

Teddy Hall



Accommodation Booklet

CONTENTS:

Overview of Teddy Accommodation	2
2nd Year Accommodation	3
Suggested timeline	3
Full Suggested Timeline	4-7
Weeks 3-4: Groups	4
Weeks 4-7: Viewings	5-6
Weeks 7-8: Contracts	7
Tenancy	8-10
Tips from Students	10-11
How can the college support you?	12
Who to contact for help with accommodation	13
Reminder of key contacts	14

Overview of Teddy Hall Accommodation

Accommodation at Teddy is guaranteed in 1st, 3rd and 4th year. In 1st year, you won't need to worry as all 1st year students are on the main site and will most likely eat in Hall as well, so you'll get the chance to meet (and hopefully befriend!) lots of other first years. In 2nd year, you'll have to rent privately with friends (and this booklet is here to help you with that whole process and everything that comes with it!).

However, in 3rd and 4th year you'll be back in college accommodation, however this time you'll be allocated your rooms through a randomised ballot process. You can, if you want, opt out of the ballot and organise your own private accommodation, same as in 2nd year. On-site accommodation for 3rd years is either in the front quad or in a building called Besse, however Teddy also owns a few different buildings across Oxford. This means 3rd years also have the option of living in the William R. Miller Building, just off Cowley Road, or Tamesis Guest House, both of which are about 10 minutes' walk away from the main site.

4th year housing is all in Norham, North Oxford, except two houses the college owns near Iffley Road (in the Cowley area, similar to Miller and Tamesis).

In some great news, college is also currently in the middle of a massive project over in Norham Gardens, doing construction and renovation work with the intention of providing housing for all students across the four years. The project is set to be completed by 2026, meaning hopefully students in fourth year by then will have access to that building, by which point it will have been recently redone.

During your time here, you'll need to find private housing. We know how daunting that can be, so in this booklet we've put together some advice and information to hopefully help you in that process, as well as some more general stuff about accommodation at Teddy. We've also included some information and things to look out for during your time as a tenant (see pages 8-10), which is hopefully as helpful for 2nd years as for 1st. Happy reading, Hall!

