

Representations by James Moore, 6 Sturton Street, re:

APPLICATION TO VARY PREMISES LICENCE (SEC 34) OF

‘BACK STREET BISTRO’, 2 STURTON STREET, CAMBRIDGE CB1 2QA

[I.E.] TO VARY THE LAYOUT OF THE PREMISES AND TO REMOVE THREE CONDITIONS

From: <https://Cambridge.gov.uk/licences> (caps in original):

[VARIATION REQUEST ITEM 1]

‘TO VARY THE LAYOUT OF THE PREMISES TO INCLUDE THE CHANGES SHOWN AT ANNEX A^[*] ATTACHED’

[VARIATION REQUEST ITEM 2]

‘TO REMOVE THE FOLLOWING OUTDATED CONDITIONS FROM THE LICENCE: ALCOHOL MAY BE SOLD, SUPPLIED, CONSUMED IN OR TAKEN FROM THE PREMISES EXCEPT FOR ONE HOUR FOLLOWING THE HOURS SET OUT ABOVE AND ON CHRISTMAS DAY, BETWEEN 15.00 AND 19.00 TO PERSONS TAKING TABLE MEALS IN THE PREMISES IN A PART OF THE PREMISES USUALLY SET APART FOR THE SERVICE OF SUCH PERSONS AND FOR CONSUMPTION BY SUCH A PERSON IN THAT PART OF THE PREMISES AS AN ANCILLARY TO HIS MEAL. FOR OTHER PURPOSES OR IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PREMISES THE HOURS SET OUT ABOVE SHALL CONTINUE TO APPLY’

[VARIATION REQUEST ITEM 3]

‘12. NO CHILDREN ALLOWED UNLESS DINING’

[VARIATION REQUEST ITEM 4]

‘13. CHILDREN'S AREA TO BE DESIGNATED A NON-SMOKING AREA’.

*‘ANNEX A’

‘Annex A’ was not ‘attached’ to the Public Register of Licences and Registrations form (at <https://Cambridge.gov.uk/licences>) nor has it been found on a Council website. So members of the public may not have had an opportunity to study and comment on ‘Annex A’ (i.e. ‘Annex 4’). Councillor Richard Robertson obtained the file for me, ‘BSB licensed area Plan Proposed Annex 4’, which contains 1:50 scale drawings, and a ‘licensing key’, of the full ground floor plan (also shown *in miniature*, 1:100 scale, in document 16_1760_FUL-PROPOSED_ELEVATIONS-2021062), and **the full first-floor plan for kitchen, lavatories, staff and office areas, store and roof terrace**. The latter plan reveals the radical change-of-use proposed by City Pub Company

(East): for the first time since the public house was erected some 140 years ago, the first-floor residential flat is to become a site of commercial activity. This contentious plan appears, unnamed and semi-legible, as a small illustration in the Full Planning Statement (16_1760_FUL-PLANNING_STATEMENT-2021067), but it ***has not been found in any document named 'Annex A' (i.e. 'Annex 4') except the document not made publicly available online. Why has the Council not provided full and complete documentation to ensure effective public consultation?***

* * *

I have resided continuously at 6 Sturton Street for 28 years, since 24 December 1988, including the ten years in which 2 Sturton Street was developed from 'The White Hart' public house (purpose-built about 1874) and then run as the 'Back Street Bistro'. My representations are based on close acquaintance with the former pub premises, with 'Sturton Town' (as the streets east of the cemetery as far as the railway used to be called) and with neighbours now deceased, including Harold Oakman (born 1918 at 18 Hooper Street; died 2002) and Cora Smith Oakman (born 1913 at 1 Sturton Street, resident at 4 Sturton Street from 1915 and with Harold there from 1950; died 2000). Thus I possess first and second-hand knowledge of the neighbourhood that extends, through the Oakmans, back to their parents, who were born in Victorian times when 2 Sturton Street was built.

My representations are also based on many private conversations and e-mail contacts with long and shorter-term residents of 'Sturton Town', and are made under the four statutory licensing objectives.

