

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Site name | St Thomas School and Osney Warehouse |
| LP2045 Site Allocation | SPCW11 |
| Site size (ha) | 0.41 |

Site location



© Crown Copyright and database right 2025. Ordnance Survey AC0000808820

A) Site overview

Description of current context

- Falls within Policy AOC1 West End and Osney Mead.
- St Thomas site is in use as multiple social enterprises/community uses.
- Osney Warehouse site is in use as visual arts company including studio, exhibition, education spaces/community uses.
- Site is within Historic Core Area.
- Site is within 20% most deprived areas according to IMD 2019.
- Site is within Western Fringe Character Area

Site photos



© Bluesky International Limited

B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- Some mature trees outside of the conservation area separate the former schoolhouse and warehouse.

Biodiversity and ecology

- No international/national or local biodiversity sites within 200m.
- Sites separated by line of mature trees. Likely to provide habitat for roosting, foraging and commuting bats and nesting birds. Records of swifts within 100m

Blue Infrastructure

- Site is approx. 60m from Wareham Stream.
- Whole site is in Flood Zone 2.

Land Quality

- Potential for contamination issues at eastern portion of the site due to the former use of the warehouse (Underhills Hide and Skin Market).

Analysis and urban design implications

- The site is not sensitive from an ecological perspective although birds and bats may be present at the site
- Much of the site is also exposed to flood risk and this will need to be appropriately investigated in further detail and mitigated where necessary.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- Site is within Historic Core Area and City Centre Archaeological Area.
- Within High Buildings Area.
- Western half of the site is within Central (City and University) Conservation Area.
- No listed buildings within or adjacent to the site.
- Close to poorly understood route of western Royalist defences and located south of Osney Lane where there is some potential for medieval settlement before later contraction. Any significant new build likely to require assessment and evaluation from an archaeological perspective.

Built environment

- Primarily residential immediately surrounding the site.
- Buildings currently in use on site.

- The Western Fringe Character Area accommodates diverse land uses and ages of development. The area is characterised by juxtaposition of large scale modern commercial and educational development such as the Said Business School and Westgate Shopping Centre, with smaller scale historic buildings such as Royal Oxford Hotel, The Malthouse and features along Castle Mill Stream. This juxtaposition is particularly evident around the castle, where modern structures are integrated with the old.
- Stone, buff brick, red brick, concrete and glass buildings of inter/post war era contrast with the use of expanses of glass/large windows on modern buildings.
- This character area is dominated by busy roads, large modern buildings and piecemeal commercial and residential development, which strongly influence the perception of the western approach to the historic city.
- Surrounding uses include: housing, employment and education. Not particularly sensitive given that the site in question is in employment use.
- Heights of surrounding built environment is predominantly 2-3 storeys.
- There are significant existing trees along the west boundary of the eastern site, growing alongside the pedestrian access to City of Oxford College, which are important to public amenity in the area and will provide valuable ecosystem services.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Potential heritage sensitivities requiring considerate development proposals.
- Built form should reflect the surrounding arrangements and heights of the CA.
- Modest height that responds to the area adjacent and respects the amenity of neighbouring buildings and uses.
- Potential to re-use existing buildings currently in use subject to proposals.
- Plots should respond to the urban grain of the surrounding area and the prevalent built forms.
- Opportunities to integrate existing ecological environments within the site.
- Potential for enhancement/continuation of pedestrian routes providing improved connectivity to city centre.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- Vehicular access is currently off Oxpens Road to the rear, or via St Thomas St/ Woodbine Pl onto Osney Lane. No direct access from Holybush Road/Oxpens Road onto Osney Lane.

Layout of the site

- Pedestrian access to City of Oxford College separates the two sites. Site is level and no significant physical features are present.
- No issues with public right of way within or adjacent to site.
- Strip between the two sites presents a potential challenge to active travel.

Connectivity to wider area

- Some of the surrounding roads are within a CPZ.
- Well connected location on edge of city centre.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Opportunities for car-free/low car development due to proximity to city centre and train station.
- Potential for pedestrian only routes to reach further into the city centre.
- Need to demonstrate re-provision/alternative provision of existing community facilities.
- Key pedestrian cycle route from Osney Lane to Castle Quarter/Westgate/Oxpens - Site at key intersection, opportunity to open up as a more legible route into town.

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

Amenity

- Little noise/ other nuisance is likely to be generated given the current operation/ nature of use is likely to be fairly quiet with limited vehicular movements.
- Unlikely to be considerable lighting or air quality concerns.

Infrastructure needs

- No infrastructure concerns.

F) Landowner aspirations

What use(s) does landowner propose onsite – see Call for Sites, SHLAA, LP2040 reps.

- *if residential, have they specified student, post-grad, key worker etc*
- *If non-resi – have they specified use e.g healthcare, R&D, offices etc*

Call for sites 2025 landowner confirmed intention to develop for mix of uses including employment and resi/ student accommodation/ specialist elderly.

Also, site was identified (but not allocated) in the former West End Area Action Plan for residential use and open space.

G) Any extra work needed to inform allocation?

- N/A

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:

- Capacity figure taking into consideration density of surrounding conservation area, and need for retention or reprovision of community facilities.