

# OXPENS

## OXFORD WEST END

Master Plan  
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)  
November 2013

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Master Plan  
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)  
November 2013

prepared by  
David Lock Associates  
and  
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on behalf of  
Oxford City Council



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Town Planning and Urban Design



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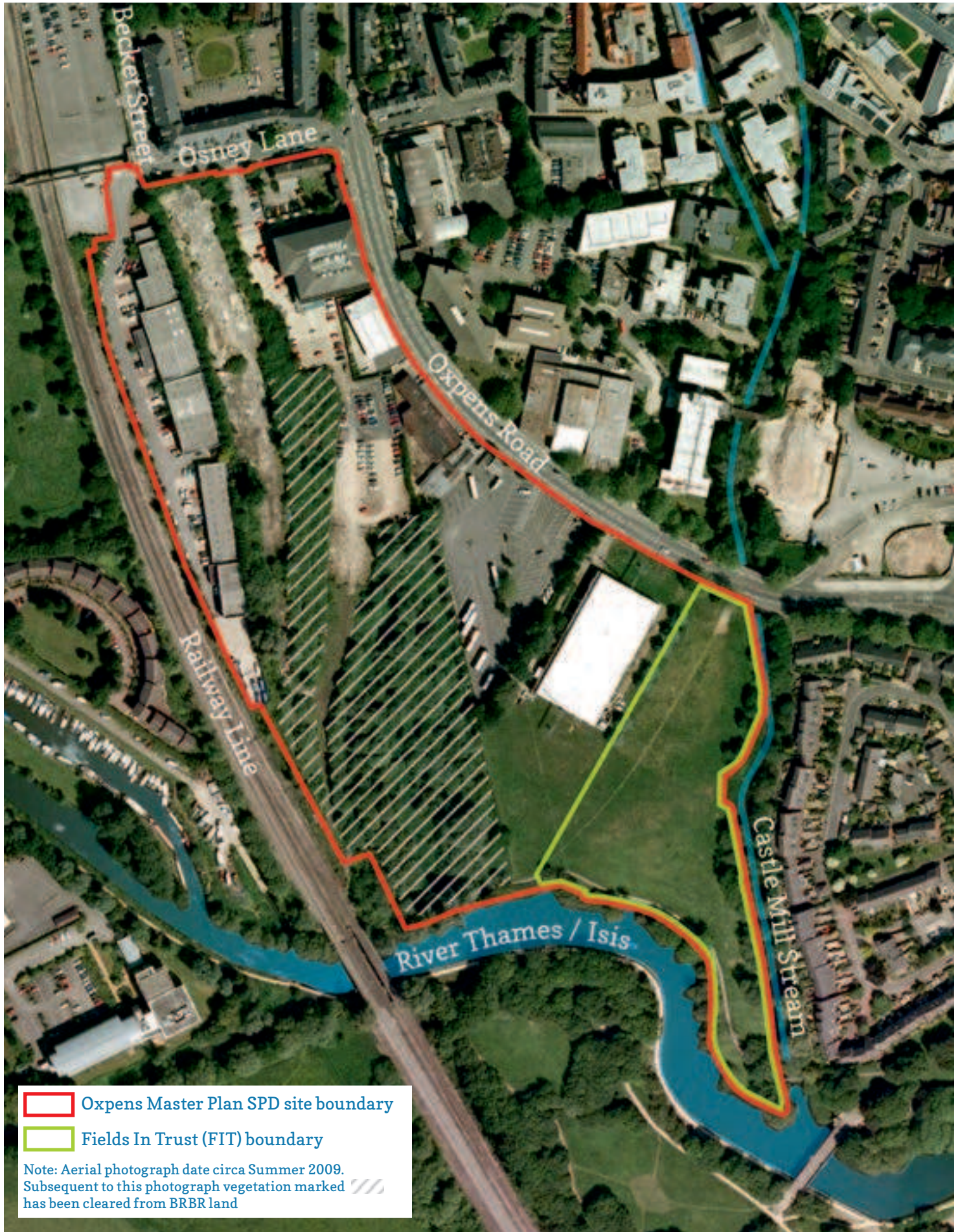
Chapter One  
INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Oxpens site represents one of the most significant development opportunities within Oxford city centre. Located in the Oxford West End, see **Figure 1.1**, close to the Railway Station, the University and the Westgate Shopping Centre (which is itself subject to major redevelopment plans) the site has potential to make a valuable contribution to the life and economy of the City through the delivery of new housing (for market sale and affordable housing), flexible office space, a hotel, local facilities and public open space.
- 1.2 Oxford City Council expects an exceptional scheme to come forward at Oxpens, one that responds to the status and ambition of the City whilst providing an exceptional local environment and embraces the principles of sustainable development. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced by Oxford City Council as a guide for future development of the land adjacent to Oxpens Road, herein known as the Oxpens site. It establishes the City Council's expectations on master planning, design quality and infrastructure requirements.
- 1.3 The SPD relates to the area of land identified in red on **Figure 1.1, Oxpens Site Plan – Aerial Photograph**. The SPD builds on the policy set out in the Oxford West End Area Action Plan (WEAAP), in particular WEAAP Volume 2 of 2, Appendices include the West End Design Code. The SPD should be read in conjunction with the WEAAP and other notable policy documentation covered in more detail in Section 2 of this report.
- 1.4 The site is currently in multiple-ownership; Oxford City Council, British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR), Milton Property Investments Ltd (the key landowner at the Oxford Business Centre) and Royal Mail each own part of the site, and there are ongoing uses including the Royal Mail Delivery Office and administrative functions, Oxford Ice Rink, a coach park, a petrol filling station, sheltered housing and a range of local businesses. The master planning work contained within this SPD has taken account of these factors.
- 1.5 There are no current plans to redevelop the Ice Rink site, and the master plan allows for the retention of the Ice Rink. The Ice Rink has been included within the Master Plan to allow comprehensive consideration of the whole of the Oxpens site. Potential phased development of the site is set out in Chapter 7, *Phasing and Delivery*.
- 1.6 In addition the site has a number of physical features which will influence the design of any future scheme. This includes areas that are subject to flood risk, railway noise and a deep inspection chamber. Oxpens Meadow includes a Fields In Trust (FIT) designation, there is no intention to develop housing on the FIT area of open space. This SPD provides guidance on how these constraints should be addressed.
- 1.7 This SPD establishes a **Development Framework** (see **Figure 6.1**) and **Illustrative Master Plan (Figure 6.3)** for the Oxpens site, with supporting design guidance in the form of illustrative Figures (plans, diagrams, illustrations and photographs) and written commentary.
  - *The Development Framework comprises a series of urban blocks that allow for flexibility in their intended use and distribution. The urban blocks allow for the phased delivery of development.*
  - *The Master Plan is Illustrative of how the urban blocks established in the Development Framework could be developed. The Master Plan is not intended to be prescriptive; rather it shows one way in which the site could be developed.*
- 1.8 The SPD will be a material consideration in determining the appropriateness of planning applications and in moving forward through to implementation. Oxford City Council strongly advise that future development proposals for the Oxpens site should be prepared in accordance with the design guidance set this Master Plan SPD, to help ensure the successful redevelopment of the Oxpens site, which in turn can act as a flagship to inspire further investment and renewal in the Oxford West End.
- 1.9 The SPD has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 1.10 The SPD has been prepared through a process involving the stakeholders (including Oxford City Council, Oxford County Council, the Environment Agency, Oxford Preservation Trust, Oxford Civic Society and SENDRA), landowners (Oxford City Council and BRBR), Officers and Members of the Council. It aims to balance the aspirations and objectives of all of these groups with acknowledged best practice principles for the design and development of sustainable, high quality places.
- 1.11 This draft report has been prepared for Oxford City Council (OCC) by David Lock Associates Limited, in association with MJP Architects, and informed by technical advice from CBRE property consultants, Atkins engineering consultants and Council officers. It has also been informed by the initial informal comments of a range of stakeholders.
- 1.12 [*Consultation has taken place and views have been taken into account in the formulation of this document as summarised under headings for stakeholder engagement and consultation in Chapter 1. This SPD was subject to formal consultation in accordance with Regulation 12 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.*]







## ROLE OF THE SPD: ESTABLISHING GOOD DESIGN & DELIVERY

1.13 This SPD sets out the minimum design standards which should be achieved to deliver the new development. Developers will be encouraged to exceed these standards where possible and will be expected to apply new standards that arise during the life of the document. The guidance given here reflects up to date best practice and design principles.

1.14 The key elements of the SPD are:

- a spatial framework plan which should form the starting point for master planning the site;
- design principles aimed at delivering a high quality scheme;
- requirements for addressing sustainable design;
- requirements relating to the scheme's delivery; and
- requirements which should be met at the detailed planning application stage and beyond to ensure adequate and consistent approaches to quality and delivery.

1.15 The SPD should be read in conjunction with other Government policy documents relating to large-scale development, sustainability, and design, in particular:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (DCLG);
- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice, (DETR and CABE);
- The Urban Design Compendium (editions 1 & 2) (Homes and Communities Agency);
- Places Streets and Movement: Better Places to Live by Design (CABE);
- The Manual for Streets (editions 1 & 2) (Chartered institution of Highways & Transportation, DfT); and
- Car parking, What works where (Design for Homes, EP);

1.16 These documents collectively promote a consensus view of good design principles which should lie at the heart of the design of the site, comprising:

- **Character** – somewhere with a sense of place, and that responds positively to the high architectural quality of the city centre as a whole;
- **Legibility** – a place which is easy to understand and navigate;
- **Permeability** – achieving a form of layout which makes for efficient pedestrian, vehicular movement and public transport provision, and ensures good connections with its surrounds;
- **An articulated townscape** – creating an interesting, contextually responsive townscape utilising building height, scale and massing, and design detail;
- **An integrated landscape** – a place which responds to its landscape setting and has a well considered urban landscape;
- **Human scale** – the arrangement of building forms which are easy for the human eye to read and provide a sense of scale and perspective;
- **Secure, natural surveillance** – creating places which are properly overlooked and make for effective passive and active policing;

- **Detailing, richness and interest** – promoting ornamentation, rhythm, consistent vernacular, richness, and intrigue to the built environment;
- **Quality within the public realm** – promoting routes and spaces which are attractive, safe and uncluttered;
- **Continuity and enclosure** – promoting the continuity of the street frontage and the definition of public and private space;
- **Adaptability, robustness and sustainability** – the layout of the site and individual buildings should reduce the use of resources and carbon impact from the design stage onwards; and
- **Diversity** – promoting diversity and choice through a mix of developments and uses, responding to local need.



Note: Image is indicative only, representing broad massing and form.

Specific details, for instance creating roofscape variety, will be developed in detailed design proposals with reference to WEEAP Appendix Design Code requirements for varied height of building lines addressing key streets.

Detailed design proposals should avoid large, flat roofed blocks and proposals should be considered in the context of the sensitivity of the city's skyline.

## STRUCTURE OF THE SPD

1.17 The remainder of this SPD covers the following content in six further sections:

- **Planning Policy Framework** (Section 2): a summary of the policy context for the SPD;
- **Site Context** (Section 3): A summary of the site location, local context, site features and opportunities;
- **Vision and Development Concept** (Section 4): A summary of the overall concept and the vision for the Oxpens site.
- **Key Design Principles** (Section 5): Statement of the key design principles that guide the development framework for the Oxpens site.
- **Oxpens Master Plan** (Section 6): Presentation of the key design guidance for the Oxpens site: illustration of master plan in the form of a Development Framework Plan that will guide all future applications for the site, accompanied by Illustrative Master Planning material showing proposals of how the site can be designed in accordance to the design principles set in the SPD.
- **Phasing & Delivery** (Section 7): Illustration of proposed indicative phasing strategy, statement of key infrastructure requirements, and management and maintenance.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 1.18 In the preparation of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD stakeholders have been consulted to further understanding of the key local issues in relation to the Oxpens study area, and the wider Oxford West End. Stakeholders consulted include:
- The Environment Agency;
  - Oxford County Council Highways Department;
  - Oxford Civic Society;
  - Oxford Preservation Trust; *and*
  - St Ebbes New Development Residents' Association (SENDRA)
- 1.19 Land owners have also been consulted in the preparation of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD including:
- BRBR;
  - Milton Property Investments Ltd;
  - Royal Mail; *and*
  - Oxford Citizens Housing Association.
- 1.20 Stakeholders were made aware of the purpose of the Oxpens SPD & Master plan. Issues and concerns raised during stakeholder discussions have informed the SPD. Relevant reports and studies that provide the design and planning policy context for the project were highlighted to stakeholders – these reports include:
- Oxford West End Area Action Plan, 2007-2016, prepared by Oxford City Council, Adopted June 2008;
  - Oxford West End Area Development Framework, prepared by David Lock Associates Limited, March 2005;
  - Oxpens Development Strategy, Final Report, prepared by CBRE, June 2010; *and*
  - Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility *Study*, prepared by Atkins, June 2007.

## Public Consultation

- 1.21 In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the SPD underwent a 6 week public consultation between 17 June and 30 July 2013. The draft document was published, advertised and made available for public comment. Statutory consultees were invited to comment. In addition an exhibition was held in St Aldates Chambers, 900 questionnaires were physically distributed to residents and businesses in the area, a further 200 questionnaires were distributed through the Customer Service Centre and around 1400 members of the public who had registered an interest in planning matters on our online consultation portal were invited to comment on the SPD. The Council received comments from 150 people or organisations.
- 1.22 In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 SI 1633, the SA for the SPD underwent a 5 week consultation for the Screening and Scoping Stages. In line with the Regulations, the environmental consultees – English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England were invited to comment at this stage. The Screening and Scoping consultations were conducted simultaneously for a period of 5 weeks. We received 5 comments on the Screening and Scoping consultation from a range of groups including the environmental consultees at the scoping and screening stages and two other local groups.
- 1.23 Between 17 June and 30 July 2013, the Environmental Report for the SPD underwent a 6 week public consultation alongside the SPD itself. This consultation invited the same group that were consulted on the SPD to comment on the SEA and included members of the public who had registered an interest in planning on our online consultation portal. In total there were four responses on the Environmental Report.
- 1.24 We considered all the comments and made amendments to the SPD where appropriate. The Final Public Participation Statement provides more detail on the issues raised during stakeholder engagement and the comments received during the public consultation and how they have influenced the final SPD.

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Chapter Two  
PLANNING POLICY



## 2 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 This section summarises the planning policy context of the Oxpens SPD.

2.2 The context for the master plan is set by a number of important reports including the following adopted policy documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (England), 2012;
- Oxford Core Strategy 2026, adopted 2011;
- Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy (2006-2016);
- Oxford Economic Development Strategy (2005-2020);
- Oxford West End Area Action Plan, 2007-2016, prepared by Oxford City Council, Adopted June 2008;
- Sites and Housing Plan, Development Plan Document (DPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted February 2013);
- Affordable Housing SPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted 2006;
- Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) SPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted November 2006; *and*
- Balance of Dwellings SPD, Oxford City Council, Adopted 2008.

2.3 Non-statutory context material of particular relevance for the Oxpens site includes:

- *Oxford West End Area Development Framework*, prepared by David Lock Associates Limited, March 2005;
- *Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility Study*, prepared by Atkins, June 2007; *and*
- *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council, 2010.



## Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 2.4 The SPD is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA), which is also subject to consultation. The guidance from both the European Commission and the Government indicates how local authorities can comply with the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC and the subsequent "Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004" (the SEA Regulations) which amplify its operation within England. Under the SEA Regulations, local authorities must, where appropriate, carry out a SEA of land-use and spatial plans. Regulation 5 (2) of the Regulations describes that an environmental assessment should be undertaken for a plan or programme which -
- (a) *is prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, and*
  - (b) *sets the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC.*
- 2.5 Oxford City Council has considered whether the SPD is likely to require an SA/SEA. Taking account of its conclusion that an SEA was required for the Master Plan SPD, the Council has produced a Draft SA/SEA, which details the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the SPD and the reasonable alternatives considered, taking into account the objectives of the SPD.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment Combined Screening & Scoping Report

- 2.6 Oxford City Council prepared a SEA combined screening and scoping report in April 2013:

*"1.1... to determine the need for, and consult on the scope and level of detail to be included for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations for the proposed Oxpens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).*

*1.2 The purpose of this document is twofold. Firstly to undertake a screening assessment that meets the requirements of the European Legislation, applied in the UK through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (SI No. 1633). The Regulations do not require an assessment of the planning merits of the proposals at this stage, instead the requirements is to ascertain whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. This process is completely distinct from the planning process and governed by an entirely different set of Environmental Regulations.*

*1.4 The policy framework for the Oxpens SPD is found in the Oxford Core Strategy (2011), and West End Area Action Plan (2008)."*

- 2.7 The report concluded:

*5.1...The proposed SPD will supplement existing adopted policies as set out in Appendix 1. The SPD will form part of the framework for the development for the Oxpens site. It will sit underneath the "parent" document of the West End Area Action Plan (AAP) and will become a material consideration when determining planning applications.*

*5.2...In order to supplement the policies in the AAP, the SPD must reflect and be based on the AAP policies. Any significant changes or additions to the policies in the AAP must be the subject of a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment as they would constitute a material departure from the development plan. This ensures that the SPD will comply with the European Directive.*

*5.3...This SEA Combined Screening and Scoping assessment has not been able to rule out that the SPD would give rise to any significant environmental effects. The SEA Combined Screening and Scoping*

assessment has shown that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required in relation to the following SEA Topics: Biodiversity, Water, Climatic Factors, Cultural Heritage, and Transport (Inter-relationship between Air, Climatic Factors and Material Assets) See Table 5. Therefore it is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the proposed Oxpens SPD that relates to only these SEA topics. It is considered that the rest of the topics were considered sufficiently through the Sustainability Appraisal (which includes SEA) of the West End Area Action Plan.

5.4..As this report also represents the Scoping Report, the City Council is consulting with the three statutory environmental bodies (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for 5 weeks in order to decide the level of detail of the information that must be included in the SEA Report. As well as meeting the requirements of the Regulations, this Combined Screening and Scoping Report will be made available alongside the draft SPD and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Draft SPD (programmed for June 2013).

5.5...The Oxpens SPD is likely to add an additional level of detail to that of the AAP. The SEA Guidance<sup>1</sup> states that

*“An SEA need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. The Directive requires consideration of the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme, and of reasonable alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.”*

As such the assessment should be proportional to the level of the plan that is being assessed.

5.6... Any assessment undertaken under the SEA Regulations<sup>2</sup> does not rule out the need for further assessment, should it be necessary, under the EIA Regulations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ODPM, (2005), A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of plans and programmes Regulations 2004 SI No. 1633

<sup>3</sup> Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 SI No. 1824

Chapter Three  
SITE CONTEXT

## 3 SITE CONTEXT

3.1 This section provides a summary of the site location, local context, site features and opportunities.

### LOCATION: OXFORD WEST END CONTEXT

#### Proximity to Oxford Railway Station

- 3.2 Oxford Railway station is located to the north of the Oxpens site; its proximity is a great asset, providing excellent connections for both residential and commercial development and assisting in attracting inward investment. Direct access is via Becket Street and Oxpens Road – Holly Row, and the station is within easy walking distance. Access to the station is due to be improved further with the public realm enhancement of Frideswide Square, further information below.
- 3.3 The Railway Station and its environs may be subject to their own Supplementary Planning Document as part of master planning work jointly commissioned by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Network Rail. National level funding has been sought for infrastructure improvements in the Oxford corridor.
- 3.4 Potential changes to Becket Street (to be confirmed) are likely to include the creation of a two-way vehicular route enabled by removing on-street parking bays, which may be replaced at Osney Lane.
- 3.5 Oxfordshire County Council continues to review the transport requirements of Oxford West End in partnership with the City Council. .

#### Proximity to the heart of Oxford City Centre

- 3.6 The heart of Oxford City Centre is within walking distance of the Oxpens site. The proposed Westgate Centre redevelopment immediately to the east of Oxpens will draw the centre of gravity of the City Centre closer still to the Oxpens site, with retail and commercial activity proposed to stretch from the existing City Centre core, south towards Oxpens Road. The Oxford Castle Quarter is located between Oxpens and the heart of the City Centre and provides a strong example of recent high quality redevelopment within the Oxford West End. The presence of retail, leisure, food and drink attraction within short walking distance of the Oxpens site will increase the attraction of new development proposals for Oxpens. Currently connections for pedestrians between Oxpens and the rest of the City Centre are not as strong as they could be – see Development Principle 5 (DP5) and Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End* – and proposals across the area must seek to address this.

#### Development Schemes in the Oxford West End

- 3.7 Other key sites and development proposals in the Oxford West End include the following:
- Westgate Centre redevelopment;
  - Oxford & Cherwell Valley College site;
  - Frideswide Square redevelopment;
  - Oxford Railway Station redevelopment;
  - Oxford Railway Station Area Master Plan; *and*
  - The Magnet, Science Oxford's project to create a world-class centre for science and innovation in the Oxford West End.
- 3.8 The location of these proposals in relation to the Oxpens Master Plan site is illustrated in **Figure 3.1, Oxpens Site Location within the Oxford West End.**





## THE OXPENS SITE

### Study Area Boundary

3.9 For the purposes of the Master Plan SPD the Oxpens Site comprises the land located within the red line boundary shown in **Figure 3.2 – Oxpens Land Ownership Plan**. The site is approximately 8.3 hectares/20.5 acres.

### Site Edges

3.10 The Oxpens site is bounded by distinct edges as follows:

- **Oxpens Road, to the east:** a wide, traffic dominated inner city route which currently passes round the core of the City Centre. Currently a poor public realm experience for pedestrians and cyclists;
- **Osney Lane, to the north:** a lower order street that runs on an east west orientation, dissected by the Oxpens Road to the east and the railway line to the west;
- **Railway line, to the west:** the mainline rail route providing connections between Oxford, London (Paddington) and the South Coast;
- **Water courses to the south:** the River Thames (Isis) to the south of Oxpens Meadow, and Castle Mill Stream to the south/east.

3.11 Oxpens Road and Osney Lane – are also considered in the master plan SPD. Both routes would benefit from public realm enhancement works to transform traffic dominated roads into attractive streets that are welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists, create a better setting for development at Oxpens, and facilitate better movement between the site and the heart of the City Centre.

## LAND OWNERSHIP

3.12 The Oxpens site is composed of six areas of different land ownership. The ownership boundaries are illustrated in **Figure 3.2 Oxpens Land Ownership Plan**. These boundaries have been informed by Land Registry information provided by Oxford City Council and BRBR.

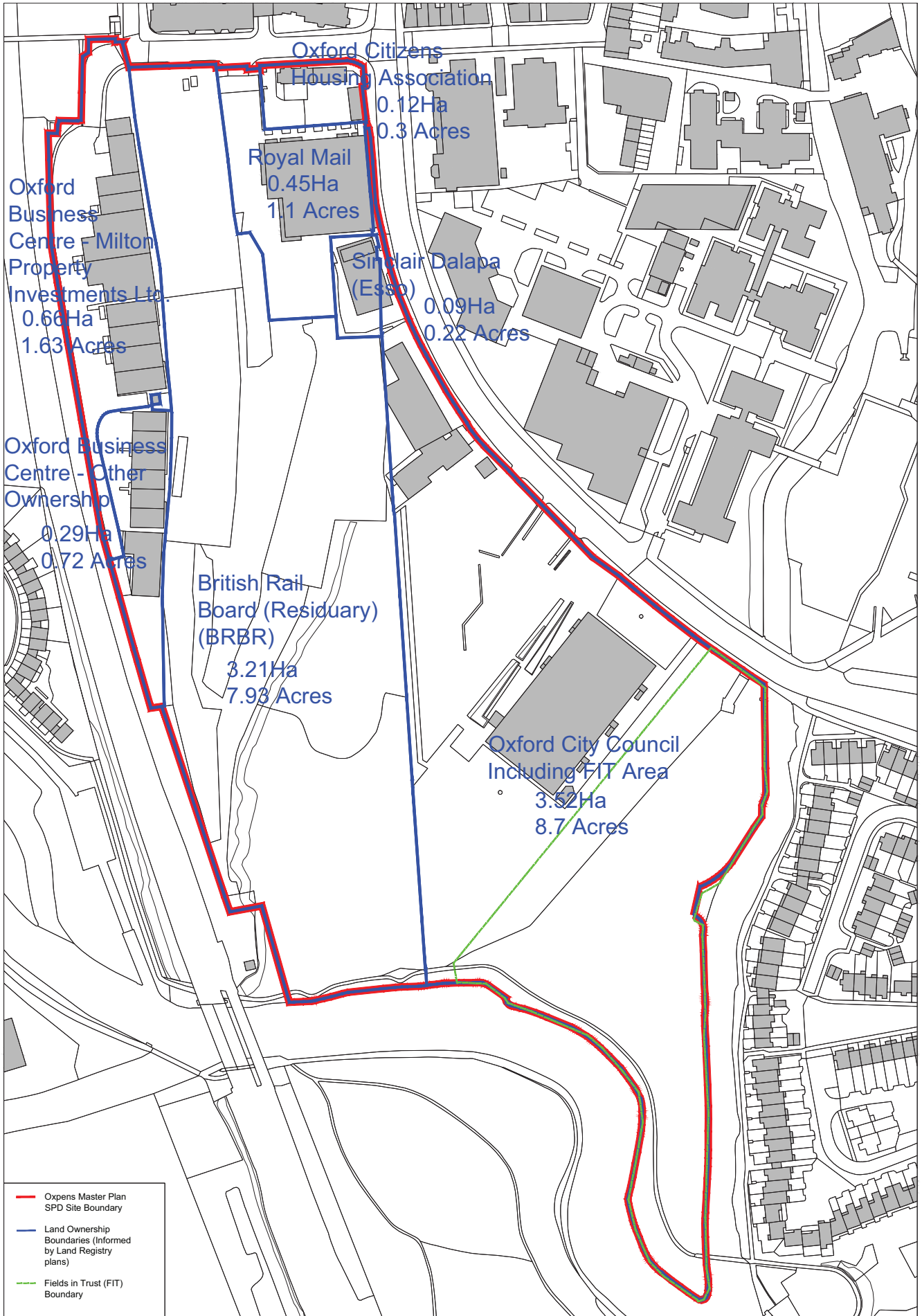
3.13 The split of key land ownership for the Oxpens site includes land owned by the following groups:

- Oxford City Council;
- British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR);
- Milton Property Investments Ltd (the key land owner at the Oxford Business Centre);
- Royal Mail;
- Oxford Citizens Housing Association; *and*
- Sinclair Dalapa (Esso, petrol filling station).

## Comprehensive Master Plan

3.14 Oxford City Council are committed to facilitating the delivery of a comprehensive development on the Oxpens site: despite the presence of multiple land ownerships within the site Oxford City Council believe the best approach for this valuable West End opportunity site is to embrace a master plan for the entire site.





3.15 An overview of the existing land uses within each of the ownership areas is outlined as follows:

### **Oxford City Council**

3.16 Oxford City Council has the largest land holding within the Oxpens site, an area of approximately 3.5 hectares (8.7 acres).

3.17 The Oxford City Council land extends along Oxpens Road and currently includes the following land uses:

- Oxpens Meadow – green public open space, occupying the south eastern quarter of the site, adjacent the Castle Mill Stream and River Thames (Isis). A Fields In Trust (FIT) designation applies to part of the Oxpens Meadow, as illustrated in Figure 3.6.
- Oxford Ice Rink;
- Surface car park including coach parking area, public car parking and public conveniences;
- The building the currently accommodates the Lodge night club;
- The light industrial unit that currently accommodates a car repairs workshop; and
- The frontage strip between Oxpens Road and the petrol filling station (Esso).

