

# Design Reviews: Crossrail

# When the Crossrail Act went through Parliament in July 2008, it was the culmination of years of work to make the economic case for a new rail system that will increase London's transport capacity by 10%.

Crossrail, scheduled to open in 2017, is the largest single project in Transport for London's investment programme. It will provide high-frequency rail access into and across London and will run 118 km from Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west, through central London to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east. This will bring an additional 1.5 million people within 60 minutes' commuting distance of London's key business districts.

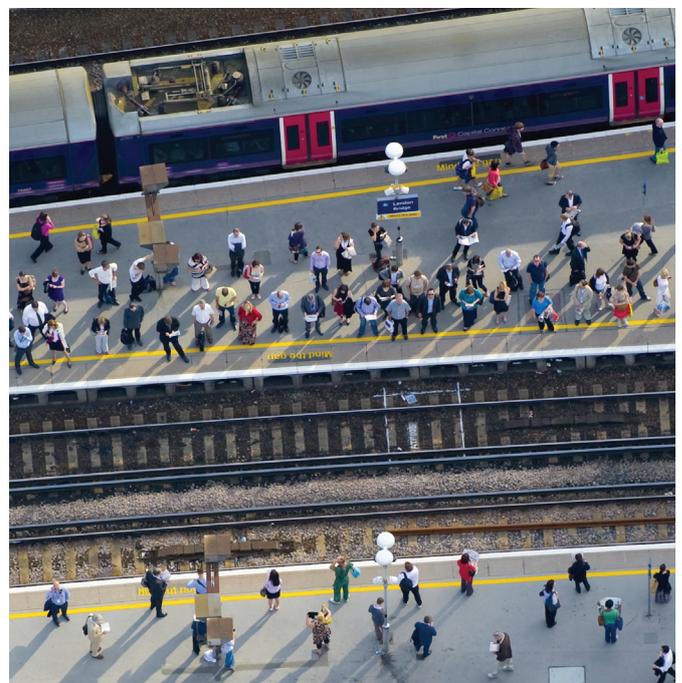
Crossrail invited Cabe to set up a multi-disciplinary Design Review panel to bring an independent perspective to the scheme and to scrutinise the design quality of the stations. The panel reviewed all of the inner London stations as well as some in South East London. In total it conducted 80 reviews.

## How the Crossrail panel works

The Crossrail panel will assess the designs for the exterior of station buildings, entrances and ticket halls, as well for other parts of the development requiring consent from the relevant planning authority. This includes what will be built above and alongside the stations.

It will look at issues such as aesthetic quality, how the proposed buildings relate to their surroundings, quality of materials, clarity of passenger access, inclusiveness, and accessibility. Designs will be reviewed at early stages, allowing time for the panel's advice to be taken on board.

The design review process for Crossrail follows our existing procedures. We publish Crossrail reviews if a scheme is the subject of a planning application. All other reviews are confidential.



# **Abbey Woods**

**A new Crossrail station for  
Abbey Woods, providing new  
facilities and public space  
around the station building.**

# Designed by Fereday Pollard and Urban Movement

London Borough of Bexley / Royal Borough of Greenwich

Planning reference: 13/01155/FUL (London Borough of Bexley)/13/1791/K (Royal Borough of Greenwich)

23 July 2012

We welcome the opportunity to review this scheme. The neighbourhood around the station has been challenged by a number of insensitive, post-war infrastructure projects, which have contributed to the fragmentation of the area, and the delivery of the new transport interchange presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to reorganise and regenerate the centre of Abbey Wood. It also has the potential to trigger further, inward investment for the surrounding communities. We are delighted to see such a positive approach being taken to the architecture, urban realm and community, and believe that the project has the potential to be an exemplar of sub-urban regeneration.

## Urban integration

We recognise the benefits of cross borough working, so it is positive that both local authorities (London Borough of Bexley and Royal Borough of Greenwich) are willing to seize this current development opportunity as a catalyst for broader regeneration within this neighbourhood. The proposal has the potential to deliver much needed public space and to provide a welcoming arrival point, including the taxi drop off, thoughtfully arranged blue badge parking and the seating area at the northern station entrance. We applaud the design team's ambition to remodel the elevated section of Harrow Manor Way, by narrowing carriageways and introducing footpaths and cycle lanes. We agree that, on balance, a slightly longer journey via a sensitively remodelled road that is made hospitable and safe for pedestrians is preferable to re-providing the ramps around the station.

