



## Galleries And Sculpture Park @ Preston Bus Station



**"The potential of the bus station is enormous and the challenge is to enable others to see that potential."**

English Heritage/CABE Urban Panel

**GASP is in response to the challenge laid down by English Heritage's Urban Panel following their visit to Preston.**

Commenting on the cities iconic Bus station they concluded that having considered the historic significance and aesthetic merits of the structure, the Bus Station could become Preston's unique selling point. The right idea would establish its enormous potential as a highly visible symbol of the city, generating a positive marketing opportunity. This in turn, would stimulate development both within the city and the region at large.

Since then Lancashire County Council has taken over the ownership of the building and through a £11.4m investment, have brought it back to its former glory and upgraded the car parking floors to modern standards. In the new layout, bus stands now only occupy the outward facing, east side of the concourse, with the west side opening onto a new public square leading to the city centre.

The scale of the building is such that the space now available on the concourse will completely transform the use of the building in a way that befits its stature.

Led by UCLan, partnering with Lancashire County and Preston City Councils the proposal is to adapt the building to include exhibition, galleries and interactive spaces for contemporary arts and to form a community-based cultural hub. Rather than being restrictive, the building lends itself perfectly to this new use and offers opportunities that may not have been envisaged in a purpose built gallery. For example, the enormous roof space, currently used for additional parking, could be transformed via creative landscaping into an urban park. Best described as a cross between Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the High Line in New York, this has the potential to be a major international attraction for the ever-increasing number of cultural tourists and bring enormous benefits to UCLan, Preston and Lancashire. Of equal significance, the uniqueness of this building as a transport terminus brings to it an audience, who may not other wise have an opportunity to see high quality artworks.

## Aim

# To create an arts centre of international significance and national importance, that is firmly rooted in the community.

## Impact

### Benefits to Preston and Lancashire

This innovative new centre will give Lancashire an internationally important contemporary arts space. It will provide a much needed focal point for Lancashire's contemporary arts community, recently boosted by Professor Lubaina Himid winning the 2017 Turner Prize.

Easily accessible for all parts of the country. Harris Modern's Preston location will complete a 30 mile equilateral triangle, with the cities of Manchester and Liverpool. From a cultural perspective, this would draw Lancashire into the Northern Powerhouse, and enhance Preston's potential as a future City of Culture. It would also enforce Preston's identity as the region's 'Alternative City'.

The innovation transformation of a functioning bus station into an arts complex will enable high profile cultural activity to impact the lives of thousands of people, who may otherwise not have the opportunity to experience it. The centre's ambitious programme will have relevance and be accessible to people from all backgrounds, connecting international artists, visitors and local communities.

The re-purposed building will fuse heritage and modernity by completing the Harris Quarter cultural district of Preston that includes The Harris Museum, Preston Market, Guildhall and Charter Theatre, and planned Youth Zone and cinema. It would also provide opportunities to stage

citywide festivals using the arts as a route to develop peoples' identity, creativity and learning. Activities will tap into the essence of the Preston Guild, and celebrate the rich heritage of Preston's diverse communities who have made this part of the Northern England their home.

Financially, Harris Modern represents extremely good value for money, not only because the building already exists but also because of the ease with which it can be adapted to innovate reUse, without compromising its Grade 2 listed status. The refurbishment costs to date, could be cited as match funding in future grant applications.

Cultural tourism is recognised as one of the largest and fastest growing segments within the global tourism marketplace. As a destination for cultural tourists, it will significantly enhance local and regional economies. For example, research has now shown how the Turner Contemporary has benefited not just Margate, but Kent in general.

Harris Modern will enforce sense of place and build the reputation of Lancashire as a successful and distinctive cultural destination.

### Benefits to UCLan

This important new centre will be a highly visible aid to recruitment locally and nationally, and its international profile could be used to cement relationships with partnered cities and institutions throughout the world, and a means of introduction to others.

As a creative hub integrated into the fabric of the city, Harris Modern will provide far more than an extension to campus. It will act as an innovative cultural generator: pulling in collaborative opportunities and pushing out new initiatives that will support symbiotic relationships between university, city and the local community.

There will be opportunities for new, trans disciplinary forms of study and for practice-based input to existing courses, where students will work alongside staff to gain first hand experience in the day running of the centre and in the planning of its events programme. The roof top sculpture park and gardens will connect arts and science via the

combination of social art space and unique organic habitat. Activities will connect knowledge held within ecology, conservation, environmental management, urban planning and existing courses within the School of Art Design and Fashion.

By capitalizing on the transportation function of the building, Project GASP will be in the right place to literally bring art to the people. The absence of boundaries in its revised hybridised layout will mean that people joining or leaving a bus journey, or parking their car, will naturally find themselves passing through art gallery space.

The egalitarian character of the building, and the feel good buzz of social activity in this everyday, meeting place will enable casual or unexpected opportunities for people to experience and be inspired by the arts as well as more purposeful visits to keep in contact with an ongoing exhibitions program, or visit the roof gardens.

There will be two main spatial components:

# 1.



An outdoor rooftop sculpture park, incorporating extensive landscaped areas and gardens with views over Preston and the surrounding region. There will be additional indoor accommodation on the roof for a variety of activities, via the use of shipping containers. These will be combined and adapted to form additional gallery space, workshop facilities and café/ restaurants, without compromising the grade 2 listed status of the building. The use of containers is aesthetically appropriate to the industrial scale and materials of a brutalist building. For example: Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank, also a listed building, has successfully utilised containers to expand on its activities, which have become successful areas of enterprise and creative activity, in their own right.



