

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	Land Surrounding St Clement's Church
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPE6
Site size (ha)	2.31ha

Site location



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A) Site overview

- Largely greenfield site, without public access, on the Marston Road next to the Cherwell. The site surrounds the Grade II* listed St Clement's Church, with large lime, horse chestnut and sycamore trees providing its setting
- It includes the now vacant ATC huts in the south and two bungalows and a plant nursery to the north.

Site photos

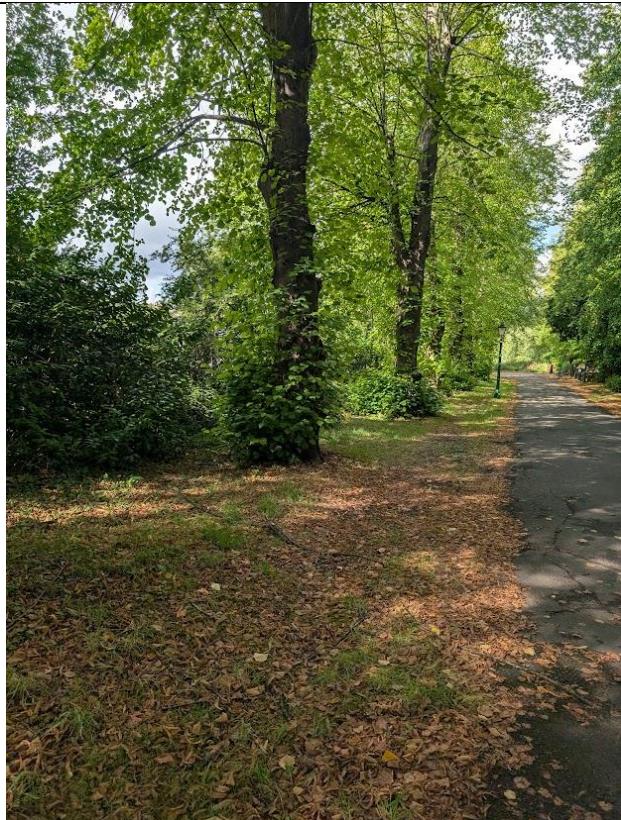
Access from Marston Road at north of the site to bungalow:



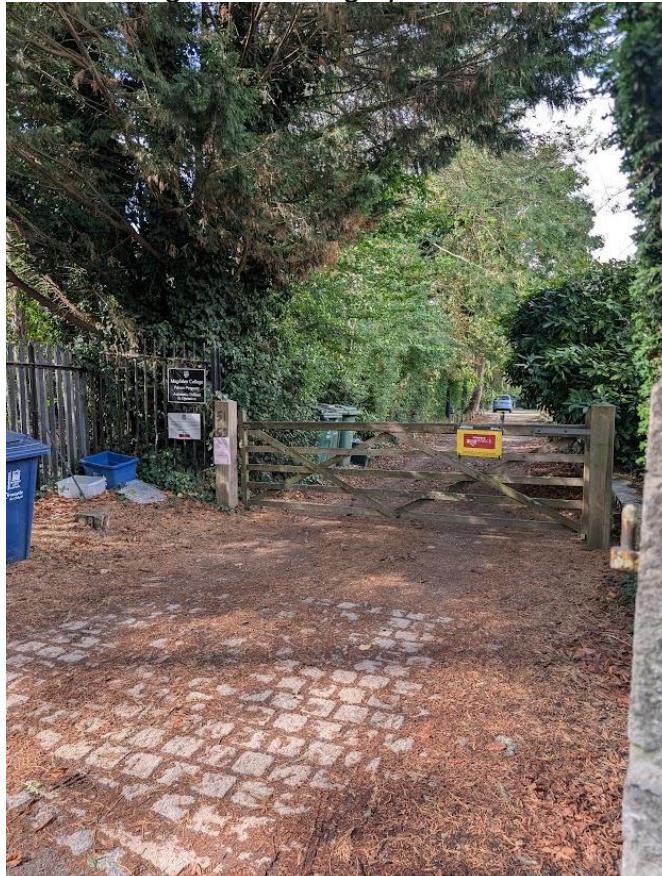
ATC huts viewed from the north:



Tree-lined church access to the south of the church:



Gate to Magdalen College private access in the south west corner of the site:



B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

- *Green infrastructure*
 - There are tree and hedge-lines along the Marston Road and to the south of the church.
 - UGF score above 0.3 so need to maintain that level, which will require retention and enhancement of the most significant green features
- Biodiversity & ecology
 - The river will act as an important wildlife corridor, so maintaining and enhancing a buffer is vital.
 - Potential protected species constraints include roosting bats (both in trees onsite and in the adjacent St Clement's Church), foraging and commuting bats, nesting birds, badger, reptiles, water vole and otter (associated with the River Cherwell).
 - Within LNRS mapping for areas that could become important for biodiversity.
- Blue infrastructure
 - Site adjacent to the river Cherwell.
 - Buffer required alongside the river, with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
 - There is a very small part of the site along the southwest edge, adjacent to the River Cherwell in Flood Zone 3a and a slightly larger but still very small area in Flood Zone 2.

