



*Capital
case study:*

Rivington Place
Shoreditch, London
Borough of Hackney



LOTTERY FUNDED

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Shoreditch, Hackney

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Executive summary

Rivington Place is a new gallery in Hackney, east London, housing two organisations: Iniva and Autograph. Both are dedicated to the development and presentation of black visual arts at a national and international level. Designed by award-winning architect David Adjaye, the building opened to critical acclaim in October 2007.

The gallery has two multi-media exhibition rooms, offices for Iniva and Autograph, work units let to local creative organisations, an education space and the Stuart Hall reference library (named after the eminent academic and broadcaster who championed the project from the outset.)

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The total cost of the project was just under £8 million. It was funded by grants from the Arts Council Lottery Capital programme, Barclays Trust, the London Borough of Hackney, LDA (London Development Authority), ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and the City Fringe Partnership development programme.

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Project background and history

Rivington Place is the first new-build public art gallery to be opened in London for 40 years. More significantly, it is the first time in the UK that a space has been created that is dedicated to the development and presentation of the culturally diverse arts.

Iniva (the Institute of International Visual Arts) was founded in 1993 with a mission to create exhibitions, publications, multi-media, education and research projects, designed to bring the work of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds to the attention of the widest possible public. Iniva works with national and international partners in curating exhibitions, publishing, commissioning new work and maintaining an extensive library of books, slides, and videos on worldwide artists and cultures.

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Autograph ABP (Association of Black Photographers) was founded in 1988 to produce, exhibit, publish and promote the work of photographers and artists from culturally diverse backgrounds in exhibition, training, commerce and publishing. In common with Iniva, Autograph works nationally and internationally, collaborating with gallery, museum and education institutions – and increasingly with international partners.

With support from Arts Council England's Lottery Capital programme, the two organisations came together to plan a significant new arts project. Each had its own board but they shared a common chair in Professor Stuart Hall, renowned for his work as a cultural academic, broadcaster and writer, and this proved crucial to the success of the project.

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The company

In 1998, the directors of Autograph and Iniva forged an alliance to address the need for a permanent base for the two agencies and their constituencies, setting up a new company, Sense of Place (SOP) to take responsibility for securing the site, signing the lease, raising funds and overseeing the capital project. The company was chaired by Professor Stuart Hall, providing the link between the two organisations at board level. SOP now has a continuing role in overseeing the running of the building and its day-to-day management as a venue. Both organisations are represented on the SOP board.

The building is referred to as Rivington Place, as its site runs along the length of the passageway bearing this name. The two main organisations, Iniva and Autograph, provide all the arts activities. They are serviced by the centre-management company, Sense of Place (trading as Rivington Place) with a core staff – a centre manager, a head of operations and house, and a team of admin/receptionists. The head of operations is responsible for maintaining the building and its services, including

a franchised café facility, welcoming visitors, and renting out space when it is not required by the two main organisations as well as the day-to-day smooth running of all aspects of the building.

No rents or service charges are levied by Sense of Place on the two main organisations. Instead income and expenditure is allocated between the two organisations in proportions based on their differing use of dedicated spaces (offices, library, multi-media and interactive spaces) resulting in a split of 77 per cent to Iniva and 23 per cent to Autograph. The management company is financed by the income from the café franchise and from rentals and hires. Any shortfall is met by Iniva and Autograph (77 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). Where profits occur, they will be also be shared between Iniva and Autograph. The structure was carefully researched, with pro-bono advice being given by a leading financial consultancy, to provide the most tax-efficient method of operating while safeguarding the two arts organisations and the investment made in the building.

