing suffering to local residents, violence with injuries to patrons, incrementing crime: one of the main focal ASB points for the whole of Brent borough.

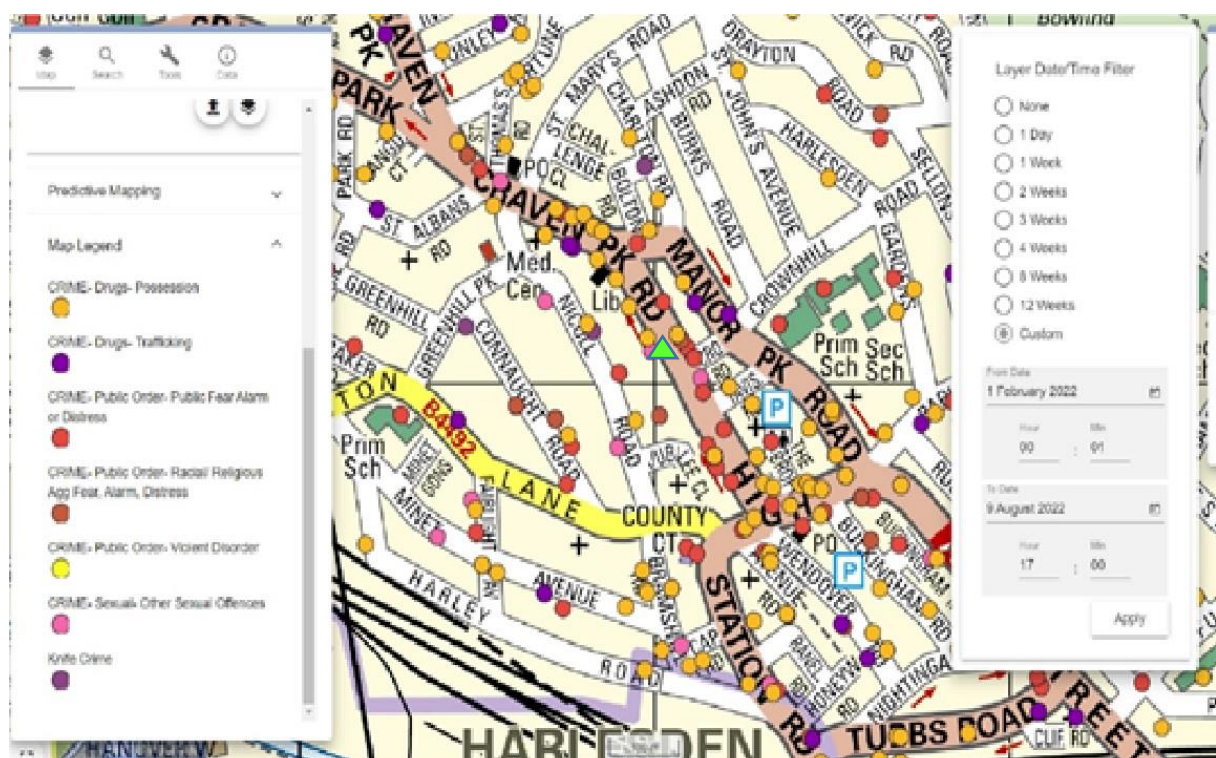
Police, and other first responders, were disproportionally being sent into the Harlesden town centre area to deal with emergencies resulting from the issues mentioned above, around the Vybzs bar area, thus becoming unavailable for other areas.

Harlesden town centre did apply and was successful on obtaining a closure order for Vybzs bar, on 09/08/2022 issued by Willesden Magistrates Court.

