The Oxford Station Area The Masterplan and Concept

Our proposal for the new Oxford Station Masterplan offers users an arrival experience that is sympathetic to the rich historic texture of this iconic British city, yet stands confidently as a series of contemporary, functional twenty-first century buildings.

The design concept in essence can be likened to a ‘string of pearls’. Each pearl, or building, is expressed as a separate individual yet connected volume. Addressing the linear nature of the site the architecture resembles a colonnaded city wall punctuated by individual buildings that vary in function and purpose but are similar in character and form. Visitors to the city must pass through this colonnaded city wall when arriving or departing the city.

Despite the multimodal nature of the masterplan – incorporating cars, trains, buses and boats – our emphasis for arrivals and onward journeys is focussed firmly on pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from the city centre via a vibrant public realm. By creating a network of linked and activated streets, public spaces, high-level garden pedestrian routes, terraces and roof gardens, we aim to increase legibility, visual and physical connectivity to the city centre, and create an exciting new ‘Station Quarter’ destination for Oxford.
The architectural response - individual buildings linked via a colonnade - is founded on a grid that unites the building collective through a simple geometric architectural language, yet still allowing each building to take on its own identity, legibility and sense of purpose. A key benefit of this strategy is to keep the proportional massing of the site low, whilst enabling a multinodal functionality.
The train station itself is designed to be a distinct and eye-catching building with a generous and highly visible entrance to both the west and east sides, achieving a new public square. A clock tower subtly punctuates the skyline above, as a familiar station landmark and in reference to the spire of Said Business School. Above the main entrance, there is an elevated public space and roof terrace with views back towards Oxford city centre.

The creation of a station square will create an exciting new outdoor destination, activated by the station itself, the surrounding colonnaded commercial development and a new central pavilion - perhaps a cafe or a restaurant. Lawns, informal seating areas and pavement fountains will provide a year-round interest for a wide range of users.