

**OXFORD RESETTLEMENT PROJECT**  
**OPTIONS FOR TEMPORARY DECANTING**

<b>Report of:</b> <i>Business Manager Neighbourhood Renewal</i>	<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>  <b>Carfax</b>
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<b>Lead Member Responsible:</b> <i>Housing Portfolio Holder</i>	
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:</b> <i>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</i>	
<b>Key Decision:</b> <i>No</i>	

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**This report sets out the options for the temporary decanting of the Oxford Nightshelter while the existing site is redeveloped for the Oxford Resettlement Project.**

**The new scheme will provide 50 bedspaces for homeless people, including rough sleepers, which is a priority need in the Council's Single Homeless Strategy and will help the Council meet the key objectives of reducing inequality and combating social exclusion.**

**The Executive Board is ASKED:**

- ii) i) to select a preferred option for temporary decanting of the Oxford Nightshelter**
- iii) to request officers to apply for temporary planning consent and to report on the detailed costs for decanting at the next meeting of the Executive Board.**

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Council gave Major Project Approval for the development of the new Oxford Resettlement Project at Luther Street in April 2002. The availability of decanting space for the existing Nightshelter was identified in the report as the major influence on whether a start on site would be achieved by Autumn 2002 as planned. A provisional budget was of £150,000 was approved to cover decanting costs.

## **2. DECANTING OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Decanting is necessary because it is not possible to redevelop around the existing project. The restricted nature of the site means that a tower crane will need to be located in the centre of the site and the foundations of the new building have to be piled.
- 2.2 Officers have therefore been looking for temporary provision in the locality which could be used during construction from November 2002 to December 2003. A City Centre location is considered essential because of the type of clients the Nightshelter accommodates and the importance of maintaining the role of the Nightshelter in the ongoing work to address rough sleeping. It is also important for the Nightshelter to be able to carry on providing the same range of day and night services from the temporary location.
- 2.3 Three options are set out below and Members are asked to select a preferred option :

### **Albion Place Car Park (hatched land on Plan 1 attached)**

- 2.4 This is Council owned land and is used by staff from the Council and the adjoining Magistrates Court. A purpose built relocatable building would be provided on the site with integral wc and washing facilities, kitchen and dining area and room for day services. There would be two small additional office buildings for Nightshelter staff. Environmental Health have been consulted in principal and have provided a checklist of the standards which will have to be met by the new temporary building.
- 2.5 Albion Place is a very accessible location because it is close to Luther Street and is on the public highway. However, the site has been approved as a coach set-down and pick-up and it is hoped that the new facility will be in operation from Easter 2003. The County do not have a budget for this year but hope to be able allocate money for the work in 2003/04.
- 2.6 The use of this site for the temporary Nightshelter could potentially delay the new facility by 10 months, assuming that funding for the road works is allocated by the County. Replacement parking for staff who currently use Albion Place would therefore be needed earlier.

**Abbey Place Car Park (hatched land on Plan 2 attached )**

- 2.7 The same configuration of temporary buildings would be used as for Albion Place and would occupy around a third of the site. Access would be from the Thames Street frontage.
- 2.8 This site is potentially affected by the redevelopment of the Westgate car park because it is earmarked for the location of the contractor's compound and as the temporary base for ShopMobility who will be displaced by demolition. The site could also form part of the route for spoil removal from the demolition. On the provisional Westgate development programme, Abbey Place could be required from July 2003.
- 2.9 The use of part of the site by the Nightshelter does not necessarily conflict with use by either the Westgate contractors or ShopMobility. The issue of spoil removal is the most difficult to gauge at this time because the practical measures involved will not be considered until after outline planning consent has been granted. However, the safety of the public using the adjoining highway and public house will have to be protected in any proposal and there is no reason at this stage to rule out the Nightshelter's potential use of part of the site.
- 2.10 There would be loss of revenue to the Council from having less parking spaces and this will be quantified in detailed costings.

**Osney Lane (cross hatched on Plan 3 attached)**

- 2.11 The Council has a lease on a warehouse building which is used for storage and also houses the Environmental Health laboratory. Alternative space would need to be found for these uses and works will be required to the external shell of the building in order to meet Environmental Health requirements for heating, lighting and ventilation. A mezzanine floor would also need to be constructed to provide sufficient bedspaces.
- 2.12 In practical terms access to this site is not as good as the two car park sites. The building is not directly on the public highway and CCTV and additional lighting will need to be installed to ensure proper supervision of the approaches. Concern has already been expressed by residents and occupiers immediately adjacent to the building, particularly over the use of a footpath which connects to the approach to the site.
- 2.13 The consent of the freeholder will be needed under the lease for change of use and also to allow physical changes to be made to the existing building.