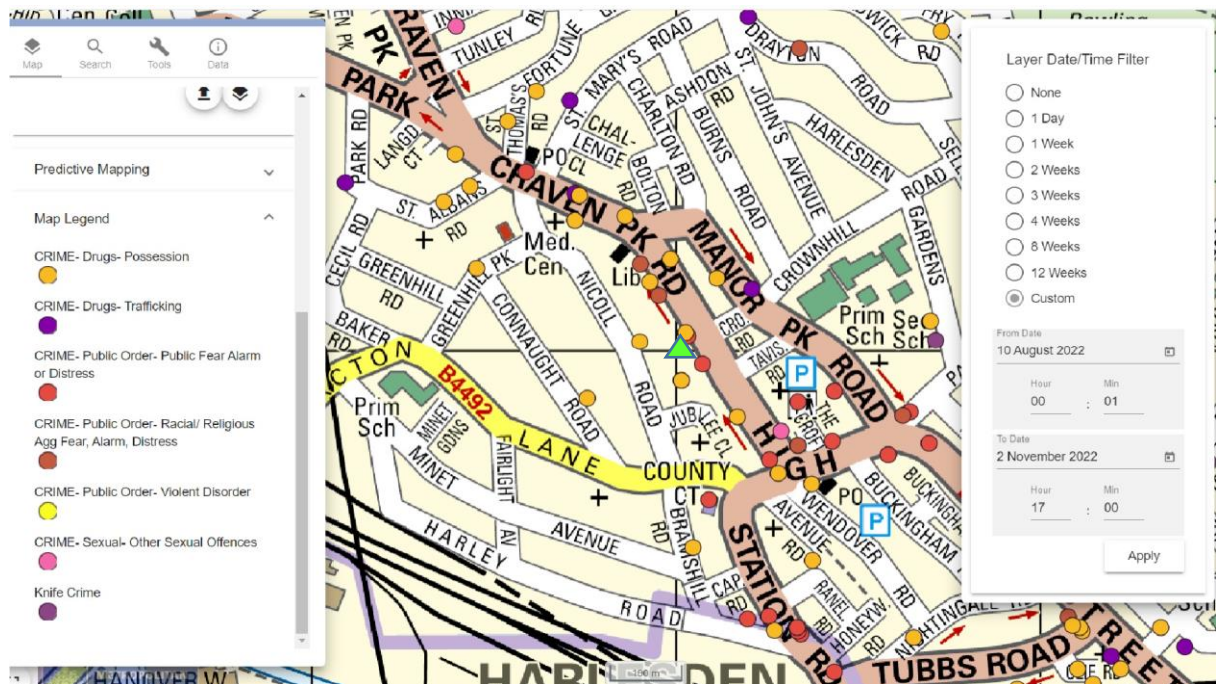
3 months later, on 07/11/2023, Harlesden town centre applied for an extension on Vybzs' bar closure order, which was granted by the courts again.

At the time of the application, I produced 2 heat maps, using policing indices / systems; clearly evidencing the effects of a venue, such as Vybzs bar, in the Harlesden town centre area.

The map below is represents the level of offending and ASB around the Vybzs bar area prior to the first closure order (venue shown as a bright triangle):



The map below demonstrates that the level of offending and ASB has undoubtedly diminished following the closure of Vybz bar, providing figures from 10/08/22 to 01/11/22 (venue shown as a bright triangle):



As demonstrated in the pictures above, a venue such as Vybz bar heavily impacts the local area in the most negative of ways. Police cannot overstate the benefit to Harlesden of the closure of Vybz bar.

Eventually, Vybz' bar alcohol licence was revoked and the venue shut for good.

I have serious concerns that Palm Lounge is Vybz bar being renamed so to fool like the local authority to allow its owners to operate in Harlesden. By 31st January 2023 and for Palm Lounge, ????? was the registered Business rate holder, where ??? was applying for the planning permission to erect a pergola, and Mr Kingsley Adjei introduced to be the owner / manager. Police are aware ??? was the person behind Vybz bar, with ??? running the business for him. This is highly suspicious, and only points out to a rebranding of Vybz Bar.

