The Design Initiative: Public Art Proposals for the
Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme

Planning Committee
6 December 2007

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To present to Committee the 'Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme: Public
Art Proposals', which outline the strategy for integrating Artworks with the Water
of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme and put forward ideas and themes for future
art works. Consultation is proposed, together with action to identify potential
sources of funding.

2 Summary

2.1 An earlier report to the Council in December 2005 gave approval to appoint an
artist to take forward the proposal to incorporate public art work into the Flood
Prevention Scheme. Expenditure on artworks themselves was not approved.

2.2 In 2006, an artist was appointed to take forward the proposals, overseen by a
panel representing the Council and communities. The artist has worked closely
with communities and businesses along the river and prepared concept
proposals for art work. The proposals will be made available for comment.

2.3 Should the proposals be adopted, grant assistance from the Scottish Arts
Council, Lottery and others will be sought, and this will be the subject of a later
report.

3 Main report

Background

3.1 The Water of Leith travels 35km from its source in the Pentland Hills in a north
easterly direction. It crosses Edinburgh from Currie to the Harbour at Leith
where it flows into the Firth of Forth. The environments through which the river
passes are very diverse and range from the pastoral, residential, industrial,
commercial to recreational.
3.2 The Water of Leith for much of its course is hidden, almost a secret part of the city and as such it offers a different perspective on the city, providing opportunities for contemplation, relaxation and exercise. It is a valuable and valued resource to the city and its citizens.

3.3 The Water of Leith has in recent times had a history of flooding, with significant flood events in 1984, 1990 and 2000. To reduce the risk of this flooding threat, the Council has developed a flood prevention scheme.

3.4 The Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme mainly deals with the Water of Leith Corridor between Bonnington Mills and Lanark Road in Slateford. It will entail the construction of walls, floodgates and embankments, complimented by the provision of additional storage capacity of storm water in upstream reservoirs.

The Arts Project

3.5 As part of this major infrastructure investment, the Council agreed to commission artists to help integrate art works into the flood defence scheme. This was felt to be an appropriate way of mitigating the visual impact of some of the required infrastructure.

3.7 The key objectives of the Arts project are:

- To mitigate the impact of the flood prevention works upon the Water of Leith.
- To include communities and create works of interest and relevance to those using the walkway.
- To enhance the scheme through the integration of high quality, site sensitive, contemporary artworks.
- To be sensitive to materials and processes used to link different sections of the walkway through way marking and landmarks, thereby encouraging greater usage of the walkway.

3.8 PACE, an Edinburgh based Arts agency, was engaged to develop the approach and manage suitable artists. PACE was steered by an arts working group which comprises representatives from the Council (Museums and Arts, Design Initiative, Flood Scheme Project), the Flood Schemes engineering consultants, landscape architects, the Water of Leith Conservation Trust and the Edinburgh Flood Prevention Group, a group representing communities at risk of flooding.

3.9 In June 2006, the artist Gordon Young was appointed to act as lead artist, and he has been collaborating with PACE to develop the conceptual proposals.
3.10 Gordon Young has immersed himself in all he could find related to the Water of Leith past and present: a process of open minded discovery and collaboration, leading to the generation of conceptual ideas for art interventions along the course of the river.

**The Proposals**

3.11 Through discussion, discovery and research, the artist has set out 20 different ideas which could be developed later in detail. Each of these are the starting point for the development of art works in conjunction with specific artists and craftspeople appointed to deliver the works.

3.12 The proposals are set out in a report located in the party group rooms. They are a fascinating and thoughtful series of artworks which will enrich the visual character of the river corridor and make a positive contribution to the identity of communities along the river banks. They include:

- Traditional elements, such as “Bairnsangs”
- Local connections, such as “medals and bars” near the poppy factory
- Sporting connections such as “speedway badges” and “the Scottish FA Cup”,
- The river’s qualities such as “fly-fishing” and the beetle waymarker,
- Proposals for works with literary and historical connections on flood gates.

**The Way Forward**

3.13 Although the artist has worked closely with communities and businesses along the river, the proposals will be made available for comment.

3.14 The next stages in the delivery of the art strategy for the Water of Leith, is to ensure that there is sufficient funding to support the creation and delivery of the art pieces. In the current financial circumstances, it is believed that the best role for CEC is to act as enabler and coordinator as the delivery of the project will rely on funding from out with the Council.

