

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**

***DOWNS COMMITTEE***

***14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2014***

**Report of:** Aldo Rinaldi

**Title:** Summer time Public Art Commission: Bristol Downs

**Ward:** Clifton (Downs)

**Officer Presenting Report:** Senior Public Art Officer

**Contact Telephone Number:** 0117 922 3064

**RECOMMENDATION**

We would like the committee to:

1. Approve the installation of a temporary public artwork for community summertime activities on The Downs by artist Oscar Tuazon, commissioned by Bristol City Council in partnership with Arnolfini
2. Agree a locations (or locations) for the artwork to be installed to enable Bristol City Council and Arnolfini to gain the approval of the installation by the BCC planning department so that it is in place for the summer period, to coincide with Arnolfini's major summer exhibition 'The Promise' (19 July – 9 November 2014).

**Summary**

Bristol City Council, in partnership with Arnolfini, is working with the artist Oscar Tuazon on a new public artwork. The work coincides with the exhibition 'The Promise' at Arnolfini in Summer 2014, focusing on architecture and urban planning for the society we live in and the relationship between Bristol and its residents. Due to the strong public dimension and connection to the city itself, the exhibition will take place inside and outside the Arnolfini, with art works situated in public spaces and amongst its communities.

One of the artworks in development is by Oscar Tuazon, who explored Bristol during a site-visit in November 2013. Oscar was especially fascinated by The Downs, its history and its various natural and built characteristics (landscape, water tower, observatory, etc.). Following his visit the artist proposed erecting an impressive sculpture made from cast steel and concrete that creates a site for communal activities on the downs during the Arnolfini summer exhibition. The sculpture would be both functional (used on specified dates for events organised by Arnolfini) and a built structure integrated in the landscape like an architectural folly or viewpoint. The structure would be used for events organised by Arnolfini that invite local communities for food and social activities. The structure would be secured against unauthorised use beyond these dates. The proposal is a

temporary project for the duration of the exhibition – a period of four months.

We have consulted with the lord mayor and the master at the downs committee pre meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> March, and showed concept ideas for the art work. At the meeting we were asked to consider specific places on the downs where the art work would be located, and in principal, were given the agreement by the committee to progress with the project in consultation with Downs Ranger, Bristol Parks and the events team.

### **The significant issues in the report are:**

The project proposed would involve:

- Erection of a structure on the Downs (Bylaw no. 5)
- Lighting a fire on The Downs (Bylaw no. 2. (1))
- Events programme

## **Policy**

This project is compliant with Bristol City Council policies:

- 'Bristol City Council Public Art Policy'
- 'Bristol City Council Public Art Strategy'
- 'Bristol City Council 20: 20 Plan'
- 'A Management Plan for Clifton and the Downs' (sections: D1 and D2) and in pursuance of section 3.8 'Cultural Heritage' and 3.9 'Built Heritage'
- 'BCS21: Quality Urban Design (Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy)'

## **Consultation**

### **1. Internal**

Andrew Gordon, Estates Management Team Leader

Re: practical issues relating to the installation of art works.

Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer

Re: sites of historical or archaeological sensitivity.

Peter Watts, Festival and Events Officer

Events licenses and permissions.

### **At time of report preparation:**

We will continue to consult with the Safety Advisory Group, arranging table top exercises where necessary; along with the police service, fire service, NHS, and Becky Coffin, Nature Conversation Officer.

## **2. External**

### **At time of report preparation:**

Friends of The Downs and Avon Gorge (FoDAG)

Mark Harris, Production Manager Arnolfini

Project delivery and fabrication, installation, including planning and risk assessments.

### **Context**

- (1) Bristol City Council and Arnolfini are working with artist Oscar Tuazon, to commission a new artwork as part of 'The Promise' – an exhibition that opens in July 2014. The artist would like to propose the construction of a sculpture on an agreed location at The Downs, which would act as a point for summertime communal activities. The sculpture would include a cooking element for food related events referencing an ancient fire pit.
- (2) 'The Promise' (19 July – 9 November) is an exhibition about the relationship between a city and its residents. If we understand a city as more than a place, and more than a shared infrastructure, how do the people of a city live together, and how does the design of a city – architecture, urban design, and also public art – impact on the conditions of living? The project will consist of a series of offsite art commissions by international artists, developed for significant public places in Bristol, as well as an exhibition in the galleries of Arnolfini. The presentation in the Arnolfini gallery will include a display of architectural models and images that relate to the history of Bristol. These materials will be selected to give an overview of the diverse ways in which Bristol has been imagined but not realized (many of the models will be for buildings that were never built). The project will be accompanied by a public events programme including talks, concerts and film screenings, educational activities, and an engagement programme for all ages.
- (3) Oscar Tuazon has proposed a new work for 'The Promise', a sculpture that would be temporarily sited on The Downs for the duration of the exhibition. The sculpture would be a large structure, which would also be used as a barbecue. Central to the idea is the act of communal eating and gathering, and though the structure would exist as an artwork, it would be activated for a programme of food related, celebratory community events that would be delivered by Arnolfini. When not in use, the structure would be secured, with a lockable design to deter unauthorised use. It would not be available for general public use.
- (4) The artist visited Bristol in November 2013, and became particularly interested in The Downs, and the history of architectural structures that existed in the area previously – such as the Post-Medieval Lime kiln, which was sited at the foot of St Vincent's Rock, below the Giant's Cave; and the ancient settlement by the observatory that would have been used for signalling using pyres or structures to burn wood. He also noted the particular design of structures that currently exist in the area, such as the water tower and the ventilation shaft, close to Upper Belgrave Road, which is one of three that serve the former mile long Clifton Down railway tunnel, and is built in the form of a stone tower, resembling an historic artefact or memorial rather than a structure carrying out a specific function. The artist is interested in the parallels between these structures and his design for a communal cooking structure in particular, as with the ventilation shaft, something functional that has the feeling of being related to the heritage and use of the Downs.

