



## FURTHER INFO

#PAINTERSYARD #DEPOT

This was a community based arts project, created as part of 'The Big Sunday.' Opinions are those of the people named within, some are made anonymously.

For further information or assistance with public consultation please contact me:

Sara Hayes  
Creative Consultant  
07950 836488  
info@thepublicartcompany.co.uk

**AS PART OF BIG SUNDAY  
I CREATED AN ALTERNATIVE  
PUBLIC ART DROP-IN TO  
GATHER FEEDBACK ON THE  
'PAINTERS YARD'  
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL IN  
COLCHESTER ESSEX  
ENCLOSED ARE MY FINDINGS**

#PAINTERSYARD #DEPOT

# INTRODUCTION

**#PAINTERSYARD #DEPOT**

I'm a creative consultant and I live and work in Colchester's 'Cultural Quarter,' at the time I was a resident of 37 Queen Street owned by Colchester Council and run by Space Studios.

When I saw that planning proposals for a new development on the site of former community project 'The Waiting Room' were up for only one day, in the exclusive Greyfriars Hotel I decided to create an 'Alternative Public Feedback' event.

Created as part of 'Big Sunday' (8/7/2018) an annual event that happened at the location, organised by and for locals, with no funding from the local council. I wanted to give a voice to the people who had not attended the official public feedback event.

The following is the information gathered; I supplied official feedback forms, paper, pens and clay and invited people to give their opinions however they preferred - on the development plans pasted on the wall, as drawings, sculpture or comment...

This was an open forum during which I did not try to influence people, simply to enable them to have a voice, the project received 360+ planning objections (one of the most ever) and at time of writing is sadly still being pursued by Colchester / Essex County Council for development, via removal of a covenant on the land that researchers found out protected its use for the community.

**Sara Hayes MA**  
**Creative Consultant**  
**The Public Art Company**

Original project: 8/7/2018  
Intro revised: 27/7/2020



## INTRODUCTION

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### MY REACTION

**MARK DE'ATH WAITING ROOM**

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**EMMA EVANS**

**KIRSTINHANDLEY**

**ANNIHOWARD**

**BENHALL**

**MARIA OJURI**

**SANDY ARMITAGE**

**KAREN COOK**

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**ANONYMOUS**

**MARIA**

**SARA HAYES**

## ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK BOOK

## PHOTOS OF THE EVENT

## FURTHER INFO

# MY OWN REACTION TO THE PAINTERS YARD PROPOSALS

## My first thoughts were that the proposal was divisive...

It was designed to look like it was an Essex University project.

Green roofs look like they are actual green-roofs but no mention in the text of this.

Text alludes to a public consultation taking place, which has not happened.

Shows pictures of the area looking run down and depressed, which totally overlooks the actual uses of the site, and the public feeling associated with the area.

## My main objections to the current plan are as follows:

**DENSITY** – Too high density for the site.

**IGNORES** – The original cultural quarter plans.

**IGNORES** – Current uses of the area by local people

**IGNORES** – Communities that emerged in the area as part of the Waiting Room project who supported the council's cultural aims.

**BLOCKS** – The view of our architect designed gallery (underestimates civic pride in the building.)

**BLOCKS** – The view from CURZON.

**BLOCKS** – The view from 37 Queen Street.

**NO VISION** – Lacks vision/heart/soul, the project looks like a Gulag, lacks creativity and is deeply disappointing and depressing on an aesthetic level.

**DISREGARDS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS** – Takes no account of the fact that nearby East Hill is the most polluted road in Colchester, and proposes a development with barely any green space for young people, disregarding the health and wellbeing of local residents.

*Images Big Sunday - 8th July 2018, taking place in the location of proposed plan; dance classes, outdoor stalls, Dorian Kelly - Director*



Your proposal overlooks the fact that this area is in fact highly invested in by the local community, you can see the attached images of Big Sunday to show an example of this.

These are my objections, the overall use is in fact open to debate, but original plans were for an arcade of shops/ studios which could house some of the projects that found a home here as part of the Waiting Room community project.

