

THE DOLLHOUSE

7-8 Bishopsgate Churchyard, London EC2M 3TJ



CITY OF LONDON POLICE

GROUNDS FOR SUMMARY REVIEW

Introduction and summary of police case on Summary Review

1. This application for a Summary Review of the Premises Licence of "The Dollhouse", at 7-8 Bishopsgate Churchyard, London, EC2M 3TJ, has been instigated by the City of London Police in order to prevent the further occurrence of incidents involving serious crime and serious disorder associated with this nightclub and its customers. The police invite the licensing authority to **suspend** the premises licence as an interim step pending the full review hearing which must take place within 28 days.
2. This application follows a very serious incident of extensive public disorder involving customers of The Dollhouse in the early hours of Friday 29 November 2013 (i.e. late Thursday night). During this latest incident police officers were injured trying to quell the disorder and several streets in and around the venue had to be cordoned off. However this incident, serious and extensive as it was, is not a standalone one. It follows a pattern of incidents involving assaults and public disorder in and around the premises involving its customers in the early hours of the morning. Many of the perpetrators are under the influence of alcohol bought and consumed inside The Dollhouse. The venue has become a magnet for disorder. The management have demonstrated that they have insufficient control over events held at the premises which are usually organised by external promoters. The police have, at this stage, very little confidence that this licence holder and his management team have the skills required to put things right in the future. It is anticipated that at the full review hearing the police will invite the licensing authority to consider all options up to, and including, revocation of the Premises Licence.

3. Prior to the incident on 29 November, the police have tried to engage with the management of the venue and have had several meetings with them in an effort to offer advice and induce voluntary changes to their operation to promote the licensing objectives. Despite this engagement the licence holder, management and door staff have shown themselves to be either unable, or unwilling, to take effective steps that promote the objective of preventing crime and disorder.

The Dollhouse as a venue

4. The Dollhouse operates primarily as a nightclub on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights until the early hours of the morning. It also, occasionally, opens on Thursday nights. The venue's extensive Premises Licence permits it to provide regulated entertainment and remain open during the following hours:

Sunday to Wednesday - 08:00 - 04:00 (sale of alcohol until 03:00)
Thursday to Friday - 08:00 - 06:00 (sale of alcohol until 05:00)
Saturday - 08:00 - 07:00 (sale of alcohol until 06:00)
5. The Premises Licence Holder is Mr David John Wilcox. The Designated Premises Supervisor is currently Mr Rob Wright. The venue is close to Liverpool Street Station near to the junction of New Broad Street with Old Broad Street. There is no other licensed venue that operates to these very late hours in the immediate vicinity of The Dollhouse. (A cocktail bar/club and restaurant called "Babble" is located at 45 Old Broad Street. It advertises itself as operating until 00:00 on Monday -Tuesday, to 03:00 on Wednesday-Friday and as "available for private hire" on Saturdays and Sundays).
6. The Dollhouse advertises itself as being able to accommodate up to 300 guests. It most frequently hosts external promoters who provide nightclub nights that are widely

advertised on social media. These promotions include: “Overdose”, “Nightplay Parties” and “OM4G(OSH)”. DJ’s play various types of music depending on the promotion including RnB and Deep House, Afro-beats and Hip Hop. The venue also offers itself for private hire, for example, for birthday parties.

Trigger incident on Friday 29 November 2013

7. On the night of Thursday 28 November 2013 (going into the early hours of Friday 29 November) The Dollhouse hosted an “official birthday party” for a well-known rap-artist who uses the stage name “Chip” (previously “Chipmunk”). The party was widely advertised to the general public on social media sites including Twitter. It was sponsored by “Ciroc”, a brand of vodka, and included performances by DJ’s including “DJ Illness”. The advertising materials indicated that the dress code was “strictly smart” and it was for “over 21s” only. Entry was said to be by “guest list” only. The timings of the event were stated to be 10pm – 3am.
8. Police were notified of a public disorder incident outside The Dollhouse and involving its customers shortly before 3.30am. A series of witness statements from officers who attended the scene will be provided in due course in addition to CCTV evidence. In summary they evidence very serious and extensive incidents of public disorder outside The Dollhouse in Bishopsgate Churchyard which spread onto New Broad Street and Old Broad Street. The public disorder spanned some 45 minutes. In total 6 arrests were made for various public disorder, assault and offensive weapon offences. However many more arrests would had been made if the police were not so outnumbered by the numbers of violent participants involved in the disorder. Police estimates suggest that well over 100 people were in the vicinity of The Dollhouse at the time of the disorder either as participants or bystanders. Most were aged 20-40 years old. The scene was described by officers as “*daunting*” and “*chaotic*”. Several separate incidents could be identified involving between 10-20 males and females fighting. Fighting seemed to break out every few minutes. Some males took off their shirts to square up to each other. Many were clearly drunk although some appeared sober. It is unclear, at this early stage in the investigation, whether the violence was

spontaneous or planned. There is the real risk of reprisals if similar events are held in the future.

