

FAO Laura Bell
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Date: 11 April 2024

Our ref: 66350/01/MLW/AG/31428655v1

Dear Ms Bell

Planning application ref. 24/00539/F: Land East of Stratfield Brake and West of Oxford Parkway Railway Station, Oxford Road, Kidlington

Introduction

Lichfields is acting on behalf of the landowner group, Checker Hall Ltd, University of Oxford, and Merton College, who are together working to bring forward development of allocated site PR6b Land West of Oxford Road.

We are grateful for the opportunity to make representations on behalf of the landowner group in relation to the application at Land East of Stratfield Brake and West of Oxford Parkway Railway Station (ref. 24/00539/F) for the proposed new Oxford United Football Club stadium development. Allocated site PR6b is located approximately 150 metres to the south-east of the stadium site. There are a number of other allocated sites also located in close proximity to the stadium site.

This scheme represents a highly significant project for North Oxford. The landowner group recognise the many strengths of the scheme and the numerous public benefits that would be generated.

However, this letter draws attention to three key areas of concern: highways and transport, visual impact, and amenity impacts. We highlight that allocated site PR6b seems to have been omitted from the analysis and assessment provided in the stadium application. This forms a key oversight and must be rectified in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of impacts of the proposed development. Full detail on our concerns is provided in the body of this letter.

Highways and Transport

On match days, there will be a large number of pedestrians crossing and walking alongside Oxford Road, accessing bus stops and the station at Oxford Parkway. Oxford Road is a busy highway and therefore pedestrian safety must form a key consideration in the assessment of the stadium application.

In order to mitigate pedestrian safety concerns, the transport strategy for the stadium proposal involves diverting traffic away from Oxford Road for 30-minute periods on match-days to enable fans to safely access and egress the stadium. This represents a significant intervention in the local highway network. The landowner group is concerned that such an intervention would result in significant impacts upon future residents of the allocated sites being able to easily access their homes and travel in the local area.

All proposed junctions and turning points for the stadium site should be considered in relation to proposed junctions for nearby allocated sites to ensure that they are able to safely operate alongside one another.

Whilst the stadium application seeks to encourage visitors to the site to travel via public transport/ foot/ bicycle as much as possible, there will remain an inevitable increase in the traffic volume and associated congestion on the local highways network. The stadium application should provide a cumulative assessment of the impact of the proposal on the highways network, accounting for the allocated sites including PR6b.

Pedestrian and cycle access to the stadium from Parkway should be an integral part of the wider network connecting the PR6 sites and the stadium should be coherently connected with the emerging area wide network of pedestrian and cycle routes. Specifically, it would seem most appropriate for there to be a dedicated pedestrian and cycle link between the stadium and Parkway involving new bridge connections over the railway and A34.

Visual Impact

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted as part of the stadium application, which assesses the visual impacts of the proposal on the surrounding landscape. However, no views of the proposed stadium from site PR6b were included in the LVIA.

Based on other views included in the LVIA, it seems that the existing vegetation alongside the A34 would obscure the view from site PR6b in its existing use and this was the rationale for it not being included in the assessment. However, the LVIA did not account for the potential of there being buildings of 2+ storeys on the Golf Course site and what this would mean by way of views and visual impact on future residents.

Further assessment should therefore be undertaken to determine the visual impact of the proposed stadium development on the allocated sites after they have been built out.

Amenity Impacts

The stadium proposal would result in some impact on future residents of our site in terms of lighting, noise, and air quality. Whilst the supporting statement deems that all effects would be minor adverse / negligible, the impact on future residents of site PR6b has not been considered. This should therefore be added to the assessment to ensure the impact on future residents is fully accounted for. The assessment should also provide a cumulative assessment of the lighting, noise and air quality effects, in conjunction with the allocated sites.

Conclusion

We trust that the above comments are useful and assist in the determination of planning application ref. 24/00539/F. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Michael Lowndes

Senior Director

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