

Arbury Park

Public Art Strategy and Developer Guidance

May 2006

Public Art Strategy: Making Visible the Invisible

Making Visible the Invisible – the Public Art Strategy for Arbury Park refers to the exploration of hidden layers in and around the site – creating aesthetic coherence and fostering a sense of integration relevance and continuity throughout the development.

All developers working at Arbury Park will be required to demonstrate how they have involved artists in the design of individual sites and dwellings and in particular to commission works of art which are integral to these. This involvement should be planned at the earliest possible stage, demonstrate a commitment to quality, best practice and community consultation; and demonstrate consideration of this strategy.

Work commissioned by artists should be informed by the rich social and cultural histories of Arbury Park. They should continue to explore the archives and reference centres around Cambridgeshire, exposing the hidden and concealed, often ordinary aspects of Arbury not normally visible.

The following sections provide further details of these requirements.

1. Background

South Cambridgeshire District Council has adopted a public art policy that encourages developers to dedicate a percentage of the capital construction costs to public art. Although this policy was not in place at the time of the granting of the outline planning permission, the master developers for this site took a decision to promote the use and involvement of an artist as a key design strategy

The Design Guide for Arbury Park produced by the master developers states that the philosophy of the overall development is that rather than rely on stand alone pieces of commissioned art a more holistic approach is taken.

The appointment of lead artist Patricia MacKinnon-Day at an early stage of the infrastructure development process is seen as an important factor in the development of an attractive, vibrant, and contemporary neighbourhood and finding imaginative ways of involving artists in this process’.

Consultation with local groups and communities was seen as an essential part of the role of the lead artist. Prior to the development of any of her proposals, the artist met with many people already in the area to talk about Arbury Park, its history and its relationship to them. She spoke to local councillors, with members of Chivers (farmers and original producers of Chivers Jam) retired workforce, the current owner and to people who worked at Unwins (seed and bulb suppliers). MacKinnon-Day followed up their histories in archives in the museum as well as spending time in the Chivers archive.

2. History of Arbury Park

There is extensive information available about the site at the Folk Museum; Cambridge University Archaeology Department; Cambridgeshire Collection Public Records Office and in the personal collections of Chivers and Unwins former employees. This information has been used in the development of the lead artist's project and could be used when researching future projects.

Local history groups and members of Impington Parish Council shared their knowledge about Unwins seed company. MacKinnon-Day discovered that the world leader in sweet pea breeding began when William Unwin rented a field on Impington Lane in 1903. The sweet peas were picked early in the morning to remain as fresh as possible after a long journey to market. Unwins soon found it more profitable to become a mail order seed company.

Chivers purchased an orchard in 1850 next to the railway line in Impington, in 1889 they produced the first clear commercial desert jelly. By 1950 they employed 4000 employees working 8000 acres of farmland. Chivers as employer were concerned to promote the social, spiritual, educational, physical welfare of the workforce. A large percentage of the existing population of Impington, Histon, Kings Hedges and Arbury Estate have some link with the company.

The Public Records Office own hand drawn maps which show the physical change of the form and structure of Arbury Park as well as the land usage. Records show that whilst this land has been worked, it has never been the site of dwellings.

This information together with other research forms the basis of the overall concept of site – Making Visible the Invisible.

3. The Community

As they go about their working and leisure lives it is intended that the new residents at Arbury Park will be engaged by visual stimuli and inspired to discover more about the history and culture of the local environment. In addition it is hoped that the public art commission will help to forge character and uniqueness in which the inhabitants of the area in time will come to identify.

This process of involvement and consultation will be continued through focus group discussion and workshops linked to specific projects. The exact nature of these will be dependent on the project themselves.

4. Issues for Consideration

- Quality

Emphasis should be placed by developers on producing works of art or the quality of inclusive art based design which adds interest, diversity and identity throughout the site. This quality should be evident both in the development of new ideas and the execution.

- Location of Public Art Works

In general, the public art commission should be in publicly accessible parts of the site, or visible from these. Opportunities might include public space, parks or rights of way.

