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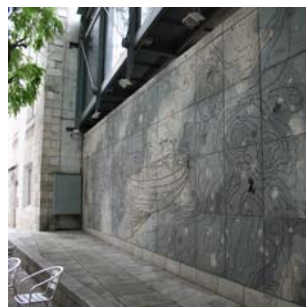
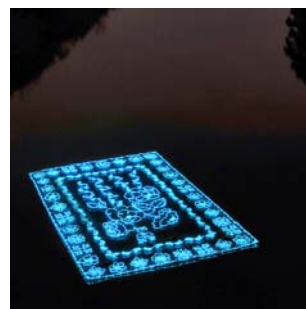
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CITY OF LETTERS : CITY OF STONE

v2



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introduction

This report comes at a key point in the political and organisational history of the City, with the dissolution of the district councils including City of Durham Council, and the Durham area becoming a unitary authority as Durham County Council. The report has behind it the recent successes within the City of art commissions at the Gala Theatre, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre and the Enlightenment Festival, but the challenge in front of it of advocating the vision for public art to an unfamiliar audience in a newly formed authority. Allowing for consultation and amendments to this draft, the proposed timescale for this Action Plan is for five years from the start of the new authority in April 2009 (i.e. to April 2014).

Section 1: The Current Position provides a summary of recent commissioning activity within the City centre and a review of the three existing documents with the greatest bearing on the Action Plan. These are: *Wide Angle – A Public Art Review for County Durham* by RKL Consultants, which was written in 2005 and proposed a number of initiatives designed to maximise the opportunities for public art across the county; the City of Durham Council's Supplementary Planning Document *Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes*, which imposes a '%forArt' commitment on major developments and is therefore a major potential funder of public art activity in the City; and *Durham City: A Vision For Art*, a report commissioned by Durham City Vision from artist Howard Bowcott which outlines art opportunities in Durham Market Place.

Section 2: Key Themes and Concepts identifies some of the key challenges which public art in Durham should be addressing if it is to bring strategic benefit to the City, and makes a recommendation that is fundamental to the rest of the report – that Durham differentiates itself from the rather generic curatorial approach of other cities in the North-East by commissioning the majority of its artworks within two relatively narrow programmes. A conceptual and practical rationale for both these programmes – *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* – is included in this section.

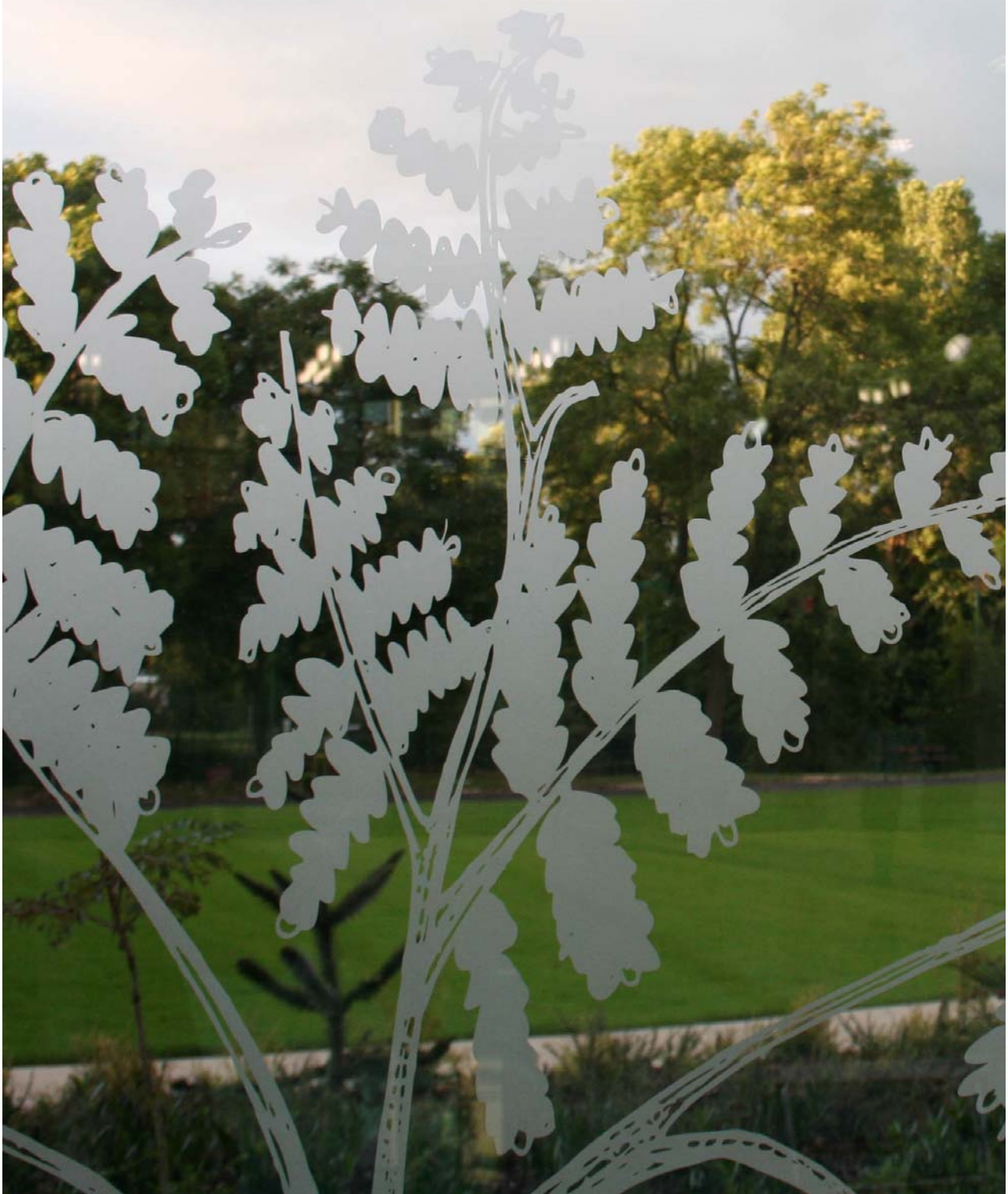
Section 3: The Spaces and Projects is the heart of the action plan. Working within the *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* strands, this section identifies a number of interlinked and overlapping commissioning opportunities within the City. This includes projects for:

- The Market Place
- Claypath Bridge
- The Vennels
- The riverside paths
- Fowlers Yard creative studios
- Durham Railway Station

Alongside these public art commissions, this section also makes recommendations about the relocation of the Neptune Statue within Market Place, practical steps towards the use of Market Place as an event space, and strategic support for temporary visual arts projects.

The final section, ***Making it Happen***, looks at the practicalities of achieving this vision. It recommends a management structure; outlines indicative costs, funding sources and timescales; and makes a series of comments on related issues such as creative risk, procurement and interpretation.

section 1 the current position



1.1 recent and current commissions

Perhaps because of its historic public realm and architecture, and the legislative constraints that heritage imposes, Durham has little external contemporary public art within the City centre. Statues of Neptune and Lord Londonderry dominate the Market Place and Fenwick Lawson's recently installed *The Journey* in Millennium Place is in this traditional mould. Stone bollards that reference the Cathedral's decorative motifs are discrete modern additions to Claypath bridge and Saddler Street/Elvet Street junction.

A casual observer or tourist that never ventured from the Peninsula could easily form a picture of a City in thrall to its history and frozen by its responsibility to that heritage. But closer analysis of recent commissioning activity reveals a bolder, more adventurous approach to architecture, design and public art. Major developments at Millennium Place and Freemans Quay Leisure Centre display due sensitivity to the Durham vernacular but also embrace a contemporary aesthetic. The public art commissions for both developments employ modern materials, technologies or aesthetics and make confident visual statements in the same vein as the architecture itself. Durham County Council's ambitious proposal for Pal Svensson's *Skybowl* at Akley Heads fits this mood of confidence and suggests that, in the City at least, the risk-aversion that the RKL report identified is being addressed.

In addition to these permanent artworks, cultural providers such as Durham City Arts and Durham City Vision's Events Team, aided by other City of Durham staff, deliver an increasing programme of temporary events throughout the calendar in public spaces. Initiatives such as the Enlightenment Festival and the annual 'Sculpture in the Park' exhibitions enrich the experience of the City and visitor offer without choking the City's limited public space in a glut of permanent artworks, and their temporary status allows for a greater level of experimentation and innovation than would otherwise be sanctioned. This controlled acceptance of risk is essential to the commissioning of art of any quality, and plays a vital part in preventing the City's architecture and public spaces from atrophying into a pastiche of itself.



