



**Belfast**  
City Council

## **Storylines: Design Competition for Early Career Architects 2022**

The RSUA/JP Corry Storylines Design Competition, in partnership with Belfast City Council, challenges Early Career Architects to generate ideas for the meanwhile use of a key site in Belfast City Centre to herald a new era of increased activation of open space in the city.

The competition will seek to demonstrate that Belfast city centre is open for people to socialise and have fun, that it is open for business and visitors. Equally it will seek to demonstrate that the city is open to change to address our Climate Emergency and to support vibrant and inclusive city centre living. Subject to successful due diligence and Council approvals it is the intention that the winning architects will be offered the opportunity to work with Belfast City Council to deliver their proposal within the identified site.

Belfast's [Bolder Vision](#) should be reflected in the proposals put forward. In particular, entrants are encouraged to explore how underutilised space could be made playful for people of all ages, how the city centre could accommodate pockets of nature or how new social spaces could be created.

The project should support engagement with the ambitious [Belfast Stories](#) project - a landmark, transformative, multi-million-pound tourism destination opening in 2028 on this site. The aim is to instigate a project that can be delivered relatively quickly to help engage with the public and inform the longer-term plans for Belfast Stories and the city centre.

The competition aims to encapsulate the ambition set out in [The Belfast Agenda](#) of a city imagined, beautiful, culturally vibrant and a place of innovation and creativity. In particular it seeks to:

- Gather ideas on how to put space to use in the meantime, to test out ideas and make the city centre a more welcoming place for everyone, including how this project can act as an exemplar for how the city treats derelict sites ahead of development.

- Generate debate, interest and discussion about Belfast Stories.
- Explore what role architecture and urban design can play in helping to respond to the major challenges facing city and town centres in Northern Ireland and beyond.
- Consider the circular economy for temporary interventions in the built environment – how can elements be designed with re-use, repurposing and recycling in mind.
- Illustrate the increasing importance of understanding the embodied carbon in different construction materials.
- Unleash and showcase the creative talents of early-career architects from the island of Ireland.

## **Eligibility**

This competition is open to early career architects either living or born on the island of Ireland.

‘Early career architect’ is being defined as any architect who has been actively in work as an architect for less than 15 years. This is in recognition that for many people, especially women, the journey after qualifying as an architect is not a straight run of employment without any interruptions.

The competition is open to early career architects working in all sectors not just those in private practice. Early career architects can collaborate with each other to enter the competition.

## **Mentor**

Depending on level of experience that the winning architect or architects have, the judging panel may request that an experienced architect is brought into the team as a mentor.

## Brief

As this competition is focused on supporting creativity and imagination, we have aimed to keep the brief very open.

The intervention(s) should be designed as follows:

- **Goal:** Create a distinctive Belfast Stories experience centred around social interaction and fun in the city centre as outlined in the introduction.
- **Delivery timeframe:** The project must be deliverable by December 2022.
- **Budget:** For the purposes of the competition the total budget for the project, including professional fees, is £120k. This should also take account of maintenance costs for a period of 2 years.  
Further funding may become available, and it would be beneficial if proposals could be readily scaled up.  
£20k of this £120k budget will be provided by JP Corry by way of materials.  
The implementation of the project is subject to a range of approvals including planning by Belfast City Council.
- **Temporary:** The intervention(s) should be designed to be in place for up to two years. Consideration should be given to how the structure / interventions / materials could be easily transported and relocated to other parts of the city after this initial period.
- **Circular economy:** Consideration is to be given as to how the elements of the intervention(s) will be re-used, repurposed, or recycled when no longer needed in their current form.
- **Practicalities:** The design should take account of health and safety considerations, use and accessibility, durability including the risk of vandalism and key construction considerations.
- **Access:** The intervention is expected to have open access whilst also taking account of practical considerations, as above - health and safety and vandalism considerations in particular.

- **Location:** The site for the project is on at Royal Avenue / North Street in Belfast city centre, the location of the Belfast Stories project. There are plans for full scale redevelopment for the site commencing 2025.

### Site location

The site for the Belfast Stories under BCC ownership is identified within the red boundary. The grey box is the possible location for the project / intervention, with scale and exact location to be agreed by BCC. The former Bank of Ireland is listed and should not be incorporated in the proposed design (outlined in green).



## Submission

To enter the competition, you must submit your concept design and provide a written statement as follows:

1. **Visual** - Submit a range of images/drawings to best convey your idea/concept for an intervention(s) that meets the brief.
2. **Explain/Propose** - In less than 1,500 words:
  - a name for your project
  - how your project will meet the brief
  - consideration around the deliverability of your proposal, particularly within the potential budget £120k.
3. **Display** – Identify a lead image plus two supporting images for display at the showcase and provide a 100-word summary of your proposal.

## Competition Timeline

The competition is being run to the following timetable:

- 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – competition launch
- 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – submission deadline
- Panel assessment – April 2022
- May – August 2022 – detailed design and planning application
- August / September 2022 – contractor procurement
- October / December 2022 – build

## **Judging**

The judging panel is to consist of:

- Architects from the [RSUA Peer-Approved Design Quality Panel](#)
- A representative from JP Corry
- A representative from Belfast City Council (client)
- A representative from the local community

Full details of the judging panel will be released in March 2022.

## **Prize**

The prize will be to develop your concept with the client, Belfast City Council, and to deliver the project. Professional fees will be agreed after the competition but will not be above £30,000.

If the project does not proceed, the winner picked by the judging panel will receive a prize of £1,000 courtesy of JP Corry. All entrants will be showcased by RSUA and Belfast City Council.

## **Registration**

To register, please email Kerry Campbell ([Kerry@rsua.org.uk](mailto:Kerry@rsua.org.uk)). You will be issued with a unique registration number which will ensure that the submissions are anonymous for judging purposes.

## **Further information**

RSUA has been running design competitions annually for early career architects since 2016 with a cycle alternating between an ideas-only competition and a competition that aspires to deliver a built project. The first built project year was 2017. Here is a review on the completed project – [Built:East.](#)

The 2019 project Sound Yard along the Maritime Mile was launched on 20 October 2021. See more info [here.](#)