



Public Art Strategy, Stoke Bishop Halls of Residence

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University of Bristol, Public Art Strategy for Stoke Bishop Residential Site

1. Introduction

The University of Bristol is commissioning new student accommodation at Hiatt Baker within the residential campus at Stoke Bishop. The University has in existence an International Public Art Strategy that addresses its overall ambition for public art with an emphasis on the City Precinct. Given the particular nature of the Stoke Bishop site, **its' historic gardens and** the parkland that surrounds it, it is felt that a public art plan should be put forward that takes into consideration this rather different context whilst continuing to pursue the ambitions of the existing Strategy.

Should the University need to build further accommodation in the future, then this plan sets out further aims and objectives for commissioning public art at Stoke Bishop, which whilst initially arising through the new build, can be drawn on in the future across the residential campus.

1.1 International Public Art Programme

Written by Situations at the University of the West of England and adopted by the University in 2010, this sets out some key principles which the University has adopted and which bear relevance here. It is worth quoting some of these here.

The Vision states that the public art programme should:

- Promote a heightened **awareness of the University's work** and physical environment, drawing out the distinctions and connections between different academic strands of activity;
- Promote orientation across the University through distinctive environments and interventions;
- Contribute creative and imaginative ideas to the design **and development of the University's buildings and external realm**;
- Create meeting and talking points throughout the **University's Precinct for staff, students and the general public which promote the University's commitment to** nurturing creativity and independence of mind;
- Build a collection of outstanding artworks through the creation of opportunities for artists to engage with the work of the University;
- Engage participants and visitors beyond the University by improving and enhancing the urban realm and by staging a series of inclusive and inspiring events and participatory projects;
- Support risk-taking in public art commissioning to support **the University's ambition to become a centre of excellence** in public engagement.

2. Context

2.1 The Grounds

The Stoke Bishop residential campus falls within the two Bristol City Council conservation areas of Durdham Downs and Sneyd Park. It comprises of six halls of residence built at different intervals from the 19th century up until 1995. Historically the setting of the Halls of Residence was part of a large parkland sited around Stoke House (built in 1669). The grounds are particularly verdant and include an arboretum surrounding Churchill Hall, wild grass meadows to the north of Hiatt Baker, the smaller pleasure gardens at Wills, mature specimen trees with woodland walks and lawns and fine planting throughout the site.

The grounds are relatively underused by the students who live in the Halls and the University is looking for opportunities to encourage the students into different areas through a range of activities.

2.2 The University's Botanic Gardens

Bristol University's Halls of Residence are perhaps the only ones in the UK that have at their centre a Botanic Garden, (also run by the University), which comprises some 4,500 specimen plants and trees arranged into four core collections. The Botanic's mission is to 'educate, communicate and conserve', which they deliver by acting as a teaching resource for the University's Plant Sciences courses, running courses for adults and local schools and as a local attraction for the general public.

The Botanic Gardens and the University's landscaping team work together on a number of initiatives and are keen to develop links between the Botanic and the residential gardens. At present this includes the development of a tree walk which includes key specimen trees through the Halls of Residence, and a meadow of native plants, part of a nationwide research project led by Professor Jane Memmott. The Botanic Gardens also commission their own temporary exhibitions and are currently supporting the Ballast Seed Garden by Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves co-produced by the Arnolfini.



The Botanic Gardens, University of Bristol

2.3 The Halls of Residence

Currently over 2,000 students live in the Halls within the Stoke Bishop campus. For most of these students this will be their first experience of life away from home, and an essential part of their University experience.

Student halls **were historically set up in part ‘to foster the growth of a spirit of corporate life amongst undergraduates’**. To the public they represent the more private side of University life, but for the students it is potentially the most social side and a key contributor to their personal development.

The students represent the core **‘community’ to engage with** – and offer an opportunity to explore some of the rhythms, routines and rituals around communal living. Hall, the refectories, the apartment kitchens, communal bars and the central café are all potential locations where this social interaction takes place. However, given the very transient nature of the population, the majority of students stay in Halls for only one year and have courses lasting an average of three years, it will be important to consider the legacy of any artist projects beyond the immediate student population.

There are many opportunities competing for **the students’** attention and it may be prudent to bear these in mind when considering an engagement project.

Possible avenues to explore include the Junior Common Rooms, Halls Committees, Student Union, University website and radio, and alumni.



