

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	
Name	Kelvin Markham
Address	43 Croft Avenue, Kidlington, OX5 2HT
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I object strongly to this application for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Policy and Guidance: No evidence of 'very special circumstances' has been demonstrated by the applicant. The club appears to have negotiated itself 'homeless'. Many supporters, and the club itself, appear to equate the natural expiry of a lease/licence with 'eviction' from the club's current stadium. It is, however, on public record that the applicant's landlord is open to them remaining at the current stadium. Firoka wrote to County Council in January 2023 to confirm this was the case, and recently confirmed as much in an article reported in the Oxford Mail. Even if it were the case that there is no option for the club to remain at the Kassam Stadium, the alternative site search conducted by the applicant appears to be deficient and it is unclear why other sites of a similar size have been disregarded.Traffic Congestion: proposed road closures (or "diversions") on a key route such as the Oxford Road are a completely unacceptable solution to deal with fans accessing/egressing the site. This will cause traffic gridlock in the local area. In April 2023, Tim Williams, CEO of the club addressed County Councillors and stated that a footbridge would be constructed. This should form part of this application.Parking provision - football-related: the applicant's existing stadium has plenty of space, and yet still suffers with antisocial parking in the local vicinity. This development will create significant issues for the local community on a regular basis. No credible evidence has been presented to demonstrate that this development will do anything other than causing parking chaos for local residents. The applicant proposes Controlled Parking Zones and so clearly recognises parking will be problematic to manage. What will stop fans using free car parks such as Stratfield Brake Sports Ground and Exeter Hall; displacing members of the community who currently rely on these to access local facilities? Local residents should be specifically consulted on the issue of parking and proposed management before this application proceeds any further. The application will result in a significant loss of amenity and a source of disturbance to local residents. Previous consultation(s) / engagement with the local community have been completely inadequate.Parking provision - other: The application anticipates 580 events (such as conferences/trade shows) per annum. With minimal parking on the site itself, this will put pressure on the adjacent Park & Ride. This is unacceptable, as it is a community facility designed to enable the local community to access Central Oxford and local Hospitals. The stadium (if it went ahead; and I sincerely hope it does not) should be limited to sports use only with no commercial use).Local Plan: this site was acquired by Oxfordshire County Council to create a gap between Kidlington and Oxford. This development will allow these urban areas to merge. This is contrary to the Local Plan. I believe the development will damage Kidlington High Street by (i) creating a competing economic hub and pulling footfall away; and (ii) proposed road closures on match days will significantly disrupt traffic around Kidlington and

prevent/deter visitors from the south frequenting amenities in the High Street.

6. Impact on Trees: it is outrageous that the applicant proposes the destruction of mature oak trees which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. These trees cannot be easily replaced and so will have a detrimental impact on wildlife they support.

7. Design, appearance and materials: The structure will dominate the landscape at the entrance to Kidlington - in terms of height, it will be completely inconsistent with the low rise housing in the village. The design materials do not appear to be particularly environmentally-sustainable, which is disappointing given that the club plans to jettison its existing modern stadium in order to build another on Green Belt. It is unclear what the Kassam Stadium would be used for if OUFC leave.

8. Community Benefits: The applicant does not have funding in place for this scheme, which calls into question promises made regarding social/community benefits.

9. Ecology: This is clearly an extremely biodiverse site. Rare Barbastelle bats and a harvest mouse nest have been recorded amongst numerous other species. This site will become of increasing importance given the scale of development on other sites in the area recently released from the Green Belt, and it should be protected.

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Attachments