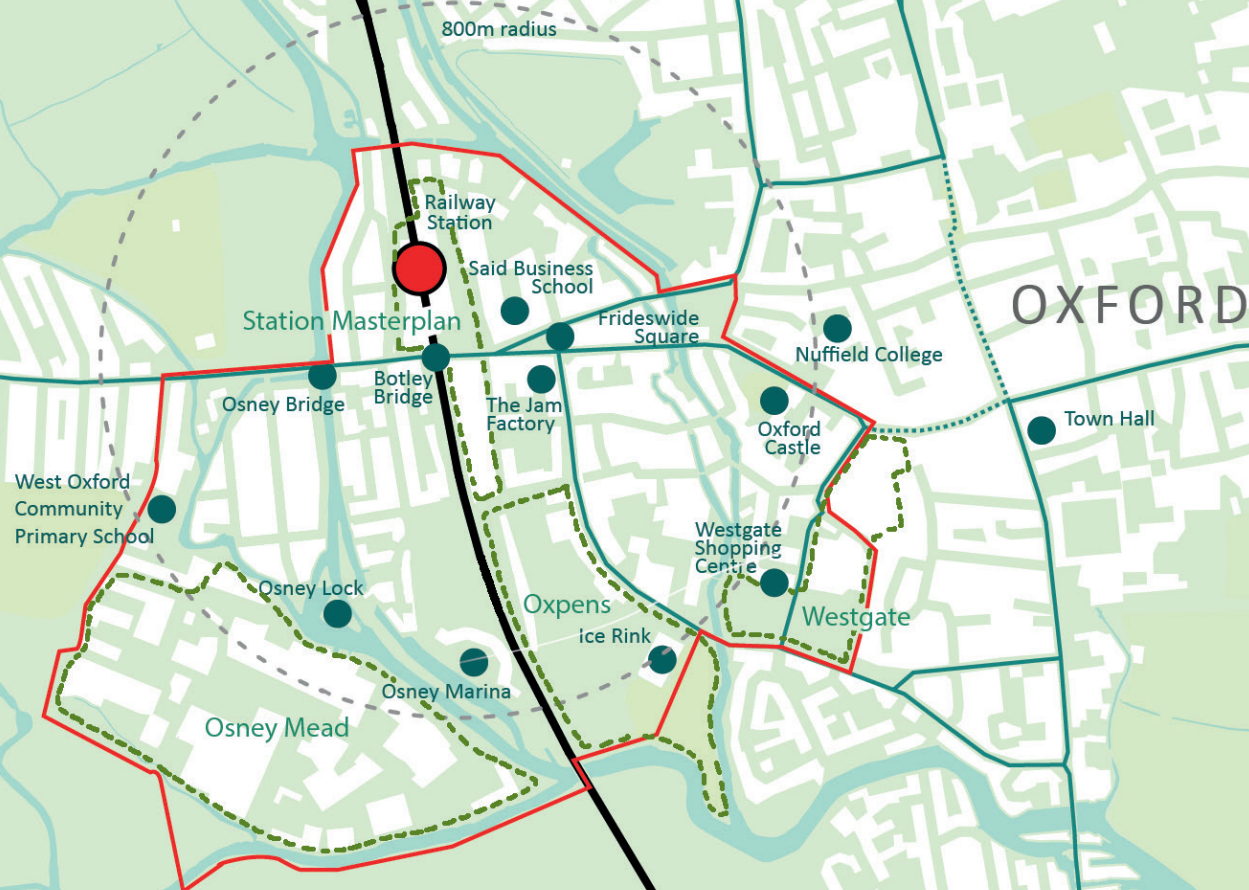


Oxford

Central West

A new city quarter



Earlier this year a workshop was held in Oxford to look at the zone around the station known as Oxford Central West. This area is crucial to the future of the city and is perhaps the most extraordinary underdeveloped area of any historic city in the UK. Furthermore, with plans for the redevelopment of the station being promoted and masterplans being announced for Oxpens and Osney Mead, there is a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the area into a new quarter for the city, fit for the 21st century.