The proposed glazed brick, in the under-croft of the elevated road, seems to lift the dark spaces. Furthermore, a sensitive lighting strategy for these areas could improve the atmosphere; this could be part of a comprehensive lighting strategy that embraces the whole station development and surrounding public spaces. There is potential to produce an envelope of light that marks the event of passing through the interchange by various modes of transport and we recommend the client and design team cooperate closely with the two boroughs to deliver this aspect of the scheme.

## Access

The site is particularly challenged by public access difficulties. The existing ramps and elevated walkway create a profound north-south divide; offering an awkward, unpleasant and a potentially threatening experience, particularly for people with impaired mobility. Therefore we

are pleased to see a comprehensive reorganisation of the urban realm, directed at providing safe, convenient, high quality, walkable routes. The decision not to re-provide the unsightly and inconvenient public ramps is to be applauded. With the population of elderly people set to expand, good provision of lifts will become ever more essential; with the arrival of the new Crossrail line, there will also be many more passengers travelling to airports, carrying heavy luggage. So we warmly welcome the provision of two well-dimensioned, public lifts at both the North and South of the railway lines.

## The elevated concourse

We welcome the level access route from the bus stops directly onto an elevated, main entrance concourse. The simplified road crossing and a common surface treatment to visually pull the elevated road into a large new plaza works well. It is necessary to strategically re-balance the demands of the road user with those of the pedestrian, so that vehicles move more slowly through the new plaza. We encourage an on-going study that investigates the impact of reorganising vehicular and pedestrian movements around the interchange; for example and suggest that the client and design team work closely with the two boroughs and Transport for London to develop an appropriate solution.

## The station building

We support the strategy of placing an elevated concourse and ticket hall above the railway lines, with a simple, legible and direct route down to the two new island platforms. The station building offers a high level of transparency, which celebrates the exciting visual connections down to the new Crossrail trains on departure, and out to Abbey Wood on arrival.

The dynamic architectural expression is in sympathy with the movement of people and flow of vehicles around the interchange. We are encouraged by the elegant floating timber roof and grand staircases that splay out to welcome public. It is positive that the lift access, for people with impaired mobility, has equal visual weight.

The success of the scheme will depend on the quality of materials and details, durability and low maintenance. We welcome the palette of materials and the thought that informed the detailing, for example the use of the dramatic glu-lam lattice. The transition from the timber of the wall cladding to the timber of the roof will be a critical junction for the architectural expression of this building.

# **Custom House Crossrail Station**

**A new railway station located in Newham, East London. The station provides a bridge link to the ExCel Centre.**

# Designed by Allies + Morrison

London Borough of Newham

Planning reference: 12/00036/AOD

30 January 2012

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## Urban integration

Significant development has taken place around ExCel and the Royal Victoria Dock in recent years, however poor connections across the tracks mean that the benefits of this have not been maximised for the neighbourhood to the north. In our view, one of the most important benefits of the new Crossrail station at Custom House is its potential to provide a new route across the railway tracks, linking the residential area to the north of Victoria Dock Road to ExCel and the docks to the south.

Unfortunately, the current proposal does not include a detailed design for the link between the station and the community to the North. This link is an essential part of the station's urban integration strategy, however we understand that an arrangement is in place to ensure such a future link will be delivered once the local masterplan has been resolved.

## Station design

Clever use has been made of the long narrow site to create an ordered arrangement of canopies and colonnades that will make Custom House a distinctive and pleasant station to use. The station design uses prefabricated building components for efficient construction. However, we are concerned about the robustness of the material palette and find the current elevational composition of coloured panels uninspiring.

We are disappointed by the proposed use of engineering brick along Victoria Dock Road without any element of public art, for example using coloured glazed brickwork, to enliven this long stretch of blank wall; however we are pleased to be assured that this wall will be kept free of advertisements, and we hope, graffiti.

On the accessibility of the station, we think that single lifts up to the footbridge and from concourse down to platform level is not sufficient. In the event of a lift breakdown, it will be impossible for anyone unable to use stairs to access Crossrail services at Custom House. We are disappointed that a second lift has not been provided at these points and believe that the lack of escalators between the platforms and the concourse would exacerbate the problem in the event of a lift failure. In our view, it is important to provide the same high quality of passenger experience on Crossrail in this more challenged part of the capital as one expects to find in the city centre.

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We are also concerned about the design of the pedestrian bridge link from Excel that incorporates two sets of steps and associated ramps with handrails. This configuration seems incompatible with efficient circulation, especially at peak periods. The volume of commuters being corralled through three narrow gaps will cause congestion at busy times and limit the ability of the route to accommodate wheelchair users, cyclists and wheel-based luggage simultaneously.