Bollards, Durham County Council; **The Journey**, Fenwick Lawson, Millennium Place; **Birdboxes** Angus Morrogh-Ryan, Durham riverside walk; **The Visitor** Ron Haselden, Gala Theatre; **Counterweight** Simon Watkinson, Gala Theatre; **Durham Needles** Keri Townsend, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre; **200 Million Years** Gavin Marshall, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre

1.2 Wide Angle – A Public Art Review for County Durham

RKL Consultants, April 2005

The 'Wide Angle' report by RKL Consultants was commissioned by the County Durham Strategic Arts Officers Group in April 2005. It highlights the huge scale of opportunity with public sector capital programmes but also identifies key issues that inhibit the quality and extent of public art commissioning within the county. The report opens with, and is guided by, the assertion that:

Public art enhances the quality of life by helping to define and formulate responses to social, economic, cultural and political issues faced by a community. At its best, public art is more than simply art integrated, installed or performed in a public place; rather it is a community-based process of dialogue, involvement, and participation.

Read as a standalone statement this definition for public art is easy to misinterpret as a plea for artwork created through practical workshops with local communities. But when read as part of the full report and in the context of national best practice, the statement becomes extremely aspirational and should be read as both a call for a high-level of expertise and capaCity, and for an understanding of the cost and resources required for creating artwork of the highest quality.

RKL identify the following key issues as limiting factors on this aspiration:

- lack of effective advocacy
- lack of a vigorous design debate
- lack of public art remit for LSPs
- weak project development infrastructure
- lack of consensus on how to take public art developments forward
- risk aversion and a procurement culture that tends towards conservatism

To begin to address these issues the report proposes a £315,000 three year programme, including recommendations for a short-term visioning process; Public Art Officer posts within the County Council and Durham City Arts; seed funding for new projects and initiatives; and the resourcing of a county-wide 'Wide Angle' Public Art Steering Group. Funding for this programme was to come from set contributions from each District Council and the County Council with a strategic level of support from Arts Council England.

This proposed programme of initiatives has prompted some shared aspirations within the Durham District Strategic Arts Officer Group, although activity remained somewhat disjointed. The opportunity to take a strategic approach to the role of public art has now opened up within the structure of the new unitary authority Durham County Council.

1.3 *Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes* **Supplementary Planning Document, City of Durham Council** **August 2006**

City of Durham Council adopted a '%forArt' policy in August 2006. The policy, "*Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes*", was drafted by the planning department of City of Durham Council and Christian Barnes in his public art consultancy role at Durham City Arts, and has the status of a Supplementary Planning Document.

Building on general principles and aspirations already embedded in the Local Plan, the policy is primarily focussed on the integration of art and design into major developments. It applies to residential developments of ten or more dwellings; commercial/industrial, education, retail and leisure developments with floorspace of 1000 m² or more; or for sites in excess of 0.5 hectares. Developers (including the local authority and other statutory and administrative bodies) must allocate 1% of their construction costs to public art.

DCA are currently managing projects that have directly resulted from the policy including The Meadows housing development at Framwellgate Moor (Miller Homes), Parkgate office development at Belmont Industrial Estate (The Hanro Group) and the Freemans Quay Leisure Centre.

In these examples there has been a healthy budget and scope on site for innovative and worthwhile artworks to be developed, and the active engagement of the developer. Regrettably this is not always the case, and there will be instances where developers do not wish to offer onsite arts provision; where developments submitted to the planning authority offer no physical scope for public art; and/or the cash value of the 1% contribution is not sufficient to commission an artwork of any merit.

In such instances the policy allows for City of Durham Council to levy this money from the developer via the %forArt policy, 'Section 106' agreement or, in practice, to 'champion' such conditions as part of planning approval. These funds can be allocated to a suitable, agreed scheme away from the development site. This opens up the option to pool developer contributions in a Public Art Action Plan fund, and to commission artworks that offer wider benefit to the City, its residents and its visitors. The themes, projects and processes outlined in this strategy will give private developers the confidence that their contribution will be put to good use and be recognised as contributing to the City's cultural capital. Therefore funds gained via this process must address a public need, and the majority of the individual commissions proposed in this report relate to central spaces where the benefit to a wide public is proven – e.g. the Railway Station, Riverside walks, Market Place and Vennels.

Recommendation>> Establish a Public Art Action Plan fund for holding and pooling developer contributions

1.4 *Durham City: A Vision For Art*

Howard Bowcott, April 2008

Durham City: A Vision For Art was submitted to Durham City Vision in April 2008 by artist Howard Bowcott as part of Miller Research's *Retail Distinctiveness Strategy*. The remit of the report, which is limited to the critical space of Market place and its immediate surrounding area, is to offer an 'artist's eye' of the space and is therefore similar in approach to this document.

Bowcott – an experienced and traditional public artist based in Wales – provides a spatial analysis of the Market Square and its approaches, sketches out a series of commission opportunities and makes more general recommendations for visual enhancements. The approach has much in common with an urban designer, offering a solid assessment of key spaces, thresholds, sightlines and other 'formal' qualities that would form the context and *raison d'être* for the art commissions that might follow. Although developed independently of this strategy, and in parallel to it, Bowcott's report does not contain any major recommendations that contradict the projects in this document.

As the Market Place is perhaps *the* critical space in the centre of the City, and given that both documents are authored by artists, there are many overlaps between the two, including:

- two dimensional artworks for the gable end of the Boots building and the rear façade of Claypath Library
- artist-designed seating, lighting and other multi-function street furniture
- an improved floorscape in Market Place
- greater definition to the boundaries of the Market Place

Bowcott proposes one major project which we had not identified within our own provisional programme of projects – an artwork or architectural intervention on Claypath Bridge, linking Market Place with Millennium Place – which we agree with as an important opportunity. Therefore, and with due credit to Bowcott, we have included that space within our report and attempted to flesh out what this artwork might achieve in more detail.

section 2 key themes and concepts



2.1 the city centre – characteristics and challenges

As a medieval City with few straight lines on its plans or elevations, and with so many centuries of development, the urban grain in Durham is incredibly rich. The experience of walking through the City centre is one of moving in and out of fast-flowing currents. A walk up Silver Street towards Market Square has a sense of convergence and moving with the pulse of the City, and yet a few steps to one side take you into the stillness and tranquillity of the Vennels.

In recognising this unique quality as a fundamental to Durham's character, the role of art in a Masterplan or more general public realm improvements becomes one of acknowledging, enriching and strengthening this diversity, and of facilitating the experiencing of this diversity amongst a wider audience.

The key challenges in achieving this aim are:

- CH 1** **Drawing attention to Durham's hidden places, spaces and routes, adding to the *experience of the City* and broadening its visitor offer.**
- CH 2** **Achieving the difficult balance between making these hidden spaces feel *safe and accessible* without losing their unique 'backwater' charm.**
- CH3** **Contributing to the *legibility* of the City by increasing the *definition* between the City's primary and secondary spaces and routes.**
- CH4** **Creating high-quality and meaningful art commissions in a restricted heritage environment.**
- CH5** **Creating projects which add value to the other activity in the City by enhancing existing strengths and providing solutions to recognised problems.**

Each of the individual projects outlined in section 3 of this report has been developed with a view to meeting some or all of the above challenges.

2.2 avoiding the generic – a unified and consistent approach

Put simply, Durham is unique amongst cities in the North-East. It bears little visual similarity with Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland or Middlesbrough, and has more in common with market towns such as Hexham but is clearly on another scale. It follows that the approach to commissioning artworks should also be unique and, most importantly, be quite distinct from the commissioning that characterises the other cities.

To an extent, public artworks always reveal the interests of the small number of individuals that have been responsible for commissioning them, but it is fair to say that the main characteristic of art commissioning in most cities is the absence of a defining characteristic. Diversity of artform and approach is in fact the common link, and the 'signature' artworks from each City could quite easily have been commissioned for another.

Our recommendation is that Durham, in seeking to differentiate itself, takes the opposite path and adopts some clearly defined and relatively narrow themes, materials and approaches to its public art commissioning. We propose two interlinked programmes as the focus for new commissioning activity, although of course there will be instances where alternative approaches will be more appropriate. The programmes are:

CITY OF LETTERS

CITY OF STONE

These two programmes acknowledge and build upon two inalienable facts – that stone is emblematic of the city and a major material within the visual fabric of the City, and that learning is a cornerstone of the City's identity and trade.

