

ARTIST'S BRIEF

Commission for permanent destination artwork in a public space in Leicester, UK



Introduction

The **Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC** (Community Interest Company) invites an artist to develop a permanent work of three-dimensional public art to memorialise Joe Orton.

The statue will be sited in Orton Square, outside Leicester's Curve theatre, in one of four possible locations ([see Appendix 1](#)).

This artwork has been crowdfunded: <https://www.spacehive.com/joe-orton-statue-appeal>

Donors include Sir Ian McKellen, Stephen Fry, Sir Matthew Bourne, Pet Shop Boys, Alison Steadman, Kenneth Cranham, Sheila Hancock, Adam Kay, Patrick Gayle, Jake Arnott, Graham Fellows and The Connor Brothers.

The Vision

To make the 'Joe Orton Statue' a destination artwork and one which enhances the local resident and visitor experience of Orton Square, Leicester. We envisage that the artwork will be thought provoking, outward looking and make a major contribution to the community, enhancing the lives of passers-by.

Purpose

- To memorialise Orton as a significant contributor to Leicester's social history
- To raise awareness of Orton and celebrate his life, work and legacy

- To enhance the city's reputation for diversity and inclusivity by conveying Orton's sexuality and social class
- To reinforce that Leicester is home to all sorts of people from all sorts of backgrounds, and all are welcome in the city

Key aspirations for the 'Joe Orton Statue'

There are no preconceived ideas of what the artwork should look like and what medium the artist should use. However, the work must function within the constraints of the existing public realm environment including foundation depths, be permanent and conceived with a clear understanding of the potential footfall and pressure that the public space will experience from members of the public and destination visitors.

The artwork should become a memorable and intriguing intervention that adds interest and generates discussion. The artwork can be conceived for a single location as a stand-alone artwork or become sequential or multi-faceted.

The work should engage the local community and visitors adding to the narrative and character of the place and encouraging people to make use of the public space.

The final location, scale or medium for the artwork is not determined. However, the artwork should be developed with consideration of the public and visitor experience.

Key aspirations for Orton Square, Leicester

This is a unique opportunity to rethink memorialisation and to create something which celebrates excellence, salutes individuality, represents inclusivity and reflects our diverse society.

It is not a 'statue' that people should be in awe of, rather something they want to interact with and associate with – access should be easy for all and the experience should be positive and memorable.

An artwork of the highest quality is required. Minimising future maintenance will be a key driver in the selection process, so robust, natural and durable materials will be favoured as they contribute to Leicester's built-environment sustainability objectives.

CRITERIA

The artwork will

- convey Orton's subversive spirit
- be accessible

- encourage people to engage with and /or interact with the sculpture
- not feature water or sound
- not have removable or working parts
- be cast or fabricated from hardwearing material which is resistant to the elements, vandalism and theft
- not pose a risk to public safety
- be sensitive to the surrounding built-environment (St. George's Conservation Area) and, in particular, any adjacent listed buildings

The artwork may

- be figurative or non-figurative
- incorporate a quotation from Orton that sums up the man and his work
- be set on a plinth

Location

There are four possible sites for the artwork. The artist will choose their preferred location (subject to underground services and other constraints).

The artist will need to consider the stability of the artwork and the need to minimise the size and depth of the foundation due to the concrete slab beneath the granite paving, and the shallow depth of underground utilities.

Please note there are no plans to divert any underground utilities as part of this project.

For information on the proposed locations see Appendix 1.

Budget

The budget for the commissioned work is £80,000 including VAT. Payment will be made in stages agreed with the artist.

This sum is expected to cover:

1. Artist fees and travel
2. Materials
3. Fabrication / manufacture
4. Fabricator project management costs
5. Any specialist engineering costs
6. Transportation

The artist's budget **excludes** the cost of site preparation, installation and, if appropriate, a plinth.

Value for money will be taken into account when assessing designs.

No monies (travel expenses etc.) will be paid to artists who are not shortlisted.

All monies will be administered by the Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC.

ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

The artist will be appointed through a competitive longlisting/shortlisting process followed by a competitive interview process.

Stage 1 – Expressions of Interest

Artists are invited to submit the following information before midnight on 30 May, 2020.

1. A covering letter stating why they are interested in the commission
2. A one-page Word document explaining how the design fulfils the Brief (see 'Purpose' and 'Criteria' above)
3. Links to a visual interpretation of the proposed design
4. Artist CV
5. Links to photographic images of previous public work
6. Coversheet (see below)

Applications are welcome from early career artists with limited previous public artwork experience, with the potential of being supported by a mentor arranged by the PMSA.

Send expressions of interest to joeortonstatue@pmsa.org.uk using the header 'Joe Orton Statue'.

Stage 2 – Longlist

An Advisory Group will longlist up to twelve artists by Summer 2020 based on the criteria above. The Advisory Group's decision on longlisting will be final. No feedback will be available on designs that are not longlisted.

Stage 3 – First Public Engagement Event

Longlisted artists will provide one A1 foam-board of their design for display at a public exhibition in Summer 2020. Further information will be provided to longlisted artists. This exhibition forms part of our public engagement plan designed to raise awareness of Joe Orton and generate interest in the statue. Artists will be invited to an optional press night or public engagement event and must be willing to engage in PR activity

that will take place around the announcement of the longlist. Members of the local community will be invited to view the longlisted designs and leave comments.

