Diamond Place Supplementary Planning Document

Options Consultation Document

March 2014
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INTRODUCTION

OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT AT DIAMOND PLACE

1. The Diamond Place site is of significance to the Summertown area because of its size, its location behind the district shopping area and its current uses, all of which give potential for development to bring considerable benefits, building on improvements to the district centre environment that have been implemented recently. The uses on the site currently bring benefits to local shops and businesses, but surface level car parks and the low density Ewert House do not make efficient use of a site in such a prime location. There is an excellent opportunity to develop the site in a way that enhances the local area, without loss of the important functions already performed by the site.

2. The map shows the site area considered in this document. It is slightly different to the site area as defined in the Sites and Housing Plan as it does not include the buildings fronting the Banbury Road, but it does include the community centre. The site includes the Diamond Place car park, the Ferry car park and Ewert House. The site is 1.49 hectares. The car parks serve the leisure centre and the district shops and services. Ewert House is owned and occupied by the University of Oxford. It houses a large examination school, ISIS Innovation and hosts courses of the University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education.

REASON FOR PRODUCING A SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

3. The City Council’s Sites and Housing Plan 2013 includes policy SP14: Diamond Place and Ewert House, which allocates the site for a retail-led mixed-use development. The site was included in the Sites and Housing Plan only after it was established that it is likely to come forward for development. The site is owned by the University of Oxford and the City Council. Both landowners are interested in releasing the site for development. Both landowners agree that there are many advantages to developing the site as a whole. The University of Oxford has recently stated that they intend to vacate Ewert house in 3-5 years.
4. Because of the importance of the site to the local area and because of the significant potential of the site to bring benefits to the area if developed carefully, the City Council intends to publish a development brief in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document. This will be in the form of a development brief. Producing a development brief will help evolve a vision for the site shared by the local community and the City Council. It should be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the area, in line with policies in the adopted Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The SPD will form part of Oxford’s development plan and will be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application made on the site. Once the landowners are ready, detailed plans for the site can be drawn up based on the guidance in the SPD and a planning application can be made. It is not for a development brief to specify who will develop the site. The intention of a development brief is to provide guidance for whoever develops the site. This will provide certainty for the public and developers and help applicants made a successful planning application that can move smoothly through the planning process because the potential for conflicts and objections is minimised.

WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

6. The final Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be informed by three stages of consultation. This options document is intended to be the basis for the second stage of consultation. The first stage of consultation took place in the Autumn of 2013. Local people were asked for their initial ideas for the site—what they would like to see and what they may be concerned about. A series of options for potential approaches that may be taken in the draft SPD have since been developed. This document sets out and explains these options. A set of options are shown for key issues such as level of parking provision, with a preferred option given in each case.

WHAT HAS INFORMED THE OPTIONS?

7. A Supplementary Planning Document gives detail to existing adopted policies. There are many adopted policies that are likely to be relevant to development on the site, in particular in the Core Strategy and the Sites and Housing Plan. The SPD is intended to give detail in particular to Policy SP14 (Diamond Place and Ewert House) of the Sites and Housing Plan. The SPD must be in compliance with this policy. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 state (paragraph 8(3) state that: ‘Any policies contained in a supplementary planning document must not conflict with the adopted development plan.’
Throughout this document, particularly relevant existing policies that will inform the SPD approach to particular topics are quoted at the top of each section.

8. The final SPD should reflect the joint vision of the City Council and the public and other stakeholders. The early consultation exercise has informed the options included in this document. A synopsis of comments made in the early consultation exercise is included at the beginning of each section.

9. The SPD should be drafted with an understanding of the surrounding area and how the site fits into it. A site appraisal was undertaken and has informed the options.

10. Consultation with landowners and other stakeholders has also taken place to inform the options. This has included discussions with Oxfordshire County Council about access to the site, with the City Council’s parks and leisure department about open space potential on the site and with the City Council’s car parking department about parking levels. This document will be used as the basis for further discussion with stakeholders, including for example the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage who will be asked to comment on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Assessment that has been carried out and is available as a background paper.

11. It is important that proposals put forward can realistically be delivered. A simple appraisal of the economic potential of the site, within the bounds of existing planning policy, has been carried out. This suggests that a policy compliant scheme could be developed that is viable. At the stage of producing a development brief such as the SPD only a ‘rough and ready’ assessment can be carried out. Final viability will depend on so many details that cannot be known without a more worked-up design such as materials. The coarse nature of the appraisal means that it cannot be used to test finer details. It is not possible to say that a single option will prevent or create viability because it will be too dependent on the combination of options chosen, the final details of the design and the economic climate at the time of the development.

HOW TO COMMENT ON THE OPTIONS

12. A comment is available to download from www.oxford.gov.uk/spd. There is also a link to the online consultation from this page. If you would prefer to make comments without using these structured forms, please email planningpolicy@oxford.gov.uk or write to Planning Policy, Oxford City Council, St. Aldate’s Chambers, 109-113 St Aldate’s, Oxford, OX1 1DS.
NEXT STEPS

13. Following consultation on the options the City Council will begin to draft the Supplementary Planning Document. A draft SPD will be consulted on later in the year.

OPTIONS

USES

19. Achieving a good mix of uses should be the starting point for design considerations on this site. Development on this site can support a variety of uses because there is expected to be demand for them, helping to ensure many potential uses will be able to afford space on the site. There are many benefits to accommodating a mix of uses. A variety of uses will create a varied place on many levels. It will lead to varied building types and forms, and it will attract different people at different times of the day, ensuring activity appropriate to a district centre site. Having many uses in a small area maximises people’s opportunity to access a wide variety of uses while spending a minimal amount of time travelling between them. Different uses can support each other, ensuring the success of the development. Some uses attract people to a site (primary uses), for example housing, workplaces, markets and large stores. Other (secondary) uses such as smaller shops and restaurants rely on these uses that draw people in. A mix of primary uses that draw people into the site at all times of day will help these secondary uses be more successful.

Retail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Planning Policies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sites and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Planning permission will be granted for a retail-led mixed use development...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Strategy paragraph 3.2.9: ‘The district centres will continue to complement the city centre by providing retail and service facilities for the local population. They are also the focus for many social, community and cultural activities. The role of district centres will be supported and they will be expected to accommodate a greater share of future retail development during the Core Strategy period, given that scope in the city centre will be limited following implementation of the Westgate and St Aldates/Queen Street schemes...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Strategy Policy CS1: ‘District centres are suitable for retail, leisure, employment and other uses serving district-level needs...’</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Results of consultation (September 2013)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comments were made about specific types of retail people do and don’t want to see, for example no more estate agents, hairdressers, charity shops, kitchen retailers, supermarkets. Many respondents wanted to see specialist small shops, eg a garden shop, post office and a hardware shop. Affordable rents were mentioned as being important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some commenters said that commercial vibrancy is essential for Summertown.</td>
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</table>
A few said their main concern with retail was that it was less desirable than other uses and they didn’t want it taking space from those uses. There was also some concern amongst those commenting that the site should not be a retail park/attract people from afar when it should be serving the local area. A good mix of uses was desired.

Some concerns were raised about locating retail on the site at all, with some saying the Council should consider the desirability and demand for new retail. The retail needs survey is old. Shopping has changed- eg Westgate is going to have less retail. Some respondents were concerned there would be empty units. Some respondents thought development would not attract people in from the Banbury Road shops. Many said that although they would like more variety, the signs are there will be less variety in retail.