3.18 The current coach parking is under review by Oxfordshire County Council and alternative arrangements are being considered including coach parking at the Redbridge Park & Ride site, with coach drop off in the city centre. The Oxford Transport Strategy provides further information.

### **British Railway Board (Residuary) - BRBR**

3.19 BRBR own an area of approximately 3.2 hectares (7.9 acres). This land holding is situated behind the Oxford City Council land parcel with access from Osney Lane only. It extends south the entire length of the Oxpens site, up to the edge of the River Thames (Isis).

3.20 The BRBR site has been removed from operational use and all operational infrastructure (including railway sidings) has been removed. The site has recently been cleared of vegetation and buildings by BRBR to provide a vacant site ready for future redevelopment.

3.21 There is a notable change in levels in the southern section of the BRBR land where soil has been extracted creating lower ground level. The comprehensive master plan has been prepared on the assumption that ground levels will be made consistent across land ownership to create a level platform for development.

3.22 Network Rail has a Right of Access through the BRBR land holding as illustrated in **Figure 3.7, Site Features Plan**.

### **Oxford Business Centre (Milton Property Investments Ltd, majority land owner)**

3.23 Milton Property Investments Ltd owns the freehold of the majority of the Oxford Business Centre estate and is fully engaged in the master planning process. The smaller remainder of the estate (located at the southern end of the plot) is owned by a family trust and one other owner occupier. Tenancies are all short term. The Oxford Business Centre has a site area of approximately 0.9 hectare (2.2 acres).

3.24 The Oxford Business Centre is located between the BRBR land holding and the Railway Line on the western edge of the Oxpens site. Access to the Oxford Business Centre is from Osney Lane, adjacent the junction with Becket Street.



**Royal Mail**

- 3.25 The Royal Mail occupies land measuring approximately 0.45 hectare (1.1 acres). This parcel has frontage to both Oxpens Road and Osney Lane. The main building on the site is Kings Mead House which accommodates the delivery office and administrative offices. The building is orientated to address the Oxpens Road. Vehicular access is taken from Osney Lane, with the service yard and parking located behind the building.
- 3.26 The Royal Mail currently leases an area of additional surface car parking (for staff) immediately south of their land holding from BRBR.
- 3.27 Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide an efficient mail sorting and delivery service for Oxford Council's administrative area. Relocation/reprovision of the Delivery Office to another suitable site in Oxford will be required before that site can be developed.

**Oxford Citizens Housing Association**

- 3.28 The Housing Association own small parcel of land (approximately 0.12 hectare, 0.3 acres) in an important location at the junction of Osney Lane and Oxpens Road. This site accommodates Richard Grey Court, a three storey block of flats.

**Sinclair Dalapa (Petrol Filling Station)**

- 3.29 Sinclair Dalapa owns a small site (approximately 0.09 hectare, 0.22 acres) that is currently occupied by the Esso petrol filling station. This land holding is 'land locked': set back behind the frontage strip owned by Oxford City Council to the east, with BRBR to the south and Royal Mail to the north and west.

## SITE HISTORY

3.30 Understanding the history of the Oxpens site can inform understanding of current site features. Some key issues in the recent history of the site are identified as follows and a snapshot of the previous form and function of the site is presented in **Figure 3.3, *Oxpens Historic Mapping***.

### Oxpens Meadow

3.31 Oxpens Meadow is the strongest remaining connection to pre-industrial Oxpens and the wider West End. The meandering route of the River Thames (Isis) will have been bounded by flood plain meadows prior to the expansion of the city towards the river, and the rich landscape character of the south eastern corner of the Oxpens site is a strong naturalistic link with the origin of the site.

3.32 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. Archaeological studies for evaluation, investigation and recording should be factored into the overall development plan to avoid delayed implementation of development proposals.

### Railway sidings

3.33 The historic mapping presented in **Figure 3.3** clearly illustrates the railway sidings as a dominant land use feature on the site for the majority of the twentieth century. The historic presence of railway sidings explain the shape and form of the British Rail (BRBR) land, which occurred as a result of re-profiling (see low lying area illustrated on **Figure 3.7, *Site Features Plan***). Although the railway tracks and sidings have been removed the change in levels is a distinct site feature that remains.

3.34 Railway sheds and industrial buildings are likely to have been present on the site related to the handling of goods connected to the railway line. One remaining example is the industrial unit that currently accommodates a car repair business, located between the petrol station and the coach park, on the Oxford City Council land. Hints of the old industrial character of the shed building can be glimpsed from the rear of the building.

### Residential

3.35 **Figure 3.3** illustrates the presence of previous residential accommodation in the north east corner of the site. This housing has subsequently been replaced by what is now Richard Grey Court, owned by Oxford Citizens Housing Association.

### Historic precedent issues

3.36 The site lies on the edge of the former historic suburb of St. Ebbes, whilst elements of St Thomas's suburb lie between the site and the heart of the city centre. These areas are characterised by a complex pattern of narrow streets and red brick terraced houses, interspersed with larger buildings associated with former industrial use set around courtyards and with large frontage blocks. This form can inform the design approach adopted. Further information on this issue noted in Chapter 6, Master Plan.

## West Oxford Historic Context Study

- 3.37 Further information on the historic pattern of development in the Oxford West End can be found in the **West Oxford Historic Context Study (March 2012, Oxford Archaeology)**. References of interest to the Oxpens site contained within the Context Study report relate to how districts around Oxpens have evolved. These include:

### **West Oxford Historical Overview:**

3,2,28 “The areas of older housing just outside the city centre were subject to sporadic clearance from the 1930s. St. Thomas’s lost a large part of its population as a result of slum clearance combined with commercial development: the castle mill was demolished in 1930, and Paradise Street, Tidmarsh Lane, Park End Street, and Hythe Bridge Street were given over to offices, warehouses, and garages. Beginning in the 1960s a long period of change has seen the disappearance of older housing cleared away as slum dwellings in both St Thomas’ and St Ebbe’s, the re-alignment of roads (particularly Oxpens Road) the proliferation of car-parks, the erosion of evidence for the earlier industrial and commercial activity in the area...”

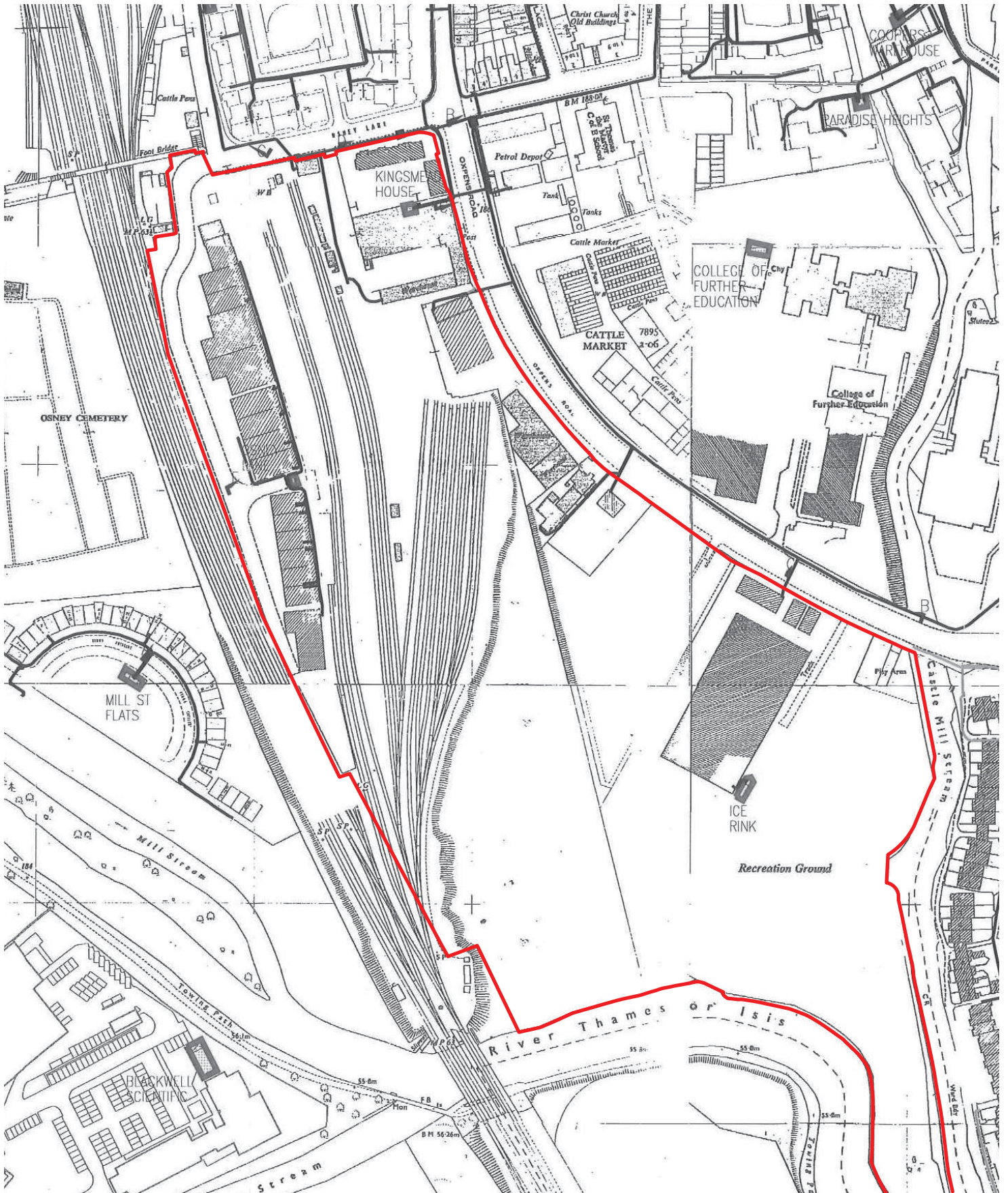
- 3.38 The above extract from the *Historical Overview* identifies how land uses have changed with the loss of finer grain uses, replaced car parks and highways engineering. The extract shows the historic precedent for mixed use development with heritage of finer grain residential streets and larger plots for commercial enterprise which the Oxpens master plan could seek to replicate in a contemporary form.

### **Greyfriars and Paradise Areas of West Oxford, assessment of significance:**

**5.5.2 Community Significance:** *This area contains a number of residents in houses and apartments, in isolated islands and split from other main residential and recreational areas by the very busy Oxpens Road and large land unit car parks. Apart from Paradise Square the modern housing bears little relation to the pre-Victorian topography and the large-scale developments (plot size and mass) have overwhelmed the remaining historic features. The significance of the area is currently reduced by the delayed development and associated blight although recent redevelopment along St Ebbes has markedly improved this streetscene. Roads, car-parking, the Westgate Centre and College (OCVC) also make this a familiar area for workers. For the tourist/visitor arriving via the car parks or main coach park (Oxpens), who will mostly be unaware of the heritage of the area, the initial experience of the historic city is dismal in particular the sign-posted route to the city beneath the multi-storey car park. Approached from this low-lying area, the historic city is largely hidden from view and the road system and poor signage add to the confusion and bleakness of this major gateway to the city for many visitors. Sparse greenery is provided by churchyards/college gardens –with the exception of Paradise Square which has mature trees but with its air of neglect and reputation for anti-social use is little visited. Castle Mill Stream is screened from Oxpens Road and has an air of neglect. Oxford Preservation Trust buildings, Littlegate House and the buildings in Paradise Square offer a rare and much appreciated tangible reminder of the former character of the area the redevelopment of which was a key event in the modern history of the city. Its lost schools, pubs, work places, and shops still hold important memories and associations for many local families now living elsewhere in the city.*

- 3.39 The above extract regarding *Community Significance* further identifies a rich mixture of community land uses have largely been lost, replaced by car parks, highways engineering and island blocks of more recent residential infill development. This extract clearly states how the current Oxpens Road area presents a poor image for visitor, with a lack of clear connection to the historic city. Improving the appearance of the area with high quality urban design, architecture and public realm is an objective of the Oxpens master plan, improving connections and links to the historic city is also an important objective.







## SITE FEATURES

3.40 A comprehensive overview of the key features that affect the Oxpens site is provided in **Figure 3.7, Site Features Plan**. This plan illustrates the constraints, existing form, facilities and assets which overlap each other as is common for a brownfield development opportunity site. The most significant features are considered in turn as follows, with some illustrated in separate figures to clearly present specific issues. Key site constraints include:

- Flood risk and flood mitigation;
- Oxpens Meadow open space, including Fields In Trust (FIT) designation;
- Oxpens Road;
- Sewer Inspection Chamber;
- Utilities;
- Proximity to Rail Line – noise mitigation;
- Poor pedestrian / cycle connections;
- Network Rail Right of Access;
- Contaminated land;
- Change in Levels on boundary between BRBR & OCC land;
- Conservation Area;
- Ecological Features;
- Archaeological considerations;
- Heritage Assets; *and*
- Phasing of development in relation to ownership & land use.

### Flood Risk

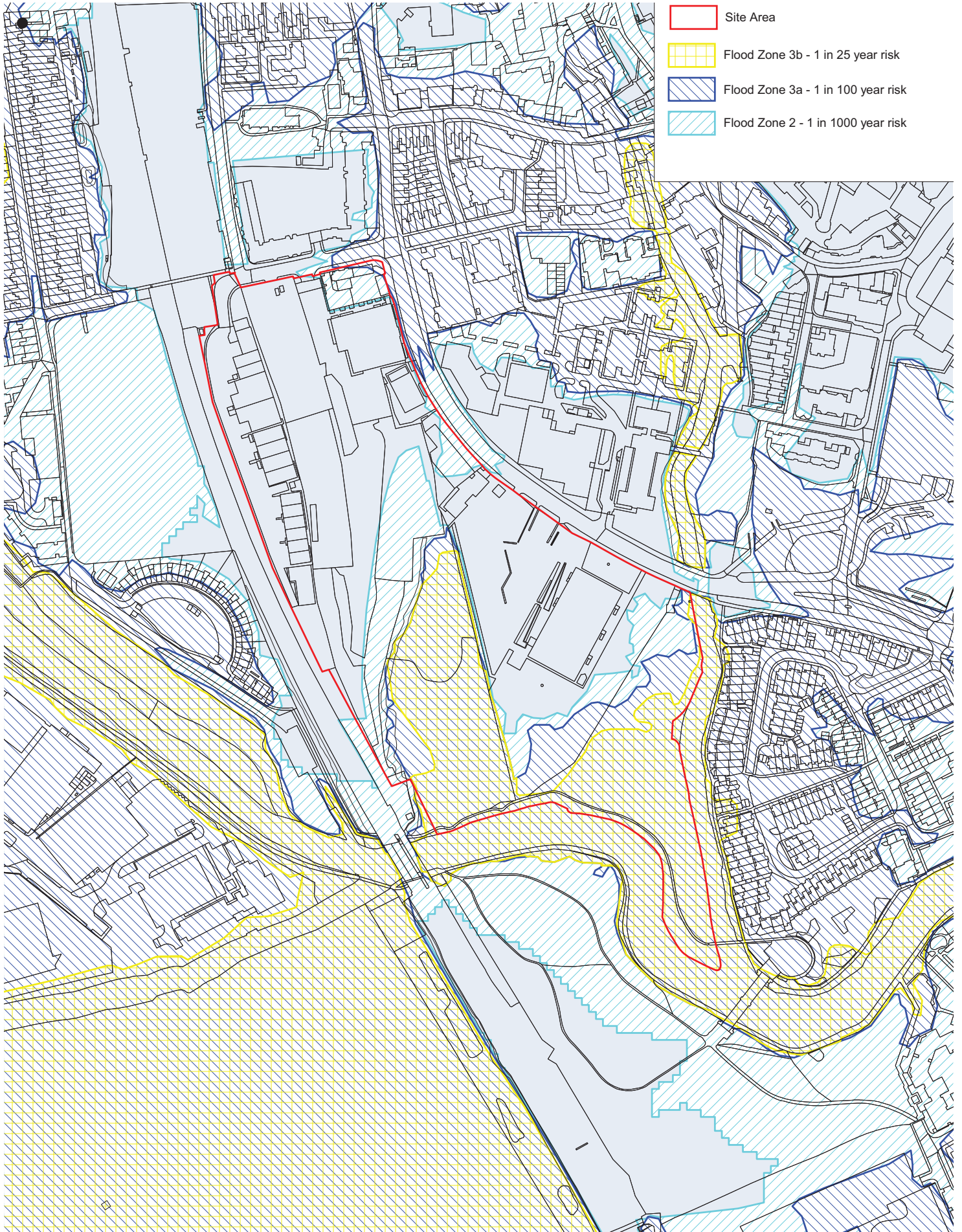
3.41 Flood risk is a significant consideration in Oxford with the River Thames (Isis), the Oxford Canal and various streams and tributaries running through the city. Large areas of the city are potentially at risk from flooding during more extreme flood events.

3.42 Oxpens, located at the junction between the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream is located in a position at potential risk from flood events. Environment Agency derived flood risk mapping is illustrated in the context of the Oxpens site in **Figure 3.4, Flood Risk, Environment Agency Flood Zones**. Areas of greatest flood risk are the lower lying land at the south of the site immediately adjacent to the water courses. Potential flood risk affects two areas in particular:

- The Oxpens Meadow open space; *and*
- The lower area of land in the southern half of the BRBR land holding.

3.43 The BRBR land is particularly susceptible to flooding as the southern portion of this land holding is considerably lower, with a retaining wall defining the boundary edge between BRBR and Oxford City Council ownership – this is illustrated in **Figure 3.7, Site Features Plan**.

3.44 In addition the Environment Agency flood zones illustrate a small area of potential flood risk in the north east corner of the site. This is only for the most extreme type of flood event (1 in 1,000 year flood risk).

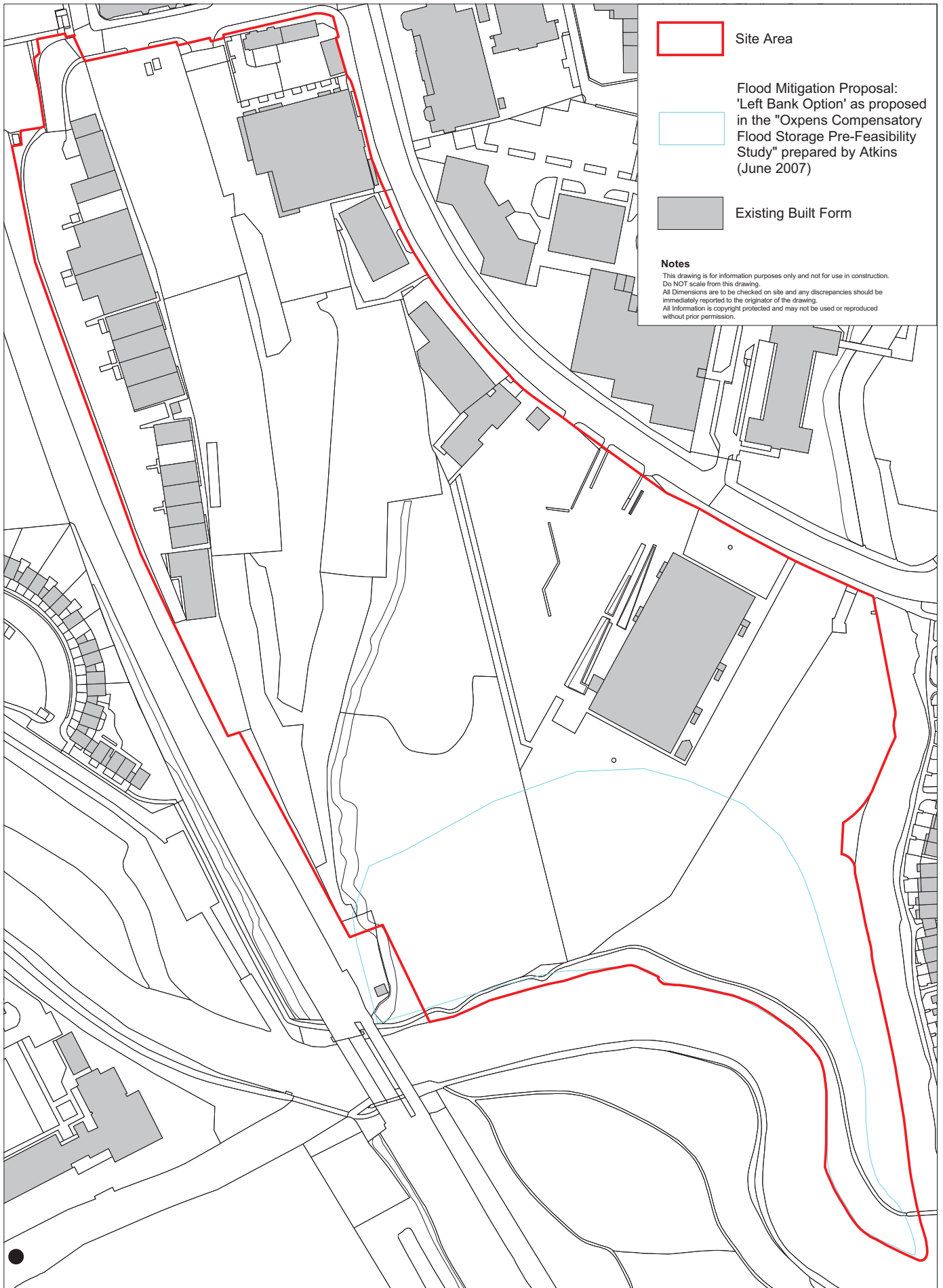


## Flood Mitigation

- 3.45 As part of the development of this SPD, all reasonable efforts (proportionate with the requirements of an SPD) have been made to fully understand flood risk issues to the Oxpens site, likely impacts to flood risk subsequent to development and, the potential need for flood risk mitigation. The flood risk analysis undertaken was based upon the best available information at the time of writing, as used by the Environment Agency to produce the published Flood Map.
- 3.46 It was identified that there are inherent uncertainties associated with current understanding of flood risk and it is not possible, therefore, to definitively report on the extent or severity of flood risk and, whether there would indeed be a need for mitigation and if so, the scale of that mitigation. A short technical note was produced to support this analysis and circulated between project partners.
- 3.47 It is recommended therefore, that a more detailed analysis of flood risk is undertaken for the site, subsequent to the publication of the Oxpens Master Plan SPD, as better information becomes available and prior to the progression of the site beyond this master plan stage. As at Autumn 2013 the Environment Agency are due to deliver an updated, and more representative, hydraulic model for the River Thames through Oxford, this model will be used to identify development impacts and appropriate mitigation measures prior to the site being taken forward. The new model may impact on the available options for handling flood storage and mitigation on the site.

### ***Identification of a flood mitigation zone to inform the master plan:***

- 3.48 Oxford City Council commissioned the *Oxpens Compensatory Flood Storage Pre-Feasibility Study (2007)*. The report, prepared by Atkins in discussion with the Environment Agency, states that further investigations should be undertaken as plans for the site progress.
- 3.49 The study identified three potential options for flood storage / mitigation worthy of further investigation:
- *Option on the left bank only;*
  - *Option on the right bank only; and*
  - *Option considering both left and right banks.*
- 3.50 For the purposes of the SPD the preferred option is the **left bank only option**, chosen because it is wholly contained and deliverable within the Oxpens site.
- 3.51 The preferred option for flood mitigation is presented in **Figure 3.5: Flood Mitigation, Left Bank Option**.

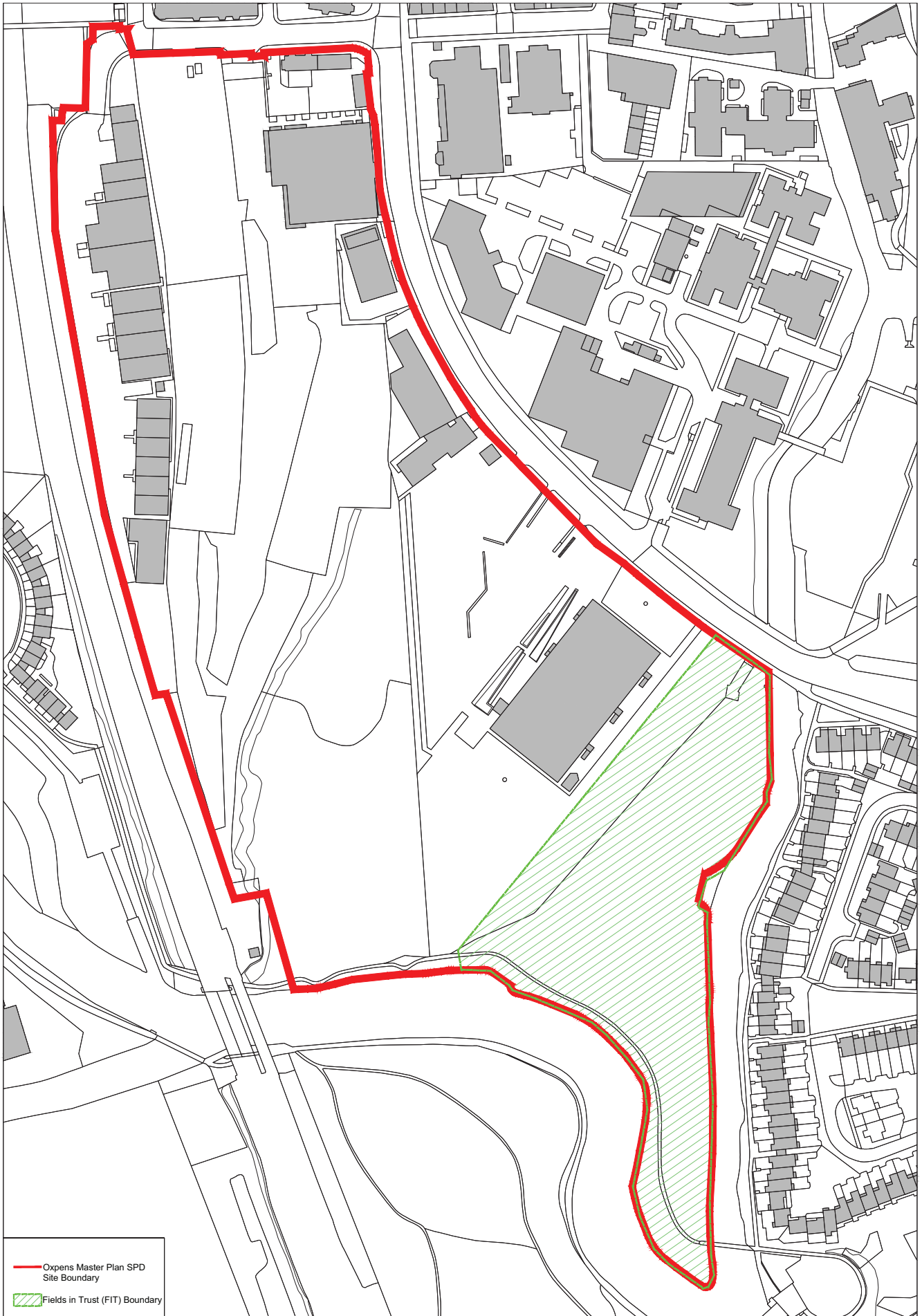




**Oxpens Meadow open space, including Fields In Trust (FIT) designation**

- 3.52 Oxpens Meadow is a valuable area of open public amenity space and to protect this valuable landscape asset part of the meadow now has 'Fields In Trust' (FIT) status. Fields In Trust (FIT) is a nationally recognised designation to give important public open spaces a level of protection, ensuring they are protected from future development. See **Figure 3.6, Oxpens Meadow – Fields in Trust & Open Space**.
- 3.53 The Deed of Dedication (dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2013) between Oxford City Council and National Playing Fields Association outlines the agreed appropriate functions of this public open space. In this respect the Fields In Trust Deed of Dedication states that the area designated as FIT should not be used:

*"3.1 ... other than as an area of public open space, for use by the public for leisure or recreational purposes and/or for the purpose of holding occasional fetes, fairs, circuses, concerts, dramatic productions, sporting events, community events and other public entertainments which may involve the erection of marquees, tents and other temporary structures or enclosures (entry to which may or may not be subject to the imposition of a charge), and which provide entry onto the property of necessary motor vehicles, provided that there shall be no more than 6 such events per calendar year (the Primary Use); such use being subject to any reasonably required flood remediation or flood prevention work;*



— Oxpens Master Plan SPD Site Boundary  
▨ Fields in Trust (FIT) Boundary

## Oxpens Road

- 3.54 Oxpens Road defines the eastern edge of the Oxpens site and is the primary vehicular route through the Oxford West End. The environment of Oxpens Road is currently not in keeping with the rich urban grain of the rest of Oxford City Centre: it is wide, traffic dominated and hostile to pedestrians and cyclists. Whilst its capacity must be retained, there is considerable scope to re-imagine Oxpens Roads through a combination of new development frontage and public realm works.
- 3.55 Investment in a street enhancement scheme has the potential to help attract investment and link Oxpens with new development at Westgate and Frideswide Square / Oxford Station.
- 3.56 Guidance for the re-design of Oxpens Road is set out in Chapter 5 *Design Principles* – see **Figure 5.3 Oxpens Road Frontage** and Chapter 6 *Oxpens Master Plan* - see **Figure 6.8 Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements**.