1) The prevention of crime and disorder

The obvious representation to be made under this objective is that a trebling of seating capacity could lead to overcrowding (see below) and overspill onto pavements; and the redeveloped premises could then attract a different class of customer. ***Public order offences are wholly foreseeable.***

2) Public safety

The City Pub Company (East)'s planning application (16_1760_FUL-APPLICATION_FORM_-_NO_PERSONAL_INFO-2021042) gives the 'site area' of 2 Sturton Street to five significant figures: '260.00' square meters. *This extraordinary degree of mathematical precision not only appears to be spurious; the measurement itself appears to be in error.* My own measurement of the ground-floor footprint gives external dimensions of about 18 x 10 meters; this is confirmed by the 1:50 scale drawing in the 'Licensing Plan' ('BSB licensed area Plan Proposed Annex 4'). Other 1:50 scale drawings in that document show a first-floor area of some 90 square meters (not counting the stairwell again) and a 'basement', labelled 'store', with an area of roughly 30 square meters, bringing the total 'site area' to 300 square meters, not '260.00'. ***Why was the basement not counted in the total site area?*** The proposed new and enlarged

licensed area on the ground floor, approximately 180 square meters, is shown accommodating 114 covers. The capacity of the Back Street Bistro, when full, was about 40 covers.

We can assume that:

- some customers would remain standing or stand waiting at the bar servery (as in the Kingston Arms and similar establishments), perhaps as many as the number shown seated there, viz. 6;
- some employees, perhaps 6, would operate from and behind the bar servery, delivering food and drink and clearing and setting tables (as in City Pub's newest Cambridge restaurant, The Old Cycle Shop) ;
- employees would use the staircase to the first floor to access the kitchen, dish-washing and cupboard areas; customers would use the same staircase to access the lavatories, all these persons moving about the licensed premises to reach the staircase.

Immediately there is an issue of

Health and safety

Is it seriously envisaged that employees will ***carry hot food and drinks, up and down the same staircase that customers use to access the lavatories?*** Some years ago, a major establishment in Cambridge was prosecuted and fined after a waiter tripped and was scalded while carrying hot soup up a staircase. What if the waiter had tripped and scalded a customer on the staircase?

But a deeper problem arises from doing the maths:

Overcrowding

Subtract from the 180 square meters proposed as the new and enlarged licensed area, the considerable area (as drawn in 'BSB licensed area Plan Proposed Annex 4') taken up by tables, chairs and stools, bar servery, disabled WC, staircase, walls and supporting columns, and 72 square meters (40%) remain to accommodate up to 126 (= 114 + 6 + 6) persons, an area in which all must be able to move about freely and, if necessary, evacuate the premises efficiently. This amounts to some 0.57 square meters per person (just over 6 square feet, or a 30-inch square) if all persons were standing. With 114 customers seated (each person now taking up half of 0.57, about 3 square feet, or a 21-inch square), and 6 customers and 6 employees standing, the free floor area remaining could be as much 31 square meters, but ***the possibility must be considered that customers seated in the al fresco 'terrace' (23 square meters, 22 covers) and 'covered area' (13 square meters, 16 covers) might, owing to rain or restrictions on music after 22:00 (see below), re-enter the main enclosed licensed area.*** This area, if already at full capacity, with 70 customers seated, 6 standing and 6 employees standing, would then have to accommodate an extra 38 customers in the remaining free floor area of some 31 square meters, or just under .83 square meters per person (9 square feet, or a 36-inch square). That would be feasible ***unless everyone stood up, as in an evacuation.*** Then 126

persons would find themselves struggling in floor area of roughly 55.5 square meters (70 – 40% x (23 + 13)), or just over 0.4 square meters per person (less than 5 square feet, or a 26-inch square) – the equivalent of 2 persons in a red public phone box trying to get out at once.

So a critical issue is overcrowding, which would ***necessarily bring an increased risk to the safety of both customers and employees.*** A closely related issue is

Overloading

This may not fall within the remit of licensing, but it has to be pointed out that the structural integrity of those parts of the proposed new and enlarged licensed area above the basement, or any other part of that area supported ground level, may be imperilled by the maximum loading of customers (above). ***Due consideration must be given to permissible floor loadings*** in a purpose-built mid-Victorian pub if customers and employees are to be safeguarded.

