

Project Profile - Landmark Wales

Client - Landmark Wales Steering Group via Capital Region Tourism and Monmouthshire County Council

Value – Programme £20M

Services - Creative Strategy Development, Consultation, Design Procurement, Funding

Duration - May 2005 – September 2007



Project Aims

Landmark Wales aims to develop contemporary images of Wales to impact on its international reputation and reception. The intent is to encourage a greater sense of place and a greater sense of cultural difference for those crossing boundaries into and out of Wales where the key attributes of Wales are less evident. The aim was to put across very clear messages about the many facets of Welshness at the very point of entering and leaving the country.

Objectives

To develop a strategy and to commission designs for a programme of major art gateways to Wales at the major entry points by sea, air and land. Phase 1 Sites include the Second Severn Crossing, Holyhead Harbour and the A550/A494 on the Flintshire border. Phase 2 sites include the A40 at Monmouth, the A5 at Chirk, the M4 at Newport, the Heads of the Valleys Road at Dowlais, Cardiff Airport and Fishguard Harbour. Programme included

- Consultation and advocacy to partners and host organisations to build belief in the idea
- Site research and agreement to ensure appropriate and viable locations
- Stakeholder consultation and brief development to secure local buy in and inform the design process
- Artist recruitment via national/international design competitions
- Design proposal management, assessment and selection
- Technical and budget appraisal of proposals at interim and final presentation stages
- Fundraising and funding management
- Overall project management and Client reporting.

Outcomes

- An overarching strategy for a coherent programme of commissioning at a national level
- Co-operation between key strategic partners including 8 LAs, Arts Council Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, Countryside Commission for Wales, Visit Wales, CADW.
- A programme of deliverable design proposals for key sites
- A determination to progress the first site at Second Severn Crossing

Project Overview

Landmark Wales is a hugely ambitious project that is born from Wales' emergence as a nation and its increasing desire and capacity to express itself as more than as a sub region of its larger neighbour.

The programme of major artworks at entry and crossing points has the capacity to focus people's attention on what it means to be Welsh in the 21st C and how does Welshness express itself in built and artistic form. With strong support from all the partner authorities and a remarkable public reaction, this project offers the opportunity to bring contemporary and dramatic visual symbols to Wales to augment the rich historical and natural imagery.

The aim has been to integrate ancillary uses into projects so that they bring added value and provide amenities and services that are needed or valuable to the locality.

'Postcard to Wales' for the A550/A494 in Flintshire, by Anna Liu and Mike Tonkin, is both a dramatic drive-through gateway but also provides a slender building with glorious views towards the Dee Estuary and the Hills of Moel Famau, a series of classrooms and small event spaces for parties, can host a small café, and with its stairs and lifts, it provides a fully accessible and practical landmark. Sitting with its foundations in the River Dee, the project uses turbines to capture energy from the river flow and will also harness solar and wind power to provide its own energy.

'Cwmwl Coch' (Red Cloud in Welsh) for the Second Severn Crossing, by Marks Barfield, harnesses the sense of community in Wales and directly quotes the translation of 'Cymru' into 'compatriots'. Flying above the ground at heights of between 7 and 21 metres are 300 red Welsh figures. Each is supported by a slender carbon fibre pole that sways gently in the wind. The whole piece gives the impression of a flock of people moving together through the air.



At Holyhead Harbour, Ian Ritchie proposed three standing stones of between 45 and 82.5 metres height sitting in the harbour but accessible from a glass bridge.

To achieve this great height the masts will be post-tensioned using multi-stranded high tensile steel cables. This project uses contemporary technology to extend the principles of the ancient stone monoliths all over Anglesey, to create something extraordinary. The stone masts are still slender enough to embrace and we proposed that a tradition of hugging them on arriving and leaving, much like kissing the Blarney Stone.