

# Best Bar None

Paul Rayment meets a campaigning resident who knows the secret to city community

**F**raser Stride is a huge fan of the Crown Street Buildings — so much so that he has recently led a protest against a proposal that could see a 1,000-capacity club move into the basement of the building. A somewhat strange opposition, some might say, considering that the area is already home to arguably the city's most bustling street.

"The main difference is the noise associated with bars being different than that from a club," Fraser says. "It's different when a bar is playing to a couple of hundred people and a nightclub to a thousand."

Noise isn't the only issue, as Fraser is keen to stress the safety and security issues that come with a new club.

"With bars people tend to come in and out all night, but in a nightclub they tend to stay in and come in and out at the same time. Also, with the queue being outside the entrance to the building it could be quite intimidating for people coming in and out and as well as the rubbish you get."

When he isn't campaigning for the rights of his fellow residents, Fraser is working at his own business, Finite Solutions. They specialise in fitting out homes with

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the latest audio and visual equipment — a fact that's evident in his own apartment. Equipped with speakers in every room, dropdown cinema screen and more, it's really a place that would look more at home on 'MTV Cribs' than Call Lane, resulting in Fraser's place often being the last stop on a night out.

"It's great, really enjoyable to live here when you have friends back here and stuff, especially with a big cinema screen. There often tends to be drinks here when the bars shut, which is usually to the detriment to my Monday morning."

Much is written about community in the city and, while everyone seems to have an opinion on it, Fraser thinks he may have the answer.

"I think the way the building is constructed helps," he says, referring to the original design of Crown Street Buildings. "It means you have to walk past people to get anywhere and you start to recognise them. Also, the way it's based around the central courtyard means it feels more natural to go knock on someone's door. The courtyard also means you can organise barbeques in the summer and get to know people that way."

As well as having a sense of community, Fraser is pleased by how diverse the community is. "We have professionals like myself, key workers and students," he says. "The students usually move here in their third year and they have had enough of Headingley and realise it's not much more to live here. There are families here, too."

While Fraser is aware that his money may have been able to buy him a large place in the country, he is adamant that it wouldn't even matter.

"As it stands at the moment, there is nowhere else I'd rather live. If someone gave me half a million pounds I could buy a big house out in Alwoodley, but I wouldn't have this vibe. You can be sitting in on a Friday night having a few drinks and then you walk out the front door and you're in the thick of it."

As for the campaign against the nightclub: "The hearing is on 17th December, so we've got till then to get our case together." Fingers crossed.