**3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 In summary, the car park sites are the most accessible because they directly adjoin the public highway. The approaches to the sites can be supervised

easily and clear boundaries established for the temporary Nightshelter which will make day to day management easier. The Council's ownership of the car park sites also makes the project easier to deliver and this is particularly important in this case where time is at a premium.

- 3.2 Temporary use will be required from November 2002 to December 2003 and this puts the use potentially in conflict with long term proposals in both sites. In the case of Albion Place, this may delay the use of the site as a coach set down point for 10 months but the scheme requires County Council funding and assumes that money will be available for a start on site in April 2003.
- 3.3 For Abbey Place, earliest use of the site would be in summer 2003 in connection with the demolition of the Westgate. However, the temporary Nightshelter is compatible with uses connected to the Westgate project and the site is large enough to accommodate all potential users.
- 3.4 Officers therefore consider that Albion Place is the preferred option over Abbey Place because of the site's proximity to the existing project in Luther Street.
- 3.5 Planning consent is needed urgently if the temporary scheme is to be ready for occupation by November and approval is sought to proceed with the planning application. It is proposed to keep the local community informed about the scheme as part of the planning process. This will involve a display where representatives of Oxford Nightshelter, Warden Housing Association, the Police and Council officers will be available to answer queries on the temporary and permanent schemes and hopefully allay any fears the local residents may have over the running of the project
- 3.6 Detailed costings on the preferred option will be presented to the next meeting of Executive Board so that a scheme budget can be agreed.

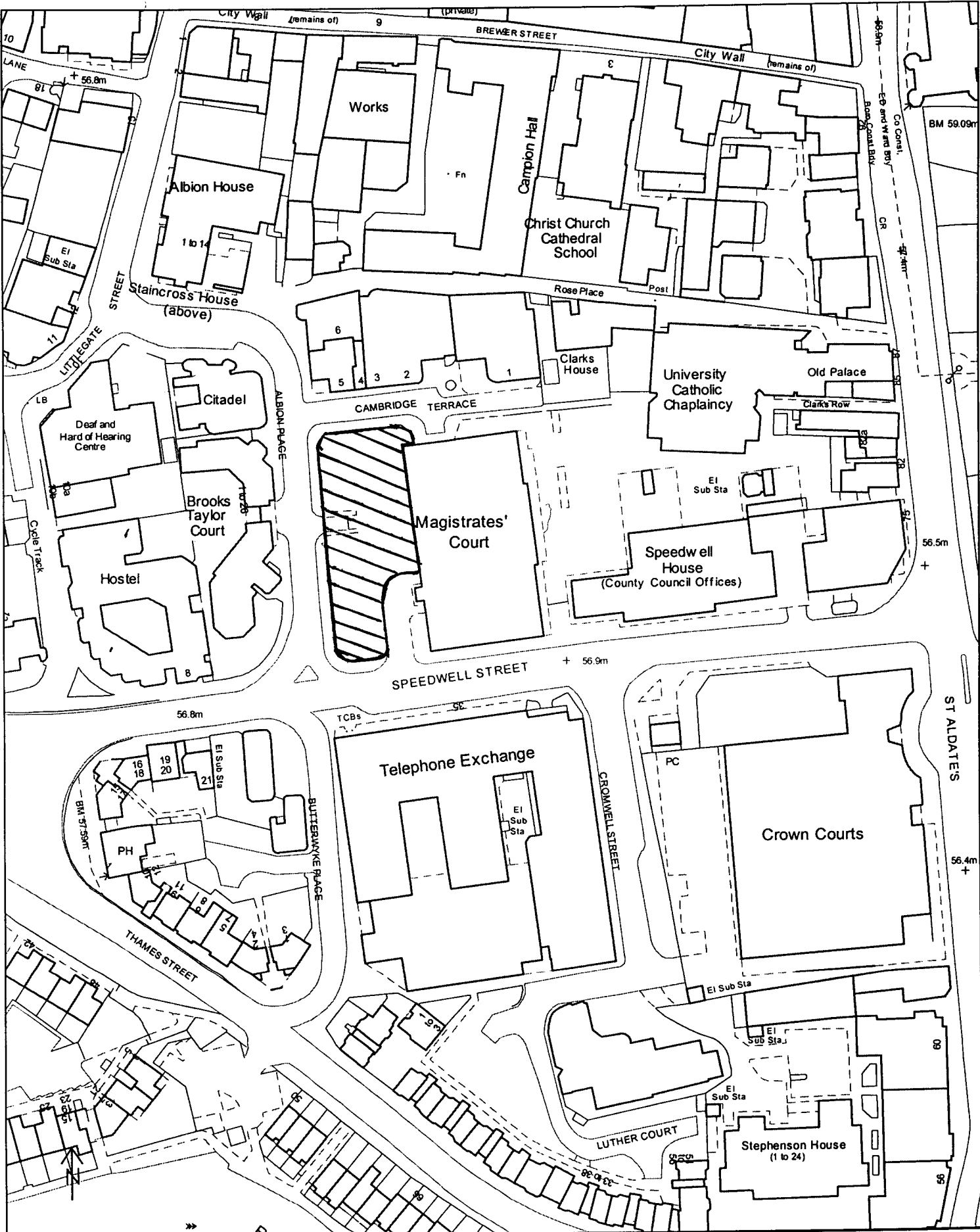
#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN BY THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT AND APPROVED BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL MANAGER
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#### **Background Papers**

