

**OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE BOARD
Date of meeting 7TH February 2005**

Report of: Planning Business Unit Manager

Title: **BONN SQUARE REFURBISHMENT:
BRIEF FOR AN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION**

Ward: CARFAX

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Key Decision: No

Lead Member: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth

Scrutiny responsibility: Environment

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- 1. considers and approves the brief and competition conditions, as set out in this report, for the international design competition for the refurbishment of Bonn Square; and,**
- 2. nominates a Councillor to be a member of the Jury Panel.**

1. **The Committee is asked** to approve the brief and competition conditions for the international design competition for the refurbishment of Bonn Square; and to nominate a Councillor to be a member of the Jury Panel.
2. **The refurbishment of Bonn Square will contribute to the Council's vision by**
 - (i) improving the environment where we live and work; and,
 - (ii) making Oxford a safer city
3. **Background and context:** public consultation was carried out during spring/summer 2004 on two refurbishment schemes for Bonn Square but there was no clear agreement on the options proposed. The consultation highlighted the importance of the location within the city centre and the desire of many interested organisations to be involved in the refurbishment.
4. The Executive Board (6th August 2004) concluded that a more substantial design approach was warranted by way of a design

competition; and that the project should be taken forward under the auspices of the West End Steering Group.

5. In September 2004 a Project Manager was appointed; and a Technical Panel under the chairmanship of the Project Manager was convened with the task of preparing the brief for the competition. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Competitions Office was appointed to manage an 'open ideas' international design competition. A short procurement exercise had been carried out which established that the RIBA offered the Council best value.
6. **The relationship between the Bonn Square 'open ideas' design competition and the Westgate / West End proposals:** the improvement of Bonn Square is linked with the Westgate Centre proposals and the broader 'West End' proposals primarily (but not exclusively) because of their potential to deliver traffic reductions along the New Road / Bonn Square / Queen Street route. The improvement of Bonn Square is not however wholly dependent upon those proposals. Reducing the number of buses along that route is a very strong political aspiration because, among a range of other benefits, it will improve considerably the environment of Bonn Square. It is unlikely however that total pedestrianisation of this route could ever be achieved because access will still be needed for emergency vehicles for delivery vehicles (albeit time-limited) and even buses in the evenings. Thus the design for Bonn Square must accommodate a route for such vehicles. This competition is being promoted in advance of any final decisions on traffic reductions because it is believed that the competition is vital to understanding the future of Bonn Square in terms of its visual appearance and its potential contribution to the life of the city. Indeed the winning design may have a role in lobbying for environmental change in this part of the city and have an influence over the design of the northern elevation to the West Gate Centre. So it is suggested that there is no need at this stage in the process to delay holding this competition until there is greater certainty over the question of the removal of buses from Queen Street.
7. **Consultation on the draft brief:** the draft brief underwent consultation during January the results of which are presented as Appendix 1 hereto. Changes have been assimilated where appropriate into the revised brief now presented as Appendix 2 hereto. The competition conditions are also presented which include details of the prize money, the Jury Panel and copyright.
8. **The competition timetable:** the competition will be launched on 28th February, (allowing time after approval of the brief for printing the necessary documentation). The closing date for entries will be Tuesday 26th April. In week commencing 2nd May, 6 entries will be short listed. Public consultation on those 6 schemes will take place for 2 weeks commencing 9th May. The winning scheme will be selected in the week commencing 23rd May.

9. **What the competition seeks to achieve:** the competition is an open ideas competition and therefore the draft brief seeks:
“as wide a range of ideas as possible to come forward”.
10. **The design area** covers the entire open space: Bonn Square, the forecourt to the New Road Baptist Church and the public highways.
11. **The vision for Bonn Square:** the draft brief states that:
“The chosen design for Bonn Square will demonstrate the best contemporary work of artists, urban designers, architects and town planners.
The design should respond to the City Council’s vision for Bonn Square as a dynamic, inspirational city square which people will love and use at the hub of the revitalised west end of the city centre.
The design should respect and enhance the setting of Bonn Square within the Central (City and University) Conservation Area”.
12. The draft brief is written as a series of aspirations for the future of Bonn Square and constraints to the design – it is not prescriptive as to the type of design being sought. It asks designers:
“to be courageous in their thinking, aware of the opportunities afforded by the enhanced role of Bonn Square in the city’s west end, but aware also of the need for the highest standards of design”.
13. **Evaluation of schemes:** submitted schemes will be expected to:
- create a dynamic and inspirational open space;
 - improve accessibility and circulation within and around Bonn Square;
 - enhance relationships between Bonn Square and its immediate surroundings;
 - meet the requirements of conservation legislation;
 - reduce the potential for conflict and antisocial behaviour;
 - achieve sustainability and ease of maintenance;
 - meet the need for financial realism.
14. **Financial implications:** at present there is approximately £236k in the capital programme for Bonn Square projects. This will be used as seed funding and the winning design will be used to raise additional funds for implementation through S106 contributions, awards and sponsorship. A full report would be brought back to Executive Board for approval of any additional capital expenditure for this project. The total costs of the competition are £29,500, including prize money of £15,000. £15,000 of these costs is being met from the Urban Cultural Programme and the rest from existing resources.

15. **Staffing Implications:** being met within existing resources.

