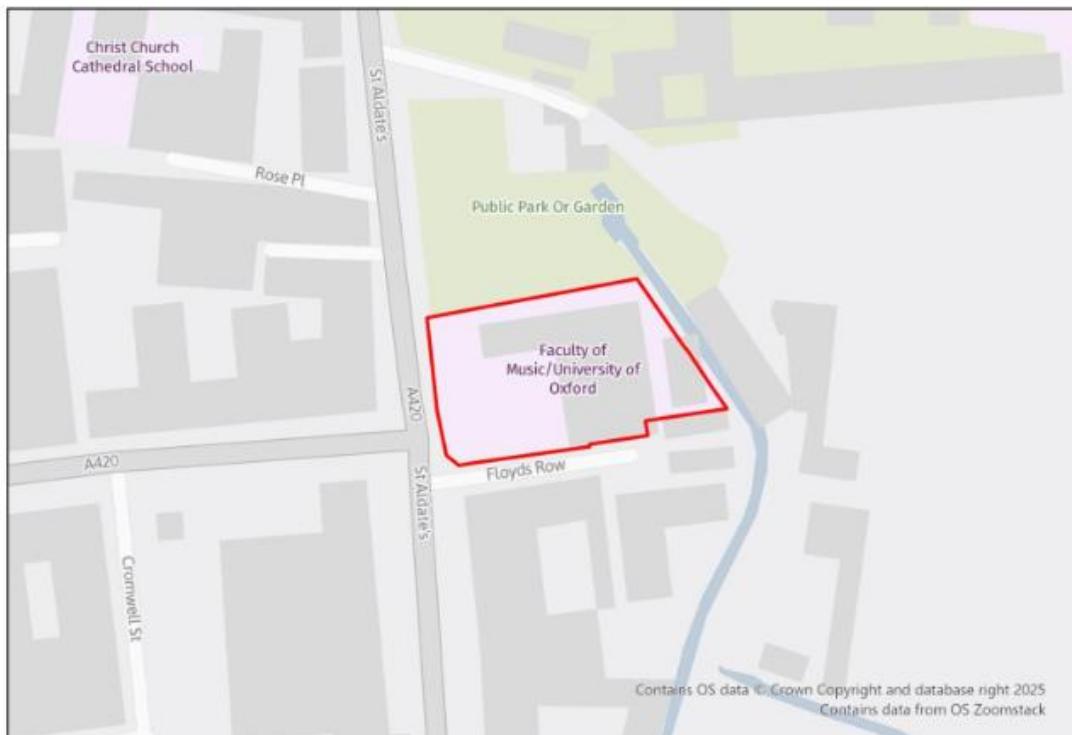


Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	Faculty of Music
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPCW4
Site size (ha)	0.33

Site location



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A) Site overview

Description of current context

- The site is located on St Aldate's in the city centre in between St Aldates Police Station and Broad Walk; a busy promenade, with a wide gravel path, partly lined with trees in grass verges which leads to Christ Church Meadow. The Faculty of Music is currently in academic institutional use.
- The building was constructed in the 1930s and has undergone a number of minor and some major changes from the later 1930s-1970s. It has been occupied by the University's Faculty of Music since 1981.
- The buildings in the vicinity are a combination of civic, academic and commercial uses with residential on upper floors.
- The site is not in an area of significant deprivation (within the 20% least deprived areas in country).
- The site lies within and towards the edge of Oxford City Centre

Site photos





B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- There are some attractive mature trees towards the western and along the northern edges of the site. These are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) but benefit from limited protection due to the site lying within a conservation area.
- Although there is some greening towards and along the western boundary of the site, the majority of it is already developed which suggests that the site is likely to score below the policy target for the Urban Greening Factor at present.

Biodiversity and ecology

- The site contains no nature conservation designations.

Blue Infrastructure

- The site is largely in Flood Zone 1, with a small part of the eastern corner in Flood Zone 2. The Trill Mill stream forms the eastern boundary, separating the site from Christ Church Meadow.

Land Quality

- No significant contamination issues likely, however, depending on the proposed use, a site investigation and contamination risk assessment may be required to confirm absence of risks.

Analysis and urban design implications

- The existing trees on the western side fronting onto St Aldate's should be retained where possible, as they contribute positively to public amenity in the area. Furthermore, the site likely already scores below the UGF target, and given the small size of the site, there are limited opportunities to plant new trees that would benefit public amenity and enhance the character of the City Centre Conservation. Any increase of the UGF is likely to come from improving existing lower quality areas of greening elsewhere.
- For any new development, a 10m buffer will need to be incorporated along the eastern edge of the site due to the presence of the stream.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- The site is located within the Historic Core Area and the Central (University and City) Conservation Area.
- The Faculty of Music is not a listed building but there are several Grade I and Grade II listed buildings, particularly towards the north of the site on St Aldate's. The Grade II listed Christ Church Footbridge and flanking walls in the Memorial Garden and Screen all lie immediately adjacent to the north of the site, with part of Christ Church Meadow; a Grade I Registered Park and Garden just beyond.
- There are no view cones running through the site.
- The site has potential for Middle-Late Saxon Archaeology (adjacent to possible causeway), also location of a short-lived medieval friary and has medieval and post-medieval potential. Potential for waterlogging and well preserved eco and artefacts. Significant development would require evaluation.