14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that need for town centre uses should be met. Defined district centres are included in the definition of town centre. The NPPF states, in paragraph 23, that local planning authorities should: ‘allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authorities should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites.’

15. Oxford’s Retail Needs Assessment was updated in 2008 to inform the Core Strategy. This found that the need for non-food retail was likely to be met largely by city centre development. There was more need for food retail predicted. Paragraph 2.13 of the Retail Needs Study Update 2008 says that development which maintains and enhances the role of district centres is encouraged; mainly convenience, standard durable and specialist goods.

16. The Core Strategy described all Oxford’s district centres as performing well, with Summertown providing an important focus for local facilities and services. Its position within the retail hierarchy was said to continue to offer opportunities to enhance and strengthen its role. Diamond Place was expected to accommodate additional growth in the medium term (2013-2016).

17. Summertown is generally considered to be a well performing district centre. The retail needs study update 2008 says that Summertown has ‘...the second highest retail rents, and low yields. Vacancy rates are slightly higher, but demand for floorspace is higher than in Headington...’ This general picture still applies. The City Council undertakes retail surveys of the city’s shopping centres twice each year. These surveys give a general indication of the health of our shopping centres. The most recent survey shows that there are 2 vacant units (2% of the total). This is compared to 3 in August 2013 and two in January 2013. This is a small percentage of
units and there does not seem to be any increasing trend. There are 5 charity shops in the shopping centre, as there were in January 2013. This is 7.8% of the total A1 retail units and 5% of total units. 64% of units are A1 (shops), compared to 65% in January 2013.

18. Identifying sites in the city centre and district centres helps ensure that need for new retail can be met with less need for out of centre developments. Allowing new retail in district centres helps to safeguard their strength. Furthermore, it may help create activity that supports other uses such as cafes and restaurants.

19. No option is given for the SPD to be written on the assumption that there will be no retail on the site. This approach would undermine the SPD as it would not meet the requirement in the Regulations that: ‘Any policies contained in a supplementary planning document must not conflict with the adopted development plan.’ (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, 8(3)). (It should be noted that SPDs do not set new statutory policies, the reference to policies in the Regulations is meant in a general sense and taken to refer to the detail set out in the SPD).

20. The SPD will apply the following general principles, designed to ensure the potential benefits of retail are realised:

**General principle:**
There should be more than one retail unit included in the design (which may include related uses like restaurants and cafes). Retail units should not create blank frontages to a street. Sales areas should be on the ground floor, but ancillary uses such as office and storage facilities could be on the first floor, and this is encouraged to minimise block sizes. Upper floors should also have uses other than retail, eg. Residential or potentially car parking.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Retail Options</th>
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<tr>
<td>Option for approach to be taken in SPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a Smaller retail option with flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study/market appraisals suggest there is demand for more retail, this would be encouraged in the part of the site near to the Banbury Road shops, if it can be shown to be beneficial to creating a successful scheme, and that there are no negative impacts on urban design, parking pressures and achieving a balance mix of uses on the site.</td>
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</table>

| **1b Smaller retail option** Retail with an upper limit of 1,000 m² with no option for additional retail beyond this. There should be more than one retail unit to encourage active frontages and variety. This still leaves scope for a convenience store or small supermarket. | This approach would have many of the benefits as outlined above, but without the flexibility to have more retail units if there is a need for them at the time of development and if they are shown to make an important contribution to the success of the scheme. In practice, although an SPD could suggest a limit it would not be possible to impose it. With this option there is a risk that greater retail would be proposed but without any consideration given to showing how it will be beneficial, or minimising any potential negative effects. |

| **1c Larger retail option** Ground floor retail of 4000 m² approx (scope for a medium size supermarket, similar in size to Aldi on Botley Road) | A large supermarket is seen as a safe investment. It would enhance the value of development on the site and would allow a developer to draw down money to forward fund other uses on the site. A larger area of retail also gives scope for a wider variety of unit types and sizes. A large unit could potentially have multi-storey car parking above it, which would avoid any large area of parking fronting a street at ground level, enabling creation of more attractive streets, with ‘active frontages’ at ground level. |

### Health centre

| Relevant Planning Policies | Site and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House
‘Other town centre uses may also be appropriate…’
Core Strategy Policy CS1: ‘District centres are suitable for retail, leisure, employment and other uses serving district-level needs.’ [This would include a health centre].
Core Strategy: Policy CS15 Primary healthcare | Alternative option

| Alternative option |
The City Council will work with Oxfordshire PCT [now OCCG] to provide high-quality and convenient local health services in all parts of Oxford, but particularly in areas of population growth... Planning permission will be granted for further new primary healthcare facilities in locations accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, where this will meet an existing deficiency, or support regeneration or new development.

**Results of consultation**

There was widespread local support for the idea of this use on the site. It was seen as a very positive thing. Local people described the practice building as too small, not fit for purpose and having poor access. There was also support for other health care uses that could be linked to it including a chemist, primary care, physiotherapy, podiatry etc. It was pointed out during the consultation that an aging population will create additional need. A few respondents suggested a temporary health centre in Ewert House initially, 4/5 years being seen as too long to wait for a new facility. Adequate parking for the centre was seen as essential.

21. General Practitioners (GPs) at the Banbury Road practice and the Summertown Practice are very interested in re-locating to a new centre on the Diamond Place site. There is a lot of perceived need from the public in the local area and from the GPs in the existing practices. Whether the move happens will be dependent on the GPs being in a position to initiate it. The SPD cannot require a health centre or force it to happen as it may remain unoccupied. However, the development brief can be written so as to enable a new health centre on the site should GPs be in a position to relocate.

22. A health centre may be accommodated in a single block, or on the ground floor of a block with other uses, such as residential above. Ground floor accommodation will be most accessible, but it is also likely that a modern health centre can be designed with facilities on the ground floor for those who are less mobile, and with adequate lifts etc. It is not for the SPD to give design guidance at this stage about whether the health centre will be part of a block or a whole block, as ideas about this are likely to need to be developed by the GPs and developer as part of their business case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Centre Options</th>
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</table>
| **Option for approach to be taken in SPD**: Encourage a health centre  
The SPD to say that the site should be developed to include a health centre, assuming that the interested practices still desire to and are able to locate there. The required size is likely to be at least | **Consequences of approach/discussion**: There is a great deal of public support for a health centre and perceived need from public and GPs. With this approach, to show that they have followed the SPD, developers will have to ensure the potential for a health centre on the site is fully explored. A health centre would take space from other uses. This would most likely be more housing. It | **Related options, conclusion**: Preferred option |
1,200 to 1,300 m², gross internal floorspace. would be equivalent to only a few town houses or a block of no more than a dozen flats.

2b To make no mention of a health centre. This does not rule out a health centre but the SPD will be drawn up on the assumption of other uses taking up the space of the health centre. There may be little motivation for developers to include a health centre instead. A health centre would be an additional use to those outlined in the SPD, which makes things less certain for a planning application. Alternative option

Housing

Relevant Planning Policies
Sites and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House
‘Planning permission will be granted for a retail-led mixed use development at Diamond Place and Ewert House that could include the following uses: Residential; Employment; Student accommodation.’