16. **List of appendices:**

- (i) Appendix 1: results of consultation on Draft Competition Design Brief;
- (ii) Appendix 2: the revised Brief (together with its own appendices) and Competition Conditions.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth
Strategic Director: Sharon Cosgrove
Legal and Democratic Services: Lindsay Cane
Financial Management: Claire Reid

Background papers:

“ A Conservation Plan: Bonn Square Oxford” draft report by Dr. Nicholas Doggett, MIFA, IHBC, Associate Director CgMs Consulting

BONN SQUARE: A PLACE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

COMMENTS ON DRAFT COMPETITION BRIEF

Comment	Response
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The competition design challenge – paragraph 1

<p>The Westgate Partnership supports the Council in seeking to identify options for the future of Bonn Square by means of a design competition. The Westgate Partnership is concerned however that there is potential for conflict between the aspirations for the Square (the aspirations not only of the Council but of a wide and diverse range of stakeholders) and the restrictions imposed by conservation policy. It asks for greater clarity and stronger guidance on the primary focus for formulation of the design.</p>	<p>The competition is an <i>'open ideas competition'</i> which the Council has embarked upon precisely because of the diverse range of views about the future of the Square and regulatory legislation impinging on it. The brief intentionally encourages submission of a wide range of responses to the design challenge and does not seek to limit designers' interpretation of the aspirations and constraints. The Council believes that stakeholders and regulatory bodies will have a better chance of making real choices about the future of the Square if a truly <i>'open ideas'</i> competition is held. The architectural advisor to the competition has been involved in drafting the brief and is confident that it provides sufficient guidance to designers. No change to the Brief is proposed.</p>
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Context – paragraph 5

<p>Tone down reference to crime and antisocial behaviour in paragraph 5</p>	<p>The strength of this comment reflects available evidence. No change.</p>
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Pedestrianisation – paragraphs 6 and 22

<p>Strong representations have been received from the Central and South West Area Committee and several individual Councillors that the design should presume the removal of buses from Bonn Square and the pedestrianisation of Queen Street.</p> <p>The Westgate Partnership supports the aim to reduce significantly the numbers of buses using Queen Street and is working with the City and County Councils to quantify by how much. It considers that in advance of that quantification it is premature to state that the Westgate proposals <i>"will allow for a significant reduction in the number of buses using Bonn Square and Queen Street"</i>. It asks for the removal of the word <i>"significant"</i> from the sentence (paragraphs 6 and 22).</p>	<p>Pedestrianisation of Bonn Square / Queen Street is a strongly held political aspiration. Paragraph 6 has therefore been amended to read:</p> <p><i>"It is the political ambition of both the City and County Councils that the Westgate proposals will allow for a significant reduction in the number of buses using Bonn Square and Queen Street"</i>.</p> <p>This reflects the wording of Paragraph 22 and is not considered to pre-empt negotiations between The Westgate Partnership and the City and County Councils concerning potential bus reduction in Bonn Square / Queen Street in relation to the Westgate Centre proposals.</p>
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Developing a design concept – paragraphs 12 and 13

It has been suggested that the draft brief was not even handed between high, medium and low impact schemes.	Paragraph 13 amended.
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Creating a dynamic and inspirational open space – paragraphs 14 and 15

Artpoint suggests rewording to give greater clarity to the integration of the work of artists in the scheme	Paragraph 14 amended.
Artpoint considers that the creation of a performance space needs to be linked to a long-term strategy for its use taking account of the activities which it may have to accommodate.	Paragraph 15 amended.

Cycle routes – paragraph 20

It is suggested that the reference to “significant pedestrian/cyclist conflict” resulting from use of Sustrans Route 5 down the west side of the Square implies unnecessary overtones.	Paragraph 20, bullet point one has been amended.
Cyclists should dismount to use Sustrans Route 5	Not necessarily part of the design competition.
The suggested 2m wide strip should be 3m wide	No change
Correction required to stated times of permitted cycling.	Para 20, bullet point two changed.

Cycle parking – paragraph 21

<p>The inclusion of cycle parking in the Square will limit the potential attractiveness and openness of the square and will disrupt the broader design scheme. Can it be optional?</p> <p>The number is too prescriptive and should be the subject of further discussion with the Council and stakeholders.</p> <p>The number is too few and should be increased. Double the existing capacity.</p>	It is considered that Bonn Square should make a contribution to cycle parking needs but only on a scale consistent with its other roles in the public realm. Replication of existing provision plus a small additional allowance is thought to be reasonable. A larger amount of provision would unduly impinge on the space and would not be acceptable. No change proposed.
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The aspirations of the New Road Baptist Church – paragraph 23

These are expressed as pre-conditions – not all aspirations can be met.	These reflect the basis on which the Church is prepared to participate in the scheme which effectively entails putting its private land in the public realm. No change.
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Relationship with the Westgate Centre – paragraph 24

Not clear on the meaning of this paragraph	The desire is that the square should have its own character and not be regarded as part of the Westgate Centre. No change proposed
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Listed buildings and structures – paragraph 31

Possible relocation of the Tirah Memorial might enhance its setting and that of the conservation area generally. This should not need “powerful” justification. Delete “powerful”.	The Tirah Memorial is the most prominent structure in the Square and is listed. Powerful justification <u>will</u> be necessary for relocation from its present site. No change proposed.
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Archaeology and Trees – paragraphs 32 and 33

The three options given are too prescriptive. Designers should be asked to undertake further consultations with the Council and stakeholders.	The text merely suggests three different approaches but does not stipulate any particular one. No change proposed.
The design should be 'green' with plenty of soft landscaping because it is one of the few green spaces in the city centre.	Noted.

The Bonn Square Stone – paragraph 34

This is large and unattractive. Suggest removal to another site and re-inscription.	Not considered to be a widely held view – no change.
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Reducing the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour – paragraph 35

While recognising the seriousness of these issues, this section needs reconsideration. As written, the 'designing out crime' agenda will not create an inspirational open space. We want people to congregate! We need a generous number of flat surfaces for people to sit on and enjoy the space. Designers need to find other ways to encourage people to behave appropriately. People will not love the square if it is regulated and uninviting as these guidelines suggest.	Paragraph 35 amended in the light of these comments and bullet points deleted.
Substitute "natural surveillance" for "natural policing"	Text amended.

