

Beacon:

an iconic travelling performance space
for Bradford City of Culture 2025

Invited Design Competition



The Brick Box © Karol Wyszynski



Open Call

Beacon: an iconic travelling performance space for Bradford City of Culture 2025.

- A beautiful touring, temporary venue to be sited at the heart of local communities.
- A space for gathering, exhibitions, conversation and performance.
- An exemplar for sustainability in design, materials, and practice.

1.0 Competition Open Call Invitation

Bradford Culture Company (trading as 'Bradford 2025') invites collaborative teams to submit expressions of interest for an opportunity to design a temporary arts space, for Bradford City of Culture 2025. The Year of Culture taking place across the Bradford District and across artforms, is set to deliver more than 1000 new performances and events including 365 artist commissions and national and international collaborations. This venue, known as 'Beacon', will provide a platform for performances, exhibitions, and live events throughout the district during the summer of 2025.

The competition will select a sustainable design for Beacon that celebrates Bradford's cultural heritage and its diverse, cosmopolitan communities. Teams submitting designs for Beacon should consider responses through the lens of de-colonial spatial design. The design methods and proposal should speak to the global impacts of climate change and to a desire to create more equitable spaces for under-represented and local diasporic communities.

The winning design will enable Beacon to facilitate and promote meaningful interchange between communities to address the monoculture and social segregation that currently exist between communities from diverse ethnicity, socio-economic background and through the rural-urban gap. The design proposals must demonstrate how the design methods and process dismantle conventional architectural design practice by facilitating the voices of under-represented communities in the design, build and use of Beacon; widening access to the arts, architecture and design.

The competition will be held over two phases. Following Phase 1: Expression of Interest, up to 5 design teams will be shortlisted to proceed to Phase 2: the Concept Design and methods phase of the competition, to showcase the design by communicating spatial experiences, the design process and strategies that meet the competition brief and the design aspirations.

2.0 The context

Bradford has been designated UK City of Culture 2025.

Awarded every four years by Government, the UK City of Culture title has had a transformational impact on previous host cities, securing millions of pounds of investment and acting as a catalyst for creative place-making and culture-led regeneration.

Bradford district's year of culture is set to deliver more than 1,000 new performances and events including 365 artist commissions, a series of major arts festivals and major national and international collaborations.

Bradford's history of fierce independence and of progressive social reform and its spectacular cultural heritage offer a powerful launchpad for a UK City of Culture celebration in 2025 that could only happen in Bradford.

Bradford is a city built on the shoulders of people from every corner of the globe and a city with a unique set of conditions:

- We're the youngest place in the UK - with more under-18s than any other UK city.
- We're diverse and cosmopolitan – by 2025 half our population will have South Asian, African, Eastern European, Caribbean, or Arab heritage, amongst many others.
- We have an acclaimed cultural heritage and many landscapes – from hills and mills that inspired the Brontës, Delius and JB Priestley to the world heritage site of Saltaire village, to the world's first UNESCO city of Film. But we're also steeped in urban culture, bassline music and Grime.
- We're an entrepreneurial city, with high rates of business start-ups and self-employment.

Like many places, Bradford faces serious challenges of inequality. Once the richest city in the world thanks to the rapid development of the international wool trade during the Industrial Revolution, Bradford now has some of the lowest levels of cultural investment per capita, low opportunity and low social mobility.

Whilst the district is 67% rural and incorporates wealthier areas like Ilkley, there are wards in Bradford where engagement in conventionally defined arts is less than 1%. These are some of our poorest neighbourhoods where lack of opportunity and barriers to access are profound.

3.0 The sites

Beacon will be a venue for a series of live events across the district during the summer months of 2025. It needs to be a beautifully designed temporary performance space made from sustainable materials, that can be dismantled, and can be easily transported and re-installed at a number of sites.

The Bradford district boasts a remarkable collection of public parks that offer residents and visitors a natural haven amidst the urban landscape. These parks, many dating back to the Victorian era, are well designed, and thoughtfully maintained, providing tranquil spaces for people to enjoy.

Whilst the specific locations for Beacon have not been finalised yet – we'll be looking at parks in the heart of communities, where residential areas butt up against perimeter of the green space.

Some examples to consider for purposes of the competition would be - Lister Park which stands out as a true gem, featuring picturesque gardens, a boating lake, and a magnificent Mughal Water Gardens. Horton Park impresses with its expansive green spaces, inviting walking trails, and serene lake. Roberts Park enchants with its scenic riverside setting and Victorian architecture. Cliffe Castle Park in Keighley captures offers a rich history, beautiful grounds, and an impressive Victorian mansion that now serves as a museum, providing a unique blend of culture and natural beauty in the heart of the town.

