

BUILDING DESIGN

The weekly newspaper for the design team

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Hopkins set to revamp the Thames

Millennium plans prepared by Michael Hopkins & Partners to transform the Thames with new bridges and a floating riverside walk have been approved by Westminster council.

Westminster's Millennium sub-committee this week agreed to take forward three schemes which are being promoted by the Cross River Partnership, a consortium of local authorities made up of Westminster and the City Corporation, and the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark.

The proposals, which have the backing of the Government Office for London and rely on Lottery funds, aim to reinforce connections between the South Bank and Covent Garden.

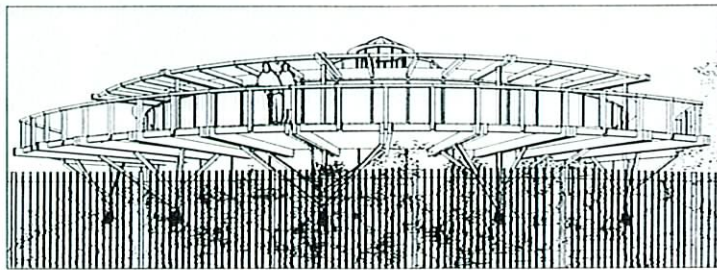
Three priority projects are to be pursued - improvements to Hungerford Bridge; a tram from the Imperial War Museum to St Pancras via Waterloo Bridge; and an Embankment promenade on pontoons. This could extend from the Tate at Millbank to the proposed Tate at Bankside.

The plans also include a travellor across the river, a new bridge parallel to Hungerford Bridge and an additional pedestrian crossing between Temple and Vauxhall.

Foster's redesign

New drawings prepared by Sir Norman Foster & Partners for the Cardiff Bay Opera House were presented to the Opera House trust last Friday by Stanhope's Peter Rogers, who is advising the trust on technical matters.

Mode 1 Architects have transformed a thirties sports pavilion in Wallham Forest, London into a vibrant African Caribbean Centre. Sculptors and glass artists collaborated on the £300,000 scheme which includes a café and bar as well as a multi-purpose main hall. Photo: Peter Cook.



Visitors to Joseph Paxton's Birkenhead Park in Liverpool could soon enjoy a view of the pioneering public space from this new £2 million visitor centre, designed by Carl Thompson Associates for the Wirral Green Alliance. Two cylindrical buildings are joined by a curved and partially underground glazed colonnade to provide restaurant facilities, an apartment and "Eco-House" for the exhibition of domestic ecological issues.

Burrell row rumbles on

A new independent report on leaks at Glasgow's famous Burrell Gallery blames cracks in the flat stainless steel roof.

"There are cracks throughout the metal roof and the problem won't go away," said Building Investigation Centre technical director Graham Rider who has prepared the report.

The Burrell's owner, Glasgow council, claims contractor Taylor Woodrow is responsible but Taylor Woodrow said it had not had any control over architect Barry Gasson's council-approved designs and claims that Gasson appointed the roofing sub-contractor.

Alsop's Tower Bridge housing faces call-in

By Pamela Buxton

Alsop & Störmer's spectacular stilted housing scheme next to Tower Bridge is set to be called in after a dramatic last-minute intervention this week by the DoE.

On Tuesday, just hours before the application went to a planning committee, environment secretary John Gummer issued an Article 14 notice warning that he may call in the highly-acclaimed scheme.

Despite planning officers' recommendation for acceptance, London Docklands Development Corporation deferred the scheme pending a further site visit. But the LDDC is still likely to accept the Southwark council-commissioned application, and precipitate action by Gummer, who is taking an increased interest in urban riverside sites.

Will Alsop told *BD* that the Article 14 notice was "predictable". He was "disappointed" but added that he "looked forward with relish



Model of the Alsop housing. Photo: Geoff Beekman.

presenting the scheme to the environment secretary". Alsop said that it was a scheme where he had not compromised but had still won praise from both English Heritage and the Royal Fine Art Commission.

The 11,500sq m scheme had only met significant opposition from St Martins Property Corporation, which owns the site but is due to transfer it to Southwark as part of planning

gain for London Bridge City.

St Martins has been vociferous in its opposition of the Alsop & Störmer scheme, which proposes more than 100 flats in an L-shaped building described by planners as a "wobbly boomerang".

It has been lobbying hard against the scheme, which it claimed would detract from its own neo-Venetian plans for London Bridge City. St Martins admitted that it was taking a "bracing attitude" to the application after experiencing planning difficulties over London Bridge City phase two.

Gummer is monitoring the Alsop & Störmer site because of its close proximity to top tourist attraction Tower Bridge which gives it national importance.

The DoE confirmed that the scheme's unusual design was a factor in its decision. The scheme does not contradict the unitary development plan however, and there is already a planning consent for residential property on the site.

If the scheme is delayed

longer than March 31, it will come under the jurisdiction of Southwark council, which will take over the area from the LDDC. It will then be in the position of being able to approve its own scheme.

Southwark council director of regeneration and environment Fred Manson said the DoE's action had been a shock.

"I hadn't been expecting it. As promoters, we're disappointed and hope that it'll be resolved," he said.

IN BRIEF

•Tschumi school

Bernard Tschumi has won a competition for a new architecture school for 1,200 students at Marne-la-Vallée, Paris.

•Health, wealth

Hunter Price are to convert the north block of the listed Royal Brompton Hospital, London SW3 into luxury apartments.

•Ray Cecil dies

Ray Cecil, trenchant practice commentator and RIBA councillor, has died. Obituary page 2.

Creative Fire Protection

PREFORMED PLYWOOD CASINGS WITH INTEGRAL FIRE PROTECTION

Pendock's award winning range of casings and trussing systems are now available with built in fire protection offering specifiers the opportunity to minimise the impact of internal structural features such as columns and beams and even to transform them into an integral part of the design concept. The system is fully tested for up to 2 hour fire protection by LPC and an assessment is available for longer periods.

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