Street traders – paragraph 36

Take out the suggestion that they "contribute to the life of the square" – they are part of the problem. Require them to fit in with high quality design.	Paragraph 36 amended to meet this comment in part.
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Financial realism – paragraph 39

The Westgate Partnership is concerned that the inclusion of the figure of £1m may be seen as a guide or a budget to which competitors will work. The most effective solution may be simple and cost less than £1m.	Paragraph 39 amended to clarify this point.
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BONN SQUARE: A PLACE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

THE COMPETITION DESIGN CHALLENGE

1. The transformation of Bonn Square into a high quality, contemporary city square central to the everyday life of the city is one of the most important tasks facing the City Council. **The design challenge lies in the successful fusion of contemporary public space requirements with the requirements of conservation legislation.** Oxford City Council and its partners on the West End Steering Group (Oxfordshire County Council and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) are therefore launching this competition to generate a wide range of ideas to meet this design challenge.

The Council's Vision for Bonn Square

The chosen design for Bonn Square will demonstrate the best contemporary work of artists, urban designers, landscape architects, architects and town planners.

The design should respond to the City Council's vision for Bonn Square as a dynamic, inspirational city square which people will love and use at the hub of the revitalised west end of the city centre.

The design should respect and enhance the setting of Bonn Square within the Central (City and University) Conservation Area.

THE DESIGN AREA

2. Bonn Square is located in the heart of Oxford city centre where four important shopping/commercial streets converge. It was named Bonn Square in 1974 to celebrate the links between Oxford and Bonn.
3. The design area (Appendix 1) encompasses the entire open space defined by the buildings that surround it. It therefore includes:
 - the landscaped memorial garden (created at the end of the 19th century over a former graveyard) for the Tirah Memorial which is Grade II listed;
 - the forecourt to the New Road Baptist Church (also Grade II listed) and the narrow access to the side entrance to the Church;
 - the access and steps from New Inn Hall Street along the south side of number 1 New Inn Hall Street (the latter is Grade II listed); and,
 - public highways – on the south and east sides of the Square.
4. 14 New Road, a triangular building on the edge of the square, has also been included within the design area so that particular consideration may be given to its future role adjacent to the public space.

CONTEXT

5. As its name suggests, Bonn Square is already a city square, indeed it is one of the very few public spaces in the city centre. It is a hub for heavy pedestrian flows during the day and in the evening but its layout, lack of natural surveillance and degraded appearance make it the focus for some of the worst criminal and antisocial behaviour in the city centre. Buses, taxis and delivery vehicles pass west to east along its southern side and into Queen Street. People enjoy its sunny aspect and sit on the low walls surrounding the memorial garden, but are inhibited from enjoying it to its full potential by its downcast appearance, its threatening atmosphere and the constant passage of large vehicles.
6. The importance of Bonn Square and the pressure for it to be improved and contribute more positively to the life of the city are going to grow as the result of several major developments nearby which will significantly increase the number of pedestrians using the square, namely:
 - the imminent completion of the mixed commercial and residential developments on the Oxford Castle site and nearby to the west;
 - proposals for refurbishment and a major extension to the Westgate Shopping Centre (see www.westgateoxford.co.uk) It is the political ambition of both the City and County Councils that the Westgate proposals will allow for a significant reduction in the number of buses using Bonn Square and Queen Street; and,
 - the Oxford West End regeneration project which has the objective of bringing *“this under-utilised area of Central Oxford back into active use, and to make it a modern, vibrant and stylish city quarter.”* (See www.davidlock.com/oxfordwestend) It is the political ambition of both the City and County Councils that these proposals will ultimately allow for pedestrianisation of Queen Street during core shopping hours.
7. **Historic significance** - Bonn Square is within the Central (City and University) Conservation Area (Appendix 2). It has listed structures within and around it. The former graveyard (which is consecrated ground to which the Faculty Jurisdiction applies -see paragraph 42 below) contains human remains and mature trees of high amenity value. It is possible that the remains of the Anglo Saxon/medieval church still exist under the present highway.
8. **Oxford - Centre of Culture 2008** – as a result of its bid to become a European Capital of Culture, Oxford was awarded Centre of Culture status for 2008. Oxford is recognised by the SEEDA as a major centre for the development of the creative industries, and has been nominated by Arts Council England as a centre for cultural leadership in the South East region. The Council is looking to an improved Bonn Square to reflect and enhance the city’s rich contemporary culture, as well its heritage.

THE OXFORD PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY 2000

9. The Oxford Public Realm Strategy was adopted by the City Council in September 2000. It recommends a framework for managing the public realm in the city centre following a thorough appraisal of its historic, aesthetic, social, economic and environmental context. It recommends enhancement of the overall sustainability of the city centre by encouraging its social and economic vitality. A summary page *“An agenda for the public realm”* is reproduced as Appendix 3.

10. It identifies the improvement of Bonn Square as an opportunity to integrate major developments on the western side of the city centre with the historic parts of the city centre. It describes Bonn Square and the Westgate forecourt as having a *“severely fractured spatial character [which] exhibits intensive wear and has low overall quality”*.
11. It proposes that Bonn Square should be *“a major public space that offers a variety of uses in the busy shopping hub of Oxford City Centre”*. It suggests that improvement to Bonn Square is an opportunity *“for modern and innovative contemporary design”* and introduces three alternative design concepts to achieve this (these have been reproduced as Appendix 4):
 - create a new large scale square at street level, unifying the adjacent streets with the Square, removing trees and walls and reducing levels (in this brief, this concept will be referred to as *maximum impact*);
 - retain a two-levelled square through the removal of selected trees and the New Inn Hall Street wall and creating a major stepped assembly area (*medium impact*);
 - retain all existing trees and walls, increase the pavement treatment of Bonn Square and apply a simplified design with natural materials (*minimum impact*).

