Birmingham Centenary Square Competition Brief

Introduction

Birmingham City Council invites UK and international architects, landscape architects, urban designers and students of these disciplines, to enter the Centenary Square Design Competition. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, to be part of shaping Birmingham’s future.

The design competition for this key public space will be in two stages. In the first stage we are asking for conceptual designs that will be judged anonymously. The 5 best of these will then progress to stage two; the shortlisted teams will be granted an honorarium and asked to develop their designs further. Judging for the stage two submissions will include a public consultation.

Up to £5 million construction costs for the project have been identified plus additional funding for fees, which is subject to final City Council approval when the winning design has been confirmed. It is the intention that the design team of the winning application will be appointed and retained for all RIBA stages of the project. Project Management and Quantity Surveying services will be provided by Acivico Ltd. The contractor will be allocated through the Constructing West Midlands (CWM) Framework.

Centenary Square sits at the heart of an area of significant change within the west of the city centre. The recently completed Library of Birmingham, the refurbished and remodelled Repertory Theatre and the future extension of the Metro to the square; coupled with a number of significant developments in the immediate area, gives us the perfect opportunity to reinvent this historic square.

The recently completed award winning Eastside City Park and the Library of Birmingham add to Birmingham’s proven track record of delivering outstanding, world class projects and public spaces. Centenary Square is an opportunity to build on these successes and go further to cement the City’s international status.

Site and Context

Centenary Square is located to the west of the city centre of Birmingham and is one of the largest civic open spaces in Birmingham at just under 20,000 m2. The square is bounded by the Rep Theatre, Library of Birmingham, Baskerville House, Hyatt Hotel, House of Sport, Birmingham Municipal Bank, the ICC, Symphony Hall and Paradise Forum. The site coverage extends to the building façades.

To the north east is the Paradise Forum development by Argent on the site of the old Birmingham Library http://www.paradisecircus.co.uk and to the south east on Broad Street is the Arena
development [http://www.arena-central.com](http://www.arena-central.com) by Miller Developments, both of which are due to start on site in the next six months. These new buildings will be considerably taller than the existing context therefore the proposed proportions of the square have to be considered as well as the newly created public realm.

The north-western edge of the square includes Baskerville House which was originally council offices but are now privately owned and rented out as serviced offices. In the centre is the recently completed Library of Birmingham by Mecanoo which was shortlisted for the 2014 Stirling Prize and won the BBC public vote for the best building [http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com](http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com). The Library of Birmingham is linked internally to the Birmingham REP theatre which was originally completed in 1971 [http://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk](http://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk).

The south-western edge of the square is dominated by the International Convention Centre which was completed in 1992 [http://www.theicc.co.uk](http://www.theicc.co.uk). The International Convention Centre houses the internationally renowned Symphony Hall [http://www.thsh.co.uk/symphony-hall](http://www.thsh.co.uk/symphony-hall) and has a public link through the centre of the building to the Brindley Place development. Symphony Hall is one of the top venues in the world and the visitor experience of arrival and leaving the hall should be taken into consideration. The Hyatt Hotel [http://birmingham.regency.hyatt.co.uk/en/hotel/home.html](http://birmingham.regency.hyatt.co.uk/en/hotel/home.html), which is on the south western corner and linked by a high level bridge to the International Convention Centre, is Birmingham’s premier hotel.

The south eastern side is dominated by Broad Street which links to a major part of the city centre’s night life. As mentioned earlier, part of this side is being developed by Miller Developments. The only building to be retained on this side is the Municipal Bank. This building is owned by Birmingham City Council and there are plans to redevelop it as a major cultural venue.

Centro is currently installing a tram system through the city. The line into Centenary Square will run from a new terminus stop on Stephenson Street outside New Street Station, along Pinfold Street and turn west onto Victoria Square, with a stop at the Town Hall. The extension will travel along Paradise Street to Paradise Circus and turn onto Broad Street, where it will continue to a stop at Centenary Square, from here it will continue down Broad Street to a terminus at Five Ways.

