

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 Stephan Humphrey-Gaskin

Address: Flat 166 Block D Castle Mill Roger Dudman Way Oxford OX1 1GA

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: As a frequenter of the Wheatsheaf for live performances over the last 7-8 years, I completely object to the proposals that have been put forward. This is an irreplaceable asset to the city centre and invaluable to the arts/cultural aspects of our community. As the only remaining live music and performance venue in the city centre especially for up-and-coming acts, it is hugely inappropriate for this to be lost for the sake of private interests.

Also, speaking as a musician, this is one of the only places in the city that I could go to perform or meet other musicians in the city centre, so it would be a huge loss for Oxford's creative community.

The proposals clearly contravene Oxford's Local Plan 2036, breaching various of its objectives and aims in the following places:

The plan comments on the need for a wide range of facilities in accessible locations (p.22). The town centre is the most accessible location for many, and there is no comparable music venue of the same size as the Wheatsheaf in the same area. Nor is there one with the same reputation, history and community focus.

On p.114, the plan describes how 'The city centre, district and local centres offer the opportunity to

access a wide range of 'town centre uses' including retail, leisure, entertainment, office, arts, culture and tourism . ' Allowing this development would contravene this part of the local plan.

Policies V6 and V7 (p121-124) refer to the importance of social 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 at a location equally or more accessible by walking, cycling and public transport .' The music venue at The Wheatsheaf cannot be shut without an adequate replacement, i.e. a c.100-200 capacity music venue connected to a public house.

In addition, according to the National Planning Policy Framework:

"To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: ...

(c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs..."

Not only does this planning application contravene Oxford's local plan, it contravenes the National Planning Policy Framework by not guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities like the Wheatsheaf's venue.

Overall, I wholeheartedly object to this planning application. Oxford does not need more student accommodation that will simply make the city centre devoid of culture and interest. It will ruin the character of the city and ruin its cultural scene, potentially depriving it of many visitors too. The Wheatsheaf is also historically significant, having brought many bands to Oxford that are now much bigger e.g. Foals. Without spaces like the Wheatsheaf, bands like this would not get exposure.