

Email from applicant with additional information

Good morning,

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the unit on Durham Road.

We thought we would start by giving you a general overview of the plan for the unit. The first part of our business plan is to open a 60 cover small restaurant and bar with an aim to attract a clientele aged 30 and above. We want to bring fantastic food and drinks to Low Fell and serve them in a sophisticated, trendy and unique environment with a community focus. The second phase (if the first phase is a success) is to open an alternative events and activity space in the basement which will be host to a wide selection of events. We would aim to do this after 1 or 2 years. During the day we would like this space to be used by local groups for classes such as baby and toddler socialising and exercise classes and yoga etc. On an evening we would hope to use this space for talks, movie nights and live music. The live music have limited attendance because of the size of the space and would only be held on weekends. We are extremely conscious of noise to the surrounding area so any live music events would be suitable for the space and monitored to ensure noise levels do not exceed an acceptable level (internally and externally). I have attached floor plans for the unit so you can see the events room is at the front of the building with two thick doors (the original bank security doors) and solid supporting walls between the room and the outside area. We will also be using noise reducing materials in the fit out of this space to further reduce risk of disturbance to the surrounding area. I want to stress though that we are our business model is based on being a restaurant primarily and the events space would be an addition that would compliment the restaurant offering. We must also stress that it is our ambition to have community focus, and that means we will always strive to operate with the needs and suggestions of the community in mind.

1. Our house and garden are overlooked by elevated windows at the rear of the building, which, whilst not presenting any sort of a problem whilst it was a bank, would become a significant problem if there were to be groups of possibly inebriated people overlooking our and others' gardens. I consider this to be a nuisance to residents (perhaps opaque film could be affixed to the windows to solve this problem);

This is certainly something we will take into consideration when we come to design our fit out of the unit. We do not want local residents to feel like we are a nuisance and we will be doing everything we can to ensure their privacy is maintained. At present the window is covered in opaque film in parts and we could amend this to suit the local needs. It is the ambition at present to have restaurant tables by the window, with diners sitting.

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1. Regular live and recorded music until 23.30 or even 00.00 at weekends is unacceptable in such close proximity to a residential area, and constitutes a public nuisance. we feel that the music licence should cease at 22:30 at the latest. NB- in the licence application document, section E, the licence applicant themselves has referred to the premises as a restaurant/bar. It is the development of a fully-fledged bar that particularly concerns us;

Recorded music will be played in the restaurant area as background music to compliment the atmosphere of the space. Any live music would be performed in the events space on weekends only. Any live music in the basement would finish before 23:00.

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2. Public disorder and crime are already major concerns in Low Fell, and can only be increased if another licenced premises opens (for example, as evidence of this, I regularly find people using the back lane, which we share with the proposed premises, for relieving themselves, doing drug deals, and occasionally, fighting); For the same reason, I would be concerned that children's play in the lane would be inhibited by the possible presence of drinkers/smokers next to them;

No customers would have access to the back lane directly from our premises. The outside yard area would only be occupied when the events space is in use as a smoking area and this would be closed at 9pm after which customers would be directed to the main road to smoke. We will actively encourage customers to be quiet when leaving the premises to minimise any disruption. We aim to attract a clientele aged 30 and above which we hope would reduce the risk of any disturbances. We plan on erecting a high screen around the metal security fence to create a further barrier and to enhance the aesthetic.

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1. I am concerned about the increased levels of litter and rubbish in the lane that are likely to result from this licence being granted. Whilst Lloyds bank generated comparatively small and easily handled amounts of rubbish, this is not likely to be the case with a licenced premises. Large amounts of rubbish, particularly if food-based, would increase the rat and litter problems we currently have in the lane, which already cause a public nuisance and compromises local health and safety;

The proprietor (Hayley Kell) has two cafes already in Gatehead and has a hygiene rating of 5-very good. Sealed bins will be stored on the property and collected weekly to prevent any issue with vermin or littering in the lane.

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1. Noise and consequent public nuisance of people leaving pubs in the area at closing time, would be increased by having another licenced premises in this small area. We have had front windows smashed in our house three times, always by a drunk person. These were all reported to and investigated by the Police. We also had a six-foot graffiti "tag" sprayed onto the end of the house, which whilst not demonstrably attributable to drunkenness, does nevertheless point up the existing crime and antisocial behaviour problem in the area;

We will be doing everything in our power to create a respectable venue in Low Fell. The proprietor herself lives off the Durham road as well and appreciates the concerns and all owners are residents of Low Fell (with one living around 300m away) and we will be taking all measures to be considerate and minimise any impact on the local residents. As part of our licensing agreement we have agreed to multiple standards that will help to ensure social order and good behaviour. All of our staff will be trained to operate in a way that implements these rules and standards. We will only be issued with a licence if we guarantee to maintain high standards on public order and safety. We will be implementing good quality CCTV at the front and rear which will further help to keep the community safe.