## Sewer Inspection Chamber

- 3.57 The path of an underground foul sewer runs through a section of the Oxpens site. Notably this sewer path includes a deep inspection chamber which cannot be relocated. The indicative path of the foul sewer and location of the of the sewer inspection chambers is illustrated in **Figure 3.7 Site Features**.
- 3.58 Future detailed development proposals should be informed by consultation with the relevant statutory (water) authorities to locate the exact position and depth of the sewer and inspection chamber.
- 3.59 The sewer inspection chamber is an important site feature to consider in future development proposals. Built form development should not be proposed over the location of the inspection chamber, as access is required. The SPD Master Plan proposals illustrate how this can be achieved – see illustrations in Chapter 6, Oxpens Master Plan.

## Utilities

- 3.60 Future proposals for development within Oxpens will need to consider connection to utilities infrastructure. Surveys may be required as part of any detailed design proposals and all development proposals will need to be informed by discussions with utility providers to ensure that connections to proposed development can be made to provide water, gas, electricity, sewage, telecommunications etc.
- 3.61 Any development should not be commenced until the applicant can demonstrate how and when the required waste water infrastructure will be addressed and connected. Any required sewer network upgrades should be undertaken before or in line with the development to ensure there are no problems and that the water quality of the aquatic environment is protected. Thames Water should be contacted in relation to any development proposals to discuss available capacity.

## Proximity to Rail Line – noise mitigation

- 3.62 The railway line defines the western edge of the Oxpens site. The Oxford Business Centre immediately abuts the railway line, and the BRBR area of the site neighbours a slightly widened area of Network Rail land immediately adjacent the rail line.
- 3.63 Whilst close proximity to the railway station is an opportunity for the site, as an asset that will help attract interest and inward investment to the site, the immediate proximity to the railway line is an issue that needs to be appropriately managed in future development proposals. Noise from the railway is the notable constraint which needs to be mitigated.
- 3.64 The master plan proposals set out in Chapter 6, Oxpens Master Plan illustrate how the built form can respond to this issue: primarily by delivering a form of development parallel to the railway that will protect much of the remainder of the site from excessive noise. Student accommodation is proposed for this area, although other uses including employment (e.g. research and development) or a hotel may be permissible.

### Network Rail Right of Access

- 3.65 Network Rail has a right of access through the Oxpens site from Osney Lane to ensure continued access to the network rail land. The current route of Network Rail access is illustrated in **Figure 3.7 Site Features Plan**.
- 3.66 The exact route through the site is not set, but the master plan must ensure there is a clear route from Osney Lane to the Network Rail land holding: the proposed network of connected streets advised in the Oxpens Master Plan ensures this is possible, see Chapter 6.

### Contaminated Land

- 3.67 Identified historical and current activities within the Oxpens area may have resulted in contamination. Land remediation or mitigation measures may be required. Site contamination and ground condition surveys will be required to inform any detailed design proposals. Development of the Oxpens site has the potential to facilitate the clean up of any contamination which may have resulted from various contaminating activities and past industrial heritage, providing long term benefits to the environment and protecting human health.

### Change in Levels on boundary between BRBR & Oxford City Council land

- 3.68 Land at the rear of the coach / car park is marked by a retaining wall and notable change in levels. **Figure 3.7 Site Features Plan** illustrates the location of the retaining wall and most notable step change in levels between the BRBR and Oxford City Council land holdings.
- 3.69 Land remodelling will be required to facilitate the comprehensive planning and development of the site.

### Conservation Areas

- 3.70 The Oxpens site forms part of the setting of both the city's Central (City and University) Conservation Area and the Osney Town Conservation Area, notably in longer range views of the city and views from Osney Cemetery. The impact of development on the Conservation Areas' setting is both a constraint and an opportunity and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

### Ecological Features

- 3.71 Oxpens Meadow is the greatest existing landscape feature, mostly comprising open, short mown grassland with trees and other vegetation along the waterside edges to the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream.
- 3.72 Aerial photography including Figure 1.1, Oxpens Site Plan – *Aerial Photograph* has illustrated trees within the central section of the site, within the BRBR land. The majority of these trees and vegetation have been cleared since the photograph was taken, creating a predominantly vacant development plot.
- 3.73 Smaller areas of tree planting exist along some site boundaries including:
- The eastern edge of the Oxford Business Centre, screening the site from adjacent sites;
  - Some trees adjacent Oxpens Road;
  - Both long edges of the Oxford Ice Rink plot – screening to the current coach & public parking area on one side and a more formal row of trees along the edge adjacent to Oxpens Meadow open space.
- 3.74 Where possible the existing trees to the edge of Oxpens Road and the edge of the Ice Rink addressing Oxpens Meadow should be retained. Trees and vegetation along the waterside edges to the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should be retained where possible, although this will be subject to detailed design considerations in the re-profiling of Oxpens Meadow to accommodate flood mitigation.
- 3.75 Further details regarding ecological features in the Oxford West End are presented in ecological studies and previous SEA for the WEAAP.
- 3.76 Appropriate ecological assessments will be required to inform and support future development proposals, for instance arboriculture surveys.

## Archaeological Considerations

- 3.77 The site has potential archaeological remains of the medieval abbey and Civil War defensive works (including Hart's Sconce), which are likely to be of 'at least' local significance, but possibly of greater significance depending on their nature, condition and extent. Development proposals should be informed by the results of archaeological evaluation undertaken to a brief agreed by the City's Archaeologist prior to the submission of a planning application.
- 3.78 The character, extent and state of preservation of any remains associated with Hart's Civil War Sconce is currently poorly understood as the site has not previously been investigated. If remains are present and well preserved, they may be of national significance and, therefore, should be preserved in-situ within the development. This would require reconsideration of the location of flood mitigation measures. Archaeological evaluation will be required to demonstrate whether any remains of Osney Abbey are present within the development site. Should important remains be present then the development should aim, as far as is practical and in line with existing policy, to preserve these in situ by means of adaptive design. Should remains of lesser significance be identified then it will be necessary to ensure these are appropriately investigated and recorded prior to the commencement of development.
- 3.79 The location of Civil War defences recorded on historic maps of the city coincides with part of the area identified for flood mitigation works. The need to undertake archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording could delay implementation of development proposals if not factored into the overall development plan.
- 3.80 A desk based assessment has identified the potential for the presence of archaeological remains associated with agricultural use of the area in the past including the potential for waterlogged remains associated with drainage ditches running across this low-lying area and including potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval period use of the area. Development will need to be preceded by further investigation of the area's archaeological potential to be guided by discussion with the City's archaeological advisor.

## Heritage Assets

- 3.81 Heritage Officers have not yet undertaken an assessment of what up-standing heritage remains within the site. Whilst much of the railway sidings landscape has been cleared of historic features, any small structures that survive and illustrate previous land uses could be retained within large development to help to retain a sense of connection with the past as well as adding detail and interest. Such buildings should be identified at an early stage and consideration given to how they may be put to beneficial use within the new development.

## Poor pedestrian / cycle connections

- 3.82 Pedestrian and cycle access to and through the Oxpens site is currently limited, and access is a significant consideration for the site. A full assessment of access and connections between Oxpens and the wider Oxford West End is presented in the Accessibility Study that accompanies the Master Plan SPD.
- 3.83 Please see Development Principle 5 (DP5) and Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End* for further details of this site feature. This Figure (5.4) identifies current access connections (good and bad) and makes proposals for improvements.

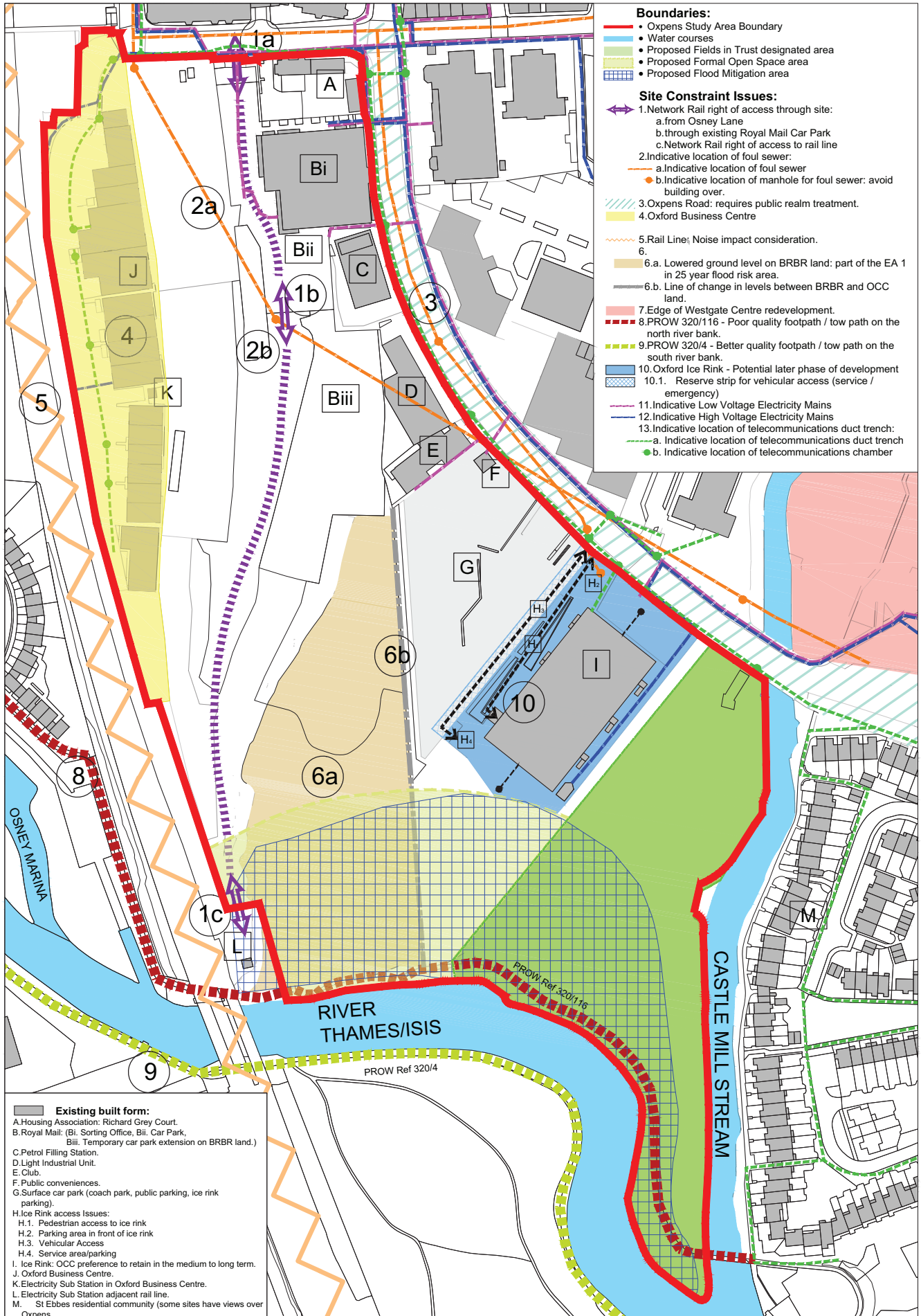
## Phasing of development in relation to ownership & land use

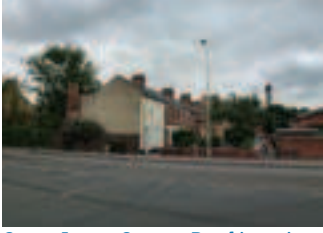
- 3.84 The pattern of land ownership within the Oxpens site (as illustrated in **Figure 3.2 Land Ownership Plan**) will impact on the longer term phasing of development. Proposed phasing strategies are set out in further detail in Chapter 7 *Delivery*.

## Illustration of Site Features

- 3.85 Further illustration of Oxpens site features is presented in **Figure 3.8, Site Features Photographs**.







Osney Lane - Oxpens Road junction



Light industrial unit fronting Oxpens Road



Petrol Station & Royal Mail



Oxford Business Centre



Royal Mail & Housing Association



Oxford Business Centre



BRBR site change in levels in cleared site



Poor quality riverside path (railway bridge over Thames)



Coach Station & Oxpens Road



Oxpens Meadow



Ice Rink



Network Rail adjacent land



College site poor frontage to Oxpens Road



## SITE OPPORTUNITIES

3.86 Important opportunities at Oxpens are illustrated in **Figure 3.9, *Site Opportunities Plan*** and **Figure 3.10, *Site Opportunities Photographs***. These include:

- River Frontage;
- Oxpens Meadow as an attractive setting for development;
- Opportunity to improve connections;
- Opportunity to improve Oxpens Road;
- Opportunity to deliver a city centre housing;
- Opportunity to deliver business accommodation to support economic development; and
- Opportunity to deliver further complimentary land uses to generate investment and activity.

### River Frontage

3.87 The Oxpens site benefits from frontage to the River Thames (Isis) to the south and the Castle Mill Stream to the east. The SPD Master Plan seeks to illustrate how views to the waterways can be enhanced to maximise benefit for the proposed development.

### Oxpens Meadow as an attractive setting for development

3.88 The Oxpens Meadow is a significant area of public open space, one of few located in relatively close proximity to the heart of the city centre. As such this site feature is an asset not just for Oxpens but for the wider Oxford West End and the city centre. The area known as Oxpens Meadow is proposed to be retained as public open space.

3.89 The Meadow will create an attractive setting for the development. It could provide space for informal recreation and play, as well as scope for programmed outdoor events.

### Opportunity to improve connections

3.90 The comprehensive master planning of the Oxpens site should improve connections through the whole site, enabling better public access through the West End and in particular to Oxpens Meadow and the river frontage. Opportunities for improving connections are illustrated in further detail in Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End*.

### Opportunity to improve existing streets

3.91 The master plan also highlights the opportunity to enhance the public realm along Osney Lane and Oxpens Road. Proposals should seek to improve connectivity across the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists. Further detail of potential improvements to Oxpens Road are presented in:

- Chapter 5 *Design Principles* – see **Figure 5.3 *Oxpens Road Frontage***;
- Chapter 5 *Design Principles* – see **Figure 5.4 *Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End***.
- Chapter 6 *Oxpens Master Plan* - see **Figure 6.8 *Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements***;



**Opportunity to deliver a city centre housing**

3.92 The Oxpens site is the largest single redevelopment site identified in the Oxford West End AAP. It offers a unique opportunity to accommodate a range of appropriate land uses. Oxford City Council have identified the need to provide further city centre housing to support the needs of existing and new residents, and to ensure sufficient housing stock is available to support on-going economic development in the city. Oxford City Council require a balanced development to be delivered, with an appropriate proportion of the scheme is for residential houses, not just apartments.

**Opportunity to deliver further complimentary land uses to generate investment and activity**

3.93 The site is large enough to accommodate a range of land uses which will generate activity on the site at different times of day. Land uses should add to the rich mix of uses within the city centre as well as increasing opportunities for employment and economic activity.

**Illustration of Site Opportunities**

3.94 See **Figure 3.9, *Site Opportunities Plan*** and **Figure 3.10, *Site Opportunities Photographs***.









Accomodate new business



Deliver a range of housing



Improve pedestrian access in currently fenced site



Potential for events on the meadow



Riverside location



Generate activity



Opportunity to improve Oxpens Road public realm



Deliver a range of housing and amenity space



Oxpens Meadow setting

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Chapter Four  
VISION AND  
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

## 4 VISION

### OXPENS VISION STATEMENT

4.1 The vision for the Oxpens development is encapsulated in the following statement:

**4.2 *The Oxpens site should be developed in a comprehensive manner to deliver maximum benefit and a fully integrated scheme that properly responds to its surroundings, enhancing connections to the wider Oxford West End.***

**4.3 *The Oxpens site should be developed in an effective and efficient way that maximises the use of the land and promotes the principle of sustainable development. Redevelopment should positively integrate Oxpens with its surroundings and realises the benefits that greater linkages can bring to the wider renaissance of the West End***

**4.4 *Development at Oxpens should be of high architectural design quality, to attract investment and raise aspirations in the Oxford West End. The development at Oxpens will set the high standard for architecture, public realm and landscape design in the Oxford West End.***

**4.5 *Development should protect, enhance and positively address Oxpens Meadow (including the FIT designation), the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream.***

**4.6 *Master plan proposals should address Oxpens Road and seek to enhance the quality of public realm for all.***

**4.7 *Residential development should include a balance of family housing with gardens and apartments with outdoor amenity space.***

**4.8 *Space for business should be accommodated in the form of offices and research & development premises. Educational uses, such as a business school, may also be accommodated to build upon the established success of nearby educational institutions.***

**4.9 *Complimentary land uses including hotel(s), retail, food, drink and professional services should be located in the most visible locations on Oxpens Road and set around a new public square. Such uses will create activity at different times of the day, enlivening this part of Oxford, creating the right conditions for appropriate city diversity.***

**4.10 *The palette of materials should carefully reflect the colours and materials commonly found in the city centre, with core materials used consistently across the site helping to establish a common identity and character.***

4.11 Visualisation of the form of development at Oxpens as proposed in the Master Plan is presented in:

- **Figure 1.2, *Oxpens Visualisation – Master Plan Scheme facing north over Oxpens Meadow***; and
- **Figure 4.1, *Oxpens Visualisation – Master Plan Scheme view facing south.***





Note: Image is indicative only, representing broad massing and form.

Specific details, for instance creating roofscape variety, will be developed in detailed design proposals with reference to WEEAP Appendix Design Code requirements for varied height of building lines addressing key streets.

Detailed design proposals should avoid large, flat roofed blocks and proposals should be considered in the context of the sensitivity of the city's skyline.



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Chapter Five  
KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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## 5 OXPENS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Oxpens Master Plan Design Principles (DP) include:

- **DP1: A High Quality Development**
- **DP2: Maximising the Value of the Site**
- **DP3: A Sustainable Scheme**
- **DP4: Addressing Oxpens Road**
- **DP5: Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End**
- **DP6: High Quality Public Realm: Streets and Spaces**
- **DP7: Enhancing Oxpens Meadow**
- **DP8: Relationship to the River**
- **DP9: Appropriate Land Use Mix**
- **DP10: Generating Activity**
- **DP11: Coherent character**
- **DP12: Phasing**

### OXPENS & WEAAP DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.2 The design principles for Oxpens reflect and expand on the design principles set out in the West End AAP. The WEAAP headline principles for the whole Oxford West End are listed in the table below.

5.3 For reference these overarching WEAAP principles are set out against the design principles (DP's) that are specific for the Oxpens site:

<b>Principles for the Oxford West End, Set out in WEAAP Volume 1</b>	<b>Oxpens Design Principles</b>
An attractive network of streets and spaces	DP1, DP4, DP5, DP6
A high quality built environment	DP1, DP2, DP6, DP11
A strong and balanced community	DP2, DP9, DP10
A vibrant and successful West End	DP9, DP10, DP11
Delivery and implementation	DP2, DP9, DP12

5.4 The Oxpens Design Principles are presented as follows:

**DP1: A HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.5 The highest quality of development should be sought for the Oxpens site. Delivery of a high standard of design in architecture, public realm and landscape will set the standard for subsequent development on other opportunity sites in the Oxford West End.
- 5.6 As stated in AAP Policy WE 12 high quality architecture will be expected in all new development. It should be demonstrated in planning applications that buildings are designed to be flexible and long lasting.
- 5.7 High quality design is essential to attract investment in the Oxpens site and the wider Oxford West End and help to lever land values that are sufficient to ensure viability. Attractive contemporary building design will be an important factor in attracting investment in residential, business and commercial land uses within the site.
- 5.8 New built form and public realm should respond positively to the high architectural quality of the city centre as a whole. The development should enhance views of Oxford from the railway line.
- 5.9 Contemporary architecture and design should be encouraged so that the development is 'of its time' and not a pastiche of past eras.
- 5.10 Material and colour palette choice is important and should reflect the local context sensitively. Use of a limited number of core materials is an important requirement to ensure that the scheme reads as one, and has a common identity which will contribute to the generation of a sense of place.
- 5.11 See **Figure 5.1, High Quality Development - Precedent Photographs**





High quality apartments



High quality landscaping



Business and innovation



Contemporary townhouses



Events in public open space



Blocks with high quality public realm



Contemporary office opportunities



Mixed use buildings with strong street frontage, especially at Oxpens Road

## DP2: MAXIMISING THE VALUE AND POTENTIAL OF THE SITE

- 5.12 Oxford City Council and associated land owners want to maximise the value of the site by seeking to exploit its full potential with the best quality scheme. Viability is key to delivery and to ensure the redevelopment of Oxpens is viable the site should seek to delivery the maximum number of residential units and commercial floorspace whilst following the guidance set in the Master Plan SPD to ensure the design of an appropriate form of development.
- 5.13 Development proposals should configure an efficient form of development that responds to site features whilst also maximising development yield contributions to fund public improvements - notably improvements to Oxpens Road and improving connections, for instance a new foot/cycle bridge crossing of the River Thames (Isis).
- 5.14 Whilst seeking to maximise floorspace an appropriate balance of land uses should be sought. Policy WE15 requires 50% of homes to be houses. Residential development should be balanced between family houses and apartments, although the precise implications for viability will need to be considered and discussed at detailed stages of design.

## DP3: A SUSTAINABLE SCHEME

- 5.15 Oxpens should showcase best practice in sustainable development. Sustainability should be integrated throughout the development proposals, not bolted on as an optional extra. Sustainability embraces the physical development, social interactions and economic opportunities. Sustainable design should include reference to:
- Managing water and flood risk;
  - Improving connections;
  - Sustainable building design;
  - Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS);
  - Sustainable energy, including a potential CHP Energy Centre which could be one way to help a development scheme to achieve the 20% of energy from on-site renewable energy, in line with Policies WE13 and CS9.;
  - Promoting bio-diversity, particularly by protecting and enhancing ecological assets in Oxpens Meadow;
  - Sustaining the significance of the city's renowned historic environment;
  - Providing city centre housing;
  - Integrating movement options (car clubs, cycle facilities);
  - Creating employment opportunities;
  - Supporting the vitality of the wider Oxford West End and City Centre;
  - Facilitating the remediation of any contaminated ground; *and*
  - Facilitating recycling and composting.
- 5.16 Themes of sustainability are explored in further detail in Chapter 6, Master Plan under the section *Integrating Sustainability*.
- 5.17 Illustration of potential sustainable design solutions and issues that could be integrated into the Oxpens scheme is presented in **Figure 5.2, A Sustainable Scheme - Precedent Photographs**.





