

Licensing Sub Committee

**Tuesday, 29 October 2024 at 2.30 p.m.
Committee Room - Tower Hamlets Town Hall,
160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ**

Supplemental Agenda

3 .2 Application for a New Premise Licence for Quiz Room, Ground Floor Brody House, 19-25 Bell Lane, London, E1 7LA (Pages 3 - 18)

Supporting documents submitted on behalf of the applicant.

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Quiz Room, Ground Floor, Brody House, 19-25 Bell Lane London E1 7LA- new premises licence application

I act for Quiz Room UK Limited.

My client would like to reassure the residents about the nature of the operation and as such is providing this further information prior to the hearing.

About the company

Quiz Room is a French company that is owned and operated by two entrepreneurs; Tristan Quelin and Charles Babinet. The company has been operating for 5 years, starting in France, and having recently expanded to Canada and Australia; in total there are now almost 70 Quiz Room venues worldwide.

The company operates two types of venue - 'owned and operated', where they are extremely hands on and involved in all decisions, and 'franchise' where a licence is granted for another party to run the brand and make decisions about the venue.

The Spitalfields venue is fully owned and operated directly by the Quiz Room team and is hugely important to the company as their first location in the UK. The success of the Spitalfields venue will determine whether further expansion in London/ the UK is viable.

Quiz Rroom

Quiz Room is an interactive entertainment concept venue where customers play knowledge based quiz games in groups of friends or colleagues.

The games take place in dedicated rooms as shown on the plans and the duration per game is approximately 1-1.5 hours. The target audience comprises those seeking corporate entertainment or groups of friends wanting a unique knowledge based entertainment experience; children above the age of 8 can also be accommodated, if accompanied by an adult.

The concept and venue design have been tried and tested in over 70 venues worldwide. In addition to the quiz entertainment, light refreshments (food and beverages) will be on sale in the reception area to enhance the entertainment experience.

The focus of the venue is the provision of entertainment, once quiz games have been played, customer dwell time is expected to be very limited. Further, before the game, only one drink is allowed, and obviously only if the clients are early. After the game, from experience, clients will only usually have one beer, if that. Additional drinks are not accepted because the premises do not want the groups to stay too long so that they can ensure there is ample space for the other following groups that want to debrief after their game.

Venue staff also have a very hands-on approach to guest management, with dedicated hosts welcoming customers and escorting them to and from their specified quiz room and out of the venue post-quiz.

We confirm that the core business activity, and main revenue generation, is the quiz experience, not alcohol sales. No draught beers and ciders are sold. Alcohol is an ancillary feature of the premises, without it the venue is less competitive in the market for other entertainment based socialising activities. The applicant has therefore agreed a condition that "The licensable activities authorised by this licence and provided at the premises shall be ancillary to the main function of the premises as a quiz room entertainment facility." This will ensure the venue is not a bar or club experience and cannot just be converted to such by another operator should the application be granted. There would, we say, be no other operator that would be able to comply with this condition, given the unique offering and any subsequent operator would need to go back to the council and seek a variation to the licence to change the wording of this condition. This is all said, of course, notwithstanding that the applicant has a long lease for the premises and has no intention of selling on the premises- the investment already given to the site is in the region of £700k.

In terms of the operation of the reception area, the purpose of the space is to greet customers and , explain the concept and rules of the quiz games. They can also stay after the game to share a drink or some food platters as a debriefing time. We do not expect customers to dwell at the venue. We do not expect and will not allow customers to become highly intoxicated. We also do not expect, or would allow, any clients to come without playing – it is not a bar and is not been marketed as such, and, further, the conditions prevent this. The brand is established and has experience in operating in the kind of environment of the application premises. The applicant will pay specific attention to keeping the environment calm, given the nature of the entertainment.

In terms of clientele, the applicant anticipates that 90% of bookings will be made online and in advance and therefore capacity will be highly controlled and customers will arrive at their designated booking times and will not be waiting around. The booking schedule is also staggered to reduce crowding when customers arrive and depart. This is all within the control of the applicant and will be done. Additionally, the applicant will only be opening 3 of the 5 available quiz rooms at the start of the booking period to ensure the operations are controlled and run smoothly. The core customers will be corporate clients and therefore a higher level of behaviour is expected due to the companies having their own policies as well. We mention, as it was expressed as a concern from some residents, that the applicant is not actively targeting/ marketing hen or stag parties. We also want to be clear that there is no gambling on the premises and neither is it a 'bingo' venue. We raise both points as we have heard that these are misconceptions about the use of the venue which could have caused concern to the residents.

