

A park-and-walk scheme 'could beat congestion'



CONNECTION: Oxford architect Adrian James pictured on the A34 flyover at South Hinksey

Picture: Jon Lewis

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A TOP city architect has called for a new 3,000-space "park and walk" facility to be built at an Oxford industrial estate.

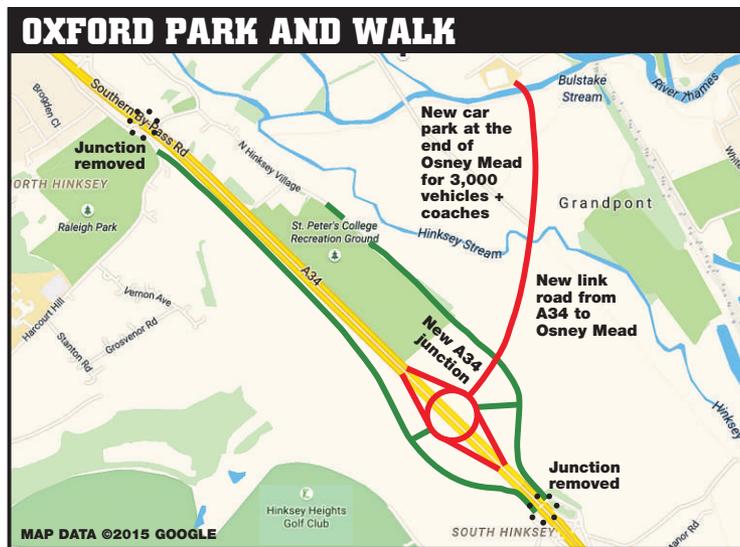
Adrian James of award-winning firm Adrian James Architects said Osney Mead could be connected to the A34 via a link road leading to a new junction between North and South Hinksey.

Users could park at the facility and then walk or cycle into the city centre.

It has been suggested as a way to tackle chronic congestion along key routes into the city, including Botley Road and Abingdon Road.

Mr James said his idea was a response to the call for "radical solutions" to the city's transport issues by Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council.

The architect said: "There is no doubt this would take serious investment, but in comparison to trams or bus tunnels it would be much less expensive. "We would need to build a bridge



or a raised carriageway over the flood plain, but this would take traffic straight from the ring road to the city centre.

"It could take significant amounts of traffic away from the busy interchanges and roundabouts."

Coaches and buses could also park at the site, he added, reducing their presence in the city centre.

The father-of-two has won several awards and was recently nominated for another accolade by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

He first raised eyebrows in West Oxford in 1997 with his construction of a striking steel-framed house in Mill Street, along the bank of the Thames, on the site of a former builder's yard.

Mr James' idea comes as bosses

at Oxfordshire County Council are preparing the final draft of a new transport plan for the county, including a strategy for Oxford.

The local authority has revealed plans centred around discouraging motorists from driving into the city centre, using the park and ride facilities instead.

As revealed by the *Oxford Mail*, Oxford University has also recently announced it is hoping to encourage millions of pounds of private investment into Osney Mead.

The county council has said this will be encouraged by new pedestrian and cycle links between the industrial estate and the city centre.

Mr James said the new road to the estate, from the A34, would likely need to be elevated three metres above the flood plain.

But he said creating the new park and walk facility would enable Oxford City Council and the county council to reduce car parking spaces in the city centre.

County council leader Ian Hudspeth said: "This is a very interesting concept, but it would encourage more cars on to the roads around Oxford. At the moment our strategy is to have park and ride sites further out, to reduce congestion in the city."