

Site capacity assessment – Local Plan 2045

Site name	Templars Square
LP2045 Site Allocation	SPS16
Site size (ha)	3.88

Site location



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A) Site overview

Description of current context

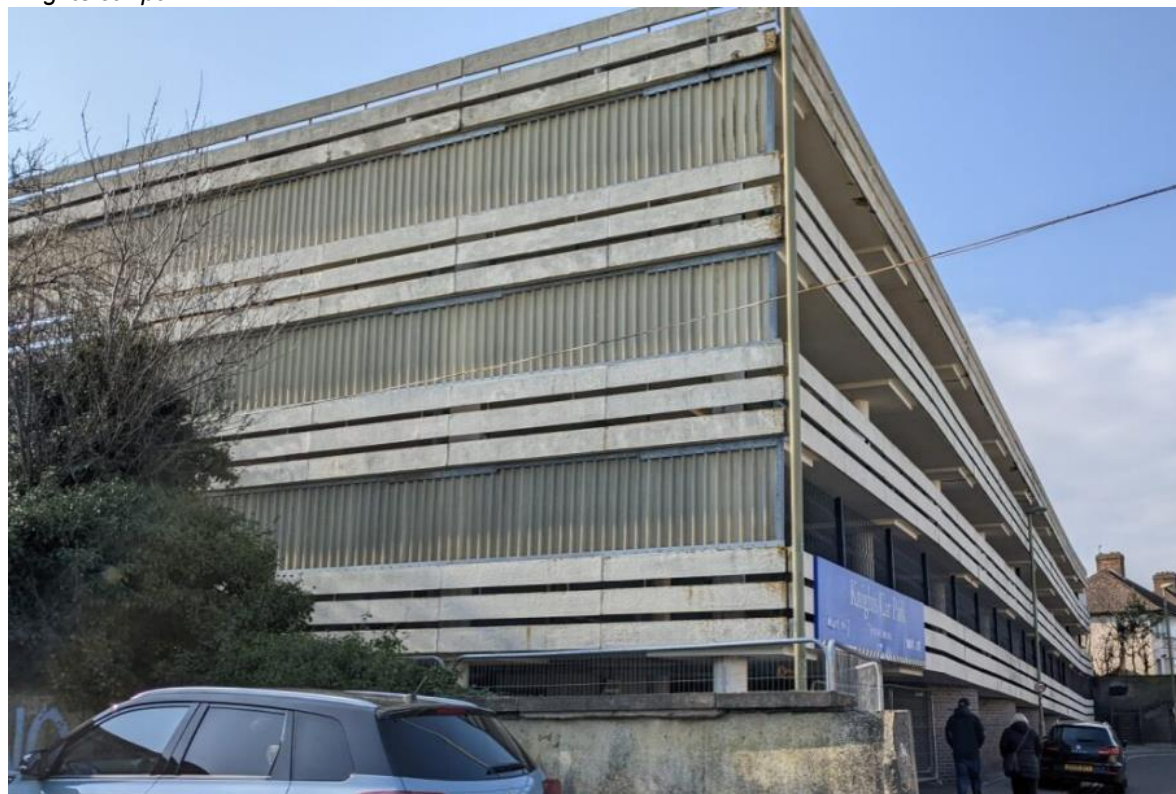
- The site is a key part of the district centre. It comprises of indoor shopping, with some shops around the outside and entrances. Many retail units are vacant. Two multi-storey car parks are included within the site, one of which is closed. There is a tall residential tower within the site and other small scale residential units at the back. As well as some shops, the centre has a range of other town centre uses and facilities, including the EMBS Community College.
- Opposite the site is the Templars Shopping Park, which has large-unit retail surrounding surface-level parking. The site is also next to some low-rise residential development.
- The site is in a LSOA amongst the 40% most deprived.
- Planning permission was granted for redevelopment for part of the site for mixed-use ground floor and 226 residential units (now expired), focused along the Between Towns Road side of the site.
- The site has a date appearance, is inward facing and has limited engagement with its surroundings.

Site photos

View towards north from Hockmore Street:



Knights car park:



View south from Between Towns Road:



B) Open space, nature and flood risk

Description of current context

Green infrastructure

- There is very little green on the site- just a few patches of grass and a few trees mainly by the car parks.
- The site scores under the UGF target for residential and for non-residential development, so greening would need to be introduced to meet the target.

Biodiversity and ecology

- Aerial imagery indicates semi-natural habitats are absent from the site. The site offers the opportunity to provide some biodiversity interest.

Blue Infrastructure

- The site is in Flood Zone 1, although there are some patches of potential surface-water flooding.

Land Quality

- Potential contamination risks. Site investigations and remedial works likely to be necessary.

Analysis

Analysis and urban design implications

- Opportunities should be taken include more street trees and soft landscaping, which are currently lacking around the site.
- Innovative approaches such as green walls and roofs could be used to introduce biodiversity and greening along new streets and to soften the edges of the development will help to achieve the UGF score.

- Potential protected species constraints include roosting bats and nesting birds; however, the urban surrounding reduces the likelihood that bats are present. The need for survey work should be assessed on a case-by-case basis with any application coming forwards.
- Amenity open space for residential development could include greening features, such as rooftop gardens, inset green space and vertical gardens.

