

Project Profile: Oxford Road Corridor Public Art Framework

Client: Manchester City Council

Services: Research, Stakeholder Consultation, Strategy Development, Delivery Plan

Duration: Feb 2009 – ongoing



Project Aim

To bring greater focus to the Knowledge Corridor of Manchester's Oxford Road and encourage a livelier and more diverse culture. To bring people from the city centre out into the project area and spread the benefits of the city's popularity. To fertilise the city centre with the edge that the appetites and tastes of the cultural quarter. To prepare the city for the influx of 3000 new consumers that will arrive with the relocation of the BBC.

Objectives

To develop an overall framework to enable an ongoing programme of public art development in the knowledge corridor of Oxford Road.

- To consult with stakeholders including the 2 Universities and the key cultural institutions
- To consult with the enabling authorities such as Planning, Highways and the Transport Authority GMPTA
- To develop a strategy that enables the client team to understand what actions they should and why they would be beneficial
- To analyse the area and develop a site based strategic approach to art integration
- To explore the scope for introducing digital art programmes
- To propose a delivery strategy and outline the resources that the City Council would need to deliver each project
- To develop working methods that will enable the partners and the institutions to collaborate effectively and still maintain their independence

Outcomes

- A site by site analysis of opportunities accompanied by a rationale for justification of each decision
- A series of exemplars showing the types of project potentially applicable to each location
- An action plan for each location
- A curatorial model for overseeing the programme
- Resource options for delivery
- Applicable costs for project development and management

Project Overview

Oxford Road has been a hugely influential area both nationally and for Manchester but the visual corridor does not impart this through the quality of its public realm. The first stored memory computer was developed on Oxford Road, and people of the stature of Engels,

Wittgenstein, Marie Stopes, David Lloyd George, Emmeline Pankhurst and Alan Turing all have close associations with the road. The intellectual output from the street is extraordinary yet there is no clue of this from the city centre. Our strategy is aimed at developing a stronger relationship between the street and the city centre and harnessing art to create an intelligent environment capable of representing Manchester past, present and potential.

We have identified radical and far reaching approaches to a variety of issues including the overall visual corridor, to its night-time perception, the individual elements of the travel infrastructure, the spaces that people could and should be occupying, and the individual buildings and structures within the area.

This project is another example of our promotion of the idea of Manchester becoming a city to come and 'see', not just to come and 'do'.

The programme has now entered the implementation phase and the Corridor Partnership, the city, its partners and consultants aim to deliver the first tranche of projects alongside the changes to the infrastructure.