

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	Manor Place
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPCW6
Site size (ha)	1.24

Site location



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A) Site overview

Description of current context

- Site within city centre.
- Former tennis courts, allotments, orchards.
- Adjacent to parts of Core GI network.
- Not within or adjacent to a regeneration area.
- Within University Fringe Character Area.

Site photos



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B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- The site contains grassland, scrub, woodland, and scattered trees. Patches of the woodland are included on the Priority Habitat Inventory.
- Existing UGF score is likely to be higher than the proposed policy requirement

Biodiversity and ecology

- Contains no nature conservation designations.
- Site baseline is likely to have a high biodiversity value, making it difficult to achieve a net gain alongside development. Potential protected species constraints include foraging and commuting bats, roosting bats (trees), reptiles, badgers, nesting birds.
- Within 200m of geological SSSI (Magdalen Grove).
- The site lies in close proximity to the New Marston Meadows SSSI which is sensitive to changes in the flows and quality of water in the River Cherwell due to its floodplain.

Blue Infrastructure

- Adjacent to River Cherwell and Holywell Mill Stream.
- The site adjoins the River Cherwell and a small portion of the site is within Flood Zone 3a, with a slightly larger area within Flood Zone 2. It is expected development be directed away from areas of flood risk and a site-specific flood risk assessment will be required.

Land Quality

- Contamination unlikely.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Any development should seek to link in with the surrounding woodland and meadows and provide high-quality semi-natural habitat.
- Opportunities exist to plant new trees to improve connectivity within GI network.
- No direct impacts expected to Magdalen Grove SSSI if there is no direct land take.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- Entirely within Central (University & City) Conservation Area.
- Within Historic Core Area, City Centre Archaeological Area and High Buildings Area.
- Adjacent to multiple Grade I, II, and II* listed buildings.
- Adjacent to Magdalen College Grade I Registered Park and Garden.

- The site is in line with the Elsfeld, Doris Field and Headington Hill Allotments view cones but may also appear in others as it is located in the Historical Core Area.
- Archaeological information submitted with the latest planning application suggests the site contains the likely line of the Civil War outer Defences. The site lies within the setting of 15th c Magdalen Precinct wall, the Grade I Magdalen College park (i.e. deer park) and of GD I & II. St Catherine's College (and affiliated buildings) St Cross Building, 10 Cross Road. The impact of development on a listed building/ local heritage asset would depend on design.

Built environment

- Buildings around the site are primarily 2-3 storeys.
- No buildings currently on site, unprotected open space.
- The University Fringe character area is located largely to the north and east of the historic core, as well as a small pocket to the west around Worcester College.
- University Fringe building materials are predominantly College buildings and hospitals typically of brick or limestone. An array of modern materials, such as concrete that contrast with the old, particularly noticeable in Little Clarendon Street.
- There is substantial green space that characterises the east of the character area, including locally and nationally designated sites of ecological importance. This provides multifunctional greenspace including extensive areas of parkland habitat to the west of the River Cherwell, linking with pockets of broadleaved woodland, with many veteran trees. This contrasts with the density of buildings, particularly in the Science Quarter within this character area.
- Site is adjacent to a cemetery.
- The site is currently bordered by a large number of trees, which could certainly be used to its advantage in terms of creating a private and secluded environment for the site.
- To the North Manor Place contains red brick, terraces with steeply pitched roofs and dormers and detached houses all of two storeys.
- Much of the area is characterised by University and College buildings in the Victorian neogothic style, using stone or multi-coloured brick.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Site has a number of heritage constraints which will require sensitive design in order to overcome.
- The site lies in a view cone and within the locally designated high buildings area and the height of any buildings should be restricted.
- However, no insurmountable constraints to development.
- Modest height that responds to the area adjacent and respects the amenity of neighbouring buildings and uses including the St. Cross College Buildings and the Squash Courts building.
- Improve natural surveillance of the site.
- Boundaries should be brick or stone walls to reflect the local vernacular. The use of hedges would suit the current location of the site too, while improved natural surveillance of the site should also be incorporated.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- Currently, the only access point onto the site exists via gated single track road along the site before providing access to it.
- The access road to the site is within Flood Zone 1, therefore safe access/ egress from the site can be achieved.
- The site will not be suitable for much vehicular access due to physical constraints at potential access points.

Layout of the site

- Currently under-utilised site.
- The area is characterised by college and university buildings of mixed ages, with a generally more open spatial quality in contrast with the historic core. The spatial character allows views past buildings and above walls, to other buildings and a skyline of trees and roofs.
- St Cross Road runs parallel to the western border of the site. In terms of natural site definition – currently the east of the site is defined by quite a lot of vegetation.

Connectivity to wider area

- Well-connected city centre location.
- Surrounding streets are within a Controlled Parking Zone.
- No Public Rights of Way within or adjacent to the site.
- The LCWIP identifies a cycle Connecting Route adjacent to the western boundary of the site providing opportunities for connection with the city.

Analysis and urban design implications

- New access from Manor Place to facilitate site access servicing and deliveries etc. from adopted road.
- Existing safe access does not limit development.
- Opportunities for continuation of active travel network.
- To the east of the site, The River Cherwell provides a natural barrier to any sort of access/movement through/onto the site.
- To minimise the impact of vehicular traffic, the most appropriate uses for the site are either student accommodation, or low car residential development.

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

Amenity

- Site is not adversely affected by noise, although it is close to an air quality hotspot.

Infrastructure needs

- No infrastructure concerns.

F) Landowner aspirations

Landowner update (2025) confirms intention to develop for residential use; including student accommodation and possibly also life sciences or other commercial uses.

G) Any extra work needed to inform allocation?

SFRA Level 2 assessment

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:

- Sensitive location means that significant buffer is needed to wildlife corridors/habitats and for screening
- Flood Zone 3 area is excluded from the developable area
- Although the site is a highly sensitive location in terms of heritage, it is also a city centre location and area with relatively dense academic and student accommodation. Also, the site is likely to come forward as student accommodation. Therefore, the sensitivity is dealt with by assuming a small developable area, but within that area the density typology used is appropriate of the city centre.