

Barking Town Centre Public Arts projects

Initial Brief – Stage 1: Proposals

1 – Context

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham is experiencing a period of great change as the regeneration of London moves East to focus on the Thames Gateway. At the Heart of Thames Gateway and with vast opportunities for development on brownfield land to the south of the Borough, the Council working with its partners is in a unique position to influence the nature of change and regeneration that takes place.

Two Urban Regeneration Companies have been proposed by the Government to deliver regeneration in the East of London, at London Riverside and along the Lee Valley. Barking Town Centre is located at the junction of these two regeneration areas. With good transport connections, proximity to London and Docklands, the Town Centre is ideally located to take advantage of opportunities to maximise the benefits for the Borough, that both of these regeneration areas and the Olympic Bid in the Lee Valley, can bring.

The quality and design of the built and natural environment, the public realm, public art, lighting, density of development, circulation and connectivity, environmental management, and safety, are all key aspects in creating a Borough that has vitality, thrives and continues to grow and improve the facilities on offer to those who pass through, live and work in Barking and Dagenham.

As part of the regeneration and development of Barking Town Centre, designers Burns + Nice were commissioned to produce guidance on use of materials and finishes in the public realm. The guidance applies to developers and local businesses as well as to the local authority maintained areas, to ensure consistency in quality and coherence of the public realm. This is referred to as the 'Barking Code', currently being implemented in several 'pilot' areas.

These pilot areas are:

London Road;

Ripple Road;

Abbey Road;

The Broadway.

Works to the Broadway have already commenced and are due for completion February '05. Within the 'code' are indicative locations for 'public art / waymarkers', the aspiration for which has formed the basis of the public arts scheme, to be applied across the town centre.

2 – Aims and Objectives

The Code will create links in and around the Town Centre through consistency of materials at a ground level. That is, a subtle appreciation of place for pedestrians while they shop, find somewhere to sit, park a bike or catch a bus.

A series of public arts / waymarker installations – whether they are created as distinct installations or integrated more fully into the landscaping design process – enables a sophisticated response to the cultural values and distinctiveness of specific areas in the town centre. The objective for inclusion of public arts, is to make visible, to the visitor and resident of the borough, these cultural values, the heritage and aspirations of the town, within the context of a borough that has a rich and diverse, though somewhat overlooked, cultural profile. This profile informs the culture led regeneration of the borough, currently being realised in the town centre through the development of the new Broadway performing arts centre, the Malthouse creative industries complex, the Lifelong Learning Centre and Public Realm, with conservation and restoration plans under development for the Town Quay area, Barking Abbey and Green and Barking Park.

Furthermore, it is an exciting opportunity to clearly demonstrate that a different level of investment and assertion of ‘values’ is taking place in the Town Centre and therefore, opportunities for community engagement and consultation should be exploited, where appropriate, as part of the artists’ brief.

Proposals for public arts, including 3 & 2 dimensional pieces, community based arts installations, street furniture – including seating, bollards, signage – artistic lighting, interpretation, way-markers, flooring design, inserts & demarcation are invited from artists with a view to achieving the following aims:

- Increased perception of the town centre as a place of change, cultural heritage, diversity and opportunity for cultural growth and learning.
- Increased perception of the town centre as a ‘beacon of change’ encouraging investment, business and local pride.
- Clarity of direction and signposting of pedestrians arriving at and leaving Barking Station, who wish to visit the town centre retail, cultural or leisure facilities.
- Interpretation for pedestrians of the designation of public spaces and directional indicators towards retail or cultural facilities.
- Interpretation for visitors and residents of the cultural heritage and values of the borough and history of the town centre.

3 – Proposal format

Artists are requested to submit a proposal for one or more areas in Barking Town Centre that address the above aims and objectives. The proposals should include the following:

- Written statement about the work, origination of idea and relevance to Barking and Dagenham
- Clear indication of location and written statement of site considerations, risks and mitigating factors e.g. potential for vandalism countered through use of materials
- Full design visuals with materials, scale, detail and other features, such as colour, clearly indicated
- An in-situ illustration of the work within the intended location – this can be a computer generated or otherwise providing that the work and its impact on the site is able to be understood
- Indication of siting criteria and budget - note that a civil engineer will advise from this stage to enable the preferred proposals to be developed to full detail design and tender stage

Please note that artists will be expected to visit the borough on their own initiative in order to inform their proposals and assess site issues

4 – Fees and Budget guide

A fee of £1,000 will be made out to each proposal that fulfils the stated requirements as above. This fee is wholly inclusive of all travel, research and other costs such as subsistence, purchase of materials, time and concept development.

A substantial budget for the whole scheme is available and proposals are invited from artists that demonstrate consideration, artistic interpretation and relevance to the site in question as well as contribute to the enhancement of the public realm overall. The budget has not been allocated to any site in terms of percentages. Budget allocations will be undertaken once the proposals are received to allow for freedom of artist input to developing the overall scheme. This is intended to allow for an adequate budget to be made available for a significant proposal as well as for smaller, more subtle interventions, depending on the location and site requirements.