Stone and text do place significant limits on the range of options available to artists, but this of course only limits in one direction – the themes, sites, scale and techniques are left open. Stone might be the material used to explore varied ideas, but a *City Of Stone* commission could alternatively approach stone as a theme and create an artwork in an alternate material. Letters could be created in any permanent or temporary medium or material from lettercut stone through to projected film. The focus on one 'Letters' commission might be a narrative event, and on another the visual impact of typography. *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* projects can combine and overlap within spaces through careful curation and, where appropriate, collaborative practice. It is also important to note that this report does not recommend vetoing other forms of art practice, but simply that the limited resources available through %forArt contributions and other funding should prioritise these two programmes in a structured and strategic manner.

Nor should the focus on text and stone be taken to be a recommendation for the commissioning of traditional art forms, archetypes or artists. The RKL 'Wide Angle' report notes that "*respondents wanted public art to convey a 'sense of place' about their locality*", but does not clearly state that public art also has the potential to *create* a sense of place and to contribute a new layer to Durham's heritage. Passive referencing of the City's existing heritage condemns the City into becoming a pastiche of itself. The recent and successful integration of major contemporary buildings into the fabric of the City, and the artworks that have been commissioned as part of those developments, clearly proves that the City on a collective basis is able to accept risk and welcomes contemporary projects where appropriate.

2.3 City of Letters

City of Letters is, alongside *City of Stone*, a core commissioning programme within the Durham Public Art Action Plan. The theme is purposefully described as ‘City of Letters’ rather than ‘of Text’ or ‘of Words’. In part this recognises the connection with key religious texts associated with the City; with academic distinction and qualifications and the influence of the University on City life; but it is also meant to suggest the imaginative world that text can transport its reader into.

For our purposes, *City of Letters* is about the use of text as a correspondence between the City and its public, as a means of explaining or enriching an understanding of the City, and as a route for animating spaces and places on either a permanent or temporary basis.

A key strength of the *City Of Letters* programme is its flexibility, and the sheer variety of spaces and places that it can be tailored to. Flexibility comes first from the writer and the diversity of writing styles, approaches, subject matter and themes; but it continues in the options for translating that text into a visual public experience: projections, fretwork, signwriting, lighting, sculptural forms and, connecting with the *City of Stone* theme, as letter-cut or grit-blasted text in walls and flooring.

Changes in scale can move the experience of text from the civic and public through to the personal and intimate. Employed sensitively in the right font, size and layout within a space, text can perform many of the functions required of public art in the Market Place, Vennels and other key sites in the City centre. It can provoke, challenge, be informative and move people; direct people through a space and reassure them that they are on a safe and cared-for route; it can act as a placemaker, a focal feature or a stopping point; and it can remediate difficult spaces within complex urban environments.

Text, as an extremely specific medium, needs to be of the highest quality and entirely appropriate to site. There is a substantial amount of text-based public art in the North-East but the quality of content and delivery is extremely variable. To achieve the best results for Durham care must be taken to ensure that:

- The writers or poets commissioned are of the highest quality and appropriate to the City
- The typographers, craftspeople or fabricators who translate the text into public space enter into a collaborative dialogue with the writer
- The support that both are given in terms of research, time and funding is adequate

Expertise and Resources

Fundamental to recruitment of high-quality writers and poets for this programme is a symbiotic relationship with the City’s flagship Durham Book Festival (previously the Durham Literature Festival, programmed each October). An established highlight in the region’s cultural calendar, the festival attracts writers of a high-calibre to the City each year for a series of readings, promotions and events, and offers access to a unique range of creative practitioners. The vision is to commission one writer or poet participating in the Book Festival annually to develop a temporary or permanent piece of public art specifically for the City, setting a benchmark for the calibre of writer that would be sought for this programme. The commissions would provide a unique and lasting legacy of each Festival, and help to strengthen its connections with the City’s identity.

Alongside the Durham Book Festival, other live literary events such as the Mystery Plays planned for 2010 could inform the commissioning of *City Of Letters*. The English department at Durham University also offers a wealth of experience in the field of literature, and academic staff should be invited to engage with the selection process for *City Of Letters* commissions. University and Cathedral archive holdings of illuminated manuscripts and other rare texts should be drawn upon as contextual material for the commissions.

commission>> given that the regeneration of the market place offers a unique opportunity to integrate a commission into the overall design of the space, the first City of Letters commission could be for this site.

Recommendation>> to provide an efficient introduction to the possibilities ways of physically outputting text in public space a background report would need to be produced. This would primarily be visual and would include examples of text in a variety of materials and used as seating, kerb edging, signage, projections etc. This document would be appended to the Writers Brief for each commission.



Fowlers Yard Vennel; Gable end of the Boots Building, Durham Market Place; Clayport Library; Durham Market Place flooring; Text Incorporated into the Welsh Assembly building, Cardiff; Poet Laureate Andrew Motion's What If..., Sheffield Hallam University; small text pieces in Newcastle's Grainger Town by Rupert Clamp and Bill Herbert

2.4 City of Stone

If, as noted in 1.1, recent architectural projects in the City have been characterised by a good balance between sensitivity to the Durham vernacular and a contemporary aesthetic, then the art commissioning programme needs to display a similarly sure-footed and balanced approach. This synergy between artwork and architecture has already been achieved through the commissioned artworks at the Gala Theatre and Freemans Quay Leisure Centre. The latter are good examples of this – Gavin Marshall's glazing design takes an extremely illustrative approach to Durham's heritage, but the scale and confidence of the delivery give it a contemporary feel. By contrast Keri Townsend's *Durham Needles* fencing appears entirely abstract, but is based closely on the topography of the City. Irrespective of their starting points, both suit the aesthetic of the architecture.

City Of Stone, the other core commissioning programme within the Durham Public Art Action Plan, must achieve a similar balance. Stone sculpture is popular with the general public, offering as it does an association with traditional skills and a pleasing aesthetic and material quality. For the commissioner it also offers extreme durability and easy maintenance, making it a viable option for infrequently visited areas that may be prone to vandalism. In Durham it is a vernacular building material, and its use in art offers a clear and obvious link with that heritage. It is important to state clearly that this programme is not about the promotion or prioritising of conservative or derivative artworks, or about placing a creative stranglehold on artists. Rather it is about the creative commissioning of innovative new artworks that adopt a range of approaches and explore diverse themes relevant to the City, but within the cohesive framework provided by the *City of Stone* umbrella.

Commissioning a programme of artworks requires the same skills in microcosm as the City of Durham needs when striking a balance between preserving and celebrating heritage and the commissioning of new architectural forms: an appreciation for the existing field, a commitment to new learning and measured risk, and imagination for how things might be done.

Selection of artists

The challenge will be to work with this material in an innovative way without rejecting the fundamental qualities that make stone so enduringly popular. With that in mind, recruitment for commissions would fall into one of two distinct camps:

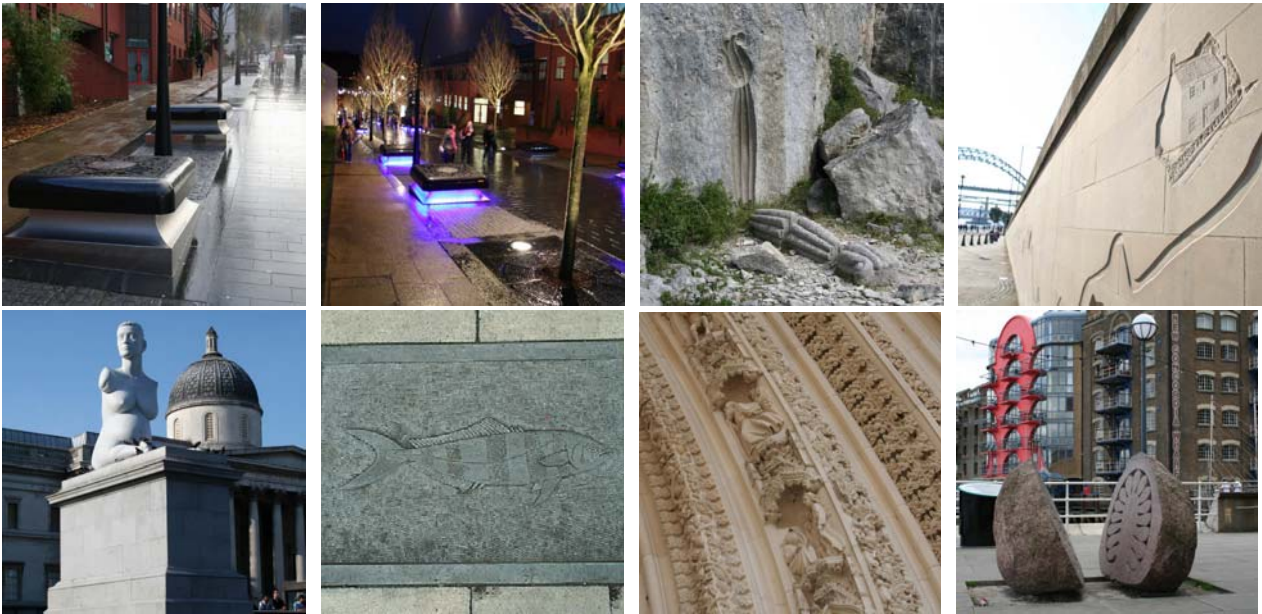
- Identify a pool of the best artists working regularly in stone across a wide range of styles, techniques and concerns
- Identify a pool of consistently engaging contemporary artists with no background in working with stone, and pair them with a skilled carver, mason or stone processing facility.