## What I would like to see:

Overlooked parking/drop-off zone for 37 Queen St, it's very hard to run creative business without access to drop-off and pick-up materials, and for people with children that need to pop into work by car so they can leave to collect them from school.

Parking/disabled parking drop-off for Curzon similarly, a 30-minute drop zone like Crouch St would be a good solution to this. The council's opinion that people will not use cars in the future is a fantasy, people will use cars but they will become greener.

## MUCH MORE OPEN PUBLIC SPACE

Open access to the whole site, NO GATED COMMUNITY!

Open access for the public to visit the interesting site in the ROMAN WALL (not the 'town wall') with a window, which is a unique part of the wall, and to miss the opportunity to highlight it would be stupidity.

## Others have suggested:

- Concert hall
- Bus depot
- Arcade of boutique shops
- Lake
- Water Feature
- Green Spaces
- Market
- Shared public spaces
- Addressing homelessness issue

I feel like no public consultation work has been done, I can only assume you proposed these plans in the first instance to spark debate, I hope this document rises to that challenge!



## A LETTER FROM MARC DE'ATH, CO-FOUNDER 15 QUEEN STREET & THE WAITING ROOM PROJECT

I am registering my concerns in relation to the consultation process that has been undertaken on what is now called Painters Yard in St Botolph's.

After a long wait, Colchester Borough Council should be applauded for attracting partners willing to invest in this part of Colchester.

Just as firstsite starts to come into it's own and become a genuine community arts hub and 37 Queen Street, full up and with a waiting list with Space Studios at the helm.

I raise my concern as a stakeholder, as a previous resident of Priory Street for 5 years (2005), co-founder of Colchester's first creative co-working space 15 Queen Street with firstsite (2009), project lead in the Hidden Kiosks (2011), and a partner in the Waiting Room a DIY Venue/Open Kitchen/Makerspace for 3.5 years.

Over that entire time I, along with many others, fell in love with the social history and fabric of St Boltolph's. It's Roman wall, the underused playing field, the old police station, the bus depot, the Waiting Room, the Minorities Gallery, the cafe garden, its kebab shops, the d-shaped lawn, the school-hood bus waiting memories, the Bike Kitchen, the marginalised skateboarders that led to YAK and now, Curzon and what the area has grown to mean to our creative community.

There is no doubt, we've been through our ups and downs.

Today, was an up, the town witnessed yet another BIG Sunday, a genuine bottom up outdoor event, organised by a local cultural asset Dorian Kelly in, what is a very challenging economic climate.

When the vision for a 'Cultural Quarter' was unveiled, many in the local community, including myself, bought in. They invested and helped to fill the void, during what has been, a pregnant pause in development. They have loved, cherished and animated a little patch of tired land that otherwise would have been blighted and a real eyesore. They did so in belief we were getting a 'Cultural Quarter'.

I understand, the climate and therefore the brief has changed. But to me, whether I like the end outcome or not, I don't feel I have been consulted properly on the current designs.

In no way do they build on the fine grain of the community or help Colchester reach its full Cultural potential.

I don't feel like I have enough information to provide informed feedback.

I don't feel like we have had enough time or an opportunity to have a say.... What do we want from - what we have earned the right to call - our Cultural Quarter?

**Marc De'ath**  
Founder Waiting Room

Our approach is to liaise with communities, to listen and to create an environment beneficial for both the student community and neighbours. We have done so successfully and provided both sustainable and affordable accommodation for around 3,000 students which resulted in benefits for the local community in terms of amenities and job creation.

Building Partnerships is an independent UK property development company and development advisor. They have a reputation for innovation and attention to detail, and have experience dealing with a wide range of complex property issues.

Our aim is to deliver the completed development scheme in 2020.

## I ASKED CHRIS DOBROWOLSKI, ARTST, BASED IN COLCHESTER, FOR COMMENT...

The latest plans for the university accommodation block are essentially the existing available space divided up into as many cells as possible crammed in. These are then presumably going to be rented out at a premium to rich foreign students who fancy living close to the centre of town. At the time of writing this there are homeless people living in tents at the back of Firstsite and the old bus garage - virtually 'in' your precious cultural quarter.

