

# 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: ian adams

Address: 111 High Street KIDLINGTON OX5 2DS

## 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
- General dislike or support for proposal
- Local plan policies

Comment:Removal of a city centre cultural venue with good accessibility and replacement with privately owned and managed student housing is not in compliance with the following policies in the Oxford Local Plan 2036 :-

Policy V1 Ensuring vitality of centres - Reduction in vitality of city centre by removing from the city centre a venue which provides entertainment to visitors to the city, students and local residents.

Policy V5 Sustainable tourism - Reduction in tourism from the loss of visitors to the venue who would have stayed in local hotels, eaten in local restaurants and purchased goods in local shops.

Policy V6 Cultural and social activities. "Planning permission will be granted for proposals which add to the cultural and social scene of the city within the city and district centres provided the use is appropriate to the scale and function of the centre."

By removing the Wheatsheaf venue, this application does the opposite!

Policy V7 Infrastructure and cultural and community facilities "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..."

The list of alternative venues in the application is not appropriate, as some of the venues on that list are either too small or too far outside the centre, or are pubs where performers are merely background music. At these there is not always a stage, lights, inhouse sound system and engineer, or most important, an audience. The Wheatsheaf has all of these things.

The applicant's viability statement for change of use separates the revenue of the ground floor bar from that of the music venue bar by totting up till receipts for each, but this method is flawed because venue punters use both bars, meaning that the music venue revenue would be understated, and the ground floor bar revenue overstated, thus favouring the application.

The unique character of the venue is very important. It is part of the fabric of the city centre whose character is already being substantially eroded by thoughtless profit-driven development. The contribution to student housing represented by the plans is minutely small, while if the development was to go ahead, the loss to the city's cultural life would be disproportionately large.