Sites and Housing Plan: HP3 Affordable Homes From Large Housing Sites
‘Planning permission will only be granted for residential development on sites with capacity for 10 or more dwellings, or which have an area of 0.25 hectares or greater, if generally a minimum 50% of dwellings on the site are provided as affordable homes. A minimum 80% of the affordable homes must be provided as social rented, with remaining affordable homes provided as intermediate housing...’

Sites and Housing Plan: HP5 Location of Student Accommodation
Planning permission will only be granted for student accommodation in the following locations:...b. in the City centre or a District centre...’ [includes Diamond Place/Ewert House/Ferry CP site]

Core Strategy: Policy CS23 Mix of Housing
‘Planning permission will only be granted for residential development that delivers a balanced mix of housing to meet the projected future household need, both within each site and across Oxford as a whole. Mix of housing relates to the size, type and tenure of dwellings to provide for a range of households, such as families with children, single people, older people and people with specialist housing needs. Appropriate housing mixes for each neighbourhood Area are set out in the Balance of Dwellings SPD. The City centre and district centres will be expected to deliver higher densities.’
Appropriate mix for a district centre stated in the Balance of Dwellings SPD: 15-25% 1-bed, 35-50% 2-bed, 20-30% 3-bed, 10-20% 4+bed.

Results of consultation
Members of the public were mainly sympathetic to provision of housing, with some concerns, for example over traffic generation and parking. Some respondents thought residential development could potentially be car-free, although it must be controlled. Many consultees noted the potential for housing above other uses, with some commenting that this may have potential to provide cheaper housing. Most respondents did not want to see lots of very expensive housing. A few respondents expressed concern about flats or housing generally, with some local people voicing concern that there was already too high a population density because of the Council’s policy of infilling. There was some fear locally that flats would increase the ‘buy-to-let’ properties that result in a transient population, destabilising the community spirit of the area. On the other had some consultees were worried that there would be more large houses that would be too expensive to meet any needs anyway. Co-housing was suggested by some respondents. Many consultees were keen to see sheltered housing or
other types of elderly care housing because of the convenient location close to facilities (something like Diamond Court). Various opinions on student housing were expressed during the consultation, with some people commenting that there is already more than enough, some saying the site is not really suitable for student housing and a few thinking it may make the area vibrant.

23. Residential development on the site will deliver much needed housing. It will also help to create a vibrant mixed-use development. The site is expected to contribute to Oxford’s housing target and residential should be more than a minor ancillary use on the site.

24. Development on the site will need to comply with the requirements for affordable housing (set out in Sites and Housing Plan policy HP3 and Core Strategy Policy CS24). At least 50% of the dwellings on the site must be affordable, and of these, a minimum of 80% should be social rented tenure, with the remainder being of intermediate tenure (including shared ownership and affordable rented housing).

**General principles:**

In all options considered below, the mix of housing units of the general housing should follow that specified in Balance of Dwellings SPD, while acknowledging that there may be a case for veering slightly from this mix because of site specific constraints and design considerations. Policy CS23 of the Core Strategy requires that a balanced mix of housing is delivered within new residential development in order to meet the projected future household need. 50% of residential developments must be provided as affordable housing on-site. This applies to all types of self-contained dwelling, including retirement homes, sheltered housing, Extra Care housing and most self-contained student accommodation.

### Housing Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option for approach to be taken in SPD</th>
<th>Consequences of approach/discussion</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of accommodation- general housing, elderly, student,</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3a</strong> General housing and potential for elderly persons accommodation (to include a minimum of 50% affordable housing) SPD to comment on elderly accommodation as</td>
<td>Previous public consultation showed a strong interest in accommodating general market housing and also elderly accommodation on the site. Policy HP2 in the Sites and Housing Plan requires all new dwellings to meet the Lifetime Homes standard and 5% of all new dwellings to be wheelchair accessible or easily</td>
<td>Preferred Option</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The mix relevant to Diamond Place as specified in the BODs SPD is: 15-25% 1-bed, 35-50% 2-bed, 20-30% 3-bed, 10-20% 4-bed

2 Affordable housing is defined as dwellings at a rent or price that can be afforded by people who are in housing need and would otherwise be accommodated by the City Council. 80% of affordable housing should the social rented housing, which is homes at a level of rent generally set much lower than those charged on the open market, available to those recognised by the Council as being in housing need, with the remainder being intermediate housing (still below market prices or rents)
a desirable use as well as general market housing. adapted to be. This is designed to help achieve mixed and balanced communities and would ensure some accommodation suitable for the elderly is provided. However, the accessibility of the site and access to facilities nearby means that it is potentially a very suitable location for this use. It could also complement general housing. Elderly persons accommodation will also need to include 50% affordable units. The SPD should encourage it to be located here if a developer considers there is a demand for the use on the site and wishes to bring it forward.

### 3b General housing only (to include a minimum of 50% affordable housing and the remainder as market housing)

SPD to suggest it is most desirable that all housing should all be general housing (with 50% affordable housing)

This option maximises the amount of Oxford’s general housing need that can be met by development on this site. However, the opportunity would be lost to encourage elderly accommodation, which is potentially very compatible with general housing and with other proposed uses on the site, and which is also required to provide 50% affordable housing.

### 3c Student accommodation and general housing

SPD to comment on student accommodation as a desirable use as well as general housing (potentially specifying that self-contained student accommodation would be most suitable for this site).

The site has good access to University academic accommodation and meets the location requirements of student accommodation and in that sense is a good potential location to meet need for student accommodation. However, it is considered preferable that the SPD tries to maximise the value of the general housing on the site and ensures that a maximum amount of affordable housing is delivered on the site. A financial contribution towards delivering affordable housing elsewhere is required from student accommodation of 20 or more bedrooms but general housing should deliver 50% affordable housing on-site. Self-contained student accommodation, which tends to be graduate accommodation, is also required to provide 50% affordable housing. This is also likely to be more compatible with general housing.

### Relevant Planning Policies

**Sites and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House**
‘The number of car parking spaces should not be significantly reduced, but retained at a level at which the City Council considers is reasonable to serve the local area and provision must be made for local temporary public car parking during construction.’

Sites and Housing Plan: HP16 Residential Car Parking

‘Planning permission will only be granted for residential development where the relevant maximum car parking standards set out in Appendix 8 are complied with. Some unallocated spaces must be provided in development that involve the creation of a new access road. Disabled parking must be provided to comply with Appendix 8. Planning permission will be granted for car-free or low-parking houses and flats in locations that have excellent access to public transport, are in a controlled parking zone, and are within 800 metres of a local supermarket or equivalent facilities.’

Results of consultation

Most respondents thought parking should not be reduced. However, there was also a strong feeling that the site should do more than provide parking. The point was made often during the consultation that new facilities will create additional parking need. To identify the correct amount of parking many consultees said we need to research current usage. Many people said that more bike parking is needed to meet existing demand, let alone any additional demand created. The need for adequate disabled parking was also pointed out by respondents- what is needed is both enough spaces and large enough spaces, and also a route from disabled spaces to facilities that is easy to negotiate.

25. It is important that car usage is not encouraged by the availability of parking. The NPPF states that ‘transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development, but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives... The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel... Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.’ Part of the intention of focusing development that attracts large numbers of visitors to the City centre and district centres is to ensure the maximum amount of choice in how people travel to access shops and services. There are many good alternative ways to travel to Diamond Place.