With their diverse landscapes, immaculate lawns, and well-equipped play areas, the public parks of the Bradford district offer a delightful escape for nature enthusiasts, families, and anyone seeking respite from the bustling city life.

Beacon requires innovative approaches to build that minimise turnaround times between sites and allows it to travel across the district to 3 different park locations where it will be sited for several weeks, at each location. It is essential that the lasting impact on the ground is limited as the sites are likely to be grass.

4.0 Design guidance and requirements

Our vision:

This is a flagship project for Bradford's year as the UK's City of Culture and as such must represent our ambition, innovation and ethos.

A gathering place and forum for debate and dialogue, it will be a common ground for people of all backgrounds to meet. It will present new work in all genres from comedy to music, film, exhibition, and dance.

Beacon will allow us to celebrate our district's open spaces and parks, bringing culture into the hearts of people's neighbourhoods and testing new ways to engage and interact with communities.

It will be a statement structure that serves as a space for exploring conversations and ideas that will inform how we think as a district about culture venues in the future.

Beacon will be an exemplar of sustainability in its design, build and operation. The exceptional structure must have sustainability at the heart of the creative process. The environmental ethos of the project should be front and centre in the design, the choice of materials and fabrication techniques and be apparent through management of the space.

Our vision intends that the design, build, and use of the Beacon interact with and is informed by our local diasporic communities and the global impacts of climate change, stimulating conversation and debate about decolonialising spatial design, materials, design and construction methods, within an international context.

Pragmatically the space will be utilised from April through to September, minimising the need for costly and complicated heating solutions, but thought should be given to how passive techniques in the design, fabrication and choice of materials can help manage the conditions in the space (especially though the summer months).

Beacon needs to be as 'insta-worthy' as it is welcoming and should actively aim to reduce 'threshold anxiety' amongst community audiences. The venue should feel at home on the cover of an Architectural Digest and comfortable and familiar for a family watching a puppet show on a Saturday afternoon.

Proposals must include design that:

- Creates a narrative and opportunities to celebrate and engage with the unique historical and cultural heritage of Bradford.
- Tests new ways to engage and interact with the under-represented and the diasporic communities, crafts, design, materials, construction and building strategies. Promoting design that celebrate pluralism; providing a sense of belonging and facilitating meaningful interchange to address current challenges of monoculture and social segregation faced by communities.
- The venue should be an exemplar for good access, ensuring equity for those working in the space as well as audiences attending events.
- Address the effects of climate change and ecological degradation.
- Encourage the use of indigenous knowledge of biodegradable material, design and build.
- Offer a functional, mixed-use, multipurpose venue that is an engaging design (not just an artistic statement). An adaptable space that can be reconfigured to facilitate theatre performance, dance, music, visual arts exhibitions and installations.
- Provide an inclusive space to accommodate 300 - 500 people in rows, in the round, at tables or standing.
- Enables demountable and adaptable structure that is cost-effective to build, install, operate, dismantle, transport and re-install at various locations.
- Should be robust to withstand when exposed to the elements (various weather conditions).
- Considers the structural loading associated with theatre production / lighting rigs / sound systems etc.

We would advise you to also consider in the design proposal:

- Legacy options for the structure and how it will be stored.
- Design strategy that considers wear and tear, repair, repurpose, reuse etc.

The winning team will be expected to undertake the following tasks:

- Provide a concept design and on-budget design solution.
- Project management and delivery of the winning design.
- Assist in the build, install, disassemble, move and re-install the winning design (three times); and disassemble on completion for storage.
- Assist in Planning Permission drawings.

Consideration should be given to areas such as:

- non-extractive materials
- methods of collective construction
- tools that shift power structures
- spatial inequity
- decarbonising to address the effects of climate change.

5.0 Further guidance

Budget: The project budget will be managed by the winning team.

Materials: Re-used and re-purposed materials are to be considered and the use of bio-degradable materials are encouraged (for part or whole of the design).

Design: The design team must assure the assembly/construction considers protection of the ground that is likely to be grassed areas. Therefore, the Beacon should lightly touch the ground by minimising digging for foundation but be steady enough to not be moved while in use.

Health & safety: The project will sit within a CDM framework (construction design and management). The planned operation of the building will undergo a detailed risk management process. You may be asked to make modifications to comply with the risk assessment requirements.