The bridge would be much improved if it could incorporate a single gradient at 1:21 or flatter over its length, eliminating the need for steps and ramps with handrails. The UK Regulations and Codes of Practice on this subject including the recent Code of Practice for 'Accessible Train Station Design for Disabled People' (DfT September 2010) concur on the 1:21 'rule', as do EU guides.

# **Tottenham Court Road East**

**A proposal for two blocks on Tottenham Court Road and Charring Cross Road in Central London. Block A is a commercial office block and Block B incorporates a new performance venue.**

# Designed by AHMM

## City of Westminster

Planning reference: 11/10045/FULL

11 November 2011

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### Public Realm Masterplan

The major construction work for Crossrail's Tottenham Court Road West station creates the opportunity for a transformation of St Giles Circus and the surroundings to Centre Point. We recognise the collaborative process involving the local authorities, Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Design for London and Crossrail to take advantage of this opportunity. However, such an important location where large numbers of people circulate in major public spaces is an area where one would expect to find public toilets and we are disappointed that no such provision is being made.

We believe that the proposed row of trees in Sutton Row should be planted along the line of Charing Cross Road to frame the eastern side of the Square, rather than dividing the Square, as proposed in the planning application.

### Block B

We welcome the arrangement of block B, with the theatre in the lower part of the building, offering direct access from the new square, and the office space located on the upper floors. The theatre foyer and bar will bring activity to the new square, with the opportunity for the catering to be extended to the outdoor space.

There are potentially awkward conflicts of scale between the low glazed pavilion entrance to the offices and the tall apse of the church behind and indeed between the church and Block B. These junctions require careful attention in detailed design.

We welcome the choice of an all-embracing ETFE wrap to enclose the whole building, with the opportunity it creates for visual connections between the inside and outside. We think that the position of circulation routes, just within the eastern side of the building, will lend interest to views of the building from Charing Cross Road. We also see the prospect of some unusual views of St Patrick's Church from circulation and break out spaces in the theatre. We believe that glimpses of the cladding from Soho Square will provide an exciting backdrop to the church tower.

We are encouraged by the ideas for enlivening the temporary cladding of the ventilation shafts on Goslett Yard with public art. This rather troublesome service area, that might attract antisocial activity, could become a feature of the area that is regularly visited and enjoyed, if a more permanent proposal for public art were to come forward.

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### Block A

We support the use of the larger site fronting Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road for large floor offices that will be a welcome addition to the mix of uses in the area, and will cross-subsidise the inclusion of the theatre in Block B. The scale and massing of the development has clearly been the subject of much discussion with the City of Westminster. We are aware that the scheme has been through several design iterations to establish its current proportions which the local authority broadly support. We think that the facade details are well considered and elegantly proportioned.

# **Tottenham Court Road West**

**A proposal for two residential blocks, sited over the new western Crossrail station ticket hall on Oxford Street, Dean Street and Fareham Street in Central London.**

# Designed by Hawkins Brown

## City of Westminster

Planning reference: 11/10055/FULL

11 November 2011

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We support the use of black reconstituted stone that ties together the two distinct phases of station and over site development for block C. However, we have some concerns about the internal quality of some of the residential accommodation. We support the use of different materials and massing to distinguish the Oxford Street and Soho blocks from each other, this reflects the distinct roles and context of the two buildings. We also support the aspiration to create a new public space related to the station entrance on Dean Street and welcome the realignment of Fareham Street.

### Block C

We consider the building to be of an appropriate height for its location. The 'crown' to the building is sufficiently set back and differentiated from the black reconstituted stone façade to minimise the visual impact of this upper storey. We welcome the detailed refinement of crown, the perforated cladding and parapet treatment.

We have some concern that although this is a residential building, the double height ordering of the framework bestows it with more of the scale and characteristics of a commercial office development. We understand the motive may be to distinguish the building as a marker for the station, but we think this might equally be achieved whilst expressing its residential function.

We are concerned that the single aspect apartments served by a central corridor will suffer from poor natural light and ventilation, particularly those on the lower floors of the building. It is unfortunate that the enclosed circulation corridors bring no natural light into the building or allow views out.

### Block D

We believe that the scale of Block D and its use of brick respond well to its Soho context. We also consider that the apartments provide good standards of accommodation. Although the west elevation of this building is challenged by the incorporation of outlets from the Crossrail ventilation shaft, the modelling of the façade and decorative treatment to the plant access doors helps to animate the public realm. However, the ground level access panels could be further enlivened by the involvement of an artist.

