



<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>EDC 48: Gogar Transport Interchange</b>
<b>Details:</b>	<b>Train / tram station and associated areas / connections</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Edinburgh</b>
<b>Use type:</b>	<b>Civic / Public Realm / Infrastructure</b>
<b>Client Developer:</b>	<b>Transport Scotland / Network Rail</b>
<b>Lead Designer(s):</b>	<b>Mott MacDonald Engineers</b>
<b>Planning Authority:</b>	<b>City of Edinburgh Council</b>
<b>Planning Status and Ref:</b>	<b>Submission of Planning (ref. 09/02589/FUL)</b>
<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>22 October 2009</b>

## **Introduction**

This report relates to draft proposals for a new interchange at Gogar, to link Scotland's rail network with the Edinburgh tram line and Edinburgh Airport, presented at an A+DS Design Review meeting held on 29 September 2009 at Bakehouse Close, Edinburgh. Initial design proposals were presented at an A+DS Design Review meeting held on 23 June 2009, and the designs as subsequently developed were presented to staff and reviewed internally with members of the original panel.

## **A+DS Views**

### **1 General**

#### **1.1 Background**

When we first saw the designs for this new interchange in June 2009, they were very much in outline and largely predicated on initial engineering and movement requirements. The site lies within the area covered by the West Edinburgh Strategic Design Framework (WESDF, currently in draft) which states that the interchange should be a 'landmark building' with good local connections. We suggested that, as an international gateway and already identified within the National Planning Framework as of national significance, the project had enormous potential. It needed to function at both local and national level, and offered an opportunity to showcase to the world Scotland's ability to resolve complex issues through creative design processes, and provide buildings and places that work well for visitors and locals alike.

#### **1.2 Previous comments**

In responding to the initial designs, we raised a number of issues that needed to be addressed if the full potential of the project was to be realised, and the requirements of the WESDF satisfied. We were concerned that the project had, to date, been conceived as a set of disconnected parts, with separate design teams involved in the design of these parts. A more co-ordinated design strategy was required, encompassing station buildings, adjacent spaces, subways, paths and access roads. A strong overall design idea, which integrated a landscape and architectural vision with the engineering requirements, was critical to the realisation of an interchange that would operate efficiently, and be a memorable and enjoyable experience for locals and visitors alike. An

analysis of the urban and landscape context was required and we suggested that a visionary landscape architect needed to be brought into the team.

### 1.3 Design Development

The designs have developed substantially since that initial review, and we have been impressed with the way in which the project team have engaged with us, and reconsidered their approach in the light of comments made at various stages. The development of a landscape strategy to address the quality of spaces and connections within the site and the wider area, and the subsequent reworking of the site layout and building diagram has resulted in a much more promising proposition than was originally presented. The proposed interchange now appears to work well functionally, the different elements are better connected to each other and the surrounding area, and the building, being more compact, is potentially easier to use for passengers and staff.

### 1.4 Current Position

The project has now reached a point at which it is due to be submitted for Planning Permission and contract documents are being prepared. As stated above, the current proposals show promise, but still require considerable design development if a landmark building of the quality that is aspired to is to be realised. It is vital that this commitment to high quality design is maintained through to the delivery of the completed building and that the work required to refine the designs and resolve the building details is carried out prior to the completion of the tender process.

## **2.0 Building form**

### 2.1 Relationship between tram and rail station

In our earlier report, we expressed concern that the approach in which the designs for the two stations were being developed by different design teams was unlikely to result in an elegant and coherent solution for the entire site, or one with a distinct identity. We also commented on the apparently long and not particularly attractive journey that travellers would have to make between the two. The current designs resolve many of the problems previously highlighted, with shorter travel distances and a building diagram that more successfully integrates the two stations in design terms. The building now reads as more of a unified whole, with elements introduced which link the different parts, such as the long connecting wall and the shared common transfer space, whilst still maintaining a logical subdivision of ownership between the tram and train operators for construction and maintenance. This integrated approach should extend into the detailed resolution of the proposals, right down to signage and detailing of the materials when procured by different parties.

