

**OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE BOARD
Date of meeting 11th July 2005**

Report of: Planning Business Unit Manager

**Title: BONN SQUARE REFURBISHMENT:
a. RESULT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION
b. WORK PROGRAMME FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Ward: CARFAX

**Report author: Mrs. Fiona Bartholomew
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Key Decision: No

Lead Member: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth

Scrutiny responsibility: Environment

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board AGREES:

1. to endorse for possible implementation the first phase of the winning scheme of the Bonn Square International Open Ideas Competition and to conclude individual appointments with the winning design team;
2. to a 2-step approach to implementation of the first phase and that the project manager and contract supervisor for Step 1 be Mrs. Fiona Bartholomew, Principal Planning Officer;
3. to authorise application for all necessary statutory consents and use of up to £175,000 of the current capital allocation for Bonn Square projects for the creation of detailed drawings; costs associated with statutory consents; and site investigations and other preliminary work;
4. to request that Central, South and West Area Committee and the General Purposes Licensing Committee review the existing street trading licences in the vicinity of Bonn Square.

1. **The Committee is asked** to approve the next steps necessary to move the project towards implementation. 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.
2. **Background and context:** The Executive Board (7th February 2005) approved the design brief and conditions for an International Open Ideas Design Competition for Bonn Square. The competition was managed by the Royal Institute of British Architects and ran from 28th February to 26th April 2005. 93 very high quality entries were made including 36 from overseas. An invited Jury Panel made the winning selections. Public consultation took place on 6 short listed schemes and on 24th May 2005, the winning scheme was selected. The Arts Council through Oxford Inspires and the Urban Cultural Fund donated the £15,000 competition prize money. £2000 was awarded to 5 of the schemes with the overall winner receiving £5000.
3. The Jury Panel comprised people who brought considerable relevant expertise to the judging particularly in balancing the requirements of conservation legislation with the need for revitalisation of this prime location within Oxford. It was chaired by John Assael, a leading British architect and Visiting Fellow of Oxford Brookes University who also has qualifications in conservation and planning. Other members were the South East Regional Director of English Heritage, the Chief Executive of the Centre for Accessible Environments; the Head of the School of Planning at Oxford Brookes University; the Oxford University Assessor; the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire; Councillor Maureen Christian; and a representative of the New Road Baptist Church.
4. The winning scheme is on display in the Planning Services reception in Ramsay House and will be on display at this meeting. The winning design team is:
 - Graeme Massie Architects;
 - Davis Langdon, Quantity Surveyors;
 - Buro Happold, Civil Engineers and Planning Supervisors.
5. **The winning scheme** - the decision of the Jury Panel was unanimous and was made strictly against the evaluation criteria stipulated in the competition design brief. Although the scheme is conceptual at this stage - certain elements need discussion and amendment - the Jury Panel was satisfied that it is feasible and capable of being built. They considered that it met successfully the principal design challenge: that of creating a contemporary open space whilst preserving and enhancing the important historic assets of the square. By incorporating a gentle slope down the square, the Tirah Memorial is retained in situ and there is to be no

disturbance to the archaeology of the site. The visibility of the classical façade of the New Road Baptist Church is enhanced and the historic pattern of its forecourt (once a garden) is retained. 3 historic walls (2 of them listed) and railings (listed) and a number of trees are to be lost but the Jury Panel considered that those losses were justified by the overall quality of the scheme including significant new tree planting. The square will be open and accessible and there will be a better flow of pedestrians across it. This will improve the natural surveillance of the square and should help to reduce anti-social behaviour. Seating will be provided which will enhance it as an area for relaxation. It will provide a venue for a range of outdoor cultural and other events. Contemporary lighting columns and pavement lighting are introduced which direct light across the whole square. The lighting columns can incorporate banners for cultural promotion or works of art. Where possible, the surface materials are to be natural and locally sourced. The scheme accommodates heavy goods vehicles across the south side of the square.