The premises, as it focuses on quiz room style entertainment with multi media, has invested substantially in acoustic works at the premises. The volume of music in the communal areas is low, specifically so that you don't feel like you're in a bar, and the tables are rarely full, because the groups finish the game out of sequence, which doesn't give a bar atmosphere and doesn't make you want to stay long as you would in a pub.

Quiz Room have also invested significant amounts in additional soundproofing materials and in quality audio equipment to ensure the rooms are secure and will not contain as much sound as possible. Specific efforts have been made to reduce noise that is perceivable outside of the venue, specifically with the residents above in mind.

This has included an additional soundproofed wall along the entire length of the Strype Street side of the venue to create a double-barrier with the existing thick glazing. The walls of each of the quiz rooms have been sound proofed, along with the ceilings, and acoustic panels have been installed within each room to absorb sound and reduce echo. The entrance to the venue has been re-located from Strype Street (where the main residential entrance is located) to the other side of the building on Bell Lane. The Bell Lane entrance will act as the main reception area where sound will be low-level ambience through wall-mounted speakers, i.e. sound will be low enough to comfortably allow conversations and will not be perceivable outside. All internal and external doors will be kept closed except for when customers are entering/ exiting rooms or the building. As you can imagine, the quiz room experience, for the business model, needs to be such that there is no noise escape or else other customers will also be disturbed.

As part of their due diligence the applicant has also carried out sound tests within the residents building above. Access was given to 3 flats immediately above and no sound was detectable from any of these flats on the first floor (directly above the venue), communal areas or corridors. The applicant is therefore confident and convinced that its operation will not disturb any residents, or be heard in their flats. The positive thing is that as the customer experience is set there is no need for any staff or persons to change the volume levels so there is no threat to the residents of noise escape from the venue.

Concern has been raised about the entrance to the premises. We confirm, in case it is not clear to the residents, that the main entrance has been relocated from Strype Street to Bell Lane, away from the residential entrances on Strype Street. The doorway on Strype Street is for emergency exit and wheelchair access only.

There is of course also CCTV installed throughout venue, both within each quiz room, the communal areas and with visibility of all building entrances/ exits. The venue will be well-managed, with trained staff, and it has strict policies in place to prevent anti-social behaviour. There is controlled access and egress through the booking system to manage customer flow and prevent overcrowding. When bookings are made a confirmation email will be sent that provides details of the rules of the venue, entrance and departure information, and transport information for the premises. Public transport options is also going to feature of the website for the premises.

There are no off sales of alcohol being sought and an effective waste management plan to prevent litter and odours outside the premises. The last thing the applicant wants is to have complaints from the residents above, or its corporate clientele, as they will be very much wanting repeat business. There is also no police representation to this application, which we mention as the Police have paid careful attention to the crime and disorder licensing objective in making their decision.

The hours for regulated entertainment applied for are 11am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 11am to 9pm Sunday. Alcohol sales were sought to 10.45pm Monday to Saturday and to 8.45pm Sunday. Given the concerns of the residents the applicant is willing to vary the hours sought to 11am-10pm Monday to Saturday (alcohol sales to 9.30pm) and 11am to 8pm on Sundays (alcohol sales to 7.30pm). This could be accommodated within the scheduling and booking of the quiz rooms.

The applicant very much wants to be a positive contribution to the area. Many shops in the immediate vicinity of the venue appear to be closed and so Quiz Room is able to provide additional security (via its CCTV, staffing and actual occupation) to the residents within a style of operation that is not alcohol led, and is not open to the general public in the way a bar would be. You are unable to purchase alcohol in the manner of a bar as the licensable activities are ancillary to the use of the premises as a quiz room. We are aware the previous business at the site (the library) went out of business due to revenue issues; The premises is a commercial space with business rates being paid, which will actively contribute to the area. The applicant, knowing the area, brings with it a fully regulated entertainment style business that is not alcohol led with modest hours so as not to cause disturbance to residents.

Should any residents wish to see the venue in person, via a personal tour from the Venue Manager, or speak with the Venue Manager via the telephone this would be welcomed.

We are attaching to this some photographs of the fitted out venue showing the reception area, breakout area, and games room example with ceiling and acoustic panels visible. You will see from these photographs the premises is not a bar space and is very much geared towards the quiz room setup.

My client's works have been completed recently and as such they invited residents to view the space to understand the application during last week and this week. I am instructed only 1 resident came to the venue but unfortunately received a phone call and had to immediately leave so they didn't see the space as they never returned. This is not a criticism but my client hopes the attached is of assistance to understand the operation of the venue.