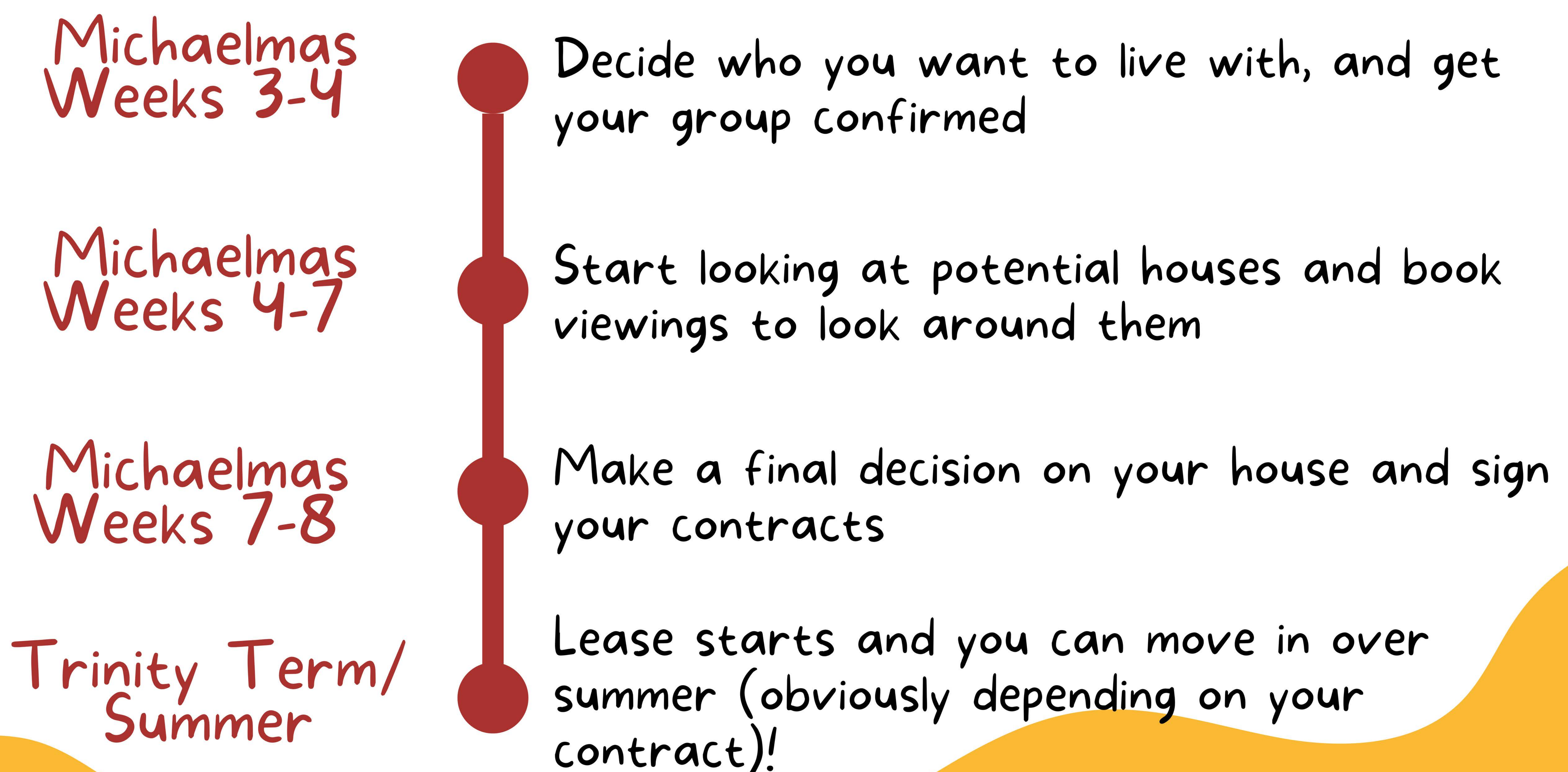
2nd Year Accommodation

Currently, college can't provide any accommodation for 2nd years, meaning you and a group of friends will have to look for housing to rent privately. Most 2nd years end up living in Cowley, and generally near each other – sometimes you even get a street full of Teddy students! Cowley is a great place to live, as many of the nice bars and restaurants are along Cowley Road. For those of you who play sports, Iffley Road Sports Centre is also right around the corner – so we'll be hoping for full attendance when we add yet another sport to our list of Cuppers wins!

Suggested timeline

Here is a suggested timeline for the steps you need to take in order to get a house, and an idea of when you might want to have completed them by. But you don't need to stick exactly to it by any means – it's not meant to be a definitive guide, it's just meant to give you a bit of guidance and help check if you're on track! Just remember, it's better to get on things earlier rather than later because things often take longer than you think.

The Condensed Version



Full Suggested Timeline

Weeks 3-4: Groups

Deciding who to live with can be tough, but remember that it's not the be-all and end-all! You don't necessarily have to live with your closest friends. Most Teddy students end up living in approximately the same area (see the map on page 5 for an idea of which roads) meaning you'll likely still see your friends out and about, and, unlike when you live in college, people host things in their houses a lot more (e.g. house parties!) as an excuse to get together.

It's also important to consider how many people you want to live with. Houses generally range from about 4 bedrooms to sometimes even 8 bedrooms, but obviously can vary. Both large and small groups have their benefits – smaller groups are easier in terms of coordination, for example getting the whole group to house viewings or deciding on location/price point/etc, and it can also be easier when living with fewer people, but you can potentially end up in a house with a lot less space for not that much cheaper. On the other hand, living in a large group can be harder just because there are a lot more people in the house, and making decisions when buying and then when living can take a lot more coordination, but you often get better facilities and you're more likely to get more bang for your buck. It can often be good to choose an odd-numbered group, because even though there are often less houses on the market, they are generally less competitive, and you're likely to get a better spread of facilities (i.e. 1 bathroom for 4 people, 2 bathrooms for 5, 2 bathrooms for 6 but then 3 bathrooms for 7, etc).

Once you have a confirmed group, try not to change it too much otherwise house hunting can get a bit sticky when you're not 100% sure what you're looking for/how many bedrooms, plus it's not ideal to change group and have to start looking all over again later on than you would have originally liked!

