

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	Andrew Hawkes
Address	72 Kestrel Way,Bicester,OX26 6XZ
Type of Comment	Support
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>As a Cherwell District Council resident I would like to strongly support the application for a new stadium for OUFC and my rationale is below:</p> <p>The proposed stadium site [the triangle] is a better site compared to the original site of Stratfield Brake. Building the stadium on the triangle, which is not currently publicly accessible, means Kidlington' residents will not lose any useable green space. The main playing fields at Stratfield Brake are no longer considered for development so Stratfield Brake, the land immediately south of the triangle and the planned public green space at the tip of the triangle will maintain a green barrier between Oxford and Kidlington and there'll be a net gain of publicly accessible green space in the area as a result. OUFC have pledged to maintain Stratfield Brake which will save Kidlington Parish Council a six figure sum to use for the benefit of the people of Kidlington.</p> <p>Logistically, the triangle is perfect thanks to the very close proximity ofOxfordParkway Station. Oxford Parkway is on the East West Rail [EWR] route and from 2025 it will be possible to travel from Parkway to Bletchley. From Bletchley its possible to travel directly to Milton Keynes which is on the West Coast mainline thus making the triangle nationally accessible by train from 2025, a year before OUFC need to move in. Once the route is fully complete (funding to complete was confirmed in March's budget) EWR will connect with the Midland Main Line, West Coast Main Line, East Coast Main Line, West Anglia Main Line and connect to the Great Western Railway so home and away fans from all over the country can travel by train to the triangle. (Evidence: https://youtu.be/b6sItYzI6Ts?feature=shared).</p> <p>The newly renovated and larger Oxford Station will have increased capacity by 2026 which will make it easier for fans to get the triangle via Oxford. All of this makes it extremely likely fans will travel to the triangle by train so its also extremely likely that OUFC will meet their target of the vast majority of fans arriving by non car methods and this is covered in detail in the plans. Oxford Parkway is operated by Chiltern Railways who also operate Wembley Stadium Station so they are experts at getting crowds through stations and onto trains.</p> <p>Also on the Oxford Parkway site is the park and ride and Peartree park and ride is also nearby, a 5 minutes shuttle bus journey away. Oxfordshire County Council's park and ride usage data on twitter shows there are approx 2000 spaces available at Oxford Parkway and Peartree park and rides every Saturday afternoon (example: https://twitter.com/OxonTravel/status/1756283342490665049?s=19). Shuttle buses could get fans from Peartree to The Triangle in under five minutes. The plans show buses may run from all P&Rs on matchdays. By 2026 there will also be a new park and ride in Eynsham which will is great for Witney based fans. shows there is great off-street parking which is reasonably priced so will not put fans off from using it and generate an income to the public purse. This mitigates the fear that the small number who may arrive at car will park on residential roads in Kidlington. There are also large high sided vehicle spaces at Oxford Parkway which would be perfect for away fan coaches and will keep them from parking on roads too and the plans show OUFC will work with OCC to utilise these.</p>

The Triangle is further away from homes than the old proposed site at Stratfield Brake and further away from homes than the Kassam is now and what The Manor was. Roads provide a barrier between Kidlington and the stadium so the stadium will not be intrusive.

Concerns about traffic can be managed as they are at stadiums around the UK every week where temporary road closures are commonplace. The plans show any road closures would be extremely time limited and will only be needed when ticket sales are high. Road closures will only be very occasionally needed at off peak traffic times (the vast majority of OUFC games are played at 3pm on a Saturday afternoon or 7.45pm on a Tuesday evening) every other week at the very most during the football season only. Roads will be reopened whilst the game is in progress. Frieze Way, a dual carriageway, will provide a more than suitable alternative route for the extremely brief period of time Oxford Road may need to be shut. However should the very occasional and time limited closure be unpalatable then it's great to see that marshalled crossings as well as additional toucan crossings are proposed alongside a possible footbridge. The entrance and exit to Parkway is already traffic light controlled and there is a control box there that can be used to manually control the lights on matchdays to ensure a smooth flow of traffic away from the area. All of the above crossing and traffic solutions combined with the proposed new stepped access to Parkway will improve access all year round to the stadium, train station and park and ride for the local community at no cost to the public purse.

Fixtures are released in June for the upcoming football season so residents will be aware of when there is a game and can plan accordingly if needed. The works currently underway on the Kidlington roundabout are well timed and will improve pedestrian, bus and cycle access to Bicester Road, Oxford Road, Freize Way and therefore the triangle. And inconvenience will be temporary and for a few hours every other week.

The plans show that by using the latest in modern architectural techniques light and noise will be mostly contained within the bowl of the stadium mitigating concerns over noise and light pollution.

The new stadium proposal with everything within the stadium footprint, will use the bare minimum of green belt land whilst not being too small. Brentford built their larger 17250 capacity stadium and ancillary developments on a site just under 8 acres, the triangle is 11 acres. OUFC, a loved 130-year-old Oxfordshire institution who do so much in the community, are deserving of a tiny slither of green belt to ensure their future. This will also stop this land inevitably falling into the hands of developers who are not a fundamental part of Oxfordshire life like OUFC are. It's clear the circumstances surrounding the ending of OUFC's lease and the existential threat to OUFC's future caused by potentially becoming homeless clearly meets the needs based criteria to allow greenbelt development. A detailed alternative site search has been conducted by OUFC and found no other suitable sites.

New stadia can transform an areas local economy and Brighton and Hove Albion are a good case study for that. An Economic Impact Report shows the staggering contribution of over 600m to the local economy during the 2022/23 season alone (evidence and more information: <https://www.brightonandhovealbion.com/news/3772386/albions-600m-contribution-to-the-local-economy>) There are many similarities between OUFC and Brighton and Hove Albion, for example, in the 2010/11 season prior to moving to The Amex Stadium, Brighton were in League One as OUFC are now. Their average attendance that season was 7351, ours last season was 8393. The population of East Sussex is 558k and then population of Oxfordshire is 687k so there is actually greater potential of a similar boost to the local economy happening here should this proposal be approved. They too had stadium issues but have been extremely successful since securing a permanent, sustainable home of their own. Like the triangle, Brighton's stadium is next door to a train station. A new stadium can galvanise success on the pitch, stimulate investment into the local area, boost house prices and increase the public purse significantly as well as producing increased levels of civic identity and local pride. (Research shows house prices near stadiums improve: <https://www.purepropertyfinance.co.uk/news/stadium-property-prices-these-are-the-new-football-stadiums-currently-being-built/>)

The owners of OUFC are extremely competent businessmen and people of significant means and in the case of Erick Thohir have experience and a proven track record of running much larger football clubs (Inter Milan, Italy and DC United, USA) and successfully delivering a new stadium in Washington DC for DC United. They are members of the International Olympic Committee and other sport governing bodies so have a clear passion for sport and an understanding of sports governance.

The proposed stadium will be the first all electric stadium in the UK and will be something for Oxfordshire and the Cherwell District to be proud of. The design of the stadium and surrounding landscaping is extremely aesthetically pleasing and will enhance the area. The

triangle site is slightly below street level so the stadium will appear smaller than it is from the surrounding roads and the plans show a significant number of trees which hide the stadium and a result in net biodiversity gain.

The application is extremely detailed and leaves no stone unturned and appears to meet meet all legal requirements. It addresses issues around travel, biodiversity, parking, air quality (all electric), noise and light concerns and pedestrian movement in great detail and shows sensible and workable solutions for all of them.

Given all of the above its my opinion Cherwell District Council should approve the application at the first time of asking and without delay.

Received Date

14/03/2024 17:52:50

Attachments