There was concern at the workshop that the potential of the area will not be fully exploited unless the various developments are coordinated. Yet there seemed to be no mechanism to do this. A group of urbanists and urban designers therefore resolved to organise a charrette to explore a phys-

ical vision for the whole of the area. This was done on a pro bono basis and was not intended to challenge any of the proposals currently being developed. Rather the aim was to explore how the various proposals could be joined together to create a coherent urban quarter and better gateway to Oxford.

The 200 acre site is currently a fragmented and largely forgotten part of the city. It is susceptible to flood and sliced up by the railway line, river and canal so that east/west movement is very difficult. Despite its proximity to the centre of Oxford it feels isolated and despite the character of the canal it does not have the appeal of a valued area like Jericho. It should be one of the most valuable parts of the city but the constraints make development difficult and the railway station redevelopment remains unfunded. All of this can be overcome potentially with a coordinated approach.

-
- Leisure
 - Employment
 - Residential
 - Transport
 - Retail
 - Parking

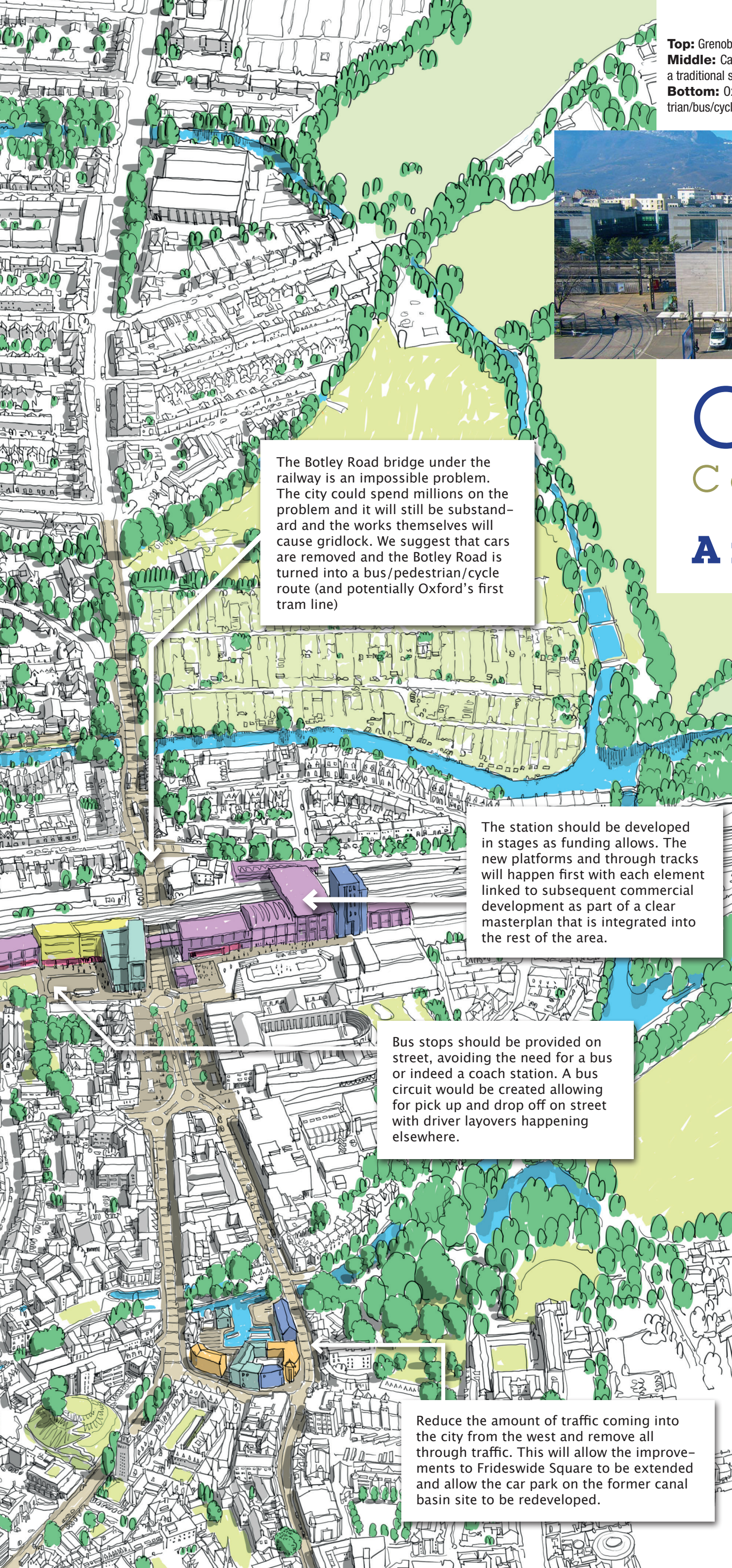
The University has released plans for the redevelopment of Osney Mead to transform the industrial estate into a knowledge park. This will include engineering, laboratories and a range of business space from start up accommodation to headquarter buildings. The plan also includes student and graduate housing.