3.15 When previously reported to Council, the artworks had a notional value of £120K to £180K. Funding is not available from the Council and there is no guarantee that a Scottish Government grant will be forthcoming towards the additional cost of artwork, on top of the costs of the flood prevention works themselves. Funding will therefore need to be sought from other sources and agencies. Accordingly, a launch event will be organised to raise the profile of the project. The occasion will ensure that possible funding streams are identified and that sponsorship opportunities are explored. The Scottish Arts Council, Lottery, businesses, and other potential funders will be approached.

3.16 A calendar of events would maintain the profile of the project. This type of project will have a timescale over a number of years and the delivery of individual works will be linked to funding packages which can be put in place during the life of the project.
3.17 Arts and craft works which have fixed foundations or are fixed to buildings will require planning permission and/or listed building consent. The Development Management guideline on Art in Public Places acts as a framework for good practice to ensure that contemporary art works enhance and contribute in the environment. As each art work is progressed, they will be subject to discussion with Planning to facilitate the process.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The setting up of events and associated public relations work will be accommodated in existing budgets for the delivery of the Flood Prevention Scheme.

4.2 The costs of the art works themselves would be met from outside the Council. Potential funding sources will be explored and the matter will be the subject of a further report to Committee.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The introduction of Artists to work on major infrastructure projects is not a new concept, and it is a powerful way of ensuring that such schemes are sensitive to their local context.

5.2 'The Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme Public Art Proposals' is to be commended for adopting an approach which is inclusive, sensitive and focused on the delivery of public art which will enhance the Water of Leith experience.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

(a) approves the proposals for public art along the Water of Leith as a draft for consultation,

(b) requests a further report on the consultation outcome and potential funding sources

Andrew M Holmes
Director of City Development
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<td>Contact/tel</td>
<td>Riccardo Marini Tel 529 3731</td>
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<td>Wards affected</td>
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<td>Background Papers</td>
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1. Introduction

The Water of Leith travels 35km in a north easterly direction from its source in the Pentland Hills through rural land to the villages of Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green and Colinton and thereon into Edinburgh. The urban environment through which the river passes is very diverse and ranges from the industrial, commercial, recreational, historical, to the residential, passing through allotments, parks, schools, a prison, a sports stadium, bowling greens, cemeteries, industrial areas and a variety of housing. The river meets the sea at Leith docks where it flows into the Firth of Forth.

The Water of Leith is a hidden, almost secret part of Edinburgh and as such, it offers an unusual perspective on the city. It is a resource for the people of Edinburgh and also for tourists. Used recreationally for walking and at times fishing, it is also an alternative route through the city for pedestrians and cyclists.

2. The Flood Prevention Scheme

The Water of Leith has a history of flooding, with significant recent floods in 1964, 1990 and a severe flood in 2000. Consequently, the City of Edinburgh Council will be implementing a flood prevention scheme (FPS) to reduce the risk of floods along the banks of the river. The scheme will entail the construction of walls, floodgates and embankments along the Water of Leith corridor to contain the floodwaters; complimented by additional storage of storm water at upstream reservoirs. With the exception of work on the 3 reservoirs, the focus of the FPS is on the Water of Leith corridor; in particular the sections between Bonnington Mills and Lanark Road in Slateford.

3. The Arts Project

As part of this major programme of works, the City of Edinburgh Council is commissioning artists to help mitigate the visual impact of the scheme. Arts agency P.A.C.E. has been engaged to develop the arts strategy, source and manage suitable artists. An arts working group has been set up to oversee the process and comprises of representatives from CEC, PACE, Arup engineers, Smeed Foreman landscape architects and community representatives. In June 2006, Gordon Young was appointed by CEC as lead artist and has since been working collaboratively with PACE to develop a range of ideas for the scheme.

Gordon's modus operandi is to start with a fresh eye and an open mind. He finds clues in unexpected and often unrelated ways and finds inspiration in as diverse a subject as microbiology to fly fishing and football. Over the past 12 months, his research has taken him far and wide and covered topics such as phrenology, the printing of early bank notes, skating, ghosts, chap books and broadsides, iron founders, twinning organisations, geology, football, sealing wax, old Edinburgh clubs, medals, motorcycle racing, ecology and literature.

Gordon's approach is very much collaborative; this involves not only artists and craftsmen but people of all disciplines be it scientists, bee keepers, speedway enthusiasts, gardeners, anglers, librarians or poets. This is not community consultation on a tokenistic level but a way of ensuring that the work strikes a chord with a wide range of people. During the detailed design stage, this process will continue: additional artists and craftspeople will be engaged to work alongside Gordon and work collaboratively with different interested parties.