Full Suggested Timeline

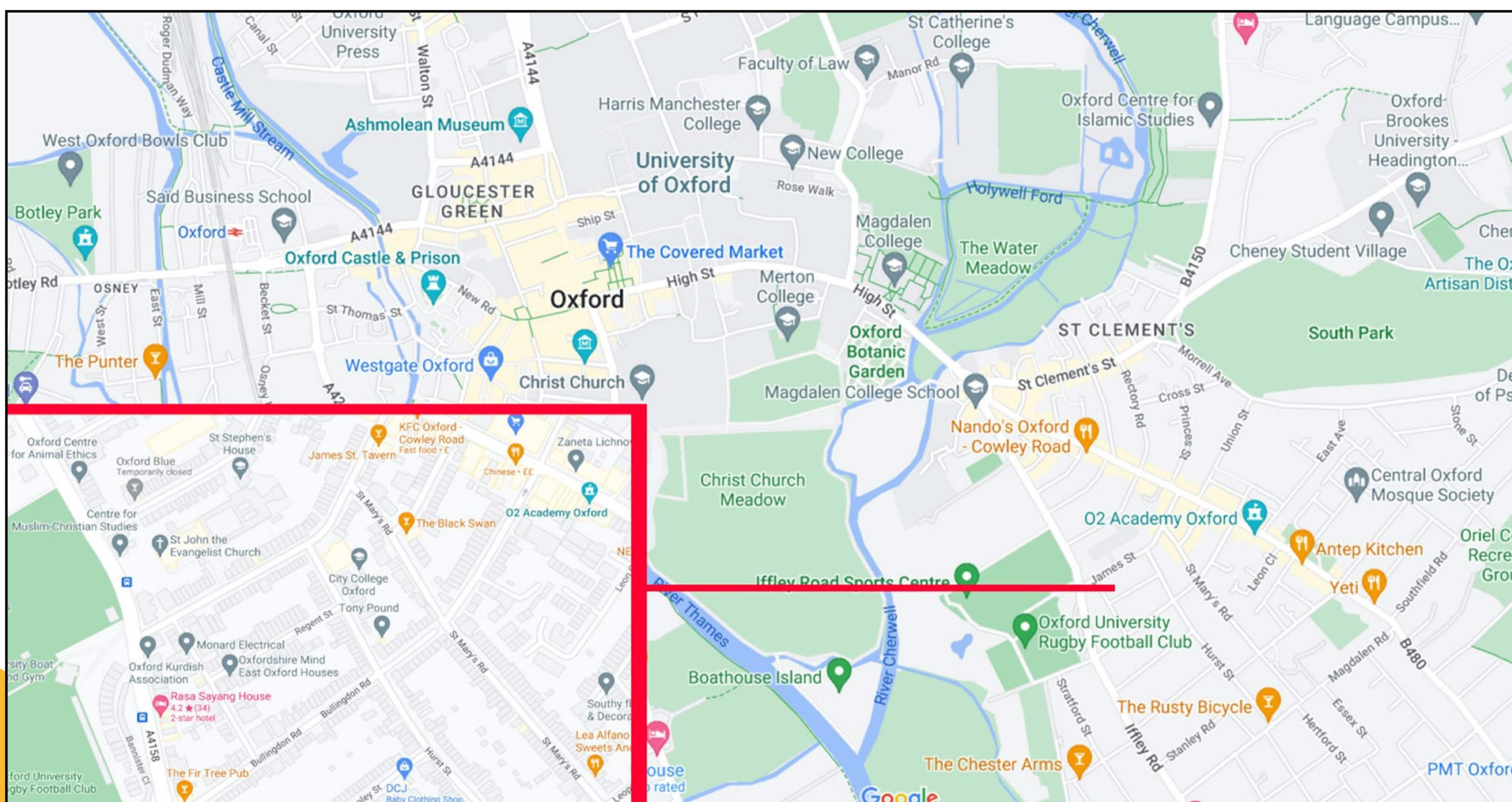
Weeks 4-7: Viewings

Now that you have a group, it's important to start looking for houses. No idea where to start? A few good general websites are: openrent.co.uk, rightmove.co.uk, onthemarket.com and zoopla.co.uk.

For more Oxford specific websites, you can use College and County, who will be releasing houses this year on a staggered weekly basis. So 6+ beds properties will be released on 1st November, 5 beds on 8th November, 4 beds on 15th November and 3 beds on 22nd November. Go to this website to see houses as they release: collegeandcounty.biz/property/to-rent/in-oxford-and-thame/

There is also a letting agency called Finders Keepers who, for students, release a bunch of houses on a first-come, first-serve basis. The houses will be available to view online from 14th November. For 5+ bedroom properties, you can go into the office to book viewings from 22nd November, and on 29th November you can do the same for 3-4 bedroom houses. You can find out more here: <https://www.finders.co.uk/fksl-guide#/>

In terms of location, you'll ideally want to be somewhere around the red box of this map (even if not necessarily right inside it – you may end up a little further out):



Full Suggested Timeline

Weeks 4-7: Viewings

When searching on websites, Iffley/Cowley (Road) can be good to input, as well as OX4, but just be mindful of how far out they can take you. OX4 is large, as is Cowley, and sometimes you'll get properties that are aimed at Brookes students because they're closer to the Brookes campus than to the city centre, so make sure you double check you're not being sent to the deepest of deep Cowley!