Stage 4 – Shortlist

The Selection Panel will shortlist three artists.

Public opinion and general feedback from the exhibition will be carefully considered but the Selection Panel's decision on shortlisting will be final. No feedback will be available on designs that are not shortlisted.

Shortlisted artists will be given a development fee/honorarium of £2,000.

Artists will submit a more detailed proposal and bring a maquette (at 1/6 size) to the interview (see below), in a hard material that can be exhibited in an indoor public space.

Artists will be invited to visit Leicester in person to discuss their proposal at an interview with the Selection Panel, visit the site and consider the placing of the artwork with the panel in late Summer/early Autumn 2020.

Proposals must include:

1. A written narrative outlining ideas, design rationale, research and key concepts associated with the artwork, and its appropriateness for the space.
2. Visualisations of the artwork in context clearly setting out the concept, size, material, weight and appearance of the piece. Any drawings should include perspectives and sections and elevations to scale.
3. A methodology for production and fabrication including details of preferred fabricators.
4. Cost breakdown for materials, fabrication / manufacture, fabricator project management costs, travel, artist's fee, copyright/permissions, any specialist engineering costs, transportation. The total cost must be within the indicated budget.
5. Fabrication and installation timeline.
6. Consideration for maintenance, design life and long-term sustainability of the proposed artwork.

Stage 5 – Interviews

Shortlisted artists will be invited to attend interviews with the Selection Panel in late Summer/early Autumn 2020.

Stage 6 – Second Public Engagement Event

The maquettes will be displayed in New Walk Museum and Art Gallery. Shortlisted artists will provide one A1 foam board mounted information sheet for display alongside

their maquette. This will include written narrative outlining ideas, research and key concepts associated with the artwork, and its appropriateness for the space.

Members of the local community will be invited to view the designs and leave comments.

Shortlisted artists must be willing to participate in at least one public engagement event in person and PR activity around the announcement of the shortlist.

Stage 7 - Selection

Following the interviews and Second Engagement Event the Selection Panel will make their final selection and appoint an artist.

Public opinion and general feedback will be carefully considered but the Selection Panel's decision will be final. The Selection Panel reserves the right not to commission any of the designs. Written feedback will be offered to the unsuccessful shortlisted artists.

A contract will be prepared between the commissioning body and the artist.

The commissioned artist must agree to the production of a limited edition set of maquettes or small casts (with profits split equally between the artist and Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC). Any funds raised by the Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC from the sale of maquettes or small casts will support the development events and activities in Leicester that promote the life and work of Joe Orton.

Stage 8 – Concept Development

The appointed artist will have a period of approximately 6 months in which to fabricate and install the commissioned work.

The artist is expected to develop their concept proposal through a process of consultation with LCC and the Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC.

The artwork will be produced within the budget.

The artist is expected to manage the installation in partnership with LCC with the full support of the Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC.

The artist will keep possession of the statue until an agreed delivery date with LCC. It will be the responsibility of the artist to organise transportation and delivery of the statue prior to installation.

The commissioned artist will be required to demonstrate appropriate levels of public, employers and professional indemnity insurance and appropriate risk management plans. Evidence of these will need to be provided before a contract is issued.

Planning Permission

This will be submitted by the Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC. The artist's concept proposal documents must be suitable for inclusion in the final planning application. The artwork should follow LCC's Public Art Guiding Principles: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/182004/public-art-guiding-principles-sept-2016.pdf>

Ownership and Maintenance

The artwork will become the property of LCC but the artist will retain intellectual property rights and copyright in the work. As such, the artist will be consulted on any proposed adjustment, re-siting or removal of the work. LCC will take responsibility for maintenance.

Advisory Group and Selection Panel

The **Advisory Group** includes local people who work in the arts and culture industries, the Orton family, members of the Saffron Lane estate and the Leicester LGBTQ community.

The **Selection Panel** consists of Leonie Orton (Joe's sister), Dr Emma Parker (Associate Professor of English, University of Leicester), Tanya Brittain (Public Monuments and Statues Association), Nikolai Foster (Artistic Director, Curve), Cllr Adam Clarke (Deputy City Mayor, Leicester City Council), Phil Hackett (artist) and singer-songwriter, artist and Orton enthusiast Holly Johnson.

A technical advisor from LCC will consult with the panels.

No contact/lobbying should be made with any of the above members throughout the process. Any artists found to be doing so in a manner to promote their own work will be immediately dismissed from the competition.

JOE ORTON

Joe Orton (1933-67) was a leading British playwright. In the 1960s, he wrote three highly acclaimed stage plays (*Entertaining Mr Sloane*, *Loot*, *What the Butler Saw*), three television plays, a bestselling diary and an unproduced screenplay for The Beatles.

Born in Leicester, Orton grew up on the Saffron Lane estate and lived more than half his life in the city. He once told a friend, 'I'm from the gutter. And don't you ever forget it, because I won't.' His working class status shaped his work, which mocks class hierarchy, snobbery and social pretence.

