

Request for Proposals

William Mitchell Gallery Feasibility Study

Introduction

Bradford is to be just the fourth UK City of Culture. It's a huge honour. It's a massive responsibility. And it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

We're building an organisation from scratch to plan and present 12 unforgettable months of creativity, culture and the arts across Bradford District. From New Year's Day to New Year's Eve, 2025 is set to explode with more than 1,000 shows, exhibitions and events – by and for everyone, with much of it completely free to see.

We're asking hundreds of local, national and international artists, dancers and musicians to join us in 2025 and make something new – just for us, just for you. But we're also throwing the spotlight on the people of our city, which is the youngest, the most diverse and the most exciting in the nation.

Bradford 2025 will be a celebration of Bradford, its cultures and its people – right here, right now. From artists to businesses, schools to community groups, we're inviting people across Bradford to help us create a year of culture that could only happen here.

With support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Bradford Council, Bradford Culture Company (BCC) operating as Bradford 2025 (the Company) is seeking to appoint a suitably experienced and qualified partner (the Provider) to deliver a feasibility study on a William Mitchell Gallery.

BCC would like to invite interested providers to tender to fulfil this role and function.

The proposed contract will run from May 2024 to July 2024.

William Mitchell Heritage Project

Alongside boasting the largest collection of David Hockney works in the world, Bradford District is also home to a large collection of wall relief sculptures by William Mitchell, the famous English Sculptor who sadly passed away in 2020. Mitchell was a leading post-war maker of public art whose work was rooted in mid-20th century modernism. Mitchell's work adorns many public spaces across the country, with Bradford City Centre home to five of Mitchell's public realm works.

One of these five works is currently installed within 'Highpoint,' a privately owned building in Bradford City Centre. Another of Mitchell's works is in private storage and has been gifted to Bradford District with the ambition that the work can be brought back into the public realm as it was designed to be.

The remaining three of the five works are owned by the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and are currently in-situ within Kirkgate Market. As part of plans to make the City Centre a greener, healthier and more sustainable place that will continue to be the economic core of the District, Kirkgate Market is due to be demolished. The centre is to be replaced by the new £23 million flagship Darley Street Market regeneration project. Demolition of the Kirkgate

Centre will facilitate the development of the 'City Village' Housing led regeneration initiative which will deliver around 1000 new residential units in the heart of the city centre.

Please see Appendix 2 – William Mitchell Sculptures Information Document for full details surrounding the sculptures and their current locations.

This unique series of events, and thanks to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund raised by National Lottery players, provides the District with the once in a lifetime opportunity to breathe new life into the William Mitchell reliefs. This could involve developing the largest global collection of William Mitchell's works located within a dedicated internal, external or exhibition space, which would serve as a long-lasting legacy of Bradford's success in securing the title of UK City of Culture 2025. In conjunction with Bradford Culture Company Ltd (BCC) a ground floor space at an ongoing private development has been identified as potential location for display of all the William Mitchell reliefs. The development at 'Highpoint' is already home to an existing Mitchell relief.

Highpoint is an 8-storey concrete former office building, that was home to the headquarters of the Yorkshire Building Society. Constructed in the brutalist style, it was designed by the John Brunton Partnership of Bradford and was completed in 1972. The building has now been vacant for over a decade following a decision by YBS to relocate its Headquarters. It is currently being refurbished, with ground floor space being earmarked for public access / commercial use.

Technical assessments are under way to determine the methodology to remove the existing reliefs located at Kirkgate and to store / transport the reliefs to the new location for installation.

The Ambition

Working with Bradford Culture Company, the council and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, BCC's ambition is to establish the ground floor space at Highpoint as a curated gallery space for the Mitchell reliefs and other artworks. The objective would be for the space to incorporate other facilities, such as a café, which can be sub-let to provide income to fully mitigate the ongoing revenue costs of operation.

Alternative locations for installation have been identified also;

- 26 Picadilly – A Council owned building, with vacant possession to be provided by June 2024. The recent discovery of RAAC within the building may preclude it's use for this purpose however.
- The potential to incorporate the reliefs into the re-development of the current site of Kirkgate Market as part of the City Village Development.

The partners Bradford Culture Company, The National Lottery Heritage Fund & Bradford Council wish to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced contractor to conduct a commercial feasibility study to explore the potential to establish a sustainable curated gallery at this location. This will likely require working with key partners and specialists, including the council's technical staff and Parklane Developments, owners of Highpoint.

Providers must meet BCCs procurement objectives:

- To ensure that procurement activities reflect BCC's approach to transparency, sustainability, value for money and equality, diversity and inclusion.
- To ensure BCC's commitment to the communities of Bradford is reflected in the procurement process.
- To ensure BCC's duty to its funders to deliver best value for money.
- To ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations

Scope of Works

We are seeking a contractor to undertake a feasibility study which will produce a report which answers the following:

- What commercially viable and sustainable options are there within the identified location to incorporate the works into a long-term commercial cultural space and what the purpose of this space would be in relation to William Mitchell's legacy. This should explore the opportunities to expand the collection.
- Outline what the other feasible options may be for keeping the works within the public realm in Bradford City Centre which may not incorporate a commercial function and whether these should be considered.
- Contacting other spaces and galleries to consider demand and funding options.

Schedule of Works

Carry out a full options appraisal which robustly evidences the commercial and cultural opportunities provided by the identified location. This should:

- Explore the funding opportunities relating to City of Culture 2025 and other funders presented by the location and proposed function.
- Explore the viability and all opportunities and risks incurred by each option such as regeneration plans and programmes, cost, gifted commercial opportunities and the wider economic impact of the chosen location.
- Explore the possibility of alternative ways of displaying the sculptures within the scope of the identified location and the risks and opportunities this would present.
- Address ROI, employment opportunities and Gross Value Added involved with developing the cultural space/commercial offer.
- Undertake a basic Cost Benefit Analysis against a standard new exhibition space.
- Draw on and respond to strong relevant evidence, research, and data such as the findings produced in the cultural assets gaps analysis work undertaken by BD25 and in similar type project reports and case studies.