‘Loss, gain or change of use of non-residential floor space’

In my opinion and that of managers to whom I have spoken informally, the proposed new and enlarged licensed area is *prima facie* insufficient and inappropriate for the expected trade. By proposing to license the entire former *unlicensed* area occupied by the ‘kitchen’, ‘ladies’, ‘gents’ and ‘dry store’ (16_1760_FUL-EXISTING_PLANS._GROUND__FIRST__BASEMENT-2021052), the City Pub Company (East) has shown itself to be implausibly over-ambitious. Indeed, it appears that the planning application (16_1760_FUL-APPLICATION_FORM_-_NO_PERSONAL_INFO-2021042) ***answers question 18 incorrectly***: viz. ‘Does your proposal involve the loss, gain or change of use of non-residential floor space?’ City Pub says ‘No’, but comparison of the ‘existing floor plan’ (16_1760_FUL-EXISTING_PLANS._GROUND__FIRST__BASEMENT-2021052) with the proposed new ‘ground floor plan’ (16_1760_FUL-PROPOSED_ELEVATIONS-2021062) shows the loss of ‘kitchen’, ‘ladies’, ‘gents’ and ‘dry store’, altogether over 25% of the original ground floor area. It should also be noted that works began on or about Monday 10th October to strip and gut the premises, including the proposed new and enlarged licensed area; this was ***before planning permission was granted for that alteration.*** The works continue.

Fire safety and fire exits

The licensed premises must comply with all statutory fire safety controls. Whether or not the three exit portals shown on the south side of the ground floor suffice, I can find ***no provision in the proposed new and enlarged licensed area for persons on the first floor to evacuate to the ground floor*** or to the outside of the building except via the single staircase.

3) The prevention of public nuisance

‘Public nuisance’ is not narrowly defined in the *Licensing Act 2003*; it retains its broad common law meaning and pertains mainly to: noise nuisance, light pollution, noxious smells and litter. A licence holder under this objective must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent disruption to their neighbours in these respects. The proprietors of the Back Street Bistro made

certain attempts, but it cannot be assumed that City Pub Company (East) will follow their example, rectify its deficiencies or indeed refrain from creating new nuisances.

According to Council procedures, representations about a licence ‘must provide evidence that you have experienced’ a nuisance ‘at first hand’, that it has been ‘reported to the relevant authorities’ and that the incident has ‘happened on a repeated basis’. **All of which is necessarily impossible for a major redevelopment that has not opened for business or even been completed.** Some representations under this rubric (based on my own experiences of the Back Street Bistro and those of many other neighbours) were not always ‘reported to the relevant authorities’, though in most cases the incidents repeated persistently. I make representations here because of the **strong likelihood that such nuisance incidents will continue to occur and will be accompanied by other nuisances peculiar to the proposed new and enlarged licensed area.** By registering likely nuisances *in advance* and the need for restrictions to avert them, it is intended that City Pub Company (East) should be *under notice* that, if the nuisances persist, their licence can be reviewed and varied, or restrictions of a more stringent nature can be imposed because of the enlargement of the licensed area.

Access to ‘ground floor terrace, ground floor covered area and first floor roof terrace’

These places ‘shall not be used outside the hours of 11:00hrs and 22:00hrs at any time’, according to the Planning Consultation Response by Ben Walther, dated 27 October (16_1760_FUL-ENVIRONMENTAL_HEALTH-2035232-1). It continues: ‘All doors/windows accessing the ground floor covered/terrace area and those that serve the first floor terrace shall be kept closed between 22:00hrs to 11:00hrs or at any time during the provision of entertainment or the playing of music’. These strictures represent a partial improvement on the Back Bistro’s practice but leave open the possibility that, *for the first time*, the roof terrace, formerly used for lounging by the publican or domestic tenants on the first floor, will be accessible to employees or customers from 11:00 to 22:00. Even if alcohol is not consumed, persons on the terrace may smoke, carouse or carry on loudly even while having to negotiate the air conditioning condensers and cellar cooling units proposed to be located there. The Planning Consultation Response by Ben Walther (above) states, ‘I believe refusal of this application would be reasonable based upon the use of the 1st floor terrace area alone’. Short of that, in my opinion **the roof terrace area must remain out-of-bounds except for maintenance purposes and the door to that terrace at the head of the staircase should be locked to prevent use by unauthorized persons.**

Expansion of ground floor terrace/covered area

If this expansion is allowed, use of the area should be strictly limited. In the Back Street Bistro, the outdoor terrace was created primarily for smokers; it seated a handful of persons, perhaps a dozen, and had a thin plastic roof. Even so, a persistent nuisance was created, especially in the evening, for the adjacent neighbours at 11/11a Hooper Street and 4 Sturton Street – loud conversing, merry-making and smoking separated from them only by a seven-foot brick wall –

as well as at 6 Sturton Street and sometimes beyond. There was no peaceful sitting on one's own terrace, chatting under the stars, as I know from long experience, with the Bistro's terrace buzzing, occasionally erupting, just few meters away.

