

Oxpens River Bridge

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Background and Context



Location Plan

PROJECT OVERVIEW

We would like to update you and seek your comments on our emerging proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Osney Mead to Oxpens and the city centre.

Funding for the bridge is from the Oxfordshire Growth Deal, which funds infrastructure to support housing delivery. Oxford Local Plan seeks a new bridge across to the river to support the proposed redevelopment at Osney Mead by providing safe and convenient off-road cycle routes towards the city centre.

CONNECTIVITY

- Connecting future Osney Mead and Oxpens developments to the wider walking and cycling network; improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and reinforcing legibility.
- Ensuring routes along the river are maintained and enhanced.
- Improving accessibility between southern areas to the City Centre, Oxpens, the train station, providing an accessible route at times of flooding.

PLACEMAKING

- Bridge to respond to the unique natural setting and its proximity to the River.
- Becoming a recognisable and appealing structure synonymous with the high architectural quality of Oxford city centre.
- The new structure will provide clearly legible form in the setting, whilst integrating well into the landscape.

VIEWS ALONG THE RIVER



1. From North bank looking to West



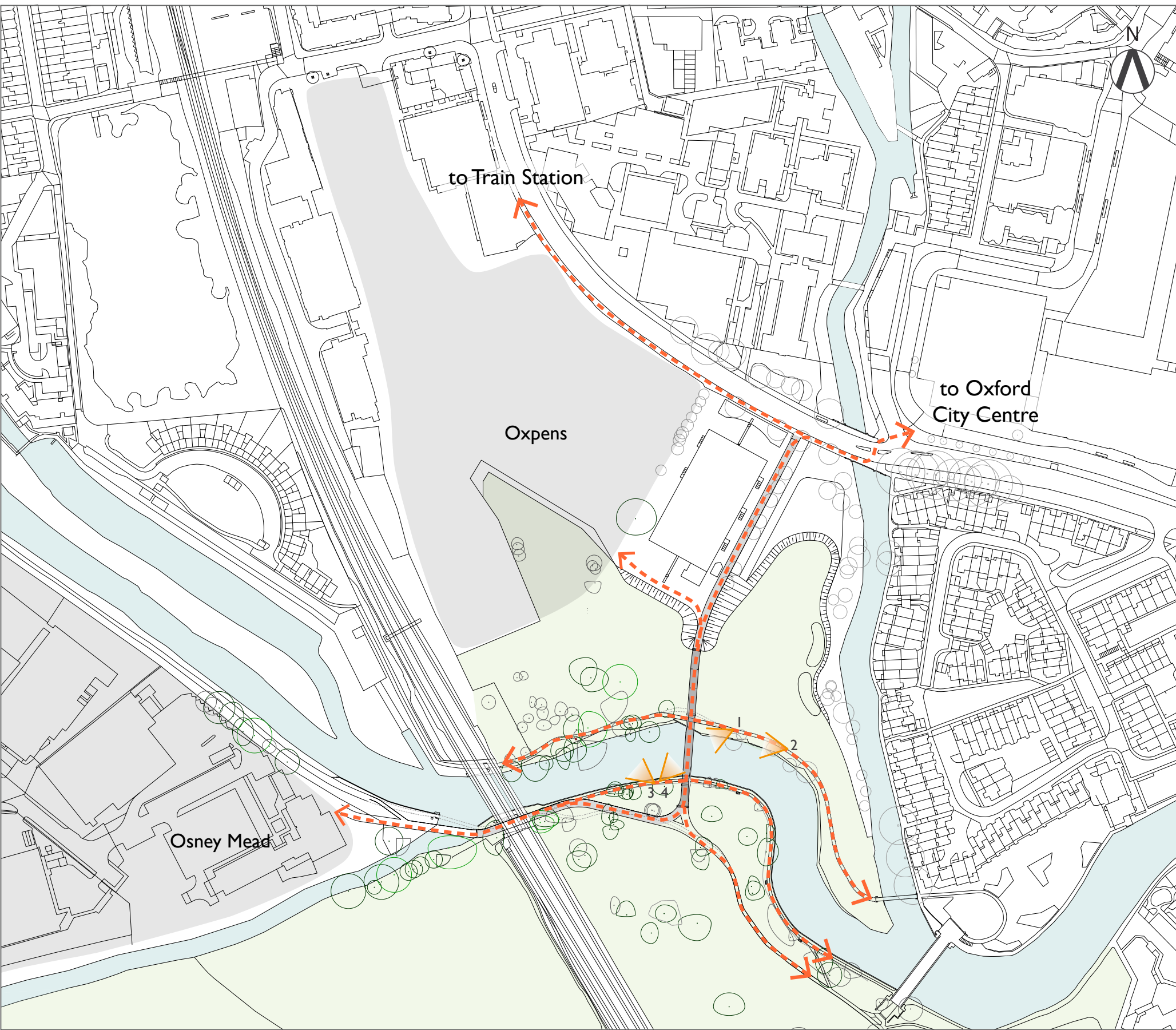
2. From North bank looking to West



3. From South bank looking to West



4. From South bank looking to East



Connectivity



Site Image 1 From Grandpont to Oxpens Meadows

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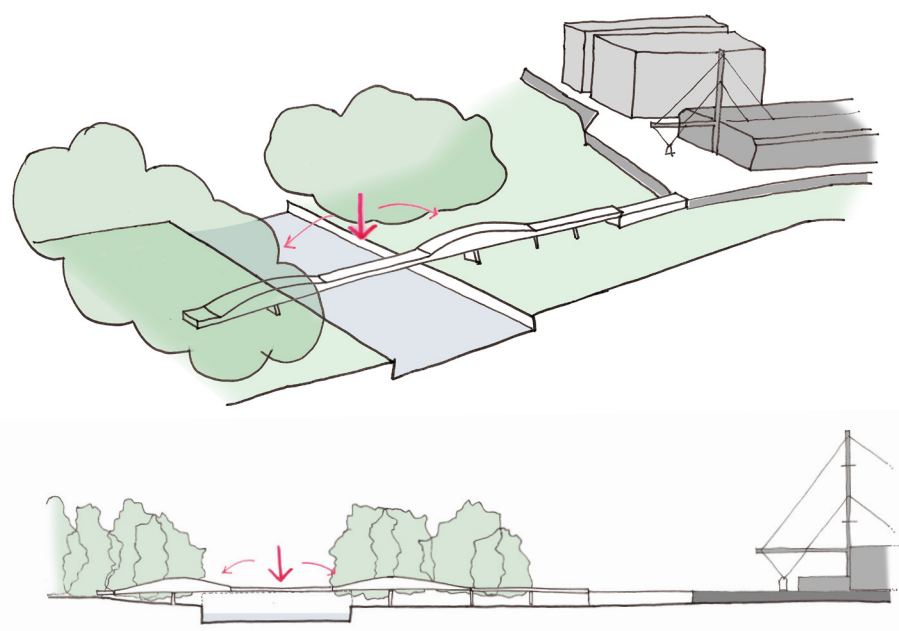
Design Development

BRIDGE CONCEPT NARRATIVE

The Oxpens Bridge aims to provide essential **connectivity** across the Thames, with an understated, elegant structure which responds to and enhances this unique site.

This is a **varied site**, characterised open views across the meadows, punctuated by a meandering, tree-lined river. The bridge is comprised of several elevated spans over the meadows, with a main-span over the river itself.

4. An undulating above deck structure maximises clearance below, and offers maximum transparency at mid span, contrasted by characterful waves.