As a rough guide, it is anticipated that fees may range from £2,000 to £25,000 and project budgets from £20,000 to £250,000 inclusive.

5 – Sites and Considerations

The public arts project overall should seek to develop links and connections between the main public spaces, cultural facilities, routes and developments. Commissions are therefore sought especially for the following areas:

- **Station Parade to East Street**

The area immediately outside of Barking Station plays a key part in the assessment of the town centre and borough for visitors. As this area also contains off road bus and taxi points, it is often crowded and difficult to navigate. The Parade is the route to the rest of the town centre retail and leisure offer, when followed to the right – becoming pedestrianised – before forming a key crossroads junction with London Road, Ripple and East Street. London Road is earmarked for East London Transit, which will travel along Ripple Rd also. East St will remain pedestrianised and a main route to the new Town Square, Barking Abbey and Town Quay.

Proposals are invited that illustrate the connectivity of the Station Parade and East St. and its 'directional' purpose in terms of indicating that it is a significant route and therefore warrants some special treatment. Opportunities for bollards, seating, lighting and flooring are already presenting themselves, particularly at the cross road area and applications for distinct 'waymarkers' are invited.

- **East St to The Broadway**

A brief to developers for East Street is in circulation – for the purpose of understanding the wider context, the development brief is attached. The ambition for the public arts scheme is to 'set the scene' by driving the public arts agenda and influencing the wider development as a result rather than waiting for the areas to be developed by a third party before placing art on this route.

From its junction with London Road to its junction with Paul's Way, the Broadway provides significant pedestrian connections with adjacent residential areas, Barking Abbey and Green, the new Town Square, the new Broadway performance venue, the Town Quay and River Roding, with its proposed creative industry complex. Its junction with Paul's Way provides the road connection between the town centre, Ripple Rd and the A13, Ilford and the A406. It is considered a key area to accommodate public arts, cultural waymarkers, artistic lighting and features that highlight the features and amenities around it. The aim is to highlight the cultural 'heart' and 'gems' of the town centre that encircle the the developing retail offer.

The themes for the Broadway should look to create visual links between the historic Abbey and the contemporary regeneration / cultural facilities of the Town Centre and Town Square. Due to the impending completion of the civil works, consideration should be given to whether this location requires works that can be installed after the public realm design and contract completion.

Opportunities are presenting at the public areas adjacent to the Broadway Performance venue, designed by Tim Foster Architects. These are immediately to its front, where the installation of several granite forms have led to a call for them to be translated into artistic features with demarcation solutions that enhance the environment and complement the proximity of the Abbey Green.

- **Clockhouse Avenue & adjacent service road leading to Axe Street**

To each side of the Broadway Performance Venue is a public route, Clockhouse Avenue a retail service road linking the new town square and East Street and an un-named service road linking the Broadway with the town square and Axe Street, itself an area of redevelopment. A commission for a lighting and landscaping scheme for these roads is now available, to create an enhanced public route and environment for these link roads. The Town Square is being developed by Urban Catalyst who are appointing a landscape architect to create a proposal for the public spaces within it. Efforts will be made to ensure that all involved in both schemes have opportunities to liaise and communicate to ensure coherence and clarity in the landscaping of the public realm.

- **Mill Pond – 4 & 6 Gates at Barking Town Quay**

In terms of access from Barking Town Centre, the Quay is reached, on foot, from the Broadway (to its east) via Abbey Green. The most obvious pedestrian route is to cross the Green near to the Broadway Venue, passing the Abbey ruins and St. Margaret's church on your right before crossing the main road onto the Quay and an area known as 4 & 6 Gates, which takes you over the river to the A406.

The Quay itself was developed some years ago and sits within a housing and office development by Freshwharf Estates. It contains a small grassed 'island' within which is a stonework sculpture installation by Ian Hamilton Finlay and the route to the Gates contains lighting by Freeform artists.

The 4 & 6 Gates area is effectively a bridge over the River Roding, with a seating area that restricts full access and enjoyment of the water. The road is used by local traffic and services to the nearby superstore and hotel chains. The Environment Agency is developing this area with a view to retaining the heritage whilst providing maximum conservation facilities within the riverbank and Gates area. Their objectives for this area are as follows:

- Seating should be relocated to the edges of the site to allow people to sit without being conspicuous
- Levels should be raised to allow for a view from the southern face of the site over the water (whilst still maintaining H&S)
- Materials should be chosen to be in accordance with other works in the area and the Barking Code, and should enhance the historic character of the site while allowing innovation in design of the space

- A creative solution should allow for a barrier between the seating areas and the road without resorting to standard bollard solutions, and should be in keeping with the historic character of the site.
- The main theme the Environment Agency would want to promote is the river. Any sculpture should encourage people to take more notice of the river and if possible help them to understand more about it.

There are several aspects of the river that EA feel could be promoted including:

- History of the river, such as the fishing industry
- How people use the river today, including walking, cycling and canoeing
- The wildlife in the river, including tidal influences, reeds and associated fauna and fish

Proposals for this area, its relationship to the Town Quay and river side access must be considered within the wider residential context and proposed use of Abbey Road.

