

Comment for planning application 24/00539/F

Application Number

Location

Proposal

Case Officer

Organisation Name

Address

Type of Comment

Type

Comments

The police advise against it as it creates dangerous health and safety concerns and stress that it cannot be safely and rapidly evacuated in the event of an emergency. Transport chiefs are against it because it will regularly screw up the traffic, interfere with ambulance, fire and bus services, and restrict access to Oxford Parkway and to the hospitals. Chiltern Railways make the point that the station is not big enough for the intermittent crowds and they would need to enlarge the station to make it safe, and buy additional rolling stock. Listen to the experts!

Simple common sense tells us that even if a footbridge were to be built it would be a complex and expensive structure, and have to be wide enough to carry thousands of people over short periods of time. Even if a sufficiently wide bridge were to be built, there will be fans taking a risk and trying dangerously to dash across the road. One fatality will be one too many.

Anybody who has had experience of clearing so large a building as the stadium will know that it will take much more than the claimed 30 minutes to do so. Do not be misled by the seductive talk from OUFC of speedy boarding and rapid exiting of fans. It won't happen, and on match days this part of Oxford will be in gridlock.

Parking on match days will be a nightmare. The nearby Park and Ride is already well used, and is within its capabilities. What might happen if the P&R is filled up in the morning by shoppers and rail travellers, as it sometimes is, particularly at Christmas? There would be little or no room left for football fans. OUFC supporters may develop ideas as to where to park, but away fans are unlikely to have a clue.

And it won't just be football on some Saturdays. There is also the promised hotel and conference centre, and of course there will be concerts attracting as many people as possible to generate as much money as possible to make the stadium work economically. That's natural. So the road closures will be needed more and more, the P&R will be more intensively used, and we should expect bus services, emergency services, and general public usage of the routes past the stadium to be compromised again and again. This is not just a football pitch; it's a venue for big crowd events which will have to be economically active all the year round.

On the face of it, all thoughtful responses show that this is a non-starter, and that OUFC remaining at Kassam is the best outcome for all. How many millions are being spent by the sponsors on building the stadium? This money could surely be put to better use by securing OUFC where it is, working with the business people in finding a satisfactory way through, and improving the present building.