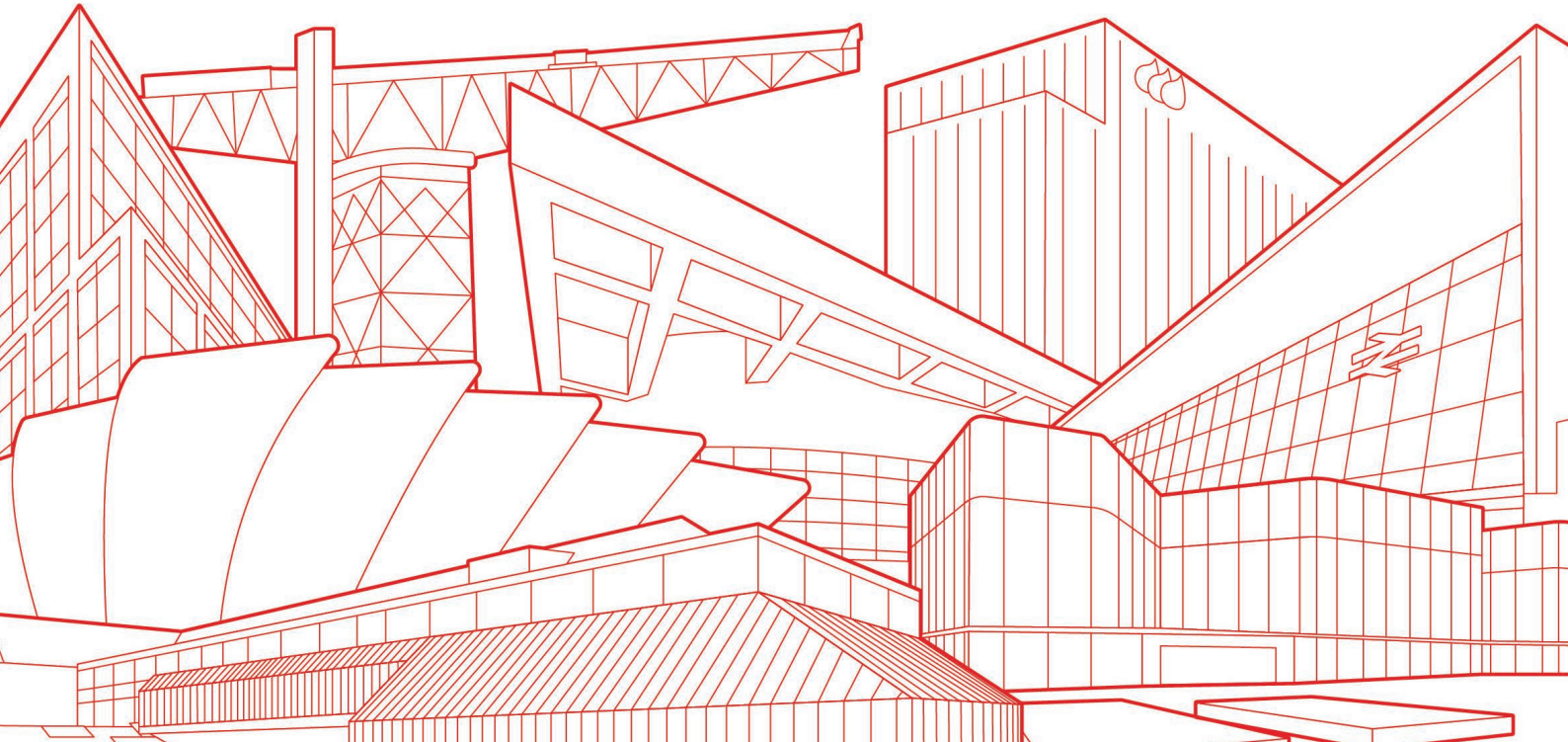
ARUP

Future Ideas for Glasgow

A celebration of early-career imagination, skill and foresight



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Foreword

Glasgow is a city defined by creativity, resilience, and ambition. We are excited to share a collection of forward-thinking concepts designed to shape the city's future and enhance the lives of those who call it home.

