

East Area Planning Committee

6th January 2016

Application Number: 15/02476/FUL

Decision Due by: 2nd November 2015

Proposal: Erection of spectator stand to provide 150 additional seats in North East corner of ground

Site Address: Oxford City Football Ground, Court Place Farm, Marsh Lane (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Marston Ward

Agent: Mr Tom Betts

Applicant: Mr Colin Taylor

Application called in by Councillors Clarkson, Fry, Pressel, and Munkonge over concerns raised by the Old Marston Parish Council concerning parking overspill and intensification of use.

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve planning permission for the following reasons:

Reasons for Approval

- 1 The proposed spectator stand would seek to make an efficient use of land to meet the needs of the football club to increase the number of covered spectator seats in order to meet the specific requirements of the National League and Football Association while resulting in a minimal increase in the overall stadium capacity. The stand would be a small-scale unobtrusive essential facility for this type of outdoor sports facility which is considered an appropriate building within the Green Belt. The overall size, scale, and design of the proposed stadium would be proportionate to the other structures within the stadium and would not compromise the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt. Although the proposal will result in a increase in the overall capacity of the stadium, it will generate minimal (if any) additional trips to the stadium beyond the existing situation which is acceptable in highway terms. The scheme would also provide satisfactory drainage measures. As such the proposed development would accord with the overall aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016
- 2 In considering the application, officers have had specific regard to the comments of third parties and statutory bodies in relation to the application.

However officers consider that these comments have not raised any material considerations that would warrant refusal of the applications, and any harm identified could be successfully mitigated by appropriately worded conditions.

- 3 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Materials as specified
- 4 Surface Drainage Scheme as specified

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP9 - Creating Successful New Places

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

CS2_ - Previously developed and greenfield land

SR2 - Protection of Open Air Sports Facilities

Core Strategy

CS2_ - Previously developed and greenfield land

CS4_ - Green Belt

CS11_ - Flooding

CS18_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Site History:

The site has been subject to numerous applications over the years. None of which are particularly relevant to the application.

Representations Received:

Cllr Upton, 13 White Hart, Oxford:

- I am writing as the Councillor who sits on the management committee of OXSRAD
- While I am very pleased that Oxford City have aspirations to qualify for promotion to the Football Conference Premier Division they must give much greater attention to the parking provision. There are already problems with football traffic filling up the OXSRAD car park to the detriment of its users. It is not good enough

simply to state in the Design and Access statement that "It is not considered that this proposal will generate additional match day traffic for regular league fixtures." Traffic is already a problem, and presumably they hope to gain more supporters if they are promoted. If permission is given for this, and in many ways I hope it is, please ensure that there are strict conditions around having a traffic plan that means Oxford City always provide enough stewards to ensure that OXSRAD's many disabled users can use their own car park.

43 Horseman Close

- This is a positive move not only for the football club but for the community. I'm not sure what impact this will have given the location of the additional seats on anyone living close, however, it will have a massive positive impact to the fifty odd football teams; girls, boys, disabled, veteran's, ladies and men's teams and the whole sporting community of Oxford City. It may be prudent for those opposing this to actually look at what Oxford City Football Club provides in sporting opportunities for the community and not just in Football? Given my address, it might have been useful for those who have made objections on my behalf to have spoken to me first!

Statutory Consultees:

Oxfordshire County Council Highways Authority:

- No objection
- Following the submission of additional information and clarification, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) is satisfied that the projected increase in stadium capacity as a result of the development, from 3,218 to 3,230 will generate minimal, if any, additional trip generation to the site.
- It is noted that the proposed development will neither remove nor add additional vehicle/ cycle parking at the development. The LHA is satisfied with this arrangement in light that the development will generate minimal additional trip generation to the site.
- It is recognised that current average attendance (279) at Oxford City Football club is significantly below ground capacity.
- The LHA notes the football clubs future aspirations to increase capacity of the ground to 4,000 spectators, set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This represents a 20% increase in ground capacity and the potential to generate significant additional trip generation to the site. The applicant is advised that the LHA would require a thorough assessment of the traffic impact, including a full Transport Statement, Travel Plan and parking assessment should a proposal for significantly increasing the grounds capacity be forthcoming.
- The highway network immediately adjacent to and surrounding the development site, is currently subject to significant traffic delay and congestion for a considerable part of the day. The LHA would be concerned by a development which would appear to notably increase traffic flow within this area. Additionally the ground does not lie within a Controlled Parking Zone and as such would likely incur an increase in indiscriminate parking on the highway, as a consequence of additional car trip generation to the site.
- Following submission of additional information, the county council is satisfied with proposed drainage arrangements.

