



New RIBA Competition

The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

Design of a new gallery extension and alteration of internal and external spaces

Preliminary Briefing Paper

I have come to the conclusion that a good museum or gallery should be a place where people feel comfortable. If it stands in a garden or park, the visitors should be able to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors as a counterpoint to what is within.

Margaret Pilkington, Whitworth Art Gallery Director following a visit to Oslo, 1932

Expressions of Interest are invited from architects interested in taking part in a competition for the design of a new gallery extension and alteration of internal and external spaces within the Grade II listed Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester.

Introduction

The Whitworth is a public art gallery, founded in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park. It became part of the University of Manchester in 1958. It is a Grade II listed building. We hold collections numbering a little over 55,000 objects, all stored onsite. We aim to make our internationally important fine art, textiles and wallpapers accessible to a wide range of visitors who come to experience our collections and enjoy the art, the building and the green space surrounding us.

Since 2007 the Gallery has been working with staff, visitors, local communities and other stakeholders to develop a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a capital development that would allow us to develop our activities, make the Gallery more accessible to more people and significantly improve the offer for those who visit. In February 2009, we were awarded a Stage One pass from the HLF, one of only three national projects they have supported in this year. This award gives in principle support for a £6 million award and a development grant to take the project forward for Stage Two (RIBA Stage D) submission in September 2010. We are now seeking an architectural practice to develop the design concept for the project, working the proposals up to RIBA Stage D and a planning permission to achieve a Stage Two approval and then to a successful completion of the £11 million overall project.

Why Now?

Over the past three years we have seen a significant growth in audiences – from 86,000 in 2006 to 108,000 in 2007 and 139,000 in 2008. Expansion of our public programme, learning and family programmes has meant we are drawing in many more local visitors as well as serving as a significant pull for visitors to Manchester and the region. At the same time our regional, national and international profile has been transformed through an ambitious exhibitions programme and work with international artists of the highest quality. In order to cater to and continue to grow our audience and sustain a high quality experience we want to extend our building, make better use of our existing gallery spaces and re-establish the relationship with our surrounding grounds and park. Having outgrown the Gallery as it currently is, we wish to create a beautiful, sustainable extension to our building, which brings its distinctive 19th and 20th century architecture forward into the 21st century: a gallery conscious of its rich history but fit for the future.

Extensive work with staff has identified both the things we already think we do well and what we could do better. We are proud to be a University Gallery, unafraid to engage in debate and raise as many questions as we seek to answer. We enjoy the fact that we are an urban gallery but not in the centre of the city and that we are surrounded by green space. We know visitors find the Gallery calm, informal and relaxing as well as quirky, provocative and playful. Our visitors appreciate the diversity of our collections, the adaptable nature of our spaces and the multiple uses we put them to. We aspire to be a creative laboratory: bringing ideas, people and collections together in a conversation that could only take place in a public space within a progressive university.

We are keen to look to the future by embracing our history. Looking back over 120 years a clear progression emerges of the Gallery as a cutting edge public space. In 1889 the building was created to house contemporary works as well as historic watercolours and world textiles: the collections acquired and donated reflected Manchester's ambitious modernity. In the 1960s Edwardian spaces were transformed by Scandinavian-inspired modernism to provide spaces that are sometimes intimate and sometimes expansive: these contrasts give space to display textiles and wallpaper, the internationally significant watercolours as well as accommodating large scale contemporary works. With changing visitor needs, growing audiences and higher expectations, the Gallery now needs to move into a 'third phase', with a development to ensure we, once again, reflect our history and our now.

Our Values

We strive to be a values-led organisation. In our work we seek to embody three key values: intelligence, accessibility and quirkiness. These words take notice of our university status, our eclectic and remarkable collections and the visitors who enter into conversation with us. The development must embody these values and reflect the international reputation of our collections and our exhibition programme. We are rooted in Manchester but are global in outlook and reach and we want to see this reflected in the form of our building.

So What Do We Need?