Ideas for Glasgow brings together innovative approaches to urban planning, sustainability, and community development, each rooted in the city's unique character and potential. From reimagining public spaces to promoting sustainable transport, these ideas aim to spark conversation, inspire collaboration, and drive meaningful change.

However, Ideas for Glasgow is also something more: a celebration of early-career imagination, skill, and energy. The concepts within this brochure reflect the passion of our emerging professionals. Individuals who bring fresh perspectives, bold thinking, and a deep love for the city we call home. Their enthusiasm and creativity remind us not only what Glasgow is, but what it can become.

This brochure is a showcase and also an invitation to explore possibilities, challenge conventions, and be inspired by the next generation shaping Glasgow's future.

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Introduction

Ideas for Glasgow invited early career colleagues from different disciplines across our Glasgow office to present their initiatives for how to improve the City of Glasgow for its residents.

The initiative involved the development of a variety of ideas into well-thought through proposals, that were then presented to a panel of industry-expert judges.

This initiative was part of Arup's way of celebrating Glasgow as it enters is 850th year.

Winning Team and Judges: River Clyde Regeneration.

The Judges

Through the development stages of the initiative, we were delighted to be joined by our judging panel who joined a series of inspiring and thought-provoking sessions with our teams as they developed and shaped their ideas.

Our competition culminated in the teams presenting their ideas to our expert judging panel from our clients, collaborators and partners. These presentations were hosted in our Glasgow office and celebrated the diverse and original ideas created by our teams.

Ian Gracie
Construction Director at Drum Property Group

Jude Barber
Architect-Director at Collective Architecture

Valerie Davidson
Chief Executive of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

River Clyde Regeneration

Winner

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Introduction

"Glasgow made the Clyde, and the Clyde made Glasgow"

This famous phrase highlights the importance of the river Clyde to the foundation of the city of Glasgow and to the city's transformation during the Industrial Revolution. The river was the source of opportunity for generations of working-class families who worked in the shipyards and it was a key transport link, connecting Glasgow to the world. However, in recent years it has become an underutilised resource: its riverbed and banks were sold off, its waters polluted, and its banks left underdeveloped and uninviting.

Across Scotland, wild swimming has surged in popularity, offering people a chance to reconnect with nature and enjoy the country's inviting waters. Yet for Glaswegians, this growing trend comes with a catch: they must leave their own city to find clean, safe places to swim.

Our project aims to transform Glasgow's historic river from an abandoned industrial relic into a vibrant community asset. By cleaning and restoring the river for safe public swimming, we'll create an inviting outdoor recreation space in the heart of Glasgow's city centre.

River Clyde

Design

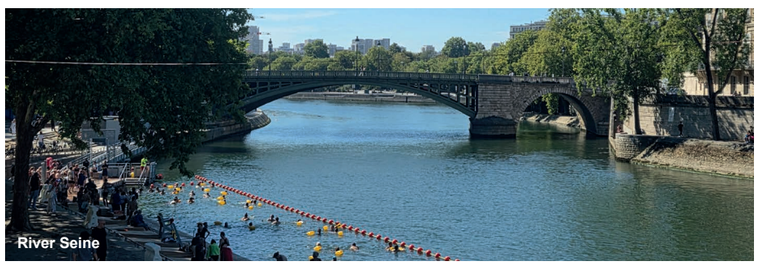
The project seeks to enhance the existing long-term river regeneration strategy for the Clyde by addressing water quality issues and creating safe environments for swimming. Accessibility was a key factor during site-selection, with the chosen site being ideally located in the heart of the city centre, providing multiple routes via private, public and active travel.

The project design was inspired and influenced by successful river restoration projects in other cities. Consideration of spatial constraints and other river uses also shaped the design. Our recommended proposal features a three-pronged approach to water quality improvements, tackling the sources of pollution, removing physical rubbish, and purifying the water. The proposed swimming area incorporates pontoon-style infrastructure to create leisure spaces, enhance safety and provide flexibility should the area be adjusted or extended in the future.

