

School of Art - Relocation Project



Project Exception Report

Contents

1. Background & Context
2. Executive Summary
3. Assessment Process & Current Project Position
4. Options

Appendices

- A. BRE Assessments
- B. Acoustic Report
- C. EPC Certification

1. Background & Context

The Art Relocation Project initiated in early 2021, it was required to follow the RIBA 2020 Plan of Work, which establishes clear deliverables for design standards and principles. This report focuses specifically on the steps taken to address challenges in achieving sustainability goals.

The key objective of this report is to assess the project's current standing with respect to BREEAM certification. Reading Borough Council set this as planning condition 10, requiring the project to achieve at least BREEAM 'Very Good' status, which equates to a minimum score of 55% based on credits identified as achievable through the BRE pre-assessment.

BREEAM credits are determined by the project brief and associated design strategies. These are agreed upon by key members of the Project Team, including the Project Manager, University Stakeholders, Mechanical & Electrical Engineers, Lead Designer, and the BREEAM Consultant. Effective management of these credits is crucial during the design stages to ensure that the project aligns with BRE standards and that all required credits are ultimately achieved.

To give a project the highest chance of achieving the required BREEAM rating, it is essential that a BREEAM pre-assessment is completed at the RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design). This early assessment allows for stakeholder engagement sessions and project documentation to be captured and submitted as evidence. Engaging at this stage also enables the Project Team to establish principles that align the design deliverables with BRE requirements.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the BREEAM pre-assessment did not begin until late in RIBA Stage 3, resulting in missed early credits which are achievable through project documentation, further impacting the success of achieving the required 'Very Good' accreditation.

The assessment process for the Art Relocation Project and its alignment with BREEAM requirements is further detailed in the following sections of this report.

2. Executive Summary

The BREEAM certification process is split between the design and construction phases, with submissions made to BRE in sequence. Ideally, the BREEAM Consultant would submit the design stage at the beginning of RIBA Stage 5 (Construction) to secure the necessary credits, which was not possible due to unforeseen circumstances. As a result, both the design and construction stages are being submitted together after handover.

These credits, and their associated percentages, include:

- Man 03 – Credit 2: Sustainability Champion - 0.635%
- Man 03 – Credit 1: Environmental Management - 0.635%
- Man 03 – Credit 5: Monitoring of Construction Site Impacts - 0.635%
- Man 05 – Credit 1: Aftercare Support - 0.63%
- Mat 03 – Credit 2: Responsible Sourcing of Materials - 1.07%
- Mat 03 – Credit 1: Sustainable Procurement Plan - 1.07%

By missing the opportunity to achieve 5.675% of construction-based credits, the project's position was further compromised. Significant post-completion work was undertaken to meet BRE requirements, and

October 2024

alternative credits were targeted to mitigate the risk posed by unachievable credits. However, challenges related to design specifications remained.

One example of a challenge encountered was related to the Hea 05 credit for Sound Insulation. During the project, it was identified that two walls did not meet their design criteria, which impacted the ability to achieve this credit. The loss of this credit resulted in a further 1.23% reduction in the overall score, as detailed in Section 4 of this report. The acoustic report can be found in Appendix B.

Despite these setbacks, the project has demonstrated significant achievements. The building has achieved an EPC rating of A, highlighting its exceptional energy performance. The installation of solar panels further strengthens the project's long-term sustainability and supports the University's goal of achieving carbon net zero. The EPC certificate can be found in Appendix C.

In addition to its sustainability successes, the new art building has been positively received by both the department and students. Its vibrant use for exhibitions, tours, and feedback, as well as increased student enrolment for 2024/2026, showcases its success as a functional and engaging space.

3. Assessment Process & Current Project Position

The following sets out the assessment process the Art Relocation Project has taken, including dates and assessment references. The assessments can be found in Appendix A.

RIBA Stage 3 -21/10/21 – 70.00%
RIBA Stage 4 – 22/03/13 – 61.09%
RIBA Stage 4 -23/05/19 – 57.39%
RIBA Stage 4 – 23/07/13 – 59.67%
RIBA Stage 6 – 24/09/09– 60.24%
RIBA Stage 7 – 24/08/30 – 58.62%
RIBA Stage 7 – 24/10/09 – 57.83%

As detailed in section 2 of this report failed credits have resulted in a loss of 5.675% of construction-based credit & 1.23% for acoustic performance. This is prior to BRE assessment of the completed documentation, however, renders the final assessment (24/10/09) of 57.83% unachievable.

This puts the project position at 50.925%, which is an intolerance of -4.075% to the BREEAM requirement of 55% to achieve 'Very Good'.

Outstanding contractor documentation is still to be received, currently this sits at 3.305% which is required to achieve the above 50.925%.

It should be noted that the project documentation has been assessed by the appointed BREEAM Consultants at Encounico, who have determined that it meets the BRE requirements. However, on submission to BRE the documentation will receive a further evaluation and there is a potential risk that credits are not achieved due to the rigorous process that BRE follows.

4. Options

Addressing planning condition 10 related to BREEAM certification requires careful consideration. In the case of Hea 05, while appointing an acoustician to review the installation could provide methods to achieve the credit, this option is not considered viable.

Given the number of lost credits already identified, attempting to regain the 1.23% from this credit would not bring the project to a position where BREEAM 'Very Good' is achievable. Therefore, further investigation into this option would not be a practical solution. Due to this, the focus has shifted to resolving the planning condition through alternative means.

October 2024

To address this planning requirement with Reading Borough Council (RBC), the following approach is recommended. After liaising with RBC, the Project's Planning Consultant has submitted a non-material amendment application which accompanies this report, to adjust planning condition 10. This amendment acknowledges that achieving the BREEAM 'Very Good' rating is not feasible and proposes a 'Good' rating instead.

This proactive approach ensures that the planning condition is addressed while showcasing the project's alignment with broader sustainability objectives.