Worse is in store if City Pub Company (East) expands as proposed. Beefing up the 'draw' on customers by enlarging the ground floor terrace/covered area to 38 dining covers does not appear to be consistent with ensuring nearby residents will not be disturbed by the proposed redevelopment or indeed at all. It also appears to be inconsistent with local requirements of the Central Conservation Area.

How can City Pub plan to restrict noise nuisance from customers on the ground floor terrace/covered area to a reasonable minimum? The area occupies an open corner of an enclosed square; noises are reflected from its surfaces and projected beyond the walls. Now it is proposed to add the constant clicking and clanking of tableware and crockery, high-pitched sounds that carry well in the daytime and even better at night.

And, not least, how can City Pub plan to prevent the odour nuisance from smokers on the ground-floor terrace/covered area? Smoke also carries well over walls and into adjacent properties.

*Answer: the ground floor terrace/covered area should have appropriate **sound absorbent surfaces with baffles**, and **fans to expel smoke** into Hooper Street; use of the area should be limited to **half of the proposed new capacity**, or say 20 covers; it should be **cleared by 22:00 on Sunday to Thursday and no later than 23:00 on Fridays and Saturdays**. And at all times, **music (amplified or otherwise) should not be heard in this area**; the doors to the main licensed area should remain closed if music is being played.*

Closure of ground-floor external windows and doors

With the required closure of 'all doors/windows accessing the ground floor covered/terrace area and those that serve the first floor terrace' (Planning Consultation Response by Ben Walther, dated 27 October, 16_1760_FUL-ENVIRONMENTAL_HEALTH-2035232-1), and assuming that the sealing of the lavatory windows is required (see below), the **closure of all windows and doors opening onto the street from the ground-floor licensed area should also be required** (as in the Kingston Arms &c), so that, in sum, all windows on the premises are to be kept closed at all times. City Pub Company (East) should be **required to explain whether double-glazing throughout the premises has been considered, and if not, why not**.

Further strictures under 'Acoustic assessment'

With the premises effectively sealed to prevent noise nuisance (the first-floor kitchen and office areas fall outside of licensing), air-conditioned interiors and cold beverages would appeal, not least in warm weather when window and doors might otherwise be left open. The two new air-conditioning condenser units to be located on the rear flat roof/terrace, and the existing cellar cooling units to be relocated adjacent, would then be running at full-tilt. This **seasonal extra**

noise nuisance should be addressed; it does not appear to be taken into account in the Planning Consultation Response by Ben Walther, dated 27 October; the strictures stated there under 'Acoustic assessment' must be strengthened.

Lavatory nuisance

The lavatories (except the disabled WC), are shown relocated to the first floor in order to maximize the proposed new licensed area to accommodate up to 114 covers. One source of nuisance is the socializing, door-slamming and horse-play that typically take place in and around lavatories. Another obvious nuisance is offensive odours. If the first-floor toilet cubicles and urinal area are ventilated externally to Sturton Street, odours will be apparent. **Ventilation should not be either to the street or to the rear of the property** where odours will cause nuisance to neighbours in their gardens. For my part, I have never known a pub or restaurant to position any toilet area at the front of the premises, as if it were a source-of-pride, with brightly lit sash windows opening directly onto a closely built residential street, 10 meters opposite neighbours' bedrooms and living rooms. The potential for nuisance should be reduced by **immobilizing and shading or shuttering, as well as double-glazing the lavatory sash windows**. But City Pub Company (East) should be required to explain **why the basement is unsuitable for the lavatories**, given that countless pubs and restaurants have basement toilets.

Kitchen nuisance

Extractor fan noise from the Back Street Bistro was so obtrusive that near neighbours were often unable to sit comfortably in their gardens or open windows. Even more uncomfortable were those forced to keep windows shut in warm weather because of the persistent cloud of repelling cooking odours generated by the Bistro. Were the proposal to treble the premises' capacity approved, the odoriferous cloud would become more potent and obtrusive.

