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Redbridge Waste Transfer Station, Oxford City Council
Design Workshop

Notes from 22 June 2017

Thank you for engaging in an ODRP Design Workshop for the Redbridge Waste Transfer Station in Oxford on 22 June 2017.

Introduction
This scheme has the potential to help raise the awareness of recycling to the wider public and promote the Clean Green Oxford Campaign in Oxford. The Waste Transfer Station, including a small office and hotboxes for tarmac, is a welcome addition to the Redbridge Park and Ride site to improve the efficiency of waste movement and reduce vehicular emissions in Oxford. Bearing this in mind, we encourage Oxford City Council to help reduce the negative stigma and visual and environmental impact that can result from consolidating 'unwanted' uses – cars and waste – in out of town sites, through a holistic plan for these uses across a number of sites.

The current proposal does not deliver the full potential of this scheme – to connect with its natural environment, improve its current setting of the car park and deliver a strong, meaningful message about sustainability. The building and landscaping of this site can communicate a strong environmental message, particularly by embracing the natural environment and the industrial process of recycling in the design of the scheme. As a priority, we recommend setting clear green targets for the scheme from design and construction to its use, such as carbon neutrality and using off grid energy. Currently we feel the design approach lacks a sense of context and appears slightly contrived and dated. We suggest a simple permanent building which conveys a message about its role in promoting Clean Green Oxford, and is set within a much greener landscape setting. Further exploration of the orientation of the building on the site and more nuanced ways of promoting sustainability and recycling are recommended.

Promotion of sustainability and recycling
We welcome the council's ambition to use this development to promote sustainability and recycling to the wider public. However, we question the design emphasis on children's artwork used as cladding, and think that there are more effective ways of achieving this ambition through the integral design of the Waste Transfer Station.

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- The involvement of schools in the design and delivery of this scheme is positive which can help raise awareness of sustainability and recycling to children, parents and teachers. While an annual artwork competition for schools can engage these users, we think that children's artwork used as cladding on the buildings could become redundant after a short time.
- If graphic works are needed to publicise sustainability and recycling on this site, we suggest exploring alternative location(s) for these works that are more prominent to a wider range of users, for example along the motorway at the entrance to the park and ride site or at the bus stop. As the same people are likely to park next to the recycling facility throughout the year, the audience for advertising on the building is far less than in other locations around the car park.
- The boundary treatment surrounding the site could be used to demonstrate its environmental importance, as it will be highly visible, potentially more so than the building itself.

Site layout
In general, the location of the building within the wider car park site works well given its close proximity to the main entrance and positioning along the edge of the site to help maximise space for access and car parking. We offer some suggestions below to improve efficiently and better integrate the scheme with its surroundings:

- We question the extent and shape of the redline boundary of the Waste Transfer Station site as it currently excludes a sliver of land to the west of the site alongside the Hinksey Stream. We suggest incorporating this land within the redline boundary as it is unlikely that it would be usable otherwise.
- The proposed building orientation does not seem to take advantage of the site area, routes and spaces, and appears to be rigidly led by the alignment of Abingdon Road. We suggest either rotating the building by 90 degrees to use less space or orienting the building to the car parking lines. By reorienting the building in this way, any publicity material displayed on the building will be on this tallest elevation would be directly visible by vehicles/pedestrians travelling along the north-south routes in the car park.
- We think that the scheme could be made more visually open to the car park by reorienting the proposed building within the Waste Transfer Station site. This will help to reinforce the message about recycling and sustainability, and may encourage the on-site operators to keep the site clean and tidy.

Open space and boundary treatment
The success of the scheme hinges largely on the character of the open space surrounding the Waste Transfer Station and the boundary treatment of the site. We recommend that a landscape architect be engaged to address these areas to improve the relationship between the car park and natural surroundings with the site. Currently, too much focus is being put on the building.

- We strongly encourage the team to enhance the ecological value of the site by providing trees and greenery where practical within the site. Greening the site will also help to improve the relationship of the site with Hinksey Stream and the Travelodge Hotel, and

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reduce the visual impact of the tarmac within the car park. At this stage, it would be worthwhile thinking about the visual impact of the building during winter, particularly along Abingdon Road, when the trees have lost their leaves and foliage.

- A strong natural feel throughout the landscape design will help the scheme to respond to its waterside environment. We suggest incorporating native species of planting and trees, such as Ash found in river corridors throughout the landscape design, and allowing a natural feel in the layout of the planting. Earth mounds could be used to promote the natural look and feel while helping to prevent noise and flooding.
- Information on the boundary treatment, including its materiality and transparency, will be crucial at the next stage of design development and should be incorporated in the drawings of the scheme. We suggest investigating hedges and creatively incorporating recycled materials, such as walls built from bottles and recycled tires, in the boundary treatment.

Architectural design

We welcome the proposed portal frame structure with concrete chambers which is a simple, straightforward and cost effective way to approach the building design. However, the current proposed design approach to the elevational treatment needs revisiting.

- Further clarification on the structural and construction requirements, including the foundations, would be welcomed at this stage of the design process given the specific functionality of the building. More sustainable, less carbon intensive types of foundations could be investigated.
- There are a wide variety of materials that could be investigated to complement the building use and existing context. We encourage the team to consider green walls and reused materials within the building envelope. Fire retardant timber could help give the impression of a low key and characterful farm building within its waterside context.
- The orientation and structural requirements of the building should inform the shape and orientation of the roof. A steeper roof would generally be more costly. While a dual pitch could work, a mono-pitch could also be investigated; orienting the pitch of a mono-pitch roof to the car park could provide better views of the green roof from this area.
- A sedum roof can work in this location but may not be appropriate for this scheme due to the weight of the roof and soil, particularly when wet. There are also potential costs associated with green roofs due to the structural and maintenance requirements.
- We question the need for chimneys in the roof design given they can leak and increase draft which can affect equipment. Systems to close the chimneys may also be needed in the event of a fire.
- The use of solar energy could also be a powerful way of communicating sustainable goals of the scheme and we therefore welcome the use of photovoltaics. We recommend exploring installing a battery system which would store excess energy that is generated, particularly during sunny summer months when less heating is needed.
- Detail on the office space for on-site staff is needed to ensure this space is welcoming and safe. To create a cohesive environment, the design of the Waste Transfer Station and the office should relate to one another.

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Attendees

Design Workshop Panel

Joanna van Heyningen (Chair)
Jessica Byrne Daniel
Paul Appleby
Martin Stockley

Scheme presenters

Geoff Corps	Oxford City Council
Stephen Johns	BHP Harwood
Arron Twamley	Peter Brett Associates LLP
Natalie Maletras	Peter Brett Associates LLP

Local Authority

Nadia Robinson	Oxford City Council

Design Council Cabe

James Harris
Victoria Lee

Confidentiality
Since the scheme is not yet the subject of a planning application, the advice contained in this letter is offered in confidence, on condition that we are kept informed of the progress of the project, including when it becomes the subject of a planning application. We reserve the right to make our views known should the views contained in this letter be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). If you do not require our views to be kept confidential, please write to cabe@designcouncil.org.uk.