**SCHEME OVERVIEW** (max 600 characters inc. spaces)

*Blade* - a monumental artwork by Nayan Kulkarni commissioned by Hull UK City of Culture 2017 for the opening season, Made in Hull. A 75m long, 28 tonne, wind turbine blade, handmade at Siemens in Hull, installed in Queen Victoria Square for 10 weeks - a surprise gift & an urban interruption. *Blade* bisected the square, its tip rising over 5 metres high, allowing buses to pass underneath. Of the 1.1m people crossing the square, over 420,000 interacted with the sculpture, 50.5% stated it was the main thing that influenced their visit to the city centre.

557 characters

**SCHEME DESCRIPTION** (max 3000 characters inc. spaces to cover brief/proposal/design approach/collaboration/development/implementation/funding)

*Blade* inaugurated *Look Up*, a curated programme of temporary, public artworks for Hull’s city centre designed to change people’s experience of the city, shifting perceptions of place, turning the familiar into something strange & wonderful, intriguing & celebratory.

There was no initial brief, it was more organic. As Nayan Kulkarni was chatting with the curators, reflecting on what it meant to be ‘Made in Hull’, the idea came to him instinctively, ‘Let’s see if Siemens will lend us a blade & install it in the city centre.’ The brief developed from this idea.

*Blade* was conceived as an unforgettable physical manifestation, an opportunity to see what is made in Hull which would surprise & engender pride. It used one of the first B75 rotor blades crafted by local people at Siemens new facility as a ‘readymade’ artwork. These blades are the world’s largest handmade fibreglass components to be cast as a single object. At 75 meters long, *Blade*was intended to form a temporary impediment to free flow, forcing people to drift around its curves, their senses of sight & touch taking the place of the wind. It would be a striking contrast to the neo-classical and Italianate facades of surrounding buildings, transforming people’s experience of the square.

Key stakeholders, Hull 2017, Hull City Council & Siemens endorsed the proposal & approach. A collaborative design team was established, with Arup as consulting engineers, to determine if it could be realised, & if so how & at what cost. The approach was predicated on minimising physical disturbance of the square’s fabric & to ensure that the transport and installation of the ‘readymade’, including support structures, could be achieved within a 24-hour window & without advance works in the square itself.

Realising *Blade* was a significant challenge, underpinned by respect for the artist’s vision based on a pragmatic approach to sharing ideas & working collaboratively with a wide range of interests, political, commercial & cultural, & professional skills.

The Feasibility Study, completed August 2017, established, with input from Abnormal Load Engineering,

* transporting a 75m blade from Victoria Dock into the city centre was viable
* extent of necessary temporary highway measures required
* site & orientation of the blade
* support structures’ design
* planning issues
* projected costs
* programme

It secured commitment from key partners, with Siemens agreeing to loan a blade & to undertake its transport & lifting. Sponsorship was also secured from Green Port Hull.

Detail design, fabrication of supports, securing consents, transport planning & highway measures were undertaken Sept – Dec 2016, over 7th & 8th January 2017 *Blade* was installed.

*Blade* was on site until 18th March, experienced by thousands as much more than a beautiful, green & handmade engineering object in its own right. It’s very physical presence impacted on the social enjoyment of this civic space, etched into people’s memories when it was removed.

3000 characters

**SUSTAINABILITY DETAILS** (max 3000 characters inc. spaces to covers aspirations, response, approach, outcomes and measurement)

In an article on *Blade* for the Ecologist (July/Aug 17) Nick Robins noted that future prosperity, drive by zero-carbon industry, was a possibility but that to secure this the gap between distant debates on climate change and everyday culture need to be closed. He added, “*As Blade amply shows, making these connections is a job for art. Perhaps every town square should have its own Blade, not as just a temporary jolt to the senses, but as a lasting tribute to the skill and the beauty that go into the transition*.”

*Blade’s* sustainable credentials rest principally in highlighting the physical form of a solution to climate change, presenting it with minimum fuss and allowing its beauty to speak for itself.

*Blade* will be relocated outside Siemens’ factory in Hull, recycling into a new environment the steel support structures which were fabricated for its temporary installation in the city centre.