And the proposed redevelopment would move the exhaust stack only a few meters onto the rear roof, placing the 'termination cone' at the level of the loft dormers for which planning permission is now being sought at the adjacent property, 4 Sturton Street. An 'odour control assessment' was undertaken for City Pub Company (East) and a 'high impact risk ... established', according to the Planning Consultation Response by Ben Walther, dated 27 October (16_1760_FUL-ENVIRONMENTAL_HEALTH-2035232-1). But that Response acknowledges only 'the standard odour condition'. If 'the standard' is that of odours from Back Street Bistro, this condition is too lax. **More filtration should be required**, well above that of DEFRA level 1, 'Low' (16_1760_FUL-ODOUR_CONTROL_ASSESSMENT-2021070), such as the filtering employed at the Kingston Arms and local curry houses, which in my experience usually emit minimal noxious odours.

Waste storage and disposal

City Pub Company (East)'s plans do not appear to allow for or even address the issue of waste storage and disposal. In response to questions under item 7 in the application, 'Have

arrangements been made for the separate storage and collection of recyclable waste?’ and ‘Do the plans incorporate areas to store and aid the collection of waste?’, City Pub has answered in both cases ‘No’ (16_1760_FUL-APPLICATION_FORM_-_NO_PERSONAL_INFO-2021042).

Employees of Back Street Bistro regularly made late-night and early-morning trips to deposit boxes of debris in commercial waste containers at the entrance to The Courtyard, 11-19 Sturton Street. Often I have been awakened early on a Sunday morning by the crashing of bottles and other refuse tipped into the bins. One wonders how neighbours directly opposite The Courtyard endured it. City Pub should be required to ***show how refuse will be dealt with, especially food waste, including its removal from the premises at appropriate hours.***

Pavement obstacles

Waste collection containers should not be stored on the pavement. Bicycles should not be allowed to block pavements near the premises. The downpipe guards installed by Back Street Bistro should be retained to prevent cyclists attaching to them, but the Bistro made no provision for cycle parking. Nor does City Pub (East)’s application to treble the seating capacity, contrary to the Local Plan which requires planning applications to include full details of proposed cycle parking. The Kingston Arms, with a much smaller capacity, latterly provided for on-street cycle parking. Given the size of City Pub’s proposed redevelopment, provision for parking at least twice as many cycles should be made across two car-parking spaces in Hooper Street, Sturton Street or in both. City Pub should be required to ***show how pavements near the premises will be kept clear of waste collection containers and bicycles.***

Customers exiting the premises

City Pub Company (East) should be required to put up signs prominently asking customers to ***respect the quiet back-street character of the surrounding neighbourhood*** and to help ensure that others do so also. City Pub should be required to ***show how they would enforce these requests.***

4) The protection of children from harm

No representation is made under this objective to the proposed removal of licensing conditions 12 and 13, though City Pub should be required to ***provide justification for the requested changes.*** The Cambridge Blue in Gwydir Street requires children to leave the premises by 21:00. This would be an appropriate minimum restriction on children for the proposed redevelopment.

Given City Pub’s obligation to preserve a family-friendly environment and keep children from harm, it would be strange if that duty ceased outside, in the near vicinity of the premises. ***Unless the redevelopment can be effectively sealed for sound, the playing of recorded music should not be allowed in the evening to ensure children living nearby do not have their sleep disturbed.*** The owners of the Back Street Bistro did not play music; this was in keeping with the premises being a quality food establishment. Other pubs in the neighbourhood make a feature

of shunning ‘canned music’ and the City Pub Company (East) should follow their example. On my dining visits to The Old Bicycle Shop, my guests and I found the food very agreeable but the recorded music was overwhelming; it made conversation difficult.

The modest Back Street Bistro, with 40 covers, occasioned loud conversing, some carousing, much car-door slamming and other noise nuisances for six nights of most weeks. The proposed redevelopment, catering for up to three times as many covers until 00:30 (or 23:00 Sunday), would up to treble any such nuisance. Children (and adults) are entitled to their sleep. An **informal census of young children in the vicinity** of the former Back Street Bistro has begun; already 2 children are identified at 11/11a Hooper Street (next door to the premises), 2 at 1 Sturton Street, 3 at number 4 Sturton Street (next door), and 2 at number 8, and 3 at number 12. More are likely to be identified. So the concerns and misgivings expressed in the Planning Consultation Response by Ben Walther, dated 27 October (16_1760_FUL-ENVIRONMENTAL_HEALTH-2035232-1), under the headings ‘Ground floor and Roof terrace’ and ‘External Doors and Windows to the ground floor terrace and covered area’ can only be strengthened. ***Silence should be golden, as far as it can be achieved, after 22:00 daily.***