Orton was unapologetically gay as well as avowedly working class. He died a few days after homosexuality was decriminalised in 1967, though he professed to care nothing for the change in the law, which only granted partial rights to certain homosexuals. Orton relished his status as an outsider and never courted social acceptance or respectability. He was one of the first writers to put same-sex desire directly on stage in plays that ridicule sexual repression and lampoon sexual norms. His plays feature a strong homoerotic subtext.

Orton channelled his anger at social and sexual inequality into humour. By blending the comic and the macabre, he developed a unique style that came to be dubbed 'Ortonesque'. His black comedies satirise authority and the Establishment. They lampoon the church, the police and the medical profession - institutions that demonised, criminalised and pathologised homosexuality. The form and content of Orton's plays prompted protest from mainstream audiences in the 1960s and continue to provoke outrage today.

Orton had an impish sense of fun. Using the pseudonym 'Mrs Edna Welthorpe', he penned spoof letters of complaint that satirise conservatism. He even had Edna complain about one of his own plays. Before he turned to drama, Orton and his partner Kenneth Halliwell stole books from Islington public library, redesigned the covers to render them absurd or mildly obscene, then returned the books to the library to gleefully observe the shocked reaction of library users. This prank resulted in a 6 month prison sentence.

Today Orton is recognised as a gay icon and has inspired writers, comedians, musicians and artists such as Hanif Kureishi (*My Beautiful Laundrette*), Jonathan Harvey (*Beautiful Thing*; *Gimme, Gimme, Gimme*), Arthur Mathews (*Father Ted*), Jesse Armstrong (*The Thick of It*), Alec Baldwin (*Saturday Night Live*), David Bowie, Pet Shop Boys, The Connor Brothers and Harland Miller.

His legacy demonstrates that talent is everywhere and art is for everyone.

Further Background Information

See Joe Orton Online:

http://www.joeorton.org/Pages/Joe_Orton_Intro.html

Leonie Orton's memoir *I Had It In Me* (Quirky Press, 2015) provides invaluable insights into Orton's life in Leicester.

Further information about the Saffron Lane Estate can be found here:

<https://municipaldreams.wordpress.com/2015/10/06/the-saffron-lane-estate-leicester-moving-into-paradise/>

Project Updates

Twitter [@JoeOrtonStatue](#)

Instagram [@joeorton.statue](#)

Facebook [@JoeOrtonStatueAppeal](#)

Contact

Send queries to Emma Parker: ep27@le.ac.uk

Send submissions to joeortonstatue@pmsa.org.uk

January 2020

© Joe Orton Statue Appeal CIC

Appendix 1

Proposed Artwork Location

Orton Square

Four possible locations have been identified in Orton Square, which is a pedestrian area directly in front of The Curve theatre in Rutland Street, Leicester.