# 2.

There will also be large indoor exhibition spaces on the ground and mezzanine levels: some of these open access, others securely enclosed, with opening hours. The ground floor and mezzanine level offer large volumes of space well suited to interactive installation, multi media artworks (e.g sound, performance, film, sculpture, photography) in a range of potential formats and scales. Relatively little adaption will be needed.

A new glazed external lift would be a sympathetic addition to the building and aid connectivity/circulation between rooftop and ground level gallery areas. It would also create a visually dynamic enhancement.

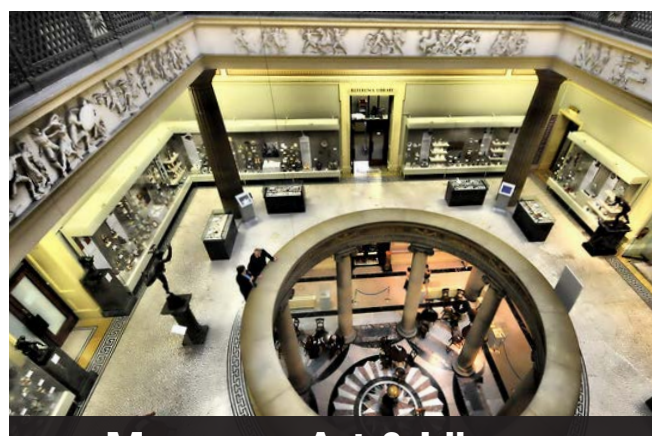
The adaptations will extend the reach and benefits of arts activities beyond already 'converted' audiences, which has been a challenging issue in the development of other successful galleries.

## Completes a total cultural experience

GASP will complete a cultural quarter made up of the Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library, the Guildhall, Charter Theatre, Market, and the New Public Square plus the proposed cinema complex. The combination of these could provide the people of Preston and Lancashire with a total cultural experience.

The district has been named the Harris Quarter, after the building already widely known for its cultural activity. Or HQ for short.

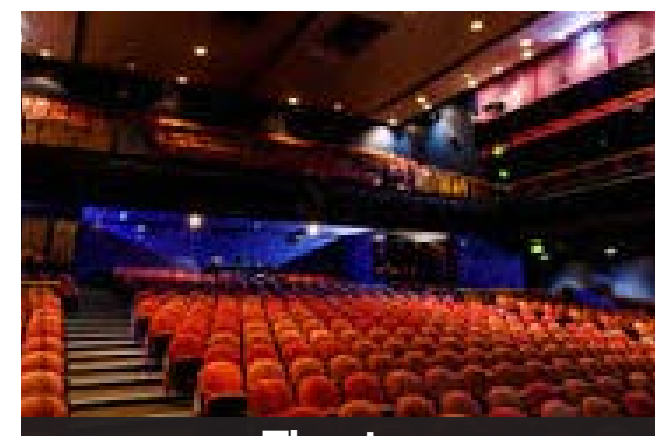
However, Preston's Guild is a unique, historical event, that drives creativity and celebration. Eccentrically perhaps, it only takes place every 20 years. GASP could lead the HQ initiative to bring the essence of the Guild into everyday life. It could for instance take the form of an annual or bi-annual festival that would feature a part of the world with strong links with Preston. Major exhibitions, dance, music, theatre, food and cuisine would all feature to celebrate the region's rich diversity of cultures. It would involve local residents whose ancestry is linked to the selected region, and have made this part of northern England their home.



Museum, Art & Library



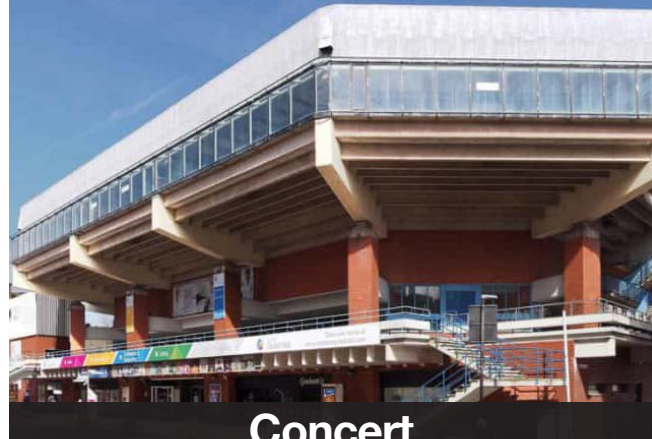
Food



Theatre



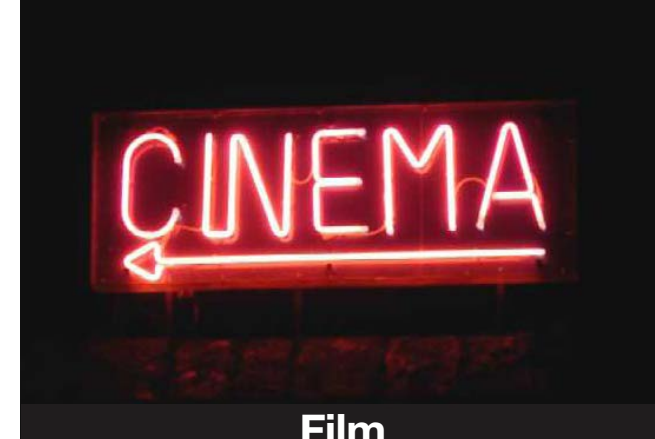
Contemporary Art



Concert



Performance



Film