- **Abbey Road**

Abbey Road extends from the west side of Barking Abbey with the River Roding to its east. At its junction with the Town Quay site and Paul's Way, it branches off, following the line of the river. It is along this site that the proposed creative industries development is to take place, half of which has been achieved with the Malthouse, a redeveloped warehouse for artists and creative industries. The road separates residents on the Gascoigne Estate from the river and is flanked at either end by new housing developments by Rialto and Furlong Homes. It will also be a link between the town centre, visitors to the arts studios and the river – enhanced by the impending 'riverside walk'.

Consideration must be given to the approach to the river via the Gascoigne Estate, which is listed within the top twenty of the country's most deprived wards, currently undergoing vast regeneration in terms of its housing. It is important that Abbey Road does not effectively create a cultural barrier between the river and the estate, with the riverside walk and new public spaces 'owned' only by the residents of the private developments at Furlongs and Rialto. Proposed works must demonstrate a considered sensitivity and appreciation for location in this respect and applications for works that entail full community engagement and involvement will be welcomed.

- **Ripple Rd**

As a thoroughfare – Ripple Rd retains a focus on retail, access and interpretation. There are limited but sound opportunities for street furniture, signage, lighting, tree grills and flooring pieces, which could create links to other artworks on a subtle level. Importantly, the Barking Code will be fully implemented in this area and will seek to reduce to street 'clutter'.

- **Riverside Walk**

The riverside walk is proposed to create a public walkway along the River Roding, from the bottom of Abbey Road to the 4 & 6 Gates area. It is adjacent to Abbey Rd and therefore subject to the same considerations. The designs for the walk are at completion but the implementation phases are unclear. Proposals from Artists particularly wishing to create works for the riverside walk will be welcomed but informed and driven by the timescales for the riverside walk, which are unclear. Given the pressures to spend the available funding, it may prove unfeasible to accept a proposal for a scheme that is delayed or unclear in its delivery.

- **Furlongs**

Situated at the southern end of Abbey Road, Furlongs housing is directly adjacent to the River Roding. A proposal is being negotiated to enable an artist to work with Burns + Nice on the creation of the new public space at the riverside. In this instance, the artist will have the opportunity to influence the landscape, within the parameters of the code, the inclusion of art or other features that lend to its use and distinctiveness.

Proposals will be welcomed from artists setting out their desire to work with Burns + Nice, accompanied by clarity in terms of what they will bring to the team and what they would seek to achieve, as an artist, as a result of this collaboration.

- **Northern Relief Road Subway**

Via a Section 106 Agreement with a local developer, we are able to include a subway under the northern relief road at the top of Wakering Road, in the public arts brief. Wakering Road links the Station Parade with the dense residential development to the rear of Barking Train Station. This high rise development, the Lintons, will be razed and new housing development constructed in its place to allow for a richer mix of private and social housing. Wakering Road has already seen the inclusion of the 'code' with lighting by artist Clare Brew.

There will be opportunities for applied designs, lighting and flooring within this main route for young people, adults and commuters, due to their proximity to the station quarter, a primary school and dense housing development, which will also see the installation of a Foyer as part of the housing regeneration offer. The flooring must accommodate the requirement for shared cycle and footpaths.

- **Barking Park**

Another 106 Agreement has made a significant sum of money available for an artwork for Barking Park, to the north of the town centre. A landscape designer has created the masterplan, currently under further development following feedback from the Heritage Lottery. The Borough's Leisure Service is seeking Heritage Lottery Funding to restore it to its former standard, as a high quality Victorian park, but with a modern aspect in terms of contemporary design, access and opportunities for educational links.

The inclusion of public arts in the scheme is intended to give a sense of added value, innovation and quality to the HLF application and future use of the park. The process for making proposals for the Park has yet to be finalised with the relevant officers, as there is no clear guidance in terms of timescales, reference or parameters. Artists wishing to work in this context will be provided with the material at the earliest opportunity – this project is not subject to the same deadlines as the other town centre schemes due to the funding conditions.

Therefore artists will not have to submit final proposals by mid January but at such time as can be negotiated following the provision of information that can inform the artists approach to the work.

- **Junction of Paul's Way with the Broadway and Gascoigne Rd**

The borough has commissioned several artworks for key junctions in the borough, mainly along the A13, as part of the A13 Artscape project, but also at the Fanshawe Roundabout in the town centre. The Catch is an artwork by Lorraine Leeson, illustrating the fishing heritage of the borough at a key interchange.

We are interested in receiving proposals for the roundabout at the Broadway and Paul's Way to create a focal point and landmark feature, signifying the 'gateway' opportunity of this junction.

- **Temporary Artworks**

Since advertising we have secured the opportunity to commission temporary or 'transient' artworks and installations in and around the town centre. These commissions will offer the opportunity for multi-media, experimental and challenging works that raise the profile of the cultural development and regeneration of Barking Town Centre.

Timescales

Artists site visits / research and development / proposals: 19 Jan '05

Detailed design stage / approvals: mid to end Feb

Implementation/purchase of materials/contracts – where feasible: end March '05

Therefore all artists' designs and contract specifications to be agreed by end March 2005 for implementation.