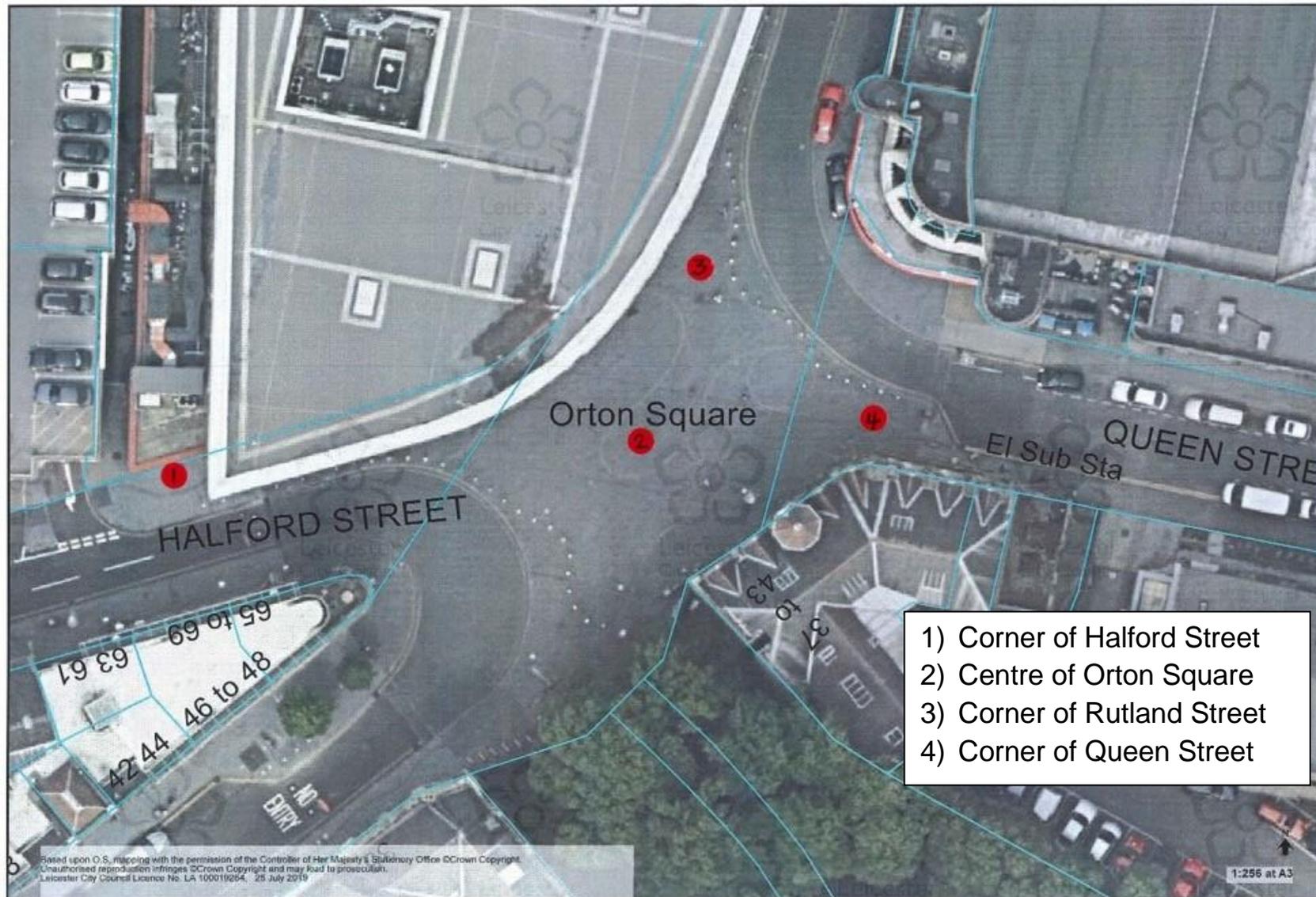
Photo @ The Curve Theatre

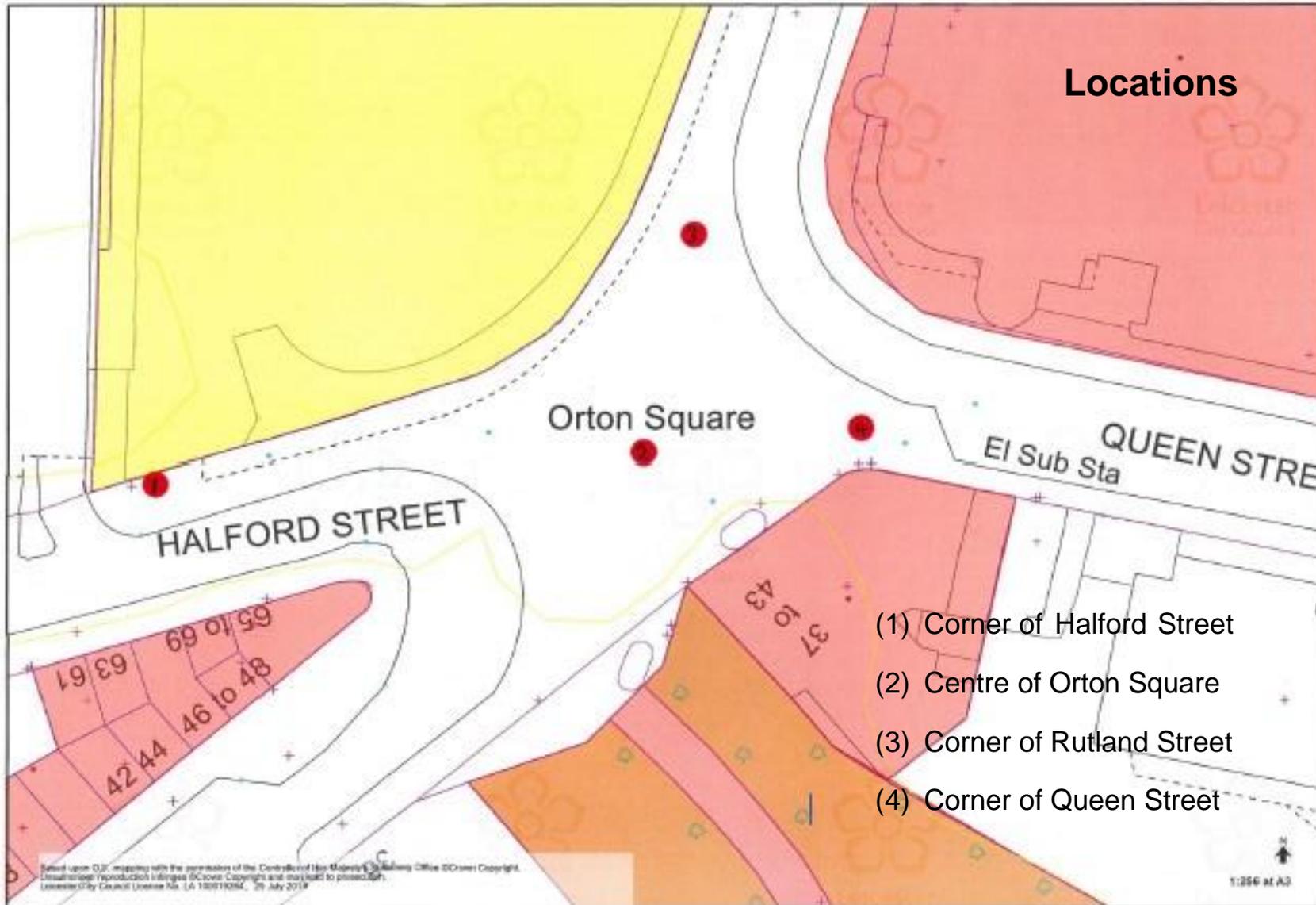


Orton Square
60 Rutland Street
Leicester, UK

