

Comments for Planning Application 21/00345/FUL

Application Summary

Application Number: 21/00345/FUL

Address: Wheatsheaf Yard, The Wheatsheaf High Street Oxford OX1 4DF

Proposal: Conversion of first and second floors to create 9no. student rooms, shared kitchen and common area. Formation of 2no. front dormers in association with a loft conversion. Removal of 1no. window to front elevation. Alteration to 1no. window and 1no. door to front elevation. Insertion of 1no. door to front elevation. Provision of bin and cycle stores

Case Officer: Tobias Fett

Customer Details

Name: Mr Guy Henstock

Address: 36 Cornwallis Road Oxford OX4 3NW

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Members of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Effect on existing community facilities
- General dislike or support for proposal
- Information missing from plans
- Local plan policies
- Not enough info given on application
- Other - give details

Comment: Dear Oxford City Council,

Please don't support this planning application, you would be changing a community hub and the favourite venue of hundreds of Oxford's citizens into bedrooms for just 9 students.

While I appreciate Oxford is a student town and that accommodation for students is important, there are numerous developments all over the city in suitable residential locations for students. It is not necessary to close the only remaining grass roots live music venue in the centre of town.

The applicant's suggestion that there are numerous alternative venues within Oxford is simply not true. With the closing of the Cellar in March 2019 the Jericho Tavern is the only place that compares to the Wheatsheaf and that is in Jericho not the town centre. The applicant's suggestion that the venue isn't viable and yet the viability assessment actually confirms that the whole pub including the upstairs bar with venue is a viable business. The Venue is not a separate business from the ground floor bar financially or in its use. In order to get permission to change the use it must be proven the whole pub (both bars together) are not viable to reach the criteria set out in

planning policy V6 in the Oxford Local Plan 2036. The applicant has actually proven it is a profitable business over several years. Trying to use the Coronavirus pandemic blip as a way of proving financial unviability should not be accepted as reasonable, or true. These plans would go against the Oxford Local Plan 2036, V7 which says: 'The City Council will seek to protect and retain existing cultural and community facilities. Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss of such facilities unless new or improved facilities can be provided at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.'

I and over a 1000 other patrons of the Wheatsheaf have now submitted objections. Please listen to them, the facebook group 'SAVE THE SHEAF' now has over 1700 members. This venue is an important social hub to hundreds of people and where hundreds of local musicians first cut their teeth. Oxford has a rich cultural heritage of live music and bands like Radiohead, Foals, Supergrass, Ride and The Young Knives, among others, have gone on to international acclaim and are strongly associated internationally with Oxford. I myself have played gigs at the Wheatsheaf numerous times and more recently as an Oxford based professional photographer have taken numerous live music photos there that have been published by The Oxford Mail and helped promote my own photography business.

With young British musicians no longer being able to tour Europe freely the need for our local venues is needed more than ever else we risk serious damage to the music industry at a local and national level. Please save this venue and this place for new young musicians to hone their skills, develop their professionalism and prove themselves.

The end of the pandemic is in sight and, like many people, seeing live music with my friends is something I have been greatly looking forward to. Please support this important cultural venue by not supporting this application.

Yours sincerely,

Guy Henstock