None



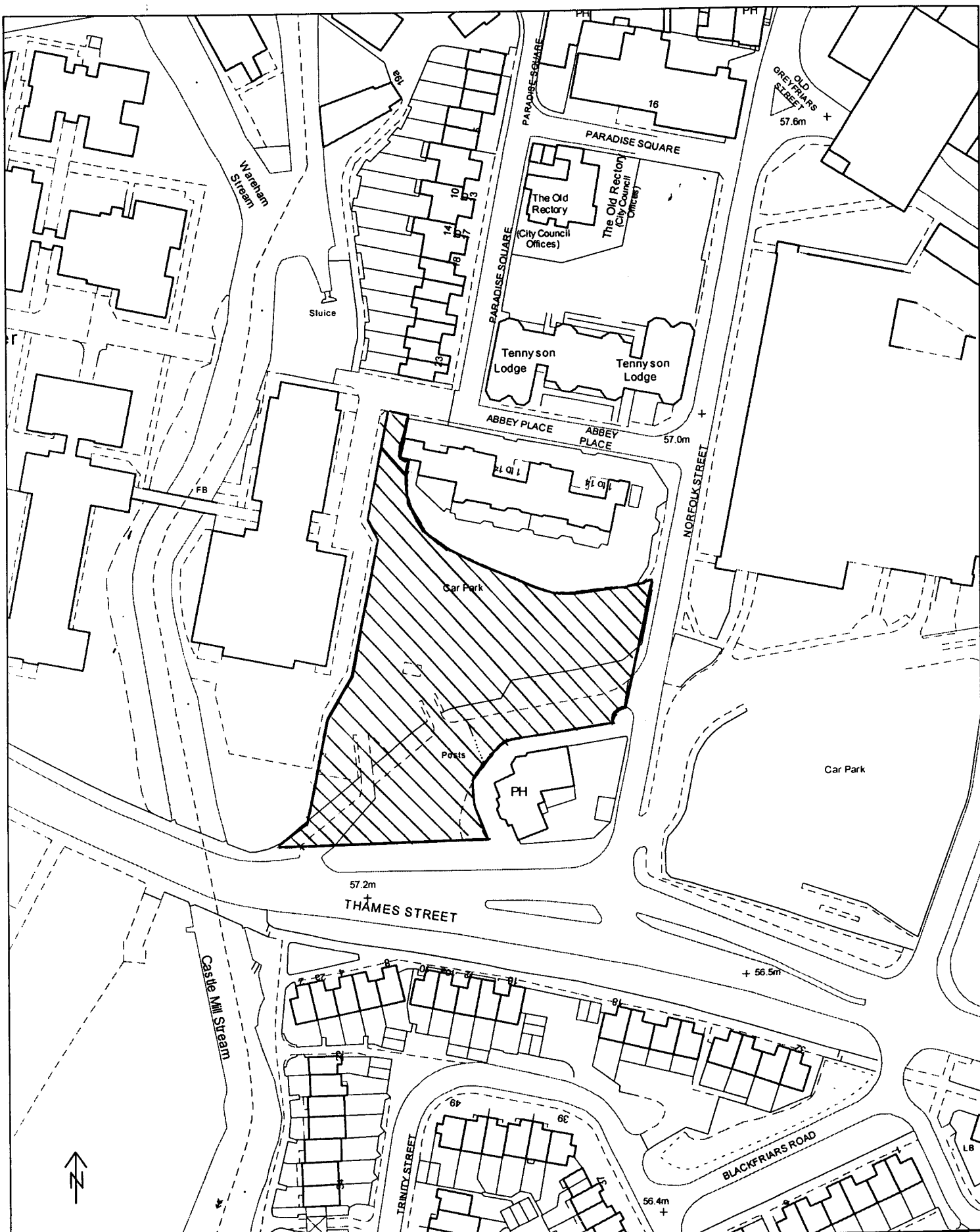
Title: Plan 1 Albion Place Car Park

Scale: 1:1250; Map Reference: SP5105NW Date: 27/06/2002

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