University Hall, Badock and Wills Halls of Residence

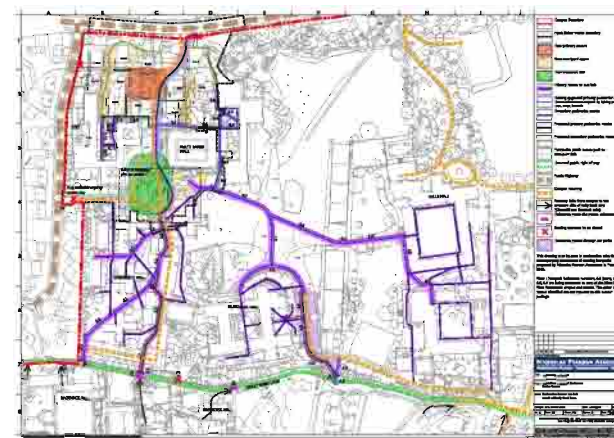
2.4 The Local Residents

The Halls of Residence are positioned within a residential area of Bristol and the Hiatt Baker development may impact on residents living in **Parry’s Lane and Shaplands**. Residents on Hollybush Lane also take an interest because of their proximity to the main arterial pedestrian route through the site, currently the principle access point to public transport for students. Key local interest groups also include Friends of the Downs & Avon Gorge and Westbury on Trym Society.

Whilst the residential campus is essentially private, it is used by the public on an informal basis as a pedestrian thoroughfare to the Downs. It is intended that at key moments during the implementation and completion of the public art programme local residents as well as the wider public will be given opportunities to participate and engage with the outcomes. However this will need to be monitored and reviewed as security is also a regular concern for the University.



Hiatt Baker general arrangement plan showing proposed new bus route to Halls of Residence. Nicholas Pearson Associates.



Pedestrian routes through Halls of Residence to proposed new bus route, north of Hollybush Lane. Nicholas Pearson Associates.

2.5 Layout of the Site

The Halls are spread out through the residential grounds and historically the main pedestrian thoroughfare has led students up Hollybush Lane to the bus stop on Seville Road.

The development of Hiatt Baker will include the introduction of a new 'transport hub', for the first time bringing the University's bus service into the grounds of the Halls of Residence. This will naturally change the focus of the site to its northeastern side, re-positioning Churchill and Badock on the outer lying perimeter.

Social spaces around the transport hub will take on increasing importance and the University intends to enlarge the café and shop and increase the terraced area.

3. Aims and Objectives

Bearing in mind the context of the site, the University proposes to take a holistic view of the grounds and look at opportunities for developing connections across the site as a whole rather than limiting the public art programme to the area directly related to the new building development.

Both physical and social connections can be made between the built and the natural environment, from one building to another **and between the residential campus and the University's** departments across the city.

Whilst bearing in mind the Vision of the International Public Art programme for the University as a whole, the primary aims and objectives specific to Stoke Bishop are:

- To encourage greater use of the green areas surrounding the site around the residential buildings
- To encourage greater connectivity between the different Halls of residence, both physical and social
- To promote orientation across the site, including the new transport entrance to the Halls
- To encourage social use of the public realm and outdoor activity
- To work with emerging and mid-career artists and where appropriate to work with artists based in the southwest of England.

In their *Guidelines for Commissioning Public Art*, Sophie Hope and **Cameron Cartiere** write that 'The role of the artist can be to make and reinforce connections'. **It is this approach that** the University proposes to celebrate here.

The public art programme will be an opportunity for cross-fertilization – physically and socially across Stoke Bishop, and conceptually through the exploration of ideas and sources of inspiration.



Wrights & Sites '*Everything you need to build a town is here*', a constellation of 41 signs dispersed across Weston-super-Mare, which engage with their immediate vicinity and draw attention to underlying connections across the town. Commissioned by North Somerset Council, 2010. Photo: Max McClure.

3.1 Routes of Delivery

We propose a two-tiered approach to the delivery of the programme specific to the redevelopment of Hiatt Baker:

- i) Artist residency, initially six months
- ii) Supported by site specific commission(s) across the green spaces



Habitat: a Floating Garden by artist Tania Kovats for the City Road Basin on the Regents Canal. The structure is planted with botanical species sympathetic to its environment and designed to encourage wildlife to the island.

Photo: Brian Whar

3.2 Artist Residency

‘An artist residency can offer the opportunity for a creative collaboration between the artist and the staff and/or students ...’
University of Bristol International Public Art Programme.

The residential nature of the site, and the opportunity for an artist to spend a more concentrated period of time on location, are both factors, which recommend this course of action. A residency will offer an artist the opportunity to engage more directly with the students. The intention will be that over the period of time the artist is on location they should be developing and creating a new work.

The residency will also be an opportunity to focus a series of talks and events, which explore potential locations that the future commissioning programme might focus on.