DEVELOPING A DESIGN CONCEPT

12. To meet the Council's vision for Bonn Square, the design will be required not only to improve the physical appearance of the square, but also to assist in resolving the social problems and the many competing demands on the square that have been evident over many years. In addition, a range of new features will need to be incorporated to bring the square up to contemporary standards and to enhance its role in the City's public realm. As many as possible of these aspirations and constraints must be met while at the same time respecting and enhancing the setting of the square within the conservation area.
13. The Council believes that the spectrum of design possibilities for Bonn Square is immense and is not confined to the three analytical concepts outlined in the Public Realm Strategy. Designers are free to pursue whichever course they wish but all schemes will need to have regard to the specific tests in respect of development affecting listed buildings or conservation areas including the importance of protecting the special interest of listed buildings and the preservation or enhancement the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Some designers may feel that the historic qualities of the square are best exploited through a minimum impact scheme. Others may consider that this does not take full advantage of the opportunity to enhance the character of the conservation area in its modern context. It must be understood however, that progressively more powerful justification through accomplished design is required for the progressively greater intervention in the historic environment.

The purpose of this open ideas competition is to encourage as wide a range of ideas as possible to come forward from across the whole spectrum of possible design concepts.

The Council asks designers to be courageous in their thinking, aware of the opportunities afforded by the enhanced role of Bonn Square in the City's west end, but aware also of the need for the highest standards of design to avoid the risks of failing to secure any necessary statutory consents.

THE DESIGN FRAMEWORK - ASPIRATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Creating a dynamic and inspirational open space

14. **Art** - art should be integral to the design for Bonn Square. There may be one artist involved in the project, or a group of artists working under a lead artist. The (lead) artist need not be identified but a clear statement on how the work of artists will contribute to the design philosophy of the scheme is required. Competitors are encouraged to be innovative in how they include the work of artists within the proposed scheme, and no prescription is given in this brief on media or the method of working. Consideration should be given to how the users of the square will be engaged in the development stages of the work. Some artwork within the scheme may also be part of a programme of temporary works.
15. **Space for performance and other public events** - Bonn Square is occasionally used as an informal performance space (primarily for music), although the infrastructure for this is lacking. The Council recognises that there is considerable scope for cultural events and performance activities to take place in Bonn Square. Designers are asked to include a flexible space (or spaces) within the scheme, capable of accommodating a broad diversity of cultural activities. The necessary facilities for this could be temporary or permanent.
16. **Cultural Promotion** - Oxford suffers from a lack of on-street promotion of contemporary cultural activity. The design should include innovative ways to promote and celebrate Oxford's contemporary cultural activity.
17. **Lighting** – a lighting scheme should be an integral part of the design.

Improving accessibility and circulation

18. **Accessibility for disabled people** - the following is based on the advice given in the City Council's adopted 'Public Realm Strategy' and should be adhered to in this competition.
 - Bonn Square should be safe, convenient and accessible to all;
 - layouts of all pedestrian areas should be simple, logical and consistent;
 - obstacles and restrictions to access should be removed where possible;
 - contrasts in colour, tone and texture should be used to accentuate the presence of key features;
 - furniture should be ordered in a legible way to create clear unimpeded routes;
 - lighting levels should be adequate.
19. **Pedestrians** - Bonn Square is at the heart of the pedestrian network of the city. Some of the highest footfall passes through this junction and this is projected to increase significantly. The design should therefore increase the pedestrian permeability of the square by incorporating significant improvements to the circulation space for pedestrians moving around and through the square.
20. **Cycle routes** –
 - National Cycle Network Route 5 runs north-south down New Inn Hall Street, passing down the east side of Bonn Square and on down St Ebbes Street. This is a 24-hour cycle route and a 2 metre wide 'strip' should be maintained within the design (although this is expected to be shared and not segregated). The route creates pedestrian/cyclist conflict and the means should be found through the design to minimise this;

- across the south side of the square - cycling is permitted 24hrs. east-west through Bonn Square between New Road and New Inn Hall Street; and between 6pm and 10am along Queen Street. These routes should be maintained.
21. **Cycle parking** –existing cycle parking provision is for 27 cycles (10 Sheffield stands adjacent to the Baptist Church railings and 7 rings on the wall to New Inn Hall Street. The cycle parking in the subway and on the railings adjacent to the Library is to be included in the Westgate Centre scheme). The demand for cycle parking in Bonn Square is likely to increase and therefore provision should be increased to 37. Higher levels of provision could be accommodated if it can be successfully integrated into the design.
22. **Designing for vehicles in Bonn Square:** although lower traffic flows than currently exist can be allowed for, it is important that the design and construction reflects the continuing need for (i) shared pedestrian / cycle / vehicle flows; and, (ii) along the New Road/Bonn Square/Queen Street route, heavy vehicle loading.
- **Public transport** - in conjunction with the proposed redevelopment of the Westgate Centre, both the City and County Councils have aspirations to reduce significantly the number of buses using the New Road/Bonn Square/Queen Street route. The relocation of the bus stop currently located outside the Baptist Church to a position outside the design area may also be possible.
 - **Delivery traffic and taxis** - delivery vehicles, including HGVs, and taxis will continue to be permitted along the New Road/Bonn Square/Queen Street route between 6pm and 10am.
 - **Emergency vehicles** - access for emergency vehicles on this route will be continued.

