

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	West Wellington Square
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPCW12
Site size (ha)	0.88

Site location



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A) Site overview

Description of current context

- Mainly academic institutional uses including student accommodation. Some ground floor uses supporting the Little Clarendon Local Centre (e.g., retail/ cafe/ community space) fronting Little Clarendon St.
- Site located at the northern edge of the city centre.
- The southern part of the site (fronting onto Walton St) is located within the city centre. While the northern part of the site (fronting Little Clarendon St) is located within the Walton St and Little Clarendon St Local Centre (adjacent to the city centre boundary).

Site Photos



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B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- Trees & Hedgerows
 - No TPOs- nearest TPOs - 28 St John St and 10 Little Clarendon St
 - Several trees within the public realm directly to the west of Dartington House, Wellington Square (within Central Conservation Area).
 - Several mature trees also present as part of public realm on Little Clarendon St.
 - Trees are protected by their location within the Central Conservation Area.
- Private/ managed green space on-site:
 - Includes the semi-natural gardens and green spaces to the rear of the properties along Walton St and to the rear of properties at Wellington Square.
- Publicly accessible GI nearby includes:
 - University Parks (Core GI) (approx. 10mins away – on foot)
 - Port Meadow (Core GI) (approx. 20mins away – on foot)
 - St Giles Churchyard (Core GI) - churchyard with public access
 - Wellington Square (supporting GI) - adjacent to site (managed space with daytime access)
- Private Green Space nearby:
 - Worcester College grounds (Core GI)
 - St John's College grounds (Core GI)
 - Trinity College grounds (Core GI)
 - Green Templeton College grounds (Supporting GI)
- UGF: given significant built form, site unlikely to score more than 0.3 (resi)/ 0.2 non-resi

Biodiversity and ecology include:

- Oxford Meadows SAC (nearest part is Port Meadow SSSI)
- University Parks (Local Wildlife Site)
- Potential protected species likely to be limited to roosting bats and nesting birds.

Blue Infrastructure

- Nearby waterbodies include:
 - Worcester College Lake (approx. 250m away)
 - Oxford Canal/ Castle Mill Stream (approx. 400m-450m away)
- Flood risk: whole site lies within Flood Zone 1
- Surface water flooding: Small patches of surface water flood risk to the south-west corner of the site. Also, near the eastern boundary

Land Quality

- Some contamination risk assessment may be required depending on development.

Analysis and urban design implications

- The Central (City and University) Conservation Area Appraisal recognises that there are very few public spaces in the immediate area – Wellington Square Gardens is a small managed greenspace with public access granted during daylight hours.
- On-site greenspaces should be retained and enhanced/ improved as part of development proposals.
- Existing trees must be considered.
- As the entire site sits within the Central (City and University) Conservation Area, most trees will be protected and should be retained.
- Given the constrained urban nature of the site, green roofs and/ or walls should be considered to support biodiversity linkages.
- Appropriate tree planting should be considered to support biodiversity linkages and to support urban heating/ cooling.
- The site itself (and surrounding streets) is outside any areas specifically identified within the LNRS.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- Conservation Areas:
 - Entire site lies within the Central (City and University) Conservation Area.
 - Buildings along Walton St and Wellington Square are recognised for the positive contribution that they add to the Conservation Area
- Heritage Assets
 - Listed Buildings
 - Numbers 2-63 St John St and 5 Pusey St are a group of Grade II Listed Buildings. The nearest property within this Listing is 34 St John St.
 - Other Listed Buildings nearby are at 1 and 2 Wellington Place, and 3 and 4 Wellington Place, however these are well-screened from the site by Rewley House by the Listed Victorian terraced properties at 24-33 St John St.
- Archaeology
 - Site lies just to the north of the City Centre Archaeological Area.
 - There is a high potential for archaeological interest in the area.
 - It is the site of the Wellington Workhouse and a line of Civil War defences.
- Views
 - Site lies within the Historic Core Area

- The Central (City and University) Conservation Area Appraisal notes that parts of the wider “zone” within which the site sits, includes several streets with “designed views”. The most relevant is St John Street, which, the Conservation Area Appraisal notes, “*was aligned to terminate with a view of the Observatory to the north (now partially obscured by mature trees in Wellington Square and buildings on the north side of Wellington Square and Little Clarendon Street).*”

Built environment

- Land uses on site
 - The site mainly consists of academic and residential institutional buildings associated with the University of Oxford.
 - The ground floor frontage at Little Clarendon St includes various units within the Walton St and Little Clarendon St Local Centre, including retail, cafe and a community hub.
- Land uses immediately surrounding site
 - To the south of the site, the listed buildings at St John St consist of a mix of residential and university-related buildings.
 - Wellington Square consists of primarily of academic and residential institutional buildings including Rewley House, Dartington House and although originally designed as a residential quarter, a large proportion of the former residential buildings are now occupied by academic institutional uses.
 - Land uses (opposite the site allocation) along Walton St are predominantly residential in nature, interspersed with occasional shop frontages, some of which are within the city centre.
- Scale and form of surrounding development
 - The characteristic building type in the immediate vicinity to the south of the site is mainly terraced housing. At Wellington Square much of this former housing is now in an academic institutional use. This former terraced housing at Wellington Square is mainly 3-4 storey and is punctuated by 20th century purpose-built academic institutional buildings such as the four-storey Dartington House, and the three-storey Rewley House (at opposite ends of Wellington Square).
 - Little Clarendon St has retained some interesting traditional shopfronts.
 - The buildings themselves range from colourful two-storey buildings to modern mid-late twentieth century purpose built academic institutional buildings and post-graduate student accommodation associated with Somerville College (Margery Fry House).
- Materials on and around the site
 - The Victorian buildings around Wellington Square typically use buff brick with stone dressings, with bay windows giving variety to the front elevations.
 - There is generally a good survival of historic features, including timber sash windows, timber doors and doorcases, fanlights and cast iron boot-scrapers along St John Street.
 - The post-war University buildings reflect the era, function and architectural philosophy from when they were conceived. These buildings introduce a new scale with an emphasis on the horizontal, new materials in the predominant use of concrete, and a new flat, roofscape without chimneys.
- Re-use of existing buildings on-site
 - An opportunity exists to re-use/ re-purpose the existing former residential Victorian era buildings that front Wellington Square. A similar opportunity exists for the Victorian terraced properties that front onto Walton St.
- Character area:
 - Landscape: 3A – North Oxford River Terrace
 - Townscape: 2A – University Fringe
 - located largely to the north and east of the historic core;

