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## Welcome to Genie's 'Public Information' newsletter

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*Genie has been asked to forward the appeal from the Trustees of the Corn Exchange, Wallingford. We know that many in the area have enjoyed this local amenity. Because of the short deadline for comments on the planning application, we felt it very appropriate to forward their request to Genie subscribers.*



### **The Board of Trustees and the Board of Corn Exchange Wallingford Limited write:**

We are writing to you to alert you to what is a serious threat to the to the Corn Exchange as a theatre and cinema.

A planning application is being considered by South Oxfordshire District Council for 9 dwellings to be built in the Lloyds Bank car park adjacent to the Corn Exchange. The 9 apartments will share a party wall with the Corn Exchange and we are concerned about the impact of noise filtering through in either direction. The apartments will be 3 stories high with the living space on the top floor. The roof windows in these rooms will be virtually level with the roof vents on the Corn Exchange, making noise transfer highly likely, especially in the summer when both are more likely to be open.

Although the Corn Exchange theatre has been making noise at the heart of Wallingford for 40 years without complaint, current legislation permits neighbours' complaints against noise producing venues and puts the responsibility for managing and mitigating the impact of noise on the business producing the noise. The planning application specifies some sound insulation measures but we don't believe these will be effective enough and therefore these new residents could be disturbed by music or loud films or by the noise in our workshop during the day.

And there is the potential to impact the Corn Exchange financially and ultimately force us to curtail or even cease our performances

Please show your support for the Corn Exchange by expressing your views. The deadline for planning objections is Monday 12th February.

You can object in a number of ways:

1. We will have a petition available to sign at the Corn Exchange this weekend - Friday 9th February and Saturday 10th February.
2. You can object to the planning notice by clicking this link: [object to planning application P17/S3579/FUL](#)
3. You can write to the planning officer at this address

**Mr Paul Bowers, Planning, South Oxfordshire District Council, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, OX14 4SB citing this reference PLANNING APPLICATION [P17/S3579/FUL](#) AND [P17/S3580/LB](#) - [4 MARKET PLACE, WALLINGFORD](#)**



We have included below a sample objection letter which you are welcome to use or to take inspiration from to write your own. It doesn't have to be long, just a few lines will do. For instance: ***I object to this development on the grounds that the Corn Exchange Theatre, which I frequent, may be impacted by noise nuisance and complaints.***

Please help to save our theatre. Many of you have helped to save the roof but now this is a much greater threat which we need to overcome.

Thanks for your support.

**Board of Trustees and the Board of Corn Exchange  
Wallingford Limited**

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A sample letter of objection follows:

**Mr Paul Bowers  
Planning  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
135 Eastern Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon  
OX14 4SB**

**PLANNING APPLICATION P17/S3579/FUL AND P17/S3580/LB —4 MARKET PLACE, WALLINGFORD**

**Dear Mr. Bowers,**

***The operations of the Corn Exchange cinema and theatre are of considerable benefit to the town and people of Wallingford but could be jeopardised by the proposed development. The supplement (10 January) to the Design Statement is misleading when dealing with noise from the Corn Exchange and inadequate concerning its implications and resolution.***

***The Corn Exchange theatre is necessarily a noise-generating activity and this is not limited to 'late-night noise'. Noise is produced by evening performances (and the showing of some films can be very loud), afternoon performances, rehearsals, all day activity in the workshop and in the auditorium on preparation, erection and demolition of sets (circular saws, hammering etc). The noise is carried through external walls, the roof and is airborne.***

***Under present law responsibility for managing and mitigating the impact of noise by noise-producing venues on neighbours falls on the business making the noise. Newly-arrived residents can complain about noise from existing businesses, sometimes forcing those businesses to close down. This issue is dealt with in a legal opinion 'Agent of Change Briefing' [ACBI produced by the Music Venue Trust]. This paper includes new rules being introduced in London to deal with the problem of new neighbours adversely affecting established cultural venues. The Government has***

**also announced plans to introduce legislation but of course this cannot protect the Corn Exchange at the moment.**

**Since the Corn Exchange was given planning consent as a theatre 40 years ago there have been no adjacent residential properties. The present application would change all that. The Corn Exchange must be protected from the risk of disruption or even closure arising from complaints by new neighbours. Whilst the developers should be required to take full responsibility for protecting new residents from any noise impact of the Corn Exchange, we do not think that this is not possible, and therefore the proposed development should be refused.**

**The protection needed by the Corn Exchange is not only for developers to sound insulate new buildings but also to insulate the present source of the sound and to make such other arrangements that may be needed to ensure harmonious coexistence with any new neighbours. The London Plan places the responsibility for mitigating the impact of noise firmly on the developer, including paying for soundproofing for the existing noise-generating sources. The objective is that 'cultural venues remain viable and can continue in their present form without the prospect of licensing restrictions or the threat of closure due to noise complaints from neighbours'.**

**There is also concern whether the Corn Exchange will be able to access its roof for essential maintenance and repair work. It is essential for the theatre to confirm that this is reasonably possible before planning consent is given.**

**Finally under the new development plans, parking in the current spaces adjacent to the theatre will be unavailable under the new development plans forcing companies that are performing at the Corn Exchange to park and load/unload in Wood Street causing traffic congestion in what is quite a narrow street.**

**The Corn Exchange has just spent over £700,000 on renovations to the theatre including a new roof. If there is action taken by tenants due to noise disruption then many of the donors will be at liberty to reclaim their money if the theatre is forced to close. This includes South Oxfordshire District Council who contributed £170,000 to the project.**

**Yours sincerely,**

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