**Project Aims**

The aim of this exciting and ambitious International Design Competition is to find design teams to develop contemporary conceptual proposals for Centenary Square, an existing prominent square in the centre of Birmingham. These ideas will in turn spark the imagination, encourage discourse and offer creative solutions to develop this space. The physical ideas should be ones that will promote a positive cultural transformation of the square, making it a world class space and popular destination.

These proposed interventions should value and support both the civic and community engagement. The square, although an important space for the gathering of people at formal events, should also be
a catalyst for bringing people into the area to stop and relax, promote interaction on a smaller scale and informal level; slowing down the pedestrian speed.

Some of the surrounding buildings have been recently transformed or are in the process of being developed so the square is in a state of flux. We hope new ideas will promote the creation of new linkages with surrounding open spaces and walkable routes; creating a new ambience within the square whilst linking important cultural buildings.

It is important to consider the existing square and public highway as one entity. The design should consider the extent of the square as the boundary of the site stretches out to the surrounding façades. The square should celebrate the existing architecture of the surrounding buildings whilst creating a coherent public realm which will strengthen its identity.

A new ‘open-air living room’ needs to be created which is accessible to all of the people of Birmingham and visitors; a friendly, multi layered, durable, safe, flexible square promoting a harmonious place for pedestrians overall and cyclists. [http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bmap](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/bmap). The Square’s intrinsic nature should interact with all who engage with it.

Design Considerations for all of the following:

- King Edward VII statue by Albert Toft is in a fixed location and cannot be relocated.
- Baskerville Type Face sculpture ‘Industry and Genius’ can be relocated but should still relate to Baskerville House as this has been located here in honour of John Baskerville and positioned in front of Baskerville House. The letters spell out Virgil, the name of the Roman poet whose works were printed by Baskerville, in his typeface.
- New Birmingham Family statue by Gillian Wearing can be retained in the square or omitted for relocation.
- Matthew Boulton, James Watt and William Murdock statue by William Bloy can be retained in the square or omitted from the design for relocation.
- Retention of the existing ‘carpet’ of brick paving by Tess Jaray should be considered.
- The function and listed building status of the Hall of Memory should be considered and incorporated within the design.
- The current external areas of seating associated with the Rep and The Library of Birmingham should be retained within the design.
- Potential for external seating for all the surrounding and future buildings should be accommodated.
- Counter terrorism measures for the square should be an integral part of the design.
- Cycle routes and cycle parking provision should be considered.
- Constraints of Metro and all other public transport should be considered. See attached plan and information.
- Proposals to consider constraints of Network Railway Tunnel running below.
• New lighting strategy to be considered
• 3 x pedestrian crossings across Broad Street to be maintained, although the locations may change to suit the design

Design Considerations for some or all of the following:

• Solution for a space which can cope with a large number of visitors at various events
• Information capabilities to facilitate the evolving culture and use of the space
• Temporary exhibition spaces
• Temporary stalls
• Outdoor performance opportunities
• Consideration of microclimate, specifically wind mitigation.
• Provision of street furniture and lighting
• Incorporation of the library void within the design

**Birmingham**

Birmingham is the West Midland’s regional capital and the UK’s second largest city. Birmingham has a population of just over 1 million and an economic output of £18 billion per year, with an ever-increasing international standing. Birmingham has the youngest profile of any European city with over a third of the population under 24 years of age and has the second most ethnically diverse population in Europe.

**History of Centenary Square**

By the end of the 18th century many towns in England were undergoing transformation. The area where Centenary Square is today was cleared of its insanitary housing and underwent an industrial transformation. Easy Hill House, workshops and gardens which were designed by John Baskerville in the general area of where Baskerville house now stands was purchased by Gibson, an iron merchant.

Gibson purchased Baskerville House to enable him to cut a canal arm to provide access to the main canal and increase his mill business on Cambridge Street. The canal was completed by 1825. This in turn encouraged the expansion of other businesses in the area and resulted in other arms linking the canal being created. These new wharves were soon covered over and enclosed with industrial buildings. This area between Broad Street, Easy Row, King Alfred’s Place and Baskerville Passage was transformed from a mainly residential area to an area of industry.