Old Marston Parish Council: Concerns regarding the overdevelopment of the site and parking issues on the site and surrounding area.

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description:

1. The application is situated within Court Place Farm which is owned by Oxford City Council and comprises a large open-air sports and recreation ground on the eastern side of the Marsh Lane (B4015). The site is bordered to the North by the Northern By-pass (A40), and the residential properties of the Northway Estate, and the Peasmore Piece nature reserve to the south-east (**site plan: appendix 1**)
2. The site relates to the small-scale football stadium in the northwest corner of the recreation ground which is leased to Oxford City Football Club and accessed by a small single lane road. The stadium includes a number of small scale stands and covered terraced areas, open air terraces, and other ancillary buildings (i.e club house, changing rooms, and pavilion for the adjoining artificial football pitch and netball courts). There is a vehicular and pedestrian access leading from Marsh Lane, with other pedestrian links leading from the Peasmore Piece nature reserve, Stockleys Road, and Maltfield Road.
3. Court Place Farm is designated within the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 as a protected open-air sport facility, and forms part of Oxford's Green Belt. The site is within one of Oxford's view cones, adjacent to the Marston Village Conservation Area and Peasmore Piece, which is a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC).

Proposal

4. The proposed development is seeking planning permission for the erection of a new single storey spectator stand in the north-eastern corner of the ground which would provide a total of 150 seats.
5. Officers consider the determining issues to be the need for the development, impact on green belt, form and layout, highways matters, and drainage.

Principle of Development

6. The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value. These aims are supported through Policy CS2 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026.
7. The stadium is situated within Oxford's Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In this regard the construction of new buildings are deemed inappropriate unless they provide appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, or the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not

result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. This is supported by Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS4 which states that permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with National Planning Policy.

8. The provision of an unobtrusive spectator stand could reasonably be considered an essential facility for this type of outdoor sports facility. The proposed spectator stand would be small scale and located in part of the site that would be considered previously developed being within an area of hardstanding in the north-eastern corner of the stadium. Therefore officers consider that the general principle of providing a small scale spectator stand would be acceptable provided that it does not compromise the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt.

Need for the spectator stand

9. Court Place Farm is a protected open-air sports facility, where there is a presumption against the loss of this type of space within Policy SR2 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016. Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS21 encourages improvements to indoor and outdoor sports facilities.
10. The proposed new spectator stand would offer 150 seats and is required to enable Oxford City Football Club to achieve full compliance with the stadium capacity requirements in accordance with the National Ground Grading (Category B) for Step 2 of the National League System in which they currently play.
11. The National Ground Grading Category 'B' requires that covered spectator accommodation, which should preferably be on at least two sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. The minimum covered accommodation must be 500, of which at least 250 shall be seats located in one stand. These seats may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating.
12. The club currently has in place the appropriate FA Ground Grading is Category B (NLS Step 2) following FA inspections of the stadium in 2012 and again in November 2015 where a temporary de-mountable stand had been erected. This was on the understanding that a more appropriate structure would be provided for the start of the current season. The club are currently five months late for this commitment and therefore failure to obtain permission for the stand would have an impact on the clubs ability to participate in the National League South.
13. The proposed stand will provide 150 covered seats and increase the total number of seats within the stadium to 520. This would satisfy the requirements for National League South and also meet the minimum seating requirement for Category 'A' grading should promotion be achieved to the National League (Step 1).
14. The current capacity of the stadium is 3218, of which there is space for 2848 standing spectators and 370 covered seats located alongside the southern touchline. The proposed spectator stand will be located over a proportion of the existing hardstanding in the north-eastern corner of the stadium which currently

accommodates 138 standing spectators. The new stand will replace this standing area and in real terms result in a very small increase to the stadium of 12 spectators.

