

Comment for planning application 24/00539/F

Application Number	24/00539/F
Location	Land To The East Of Stratfield Brake And West Of Oxford Parkway Railway Station Oxford Road Kidlington
Proposal	Erection of a stadium (Use Class F2) with flexible commercial and community facilities and uses including for conferences, exhibitions, education, and other events, club shop, public restaurant, bar, health and wellbeing facility/clinic, and gym (Use Class E/Sui Generis), hotel (Use Class C1), external concourse/fan-zone, car and cycle parking, access and highway works, utilities, public realm, landscaping and all associated and ancillary works and structures
Case Officer	Laura Bell
Organisation Name	
Address	
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I write to you as a current resident of Wolvercote - and as a former resident of Kidlington, Cutteslowe and North Oxford. I have lived in Oxford and Oxfordshire for nearly 50 years.2. It is now over 30 years since I walked my son up from our then home in East Oxford to his first Oxford United game. We followed United at home and away. My son did schoolboy training sessions with United players.3. I viewed the annulment of the Manor ground covenant with some misgivings: I felt it was now to be about money and not the club.4. I am very worried about the current proposals. I have read Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) documents and I completed the consultation questionnaire.5. I understand that Mr Kassam (or his business) owns the actual stadium but has not in fact required the club to vacate the premises. I am very worried about the lack of transparency in respect of the club's reasons for moving, and OCC's failure to require the club fully to explain why it proposes to abandon the current stadium. I cannot understand why OCC refuses to say why the club cannot stay at the existing stadium.6. I am unable to determine how, or by which democratic process, the OCC 'seven priorities' were first established - and this lack of rigour and transparency extends throughout the proposal and consultation. In any event, I cannot see how the 'seven priorities' have been met, given that the officer says that they have only been 'mostly' addressed.7. Building a stadium would mean a tragic loss of green belt land. I believe that maintaining the green belt is essential for the environment, for biodiversity, for residents' mental health, and for giving physical form to a community identity.8. The club's proposed 'shared open spaces' would be no substitute for the loss of the green belt.9. The proposals do not meet the OCC net zero objective: they do not take into account the whole life carbon investment in a new building, or the environmental costs of the destruction of the old building. The football club quotes RIBA criteria but offers no actual calculus for examination of the environmental cost of site preparation, transport infrastructure, the new buildings: this is especially negligent in a time of climate crisis.10. The kindest thing to say about the football club's suggestions for transport is that they are imaginative. I have cycled to the existing stadium (both to watch football and for other purposes) and I would guess that fewer than two dozen supporters travel by cycle. It is simply unreal to suggest that supporters will walk or cycle to the new stadium.11. The club offers no evidence of public transport being a successful solution to the lack of car parking in any other existing stadium. The parking demands of visitors to the stadium will conflict with the existing users of the Water Eaton Park & Ride, which is often full on Saturdays.12. The proposal is lacking in the detail of how the stadium might look from outside the site. There are no decent artist's impressions to show how a stadium, hotel and other facilities will be successfully and sympathetically integrated into the countryside.13. Talking of countryside, some of the land the club proposes to take is described as 'ancient woodland'. How can this loss be justified?14. Local taxpayers are funding many of the costs of the proposal. Local residents would

bear the price - environmental, noise, disturbance, traffic, delays, dirt - while all profit will accrue to overseas owners. This is a failed model, as we have seen so disastrously with the water industry. Just as the water companies did, the club proposes to make various unenforceable 'commitments'. Local residents will bear the environmental and financial costs when the club fails to make good on its promises, while the overseas owners will extract their profit.

15. I attended the Oxford North Consultation. I asked a planner how residents might commute to Oxford. "They can cycle down the canal," was the reply. I asked if had cycled down the canal path, with its dog walkers, parents with buggies, bird watchers and so on. No, he had not. Oh dear. We discussed the loss of green belt. I got the firm impression that permission for Oxford North was granted on the basis that there would be no further development on the Green Belt between Oxford and Kidlington.

16. The BBC reported (on 2 November 2021) that the club's new Indonesian owner, Aninda Bakrie, said when purchasing a share from a Thai businessman, that any development would have to be sustainable, and at the core of his aims. (He said this as part of Indonesia's delegation to COP26 in Glasgow). A key part of sustainability in building is avoiding any unnecessary reconstruction - and this is now RIBA policy. Why is OCC failing to hold the owner of the club to his promises?

17. It may be my failure adequately to scrutinise OCC documents but I have been unable to find a list of OCC members and officers who support Oxford United.

18. I would be most grateful if you would kindly take my views into account.

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22/04/2024 13:57:45

Attachments