* * *

The City Pub Company (East) PLC, with £19 million backing, has a ‘growing portfolio’ of 13 pubs in ‘affluent cities and major provincial towns’, 3 of the pubs in Cambridge: The Mill overlooking Mill Pond, the Cambridge Brew House in King Street and The Old Bicycle Shop in Regent Street. These ‘distinctive high quality pubs’, according to City Pub’s website – next to a non-residential tourist hot-spot, amongst shops in a bustling student precinct and beside a noisy commercial thoroughfare – are to be joined, it seems, by a new ‘City Pub’ bang in the middle of the quiet, densely-built and village-like residential neighbourhood at the corner of Hooper and Sturton Streets. The intimate decade-old, locally owned and managed but now defunct Back Street Bistro (formerly ‘The White Hart’, a pub continuously since the 1870s) is poised to become, as part of City Pub’s expanding empire, ***the biggest pub-restaurant in Petersfield – bigger than each and every restaurant in Mill Road, bigger than each and every gastro-pub with their al fresco smoking areas, bigger than all the other eat-and-drink establishments in the ward.*** (I visited them all, counted seating capacity and took advice from the managers.)

But here lies the Achilles’ Heel of the redevelopment – BIGNESS. Most of the drawbacks in City Pub’s planning application stem from an evident intention to ***maximize revenue by turning a small purpose-built Victorian public house into a fat cash cow, a site for milking a growing customer base with scant regard for the needs and character of the neighbourhood.*** By trebling the Back Street Bistro’s covers, City Pub would as much as treble the amount of incoming traffic, the used-up parking spaces, the car-door-slamming drop-offs and pick-ups until after midnight, the customers making merry outdoors beside neighbours’ gardens, the music wafting from open windows and doors, and the volume of overpowering kitchen odours (never mind the ‘Nightmare’ of clattering pots and pans, clanking dishes, slamming pantry doors and whooshing dish-washers) – all to the sound of toilets flushing 10 meters opposite bedrooms and sitting-rooms in Hooper and Sturton Streets.

You could make it into a comedy, or a tragedy, so simple is the solution: ***think small***. Petite, bespoke, boutique. Imagine a family-friendly corner eatery scaled to a quiet neighbourhood where well patronized and established competitors (Kingston Arms, Cambridge Blue, Alexandra Arms, Devonshire Arms, even The Geldart) thrive on a customer base that could be lured away by quality meals like those served in City Pub restaurants further afield.

Besides the points insisted upon above, here are positive proposals:

- Restrict the number of customers on the premises to a maximum of 60 – a 50% increase on the Back Street Bistro, *not the proposed three-fold increase*;
- Permit up to 20 customers only to sit in the ground floor terrace/covered area;
- Keep the kitchen and lavatories where they belong, on the ground floor (or in the basement – if not, why not?), not slap in the neighbourhood's face upstairs;
- Modify the licensed area to cover the first-floor rooms on the corner and along Sturton Street, leaving the upstairs rear wing along Hooper Street (as proposed) for office, staff and storage;
- Make these first-floor rooms (or the ground floor, or both) a themed dining area – to celebrate a 'town' (not-'gown') neighbourhood 'built' by the London and North Eastern Railway; to memorialize the notables associated with (and buried in) Mill Road Cemetery; to feature the Eagle Foundry formerly across Hooper Street (and other local historic sites) and of course 'The White Hart' with its past of public inquests and its connections with colourful characters – Sturton, Gwydir, Geldart and not least Arthur Smith, the Royal Engine driver for the LNER, who lived next door;
- Refuse to play music, live or recorded, at any time;
- Designate some or all of the premises, part-time or full-time, as a device-free zone for 'digital detox' ('the next big thing'; Hot Numbers in Gwydir Street is behind the trend), so the new, improved and *somewhat more capacious* (but not Big) bistro would stand out as a calm oasis of conversation and conviviality, a mecca for locals and a magnet for discerning diners everywhere.

James Moore (Prof.), 6 Sturton Street, Cambridge CB1 2QA