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Vital statistics

- initial project planning began in 2002
- work started on site in February 2006 was completed in June 2007, (70-week construction period)
- project costs totalled just under £8 million, of which the construction costs accounted for £4.4 million and site acquisition costs totalled £1.3 million. Gross floor area 1,445m²
VAT amounted to £530,000
- design team was appointed through OJEC [Official Journal of the European Community] competitive procedures
- procurement route – initially traditional JCT (Joint Contracts Tribunal) contract, revised following the completion of the RIBA Stage D to a fixed price contract negotiated with shortlist of contractors

Main sources of funding

Arts Council England	£5.97 million
Barclays	£1.1 million
ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)	£172,702

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Hackney Council	£100,000
LDA (London Development Association)	£91,000
City Fringe Partnership	£231,000

Design and project management team

Architect

Adjaye Associates

Business and financial

DTZ

Project manager

Bucknall Austin

Service engineer

Michael Popper Associates

Structural engineer

Techniker

Main contractor

Blenheim House Construction

PR and marketing

Kalloway

Fundraising

Series of short-term contracts

Financial planning

DTZ

Key Iniva and Autograph personnel (for the development)

Chair, Sense of Place

Professor Stuart Hall

Director, Iniva

Gilane Tawadros

Artistic director, Autograph

Mark Sealy

Project manager (coordination)

Paul Brookes

Project manager (construction)

Peter Clack

Autograph Board members

Ron Henocq

Rosemary Miles

Paula Kahn

Independent Chair, Sense of Place

Ken Dytor



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Rationale for the project

Having at first looked in Peckham, south London, Iniva and Autograph soon decided to find a site or building in Hackney. The reasons for this are many and, in retrospect, it was the obvious choice of location.

- this area of London's East End has particular cultural and historical importance as a gateway for successive generations of migrants
- by the fifth anniversary of the opening, Hackney will be drawing in visitors from across the world for the 2012 Olympics
- studies had shown that Iniva and Autograph draw their audience from media and visual arts specialists (artists, teachers, students, writers) as well as individuals and groups within the culturally diverse communities on which its work is focused
- by establishing a base in this area, Autograph and Iniva are able to claim their position at the forefront of the arts alongside the Whitechapel Art Gallery, White Cube, and numerous small galleries and studios

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The location also offered funding opportunities. The City Fringe Partnership, which covers an area to the north and east of the 'Square Mile', is committed to increasing economic and social inclusion by encouraging the growth of the creative industries, strengthening social care, and forging links between the rapidly developing commercial sector and the local community.

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Planning and project development (part 1)

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Sense of Place (SOP) was initially advised to work with a developer as this was seen as the best way for a small organisation with limited financial resources to deliver a building project. Negotiations were opened for a site in east London's Brick Lane, where the new gallery would be part-financed by a housing development. Initially the potential partnership worked well but as the plans developed it became increasingly apparent that more and more restrictions were being imposed by the developer, limiting SOP's future autonomy and restricting what the organisation would be able to achieve. After two years, SOP decided to move on, sacrificing £45,000 of associated costs as well as considerable time and energy. The exercise had, however, served to clarify their objectives, set the size and scale of the provision required, lay the business foundation for the project, and provide indicative costings. A great deal of pro-bono work had also been undertaken to establish the most tax-effective way of structuring the new organisation.

The search for a vacant site or building continued, undertaken with the help of estate agents and other contacts. The rented offices where Iniva was based at the time were next to the old Shoreditch Town Hall and separated from it by a strip of vacant land used for parking cars – the former town hall's car park. Enquiries established that the freehold was held by Hackney Council, but that the current occupancy was subject to a complicated set of sub-leases. SOP was able to unravel these sub-leases and successfully agreed a price for the site and exchange of contracts, submitting a planning application to Hackney for an independent scheme on the site, designed by their appointed architects, Adjaye Associates. The cost of site acquisition was £1,275,875.

Throughout the early stages of the development SOP was supported by DTZ (an internationally recognised company of real estate specialists) who subsequently advised the Board to bring in Bucknall Austin (property and construction consultants) to guide it through the procurement process. Because of the desire for a high-

quality building and direct professional responsibility, the traditional route of the architect-led team was selected as the best option. The preferred architects, Adjaye Associates, had been working on the Brick Lane project but SOP had to repeat the OJEU [Official Journal of the European Union] process (using the negotiated procedure on the basis of best value for money) before it could reappoint them for the Rivington Place development.

