

Public Art

**Supplementary Planning Guidance
Adopted 20th July 2004**

Cheltenham Borough Council

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

PUBLIC ART

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Borough Council is committed to improving the quality of the public realm in Cheltenham and will work with developers to provide new works of art either as part of development schemes or within the wider public realm. This guidance relates to the promotion of public art provision in association with development.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cheltenham Borough benefits from a wide range of publicly sited works of art, examples of the most famous being the Minotaur and Hare and Neptune's Fountain, both situated on The Promenade. Public art makes an important contribution to the character and aesthetics of the town. 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.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

Government policy

- 3.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 - General Policy and Principles (1997) identifies the need to achieve a high quality of design in new developments and states:

“Good design can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.”

- 3.2 This approach is further emphasised within Government objectives and guidance, including The Urban White Paper (November 2000) and supplementary guidance to Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing), By Design (2001) which links the quality of the environment to the quality of life experienced in towns and cities. Contributions made to the public realm can assist in improving this objective.

Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Framework

- 3.3 In 2000 the Borough Council commissioned the preparation of an Urban Design Framework for Cheltenham by urban design consultants Latham Architects. A draft version of this framework was published in October 2001 for public consultation.
- 3.4 The objective of the framework was to set out urban design principles, identify distinct character areas throughout the Borough and consider how these interact with each other, assess potential development sites and identify landscape, public realm and architecture guidelines which will help to build on the existing distinctive characteristics of the town.
- 3.5 The framework sets out the importance of enriching the quality of the public realm and promotes the role that both formal and informal public art can play in stimulating interest in the street and landscape:

“To use the talents of artists to enhance the surfaces and features. Patterns on paving, sculptural railings, artistic street furniture, witty signage and murals on blank walls are all ways of providing ornament which can be thought provoking whilst being useful”.

4 CULTURAL STRATEGIES

Cultural strategy for the South West

- 4.1 In 2001 Culture South West published a regional cultural strategy (In Search of Chunky Dunsters). The principle objectives of the strategy's aim were to improve access, participation and education in cultural activities throughout the South West. Strategic theme 2 of the strategy recognises the importance that improvements to the quality of the built environment can make to the accessibility of culture.

Cultural Strategy Framework for Gloucestershire

- 4.2 In 2002 Gloucestershire County Council published a Cultural Strategy Framework for Gloucestershire. One of the purposes of this framework is to act as a reference point for all those involved in developing and delivering cultural activities. Strategic Theme 9(b) of the strategy (Improving support for all forms of cultural activity), highlights the need to:

“Continue to expand the County's public art programme”

Cheltenham's Cultural Strategy 2002 to 2006

- 4.3 In 2002 the Borough Council published Cheltenham's Cultural Strategy which sought to both apply the strategic themes of the Cultural Strategy Framework for Gloucestershire and to meet the challenges set out in 'Our town, our future' (2000) which included the need to promote the artistic and cultural life of the town. Action1 B1 of the strategy sets out the need to:

“Extend opportunities for creating public art”

5 WHAT IS PUBLIC ART?

- 5.1 Public Art is defined as any work of visual art or craft produced by an artist or craftsman and sited in a location that is freely accessible to the public. It may be new work commissioned specifically for a particular site, or an existing work sited in a public place. It may be made by an individual artist or as a result of a collaborative process involving other design professionals or members of a local community.
- 5.2 The term Public Art not only encompasses publicly sited sculpture, painting, prints, photographs and crafts but also includes artwork incorporated into a wide range of projects, from playground designs, signage, street furniture, lighting schemes and landscape designs to the internal detailing of a building, its furniture, flooring or even its crockery. Public Art refers to permanent artworks as well as artist-in-residence schemes and temporary projects - from video projections to Internet projects - where the emphasis is on public work.

6 PUBLIC ART – THE BENEFITS

6.1 Public art can be employed to fulfil a wide range of Council objectives within areas of environmental, social, educational, cultural and economic policy.

Social and educational benefits

6.2 The development of public art projects in which local people work with artists to improve their own environment, can:

- Develop people's sense of ownership of their environment;
- Instil a sense of local identity and community pride;
- Strengthen a sense of community and enhance social cohesion;
- Develop people's interest in, and understanding of, the visual arts, and
- Enhance people's creativity, extend their social skills and self-confidence, and create social inclusion through learning.

