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To: Elected members of Oxford City Council
via email to [REDACTED]

06 March 2021

Planning Application 21/00345/FUL - The Wheatsheaf High Street Oxford OX1 4DF

Dear Councillor,

I am contacting you on behalf of the MU and our members to object to the proposed redevelopment of the first and second floors of The Wheatsheaf to student accommodation as detailed in application 21/00345/FUL.

Granting this application would see the forced closure of an important grass roots music venue in the City center which, apart from providing vital employment to musicians, is an important part of the cultural offer Oxford provides to its residents and visitors and would appear to be in direct conflict with the statements below from the City's Cultural Strategy¹ currently in place.

2 Our vision for culture and the arts

Our shared vision for culture is:

To work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver and support affordable and excellent cultural activities and events; enhance and leave a legacy in the lives of Oxford's individuals and communities; encourage youth attainment; engage our diverse communities; and develop skills and businesses in the city's creative sector.

10. Conclusion

Oxford City Council and its partners believe that culture and the arts play a profound role in shaping people's experiences and attitudes. We believe that access to high quality cultural experiences across a wide range of forms is the right of all our citizens. We believe that the proposals in this strategy will contribute to ensuring that these opportunities are open to all our citizens and not just the few.

Whilst the venue in question is not a current Cultural Partnership Group member as set out in Appendix 1 of the policy it contributes to the culture of the City and a gap in the cultural offer would be created if it were to cease to exist, which would be the outcome if this application is approved.

As I write there are 1,380 public comments on the proposed redevelopment, whilst I have not read every one I have yet to find one that is in support of the application. I therefore urge you to consider fully the effect on the cultural offer within the City center of granting this application, and by your actions protect a cultural asset to the community and an important venue for live performance of grass roots music and the employment of musicians.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Paul Burrows
Regional Organiser

[REDACTED]