6. The winning scheme can be regarded as having two independent elements: a ‘landscaping’ element using hard landscaping, tree planting and lighting to re-style the open space; and a new arts centre based on an extension to 14 New Road. Based on contract values at May 2005, the estimated costs of the two elements are as follows:

‘Landscaping’ element £932,368	Arts centre element £ 722,165
a. £670,000 – building costs b. £140,755 – fees (including architects travel expenses) £121,613 – 15% contingency against unforeseen site conditions = 15% of (a + b)	a. £590,000 – building costs b. £132,165 – fees (excluding architects travel expenses)

7. The ‘arts centre’ element is not fundamental to the success of Bonn Square as a civic square and raises a range of associated issues that have the potential to delay progress on the landscaping works. It is therefore suggested that the ‘landscaping’ element of the scheme should be regarded as a first phase of the overall refurbishment of Bonn Square and given priority over the ‘arts centre’ element which should be regarded as a possible second phase. It is suggested that a further detailed report be brought to the Board on the ‘arts centre’ element of the scheme.
8. **Next steps:** if the Board today accepts the landscaping element of the winning scheme as the one that it wishes to implement, then it is suggested that 2 further phases of work are required. This stepped approach is recommended because before the scheme can proceed to implementation a number of external permissions need to be obtained and additional external capital finance needs to be secured.

Step 1 Authorisation being sought today	1. appoint winning design team; 2. nominate Project Manager/Contract Supervisor; 3. carry out detailed site investigations; 4. prepare detailed drawings; 5. apply for all the necessary external consents: planning permission, conservation area consent, listed building consent, diocesan faculty, highways act consents; 6. obtain the required additional external funding; and, 7. investigate the pattern of street trading in the vicinity of Bonn Square.
Step 2 Possibly summer 2006	When all the above is in place, for the Board to receive a further report for major project approval.

Authorisation for Step 1

9. **Appointment of Design Team** – given that the Council has invested in a design competition from which a winning scheme has been selected, it would be inappropriate to invite alternative designers to tender for the detailed design work. The unique nature of this project means that the Business Unit Manager may waive the normal procurement requirement to seek 4 alternative quotes for the work. The Board is therefore asked to authorise that individual appointments be concluded with the winning design team.

10. **Nomination of Project Manager/Contract Supervisor** - the Project Manager for Bonn Square since September 2004 has been Mrs Fiona Bartholomew, Principal Planning Officer seconded from Planning Services. The Board is asked to renew this post for a year from September 2005 and to give the post-holder responsibility for supervising the design team contracts and any other contracts associated with preliminary investigations.

11. **Detailed site investigations** – unforeseen site conditions have the potential to escalate costs, incur delays and impose design amendments. These are risks that need to be avoided if possible. It is therefore considered necessary to carry out detailed site investigations at this early stage of the project in order to understand full the condition of the site and make any necessary allowances in the detailed design. The investigations may cover for example any unrecorded archaeology, underground services, the health of the trees and other environmental conditions. A contingency of about £120,000 (15% of the contract value of the scheme plus fees) has been allowed to cover this work. The Board is asked to authorise the use of the current capital allocation to pay for such preliminary site investigations (see paragraph 13 below). The level of financial contingency required can be adjusted in the light of the results of

those investigations and reported to the Board at the end of step 1 of this project.

12. **Fees for preparation of detailed drawings** - excluding VAT, the design team fees for this work will be £54,232.00, as follows:

Graeme Massie Architects	£26,360.00	Based on the indicative fee scale graph for standard services (Urban Rehabilitation, Pedestrianisation, Renewal; complexity scale rating 4) published by the Landscape Institute (Engaging a Landscape Consultant, Guidance on Fees, September 2002) including £900 capped expenses.
Buro Happold for civil engineering and architectural lighting design	£21,842.00	As defined by the normal services in Association of Consulting Engineers Conditions of Engagement 2002, Agreement B(1) inclusive of normal expenses.
Davis Langdon for quantity surveying consultancy work	£6,030.00	As defined by the normal services in RICS Conditions of Engagement inclusive of normal expenses.