Built environment

- The existing building is generally two/ three storeys in height with some single storey additions towards the rear. The prevailing heights of buildings within the vicinity are slightly taller, at three to four storeys high.
- The Central (University and City) Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby listed buildings would be a key consideration. Both the building within the site and those within the immediate vicinity are predominantly constructed from a light-coloured stone, brick or other materials with some of the buildings containing interesting design features.

- The mature and semi-mature trees inside the western boundary provide a pleasant transition and connection to and from Christ Church Meadow and a welcome relief from the urban environment.
- The site is located towards the southern edge of the city centre, within the Historic City Core (1A) Character Area, which is defined largely by the boundaries of the medieval walled town and the historic University buildings that overlie the former medieval town walls to the north and east. The area is noted for its distinctive pattern of perimeter development, the harmony of much of the built form and materials used, despite the variation in architectural styles, and for containing historic and landmark buildings and trees. The assessment notes the area to have overall high landscape quality and historic integrity due to its uniqueness, as well as being internationally recognised for its historic buildings, unique skyline and academic history. The area is noted to be highly sensitive to change as a result of its distinctive street and block pattern, historic time depth, its visibility from the surrounding hills and its international renown.

Analysis and urban design implications

- It will be important that the height, massing and position of any new buildings or additional development if the building is to be reused are sensitively designed in a way that responds to the setting of Central (University and City) Conservation Area and those listed buildings and features both adjacent and near to the site.
- May need to investigate potential archaeological remains
- Whilst there is a variety of architectural styles present in the nearby vicinity, most of the buildings have been constructed from light-coloured materials. Any new development may take inspiration from this.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- The site can currently be accessed from Floyds Row, via St Aldates. There is a small car park to the northern side of Floyds Row, just beyond the junction with St Aldate's that can accommodate around nine vehicles.

Layout of the site

- The building is set back towards the east of the site with more open space to its west. Pedestrian access can be achieved via both St Aldates's and Floyds Row.

Connectivity to wider area

- The site is located within Oxford city centre and has good access to the various amenities it offers.
- In terms of public transport, the site is very well served by frequent buses to other parts of the city centre and beyond. The nearest bus stop (Police Station on St Aldate's) being less than 100m from the current access point to the site.

Analysis and urban design implications

- There is potential to reconfigure the parking provision off Floyds Road (although there is a manhole cover within one of the spaces which requires permanent access).
- Additional measures to further enhance pedestrian access and connections through the site could be incorporated.
- Any new access into the site is likely to be pedestrian/ wheeling and cycling only. St Aldate's is well-served by public transport and there is some heritage sensitivity of the site, with the mature trees fronting onto St Aldate's enhancing the character of the Central (University and City) Conservation Area.

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

Amenity

- The site is currently in use by The University of Oxford for academic purposes and lies within the city centre. Any redevelopment including the provision of student accommodation is unlikely to significantly affect the existing level of amenity both within the site and its immediate surroundings.
- Site is not in proximity to a current air quality hotspot, although the entire city is an Air Quality Management Area.

Infrastructure needs

- N/A

F) Landowner aspirations

The site is currently occupied by the University of Oxford's Faculty of Music, with an aspiration to become a graduate centre, primarily used for student accommodation.

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

The early review of potential sustainability impacts arising from developing this site (see individual site assessment form supporting Sustainability Appraisal) identified the potential need for mitigation in relation to significant negative impacts (scored as --) against the following criteria:
SA objective 11 – specifically, because the entire site is located within the Central (University and City) Conservation Area Oxford and because of its sensitive location, with Christ Church Meadow, listed as a Grade 1 Registered Park and Garden to its rear.

A very small area on the eastern edge of the site lies within Flood Zone 2, however the Level 2 SFRA report (November 2025) explains in more detail why a full Level 2 SFRA is not required for this site.

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

Minimum capacity for the site has been calculated with the following assumptions, but these are not design guidelines:

- Starting point was considering the watercourse adjacent to the east of the site and applying a 10-metre-wide buffer zone, excluding where new development could be located (approximately 0.04ha).
- A vertical strip along the western border was also excluded from the calculation (approximately 0.05ha) as this contained several mature trees. Whilst not protected under a Tree Preservation Order, they have some protection due to being located within a Conservation Area and contribute positively to the street scene.
- It is assumed that the parking (currently 8 spaces) will be reduced (by approximately 0.005ha) due to city centre location to around 50%.
- The total developable area assumed is therefore $0.33 - 0.04 - 0.05 - 0.005 = 0.235\text{ha}$. If assuming typology of 100dph (city centre site), $0.235 \times 100 = 23$ dwellings (or 55 student rooms when using the latest Housing Delivery Test multiplier of 2.4).
- It is assumed that any new development would reflect the scale and massing of the existing development, particularly taking account of the heritage sensitivities of the conservation area and nearby listed structures and buildings.
- Taking the above into account, the number of new student rooms (and their dwelling equivalent) is considered to be an appropriate minimum number for the site.