The artist will be encouraged to work with an existing department of the University or member of staff in order that their work is supported and has a legacy beyond the immediate student year group.

The Residency will be an **opportunity to ‘promote a heightened awareness of the University’s work and physical environment drawing out distinctions and connections’ not only ‘of the different strands of academic life’ but also of the social and cultural life of the University.**

3.3 Case Studies

Jacques Nimki, 'Florilegium'



School children study the Florilegium at Eastside; Nimki's 'Greenhouse' at Tatton Park Biennial.

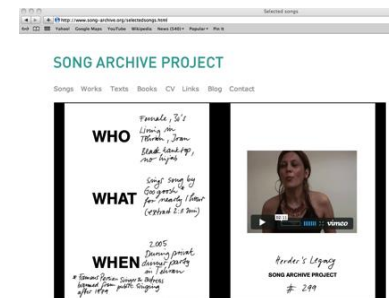
Artist Jacques Nimki has created a number of works that he calls his '**Florilegium**'. Nimki painstakingly researches and catalogues the weeds and wildflowers that he finds in a particular area. Usually undervalued and overlooked he uncovers local specimens and holds them up for reconsideration, bringing to light their medicinal, magical and aesthetic qualities, thus challenging traditional notions of value and beauty.

In Birmingham he then produced a vast meadow of the wild plants and weeds that he sourced from the local Digbeth streets. In the formal gardens of Tatton Park he created a Greenhouse project space, which became a site for research and engagement.

Yvonne Buckheim, 'The Song Archive Project'

Bristol-based artist, Yvonne Buckheim, has been working on The Song Archive Project, which she began in 2003 in response to a song collection from 1773 by **Johann Gottfried Herder**. Herder's collection and theory suggest that the cultural identity of a people is reflected through their song tradition.

Buckheim invites people of different ages and social backgrounds to perform a song of their choice spontaneously in front of a video camera without preparation thereby creating 'raw honest acts of self-assuredness, embarrassment, dignity, skill, enjoyment, solidarity, and vulnerability'. The Song Archive Project includes over 900 amateur song performances from diverse cultures and countries. Carried out in different locations, each time the specific location reveals its own particular themes.

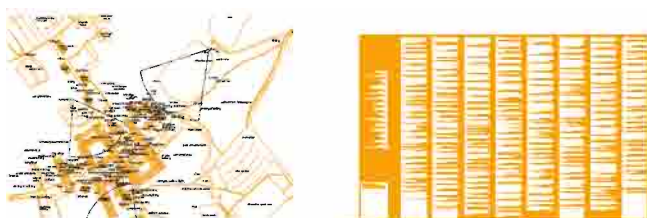


Excerpt from the Song Archive Project website

Support Structure, 'Walk and Talk'

The University of Essex worked with Support Structure, artist-architect duo **Gavin Wade** and **Celine Condorelli** through a six month residency to create **Walk and Talk**. The project took as its inspiration the discussions between the founding vice chancellor and the original architect for the University where they 'walked and talked the site together', in order to establish their vision for the structure and layout of the University.

The artists' aim was to use the social premise of the University campus as a platform for conversation and debate and to create a new map for past and future communities of the campus. A public call was made over the six month residency, answered by a range of students and staff, including alumni, management and facilities staff. The walks and talks act as a register of collective memory and experience of the site from its creation to now. The conversations led to the production of a set of temporary signs located around the site to encourage conversation and an awareness of social acts and a layered map of personal experiences.



A 'Walking Talking Map' of Essex University

3.4 Artist Commissions

The second strand of the programme is to commission one or two interventions in the public areas around the site. This will be an opportunity

- To add to the University's growing collection of outstanding artworks both temporary and permanent which reinforce the distinctive aspects of the different types of gardens and parkland surrounding the Halls of Residence
- To Create new distinctive landmarks through the grounds which become meeting and talking points
- To Promote orientation and encourage new use of overlooked spaces



Lara Favaretto, *Without Earth Under Foot* a night time occurrence on the causeway at Madeira Cove, Weston-super-Mare, Commissioned by North Somerset Council, 2010. Photo: Max McClure.

3.5 Case Studies

Ruth Ewan, **'The Liberties of the Savoy'**



The artist Ruth Ewan has been invited to work with over 200 young people living in East London to create **'The Liberties of the Savoy'**, an event **inspired by the Peasant's Revolt of 1381**. The young participants will be responsible for all aspects of the project including the menu, music, performance, design and transport. The event will take three months to deliver with the participants **developing key practical skills and being granted 'Liberties of the Savoy' whilst reflecting on a key moment in the Capital's history.**

Ruth Ewan's work is often based on hidden moments in social or political history, which have had a significant impact on the site in which she is invited to work. The project is commissioned by Create and will involve residents from the Olympic host boroughs.