The success of the programme would be if all the commissioned works functioned as a collection without a clear split between the two approaches.

As with the *City Of Letters* programme, changes in scale can move the experience of text from the civic and public through to the personal and intimate. It can address the same challenges and offer the same benefits throughout the City, and section 3 outlines a number of projects within the *City Of Stone* strand on a range of scales. The true flexibility of this programme strand does not come from the material, techniques or processes involved, but from the creativity of the artists invited to

develop projects for the City. Plans for the procurement and management of artists for this programme are outlined in section 4.

Recommendation>> to provide an efficient introduction to the possibilities of stone as a material, and background report would need to be produced for use by artists new to the material. This would include information on stone (types, properties, longevity etc); processes (carving specialists, CNC routing, water-jet cutting, laminating etc); and logistical issues (weight, quarries, lead-in time, costings). This document would be appended to the Artist Brief for each commission.



Contemporary street furniture, Sheffield; Untitled stone carving, Tout Quarry, Portland; Relief Carving, Newcastle Quayside; Portrait of Alison Lapper, Mark Wallinger, carrara marble, Trafalgar Square, London; Pilot Fish Hull Fish Trail, Gordon Young; Ecclesiastical carving, York Minster; Peter Randall-Page, South Bank, London

section 3 the projects



3.1 overview of key spaces

This section identifies a number of important spaces within the City. It has not been divided into 'Letters' projects and 'Stone' projects as many of the spaces are equally suited to either of these options, or a combination of both. Some of the projects outlined in Section 3 are designed to create greater linkages and natural routes between one or more of these spaces.

Millennium Place

Housing the Gala Theatre, Tourist Information Centre and Clayport Library, this recent addition to the Cityscape of Millennium Place provides the City's best programmable external event space and is the home for numerous events. In part this is due to the lack of street clutter, which needs to be kept to a minimum, but there is sufficient space within Millennium Place's split level plaza to accommodate events and permanent sculpture.

The recent introduction of Fenwick Lawson's *The Journey* into the upper plaza effectively prevents the installation of any other permanent sculpture within the same space as the style of the sculpture is so distinct. The *City of Letters* strand does remain a viable option for the Millennium Place plazas as it can work subtly alongside *The Journey* and an events programme without creating visual overload.

Palace Green

Owned by the University, and now part of the World Heritage Site, Palace Green is of great historical significance but in itself is visually unobtrusive, giving a subtle spatial setting to the principal monuments. With both the Castle and Cathedral as backdrops there are compelling reasons to leave this space alone, and as the Green is both large and open the scale required of any new sculptural object would be such that it would compete with those two Durham icons. This report leaves this space alone, except to note that the prestigious nature of the space does warrant the budget to allow for bespoke design of the very highest quality for any new street furniture or streetscape design.

Market Place

The Market Place is the historic heart and meeting place for the City and remains its central space. It is the natural starting point for trails or walking routes and is an important space for most of the projects outlined in this report. Usage and pressures from stakeholders are complex and the area is scheduled for a major capital investment and redesign exercise in the coming months. This offers the first opportunity to comprehensively impact on the space since the last scheme some thirty years ago. All the projects outlined in Section 3 are interlinked, but core projects for Market Place could include:

- 'Stripping Down and Dressing Up': infrastructure to facilitate temporary events
- 'Mapping History': redesign of the market place flooring
- 'Durham Plinths': inclusion in the Durham Plinths stone carving trail
- 'Setting Out': provision of artist-designed market stalls
- 'City Of Letters' inclusion of the Market Place as a site for a text-based commission

The Vennels

Durham's Vennels – the narrow back alleys that radiate from Market Place, Silver Street and Saddler Street – have a unique charm and create additional linkages between the major streets and other areas of visitor interest such as the riverside and Fowlers Yard. Their usage is currently limited due to uncertainty about their status as public rights of way, the perception that they may be unsafe, and doubt amongst visitors as to whether they lead anywhere of interest and merit. The personal and contemplative nature of these spaces makes them more suited to small, integrated artworks. Alongside the Market Place the Vennels are scheduled for a major capital investment and redesign exercise in the coming months.

The Riverside

The heavily wooded Riverside area has major walking routes around the peninsula, and currently offers a variety of spaces, openings, views and secluded areas. The area has a recent history as the site for artworks including Richard Cole's reclaimed Cathedral pinnacle by Prebends Bridge (the outcome of a Durham Cathedral residency) and the contemporary bird boxes by architect Angus Morragh-Ryan. These artworks are unobtrusive and fit well with the inherent qualities of their environment, and the uncluttered feel of the area should be retained through sensitive and low-key commissioning, with an emphasis on temporary projects. The 'Durham Plinths' project would be a logical way of connecting the Riverside with key walking routes in the City centre. The area is in multiple ownerships, but the Riverside Management Group provides the forum via which this project and others could be taken forward.