Impact

We anticipate that there will be several positive impacts from this project:

- Environmental: There will be a reduction to pollution levels and the volume of waste flowing through the city and into the sea. Additionally, improvements to water quality will support life in the river and help foster a thriving biodiversity corridor within the city.
- Health and wellbeing: A clean and safe river will provide a new space for exercise, recreation and community connection. Meanwhile, the cooling water will act as a climate resilience measure in the city centre during periods of hot weather.
- Economic: Attracting people to the river creates opportunities for further development along the underutilised riverbanks. There is potential for new restaurants, cafes and bars, as well as leisure venues such as saunas. So that people might enjoy a sauna then a cold plunge in the river.
- Events and tourism: Glasgow has a strong history of hosting major sporting events including the Commonwealth Games and the Cycling World Championships. This project would enhance Glasgow's portfolio of sporting and entertainment venues and create new opportunities for swimming and water sports events in the heart of the city.



River Seine


Delivering the Project
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Constraints to be considered
River width
River depth
Boat passage requirements


Delivering the project
ARUP
Location
River Clyde 2050


ARUP


Delivering the Project
ARUP
Constraints to be considered
River width
River depth
Boat passage requirements

RiverSyde

Entry

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Introduction

Glasgow, famously known as the “dear green place”, has witnessed a significant decline in public green spaces over the past two decades. Alongside this, rapid development along the River Clyde has left a noticeable gap in accessible riverside areas for both locals and visitors. Introducing RiverSyde - a vibrant, multi-use recreational greenspace designed to reconnect Glasgow with its waterfront. Complementing this vision is the proposed Squiggly Bridge, offering a safe and scenic link between Govan and the West End, eliminating the need to navigate a hazardous A-road.

The Site

Currently lying derelict, the brownfield site sits at the confluence of the River Kelvin and River Clyde - a prime location with untapped potential. Recent student accommodation developments have already enhanced public transport connectivity, and the new bridge would integrate cycling and pedestrian routes stretching from the city centre. Transforming this site into RiverSyde will require thorough remediation and environmental testing, alongside structural checks on the existing quay wall.

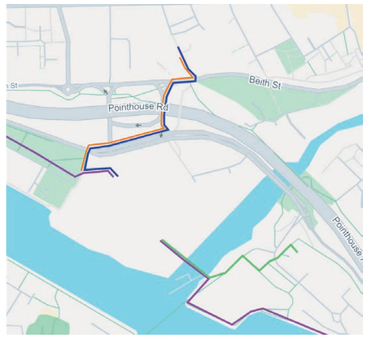
Placemaking & Safety

The proposed layout of RiverSyde prioritises sustainability, accessibility, and community engagement. Most infrastructure - including showers, WCs, exhibition rooms, café, food stands, and a boathouse - will be constructed using recycled shipping containers, reducing both environmental impact and construction costs. A wildflower garden featuring native Scottish flora and a pond will occupy the southwest quadrant, creating a biodiverse and tranquil space. Adjacent to the Clyde, a floating pontoon will complement the boathouse, offering direct water access and hosting organised water sports events. A playpark, built from recycled materials and timber, will sit near reserved parking and cycle storage, both powered by photovoltaic (PV) systems to charge vehicles and supply energy for the site.

Safety and accessibility are central to the design. The park will feature wide, flat paths for easy navigation, accessible parking and bathrooms, and strong safety barriers along the river edge. Adequate lighting and emergency stops will be installed throughout the site, and the park will close nightly in line with Glasgow’s park policy.

Impact

RiverSyde will serve the entire city of Glasgow, benefiting both residents and visitors. The site is currently owned by Peel Ports, and we propose that Glasgow City Council acquires it to secure its future as a public space. Once operational, Glasgow University and its affiliated watersports clubs will manage the boathouse and pontoon. Spaces within the park can be leased to local artists, vendors, and community groups, creating sustainable revenue streams and fostering cultural vibrancy.




A question for you…
Glasgow
A question for you…
Glasgow


RIVERSYDE
ARUP


Place Making

Berkeley Square Gardens

Entry

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Introduction

Berkeley Square Gardens proposes two new mixed-use developments and a public square, covering the segment of motorway from Bath Street to St Vincent Street. The development aims to eliminate the harsh motorway divide between Glasgow's West End and the city centre, revitalising the adjacent area and reintegrating the historic Mitchell Library into the city. By creating a new, aesthetic public space, the square will complement our own and other proposed developments, increasing desirability for commercial and residential customers.