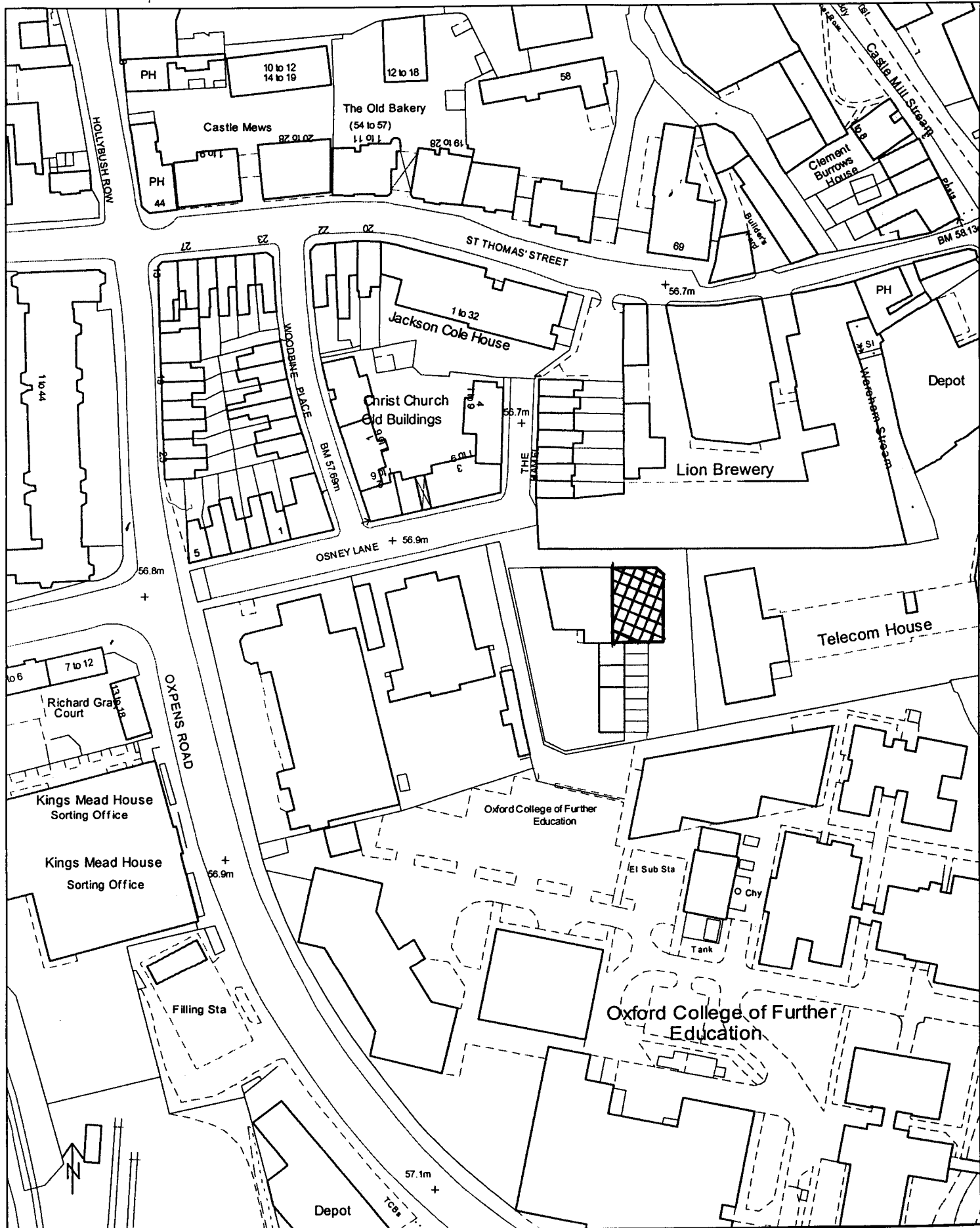
Title: Plan 2 Abbey Place Car Park

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Title: Plan 3 Osney Lane

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