9. The crowds outside The Dollhouse were very anti-police and when arrests were made attempts were made to drag the individuals away from the custody of the arresting officers. Groups shouted, swore aggressively, and lunged at police officers trying to break up fights and maintain order. It was clear that the crowds were intent on violence and had little regard for any police presence.
10. In one incident several females were seen getting a baseball bat from the back of a car to join the melee. In another incident a police officer heard a male involved in the violence shout "*Go get the gun*". This led police officers at the scene to request police firearms unit and Taser stun-gun support. A police dog had previously been deployed to help quell the disorder, consideration to call in the Commissioners Reserve (Metropolitan Police Level 1 Support Group Unit, that specialise in public order/disorder was considered by the Inspector) but were not deployed.
11. The door staff at The Dollhouse were wholly ineffective. Very few SIA doorstaff could be identified by police officers at the scene. One doorman, who was asked by an officer to assist, responded: "*What do you want me to do about it? ... There's ten of us on, I don't know where any of them are*". Customers were seen to be allowed to "*come and go as freely as they wanted*" from the club and "*there was no control on the door*". A number of people kept professing to be door staff despite having no identification and pushed past one female police officer "*showing utter disregard for the law*".
12. The only member of the door staff able to be identified by another officer was observed to be "*clearly friendly with portions of the crowd involved in the disorder*". The Duty Inspector at the scene (Inspector Robert Wright) expressed himself to be in "*no doubt*" that all the people involved in the disorder had come from The Dollhouse. Inspector Wright himself suffered minor bruises and aches from the disorder. Another officer was punched repeatedly by members of the crowd.

Previous incidents

13. Although previous incidents associated with The Dollhouse over the past 15 months are not as serious as the trigger incident last week, they do demonstrate:

- a. A pattern of alcohol-related disorder and violence associated with The Dollhouse;
- b. Weaknesses in the management and door supervision team to prevent such incidents and/or properly assist police in their investigations.
- c. Failures of the management to respond to previous police warnings;
- d. The venue is attractive to trouble-makers. For example, it is of deep concern that in one incident two door supervisors employed at the premises refused to give witness statements to police about a violent assault they witnessed because they feared repercussions from the suspect if they did so. A number of other victims also later refused to assist police with their enquiries. This does beg the question what type of customer is being attracted to The Dollhouse as a licensed premises and why?

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Incident</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Sunday, 9.9.12	02:06	<u>Drunk and disorderly</u> . A drunk customer was ejected from inside The Dollhouse. He then approached an Asian male and threw him on to the floor and then ran away from police. The suspect later said it was a friend of his who had been ejected and he followed suit. He had consumed one vodka and orange at home before consuming "3-4 more vodka and oranges, 1 Sambuca and a few Jagerbombs" at The Dollhouse. He was issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for being drunk and disorderly.	CR [REDACTED] CR [REDACTED]
Monday,	04:10	<u>Public disorder and obstructing a police</u>	CR [REDACTED]

10.12.12		<u>officer.</u> A disturbance outside The Dollhouse involving 10-15 males. CCTV operator notes that the crowd is not dispersing. Two police dog handlers try to disperse the crowd who are aggressive and threatening. One female refused to disperse and was abusive to police and was arrested for obstructing a police officer.	
Saturday, 22.12.12	03:25	<u>Cocaine use by promoter.</u> A member of the promoter's front of house team is seen taking cocaine in the toilet of The Dollhouse. A member of the public points him out to police officers outside The Dollhouse. He is found in possession of a wrap of cocaine and later accepts a police caution.	CR/ [REDACTED]
Thursday, 27.12.12	04:06	<u>Public disorder/Drunk and disorderly.</u> Police come across an altercation involving 3 males pushing and shoving each other outside The Dollhouse. Police break up the melee. One male is physically and verbally abusive to police and had to be threatened with CS Gas. Male later accepted a Penalty Notice for being Drunk and Disorderly. (Note: there is no certainty that these males had been inside The Dollhouse, however given their proximity to the venue and the time of their arrest it is more likely than not that these males were in fact customers of The Dollhouse).	CR/ [REDACTED]
Tuesday, 1.1.13 (N.Y.E)	03:35	<u>Offensive weapon.</u> A male was brandishing a knife inside The Dollhouse. Police entered the venue and arrested the suspect who was found in	

		possession of a small kitchen knife which he had concealed in his jeans. He stated he was a musician and some people do not "agree" with his music and that is why he carried the knife.	
Monday, 14.1.13	03:50	<u>Drunk and disorderly.</u> Police arrived at The Dollhouse shortly before expected closing time. A female was behaving aggressively towards door staff. She was "extremely intoxicated", fell over several times, was swearing and thrashing her arms out at officers. Police records suggest she had been drinking inside The Dollhouse. Female later accepted a Penalty Notice for Disorder.	CR [REDACTED]
Monday, 22.4.13	04:50	<u>Assault and failure of door staff to assist police.</u> A female and her male ex-partner met at The Dollhouse. When they came out the club the male assaulted the female by slapping her across the face and kicking her in the stomach until she was unconscious. In a 999 call to police at 04:50 a member of the public describes seeing a group of 7-8 males and females leaving a club just before the male assaults the female. The males are having a "big fight". One male was seen to take his top off. Security were trying to calm them down. Two door staff of The Dollhouse had witnessed the assault and knew the suspect but neither was prepared to give a witness statement to police as they " <i>fear repercussions</i> " if they provide	CR [REDACTED]