1. Parking is not currently possible at the rear of the property. Any parking would we trust, be done on the business' own land (i.e. the rear yard, from which the current fencing had been removed), so as not to obstruct the lane;

We do not anticipate requiring any parking but if so, we will use the car park on Cross Keys Lane.

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3. Increased refuse and consequent refuse collection, and deliveries of business supplies, will increase congestion in the lane, which is a cul-de-sac. Any licence granted should in my view be conditional on adherence to agreed principles, to ensure minimising of disruption (i.e., avoid blocking the lane or causing obstructions. This is already a significant problem, which we have had report to Police and the Local Authority);

Deliveries will be made between 9am and 5pm on week days to the rear of the building. We understand that the lane could easily become congested so delivery vehicles will be asked to park outside of Costa cafe and bring all stock down the lane on trollies. Generally deliveries take around 20-30 minutes to be unloaded and we anticipate around 4 deliveries per week.

We understand the concerns and would like to reassure the residents that we will be taking our responsibility as occupiers very seriously in regards to minimising general nuisance and disturbance as much as possible. As residents of Low Fell we want to build a business that is part of the community and this includes making sure we do not have a negative impact of any surrounding residents. We will be open to communication going forward to ensure that any concerns are appeased and also any problems that arise once we start operating will be dealt with swiftly.

We hope this helps answer all concerns but if we can provide any more information please let us know.

Best regards,

Hayley Kell



Additional information from the applicant

Good afternoon Rebecca,

Thank you for the call on Friday. As discussed the main concerns of the residents are the window and the yard space. Please see our proposed resolution for these concerns below.

The window

We are proposing that we partially cover the window (please see document attached). Upon close inspection of the window, and the view it allows, we believe that there is only limited view into one of the neighbouring yards. An opaque film on the sides of the bay window will prevent any view into this yard. The front of the window will remain clear with a view of the building opposite (please see photographs attached).

We will be leaving this pane clear as we need to have as much natural light entering the restaurant as possible (to reduce the need for energy / lighting and to help with the aesthetic). The sun passes the back of the building from midday thus leaving the front facade shaded which leaves the space very dim. This window will help bring natural light into the room and add to the atmosphere of the venue. We would also like to reiterate that this window will have one table in the area and will not be free for people to use as a viewpoint or standing area.

