

BEFORE THE TOWER HAMLETS LICENSING COMMITTEE

**IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL TREATMENTS LICENCE :
Premises 1 White Row, London E1 7NF**

STATEMENT OF CUI LAN FU

PREMISES: Bamboo Thai Massage, (formerly Vanilla Thai Massage) 1 White Row, London E1 7NF("the Premises").

1. My name is Cui Lan Fu.
2. I am the owner/operator of the premises.
3. I will break down my statement into 2 parts.
 - a. First to deal with the background of myself;
 - b. Second to deal with the purchase of the business and moving forward.

A. BACKGROUND

4. I was born on 27.6.1968 in Liaoning, China.
5. I moved to the UK and over a period of time I have been given indefinite leave to remain.
6. My first language is Mandarin
7. I speak very little English but I have an interpreter Ms Claire Gao.
8. I came across the premises when my friend Mrs Susan Zhou (Li Zhou) told me at the end of February this year, that her boss is getting too old and would like to sell the shop called Vanilla Thai Massage based at 1,

White Row. I asked my friend to inform her boss, I am interested and would like to view it.

9. When I visited the shop, Susan introduced me to the shop owner, whose name is Rachel.
10. The decoration of the shop was nice and I was satisfied.
11. I was not informed by the previous owner that there was any allegation that something against the licence conditions had happened in this shop. The previous owner showed me the licence and that it had been recently renewed. I was also being assured that there were no problems that happened in this premises under the old management.
12. I thought this would be a good addition to the premises I operate on Chancery Lane and so I purchased this shop on 11/04/2022.
13. Li Zhou told me that the previous owner Rachel signed the lease contract with the landlord under the company name Redbud (London) Limited, and now it will be much easier if we change the director of the company's name to me, Cui Lan Fu. By naming me as the new director, we wouldn't need to sign another contract with the landlord, that would save us 4 months to sign a new contract with the landlord.
14. Up to signing the contract to transfer the shop, it was Li Zhou working between me and Rachel, due to the fact that I can't speak English, and the previous owner Rachel can't speak Chinese, she can only speak English. She said that to change the name of the director of the existing company (here refers to Redbud (London) Limited) is an easy thing to do with the help of an accountant.
15. I was concerned, so I consulted my accountant. The accountant confirmed there were no issues with the accounts and confirmed that

the director name was changed to me and shares were transferred to me.

16. Li Zhou assured me that everything is OK, she works here and she is aware of everything.

17. Due to years of friendship with Li Zhou, I trusted her words and on 11.04.2022, changed the director of Redbud (London) Limited into my name. The shares were also transferred to me. I bought the business.

18. If I had any knowledge that this is a problematic premises, I certainly would not do this.

19. After I was made aware of this issue, I contacted Li Zhou, she denied of any knowledge of this issue. I have requested Li Zhou and Mr. Cheung Lai Kwan to attend the hearing with me, but they have refused.

20. The tenancy was in the name of the tenant company and I was informed that the quickest way of acquiring the premises was to take over the company. This would avoid transferring the lease and would avoid a delay in obtaining any landlord consent.

21. It was only after receiving the council email regarding the objection and the hearing that I realized that there were some issues about this shop.

22. The previous situation was deliberately hidden from me and as I was unaware of the previous inappropriate activities that took place in 2021, before I took over, I agreed to allow some of the previous staff to remain. It is only when I received Simmi Yesmin's email on 06/07/2022, that I was made aware of the issue and that certain individuals were said to be involved. I don't personally know the previous owner, or most of the people who worked at the premises and had no idea about the operating issue and the problems of some staff. Consequently, I added their names to the application forms when I applied for the new licence.

23. As soon as I read the 6th July email I ensured the persons mentioned were informed that they are not welcome and will not be able to work here.
24. However, I would also like to say that these issues happened before I purchased this shop, and should be disregarded when considering my application. I am the victim of this issue.
25. I sincerely request you to give me a chance, by issuing me the licence to operate the shop properly.
26. The shop was only purchased a very short time ago, if the shop is not able to operate with the licence it will not open, there will be no income to pay for the rent, also I can't pay back the loans used to purchase the shop.
27. Personally, I have some health issues. I have brain aneurysm, which does not allow me to do any heavy physical activity. It is also difficult for me to find a job due to my age.
28. This is also why I purchased this shop in first place.
29. I sincerely request that the licensing committee can issue the licence for this shop, give me a chance to work and manage this shop properly.
30. I have invested in the property and carried out refurbishment works and changes to the premises. It is important for me that I am able to use the premises.

B. THE PURCHASE OF THE BUSINESS AND MOVING FORWARD

31. When I received the email from Simmi Yesmin, I was shocked to know that there are two owners of this shop, Rachel who I met, and her elder sister Cheung Lai Kwan.
32. In support of my application, please believe me that I will not allow the same issue to exist under my management.

33. The first issue is with the engaging of the masseurs. I work with a number at my premises, Sunny, at 136 Grays Inn Road, WC1X 8AS. This is in Camden. A company Sheng Li beauty Ltd operates the business. When engaging therapists I seek references where possible. When necessary I will make the appropriate notification to the council and I would hope that if there is any concern in respect of any therapists then the authority will inform me.
34. I require all masseurs to work with proper certificates, and as part of the written contract between myself and the masseurs an undertaking that they will comply with the rules and that they will not offer any sexual services.
35. In the premises signs will be placed up "MASSAGE ONLY SERVICE". These will be displayed both in the front desk and prominent places in the rooms.
36. I try to speak with all new customers and will make it clear that we do not offer any sexual services. I will place up a sign indicating that "As a matter of law we do not provide any sexual services. If any person offers any sexual service please notify the receptionist so that appropriate action can be taken. You may be entitled to some or all of your fee being refunded".
37. In addition, I will make it known to the masseurs that I have engaged a mystery shopper company to carry out tests to ensure quality of service and compliance. I will look to arrange for the test purchases to take place regularly to maintain high standards.
38. I will make sure only advertise our service in appropriate websites like TREATWELL.

The contents of this my statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated 28 September 2022