Environmental benefits

6.3 Public art can enhance the environment, contributing to all aspects of urban design - from street furniture and paving to building design and landscaping.

With community involvement, it can be effectively employed to:

- Aid regeneration by developing a positive identity for an area and improving its image;
- Encourage people to value their surroundings, contributing to a reduction in vandalism and fear of crime and creating a healthier, safer environment;
- Create local distinctiveness and a sense of place.

Cultural benefits

6.4 Cheltenham's collection of public art is already a significant addition to the borough's cultural provision. If it's potential as a cultural and educational resource is effectively developed, it can:

- Enrich the cultural life of the town, improving the quality of life for local people;
- Expand upon the town's cultural profile nationally and internationally;
- Develop civic pride and help create a distinctive 'image' for Cheltenham;
- Broaden public access to contemporary arts and crafts, and encourage the understanding and appreciation of visual art.

Economic benefits

6.5 Public art can encourage inward investment by:

- Providing an impression of social, cultural and economic confidence, thereby stimulating economic growth;
- Creating a focus and stimulus for tourism;
- Increasing revenue to local businesses through an increase in visitors to the city, contributing to the local economy by creating employment opportunities for local artists, craftspeople and associated businesses.

7 PERCENT FOR ART

7.1 In 1989, the Arts Council of Great Britain initiated the "Percent for Art" campaign. This was designed to enhance the built environment by encouraging developers to devote a proportion of capital expenditure of the construction of a new building to the provision of new works of art, craft or decoration either within the development site or the wider public realm.

How does the 'Percent for Art' programme work?

- 7.2 The Borough Council will enter into discussions with developers to allocate up to 1% of the total building costs of proposed developments for the commissioning of public art as an integral part of the development. Percent for Art applies to public and private sector developments, usually those that are large scale and include publicly accessible buildings and spaces.

8 PUBLIC ART PANEL

- 8.1 The proposals for a work of art within a development or in the wider public realm are normally submitted to the Public Art Panel. Cheltenham's Public Art Panel are involved in the selection and commissioning process of public works of art. They also adopt a supervisory stance during the development of the art work.
- 8.2 The panel is comprised of representatives from the Council and relevant organisations including, Planning Committee, a Cabinet Deputy, Assistant Director of the Built Environment, Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham Arts Council, Public Art South West and the local community.

9 IMPLEMENTATION

Legal agreement

- 9.1 Provision of public art within a development proposal will normally be delivered through an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This Agreement is legally binding and sets out the basis of the commission and the process to be followed. The agreement will normally include details of:
- The scope and scale of the works;
 - The type of work to be pursued;
 - The role of the artist(s);
 - Commissioning the artist;
 - The extent, if any, of direct public involvement;
 - The timing of the project in the overall capital programme;
 - The identification of budgets and committed overall costs;
 - A statement on future maintenance responsibilities and costs;
 - De-commissioning.
- 9.2 The Public Art Panel will review the details of the proposal before accepting the planned piece of work.

10 FURTHER INFORMATION

Relevant legislation

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Guidance

- PPG1 - General Policy and Principles (1997)
- Circular 1/97 Planning Obligations (1997)
- Government's Urban Renaissance White Paper (November 2000)
- Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Second Review Revised Deposit Draft, Cheltenham Borough Council (2004)

- Cultural Strategy for the South West (In Search of Chunky Dunsters), Culture South West, (2001)
- Cultural Strategy Framework for Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire County Council (2002)
- Cheltenham's Cultural Strategy 2002 to 2006, Cheltenham Borough Council (2002)
- By Design, DETR (2001)

Useful websites

- www.cheltenham.gov.uk
- www.publicartonline.org.uk
- www.culturesouthwest.org.uk

10 CONTACTS

10.1 The following officers of Cheltenham Borough Council will be able to offer further advice on the issues set out in this guidance:

Development Control Manager
01242 264168
 Strategic Land Use Officer
01242 264382

Urban Design Manager
01242 264145