- Cost/Budget

South Cambridgeshire District Council adopted a district-wide public art policy in February 2004 that encourages developers to dedicate a minimum of 1% of the associated construction costs of the capital project to public art.

At Arbury Park the Council has agreed that all developers propose a meaningful and appropriate response to the provision of art on Arbury Park as part of the reserved matters planning application package. If the application pack does not include this and other requirements then the application will be considered as falling short of the basic requirements, and will not be registered as valid.

- Process and Good Practice

Particular attention should be paid to good practice. This includes the development of project budgets, proper artist selection process and consideration of ongoing care and maintenance.

- Publication

Gallagher Estates and South Cambridgeshire District Council will produce a publication that records the development of the site and the involvement of the lead artist in the project and document her research into the history of Arbury Park and a critical response to the commissioned artworks. This will be produced towards the end of the project.

Developer Guidance

Developers will be expected to incorporate in their planning proposals, projects by artists which relate to the lead artists concept as described earlier in this leaflet.

The following sections provide guidance for developers working on Arbury Park on the inclusion of public art in their proposals.

1. Requirements

Participating developers should show how their proposals have met the following objectives:

- A strategy for the appointment for the artist
- Incorporation of art into the built form
- Incorporation of art into the public or semi public realm
- The role of an appropriately experienced artist in this process
- Evidence of involvement of the community in the process
- Approach to the maintenance of the pieces of Art

Gallaghers are not seeking to restrain the delivery of bespoke stand alone pieces of artwork, but feel that the role of art in terms of place making should be considered at a more grass roots level, with all the components of the new settlement being available to offer an opportunity for art to be incorporated as part of the design process, not as an afterthought.

2. Eligibility and Considerations

The contribution by the artist should complement the overall objectives of the development. Larger schemes may involve commissioning a number of different artists.

Resultant artworks should be appropriate to the scheme and its location, both in terms of public usage and design context. The work should be visible by, and accessible to, the public and is likely to be commissioned and created specifically for the development. In many cases the work will be developed in consultation or collaboration with the architect or designer.

The specific approach adopted will vary from scheme to scheme. These are some of the options:

- A functional element (railings, gates, seating, signs etc)
- A built element which forms a seamless part of the overall design (lighting scheme, landscape feature, wall/floor decorations etc)
- A temporary work such as a performance
- A financial contribution to a project elsewhere
- A free standing Work by an artist (sculpture, wall relief, painting etc)

The public art proposals will always include the following:

- Appropriateness to public usage and design context
- Demonstration of good practice with particular reference to selection and equal opportunities.
- Public involvement and consultation (if appropriate)
- Consideration of the cost or care and maintenance.

Particularly appropriate for Arbury Park are locations along main navigation routes, public spaces and in gateways where they can create landmarks and develop the legibility of the settlement. Designs of local or historic significance are considered particularly important and will help to engendered pride of place, adding interest to the settlement.

3. Process

When the developer submits details for outline planning permission, the following information will be required:

- Outline proposal for public art demonstrating the objectives, range and quality of proposal
- Exhibit how the proposal responds to the objectives set out by Patricia MacKinnon-Day
- A demonstration of how the scheme will contribute to the quality of the environment
- Outline of the intended procurement process
- Budget allocation
- Proposals for future maintenance

At full planning permission stage, or reserved matters stage, the following information will be required:

- Detailed proposal for public art
- Demonstration of contribution to the quality of the environment
- Description of the commissioning process with a report on tasks already completed
- Evidence of complying with this supplementary planning guidance
- Budget details
- Details for future maintenance. for freestanding artwork, agreement will also need to be reached regarding a minimum time it will be on the site

Proposals will in general be dealt with by the Stakeholder Group, which will make a recommendation to the Council.

4. Advice and Assistance

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Commissions East role in this project is to facilitate and support Patricia Mackinnon-Day as lead artist on the Arbury Park design team.

South Cambridgeshire District Council is the instigator of the public art programme at Arbury Park and manages resources generated through planning gain agreements for this purpose. The Council's Arts Development Officer chairs the public art stakeholder group comprising representatives of Gallagher Estates, local authorities and other interested parties.