

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	Crescent Hall
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPS5
Site size (ha)	0.9

Site location



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A) Site overview

Description of current context

- The site is located in the southeast of Oxford and is bounded by Hollow Way, Crescent Road and Junction Road. It is currently in use as student accommodation and the development is mainly made up of two separate blocks. The buildings are two to three storeys in height and largely follow the perimeter of the site, with openings to allow access.
- An attractive stone wall, approximately 1 metre in height, forms the boundary of the site with the three adjoining highways. These frontages are characterised by numerous large semi-mature trees, which are planted just inside the boundary.
- A disused (and fenced off) Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) that suffered complaints of anti-social behaviour lies adjacent to the eastern side of the vehicular entrance to the site but does not form part of the site. Parking spaces are currently available adjacent to either block of buildings and between the MUGA and eastern block.
- The immediate surrounding area predominately comprises two-storey residential properties, the occasional commercial property, with a church adjacent on Hollow Way.
- The site is not in an area of significant deprivation (within the 20% least deprived areas in country).

- The site is not within a city/district centre and is closest to Cowley Centre District Centre (1km walk).

Site photos







B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- The site itself is characterised by numerous trees which are predominantly located along the perimeter of the site. Those trees fronting onto Crescent Road and part of the way along Junction Road and Hollow Way are protected by the Oxford City Council Crescent Road (No.1) Tree Preservation Order 1998. The trees are important to public amenity in the area and will provide valuable ecosystem services.
- The general abundance of greening across the site, despite the level of existing development within the site, suggest that the site is likely to score above the policy target for the Urban Greening Factor at present.

Biodiversity and ecology

- The site contains no nature conservation designations but has potential for protected species to be present such as roosting bats and nesting birds.

Blue Infrastructure

- Whilst the site and its surroundings are in Flood Zone 1, patches of surface water flood risk are present within the site.

Land Quality

- No significant contamination issues likely but any redevelopment would require site investigation work.

Analysis and urban design implications

- The existing protected trees should be retained where possible, particularly those fronting onto and near to Crescent Road which contribute positively to public amenity in the area. There are several unprotected trees within the site which may need to be removed to enable development.

- The site is unlikely to score above the UGF target; however, proposals will need to ensure that the overall score is not reduced. This will be particularly important if those unprotected trees within the site are not retained, which may necessitate some improvement elsewhere within the site.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- The site is located immediately adjacent to the Temple Cowley Conservation Area.
- There are no listed buildings either within or in close proximity to the site.
- There are no view cones running through the site. (The Crescent Road View Cone ends approximately 150 metres further to the west on Crescent Road.)
- The potential for the site to contain archaeological remains is low to moderate.

Built environment

- The existing buildings within the site are predominantly two to three storeys in height and are of little architectural merit. The buildings are mainly constructed from brown brick with a paler brick used to provide horizontal detailing along the middle section of the buildings as well as the plinth.
- The surrounding buildings are generally brick constructed two storey residential properties. They tend to be set back slightly within their plots with modest front gardens, which add to the suburban character of the area.
- The residential buildings fronting onto the other side of Junction Road lie within the Temple Cowley Conservation Area. Due to their design, several appear as three storeys in height and contain interesting design features including decorative brickwork and ground floor bay windows with hipped roofs.
- The site is located in the southeast of the city, within the Cowley Residential Suburb (Inter-War/ Post-War Suburbs) (5B) Character Area, noted for wide streets with crescents and cul-de-sacs which respond to the landform. Houses are typically semi-detached or in short terraces with front gardens enclosed by low hedges or walls made of various materials including reconstituted stone, brick or concrete as well as wooden fences. Vegetation is limited within the area, although planting in front gardens makes an important contribution to the street scene. The assessment notes the area to have overall moderate landscape quality and low historic and biodiversity value. The area is noted to not be particularly sensitive to change, although it is recognised that changes to architectural elements and the condition and style of front garden boundaries has, in the past, detracted from the townscape quality.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Any potential development is likely to be infill with possible demolition of the single storey elements of the existing building which appear to be in use as offices for wardens and storage space.
- If the development of the site is limited to infill development, the relationship with and impacts on the existing development will need to be considered carefully.
- By its nature, any proposed development will narrow the openness between the two main blocks along the perimeter. Where possible, gaps should be retained to enhance the green setting within each quadrant.
- Materials used for new development should, as far as reasonably possible, match those of the existing development, particularly in regard to brick colour and roofing materials.
- A more comprehensive redevelopment of the site offers potential to relate better to surrounding streets, particularly to Crescent Road and Hollow Way, and to inject high-quality design. There is potential for denser and higher development, although it will be important to have variation across the site and to avoid

dominating the 2 and 2.5 storey homes immediately adjacent to the site, and to be sensitive to the neighbouring conservation area.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- Separate vehicular and pedestrian access can be gained into the site via Crescent Road.

Layout of the site

- Access/ egress is limited to a single access point to the west of the existing MUGA. The buildings largely follow the perimeter of the site with parking areas available next to each section of building, with a larger car park available immediately to the east of the MUGA.

Connectivity to wider area

- The site is a 0.9km walk to Temple Cowley District Centre and the various amenities it offers.
- In terms of public transport, the site is very well served by frequent buses to the city centre via Hollow Way. The nearest bus stop (Fern Hill Road on Hollow Way) being less than 300m from the current pedestrian access point to the site.
- The site lies within the Central Area (B) Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

Analysis and urban design implications

- Due to the existing configuration of the site, the existing access/ egress is unlikely to change. There is the potential to reconfigure and reduce the amount of parking on the site to enable some development between the existing blocks and to make more efficient use of land. This is further supported by the location of the site in a CPZ, where low car development is appropriate.
- There could also be opportunities to enhance the existing separate pedestrian only access to the site.

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

Amenity

- The site is currently in use by Oxford Brookes University for accommodation purposes. Any redevelopment which reflects the current uses 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 and is planned to remain as student accommodation, with an aspiration to increase the amount of student accommodation on site, as well as partially develop the site for residential to help off-set costs.

Plans are not dependent on the MUGA, which now lies outside of the site boundary, but there is potential for it to be incorporated into the redevelopment if Oxford City Council as landowner were open to it.

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) didn't identify any significant negative impacts (scored as --) against any of the criteria.

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:

- Starting point was considering the existing buildings on the site which accommodates circa 306 study bedrooms, on the assumption that intensification is most likely to take place around much of the existing development.
- Based on the existing configuration of buildings and considering the layout and access of the site, it appears that infilling some of the existing space could create four quadrants, which would mirror the existing development.
- Current information on the Oxford Brookes University website indicates that the flats currently contain either 6, 7 or 9 bedrooms. It appears that one block could accommodate 2x6 bed flats and 2x7 bed flats (=26 bedrooms).
- A total of seven additional blocks could be incorporated within the existing development (allowing for some of the single storey elements to be demolished), therefore 182 (26*7) new bedrooms could be added.
- 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 adjacent conservation area.
- All of the trees fronting onto Crescent Road and which wrap onto Junction Road and Hollow Way are protected under a TPO. These trees are important to public amenity in the area and will provide valuable ecosystem services. This taken with the existing configuration of the buildings mean that there is little opportunity to change the existing access/ egress point into the site which does limit where new development can be located.
- 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.