

Comment for planning application 24/00539/F

Application Number	<input type="text" value="24/00539/F"/>
Location	<input type="text" value="Land To The East Of Stratfield Brake And West Of Oxford Parkway Railway Station Oxford Road Kidlington"/>
Proposal	<input type="text" value="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	<input type="text" value="Laura Bell"/>
Organisation Name	<input type="text" value="Chris Darley"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="21 Stockey End, Abingdon, Oxon, OX132NF"/>
Type of Comment	<input type="text" value="Support"/>
Type	<input type="text" value="neighbour"/>
Comments	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I am sure you have been receiving lots of responses to this application, which undoubtedly is a talking point around the county. I for one am most certainly in favour of this proposal, and would expect the relevant authorities to be working with Oxford United to help ensure the future of the club is not put into jeopardy. Oxford United Football Club are unique in Oxfordshire, they are the counties only professional sports team and a focal point of the community. I for one started watching them in the mid 1990's as a child, taken by my parents when they could along with my brother to watch my favourite passion and over the last 30 years have experienced the full experience of a football supporting. From the heartbreak of leaving The Manor, getting relegated in 2006 to promotions in 2010 at Wembley (where over 30,000 people went to support the club) and again to League One in 2016. I absolutely love this club, despite the numerous issues that we face in the current facility at the Kassam Stadium.</p> <p>I also attended the local Soccer Schools at John Mason School in Abingdon as a child that were run by the football club, I was never the best player there but I absolutely loved playing and meeting new people. The sessions were run by the likes of Peter Rhodes-Brown ("Rosie"), former player and club stalwart who was brilliantly engaging with all the kids and encouraged their love of exercise and sport. The highlight was always the end of term awards, or the holiday sessions, when first team players from Oxford United would attend which was incredibly exciting!</p> <p>As a 35 year old man, Oxford United is a big part of my life and has been for approaching 30 years. It is an integral part of the community, just look at the pride spread across the county last weekend after we demolished Peterborough 5-0 and the growing excitement of making the League One playoffs this season. However the sad reality is the future of the club is in real jeopardy, we are approaching the end of our tenure at the Kassam Stadium. Although this stadium is only 25 years old the facilities are really not fit for purpose and are a hindrance to the football club due to the high rental costs charged by Mr Kassam. The fact we cannot access the site out of matchday or make use of the facilities has always been sad. The scary thought it that my 14 month old daughter, and my second daughter arriving in the summer of 2024, may grow up without being able to witness Oxford United playing in the county unless we get the ground issues sorted.</p> <p>The site at The Triangle was not the clubs first choice, years were spent by various owners and Directors identifying the ideal location, but unfortunately the option to look at developing Stratfield Brake was barred. However The Triangle, although smaller than wished for which has meant plans have been reduced (such as a much needed new ice hockey facility for the City), has been identified as the site to move forward with. This could be an ideal location with easy access to public transport, I for one would certainly look to catch the train from Radley to arrive at the ground rather than currently driving to ensure I'm there in plenty of time to soak up the atmosphere and catch up with friends.</p>

I really hope the council works with the club on their plans and approves them. What I am not asking for is for the council to approve without any due investigations and scrutiny, I want the club to be held to account for their submissions to ensure the highest quality of facility is approved and built. Imagine Oxfordshire having a world class venue, one the football club owns and can make use of all week to offer education and physical support to local schools and children, to help local charities, to provide football fans with a facility to be proud of and show off to visiting members of the public.

I really hope it is shown the council supports the football club on this, and that certain dubious local councillors are not allowed to feed lies to the public (and disappear when challenged) which block this amazing opportunity. The facility the club currently uses is not fit for purpose and I really hope lessons are learnt from previous mistake which will allow the club to work with the council to produce a truly amazing, once-in-a-lifetime facility that meets a long list of criteria (including but not limited to eco-friendly, encouraging the use of public transport, sustainable, financially prudent, a gathering place for friends to connect).

Please do hold the club to account, but please do see the vast list of benefits that approving this proposal would bring to thousands of engaged residents locally.

Many thanks for your time.

Chris

Received Date

17/04/2024 16:16:45

Attachments