Oxpens Meadow multi-functional – flood mitigation, events, open space



Proximity to Oxford City Centre



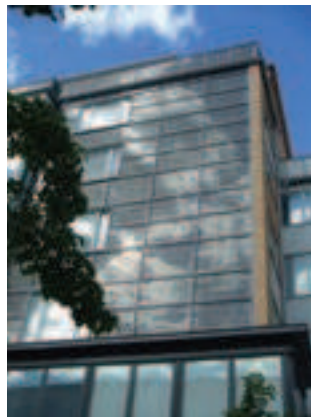
Proximity to Oxford Railway Station



Pedestrian and cycle routes



Bus route spine



PV cells on building facade



Cycle parking at key entrance points



Family housing with gardens



Cycle parking integrated into block design



Water management in urban context



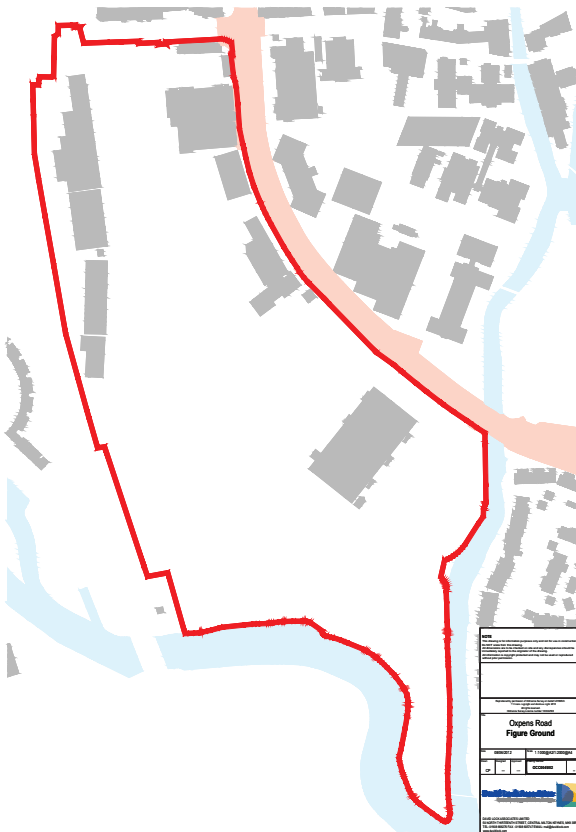
Electric car charging points

**DP4: ADDRESSING OXPENS ROAD**

- 5.18 Development will be orientated to address Oxpens Road with a mix of land uses capable of generating activity and visual interest.
- Oxpens Road's frontage should be designed in accordance with the adopted Design Codes that form part of the AAP.
  - Frontages could reflect the scale and massing of buildings on streets including Park End Street and South Parks Road, with a series of prestigious buildings designed to catch the eye through use of refined architectural detailing and using a similar palette of materials to provide a sense of unity. The choice of materials could reference those used on other streets of similar status within the city (see Cooper's Marmalade Factory and the Cantay Depository on Park End Street).
  - Within the frontage blocks defined in the masterplan, frontages should be broken up to provide a succession of buildings of a vertical proportion with the width being perceived as being less than the height of the building and active ground floor frontages to create an active and human-scale streetscene.
- 5.19 A **consistent building line / building set back from Oxpens Road** is important to ensure different buildings have a common form and presence to the street. Currently Oxpens Road lacks any form of unity and cohesion in built form that addresses it, which perpetuates the sense of a wide, uninviting route as opposed to an attractive civilised street.
- 5.20 Ground floors in buildings and blocks fronting Oxpens Road should incorporate taller floor to ceiling heights to provide maximum flexibility to accommodate a range of land uses and activities. The WEAAP Appendices Design Code specifies a ground floor height of 3.5m for this purpose.
- 5.21 A comprehensive scheme of public realm improvements is required to enhance the quality of Oxpens Road, improving the physical form and function of the street, and improving access and experience for pedestrians and cyclists. This should be agreed with Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority. The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*.
- 5.22 The design of the street surface and the selection of materials should promote easier pedestrian movement across Oxpens Road, and should draw people into the site at key locations, including Oxpens Square.
- 5.23 **Street trees** are an important landscape design feature for the public realm and should be incorporated to line the route of Oxpens Road. Street trees can help to frame the space within the street corridor, and soften the urban environment, enhancing the appearance and 'experience' of the street. Given the wide scale of Oxpens Road large street trees should be specified to provide a foil to the large scale and massing of building frontages.
- 5.24 An extension to Becket Street will create a new route through the site and an alternative route for traffic within the West End, reducing vehicular flow on Oxpens Road, which in turn should help improve conditions for pedestrian and cyclist crossing and links to the wider area. This proposal is reliant upon a feasible solution for the existing Becket Street being confirmed but is likely to include the creation of a two-way vehicular route with current on-street parking potentially to be relocated from Becket Street to Osney Lane.
- 5.25 See **Figure 5.3, Oxpens Road Frontage**



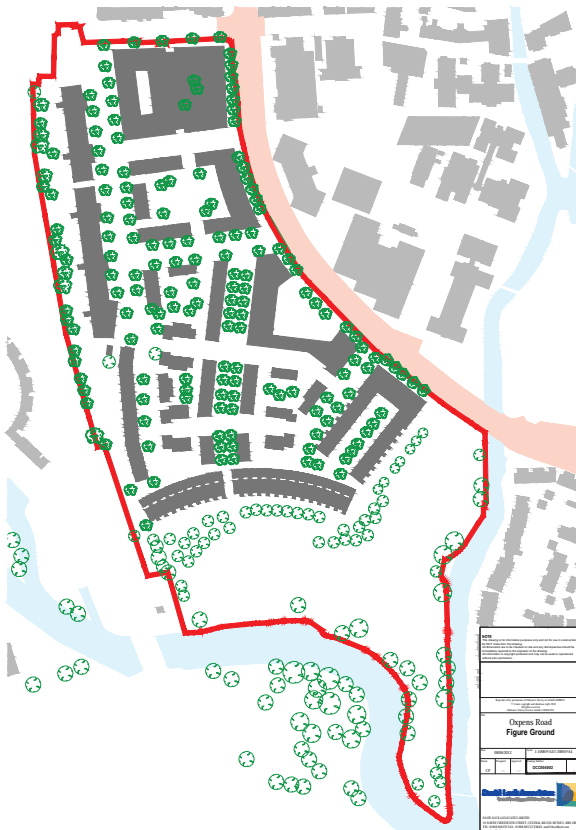
## EXISTING OXPENS ROAD FRONTAGE



- Street lacks enclosure
- Wide carriageway
- Inconsistent building line
- Traffic dominated, poor pedestrian environment



## PROPOSED OXPENS ROAD FRONTAGE



- Street enclosed with mixed use buildings
- Continuous building line / set back
- Street trees and wide pavements
- Enhanced experience for pedestrians and cyclists

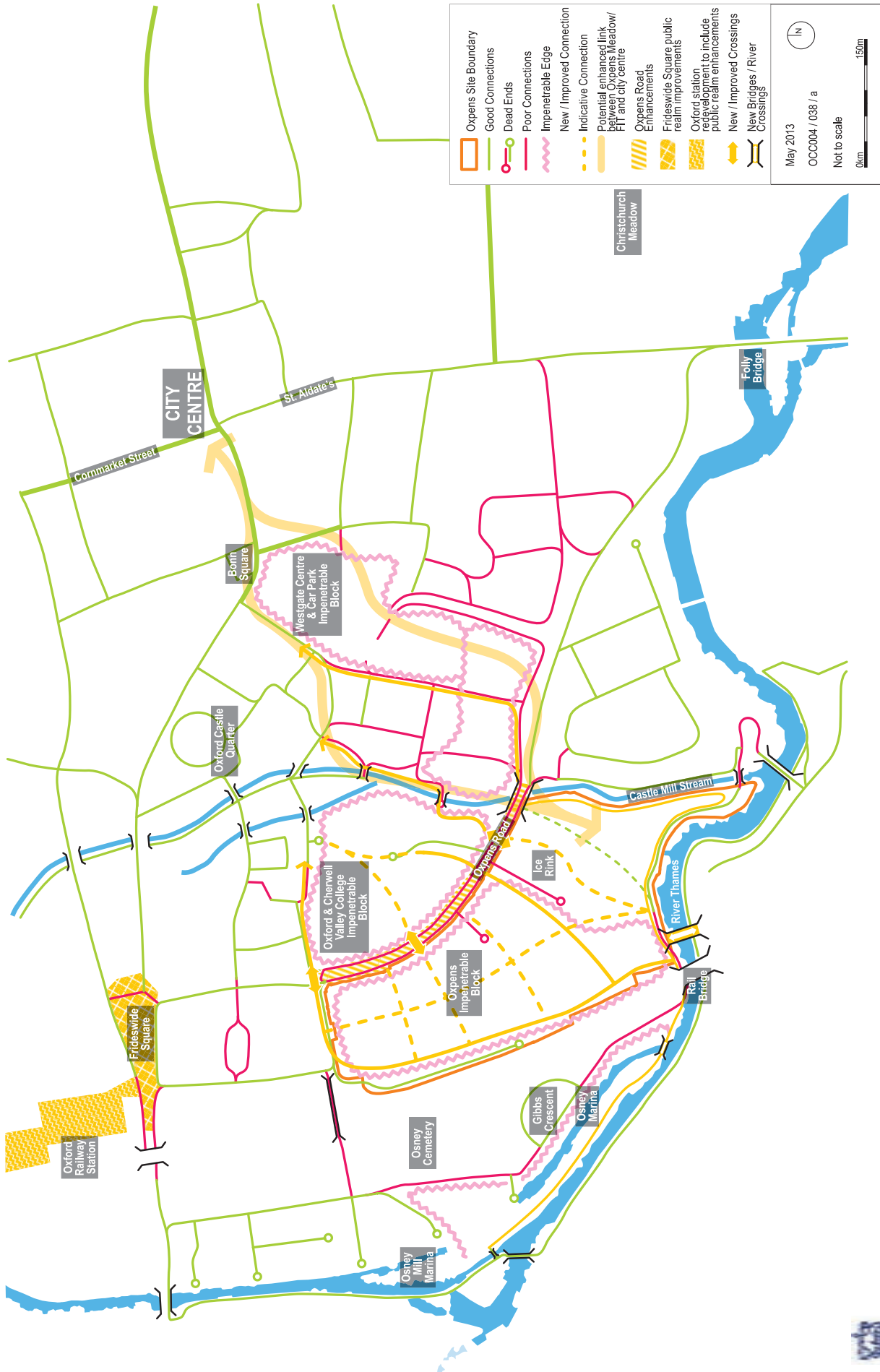




**DP5: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE OXFORD WEST END**

- 5.26 The SPD Master Plan illustrates how the site should be structured to create **a network of connected streets and spaces**, to enhance legibility and improve access for pedestrians and cycles.
- 5.27 In addition to maximising access through a grid of streets, access should also be improved to and through Oxpens Meadow with the creation of **leisure routes** for cycling and walking, towards and along the water front of the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream.
- 5.28 The principle of improving access and connections should be continued from within the Oxpens site to extend to enhancing links to, and through, the wider Oxford West End, and onward to the heart of the City Centre.
- 5.29 Public transport access through the site may be required, and the SPD Master Plan indicates where the highway specification and geometry should be designed to facilitate this. The County and City Council's objectives are to ensure that the street network within Oxpens is an integral part of the wider City network, and has inherent flexibility in response to changing travel demands over time. The variety of movement routes are illustrated in the master plan drawings presented in **Figure 6.1, Development Framework Plan** and **Figure 6.6 Street Hierarchy**.
- 5.30 A **new foot/cycle bridge** crossing the Thames (Isis) should be provided to enhance opportunities to move between Oxpens and the wider area, notably to the Grandpont Nature reserve, and residential areas further up/down-stream on the opposite side of the river. Indicative locations for the proposed bridge crossing are illustrated on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Master Plan. The exact location of the bridge is to be determined and the Environment Agency must be consulted on its design.
- 5.31 Public Realm enhancements to Oxpens Road (see Design Principle 2) are central to improving accessibility, but the site should also be laid out to respond to related development opportunities and sites in the Oxford West End as illustrated in **Figure 5.4, Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End Diagram**.
- 5.32 An improved connection for pedestrians and cyclists should be provided from the riverside (and potential bridge crossing), across Oxpens Meadow and Oxpens Road, connecting north through the wider Oxford West End to link to the heart of the City Centre.
- 5.33 Walking and cycling links through to the wider Oxford West End will be enhanced by improved crossing points along Oxpens Road, improving access between Oxpens and important local features including the Westgate Centre, the Castle, Castle Mill Stream, and proposed attractions including the Magnet.

INDICATIVE IMPROVED CONNECTIONS



	Oxpens Site Boundary
	Good Connections
	Poor Connections
	New / Improved Connection
	Impermeable Edge
	Potential enhanced link between Oxpens Meadow/FT and city centre
	Oxpens Road Enhancements
	Frideswide Square public realm improvements
	Oxford station redevelopment to include public realm enhancements
	New / Improved Crossings
	New Bridges / River Crossings

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Not to scale  
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David Lock Associates  
Town Planning and Urban Design

OXPENS SPD AND MASTER PLAN



**DP6: HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC REALM: STREETS AND SPACES**

- 5.34 In line with the West End AAP Design Code the design of the public realm should be given the high priority and designs should be of high quality to create attractive streets and spaces as a setting for the new development.
- 5.35 A **consistent palette of high quality street surfacing materials, street furniture, street trees** and other landscape features should be applied to all streets and spaces to ensure continuity in design and appearance. This is crucial to create unified sense of place, and aid orientation.
- 5.36 The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*.
- 5.37 The **Oxpens Square** will be a new civic space of exceptional quality located in the heart of the Oxpens development. The Square should have a direct relationship with Oxpens Road, positioned adjacent to the main route, and united in design with use of a common palette of surfacing materials, street furniture and landscaping.
- 5.38 To soften the transition from the rural character space of Oxpens Meadow to the more built-up urban spaces of the new development, tree planting could include street trees and trees as part of landscaping for individual developments that provide foliage that spills through the building line into the streetscene. Examples of this effect are seen in many streets in Oxford, reflecting the presence of college gardens with mature planting. The West End Design Code provides further details of suitable species and factors to influence the choices of tree planting. Choices of architecture, materials and landscaping could seek to provide a natural city edge frontage overlooking green space. The Georgian and Victorian townhouse frontages of London Place, overlooking South Park, could be used as a precedent in the city to inspire design but this does not imply a restriction of architectural idiom to neo-vernacular design. The promotion of good contemporary architecture is established in the West End Area Action Plan.
- 5.39 See **Figure 5.5, High Quality Public Realm – Precedent Photographs**





Main public square with mixed use frontages



Active buildings and streets



Green open spaces around larger blocks (e.g. student accommodation)



Public spaces within blocks



Water management rill in streetscape



Wider pavements will spill out space on main streets



Public Square activity



Street trees line key routes and spaces



Landscaped streets and amenity spaces

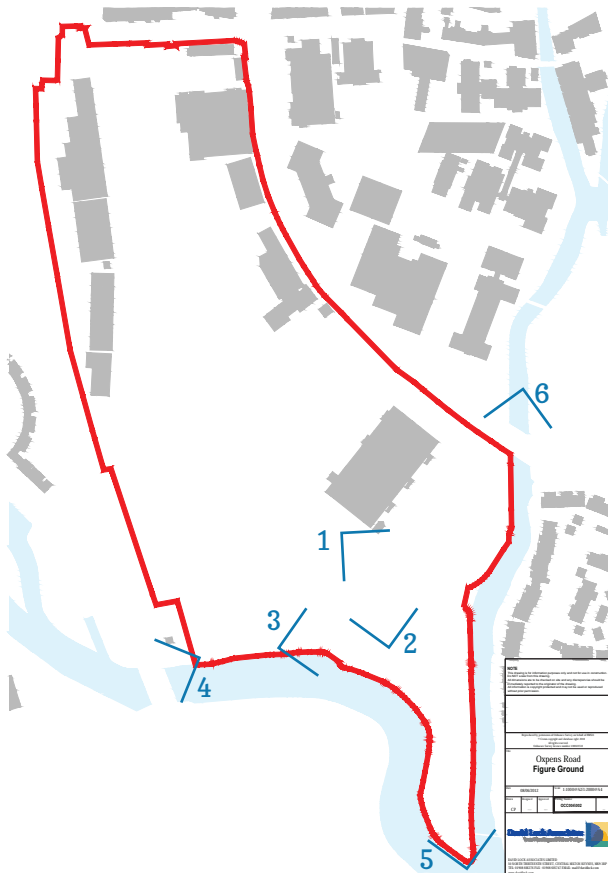
**DP7: ENHANCING OXPENS MEADOW**

- 5.40 Oxpens Meadow will be retained as public open space in proposals for the future of the site. The majority of Oxpens Meadow has a Fields in Trust (FIT) designation and this area may be supplemented by further public open space adjacent the River Thames (Isis) that can be created as part of a flood mitigation solution. The need to integrate a flood mitigation solution with the redevelopment of Oxpens provides the opportunity to enhance the form of Oxpens Meadow to create an attractive public open space that can accommodate a range of activities including outdoor events and performances. Reshaping land as part of flood mitigation work may create landforms that can provide scope for sitting and overlooking performance areas. This idea promotes the concept of Oxpens Meadow as a multi-function space. Other solutions may be possible and Oxpens Meadow provides an exciting opportunity to engage with local stakeholders to design a space which serves the needs of the wider community, both existing and future local residents.
- 5.41 A landscape scheme which supports informal recreation and organised activities is required as part of a planning application. Built structures may be able to be incorporated into Oxpens Meadow or the proposed adjacent open space next to the River Thames (Isis) for example, scope may exist for a free standing pavilion building to accommodate A3 uses (café or restaurant), and for a platform or hard-surfaced area to allow performances. Structures proposed within the FIT area will be subject to the agreement of Fields in Trust and Oxford City Council, in line with the FIT deed of dedication.
- 5.42 Policy H9 of the Sites and Housing Plan requires all developments of 20 dwellings or more will be required to provide a minimum of 10% of the total site area as public open space. The proposals as presented in the *Illustrative Master Plan* show that this target can be achieved in the additional proposed open space adjacent the FIT area and the River Thames (Isis). Further public open space will include the Oxpens public square.
- 5.43 Enhancement of public open space should include provision for measures to discourage the use of areas under the railway bridge for anti-social behaviour.

**DP8: RELATIONSHIP TO THE RIVER**

- 5.44 The issue of flood risk should be considered and scheme design must incorporate appropriate flood mitigation proposals. Oxpens Meadow and proposed adjacent open space could be re-profiled to create land form terracing around a landscaped flood attenuation area that is capable of accommodating excess water from the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream should more extreme flood events occur. The design of the flood mitigation scheme should accommodate other landscape and land use aspirations – see Design Principle 7: *Enhancing Oxpens Meadow*.
- 5.45 A phasing plan for development and flood mitigation will need to be agreed by the City Council in consultation with the Environment Agency before commencement of development.
- 5.46 Proposals should maximise the opportunity of the river frontage to River Thames (Isis) and the Castle Mill Stream. Development should be **orientated to ensure streets, spaces and buildings have views across the open space, towards the waterfront**. This will help to create an attractive setting for the public open space, whilst maximising the value of the built form.
- 5.47 See **Figure 5.6, Oxpens Waterside Frontage**





1  
Oxpens Meadow facing toward the River Thames/Isis



2  
Oxpens Meadow with Ice Rink



3  
Oxpens Meadow, River Thames/Isis footpath



4  
River Thames/Isis under railway bridge



5  
River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream



6  
Castle Mill Stream

**DP9: APPROPRIATE LAND USE MIX**

5.48 Oxpens should accommodate an appropriate mixture of land uses, with a preference to accommodate land uses listed as follows in this Design Principle. The Master Plan Development Framework presented in Chapter 6 establishes a clear structure of urban blocks that have the flexibility to accommodate a range of land uses:

- Residential (houses and apartments);
- Employment (offices, research & development);
- Hotel;
- A1 – A5 Land Uses (retail, food, drink, professional services);
- Student Accommodation;
- Educational Uses;
- Retirement Accommodation;
- Café (Oxpens Meadow attraction); *and*
- A potential Energy Centre.

5.49 Appropriate land uses are illustrated in **Figure 5.7, *Appropriate Land Uses – Precedent Photographs***.

**DP10: GENERATING ACTIVITY**

5.50 Oxpens is currently lacking in activity, aside from vehicular movements through the Oxpens Road. A key design principle of the SPD is to design a place with an appropriate balance of land uses that can attract interest and generate activity. Residential and employment uses are central to achieving this objective.

5.51 The design of high quality streets and spaces is important to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists feel welcome and are encouraged to move freely through Oxpens. All buildings should be accessed from the street to maximise on-street activity.

5.52 Buildings that front the public square and Oxpens Road should have flexible ground floors that can accommodate a range of land uses. Retail units and eating and drinking establishments would be particularly appropriate at the ground floor around Oxpens Square and Oxpens Road, encouraging activity in the public realm, and benefiting from high visibility and passing trade to support business growth.

5.53 The redevelopment of Oxpens can support cultural activity through the provision of high quality public open spaces including a new civic space and the enhanced Oxpens Meadow. The proposals for Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space (see Oxpens Meadow landscape design proposals in Chapter 6) include space for community events and the potential to accommodate performance space, possibly with an amphitheatre.





Mixed use block with ground floor activity



Business opportunities



Cafes & restaurants around square



Family housing with gardens



Apartments - residents, students or retirement



Business incubator space and education uses



Mixed use blocks



Hotel



Housing with amenity space



Student accommodation



Office and R&D



Cafe restaurant in open space

**DP11: COHERENT CHARACTER**

5.54 The design of Oxpens should foster a sense of place and character. This can be facilitated by:

- A consistent and constrained material and colour palette for all built form which reflects the local context;
- Consistent material and colour palette for the public realm, streets and spaces (in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*);
- New built form and public realm should respond positively to the high architectural quality of the city centre as a whole;
- Boundary edges for private amenity space facing the public realm should be defined as per the guidance established in the WEAAP Appendices Design Code;
- Consistent specification of a limited palette of landscape features, especially street tree species;
- A uniform palette of street furniture and lighting;
- Using streets of similar function in adjoining character areas, to provide a precedent for the scale and role of buildings to create a legible hierarchy of streets forming coherent character areas;
- The hierarchy of streets in the new development reflecting the variation in street patterns in St Thomas' in particular to benefit from the potential to create links with existing areas of high quality historic and modern townscape. Street design is covered in more detail in the West End Design Code;
- Oxpens Road's character reflecting the broad width, strong enclosure and large building scale and pattern of Park End Street and Frideswide Square to which it is well connected with the buildings providing a series of landmark frontages to arrest the attention, allowing considerable potential for variety in detailing, but sharing a common scale. (Mixed-use main street in West End AAP);
- Residential lower order streets reflecting a more organic character of space and building reflecting the character of St Thomas Street or the denser developments of residential streets that characterised the later expansion of Oxford in the 19th and 20th century. Using more muted architectural detail and a limited palette of materials so that buildings contribute as groups with occasional stand out buildings providing focal features would also help create a coherent character. Redevelopment at Littlegate Street provides suitable models of good practice; *and*
- Repeated use of roofline features to support the rhythm created in frontages. Variation in detailing between streets could be included to avoid creating a monotonous street scene, whilst occasional gaps in the frontage are necessary to allow greenery to spill through the street. The Christ Church Old Buildings at Osney Lane provide a precedent for adding detail to larger residential blocks.

5.55 Establishing a clear identity for development is important to help attract inward investment and to ensure that new and existing residents and visitors can understand the place and orientate themselves.

5.56 See **Figure 5.8, Character – Precedent Photographs**





Integration of locally relevant features - e.g. cycle storage



Consistent material palette unifies the whole



Considered choice of brick and edging



Boundary walls in consistent material to define edges



Contemporary design in consistent material and colour palette



Oxford West End precedents – Woodins Way



Local material choice



Locally relevant material and colour palette



Amenity space integrated into built form



**DP12: PHASING**

- 5.57 Development proposals for the Oxpens site should take account of the potential need to phase development in stages.
- 5.58 The SPD Master Plan as presented in Chapter 6 presents a comprehensive development proposal for the site. The Master Plan illustrations show the site in fully developed form, but the arrangement of blocks, streets and spaces has been carefully considered to ensure that the site could be delivered as separate phases. The Oxford Business Centre site could be delivered alongside the core development area, but the master plan retains flexibility.
- 5.59 Phasing is considered in more detail in Chapter 7, *Phasing & Delivery*.

Chapter Six  
EXPENSES MASTER PLAN

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## 6 OXPENS MASTER PLAN

- 6.1 This chapter presents the SPD Master Plan for Oxpens. The Master Plan establishes a framework of design guidance for the Oxpens site. Oxford City Council strongly encourages future detailed design proposals for the development of Oxpens to adhere to the master plan design guidance.
- 6.2 The Master Plan comprises two key drawings:
- **Development Framework Plan (see Figure 6.1); and**
  - **Illustrative Master Plan (see Figure 6.3).**
- 6.3 These plans are supported by with a series of interpretive plans and illustrations, presented in subsequent figures.



## EXPENS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

- 6.4 The Development Framework Plan presented in **Figure 6.1** sets a clear design framework, comprising a series of urban blocks that allow for flexibility in their intended use and distribution, and phased delivery of development.
- 6.5 The Development Framework Plan illustrates core Master Plan design guidance for Oxpens that Oxford City Council strongly favour: all planning applications are expected to be in conformity with this plan. If flood mitigation measures are not needed in due course then the framework may evolve but the essential characteristics of the design approach must be retained – a series of urban blocks with riverside park area responding to the site's location and reflecting important heritage aspects of the city. There is flexibility in the framework and creative solutions for flooding that do not compromise the integrity of this approach are welcomed.
- 6.6 This technical plan is supported by a series of plans and diagrams, presented in subsequent figures.
- 6.7 The Development Framework Plan is informed by site constraints and uses the design principles to identify a range of physical elements that are seen as critical to the successful design co-ordination and comprehensive redevelopment of Oxpens, including:

### Access Requirements:

- Points of access (main and minor);
- Oxpens Road (including area for focus of public realm improvements);
- The alignment of the primary route and lower order streets;
- Local side streets junctions with the primary street;
- Footway / cycleway / leisure routes; *and*
- Network Rail access.

### Built Form Requirements:

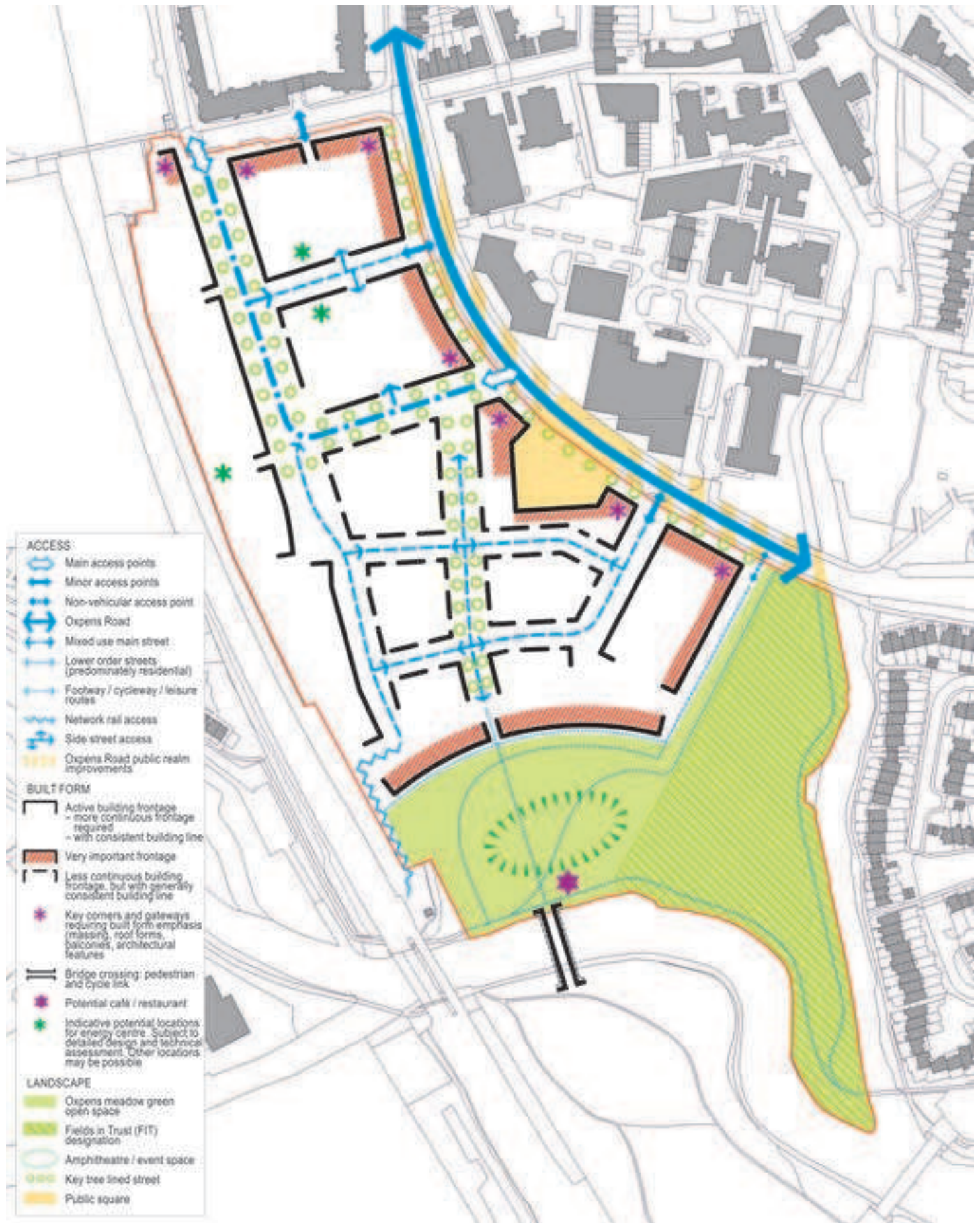
- Areas where a more continuous built frontage is required;
- Locations of the most important building frontage;
- Areas where a less continuous building line is required;
- Building frontage lines illustrate locations where *active frontages* are required (i.e. building frontages with activity-generating fenestration, front doors and windows);
- Location for a potential foot / cycle bridge crossing; *and*
- Location for a potential café / restaurant.
- Potential locations for an Energy Centre, other suitable locations may also exist, all subject to detail design testing.