26. However, there will be those who need to drive or who drive for particular kinds of trips, such as if they are coming from a location without good public transport connections to the site, if they are not very mobile, if they are making a combined trip or if they expect to have heavy shopping to carry. The NPPF also states (paragraph 40) that ‘Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles...’ It is important that the demand for parking does not exceed the space available to an extent that leads to unacceptable parking pressure on surrounding streets or that deters visitors.

27. Appendix 8 of the Sites and Housing Plan sets out maximum parking standards for residential developments. It recommends that the maximum standards are met for new developments that involve the creation of a new access road. However, Policy HP16 of the Sites and Housing Plan also allows low and no car
developments in accessible locations where there is a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). Because of the accessible location of the site and the existence of the Summertown CPZ, it is not necessary to recommend that the maximum parking standards are achieved.

28. Policy SP14 in the Sites and Housing Plan requires that provision is made for local temporary parking during construction. Parking on the site serves the district shopping centre and the leisure centre and it is important for the long-term success of the shops and services in the area that parking provision is maintained as the site is developed. There are a number of ways this could be provided, which are explored below.

General principles:
- Parking standards for commercial uses are provided in the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016. Parking standards recommended in the Local Plan should be followed.
- Statistics on car park usage will be required before any decisions are made on the exact number of spaces to be provided. This may require surveys.
- The design and access statement to accompany any planning application should demonstrate that adequate parking for the disabled is provided, in terms of the level of parking for the disabled, proximity of spaces to facilities, size of space and ability to circulate from the space around the parking area to a path.
- Cycle parking should be provided to the standards set out in the Oxford Local Plan, and following guidance in the Parking Standards SPD.

### Parking options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option for approach to be taken in SPD</th>
<th>Consequences of approach/discussion</th>
<th>Related options, conclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public parking</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a Number of public parking spaces to increase from current provision.</td>
<td>New retail and other uses are likely to create additional demand for parking. The car park is already well used. It is inevitable that some trips will need to be made by car, and meeting need for parking will help ensure the health of the district centre. However, a larger car park will reduce space for other more desirable uses. It also means that there is less opportunity to try and encourage travel by other modes.</td>
<td>Preferred option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b Number of public parking spaces to decrease from current provision.</td>
<td>This is an efficient use of the land. Reducing the availability of car parking spaces will make some people consider more sustainable means of getting to Summertown. However, it is important that visitors are not put off from using the site. There is too high a risk that</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Re-provide the same number of public parking spaces</td>
<td>Parking would not be reduced below the current level but new uses are likely to increase demand for parking, both in terms of more visitors and longer stays. Delivering no more parking spaces than are currently available may help to ensure trips by car are not increased, encouraging other modes. However, it is important that the vitality of the centre is not affected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Temporary surface level car park close to the development site</td>
<td>The only possible locations are green open space (e.g., school playing fields) that will be costly to hard-surface over. However, this option leaves freedom to develop the site in the most logical way. It is important that the car park is within easy reach of the site and the Summertown shops. An option exists to accommodate a temporary car park on Summer Field School’s playing field to the east of the site. The would be part of a comprehensive scheme to subsequently develop housing on the site, because of the costs involved in relocating facilities on the site. (This would be as part of a land swap with the allocated strategic development site to the east (CS8) to ensure that there is no net loss of protected open air sports facilities).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Provide no temporary car park but ensure permanent car park is constructed at the start of the site’s redevelopment.</td>
<td>To achieve minimal loss of parking spaces, and for the shortest time, a simple, possibly modular car park can be constructed. This can happen very quickly. However, there would be little scope to consider locating the multi-storey anywhere other than above an area of existing car park. The design of the final multi-storey is also likely to be restricted. However, this is likely to be a cost-effective option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>Temporary decked car park to be constructed</td>
<td>This would leave more flexibility in location and design of the permanent parking provision than the other alternative option. However, it would still restrict the scope of how the rest of the site is developed. There is not enough justification for the resources involved in the construction of two multi-storey car parks if other options are available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Temporary Public Parking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>This would leave more flexibility in location and design of the permanent parking provision than the other alternative option. However, it would still restrict the scope of how the rest of the site is developed. There is not enough justification for the resources involved in the construction of two multi-storey car parks if other options are available.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Private parking for new general housing on site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Medium parking option</td>
<td>This approach would allow 2 parking spaces for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6b</strong></td>
<td><strong>Higher parking option</strong></td>
<td>Larger dwellings to meet demand from families it could mean less than 1 space per 1-bed unit and less than 2 spaces for each 2-bed unit. The accessibility of the location and existence of the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) means that there is a good opportunity to minimise private parking for smaller dwellings, maximising the potential and efficient use of the space and encouraging travel by more sustainable modes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6c</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lower parking option</strong></td>
<td>Given that a fairly significant amount of housing could be delivered as flats above other uses, this would require a fairly large amount of space elsewhere for private residential parking. Alternatively, space in the public car park could be used for residential parking, either increasing the size of the public car park or reducing the availability of public parking. Undercroft parking may become a more desirable option for developers to deliver housing as flats while minimising land-take for parking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other uses**

**Relevant Planning Policies**

Sites and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House

‘Planning permission will be granted for a retail-led mixed use development at Diamond Place and Ewert House that could include the following uses: residential; employment; student accommodation. Other town centre uses may also be appropriate.’

Core Strategy: Policy CS28 Employment sites

‘...Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use or loss of other employment sites (i.e. those not key protected employment sites), subject to the following criteria:... the loss of jobs...’
would not reduce the diversity and availability of job opportunities; and it does not result in the loss of small and start-up business premises, unless alternative provision is made in Oxford....’

**Core Strategy: Policy CS20 Cultural and community development**

‘The City Council will seek to protect and enhance existing cultural and community facilities...Planning permission will be granted for new cultural facilities that will add diversity to the cultural scene...’

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**Results of consultation**

Some consultees made suggestions relating to the idea of attracting people of all ages to the site, such as indoor sports facilities especially for disabled or the elderly and leisure facilities for teenagers/young people (eg a bowling alley or cinema). Some consultees suggested there should be new community uses, such as a small community space for local clubs like Bridge Clubs. The potential of consolidating all community uses in one place, perhaps even including the library, was suggested. There was also public interest in art space such as a dance and rehearsal space and studio space.

Many local people were positive about the continuing education facility at Ewert House and were keen that the possibility of this remaining on the site is explored. Some consultees were supportive of offices and businesses coming to the site, although others were dubious about the need for offices and concerned about the possible traffic implications. The existing sports use on the site was seen as desirable by many people, with thoughts about the potential for it expand or be incorporated into a new building with other uses above. Some consultees wondered if there was a need for or opportunity to deliver a new primary school, or for Cherwell School to expand.

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29. The site contains some office use currently at Ewert House, where Isis Innovation is located. Isis Innovation manages the University’s intellectual property portfolio. The general Core Strategy approach is to protect existing employment sites. However, the Sites and housing Plan added more flexibility, by stating that employment (office use) would be a potential use on the site, but not saying that employment had to be replaced. The site has not been identified as being needed to contribute to Oxford’s employment needs because other sites were already identified in the Core Strategy and Sites and Housing Plan. This means that the SPD approach does not need to assume replacement employment will be included, although it would be possible to suggest increased employment on the site. However there was not a great deal of interest in office use in the earlier public consultation.