15. As a result the total capacity of the stadium will be increased to 3230, with the balance of seating and standing areas altered to consist of 520 covered seats and 2710 standing spectators. As such officers would advise members that there is a clear need for the stand in order to meet the specific requirements of the current league in which the club plays and also make provision for any future promotion which would help maintain this outdoor sporting facility in accordance with the above-mentioned policies.

Form and Layout

16. Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 requires development to demonstrate high-quality urban design responding appropriately to the site and surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; contributing to an attractive public realm; and providing high quality architecture. The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 requires development to enhance the quality of the environment, with Policy CP1 central to this purpose. Policy CP6 emphasises the need to make an efficient use of land, in a manner where the built form and site layout suits the sites capacity and surrounding area. This is supported through Policy CP8, which states that the siting, massing, and design of new development should create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the surrounding area.
17. The proposed stand would be a modest structure measuring approximately 23m (l) x 3.8m (w) x 4.3m (h). It would be brick built with a metal mono-pitch roof and would be coloured Moss Green (RAL 6005) in the external facades and Reed Green (RAL 6013) internally. In terms of site layout it would be in part of the site which is a currently under used area of spectator standing. The overall size and scale of the stand has been designed to sit comfortably in this corner and be of a height in keeping with the adjacent covered terraced along the north-eastern touchline of the stadium.
18. Therefore having regards to the above, officers consider that the stand would be of an proportionate size to the rest of the structures within the stadium and would not compromise the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt or surrounding area and would accord with the aims and objectives of Policy CP1, and of the Oxford Local Plan and CS18 of the Core Strategy.

Highways

19. The proposal will not provide any additional vehicle and cycle parking within Court Place Farm for the stadium and neither will any be removed. During the consultation process concerns have been raised that the proposal will create traffic problems in the area and that the club should do more to manage this situation.
20. As already stated in this report, the applicant has provided further clarification about how the new stand will impact upon the stadium capacity. In real terms,

the capacity of the stadium will increase from 3,218 to 3,230 which will generate minimal, if any, additional trips to the site. The applicant has confirmed that the average attendance for first team matches at the ground is 279 spectators which is significantly below the stadium's capacity.

21. The Local Highways Authority recognise that highway network immediately adjacent to and surrounding the development site, is currently subject to significant traffic delay and congestion for a considerable part of the day. However, they are satisfied that the current proposal will generate minimal additional trip generation to the site and are raising no objection in highway terms in accordance with Oxford Local Plan Policy CP1.
22. Notwithstanding this officers would advise members that the Design and Access Statement originally submitted with the application indicated that the football club may have further aspirations to increase the capacity of the ground to 4,000 spectators. This would represent a 20% increase in ground capacity and the potential to generate significant additional trip generation to the site. As such officers would recommend attaching an informative that any such proposal for significantly increasing the ground's capacity would require a thorough assessment of the traffic impact, including a full Transport Statement, Travel Plan and parking assessment.

Drainage

23. The application includes details of the proposed method of surface water disposal to ensure that the development will not increase surface water flood risk on the site or elsewhere.
24. The surface water drainage has been designed to accommodate a critical storm event (1 in 100 years) and based on a drained area of 100m². The scheme will include a pipe laid-in between the spectator stand and the adjacent ditch abutting the north-eastern boundary where it will connect to an existing drainage system and discharge through an existing outfall into the ditch.
25. The Oxfordshire County Council Drainage Team and Oxford City Council Drainage officer have raised no objections to the proposal on the basis that the stand is located on an existing area of impermeable hard standing and the drainage solution will reduce the rate of run-off that currently occurs.

