

## Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

<b>Site name</b>	Ozone Leisure Park and Minchery Farmhouse
<b>LP2045 Site Allocation</b>	SPS13
<b>Site size (ha)</b>	3.0

### Site location



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### A) Site overview

#### Description of current context

- Leisure complex on the southern edge of the city between the Kassam football stadium and the Oxford Science Park. To the south is Grenoble Road, and the agricultural fields south of that are allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 for residential and employment development.
- Contains facilities including cinema, tenpin bowling, restaurants, closed bingo hall. Site also includes a separate hotel and the listed Minchery Farmhouse
- Planning application 25/01588/FUL has been submitted

#### Site photos

Minchery Farmhouse:



*Main leisure building looking from the bridge that goes to the overflow car park:*



## **B) Open space, nature and flood risk**

### ***Description of current context***

#### **Green infrastructure**

- Little within the site. Trees and hedges line the brook to the north, and also the path to the west. There are trees around the hotel and patches of grass to the south, with a green setting around the Minchery Farmhouse. Preliminary analysis suggests UGF under 0.3

#### **Biodiversity and ecology**

- Green corridor alongside the brook to the north is likely to act as wildlife corridor and therefore have some ecological value.
- Land along the northern boundary of the site is identified within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as having the potential to become important for biodiversity.

#### **Blue Infrastructure**

- Brook of some ecological value and with potential for enhancement
- The brook leads to some flood risk, which is greatest in the northwest corner, including some Flood Zone 3b.

#### **Land Quality**

- Known peat deposits are present alongside the brook.

### ***Analysis and urban design implications***

- The site offers many opportunities to enhance biodiversity. There is little within the site, but the site is lined by trees, hedges and the brook. Therefore, Green Infrastructure within the site has potential to link existing habitats. Rich planting in



corridors through the site would help extended green connections and achieve UGF

- A buffer will be required alongside the brook, which should include biodiversity enhancements.
- A sequential approach to flood risk should be taken on the site, and areas of Flood Zone 3b should not be developed. Much of the area of flood risk alongside the brook will be incorporated within the buffer.
- Proposals should have regard for the LNRS, including demonstrating that they've explored ways to deliver onsite biodiversity improvements that align with the suggested measures set out for this area, including restoring river diversity and riparian habitats and creating new, varied ponds. Refer to the LNRS for more detail.

## **C) Historic environment, character and local context**

### ***Description of current context***

#### Historic environment

- Within the site is the Grade II\* Minchery Farmhouse.
- Extensive multi-period remains from the area including Bronze Age, Iron and Early Saxon as well as dispersed Roman pottery manufacturing.
- Intervisibility with the historic core of the city is low.

#### Built environment

- The site is largely flat with few topography changes. The site is within character area 8A Littlemore Business and Science Parks, which is incremental edge of city mixed development.
- The dominant built form on the site is the Ozone Leisure Park building, which is a wide building with brick, glass, and grey facing. The Minchery Farmhouse is a 15<sup>th</sup> Century building once used as a dormitory for the Littlemore Priory. It was most recently used as a pub/country club, but has been closed and empty for many years and is on the heritage at risk register.
- Next to the site is an extension of the Oxford Science Park, currently under construction, Grenoble Road, with fields beyond and a significant amount of surface level parking. The site is slightly removed from the low-rise residential development also in the area.

### ***Analysis and urban design implications***

- The design should be structured around attempting to reflect and maintain the remnants of the semi-rural landscape.
- Development of the site presents an opportunity to inject character. There is scope for a variety of high-quality materials and design styles and also for some height.
- The Minchery Farmhouse is key to successful design, which should be respectful of and enhance its setting.
- The Minchery Farmhouse should be brought back into repair and use.

## **D) Access, movement and layout**

### ***Description of current context***

#### Access into the site

- There are existing pedestrian access points into the site that could be enhanced.
- Vehicular access into the site currently is small access road immediately south of the main building, from the surface level car park to the east, and leading to two

small surface level car parks north and south of the hotel, and a servicing area south of the cinema.

#### ***Analysis and urban design implications***

##### Layout of the site

- High density and larger-plot development is likely to be suitable on this site.
- Circulation into, around and through the site should be enhanced. In particular, there is an opportunity to enhance the setting of the Minchery Farmhouse by consolidating parking and servicing and moving it to a less sensitive part of the site. Given the significant amount of parking to the west of the site, the need for parking within this site is limited.

##### Connectivity to wider area

- Links through the site for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelers should improved, allowing better permeability through the site.
- Development on the site currently turns its back on its surroundings and has poor interfacing at the edges. This should be enhanced by the layout. The route along the path to the west of the site is key to future successful connectivity across this area, and it will connect to the proposed Cowley Branch Line station, so enhancement of this route is essential.

#### **E) Other considerations**

##### Amenity

- N/A

##### Infrastructure needs

- Enhancement to the substation are required. Ideally, this should be futureproofed to provide for new development across the Kassam sites.

#### **F) Landowner aspirations**

Application 25/01588/FUL has been submitted for demolition of existing commercial and leisure buildings and rection of mixed use R&D laboratories with active ground floor uses, a community leisure building, a Cowley Branch Line mobility hub, construction of an electrical substation and restoration of the Minchery Farmhouse.

#### **G) Any extra work needed to inform allocation? (won't apply to all sites)**

A heritage impact assessment is needed because of the vulnerability of the Minchery Farmhouse.

#### **H) Key considerations informing the minimum number of homes for the allocation policy**

The site is in lawful use as Use Class E, with C1 hotel use and sui generis uses. The landowner intention is not to bring forward residential here, and the site is already fully built up, so there is not capacity beyond the lawful uses for residential. The commercial leisure uses existing at the site are important facilities that provide social benefits including as a meeting place for different groups of people. Policy C5 that aims to protect cultural venues and visitor attractions applies to these and appropriate cultural venues or visitor attractions need to be re-provided on site.