

## Lynne Baldwin

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**From:** Caroline Johnson <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 22 April 2024 20:06  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Planning Application - 24/00539/F.

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Madam/Sir,

I would like to object to this application on the following grounds:

**Design, appearance and materials** – the proposed development is disproportionate in size at ~24m high, will overwhelm surrounding buildings, landscapes and the planned new developments. It is overdevelopment of a small site and is judged by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to have an ongoing significant negative impact.

**Highway safety** – the proposal that the Oxford Road should be closed for a period (30 to 60 minutes possibly more ) before and after every match is unacceptable and is made despite Oxfordshire CC' statement that the road cannot be closed. It is therefore inconceivable that OCC would not object to this proposal.

People other than stadium users will be expected to take a longer route, increasing road miles, congestion, pollution and potentially accidents. This is an unacceptable impact on local residents particularly given the frequency with which this would occur.

The proposal is made on the assumption that Oxford Road is used only by vehicles and that the diversion is reasonable. It is not a reasonable diversion to impose on cyclists. It is not a reasonable imposition to make on people arriving or departing from the railway station.

It is unacceptable to close the Oxford Road to emergency vehicles. This is the route to the JR from the A34 and North Oxfordshire and for fire service and police vehicles from Kidlington to route into Oxford. If it has been necessary to open LTN routes in Oxford to emergency vehicles it is reasonable to assume that there is a requirement to keep Oxford Road open.

The Oxford Road is a designated alternative route from the A34 in the event of closure, a not uncommon event. How would it be proposed that this would be managed if OUFC were playing, would the A34 traffic go to Frieze Way, Peartree, Wolvercote and then to Cutteslowe roundabout to continue their journey.

The plans on shuttle buses, coaches discharging fans are half baked as are the plans for maintaining public transport.

**Traffic Congestion** – effectively there has been no planning for traffic. The wrong traffic modelling tools has been used and the correct modelling is only now being performed. CDC cannot make decisions in the absence of data. The public need to be given opportunity to comment on this modelling when it is available.

The proposal to close the road is an abdication of responsibility to plan or an admission that it is not possible to plan.

A pedestrian bridge is required and must be part of the planning proposal for the stadium. It cannot be separate as that risks the stadium being progressed without work on the bridge.

OUFC has no control over the transport choices of its fans. Despite claiming that the site gives a high transport sustainability they are clearly assuming high levels of car use and are assuming use of the P&Rs. The parking provision on the site is proposed at 184 spaces and 2 coach spaces (home and away teams?). This will inevitably push parking into the P&R with consequent impact on use of them by people wishing to travel by train or to the city centre.

Use of sustainable transport cannot be claimed if people drive to a P&R and then get a shuttle bus. There are not environmental benefits to use of this site.

Cycle parking on the site is inadequate and needs to be increased so that the club makes its own provision. It should not assume use of the racks at Parkway.

How will the lives of local people be protected. How would matchday CPZ operate and be policed?

**Drainage** – the proposal states that it is not known what arrangements will be for drainage. The recent weather events have shown the need for planning for adverse quantities of rain. If Frieze Way would be the key transport link then it would be essential that all drainage is managed within the site. The current use as willow coppice is an indication that this is an area of wet ground which absorbs runoff from surrounding areas. The proposal should not be accepted if it has no plans to manage its drainage and drainage from storms.

**Nature Conservation** – the area has diverse wildlife and has a profusion of wildflowers. The Ecological surveys have been inadequate and badly timed. The current proposal in common with many planning proposals is to plant flowerbeds and presumably hang batboxes whilst claiming that an increase in biodiversity will be achieved. How will the company ensure that the areas intended for biodiversity are maintained and not used as short cuts etc. and thus compromised? They will need to be protected with a buffer zone to provide protection to the wildlife from noise and intrusion and be viewable but not accessible to the public. Both BBOWT and Cherwell DC's Ecology Officer have called for this separation and OUFC should not be permitted to ignore them.

The ecology report underestimates level and abundance of biodiversity on the site and on the adjacent but separate woodland area. How will biodiversity increase be monitored and what will be done to ensure it is delivered? How will detrimental effects on the important area of woodland caused by activity on the stadium site be managed short, medium and long term? What sanction would there be for non-compliance?

The proposed works will result in significant loss of trees. Oaks with Tree Preservation Orders are slated for removal. The TPOs are put in place for good reason and it should not be an option to remove such an important species from the eco-system. The arboricultural report seeks to write them off as not being in their prime but overlooks the ecological opportunity that aging trees offer, giving roosts and decaying matter for succession of species.

**Allocated Development Sites identified in the Local Plan** – this area of Oxfordshire has been subject to thorough examination by a Planning Inspector who approved development of other areas based on this area remaining as Green Belt and thus preserving the Kidlington Gap. No justification has been offered for this area being lost as Green Belt other than it being land that belongs to Oxfordshire County Council which could just build a football stadium. This is not good enough justification to lose a community resource of green space, carbon sink, pollution absorption etc. requires sound reasons. The application must demonstrate the very special circumstances needed to build on the Green Belt; it fails to do this. It is a matter of dispute whether the club must build a new home by 2026. The club has chosen to leave Kassam and not to seek lease extension (which the owner says would be considered) and Cherwell DC must challenge OUFC's contention that it has no option. The Alternative Sites Report is flawed and unreliable as it was pre-determined.

Cherwell DC must investigate the intended ownership structure for the stadium. Would it belong to OUFC or to holding companies. Would there be separation of the commercial ventures – hotel etc from the football club? If so the club would potentially be in the same situation at the new stadium as they are now.

The impact on Oxford City Centre of P&R being unavailable for shoppers should not be overlooked or underestimated. Even though these impact OCC rather than CDC they have a responsibility to consider them.

**Safety**- The Council has a duty to consider if this site could be safely evacuated. With one access point on to a major road how could it be evacuated in 8 minutes? Can the site be safely managed to the benefit of people using the venue, people not wishing to use the venue passing by, passing traffic? The application does not address these issues.

Caroline Johnson

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