Oxford Station Masterplan

REPORT
Key Principals of the proposals

- Colonnaded city wall as a civic gateway into the city
- Commonality of parts while clearly identifying the station entrance(s)
- Elevated garden pedestrian route to unite the elements
- Enhance the civic square fronting the station
- Introduce clock tower as familiar station identifier and as a response to the Said Business School spire
- Proposal as an evolution of the existing masterplan not a radical departure
- Station element integrates linear platforms with masterplan through colonnaded canopy
- Masterplan movement focusses on cyclists and pedestrians

Our proposal for the Oxford Station masterplan offers users a gateway experience; while rooted in the historic texture of the city, also stands confidently as a series of functional twenty-first century buildings.

Each building is expressed as a separate individual yet connected volume. The benefit of this strategy is to keep the proportional massing of this site low, allows for multi modal functionality and provides flexibility for future expansion.

The masterplan is based around a grid that unifies this series of buildings through a simple geometry, allowing each building to take on its own identity and sense of place.

Urban Design

Situated on the western fringe of the City Centre, access to the town centre is channelled and constrained via limited crossing points over the River Thames and in particular via Botley Road. This site is a true ‘civic gateway’ opportunity and point of arrival and departure for travellers by train, bus and motorcar.

Despite the multi modal nature of the interchange our emphasis for arrivals and onward journeys is on pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from the city centre. By creating a network of linked and co-ordinated streets, public spaces, high level garden pedestrian route, terraces and roof gardens, we aim to increase legibility and improve the experience of pedestrians by plugging into a network of existing routes and spaces.

Addressing the linear nature of the site the architecture is conceived as a colonnaded city wall, punctuated by individual buildings that vary in function and purpose but which are similar in character and form. Visitors to the city must pass through this ‘western colonnade’ to move into the city centre.

Station Square

The creation of a station square will reduce the presence of vehicular traffic across the northern part of the site and prioritise the pedestrian. A central pavilion building brakes up the scale of the station square to a size more appropriate to Oxford and the space softened by landscaping.
Materiality and Palette

The proposed material for the buildings is brick; naturally varied in colour, texture, tone and coursing. The brick will sit well within the context of the new and historic Oxford in general, and will endure the test of time to deliver a civic response that looks as good today as it does tomorrow.

- Traditional materiality of brick to unite the area
- Minimal visual discord to overall form and rhythm punctuated by station clock tower
- Traditional rhythms of solid to void
- Materials selected to wear well and be robust
- Material selected for maintainability and reliability
- Varied in texture and colour
- Simple detailing with a strong coherence across the site

The Garden Walkway

At ground level, the buildings are connected by a covered colonnaded canopy which runs parallel with the station platforms and moves through the buildings both horizontally and vertically.

These multi functional open air walkways deliver a connected, sustainable and innovative new civic route to dwell or move through the city.

The movement through the site also offers new retail and revenue opportunities for the present with potential for employment, shopping, dining and potentially entertainment and cultural attractions as well as managing and directing the flow of pedestrians across the site.

We believe that the creation of these new semi-public, indoor/outdoor corridors with their place making window displays, attractive landscaping and connecting open spaces, will bring life and soul to this development, with increased people presence from day into night.
Station Component

Connections between the bus and rail interchange are arranged so that each decision making point is visible from the last. Visual connections between spaces and beyond to the city are managed to avoid conflicts of movement. Also reinforcing and framing the key opportunities for views to the city skyline, the Concourse/Overbridge using a consistent soffit level as part of the strategy to enhance views out to the city beyond.

Operationally, the station concourse and most back of house activities are located at the Concourse/Overbridge level. This allows for operational functions of the station to be located around the paid/undpaid gateline including station manager for visibility.

Retail is located at ground level and away from station operations so as to be on the way and not in the way.

A reinstatement of a platform end footbridge would aid station sweep, evacuation strategy and platform loading, this would be investigated at next stage of design.

Alternative Station Proposal

The GWR through station (current Oxford Station Alignment), opened in 1844 and incorporated subway access to platforms. The design team recognise a subway option has been investigated, was not progressed due to ‘lack of benefits’ and that the parameters imposed at this stage do not allow for this option to be investigated further.

The design team consider that there may be an opportunity, subject to passenger modelling and instruction, to look a retaining the layout and masterplan shown within this submission with a subway option to replace the overbridge. We believe this may offer benefits including cost, avoidance of need to realign Botley Rd horizontally and in construction phasing.
Concourse / Overbridge level plan

Station Section A-A

Botley Rd vertically aligned for 5030mm min. clear under bridge

Cycle Parking

Paid

Unpaid

Gateline
### Skyline and views

The proposed masterplan respects the datums set by the existing masterplan and agrees with the findings of the existing report. In summary:

- The station is either outside the key view corridors, or
- Significantly below the skyline and important features, or
- Extremely distant

The addition of a station clock tower respects the height datum set by the Said Business School spire and is a response to the spire. It assists as a marker and for station identification within the local area.

The key view from the station is towards the city skyline as identified in the existing masterplan. This view is maintained in the high level retail offer of the station entrance building and is also introduced looking along the concourse overbridge as a key view to welcome visitors arriving by train.

### Constructability

- Existing side platforms and main entrance would remain operational during construction
- Footbridge connection would remain open
- New rail bridges constructed over Botley Road with central bridge maintained as train path
- New bridges and platforms commissioned, existing rail bridge extended to allow realignment of Botley Road
- Concourse overbridge constructed concurrently with rail bridge sections outlined above
- New east/west entrances constructed
- Existing entrance decommissioned and new ‘colonnade city wall’ constructed
- New bus station commissioned and existing renovated into station square

A temporary crash deck would allow railway operations to continue during construction over the tracks and platforms. Also using large prefabricated bridging elements that can be craned in or launched over the railway will minimise risk and disruption to operations.