The Yard

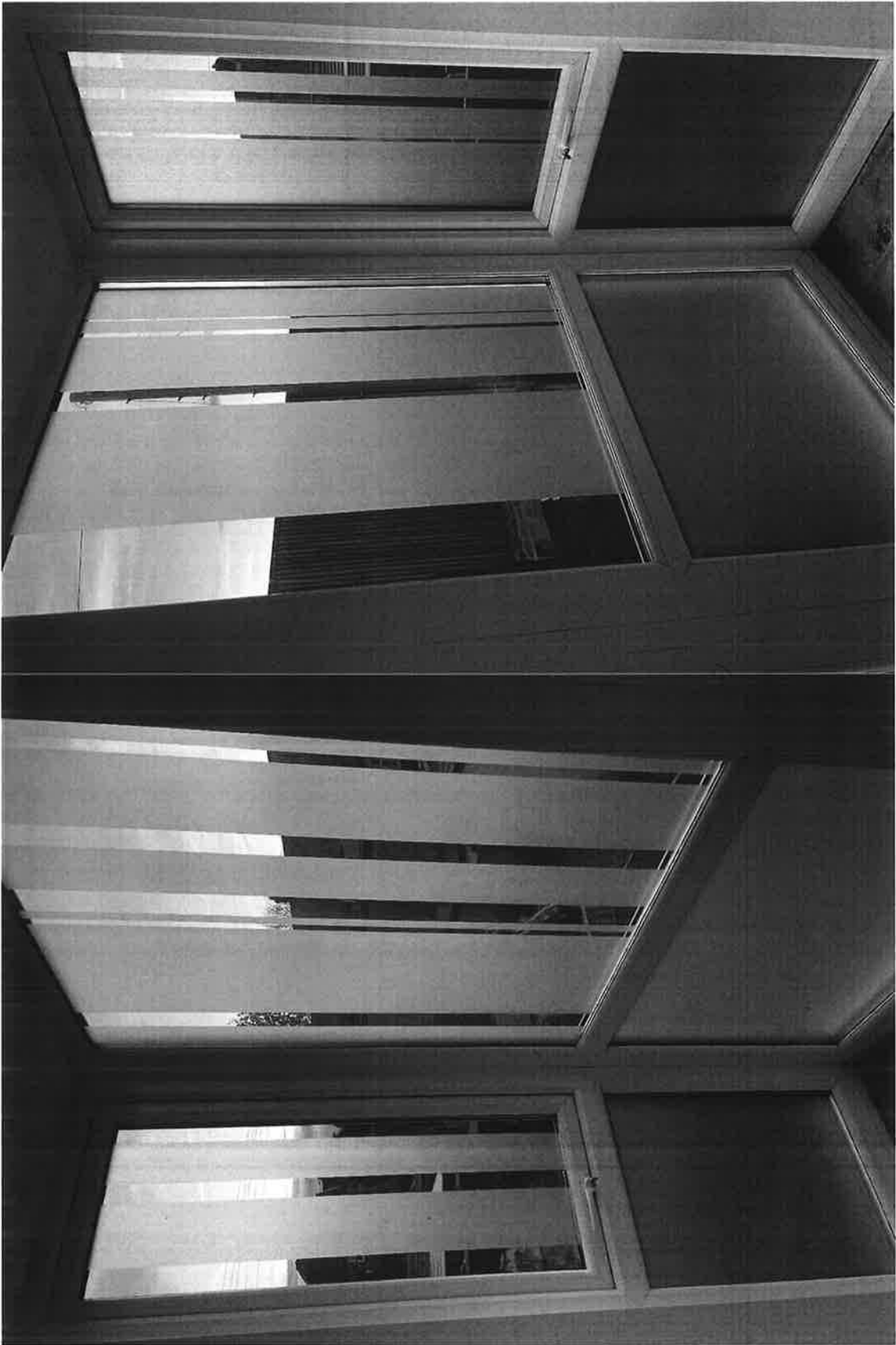
We believe it is vital that the yard is available for use by our customers in order to comply with relevant regulations pertaining to smoking areas and accessibility: as such we would need this area for wheelchair and push chair users to provide an outside space and access to the basement of the building. This will not however be a thoroughfare and to ensure the privacy of neighbours and limited noise distribution we are proposing-

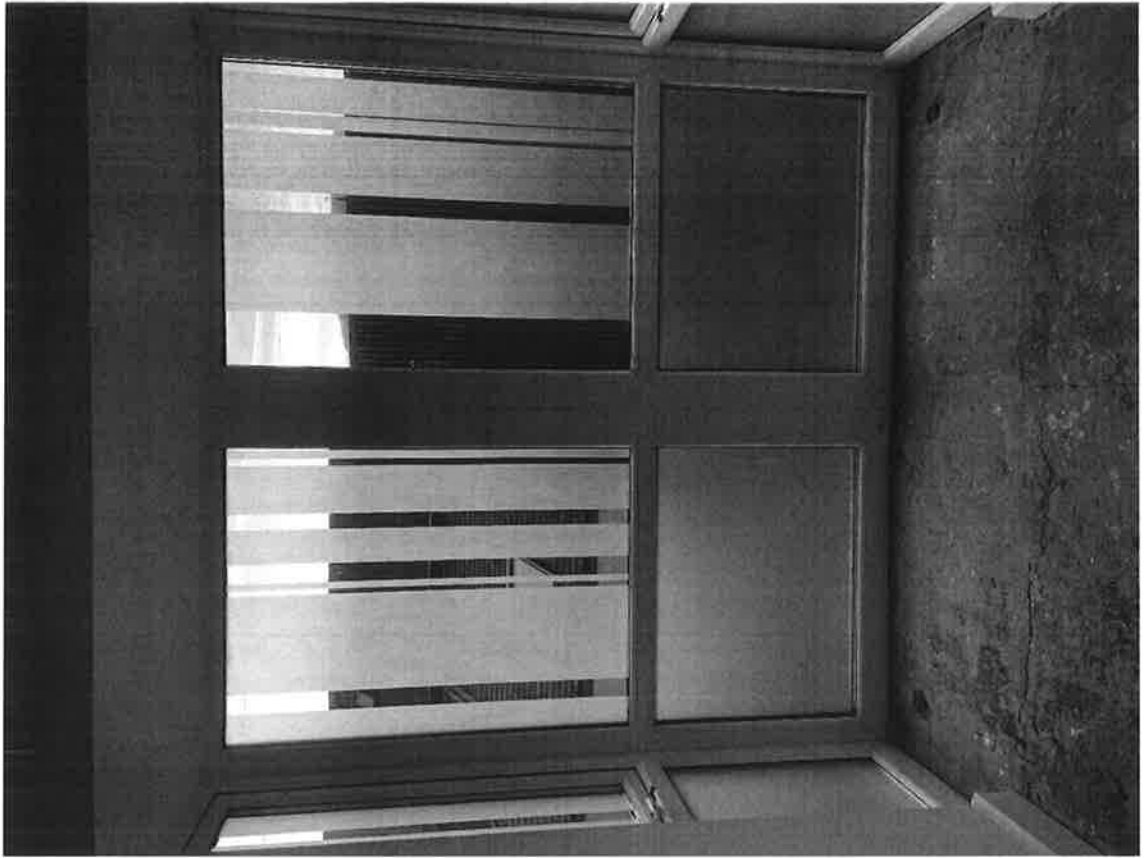
1. All fencing will be covered internally so there is no view in or out of the yard. This will also act as a further solid barrier to noise.
2. The yard will always be closed from 9pm.
3. The yard will only be used when the downstairs area is open which we do not foresee as being every day.
4. Signage will remind users of the respect that is needed for local residents, and that CCTV is in place that will monitor them. Signage will also help to ensure that the rear door remains closed at all times. This will be further monitored by staff.