- characterised by college and university buildings of mixed ages;
- the area developed as academic institutions grew during the 19th century;
- the density of development has increased through the 20th and into the 21st centuries, as technologies have changed and the University has expanded;
- much of the area is characterised by University/ College buildings in the Victorian neogothic style, using stone or multi-coloured brick;
- Many university buildings and their settings are large scale, with some small-scale streets including St John's Street, Pusey Lane and Little Clarendon Street.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Although largely in university use, the residential appearance of the terraces at Wellington Square contribute to the character of the zone and their retention and enhancement is recommended given the positive contribution that they make to the Conservation area (as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal)
- Development proposals should ensure that they have regard to the setting of the Grade II Listed Buildings from 2-63 St John St and 5 Pusey St, which are adjacent to the southern boundary of the site allocation
- The existing building frontage at Little Clarendon St, within the allocation area, provides either shelter or shade depending on the weather conditions (as do other academic institutional buildings along the frontage). Development proposals are encouraged to consider whether shelter/ shading should be incorporated into the design of redevelopment proposals.
- Any requirement for archaeological evaluation would depend on the character of any new build and the nature of any physical constraints.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- Existing Pedestrian/ cycle access to the site from the public realm at Little Clarendon St Walton St, and Wellington Square.
- Vehicular access available via Walton St with a limited amount of parking spaces available for site users. On-street parking (pay and display) is also available at Wellington Square.

Layout of the site

- There are several different areas within the site.
- The existing terraced properties fronting onto Walton St and the existing terraced properties that front onto Wellington Square can be viewed as separate but related parts of the site. These rears of these properties face each other however they represent different areas of the site with different access arrangements (particularly for vehicles).
- The remainder of the site is utilised by the large academic institutional building that provides the frontage along Little Clarendon St.
- The site is largely built up with little remaining land outside the existing built footprint of the existing properties.

Connectivity to wider area

- Nearest frequent service bus stops are located on Woodstock and Banbury Road and St Giles with connections to north Oxford (Wolvercote. Summertown) and onward to Witney and Kidlington. Gloucester Green Bus Station is a short walk away.
- Oxford Railway Station is also nearby (accessible on foot or by bicycle)
- There is limited short stay daytime only parking available (30minutes) at Little Clarendon St.
- Some cycle parking also available at Little Clarendon St

Analysis and urban design implications

- Given access limitations, site should continue to be “low car” and could explore reductions in existing car parking where possible.
- Site should not increase the number of car-parking spaces.
- The potential to provide cycle parking for site-users should be considered.
- Any cycle parking provision should be well-designed and located and not impact the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Opportunities should be taken to enhance pedestrian and cycle links in the area.

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

Amenity

- No obvious noise issues (other than the existing noise associated with the vibrant street frontage at Little Clarendon St.)
- Whole city is within AQMA however this site does not fall within a known ‘hotspot’.

Infrastructure needs

- No known infrastructure needs/ requirements identified at time of writing.

F) Landowner aspirations

Mix of uses including academic uses, residential (student accommodation and/ or employer-linked affordable housing preferred), and an appropriate mix of uses suitable for inclusion within the street frontage of the Walton St and Little Clarendon St local centre (at Little Clarendon St)

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

- *Site-specific mitigations identified from SA*
- *Heritage impact assessment*
- *SFRA Level 2 assessment*
- *HRA biodiversity survey conclusions/recommendations*

HRA “Appropriate Assessment” has assessed the recreational impacts of this site on the Oxford Meadows SAC. The assessment concludes that given the landowner’s aspirations for residential uses at the site are for student accommodation and/ or employer-linked affordable housing, the HRA concludes that dog-walking activity associated with the redevelopment of this site is likely to be limited (if any). Also, the HRA concludes that University Parks is more accessible from West Wellington Square than the Oxford Meadows as an alternative large publicly accessible open space.

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

Estimated capacity – min (for residential/mixed use): 13 minimum capacity for the site has been calculated with the following assumptions, which are not design guidelines:

- These calculations assume that the existing buildings that front onto Walton St and Wellington Square/ St John St are retained.
- This leaves a relatively small area to the rear of some of the properties fronting Walton St, and to the rear of those properties fronting St John St. Given the surrounding context of Jericho, this area is considered suitable for some (appropriately scaled) infill/ “back-land” development.

- The density assumptions used (35dph) reflect the conservation area status of the area within which the site allocation is located.
- The residential capacity calculation assumes that the height of any new development would sit below the existing Victorian terraced properties that form the street frontage at Walton St/ St John St
- There is 35m (approx.) space behind the properties that front onto Walton St. Assuming that each new property is approximately 5m wide, this row would give 7 dwellings.
- There is 30m (approx.) space behind the properties that front St John St. Again, assuming each new property is approximately 5m wide, this row would give 6 dwellings.
- It is important to ensure that any new development to the rear of either street frontage remains subordinate to the existing street scene and can be undertaken without harming the character of the Conservation Areas