Bingley House, which was built in 1760, was cleared to allow for the creation of a railway tunnel which runs under the site and is known as the New Street North tunnel.
The city council purchased the surrounding land in 1919 to create a new civic centre. In 1925, Baskerville basin was in-filled to facilitate the building of this new centre and the Hall of Memory was built in remembrance of the soldiers who had died in World War One. By 1926 the majority of the land had been cleared to allow for the entire square to be filled with civic buildings, including a city hall and two public halls, a planetarium, a library, museum and art gallery. The city council organised a design competition to facilitate their vision but unfortunately the only building to be built as part of this winning scheme was Baskerville House which was completed in 1941; the design of which makes reference to the architecture of the Hall of Memory.

Bingley Hall, which was built in 1850 and used as a multi-purpose venue for the city of Birmingham and Midland counties, was damaged by a fire in 1984. The city council used this as an opportunity to develop a large International Conference Centre and Symphony Hall on the south west edge of the site. Along with the demolition of Bingley Hall, the city council also demolished St Peter’s Roman Catholic Church and graveyard, Powell’s saw mills and timber yards and the Prince of Wales theatre between the square and the canal, to create the site for the International Convention Centre.

To complement the International Convention Centre, the square was redeveloped in 1989 including the construction of Centenary Way: the first bridge to stretch across the Inner Ring Road. This created an uninterrupted pedestrian route from the city centre to the civic square. A colonnade, which had been built as part of the Hall of Memory was removed and relocated elsewhere in the city. The Hall of Memory was retained giving the space a strong sense of historical continuity. Two artists Tess Jaray and Tom Lomax had integral roles in the development of the square. Jaray was involved in the design of the new surface of the square which included 525,000 pavers to be laid out similar to a Persian Carpet. Tom Lomax designed a fountain which has since been removed. The square was renamed Centenary Square in celebration of Birmingham’s hundred years’ status as a city.

**Big City Plan**

Designers should consider the aspirations of the Big City Plan which was launched by Birmingham City Council in September 2010. [http://bigcityplan.birmingham.gov.uk/](http://bigcityplan.birmingham.gov.uk/). This plan is the council’s 20 year vision for Birmingham’s City Centre supporting transformational change to create a world class city centre delivering sustainable growth, improved connectivity, authentic character, environmental quality, new residential communities and a diversified economic base. Covering an area of 800 hectares at the centre of the city, the Big City Plan provides the vision, strategy and principles to guide the future development and regeneration of the City Centre.

One of the key aims of the Big City Plan is to improve the walking and cycling routes and open space network within the city. New and improved routes with pedestrian and cycle priority is central to the council’s aim to create a more sustainable city centre that is a more attractive place in which to live and work. Within the city centre there are a series of distinctive public and civic spaces along a pedestrian spine; Centenary Square is part of this series of spaces.
Birmingham Centenary Square Competition

Competition Conditions

1. Competition Client
The competition client is Planning and Regeneration, Birmingham City Council led by Jim Wilson. Jim was the client project manager for the recently completed Eastside City Park. The park was the first park to be built in Birmingham for a hundred years and Jim played a key role in making it happen. Eastside City Park has subsequently won multiple awards including RIBA Client of the Year for Birmingham City Council.

The competition is being managed and administered by RIBA Competitions to whom all queries relating to the competition should be addressed.

2. Competition Format
The competition will follow the Open Design competition format and will be organised in the following stages:

Stage 1: Submission of concept designs which will be assessed anonymously
Stage 2: A shortlist of up to five designs will be selected, with anonymity lifted and the authors invited to develop further their design concepts. Shortlisted teams will then be invited to interview to present their designs to the judging panel and discuss in more detail.

3. Eligibility
The competition is open internationally to architects, landscape architects, urban designers and students of these disciplines. Collaboration with artists and other relevant disciplines are welcomed.

Architects should be registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) in the UK, or an equivalent, recognised overseas regulatory authority.

Please note that professional and student entries will be judged together anonymously. In the event that a student entry is selected to proceed to the second stage, the student competitor should consider from the outset a professional partner to collaborate with. If required the client can assist with this.