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There is no reason to break the continuity of the pavement alongside these access panels. Access will be required very rarely, whereas the pavement will be in regular use and should therefore be continuous for the benefit of pedestrians.

### Public Realm

At Tottenham Court Road West station, there will be a significant passenger volume over a three hour peak period on the completion of Crossrail Line 1 and this will increase further with the introduction of Crossrail Line 2.

We are concerned about the visibility of the station from Oxford Street. We have consistently argued that the station entrance should not be hidden behind retail units and would prefer there to be a clear view of it, possibly by the omission of the retail unit on the Oxford Street/Dean Street corner. Fortunately, the closure of Dean Street to traffic outside the station entrance will provide a pedestrian forecourt to the station. This will need to be secured to prevent vehicles from being driven into the entrance. We hope the Council will be able to install a pedestrian crossing on Oxford Street opposite the end of Dean Street, further marking the location of the station.

# **Liverpool Street West Station**

**The ticket hall, at the western end of the new Crossrail station, replaces the current Moorgate station and will also serve the Metropolitan & Circle line platforms at basement level.**

# Liverpool Street West Station

**City of London**

Planning reference: 11/00312/XRAIL

22 June 2011

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We commend the generous size and openness of the proposed station. We stress the need for an updated masterplan to address the redevelopment of TfL's property and its connections to the adjoining Barbican development to the west. However, we recognise that the scope of the current planning application does not include the over site developments or the urban realm proposals; we intend to comment fully on these aspects of the design, when they come forward as separate planning applications.

We support the integration of the new Crossrail ticket hall with the existing London Underground station, which results in a more generous space leading to the extended ticket line. We welcome the openness of the new station to the street outside, and the clarity of the design. The stone portal, embracing the length of the station, splayed glass walls and the sloping glazed light box canopy unite the elements of the ticket hall and successfully signals the station entrance. The richly coloured glass will bring a distinctive quality to the building. We support the notched glass detailing which conceals the ventilation plant behind a flush facade.

The station design would be comfortable standing alone as a finished building, or would work equally well as the base for a future over site development. However, we believe it is logical and commercially necessary to demolish the whole of the block 17-31 Moorfields, rather than retain the northern third that lies outside the Crossrail Act Limits of Deviation. It is clear to us that the building above the station must be part of a much wider masterplan that addresses land to the north and west and forges a successful relationship with the Barbican and its elevated circulation routes.

# **Liverpool Street East Station**

**This basement level ticket hall for the proposed Crossrail Station opens onto Liverpool Street through a new glazed canopy. Below ground there is also connection to London Underground and Network Rail services.**

# Liverpool Street East Station

## City of London

Planning reference: 11/00310/XRAIL

22 June 2011

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We welcome this proposal and find much to admire in the design of the new Crossrail station. We recognise that the scope of the current planning application does not include the final scheme for the associated over site development, or the urban realm proposals; we intend to comment fully on these aspects of the design, when they come forward as separate planning applications. However, we wish to make a number of comments on the design of the station below.

The ticket hall is a clear and well organised space, with a strong character provided by the structural ceiling panels. We are pleased to see the folded form carried through into the structure of the glass canopy above. We believe the combination of fan shaped steel portals and glazing will create a striking architectural 'pavilion' and has the potential to become a distinguished landmark for the Liverpool Street area. However, attention must be given to maintaining the quality of detail through to construction. In particular, it will be necessary to develop sensitive rainwater and drainage details that support the clean lines of the pavilion.

A strong wayfinding strategy will be crucial to the success of this project, both above ground and below. A critical point is likely to be at the head of the escalators emerging from the station, where many people will pause to orientate themselves. We feel that the signage is not fully integrated with the design of the canopy, more thought should be given to this aspect of the design.

We are pleased that there is an inclined lift alongside the escalators and welcome the provision of a sheltered space at the top of the lifts and escalators.

# **Liverpool Street East, Blomfield Street Vent Shafts**

**As part of the Liverpool  
Street East Crossrail  
Station proposal there will  
be an commercial over site  
development above the vent  
shafts in Blomfield Street.**

# Liverpool Street East, Blomfield Street Vent Shafts

**City of London**

22 June 2011

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We await the presentation of a revised scheme for building around and over the Crossrail ventilation shaft and other plant rooms, replacing the handsome existing facade with a permanent new frontage to Blomfield Street. Meanwhile, on this occasion we wish to comment on the current interim design for the site.