Over 40 different ideas developed by Gordon were brought to the arts group. Not all these ideas can be realised for financial and curatorial reasons, but a shortlist of 20 are presented in this document; the realisation of all 20 dependent on additional funding being secured from trusts and charities. It should be noted that the proposals are concepts only at this stage and will be further developed during the detailed design stage. The proposals are presented in a linear way starting at Leith and finishing at Longstone at the Water of Leith Visitor Centre.

4. Key aims and objectives

- To mitigate the impact of flood prevention works upon the Water of Leith
- To include communities and create works of interest and relevance to those using the walkway
- To enhance the scheme through the integration of high quality, site sensitive, contemporary artworks
- To be sensitive to materials and processes used to link different sections of the walkway through way marking and landmarks thereby encouraging greater usage of the walkway eg at St Mark's bridge, Balgreen Road
A Catch of Footballs
(in collaboration with artist Douglas Jones)

Edinburgh artist Douglas Jones has for several years been retrieving discarded or lost footballs from the river which he has made into large scale photographic portraits. Each of the abandoned footballs tells a story. It is proposed that a selection of these footballs is cast either life size or bigger and set along the edge of the walkway or submerged in to the river.

Material: cast in bronze or iron. It is proposed to work with local iron foundry Charles Laing and Sons, Beaverhall.

various locations along the walkway between Leith docks and Great Junction Street
Bairnsangs

Traditional children's poems set into the ramp; either the Auld Troot or Willy Wagtail both species are present along the Water of Leith.

Material: granite lettering set into pre-cast concrete panels

WULLY WAGTAIL ower the Linn,
Whaur the watter's rinnin thin,
Deuk an dance the rocks amang,
Happy as the day is lang.

WULLY WAGTAIL doun the Pool,
Whaur the watter's rinnin full,
Flichterin here an flichterin there
Without a thocht o'dule or care.

WULLY WAGTAIL in the Schaw,
Whaur the watter's rinnin slaw,
Bobbin on a mossy stane
Your lichtsome heart ye weel suid hane.

Wully o' the Watterside,
May ye aye wi joy abide,
Ne'er may sorrow dim your ee,
May we learn to live like thee.
SPEEDWAY BADGES
Speculative consultation: Friends of Edinburgh Speedway

Local iron foundry Chapels Ling and Sons, commercial material cast in iron and painted. It is proposed to work with both sides of St Mark's Bridge. Larger than life-size copies of monuments' badges are installed on Monarchs Motorcycle Club from 1977 to 1995. It is proposed that Monarchs Motorcycle Club, long a home of the racing and speedway motorcycle racing, was home of the rugby and speedway rugby and laterly for grass and sand. This site is close to the former Powdertall Stadium which was Edinburgh Speedway Badges
SCOTTISH CUP

WARRISTON
The Scottish FA Cup

The only ever Scottish Cup final to be held out of Glasgow took place at Logie Green, Edinburgh in 1896. Hearts v Hibs, Hearts won 3:1.

Material: galvanised steel
Specific consultation: the Scottish Football Association

on top of wall at the start of the raised walkway
MEDALS AND BARS
The raised walkway is sited opposite Lady Haig's Poppy factory which produces poppies and wreaths for remembrance and is staffed by disabled ex service men. The proposal is to cast replica medals from significant wars from the army, navy and air force. The artist would consult with the staff (including ex service men) at the poppy factory to determine the choice of medals before proceeding.

Materials: the bars would be made of cast coloured concrete and the medals would be cast in iron and painted. It is proposed to work with local iron foundry Charles Laing and Sons, Beaverhall.

Specific consultation: Lady Haig’s Poppy factory
Flood Gates

It is proposed that all the flood gates are treated as a family for visual consistency and aesthetic reasons i.e. using the same materials. It is proposed that the gates are clad in timber which would be designed and carved by artists and craftspeople.