No member or employee of the client body, the judging panel, or any partner, close associate or employee of them is eligible to compete or assist a competitor.
4. **How to Register and Enter**
You may only submit an entry to the competition if you are officially registered through RIBA Competitions and in possession of a Unique Registration Number (URN). The competition is subject to a non-refundable registration and administration fee of £50+VAT for professionals and £15+VAT for students. Please visit www.architecture.com/competitions and follow the appropriate link under ‘Live Competitions’ to make an online payment.

Once your payment has been processed, you will be issued with a Unique Registration Number (URN) and a Declaration of Authorship Form.

5. **Declaration of Authorship & Acceptance of Competition Regulations**
The declaration form acknowledges authorship of the designs and by signing it competitors agree to abide by the competition conditions and accept the decision of the Judging Panel as final. The declaration form should be completed and uploaded to the digital entry system along with the design submission.

Please note the team members stated on the declaration form will be used in all promotional activity so please ensure this is reflected accurately.

6. **Judging Panel**
The Judging Panel (which may be subject to change) is expected to comprise:

Jim Wilson, Planning and Regeneration, Birmingham City Council, Chair of the Panel
Sasha Bhavan, Knox Bhavan Architects, RIBA Adviser
Councillor Ian Ward, Deputy Leader, Birmingham City Council
Vicky J Smith, Acivico, Architect
Andrew Wayro, Planning and Regeneration, Birmingham City Council, Senior Landscape Officer/Urban Designer
Stakeholder representative x 2

* Joanne Wallis, RIBA Competitions will attend the assessments to document the competition process and provide procedural support.

In the event of a Judging Panel member being unable to continue to act through illness or any other cause, Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham City Council, in consultation with the RIBA, reserves the right to appoint an alternative panel member.
7. **Competition programme**
The anticipated programme, which may be subject to change, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Competition launch &amp; Brief available</td>
<td>20 October 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for Questions</td>
<td>4 November 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Questions issued</td>
<td>11 November 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for submission of Stage 1 Design Proposals</td>
<td>2 December by 2pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Stage 1 Design Proposals</td>
<td>w/c 8 December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short list notified</td>
<td>w/c 15 December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission Deadline for Stage 2</td>
<td>w/c 27 February 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition of shortlisted designs / public consultation</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Interviews/Presentations to Judging Panel</td>
<td>End March 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announcement of Result</td>
<td>April 2015</td>
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</tbody>
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8. **Questions**
Questions relating to the competition brief and conditions must be submitted to RIBA Competitions at riba.competitions@riba.org before 5pm on 4 November 2014. A statement in response to all questions raised will be emailed to all registered competitors by 11 November 2014. Oral questions will not be accepted.

9. **Evaluation & Award Criteria**
The design proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

**Stage 1:**
- Overall design quality 50%
- Response to the brief, context, site opportunities and constraints 30%
- Clarity of presentation 20%

**Stage 2:**
- Quality / innovation 40%
- Response to feedback 20%
- Viability of the submission and costs 20%
- Ability to deliver the project & work in partnership with the client group 20%

Stage 2 designs will be subject to a public consultation and the results from this will be taken into account by the Judging Panel during the final assessment.
10. **Anonymity**
All Stage 1 submissions will be judged anonymously, via use of the Unique Registration Number (URN) issued at the time of registration. The URN should be prominently displayed on the design submission sheet, 200 word design statement and declaration form. Please refer to the section “How to Register” to obtain a URN.

Any submission that has identifying marks (including logos, text, insignia, or images that could be used to identify the submission’s author) will be disqualified.

11. **Disqualification**
Submissions will be excluded from the Competition:
- If a competitor discloses his or her identity, or improperly attempts to influence the decision;
- If the entry is received after the deadline as stated under Stage 1 Submission Method;
- If, in the opinion of the Judging Panel, it does not fulfil the requirements of the competition brief;
- If any of the mandatory requirements of the competition brief and conditions are disregarded.

12. **Stage 1 Submission Requirements**
There are three elements to the design submission, each of which should bear the Unique Registration Number (URN) only. Competitors should refer to the anonymity requirements and submit the following material digitally:

i. A maximum of one A1 sheet (in PDF format):

The proposals should be presented in a clear and succinct manner to enable Judging Panel members to readily understand the essence and design drivers behind the scheme.

