

Design For Change Workshop 1

Summertown Urban Analysis

The first workshop considered the site within its wider surroundings.

What works well and what could be improved in Summertown?

37 participants, representing the following groups:

- Local residents
- Cherwell School (Head + other staff member + pupil)
- Oxford University Development
- Transport and Environment Consultant
- Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum
- St Andrew's Church
- Low Carbon Oxford North
- Oxford City Council
- County Councillor
- Summertown NHS
- St Michael's + All Angels Church
- NOA
- Cuttleslowe Community Centre



Urban Design Mapping Exercises

Three mapping exercises prompted participants to explore the urban design of the Summertown Area around Diamond Place, considering the successes and failures of the urban form, road hierarchy and public spaces.

- Generally the urban form is strong and consistent with the shopping area to the West of Banbury Road easy to identify on a map, and a clear permeable grid and linear patterns of housing spreading westwards.
- The surrounding housing is medium density with large gardens. The East and west sides of Banbury

Road vary significantly, and it is less dense on East of Banbury Road (Diamond Place site) but with larger buildings and underused undefined surrounding land.

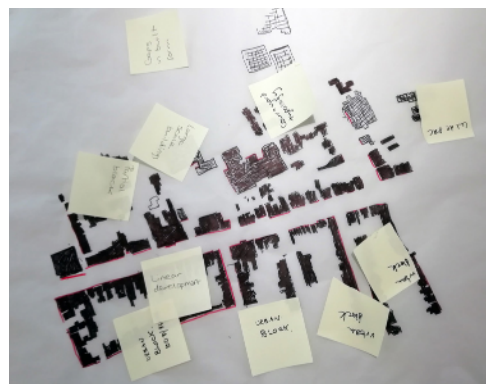
- Frontages – clear along Banbury Road, lack of active frontages on Diamond Place site. Buildings on site confusing layout and entrances do not follow logical building line
- Regular and comprehensive road hierarchy generally, but limited permeability towards East of Banbury Road
- Limited public realm space other than roads and Diamond Place. Good parks a bit further out but lack of welcoming public space in centre



Urban Form



Urban Form



Street Hierarchy



Public Realm



Design For Change Workshop 1

Good and Bad Aspects of Summertown

Groups had 20 minutes to discuss and notes down aspects of Summertown which they thought were particularly successful and features which were currently less successful. This has been collated here, with most comments being positive:

Housing:

- **GOOD:** the housing stock is very attractive and desirable in Summertown
- **BAD:** House prices and rental costs are high and there is a lack of affordable housing and smaller units.



Architecture and character:

- **GOOD:** Large gardens and pleasant streetscape to West of Banbury Road. Diverse historic buildings with lots of character and detailing. Low height offers a human scale.
- **BAD:** The Eastern side of Banbury Road is less attractive, with several empty shop fronts detracting from the character of the area. Some people are not a fan of the new higher rise developments. There is too much asphalt and the backs of buildings (which face on Diamond Place) are unattractive.



Transport:

- **GOOD:** Several people noted that public transport (bus services) offers good connectivity in Summertown, with regular routes into the city centre. Some people stated that the public car park was useful for supporting local shops.
- **GOOD:** Others commented on the great cycle culture in the neighbourhood – with many students cycling to school and the benefits of the NCR51 cycle route behind the school playing fields.
- **GOOD:** Comments were also recorded about the benefit and opportunities of wide pavements along Banbury Road with opportunities to increase street life,



and improve walking and cycling opportunities.

- **BAD:** All groups identified traffic congestion issues along Banbury Road (especially at rush hour). Workshop participants are in favour of investment in cycle infrastructure improvements with better routes and parking to reduce car reliance.
- **BAD:** Road and pavement surfaces are poorly maintained and challenging to navigate for disabled people and buggies. While car parking space is needed for disabled people, currently the Diamond Place car park is underused and car dominance is at the expense of the safety and convenience of pedestrians and cyclists.



Retail and Food / Communal Facilities and leisure:

- **GOOD:** Summertown is viewed as a successful 15 minute neighbourhood with a good availability of shops, restaurants, and a great coffee culture with several cafes. The bookstore, Joe's and Mamma Mia's were specifically mentioned, and some groups identified the community markets as a great feature.
- **GOOD:** The local centre has a good supply of communal and leisure facilities with Ferry Leisure Centre, NOA and the library. The schools are excellent and it is useful to have a number of hotels with parking.
- **BAD:** As seen in local centres across the country - some shops and facilities have closed in recent years including the post office, bank and co-op shop. Empty shops need a plan for reactivation. Two groups commented on the lack of a health centre/ NHS facilities in the local area.

Green and public spaces:

- **GOOD:** There are some good parks at the edges of Summertown including Alexandra Park, Sunnymead and Port Meadow. Many residents commented on the number of mature trees along Banbury Road.
- **BAD:** Whilst Banbury Road has many street trees, the ground level could benefit from more planting. There is a lack of public green space and no central square in the centre of Summertown. and few areas of public seating for meeting outside. Much of the green space in the area is privatised.

Ambience

- **GOOD:** Summertown has a vibrant, lively ambience with a substantial percentage of young people (school age and university students) and a range of ages mingling together. The neighbourhood feels safe and stable.

Opportunity

- **GOOD:** The east of Banbury Road and Diamond Place site behind has good potential for development and residents are excited about opportunities here.