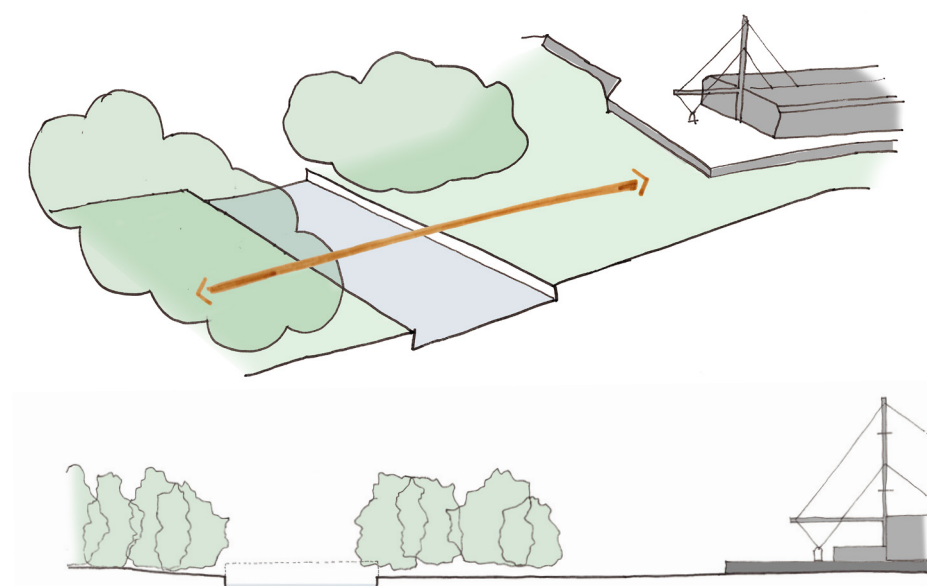


Drawing inspiration from the site, the undulating bridge form locates its primary structure within the tree-line to either side of the river.

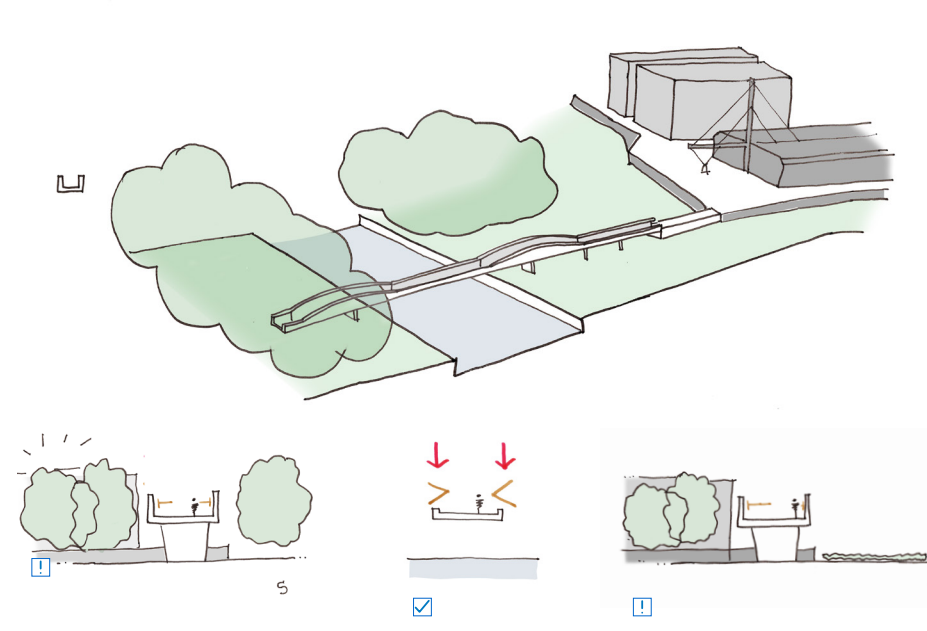
This maximises **slenderness at mid-span**, and protects the open, expansive views of the Thames, for both users on the bridge and those walking along the towpath.

The site is not symmetrical and nor should this journey be. The site has moments of openness, and moments of enclosure. An asymmetric form frames, directs and guides key viewpoints, and conveys the story of the site.

1. A north/south section of the site demonstrates the changing character of the site, which has an open river, with density / mass either side.



5. The view 'from' the bridge must balance onward visibility and choreograph key moments of the journey to convey the character of the site to users on the deck.