 900 characters

**Universal Design Details (Accessibility for All Users)** – (Maximum 3000 characters)

The detail design of *Blade* met the minimum accessibility standards outlined in the approved documents M & K. The City Council’s Access Officer was consulted during the design programme and during its installation a special visit for members of Hull & East Riding Institute for the Blind was arranged as part of the engagement programme.

337 characters

**Community Impact and Engagement details** (Maximum 3000 characters including all spaces and special characters (bullet points, commas, full stops etc.)

The impact of *Blade* is reflected in research commissioned by the University of Hull/Hull 2017 and conducted by Information by Design 08.01 – 12.03.17. (details were collected from 1,449 people as ‘audience members’ with a further 600 post-event interviews).

*Conclusions to this report emphasise the success of Blade both in terms of audience numbers and impact. Blade was highly successful in its objective to ‘transform Hull’s streetscape through the imposition of a single wind turbine blade’ and in providing its audience with ‘a spectacle, an obstacle and an object of wonder’. Blade had an estimated audience of over 400,000 people, with an average of over 7,000 people visiting the structure each day of the two-month period it occupied Queen Victoria Square in the city. Total spend by the Blade audience was over £5m with estimated additional spend (additionality) resulting from Blade in the region of £1m.*

The following are of note;

* Over 80% of respondents strongly agreed (a score of 9 or 10) with the statements ‘it is important it’s happening here in Hull’ and ‘it was an interesting idea’
* Over 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statements ‘Blade showed the aspirations of the City now and in the future’ and ‘Blade provided me with a different experience of the city’
* Seven out of ten respondents (70%) were very likely to recommend a similar type of event to Blade to friends or relatives
* The Blade experience also had an impact on Hull residents in other ways – the opportunity to interact with people they would not normally interact with, and increased thinking about possibly volunteering.

Media coverage of the first 3 months of City of Culture contributed significantly to the increased positive perception of Hull as a place to live & visit, as well as to the civic pride of residents.

* Residents’ pride to live in Hull increased (by 4%: from 70% in December 2016 to 74% in March 2017).
* The most notable increase has been the 9% rise in residents who would speak positively about the city to someone not from Hull (from 55% in December 2016 to 64% March 2017).
* Media coverage generated 4,221 pieces of coverage about Hull’s UK City of Culture celebrations in the first three months of the programme. The value of media coverage exceeds £10.1m in advertising value equivalent.

Hull 2017’s volunteer programme played an important role in enhancing people’s engagement with *Blade.* Each day, from 10 am – 6pm, not less than 4 volunteers (in Hull 2017 branded clothing) were on site to welcome visitors, distribute printed information and answer people’s questions. All volunteers had been trained and received detailed briefings on the artist and the project.

*“People stopped to stroke it, almost like pilgrims touching an icon. Newlyweds had their pictures taken beside it. In a city that likes things tangible, it brought real pride, making a solution to climate change take physical form”* (The Ecologist).

2954 characters

**Pro Tem Details - for Temporary Installations** (Character limit 3000)

As an artwork, *Blade* was conceived as temporary intervention in a public space, a gesture which would only make sense when limited by timerather than by resources. Nayan Kulkarni described how, “*The moment this B75 Rotor Blade left the factory yard, it became Blade. Journeying from the factory to the city centre, from industrial to cultural production, was a highly complex physical & technical dance, played out at night & in secret: the moving image in the city. The physical movements of the sculpture through the streets at night was a cinematic event that staged the production of Blade as a production of the city of Kingston-upon-Hull*”. This temporary event, recorded and shared on social media, was an intrinsic part of *Blade,* which on reentering Siemens at the end of the project lost its status as an artwork.

However, mindful of the investment which went into the work and the strength of people’s response to the physical and symbolic qualities of the blade, the supporting structures were designed to be dismantled and re-assembled such that the blade could assume a different presence or status in another place.

Siemens occupies a large site which is visible from an adjacent public footpath and it is planned that the blade will be installed within the site, re- using the support structures, such that it will be visible to public. Here it will become a sign of what is made within, an on shore destination for people to view at firsthand what is normally seen in the distant off shore wind farms. Responsibility for costs associated with a more permanent display of the blade rest with Siemens.

The ‘permanent’ presence of *Blade,* as an artwork, now resides predominantly as a digital record, within the many thousands of ‘selfies’ taken by people to record their moment beside it and distributed across the globe via social media.

1851 characters