Enhancing relationships with the immediate surroundings

23. **The aspirations of the New Road Baptist Church:**
- the design must complement and enhance the classical façade of this Grade II listed building;
 - the Church would like its building to become more visible within the public domain in line with its philosophy of outreach to the city centre;
 - the Church intends to continue and expand its use of the forecourt but is happy to offer it as an integral part of the design area. Subject to any statutory consents therefore, and provided that it is necessary to bring about real and lasting improvements to Bonn Square, the Church is happy:
 - for the 'shape' of its forecourt to change (it could for example extend further along the front of its building rather than out towards the public highway); and,
 - for there to be some general public use of Church land (e.g. by pedestrians crossing the square).
 - the existing amount of land in the control of the Church must be replicated in any design and a means to denote 'on the ground' the extent of the church land holding will be necessary;
 - the Council, as landowner, will need to consider separately any necessary land transactions and maintenance arrangements required to change the shape of the forecourt and increase public use of it but, for the purpose of this competition, designers need not be concerned about those aspects of implementation;

- all designs must maintain the existing right of vehicle access from New Road to the front of the Church;
 - the Church also intends to develop a café (to give employment to people returning to work) within the upper floor of 1 New Inn Hall Street (which has internal access to the Church through the infill building between the two). This needs greater visibility in the public realm to help ensure commercial success. For this purpose the Church also intends to create a new access to the right of the existing side entrance and this should be allowed for in the competition design;
 - the existing side entrance and narrow access path along the front of the Church behind the Memorial garden attracts rough sleepers and drug abusers. The Church hopes that opening up this area can alleviate this problem.
24. **Relationship with the Westgate Centre** - the frontage to the Westgate Centre is to be re-modelled but the designs for this are not yet available. The design for Bonn Square needs an appropriate visual relationship with the remodelled Westgate Centre but must create its own identity and sense of place and not become the 'forecourt' to the Westgate Centre.
25. **Number 14 New Road** - consideration should be given to the future of this building, which although not listed, is of some local historical interest. For example, it has been suggested that this building should be demolished in order to open up the space. Equally, it may be possible to retain the building, enhance its historic qualities and give it a more positive connection with the adjacent open space.
26. **Links to surrounding streets** – whilst generating its own identity the design should connect easily with surrounding streets.
27. **Views** – the design should preserve and enhance important views into and out of the square.
28. **Buildings on the boundary** – photographs of the buildings on the boundary are reproduced on the disk. Landowners' rights in relation to access, windows, means of escape and ventilation must be preserved.

Meeting the requirements of conservation legislation

29. **General note** - a conservation report, which is reproduced as Appendix 5, has been prepared by CgMs Consulting to inform the design and assessment of schemes for Bonn Square. The legislation and national advice governing the protection and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings imposes significant constraints but interesting challenges on the design of the square. The justification for any impact on the historic assets of the square must be made in the terms laid down in the legislation.
30. **Conservation area** – Bonn Square is within, but on the edge of the Central (City and University) Conservation Area, flanked to the southwest, by the Westgate Centre which has been excluded from the conservation area. The layout and function of the square has changed over time, each phase leaving its mark on the present day character and appearance of the square. The square has its origins in Anglo-Saxon/medieval times and underwent development and change through the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The square is therefore profoundly part of the history of Oxford although its current superficial appearance and surroundings owe most to the road pattern and building developments of the late 19th and late 20th centuries. These historical qualities may be used to inform competition designs. In judging a competition

entry, an assessment will be made of the impact of the scheme on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

31. **Listed buildings and structures** - the conservation report identifies the listed buildings and structures within and around the square. Consideration of proposals that affect those buildings and structures will involve assessment of the impact on their setting and special architectural or historic interest. The most prominent listed structure in Bonn Square is the Tirah Memorial which was erected in 1900, and is the central feature of the memorial garden that was created to accommodate it. The garden remains today but the footway/highway in front of the garden has been remodelled several times reflecting the encroachment of the highway and the treatment of the low walls and pavement which have varied over the years. It has been suggested that the Tirah Memorial might be relocated within or outside the square – either option would be considered to be demolition of a listed building for which listed building consent would be required. Powerful justification for such action will be required.
32. **Archaeology** - the presumption of national and local policy is the preservation of archaeological remains in situ. It will be important for competition entries to provide sufficient information to judge the impact of the proposals on the archaeological interest of the former graveyard site and former church site. A full briefing note, site plan and archaeological survey report is reproduced as Appendix 6. In summary the advice is:
- **the former graveyard:** pavement level is at 64.39m +/- 0.06m OD. For the mapped footprint of the of the historic cemetery (which is smaller than the existing raised area) known burials occur within or close to this range and one trench identified burials at 0.3m higher than this level. There appear to be three general options for re-modelling the former graveyard:
 - **low impact** - re-landscape to levels between 65.3m and 65.4m OD;
 - **medium impact** - disinter higher burials and form a landscaped area leaving 0.5m fill over the remaining burials at around 64.9m OD;
 - **high impact** - disinter all burials as confirmed by fieldwork and further tiers of burials beneath them, in order to reduce the level such that an engineering sub-base can be formed for a surface able to bear wheeled traffic at the level of the adjoining surfaces.
 - **the former church site:** (the remainder of the raised area) it is presumed that burials and the floors and structure of the medieval church will be substantially deeper than pavement level. Subsequent to the competition, this will need to be confirmed by means of an archaeological trench nearer the time of implementation and the worst case implications allowed for as a contingency in the competitive bids.
33. **Trees** - a plan of the existing trees in Bonn Square and a full briefing note is reproduced as Appendix 7. A broad assessment has been made of the condition and amenity value of the trees and the physical constraints that their retention will place on the design. Collectively, the existing trees make a very important contribution the character and appearance of the space in which they stand. The largest trees are also important in adjacent street scenes: leaning out into those views or visible because they protrude above adjacent buildings. The City Council will need to be convinced that the character and appearance of the conservation area would not be harmed by any proposed impact on them. New tree planting might be used to mitigate any harmful arboricultural impacts. Again, there appear to be three general levels of arboricultural impact:

- **low impact** - no excavations within the protected areas of T1, T3, T4, and T8 and removal only of trees of low amenity value;
- **medium impact** - no excavations within the protected areas of T3, T4 and T8 and removal only of trees of low and moderate amenity value;
- **high impact** - remove all existing trees.

