



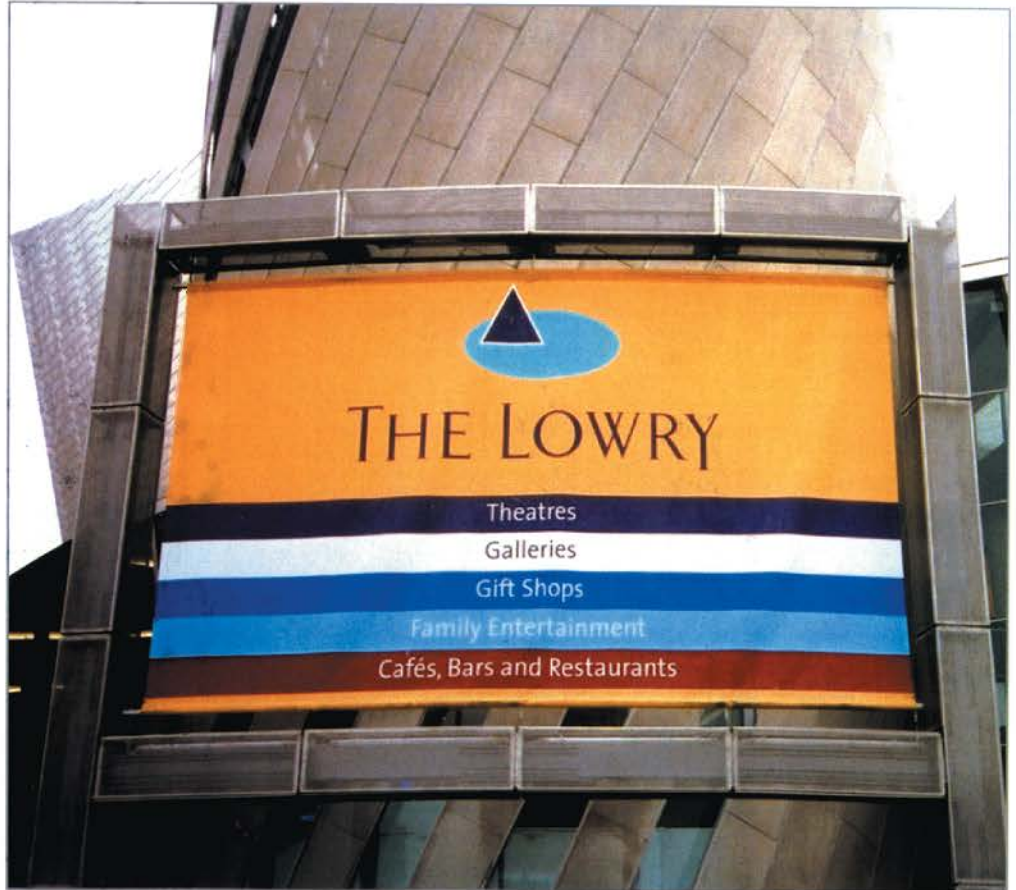
THE LOWRY REVISITED

The Lowry Centre in Salford commissioned their original Wayfinding Strategy from Design Network and commissioned Reich & Petch International to design the resignage of their building. Further to his comment in the Spring 2002 edition of Directions, Barry Gray takes another look.

The Spring 2002 edition of Directions contained an article by me in which I was very critical of the wayfinding at The Lowry. The article brought forth some censure but also an extremely positive response from the Acting Chief Executive which admitted the flaws and promised action to right them. I was invited back to have another look when the resignage was complete with the promise that I would be 'pleasantly surprised' and 'maybe we can become a case history of how to do it, after being one of how not to do it'.

Well, on a damp February day I took up the challenge and can truthfully answer that I was, indeed, pleasantly surprised. The new wayfinding and signage package has just about met all the points I raised in the article and, most importantly, looks like meeting the needs of visitors to this important building in a wholly appropriate way. It all has a coherence of style and presentation which was so lacking before.

Starting outside, there is a decent sized feature location sign and the building's fascia sign has now been given colour to contrast it with the



New, large entrance sign

Improved fascia sign now in colour





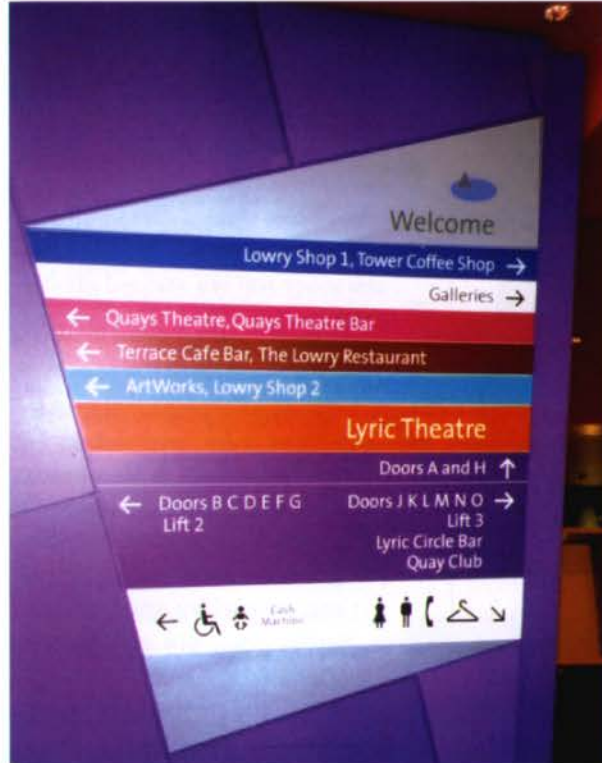
background whilst maintaining its distinctive character.

Inside, the signs are clear and consistent with an ordered colour coding and graphical symbols in use for the toilets etc. The symbols are effective, although perhaps not the best I have seen. A quick plug here for the new British Standard 8501 on Public Information Symbols which should help designers in the future.

There are good, well executed site plans sensibly positioned and, in place of the badly photocopied leaflets I found on my last visit, there are now quality printed ones echoing the style of the site plans. These guides and other leaflets and displays are nicely co-ordinated with the site plans.

The box office is now clearly indicated and there is an information desk in the right location in the entrance. One of the very few criticisms would be that this desk and its signs still looked a little temporary.

The wayfinding signs have a pleasant and distinctive shape and the location signs are much better. The 'architectural' and virtually unreadable signs, which



Welcome sign showing colour coding and use of graphical symbols



Co-ordinated site plan and leaflet display with take-away slots for the excellent guides



Improved direction and location signs with the two major styles featured



I criticised last time, have been replaced with neat and effective panels, again with thought given to their presentation. Door and lift signing is also greatly improved. The supergraphics on the doors (useless when the doors are open) have been replaced by signs over or alongside. Generally this has worked well although I did find one location where the open door obscured the sign!

The materials have been well selected and have a non-reflective finish to help those with vision problems. The lettering is clear and contrasts generally good.

Overall, I was genuinely impressed. There are one or two glitches (what signage scheme is perfect?) but there is real evidence of thought and care.

To sum up - I think that the design team have met the challenge of providing a wayfinding and signage system fit for one of our major landmark buildings and presented a good case history of 'how to do it'.

In passing, I must also say that I really enjoyed the exhibition while still retaining my doubts about L S Lowry as an artist.

Barry Gray



↑ Typical shaped direction sign

← Lift signage

Work to be done - the rather temporary looking information desk





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