

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 Ignatius Harris

Address: 61 Rymers Lane Oxford OX4 3JY

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
- Information missing from plans

Comment: Firstly thank you for reading this and sorry for my terrible grammar.

My Objections:

The details given to apply for this conversion are false and paint a picture that suits the owners narrative to get this planning permission through.

I worked for 2+ years professionally for national promoters Crosstown Concerts in Oxford as their rep, running live shows for local and touring artists.

I can tell you that more than half of the listed "Venues" on the proposal are not live music venues in the sense that The Wheatsheaf, The Bullingdon and O2 academy are.

YES, there are places in and around Oxford that have some live music on a Friday or Saturday night, bands that do cover songs in a pub or even larger touring artist for a mainstream audience and comedians that require sit down shows at The New theatre but there are absolutely zero venues for live touring acts with a standing room, built in PA, a professional sound engineer not to mention decades worth of notoriety as a venue to realistically book bands into inside the city centre.

The nearest live music venue, with a standing room, PA, Sound engineer, Green room and safe exits and professional team that can ensure the safety at late night live music events would be The Bullingdon on the Cowley Road and then The O2 academy which are both significantly larger venues and out of the town centre.

The importance of this is huge!

Promoters, musicians and the public NEED smaller venues and I will tell you why from my viewpoint as a musician, a promoter/rep and a member of the public who loves live music and has been playing, working and watching gigs in Oxford for 10+ years.

Without small venues as a musician you can not get your first legitimate gig to a target audience. The reason being that promoters who have to pay larger sums of money for more anticipated signed and touring acts often have to book larger rooms and they need to fill those rooms. So putting on an unknown, young, local band as a support slot for that touring artist isn't a viable option when trying to recoup costs to book more artists into the venues (and in turn keep Oxford's culture and music scene vibrant.). The reason for that is that new bands cannot build a fanbase for live shows without live music. They cannot learn their craft, build a reputation, build their ticket sales and become that viable option for bigger venues and promoters to take a chance and book them, I have seen this first hand.

Without a small/medium sized live music venue, Oxford will end up with young artists looking to other cities to try and get any kind of gig. Imagine Radiohead, Glass Animals, Foals, Supergrass at 16/17/18 years old looking to move to other cities to play gigs because Oxford is no longer a cultural hub of any kind for artistic expression bar the successful touring acts on record labels and already established passing through Cowley road.

As a musician here for many years myself I can say it will mean Oxford will be denying new bands the encouragement and nurturing environment that a small venue can provide. A place to try new things, to learn how to perform, how to talk to a crowd, how to get through a soundcheck professionally, how to interact with your audience, which songs work and which songs and parts don't work. It will stammer musicians' development massively and push more talented artists away.

The Wheatsheaf is an essential part of a live ecosystem, without that first step, that essential first foot in the door, we will have no new blossoming artists, no new Foals, Radiohead, Ride etc.

The Wheatsheaf deserves respect, the people that work there that have brought happiness through live music for so many decades to so many people deserve respect and this planning permission needs to be firmly rejected. Oxford will not be the same ever again if this planning permission goes through, it will be the final nail in the coffin for independent venues, bands and promoters in Oxford City Centre.

There will be a revival of live music soon, it will be thriving, people are itching to get on their feet and dance, drink, smile, sing and laugh. There will be young 17/18 year olds that have been in a pandemic for the last two years who will be forming new ideas and new music that should be heard and absorbed into our culture. There will be celebration for many, many months on end after this crisis is finally over and I know first hand that promoters are full to the brim with bands,

managers and agents asking for available dates and venues.

It will be a glorious celebration that will bring people together and if you allow this planning permission to go ahead, Oxford's city centre won't be a part of that celebration and all of us like-minded live music lovers will go elsewhere eventually and Oxford will just be... that place where good music used to come from.