34. **The Bonn Square Stone** - this Clipsham stone is to be retained as a feature in any scheme proposed for the site.

Reducing the potential for conflict and antisocial behaviour

35. **Reduction of crime and antisocial behaviour** - Bonn Square has suffered from various forms of crime and anti-social behaviour for the last 20 years. Despite the significant progress which has been made recently in reducing drug and alcohol abuse in the square, these and other problems such as fouling, rough sleeping and violence (particularly at night) still persist particularly in the memorial garden. This is because the general public has no need to go into the area, either to visit it or use as a pedestrian route. The challenge is to create a design that helps to overcome these problems. It needs to be transformed into an area that the public want to use either to rest in, or to walk through, so that natural surveillance of the area is created. The design should increase public usage of all parts of the square at all times of the day and night. It should have desire lines that encourage pedestrians to cross the square and reduce the concentrations of people in any particular parts of the square. The design should seek to adhere to the Association of Chief Police Officers 'Secured By Design Principles' (www.securedbydesign.com/guides/principles.asp)
36. **Street Traders** - there are 5 existing street traders as shown on the plan reproduced as Appendix 8. Their services are part of the life of the square. If they are to be retained, they should be located so as to avoid the merging of various queues for food, goods, buses and taxis (flashpoints currently occur in these areas of high concentrations of people). Their accommodation should be designed to a high quality and integrated with the overall design concept.

Sustainability and maintenance

37. **Sustainability, environmental impact** - consideration should be given to the re-use of suitable reclaimed materials, careful selection of sustainable sources for new natural materials, incorporation of energy efficient features, and the orientation and siting of features to maximise the natural environmental attributes of the square.
38. **Maintenance** - hard and soft landscaping should be high quality and easy to maintain. The choice of materials and design should reflect the need to balance the historical precedents of the city with modern functional needs and design standards. Materials should be selected for long life and durability and with maintenance and cleaning regimes in mind. Subsequent to the competition, the street-cleaning regime will take account of sub-bases, bedding layers, materials and joint types but ease of maintenance and cleaning will be affected by the choice of surfaces, and their construction and detailing, particularly around and below street furniture.

Financial realism.

39. Competitors are asked to indicate how much their schemes will cost, excluding the contingencies referred to in this brief. The Council appreciates that realisation of its vision for Bonn Square may cost in the order of £1 million. This is not a figure for designers to work towards, rather it is an indication that the Council recognises the complexity of the constraints and the diversity of aspirations for Bonn Square. The most effective solution may well cost much less than this indicative figure and indeed could cost more. The winning design will be used to help raise the necessary funds for implementation.

OTHER INFORMATION

40. **Land ownership** - plans identifying land ownership are reproduced as Appendix 9.
41. **Public utilities** - the relevant providers have been contacted and plans showing their service routes are reproduced as Appendix 10.
42. **Faculty jurisdiction** - the former graveyard is consecrated ground and as such is subject to the Faculty Jurisdiction. A faculty (permission to carry out work to a church building or its contents) is therefore required for any work (apart from certain minor matters) to be carried out on/to it. The Chancellor of the Diocese of Oxford exercises the jurisdiction in the consistory court. The legislation defining the faculty jurisdiction is the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 and the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000. A full briefing note on the Faculty Jurisdiction is reproduced as Appendix 11. Details of the procedure to be followed can be found on the Oxford Diocesan website: www.oxford.anglican.org/registry/fcnotes.php

EVALUATION

43. The judges will consider whether the Council's vision for Bonn Square will be met in the submitted design. Specifically:
- whether a dynamic and inspirational open space will be created;
 - whether accessibility and circulation within and around the square will be improved;
 - whether the relationship of the square to its immediate surroundings will be enhanced;
 - whether the scheme can be justified in the terms laid down in conservation legislation;
 - whether the potential for conflict and antisocial behaviour will be reduced;
 - whether sustainability and maintenance has been taken into account; and
 - whether the scheme is financially realistic.

Competition Conditions

1.0 Invitation

Oxford City Council with its partners, the West End Steering Group, invites submissions for a single stage open ideas competition for the redesign of Bonn Square in the heart of Oxford City centre.

2.0 Objective

Bonn Square, is an historic city square which has a fractured spatial character and low overall quality. It is situated in a prime commercial location. The objective of the competition is to transform Bonn Square into a high quality, contemporary city square.

3.0 Intention to build

Whilst the promoter gives no guarantee to build the winning design it is hoped that this competition will bring forward ideas that could, funding permitting, be built in the future.

4.0 Competition Format

A shortlist of up to 6 schemes will be selected from the open first stage and the authors of these schemes will be invited to present their work to the Jury Panel. Following these presentations a winner will be selected. As part of the competition process the 6 finalists work will be put on public exhibition and comments will be invited from the public. The exhibition will be held anonymously and be programmed to take place before the Jury Panel meets the 6 finalists. The comments solicited from the public will be made available to the Jury Panel.