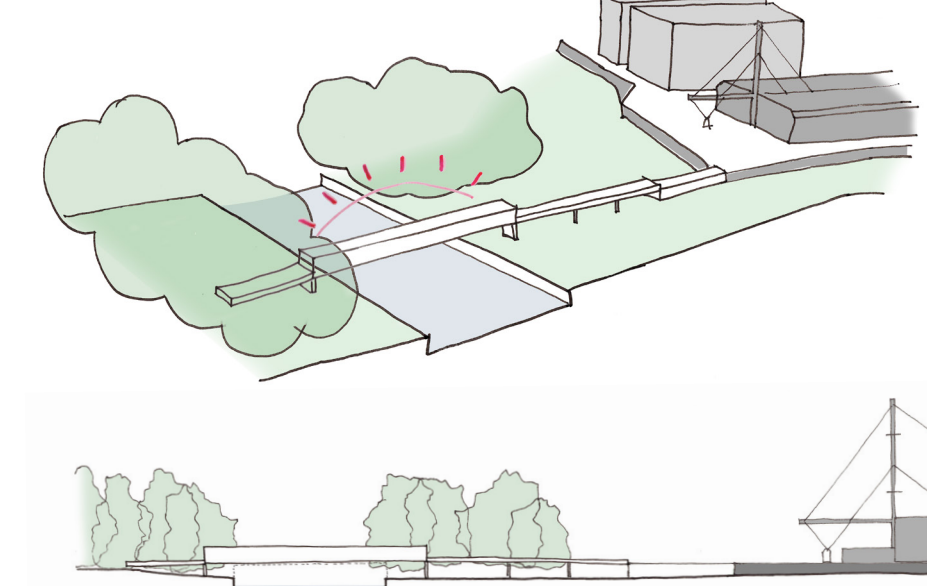


As the structure emerges from the tree-line and **crosses the meadows**, the shorter spans allow for a **very slender deck profile**, which maximises clearance below, allowing people, and the meadows itself to flow uninterrupted east-west under the bridge.

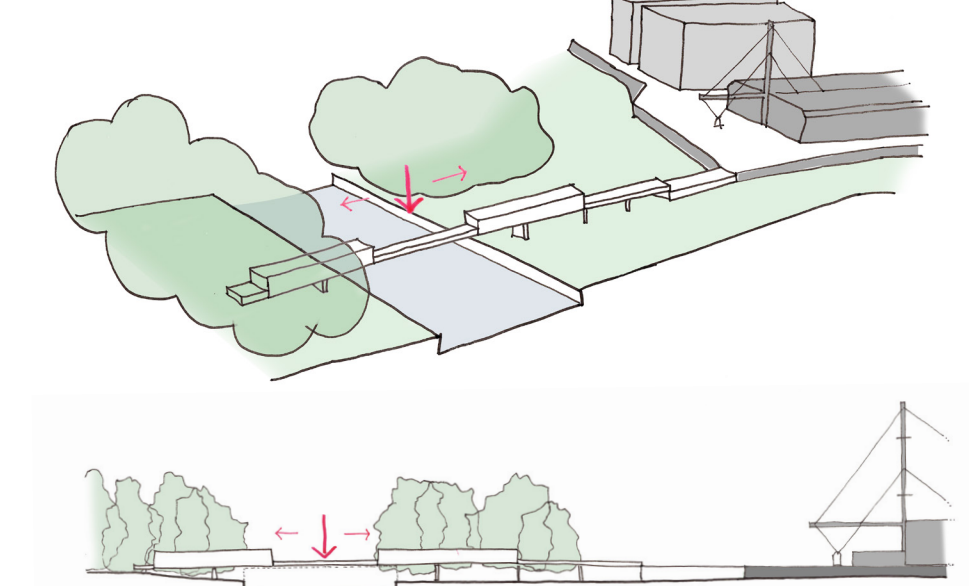
The bridge will not only provide connections through the site, but also placemaking 'moments' within it.

On the deck, the **shared path** (between 3.5-5m width TBC) will provide locations which encourage people to stop, sit and take in the views of the site. At the riverside, the bridge's unique form will draw people towards the riverside, promoting meeting points, as well as places to stop and relax.

2. The view 'of' the journey along the path shows that adding visual mass over the main span would oppose, rather than enhance the site.