### Landscape Requirements:

- Public open space to the south of the site (Oxpens Meadow and proposed adjacent open space);
- Area of Fields in Trust designation;
- Location for potential amphitheatre / event space;
- Key routes that require trees to line the street;
- Public square; *and*
- Locations for shared surface treatment of minor public spaces / crossovers.

### Urban Blocks and Urban Grain:

- 6.8 Informed by the issues listed above the Development Framework establishes a clear network of urban blocks that are proportioned to accommodate a range of potential land uses.
- 6.9 The urban grain varies with slightly larger urban blocks on the main street frontages to Oxpens Road and Osney Lane, a finer grain of streets and development blocks within the central core of the Oxpens site.
- 6.10 This approach has local precedent in the historic urban morphology of St. Ebbes and St Thomas's that have presented patterns of narrow streets of housing, interspersed with larger buildings associated with non-residential uses, as noted in *Site History*.
- 6.11 See **Figure 6.1, Development Framework Plan**





## POSSIBLE LAND USES

- 6.12 Land uses that are appropriate for the Oxpens site are presented in **Figure 6.2, Possible Land Uses Plan**. This plan identifies where **the land uses could be located within the site** - in relation to each other, public spaces, site features, constraints and local context.

### Residential (houses and apartments)

- 6.13 Residential development should aim to be equally balanced between housing and apartments.
- 6.14 In line with the Oxford West End AAP Affordable Housing policy (WE16) 50% of the residential development should be affordable housing (comprising 80% social rented and 20% shared ownership).
- 6.15 All homes must have access to an area of private amenity space: houses should have gardens, and apartments should have access to private balconies and/or communal gardens.
- 6.16 The Possible Land Uses Plan illustrates how residential development can largely be accommodated across the site, with the exceptions of the north east corner which is a valuable location for commercial development, and the site of the Oxpens Business Centre which has the greatest proximity to the railway line (noise mitigation measures required) and has the potential to accommodate other land uses, most notably student accommodation.

### Employment: Offices, Research & Development

- 6.17 Opportunities for business, including offices and accommodation for Research and Development, should be provided within the Oxpens site to help create a mixed development with a balance of activities and land uses, complementing other core uses.
- 6.18 The WEAAP identifies B1 Offices as a potential appropriate land use for the Oxpens site and encourages Research & Development space.
- 6.19 Office buildings can be either 'stand alone' office buildings or blocks, or office floorspace may be provided as individual storeys / floors, within mixed use blocks. Research and development floorspace is a priority land use and again could be provided in individual block form, or as part of larger mixed use building. The central location of the site enables walking distance relationships between off-shoot businesses at Oxpens and central hubs of activity in the Colleges and City Centre.
- 6.20 Key locations for new office and research and development floorspace are identified as:
- the Oxpens Road frontage;
  - the junction of Oxpens Road / Osney Lane; and
  - fronting the public square.
- 6.21 Policy CS28 *Employment Sites* safeguards key protected employment sites as shown on the Oxford Policies Map 2013 (formally known as the Proposals Map). Although no key protected employment sites are designated within Oxpens there are existing employment plots within the site (including Royal Mail, and light industrial units fronting Oxpens Road). The Master Plan proposes redevelopment of these existing plots. Proposed new uses include new employment floorspace, retail, hotel and R&D uses, ensuring continued presence of employment activity. Although the existing employment space may be replaced in a different location, the objective is to have no net loss of employment at Oxpens, some of which could be provided by non-B uses. Policy CS28 includes statement that: *"Planning permission will only be granted for the modernisation and regeneration of any employment site if it can be demonstrated that new development:*
- *secures or creates employment important to Oxford's local workforce; and*
  - *allows for higher-density development that seeks to make the best and most efficient use of land; and*
  - *does not cause unacceptable environmental intrusion or nuisance."*
- The master plan proposals align with these statements, creating opportunities for employment in a higher density form of development as part of a comprehensive mixed use scheme for Oxpens.

6.22 Policy SR.7 (Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016) requires provision of public open space as part of new business, commercial and institutional developments:

*“On large-scale business, commercial and institutional developments the City Council will seek the provision of suitable public open space to serve the recreational needs of employees, customers and hospital patients/visitors where:*

- a. there is a shortage of public open space in the vicinity; or*
- b. the development would create a significant additional need for public open space.*

*Where appropriate, as part of major new commercial developments, the City Council will seek contributions for the provision, or enhancement, of public squares which will be secured by planning obligations.*

*Developers will be asked to secure adequate maintenance of new areas of public open space where appropriate.”*

6.23 A new public square is proposed as part of the Oxpens master plan scheme and the enhancement of Oxpens Meadow (areas within and outside of the FIT designation) will provide a significant area of public open space for use by the new Oxpens community including residents, employees and visitors.

### **Hotel**

6.24 The SPD Master Plan includes provision for at least one hotel.

6.25 The preference for the Oxpens site is for a hotel graded as preferably 4 or 5 star to bring a high quality offer to the site. This preference is in line with the WEAAP which includes policy WE26 as follows under hotel accommodation: *“...Planning permission will be granted for a new 4 or 5 star hotel on the Oxpens site.”*

6.26 The WEAAP also permits the inclusion of a flexible conference centre facility.

6.27 The Illustrative Master Plan tested the potential to accommodate a 150 bedroom hotel and conference facility.

6.28 Appropriate locations for the hotel are on the most prominent corners of the site to maximise visibility and attract trade and investment. Key locations for a hotel include:

- The junction of Oxpens Road / Osney Lane; *and*
- The northern edge of the site, opposite Beckett Street.
- It may be possible to explore potential to accommodate the hotel in relation to the public square.

### **A1 – A5 Land Uses (retail, food, drink, professional services)**

6.29 A mixture of A1-A5 land uses could be accommodated in the ground floor of the mixed use buildings that front Oxpens Road and the Oxpens Public Square. These land uses should be located on this street frontage to maximise visibility to passing trade and thus attract business. Positioning this potential mixture of finer grain land uses on Oxpens Road and around the square will help to generate activity and interest on the street and in the new civic spaces.

6.30 The Oxpens site is outside of the Oxford City Centre primary shopping frontage and therefore retail floorspace will be restricted to smaller units which should not be amalgamated to create larger units if this would undermine the retail core.

### **Student Accommodation**

6.31 Student housing is a relevant land use given the location of the site on the edge of the city centre, close to University colleges and campuses.

6.32 The site of the Oxford Business Centre is a suitable location for the provision of student accommodation. The scale and massing of the proposed student accommodation blocks can provide a visual screen and acoustic buffer between the railway line and the rest of the Oxpens site. Other land uses may also be appropriate including employment (e.g. research & development) or a hotel.



- 6.33 A high standard of design will be required for the student blocks as they are proposed for a prominent edge of the site that is visible from the railway line and within long distant view cones. As such the architectural appearance is an important consideration, a varied roofscape with high quality elevation treatment to both the street frontage (Becket Street extension) and the façades addressing the railway line will be required.
- 6.34 Tree planting and landscape treatment will help to soften the appearance of the student block from longer distant views including the view cone points. The landscape of the communal gardens behind the student blocks will also provide an attractive buffer between the blocks and the railway line.
- 6.35 The ground floor of student accommodation blocks should include activity-generating uses to create activity on the route of the Becket Street extension.
- 6.36 The student accommodation is envisaged to be units that are not self contained. The student blocks in the Illustrative Master Plan use a working assumption of clusters of 5-7 student rooms that will share a communal kitchen and living room. In this mode of provision there will not be a requirement for provision of affordable housing, with reference to the Affordable Housing SPD, paragraph 39: *“Developments of student accommodation where units are not self-contained (where each unit shares a kitchen or bathroom) will not be expected to provide affordable housing....”*
- 6.37 Should a development scheme be brought forward that includes student accommodation units that are self contained these would be expected to provide affordable housing, as stated in the Affordable Housing SPD, paragraph 39: *“... Where student accommodation units are self-contained, they will be treated as normal housing so the developer will be expected to provide 50% of the dwellings as affordable housing in line with the Local Plan policies.”*

### Educational Uses

- 6.38 **Educational uses**, such as a business school, will be encouraged with the opportunity to build on the success of the nearby Saïd Business School and create an educational quarter within this area of the Oxford West End.

### Retirement Accommodation

- 6.39 Retirement accommodation could be an appropriate land use for the Oxpens site as elderly residents would benefit from the sites proximity to a range of amenities including the city centre (shops and services) and public transport.
- 6.40 The Oxpens Meadow would provide an appropriate setting for such development, allowing views and immediately accessible public open space for residents. Appropriate locations for retirements homes include:
- The site of the Oxford Ice Rink; *and*
  - Development blocks / parcels within the core of the master plan site, set back from Oxpens Square.
- 6.41 It should be noted that specialist residential development such as retirement accommodation will be expected to provide affordable housing in line with standard residential development policy requirement (provision of 50% of the dwellings as affordable housing). Reference to Affordable Housing SPD, paragraph 38:

*“Specialist residential development*

*38. The requirement for affordable housing extends to all types of residential development including retirement homes. A retirement home falls into the same use class as residential (class C3) and is therefore expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. In these cases it may be more appropriate for the provision to be affordable retirement housing. Care homes and nursing homes (class C2) that are not self-contained are not required to provide affordable housing.”*

### Café (Oxpens Meadow attraction)

- 6.42 A small café or restaurant could be located within Oxpens Meadow or the adjacent proposed open space. This land use must be accommodated in a pavilion building of high architectural design quality.
- 6.43 The café / restaurant could be positioned close the River Thames / Isis to maximise the benefit of waterside location. The building should be located where it will be visible from Oxpens Road, to capture passing trade and thus help boost the viability of the service.
- 6.44 Proposals for a café in Oxpens Meadow or the adjacent proposed open space, particularly in a riverside location, will be subject to discussion with the Environment Agency. One potential design approach may be to raise the café on stilts; such a solution may be possible on technical grounds but will be subject to detail design proposals. A café would have small building footprint, resulting little loss of floodplain footprint or storage volume.
- 6.45 Safe access and egress during high water, safe operation of facility, ensuring warning procedures are in place, and how the facility closure would be managed during a high water event will be taken into account.
- 6.46 The café should incorporate sustainable design features and be sympathetic to its setting of Oxpens Meadow: a green roof and green walling would help the building to blend in to its landscaped surroundings.

### Energy Centre

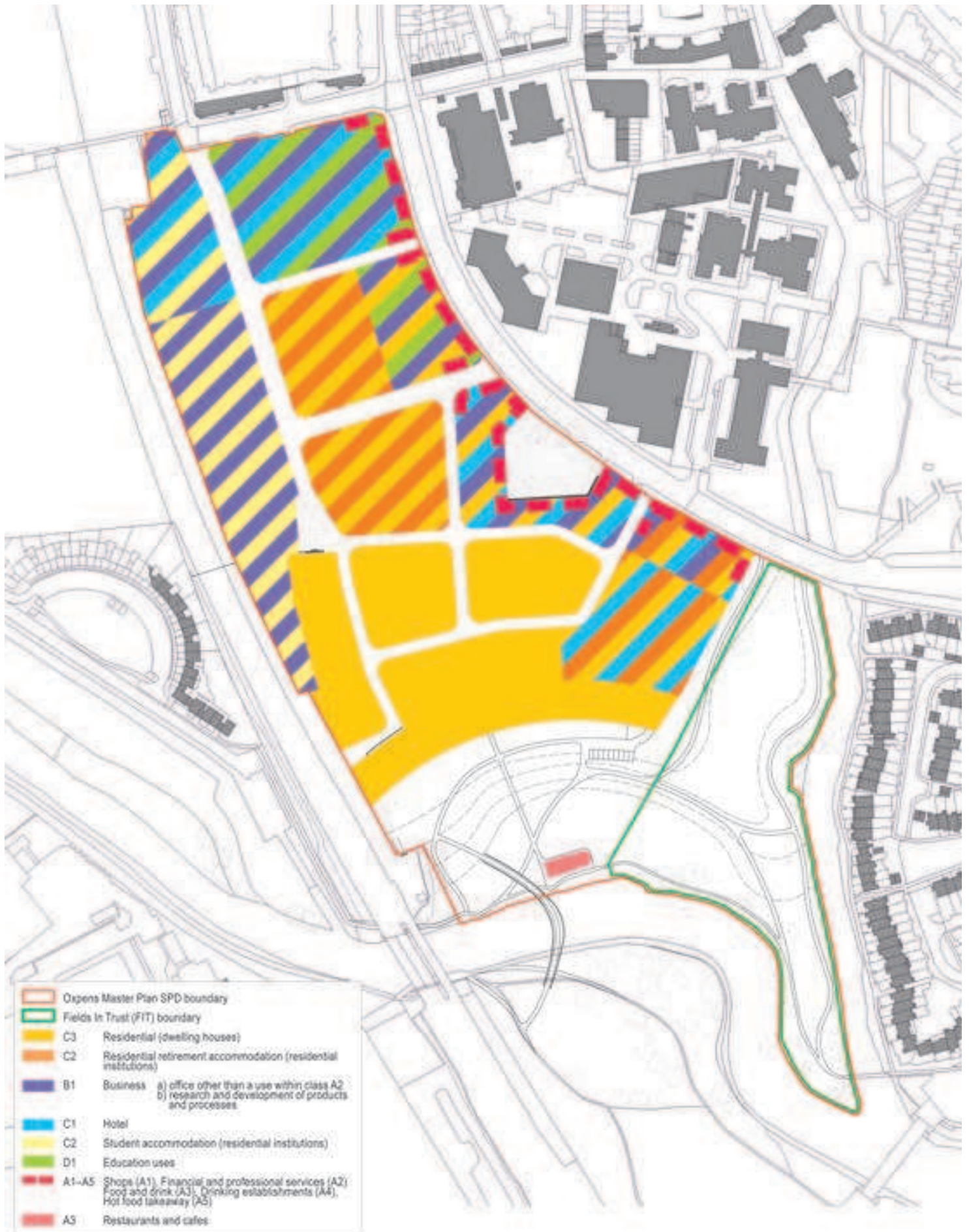
- 6.47 The site may be able to accommodate an energy centre, subject to detailed design considerations. This may provide one way of achieving the requirement for providing 20% renewable energy on-site, in line with the NRA SPD.
- 6.48 Policy WE13 in the Oxford West End Area Action Plan requires a community energy scheme to be developed within the Oxford West End. The Oxpens site was identified in the *Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study* (Stage 3 report, December 2008, Arup on behalf of Oxford City Council) as having the potential to accommodate an Energy Centre with associated district heating network.
- 6.49 Potential locations for an energy centre are identified on the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Master Plan. Other locations may also exist. All are subject to detailed design testing.
- 6.50 Incorporating an energy centre into the site will require a sensitive design approach with due consideration of neighbouring adjacent land uses. Any proposal for an Energy Centre and/or related infrastructure will require consideration of issues including:
- **Size of plot:** the *Oxford West End Sustainable Energy Study* includes illustration of CHP Energy Centre buildings in two scenarios including 30m x 20m building footprint and 20m x 20m building footprint. The size of the plot may be larger than these dimensions as external site area may be required for parking, landscaping and other issues listed below.
  - **Access:** Energy Centre plant would require access for servicing. The plot may need to accommodate space for vehicle turning.
  - **Deliveries:** an indication of the frequency and scale of deliveries would be beneficial to inform location. Timings of deliveries may need control.
  - **Design:** Any Energy Centre plant would need a high standard of architectural design to ensure it integrates with the adjacent development.
  - **Location:** An Energy Centre should be located to minimise visual impact on and from the public realm. Such a facility should not be located on main routes or frontages, preferably should be positioned within a block on internal streets to minimise visual impact.

**Other land use considerations**

6.51 Other land uses that have been considered by Oxford City Council for Oxpens, but are thought not appropriate for this site include the follow:

- Railway Station (relocated);
- Construction Compound for Oxford Railway Station Redevelopment;
- Bus Station / Bus Turn Around Facility;
- Public Car Park (except for a potential temporary car parking solution); *and*
- School – Oxfordshire County Council have confirmed the site does not need to accommodate a school. Oxford City Council's Sites and Housing Plan allocates a site for a new school in New Hinksey at Bertie Place. It is expected that this would provide additional school capacity to allow the primary education needs of the Oxpens development to be met.

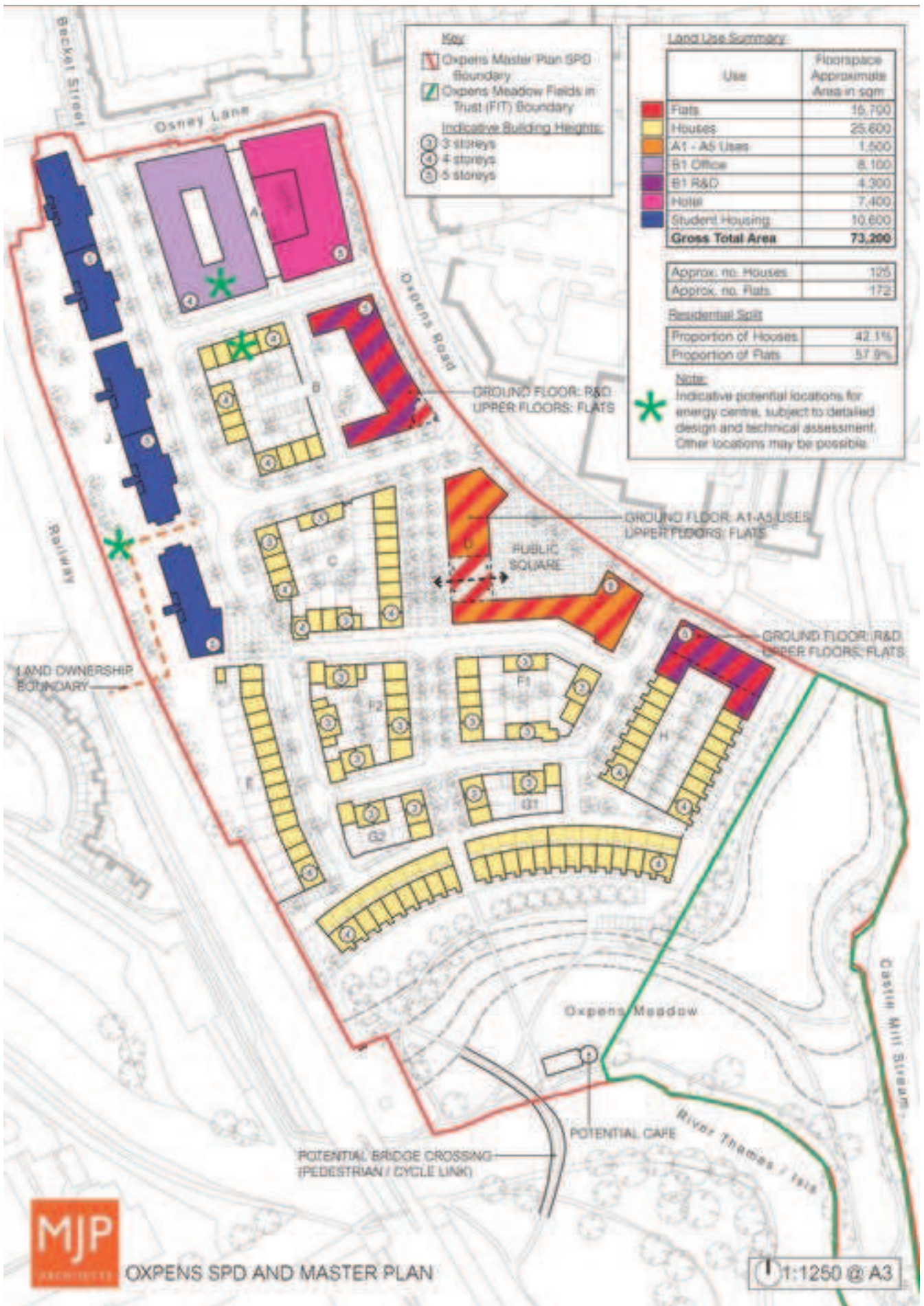






## OXPENS ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

- 6.52 **Figure 6.3, *Illustrative Master Plan*** shows how the urban blocks established in the Development Framework could be developed. The Illustrative Master Plan is not intended to be prescriptive, rather it presents a 'worked up' master plan design that demonstrates how the guiding principles set in the Development Framework Plan can inform a detailed layout scheme.
- 6.53 Accompanying diagrams showing the spatial distribution of:
- Character Zones:
  - Building Heights:
  - Street Hierarchy: Street Sections:
  - Public Realm Improvements:
  - Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space; and
  - Sustainability Issues.
- 6.54 The Illustrative Master Plan has been prepared by MJP Architects in collaboration with David Lock Associates and Oxford City Council to test the capacity of the site and demonstrate a feasible configuration of land uses. The plan is designed to a level of detail that illustrates important features including :
- Arrangement of streets and spaces in line with the Development Framework Plan;
  - Individual buildings set within wider development plots;
  - Private amenity space – gardens for houses, communal areas for apartment blocks and student housing.
  - Walled boundaries where plots turn corners and/or address streets or public space; and
  - Streetscape details including alignment of footways, carriageways, street trees and areas of common surfacing for pedestrian crossovers and public squares.
- 6.55 The Illustrative Plan also includes details of the potential landscape design for the Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space next to the River Thames (Isis). This landscape design scheme is illustrated in further detail in **Figure 6.13, *Indicative Oxpens Meadow Landscape Design Proposal***.
- 6.56 The Illustrative Master Plan drawing is accompanied by a Land Use Summary schedule that provides an overview of the headline quantities. Floorspace areas are listed for all land uses. The residential split is also noted – the plan illustrates residential capacity for:
- 125 houses; *and*
  - 172 apartments.
- 6.57 The proportional balance of houses and apartments accommodated in the Illustrative Master Plan is close to the policy objective of achieving a 50:50 ratio / split between houses and apartments. The master plan illustrates a split of 42.1% houses, 57.9% apartments, because it seeks to maximise the number of residential units achievable within the physical parameters of the site.
- 6.58 The number of apartments could be reduced to meet the policy object for 50:50 ratio of houses/apartments.



## CHARACTER ZONES PLAN

6.59 The Oxpens Master Plan has five broad character zones as illustrated in **Figure 6.4, Character Zones Plan**:

- Mixed Use Frontage;
- Residential Core;
- Student Accommodation;
- Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space; *and*
- Oxpens Road / Osney Lane: Public Realm Improvements.

### Mixed Use Frontage

6.60 The Mixed Use Frontage will bring a strong development edge with a continuous building line and taller buildings of up to five storeys to ensure a sense of built enclosure is given to the wide street corridor. The taller buildings can accommodate a mixture of uses, primarily with apartments on the upper floors and a variety of other uses on the ground floors. The ground floor level will have higher floor-to-ceiling height to ensure the units can house multiple uses including business offices, research and development, retail, food, drink and professional services.

6.61 The long elevation to Oxpens Road needs to be carefully designed. It will be the most prominent elevation in the development and should include some variety in built form to help bring richness in appearance and create an attractive townscape. Variety should also be sought in the roofscape to avoid a single roofline level along this important street frontage.

6.62 The new Oxpens Square is included within the mixed use frontage area: it is important that a mixture of uses have the potential to be accommodated around the Square to create an active place and a destination to attract investment and interest. Mixed Use Frontage extends the along Oxpens Road to include the junction with Osney Lane.

### Residential Core

6.63 The heart of the site is proposed for residential land uses. The form of residential development in this location is biased towards housing. Set back from the main street and with close proximity to the Oxpens Meadow this is a preferable location area for a finer grain of residential development.

### Student Accommodation

6.64 The site for student accommodation has sufficient space to accommodate residential apartment buildings set in landscaped gardens that can insulate the remainder of the site from the railway line.

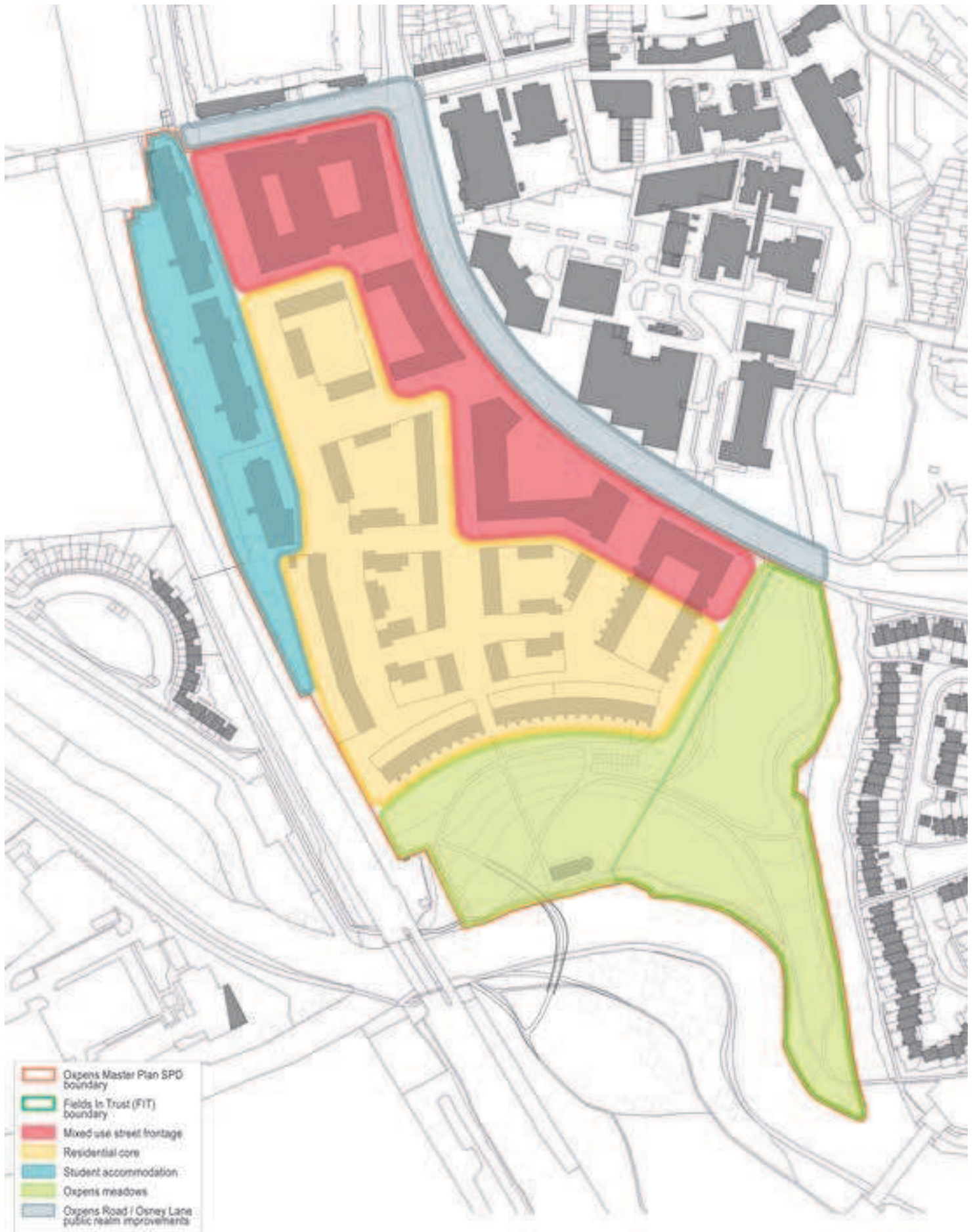
### Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space

6.65 Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space is a distinct character area, a defined area of land that has a multi-functional role – flood mitigation, public open space for recreation (with Fields in Trust designation), performance and event space. Further details of the design proposals for Oxpens Meadows and adjacent proposed open space next to the River Thames (Isis) are presented in **Figures 6.13 and 6.14**.

