



The University of Sheffield
Department of Landscape

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Mr S Ogden
Head of City Regeneration
Regeneration and Development Services
Sheffield City Council
Howden House
1 Union Street
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27th March 2014

Dear Mr Ogden

ERDF – City Centre, Grey to Green Project

On behalf of the University of Sheffield, I am writing to express our full support and enthusiasm for the proposed Sheffield City Centre Grey to Green Project. This visionary project aims to create a new identity for the West Bar corridor and Riverside Business District. There is an urgent need to transform the quality of the environment and public realm of this area, both to provide an appropriate level of connectivity and facilities for those already living and working here, but also to promote significant new inward investment into what is the financial and legal quarter of the city. The proposed scheme will make direct and clear connections with the city centre, and, crucially, will create a very high quality and distinctive sequence of public spaces that will enhance the image and potential of this district, but which will also make this area a destination in its own right.

But it is the innovative and forward-looking aspects of this proposal that is particularly striking, and which gives this project the potential for national and international significance:

- The conversion of former inner city highway to shared space with pedestrian and cycle priority over large areas makes a strong statement with regard to the importance of public realm, liveability and human focus.
- The Grey to Green concept is vital for urban climate-change adaptation, and to address environmental issues that will become increasingly problematic in cities, such as urban flooding, poor air quality, and elevated temperatures.
- The focus on SUDS and water-sensitive design over such an extended area as a core element of the public realm will be unique in a British city centre location, and will make a significant contribution to reducing the surface water runoff into the adjacent River Don.
- The proposed landscape solutions, involving high impact, low input plantings with strong year-round visual appeal and wider biodiversity value, will provide a new

approach in the UK to create high quality urban landscape vegetation which is low-cost and simple to maintain.

The combination of all these factors, over an extended linear route, has the potential to create a truly distinctive urban feature that will have many of the characteristics of New York's High Line and as well as providing very significant benefits to the West Bar and Riverside Business District areas, will also raise the profile and character of Sheffield itself at national and international level, with associated economic benefit. The New York Highline has provided the impetus for major regeneration of the areas through which it runs, and has become a remarkable destination in its own right. The proposed Grey to Green project, which will have its own distinctive character, has the potential to have a similar impact within the city of Sheffield.

The University of Sheffield is the largest employer in the city, and has an international reputation in landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, and town planning. More specifically, and in relation to this proposal, the University is a world-leader in terms of urban greening, innovation in urban landscape planting and management, and in SUDS and urban water sensitive design. We are able to bring this expertise to the project in an advisory and practical capacity. Through our extensive student body we are able to support the development of the project through live design projects, and to create a programme of temporary interventions and installations that will build momentum, profile and excitement around the development of the final scheme.

We are fully committed to, and strongly supportive of, this innovative and visionary scheme that not only has the potential to transform the investment, economic, physical and environmental landscape of the specific area, but also on the profile and image of the city as a whole.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Dunnett', is placed over a light beige rectangular background.

Dr Nigel Dunnett
Professor, Department of Landscape, University of Sheffield