To progress the project, SOP set up a project management team comprising the two directors (Iniva and Autograph), two finance people and three appointees, selected for their relevant skills. Two important new staff appointments were made:

- a project manager with administrative skills to coordinate the whole of the capital development
- a construction based project manager (part-time) to oversee the design and building work on behalf of SOP



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Planning and project development (part 2)

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Arts Council England released money to develop the project and to help secure the site. All the necessary funding was released upfront to allow the purchase to happen quickly – a move that was very much appreciated by SOP. Raising the additional money that was needed before work could start proved a major hurdle for the two organisations. Approaches through ‘the usual channels’ had secured many millions for some of the prestigious projects (national institutions) that were fundraising at the same time, but when SOP followed the same route all its efforts came to nothing. The situation was saved when Barclays agreed to donate £1 million. The initial contact came out of the blue, the result of a chance conversation with a taxi driver who knew someone he thought might help.

Another major source of worry during this stage was VAT. The controversial ‘London Zoo ruling’ had not then been resolved and it proved impossible for SOP to get a definitive ruling on what their liability was likely to be, despite experienced consultancy advice, frequent requests for a decision, and two government ministers writing to HM Revenue and Customs asking for the matter to be resolved.

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Design and delivery (part 1)

Following the completion of RIBA Stage D and the appointment of the capital project director, Bucknall Austin drew up a procurement model in which the Quantity Surveyor and CDM (Construction, Design and Management) adviser were to be appointed directly. Contractors were short-listed using OJEU accelerated negotiated procedure (the selection being made on the lowest price) and four were invited to tender for the job.

The contractors all responded with sums considerably more than the original budget, giving a projected cost over-run of £1.2 million. The design team then embarked on a value engineering exercise with the favoured contractors to explore ways in which the costs could be reduced. Modifications included in-situ concrete replacing pre-cast, rationalisation of the suspended floor design to use more traditional construction methods, and changing the ventilation system from natural to mechanical. The contract sum was reduced by £400,000 and a supplementary award from the Arts

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Council of £500,000 helped to close the gap. Barclays added a further £100,000 and work started on site.

Summary of design and building programme

- work started on site February 2006
- building work completed June 2007
- iniva and Autograph moved in July 2007
- opened to the public October 2007

Summary of capital costs

- land acquisition (including surveys, building control and planning) £1,340,000
- construction £4,400,000
- additional work post-contract £35,000
- loose fittings, furniture and equipment £125,000
- IT £85,000
- project team fees £650,000

- abortive fees on Brick Lane £45,000
- client costs £720,000
- VAT £530,000
- total project budget £7,966,000

The completed building contains:

- two project spaces capable of housing exhibition, film screenings and talks
- the Stuart Hall Library
- an education space
- meeting rooms
- a café
- workspaces for local creative businesses
- offices for Iniva and Autograph



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Design and delivery (part 2)

The impact of the new gallery belies the size of the site, creating a far greater street presence than might be expected. (The dimensions of the building are 11.4m by 35m, on a site measuring a total of 513m².) Two sides of the building are immediately visible – the narrow facade onto Rivington Street and the main frontage along the cul-de-sac from which the gallery takes its name. These present a chequer-board effect, with deeply recessed windows and glossy black aluminium panels set into the dark pre-cast concrete grid, a matrix of perforations. In the daytime, the panels reflect the light as if they were glass, giving an ambiguity to the exterior of the building.

The scale is also deceptive – with eight rows of windows relating to five storeys of building. The dimensions of the openings change, widening along the length of Rivington Place and shortening towards the top of the building. The architect, David Adjaye, commented: 'It's a building that appears to increase its volume from one end of the site to the other – the geometry is adjusting, its form compressed – it's about how you look, and then how you find something, and how that something is not as you first thought'.

The interior spaces with the white walls, smooth surfaces and clear lines provide a sophisticated frame, giving precedence to the activities and exhibitions they are designed to house. The windows, seemingly arbitrary on the outside, relate well to the interior spaces – lighting the library at a high level and providing flexibility for the main galleries. The larger rooms can be used for a range of visual arts and media – as video walls in a darkened space open to allow art works to be seen in natural light.

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Opening the new gallery

Iniva and Autograph began to move into the offices as soon as the building was completed. The first areas to be opened to the public were the education spaces, the Stuart Hall Library (which takes up much of the second floor) and the café at street level (to the rear of the building, spilling out into Rivington Place).

