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New Islington – Grant Associates

PUBLIC REALM SPACE AT NEW ISLINGTON

Grant Associates has launched its plans for the Public Realm space at New Islington. Public spaces will define the character and quality of the Millennium Community as much as buildings. From the beginning, the landscaping of the site has been central to the identity and character of the project.

Grant Associates worked with Alsop Architects, Martin Stockley Associates and Fulcrum Consulting on the strategic framework.

“The intention is to create a rich and diverse outdoor environment that reinforces the innovative spirit and ambition of the plan,” said Andrew Grant, Grant Associates.

Initial inspiration came from the Will Alsop’s sketch of an arc of water linking the Ashton and Rochdale Canals. The waterway link also connects historic Ancoats Urban Village and the proposed Metrolink tram stop on Pollard Street. Alsop’s vision is of an arc of water that is not only an amenity, but which offers views to the south across water and parkland.

“The aspect of the site gave us optimum conditions to explore the creation of a new place around water and landscape, which is a rare privilege,” said Andrew Grant, Grant Associates.

At an early stage, it became clear that due to levels across the site and cabling beneath Old Mill Street it would be too costly to make the two arms connect. Alsop instead proposed a “cattle grid” of running water that would symbolically connect the two.

“We’ve incorporated gargoyles into the Ashton arm at the head of the canal wall,” said Andrew Grant. “We’re enjoying playing with this notional water connection between the two arms.”

More follows

PUBLIC REALM SPACE AT NEW ISLINGTON Contd...

Boaters wishing to get from the Ashton to the Rochdale arm will have to boat down to Piccadilly Basin where the two navigations naturally connect.

“Working with Andrew Grant as part of the team was vital,” said Nick Johnson, development director, Urban Splash. “He brought eclecticism, delight and a touch of romanticism to the landscape, which have been fundamental to creating the vision.”

Proposals show a clear understanding of public and private spaces. They welcome the car whilst prioritising the pedestrian, striking the balance between access and amenity.

The proposed new canal side park will be the latest of a number of new public spaces, which Manchester City Council has created since the 1996 IRA bomb.

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Notes to Editors

Grant Associates is a progressive, design based consultancy specializing in landscape and ecological development in both urban and rural areas. Formed in 1995, our committed 14 member team of Landscape Architects and Urban Design professionals are actively involved in combining the principles of ecology within the discipline of sustainability to create useful, contemporary landscapes with a clear distinctive attitude and character. Since our inception we have been consistently involved in cutting edge design projects which are built around a concern for the social and environmental quality of life, searching for bold and imaginative solutions to complex and demanding briefs.

Recent projects include the Accordia housing scheme in Cambridge for Countryside Properties; the Rolls Royce Motor Car factory and offices in Chichesters for BMW; the National Trust Central Offices in Swindon and the British Pavillon for the Japan Expo 2005.

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