



Design of a new Heritage Centre

The Challenge

The Land of Oak & Iron secured an additional £1.5 million investment to build a new heritage centre at Winlaton Mill in Derwenthaugh Park. The centre will be run as a social enterprise, reinvesting any profits back into its local activities. It will showcase the heritage of the area, offer locally sourced and seasonal menus in the café, have several business units and a shop selling local products. A consultation on plans for the heritage centre was initiated with the local community. Designs needed to capture the imagination, reflect the area and provide practical spaces to deliver on the vision of a mixed use centre.

Solution

Land of Oak & Iron approached Northumbria University to develop design proposals for the centre that could be used during the consultation process. Professor Paul Jones, from Northumbria's Department of Architecture and Built Environment, led the project, working with the team from Land of Oak & Iron, Master in Architecture students at Northumbria and other stakeholders. Working with The Land of Oak and Iron and Gateshead Council, our team developed both a brief and a range of imaginative responses. We set up a student design competition, which included production of concept options, model making and high quality computer illustrations. These were used as part of the consultation and enabled Land of Oak & Iron to gather responses, at stakeholder meetings and public events, on preferred options for the scheme.

Impact

The final design of the centre was chosen in consultation with the local community, with hundreds of people choosing Northumbria University Architecture student Matthew Glover's waterwheel-inspired design concept. It pays homage to Sir Ambrose Crowley, who established revolutionary water-powered iron works nearby in the late 17th Century. The designs for the new centre will contribute to the place-making characteristics of the Park. It will have an economic impact in visitor numbers and income generation and educational outcomes for the general public, including local schools, regarding the historic importance of the site to the region. The Centre opens in July 2018.

Organisation Overview

The Land of Oak & Iron

The Land of Oak & Iron covers a 177 km² area surrounding the Derwent Valley in North East England. Funding of £3.4m has been secured to enable this area's unique combination of natural, industrial and cultural heritage to be conserved, enhanced and celebrated.



"This is an excellent example of Northumbria University, its staff and students aligning and contributing their skills and expertise with the local community to create a high quality asset for the benefit of the area and its people."

John Rundle, Chairman of Land of Oak & Iron



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