1. **POPPY FLOODGATE** – Location: by Warriston viaduct
   This would relate to the thousands of poppies made every year by the ex servicemen at Lady Haig’s Poppy factory.
   Material: carved wood
   Specific consultation: Lady Haig’s Poppy factory

2. **CHOPIN FLOODGATE** – Location: Boat Green off Warriston Rd. Chopin visited Edinburgh in 1848 and stayed in Warriston Crescent. He performed in Edinburgh what was to be considered his last real performance in public before returning to Paris where he died the following year.
   Material: carved wood, possibly with metal inserts

3. **REBUS FLOODGATE** – Location: Veitch’s Square, Stockbridge
   Based on quote from Ian Rankin’s book *The Falls* which describes a commotion on Hamilton Place and the river.
   Material: carved wood
   Specific consultation and copyright: to be sought from Ian Rankin and publisher
HERALDIC OR SHORTBREAD MOULD FLOODGATES

DEAN VILLAGE

REBUS FLOODGATE

STOCKBRIDGE
Flood Gates (2)

4 HERALDIC or SHORTBREAD MOULD FLOODGATE
Location: Damside, Dean village
A heraldic design based on one of the related trades or industries such as the Baxters (Bakers) or the water bailiffs. Alternatively a design based on shortbread moulds which relate to the long history of milling in this area (from the 12th century)
Material: carved wood
Specific consultation: the Heraldic Society of Scotland

5 TARTAN FLOODGATES – Location: Murrayfield
A special water of Leith tartan could be commissioned (in collaboration with 21st Century Kilts).
Proposal: carve a tartan pattern on to floodgates
Material: carved wood and possibly metal inset into wood
Specific consultation: 21st Century Kilts

6 SKATING FLOODGATE – Location: next to Murrayfield Ice Rink
The Edinburgh Skating Club was the oldest skating club in the UK. Skating was hugely popular in the 18th and 19th centuries but fizzled out after WW2. The motto of the club was Orior Euro: swifter than the east wind. Examples of skating manoeuvres include the Jack Frost Toast, the Wild Goose, the Worm and the Screw.
Proposal: designs based on different skating moves; eg the Jack Frost toast carved on to floodgates.
Material: carved wood and possibly metal inset into wood
Kingfisher (poem by Tessa Ransford)

A section of the kingfisher poem carved in to the sandstone walls to be viewed from across the river. The kingfisher has been frequently spotted along this stretch of the river.

Material: carved stone
Specific consultation and copyright: to be sought from Tessa Ransford

Kingfisher (excerpt)

Kingfisher blue
bluer than sky
skyer than air
more air than water
more water than leaf
leafeer than light
lighter than stream
more stream than ray
more ray than russet
more russet than daybreak

blue sky air
water leaf light
stream ray russet
daybreak blue
In the Victorian era, the University of Edinburgh were world leaders in public health research. Research into water samples taken from the Water of Leith was instrumental in raising the state and public's awareness and understanding of the correlation between clean water and improved health. Proposal: create a large scale sculpture based on a scientific model of one of the bacteria found in the Water of Leith.

Material: colourful painted galvanised steel

Specific consultation: Edinburgh University Microbiology department & Dr Andrew Fraser architectural historian
Flyfishing

Fishing is a popular pastime along the waters of Leith. Eleven species of fish can now be found in the river channel and anglers can fish, by free permit, for brown trout. The river is stocked annually by the City of Edinburgh Council and looked after by the Honorary Bailiffs of the Water of Leith.

Proposal: Large scale casts of fishing flies could be set into walls at a popular fishing location.

Materials: Colourful painted galvanised steel

Specific consultation: Honorary Bailiffs of the Water of Leith
THE BEETLE AND THE ROSE
Waymarkers: The Rose

Beetle & the Rose

Scotland

First, specific consultation to confirm the Rose Society of Scotland's preference for rose sculptures. Water of Leith Conservation

Materials: polished galvanized steel

Fall plants:

On the opposite side of the road, all of which would be mounted on the proposed Rose Sculpture Band. The Rose sculpture on the other side of the proposals create two rose sculptures on either side of the path. The street name, the Rose Garden, and the Rose Garden:

The Rose Garden in the Rose Garden Park which are still used by the Rose Garden's visitors. The Rose Garden is surrounded by the Rose Garden's visitors. The Rose Garden is still used by the Rose Garden's visitors. The Rose Garden is still used by the Rose Garden's visitors.

At this point the walkway is dissected by the busy Balbriggan

Where the walkway meets...
There is a history of bee keeping along the river. In particular, the Scottish Beekeeper's Association has one of the finest collections of rare bee keeping books in the world, largely due to the efforts of Edinburgh born John Moir (1835-1940). It is proposed that large scale casts of bees are set to walls at various locations along the river.

Specific consultation: Scottish Beekeeper's Association and Edinburgh and Midlothian Beekeeper's Association.

Material: cast iron or bronze.

There is an ancient history of bee keeping along the river. In particular, the Scottish Beekeeper's Association has one of the finest collections of rare bee keeping books in the world, largely due to the efforts of Edinburgh born John Moir (1835-1940). It is proposed that large scale casts of bees are set to walls at various locations along the river.