Morals aside, even visually this proposal is flawed. As far as I remember, at one point, the old Keddie's building was going to be knocked down to create a vista to see the Firstsite building in its entirety. Now it's going to be a hotel and in front of that this university accommodation block.

Love it or hate it the one thing architecturally Firstsite had going for it was that it made a bold if ostentatious visual statement. With the proposed development it would appear that we are trying get rid of some of the controversy surrounding Firstsite by physically hiding it behind some conventional, boring money making bricks and mortar.

The image our cultural quarter will send to the world is that we are basically an un-cultured Luddite bunch and...oh...can we have your money please?

**Chris Dobrowolski**  
Artist



**Feedback Form**

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	Naomi Reynolds
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

Our proposals are still in progress, and this exhibition provides us with an invaluable opportunity to hear your views, which we aim to address as the scheme evolves. Your views are important to us, and all feedback is welcomed.

This form can either be returned to us in person, or if you wish to take the form away to complete, please return to: FREEPOST RRAJ-KGLE-AYTR, Lexington Communications, 198 High Holborn London WC1V 7BD.

The information displayed today is available on our consultation website, where feedback can also be submitted online: [www.paintersyard-stbotolphs.co.uk](http://www.paintersyard-stbotolphs.co.uk)

**Do you have any general comments about the proposals?**

The plans make it seem as the new buildings are going to smother and overwhelm existing buildings. It looks cluttered.

There is a lack of disabled parking which I feel is discriminating, disabled access should not be removed as doing so removes opportunity.

The idea of student accommodation in this current area is not in keeping with current surroundings i.e; Art studios (space) and first site. Student accommodation is not in keeping with the cultural quarter.

Your name and address are optional, but are requested to support your comments. Copies may be made available to the relevant planning authority as it can note your comments. We will request that your personal details are not placed on the public record. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent revisions, we have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you and will not pass your details to any third parties.

**Feedback Form**

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	TIM EVANS
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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**Do you have any general comments about the proposals?**

I am very disappointed by the designs for the development - it is totally inappropriate for the area - this is not the development that is needed here. - It is a wonderful opportunity to develop an open public space - a piazza with space for sculptures and water features and trees. These designs hide first site building from the west. It is out of keeping with the cultural development of the area - if student accommodation is needed, build it as one high tower block and use the ground for the people of Colchester and our visitors. It would be a missed opportunity to make this a vibrant, community space that people will love.

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## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	STEVE BROOKS-DEWSETT
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

WOULD LIKE TO SEE SPECIFIC PARKING FOR ELECTRIC CARS. DROP OFF POINTS FOR 37 QUEEN ST AS WELL AS CURB.

Your name and address are optional, but are requested to support your comments. Copies may be made available to the relevant planning authority so it can take your comments. We will request that your personal details are not placed on the public record. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent revisions, we have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you and will not pass your details to any third parties.

## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	Emma Evans
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

Devalving proposal —  
It is clear from days like Big Sunday and from the days of the waiting room that people want space for an alternative cultural experience.  
Airing space is needed apparently (not sure what the existing unused, unused housing in Colchester is) but this is a mistake on so many levels. People need playing space as well as living space, space to breathe, this development will create a block in energy of all types.

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## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	Kirstin Handley
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

I think it's a real shame the space isn't going to be made into a beautiful 'open public space'. We have the amazing firstsite building, the Roman wall, St Botolphs, and the folly which are all unique to Colchester. Let's celebrate the parts that make our town special! Let's make the most of our heritage! We do not need anymore shops, restaurants in this area. Open spaces, pop up art/craft market sculpture park, street performers is what is needed. Let's make the most of our creative community

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## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	ANNI HOWARD
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

Why is the development called Painters Yard (and where is the apostrophe?)  
 pays lip service to site in cultural quarter - painting  
 student accommodation? This is a speculative build that is solely intended to make money for the developers. A gated community that is shut off from the citizens of Colchester in the heart of the cultural quarter? ~~cut~~ off <sup>vehicular</sup> access for disabled users of current buildings such as 37 Queen Street, or indeed disabled students. No open spaces or creative 'play' spaces, just a brick building intended to provide seasonal lets to a temporary population miles away from the university. Is there the public transport infrastructure to support this plan, where students aren't allowed their own transport?