5.0 Eligibility

The competition is open internationally to artists, urban designers, landscape architects, architects and town planners and students of these disciplines. Integrated multi-disciplinary teams are also encouraged to enter. No member or employee of the promoting body nor the assessors nor any partner, associate or employee of them shall be eligible to compete or assist a competitor.

6.0 Assessors

The following panel of assessors has been appointed to adjudicate on submissions made:

Technical Panel

*Fiona Bartholomew - Oxford City Council, Principal Planning Officer;
Roger Elkins - Oxford City Council, Neighbourhood Renewal;
Neil Smith - Oxford City Council, Arts Development Officer;
Samantha Tharme - Oxfordshire County Council, Transport Planner;
David Potts – The New Road Baptist Church;
Mary Saunders – Diocesan Advisory Committee;
Robert Hutchinson - Oxford Inspires Ltd.*

Jury Panel

John Assael, DiplArch, AAGradDip(Consv), MSc, RIBA,

Managing Director, Assael Architecture Limited

- architectural advisor to the competition;

City Councillor – to be nominated by Executive Board on 07.02.05;

Councillor Neil Fawcett,

- Oxfordshire County Council, Executive Member for Learning & Culture;

Professor Georgia Butina-Watson,

- Head of the School of Planning, Oxford Brookes University;

Dr. Andrew Brown,

- English Heritage, South East Regional Director;

Sarah Langton-Lockhart,

- Chief Executive, The Centre for Accessible Environments;

Hugo Brunner,

- Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire;

The New Road Baptist Church

- representative to be nominated.

In the event of an assessor being unable to continue to act through illness or any other cause, the promoter in consultation with the RIBA will appoint another assessor.

7.0 Prize Money

The following prizes will be awarded:

First Prize: **£5,000**

Five others at: **£2,000**

8.0 Timetable

The programme, which may be subject to variation, is:

Brief Available:	28 th February 2005
Question deadline:	14 th March 2005
Answers to Questions:	21 st March 2005
Submission deadline:	26 th April 2005
Preliminary Assessment:	week commencing 2 nd May 2005
Public Consultation:	2 weeks commencing 9 th May
Presentations to Jury Panel:	week commencing 23 rd May 2005
Announce Results:	week commencing 23 rd May 2005

9.0 Submission Method

The submission of each competitor is to be contained in a single package and is to be sent, carriage paid, addressed to the RIBA Competitions Office, 6 Melbourne Street, Leeds LS2 7PS, clearly marked 'RIBA/Bonn Square' to arrive no later than 4.00pm on Tuesday 26th April 2005.

Competitors requiring proof of delivery should enclose in their package a stamped, sealed envelope addressed to a third party (to preserve anonymity). This will be posted upon receipt of submission.

10.0 Anonymity

Packages and the designs they contain shall be sent in without name, motto or distinguishing mark of any kind and be accompanied by the declaration form provided, which shall be placed in the 'official envelope' provided with these conditions. The RIBA will place a number on each drawing and on the official envelope. The envelope will not be opened until after the selection has been made.

*A successful competitor must be able to satisfy the assessors that he/she is the bona fide author of the design he/she has submitted. **Competitors should retain copies of the designs submitted.***

11.0 Submission Instruction

Competitors should submit their design proposals on a maximum of two A1 lightweight boards. Drawings should illustrate the competitor's design and must include:

- this section to be finalised;*
- a concise typewritten report of not more than 1000 words (2 sheets of A4).*

Competitors are encouraged to also supply their entry on CD.

12.0 Disqualification

A design shall be excluded from the competition:

- a. if received after the latest time stated under submission method;*
- b. if, in the opinion of the assessors, it does not substantially meet the requirements of the brief;*
- c. if a competitor shall disclose his or her identity, or improperly attempt to influence the decision;*
- d. if any of the mandatory requirements of the competition conditions and brief are disregarded.*

13.0 Copyright

The ownership of copyright in the work of all competitors will be in accordance with the Copyright and Patent Act 1988.

14.0 Announcement of Awards and Exhibition

At the conclusion of the competition the RIBA will publish the winning names after communicating it individually to each of the competitors.

All the designs may, by agreement, be retained for a further period by the promoter for the purposes of exhibition and publicity. A date will be announced to competitors after which submissions may be collected.

The promoter or the RIBA may publish illustrations of any design, either separately or together with other designs with or without explanatory text.

The promoter and RIBA Competitions Office will exercise all reasonable care but will not be responsible for loss or damage to drawings that may occur either in transit or during exhibition, storage or packing.

15.0 Site Visits

There are no restrictions regarding visits to the site. Access is open at all times.