1. The Gallery extension (approx project cost: £6 million)

We want to create an extension to the Gallery on the South West corner, a skirt extending into our grounds that architecturally reconnects the Gallery to its park. We want an extension that is a work of art in its own right and which, in offering a second park-facing entrance, opens up the Gallery to the many community users of the green space. We want the extension to feel semi-permeable and visible to park users and for the park to be apparent from inside the Gallery, emphasising ease of movement between the two spaces. The development should showcase use of innovative green technologies (eg. solar, green roof or walls, green oak) and use high quality sustainable materials. These should, where appropriate, be locally sourced and also echo the use of wood, slate and glass in the 1960s Bickerdike remodelling. An attention to quality and durability should be evident throughout the new building and it should echo the elegance and simplicity of the current Gallery spaces.

The new extension must be a space where collections, collections access and learning combine. We envisage it will be up to 560 m². We are open to it including one or two floors, or being a combination of double height spaces and multiple levels.

Within this extension we wish to create the following:

A landscape gallery

To display more of the Gallery's internationally important landscape collection in an environment that naturally leads out into the green landscape surrounding us. The landscape gallery must have the following features:

- It should be at the heart of the new extension, not a separated gallery space
- It must be flexible and easy to use as a display environment
- It must be suitable for displaying light sensitive works, especially works on paper and meet Government Indemnity Standards for loans of works of art.

A fully accessible study centre

Where all our collections can be seen and used by the public. This study centre must have the following features:

- It must offer access to all collections; including display areas for prints and drawings, large tables for displaying textiles and wallpapers, a hoist system to display large textiles
- It will need to house the prints and drawings collection, in high quality storage that ideally will also allow display of items of the collection
- It must offer facilities for group study and also a small number of individual study units for specialist researchers

A new shop

At approx 60 sq metres, this should double our current retail space, with extensive display areas to present bespoke collections-related art and craft objects.

A small outdoor-facing café area

To serve drinks, cakes and takeaway food that can be consumed outside as well as inside. Outdoor seating would be desirable.

Improved toilet and family facilities.

To meet the expanded number of visitors, particularly the significant increase in family visitors with buggies and young children.

A new outdoor space

A new landscape environment surrounding the Gallery. We would like our architects to collaborate with commissioned artists (up to three) to create outdoor landscape works that create a space where our communities meet, relax and learn, an intergenerational, intercultural public space. We anticipate modifying the green landscape to create seating and socialising areas, play spaces and quiet areas for contemplation. We would collaborate with the architectural practice in commissioning these works but we want to see the outdoors as an extension of our collection and to be firmly led by artists' ideas.

Accessibility

All proposals should as a minimum aim to meet Manchester City Councils Design for Access Guide Rev 2.

2. Remodelling current gallery spaces (approx project cost: £5 million)

In addition to the new build, we need some practical solutions to allow us to use our current spaces to do more of what we do best. Specifically we would like to:

Reclaim an exhibition gallery (220 m²)

By relocating the lecture theatre, created in a former gallery space in the 1960s, into the basement we can open up a third exhibition space for temporary exhibitions. This large space will be redeveloped to mirror the other two spaces and should be able to display light sensitive works and also equipped to display moving image works. It should be developed to meet standard requirements for display of works of art of paper (cf BS5454) and Government Indemnity Standards.

Remove the walls between the textile gallery and the fine nineteenth century staircases

To allow the public to access the upstairs study areas and see the impressive staircases and windows which look out onto Oxford Road.

Improve textile and wallpaper study rooms and storage

By moving some print and drawing storage downstairs we can create a dedicated room for study and storage of the wallpaper and textile collections, as well as improving space for conservation. Removing the false ceiling will reveal the 19th century barrel ceiling and create a study room with natural light. Moving all staff into the outer wings of the Gallery will give us a new area dedicated to public access to the collection.