30. The Sites and Housing policy SP14 says the location is suitable for town centre uses. This includes a wide range of potential uses as defined by the NPPF to include retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development (paragraph 23). Many ideas were suggested at the early consultation. Consultation has shown there is a strong support from local people for the Continuing Education Facility of the University of Oxford (currently partly housed in Ewert House) being located in Summertown. The University of Oxford has not finalised its options in relation to Ewert House yet. The University will consider the most suitable way to continue this use, which may not be on the site. The SPD will not be able to require the University to remain on the site. It is more realistic for the
SPD to consider uses that are likely to come forward and that can most realistically be accommodated on the site.

### Options for Other Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option for approach to be taken in SPD</th>
<th>Consequences of approach/discussion</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment (offices)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7a Do not specify employment as an expected use on the site in the SPD. Follow the Sites and Housing approach that employment is just a potential use of the site.</td>
<td>The policy is flexible in the Sites and Housing Plan. Isis Innovation is owned by the University who have yet to decide how they will be rehousing uses currently in Ewert House. Not referring to employment would not prevent it coming forward, but it shows consideration of a mix without employment is the expected and preferred mix. A mix of uses on a site is generally beneficial, but additional office space is not necessary to make the development vibrant or create a mix of uses.</td>
<td>Preferred option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b SPD to suggest employment as a desirable use on the site, especially offices on upper storeys. SPD to suggest that employment uses should be retained or equivalent/additional employment uses be brought onto the site.</td>
<td>Retaining employment sites for employment-generating uses serves to reduce commuting to work, as well as improving access to local jobs for different sectors of the community. However, there are other uses it is more desirable to bring to the Diamond Place site, such as housing.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community and cultural uses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8a SPD to suggest that the community centre should be re-provided within the new development. A new community centre would need to be ‘sustainably-sized’ so that it can include facilities required to sustain the on-going management and maintenance of the centre. It should be multi-functional with small and large rooms capable of</td>
<td>The North Oxford Association community centre is located next to the Ferry Centre. It is just outside the site boundary. This option would require its relocation. There would be a cost in moving to a new building; however, the community centre is currently single storey and an awkward shape that does not make efficient use of space. Its redevelopment would free up space for other developments. Development of the Diamond Place/Ewert House site therefore provides an excellent opportunity to provide a new community centre with a more flexible space that could have a wider range of uses. Cultural and community activity contributes to a distinctive local identity, stimulates pride and a sense of belonging and supports</td>
<td>Preferred option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure uses</td>
<td>8b</td>
<td>SPD to make no reference to the potential for the community centre to be incorporated in the new development.</td>
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</table>

|               | 9a | SPD to make no reference to commercial leisure. | District centres are suitable locations for leisure development. However, other uses are likely to be more beneficial to the success of the site, such as a health centre and housing. Many commercial leisure facilities are large and not efficient uses of space, so in this area with limited space they could prevent other uses coming forward. | Preferred option |
|               | 9b | SPD to suggest commercial leisure uses should be considered on the site. | A good mix of uses is important on the site. Commercial leisure may attract people at all times of the day. However, the Ferry centre adjacent to the site performs this function and caters to many interests. A commercial leisure development is likely to mean a large block development such as a cinema or bowling alley, which may not be an efficient use of land and may be poor in terms of urban design in this location. This may not act to increase variety on the site as it would simply reduce the space for other uses, such as housing, which would be an entirely new use on the site, and for which there is evidence of significant need. | Alternative option |
|               | 9c | SPD to suggest redevelopment of the Ferry Centre. This could have other uses above. A greater range of sports facilities could be provided. It could be redeveloped to include commercial leisure. | The Ferry centre is outside of the site boundary, but it is immediately adjacent to it and development surrounding it could be a good opportunity for redevelopment and further increases in facilities available. However, while there may be an opportunity to provide more uses on the site and also improve and diversify the leisure uses, this could still happen independently of development on the rest of the site. It is not considered key to its success. The Leisure centre has been recently improved and is in a | Alternative option (although SPD should make some reference to future potential not being precluded). |

|               |    |    | accommodating a large range of uses. A new facility would need to have at least as much floorspace as the existing facility. | individual well-being and enjoyment. These facilities can help social inclusion and a high quality of life. This use also helps attract people into the site. New community facilities could potentially be provided alongside a new health centre. |    |
DESIGN AND ACCESS

31. The quality of the built environment will have a strong effect on how people use and feel about the space. It is important that good urban design principles are followed so that the space is successful. There are many general urban design principles that have been developed over many years (eg the Urban Design Compendium). Following these will help to ensure that a public realm is created that people have a positive experience of using. People experience and understand a place by moving through its streets and other public spaces. Therefore, fundamental to creating an urban environment that works is getting the basic structure of streets and other public spaces right. If this is wrong, however well designed the individual buildings, the place will not be successful.

32. A successful structure of public spaces will make it easy to travel through the site by a variety of routes. The site should be integrated (both physically and visually) with its surroundings. The urban design term often used to describe the desired structure of streets is ‘permeable’. Streets should first be designed to create permeability. Once that is achieved, consideration should be given to the treatment of them to ensure that the space within the site is easily read and the opportunities on the site understood (it should be ‘legible’). This will mean both that visibility along a street is maximised and that the appearance of the development will be visually appropriate so that people understand what is available. People use particular elements of a space to help them navigate it and ‘read’ it. Streets, focal points such as junctions and squares, landmarks and edges should all be present on the site in a considered way that makes the space easily understood and remembered. Open spaces such as squares should be related to important public buildings if there are any. Main routes can be made to visually look more important, for example by their width, the design of buildings along them and planting. Similarly, junctions can be treated differently.

33. The advantages of mixed uses are discussed in more detail in the uses section above. A mix of uses helps to create variety in the built form. For places to be well-used and well loved, they must be varied, safe and attractive. Development on the
site should be distinctive and vibrant with active frontages to promote surveillance and maximise the amount of activity that takes place in the public realm.

34. A good mix of uses can also help the ‘robustness’ of the development, as will maximising the flexibility of spaces so that there is potential to use space for different purposes. It is important that development is designed to accommodate future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. The development should also design for energy and resource efficiency and create flexibility in the use of property and public spaces.

35. New development should enrich the qualities of the existing area. Development on the site should seem to be a part of the surrounding area, drawing from its positive features.

**Access, streets and movement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Planning Policies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sites and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Pedestrian and cycle links through and to the site should be enhanced. Development should allow for pedestrian and cycle links through the site from Summertown Strategic site to Banbury Road. ’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of consultation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local people see it as important that the new development is accessible, inviting and well-signed. The potential of exploring a one-way system with cars entering Diamond Place or Ewert Place and exiting Ferry Pool Road, or vice versa, was brought up (especially given the constraints of existing accesses). Some consultees thought access from Ferry Pool Road to a decked car park would be good, while others thought that Ferry Pool Road is too narrow and constrained to handle any additional traffic. A few people also wanted the potential for segregated accesses to be considered, for example car access from Marston Ferry Road, pedestrians from Banbury Road. The need for safe pedestrian access was mentioned frequently, and specifically a safe route (pedestrian and cycle) for children across the site to Cherwell School. Consideration of all forms of access- pedestrian, bike, car, bus and delivery trucks and dustbin lorries was noted as important. Several people suggested the opportunity be taken to improve arrangements for coaches dropping off and picking up school children from the Ferry Centre pool. Linking to the existing bike-lane to the east of the site was suggested as desirable during the consultation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. The existing surface level car parks do not create a good environment for pedestrians or cyclists. The space is designed for cars; within the site there are no streets and there are no obvious routes for pedestrians or cyclists. Although a considerable proportion of the Summertown district area, there are very few clear or continuous routes that connect it conveniently to the surrounding area. Early consultation showed that many were keen to have improved pedestrian and cycle access into and across the site, and particularly through the site to Cherwell School.
37. General good urban design principles must be applied to the location of new streets in the site. There should be a variety of routes through the site and attractions and facilities of the site should be clearly visible along these routes. This can be achieved when it is obvious where routes are and where they lead, which is helped by having continuous routes. To maximise people’s choices travelling around the site and to ensure that the routes are easy to read, a pattern of roads that are connected and relatively straight is preferable. A reference to the surrounding street pattern is also preferable. The street pattern in much of Summertown is a simple grid pattern, which is usually an effective way to achieve ‘permeability’ and ‘legibility’. It is preferable that a (not strict) grid pattern similar to the surrounding street patterns in Summertown be implemented on the site.

