Tom Rees interview; key quotes.

1. Place changing over time
“Fast forward four years, the area has changed a lot… times have changed, lots of younger people coming in, lots of families… London shifts really quickly. And so what the business needs now isn’t necessarily what it needed to be then… Pubs have a certain inertia of their own. They have a life of their own.”

2. The pub as a point between different communities
“It’s either on the fringes of everywhere or it’s the centre of everywhere, depending on how you look at it. And I think, hopefully, we’ve now become a bit more of a focal point for people from lots of different areas, communities and backgrounds to come into one space and mingle.”

3. A pub as both business and shared social space
“Pubs are spaces that kind of occupy a weird space between being a commercial business and a public good, almost… everyone’s got their view and they express it in a way that gives people a sense of ownership over the space. Which is both a blessing and a curse, because everyone wants it to be a certain way or believes it should be a certain way.”

4. Belonging and the idea of “their place”
“You want people to feel like this is their space. It kind of is their space. It’s their local, their place… a lot of that will be to do with people they meet, and having a safe space to go and just while away a few hours, or feel a sense of belonging.”

5. Multiple memories of the same event (demolition and reconstruction)
“Everyone has their own… their own version of the event. But that’s really nice… it felt like everyone wanted a piece of it and wanted some ownership over it, and wanted to be part of it… everyone came in with their own stories of the place.”

6. Place as something that has never been one fixed thing
“It was really interesting to learn a bit about the history, but also gives you confidence that it’s not something that’s been one thing for 50 years… dynamic change meant that it was a fresh start, where you could just do what we wanted to do and hope for that resonating with people now… and kind of tell a new story for this space.”

7. Reconstruction
“This is exactly like it was, but it’s not. It doesn’t feel like it was just before it closed… we’ve tried to create a sympathetic space that doesn’t feel brand new. But it feels very different to what it was before. I think we’ve made some conscious choices about the offer that we’re selling.”