The URN should be prominently displayed on the front face of the design sheet in the top right hand corner.

Architectural models will not be accepted as part of the stage 1 submission. However images of models used to develop the design proposal may be included on the design sheet.

ii. A written design statement (maximum of 200 words) in support of the submission, preferably in word format.
iii. Copy of the Declaration of Authorship form, which should be completed and bear the URN in the dedicated section on the form.

In addition to a pdf of the design sheet, one visual image of the design concept should be provided for publicity purposes. The image should be representative of the ideas proposed and be readily identifiable as such. The image should be submitted in JPEG format, with low (72dpi) and high (300dpi) resolution versions of each image. This image will be used for the online gallery of entries at the end of the competition.

13. Stage 1 Submission Method
Each stage 1 design submission should be uploaded to the RIBA Competition digital entry system before 2.00pm on Tuesday 2 December 2014. Further details will be issued to registered competitors.

Late entries will not be accepted and the digital system will not permit uploads after the 2pm deadline. Please note that the total upload should not exceed 20mb.

14. Stage 2
Shortlisted teams will be provided with feedback from stage 1 and asked to further develop their concept designs. Stage 2 designs will be showcased at a public exhibition in Birmingham (venue to be confirmed) and members of the public invited to comment on the designs.

Competitors will be required to demonstrate, as far as possible, the viability of their design and invited to attend an interview to discuss further with the Judging Panel.

15. Publicity
The competition results will be published after competitors have been notified. Please note that any requests for feedback should be submitted to RIBA Competitions within one calendar month of a shortlist, or a result being announced.

Competitors must not release their designs for publication to any 3rd parties until after the result has been officially announced and permission has been granted from the RIBA. Competitors should note that by entering the competition they are expected to honour the request for confidentiality, to prevent information of the winning team being leaked to the press before any official announcement is made.

The RIBA reserve the right to publicise the competition, any design submission, and the result in any promotional activity including social media channels. Illustrations of any design - either separately, or together with other designs, with or without explanatory text - may be used without cost. Once anonymity has been lifted, authors will be credited and recognised in all associated media and publicity. This
information will be taken from the declaration form so please ensure the details are reflected accurately.

16. **Gallery**
An online exhibition gallery of all entries will be produced at the end of the competition to showcase the full range of design entries received, with each competitor acknowledged and anonymity lifted. Additional images, space and text will be given to the shortlisted teams.

17. **Honoraria**
It is intended that up to five teams will be selected to proceed to the second stage. The five shortlisted teams will each receive honoraria of £5,000 + VAT. The winner’s honorarium represents an advance on their professional fee post competition. Birmingham City Council undertakes to pay the honoraria within 6 weeks of the conclusion of the competition. Invoices for payment should be submitted to RIBA Competitions.

18. **Copyright**
The ownership of Copyright will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, that is Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.

19. **Post-Competition**
The role of RIBA Competitions is limited to the administration and management of the competition process. The RIBA will have no further role once the winner has been selected and competitors notified.

Up to £5 million construction costs for the project have been identified plus additional funding for fees, which is subject to final City Council approval when the winning design has been confirmed. It is the intention that the design team of the winning application will be appointed and retained for all RIBA stages of the project. Project Management and Quantity Surveying services will be provided by Acivico. The contractor will be allocated through the Constructing West Midlands Framework.

Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham City Council, reserves the right not to proceed beyond the competition stage in the event that the requirements and aspirations set for this competition are not met, but all honorarium payments as indicated will be awarded.

20. **Enquiries**
The competition is being managed and administered by RIBA Competitions on behalf of Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham City Council.
All enquiries relating to the competition should be directed to:

RIBA Competitions
The Studio (5th Floor)
32 The Calls
LEEDS
LS2 7EW
T: +44 (0) 113 203 1490
E: riba.competitions@riba.org

Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham City Council, the RIBA Adviser, or any other members of the judging panel should not be contacted for information as this may lead to disqualification from the competition.