### Oxpens Road / Osney Lane: Public Realm Improvements

6.66 Although outside of the site boundary in the master plan (informed by land ownership) the adjacent streets of Oxpens Road and Osney Lane should be considered as a character zone for public realm improvements. Further details of the design proposals for Oxpens Road Public Realm improvements presented in **Fig. 6.8**.







## BUILDING HEIGHTS

6.67 **Building Heights** are noted on **Figure 6.3 Illustrative Master Plan**.

6.68 The range of building heights advised are as follows:

6.69 **Five storeys** (up to 18.2m including rooftop service/plant) to frame the main streets and spaces including:

- Oxpens Road frontage;
- Oxpens Public Square;
- Osney Lane – possibility for the mixed use blocks to be 4-5 storeys; *and*
- Student Accommodation blocks, providing visual and acoustic buffer to the rail line. The design of student accommodation blocks on the site of the current Oxpens Business Centre should make best use of roof voids to increase capacity and improve design.

6.70 Variety should be expressed in the roofscape design along frontages to the main streets and spaces. Five storeys is the maximum building height and variety should be expressed using design detailing to accentuate some top storeys / roof lines to help delivery a varied skyline on the frontage to main streets and spaces. The principle of skyline variety is informed by guidance in the WEAAP Design Code, notably policies B1.2 and E3.

6.71 **Four storeys** to frame other key streets and spaces including:

- Built from frontage to Oxpens Meadow;
- Residential block adjacent the railway line (providing visual and acoustic buffer to the rail line); *and*
- Residential block on secondary streets.

6.72 **Three storeys** in the centre of the scheme:

- Finest grain residential streets in the centre of the site.

6.73 **Single storey** building height for the potential café/restaurant located in the Oxpens Meadow or adjacent proposed open space.

6.74 Building heights, and the forms, extents and materials of rooflines will receive detailed consideration in the determination of planning applications and will need to be carefully considered during the preparation of proposals.

6.75 Further detail in relation to the roofscape design is noted under Oxford skyline and view cone issues, as follows.

## 6.76 Oxford Skyline: Key View Cone Points

- 6.77 Oxford has protected view cones, of long-distance views into the city from sites on the outskirts of the city. The view cone policy (Policy HE10) protects the distinctive skyline of Oxford, the city of 'Dreaming Spires'. Views out from the City should also be considered. Additional Views Study work it is being undertaken and initial studies show that that the views from the west are 'kinetic', not static. This needs to be factored in to the consideration of development proposals for Oxpens as they come forward. Regard should also be had to the fact that new buildings at Oxpens will be in the middle/foreground of views from the west, which means that even if they are below the 18.2 metre threshold, careful consideration needs to be given to their form, design and materials in order to ensure that they do not detract from the view.
- 6.78 The prominence of this site in views of the City Centre from the western hills, and in the City Council's protected view cones in particular has been explored by Oxford City Council officers, including the Heritage Officer.
- 6.79 Site visits have informed the Officers conclusion that the three most important view points from which development at Oxpens will be visible are Port Meadow, Raleigh Park, and Boars Hill. These are official view cone points and will be used by Officers in determining the impact of new development at the Oxpens site on the spires and historic landscape.
- 6.80 Another important location for views is Hinksey Golf Course. Although this is not an official view cone location members of the golf course may view Oxford from this location.
- 6.81 Photography of the views from the key view cone points listed above is presented in **Figure 6.5, Oxford Skyline: Photography from View Cone Points.**
- View 1 – view from Raleigh Park;
  - View 2 – view from Port Meadow;
  - View 3 – view from Boars Hill; *and*
  - View 4 – view from Hinksey Golf Course;

### View cone points design considerations:

- 6.82 The Oxpens development should seek to retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, and protect the green backcloth from any adverse impact. Key design responses should include:
- **Broken building lines** to prevent a flat building mass;
  - **Variation in roof lines**, particularly on frontages to key streets – notably Oxpens Road;
  - **Roofscape materials** need to be selected so that they do not appear stark against the landscape and blend with the overall palette of the city although there is the possibility for a special form to perhaps use copper, as many of the spires do;
  - The loss of **trees** that currently contribute to the character of these views will be of particular impact. Where possible existing trees should be retained within Oxpens Meadow; *and*
  - **New trees** should be incorporated where possible in the public and private realm. Oxpens Road and routes within the site are identified as key locations for street tree planting. Street trees and trees within private gardens and communal courtyards will contribute to the green feel and appearance of the Oxpens site. The Development Framework Plan illustrates the location of key tree lined streets.



VIEW 1 - VIEW FROM RALEIGH PARK, FACING EAST TOWARDS OXFORD CITY CENTRE



VIEW 2 - VIEW FROM PORT MEADOW, FACING SOUTH TOWARDS OXFORD WEST END





VIEW 3 - VIEW FROM BOARS HILL, FACING NORTH EAST TOWARDS OXFORD CITY CENTRE



VIEW 4 - VIEW FROM HINKSEY GOLF COURSE, FACING NORTH EAST TOWARDS OXFORD CITY CENTRE



## PUBLIC REALM DESIGN: STREETS AND SPACES

6.83 The range of streets and public spaces proposed in the Oxpens Master Plan are presented in a series of illustrations as follows:

- **Figure 6.6, *Indicative Street Hierarchy*** – highlights the location of different street types in the master plan.
- **Figure 6.7, *Indicative Street Sections*** – presents cross section drawings through each of the street types proposed in the master plan, including the enhancement of the Oxpens Road.
- **Figure 6.8, *Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements*** – illustrates the proposed scheme of enhancements to the streetscape of Oxpens Road, including the new Oxpens Public Square. The public square could be tree-lined to reflect potential for some screening, whilst maintaining through visibility.
- **Figure 6.9, *Indicative Visualisation of Mixed Use Street*.**
- **Figure 6.10, *Indicative Visualisation of Residential Street*.**
- **Figure 6.11, *Indicative Visualisation of Mixed Use Frontage including hotel facing Oxpens Road*.**
- **Figure 6.12, *Indicative Visualisation of Residential crescent overlooking Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space*.**
- **Figure 6.13, *Indicative Visualisation of aerial perspective view of residential crescent overlooking Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space*.**

6.84 The design of streets and spaces has been considered with reference to the Oxford West End Area Action Plan Design Code Appendix.

## INDICATIVE STREET HIERARCHY

6.85 The indicative street hierarchy for the Oxpens site is presented in Figure 6.6 *Indicative Street Hierarchy*. It comprises:

### Existing streets with proposed enhancements:

- *Oxpens Road* – to reinforce its key role as a major city thoroughfare whilst transforming the pedestrian experience;
- *Becket Street* – to the north west of the Oxpens site this is an important link between the railway station, Frideswide Square and the Oxford West End, via Oxpens. Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are considering highways schemes for Becket Street which may result in the creation of a two-way vehicular route.
- *Osney Lane* – the northern boundary of the Oxpens site this lower order route requires public realm enhancement to tie in with proposed enhancement works to Oxpens Road. The route may be ‘stopped up’ as a through route if a scheme for Becket Street is brought forward. Pedestrian and cyclist through access will continue but vehicle access may be prohibited at one end, with the potential for new on street parking to compensate for the potential loss of on-street parking in Becket Street.

### New, proposed streets within the Oxpens Scheme:

- *Lower order streets* - The urban block structure set out in the Oxpens Master Plan establishes a clear network of connected streets, providing a choice of routes through the site. Most of the routes will be lower order with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists:

- *Main route through Oxpens* – providing connection between Oxpens Road and the Becket Street (also referred to as the 'Becket Street extension'). This route is defined as a higher order route and will have the capacity to take a proportion of vehicular movements from Oxpens Road and move these through Oxpens to link to Becket Street. This route, its alignment and junctions have been analysed by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. The route must be designed to cope with major flows but also safe pedestrian and cycle facilities. Early pre-application discussion should be held with the county council to discuss emerging street layout and design proposals for any planning application.

### Footways, cycleway and leisure routes

- All proposed streets should include footways to ensure provision for pedestrian access, and cyclists may be accommodated within the carriageways or by way of off-carriageway cycle facilities or "hybrid" cycle lanes.
- Alternatively, some lower order streets may be appropriate for homezone treatment with shared surfaces across the whole street corridor.
- Further leisure routes for pedestrians and cyclists will also be provided through the Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space, with clear direct connection between the Oxpens development and the proposed pedestrian / cyclist bridge crossing over the River Thames / Isis.
- Facilities for cyclists should be considered including electric bike recharging and well spaced cycle stands.
- The needs of cyclists with trailers, tagalongs, electric batteries and three wheels should also be considered in street design.
- Consideration should be given to the different cycle parking needs of employees from shorter-stay users of the site.
- A safe route for cyclists should be provided through the site from Oxpens Meadow to connect with the station area.

### Access & Junctions

- 6.86 The scheme of streets presented in the Illustrative Master Plan has been prepared in collaboration between Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. The main junction between Oxpens Road and the proposed main route through Oxpens is illustrated as a roundabout on the Illustrative Master Plan: this approach is preferred by the County Council as it may help to reduce 'street clutter' with less signage and columns than a signalised junction.
- 6.87 Designs for a signalised junction between Oxpens Road and the proposed main route through Oxpens have also been considered by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and their highways consultants Halcrow. This approach may be explored further when detailed design schemes come forward.

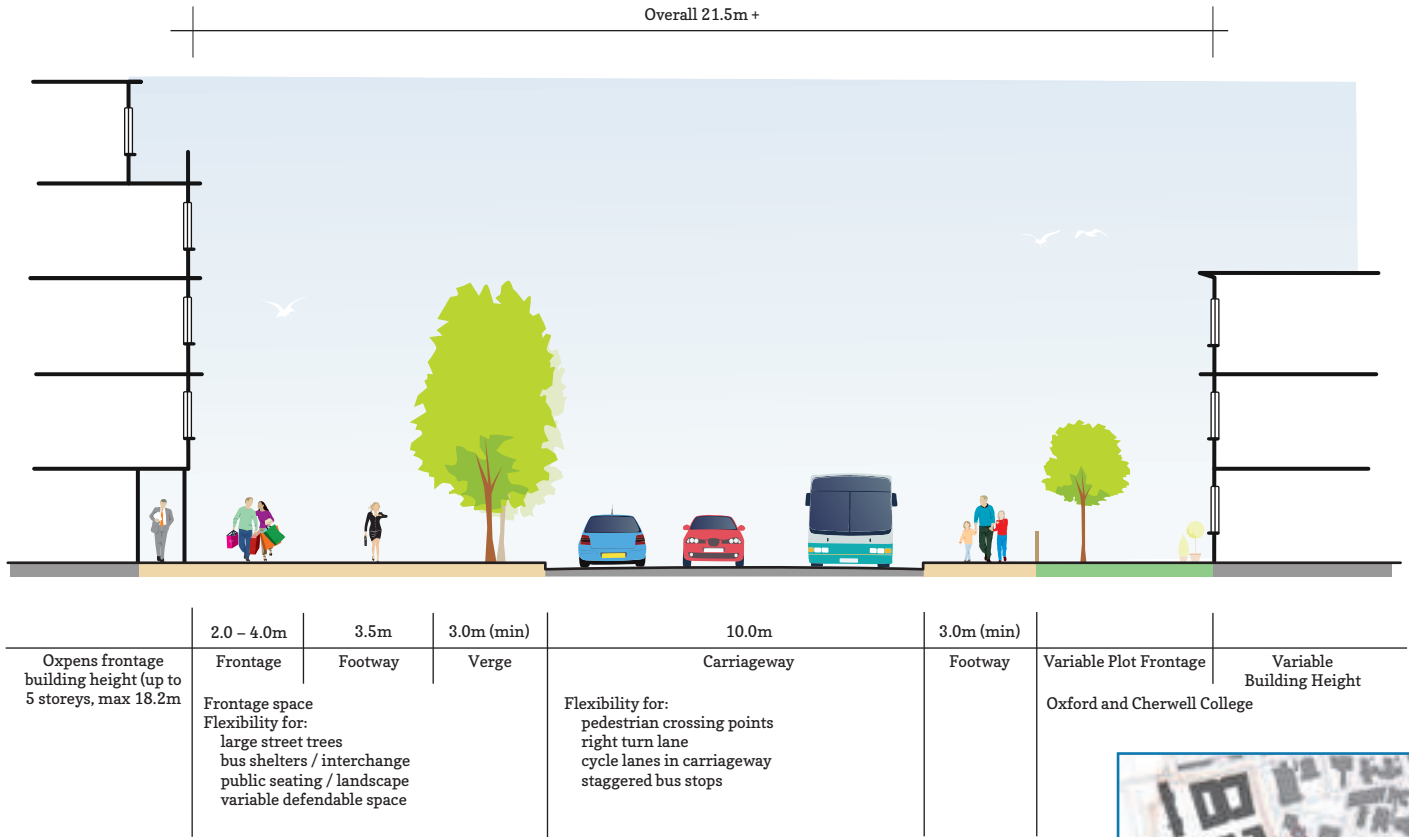
### Oxpens Road Crossing Points

- 6.88 The exact number of crossing points on Oxpens Road will be subject to discussion between Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council at the stage of detailed design. To enhance connectivity for pedestrians between Oxpens and the wider Oxford West End crossings will be required in relation to the Oxpens public square, the key corner of Oxpens Road – Osney Lane, the southern end of Oxpens providing connection between the Ice Rink site, Oxpens Meadow and the proposed Westgate redevelopment. Further crossing points may also be appropriate, subject to detail design discussions.

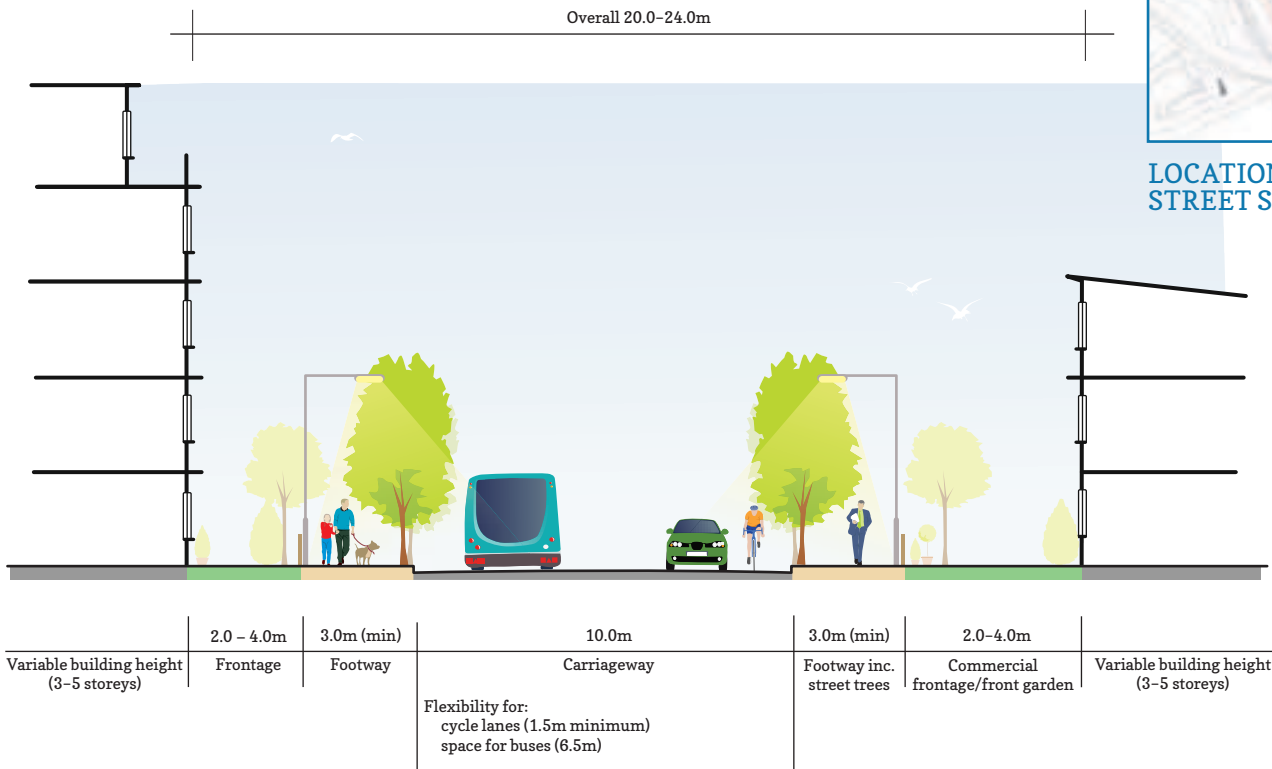




## EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION A-A: OXPENS ROAD: ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING STREET



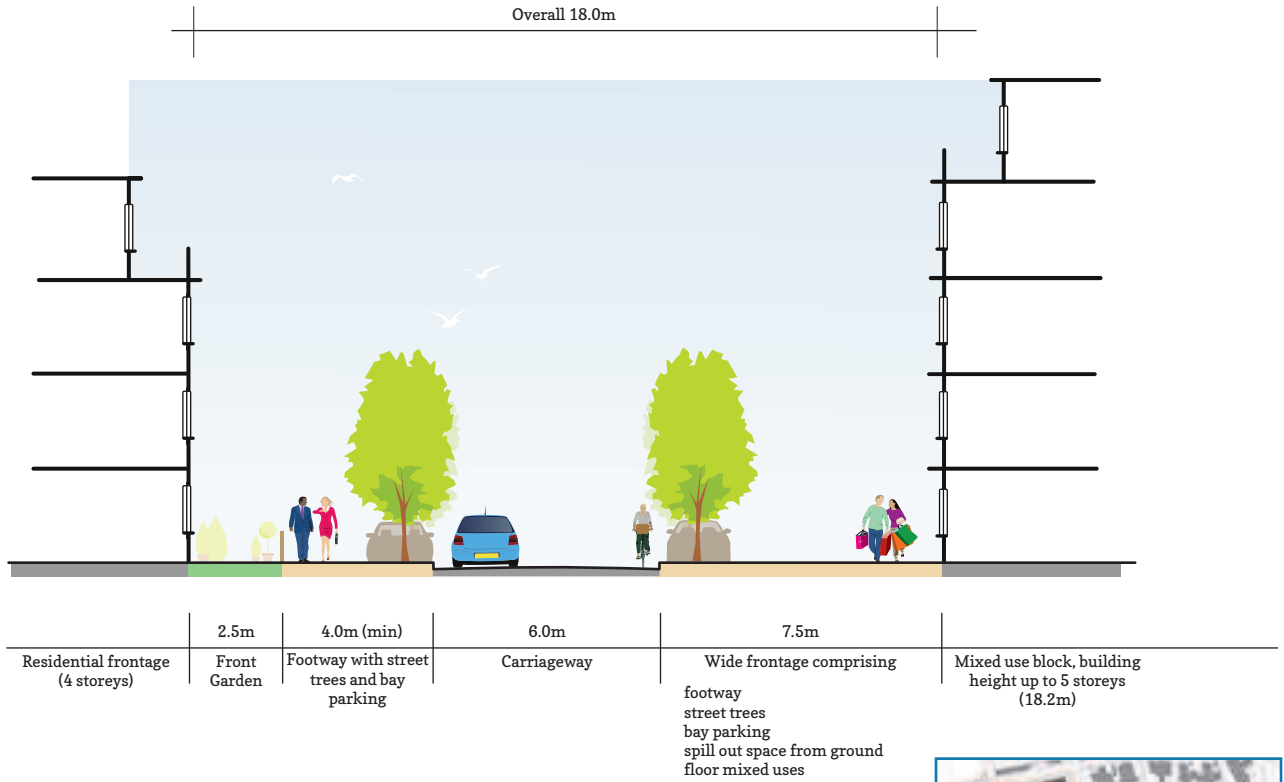
## EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION B-B: MAIN STREET THROUGH OXPENS SITE (REF. MIXED USE MAIN STREET, WEAPP APPENDICES)



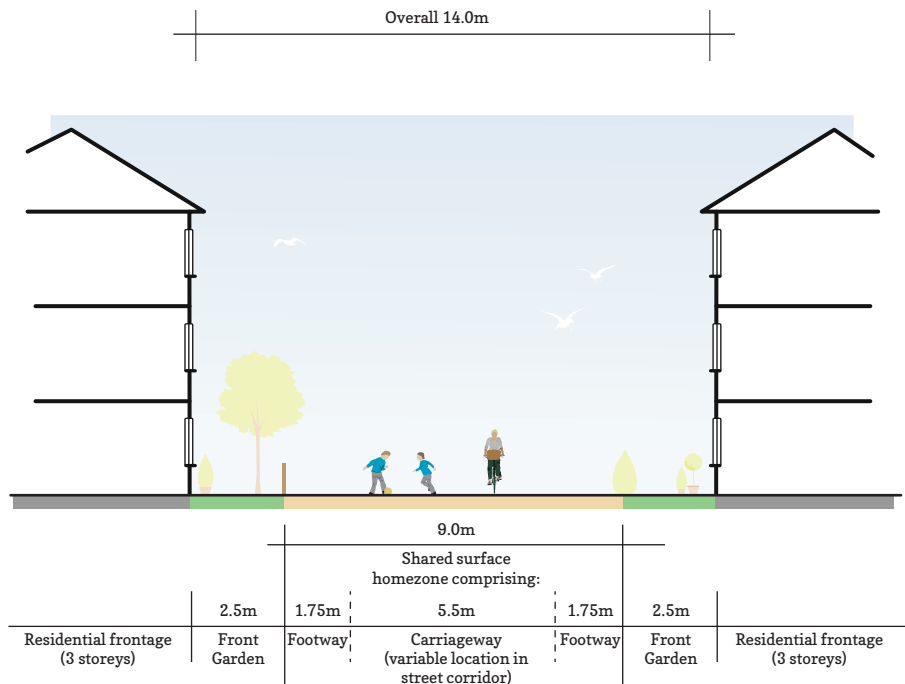
LOCATION OF INDICATIVE STREET SECTIONS



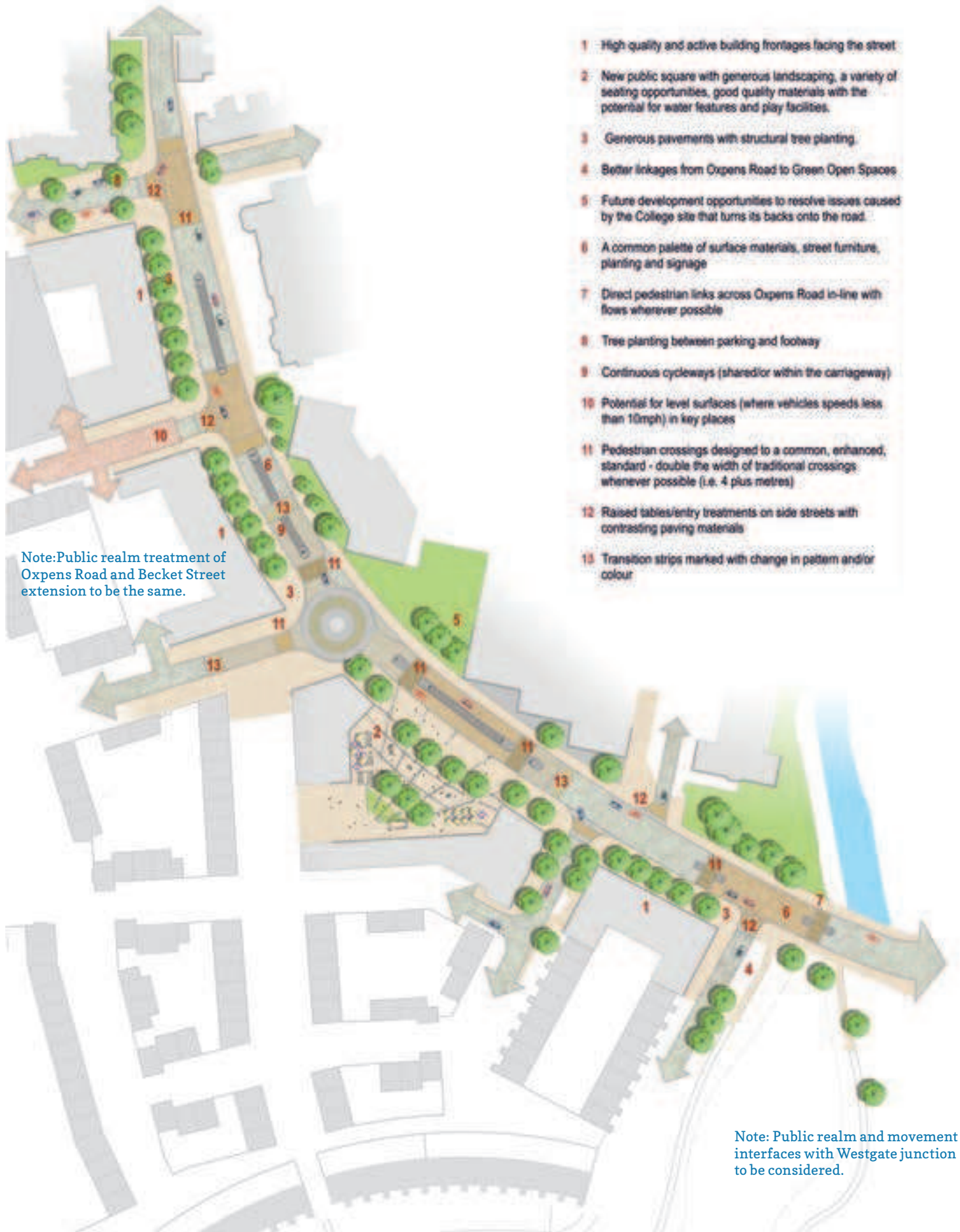
**EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION C-C: RESIDENTIAL STREET:  
(REF. RESIDENTIAL STREETS, WEAAP APPENDICES)**



**EXAMPLE INDICATIVE STREET SECTION D-D: RESIDENTIAL STREET:  
(REF. RESIDENTIAL STREETS, WEAAP APPENDICES)**



**LOCATION OF INDICATIVE STREET SECTIONS**



Note: Public realm treatment of Oxpens Road and Becket Street extension to be the same.

Note: Public realm and movement interfaces with Westgate junction to be considered.

**STREETSCAPE DESIGN: MATERIALS & STREET FURNITURE PALETTE**

6.89 The specification of public realm treatments should be in accordance with the *Oxford City Centre Street Scene Manual*. Public realm and street scene proposals presented in the SPD are indicative, informed by the Illustrative Master Plan.

**Streetscape: Appropriate Materials**

6.90 Materials should be of a family that is consistent across the Oxpens site, with variations as appropriate to the scale of the street. Suggested appropriate materials are listed below, with reference to the *Oxford Street Scene Manual*.