Durability: The project will exist for at least 9 months, and you should consider the longevity and appearance of your design accordingly, to ensure that limited maintenance is required during this period.

Maintenance: Design should also consider sustainability and require minimum maintenance. If needed, the winning team must assure the build form will be repaired to be fit for use for the whole agreed period.

Insurance: The winning practice / collaboration needs to have Professional Indemnity of £1million to be eligible to go through to the next stage. The project will require Public Liability of £10million throughout the construction period and the whole installation period, from June throughout September 2025.

Project ownership and responsibility: The winning design will be the property of Bradford Culture Company (Bradford 2025) for the duration of the installation. The winning design team will be responsible for and assist in the design, construction, assembly, maintenance, moving and disassembly during the whole installation period.

Legacy: Subject to durability and planning permission, Beacon may be able to be in place or moved to a different location for an extended period. There will be a collaborative effort between the winning design team and Bradford Culture Company, to create a long-term use of the Beacon. The options will be discussed once the selected design is confirmed. We are keen to receive design proposals that can bring ideas on what a long-term use of the Beacon can be, and how it can be utilised after the festival.

6.0 Budget

It is envisaged that the cost of constructing the project is in the order of £500,000 + VAT (excluding fees).

7.0 Deadline and Submission

The competition will be held over two phases:

Phase 1 - Expression of Interest phase

Phase 2 – Initial Concept Design Approach phase

Submission Requirements – Phase 1

Please submit **Expression of interest document** and completed **Submission Form** to RIBA Competitions' digital submission portal no later than **12 midday on 27 June 2023**.

Expressions of Interest should comprise no more than 15 single sides of A4 (or double-sided equivalent, not counting the front cover, back cover, or contents page), digital submission only. Any information provided, including links or references to other documents in addition to that requested below is not permitted and will not be evaluated.

The Expression of Interest should respond to the following (no design work is required):

1. Motivation for applying

A commentary outlining the team's preliminary thoughts about this project, motivation for applying and any specialist skills that can help respond to the brief that you would be able to bring to the project. Initial written response to the brief and some design vision may be included in this section.

2. Team composition

An introduction to the design team should be provided, together with brief CVs for members of the practice who would be specifically responsible for leading on the project. The client is looking for a collaborative working relationship with the chosen interdisciplinary design team.

3. Design method and approach

Please demonstrate how you will work with the client group to understand their expectations, the brief, the parameters of the scheme and how you will work in partnership with the whole project team. Outlining the design and construction methods and approaches.

Case studies

Illustrative case studies should be presented for up to three relevant examples that demonstrate:

- High quality projects of a similar scale which have maximised the potential opportunities of a scheme of this nature.
- Projects demonstrating engagement with local, diverse communities and encouraging a sense of belonging and amplifying voices of the under-represented.
- Project examples which demonstrate experience of temporary structures whilst also responding to the ecological degradation and climate challenges with a sustainable solution.
- Example of your success in achieving client's aims and aspirations in a relevant project.
- Projects working with the cultural or creative sectors.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used for evaluating the **Expression of Interest** returns and will be evaluated holistically.

Design Quality

- Demonstration of track record of delivering design excellence and experience of projects with temporary structures and / or the creative sector. The panel will be looking for a unique approach that demonstrates a deep understanding of the project requirements and context.
- Experience in design and delivery of relevant projects especially in relation to projects with sustainability at the heart. The panel will be interested in design principles that integrate sustainable, and evidence of feasible solutions within given constraints.
- Evidence of creativity, innovation, and originality within the team's previous projects.

Resources and Experience

The panel will consider:

- How well the team addresses the project's functional requirements.
- Evidence of delivering schemes on budget and on programme.
- Experience and CVs of key members of the proposed team.
- Demonstration of prior working with a multi-faceted client and /or community groups.
- The team's motivations for applying, and how they align with the ethos of Bradford 2025.
- Demonstration of design and construction methods that respond effectively to the brief.

Submission method

In addition to the 15 single sides of A4, the **Submission Form** should be completed with your company details. The Submission Form will be issued upon registration.

Please send your **Expression of Interest** in a PDF format. The PDF should be no more than 20MB. The file name should consist of the allocated Unique Registration Number [BE#] and also include the practice name, e.g. 'BE# Practice Name.pdf'.

A unique link for this purpose will be emailed to each practice that confirms its intention to submit an Expression of Interest for the project. Applicants are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with the submission portal and allow sufficient time for their Expression of Interest to successfully upload prior to the submission deadline. The portal will not accept any material to upload once the deadline has expired.