38. New streets should properly connect the site with the surrounding area and allow good circulation around and potentially through it. It needs to be obvious where to enter the site. It is important that the entrance to the site is obvious and attractive.

39. To ensure permeability for all users, it is most efficient if routes are shared. Spaces will be more flexible if designed for everyone. The space can then be segregated or not, depending on needs at the time, although however roadspace is designed, priority should be given to pedestrians rather than vehicles.

40. Redevelopment of the site also provides an opportunity to consider potential future access to possible development of a Summertown Strategic site. An area of land to the east of the Diamond Place/Ewert House site is allocated in the Core Strategy for potential housing development. There is a gap between the two sites. However, a ‘land swap’ may be possible so that the significant development of housing could take place adjacent to the Ferry car park. Development on the Diamond Place/Ewert House site provides an opportunity to allow possible future access to a housing development to the east.

**General principles to be stated in the SPD:**
- Service vehicle access
  The SPD should state that planning applications must show how consideration has been given to access for service vehicles, including delivery vehicles, emergency vehicles and dustbin lorries. Any planning application will need to show how coaches taking children to the leisure centre will be accommodated.
- Street design should give priority to pedestrians rather than vehicles.
- Principles set out in Manual for Streets should inform design.
- The development should be connected to the surrounding area, including the pedestrian access to Cherwell School.
- Good urban design principles should be followed in designing routes to ensure they are permeable and legible.
A Transport Assessment will be required with any application to show how the access and circulation strategy minimises impacts on traffic flow on Banbury Road and Marston Ferry Road.

### Access options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>10a</strong> One-way access through the site. Cars to access or exit the site at Ewert Place/Diamond Place and access or exit via Ferry Pool Road. (potentially with a contra-flow cycle route).</td>
<td>All of the existing access roads are relatively constrained, especially Ewert Place and Ferry Pool Road. Creating traffic flow across the site has benefits, including opening up people’s choices and drawing people into the site. It also gives more possibilities for the siting of the car park. However, the Ferry Pool Road is too narrow to accommodate significant additional flow. Creating a one-way system would overcome this problem, while still enabling free movement in all directions for pedestrians. The necessity of the main access road to turn 90 degrees will limit speed on the road.</td>
<td>Preferred option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10b</strong> All roads into the site to remain two way, but circulation will be across the site, ie there will be access from the existing area of the Diamond Place Car Park through to the existing area of the Ferry Pool Car Park.</td>
<td>This maximises choice for all modes. However, Ferry Pool Road is narrow and may not be able to accommodation the potential extra flow in both directions. There is also a risk that the route could be used by those wishing to avoid the traffic lights at the Banbury Road/Marston Ferry Road junction, with rat-running in both directions. The road would need to be treated to ensure slow traffic movement to prevent rat running.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10c</strong> Access to remain the same This would mean there would remain two-way accesses into the site from Ferry Pool Road, Diamond Place and Ewert House, but there would be no vehicular connection through the site.</td>
<td>Cars entering from Banbury Road or Marston Ferry Road would need to turn round and exit to the same road. A new car park could only be accessed either from the Banbury Road or the Marston Ferry Road (and exited to the same). This would create additional pressure on the access used.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
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</table>

### Access to the east of the site

<p>| <strong>11a</strong> Leave opportunity for vehicle access through to the east of the site | This would need particular consideration at the design stage and may require a gap at the end of a road which may otherwise be developed, | Preferred option |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPD to state that an opportunity must be left for access through to a potential development of several hundred houses (the Summertown strategic development site) to the east of the site. A gap in blocks should be left with road access leading to it.</th>
<th>so there is potential that a very small amount of development space may be lost. However, this approach would create a new access option for potential development of a Summertown strategic housing site that would enable it to have better access and that would enable better connections between developments in the area.</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>11b</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leave opportunity for pedestrian and cycle access through to the east of the site.</strong> The SPD should restate the policy requirement that development should allow for pedestrian and cycle links through the site from Summertown Strategic site to Banbury Road.</td>
<td>A private access road to the north of the site could potentially be opened up to meet this requirement, so as long as the site was designed to allow access to that route, the policy requirement would be met. Only requiring pedestrian and cycle access limits future potential access options for a Summertown strategic site and for creating good connections between Diamond Place/Ewert House and development in the surrounding area.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
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</table>

### Public realm/open space

**Relevant Planning Policies**

Sites and Housing Plan: HP9 Design, Character and Context

‘...where 20 or more dwellings are proposed, the developed site should provide a minimum of 10% of the total site area as public open space...’

Core Strategy: Policy CS18 Urban design, townscape character and the historic environment

‘Planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high-quality urban design through: responding appropriately to the site and its surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; being easy to understand and to move through; being adaptable, in terms of providing buildings and spaces that could have alternative uses in future; contributing to an attractive public realm; high quality architecture...’

**Results of consultation**

Local people wanted to see open space; some mentioned a park others a ‘town square’ or piazza type space with cafes and outdoor seating, outdoor performance space, suitable for community use, farmers’ markets, coffee shops etc. Some consultees considered providing somewhere for teenagers to congregate was important. Children’s play facilities were mentioned as being needed. People were keen to see lots of planting, greenery, trees (more/maintain existing) seating and shelter in various areas. Generally, a nice public realm, attractive paving, possible fountain/water feature (use of current pond was one suggestion) was seen as very important by local people. The Summertown shopping area since its improvements was mentioned as a good example in terms of materials and street furniture. People wanted more discreet and attractive public toilets.
41. Carefully designed areas of open space can make a place attractive and make it work well and they also fulfil a need. The Sites and Housing Plan requires that 10% of the site area of a housing development is used for public open space. On mixed use schemes, the calculation is based on the area of the site used for housing. In this case, where much housing may be provided above other uses, the total area of the site that includes housing at any level should be taken as the basis of the calculation. Based on preferred options in this document this could be an area of about 900m². For a large and important site such as this, open space will be an important use to be delivered, and it is also important to consider what function the open space should have. The final size of the open space proposed should be enough to deliver a useable space that meets needs.

42. The most appropriate character of a public open space will depend on the character of the development and needs in the area. Oxford City Council’s Green Space Strategy 2013 can be used to assess need for parks. It outlines a number of aspirational walking distance standards to various sized parks. Mapping carried out as part of the Strategy shows that Diamond Place is outside of the aspirational walking distance of 400m to formal and informal local sites and 750m to formal and informal neighbourhood sites. It is within the aspirational walking distance of 1900m to formal and informal city sites.

