

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site Name	Union Street Car Park
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPE17
Site size (ha)	0.24

Site location



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A) Site overview

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Description of current context

- The site is located within the East Oxford District Centre, off the main thoroughfare of Cowley Road. It is in the heart of the district centre and is set within well-developed context with a variety of uses including those with active frontages such as retail, cafés and restaurants, as well as residential and student accommodation.

Site photos



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B) Open space, nature and flood risk

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Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- The site is dominated by hardstanding and covered surfaces. There is not much in terms of natural features other than isolated individual trees of varying maturity. There is a line of mature street trees along the Collins Street frontage.
- The UGF score of the site is likely to be well below the proposed policy requirement.
- The site is located in FZ1. However, there is vulnerability to surface water flooding at various sections, particularly along the length of Collins Street, forming the northern boundary of the site and extending down the eastern and western boundaries. The risk will potentially be exacerbated by the amount of hardstanding.

Land Quality

- Site contamination is likely due to historic use.

Biodiversity and ecology

- There are no ecological features of note on the site, and it is likely to be highly deficient in biodiversity due to its location and use.

Analysis and urban design implications

- This is a constrained site so opportunities for greening are likely to be limited in type, particularly if a significant proportion of the onsite car parking is to be retained. To achieve the UGF score required it is likely that creative solutions will be needed and features included will need to be of the highest quality.
- The mature trees lining Collins Street should be retained and a setback maintained to allow for greatest access to their amenity. The planting of additional trees along Union and Chapel Streets should be explored. Alternative opportunities should be explored for integrating elements such as green roofs, green walls etc into any schemes. Roof/balcony gardens may also be an option for greening as well as amenity for occupiers.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- Site is not in the setting of any designated heritage assets.
- Site is within the Crescent Road View Cone.
- This site is of archaeological interest as it is within the general area of a poorly understood Civil War parliamentary siege line. There is also potential for prehistoric, Roman and medieval archaeology. These will require further investigation as part of any redevelopment.

Built environment

- The site is within the East Oxford character area, which is a high density and vibrant suburb, with a distinctive spiders web street and block pattern that radiates from the Plan. The area is dominated by terraced brick houses with bay winders and small front gardens, or older, simpler terraces with doors onto the street. Victorian industrial buildings are integrated into the urban fabric. Modern architecture is generally well-integrated and respectful of Victorian features and detailing.
- The site is currently in use as a car park. The immediate context is one of relatively low rise but dense development with a range of uses. There are a mix of building types, including 2 to 3 storey terraced buildings along Cowley Road and larger blocks of up to 4 storeys, including the 159 – 161 Cowley Road development above the Tesco Extra opposite the site. There is a primary school directly opposite the site on Collins Street.
- The 4 storey development on 159 – 161 Cowley Road above the Tesco dominates the site context as it forms the entirety of the southern boundary. There is also an access point to the Tesco with a crossing onto the car park across Avenue Lane. This boundary also directly faces onto the goods and servicing area and bin stores for the Tesco Express.
- The East Oxford primary school is located on Collins Street directly opposite the site, and is comprises of a grouping of several buildings of varying size.

Analysis and urban design implications

- The space between buildings should be carefully considered, particularly Avenue Lane which has no active frontage and is poorly overlooked. There are risks of poor security and antisocial behaviour.
- The most sensitive land use in the vicinity is the East Oxford Primary School. Collins Street is already part pedestrianised, but proposals should take into consideration how the school will be affected while it is in use, as well as during pickup/drop-offs, outdoor activities etc.
- Because of the constrained location and the contrasting character of the setting, the massing and roofline of any proposed development may need to be variable. It may be expected that the height and massing towards the Collins Street frontage should be at a more humanised scale to take into consideration the pedestrianised street, the existing street trees, and the primary school which is a single storey structure on the street.
- Greater height may be suitable towards the southern perimeter of the site towards the 4 storey block of the Tesco Express/student accommodation. The roofscape will require thoughtful design due to the potential variation in rooflines, and also to provide interest to street scene and mitigate any adverse impacts on views. Note that if undercroft or similar form of parking is integrated in the scheme, that may have implications on heights if the site capacity is to be achieved.

D) Access, movement and layout

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Description of current context

Access into the site

- Site is a city council car park containing 74 spaces.
- Current vehicular access to the car park is single in/out route from Union Street. It is a bit more permeable to pedestrian traffic.

- The car park does not directly adjoin any plots but is bordered on all sides by roads. Avenue Lane which is one way from Union Street to Chapel Street (west to east) runs behind the Tesco Extra store and separates the car park from the superstore.
- Collins Street along the north boundary of the site is partly pedestrianised.

Layout of the site

- The site is in the heart of the district centre and is set within well developed context with a variety of uses including those with active frontages such as retail, cafés and restaurants, as well as residential and student accommodation. There is therefore expected that there will be a good level of provision for social and community amenity for the occupiers of any development in the area.

Connectivity to wider area

- Site is located just off the main thoroughfare of Cowley Road and is within the designated East Oxford district centre.
- There are several bus stops along Cowley Road, serving a wide range of routes to the city centre and beyond.

Analysis and urban design implications

- Because the site is in a highly sustainable location it is expected that any new development will be low car i.e. parking provision allocated onsite for occupiers of the development and only servicing and disabled parking available.
- Public parking spaces will need to be retained at a level that will be sufficient to support the district centre.
- Options such as accommodating the parking in an undercroft should be explored.
- It is also important that public parking provision that is sufficient to serve the district centre is available during the construction period at a location that is easily reachable from the area.
- Collins Street is partly pedestrianised and separated from through traffic by bollards. It is possible this could serve as a key pedestrian access for the development. There may also be potential for a pedestrianised through route from Collins Street to the Tesco Express or Cowley Road.

E) Other considerations

Amenity

- The entrance to East Oxford Primary School is located on Collins Street and the amenity of pupils and carers should be taken into consideration with respect to overlooking, noise etc.
- The frontage along Avenue Lane currently comprises of an alternative entrance to the supermarket and services access/bin storage which will need to be better resolved in order for it to be an active frontage to enhance safety and accessibility.

F) Landowner aspirations

- Landowner aspirations for the site are for student accommodation or residential led development. The site is a current allocation in Local Plan 2036 as part of a larger land parcel that has been partially developed.

G) Any extra work needed to inform allocation?

- Site investigation for land contamination may be required, along with remediation works.
- Assessment of local/district centre car parking needs
- Archaeological Assessment
- Verified views and visual impact assessments

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 based on city centre/district typology – 100 dph