Conclusion:

26. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and therefore East Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve the application.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers

of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

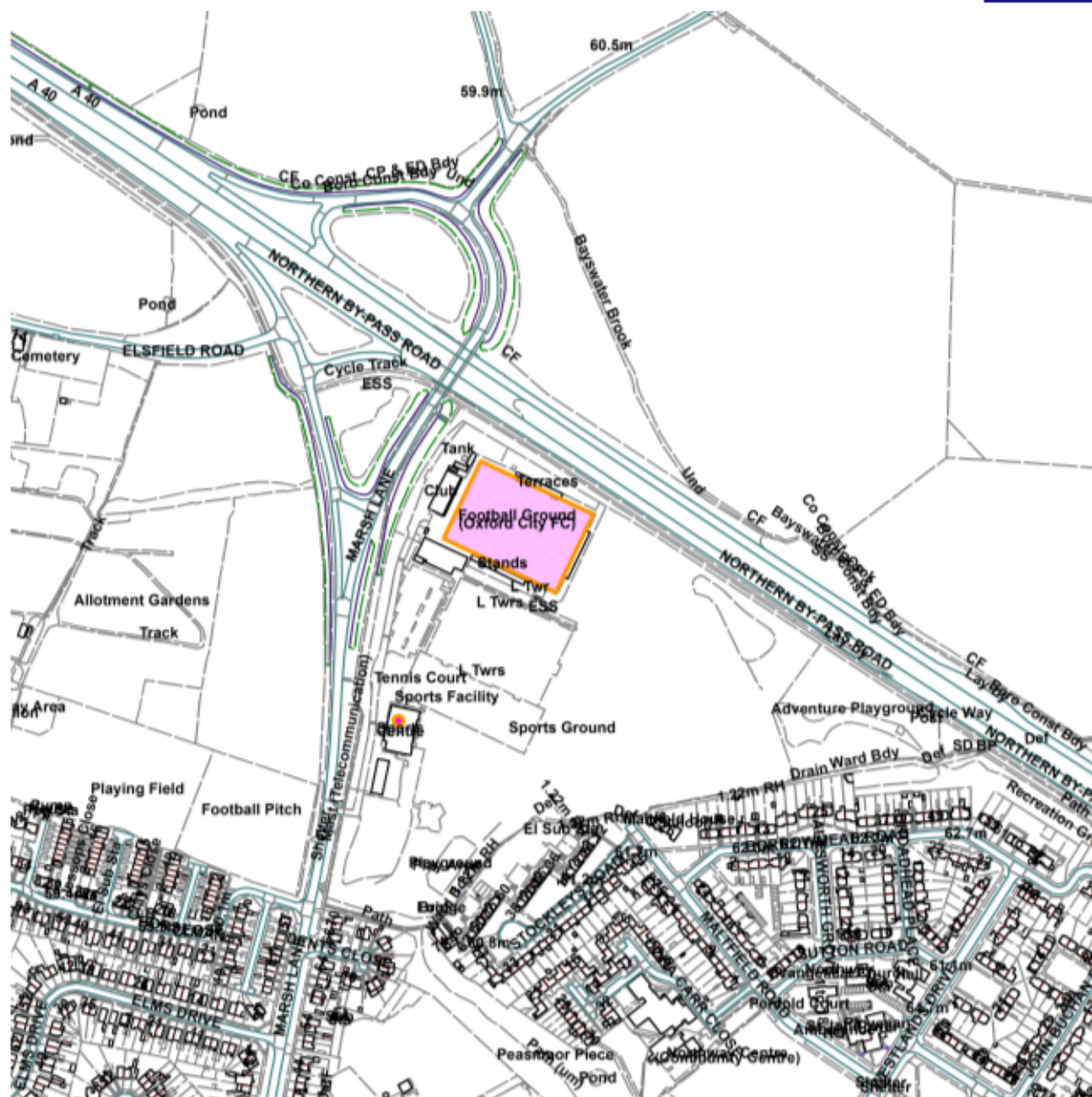
Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

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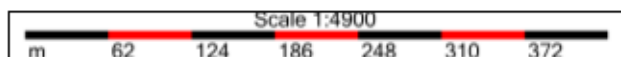
Date: 9th December 2015

Appendix 1

Oxford City Football Club (15/02476/FUL)



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Organisation	Oxford City Council
Department	City Development
Comments	
Date	21 December 2015
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