Streetscape Components	Streetscape Materials
<b>Vehicular carriageways</b>	<p>Primary Route through site (<i>ref. to WEAAP Appendices Street Type One: Mixed Use Main Street</i>) + Oxpens Road, and Osney Lane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black asphalt, usually stone mastic asphalt (SMA). Potentially with rolled-in light chipping, subject to discussions with Planning and Highways Authorities.</li> </ul> <p><i>WEAAP Appendices Street Type Three: Predominantly Residential Streets and Lanes</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using either:</li> <li>- Buff asphalt, the Oxford Street Scene Manual advises either hot rolled asphalt (HRA) with buff chippings or buff stone mastic asphalt (SMA);</li> <li>- Concrete blocks including reconstituted stone blocks; or</li> <li>- Granite / porphyry and similar igneous rock in various colours.</li> </ul> <p>Service access routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Black asphalt usually stone mastic asphalt (SMA).</li> </ul>
<b>Kerbs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Oxford Street Scene Manual advises concrete blocks including reconstituted stone blocks.</li> </ul>
<b>Footpaths / pavements</b>	<p>Primary Route through site (<i>ref. to WEAAP Appendices Street Type One: Mixed Use Main Street</i>) + Oxpens Road, and Osney Lane: and large public squares to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- York stone and similar honey-toned natural stone. Sandstone and limestone are used extensively in central Oxford. This is the material most associated with Oxford. As per <i>Oxford Street Scene Manual</i>.</li> </ul> <p><i>WEAAP Appendices Street Type Three: Predominantly Residential Streets and Lanes</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using either:</li> <li>- Concrete blocks including reconstituted stone blocks;</li> <li>- Granite / porphyry and similar igneous rock in various colours; or</li> <li>- Blue clay pavers.</li> </ul>
<b>Leisure Routes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gravel (resin bonded or resin bound) as per <i>Street Scene Manual</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Street Trees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Largest street trees e.g. London Plane specified for Oxpens Road frontage.</li> <li>- Smaller species for the streets within the site.</li> <li>- Exact specification subject to detailed landscape scheme proposals to be agreed with officers subject to detailed design proposals.</li> </ul>

**Streetscape: Street Furniture and Lighting**

- 6.91 A consistent palette of contemporary street furniture and lighting should be specified for the whole Oxpens site, including Oxpens Road, Osney Lane, and Oxpens Meadow.
- 6.92 For further guidance refer to the *Oxford Street Scene Manual*.

**Streetscape: continuity in future Oxford West End development**

- 6.93 A common palette of streetscape materials, street furniture and lighting should be continued in future development schemes in the Oxford West End to ensure continuity between different development sites.









Note: Artist's Impression, sketch for illustrative purposes only





Note: Artist's Impression, sketch for illustrative purposes only





Note: Artist's Impression, sketch for illustrative purposes only

## OXPENS MEADOW AND PROPOSED ADJACENT OPEN SPACE: LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL

6.94 An illustration of a proposed landscape design for Oxpens Meadow and the proposed adjacent open space is presented in **Figure 6.14, Indicative Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space - Landscape Design Proposal**. Examples of the envisaged landscape features are illustrated in **Figure 6.15, Oxpens Meadow Open Space Precedent Photographs**. Proposed design features for Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space include the following (*numbers correspond with annotations in Fig. 6.14*).

### Features of the landscape design proposal for Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space:

- 1. Fields in Trust (FIT) open recreation space:**
  - Enhancement of the existing large open area of grass for recreation, play and events activities.
  - Large area has potential to accommodate special events and festivals generating interest and activity.
- 2. Land form terracing:**
  - Dashed lines illustrating potential change in level / contours.
  - Land form re-profiled for flood mitigation / water management purposes.
  - Contours shaped in landscape design to create interesting spaces.
- 3. Lower area of level open space / amphitheatre:**
  - Level area of public space at the base of the terracing.
  - Level platform forms a natural 'stage' area for the amphitheatre.
  - Large area with potential to accommodate special events and festivals generating interest and activity.
- 4. Riverside leisure path:**
  - Enhanced leisure path along the riverside public right of way.
  - Path should be wide enough for walking and cycling and accommodate benches and street furniture consistent with palette for the rest of the site.
  - Ecological assets including existing trees adjacent water courses to be retained wherever possible.
- 5. Leisure paths through Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space to the waterfront:**
  - Network of leisure paths for walking and cycling providing access across Oxpens public open space.
  - Path should be wide enough for walking and cycling and accommodate benches and street furniture consistent with palette for the rest of the site.
  - Tree planting along the route of the leisure paths.
  - Leisure routes include:
    - Undulating route running along Castle Mill Stream;
    - Connections from Oxpens Road southward to the River; *and*
    - Links to the proposed bridge crossing.
- 6. Foot/Cycle Bridge crossing the River Thames (Isis):**
  - Landmark bridge as a focal point.
  - Prominent structure to terminate the view from the avenue through Oxpens.
  - Opportunity for design competition to generate interest.
  - An important link to provide access between Oxpens, riverside paths on both sides of the river, access to the Grandpont nature reserve and onward to other parts of the city.
- 7. View of the proposed landmark bridge from avenue vista through Oxpens site:**
  - The indicative location of proposed bridge is aligned with the avenue through the Oxpens site.
  - Creating a focal point view from the heart of Oxpens, south to the river – attracting interest and activity.
  - Clear legibility to aid access and orientation.
- 8. Café / restaurant opportunity site:**
  - Potential to accommodate a café / restaurant on the edge of the Oxpens Meadow.
  - Creation of destination to attract visitors and interest, stimulating activity in the area.
  - Building would need to be raised for flood mitigation.
  - Café parking shared with small public car park located adjacent residential streets for access.
  - Potential for a riverside location subject to detail design and discussion with Environment Agency.

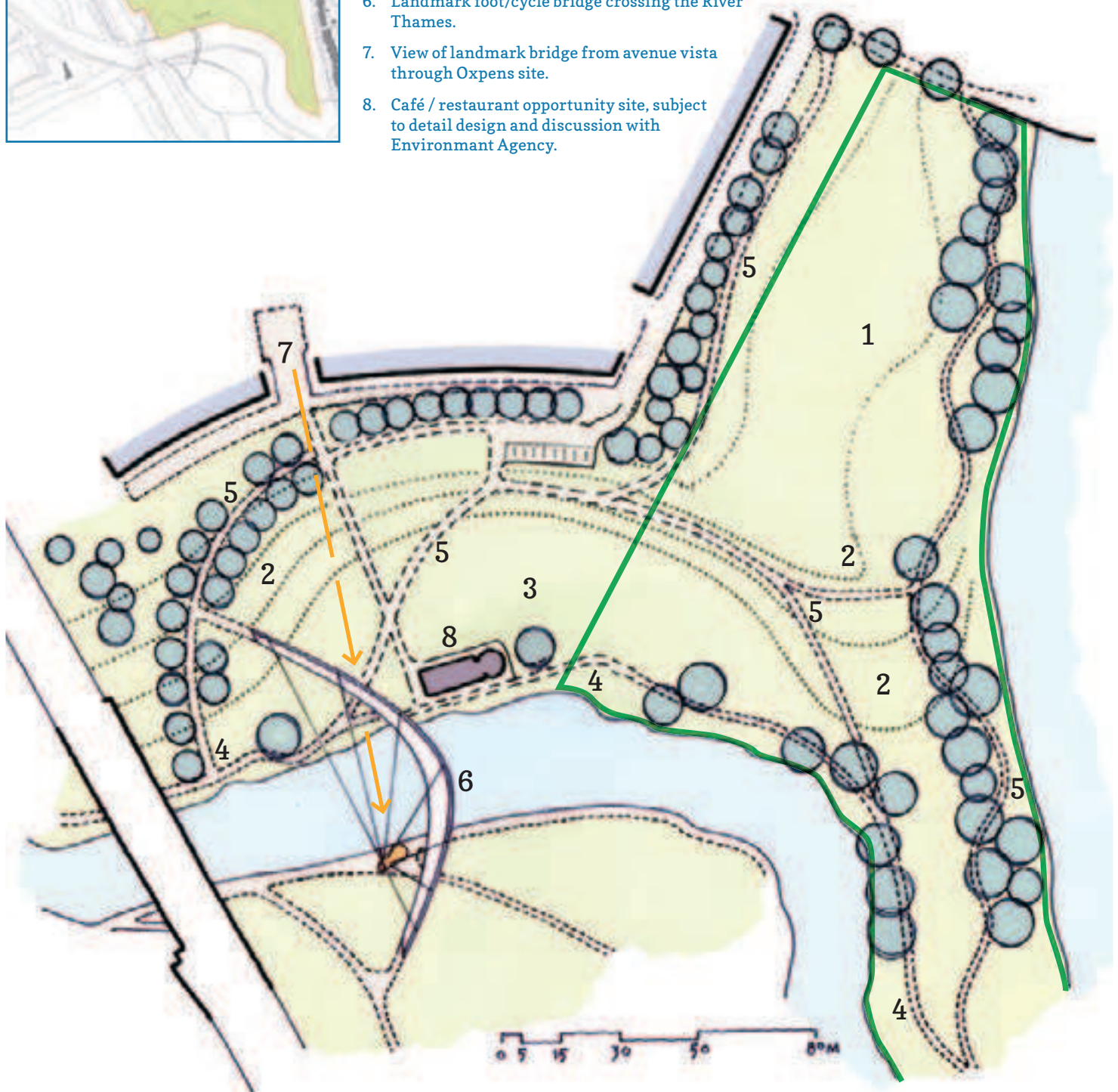


### INDICATIVE OXPENS MEADOW LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROPOSAL

Note that designs for this area are not fixed and will be developed in consultation with Fields in Trust and the local community. The bridge location is also indicative at this stage.

Design Components of indicative Oxpens Meadow Landscape Design Proposal:

1. Fields in Trust (FIT) open recreation space.
2. Land form terracing - to create flood mitigation protection, accommodate water and create landscape design interest when dry.
3. Lower area of level open space for events - amphitheatre performance space / 'stage'.
4. Riverside leisure path - enhanced along public right of way route parallel to the River Thames.
5. Leisure paths through Oxpens Meadow to the River Thames & Castle Mill Stream.
6. Landmark foot/cycle bridge crossing the River Thames.
7. View of landmark bridge from avenue vista through Oxpens site.
8. Café / restaurant opportunity site, subject to detail design and discussion with Environment Agency.







Amphitheatre and event space



Cafe in public open space



Events and activities in open space



Development frontage to open space



Enhanced leisure routes for pedestrians & cyclists



Performance space



Terrace land form for flood mitigation



Bridge crossing



Landmark bridge structure



Water management rills in landscape



## CAR PARKING

- 6.95 The design of car parking should make reference to the national guidance document: ***Car parking, What works where*** (Design for Homes, EP). This document establishes best practice design guidance for the design of car parking with illustrated solutions for various forms and scales of development.
- 6.96 The Oxford City Centre Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) should be extended through Oxpens. The restricted zone should avoid use of double yellow lines.
- 6.97 **Standards for car parking provision are established in the Oxford West End AAP (Volume 2) Appendix 4: Parking Standards.** The key standards are listed as follows:

### Residential Car Parking Standards

- 6.98 **Maximum** parking provision of 1 space per unit for residential **housing**.
- 6.99 **Flats** have a no general parking allowance, with the **maximum** parking standard stated as disabled parking only.

### Car Parking Standards for Non-Residential Land Uses

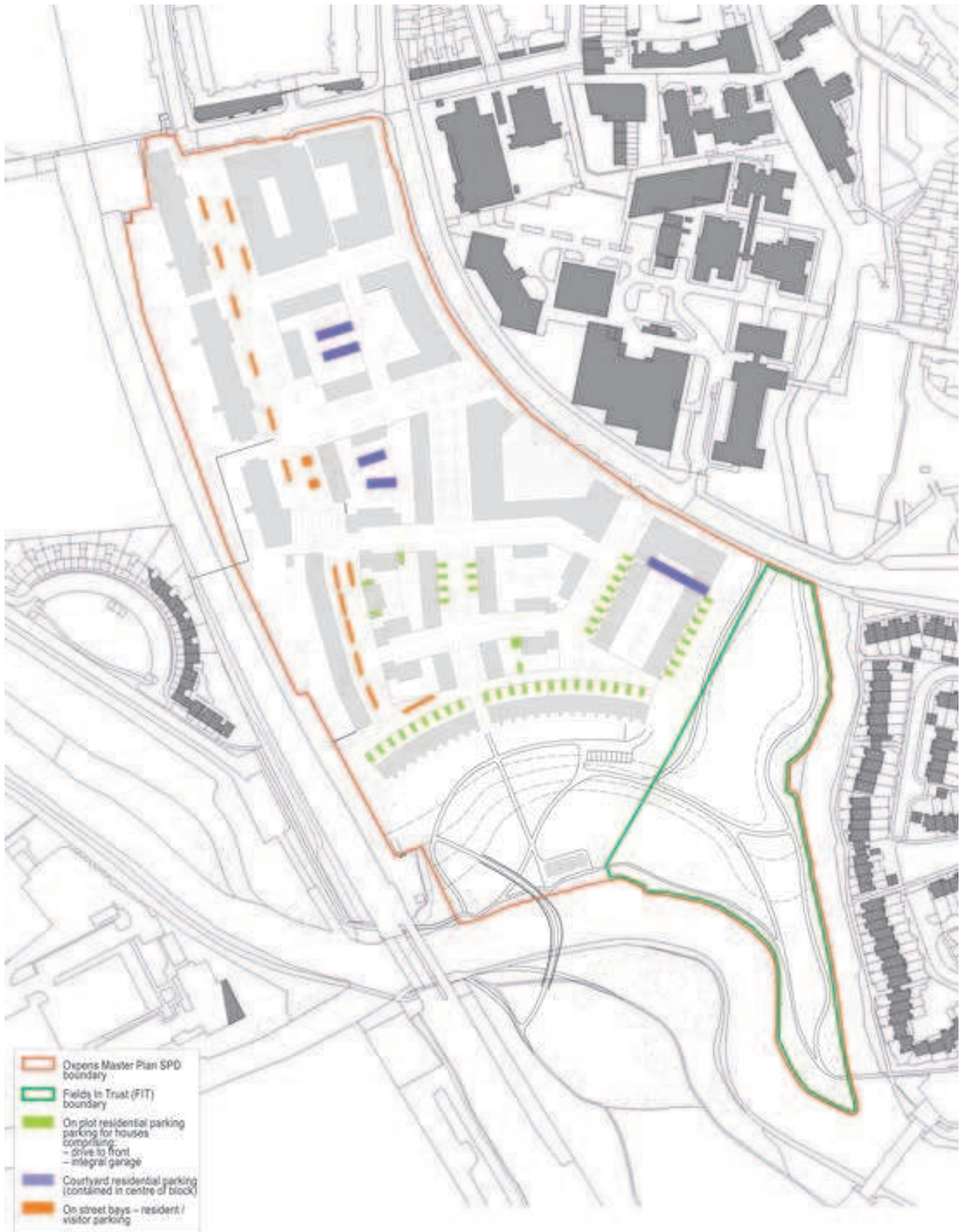
- 6.100 All non-residential development has a **maximum** parking standard of disabled and operational parking only (no general parking allowance). This standard applies to all non-residential development uses proposed in the Oxpens Master Plan.

### Visitor Car Parking

- 6.101 There is no specified standard for visitor car parking, but it is advisable to provide some visitor car parking spaces.
- 6.102 The best location for visitor car parking spaces is bay parking running parallel to the carriageway set, in the verge margin of the street. Street trees can be used to screen such bay parking.

### Car Parking in the Master Plan

- 6.103 The **Indicative Car Parking Plan (Figure 6.16)** demonstrates how the site can accommodate some car parking without dominating the street scene. In line with best practice guidance (including *Building for Life 12* and *Car Parking: What works where*) a range of car parking options is likely to be required. With regard to Car Parking *Building for Life 12* states: “avoid relying on a single parking treatment. A combination of car parking treatments nearly always creates more capacity, visual interest and a more successful place.”
- 6.104 Residential car parking solutions for the site include:
- On plot residential parking for houses, comprising:
    - Driveway to front of plot;
    - Integral garage within the plot;
  - On street parking provided in parallel bays, set in between street trees; *and*
  - Small areas of courtyard parking contained in the centre of development blocks. Courtyard parking is least preferable but in some cases may be necessary. In these instances courtyard parking should be small in scale with secure access.



## CYCLE PARKING

### Cycle Parking Standards

6.105 The WEAAP Parking Standards provide guidance on the cycle parking provision required.

6.106 **Minimum** cycle parking standards are summarised below for the proposed land uses at Oxpens:

Development	MINIMUM cycle parking standard
Residential dwellings	2 spaces per residential unit
Student accommodation	1 spaces per 2 resident students plus 1 space per resident staff
Hotels / Guest houses	1 space per 5 non-resident staff (or other people) plus 1 space per resident staff
Shops (A1) other than non-food retail warehouses, finance and professional services (A2)	1 space per 113sqm
Businesses (B1)	1 space per 35sqm or 1 space per 5 staff (or other people) plus visitor parking provision 1 space per 40sqm public floorspace plus 1 space per 5 staff (or other people)
Food and drink (A3-5)	1 space per 40sqm public floorspace plus 1 space per 5 staff (or other people)

### Cycle Parking in the Public Realm

6.107 In addition to provision of parking related to particular land uses additional cycle parking should be provided in the public realm. Cycle parking stands should be sensitively integrated into the public realm design of public spaces and streets, as illustrated in the precedent photographs presented in **Figure 6.17, Cycle Parking – Precedent Photographs**.

6.108 Cycle parking stands should be specified to complement the design and appearance of other street furniture components.

### Facilities for Cyclists

6.109 Detailed building design proposals must also integrate facilities for cyclists. The WEAAP guidance on Cycle Parking includes the statement that: “*Shower facilities will also be sought in the West End, as set out in the Local Plan.*” This reference to shower facilities relates to the need to provide such facilities in new buildings, for instance in new commercial buildings to cater for employees who wish to cycle to work.





Consistent comprehensive palette of street furniture



Cycle parking integrated into block design



Cycle parking at key entrance points



Cycle stands sensitively integrated into streetscape



## INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY

6.110 Sustainable design principles should be integrated throughout the proposals for Oxpens. The SPD Master Plan demonstrates how sustainability can be incorporated throughout the structure and detail of the scheme. Illustration of this is presented in **Figure 6.18, Indicative Oxpens Cross Section highlighting Sustainability Features**. Important sustainability considerations for Oxpens are as follows:

### **Physical Sustainability Considerations include:**

#### **Physical Sustainability: A sustainable location for development**

6.111 Oxpens is a sustainable location for mixed use development, benefiting from a central location that has many local facilities within walking distance including the railway station, heart of the city centre and University Colleges.

6.112 With the exception of the Oxpens Meadow the majority of the Oxpens site is brownfield land – previously used urban land that has the potential to be redeveloped. It is efficient to make best use of brownfield land as priority, to support urban regeneration and realise the potential value of existing urban sites.

#### **Physical Sustainability: improving connections**

6.113 Development of the Oxpens site has the potential to improve connections in the Oxford West End - as illustrated in **Figure 5.4 Improving Accessibility in the Oxford West End**. Public realm enhancements to Oxpens Road, Osney Lane, creation of new access routes through the Oxpens site will help to improve the ease of movement for all modes of transport in the Oxford West End.

6.114 Leisure routes for walking and cycling can be extended through the built area of the site, into and through Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space. Improvements should include the construction of a new bridge crossing for pedestrians and cyclists improving access across the River Thames (Isis) and facilitating better movement along the river and between the banks of the river. Leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space should use permeable surfaces.

#### **Physical Sustainability: Sustainable Building Design**

6.115 Built form at Oxpens should be developed to meet the sustainable building design standards at the time of detailed design proposals. Proposals should seek to maximise sustainable building design to provide a flagship precedent scheme for future developments in the Oxford West End to learn from.

6.116 Sustainable building design should incorporate:

- Maximum thermal efficiency;
- Energy efficiency;
- Water efficiency; *and*
- Explore the potential for opportunity for integration of micro generation.

#### **Physical Sustainability: Energy**

6.117 The Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA) SPD (Oxford City Council, adopted 2006) sets a policy requirement for provision of 20% on-site renewable energy. One way in which the Oxpens site could meet this target is to incorporate an Energy Centre as part of the development proposals. Indicative locations and identified on the Illustrative Master Plan and Energy Centre design considerations are stated under *Possible Land Uses*.

### Physical Sustainability: Sustainable Urban Drainage

6.118 Principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be incorporated in the development of Oxpens. SUDS features that should be incorporated include:

- Incorporation of **Oxpens Meadow** protected from development and retained as a green public open space, performing both flood mitigation and recreation facility functions. This area of open grass provides a large area for water infiltration, and drainage to the local watercourses. However, SUDS features should not be incorporated into the flood mitigation area;
- **Urban drainage systems** integrated into the public realm including rills which may incorporate public art (see **Figure 5.2, A Sustainable Scheme - Precedent Photographs**);
- **Roads and parking areas should be constructed using porous materials;**
- Car **parking areas should be constructed using permeable paving** solutions, for instance block work / sets that have space gaps for grass to grow permitting natural water infiltration;
- Leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space should use permeable surfaces; *and*
- Buildings to incorporate **soft landscape areas of private amenity space** – private gardens for houses and communal gardens for apartments.

### Physical Sustainability: Green / Brown Roofs

6.119 All buildings should consider the use of green and brown roofs on all or part of the roofscape. Such soft landscape additions can provide valuable ecological assets and habitat opportunities. Green and brown roofs can also enhance physical appearance by helping built form to blend in with adjacent landscape settings: this is particularly important for the potential café / restaurant building that could be located within Oxpens Meadow or the adjacent proposed open space.

### Physical Sustainability: Ecological Assets

6.120 Ecological assets, especially the landscape features in Oxpens Meadow, notably adjacent the watercourses of the River Thames/Isis and Castle Mill Stream should be enhanced. The enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow will improve public access to these landscape assets and improve the visual and ecological landscape assets. By improving existing, but also by adding new habitats, we can expect an increase in biodiversity in the area adding additional amenity value to the development. Flood mitigation works will require some land re-profiling and landscaping works but the reshaped Oxpens Meadow will be supplemented by new landscape features including new tree planting. Enhancement of leisure routes through Oxpens Meadow to access landscape features, such as the watercourses, should also be carefully located to avoid harm to high quality habitats and protected species along the watercourses. Disturbance could reduce biodiversity value of these areas and their function as corridors within Oxfordshire.

6.121 The West End Area Action Plan provides further details of ecological considerations in the Oxford West End.

6.122 Further information is also provided in the *Ecological Constraints Report (Atkins, September 2011)* that BRBR commissioned for their land holding within the Oxpens site.

### Physical Sustainability: Integrating Cycling

6.123 Oxford has a rich culture of cycling which should be promoted and encouraged in the Oxpens site. Measures to integrate cycling include:

- **Cycle routes** incorporated in the proposed movement network:

- Dedicated space for cyclists provided in the corridor of primary and secondary streets (this could be a raised kerb, white line, colour surface treatment or other appropriate design solution);
- Tertiary streets / home zones to accommodate cyclists within their corridor by creating shared surface to balance access for all means of transport;
- **Leisure routes** for walking and cycling extended through Oxpens Meadow and the proposed adjacent open space and along the banks of the River Thames (Isis) and Castle Mill Stream;
- **Cycle storage integrated into residential development** – preferably to the front of plot for ease of access (see photo precedents in **Figure 5.2, A Sustainable Scheme - Precedent Photographs**);
- **Cycle parking** accommodated in all other forms of development – visitor cycle parking to be provided close to the main entrance of buildings;
- **Cycle parking provided in public realm**, located in highly visible locations for maximum natural surveillance and ease of access (see photo precedents in **Figure 6.14, Cycle Parking – Precedent Photographs**).

#### ***Social Sustainability Considerations include:***

#### **Social Sustainability: providing city centre housing**

6.124 The development of the Oxpens site can make a significant contribution to social sustainability by providing valuable city centre homes. Residential development should provide a balance of family housing and apartments. Affordable housing will be provided at a minimum level of 50% of the total residential units. Provision of housing will provide homes for existing and new residents, helping to support the local economy.

#### **Social Sustainability: appropriate land uses**

6.125 An appropriate range of land uses should be developed on the Oxpens site, as illustrated in **Figure 6.2, Possible Land Uses**, and **Figure 6.3, Illustrative Master Plan**. Delivering a balanced mixture of land uses will help support the new community at Oxpens and provide facilities for the wider community of the Oxford West End.

#### **Social Sustainability: car club**

6.126 The Oxpens site is of sufficient scale to support a car club on the site. Dedicated parking spaces for car club vehicles should be allocated in highly visible central locations, for ease of access and maximum presence.

#### **Social Sustainability: wider benefits for the city centre**

6.127 The range of proposed land uses in the Oxpens Master Plan can provide multiple benefits for the wider community of the Oxford West End and City Centre, creating new jobs, providing new housing stock and providing a range of community facilities including:

- An enhanced new public open space (Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space);
- A new public square;
- Event / performance space within Oxpens Meadow / adjacent proposed open space; *and*
- Cafés, restaurants and retail opportunities.

***Economic Sustainability Considerations include:*****Economic Sustainability: employment opportunities**

6.128 The Oxpens site must comprise more than one use and can provide accommodation for new business opportunities including those listed below:

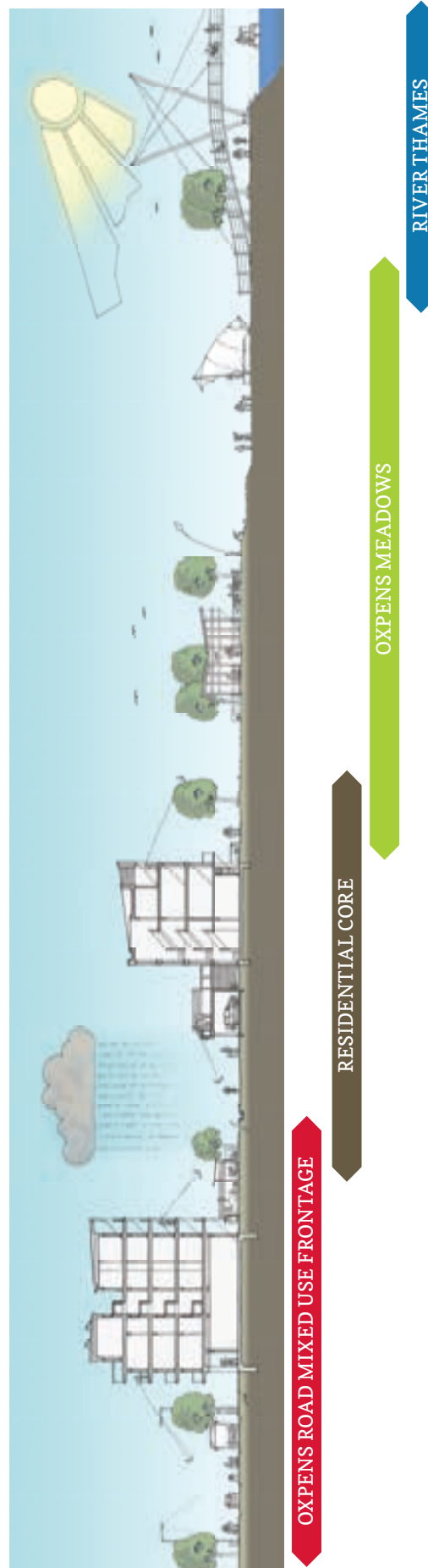
- Offices;
- Research & Development;
- Hotel and conference facilities; *and*
- Jobs in A1-A5 land uses (retail, eating/drinking, professional services).

