

**Project Profile: Chesterfield Cultural Renaissance**

**Client: Chesterfield Borough Council**

**Value: Programme - £250k Services Strategy, Design and Project Delivery**

**Research, Consultation, Strategy Development, Artistic Input**

**Duration: Oct 2009 – June 2013.**



**Project Aims**

The consultancy is to manage the delivery of a programme of art and public realm improvements to enhance the physical infrastructure within The Yards and surrounding areas in Chesterfield town centre. The project will use art as the catalyst to raising the profile and quality of Chesterfield as a significant visitor and shopping destination. The programme is nearing completion and some finished pieces as well as work in progress is shown in the accompanying illustrations.

**Objectives**

- Establishment of project working group to include key stakeholders
- Ongoing facilitation and administration of project working group
- Preparation of artistic brief
- Development of art and design proposals
- Arrangement of artist engagement workshop with project working group
- Arrangement of ongoing artistic consultation programme with business tenants, Council Members, CBC officers and general public.
- Presentation of final designs to Council Members
- Overseeing detailed design, fabrication and installation of the artwork
- Preparation and submission of planning application and listed building consent
- Budget administration and monitoring
- Arrangement of launch event/unveiling ceremony
- Arrangement of evaluation meeting and feedback report

**Outcomes**

- A strong thematic approach responding to the needs of stakeholders
- Costed proposals that respond to the restrictions of the site
- A plan that will increase footfall into the area and enrich the cultural offer

- Endorsement of the stakeholders through extensive consultation
- An extendable strategy for commissioning within the town centre which acknowledges issues such as the need for more meeting places, Chesterfield's Market Town profile and the need to compete sensibly with larger metropolitan centres
- Council Officer and Member endorsement for the strategy
- Funding agreement for the core commissions at the town centre
- Delivered programme designed in-house by Working pArts lead artist, Geoff Wood.

## Project Overview

The Yards is a network of interconnecting spaces that were once occupied by small industries and has now been turned into a speciality shopping area. Footfall is not as heavy as it could be and retail performance is suffering as a consequence.

We have developed a programme of art based visual signals, signs and public art commissions using the principles we have developed to increase the numbers of people. We are also harnessing green wall technology to humanise spaces and encourage exploration.

The core principles are 'Announce: Intrigue: Reward' and the programme has been well received by client and stakeholders. The Yards has to compete at a time when there is downward pressure on domestic and consumer budgets.

We have developed a plan that gives stakeholders a real role in what happens in their immediate vicinity and have also developed plans for them to participate.

The strategy is extendable throughout the town and the client is exploring additional sources of funding to try and facilitate this. The current programme of commissions will complete in the summer of 2012.



Illustrations and works in progress (cont'd)





The gloved hands refer to the craft industry of glove making in the Yards. The Falcon is set in large belljar on a golden column and refers to the former 16th Century Inn on the site. The area was once known as the 'dog kennels' because of the tightly packed dwellings and workshops that once occupied the Yards. The huge puppy is a tongue in cheek reference to the 'dog kennels' but is also an image of rebirth and of fun so that families will feel welcome in this intimate square. The puppy is ice-like and lies on a golden plinth that also houses the under-lighting that dramatically illuminates the work. A group of cast iron life sized trees with living canopies complete the project.

There are also references to Chesterfield's claim to have had the first electric lighting scheme in England and the early light bulbs designed by Brush Swann.