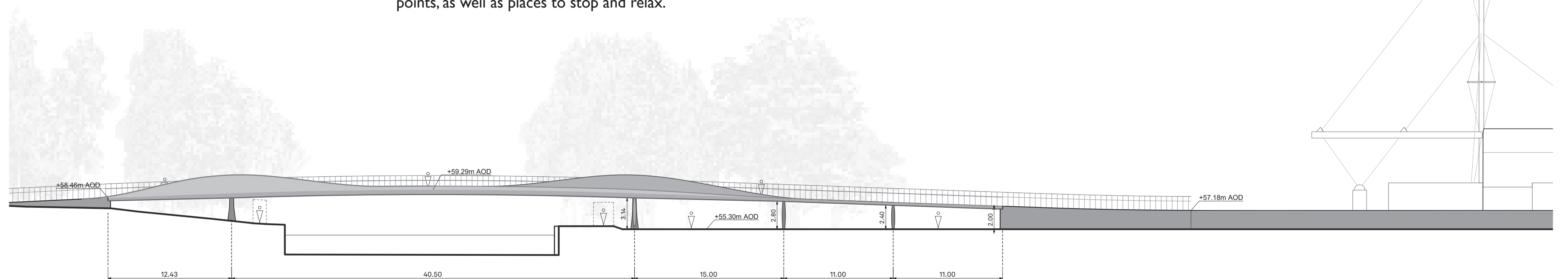
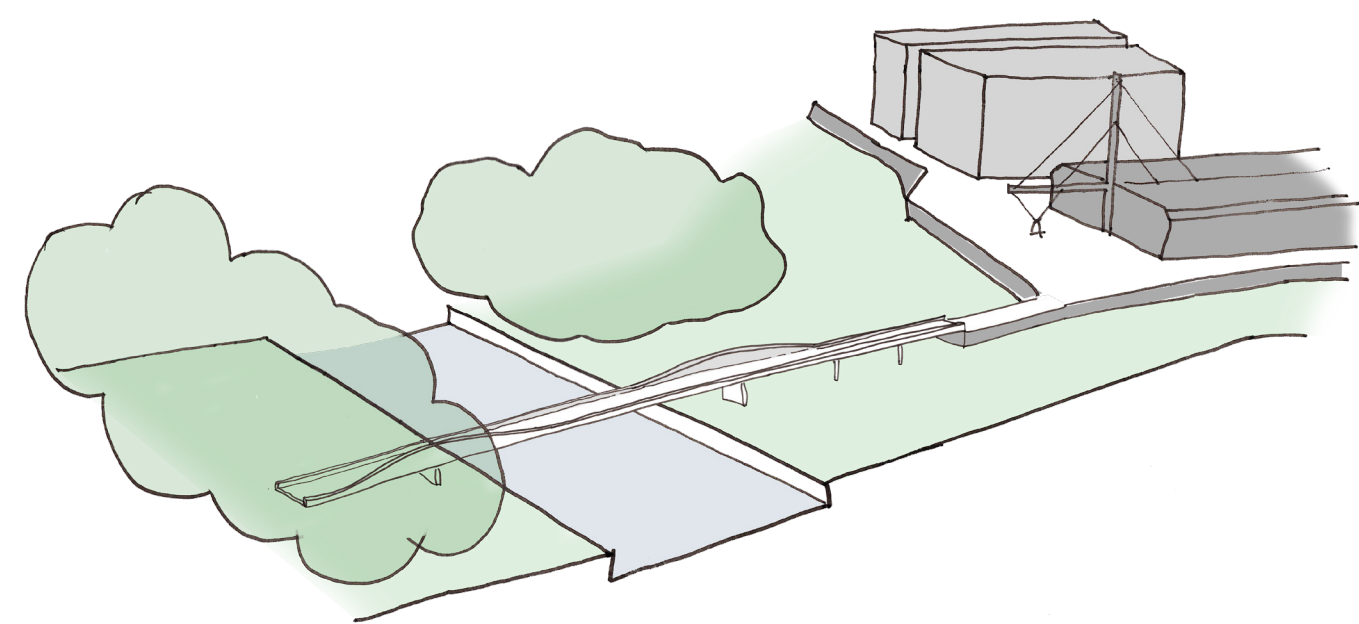
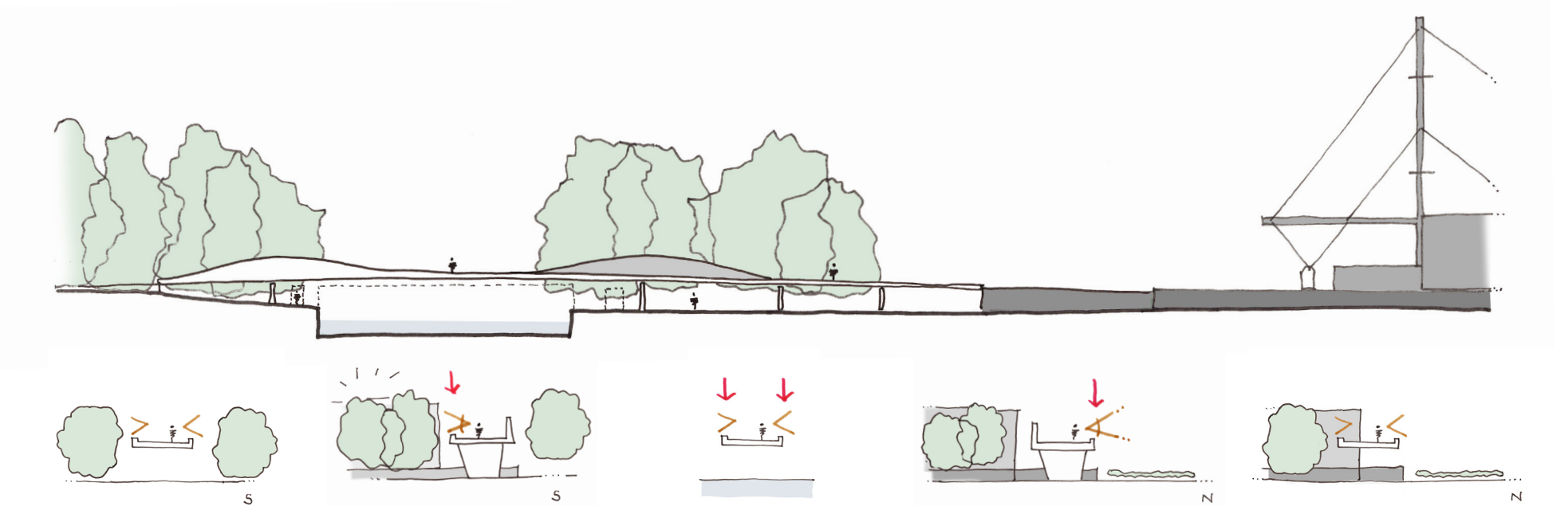
3. Removing mass from the main span and shifting it to the tree line is a unique way to enhance the site natural existing condition.