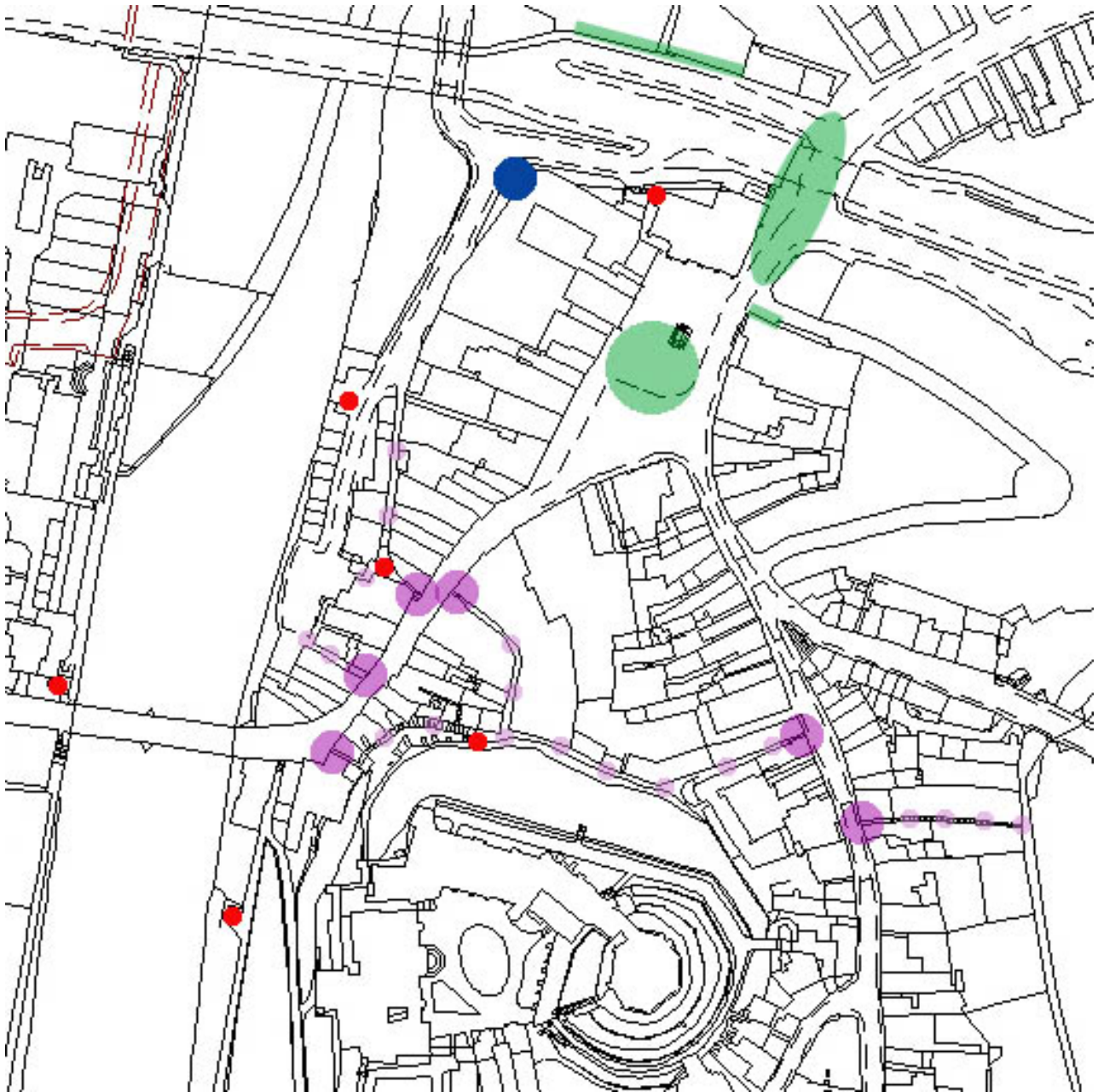
Durham Rail Station

A key gateway to the City, the Durham Railway Station blends original and contemporary architecture, and to some extent captures the prevailing design ethos of new developments such as Millennium Place. The immediate environs around the station offer a further opportunity for the City to convey its approach to heritage and contemporary art and design. Projects are proposed for the new steps to the front of the station, to the underpass, and for the Bishops Prospect, a viewpoint over the City.

Fowlers Yard

Home to a small number of cultural industries, the Fowlers Yard complex is, with the nearby Gala Theatre, part of the Cultural Quarter for the City. Tenants within the work/retail units, which are owned and managed by the City Council, have identified a need for greater promotion of the Fowlers Yard complex. Projects proposed for the Vennels – the main pedestrian routes to the Yard – will have particularly relevance to the ongoing success of Fowlers Yard, but a specific commission for a 'gateway feature' at the entrance point on Back Silver Street is also proposed.

3.2 Artwork locations



Green Circles – major artworks integrated into landscaping enhancements

Green lines – wall locations for City Of Letters major commissions

Blue Circle – Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature

Red circles – Durham Plinth stone sculptures

Purple Circles – Vennel entrance improvements and small works

3.3 The Market Place: Statues and Flooring



In his evaluation of the Market Place for the *Durham City: A Vision For Art* report Howard Bowcott refers to a recent public consultation exercise and notes a public concern about the creation of a blank, featureless space. In part to allay that concern, and in part to create better sightlines from Claypath and Silver Street, Bowcott recommends a third “*focal point of mass and height*” alongside the Lord Londonderry and Neptune statues. The suggested location is at the top-end of Market Place, potentially with a political theme to create a dialogue with the existing statues. He also raises the potential for a more functional focal point such as a contemporary kiosk, information point or shelter.

The fear of a blank featureless space has been overstated. The facades of the buildings, St Nicholas Church and the two statues are all of positive and permanent interest, although the common experience of the space and those structures is one interrupted by vehicles, market stalls, red phone boxes etc. The current space would benefit from rationalising, and in light of that we recommend that a third structure or sculpture is *not* added to Market Place. Instead we suggest that the location of the statues be considered, potentially reclaiming vehicular space for pedestrians and improving the sightlines to the sculptures from Claypath, Silver Street and Saddler Street.

In creating a more usable events space for the City the enlarged floor surface becomes the canvas for a major art commission without impeding any events. This commission, which should embody both the *City of Letters* and *City Of Stone* themes, becomes a new focal point and focal feature of the Market Place.



Roger McGough text, Liverpool; Gordon Young, Morecambe Bay; Lawrence Weiner, Newcastle; Bottle Bank, Sunderland

action>> relocate the Neptune statue to create a larger event space

commission>> explore the scope for create a major flooring design for the central event space incorporating text and stone with the commissioned design team for the Durham City Vision Market Place and Vennels project.

3.4 Market Place Events: ‘Stripping Down and Dressing Up’



Event images courtesy of Durham City Vision

A balance must be achieved between competing visions for the Market Place. It must work on a day to day basis as the heart of the City’s everyday life, filled with interest and adding to the City’s layers of heritage, it must be both a meeting point and the location for the market itself. It must also be open enough to provide a much-needed flexible space that can be temporarily transformed for unique events. These conflicting requirements are not insurmountable – simply an interesting creative challenge to which a number of interlinked art and design projects provide an answer.

Relative to its footprint, the market place underperforms as a public event space. The subdivisions between highway, parking and pedestrian space; the volume and positioning of street furniture; the positioning of the two statues: all conspire to limit the usability of the Market Place for the kind of events that Durham City Arts, Durham City Vision’s Events Team and other cultural stakeholders in the City would wish to programme.

To maximise the huge potential of the Market Place for events two contradictory actions need to transform the space. Firstly it needs to be *stripped down*, to create a larger, more usable space in which events can be programmed safely. Secondly, the infrastructure needs to be put in place for *dressing up* the space during an event.

Key actions for ***stripping down*** the space are:

- Remove or rationalise street furniture, replacing with the minimum amount of highest quality, bespoke artist-designed furniture. Where possible the designs should be multipurpose to further reduce the volume of objects in the Market Place
- Create a clear performance and event area with a large footprint and, if viable within budgetary and logistical constraints, with a realignment of levels to create flat, horizontal flooring
- Consider the relocation of the statues within Market Place, reclaiming current vehicular space for pedestrians and improving the sightlines to the sculptures from Claypath, Silver Street and Saddler Street

Key actions for ***dressing up*** the space are:

- install 'pop-up' electrical supply columns and water standpipe points flush into the paving at agreed locations
- explore the options for a sound auditorium, installing discrete speakers within the space and to the facades of key buildings, wired back to a control point in a public building
- provide the infrastructure for the temporary transformation of the space for events, by ensuring that street furniture can, where practicable, be altered (e.g. light fittings with dimmer switches) or accept additional elements during events (e.g. temporary signage)

This investment in infrastructure to support events activity effectively transforms the market place into a bookable space for performance and audio works, and will be of use to a wide range of cultural event organisers and major city stakeholders.

action>> ensure that the Market Place and Vennels Design Team incorporate cultural event needs into the emerging design process



Multifunctional street furniture, Sheffield City Centre – seating, lighting and vehicular barrier

commission>> bespoke suite of seating, lighting columns and other street furniture

3.5 The Durham Market: ‘Setting Out A Stall’



*Durham Outdoor Market – cramped into one corner of the space by poor streetscape, and nearly invisible behind the delivery vans
Durham Indoor Market – cheap looking signage and entrance points*

Improvements to the Market Place layout, including waymarking, interpretation and vehicular layout are currently in development by the Market Place and Vennels Design Team, and are largely beyond the scope of public art to resolve. One major stakeholder in this process will be the market traders, who currently bring not just economic benefit to the city but also animation and purpose to the Market Place.

The redesigned and revitalised Market Place that the Design Team will deliver will bring direct benefits to the market traders. As a component of the ‘*Dressing Up*’ element of the Market Place’s redesign, sockets and connection points for the stalls could be inset into the flooring to allow for a clean, elegant display. The pop-up electrical columns would reduce or remove the need for unsightly and noisy market stall generators.

The market stalls themselves could also be addressed as a creative project – either within the overall redevelopment or as a standalone project. With the agreement and participation of the market traders, this would be a commission for a sculptor, architect, furniture maker or product designer, who would work with the market traders to agree a technical specification for the stalls. Whilst a contemporary project in terms of its overall aesthetic, the opportunity exists for the detailing of the stalls to be informed by careful local research – for example, the fabric roofs of the stalls could incorporate specific motifs, patterns and iconography relating to Durham’s weaving traditions.

commission>> consultation with traders leading to the redesign and fabrication of new, Durham-specific market stalls.

3.6 Claypath Bridge: Linkages with Millennium Place



As noted in 1.1.3, the significance of the space on Claypath Bridge leading into the Market Place was identified by artist Howard Bowcott in his *Durham City: A Vision For Art* report. Bowcott states that the space on either side of the carriageway on the entrance to Market Place has “*an opportunity to signal entry to the heart of Durham and promote what it has to offer*”. The physical detail of such an artwork is left purposefully open, but his most ambitious version of this proposal is a major, architecturally scaled structure on Claypath Bridge that incorporates seating and shelter.