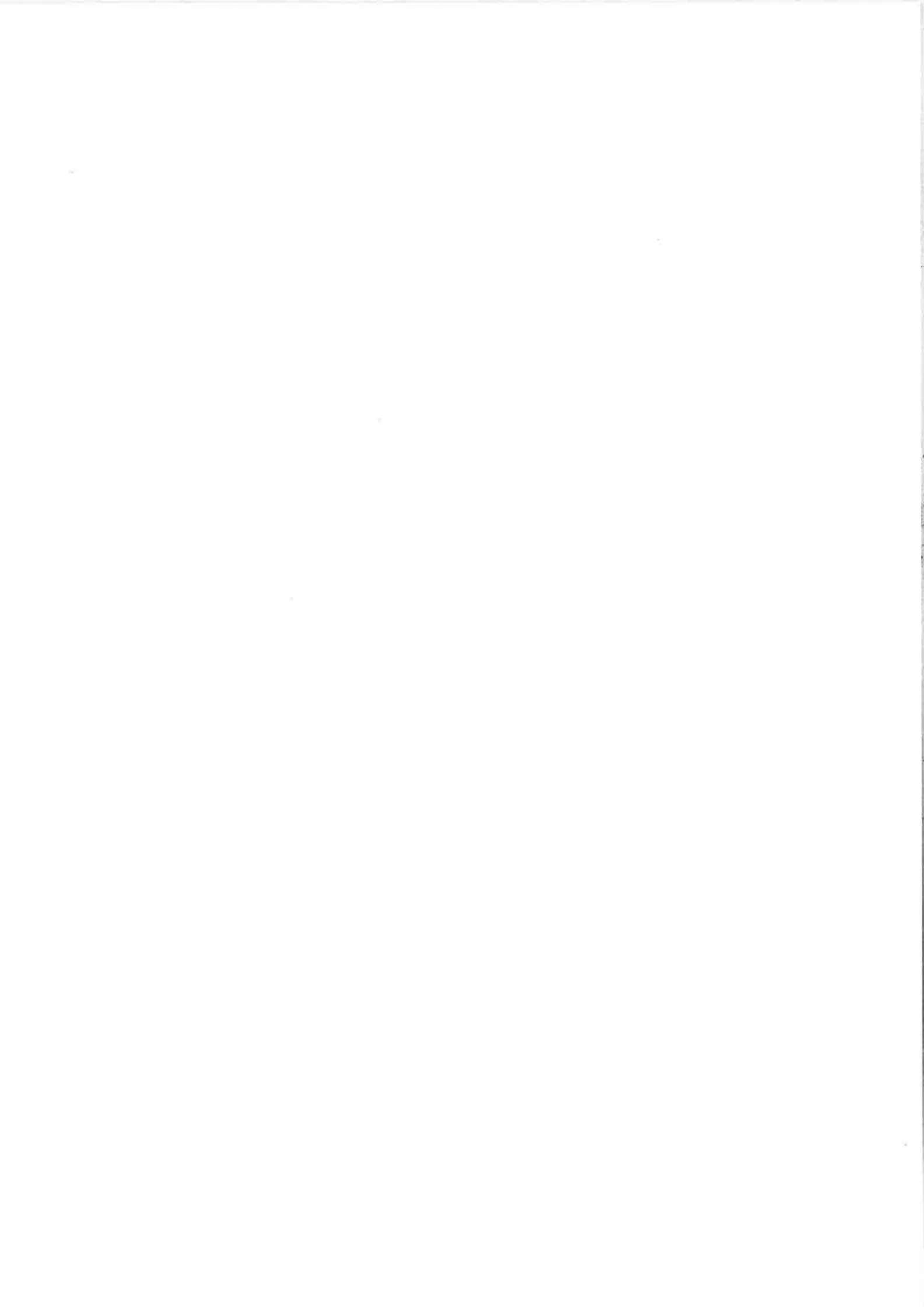
Myself and the Co owners and management team is committed to making sure our venue is a valued community space and this includes strong relationships with neighbours (who we would also wish to welcome into our venue). We will always be open to discussions about any issues that arise once we start operating. We want to reassure the residents that we will be committed to creating a safe community focused space that is valued by all.

