

# 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 Rebecca De Souza

Address: Flat 166 Block D Castle Mill Roger Dudman Way Oxford OX11GA

## 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: I have been resident in Oxford for six out of the last nine years, and the gig venue above the Wheatsheaf is a unique community and arts space that is irreplaceable. The application refers to wholly unsuitable alternatives. There is nowhere else in the city centre that is a small venue capable of attracting up and coming acts to the city. Larger venues in the city centre are simply unfeasible for these sort of events.

I also object to it on the basis of the way in which this proposed development contravenes the Oxford Local Plan for 2036 and is in breach of many of its objectives/aims.

The plan comments on there needing to be 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.

Finally, I would also like to point out that there is ample new student accommodation appearing in Oxford, such as the new development above the Mitre pub across the road. Oxford city centre will lose its cultural diversity, its attractions for visitors and places that foster the entertainment and wellbeing of its community if this venue is shut. The city centre will turn into nothing but the Westgate and colleges, offering little by way of cultural vibrancy or independent entertainment.