Ruth Claxton, Synthetic Worlds (Skytops)

Ruth Claxton was invited to make **'Synthetic Worlds (Skytops)** in response to the landscape gardens of the National Trusts' Attingham Park. The work is semi-permanent, and intended to remain on site for one year. Within a nest of aluminum hoops and mirrored Perspex discs perch a number of porcelain cockatoos wearing blown glass hoods.



'Ruth Claxton's work acknowledges the value of the bird population at Attingham and the Park's status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, but she also asks us to look again at what is apparently natural. All of the landscape at Attingham is artificially designed and constructed. By making a work which looks like an impostor, she argues that it is no less constructed than the landscape within which it is placed.'

Tue Greenfort, **Sand martin's** roost

Tue Greenfort's work often deals with ideas of ecology and directly tackles our relationship with the natural world and how we use its resources. Greenfort is interested in an expanded notion of ecology, however, one that encompasses cultural history and socio-politics as well as natural resources.'



Using seeds sowed by GPS-steered precision farming system tractors, Greenfort traces out the word Hunger in one of the vast sugar beet fields of the Wilhelmina polder. 2009.

In Bristol, Greenfort proposes to create a roost for sand martins alongside Bristol's **feeder canal located between a large area of social housing and light industry**. The project will engage local residents in discussions with the artist and ecologists, a fundamental part of the project being to activate local people to question the legal, administrative and social structures that regulate the way we live our lives and inviting us to question notions of individual, collective and government responsibilities.



ROSY (the ballerina), by raumlaborberlin

This work was commissioned by UP projects as part of their portovilion series, a programme that commissions temporary **pavilions by contemporary artists in London's green spaces**.

raumlaborberlin, an architecture/art collective, **designed this 'pop' up pavilion** made of a translucent membrane which inflates out of the back of a caravan. ROSY (the ballerina) hosted performances and events programmed with different cultural organisations across the capital from Tate Modern to independent dance companies.

The eye-catching temporary and mobile structure became a venue for all kinds of temporary activity including film programmes, talks, workshops and small scale performances organised by a range of different parties.

4. Delivery

The University has a public art committee, which oversees the delivery of the International Public Art Strategy.

This committee includes:

- Professor David Clarke (Chair)
- Patrick Finch, Bursar
- Professor Martin White (Chair of Life Sciences Public Art Group)
- Professor Stafford Lightman
- Mrs Narell Thomas

A Steering Group has been formed to oversee the Stoke Bishop site, which will report back to the public art committee through its Chair.

This steering group includes:

- Patrick Finch (Chair)
- Neil Sapsworth, Accommodation
- A Student representative (to be determined)
- Professor Simon Hiscock – Academic Lead, Botanic Gardens
- Alan Stealey, Head of Estates
- Professor Robert Mayhew, Warden Churchill Hall



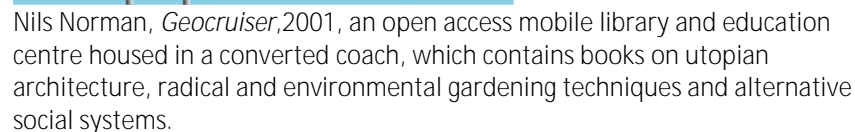
Constance de Jong, *Speaking of the River*, an audio bench commissioned by PADT 2002. Local residents and workers record their impressions of the River Thames.

The University of Bristol will appoint a public art consultant to deliver the public art programme.

Their job will be to implement the public art plan through the following actions:

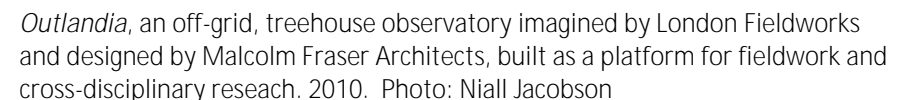
- *Recruitment and appointment of artists including*
Research and identify initial long list for residency and individual commission(s) for review by the steering group, from which a shortlist is made.
- *Manage the selection process including:*
Drafting briefs and identifying specific project partners
Invite shortlisted artists to apply – arrange site visits and presentations by key stakeholders
Arrange artist presentations of initial proposals to steering group
Make final selection
Draft contracts
Organise presentation of final selection to students and staff at Halls of residence.
- *Oversee the research process and development of final proposals:*
Develop proposals with individual artist(s) in liaison with stakeholder groups and critical partners
Present final proposals to steering group for signing off.
Present final proposals to students and staff at Halls of residence.
- *Develop proposals and manage delivery:*
Consult with project partners and stakeholder groups.
Oversee design development of projects/artworks

Gather necessary permissions, planning, building control, etc.
Oversee the provision of method statements and risk assessments
for Installation/presentation of final work



- Effective communication during the development of the art programme will be fundamental to ensure its success.