13. **Payment of design fees and other preliminary costs** - at present there is £231,700 in the capital programme for Bonn Square projects (redesign of Bonn Square £160,000 plus reduction in anti-social behaviour £71,700). The Board is asked to authorise the use of up to £175,000 of this money to meet: the above design fees (£55,000); the costs associated with statutory consents; and the costs of site investigations and other preliminary work (£120,000). The risk in this is that the costs would be abortive if the scheme does not proceed to implementation (because the necessary permissions were not given or sufficient funding could not be secured). In that case these costs will be recouped from relevant Business Unit budgets.

14. **Meeting the capital costs of the scheme** – as noted above, the winning design is estimated to cost £932,400 and the Council’s current allocation for Bonn Square projects is £231,000. The additional funding required is therefore in the order of £700,000. It is considered that by using the winning design in discussions with interested parties, it will be feasible to secure this funding externally. For example:
- based on previous discussions it is estimated that at least £150,000 may be available in association with the Westgate Centre refurbishment;
 - the business community and the University have shown interest in giving financial support to the project;
 - it may be possible to harness money from the South East England Development Agency and the County Council through the West End Steering Group; and,
 - discussions have already started with the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant from the Public Parks Initiative.

15. A full report will be brought back to Executive Board on the funding of this scheme at the end of Step 1. Approval for any additional capital expenditure for this project will be sought at that time although there is no expectation that City Council funding will increase.

16. **Staffing Implications:** none for Step 1, other than as specified above.

17. **Street Traders** – the services provided by street traders have both positive and negative impacts on the life of the Square. It is considered therefore that their current number and locations need to be reviewed in the context of the winning design and the function of the Square after it has been refurbished. If there are to be any changes to these licenses then it is important that the street traders are made aware of this as soon as possible. Given the competition process, it is considered that today's meeting is the first opportunity for such consideration. For example, it is considered that the daytime coffee/drinks stand at the foot of the former graveyard and the evening hot food seller at the southern end of New Inn Hall Street will detract from the considerable investment being made in the improvement of the square by: intruding into the openness of the redesigned space; by restricting movement across and through the space; and by restricting the flexibility of use of the square as a space for public performances, other open-air meetings and exhibitions. The Board is therefore asked to request that Central, South and West Area Committee and the General Purposes Licensing Committee review the existing street trading licences in the vicinity of Bonn Square with the aim of achieving a pattern of street trading which is in harmony with the winning design and Council's vision for the function of Bonn Square when it has been refurbished.

Risks

18. **Procedural and financial** – implementation of the scheme would not go ahead if the necessary consents were not given, or if the necessary additional funding could not be secured. These issues have been given very careful consideration whilst drawing up the design brief, during the competition and as part of the judging. Considerable effort has been made at all stages to keep as wide a range as possible of interested parties informed about the 'design' process, and where possible involved in it. In this way it is hoped that these interests are properly served by the scheme and that the risks of any unforeseen procedural or financial difficulties are minimised. The 2-step process now being recommended further underlines the need for careful consideration of the scheme at each key stage of its progress towards implementation in order to minimise risks.

19. **Physical** – as discussed in paragraph 11 above: it is anticipated that by carrying out early site investigations the risks of unforeseen site conditions imposing financial or other burdens on the scheme will be minimised.

Options

20. The design competition has demonstrated a variety of ways in which the Council's vision for Bonn Square might be achieved. An expert jury panel chose a winning scheme. The costs and risks associated with that winning scheme have been presented in this report together with a suggested work programme for implementation. The Board now has a number of options:

- (i) it may endorse this report and authorise the actions contained in it;
- (ii) it may ask for an alternative scheme, in which case a full report will be brought back to a future meeting; or,
- (iii) it may decide not to pursue the improvement of Bonn Square in which case a report will be brought back to a future meeting on how this will affect the Council's ambitions for the City centre.

Recommendation

21. The Board is asked to endorse this report and authorise the actions contained in it.

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: correspondence from Graeme Massie Architects concerning fees