

Cambridge City Council

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Provision of Public Art as Part of New Development Schemes

1. Introduction

The City of Cambridge benefits from a wide range of publicly sited works of art. These make an important contribution to the character and visual qualities of the City. Historically this has been the result of conscious decisions by enlightened public and private commissioners to employ the services of artists in the design of buildings and landscapes.

There is continuing potential for public art in the City and the recently prepared Public Art Plan for Cambridge (2002) sets out a strategy for future action. Part of this strategy is the production of this guidance for developers.

This guidance on the 'Provision of Public Art as part of new development schemes' was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the City Council on 9 July 2002. Information on the consultation carried out on this document can be found in the Statement on Consultation for Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted July 2002 available from the City Council's Planning Reception.

2. Policy Context

The involvement of artists in the design of the built environment is widely accepted and the Cambridge townscape benefits from a range of art which contributes to the quality of and interest in the environment.

Government Policy Planning Guidance 1 'General Policy and Principles' identifies the need to achieve a high quality of design in new developments. Policy RL26 in the Cambridge Local Plan (adopted 1996) states:

'The local planning authority will, in appropriate cases, encourage the provision of works of art as part of schemes of development.'

Paragraphs 8.58 and 8.59 of the Local Plan emphasise the important role public art can play in the quality of new developments and advise that further guidance will be prepared on this issue.

The provision of public art is also one of the areas identified in the Local Plan (paragraphs 15.14 – 15.18) which may, where appropriate be secured through planning obligations.

3. Purpose of Supplementary Planning Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to provide practical information on how to meet the City Council's 'Percent for Art Policy' and to give an indication of the objective criteria against which the Council will review contributions put forward by developers in association with their planning applications.

Benefits relating to Public Art are outlined in the leaflet produced by Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils, 'Public Art Guidelines'.

4. What?

The provision of public art should result in a work of art or a contribution by an artist and / or craftsperson, which complements the overall objectives of the development. Larger schemes may involve commissioning a number of different artists.

Cambridge City Council expects the work to 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 should remain on site permanently or for an agreed period of time.

The work or contribution is likely to be commissioned and created specifically for the development. In many cases it will be developed in collaboration with the architect or designer and in consultation with the users of the site.

The approach adopted will vary from scheme to scheme depending on its nature, design, scale and end use. These are some of the options:

- An integrated or functional element (e.g. lighting, landscape, floor designs and signage)
- A temporary work such as performance or installation
- A 'Landmark' work by an artist (e.g. sculpture, painting etc)

It is unlikely that structures or works located within the public highway, such as decorative street lighting will be considered eligible as the Highway Authority will not accept the maintenance liability for such works.

The Council's preference is for public art to be fully integrated into development proposals.

5. Eligibility

The requirement to meet the public art policy will apply to all developments meeting the following criteria:

Residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings (or a site area of 0.5 ha or more)

Other developments where the floor space to be built is 1000m² gross or more (or where the site area is 0.5ha or more), including office, manufacturing, warehousing and retail developments

On smaller developments encouragement will be given to developers to seek to include Public Art within their scheme as a means of enhancing the quality of their development.

6. Cost

The value of public art within the development should be equal to 1% of the construction cost of a capital project.

The precise amount will be determined either by the developer providing a detailed written estimate of the building costs or by the application of a nationally recognised building price index.

Expenditure on public art can cover the following:

- Artists fees and fabrication
- Specialist advice and project management
- Linked education programmes

If it is not feasible to spend the allocation on the development site the Council will accept a commuted sum equivalent to 1% of the construction costs via a planning obligation. The use of commuted sums will be considered and allocated by the Council in accordance with the priorities set out in the Public Art Plan of 2002 and updated by the Council from time to time.

In this eventuality the Council will inform the developers of the end use of the sum and will credit the developer appropriately.

Developers may be able to secure external funding to enhance their contribution, for example by applying for grant aid. Details of possible grant sources can be obtained from the Council.

7. Considerations

In considering 'Percent for Art' proposals, the Council intends to be flexible in the way in which Policy RL26 can be satisfied. This will depend on the type and scale of project but will always include consideration of the following:

- Appropriateness to public usage and design context
- Demonstration of good practice with particular reference to project management and equal opportunities
- Linked education programmes
- Care and maintenance costs

8. Methodology

The key to a successful Public Art project is to plan for the involvement of artists at the earliest opportunity in the development process, ensuring both that any costs are considered as part of the process and that alternatives to a financial contribution are fully explored:

In submitting details for outline planning permission, the following information will be required:

- Outline proposal for the involvement of artists
- Demonstration of how the scheme will contribute to the quality of the environment and the community
- Outline of the intended procurement process
- Budget allocation
- Proposals for future care and maintenance

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

- Detailed proposal for the involvement of artists
- Demonstration of contribution to the environment and the community
- 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 care and maintenance

Proposals will, in general, be dealt with by the Council's Planning Sub-Committee as a material consideration in determining the application.

If however, the proposals are felt to be of particular significance, they may be referred to others for advice, prior to formal consideration by the Council.

9. Advice and Assistance

Preliminary advice and assistance will be provided by your case officer.

In addition, initial advice can be provided by:

Arts Strategy Officer
Cambridge City Council
Guildhall
Cambridge
CB2 3QJ
Tel: 01223 457507
E-mail: richard.socket@cambridge.gov.uk

Commissions East and a number of freelance specialists operate locally. A list of these can be obtained from the Council.

10. Other Considerations

There may be circumstances where a freestanding artwork may require a separate planning permission. It is advisable to check with the Environment and Planning Department at an early stage in the development process.