Proposed conditions

1. The licensable activities authorised by this licence and provided at the premises shall be ancillary to the main function of the premises as a quiz room entertainment facility.
2. The premises shall install and maintain a comprehensive CCTV system as per the minimum requirements of the Licensing Police. All entry and exit points will be covered enabling frontal identification of every person entering in any light condition. The CCTV system shall continually record whilst the premises is open for licensable activities and during all times when customers remain on the premises. All recordings shall be stored for a minimum period of 31 days with date and time stamping. Recordings shall be made available immediately upon the request of Police or authorised officer throughout the preceding 31 day period.

3. A staff member from the premises who is conversant with the operation of the CCTV system shall be on the premises at all times when the premises is open to the public. This staff member shall be able to show Police recent data or footage with the absolute minimum of delay when requested.
4. CCTV Signage shall be prominently displayed throughout the premises
5. An incident log shall be maintained at the premises and made available on request to an authorised officer, the Local Authority or Police. The register shall record the following: A. All crimes reported to the venue. B. All ejections of patrons. C. Any complaints received concerning crime and disorder. D. Any incidents of disorder. E. All seizures of drugs or offensive weapons. F. Any faults in the CCTV system or searching equipment or scanning equipment. G. Any refusal of the sale of alcohol. H. Any visit by a relevant authority or emergency service
6. A record shall be kept detailing all refused sales of alcohol. The record should include the date and time of the refused sale and the name of the member of staff who refused the sale. The record shall be available for inspection at the premises by the police or an authorised officer of Tower Hamlets Council at all times whilst the premises is open.
7. Food and non-alcoholic beverages, including drinking water, shall be available in all parts of the premises where alcohol is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises.
8. Notices will be prominently displayed at exits requesting the public to respect the need of local residents and to leave the premises and the area quietly.
9. Notices shall be prominently displayed at any area used for smoking requesting patrons to respect the needs of local residents and use the area quietly.
10. No noise shall emanate from the premises nor vibration be transmitted through the structure of the premises which gives rise to a nuisance.
11. The area immediately outside the premises, shall be swept and or washed, and litter and sweepings collected and stored in accordance with the approved refuse storage arrangements.
12. There shall be no striptease or nudity, and all persons shall be decently attired at all times.
13. An entry, closure and dispersal policy for controlling the opening of the premises and the departure of customers from the premises at the conclusion of the licensed activities shall be put in place and shall be actively operated. The policy shall be in written form and made available upon request by an authorised officer of the Police and authorised officers.
14. A challenge 25 proof of age scheme shall be operated at the premises where the only acceptable forms of identification are recognised photographic identification cards, such as a driving licence, passport or proof of age card with the PASS Hologram.

15. Signage advertising the aforementioned proof of age scheme shall be prominently displayed throughout the premises and on the alcohol display area and service area.

16. There shall be no sales of alcohol for consumption off the premises

17. The venue is to provide information on local taxi firms and transport links to patrons leaving the venue upon request.

18. A direct telephone number for the manager at the premises shall be publicly available. This telephone number is to be made available to residents and businesses in the vicinity upon request.

19. All staff responsible for selling alcohol shall receive regular training in the Licensing Act 2003 in terms of the licensing objectives, offences committed under the Act and conditions of the Premises Licence. Written records of staff training in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 shall be retained and made available to police and authorised officers of the Licensing Authority on reasonable request.

20. There shall be a zero-tolerance policy for violence, drugs, and other illegal activities

21. No irresponsible drink promotions will be offered that could encourage excessive consumption.

22. The licence holder shall maintain a comprehensive Children's Safeguarding Policy and ensure that an appropriately trained and vetted member of staff is on duty whenever the premises are open to the public. This Policy shall be produced on demand to Police and authorised persons. Staff training on the Children's Safeguarding Policy shall be renewed yearly.

23. Safety checks shall be carried out before the admission of the public. Details of safety checks shall be kept in a Log-book on the premises. The Log-book shall be made available for inspection by authorised officers

24. In the event that a serious assault is committed in or directly outside of the premises (where staff witness) or appears to have been committed the management will immediately ensure that:

a) the police (and, where appropriate, the London Ambulance Service) are called without delay;

b) the crime scene is preserved so as to enable a full forensic investigation to be carried out by the police; and

c) such other measures are taken (as appropriate) to fully protect the safety of all persons present on the premises

25. Children under the age of 16 shall not be allowed inside the premises past 19:00 hours unless accompanied by a person over the age of 18 who must not be drunk/incapable. A Challenge 25 scheme will apply to any adult looking after children.

26. When the designated premise supervisor is not on the premises any or all persons authorised to sell alcohol will be authorised by the designated premises supervisor in writing. This shall be available on request by the Police or any authorised officer

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