The area should be unified by a pedestrian cycle network with five new light bridges to create a web of routes that link a series of existing and new public spaces as part of each of the sites.

A new traffic route to allow Botley Road to be closed and to open up Osney Mead. With a well-designed bridge over the river and railway linking to a new junction with Oxpens Road next to the Ice Rink. Cars will use this route to get to the station car parks.

The SPD for the Oxpens site proposes a mix of medium rise mixed use accommodation along Oxpens Road. The southern part of the site is in the flood plain and is retained as green space.

The Westgate development is currently under construction and will include 80,000m² of retail space. A basement car park will provide up to 1,100 parking spaces.



The Botley Road bridge under the railway is an impossible problem. The city could spend millions on the problem and it will still be substandard and the works themselves will cause gridlock. We suggest that cars are removed and the Botley Road is turned into a bus/pedestrian/cycle route (and potentially Oxford's first tram line)

The station should be developed in stages as funding allows. The new platforms and through tracks will happen first with each element linked to subsequent commercial development as part of a clear masterplan that is integrated into the rest of the area.

Bus stops should be provided on street, avoiding the need for a bus or indeed a coach station. A bus circuit would be created allowing for pick up and drop off on street with driver layovers happening elsewhere.

Reduce the amount of traffic coming into the city from the west and remove all through traffic. This will allow the improvements to Frideswide Square to be extended and allow the car park on the former canal basin site to be redeveloped.

Top: Grenoble Station has been redeveloped linked to a new office quarter.
Middle: Cannes Station has incorporated all of the station functions as part of a traditional street scene.
Bottom: Oxford Road Corridor in Manchester is being converted to a pedestrian/bus/cycle only route, despite being a major traffic route into the city.



Oxford

Central West

A new city quarter



There is a way of making the whole area into somewhere that is coherent and connected and which makes the most of its unique sense of place. There is also a way of procuring a new station at a realistic budget, dealing with congestion on the Botley Road and even sorting out the bridge without spending millions. All that is needed is an area-wide perspective.

The key messages:

1. We should be aiming to substantially reduce the amount of traffic coming into the city from the west and certainly remove all through traffic. This will allow the improvements to Frideswide Square to be extended and allow the car park on the former canal basin site to be redeveloped.

2. The Botley Road bridge under the railway is an impossible problem. The city could spend millions on the problem and it will still be substandard and the works themselves will cause gridlock. We suggest that cars are removed and the Botley Road is turned into a bus/pedestrian/cycle route (and potentially Oxford's first tram line)

3. Bus stops should be provided on street, avoiding the need for a bus or indeed a coach station. A bus circuit would be created allowing for pick up and drop off on street with driver layovers happening elsewhere.