The Claypath road across the dual carriageway between Market Place and Millennium Place is an extremely significant space: it connects the cultural offer of Millennium Place’s Theatre, Library, performance area and restaurants with the heritage offer of the Durham Peninsula. This piece of highway engineering bisects the two areas and presents a set of unappealing concrete monoliths with their attendant highway-standard balustrades and signage. These issues have long been recognised by all parties, and attempts made to improve the aesthetic appeal of the space, but it remains a serious challenge for all concerned.

This longstanding vision has real merit and significance, reclaiming the space from a highway environment and linking Market Place and Millennium Place into virtually one space. Assuming that the forthcoming redesign of Market Place does create a more usable event space, then that linkage becomes all the more important. The bridge is sufficiently wide to allow for structures that would screen the road from the pedestrian’s experience of the route, and be highly visible from the highway as a ‘gateway’ to the Durham Peninsula. Although an extremely challenging proposition in terms of permissions, structural engineering and Health & Safety on the highway, the opportunity is such that options should still be considered.

commission>> major project to create a promenade between Millennium Place and Market Place, replacing or screening the existing highway balustrade with a larger architecturally-scaled structure that screens the highway from Market Place and Millennium Place, acts as a high-visibility promotional statement when viewed from the highway, and provides seating and lighting

3.7 The Vennels

Durham's Vennels – the narrow back alleys that radiate from Market Place, Silver Street and Saddler Street – have a unique charm and create additional linkages between the major streets and other areas of visitor interest such as the riverside and Fowlers Yard. Their usage is currently limited due to uncertainty amongst potential users about their status as public rights of way, the perception that they may be unsafe, and doubt amongst visitors as to whether they lead anywhere of interest and merit. Public realm improvements being developed by the Market Place and Vennels Design Team should address many of these perceived negatives, and the role of lighting (including creative lighting commissions by artists) is fully recognised in the Lighting and Darkness Strategy commissioned from Speirs and Major (2007).

Currently the Vennels are more an important component of the City's imagination and image than they are an active participant in its social space, and it is their physical qualities that make the Vennels simultaneously attractive and uninviting. A visitor to Durham could stand at the entrance to a Vennel and fairly ask:

- Am I allowed down there?
- What is down there to see?
- Does it lead anywhere I could be missing?
- Is it safe?

With such doubts the Vennels remain something of an untapped resource in the City, and public art has a significant role to play in maximising their potential. Many of the questions a visitor might pose to themselves when poised at the entrance to a Vennel can be answered positively through public art.

Working within an overall improvement scheme, and to an extent able to operate in advance of it, public art has three roles to play in the Vennels:

- Improvements to the thresholds
- Enhancements to the views into the Vennels
- Leading people through the Vennels

The challenge is to address the negative aspects of the Vennels without compromising or diluting their essential characteristics. The Vennels are in public ownership, but the visitor's experience of one is essentially private due to their narrowness, their twists and turns and the absence of other users. They are spaces in which small pieces of poetry and sculpture can be stumbled across or sought out and considered quietly on a one-to-one basis.

Recommendation>> small, intimate scale artworks are the most appropriate approach for art commissions in the Vennels.

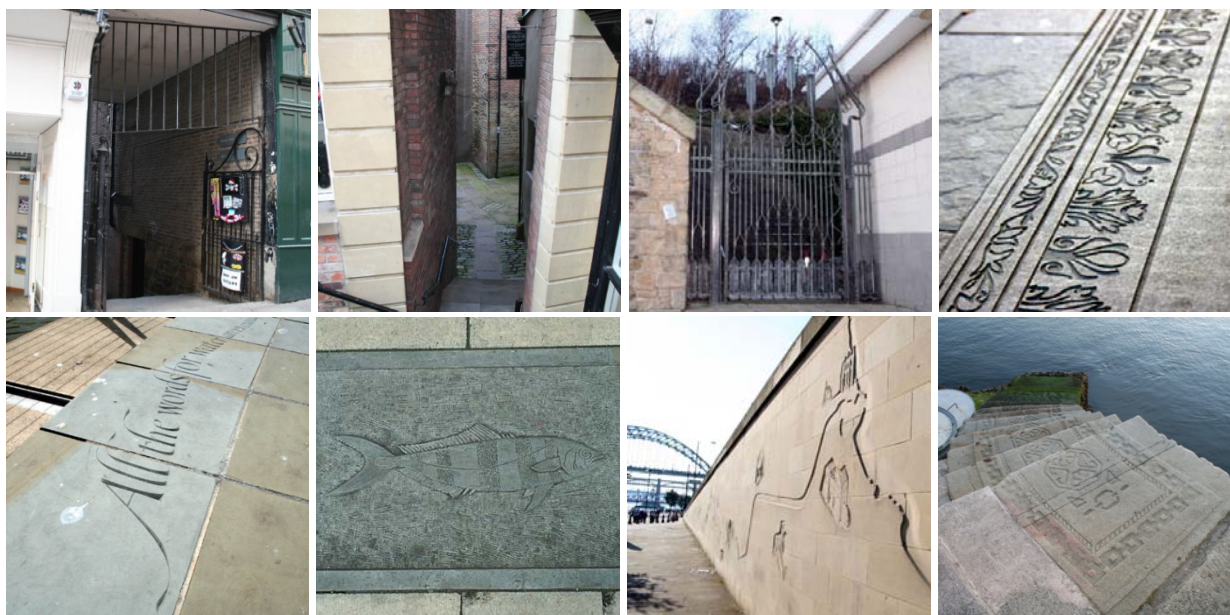
Assuming the Vennels are to be brought into wider use then greater attention must be drawn to their entrance points, which are currently poorly defined. This is particularly important for the Silver Street to Back Silver Street and Fowlers Yard Vennels which lead off from Silver Street, which offer a pedestrian link with the Fowlers Yard artist studios. New gates, railings and stone 'entrance mats' would all help to define these thresholds without being garish or inappropriate, and the care given

to the creation of the Vennel entrance points offers a clear indication that these spaces are not only safe but of interest and a part of the 'tourist map' for the City.

Such improvements to the entrance points of the Vennels have little value if the subsequent view into the interior is unappealing. To encourage a visitor to cross the threshold there needs to be some sense that the experience will be both worthwhile and safe. A 'trail of breadcrumbs' approach is required to help people progress into and through the Vennels: from the threshold there must be something visible ahead to draw people in, and small artworks inset into the walls or flooring can perform this function. From that new location there must be something else visible up ahead, and so on, throughout the Vennel. Lighting will also have a crucial role to play in the Vennels, and although led by a lighting designer could integrate successfully with an arts project.

These artworks need not be large or expensive. A pertinent example is the *Hull Fish Trail*, created by artist Gordon Young in the early nineties as an A to Z of fish (starting with the Anchovy at the Tourist Information Centre) and creating a circular route through Hull's historic but fractured old town area. What lifts this simple idea beyond a clunky illustration of a City's primary industry is the quality of the delivery – the choice of sites and the quality of craftsmanship. Each individual artwork is sensitively placed to relate to it's environment and the type of fish – the Electric Eel is adjacent to the Sub-Station; the Pilot Fish outside the office of the Humber Pilots; the Prawn carved into a stone heavily marked with fossilised crustaceans, the Eel is hidden away in a small crevice etc.

artworks that attract and lead....



Paddle Gates, Craig Knowles, Sunderland Marina; **Welcome Mats** Catherine Bertola, Grainger Town, Newcastle; **Truth and Illusion**, Linda France and Alec Peever, Museum and Winter Gardens, Sunderland; **Hull Fish Trail**, Gordon Young, Hull ; **Relief Carving**, Neil Talbot, Newcastle Quayside; **Stone Carpet Steps**, Colin Wilbourn, Sunderland Marina

commission>> replacement of poor quality metalwork with matching, more sensitively specified alternatives. High-profile entrance points such as the Silver Street entrance to Fowlers Yard warrant bespoke design. Introduction of carved stonework into the flooring at key entrance points.

commission>> a series of small additions to the City of Letters and City of Stone programmes in the Vennel walls and flooring, creating a basic walking trail and drawing people through the route. The first should be visible from the entrance points, the second

from the site of the first etc. Similar additions would be required across major routes (Silver Street, Market Place, Saddler Street) to connect the Vennels into an overall scheme.