D. Develop publicity material and contextual information for artworks.



5. Timeline

2012

July: Planning Decision

Contractor appointed

Sept: Contractor starts on Site

Draw up Artist Brief for Residency

Oct: Shortlist Artists, Invite and Develop Proposals

Nov: Interview & Appoint Artist

Dec: Commence preparation for residency

2013

Jan - May: Artist Residency takes place with associated events programme

June: Launch work

July: Reflect on findings, review and confirm final commission(s)

Draft artist brief(s)

Sept: Shortlist artists, invite and develop proposals

Nov: Interview & Appoint

Dec: Develop proposal

2014

Feb: Present completed designs

Mar: Commence fabrication

July: Deliver final artwork(s)

Sept: New Halls of residence open, Artwork installed



Painting from Memory, a series of 20 small-scale landscape paintings produced with **watercolour painter Martin Hoyle** from dialogues following **Simon Pope's** walks in the mountains of Northern Italy. 2009.

6. Projected Budget

Income

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| First Phase: | £75,000 |
|--------------|---------|

Expenditure

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Artist Residency (6 months) | |
|-----------------------------|--|

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Fees (£150/day) | £8,500 |
|-----------------|--------|

| | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Accommodation (£120/wk) | £2,500 |
|-------------------------|--------|

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|--------------|--------|
| Talks budget | £2,000 |
|--------------|--------|

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|----------------------|---------|
| Artist Commission(s) | £50,000 |
|----------------------|---------|

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| Management | £12,000 |
|------------|---------|

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|-------|---------|
| Total | £75,000 |
|-------|---------|

Appendix One: **University of Bristol's** International Public Art Programme

A copy of the University of Bristol's International Public Art Strategy can be downloaded at:
<http://www.situations.org.uk/research/university-bristol-public-art-strategy/>

Appendix Two: Halls of Residence

The Stoke Bishop student residences consist of six halls: (1) Wills; (2) Churchill (including The Holmes); (3) Badock; (4) University; (5) Hiatt Baker and (6) Durdham. These are, roughly, centred on ST566757 and bounded by: Saville Road, off Durdham Downs, to the South East; Parry's Lane to the North East; Shaplands to the North West; and Stoke Hill to the South West. The Halls fall within two of Bristol City Council's Conservation Areas; namely Durdham Downs and Sneyd Park.

The setting is part of a large parkland which was sited around Stoke House (built in 1669). The topography of the site rises from the northern end to the Downs as the Southern border. The slope is dominated by:

1) Wills Hall, designed by the locally famous architect Sir George Oatley and based upon the Oxford quadrangle model. The Hall, itself, was connected to an earlier building, 'Downside House', which is similar to Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill gothic style. The Hall is surrounded by fields and woodland to the North and East whilst smaller pleasure gardens are laid out to the south.

2) Churchill Hall was opened in 1956 and the surrounding grounds were planted with an 'arboretum', through which informal paths meander. These paths are mown on an annual basis whilst the naturally occurring flora (grasses, shrubs and herbaceous plants)

are allowed to grow to their full height. Churchill is associated with The Holmes - built 1879 – which now accommodates the University's Botanic Garden.



3) Badock Hall was built in the mid 1960s. Accommodation blocks cascade down a dramatically sloping site. A number of ancient oaks grow in formal lawns, whilst ornamental beds surround the majority of buildings. Hiatt Baker was completed in 1966 featuring warm brick buildings and pseudo verdigris detail. The surrounding

landscape is relatively flat comprising of a broad range of species of tree.

4) University Hall (1971) contains a mixture of building styles within grounds that are mainly laid to lawn and ground cover shrubs.

5) Hiatt Baker Hall was designed by the firm of architects Percy Thomas, and was opened in 1966. It is very much of its period with many mature specimen trees, lawns and ornamental beds.

6) Durdham Hall, although relatively new (1995), nestles in the ground surrounded by mature woodland, coppiced hazels, silver birch copse and ornamental shrubs.

University development of the Stoke Bishop Halls of Residence has **taken place since the 1930's. The newest hall, Durdham, was** completed in 1995.

In recent years a number of the buildings have been transformed with contemporary refurbishment; and current plans are being developed to revitalise Hiatt Baker and establish enhanced transport routes.

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