### 2.2 Integrity of overall form

The design team have worked with a complex brief to produce a design with a series of potentially exciting and well connected spaces for the users of the Interchange to enjoy. But the building is not a simple one – it is geometrically complex, and there are some disjointed relationships in particular areas which could be better resolved. Noting that this will be a well used, very visible and overlooked public building, from both the road and the air, we would hope to see the designs developed further at a detailed level to achieve a high level of formal resolution. Particular areas we would recommend addressing would be the continuity of the transparent roof from the train platforms to the concourse;

the junction of this roof with the diagonal 'front wall'; the materiality of the wall and the nature of the openings in it to ensure that its integrity is maintained, and the relationship of this wall to the curved wall behind the tram stop. We would re-emphasize the importance of clarity and simplicity in the detailed design and construction of a building of this type, without which there is a danger that the end result will appear confused and unresolved, and not deliver the landmark building called for.

### **3.0 Landscape proposals and wider context**

#### **3.1 Landscape Strategy**

We welcome the development of a landscape analysis and strategy to address issues of connectivity, the relationship between the various transport systems and the design of the spaces outside the building. The way in which this strategy has informed the design of a much more integrated and functional building diagram is noted, and underlines the importance of addressing landscape issues at an early stage.

#### **3.2 Place making**

We are pleased to see the inclusion or improvement in a number of areas previously highlighted, such as the visual and movement links of the station to the surrounding neighbourhoods, improved relationships of the bus stop and car parking to the pedestrian spaces outside the stations, the incorporation of views to the local countryside and surrounding landmarks, and the commitment to the high quality architectural treatment and lighting of the underpass to the Gyle shopping centre. We look to see a continuing commitment to delivering high quality in these aspects of the designs as the project progresses, to ensure that there are pleasant places for people to use in and around the interchange, and safe and attractive connections to the surrounding area.

#### **3.3 Planting**

Some of the detailed landscape proposals presented, such as the use of spring bulbs on the stepped gabion terraces around the tram stop, are potentially dramatic and attractive - although we do question whether the curved line of trees extending under the concourse canopy is a practical proposition. A maintenance strategy should be developed to ensure that these proposals will be successful in the long term.

### **4.0 Procurement and delivery process**

#### **4.1 Design development**

Although the proposals as developed so far show promise, they still require considerable design development, under the control of the architect, to achieve a satisfactory solution. The quality of materials and the detailed design of the junctions between different elements of the building will be critical to the success of the project, and standard details are likely to be inappropriate in many cases because of the irregular geometries involved and the particular architectural expression called for. These detail considerations need to be taken to the level of small-scale items such as finishes and signage, to achieve a robust, clear and refined solution. Sufficient time is now required in the upcoming phases to allow this design development to take place and to realise the plans as a satisfying whole, prior to the completion of the tender process.

#### 4.2 Opportunities for design refinement and detail design

The procurement process as currently envisaged allows no opportunity to carry out the large and small-scale architectural design resolution needed to achieve the high standards required by this National Development. We acknowledge the commitment to incorporating high construction standards in the written specifications for the tender, but without having developed the designs and drawing the various elements and junctions in advance, and in more detail than currently shown, it will be difficult and sometimes impossible to specify them such that the quality desired will be achieved. While clearly timescales are tight to match the delivery dates for the new transport systems, we believe it is vital to find a way to consider and describe the building's various elements and junctions, many of which will be non-standard, within the tendering procedure, such that this further architectural consideration happens in a way that can be adequately controlled by the architect and approved by the client and planning authority.

#### **Conclusion**

We welcome the project team's engagement in developing the Interchange into a well organised and distinctive building, and their considerable progress in bringing together the separate parts of the different transport systems into a compact and well connected facility with potentially attractive public spaces. We feel the proposals require a further degree of architectural and landscape design resolution, at both large and small scale, to make the Interchange into a landmark project, with the required integrity and clarity to reach the high standards demanded by such a highly used public building and a designated National Development project. It is vital that this design resolution is permitted in the upcoming phases of the procurement process to be able to build in quality through to the delivery of the project, and in its long term maintenance. If this can be accommodated then there is potential for this to become a really significant project, by making this gateway to Scotland and Edinburgh into both an asset for the locality and a showcase for the nation's design and engineering skills. We look forward to future developments and wish to be kept informed of progress on this important project.

#### **Appendix**

##### **Presenting Team:**

Network Rail	John Rennie
Transport Scotland	Kevin Murray
Mott MacDonald Engineering	David Stillie, Ross Mitchell, Shaun Ruffles

##### **A+DS:**

Chair:	Ric Russell
Panel:	Alison Blamire, Karen Cadell, and Brian Veitch
Staff lead:	David Seel
Staff:	Angela Williams, Tony Reilly, Linda Jansch

##### **Other participants:**

Planning Case Officer	Kevin Murphy, City of Edinburgh Council
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