Specific consultation: Scottish Beekeeper's Association and Edinburgh and Midlothian Beekeeper's Association.

Material: cast iron or bronze.
LAIRDS
OF
THE
CABBAGE
PATCH
SAUGHTON
The Lairds of the Cabbage Patch

In 1932, during the great Depression, the Quakers provided garden tools and seeds for 1054 allotment plots in Edinburgh to enable unemployed people to grow their own vegetables:

- 2,700 garden tools (spades, takes, hoes, barrows)
- 17,000 packets of seeds
- 30 tonnes of seed potatoes

Proposal: cast a large scale sculptural spade in recognition of all the hard work by allotment owners throughout Edinburgh.

Materials: cast iron. It is proposed to work with local iron foundry Charles Laing and Sons, Beaverhall.

Specific consultation: allotment owners
Every year the Water of Leith Conservation Trust organise river clean ups and award a trophy to the group who either clean up the largest amount of rubbish or find the most unusual objects in the river. The trophy is a statuette originally found in the river during a clean up. The proposal is to create a human scale sculpture of the trophy and site it along the banks of the river.

Material: cast iron or bronze

Specific consultation: Water of Leith Conservation Trust
Beautiful Bugs

The Water of Leith can be seen as a green motorway (Edinburgh's most significant wildlife corridor) with numerous species travelling through it from deer, badgers, and otters to bugs and beetles. The Water of Leith Conservation Trust regularly organise insect trails with children to raise awareness of the many species hidden within the undergrowth. It is proposed that large scale bugs and beetles based on species found along the banks of the river are sited outside the visitor centre.

Materials: steel (possibly painted)
Specific consultation: Water of Leith Conservation Trust
Acknowledgements

Client: City of Edinburgh Council
Lead artist: Gordon Young
Arts agency: PACE
Consulting Engineers: Arup
Landscape Architects: Smeeden Foreman Partnership

Arts Group:
Bob McCafferty: Chairman; Interim Engineering Services Manager, City of Edinburgh Council
John Wharrie: Bridges and Flood Prevention, City of Edinburgh Council
David Patterson: Curator, Fine Art, City of Edinburgh Council
Ricardo Marini: City Design Leader, City of Edinburgh Council
Juliet Dean: Curator, PACE
Helen Brown/Charlotte Neary: Manager/Acting Manager, Water of Leith Visitor Centre and Conservation Trust

During the development phase of the project the following people, places and organisations were contacted/visited/explored:

Scottish Ironwork Foundation
Charles Laing & Sons Iron Founders, Beaverhall, Edinburgh: Andrew Laing
Scottish Poetry Library
National Library of Scotland
Moir Library, Fountainbridge Library, Edinburgh; Tom McCreave
21st Century Kilts, Edinburgh; Howie Nicolsby
Merz Art, Edinburgh Calum Buchanan, Director
Heraldic Society of Scotland
Friends of Edinburgh Speedway;
Iain Sommerville, Mike Hunter
Scottish Football Association
National Museum of Scotland
Scottish Writer's Museum
The Phrenological Society of Edinburgh
Bank of Scotland's Museum on the Mound
Scottish National Portrait Gallery
Edinburgh Calotype Club
Water of Leith Conservation Trust;
Helen Brown and Charlotte Neary
Living Memory Association,
The Reminiscence Centre
Leith History Society; John Arthur
Lothian Paranormal database

Edinburgh Geological Society
The Edinburgh Room, Central Library, Edinburgh
Old Edinburgh Club
Murrayfield Ice Rink
Edinburgh Skating Club
Scottish Beekeeper's Association
Edinburgh and Midlothian Beekeeper's Association; Maureen Cameron
Individual allotment owners;
Lairs of the cabbage patch
Rose Society of Scotland
North Leith Cemetery
Warriston Cemetery
Lady Haig's Poppy Factory; Norman Tessa Ransford; poet and founder of
Scottish Poetry Library
Mike Martin; fishing flies enthusiast
Fraser Somerville;
Honorary bailiff of the Water of Leith
Ian Nimmo; author of Edinburgh's Green Heritage
Douglas Jones; artist
Dr Andrew Fraser, flood victim, microbiologist,
architectural historian and editor of the
Old Edinburgh Club

Design, photography and visualisations by Hedy McGregor; Water of Leith Tube map: Gordon Young and Why Not Associates
Along the route there are plenty of clues to find.