PC Brendon MCINNES 1187NW wrote to this authority expressing concerns about the planned opening of Palm Lounge, I am borrowing some extracts:

“During the Closure Order Mr Kingsley ADJEI has breached the Closure Order by allowing builders into the premises in order to construct a shelter in the rear of the property to increase the numbers permitted to the venue. People were only allowed to enter the property to carry out essential maintenance. Building a structure to increase capacity is not deemed as essential maintenance...Craven Park Road is a hotspot for street drinking. Should another premises open with a licence until 04.00hrs, this will only encourage more of a night life, with more street drinking taking place...”

Mr Kingsley Adjei replied to this letter from PC MCINNES, I am borrowing some extracts:

"I'm not saying that it will not occur outside the premises as I cannot control people behaviour outside my premise but only control people coming into the premises...I only got involved with the premises as the estate agent was helping me look for some properties to start my business and I liked the premises and leased it in December....The estate agent didn't tell me about workers not being allowed in the premises and as soon as the police made me aware that builders wasn't allowed and they evacuated the place with immediate effect...I'm willing to abide by the law...Craven Park appears to have a bad reputation in Harlesden...venue for drinking to minimise people from drinking on the street carelessly and without proper supervision"

Mr Adjei's reply is distressing.

He states he cannot control people outside his premises. As the map above demonstrates, there was serious criminality outside Vybz bar, and there is no reason not to believe this would not be the case if he is allowed to open Palm Lounge. Mr Adjei has already said that he will not take any responsibility over any ASB / crime that his business brings into the Harlesden area. It is proven that well managed night clubs / bar do have some control over their patrons.

As per policy; Harlesden town centre had a notice on the premises known as Vybz bar clearly indicating this venue was subject to a closure order stating reason, powers and dates. The fact that Mr Adjei let his contractors inside, despite this notice raises concerns and is an offence. Moreover, the proven fact that Mr Adjei ordered constructions of a Pergola, before the planning permission was granted, also raises concerns. Mr Adjei says he is willing to abide by the law (in one of his reply letters he even talks about metal detectors), but his intentional conduct evidently indicates otherwise. The simple reason why Mr Adjei has not continued to breach more laws is because of the work of Harlesden town centre policing team. I do not believe Mr Adjei can be trusted to run a drinking bar efficiently and safely.

Craven Park is street in Harlesden. Harlesden is a vibrant multi-cultural community, which has long been plagued by crime and ASB. There is a small number of wrongdoers, engaging in crime / ASB, affecting the lives of the large majority of law-abiding citizens who call this area of London home. Business such as Vybz Bar, brought crime and ASB into Harlesden.

Harlesden town centre policing team, has been working tirelessly to rid the area of crime and ASB by targeting the small amount of wrongdoers. Vybz bar was identified as an ASB / crime generator. The closure of Vybz bar, which was disputed by the owners at court, was part of this drive from the local police to make Harlesden safer for the local residents.

I honestly believed that allowing Palm Lounge to operate in the Harlesden area, in spite of all the reasonable concerns raised above, would not only undo all police's efforts to make Harlesden a safer area, but would seriously impact the wellbeing of the local community. One more GBH in the local area attributable to Palm Lounge's activities, is one GBH too many.

Other police officers, PC McInnes, Inspector Le Geyt, Sergeant Millar, have already written to this committee raising objections to the licence of Palm Lounge. These concerns range from noise pollution, unsuitability to have a venue of this nature in a residential area, crime, ASB, etc. I would like to join my voice to these objections with these statement and argue against allowing Palm Lounge to open in Harlesden.

I would beseech this committee to review the evidence, including that provided by the local community, consider the likely negative impact of allowing Palm Lounge to operate in Harlesden: Increased ASB, serious crime, deployment of first responders that could be used elsewhere, local community impact with the disaffection it causes, bad reputation to the area, etc. I honestly do not believe Palm Lounge to be in public interest, those premises should be operated by another organisation that cares for the local stakeholders, not in making money while breaching regulation while doing so.

Yours sincerely,

Cesar Sanguinetti
Sergeant
Harlesden Town Centre Team