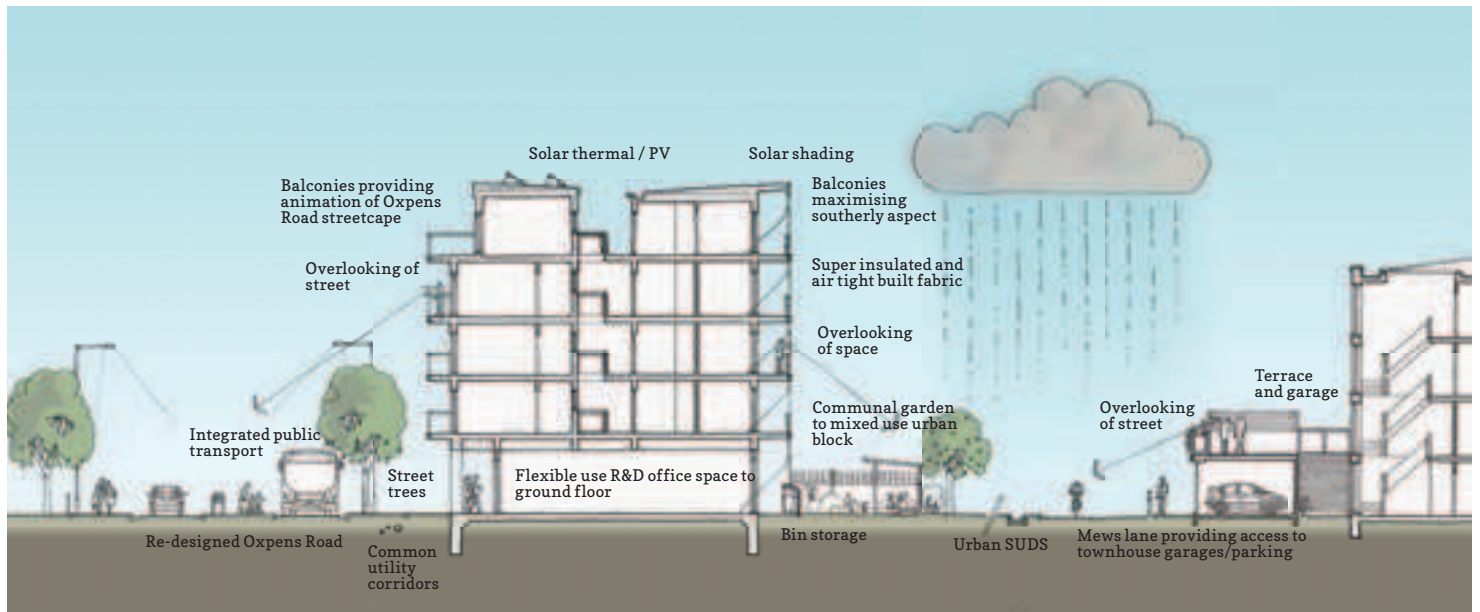
6.129 Creation of commercial floorspace will allow new businesses to develop and expand, providing space for business start ups, innovation, and for existing city businesses to move into and grow.

**Economic Sustainability: supporting vitality of the West End and City**

6.130 Development of the Oxpens site will provide a catalyst for the regeneration the wider Oxford West End, creating a positive precedent for other opportunities sites in the area. High quality development at Oxpens will provide a flagship development scheme in the West End, to compliment the future proposed redevelopment of other key sites including the Westgate Centre and the Railway Station.

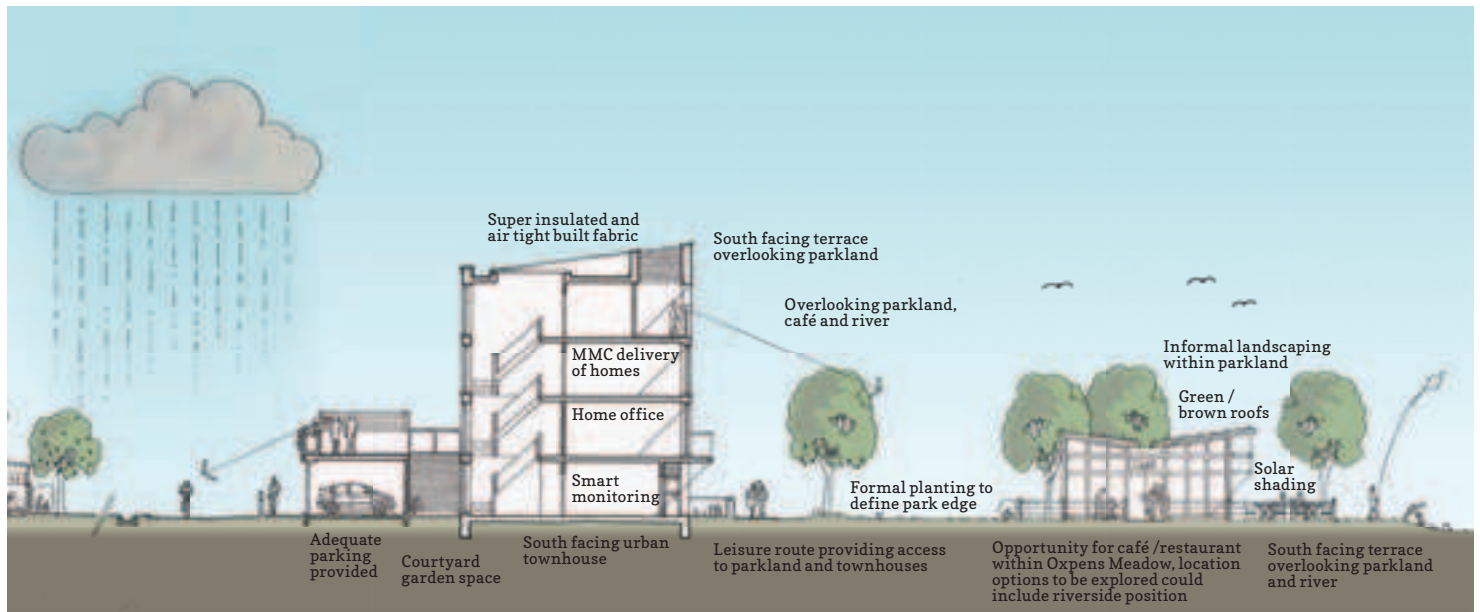






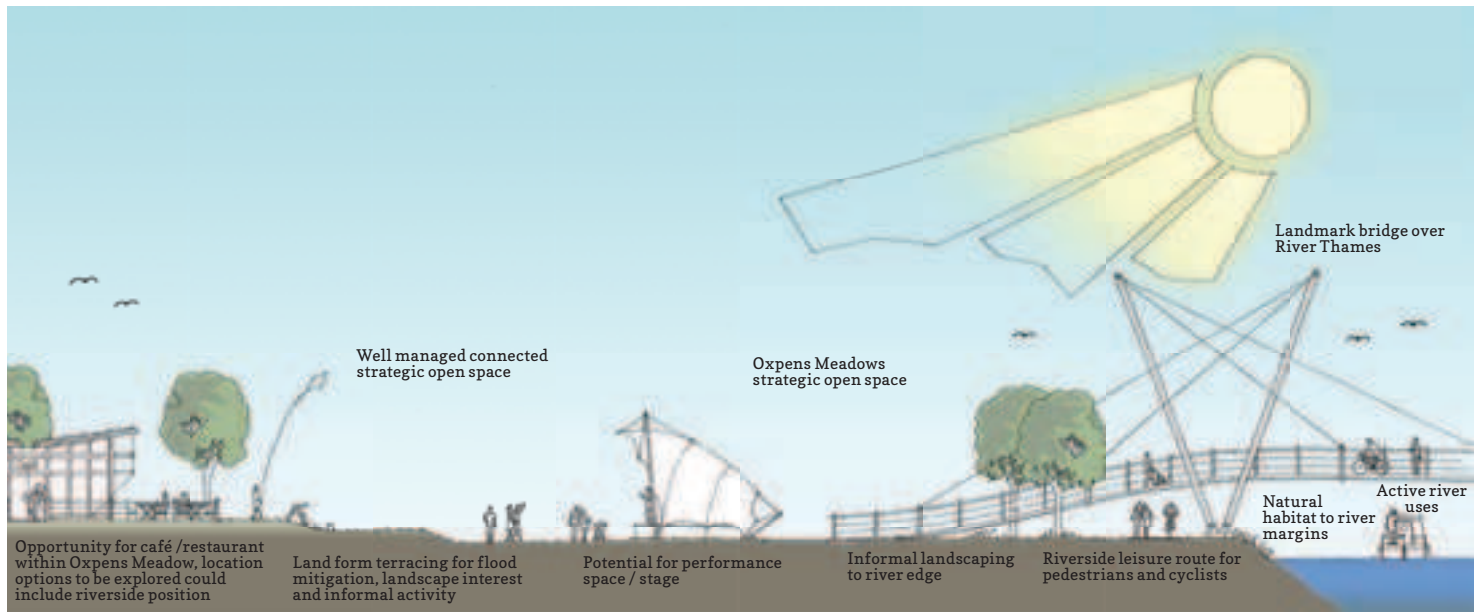
## OXPENS ROAD MIXED USE FRONTAGE

## RESIDENTIAL CORE



## RESIDENTIAL CORE

## OXPENS MEADOWS



## OXPENS MEADOWS

## RIVER THAMES



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Chapter Seven  
DELIVERY

## 7 PHASING & DELIVERY

- 7.1 This chapter presents an indicative phasing strategy and outlines delivery considerations including development contributions.

### COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

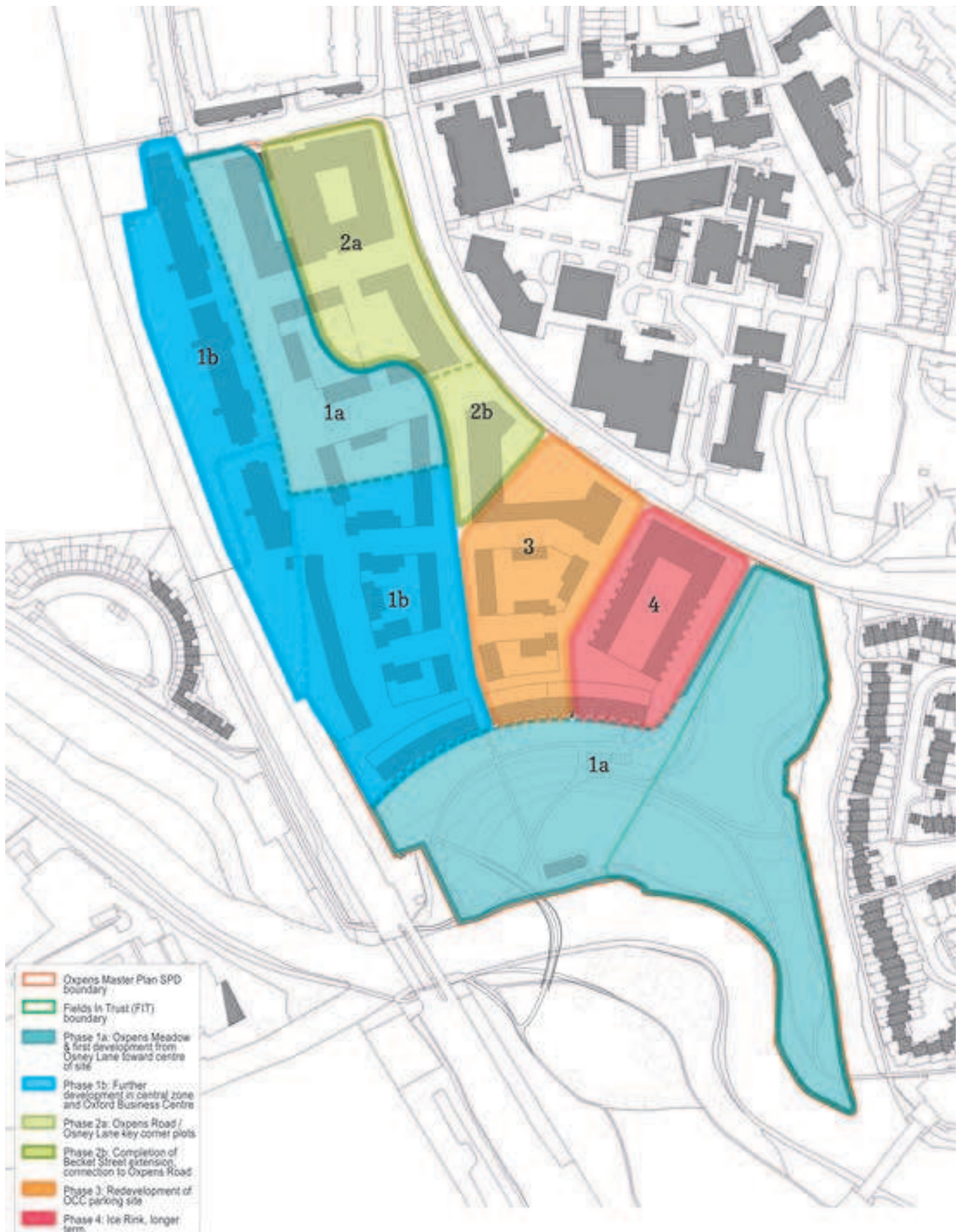
- 7.2 Oxford City Council would like to see a comprehensive master plan scheme and will work with other landowners, investors and agencies to bring the site forward.
- 7.3 A comprehensive redevelopment is sought for the Oxpens site. Although development may proceed in phases each phase will be expected to conform with the principles set out in the SPD and to make a shared contribution towards overall site infrastructure.

### PHASING IN RELATION TO OTHER WEST END DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.4 As stated in the Site Context section of this SPD Oxpens is one of a number of opportunity sites and development proposals within the Oxford West End. The phasing of the Oxpens site will need to take into account other developments including:
- The Westgate Centre, including the potential need to accommodate temporary car parking;
  - The Oxford Railway Station Area Master Plan SPD;
  - Proposed streetscape design and highways engineering schemes including:
    - Becket Street – creation of two-way traffic route;
    - Osney Lane – possible changes to the through route and on-street parking;
    - Frideswide Square – public realm enhancement of important civic space gateway.

### PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT AT OXPENS

- 7.5 The Oxpens Master Plan established in the Development Framework Plan creates a clear structure of urban blocks that provide flexibility for phased delivery of development.
- 7.6 The **Indicative Phasing Plan** for Oxpens, presented in **Figure 7.1**, illustrates a flexible phasing sequence, with phases as follows:
- Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space & first development from Osney Lane toward centre of site;
  - Phase 1b: Further development in central zone and possibly Oxford Business Centre;
  - Phase 2a: Oxpens Road / Osney Lane key corner plots;
  - Phase 2b: Completion of Becket Street extension, connection to Oxpens Road;
  - Phase 3: Redevelopment of Oxford City Council parking site;
  - Phase 4: Oxford Ice Rink site
- 7.7 The phasing plan shown in **Figure 7.1** is indicative and subject to flexibility in order to respond to lease constraints, site and funding opportunities and market conditions.





## INDICATIVE PHASING SEQUENCE

7.8 **Figure 7.1 Indicative Phasing Plan** illustrates the indicative sequential development of the Oxpens site. The proposed phases of development relate to site constraints and land ownership. The broad phases of development are as follows:

### **Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space & first development from Osney Lane toward centre of site;**

7.9 Phase 1a indicative timing: *from 2015 onwards*.

7.10 The first phase could comprise work at Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space to prepare flood mitigation and associated landscape enhancement and initial development from Osney Lane towards the central core of the Oxpens site.

#### ***Phase 1a: Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space – Flood mitigation and landscape scheme***

7.11 A detailed scheme for flood mitigation and a landscape scheme for Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space should be prepared and implemented prior to the occupation of any development on which would be at risk of flooding. This scheme will need to be consulted upon with all relevant stakeholders including the Environment Agency, Fields in Trust and the local authorities,

7.12 Whilst undertaking the landform works a landscape scheme for Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space should be constructed in line with the landscape design proposal, so that the changes in level required for flood mitigation can be formed to create the appropriate setting for other landscape features proposed.

7.13 *Note: the proposed bridge and cycle paths etc. related to the Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space are proposed from 2016 onwards.*

#### ***Phase 1a: Initial development from Osney Lane***

7.14 The first new development on site could be accessed from Osney Lane, seeking to develop plots between Osney Lane and the central core of the site currently owned by BRBR.

7.15 The development plots could provide the 'enabling development' to generate capital required ensure viability contributing to the funding of the flood mitigation and landscaping scheme at Oxpens Meadow.

7.16 The development will include creating part of the proposed Becket Street extension route.

7.17 Whilst redevelopment and construction work could progress in parallel to the flood mitigation and landscape scheme, no occupation of the area of redevelopment would be permitted until the flood mitigation scheme has been completed, to protect the Oxpens site from more extreme flood events.

### **Phase 1b: Further development in central zone and possibly Oxford Business Centre**

7.18 Phase 1b indicative timing: *from 2015 onwards*.

7.19 This phasing zone comprises the potential for some development on the site of the current Oxford Business Centre. The greater proportion of the Business Centre site is owned by Milton Property Investments Ltd and may be available for development alongside the core area.

- 7.20 The master plan has taken account of the Oxford Business Centre parcel by designing a specific response to this site, proposing student accommodation, and ensuring the design of the rest of the master plan is capable of integrating with the redevelopment of the Business Centre site at a later stage, so that the whole site reads as one. Other land uses may also be possible in this location including employment or a hotel.
- 7.21 Further development shown in Phase 1b is the continuation of development through the central core of the site (currently owned by BRBR) extending from the Phase 1a development area to connect to the southern area of Phase 1a that includes Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space.
- 7.22 An important consideration for this area is the change in levels within the BRBR land, particularly the change in levels between the (lower) BRBR land and the (higher) Oxford City Council land. The master plan assumes a comprehensive redevelopment scheme for the whole of Oxpens with ground levels being aligned to create a level development platform. Should this area be phased at a different time to the land identified in phase 3 the change in levels will need particular attention to develop solutions for the ground levels.

### **Phase 2a: Further development in central zone + Oxford Business Centre**

- 7.23 Phase 2a indicative timing: *from 2016 onwards*.
- 7.24 Phase 2a comprises the development of plots in the north east corner of the Oxpens site, adjacent to Oxpens Road and Osney Lane. Plots fronting the street and at the corner of Oxpens Road / Osney Lane are key development opportunities with high visibility and high standard of design is required to provide high quality architectural frontage to the public realm.
- 7.25 Redevelopment of the Royal Mail site will be wholly dependent on the relocation / reprovision of the Delivery Offices so that it can comply with its statutory duties.

### **Phase 2b: Completion of Becket Street extension, connection to Oxpens Road**

- 7.26 Phase 2b indicative timing: *from mid 2017 onwards*.
- 7.27 This phase is for a relatively small area of land, currently occupied by light industrial units and club, in Oxford City Council land ownership. When this phase comes forward for redevelopment the route of the Becket Street extension scheme can be completed, connecting the main route through the Oxpens site to Oxpens Road.

### **Phase 3: Redevelopment of Oxford City Council parking site**

- 7.28 Phase 3 indicative timing: *from 2017 onwards*.
- 7.29 This phase focuses on the redevelopment of the Oxford City Council land that is currently in use as surface parking for cars and coaches. The relocation of the Coach Park from the Oxford City Council land is critical to the redevelopment of Oxpens.
- 7.30 Oxford City Council are investigating the potential to accommodate a temporary car park on this site to provide parking capacity to offset capacity lost during the proposed redevelopment of the Westgate Centre.
- 7.31 When the temporary car park is no longer required the land could come forward for redevelopment.
- 7.32 Note the change in levels between the Oxford City Council and BRBR land – see points raised under phase 1b.

**Phase 4: Oxford Ice Rink site:**

- 7.33 The master plan accommodates the potential to retain the Ice Rink whilst ensuring that the rest of Oxpens-site can be redeveloped.
- 7.34 Redevelopment of the neighbouring land should provide a reasonable set back from the Ice Rink to ensure the facility can continue to function. In this respect the master plan and constraints mapping illustrates the functional site boundary of the Ice Rink, which not only includes the Ice Rink building but also immediately adjacent land that ensures sufficient space for the exposed external structural support of the building, access to the building, servicing access, fire escapes and easements.
- 7.35 The indicative phasing plan illustrates how the master plan can be delivered whilst retaining the Ice Rink as a longer term site feature.

## DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

7.36 Developer contribution considerations include the following:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- Planning Obligations / Section 106 Contributions; *and*
- Section 278 agreements with Oxfordshire County Council.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.37 The City Council is the Charging Authority for CIL in Oxford. It is responsible for setting the charge and collecting CIL in the City. In setting the charge the City Council needs to demonstrate that there is an infrastructure funding gap to justify the adoption of a CIL charge and that the CIL charge will not make too many potential developments unviable.

7.38 Development at Oxpens will be subject to CIL. When submitting an application of a building, developers will now have to submit a Liability Notice, which will allow the Local Planning Authority to assess how much CIL is due. A CIL form will soon be required as part of the validation checklist for an application. CIL becomes chargeable on implementation therefore phasing should be thought through carefully.

7.39 CIL will operate alongside a scaled-back system of Section 106 agreements. CIL adoption is anticipated for October 2013 after which the City Council will not use Section 106 agreements as the principal means to provide for the necessary infrastructure to support development.

7.40 Planning obligations will cover only site-specific obligations and affordable housing.

### Oxford City Council Draft Charging Schedule

The CIL rates	Development type	CIL Rate/m2
A1	Shops	£100
A1	out of centre shops	£100
A2	Financial and professional services	£100
A3	Restaurants and cafés	£100
A4	Drinking establishments	£100
A5	Hot food takeaways	£100
B1	Business	£20
B2	General industrial	£20
B8	Storage or distribution	£20
C1	Hotels	£20
C2 and C2A	Residential institutions and Secure Residential Institution	£20
C3	Dwelling houses*	£100
C4	Houses in multiple occupation	£100
	Student accommodation	£100
D1	Non-residential institutions	£20
D2	Assembly and leisure	£20
<i>All development types unless stated otherwise in this table</i>		£20 standard charge
C3 includes self contained sheltered accommodation		



## Planning Obligations

- 7.41 As a result of the introduction of CIL, planning obligations through Section 106 agreements (and potentially Section 278 agreements) will be scaled back to cover the provision of affordable housing and site specific measures required to mitigate the impact of development. In circumstances where a development proposal directly results in the loss of an existing facility that is used by the public, or an important site feature such as a habitat of high biodiversity value, the City Council may require the replacement of that facility or site feature either directly by the developer or through a financial contribution that would be set out in a planning obligation.
- 7.42 For further information see the emerging Affordable Housing and Planning Obligations SPD which will in time replace the Planning Obligations (2007) SPD.

## Other sources of funding - Growing Places Fund

- 7.43 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has received an initial allocation of more than £9 million for its Growing Places Fund.
- 7.44 It may be possible to seek LEP support for future Growing Places Fund Bids. Greater prospect of support exists if bids are directly linked to the delivery of key infrastructure elements such as link roads that need to be provided to enable development to take place and deliver housing and jobs.
- 7.45 Following the award of funds through Round 1, the Partnership is now launching Round 2, where £4 million will be available to support a range of infrastructure including transport, utilities and broadband, other enabling works or facilities such as **business incubators or small business premises or new homes as part of mixed use developments**. The infrastructure items listed here are notable for their correlation with the proposed uses in the Oxpens Master Plan.
- 7.46 Priority is likely to be given to proposals that demonstrate clear contributions to local priorities identified in spatial and economic strategies. The Oxpens Master Plan SPD is a mixed use scheme which includes research and development employment and uses associated with providing employment, based on identified local needs and therefore it is likely such proposals, in keeping with the SPD, will be given priority in funding allocations.

## INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

7.47 List of infrastructure requirements to serve the proposed development is set out below. Reference should also be made to the City Council's CIL Regulation 123 list.

OXPENS INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS	PHASING - <i>Indicative timing of infrastructure requirements</i>
<p><b>Flood mitigation works on Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space</b></p> <p>See <b>Figure 3.5, Flood Mitigation – Left Bank Option</b></p>	<p>First Phase (see Indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Upfront cost required to mitigate potential flood risk.</li> <li>- Required as first phase to protect the site from more extreme flood events;</li> <li>- Flood mitigation work must be complete prior to occupation of new development at Oxpens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Landscape design</b> scheme for the Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of public event space;</li> <li>• Formal open space / recreation area;</li> <li>• Amphitheatre;</li> <li>• Leisure routes – network of foot/cycle paths;</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.13, Indicative Oxpens Meadow Landscape Design Proposal</b></p>	<p>First phase (see Indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landscape design scheme to be delivered in tandem with the as part of the reprofiling of Oxpens Meadow and the adjacent proposed open space for flood mitigation.</li> <li>- The land form works to create flood protection should be designed and to create a new landscape for Oxpens Meadow.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bridge crossing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The bridge crossing proposed at the southern end of the proposed open space adjacent to Oxpens Meadow is to provide access across River Thames (Isis) for pedestrians &amp; cyclists.</li> </ul>	<p>Could be later phase of development.</p> <p><i>Note: the proposed bridge and cycle paths etc. related to the Oxpens Meadow and adjacent proposed open space are proposed from 2016 onwards.</i></p>
<p><b>Oxpens Road:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- public realm enhancements</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.8, Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements</b></p>	<p>To be delivered in tandem with the phases of development that address the Oxpens Road to ensure a high quality environment and setting for maximising the value of new development.</p>
<p><b>Oxpens Square</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new public square on Oxpens Road frontage</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.8, Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements</b></p>	<p>To be delivered in tandem with the development of blocks that address the public square.</p> <p>Depending upon detail design proposals potential overlap in phases 1b / 2b and 3 (see Indicative Phasing Plan).</p>
<p><b>Osney Lane:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- public realm enhancements, especially the crossing of Oxpens Road.</li> </ul> <p>See <b>Figure 6.8, Indicative Oxpens Road Public Realm Enhancements</b></p>	<p>To be delivered in tandem with the phases of development that address the Osney Lane to ensure a high quality environment and setting for maximising the value of new development.</p> <p>(see Indicative Phasing Plan, Phase 1a, 1b and 2a):</p>

## MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

7.48 There are two options for the long term management of public space (streets and open spaces) – adoption of streets and spaces by the local authority to maintain in public ownership, or an alternative form of dedicated private management company.

### Public Adoption

7.49 The roads, verges and footpaths within the development which are to be offered for adoption will be constructed to the requirements of the relevant Highway Authority.

7.50 Other access roads or private drives which are to remain private will be designed to accord with the requirements of the Building Regulations or the appropriate standard/specification and will be maintained by the landowner.

7.51 Street furniture and lighting should be appropriately positioned around Oxpens, in discussion with the relevant Highway Authority.

### Private Management

7.52 An alternative approach for the upkeep of public streets and spaces is for future private developer(s) to establish a private management regime. In this scenario all public realm, comprising all streets, public open spaces, squares, footways, cycleways, leisure routes and landscaping would be maintained by a private management company for the benefit of the whole.

7.53 This model would require private finance, most commonly through a management tariff imposed on new residents and businesses.

7.54 In this scenario full public access must be afforded and the development must not be gated.

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