Here are some specific properties that your wise predecessors (older Teddy students) would recommend from their time living out:

1 Regent Street, OX4 1QU: 6 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms + 1 WC

3 Regent Street, OX4 1QU: 6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms

10 Regent Street, OX4 1QU: 5 bedrooms, 1 shower room + 1 WC

37 Regent Street, OX4 1AR: 7 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms + 1 WC

8 Bartlemas Road, OX4 1XX: 6 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 1 shower room + 1 WC

82 James Street, OX4 1EX: 6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms

14 Henley Street, OX4 1ER: 5 bedrooms, 1 shared bathroom + 1 en-suite in loft

2 Combe Road, OX2 6BL: 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom

52 Bullingdon Road, OX4 1QJ: 6 bedrooms, 2-3 bathrooms

When it comes to viewings, try to get as many people from your group to go. Sometimes that isn't always feasible or convenient (and it's better to look at the house with whoever can go rather than miss out on a viewing because one person is busy), but it's not fair to have one person doing all the work. Make sure you turn up on time to the viewings, because sometimes agencies will do multiple viewings and once, and groups are toured on a first-come, first-serve basis. When you tour the house, make sure you take loads of pictures and videos of everything, especially if not everyone's there. Some things to look out for include the bathrooms or anywhere else that might have lots of mould – sometimes houses can look great but actually require a lot of maintenance, so be mindful of that. Make sure you check every room and facility and if you're interested, see if you can contact the previous owner – especially if they're a Teddy student! Take notes and make sure everyone in your group is on the same page. Bear in mind viewings can take a long time and you may have to visit quite a few houses, so patience is key!

Full Suggested Timeline

Weeks 7-8: Contracts

There are quite a few hurdles to jump over before you can actually get the contract signed and your stuff moved in. Here are a few you might encounter:

1. **Reservation fee:** usually somewhere around £100, which is paid upfront but is then deducted from the first month's rent payment. It's generally the first step and doesn't necessarily guarantee that you will be able to rent the house, but it reserves the property for you while other checks go on
2. **References/checks:** this will generally include a Right to Rent check, where you prove that you have the right to rent properties in the UK, proof that you are a student etc. You'll basically have to sign a bunch of forms (don't forget to read them through carefully)
3. **Security deposit:** usually around 1 month's worth of rent, legally can't be more than 5 weeks of rent and is generally around £700
4. **Passport:** you'll need to send off a copy of passport, so it might be good to have this on hand. If you don't have your passport with you, you can ask a parent/whoever might have access to it to send you a copy. Some people might also ask you to show your physical passport when you move in, so look into that before you pack all your stuff
5. **Guarantor's signature:** your guarantor is basically someone who is willing to pay your rent if you can't. It has to be someone in the UK, and will generally be a parent or relative. Very sadly, college can't help provide one for international students, but their official line is that it's never been an unsolvable issue before, so there are ways to work around it. There is a company called Keysafe (<https://www.keysafetv.com/>) which does credit checks for non-UK based individuals, but reviews are mixed so do a bit of research before using it. International students do also have the option of paying all their rent upfront so you don't need a guarantor. You can also ask the International & Visiting Students Rep for help! For Home students only, there is financial help available for specific circumstances (see 'How can college support you' for more information about that).

And then you can relax! And who knows, maybe even start planning how you're going to decorate your room. You may also want to think about budgeting for the money you'll be losing as rent. There are lots of different ways to do this. One idea is that once you have an idea of how much rent you'll be paying a month, you can save a little each month in 1st year to put towards it and then maybe work over the summer or the vacs to ensure you just feel a bit more comfortable and less stressed about rent.

Tenancy

Now that you've done all the hard work, signed all the forms and got all your stuff ready, there are a few other things you might want to think about.

Utilities

Split the utilities up between you and try to make sure nobody ends up doing all of the organisation – mostly because it's just not fair. If you're the only (or at least first) person in your house, choose to sort out broadband! It's the easiest one, and getting the easiest job is your reward for reading all of this.