PROPOSAL

The bridge is designed in response to two 'views', one along the towpath, another along the bridge. This results in an above deck undulating beam which enhances the two key journeys through the site.

It puts mass where it is needed, and removes it where it is best avoided. The result is a unique design which is driven through the characteristics of the site; what works elsewhere would not work here, and vice versa.



Elevation



View from towpath along the River looking west

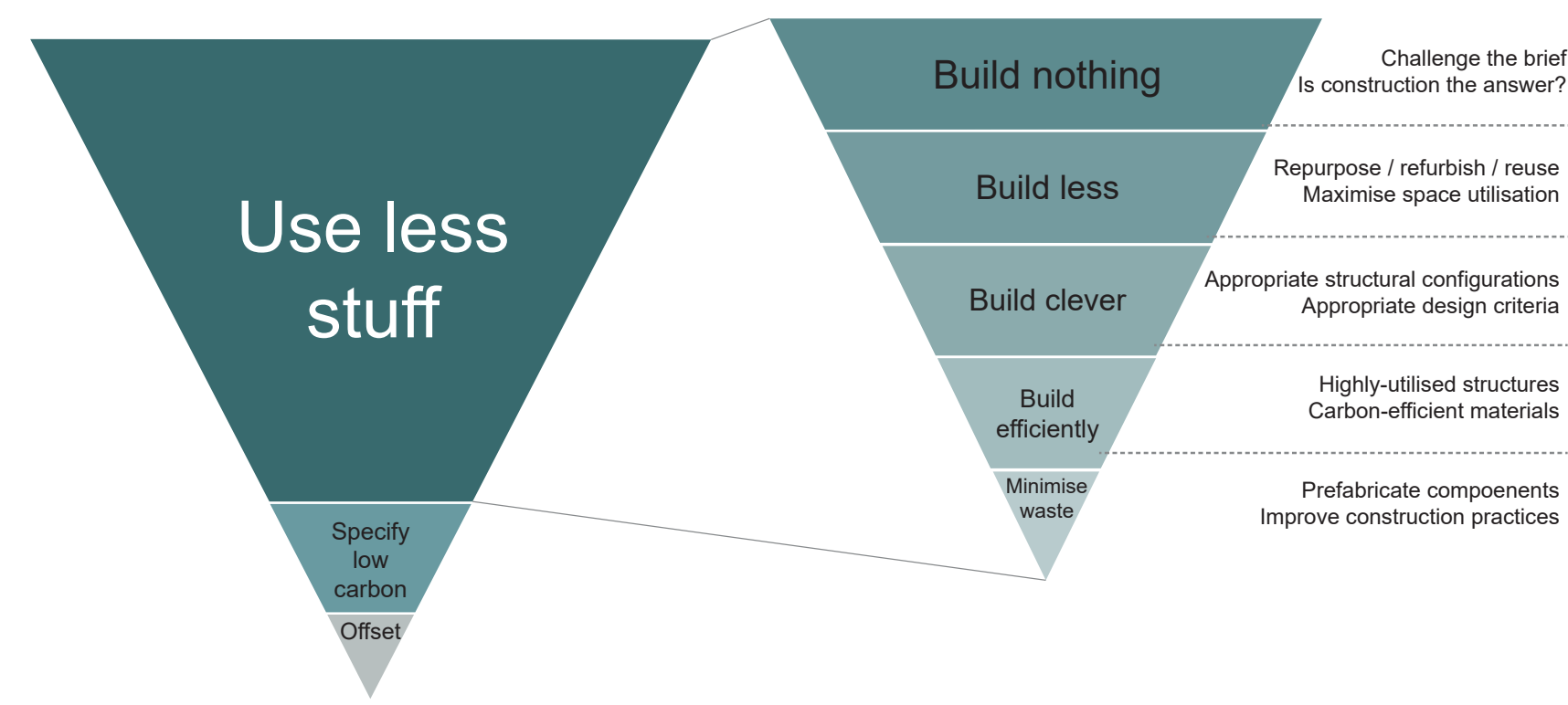
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Environment / Sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY AIMS

