



The Canning Circus Creative Hub
www.thecanningcircus.com
info@thecanningcircus.com
For correspondence: Michael Wynne, Coordinator,
The Canning Circus Creative Hub,
175 Wollaton Street, NOTTINGHAM NG1 5GE

Creative Quarter, what Creative Quarter?

Cooperative music and artists' studios, and other creative enterprises, asked by Nottingham city council to "leave quietly"

Despite the hype surrounding Nottingham city council's (NCC) £60m investment in a new Creative Quarter, successful small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) elsewhere in the city are being forced out of their premises.

Artists and creative enterprises have existed at 175-179 Wollaton Street for nearly thirty years, running an established cooperative business model with no money from the public purse. Their premises fall outside the boundary of the new Creative Quarter and so the funding and support offered by that initiative does not apply to them. With a lack of equivalent property, facilities or rates in and around Nottingham many of the businesses may be forced to close or relocate out of the city.

Michael Wynne, coordinator of the Canning Circus Creative Hub, said:

"There's been a creative community here, paying rent to the council for nearly thirty years, receiving no public funding. Now the council wants to throw us out because they've sunk £60 million into a Creative Quarter that they've decided we're not part of."

The SMEs at Wollaton Street have promoted Nottingham nationally and internationally as a creative brand over the years. In addition, the SMEs have offered valuable opportunities to many aspiring artists, technicians, promoters and other SMEs through various mentoring and tutoring programmes. Ricky Marr, now ambassador for the Creative Quarter, received creative industries-focused guidance at 177 Wollaton Street for free. A 15-year-old musician was nurtured as part of coordinator Michael Wynne's teaching practice. His name was Jake Bugg.

The Creative Quarter, by contrast, is shaping up to be dominated by corporate stakeholders, who have made little or no attempt to encourage or support aspiring artists beyond that which they have been obliged to do in order to meet their funding requirements.

In the years the SMEs have been operating, they've maintained the fabric of the buildings at their own expense and major improvements have been made by the tenants to at least one of the properties. The council has made no attempt to maintain the buildings, with the exception of installing fire doors to satisfy statutory requirements. This work was of such poor quality that the tenants had to rectify it themselves.

Businesses in the Creative Quarter, on the other hand, are benefiting from investment and support from the council, through the establishment of Venture Capital firms and other public-funded mechanisms. Despite the long standing success of the business models at Wollaton Street, none of the SMEs were consulted leading up to the Creative Quarter being established.

A portfolio, detailing the work of the creative SMEs at Wollaton Street, is available from <http://wp.me/p3SqrX-2m>. Please contact our coordinator, Michael Wynne, for further information and to arrange interviews with our artists.