Stakeholder engagement

During the development of our idea, we engaged with everyday users of the area to see what they had to say. The same themes kept cropping up; stressful, disconnecting, unpleasant. It is clear that for many people working, living and commuting through this area of Glasgow, the current layout beckons opportunity for investment to bring this location back to life.

The Concept

The development can be divided into three main components: two buildings providing 4000m^2 of premium commercial, office, and residential space; the square, providing 5000m^2 of open community space including naturally covered seating; and Berkeley Hill, an artificial mound for seating which provides headroom for the M8 below to pass over a rail tunnel.

Two structural schemes were proposed for the building structures; A transfer truss with a central column, and an arch that does not require a central support. This would be decided upon at a later stage once constraints and traffic management preferences are better understood. A space frame would be utilised for Berkeley Hill to provide sufficient elevation for vehicles to pass underneath.

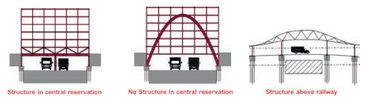
To facilitate the new development, a new traffic route was also proposed for the area. A clockwise one-way system would route traffic around the adjacent neighbourhood, creating a traffic calmed area in the centre. This was inspired by similar approaches seen in Barcelona and areas of the Netherlands.

Commercial Viability

Our surveys suggest strong public support for redevelopment, and other adjacent approved planning applications demonstrate willingness to revitalise the area. The appeal of this development should not be understated. It provides an opportunity to transform Glasgow City Centre by improving commuter connectivity, providing much needed social and business spaces, and flexible multi-use areas suitable for a range of public activities. The project aligns with City Region Deal objectives to drive land regeneration, improve connectivity, and foster economic, environmental, and social progress. It complements active travel initiatives and redevelopment plans, creating new urban spaces that offer social and economic opportunities.

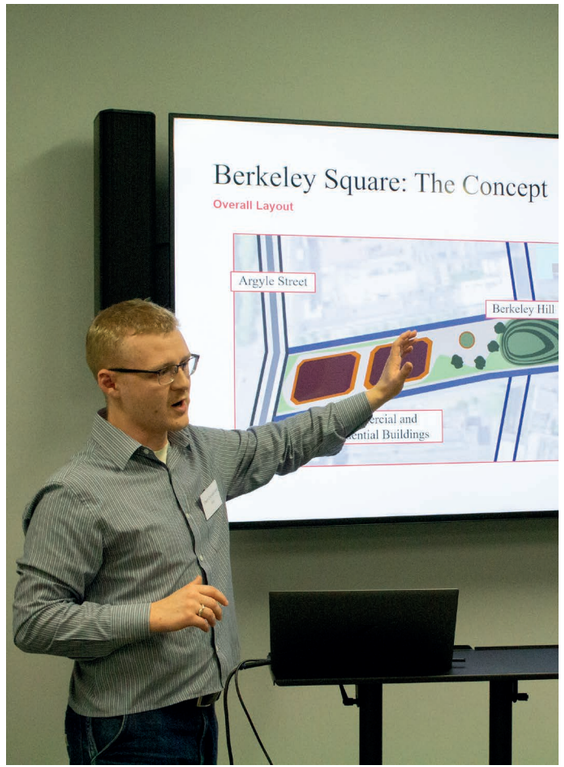
Expected benefits

The proposed development is expected to have several significant benefits. This includes greater availability of public space, provision of new premium residential, retail and office space, aesthetic improvement of the area, better connectivity between centre and West End, and reduced noise pollution.




Development opportunities
Commercial and residential
• 4000m2 of premium mixed-use commercial, office, and residential sp
• 5000m2 of open community space including naturally covered seating
• Opportunities for adjacent businesses and public buildings to utilise o
spaces for outdoor eating and retail.
• Traffic calmed roads improve walkability, increasing footfall through


Thank you. Questions?


