

Carriageworks and Westmoreland House

Cultural Plan - Outline Specification

PG Group are seeking an organisation that will prepare a Cultural Plan for the Carriageworks and Westmorland House development in Stokes Croft, Bristol.

Planning permission for redevelopment of the Carriageworks and Westmorland House site was granted in October 2015. PG Group have acquired the development site which will comprise 112 flats, 1,010 sqm of commercial space, a market square and through-route.

One of the pre-commencement conditions attached to the planning permission states:

“Prior to the commencement of any construction works for the development a Cultural Programme Delivery Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall set out the details of the Cultural Programme Steering Group, co-ordinated by an appointed programme manager. This Delivery Plan shall set out clear principles for the delivery of cultural projects to be delivered within the site. Reason: In the interests of the proper management of the site.”

Background

The Carriageworks, Westmoreland House and the surrounding land have been derelict for 30 years. The Carriageworks, a Grade II* listed building, was designed by EW Godwin, an important Victorian architect and designer of the Aesthetic Movement. In its derelict state the building is on Historic England's top ten buildings most “at risk” in the South West.

The neighbouring Westmoreland House is a six storey 1960s concrete frame office building, that was last occupied in 1986 by Regional Pools Promotions. At the rear of Westmorland House is 4 Ashley Road, a Grade II listed house that was once the local doctors surgery but is now derelict beyond repair.

In their derelict form the buildings have attracted vandalism and graffiti and have been the site of a number of accidental deaths. More positively they have provided a canvas for urban artists while the backland has been home to a group of travellers for many years. In this prominent location and condition they have come to define this area of Bristol for better and worse over many years.

The site has been the subject of many attempts at redevelopment with either market conditions or refused planning applications resulting in inaction and growing dereliction. In 2013, following local approval of a Community Vision for the site, Bristol City Council sought a development partner who would support compulsory purchase. Before plans could be advanced a new developer, Fifth Capital, emerged with the support of the site owners. Despite initial opposition Fifth Capital's proposals secured planning permission in October 2015 with the support of the local community. The site was then acquired for development by PG Group of Bristol.

Local Area

Stokes Croft¹ is border country; on the edge of the residential neighbourhoods of St Pauls, Montpelier, Kingsdown and Cotham. To the south of Stokes Croft (itself forming part of one of the country's main arterial trunk roads - the A38) lies the city centre with its national brand businesses while to north is Gloucester Road, full of vibrant independent retailers. As such Stokes Croft is perhaps one of the most economically diverse areas in the country. Many of the houses are grand (they were formerly the residences of wealthy merchants and businessmen) but sit alongside Victorian terraces, more modern social housing and hostels. The area is home to those who have much and those who have little, established families, asylum seekers and newcomers to Bristol buying homes at prices that offer good value compared to London and the South East. It hosts start-up businesses and long-established traders. Its residents include the creators of international brands, their workers, their consumers and their competitors. It is also recognised for its creativity, its streetlife and its internationalism.

The Community Vision

In 2011 the Carriageworks Action Group (CAG)² facilitated the creation of a Community Vision for the site, drawing together the diverse communities and interests in the area to work together on a shared vision for the first time. The overall vision states:

"The Carriageworks development will make a positive contribution to the economy, culture and environment of Stokes Croft and surrounding area. It will be a mixed use development that is home to many activities, businesses and people. It will be a buzzing, vibrant place for people from the local communities and from further afield. We want to see the dereliction of this site addressed as a priority and are keen to work with any organisation that embraces our vision for the future."

CAG's open meetings have, to some extent, mirrored the diversity of the area and prove that this neighbourhood really cares about the development which will be at the heart of it, reflecting and embracing the community it serves.

Requirements of the Cultural Plan

Other than the pre-commencement condition itself there are no guidelines from BCC on what should be included in the Cultural Plan. Our approach is that the Plan needs to set out:

- The Plan's purpose
- A definition of the culture of the site and the surrounding area
- How the culture informs delivery of local employment, long term management, public art, materials and finishes
- An outline of specific projects which will be delivered during the development process or after completion

¹ An overview of some of Stokes Croft's prominent buildings can be found at <http://www.bristolinformation.co.uk/streets/stokescroft-00.asp>

² www.carriageworks.org.uk

- The proposed role of Godwin (designer of the Carriageworks)

Local Community Involvement

In preparing the Plan, consultation and engagement with the local community is essential. The community is defined as those people living or working within approximately 500m of the site. This will include parts of St Pauls, Montpelier, Cotham and Kingsdown.

CAG is the principal community group engaged in the development.

It is anticipated that the author of the plan will hold a number of events and meetings with interested parties, provide online opportunities and generally reach as far and as deep into the local communities as possible.

Potential Outcomes of the Plan's Proposals

As an indication, but without prejudicing the work of the commissioned organisation or the results of local consultation, the potential outcomes of the Cultural Plan's delivery could be:

- A celebration of EW Godwin
- Integration of the new development and its residents into the local community
- Wellbeing - encouraging healthier lifestyles for new and existing residents
- Understanding between communities living in the area
- Volunteering opportunities for people from the development and the local area
- Employment for people from the development and the local area
- Wealth creation (not just financial but cultural, spiritual etc)
- Profile and reputation of the development in the rest of Bristol and beyond
- Visitors attracted to the area and the site
- Identified links to and opportunities within BCC Cultural Strategy³
- Lower crime levels in the area.

The Finished Plan

A written plan for submission to BCC planners by the PG Group. The use of other media to communicate the plan to a wider audience is welcomed.

Delivering the Plan's Projects

Cultural Activities

It is possible that the Plan will identify activities that need to be delivered and coordinated. The organisation that successfully delivers the Cultural Plan will also be in a strong position to be considered for the this later role.

³ <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=227>

Public Art

It is highly likely that a later contract will also commission a Public Art coordinator for the development. While no commitments are made at this stage, the organisation that successfully delivers the Cultural Plan will also be in a strong position to be considered for the public art contract.

Budget

There needs to be a clear budget set for the work otherwise it makes it very hard for interested writers to apply. Timescale will be a constraint on the value of the contract.

Timescale

A draft must be submitted byearly October?.....

Final report bylate October?..... for submission to BCC by?.....

Submission and Selection

Interested organisations should submit:

- Details of experience and expertise needed to deliver the work
- Proposed programme of work leading up to completion of the cultural plan by early October
- Fee proposal including day rate of people engaged to delivery the work and number of days allocated
- CVs of people delivering the work

Submit to ..(?)... by ...date....

Selection by panel including PG Group, CAG,others?.....

Contacts

PG
CAG
others?

14 August 2017