The formal opening was held on 3 October 2007, attended by many of the funders, ambassadors, artists, partners, and supporters of Iniva and Autograph over the previous 20 years of their existence. Two days later saw the opening of the inaugural exhibition *London is the Place for Me*, curated by both organisations – Autograph in Project Space 1 and Iniva in Project Space 2.

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The opening weeks had been carefully organised. They formed a crucial part of the marketing and PR plan which had been developing since autumn 2004 (regularly monitored at the weekly meetings of the Rivington Place project management team) and contributed towards what Iniva and Autograph were aiming to achieve during their first year. The aims can be summarised as:

- ensuring that the widest possible public are aware of this unique new venue
- engaging new audiences – local, national and international
- building on the existing relationships of the two organisations
- enhancing community relations

One of the strategies employed was to engage influential people as active ambassadors for the project, raising the profile and developing a sphere of influence amongst key opinion formers. A core group of key media spokespeople was established with each identified as representing a different aspect of the project. The reputation of David Adjaye, in both the arts and the architectural world meant that the new building was eagerly awaited by the press specialising in these fields. PR consultants, Kalloway, were brought in to coordinate press and media coverage. Their final report states that as well as TV and radio coverage, 85 articles were written, appearing in 16 countries and reaching an estimated audience of 15 million people.

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The gallery in operation

The two organisations remain separate entities. As planned, the venue is being managed by a small core team while events and activities are promoted by Iniva and Autograph.

Rivington Place costs around £300,000 a year to run. As envisaged, both organisations continue to be dependent on public funding for a large proportion of their costs. The largest amount comes from Arts Council England, which set up a new one-year funding agreement in 2008/2009. This will be negotiated for two further years based on the following formula:

- Autograph receives £359,251 for 08/09 with inflation-linked increases of 2.7 per cent in 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Iniva receives £988,323 for 2008/09 with inflation linked increases of 2.7 per cent in 2009/10 and 2010/11

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Rivington Place was, however, designed to generate some additional income. The two 'start-up' spaces were both let within a few months of opening and the café has been successfully franchised (to a local establishment with kitchen facilities which enable it to provide a more extensive range of freshly-prepared food).

During the opening period, the building received far more publicity than that given to the exhibitions and other activities but six months after opening, visits to the exhibitions were running at about 3,000 a month and were continuing to attract good coverage in the press. All the rentable spaces were being let to full capacity. Having reached this point, the directors and their teams were looking forward to some 'blue-sky' time to concentrate on the programmes, fundraise for activities rather than for capital and enjoy their hard-earned asset.

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Wider lessons

One of the key factors in SOP's success was the willingness of Iniva and Autograph to seek and take advice, identifying design and management consultants recognised as being amongst the best in their field. The SOP board also contained a mix of experienced individuals from different skill areas.

Despite taking best advice the project initially came in over budget, demonstrating that cost projection within the building industry is far from an exact science. The fact that SOP got through these difficulties owes much to the high levels of competence within the board and the staff teams who stayed calm and remained loyal throughout the difficult periods. This, together with the leadership of Professor Stuart Hall, was crucial in maintaining both the impetus of the project and the quality of the end product. Once the budget was finally fixed, the contract was delivered on time and on budget.

Money raised from public bodies always comes with strings attached. While Iniva and Autograph appreciated the help they received from individual officers and monitors, the systems they operated under often proved over-demanding. For example, EU funding is bound into specific outcomes at each stage and has cut-off dates. A lengthy delay in HM Customs and Excise providing a ruling on VAT also served to increase the pressures. (About six months before completion, SOP eventually established that the rate would be between 46 per cent and 49 per cent).

The impact the capital project had on the day-to-day activities of the two organisations was enormous and the directors considered that the money they were given by the Arts Council for capacity building and technical assistance was inadequate to provide the amount of consultancy required. They also felt that they themselves would have benefited from a period of intensive training, funded sufficiently to allow them to bring in additional help to manage the ongoing work.

Reflecting on the experience, Mark Sealy of Autograph concluded:

'Developing a building and running a day-to-day programme was the biggest mistake we made. It would have been better to scale down the operation and focus fully on the building.'

www.rivingtonplace.org

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Credits

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