- We are committed to addressing the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in everything we design.
- We are certain that the greatest opportunity to reduce carbon happens at the early stages of design, when the Build Less principle should be the focus of the conversation.
- It is essential we consider how the environmental performance of a project can be improved from the 'top down' of the triangles shown.
- The current stage is mainly focused on alignment, will broadly establishes the amount of structure, and therefore the amount of carbon in the scheme.
- Optimisations achievable at a later stage will be of a smaller consequence to the alignment decisions taken during this stage.
- Ensuring the design provides a positive user experience will also contribute to the sustainability of the project and to the modal shift of cycling and walking.



IStructuE hierarchy diagram for net-zero design (inspired by PAS 2080).

TREES

A comprehensive arboricultural study was undertaken into the existing trees on site.

The removal of 14 moderate quality trees (T1,T2,T3, T4,T8,T13,T15,T20,T21,T22,T25,T82,T97,T115), and 8 low quality trees (T5,T6,T9,T11,T14,T23, T76,T92) will be needed to facilitate development. In addition part of moderate quality woodland W4 will be required. Over 80% of this woodland will be retained. The proposals have been designed to retain the greatest number of trees possible and replacement planting will be undertaken to increase tree numbers elsewhere on site.

FLOOD RISK

As the design has developed, studies have been undertaken by the project team looking at level for level floodplain storage analysis to compensate for the small loss of volume caused by the new bridge within the floodplain.