43. A neighbourhood Park is defined as one that is a flexible space with prominent trees and with sports facilities such as a multi-use games area and children’s play area. Examples are Botley Park and Headington Hill Park. These are 3-4 hectares in size; larger than the development site. Therefore, the development site could only deliver a Local Park. This could be a green recreation area or a small playground. This could meet some existing need in the local area. However, a town square may fit better with the mix of uses expected on the development site, which will include car parking and other district centre uses that draw people into the site.

44. A new public open space will be the focus of public realm on the site, but all new streets should be treated as public spaces that should be attractive to be in. It will be important that street furniture is of high quality that works well in the space. The new street furniture in Banbury Road was mentioned as attractive by several people at the previous consultation. Continuation of similar public realm treatment within the site could be suggested in the SPD.

45. The wider area is characterised by significant numbers of trees, many of which are mature trees. Some of these are in gardens or in private spaces, such as at Summer Field School. However, there is also a significant amount of tree planting
along streets, for example in the Banbury Road shopping area, which has mature trees on the east side and some smaller trees on the west side. Trees have also been used to landscape the Diamond Place car park. In residential streets most visible trees are in front gardens, rather than planted in the street. Tree planting will be a very important feature of the development. Trees should be a part of the public realm design on the principal street(s) in the development.

**General principles to be stated in the SPD:**
- Street furniture should be of good quality and designed to fit with its surroundings, for example the new street furniture on Banbury Road.
- Toilet facilities available to the public should be provided on the site.
- The design and access statement that accompanies a planning application should explain how the open space has been sited to be accessible and well used and to create a comfortable micro-climate, eg by being on the south-facing side of the street to which people are often drawn because of the good solar aspect.
- There should be a clear distinction between public and private space, with clearly defined street frontages.
- The development should be connected to the surrounding area, including the pedestrian access to Cherwell School.

### Open space options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12a <strong>Town square</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mixed-use, flexible town square that includes a play, art and Green Infrastructure element and is large enough to hold public events, such as markets and street theatre.</td>
<td>This could fit well with a busy mixed use area. If well located it will be a focal point of the development, with plenty of activity. Many needs could be met in a town square. It should include green infrastructure, especially tree planting to be in keeping with the surrounding area. Flexible use must not be precluded. It should be possible to use the space for markets and events. To ensure this, trees, greenery, public seating and play space would need to be thoughtfully designed in to the square. The space should also be able to incorporate outdoor seating for cafes. This idea was suggested by many people at the early consultation.</td>
<td>Preferred Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12b <strong>Green Space</strong>&lt;br&gt;Open space to be provided as green space (well-related to the residential development, particularly any houses)</td>
<td>Although there is a large amount of open green space in the area, this is private. There is a shortage of public parks in the area. However, the size of the site means that it could only meet need in the area for a local park. A more flexible space could meet a wider range of</td>
<td>Alternative Option</td>
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</table>
and individual blocks of flats). needs. It is also likely to fit better with the urban, district centre character of the site and proposed uses. Green infrastructure could be included in a town square, but a green space could not incorporate the variety of uses of a town square.

**Design considerations - building details, scale and form**

**Relevant Planning Policies**  
Sites and Housing Plan: SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House  
Core Strategy: Policy CS18 Urban design, townscape character and the historic environment  
‘Planning permission will only be granted for development that demonstrates high-quality urban design through: responding appropriately to the site and its surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; being easy to understand and to move through; being adaptable, in terms of providing buildings and spaces that could have alternative uses in future; contributing to an attractive public realm; high quality architecture…’

**Results of consultation**  
Height and massing - Generally local people wanted the site to have an open feel and for the site not to become crowded and overwhelmed by tall buildings. Some respondents said that development should not be higher than 3 storeys. While there was generally no desire locally for high-rise development, quite a few respondents suggested up to 4 storeys would be acceptable (similar to Oxfam offices). However, a few respondents considered there is potential for development to be higher than in the surrounding area as this could get more uses on the site and may offer grander views from housing development. A variety of rooflines was considered important.

Style - Generally people were positive about the idea of innovative architecture and did not just want a pastiche. Creating a strong sense of place was seen as most important, and that the design is in keeping with the local area. Many people said they think the use of natural materials is important, including glass, stone and brick (rather than concrete). Sustainable materials should be used. There was a lot of encouragement during the consultation for ensuring high environmental standards - a low carbon development, potential for district heating, roof gardens were all mentioned.

46. The relationship between building facades and the public realm is important in creating attractive public spaces. Attention to the scale and form of the buildings can help to ensure that a space is readable, that it is comfortable to be in, without excessive shading and that it feels safe and vibrant by creating ‘active frontages’.

47. Maximising the amount of ‘active frontage’ onto a street can help ensure a place feels safer because of the perception of surveillance of the street and it can also make it feel more lively. It is optimal that buildings fronts face other building fronts. At ground floor level there should be plenty of entrances and windows to occupied space. The SPD should require any planning application to show how consideration has been given to creating a maximum amount of active frontages.
Because most buildings adjoining the site are related to surrounding streets the site is faced by a large amount of blank façade, ie solid walls and fences. Ideally, these should be eliminated with back-to-back development. If this is not feasible, the opposite façade should be very active street frontage (many entrances, preferably variation in uses, detailing on the frontage, no blank facades).

48. Buildings heights will have an effect on how the development is experienced. They will also impact on the surrounding area. The surrounding area contains buildings of a variety of heights. Most residential streets have 2 (or 2.5) storey houses, although there are also many 3 and some 3.5 storey residential buildings, both houses and flats and in newer and older styles. Taller houses tend to be found along the principal route of Banbury Road. The greater width of principal streets such as the Banbury Road can mean that a taller building will be less likely to dominate the street or to create excessive shading. The western side of the Banbury Road shopping area has mainly 2 and 2.5 storey buildings, allowing evening sun to reach the eastern side (which is where the widest pavement is located, creating an area of open space).

49. The roofline does not vary much along the western side of the Banbury Road, but there is not a continuous roofline and there is a lot of variety in heights of the gable fronted windows. The eastern side of Banbury Road mostly contains modern buildings with offices above and retail beneath. These vary from 3-4 storeys.

50. Most traditional buildings in the area are brick, mainly red brick but not exclusively. Many also have stone detailing around windows and doors. Roofs are mainly tile or slate. The newer buildings on the east side of Banbury Road shopping area include some mainly glass buildings, some with concrete, although these are also mainly brick. These buildings mainly appear to have flat roofs.

**General principles:**

- Large blocks should present their shorter side and main entrance to the most important street. If they are likely to have a side that is a blank edge, especially if it is not a public facility such as a health centre or community facility, it should be set back from the street corners in order to allow active frontages along its blank side.
- The City Council will consider whether a proposal may have a negative impact upon neighbouring properties, in particular whether a proposal would cause overbearing or affect daylight and sunlight to nearby properties. The effect of higher buildings on sunlight to the street should be considered, and set-backs may be required. This is particularly important on narrower streets and north-south aligned streets where it is important that buildings on the western frontage do not block sunlight to the eastern side.
- Heights are given in storeys; this will create some variety because of the natural variation in storey heights of different types of buildings. Building heights should vary depending on the street type. Taller buildings can be over-bearing on a narrow street, and also create too
much shading. The wider principal routes will be more suitable for higher buildings. However, the height of buildings should also vary along the same street frontage.