Current context: redevelopment of the Market Place and Vennels

Design proposals for enhancements to the Vennels are currently being procured by Durham City Vision as part of the Market Place initiative, and change to the Vennels will largely be a task for the appointed design team. Complex land ownership and heritage issues will impinge on the ability for the design team to make substantial changes to the Vennels environment, bringing the role of art to the forefront in terms of addressing some of the pressing issues that face those spaces.

Craftspeople should have a role to play in the creation of the gates, screens and other products that will be specified by the landscape designers, and light-artists a role to play in the creative delivery of aspects of the Light and Darkness Strategy. These small artworks recommended for the Vennels are best installed as an integrated component of a wider scheme, but can be installed at any point as discrete commissions with the *City of Stone* and *City of Letters* programmes.

3.8 The Durham Plinths



*Eight indicative sites (all subject to review against future development plans):
Moatside Lane; beneath The Gates Shopping Centre; to the rear of St Nicholas Church; Fowlers Yard; on the former site of the Rotarians Shelter; the Back Silver Street Vennel; riverside walk near Prebends Bridge; threshold of the Kingsgate Bridge*

As noted in the Introduction, a walk through the centre of Durham is one of moving in and out of currents – the differences between main thoroughfares and back streets and alleyways are extremely distinct, and a detour ‘off the beaten track’ is a rewarding aspect of Durham City Centre. This project makes use of those niches, quiet backwaters and intersections that have been created during Durham’s long history of development and redevelopment.

A key strand in the *City Of Stone* programme, and envisaged as both a formalised trail and a series of standalone artworks that may be stumbled across during a self-directed walk, the project extends from the Durham Peninsula across to the riverbanks and up to the railway Station. The flexibility of this project allows for its potential integration into Durham City Vision regeneration schemes, with the heart of the route and many of the proposed artwork locations falling within the boundaries of the Market Place and Vennels redevelopment. Future initiatives for priority sites such as North Road, the former Ice Rink site and the River Gardens could also be linked with the Durham Plinths.

The purpose of this project is to:

- weave an additional layer of visual interest into the City
- create a loose trail of artworks around the less used areas of the City centre, encouraging additional and more diverse usage of the space
- creating a new attraction for the City without drawing attention away from the Cathedral and Castle

As noted in 2.4, care should be taken to commission artists that can offer something new to the material and processes, and a procurement route to achieve that is outlined in Section 4. Diversity of artworks would be achieved by commissioning established stone carvers or by pairing other interesting artists with skilled technicians and advisors; and by identifying a range of sites with

varied scales and qualities. The material itself, and the branding and marketing of the projects, provides the linkage between each artwork.

commission>> an initial six artworks from a diverse range of artists



Peter Randall-Page, South Bank, London; Druva Mistry, Birmingham; Ian Hamilton-Finlay, Little Sparta, Scotland

temporary option>> To raise profile, create dialogue and raise aspirations for future projects, an option is to curate a temporary exhibition of artworks located around the City for between three to twelve months.

3.9 Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature



Fowlers Yard units; poorly defined entrance to Fowlers Yard; indicative entrance features

Fowlers Yard is a terrace of creative industry spaces, and is owned and managed by City of Durham Council. There are a range of creative businesses operating from these units, with current occupants including a photography studio, milliner/clothes designer, painter, jeweller, micro brewery and Durham City Arts.

The majority of businesses in Fowlers Yard operate on a combined studio/shop basis and attracting additional footfall to Fowlers Yard will have a clear benefit with the viability of those businesses. In part this promotion can be achieved through PR and advertising, but the role of physical signage and improvements to the nearby public realm is of equal importance. There are three areas where improvements can be made:

- Enhancements at the highway entrance to Back Silver Street, from which there is currently little indication of the Fowlers Yard complex.
- Information on Silver Street and at Market Place indicating the existence, location and distance to Fowlers Yard via the pedestrian walkways that link them.
- Improvements to the Vennels that lead from Silver Street and Market Place to Fowlers Yard.

The Durham City Wayfinding Strategy addresses some of these requirements as part of a holistic programme of signage improvements for the city, and several of the art projects already outlined will also contribute to this process and bring benefit to Fowlers Yard by improving legibility. The space immediately to the front of Leonards Coffee Shop or Durham City Arts fit logically into the proposed route for the Durham Plinths project, and plans for the Vennels (both arts commissioning and more general physical improvements) should prioritise the linkages between Silver Street and Fowlers Yard as 'early wins'.

The primary, sculptural entrance-marking feature could be located on the grass at the entrance to Back Silver Street with secondary features within the Vennels entrances.

commission>> an entrance or gateway feature at the corner of Walkergate and Fowlers Yard, promoting Fowlers Yard.

3.10 Durham Railway Station: Steps and Underpass



Durham Station steps, viewing area and underpass; cladding to brick wall of the pedestrian walkway to Waterloo Station, London; Elley Dee, Jeremy Lord, Cramlington; textured concrete wall design, Temple Bar, Dublin

Durham City Vision recently completed new access steps and landscaping enhancements adjacent to the Railway Station. The project, funded by Single Programme via ONE North East, comprises major new steps down the embankment in front of the station entrance, opening up a new vista. It concludes at the base of the steps with improvements to the small viewing area overlooking the City.

The scheme was to include a small art commission for which artist Catherine Bertola was selected. Although the commission could not be progressed at that point, suitable stone (in terms of sizes and surface texture) was specified to allow for the possibility of 'retro-fitting' the artwork at a later date. The proposed commission – part of *City of Stone* – would have started with a short period of historical research by the artist, after which a series of motifs or designs would be generated and grit-blasted into the stone steps and walls.

Whilst the Station and its environs have been improved, the road and pedestrian underpass remains an unwelcoming environment through which many residents and tourists pass on route to the City centre. The solution could be a simple and standard public realm scheme with a clean-up, enhanced lighting and new railings and floor surfacing, but a more creative response could provide a more fitting entrance to the City, becoming the first cultural experience of the City and setting a standard for the City as a whole.

commission>> Catherine Bertola designs for the stone steps and viewing area.

commission>> Extend the scope of the above project to include the underpass using alternate materials.

3.11 Strategic support for temporary Visual Arts Projects



*Durham Enlightenment Festival: **The Third Eye**, Sanchayan Ghosh; **Calcutta Lights**, Nandita Pouchadbury; **Chandelier**, Lulu Quinn; **Illuminated Carpet**, Julie Westerman*

Too many permanent projects in key spaces would soon clog up the space available for temporary artworks and events. The statues in Market Place and Millennium Place have effectively 'filled' them – they could not sensibly accommodate another art object of similar scale. As a reflection of this the majority of the projects in this plan are for small, overlooked spaces rather than the major spaces, and even in these major spaces care has been taken to propose specific artforms that do not dominate or clutter the space.

Temporary projects can animate and revitalise spaces, can offer new ways of interpreting or approaching familiar spaces, and most importantly offer a 'no-risk' route to experimenting with the spaces. This last point is essential, as temporary artworks typically require less scrutinising than permanent projects and therefore a greater level of risk can usually be accepted. After all if it doesn't work, or fit in, then there is no harm done. Temporary projects are the lifeblood of creativity in the public realm, and have an expansive effect on the understanding of the subject for those officers, councillors and other stakeholders that are involved in the creation of public art.

City of Durham Council is a core funder and major stakeholder in both Durham City Arts (DCA) and Durham City Vision (DCV), and both organisations act on the council's behalf as delivery vehicles for events and arts activity in the City. DCA and DCV have recently begun collaborating on larger, more ambitious projects such as the Enlightenment Festival in 2008.

Projects with this level of ambition are expensive and difficult to fund, with major funders tending not to finance annual events. Private sector %forArt contributions will never become the backbone of a temporary art commissioning programme, but they could nonetheless make a significant impact in the viability of such projects – offering match funding required by regular funders such as Arts Council England. Temporary public art commissions are eligible for support through the council's %forArt policy provided that they offer proven benefit to the community, and the scale and quality of events such as the Enlightenment Festival certainly qualify under this criteria.

Care must be taken that only projects of the highest calibre are supported through this route, and that a strategic scrutiny is in place to evaluate each opportunity. This would be the role of the Public Art Steering Group (see Section 4: Making it Happen).

section 4 making it happen



4.1 Programme Management

Section 2.2 of this Action Plan notes that the defining characteristic of the public art collection in most cities is actually the lack of any defining characteristic, and goes on to make a case for Durham adopting a more clearly defined programme of art commissions within the *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* strands. If this core principle is accepted then the curation, management and allocation of resources will need to be addressed carefully.