Establish a dedicated learning studio in the ground floor north wing (99 m²)

To offer an adaptable space where messy activities can happen without compromising artworks. This must be a place where hands-on schools workshops, family and adult activities can take place, with sinks, storage, IT facilities, equipment and display space for the results of workshops. It should be a place where artists in residence could work, where digital media work can be developed. It needs to be a space that can provoke creativity and contain chaos.

Lecture Theatre

We wish to relocate the lecture theatre (220 m², seating 200) into an underused section of the basement of the Gallery. This must be fully equipped for AV and multimedia display with full blackout capacity.

A service area and loading bay at the back of the Gallery

The opportunity to receive deliveries of artworks and other materials at the back of the Gallery, making for a safer and more professional service. If possible we would like to expand and improve our goods lift.

Accessibility

All proposals where the building fabric permits should be designed as a minimum to meet Manchester City Councils Design for Access Guide Rev 2.

And

We will also be open to any innovative alternative propositions from architects that would allow us to achieve the objectives set out above.

Who Do We Need?

We need an innovative architectural practice that shares our values, is comfortable and excited to be working with collections and artists. We need a practice that is pushing the frontiers in use of environmental technologies and is open to listening to the needs of our diverse audiences: from local community members to international research academics. We want a practice that can balance the needs of our collections, our visitors, the artists who work with us, the school children who come here to learn and the researchers who use the collection for study. In this balancing they will make the whole Gallery richer for all. We need architects who respect the history and architectural importance of the existing building but want to create the third strand of an architectural conversation that stretches across three centuries.

Project Programme

The Overview Programme for the Project is as follows:

Activity	Timescales
Lead Design – Appointment Process	June 2009 – Nov 2009
RIBA STAGE A/B	Nov/Dec 2009 – Feb 2010
RIBA STAGE C Feasibility Study	Feb 2010 – March 2010
RIBA STAGE D <i>Scheme Design</i>	March 2010 – June 2010
Planning Approval Process	June 2010 – Sept 2010

Stage II HLF Submission	Sept 2010
Stage II HLF Approval	Feb 2011
RIBA STAGE E – G	Feb 2011 – Aug 2011
Construction Works Commence	Sept 2011
Construction complete	Sept 2012

Invitation

Selection will take the form of an invited design competition organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Competitions Office. This will be organised in two stages :

- Stage 1 : Expressions of Interest (and possible interim interviews)
 Stage 2 : Submission of concept designs and presentation at final interview

The Jury Panel will review the Expressions of Interest against the Selection Criteria given below with a view to identifying a provisional shortlist of 5 practices (plus 2 reserves). In addition all practices will need to satisfy the requirements of the accompanying Pre-Qualification Questionnaire, in order to proceed to the next phase of the Competition. The Jury Panel may choose to hold interim interviews with up to 10 practices prior to selecting the final shortlist to proceed to the design phase of the competition.

Each practice (maximum of five) invited to proceed to the design phase of the competition will receive an equal honorarium of £5,000 + VAT following attendance at the final presentations.

Criteria for Selection

The jury panel will be looking for architects with the following skills :

Stage 1

- design flair and ability to design creatively
- ability to provide high quality architecture – exteriors and interiors
- experience of designing within a similar context
- collaborative approach involving clients and users in the design process
- response to and compliance with this briefing paper and the PQQ
- capacity of the Architect to meet University Requirements

Stage 2

- ability to work in partnership with the client team
- response to brief – demonstrable architectural quality
- ability to deliver a building which meets the clients' expectations within available budget

Jury Panel

The jury panel will be chaired by Tom Bloxham, Chancellor of University of Manchester and will include Sasha Bhavan from Knox Bhavan Architects as the RIBA Adviser; along with Maria Balshaw, Director of the Whitworth Art Gallery; Rosemary Bull, Architect and representative from the Friends of the Whitworth; Diana Hampson, Director of Estates, University of Manchester; Peter Saville, Creative Director for Manchester and an artist (tbc).

Site Visits

No organised site visits will be held during Stage 1 of the selection process. Interested architects are welcome to visit the Gallery during normal opening hours.

