

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR ART AND DESIGN IN THE PUBLIC REALM @ 17.02.2011

BACKGROUND

A concise and illustrated Guidance Note is recommended to promote the procurement of art and design in the public realm within the planning framework. This will be accessible on Wiltshire Council's website and also available in leaflet form. The purpose of the Guidance Note is to promote compliance with Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy and expectations for Art and Design in the Public Realm. It should give advice to those involved in the process of commissioning or delivering art and design projects, for use by Wiltshire Council officers, developers, artists, arts and community organisations. Detailed below is text for the new Guidance Note for Art and Design in the Public Realm.

ART AND DESIGN IN THE PUBLIC REALM

This Guidance Note aims to promote new partners and new models for what was formerly called 'public art' as part of core and cultural strategies, local development partnerships and collaborative planning. It aims to promote clear procurement and implementation procedures to realise a high quality creative arts programme in the public realm.

"Local development frameworks aim to promote greater community engagement with the planning process to seek direct participation from local people in shaping the future of their communities." 'Delivering a Fundamental Change' Planning Green Paper

The promotion of art and design requires an inclusive approach to collaborative planning as part of environmental change; to involve local people affected by such change and those with a responsibility for the design and sustainability of the natural and built environment.

Art and Design in the Public Realm need not be too formal, permanent, monumental or object-based. It can be part of social, community and cultural investment in new developments, the design and use of education, healthcare, residential and public spaces. There is no single definition of art and design. It can be permanent or temporary. It can extend the fine arts of drawing, painting and sculpture into new formats and new locations. It can incorporate text, craft, applied art and design, photography, print, moving image, computer generated images, projection, live art, installation and performance, light, sound and music. It may refer to our heritage or celebrate the future, highlight specific areas and issues or be conceptual. In whatever form, it has one consistent quality: it is site-specific and relates to the context or use of a particular site or location within the public realm.

Art and Design in the Public Realm is a recognised, integral part of design quality to add value to a development. It enables creative collaboration between artists and design, planning and construction professionals, working with public and private sector agencies to influence and create a shared vision for architecture, public space, planning and high quality design.

"It is a great mistake to equate value for money with lowest costs, especially when we look at buildings and public space. Innovative and creative design adds real value."

James Strachen, Chairman, Audit Commission

Wiltshire Council will encourage developers to look at an integrated approach to art and design, to achieve overall design quality in architectural and landscape terms by involving artists in the design process from the earliest stage rather than being commissioned to make a number of features to be added to and placed around a particular development site.

Working with artists offers an opportunity to plan projects which go beyond the purely functional and create places that reflect the life, identity and aspirations of a particular place or community.

“Artists can also work very effectively with local people and groups. They can enhance a ‘sense of place’ by helping people to articulate, in many different ways, the perception and experience of their environment.”
Arts Council England

For smaller schemes, discussion should be held at an early stage with arts, community, legal and planning service divisions of the Council to determine the viability of a defined sum towards a creative arts programme as part of community engagement directly related to a proposed development.

For development proposals with significant impact, art and design should be considered carefully and integrally at an early planning stage. An Art and Design Strategy researched by a professional, recommended creative artist and/or adviser, should be part of pre-application discussions to be submitted as part of a planning application.

The content of the Art and Design Strategy would be agreed during pre-application discussions. The content of this art plan should include:

- Details of an artist’s contribution to defining the development’s master plan.
- Descriptions of work that will be realised through collaboration between artists, architects, design professionals and community organisations.
- A programme of on-site and off-site temporary art projects.
- Timescales for the development and implementation of a creative arts programme.
- Details of the art commissioning process.
- Details of public consultation and engagement.
- Training opportunities for less experienced artists and art commissioners.
- Details of maintenance and de-commissioning of artworks.
- Budget allocations relating to all of the above.
- Timeframe for incorporating art and design as conditioned or as part of a planning obligation agreed between the developer and Wiltshire Council.

THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST

Other than by the purchase of artwork, investment in artist’s work and practice can be extended to specific commission and their involvement in the design and use of the public realm.

Artists and creative art advisers should be engaged as integral players in a project’s design process from an early planning stage. Advice with regard the appointment of ‘lead’ artists and also art and design consultants is available from the Arts Service of Wiltshire Council. Guidance and selection criteria of creative appointments should determine:

- Track record and experience of art and design in the public realm.
- Conceptual skills towards the production of original artwork of high quality.
- The ability to communicate with a variety of different people.
- Experience of working with architects and landscape designers.
- An interest in and experience of design and planning.
- The ability to recognise the potential for artwork as an integral part of the internal and external structure of public buildings and open public space.
- Awareness of financial thresholds within capital building projects.
- An understanding and experience of different methods of community consultation
- Experience of setting-up and running workshops and events with people of different ages and abilities.
- Experience of working with and/or commissioning other artists.

GOOD PRACTICE

“Commissioning for complex capital projects depends on good team-work. The arts consultant is a key player in the commissions team which will often include other professionals such as architects, engineers, planners and community leaders as well as artists and makers. Even small commissions may need co-ordination and professional guidance from the beginning of the scheme.”

Arts Council
England

Local authority officer support with specialist arts knowledge can advise how best to integrate art and design within a major development proposal seeking planning consent. Pre-application advice will promote the value of an Art and Design Strategy as part of planning proposals; recommend the role and selection procedures of artists, art consultants and project managers; and define the link between policy and procurement. Good contractual practice will be advocated for each planning, design and commission phase of an art and design scheme. This will ensure that key obligations are recognised with regard:

- research and consultation
- design and production stages
- fee payments; indemnity and public liability insurance
- delivery and installation of work
- copyright
- ownership and adoption responsibilities of management companies
- commuted sums for long-term care and maintenance of completed works
- repair liabilities; relocation and/or de-commission.

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