C) Historic environment, character and local context

Description of current context

Historic environment

- The site is in the setting of the Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area, which adjoins it to the west, and which also includes some listed buildings.
- The Conservation Area is sensitive, but the CA appraisal notes that it has also already been compromised by the current development, thus potentially reducing the sensitivity to further change at this site. The CA Appraisal identifies a risk to the CA from traffic also. There is therefore an opportunity to improve the setting of the Beauchamp Lane Conservation Area.
- The site is not in a View Cone, although it is in an elevated position in the city.
- The site is on the edge of an important Roman pottery manufacturing area and partly located over the area of a medieval settlement

Built environment

- The area falls within the Cowley Residential Suburb area of the Landscape Character Assessment urban character is inter-war residential and post-war commercial. The area forms part of the Settled Plateaux landscape type- an area of calcareous sandstone- which gives rise to a slightly elevated topography, looking down over the city centre.
- The site is very urban in character, defined by roads around all four sides of the site, with Barns Road and Between Towns Road being fairly busy main roads.
- Surrounding streets are generally planned street layout, with the Templars Shopping Park to the south, comprising large retail units surrounding surface level parking.
- Heights on the site vary from 1-2 storeys up to 10 storeys at Hockmore Tower. The previous planning permission included a 14-storey building along the frontage of the site, on Between Towns Road.

Analysis and urban design implications

- There is an opportunity to make more efficient use of land by comprehensive redevelopment that consolidates uses and through infill and taller development.
- The area is important as a district centre so needs to provide a mix of town centre and community uses as well as residential.
- There are opportunities to introduce a richer and more varied roofscape, which could support green roofs or solar panels subject to testing.

- There are opportunities to respond better to the Beauchamp Conservation Area and listed buildings set within it.
- Site is of archaeological interest - Historic core of Church Cowley and western end of Roman pottery manufacturing compound, though heavily built up.

D) Access, movement and layout

Description of current context

Access into the site

- There is currently pedestrian access from all directions, all around the site.
- Surrounding pavements are fairly wide, although public realm could be enhanced.
- Height differences across the site at present could present access issues for wheelchair users and buggies, as the site is accessed in some places via stairways.
- There are some large junctions that cyclists would currently need to navigate, including the junction at the entrance to John Allen Way.
- There are clusters of bus stops on Barns Road and Between Towns Road.
- The internal parts of the centre are closed in the evening, restricting access to Hockmore Tower. The servicing arrangements around the external parts create an inward facing centre that limits active street frontages.

Layout of the site

- The layout of the site is complicated, with two multi-storey car parks, separate accesses to residential units and multiple accesses to the shopping centre.
- The base level on the site varies, with the rear/northern side of the site being 1-2 storeys higher up than the base level at the southern edge of the site along Between Towns Road.

Connectivity to wider area

- The site is a district centre and important to the wider area, but it does not integrate well with it- the busy roads act as barriers to connectivity beyond, and the sides of the centre and location of services means that it is the backs of the development that present to the surroundings.
- The site is very well connected to a wide area by public transport. Multiple frequent bus services stop adjacent to the site, along Between Towns Road and Barns Road, with services connecting to the City Centre, Cowley Road, JR Hospital, and Blackbird Leys. And less frequent (generally hourly) services connect further afield.
- Traffic control measures including bollards have been introduced at the top end of Beauchamp Lane to help prevent parts of the Conservation Area being used as a shortcut to Cowley Centre.

Analysis and urban design implications

- There is likely potential for parking to be reduced, as long as there remains what is needed to support the needs of the site. The parking can be

rationalised to make better use of space than three separate car parks, including two standalone multi-storey car parks.

- There should be no additional parking and residential development should be low car and the CPZs adjacent should cover the new residential development.
- Residential entrances should be incorporated into the public realm/street frontages to align with Secured by Design principles and address issues such as the unattractive entrance to Hockmore Tower on Banjo Road

E) Other considerations

Other considerations to include in allocations?

Amenity

- Potential noise and air quality impacts of the roads surrounding the site should be considered.

Infrastructure needs

- The site is an important district centre site, with a community function, and the potential for infrastructure and services such as healthcare should be considered.

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*

Landowner has submitted call for sites form and wants to bring the site forward for residential, maintaining mixed use and activity on the ground floor

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

The site is previously developed land and is in an accessible location and not at risk of flooding. The site is also not sensitive from an ecological perspective. No further work needed to inform allocation.

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

Because of the mixed-use nature of the site and the already tested potential demonstrated by the planning approval, the capacity has been arrived at with some assumptions about block and flat sizes, rather than using a density multiplier. These assumptions are to enable a capacity calculation and in no way are intended to suggest these assumptions are an appropriate or tested design; they are just reasonable broad assumptions based on standard practice and also informed by existing heights, the previous approval, the High Buildings TAN and the Cowley Branch Line Densification Study. A N-S block arrangement has been assumed with 17m wide blocks and a 24m gap between blocks- this is in order to have a

basis for a calculation, rather than to say that is the only or best way to design the site. 60m² flats are assumed, with 30% of that space removed for circulation space etc. Heights will need to be varied across the site. The assumption was made of mainly 6 and some 5 storeys of residential (on top of other uses at ground or possibly first floor). However, parts of the site could come forward with greater height, allowing some higher storeys in appropriate locations, with lower levels where it is most sensitive. The assumed blocks are arranged around the Hockmore tower, limiting the number of units netted off.