- Address and respond to existing district commitments, plans and strategies such as, Bradford City Centre Action Plan, and *Culture Is Our Plan*.

Production of Final Report

- This must produce an outline business case which includes physical commercial and financial feasibility. This should provide a recommended option which needs to detail a full cost analysis and a short business plan.
- The business plan should produce a guidance document which sets out the practical steps for transforming the identified building into the cultural space and potential associated uses
- Explore what the main challenges in developing a de-risked, long term commercially viable cultural offer using the William Mitchell wall relief sculptures, exist in Bradford City Centre.

Criteria for Selection

- Experience and understanding of the potential for a William Mitchell Gallery
- Track record of supporting gallery development.
- Local to Bradford/West Yorkshire/Yorkshire.
- Best value for money.
- Alignment with BCC's procurement objectives.
- Capacity to deliver within timeframe.
- Commercial knowledge/experience of creative space development.
- Expertise on preserving large scale sculptures and wall art.

Anticipated Budget and Timescale

We are expecting proposals for this work to be up to £12,000 (inclusive of expenses) plus VAT over the length of the contract. Timescale is from June 2024 with the work completed by 30 July 2024.

How to apply

Please submit a proposal outlining your experience and your approach and how you'd intend to work with the team at BCC to meet their priorities and objectives.

Deadline for proposals is Monday 10th May. Shortlisting/interviews will take place 17 May.

Please email proposals to procurement@bradford2025.co.uk

Appendix 1 – William Mitchell Sculptures Information Document

1. Work 1: Bradford and Bingley by William Mitchell

Approximate size: 16.5m long x 3.15m high x 8cm depth made of 13 panels

Listing: Not listed

Owner: Private

Current Location: In private storage in Bradford City Centre close to Kirkgate Market. Stored in an easily accessible storage facility.

Works Information: Constructed from 15 moulds. Moulds were carved from expanded PVC and coated with wax/sand mix. The finish is bronze metallic and carbon-like pigment suspended in resin and polished. Strength is obtained from layers of fibreglass mats bonded in resin to build up thickness of over half an inch.

The 13 panels were commissioned by Bradford and Bingley Building Society in 1975 and depict scenes from both Bradford and Bingley, including the Five Rise Locks, the Alhambra and the Wool Exchange. They were placed in the reception area of the building society's head office. When the building was refurbished in 1998, the wall relief sculpture, which measures 16.5 metres by 3.15m high, was rehoused at Bingley Arts Centre. It is now looking for a new home.

Further information links and pictures:

<https://www.ilkeygazette.co.uk/news/11246764.william-mitchell-sculpture-panel-of-bradford-and-bingley-landmarks-seeks-new-home/>

2. Works 2, 3 and 4 Kirkgate Market Panels by William Mitchell

Current Location: All are currently installed at Kirkgate Market, Kirkgate Centre, Bradford.

Listing: No pieces are listed

Owner: Bradford Council

Work 2

Approximate Size: 3.3m high x 11.7m long x 0.3m deep

Location details: Installed high up, sat above cafes and above the exit.

Work 3

Approximate Sizing: 3m high x 32cm depth x 3m long

Location Details: Flanking a public exit point from Kirkgate Market into Kirkgate Centre

Work 4

Approximate Sizing: Sizing: 3m high x 32cm depth x 3m long

Location Details: Flanking a public exit point from Kirkgate Market into Kirkgate Centre

General Information: The panels were made of concrete, which has been referred to by lead architect Harry Moon as 'carved ferro-concrete'. It is likely that that the material used was 'Faircrete' an art-type concrete (polypropylene fibre and air-entrained concrete) developed by John Laing R&D in the early 1970s to produce these sculptures. Mitchell was involved in its 'artistic development' and promotion, so used it extensively at this time. The Stations of the Cross at Clifton Cathedral in Bristol and the Burgess Street panels in Sheffield (in the process of being relocated) are known examples of this. The Kirkgate panels were made off-site by

February 1973, so ready to insert during the construction stage of the new Kirkgate market, which was complete by November 1973.

It is hard to conclude if the panels were cast in moulds using liners such as polystyrene or polyurethane to create the decoration (particles of the polystyrene usually found in the deep crevices) or more likely the main block of concrete cast horizontally in a mould, then whilst wet hand-carved and impressed into directly with tools to create the imagery. It is possible a mix of these techniques we used, as Mitchell's works sometimes used a combination of processes during this period.

This information has kindly been provided by Dr Dawn Pereira, Lecturer and Heritage Consultant and specialising in William Mitchell's works.

Further information links and pictures:

[William Mitchell – Bradford \(modernmooch.com\)](http://modernmooch.com)

3. Work 5: Bradford Old and New by William Mitchell

Current Location: Insitu on the ground floor, High Point, Bradford BD1 2QU

Approximate Size: Consists of 7 full panel and 2 x half panels

General Information: High Point, Westgate, is the former headquarters of the Yorkshire Building Society. The piece was commissioned by YBS for the building. It showcases iconic Bradford buildings, including City Hall, the Wool Exchange and The Alhambra, as can be seen in the image below.

This sculpture is privately owned and will remain in-situ within the High Point Development.

Further information links and pictures:

[Bradford High Point: Renovation of brutalist landmark starts - BBC News](#)

[Iconic Bradford buildings depicted in High Point mural | Bradford Telegraph and Argus \(thetelegraphandargus.co.uk\)](http://thetelegraphandargus.co.uk)