<https://goo.gl/maps/gAdWrawzoB87ZGh97>

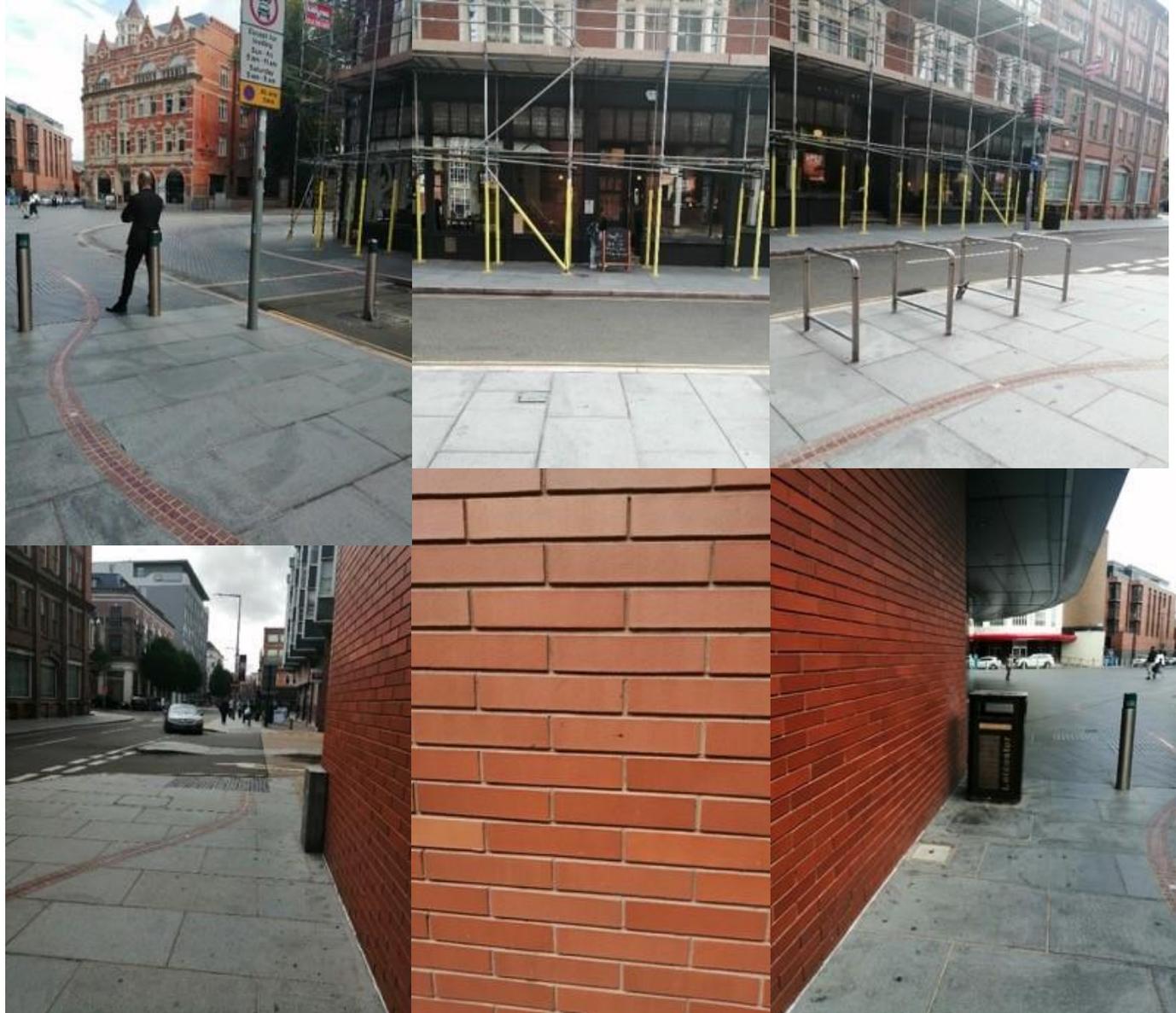
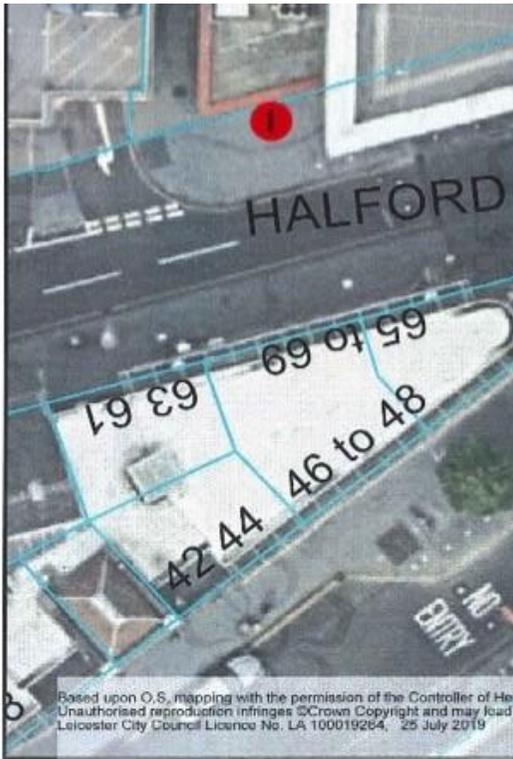
Location Options





