

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: Miss Lorna Stevenson

Address: Flat 4 145 QUEENS DRIVE London N4 2BB

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
- Local plan policies
- Not enough info given on application

Comment: Removal of a local cultural venue with good accessibility and replacement with privately owned and managed student housing is contrary to the local plan.

Policy H8: Application does not demonstrate how accommodation will meet the restrictions set out in section a of policy H8: "student accommodation will be restricted in occupation to fulltime students enrolled in courses of one academic year or more, subject to the provisions of criterion e below;"

Policy V6: Application does not include information required for applying for a change of use of a public house laid out in policy V6, notably: "Planning applications for the change of use of a public house must be accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that the continuation of the use of the premises as a public house is not viable. It must be demonstrated that: e) all reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for its existing use (refer to Appendix 8.1); and f) all reasonable efforts have been made to support and improve the operation and management of the business; and g) it is demonstrated that suitable alternative public houses exist to meet the needs of the local community."

Oxford has lost a significant number of live music venues in recent years and the planning application does not show that suitable alternative public houses exist to meet this local

community need.

Policy V7: Cultural facilities. The local plan sets out that "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 planning application fails to explain how new or improved facilities for live music will be provided. This is particularly important given the very central and accessible location of the current venue.

I draw your attention to the current central government policy on redevelopment of cultural venues during covid-19. It states that "It is right that at this time no hasty decisions are made that will see the loss of much loved venues which we want to ensure have the opportunity of a successful future." (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-update-on-cultural-venues-and-holiday-parks--2#decision-making-in-relation-to-theatres-concert-halls-and-live-music-performance-venues>).

On balance, this application is contrary to the local plan and central government policy. It would result in the loss of a live music venue enjoyed by students, locals and tourists alike. The heritage impact assessment talks of there being no impact on old buildings or the city skyline, but fails to account for Oxford's more modern heritage, as a city with a thriving local music scene of national and international importance. It does not mention the loss of a grassroots venue important for young and emerging artists. This application should not be allowed.