How to Register and Enter

In order to be considered for the project, candidates must submit their **Expression of Interest** Document and a completed **submission form**. Interested applicants should register through the RIBA to obtain a copy of the **submission form** and their Unique Reference Number (URN). Please complete the online form available from <https://ribacompetitions.com/press/beacon/>

Registered applicants will be issued with the submission form and a secure link to enable them to upload their Expression of Interest via RIBA Competitions' digital submission portal (RIBASubmit).

Please note that this and all future correspondence will be sent to the email address entered into the online form.

Enquiries

All enquiries regarding the competition should be made to RIBA Competitions in the first instance:

E: riba.competitions@riba.org

T: 0207 307 5355

Phase 2 – Initial Concept Design Approach phase

It is envisaged that up to 5 practices will be shortlisted to proceed to the concept design approach phase of the competition. Shortlisted practices will be required to meet the requirements to outline their design strategy, their proposed approach to sustainability and an idea of the look and feel of the venue in no more than:

- 3 no x A1 design sheets
- A short design report – to explain the ethos behind your design submission in no more than 10 no x A4 single sided pages.
- A statement on costs / appraisal of the headline budget.
- Submission of a fee proposal.
- A 3D visualisation of the design.
- A design proposal to demonstrate celebratory and pluralism of diversity of cultures and promotes equity.

The shortlist will be invited to present their proposals and answer questions from an Evaluation Panel at a final interview. The Evaluation Panel will select a winner based on both the submitted material and the final interview.

The shortlisted teams will each receive an equal honorarium of GBP £5,000 + VAT as a contribution towards the cost of developing their concept design and attending the final interviews. The honorarium will be paid within one calendar month of the conclusion of the competition. Invoices should be submitted to RIBA Competitions.

Post-competition Commitment

Following public announcement of the result, the selected team will be appointed by Bradford Culture Company (trading as 'Bradford 2025') to undertake RIBA 1 and 2 design. The responsibilities of the winning team are listed in section 4: Design guidance and requirements.

8.0 Eligibility and Copyright

Eligibility

The competition is open to architects, landscape architects, designers and artists. We welcome collaborations however the project must be actively led by a named architect.

Expressions of interest are invited from architect-led design teams worldwide. The lead architect firm must include an architect who has the right to practise in the country where they are qualified or in the country where they currently reside or practise. UK-based applicants should therefore be registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) with overseas-based applicants registered with an equivalent regulatory body.

The client team wish to encourage innovative design collaborations which provide the opportunity for maximum creativity. For example, this may mean, but is not limited to, collaborations between established and emerging talent; between those in different geographical locations or other such collaborations who together can enhance design quality and bring other aspects of added value to the project.

No member or employee of the promoting body, the evaluation panel, or any partner, close associate or employee of them is eligible to compete or assist a competitor.

Disqualification

Submissions shall be excluded from the Competition:

- If a Competitor shall improperly attempt to influence the decision.
- If received after the latest time stated under Phase 1 Submission.
- If, in the opinion of the Evaluation Panel, it does not fulfil the requirements of the Competition Brief.
- If any of the mandatory requirements of this brief are disregarded.

Evaluation Panel members and client representatives should not be solicited for information, as this could lead to disqualification from the competition.

Copyright

The ownership of copyright will be in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 - i.e. Copyright rests with the author of the submitted design.

Notification of result / publicity

The competition results will be published after all 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 any designs for publication to any 3rd parties until after the shortlist or 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 shortlist or 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 all social media channels, they consider fit. Illustrations of any design - either separately, or together with other designs, with or without explanatory text - may be used without cost. Authors will be credited and recognised in all associated media and publicity. This information will be taken from the submission form so please ensure the details are accurate.

9.0 Timetable

The outline timetable for the competition (which may be subject to change) will be as follows:

Date	Activity
7 June 2023	Phase One Competition Launched
15 June 2023	Phase One Question Deadline
22 June 2023	Responses to Questions issued
27 June 2023 @ 12 midday (BST)	Expression of Interest submission deadline
w/c 3 July 2023	Evaluation Panel meeting to select shortlist
w/c 10 July 2022	Shortlist notified and issued with Phase 2 brief
w/c 17 July 2023	Briefing session for shortlisted teams
2 August 2023	Deadline for questions
9 August 2023	Issue responses to questions
7 September 2023 @ 12 midday (BST)	Deadline for submission of design proposals
w/c 18 September 2023	Final interviews and presentations to Evaluation Panel
w/c 25 September 2023	Notification issued
End September/Early October 2023	Result Announced and Exhibition