OPTION 1

Corner of Halford Street



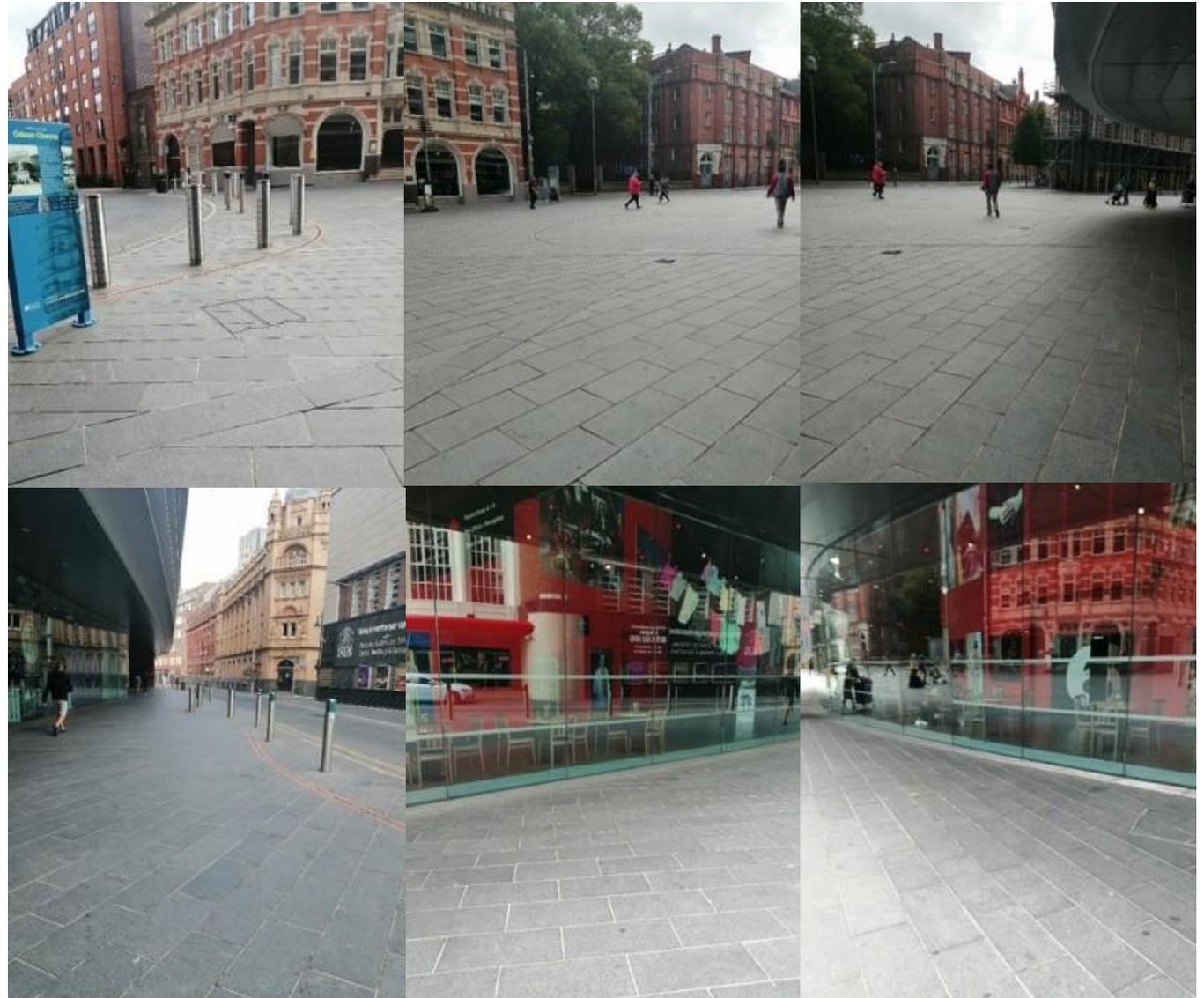
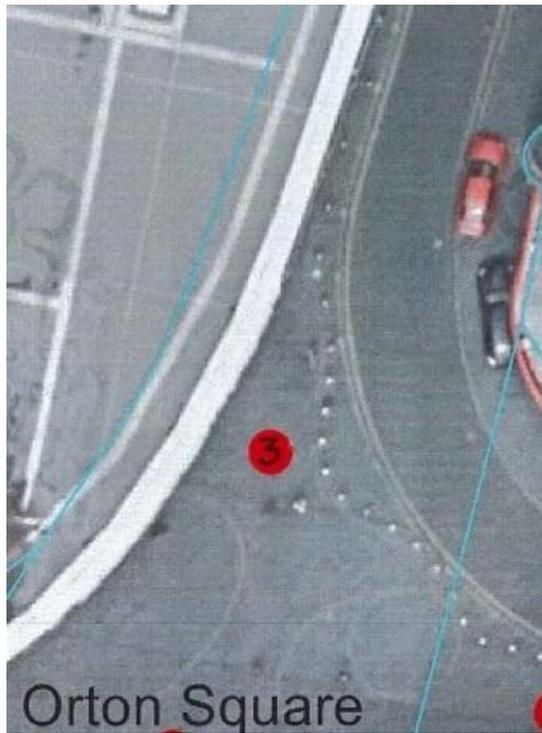
OPTION 2

