

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	Trevor Cuss
Address	7 Blenheim Road, Kidlington, OX5 2HP
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I preface my remarks by stating that I love football. I am 77 years of age and have been involved in football all my life as Player, Player- Manager, Manager, Physio, Hellenic League Secretary, Club Secretary, Press Officer, Radio "pundit" and Independent Chairman of the Kidlington Community Association. If, which I do not accept, OUFC have to move, then "The Triangle" on the outskirts of Kidlington is not a suitable, safe and workable place for them to construct their new Stadium for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Little or no consideration has been given to the safety and wellbeing of the residents of Kidlington and beyond. There are a Fire Station, Ambulance Station, and Police Headquarters within the village all of which at any time could be called upon to make blue light runs in to and past the proposed stadium site. Any delay occasioned by match day traffic etc. could put in danger the lives of those requiring emergency action.2. Further danger will be occasioned by the violence applicable to football crowds generally in respect of which OUFC are no shrinking violets. There have been many references in the Oxford Mail to violent incidents and arrests and only today the Oxford Mail Page 4 has an article entitled; "United report "increase" in anti-social behaviour level" The Club have stated that they would remind "supporters of the importance of their behaviour both in and out of the stadium" Why should the residents of Kidlington be subjected to this potential danger? When Reading FC came to town there were numerous arrests. What would happen if Reading FC or Swindon FC are required by fixtures to be visitors to Kidlington or worse still what if Reading FC decide that their present difficulties could be resolved by moving to the Kassam Stadium as is mooted by internet keyboard warriors from time to time? In particular these local derbies are usually played either as Bank Holiday fixtures or evening fixtures which would present insurmountable problems for the Club and the Police.3 Oxfordshire County Council have been pressurised in to providing land for OUFC on the basis that they will be homeless from 2026. This is not so. If the Club have a Business Tenancy then they should have served the appropriate notice requiring an extension of the Tenancy. If the land was subject to licence then there would surely provision for extension of the licence. The respective local authorities should see through this conduct for what it is. The Club have made themselves deliberately homeless in the expectation that planning rules and normal commercial rules will not apply to the local professional football club. This is Green Belt Land and the only buffer between the City of Oxford and the village of Kidlington. The owners of the Kassam Stadium have made it clear that the Club do not have to leave.4 There is no need for any further hotels or business outlets in this area. Existing hotels are rarely fully occupied and the village centre commercial life and shopping area is dying on its feet. No one will want to come out on match days thereby adding fuel to the fire of downturn of trade. It is facetious of OUFC to say that a football ground will revitalise the area. It will not. Locals will be frightened to go out on match days. The threat of violence surrounding football matches is something that you as the planning authority must provide answers to but unfortunately football clubs will say anything to gain the appropriate support.5. It appears that there will be regular need for road closures. This is a burden which the residents of Kidlington should not be subjected to. .Not only will there be danger due to delay with emergency services but traffic jams and gridlock. OUFC make big play of the fact that most supporters will travel by train. Really? With respect this is sheer nonsense. What about the away fans? Certainly most Oxford fans who travel to away matches do not travel

by train even for the most convenient train accessible fixtures and most away fans will not travel by train either. The grant of planning permission will result in traffic jams and widespread parking issues. It would be quite wrong to impose this on the residents of Kidlington or even worse the spectre of unwanted residents parking schemes. There will be little or no provision for car parking on site so parking will be in the Park and Ride which means that shoppers will be sidelined on match days or on the side streets throughout the village including the nearby Garden City and Sainsbury's Car Park. Kidlington is already blighted on weekdays by commuters who park in the side streets and catch the bus in to the City. Please do not extend the need for parking spaces to Saturdays too.

6The Council must take in to account Air and Noise Pollution as well as Light Pollution. Whilst OUFC do their best to convince objectors that their plans are "totally green" to place 16000 people in one place for 2-3 hours can only cause severe strain on the infrastructure. This is not assisted by existing plans to build many many residential homes and trading estates all around the site. As to noise why should the residents of Kidlington be subjected to incessant drumming, chanting and foul language as well as normal crowd cheering? When the then Clerk to Kidlington Parish Council attempted to set up a Motocross Practice Track on the Triangle the operation was quickly closed down on the basis that it was too noisy! This was to be a once or twice each month facility. As to light pollution I should draw your attention to the proximity of Kidlington London Airport. On occasions in days gone by Officers informally advised that Floodlighting systems were unlikely to be approved due to possible difficulties with conflict with the airport. I accept that times have changed!

7.I would respectfully suggest that to grant planning permission for the Triangle would be a loss of valuable Green Belt land. This is already under serious danger due to the apparent desire of your Council to meet Oxford City Councils alleged un- met housing need. Closure of the Gap between Kidlington and Oxford would be contrary to Green Belt Policy and in my view is a step too far. There are no "very special circumstances" to justify desecrating or destroying the last piece of green belt between Kidlington and Oxford.

8.As a Council Tax payer I am very concerned as to the possible loss of this valuable piece of land. Despite many attempts I and many others have not been able to ascertain the Premium(if any) and the proposed annual rent for the land. OUFC have a track record of failure to complete stadium projects in that when moving from Headington to Littlemore they were financially unable to complete the construction which resulted in them losing control of the land to Mr. Kassam or his business organisations. The Club accounts for the last three years do not inspire confidence that the same will not happen again so that the Council could be in danger of losing effective control of this land or worse land left with a half constructed stadium on it. As planners you have a duty to ensure that this beautiful area will be protected against this.

9 Finally if permission is granted there will be three stadiums within a very limited area namely the existing Kassam Stadium in Littlemore, the existing Velocity Stadium in Marston and the proposed new stadium. Oxford City FC have made it clear that their existing facility provides complete community facilities for the whole of the surrounding district so OUFC contention that they will provide much needed community facilities falls away. What happens if all three stadia are in use at the same time beggars belief!!

I do not wish to see OUFC homeless but if they genuinely need a new ground the Triangle is not in any way the proper place. They and their supporters have to respect the wishes of the local community and in my judgment other than OUFC fans there is little support in Kidlington for the proposed development. I therefore strongly object to the proposal.

Received Date

20/04/2024 16:17:35

Attachments