Expressions of Interest: Submission Requirements

Expressions of interest should be submitted on a maximum of 20 single sided A4 pages in total. The information should include in the following order:

- full contact details of the architectural practice
- CVs of key people within the architectural practice proposed for this project
- an introduction to the practice, reason and motivation for applying for this project
- details of relevant projects, including images – the distinction between completed projects, ongoing projects or competition entries should be clearly made. Where the project relates to work at a previous practice, the designer's involvement (eg. Project architect) should be stated.
- names of proposed consultants, for example artists, interior designers – note : the client reserves the right only to appoint the architectural practice, however consideration to any other consultants proposed will be given
- three client referees (contact details only are required – architects will be notified in advance if references are to be taken up)

The 20 page submission should be accompanied by the completed PQQ as a separate document.

Expressions of interest should be submitted to the RIBA Competitions Office to arrive **no later than 14.00 hours on Wednesday 15 July 2009.**

Please note:

- **Three hard copies of the submission and three separate hard copies of the PQQ** must be provided along with an electronic version of all documentation in pdf format on a CD ROM.
- Only candidates responding in accordance with the submission requirements of this Preliminary Briefing Paper and the accompanying PQQ will be considered.
- Overseas Competitors should note that for Customs purposes no commercial value should be assigned to the Expression of Interest documents. Failure to do so may result

in your submission being delayed and/or returned to you unopened, as the RIBA will not be liable for any charges otherwise incurred.

- Late submissions will not be accepted and it will not be possible to submit entries via e-mail. Competitors should note that First Class post does not necessarily guarantee next-day delivery and should plan their submission schedule accordingly.

Competition Timetable

The timetable, which may be subject to change, is as follows :

Expression of Interest deadline :	15 July 2009
Selection of Longlist:	23 July 2009
Interim Interviews with Longlisted teams:	28 & 29 July 2009
Confirmation of shortlist :	29 July 2009
Shortlist notified / Stage 2 brief issued :	30 July 2009
Submission of Stage 2 material :	18 Sept 2009
Exhibition of submissions	1- 31 st Oct 2009
Final Presentations wk commencing:	19 Oct 2009
Decision wk commencing	2 Nov 2009
Notification of decision	November 2009

Eligibility

The competition is open to UK and overseas registered architects. Architects should be registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) in the UK, or an equivalent overseas accreditation body. Overseas registered architects should demonstrate their ability to deliver a project of this nature from within the UK.

Enquiries

The competition is being managed by the RIBA Competitions Office. Any enquiries should be addressed to the RIBA and not the competition promoter. Members of the Jury Panel and Whitworth Gallery staff should not be solicited for information as this may lead to disqualification from the competition.

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Appendix 1

Whitworth Art Gallery Vision

The Whitworth, Manchester's university art gallery...

The Whitworth is a public art gallery, founded in 1889 as the first English gallery in a park. It became part of the University of Manchester in 1958. We aim to make our internationally important fine art, textiles and wallpapers accessible to a wide range of visitors who come to experience our collections and enjoy the art, the building and the green space surrounding us.

Academic research, especially from our campus, is made accessible through exhibitions and displays that invite our visitors to think about the contemporary relevance of our collections. Past and present are held together as part of a lively debate about culture today. Learning is at the heart of this, in the special environment a gallery can offer. Not a classroom but a creative laboratory.

Eclectic juxtapositions, from a Flintstones wallpaper to Picasso's Poverty characterize the Whitworth's collections. Contemporary art comes into the collection and sparks new ways of seeing old and new. International in outlook, but rooted in Manchester's history: what matters are the ideas that bring our works to life and the discussions about art we have with our visitors.

We want to be thought provoking and irreverent, a gallery that is informed by its rich history but which is excited about the culture around us in Manchester today. We are a green oasis at the heart of our city; open to people, ideas and conversation. Serious in intent, playful in execution. A place where good, odd things happen.

Uniquely British, internationally renowned, historically informed, original modern.