- Existing planning policies for energy and resource efficiency should be followed. Buildings should meet the current standards of energy efficiency and renewable energy in place at the time of reserved matters applications.
- Development must incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to manage any increases in surface water drainage. Green roofs can help to regulate water flows from roofs, and these should be encouraged on the site.

### Design options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option for approach to be taken in SPD</th>
<th>Consequences of approach/discussion</th>
<th>Related options, conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heights</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13a Medium height option</td>
<td>The highest building height would be similar to the higher buildings already located in the district centre. Beyond the site to the east is open fields, with some potential for residential development. Lower heights should reflect the more green and open character to the east of the site and potential for future housing development.</td>
<td>Preferred option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13b Low height option</td>
<td>This would decrease the value of the development. It also means that the site could accommodate fewer uses. Those that create most revenue will be prioritised. This could also damage the mix of uses.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13c High height option</td>
<td>Higher buildings can become attractive features of development. Higher building heights can also make efficient use of space. However, high buildings are not a feature of the area and would not be in keeping with surrounding development. There will not be major routes through the site of a width that could accommodate a very tall building without it having a negative impact on the public realm, by overbearing and excessive shading. The space that would be required around the building to prevent these potential negative</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
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</table>
effects on this relatively small site would negate the advantages of saving space and would not help to create an attractive street.

Parking provision-design consideration

Relevant Planning Policies
Sites and Housing Plan: B2.40 supporting text to SP14 Diamond Place and Ewert House
‘The retained car parking could be in a different form such as underground, decking or surface level with buildings above. Parking beneath ground is less likely to be appropriate here due to its potential impact on groundwater and any such proposal will need to assess its effect on groundwater.’

Results of consultation
Some consultees thought parking should be below ground, others thought that that could be too expensive/complicated. It was generally considered that parking should not dominate the site. There was a general acceptance during the consultation that parking needs to be decked to maintain an appropriate level while enabling more uses on the site. Some respondents suggested one deck, some two, occasionally a higher car park was given as a good example (eg Marriotts Walk, Witney, which is 4 storeys).

51. Early public consultation found that there was some public concern about how replacement car parking would be re-provided within a smaller space. However, there was also an acknowledgment that the surface-level parking covering much of the site does not make best use of the site. The opportunity to improve the overall attractiveness of the site and develop other uses was generally seen as having the potential to outweigh the negatives about how parking is to be provided.

52. There is a need for parking on the site, but the prime location of the site means that it should be able to deliver so much more than just surface level parking. Surface level car parks are not efficient use of the space; neither are they a very attractive use of the space. To make a more efficient use of the space a different parking solution will be needed. Options for this are explored below. A multi-storey car park is the preferred option. There is public concern about the appearance of multi-storey car parks. However, there is, arguably, more potential to create an attractive design with a multi-storey car park than there is to create attractive surface-level parking.

53. The issue of car parking charges was raised at the public consultation. Although this is set by the City Council, this is an issue outside the control of planning or planning policy and it cannot be considered in the SPD.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method of public car park provision</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14a</strong> SPD to say public parking should be provided in a two-deck, or potentially three-deck multi-storey (i.e. three or four storeys).</td>
<td>The advantage of extra decks is considerable in terms of the reduction in overall footprint of the car park and freeing up of space for other uses. Anything higher than four decks would be too dominating in a district centre surrounded by open space and residential development</td>
<td>Preferred option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14b</strong> SPD to say public parking should be provided in a one-deck multi-storey (i.e. two storeys).</td>
<td>The height of one parking deck is likely to be lower than most surrounding development so it is likely to be unobtrusive in terms of height. To accommodate the existing number of spaces with only one storey the car park would still have a large footprint, which could still have significant visual impact.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14d</strong> SPD to say public parking could be provided as undercroft parking.</td>
<td>Parking would be at ground floor level with other uses above. To re-provide parking at the same level, parking would need to take up as much of the site, or more of the site, as it does currently, but with buildings above. This is a large amount of undercroft parking. Retail uses would still need to be at ground floor level, meaning much of the site would be covered in undercroft parking. At this scale, undercroft parking is unlikely to be an attractive option.</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14e</strong> SPD to say parking should be provided underground.</td>
<td>This is an expensive way to provide parking, which may make development unviable and which would reduce money available for other aspects of the development, including materials, design and open space. It is also likely there would be an impact on groundwater flow, making underground parking unsuitable in this location. The site is situated on the Oxford Gravel Terrace, where groundwater recharge is thought to occur. This is thought to be important to the functioning of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC, a site designated at the European level because of its nature conservation value). The Environment Agency</td>
<td>Alternative option</td>
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Car park design considerations

15a  SPD to give guidance on the design of the car park.
The SPD could state that the design of the multi-storey will be a key part of the overall success of the scheme, and it should be shown that consideration has been given to how the design of the car park fits with overall design of the scheme.

Often, multi-storey car parks are made more aesthetically acceptable by disguising them. It may be possible to ‘wrap’ other buildings around the edges. This is worth investigating, but may not turn out to be the best solution in overall urban design terms. It may create too large a block or mean that decent private space, for flats for example, cannot be provided. Other possible ways of disguising the car park include ‘green walls’, which are becoming more common and decorative use of coloured hard material, lighting etc. Alternatively, the car park could be designed with careful use of materials and that visually incorporate it into the surrounding development (for example Marriotts Walk car park, Witney). Basic feasibility work has shown that a simple standard deck could be afforded, but a more complex design will cost money, which could affect viability of the scheme. By requiring justification of the design of the car park in urban design terms, the SPD can ensure that a multi-storey car park becomes an integrated part of the scheme design.

Preferred option

15b  SPD to make no mention of the design, building material etc of the car park.

This ensures flexibility for the final design scheme. The cheapest option and most likely to result is a simple deck. There may be good design reasons a simple deck works well in the scheme, if the right siting and materials are used. It would have the advantage of having and obvious function. However, this option would not require that the design was explained or made to fit with the rest of the scheme.

Alternative Option

Layout-location of uses

Results of consultation A few comments were made about the location of parking, with people generally thinking that this should be near to the existing shops. Several respondents suggested that shops and a health centre should be located near to the Banbury Road where they would be most easily accessible and nearest to existing facilities. During the consultation many local people suggested Ferry Road car park and/or Ewert House were the most suitable locations for family housing

There are a number of general principles that the SPD will set out that should be followed when locating new uses on the site:

- The amount of active frontage facing streets should be maximised;
- Retail uses should be closest to Banbury Road and the Diamond Place and Ewert House accesses;
- The health centre should be a location that is easily accessible from the public transport on the Banbury Road and also from public parking provision;
- Open space should be in a location accessible to the whole area, not a hidden away feature. It should act as a focal point, with different access routes to/from it. Open space should be concentrated to make a decent size space that can have multiple functions;
- The negative impact of existing blank facades onto the site should be reduced by back to back development, or alternatively if that is not possible by ensuring active frontages opposite facing a road alongside the existing blank façade;
- Routes should allow circulation around the site, maximise choices, join with existing accesses, including the pedestrian access to Cherwell School, and also allow future access through to the east. The street pattern should adapt to accommodate suitable block sizes. Roads do not need to be straight, but the principle should be followed that there should be good visibility along streets. This is simplest to achieve with straight roads but may also be achieved with crescents or other layouts.