

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	474 Cowley Road
SHLAA reference	516
Site size (ha)	0.34

Site location



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A) Site overview

Description of current context

- The site is currently not in use and is located within a residential area just off Cowley Road (but outside of the district centre). The site was previously in use as a timber yard- a fairly low-density use of the site and the buildings of not of particularly good quality.



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B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- UGF score likely to be over the baseline as the site is relatively grown over.

Biodiversity and ecology

- Site is adjacent to Allotments (Elder Stubbs Charity Allotments).
- Site contains existing trees around and near to boundaries which are important to neighbouring residential properties. Existing trees will influence developable area of site and its capacity.
- If existing trees are removed new trees should be planted to fully mitigate the impact on tree canopy cover green infrastructure in the area. New tree planting should be appropriate to ensure that the predicted tree canopy cover (% site area) following development (25 years) delivers policy and GI TAN expectations i.e. at least no net loss.

Blue Infrastructure

- ***pending further comments from EA**
- Approximately a third of the site is located within Flood Zone 2, with a small part of the northern corner (where the existing access is), located within Flood Zone 3a.
- Areas of flood risk are present along the main access route to the site. Given there is no advance flood warning provision for the site, the potential for evacuation before a more extreme fluvial or pluvial flood, considering the effects of climate change for the lifetime of the development, needs to be considered by a site-specific FRA with advice sought from the emergency services and Oxford City Council's emergency planner.
- A site-specific FRA should also consider in more detail the nature of the surface water flood risk to determine how quickly it occurs and the degree of hazard on site.

- The drainage strategy for the proposed development should be suitably designed to manage additional runoff arising from the development and ensure that surface water flood risk at the site and to third party land is not increased.

Land Quality

- Any re-development of this site would require a site investigation and contamination risk assessment.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Trees around the perimeter are important to retain where possible. Trees on the perimeter so there is opportunity to retain some of this and subsequent biodiversity
- Opportunities to support and enhance biodiversity could include: introducing green roofs and SUDS; retaining existing hedgerows around the site and trees around and within the site, particularly around the north of the site closer to the nature reserve; Scope to connect into wildlife corridors by allowing wildlife to connect into the adjoining playing fields and Cowley Marsh Nature Reserve/Boundary Brook/Barracks Lane. There are allotments close by but severed by Cowley Road so a nature corridor is probably not feasible unless crossings could be introduced

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- The site is no known archaeological interest- general potential only.
- The site is not within a conservation area.
- The site is not within close proximity to a listed building.
- The site does not lie within the city's view cones.

Built environment

- The Florence Park and Cowley Marsh character area lies on the flat landscape of the East Oxford River Terrace, which is an area of low-lying clays, silts and gravels associated with the River Thames and its tributaries
- Major through routes include Oxford Road, Rymer's Lane and Iffley Road which can become congested with traffic.
- The development of Cowley Marsh is unusual in that it is an area of mixed land uses, styles and ages of building. It is predominantly inter/post-war residential development with pockets of commercial land use
- A combination of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. Materials are predominantly render or pebble-dash and red brick with clay tile roofs. Bay windows and gable ends are features of some streets. Modern infill development contributes to the diversity of the area, with the addition of flats and cul-de-sacs. Cowley Marsh area includes two/three-storey flats and some commercial/industrial buildings.

Analysis and urban design implications

- The site is suitable for residential development of similar density and form to the surrounding residential area.
- Dominant materials in surrounding residential streets are brick and render, and some examples of brick detailing too. Development should incorporate high quality materials taking inspiration from local area.
- Site has significant tree coverage which should be retained as much as possible
- Opportunities to support and enhance biodiversity could include: introducing green roofs and SUDS; retaining existing hedgerows around the site and trees around and within the site, particularly around the north of the site closer to the nature reserve; Scope to connect into wildlife corridors by allowing wildlife to connect into the adjoining playing fields and Cowley Marsh Nature Reserve/Boundary Brook/Barracks Lane. There are allotments close by but severed by Cowley Road so a nature corridor is probably not feasible unless crossings could be introduced.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- Pedestrian access is via pavement along the existing vehicle entrance linking to existing pavements along Cowley Road. There is no significant change in level so this would also be suitable for disability access.
- For vehicles including refuse and emergency vehicles, there is existing road access via Cowley Road, which would be suitable.

Layout of the site

- Site fronts onto Cowley Road, only access point

Connectivity to wider area

- Good pedestrian and cycle routes on both sides of Cowley Road, also easy access to good connecting buses
- Good, connected routes to nearby green spaces with suitable disability access

Analysis and urban design implications

- Existing vehicle and pedestrian access from Cowley Road
- Opportunities should be taken to develop and link into existing pedestrian and cycling ways.
- Redevelopment would also present opportunities to improve the permeability of the site and pedestrian/cycle access through the site to footways and cycle networks.
- Any new internal streets must be legible, active and bring forward a similar urban grain to the surrounding residential streets. There are opportunities to increase permeability through the site, opening up access to the Recreation Ground for the local community south of the site.

E) Other considerations**Other considerations to include in allocations?**

- None identified

F) Landowner aspirations

Landowner has confirmed (2025) intention to develop site for residential (care home)

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

SFRA L2.

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:

- Density using suburban site typology– 60dph
- Left an access point, perimeter trees and buffer from trees at rear of site to minimise shadowing.
- Access point also area at greatest risk of fluvial flooding, so assumed no development in that area, following the sequential approach.

