

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	Mark Dilks
Address	48 Laburnum Crescent, Kidlington, OX5 1HB
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>I have the following concerns regarding this planning application, which I believe the Council should address.</p> <p>Traffic congestion and road closures The local road infrastructure currently suffers from congestion which will only be exacerbated by the influx of 17,000 stadium users. The additional road traffic will result in congestion which coupled to road closures and delays to public transport will cause massive disruption for Kidlington residents who will find it slow, challenging and almost impossible to leave or enter the village when the stadium is in use. When this is considered alongside the proposed housing developments for 4,500 homes in the immediate vicinity of the stadium, the scale of the problem will be enormous.</p> <p>OUFC's plans do not set out in any detail how they will minimize private car use and move the over 80% of OUFC fans who currently travel by car to sustainable modes of transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o There is no evidence that stadium users will forego the convenience of travelling by car.o OUFC do not have any influence over the transport choices of opposition team supporters.o OUFC have not shared a realistic strategy. <p>Road closures are set to last for at least 30 minutes. 30 minutes sounds highly optimistic to allow 17,000 people to leave the stadium area safely, so we should expect far longer delays in practice.</p> <p>One of the planned road closures affects Oxford Road. Oxfordshire County Council have publicly stated that they oppose closing Oxford Road, which presumably means they object to the Stadium proposal as a consequence.</p> <p>Local bus routes will be significantly disrupted between Kidlington and Oxford.</p> <p>How will it be possible to move freely on Oxford Road on event days? What consideration has been given to the safety of non-stadium user cyclists and pedestrians who want to use the pedestrian paths and cycleways on event days and have to negotiate a route through thousands of other people?</p> <p>A footbridge between Oxford Parkway and the stadium is needed to ensure the safe movement of stadium users and avoid road closures. As a consequence it should be an integral part of this planning application, and should not be treated separately. At the very least the success of the stadium application should be contingent on the successful application for a footbridge.</p> <p>The inability to move freely will adversely affect the local economy.</p>

Parking

184 parking spaces and 2 coach bays in total on site is inadequate for 17,000 stadium users based on how current supporters travel to matches and the absence of a detailed and realistic plan to stop supporters travelling by private car. Where will stadium users park?

Users will park on local residential streets putting residents' safety at risk. More traffic on residential streets, double parking, and increased air pollution will follow as a result. A CPZ is not an effective deterrent (a fine shared amongst a full car equates to cheap parking), and creates disruption for local residents.

The proposal does not include plans which preclude stadium users filling up Park & Rides, Oxford Parkway and other public car parks preventing non-stadium users from parking in them.

The inability to move freely will adversely affect the local economy.

Green Belt

O UFC have not provided evidence that 'very special circumstances' exist to justify development on Green Belt land.

O UFC claim that they have to find a new home because the owners of the Kassam stadium will not extend the current lease. An email from Mr Firoz Kassam from 20 January 2023 highlights that neither O UFC nor Oxford City Council have engaged with Firoka over the end of O UFC's current lease at the Kassam. Additionally, Firoka have publicly stated that O UFC could remain at the Kassam.

Cherwell District Council should investigate O UFC's claims and contact Firoka to establish their position on the lease and the option to renew to bring clarity to the situation and ensure integrity of the process.

The environmental benefits of moving from Kassam to the triangle are dubious. Tearing down one concrete structure to build another on the Green Belt does not amount to an environmental benefit. Additionally, transport links to the Kassam will be improved with the Cowley Branch Line and mirror the hoped for benefits of stadium users using rail to travel to the triangle site.

Building on the Green Belt will reduce the stretch between Oxford and Kidlington to a nominal amount. Much of this will be unusable as schematics suggest it includes the Kidlington Roundabout. The planned garden area will be a similar size to the Kidlington Roundabout which truly is nominal when you consider that the local population amounts to tens of thousands.

Much of the economic benefits could be achieved through activity at Kassam. Any benefits of the triangle site will be offset by the adverse effects of traffic and parking issues the stadium will bring.

Nature conservation & environmental impact

Increased road traffic and associated congestion will significantly increase levels of air pollution which will harm the health of Kidlington residents.

Light and noise pollution and the actions of 16,000 stadium users render the proposed wildlife-rich green area as unrealistic. It is important to investigate this as it is a key part of the proposal's strategy for 10% biodiversity gain.

There is no evidence in O UFC's proposals to suggest that biodiversity will be improved through the construction of a stadium. Habitat fragmentation can only be avoided by not developing the site.

The proposal is at odds with Oxford Council declared climate emergency and will result in greater environmental deterioration and a huge increase in carbon emissions. The stadium will have a deleterious impact on biodiversity. At a time of climate emergency when biodiversity is universally recognized as a critical element in avoiding environmental catastrophe, we should not build on or near green spaces which already encourage biodiversity. Similarly, the proposal will introduce habitat fragmentation which will undermine the integrity of existing ecosystems. Developing the triangle site will have serious negative consequences for the adjacent woodland and the neighbouring Stratfield Brake site ecosystems. All of these systems are interrelated and interdependent.

The timing of the surveys missed key dates for breeding birds and are not currently accurate. It would be advisable to repeat the surveys at the correct time of year.

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Attachments