

Winning Design Proposal from BDP selected for Rochdale Town Centre



Rochdale Borough Council and the RIBA (the Royal Institute of British Architects) have named Manchester-based BDP as the winners of the design competition to transform the town centre and complement plans to reopen the River Roch.

Architects, one from as far afield as Canada, submitted plans to revamp the area around the Butts where the river will be exposed as well as other parts of the town centre.

BDP, who successfully fought off a strong shortlist which included Adam Khan Architects, Atkins, Bauman Lyons and Land Use Consultants, won with a design which included glass viewing platforms to allow visitors to see the exposed bridges in more detail as well as extensive greenery around the site.

The competition was launched to improve the look of the town centre and better connect the two sides of the river once it has been reopened. It will also ensure that the area around the newly reopened river is sympathetic to its heritage features.

The panel which chose the winning design consisted of Rochdale Council leader Colin Lambert, Rochdale Council's head of planning Mark Robinson, local architect Paul Clark, chartered landscape architect Annie Coombes and architect and urban designer, Charles Wilson.

Rochdale Council leader Colin Lambert, said: "It was difficult to choose a winner from such an exceptional shortlist but BDP's design really stood out. The transformation of the public realm on and around the Butts will enhance the river reopening which is an incredibly exciting project and a critical part of our regeneration plans. Along with our £100m development agreement, it will move us closer to the fantastic town centre our residents and visitors deserve."

Alan Davies, Historic Environments Team Leader in BDP's Manchester studio, said: "We are delighted to be selected and look forward to working with Rochdale Council to develop our winning proposals for the town. The town's centre has great character, which our designs aim to enhance. The plan also sets out to create a high quality environment which is responsive to both the wealth of historic buildings and the town's mediaeval bridge, which will be uncovered and repaired as part of the river's reopening. Also integral to our design concept is the interpretation of Rochdale's rich history as a centre of textile manufacture, radical politics and the co-operative movement, and these will also be reflected in the scheme." Darren Ratcliffe, English Heritage's Historic Places Adviser in the North West, said "English Heritage is delighted to have supported Rochdale Borough Council during this important international design competition which generated some excellent ideas for a new public realm in the heart of the town. English Heritage has long known and valued Rochdale's historic buildings and is very pleased to be supporting exciting steps towards further revealing, enhancing and tying together the centre. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council as the winning design is developed and implemented."