

New lap dancing club to open next to one of Leeds' most historic buildings



The former Townhouse venue, in Crown Street, Leeds city centre, where the Black Orchid lap dancing club will now open.

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A controversial two-floor lap dancing club will open next to one of Leeds' most historic buildings after councillors approved a licensing application.

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Tokvo Industries Ltd had sought permission from Leeds City Council for a Sex

Orchid in Crown Street, next to the Corn Exchange.

A total of 77 objections and a petition were lodged against the application submitted to the Licensing Sub-Committee which met on March 14, when councillors deferred the final decision for further deliberations.



But the authority today confirmed that the licence has now been granted.

Black Orchid, off Assembly Street, will operate from the building that previously housed the Chilli Whites nightclub.

One objector on Crown Street told councillors at the last meeting that she would feel like “a prisoner in my own home”, while another said she was afraid of being heckled by drunken men, if the licence was granted.

Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves said: “I am disappointed by the decision of Leeds City Council to grant a Sex Establishment Licence for another city centre venue, particularly one so close to family restaurants and the historic Corn Exchange.

“A great deal of work was done to ensure the number of venues like this would be capped, but it is clear that this decision means SEV's are on the rise again.

“I hope that Leeds City Council steps up their efforts in tackling any future applications”.

The council said its policy allows for a maximum of four sexual entertainment venues open at one time in Leeds, and there are currently three excluding Black Orchid.

West Yorkshire Police did not object to the application.

A council spokesman said the venue would not be near properties with a “sensitive use” or in a “sensitive location”. But in its Licensing of Sex Establishments policy, the authority said it agrees the venues are “generally not appropriate” near family leisure facilities, retail shopping areas, historic buildings, residential areas or schools - among other places.

Phillip Kolvin QC, on behalf of the applicant, told the last meeting that the company was one of the largest operators of late night venues in the north of England, and it specialised in restoring old buildings for leisure use.

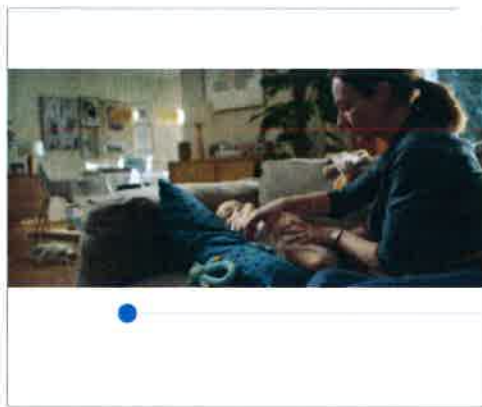
The council spokesman said: “After considering written and verbal submissions, whilst sympathetic to some of the concerns raised by the residents, the members of the council’s licensing sub-committee granted the application in relation to Black Orchid. “In reaching their decision, the sub-committee determined that the

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that the proposed venue will not be near properties with sensitive uses or in a sensitive location.

“Government guidance and case law also makes it clear that moral objections to sexual entertainment are not relevant to consideration of applications of this nature.”



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