Berkeley Square: The Concept
Overall Layout
Argyle Street
Berkeley Hill


Berkeley Square: The Concept
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Structural Solutions (High Level Concepts)
Structure in central reservation
No Structure in central reservation
Structure above railway
Berkeley Square: The Concept
ARUP
Structural Solutions (High Level Concepts)
Structure in central reservation
No Structure in central reservation
Structure above railway

Glasgow Cross City Rail

Entry

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Introduction

By following the lead of cities like London and Newcastle, Glasgow could reactivate its underused Victorian rail infrastructure and disused railway corridors to better connect the city region and its residents with frequent metro-style services. Utilising emerging technologies such as discontinuous electrification and battery-electric trains, new delivery models could lower upfront capital costs and enable the quicker realisation of economic, social and environmental benefits for Glasgow's most disadvantaged communities through place-based interventions.

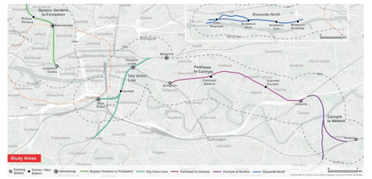
Corridors

Five abandoned rail corridors in Glasgow offer significant potential for reactivation, leveraging existing infrastructure to connect key destinations and ease pressure on the current rail network:

1. The City Union Line – Establishes a north-south route through the city centre.
2. Finnieston to Botanic Gardens – Direct links to the West End's leisure and educational hubs.
3. Parkhead to Carmyle – Provides rail access to Parkhead Stadium and drives East End regeneration.
4. Carmyle to Newton – Supports new housing and reduces congestion on the West Coast Main Line.
5. Riverside North – Enables waterfront regeneration, with possible extension to Glasgow Airport and Paisley.

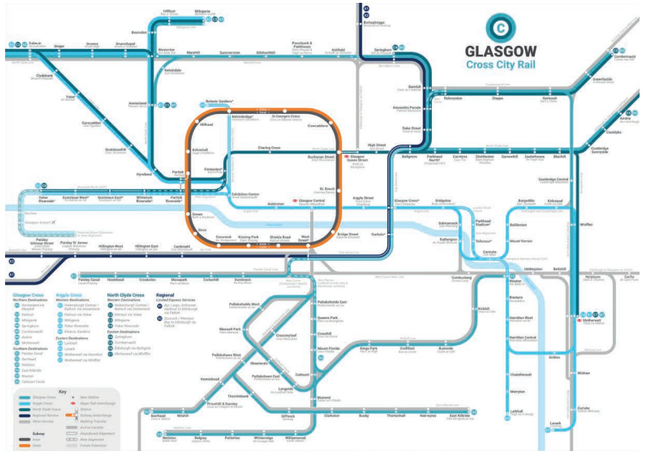
Our Vision

Our plan, Glasgow Cross City Rail, will transform travel across the region by reopening five abandoned corridors and introducing three new cross-city rail services. The Glasgow Cross line will, for the first time, connect suburban rail services north and south of the River Clyde, centred on a new interchange at Mercat Cross. This route will also enable direct express services between southwest Scotland and the central belt. The Argyle and North Clyde Cross lines will extend to new destinations in the East and West Ends, using a mix of reopened and new routes. By adopting tram-trains and discontinuous electrification, we can reduce costs and simplify the reactivation of old lines, while allowing for future expansion. Overall, our vision is to make the rail network more reliable with increase capacity that allow more frequent services to better connect the entire city-region.



Impact

This plan will introduce direct rail services to destinations that previously depended on car journeys or inconvenient transfers, encouraging modal shift and a reduction in carbon emissions. By extending rail access to deprived areas, the project will drive regeneration and transit-oriented development, creating new employment opportunities. Overall, the initiative will act as a catalyst for sustainable growth, enhanced mobility, and greater economic inclusion throughout the region.

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Get in touch

Glasgow is always evolving. Picture the city a century from now, what would you like to see changed or preserved? How can we shape its future together?

Dedicated to sustainable development, Arup is a collective of 18,500 designers, advisors and experts working across 120 countries. Founded to be both humane and excellent, we collaborate with our clients and partners using imagination, technology and rigour to shape a better world.

Arup's business in Glasgow has made a major contribution to the regeneration of the city and surrounding areas over the past five decades. Founded in 1968, the office today is home to 180 engineers, planners, digital experts and specialist technical advisors.

If you would like to discuss these ideas further or would like to know more, please contact Glasgow@arup.com or reach out to us on social media to continue the conversation.

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