Centre of Orton Square



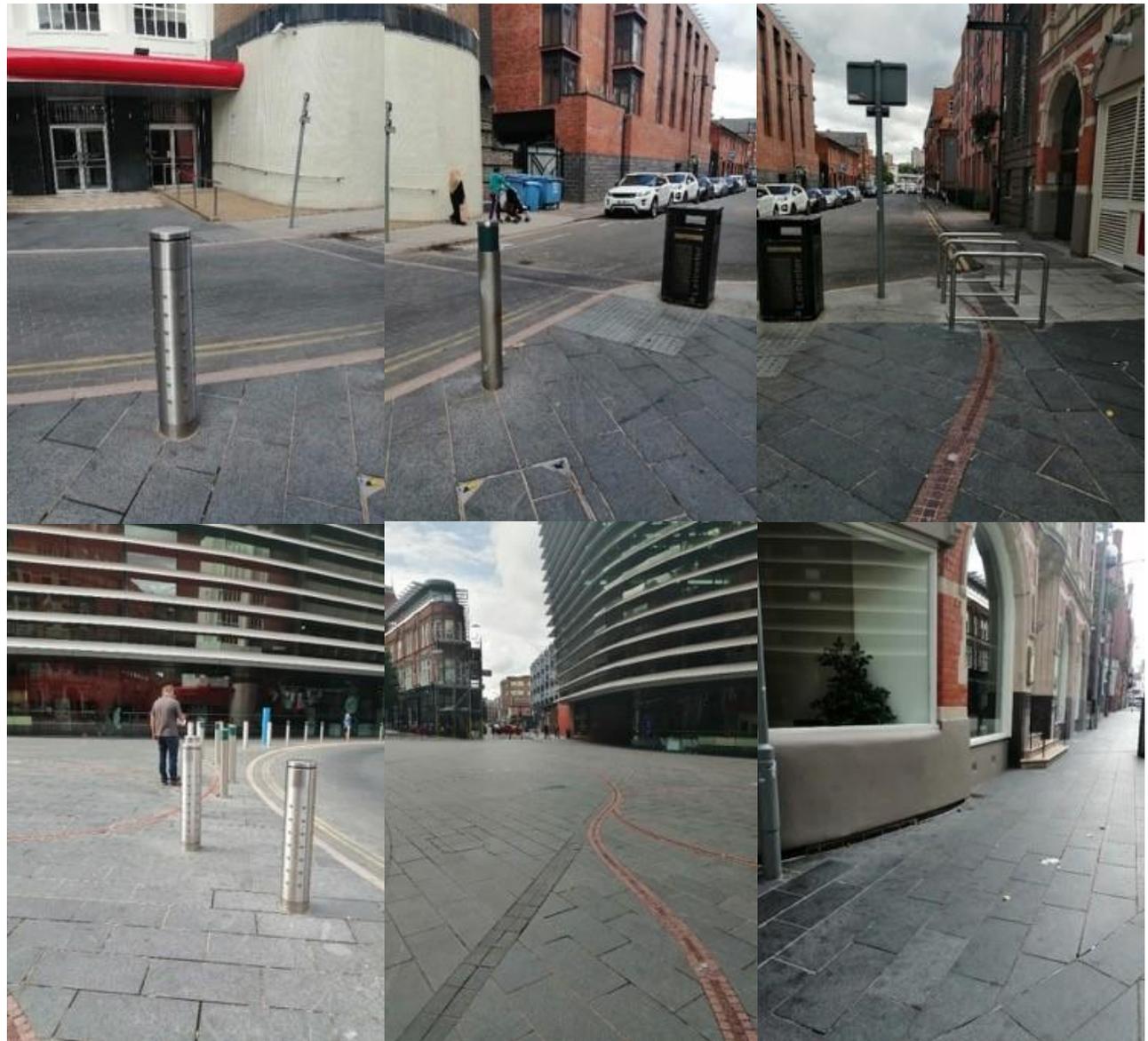
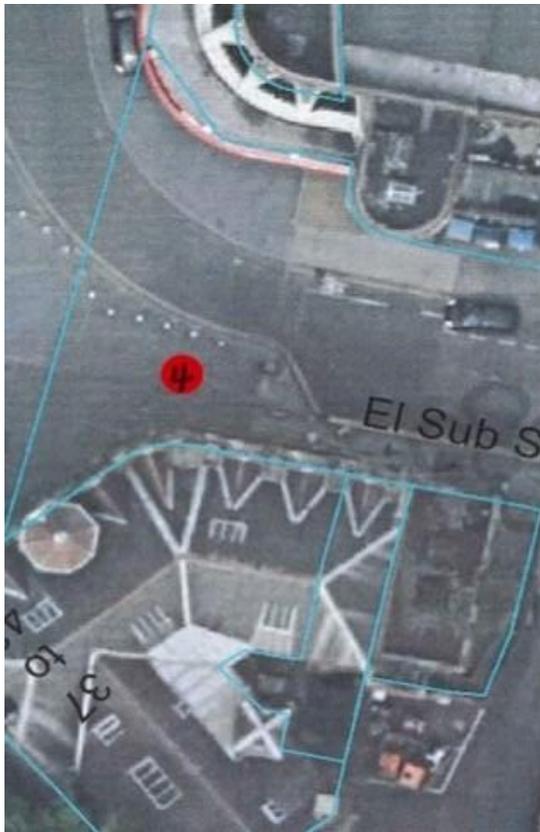
OPTION 3