Analysis and urban design implications

- The tree and hedge-lines along the Marston Road and to the south of the church are important to the character of the area and to screen the site and the church. The green, treed character of these should be maintained.
- *Mature trees to the west and north of the church and the natural vegetation along the river should be maintained.*
- Gardens with rich planting along boundaries should allow more diverse routes through the site for wildlife, connecting the river with neighbouring sites.
- Native hedgerow planting alongside the new homes should connect the river to west and the mature trees alongside the Marston Road to the east.
- 10% of the residential area of the site will be required to be public open space.
- Natural and diverse planting may form the main element of public open space on the site.
- These measures will be important in achieving no decrease in the Urban Greening Factor baseline score.
- Opportunities in the LNRS in this location include the creation of flower-rich grassland with violets and light patches of scrub for the Dark Green Fritillary, new lowland meadow on floodplain, new woodland with species suited to the soil type.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- The site is adjacent to the Grade II* listed St. Clements Church, within the St. Clements and Iffley Road Conservation Area and adjacent to the Central and Headington Hill Conservation Areas.
- *The site has a semi-rural very green setting. It is a setting of high quality, important to the St Clement's and Iffley Road Conservation area and setting of the Headington Hill conservation area.*
- The southern part of the site is in the South Park View Cone.
- The site is in landscape character area 10D, St. Clements Open River Terrace and is described as a 'semi-improved rough grassland with ruderal species.'
- The site is included in Character Area 3 of the St. Clements and Iffley Road Conservation Area which is characterised by the 'green avenue' of Marston Road, openness, traditional stone boundary walls, glimpses of Headington Hill Park and St. Clements Church within its tree lined setting.

Built environment

- The High Buildings TAN places the site within the Marston Road Dynamic Area with competition in the view from St. Marys for development above 15m, change of character in the Boars Hill view cone above 15m, and skylining in the Elsfield viewcone above 24m.
- To the south are residential streets of mainly low-rise terraces. Cherwell Street features original two storey Victorian terraced housing with decorative brickwork and modern properties of up to three storeys. *These dwellings back directly onto the site*
- Headington Hill Park is over the Marston Road to the west, sloping up Headington Hill.
- To the north is the Islamic centre.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Retention of the green and semi-rural feel will be important.
- Should retain visual relationship between the river and its meadows, the church and the green slope of Headington Hill, with view from the church across the Cherwell and towards Magdalen College, which should be referenced in the new development, with careful street orientation.
- The hedge and treelines should be retained and enhanced around the church, along Marston Road and by the river.
- Along the boundary with the existing terrace to the south, development must be sensitive to overlooking.
- Terraced or semi-detached housing with pitched roofs would reflect the local vernacular in the character area and should provide a sympathetic setting for the Church.
- Terraced or semi-detached housing with front and rear gardens would be appropriate to the semi-rural character of the site.
- There would be an opportunity for larger plots to bookend rows or at junctions giving variety to the roofscape.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

- There is access existing to the bungalows on the north of the site and an access road to the ATC huts to the south.
- There is a network of paths and bridges at the north-west corner of the site, which are in the private ownership of Magdalen College.
- The site fronts Marston Road, which has frequent buses to the city centre and to the John Radcliffe Hospital.

Analysis and design implications

- Main access to the site from the Marston Road should be towards the north of the site, avoiding the more sensitive area nearer the church.
- The existing access to the bungalows is likely to work best as the main access.
- One main entrance would allow a highways compliant design while minimising the loss of hedgerows on Marston Road.
- A separate entrance to the southern part of the site is likely to be necessary. This should be short, with any parking near the entrance, to minimise the amount it runs alongside the church. A pedestrian/cycle link to the rest of the site would be beneficial, but a vehicle connection would not be possible.
- The best block arrangement would not lose the openness of the riverside setting, compete with the Grade II* listed St. Clements Church, or lose the hedge-line on the Marston Road. The scale of development should be two or three story blocks

of terraced or semi-detached housing but within a more open, landscaped setting in keeping with the character area.

- Parking should be kept in the public realm where possible and could be located close to the Marston road, allowing the development of a masterplan more focused on walking and cycling within the site.

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

Amenity

- A lighting strategy will be required and artificial lighting should be avoided too close to the river, to minimise interference with bats.
- If St Clement's Church has the potential to support roosting bats, neither the church nor flightpaths to and from it should be subject to illumination either.
- The proximity of the main arterial road of Marston Road should be considered for any mitigation needed for air quality and noise.

Infrastructure needs

- The orientation of the site would allow some plots to be aligned within 30 degrees of due south for passive design principles.
- There is an opportunity to incorporate SuDS to the west of the site adjacent to the riverside, where Flood Zone 2 and 3 would make it difficult to build. This would also make positive use of the riverside setting and open it up to all users of the site.

E) Landowner aspirations

Landowner proposed site for residential use

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

Biodiversity survey
SFRA Level 2

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

Estimated capacity – min (for residential/mixed use): 50 minimum capacity for the site has been calculated with the following assumptions:

- Narrower than usual gap to neighbouring homes in south requires careful design. Will be one row (single storey or clever window orientation). Assume 12 units.
- Requires 10m buffer to river. Makes southwest section narrow and awkward. Assume buffer overlaps with 10% open space in southwest section of the site.

- Main development in the north. Leave buffer, treeline alongside road and clumps of trees as these are needed for townscape and UGF reasons. 30dph in this area due to the very sensitive and semi-rural location. 2 existing units removed from net gain assumption. .