

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 Dominic Woodfield

Address: 26 Silver Road Oxford OX4 3AP

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Members of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Effect on character of area
- Effect on existing community facilities

Comment: The Wheatsheaf is one of the last surviving smaller music venues in central Oxford, and to my knowledge the only one left with a significant history and pedigree in terms of supporting smaller and alternative acts. This is an opportunistic application that seeks to take shameless advantage of the impacts of covid to close a cherished venue, using yet another example of a non-viability case being manufactured from manipulation of unrepresentative data. The applicant's suggestion that the cultural impact from closing this venue will be insignificant because of the continued existence of other venues such as Holywell Music Room is frankly risible. One might as well suggest that those who seek alternative live music have no need to worry as they'll be able to pop across the road and hear carols and hymns at St Mary the Virgin or zip round to Merton College Chapel for some recitals. The Council must recognise that the cultural fibre of Oxford runs deeper than the college facades, and that if the city centre is turned into no more than a dormitory by the continued loss of venues to student accommodation or chain shops, it won't just be the residents' experience that will suffer but that of future students too. At the end of the day, many of those performing their first live show at the Wheatsheaf or attending their first alternative gig will be current or ex students, and thus it is in everyone's interests (the colleges too) to maintain the full lacunae of cultural vibrancy and diversity of the city centre. The 'need' for additional city centre student accommodation of such limited scale is simply unproven and has to be weighed against a need to protect and maintain a cherished cultural facility that adds to Oxford's richness and stands as an icon of colour against the tide of 'beige' developments plaguing our city. The application should be refused.