

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="C Dicks"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="65 Lock Crescent,Kidlington,OX5 1HF"/>
Type of Comment	<input type="text" value="Objection"/>
Type	<input type="text" value="neighbour"/>
Comments	<p>The proposal should be rejected for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.This is protected green belt land, of which little elsewhere will remain after the approved housing developments around Kidlington have been built. No exceptional need has been justified which would allow Cherwell District Council to grant Planning permission.2. There is no scope for the development in the Cherwell Local plan.3. Evidence has emerged (reported in the Oxford Times) that it is OUFC who have got themselves in this position by declining the opportunity to extend their lease at Kassam, so they can present the simple narrative they have no choice but to move. However this is reported as not the case, and they should be challenged on this.4. Closure of Banbury Road is unacceptable. Residents of Kidlington and north Oxford will face huge delays on cars or buses every other Saturday and various weekday evenings while thousands of fans travel. It is clear the proposed pedestrian bridge is a fig leaf offered now but will be conveniently dropped later on by claiming it is unviable. It will be very challenging and expensive to build over the Banbury Road, A34 and railway, and would look very obtrusive.5. Use of the Park and Ride for fan parking conflicts with its purpose, which is to allow residents to travel by bus or train into Oxford. How are residents expected to travel on the bus and train during match days? How will I collect my elderly parents arriving at Oxford Parkway station just after the end of a match? Or will I be expected to plan my weekends around a football club?6. Other parking will be severely limited for residents. Trips by car to Sainsburys, Stratfield Brake sports ground and Gosford Leisure Centre will be impossible when matches are on. Schools and local businesses will offer unofficial parking on their grounds, creating an unregulated gridlock on local back streets.7. The sustainability promoted by the club does not address the embodied carbon of the existing stadium, which is barely two decades old. This is a huge negative and renders the mitigations OUFC propose as mostly greenwash. Promoting it as the first all electric stadium is hardly ground breaking in this era of heat pumps and solar panels. They would struggle to pass Building Regulations with gas boilers.8. Two thirds of the Parish have voted against the development in the Parish Council poll.9. The Oxfordshire County Council consultations have been clearly biased, with questions such as "will the development improve sporting facilities in the area", which are impossible to disagree with. These considerations have been given equal weight as the serious impact the development will have. OCC have a vested interest in this as the landowners.

10. Cited wider benefits for the community do not stand up to scrutiny. Supposed employment opportunities need to be offset by jobs lost at the Kassam. Most jobs would be minimum wage and/or casual hours around match days. Kidlington already has ample employment opportunities, with many unfilled vacant positions in hospitality such as pubs and restaurants.

11. The impact on the adjacent Stratfield Brake nature reserve will be severe. In Covid lockdown this space was a huge asset for local residents. The casual use of it by fans after matches for a few drinks will create litter. The light pollution from the ground on winter evenings will be detrimental to wildlife.

In summary there is a lack of support for this development which will have a significant negative impact on the day to day lives of local residents. This is a commercial development for hotels and conference facilities on the edge of Oxford, with the football stadium a necessary addition to secure Planning.

The case for needing to move has been mis-represented. If OUFC do wish to move, a transparent masterplanning exercise should be undertaken to identify the best location. Instead they are presenting this as an emergency situation and hoping to avoid full scrutiny.

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Attachments