OXFORD STATION DESIGN IDEAS COMPETITION

Press release 1-3-16

The Oxford Station consortium is pleased to announce the winners of the architectural ideas competition which took place before Christmas for a concept design for our new station, and the associated development of the adjoining land in the west end of Oxford City Centre.

Oxford’s existing station will not support planned economic growth longer term and the area fails to provide a sense of welcome to a world class University City, rich in heritage and with a dynamic 21st century economy based on innovation and research.

Following the completion of a masterplan for the station area, six high profile architects were shortlisted to produce ideas for what a new rail station development could look like and how it could link to the recently completed Frideswide Square.

The competition, which was managed by the Royal Institute of British Architects on behalf of the consortium, attracted ideas from top firms of award winning architects. The six firms were: John McAslan (Entry A); Wilkinson Eyre (Entry B); Allies & Morrison (Entry C); AHMM (Entry D); Rick Mather Architects (Entry E) and AHR (Entry F).

The firms that produced the ideas were all specially selected because of their creativity and expertise in the design of high quality transport related buildings and public spaces.

Following an exhibition at the Castle Quarter and an online consultation process during December 2015, the public were invited to vote for the designs they liked best. The outright winner was AHR (Entry F) which scored over 70% of the public votes giving them the award of the ‘Peoples Favourite’.

A judging panel from Network Rail, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council along with Department for Transport and Great Western Railway, awarded the three winning places to Wilkinson Eyre; Allies & Morrison and AHR. The panel was advised by architect Joanna Van Heyningen.

The judges thought that Wilkinson Eyre’s entry was appealing due to its single roof concept, and the way in which the design of the car-park and bus interchange supported an improved character for the whole area and improved its commercial potential.

Allies and Morrison’s entry was admired by the judges because of its simplicity of approach and very attractive main station building.

AHR’s entry was selected because the station design was original and impressive. The judges also liked the idea of a restaurant on the roof of the station itself.
Fiona Piercy, Chair of the Judging Panel said: ‘We were delighted with the calibre of architects involved. They all produced excellent ideas making it very hard to choose the three winners. The ideas will help us set the benchmark for architectural quality standards and raise ambitions for a new world class gateway station for Oxford building on the completed work at Frideswide Square and linking to new schemes at Oxpens and the Westgate development. We now need to work closely with Government and Network Rail and the private sector to secure the necessary mix of funding to deliver the next stage of the project. The design ideas will help us promote the best standards of architecture going forward.’

Leader of the County Council, Ian Hudspeth said: “These designs are visions of what the future of Oxford Railway Station could look like. We’re all very keen to see progress towards the creation of a world class railway station for a world class city. The new station will have a pivotal role in Oxfordshire’s transport future I look forward to the day when we see ideas like these become reality.”

Leader of the City Council, Bob Price said:

‘Oxford deserves a new rail station and the station area is a key element in our regeneration of the West End, alongside Oxpens and the Island site where the Council is working with Nuffield College to create an overall masterplan. The selected designs for the new station are exciting and reflect a genuine 21st century style of architecture’.

Simon Maple, Network Rail said: “We will continue to work closely with the Council on their aspirations for the station and its surrounding area. Over the next few years we have an ambitious programme of upgrade work taking place in the Oxford area to provide passengers with a better travelling experience. This includes new tracks and signalling, and electrification in preparation for the arrival of the new fleet of longer, faster, quieter and greener electric trains. All of this will help to improve reliability and punctuality for passengers, and enable them to benefit from faster, more comfortable journeys.”