Compare prices over the summer. You can use websites like GoCompare, USwitch, Compare the Market, MoneySuperMarket...the list goes on. Just pay attention to the ads on your TV and you'll find a website in no time. You can also ask the previous tenants to find out what packages they were using.

Your water will always be with Thames Water, but you'll need to set up an account. Some houses have water meters while others don't, so again, it might be a good idea to get in touch with the previous tenants and find out. There will be a meter for gas and electricity, though, so find out where this is and take a picture of the reading.

Unless you want to live out your worst nightmare (no WiFi in the house), you should try to organise broadband at least two weeks before you move in, so the person who installs all the connections can do so and have the WiFi ready for your first day. Read all of the contracts carefully. Sometimes it turns out cheaper to pick a contract that's longer than your lease, so consider that too. You may also be able to find a good contract by, you guessed it, contacting the previous tenant and asking what they had. It also helps you know how well that provider works in that area/house!

Home insurance is maybe something to consider if you are really worried about theft, but it's really up to you and not actually necessary.

Tenancy

Moving in

The good thing about moving into a house is that you don't have to do the whole thing only to move right back out 8 weeks later, and then do it all over again when the next term starts. That said, there are some things that are a bit different about moving into a rented house compared to moving into college accommodation.

When you arrive and collect your keys, check the meters and make sure you take pictures of everything, including any and all marks and things like that, so in case they try to charge you for stuff at the end of tenancy, you have proof it wasn't you. Check all little nooks and crannies (maybe give things a wipe down as well, because they may well have been sitting there collecting dust) and make sure everything is working, like hot water/pipes, cookers, etc. Also make sure you take down the landlord or maintenance person's number, and maybe check there and then that it works or is right in case you're left without a way to contact them!

During tenancy.

Know your rights! Landlords are not allowed to arrive on your property without providing at least 24 hours' notice. Make sure to keep a record of any time that they violate this, especially if there are other people looking around your house. If they haven't given you that notice, you have a right to refuse to let them in.

Legally, you're also not allowed to go for more than 24 hours without hot water, so if the water goes out, make sure to note what time that was and what time the repairs occurred. It's important to keep a record of violations for when it comes to the end of tenancy.

Report damages, because most of the time the landlord has to pay for repairs, and unless something like changing light bulbs or mowing the grass is written into your contract, then they have to do that too. They can only charge you for damages if they can prove you did it on purpose, so again, reminder to document/keep a record of everything.

Tenancy

End of tenancy.

When clearing your stuff out, it might be easier to get a professional cleaning service yourself, rather than the landlord charging you for cleaning, especially as you don't necessarily know what price point the landlord's cleaner will be. If you've already had it professionally cleaned, they can't charge you for that. Also, bin everything you're not taking with you. You'd be surprised how many landlords charge for things like router disposal.

Give your contract another thorough read-through, and check other policies on things like mattress covers, in case it's in your contract that you need to replace them yourself.

At the end, you should get your security deposit back. Make sure you ask for an inventory of anything taken out, and use your now meticulous collection of records to dispute anything you think you've been wrongly charged for.

If no members of your household are going to be there on the official final day of tenancy, leave the keys somewhere obvious and visible, and make sure you take a photo of them when you do that as evidence. The landlord should send you the final readings.

Tips from Students

Now that you've got all that information, we're back to those wise predecessors we mentioned earlier. Here's some advice from Teddy students who have been through this whole process already and made it out the other side!

When your estate agent says "contact our contractor if you get locked out" make sure you actually ask for the contact details of said contractor **THERE AND THEN** because getting locked out on an Easter holiday with no way to contact the landlord or fictitious contractor and having to pay £100 (!!!!) is not a fun lesson to learn the hard way...

No matter what, make sure you go see the houses before signing a contract! Photos alone can be deceiving.

Photograph every little thing wrong when you move in and ensure that it is accounted for on the Inventory. Cross reference the check-out inventory when you leave with the incoming one to ensure no charges have been added unnecessarily.

more on the next page...

More tips...

Look at estate agent reviews because ours were terrible. Ask current/previous tenants their experience. Find out how involved the landlord will be - tend to find direct contact with the landlord is much more efficient than through an estate agent all the time.