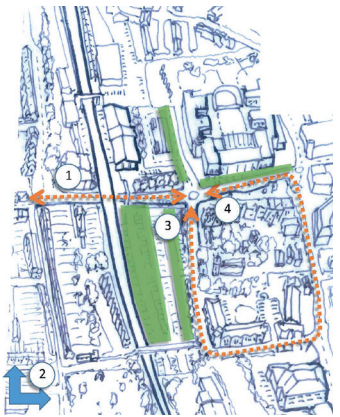
4. To achieve this we suggest creating a traffic route through Osney Mead with a well-designed bridge over the river and railway linking to a new junction with Oxpens Road next to the Ice Rink. This will unlock the development of Osney Mead and allow access to the new Westmead shopping centre while relieving pressure on the station area.
5. The area should be unified by a pedestrian cycle network. We suggest that this will require the five new lightweight bridges to create a web of routes that link a series of existing and new public spaces.

6. Commercial and residential development on the Osney Mead and Oxpens sites should be undertaken incrementally. A comprehensive approach that requires sites to be cleared before work starts will mean that nothing ever happens.

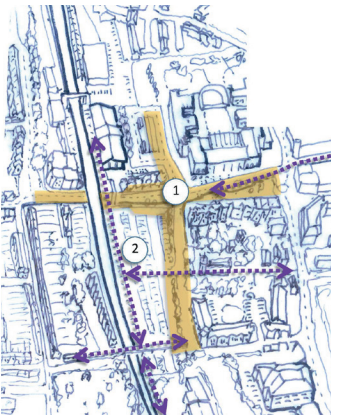
7. The station should similarly be developed in stages allowing the platform work to be undertaken first, with each element linked to commercial development as part of a clear masterplan that is integrated into the rest of the area.

8. This all requires a mechanism to coordinate development across the area and to use part of the value generated to fund the necessary infrastructure.

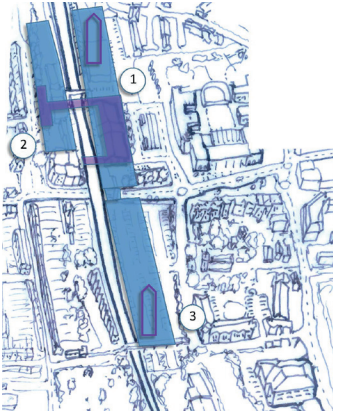
The Station:



1. Botley Road to become a public transport/pedestrian/cycle corridor
2. New Road through Osney Mead for through traffic
3. Re-distributed public transport pick up areas on street zones - liner bus station on carpark site.
4. Coach/Bus route



1. Extend public zone to include under Botley bridge and create a unified 'Plaza' Link a public transport plan to the plaza
2. Improve routes for pedestrians to and from the station linking new development zones and routes to and from the centre



1. New North South development zone linking station site with carpark site. Complimentary functions to station zone, hotel, office, small retail. Overstation development.
2. New station within development site, access from Botley side with new drop off zone. New bridge connections
3. New gateway to the city



1. Henk Bauman: Urbanist (AoU, Urban Impulse)
2. Christian Bocci: Station Architect (AoU, Western Williamson + Partners)
3. Roger Evans: Urban Designer (AoU, Studio REAL)
4. Nicholas Falk: Economist (AoU, URBED)
5. Helen McHollan: Landscape Designer (Illman Young)
6. Benjamin Palle: Urban Designer (URBED)
7. Jon Rowland: Urban Designer (AoU, JRUD)
8. David Rudlin: Urban Designer (AoU, URBED) Talking photo
9. Biljiana Savic: Urbanist (AoU)

The Academy of Urbanism brought together a group of professionals on a pro bono basis over an intensive two day period to look in a coordinated way at the development of the Oxford Central West area.



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