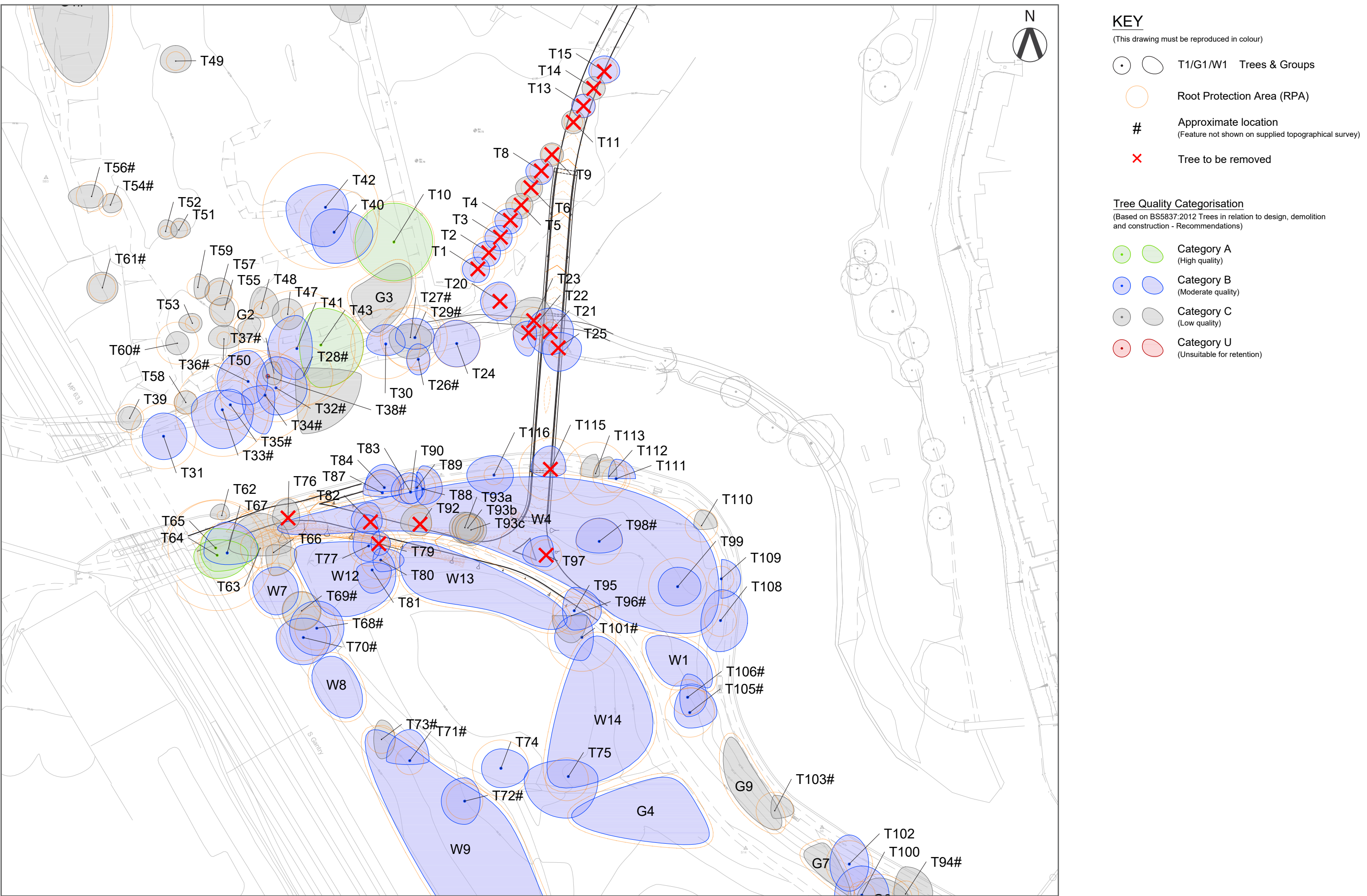
On the north bank we have been collaborating with the designers of the adjacent Oxpens scheme to ensure the bridge is allowed for within their level for level floodplain storage analysis. On the south bank we have considered the impact of the southern end of the bridge and the remodelled ground that results from the proposed connecting paths. Discussions with the Environment Agency are on-going.

ECOLOGY

Ecological surveys have been undertaken of the site through 2021 and 2022 and have identified that the site comprises areas of scattered broadleaved trees and areas of grassland as well as the River Thames itself. The site is not covered by any statutory ecological designation although it does sit within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) of the Iffley Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common and Green SSSI which are both approximately 1.5-2 km south and north of the Site. Part of the site is also within the Grandpont Nature Park.

The scheme design has sought to minimise the loss of vegetation as far as is reasonably practical and to deliver a 5% biodiversity net gain, either within the site through the delivery of enhancement works to the existing woodland or within offsite areas within the Oxford city area.

Lighting of the bridge will also be limited and where required will be designed so that it does not negatively impact nocturnal species such as otter and bats.



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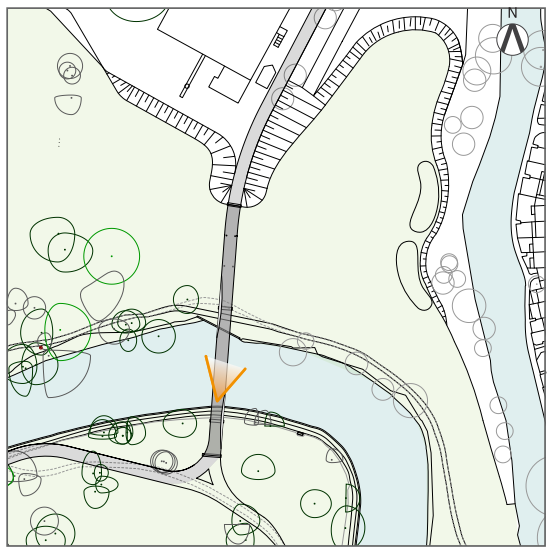
Next Steps



Bird's Eye View of the new crossing in its context



View from bridge deck looking North



TIMELINE



HAVE YOUR SAY

The information you have seen today is also available on our dedicated website at:
<https://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/planning-services/OsneyMeadBridge/>, where there is a short questionnaire.

If you would like to contact us directly please email SWEITZEL@oxford.gov.uk before 13th September.

DESIGN TEAM INFORMATION

Client:



Bridge Architecture:

Knight Architects

Structural Engineering:

Stantec