16.0 Questions

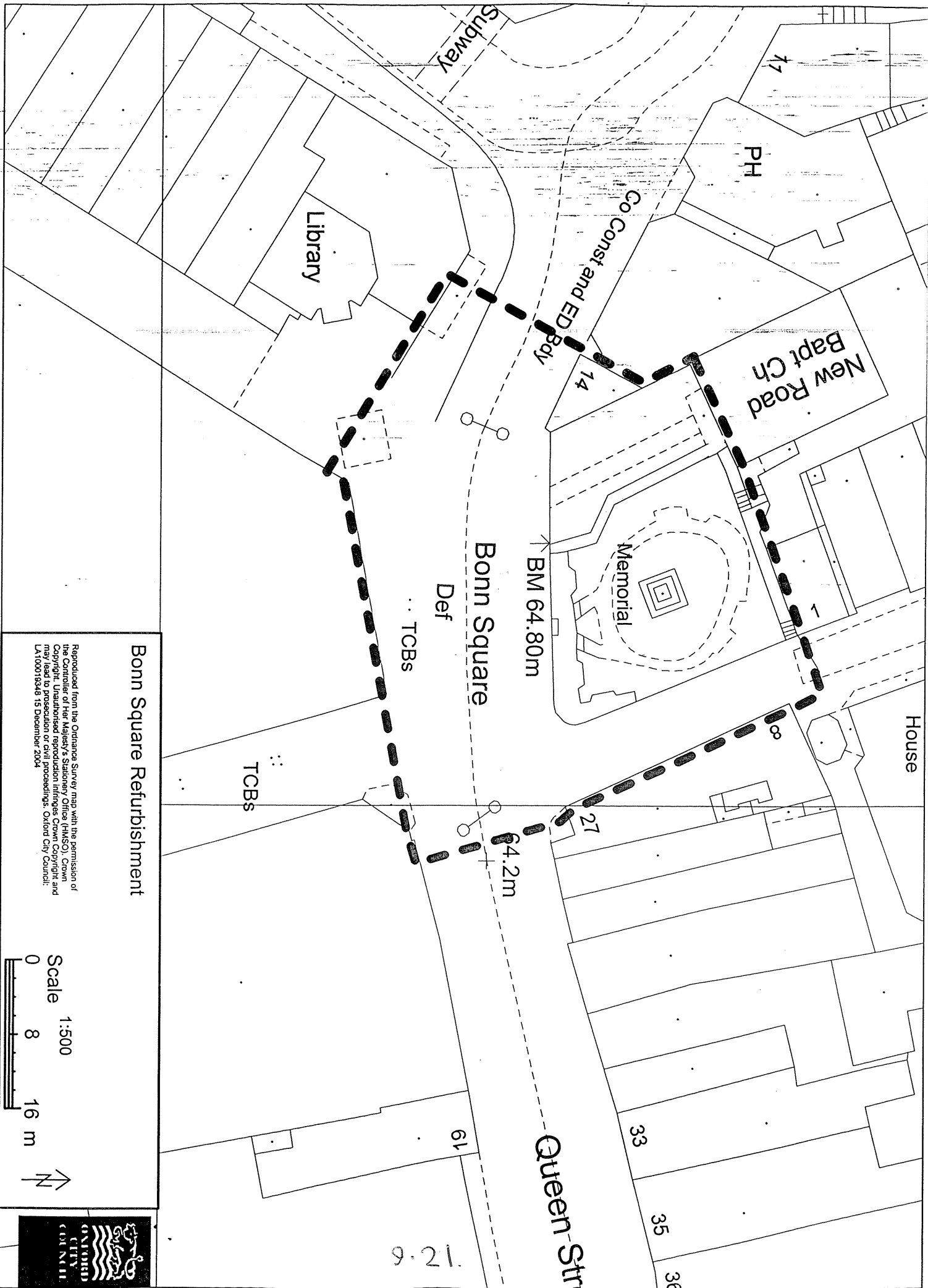
Questions relating to the competition brief and conditions must be addressed in writing to the RIBA Competition Office to arrive on or before 14th March 2005.

17.0 Registration Fee

The registration fee of £35.00 (inclusive of VAT) is non-refundable. VAT receipts are available upon request.

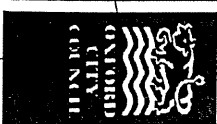
18.0 Competition Management

The competition is being administered by the RIBA Competitions Office, 6 Melbourne Street, Leeds LS2 7PS, telephone 0113 2341335, fax 0113 2460744, to whom any enquiries relating to the general conditions of this competition should be addressed. Close collaboration will be maintained with the RIAS throughout the competition.



Bonn Square Refurbishment

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9.21.



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Oxford City Council
LA 078921
July 2000



9-22

Scale 1:13000

Central (City and University) Conservation Area

 *Bonn Square*

Designated 5 April 1971

Extended 1974 1981 1985 1998

An agenda for the public realm...

- The public realm should be designed to meet the needs of Oxford as a modern, thriving economic and social centre.
- The needs of all groups in society should be recognised and the public realm should therefore be accessible to all.
- The quality aspiration for the project must reflect the highest quality architectural and townscape settings rather than respond to lower quality settings that do not in any case respect the intrinsic character of the town.
- Quality should not be compromised for short term improvements that will not stand the test of time.
- A consistent, unifying design approach to public realm is appropriate to reflect the historical and physical continuity of the City Centre and the special visual linkages that bind the town into a 'picturesque' whole.
- 'Unity' should not imply uniformity. There must be room for richness and idiosyncratic design treatments in the future as there has been in the past. Thus unity should be derived from the use of a range of complementary appropriate materials, a sense of appropriate scale and through the consistent application of quality design and workmanship.
- The setting of Oxford's architecture should be protected by removing clutter from the streets and by ensuring that any new furniture elements are of a high quality, placed and designed to meet aesthetic and functional

- standards that are in keeping with the significance of the place.
- The need to balance historical precedent with modern functional needs and design standards suggests that materials used in the public realm should:
 - continue the established pattern of sandstone / limestone flags and kerbs, whilst allowing for idiosyncrasies in minor streets and laneways.
 - seek to use the most functionally and aesthetically appropriate natural stone materials in carriageways to meet the quality aspirations for the public realm.
 - meet the demands of function and durability required by modern use of streetscapes.
- The renewed public realm should provide opportunities to enhance the evening economy and improve the ambience of the city at night.
- Areas, such as the Castle Site, which have been separated from the City Centre should be linked to the core area with appropriate public realm treatments.
- Measures will need to be put in place to ensure that all stakeholders in the urban environment work together towards a common goal. This will require interdisciplinary working across council departments, liaison between the County and City Councils, involvement of City Centre Management, co-operation from statutory authorities and continuing public involvement.