

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 Richard Bell

Address: 1 Rowan Close 1 Rowan Close Kidlington OX51EU

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: I'm a live music promoter who has put events on at the Wheatsheaf along with a number of other venues around Oxford.

I see in the viability assessment that the capacity for the live venue has been wrongly noted as 60, it's in fact 150 including staff and bands, with up to 120 tickets allowed to be sold in advance. This makes it a key venue for bands of a particular size, or at a particular upward moment in their career trajectory. I also saw the list of alternative music venues in appendix III in the viability assessment, but I have to say that, as someone who puts live gigs on in the city, this list has clearly been put together by someone with no real understanding of the type of event we could no longer host in Oxford if we lost the Wheatsheaf. The only real viable alternative of a similar size is the Jericho Tavern, and possibly Fusion Arts.

The Bullingdon is more suitable for more established bands, The O2 for those with large audiences, and The Library is small enough for new bands looking to find their feet - but The Wheatsheaf is the perfect size for up and coming bands, which is why gigs there are usually so great. Its size means we can attract really exciting bands to the city and enrich our local music scene by developing younger acts. Many of the other venues listed are unable to host full bands, and are only used for musical performances by solo artists or stripped back groups without full set ups - The Mad Hatter or The Half Moon for example. Others are simply wildly wrong, such as The Sheldonian Theatre, which would never be considered for the type of events The Wheatsheaf can

hold.

If we lose the Wheatsheaf after having so recently lost The Cellar and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre we will be gutting the city centre of prized asset, and causing significant, potentially fatal harm to the future of the local music scene - one that has spawned and nurtured major bands like Radiohead, Supergrass, Foals, Young Knives and many more. I understand the council has a responsibility to protect and retain existing cultural and community facilities, and given the recent closure of the only other two music venues in the city centre, I hope that the council will see protecting this essential music venue not only as a responsibility, but as a duty.