Thank you,

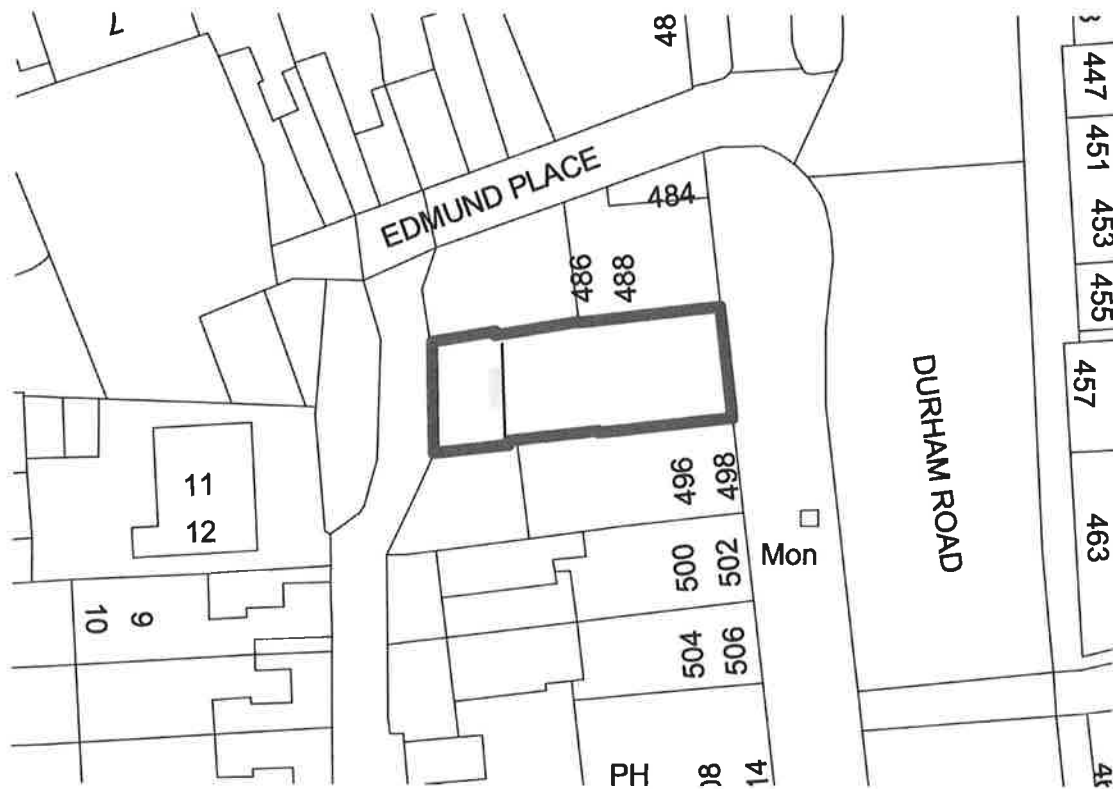
Hayley







490 Durham Road Street Plan



The bay window (shown above as a yellow box) has limited visibility into neighbouring yards. We are proposing that we put film on the sides of the window (as shown below) to ensure that there is no visibility into yards. This will leave the front of the window exposed with a view of the wall opposite from inside the restaurant.