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## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	BEN HALL
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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### Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

I want to be enthusiastic about these plans, but they unfortunately look like a joke. The plans are too cramped with virtually no shared space. This is a real front door for the town a place where people meet-up. This strongly blocks off possible paths to connect with and provide links into the wider town. It cannot be just student accommodation + ~~pub~~ pub. This zone off from the town. We need a mix of accommodation and nice that also provides shared space. No thought has been taken about these plans. Be more imaginative, don't cut this community off. Be realistic, be kind, be generous.

Your name and address are optional, but are requested to support your comments. Copies may be made available to the relevant planning authority so it can enter your comments. We will request that your personal details are not placed on the public record. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent revisions, we have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you and will not pass your details to any third parties.

## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	Marla Oursi
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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### Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

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## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	Sandy Armitage
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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### Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

The 'cultural Quarter' has taken a decade to embed and its benefits are growing and have the potential to continue expanding. During the fundamentally important period of 'The Warting Room' there was an immeasurable quality brought to the area that was built as Marc De Atti rightly said from the bottom up - and THAT was its essence - it was for the people, by the people and because of the people.

If all we ever do is build for buildings sake and be driven by finance then our humanity and sense of well-being will be lost between skyscrapers thrown by brick walls.

Look to Europe - Belgium - open spaces &

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They matter

## Feedback Form

Development Proposals: St Botolph's Quarter, Colchester

Name	KAREN COOKE
Address	
Email	
Telephone	

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### Do you have any general comments about the proposals?

I am really disappointed in this planning proposal. Student units sold off to overseas investors or commercial landlords so that can claim as many as possible - High volume in a space that is supposed to be a cultural Quarter. This is a MISSED OPPORTUNITY to provide an open space to complement Firstsite, The Minories and 37 Queen St. So much money has already been invested and the Cinema complements this. It seems madness to sell out at this point when a more creative solution can be found. Also why Painters Yard? Any painters in 37 Queen St, won't have a view or any light left to paint! Come on Colchester Council - Be Brave & hold out for the right proposal! Please.

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△ **RE SENSITIVE CULTURE REGENERATION**  
**LIKE HUNTER STREET IN HULL**  
**WOULD BE GOOD.**