Despite its robust materials, we think that the interim single story proposal introduces an uncomfortable gap into Blomfield Street and exposes party walls to view. It may be some time before a commercial over site development is built and we believe that the interim design requires further consideration to maintain the quality of the street scene.

# **Paddington Station**

**The new Crossrail Station incorporates passenger facilities and operational accommodation, including ventilation shafts for the station and the tunnels. In addition, public realm improvements are proposed on Eastbourne Terrace and Departures Road.**

# Paddington Station

**City of Westminster**

Planning reference: 11/05349/XRPS

24 June 2011

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We welcome this opportunity to comment on the proposed new station at Paddington. We commend the clarity and simplicity of the design which promises an uplifting experience for passengers. As well as creating a high quality Crossrail Station, the scheme provides improvements to Paddington Station as a whole, pedestrianisation of Departures Road and improved access to the mainline station.

We recognise that the scope of the current planning application does not include the over site developments or the urban realm proposal; we intend to comment fully on these aspects of the design, when they come forward as separate planning applications. However, we have made a number of comments regarding the design of the station below.

The new station architecture combines sensitivity to its historic context, with a contemporary architectural expression, which we think will enhance the experience of Paddington station. Escalators and lifts are accommodated in a generous space carved out below Departures Road, creating a ticket hall that will be naturally ventilated, and flooded with daylight. We support the design of the glass canopy that shelters the Crossrail concourse and Departures Road. The coloured structural glass fins which are proposed for the canopy will bring a welcome crystalline quality to the station.

The large brick wall on the north side of the ticket hall with its textured character will contribute to a strong sense of place, providing it is kept clear of the clutter of signage or advertising. We support the decision to accommodate advertising on the opposite side of the ticket hall, and trust that every effort will be made to maintain the rigour of this organisational concept. Public art could add subtle richness to the experience of the station interior and we see the need for artists to be involved as soon as possible, to allow integration of art with the station construction at minimal cost.

We are disappointed by the simplistic, rectilinear approach taken to cladding the two large vent shafts, at the front of the station. Given their inescapable presence and size, we believe that the design of these elements would benefit from

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a more creative approach that resulted in an expressive character, rather than the subdued aesthetic that is currently being proposed. However, we recognise the efforts being made to introduce some refined modelling and sculptural quality to these sober blocks. We welcome the tapered fins and sensitive choice of materials that may also be enhanced by weathering.

Finally, we applaud the commitment by Network Rail to bring forward a Conservation Plan and Development Framework for Paddington Station. This will be essential to avoid a piecemeal approach to developments associated with this Grade I listed building.

# **Bond Street Station and Master plan**

**The 'Masterplan' scheme  
for Bond Street Station  
brought forward by Great  
Portland Estates.**

# Bond Street Station and Master plan

**City of Westminster**

Planning application: 11/02587/XRPS

20 April 2011

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Cabe at the Design Council offers its support to the 'Masterplan' scheme brought forward by Great Portland Estates, as developer partner for over site development at the Crossrail station in Hanover Square. We think this offers several benefits over the 'Act compliant' scheme. Two pedestrian routes, through the city block, introduce permeability and offer access to the station from both the south and the west. Locating the vent shaft outside the footprint of the main station building releases valuable ground floor accommodation for office and retail use. This allows much of the perimeter of the main building to be animated with public use and is likely to enliven the surrounding urban realm. We find much to admire in the scheme, especially the design of the new public courtyard and the approach to environmental sustainability.

# **Bond Street West Station**

**The Bond Street West  
review includes public  
realm improvements.**

# Designed by John McAslan + Partners

## City of Westminster

Planning reference: 12/00036/AOD

30 January 2012

Bond Street West Crossrail Station on Davies Street promises to become a station of particularly high quality, with a spacious interior, benefiting from generous natural light from the south and north. A simple layout overcomes the potential difficulties of directing travellers through a 180 degree turn, between the entrance and escalators to platform level. We are pleased that the entrance opens onto both Davies Street and Weighhouse Street. We are very encouraged by the collaborative working that is apparent between the station and over site development teams, and the benefits of this are evident in the quality of architecture proposed. We understand that there will be a separate planning application dealing with the adjacent public realm, following shortly. Our comments on the detailed design of the public realm will be issued in response to that planning application. We offer our support to this project, and make the following comments on the detailed design on the station itself.