## Proposal

### (1) The Proposal

The sculpture proposed by the artist would be built from cast steel, and stand at an estimated 20 feet high. The design would incorporate a chimney and a steel base estimated at 4 foot in diameter. It would require a removable concrete footing of approximately 12 x 12 feet, or as large as possible. The artist is keen to work with local fabricators in order to realise the work, and is interested in considering how the structure could blend in or look like an archaeological remnant or relic. The design and location for the art work would be decided in consultation with Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer, and Andrew Gordon, Estates Management Team Leader, the Downs Ranger and following the full approval and support of the Downs Committee.

### (2) Events

The sculpture would be the central element in a programme of summertime community events, which would be open to local residents and the general public. The events, would be programmed weekly throughout July and August, and fortnightly in September and October (working around events already scheduled to take place). Events would be managed and delivered by Arnolfini, in consultation with Peter Watts, Festival and Events Officer. When not in use, the structure would be secured, and plans to ensure controlled use would be integrated into its detailed design and fabrication. It is envisaged that it would not be available for general public use.

Events would be small scale, and with numbers less than 200, managed and overseen by Arnolfini and link to workshops and education activities for families and with a wide appeal.

### (3) Timetable

March – April: consultation, detailed structural plans from artist, risk assessment  
April: start of planning approval period  
May: consult local community, police, fire service and NHS; contract fabricators  
June: fabrication  
July: installation  
July – October: events programme  
November: work deconstructed, ground repaired to original state

### (4) Location:

The location for siting the artwork is subject to comment and approval from Natural England which at the time of the drafting of this report is not confirmed. However it should be noted that as the art work incorporates a cooking element the designated BBQ area on the downs is an area that has been identified and is likely to be the focus for the work.

## Other Options Considered

The location of the art work at the Downs and the structure is flexible as detailed design has not taken place. Due to the site specific nature of the artist's proposal (developed in

direct response to the Downs and its landscape) no other option for siting the work in Bristol has been considered yet, however this would follow should the proposal to site the artwork at the Downs be unsuccessful.

## **Risk Assessment**

A full risk assessment will be drawn up following submission of detailed structural plans from the artist.

Arnolfini will:

- Ensure that the structure is built by competent craftsmen / fabricators.
- Provide sound public liability in excess of £10million
- Prove that all damaged ground can and will be repaired to its original state, we will seek advice from multiple professionals in this area. The Arnolfini is also happy to provide a bond to cover any works to the ground that Parks or Downs Committee may require.
- Consult with other organisations (including the Downs committee and friends of group) about similar successful projects undertaken in Bristol and the Downs, (such as 'The Black Cloud' for Victoria Park, and sited for 4 months in summer 2009) [www.morison.info/theblackcloud](http://www.morison.info/theblackcloud) to determine the positive and negative impact and how to mitigate any negatives.
- Provide a comprehensive fire report and management policy, from Bristol City fire department
- Provide a full working RAMS produced for the construction period, events and dormant stages. We will seek to get the RAMS independently approved so a guarantee we are fully compliant and are not placing the public at risk.
- At all times be fully accountable for damage to the artwork or the location it is placed within, and make good any graffiti, or tagging during the period at The Downs.
- At all stages of the process be fully conversed with the local community, friends groups, and local resident groups, so they feel involved with what is happening.
- Seek advice from the police so to mitigate as much potential vandalism or miss use, such as the use of doors, key holder, security, community support.
- Consult with local community groups and parties

## **Public Sector Equality Duties**

- a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
  - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
  - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to -

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
  - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
  - Encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
  - promote understanding.

## **Legal and Resource Implications**

### **Legal**

n/a – project managed by Arnolfini.

### **Financial**

#### **(a) Revenue**

n/a – project budget held by Arnolfini.

#### **(b) Capital**

n/a – project budget held by Arnolfini.

### **(Financial advice provided by**

n/a – project managed by Arnolfini.

### **Land**

Consultation with land owner and downs committee, and eventual planning application.

## **Personnel**

Aldo Rinaldi – Senior Public Art Officer  
Axel Wieder – Curator of Exhibitions at Arnolfini  
Lucy Badrocke – Assistant Curator at Arnolfini  
Oscar Tuazon – Artist

## **Personnel advice provided by**

Peter Insole - Archaeological Officer., City Design Group  
Guy Bentham Hill – Conservation Officer, City Design Group  
Peter Watts - Festival and Events Licensing Officer, Arts, Events and Film

## **Appendices:**

1. \*Art work design concepts / sketches:
2. \*Art work location options (map based)

\* 1, and 2 may be provided at Downs Committee if material is not prepared for the agenda and report circulation prior to the meeting.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

### **Background Papers:**

None.