**CURRENT PROPOSAL / CONCEPT =**

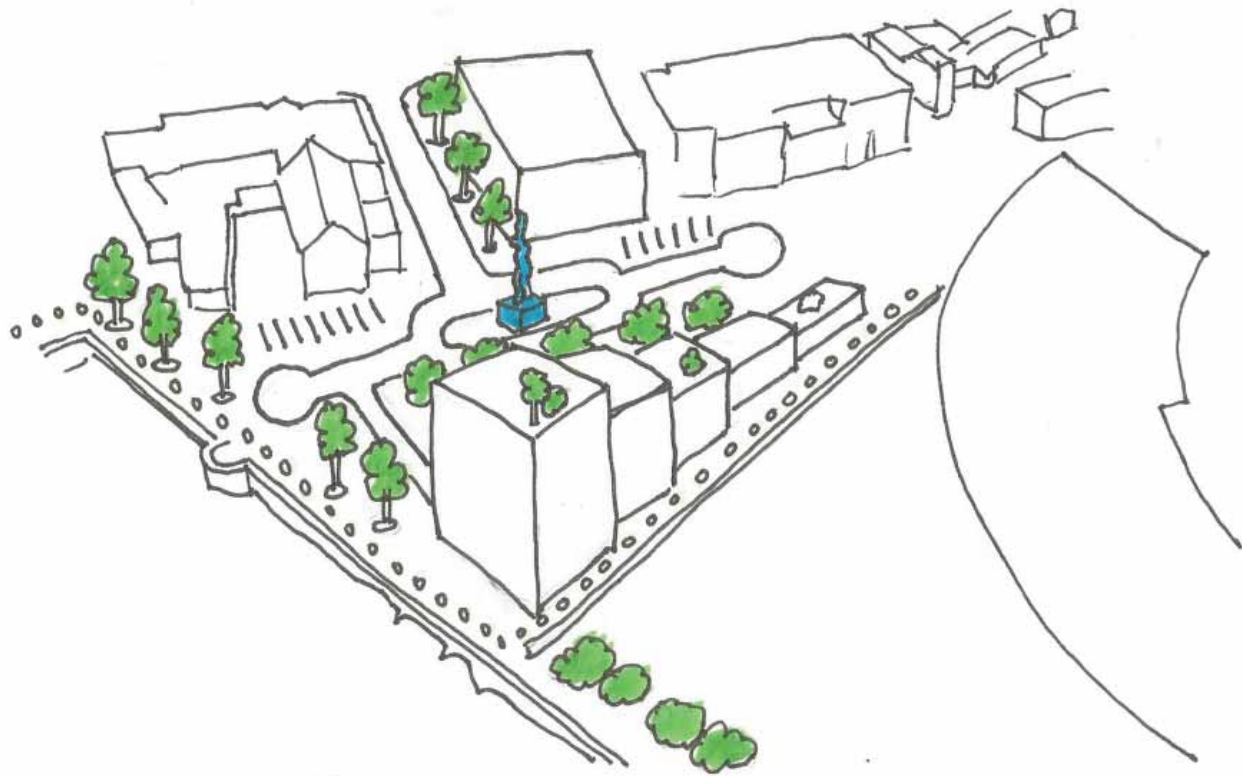


△ **TRACE RECORD**  
**SUGGEST WELL DONE BUT CULTURALLY LACKING**  
**SPACE - NOT IDEAL FOR A CULTURAL QUARTER**

Maria



...PARTICIPANT CONCEPTS



## COMMENTS BOOK...

I can't believe that anyone believes this is the best proposal for developing this space. It is absolutely awful and inappropriate for the cultural quarter. Plant some trees, make some space for people and children to play!

Roxana Macalaj - 89 Maidenhead St.  
COINT 07710474997

Please please let's halt this plan, which brings to an end any hope of the fantastic open public realm we could have between FirstSite & the Curzon cinema (whose double-sided glass windows were for - what?). Public realm is valuable, precious, to be protected, to be planned in - it's hard to see when we will ever have another opportunity like this to create a town square at the East end of town.

This is not in opposition to any detail or accommodation, but we should start by articulating the space of beauty & function that we want & can create - then plan our building around it. Most significantly remove the large triangular build planned between the Curzon & FirstSite. Simply drop that & allowing the new build that sits perpendicular to Queen St, at the road entrance, begins to create create a bordered open public space.

Also, re the planned accommodation. This is absolutely not the space for a gated, private student build. It is simply too important (for everybody) there to use for a transient student population when there will be other locations that serve their needs perfectly well, equally well.

This is a critical space & a critical decision-making time. Let's create something beautiful with it, that everybody can use, enjoy & be proud of.

Further, the Curzon Cinema and 7 Queen Street Gallery with the early Georgian wall in Hallywell and the Castle Ground are a cultural and historical asset in Coleorton. The space should be used for something that fits the theme of the area. A park or green space with a cultural store would be fantastic, having that, a built up area would be nice.

Sara Hayes

SARA

I came here to get included in the comments and feedback because this proposal has upset me so much and clearly I am not alone. The design I had in my head was so very close to Sara Hayes' with a tiered row of buildings that do NOT obscure FirstSite and - very importantly - give open space to the area.

I feel a large community centre would be a valuable space as Colchester's community is what this is all about. All the generations being able to have their space and to feel like they matter.

I do not believe this proposal is intended for students - My cynical mind thinks there is an ulterior motive to have private dwellings.

Invest in the people! The rewards will come back in the form of happiness and a sense of belonging - this is all invaluable & immeasurable - creativity needs space and light - humans need space & light. Don't build this unattractive charmless complex - it will be ruinous, negative & destructive.

OUR VIEWS MATTER!

NOT-FOR-PROFIT  
MATTERS!

Sandy Armitage  
5 July 2018

COMMENTS ON THE WALL...

TOO MUCH  
CONCRETE  
NOT  
ENOUGH  
GREEN