### Station design

We are pleased that the design offers dual access into the station from both Weighhouse and Davies Street and think that views out from the station towards the fine buildings opposite will create a strong sense of arrival in the heart of Mayfair. The distinctive architecture of the buildings opposite should help people orientate themselves as they leave the station. The new station design also succeeds in filtering views of the rear of West One shopping centre and its service bays, through a closely spaced colonnade. We think this colonnade, which is more widely spaced on Davies Street, and visible on all four sides of the building, will be a successful marker for the station. We support the decision to adopt this architectural treatment at both the east and west entrances to the Bond Street Crossrail Station. This will create a distinctive character for the station as a whole.

We recognise the challenge of refining the elegant concept of the station design to respond successfully to the different conditions on the streets around the site. For example, on St Anselm's Place, there is a challenge to maintain privacy for the mews houses opposite. The ground floor elevation on Gilbert Street is also problematic, because it lacks active uses, and we think a sensitive approach is needed to detailing an infilled colonnade in this location. However, on

Weighhouse Street, we understand that the extent of glazed colonnade, and the consequent balance between enclosure and accessibility, has been fixed by technical considerations.

We are concerned by the choice of perforated, anodised, aluminium panels as the cladding material for the vent shaft. This large flat area of cladding is likely to be unsightly and inappropriate in the context of the surrounding fine, historic buildings. The vent shaft may stand alone for some time before the OSD is built, and we do not consider this metal cladding to be acceptable, even as a temporary treatment. We recommend that an alternative solution is considered.

### Public art

The generous size of the ticket hall, day lit by windows on both the north and south, provides greater opportunities for public art than at the Hanover Square entrance. The blank rear wall behind which ventilation shafts are located provides one option for this. However, we understand that this space may be occupied by advertising, which in our view is best kept separate from public art. The suggestion that a sculpture could occupy the centre of the ticket hall, between the gate line and escalators has equally exciting potential. The route between station entrance and escalators would give a very three dimensional experience of an artwork here.

### Inclusive design

On a practical level, we note the absence of WC facilities, although the generosity of the ticket hall suggests it would be feasible to provide them. We understand WCs are also not provided on any Crossrail stations or trains. We think this decision should be reconsidered, as an essential element of inclusive design. For many people, including those with a baby, who are pregnant, older or unwell, a long journey without access to WCs could be problematic. The lack of these facilities on the London Underground network is one of the shortcomings resulting from its late 19th and early 20th century origins. As a 21st century rail network, we think it would be reasonable for passengers to expect better facilities from Crossrail.

# **Bond Street East Station**

**Bond Street East Crossrail  
station review includes  
public realm improvements.**

# Designed by John McAslan + Partners

City of Westminster

3 February 2011

Planning application: 10/11202/XRPS

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We find much to admire in the designs for Bond Street East Crossrail Station, which promises a high quality civic building that will make a positive contribution to the architecture of Hanover Square. We also welcome the convincing approach to sustainable design. In the context of giving our support to this project, we offer the following comments on the external colonnade, and the station interior. We understand that there will be a separate planning application dealing with the adjacent public realm, following shortly. Our comments on the detailed design of the public realm will be issued in response to that planning application.

## Station Exterior

We think the colonnade proposed for the station exterior will be a successful marker for the station as a new civic building in Hanover Square. We support the decision to adopt this architectural treatment at both the east and west entrances to the Bond Street Crossrail Station. This will create a distinctive character for the station as a whole. Maintaining the purity of the station architecture will be important, therefore we are pleased to see the careful integration of security gates and the proposed high quality and robust palette of materials. Similar care should be taken in considering integration of station signage. However, we are concerned by the choice of perforated, anodised, aluminium panels as the cladding material for the vent shaft. This large flat area of cladding is likely to be unsightly and inappropriate in the context of the surrounding fine, historic buildings. The vent shaft may stand alone for some time before the OSD is built, and we do not consider this metal cladding to be acceptable, even as a temporary treatment. We recommend that an alternative solution is considered.

## Station interior

The arrangement of the station interior, with escalators leading directly to a clearly organised linear ticket hall, with views out towards Hanover Square, should make this a memorable station on the Crossrail route. The clarity of this organisational diagram is enhanced by rigorous thinking about the co-ordination of ticket machines and signage in a framed element running the length of the party wall with the over site development. Although an inclined lift would offer all passengers to benefit from the same positive arrival experience at Hanover Square, we note the technical difficulties of achieving this. However, the location of the proposed vertical lift is both legible and convenient for passengers who are unable to use the escalators.

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