Corner of Rutland Street

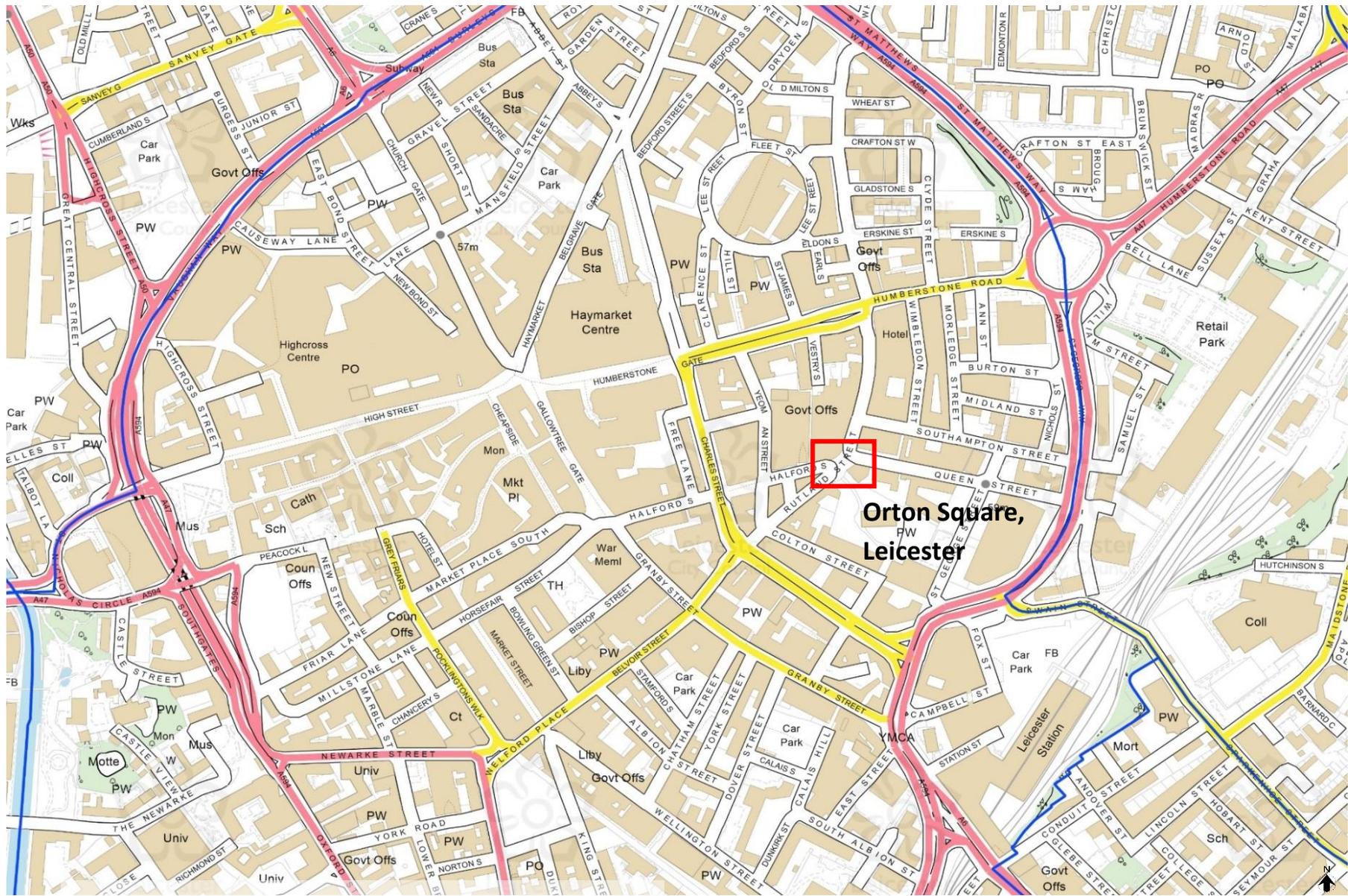


OPTION 4

Corner of Queen Street









COVERSHEET

Artist details:

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: _____

Please ensure you have included the following:

A covering letter stating why you are interested in the commission

A one-page Word document explaining how your design fulfils the Brief

Links to a visual interpretation of your proposed design

A copy of your Artist CV

Links to photographic images of any previous public work.

Send to joeortonstatue@pmsa.org.uk before midnight on 30 May 2020 using the header 'Joe Orton Statue'.