		<p>evidence.</p> <p>The female victim was taken to hospital. She was uncooperative and had consumed a quantity of alcohol. She later refused to pursue a complaint.</p> <p>Mr Rob Wright from The Dollhouse later indicated there would have been no guest list on this night as the club was open to all members of the public and was not hosting a private function.</p>	
Saturday, 4.5.13	23:30	<p><u>Assault by door staff/drunkenness. Failures of management to supply CCTV footage.</u> A drunk female was pushed over by a member of door staff after she left The Dollhouse or was ejected. This was confirmed by police who viewed CCTV footage outside the entrance to the club. The venue stated the female has been removed from the club because of her behaviour and fell over outside. The female later refused to co-operate with the police investigation. During the police investigation the venue's internal CCTV system was found to be faulty and no footage could be supplied to police.</p>	CR [REDACTED]
Sunday, 19.5.13	02:05	<p><u>Drunk and disorderly.</u> Police attended The Dollhouse after a drunk male was ejected and was arguing with door staff. The male was shouting and lunging towards other persons present and grabbed an officer's arm. The male later accepted a Fixed Penalty Notice.</p>	CR [REDACTED]

Monday, 3.6.13	03:30	<p><u>Assault.</u> A male argues with and then assaults a transgender female after they left The Dollhouse. The suspect was calling the victim a "Batty Boy". Police intervened. The male and female claimed to be friends and walked off. The male then assaulted the female again. The victim later told police her friend had never been violent to her before and it was "<i>alcohol induced and the door staff wound him up</i>".</p>	CR [REDACTED]
Sunday, 1.7.13	02:08	<p><u>Assault. Failures of management to supply CCTV footage.</u></p> <p>A fight occurred inside The Dollhouse between two groups of females which spilled outside the venue. One of the females jumped towards another and hit her in the head several times and grabbed her around the neck. Police attended but the victim did not want to press any charges. She was upset that the door staff did not help her when she asked them to call police. Door staff later told police they were unaware of any incident of violence and believed the people involved "were just being loud".</p> <p>Police requested CCTV from the venue and were told it could only be downloaded onto a USB stick. Numerous attempts were made to collect this from the manager. However the manager was never present when officers attended and he did not return any phone calls. When contact was finally made it was found that the USB stick did not have the recording and the CCTV system can</p>	CR [REDACTED]

		no longer retrieve the relevant footage.	
Sunday, 27.10.13		Public disorder. Outside The Dollhouse witnessed by police officers.	CCTV – to follow

Previous police engagement with management

14. Since January 2013 there have been a number of meetings between police and, primarily, Mr Robert Wright, one of the owners of The Dollhouse and the current Designated Premises Supervisor. The purpose of these meetings was to try to establish a way forward for the premises after the series of incidents that had occurred.
15. Discussions centred on: the tightening of their security procedures and door staff; the uniformity/visibility of their security; a workable dispersal policy; entry policies; removing irresponsible drinks promotions; advertising of promotions; the use of certain promoters at their venue; the continual late submission of their Risk Assessment 696 forms; efforts to attract a different and less troublesome clientele; a dress code; age limits for their customers; better communications with the police; the introduction of a more reliable and sustainable business model which did not rely on externally promoted events.
16. Following these meetings the venue did produce to police certain policies and made promises of improvement. I believe that at one stage efforts were made to run the business as a sandwich bar.
17. Regrettably recent events have shown that the promises have not translated into a resolution of the crime and disorder problems associated with the venue. It seems clear that only a root and branch change to the nature of this premises or its permanent closure will promote the licensing objectives in the future.

Aftermath and Conclusion

18. On the night of the trigger incident (28/29 November 2013) the manager on duty, Mr Mathew Alcock, closed the club in response to a police request. If he had not voluntarily done so the police would almost certainly have issued a section 161 Closure Notice on the night forcing immediate closure. In addition the club agreed to the police's request not to open the club over this past weekend (29-30 November). However the venue is already advertising on its Twitter page that it will re-open "next Friday" (presumed to be 6 December 2013).

19. The police have no confidence that The Dollhouse is in a position to operate safely as an early-hours nightclub in a manner that promotes the licensing objectives. It seems highly unlikely that any steps could be put in place in the immediate future to change that position. In the police's opinion there is a very real risk and likelihood that serious violence and/or serious crime will re-occur if the venue re-opens in its current state. Therefore, at this stage, the police believe that a suspension of this premises licence is the necessary, appropriate and proportionate interim step pending the full review hearing.

Inspector Hector McKoy

City of London Police

1 December 2013