Pick the people you live with well. I know it's hard but it makes a world of difference. Also keep in mind that people can be good friends but terrible house mates

Always, always have a good look round the bathrooms! They can be the most dodgy part of the house and if you see pooling water, chances are you're going to be dealing with some sort of leak during your time in there

Mould is a massive issue!! Keep windows open, even if it's cold, and report any signs of mould immediately (grows out of control very quickly). Always test your fire alarms at regular, recorded intervals.

If you can live near as many people as possible that you're friends to it makes a big difference. Not necessarily living with your best mates isn't an issue if they are a 5/10 minute walk away!

If applicable, make sure there is equipment to maintain the garden & house (e.g. lawn mower, vacuum cleaner). Make sure there are appliances! (we had to provide our own kettle microwave and toaster, and remove them at the end).

Split up the bills between housemates & ask about neighbours

If you look hard enough /get in early you can get quite a nice house for decent prices. And houses get exponentially worse the cheaper you go. So I'd say choose the house you like, not the house you want to save money on. You will be living there for a whole year so you don't want your second year (arguably the best) to be miserable

Check with older years before getting wifi and broadband deals as most companies will give you and them money off if you use referral codes! (Virgin at least has done this for many years)

Shop around for your energy company. there are often cheaper ones than the one that comes with your house.

How can college support you?

Although this probably sounds like a mammoth task, you won't be going through this completely alone. Almost everyone else in your year will be looking for housing too, so you can chat to others in your year and exchange tips.

While college says they are unable to provide a guarantor service, there is support available in specific circumstances. College has a Rent Guarantee Fund, which is only for Home undergraduate students who cannot access a financial guarantor. If that turns out to be the case, college will pay the estate agent the upfront deposit and however much rent is requested, so that the house can at least be secured. The money is eventually repaid over the year through battels, but the fund exists for students who aren't able to secure the lump sum of money to actually secure the house. If you have questions about this or think it's something you might need to use, you can contact Sophia McMinn in the Finance Department, by going to see her or by emailing fees@seh.ox.ac.uk. Don't worry, there's a reminder of this email and various other important contact details at the end!

If at the end of the day you are really stuck and cannot find housing, you will not be left without anywhere to live for 2nd year! Obviously college doesn't want to see anyone go without a house so if all else fails, they do generally have rooms they can let to students. However, there really isn't much, and they can't always 100% guarantee it, so you should definitely still look for housing as best as you can!



Who to contact for (accommodation) help

Your college parents can also be a great resource (although, of course, that depends on your family dynamic!), especially when it comes to finding 2nd year housing, because they've already been through the process. Depending on their experience with their house, they might even be able to put you in touch with their landlord. Either way, they're great for asking quick or casual questions.

However, for more serious queries, your main contact in terms of accommodation will probably be Belinda Huse, who is the accommodation manager at Teddy. You can email her under belinda.huse@seh.ox.ac.uk, but if you just wanted to visit her directly, her office is on the ground floor of Staircase 6.

When staying in college housing, especially if you're onsite, it's probably best to email help@seh.ox.ac.uk for help with maintenance questions or issues. They're pretty responsive and generally send someone over in a few days.

Otherwise, if you have specific concerns or questions or want to raise something about accommodation (and would rather speak to a student), you can speak to the JCR Accommodation Rep, who will hopefully be able to answer your questions and talk to college for you. If you're not sure who they are, you can find out through the website or just by asking! This year, the JCR Accommodation Rep is Fizza, who you can contact via Facebook Messenger or email (fizza.zaidi@seh.ox.ac.uk).

There are also lots of resources online for fact-checking and helping you know your rights. One good website is Citizens' Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>, who have lots of great information about things to expect and know as a tenant. Just make sure whatever website you're using is reputable and the information is true!

If you are having a difficult time and want someone to speak to, the JCR Welfare Officers, peer supporters and college welfare staff are also always there for you! It can be an extremely stressful time for people, from struggling to find housing to picking groups to live with, so don't be afraid to reach out if you need some help or support.

Best of luck!



Reminder of key contacts:

Belinda Huse, Accom. Officer belinda.huse@seh.ox.ac.uk

Sophia McMinn, Deputy Accountant fees@seh.ox.ac.uk

JCR Accommodation Rep fizza.zaidi@seh.ox.ac.uk

JCR Welfare Reps jcr.welfare@seh.ox.ac.uk

Jane Armstrong, Senior Welfare welfare@seh.ox.ac.uk

Claire Woolcott, College Nurse nurse@seh.ox.ac.uk