

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: Ms Alexis McGivern

Address: 32 Canal Street Oxford OX2 6BH

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Members of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Effect on character of area
- General dislike or support for proposal
- Other - give details

Comment: To whom it may concern,

I am upset and frustrated at the prospect of the Wheatsheaf being closed to make way for student accommodation. Speaking as a member of the Oxford Imps, a local improv comedy group, and as a student, I feel this closure would deprive this wonderful town of one of the last venues for live music and comedy. Our improv troupe has been performing there since 2004, and has been the site of launching successful British comedians like Ivo Graham, Sophie Duker and Rachel Parris.

Given the last tough year for the creative arts, it would be a shame to use COVID-19 as a reason for closing down a venue that has operated successfully for 21 years, showcasing many local artists and groups and even drawing in acts from further afield. The Oxford Local Plan 2036, Policy V7, says that Oxford City Council will seek to protect and retain existing cultural and community facilities. The application to convert The Wheatsheaf is in direct contradiction to this. Moreover, it feels in bad faith to use the pandemic as a barometer for long-term financial viability.

The Oxford music and comedy scene is important in fostering talent so that we can go abroad and share our craft. It is of the utmost importance to keep these small venues alive to allow these acts to flourish. In addition, the application suggests that alternative venues are available, which is

simply untrue. There are very few grassroots venues like The Wheatsheaf which can accommodate 70+ seated audience in central Oxford, or over 100 standing. Several of the 29 venues listed in the application as "adequate supply of live music venues within walking distance" are either much larger, further out of the centre of town, not performance venues, or are part of college buildings (not accessible to the general public).

Please don't allow the University to further encroach on this town and stick up for small venues - we'll all need a bit of entertainment after all this is over.

With thanks for listening,
Alexis McGivern