Depending on the specific nature of each project, Durham County Council could deliver individual commissions on an ad-hoc basis via a number of arts officers, arts organisations or public art consultants. The specialist nature of public art commissioning and the need for a consistent approach suggests that DCA could play an important role in the delivery of this programme, and this recommendation echoes the findings of the RKL Consultants 'Wide Angle' report from April 2005 (see 1.2).

4.2 Steering Group and Programme Scrutiny

It is equally clear that, to ensure that the agreed vision and strategic aims are not lost sight of, the commissioners will need to be under scrutiny by a steering group. The process would require absolute transparency, and it would be the Steering Group's responsibility to ensure compliance with the terms of the contribution and to provide an audit trail for the expenditure.

Recommended Steering Group members would be:

- **CHAIR:** Head Of Cultural Services*, Durham County Council
 - *Client representation and strategic guidance*
- Director, DCA (Durham City Arts)
 - *Director of the annual Durham Book Festival;*
 - *project manager of the Durham Public Art programme*
- Heritage & Planning Officer*, Durham County Council
 - *guidance on planning, heritage, urban design and landscape issues;*
 - *advice on key opportunities via the private sector*
- Director, Durham City Vision
 - *integration with major regeneration projects and activity within the City*
- Tourism Manager*, Durham County Council
 - *Perspective on the value of the programme for the City's tourism offer*
- Commission North, Arts Council England
 - *guidance on public art; regional and national perspective; strategic buy-in*
- Chair of DCA (Durham City Arts)
 - *advocate of arts within the City*

- Private Developer
 - *An observation-only place on the Steering Group for developers contributing funding to the delivery of %forArt projects*

** These job titles may change within the new unitary authority Durham County Council*

In addition, meetings where *City of Letters* commissions were under discussion would require an expanded panel with literature expertise:

- Cultural Lead, Durham University
 - *access to expertise, archives and resources within the University*
- Director, New Writing North
 - *the regional development agency for creative writing*
- Arts Council England (NE) Literature Officer
 - *strategic buy-in and guidance*

As with all steering groups, a simple Terms of Reference document would be required, and invited members would need to understand the time commitment for meetings and their role and workload outside of the meetings themselves. When finalising membership, the question must be asked as to whether the panel members have the right balance between authority within their organisations and the time to commit to the process. The programme managers would service the Steering Group.

4.3 Identifying sites

Agreed sites for commissions need to be determined through a selection matrix which represents the interests of all parties:

For an artist (including writers), the selection of a site would involve spending time in the City, responding on a personal level to its spaces and creating a unique site-specific artwork or text for one space or a series of spaces.

For those individuals with a *remit for culture and tourism* in the City, the preferred sites would be those which offer the greatest benefit to the City's image and have the greatest synchronicity with ongoing events and activities.

For the regeneration team working on the development of the City's public realm and architecture, it will be logical to 'follow the money' – an integrated commissioning as part of wider developments by specifying the location, timescale and budget in advance of an artist's appointment.

Each of these agendas would inform a shortlist of preferred sites, although the appointed artist/writer should be welcome to propose alternatives. The steering group and artist would liaise throughout the process to identify the most appropriate site and a number of alternates.

4.4 The Procurement Process: Standard Processes and Exemptions

The majority of the projects outlined in this action plan can be successfully commissioned through a well-tried and accepted process along the following lines:

Public Art consultant longlists c.9 artists and presents these to the steering group



Steering group shortlists 3 artists



3 artists commissioned to develop outline proposals



Steering group select a preferred artist



Artist is contracted for a design development phase



Steering group sign-off detailed design



Artist is contracted to fabricate and install artwork

However there are a number of projects where a more flexible approach to procurement will need to be adopted in order to achieve best results:

Example 1: City of Stone

As outlined in 2.4, stone sculpture is a professional field dominated by conservative and often derivative artists, and the challenge will be to commission artwork with this material in an innovative way. A dual approach to recruitment is proposed, including a proactive route of pairing a contemporary artist with no background in working with stone with a skilled carver, mason or stone processing facility. That pairing needs to be assembled and managed extremely closely, and the working relationship becomes something akin to a three-way collaboration between artist, artisan and public art consultant, with traditional boundaries and professional distinctions largely broken down.

Example 2: Durham's Creative Community

Cumulatively the projects outlined in this plan represent a major investment in the City's public realm and a scale of commissioning that is unprecedented in Durham. The emphasis within the plan is on commissioning work of the highest quality, and this will require artists of the highest quality. Inevitably this approach will see most if not all of the commissions being awarded to artists from outside the City, which has a relatively small number of artists and very few with an established profile.

City of Durham Council has a very positive recent experience of 'affirmative action' in what became Keri Townsend's *Durham Needles* project at Freemans Quay Leisure Centre. The Council requested a longlist of North-East artists at an early point in their career, and the resulting artwork clearly reveals the innovation and ambition that such artists bring. However the project did require additional management time, programme time and cost, and also carried an increased risk of failure.

Other forms of affirmative action could include ring-fencing specific commissions for local artists; establishing mentoring and other professional development opportunities as part of each commission and the wider programme; and allocating resource to support artist-initiated activity within the City.

Example 3: Purchase of existing artworks

This approach is unusual in public art commissioning within the public sector, although not unheard of. Typically it is a mechanism for taking advantage of end-of-year capital underspend, and has been used in several local authorities in the North-East, most notably in Newcastle's Grainger Town area. Although considered by many to be bad practice due to an implied lack of connection with the context of the site, when done sensitively this approach can be as successful as any other form of commissioning. It has a particular relevance to the Durham Plinths project, where some of the artworks could be commissioned from experienced stone carvers for example. A significant proportion of such carvers look inwards to the unique qualities of an individual piece of stone for the starting point in their carving process, and many of the resultant sculptures are as much about the material, the object and the artist's private concerns as they are the eventual site. Therefore existing artworks could be just as appropriate as newly commissioned ones.

4.5 Promotion, Interpretation and Education

Commissioned public art typically receive a press release on its installation and perhaps at the point of the artwork being picked up by the press during the planning permission process. Subsequent interpretation is likely to be limited to a small plaque with title, artist, year and probably the key funder(s). Education activity – workshops, activity packs etc - is uncommon.

This limited approach is the result of lack of funding, capacity and often the disproportionate costs when expressed in percentage terms against a project budget. By contrast, a significant programme of commissions managed in a strategic fashion by a Steering Group has the advantage of economies of scale – in terms of both finance and capacity. With the explicit agreement of the relevant private developers an allocation could be made across the programme to allow for high-quality PR and education activity.

Education and outreach activity of this sort is best undertaken by a local organisation with existing links to, and understanding of, the artists, the creative sector and the political context at a local level.

4.6 Funding and funding sources

This document has been drafted in reference to the likely availability of funding via adopted %forArt policy or Section 106 planning obligations. This funding stream will fluctuate between financial years dependent on receiving major planning applications, the general world economy, and the likely preference of developers towards delivering public art on their own sites rather than transferring the funding to the projects in this Public Art Action Plan.

The projects outlined in this document, including the routes and trails, are designed to be deliverable in a series of phases as and when funding becomes available through the %forArt system – what is important is to agree and hold to that strategic vision over a number of years.

Aside from developer contributions or %forArt allocations within the council's own capital projects, this core funding should be sought from Arts Council England (NE) and the Durham County Council (note: at this time One North East and its subsidiaries state that they do not fund public art. However they have done so on a regular basis when the application is packaged into a wider regeneration scheme).

As a registered charity Durham City Arts may be able to access other funding sources, especially for engagement and education activity around the programme, but this would not act as a substitute for support from the statutory bodies.

As Durham City Arts is not currently VAT registered the income from the private sector %forArt contributions and other sources should be held and processed by the local authority.

The budget outlined in 4.7 provides an estimate of the total costs to deliver all the schemes outlined in this action plan, the cost of which would far exceed the projected income from private sector %forArt contributions and the recommended covering of the programme 'core costs' by Durham County Council and Arts Council England (NE). Collectively the projects have the potential to radically enhance the visitor offer within the City centre, to transform the quality of the public realm, and to revitalise the City's approach to its heritage. The majority of funding is therefore likely to come from the usual public sector funders through regeneration and tourism budgets.

As noted previously the individual projects that comprise the programme have been developed with a view to being delivered as and when funding is available, and the programme is entirely scalable.

4.7 Indicative outline programme budget – 5 year programme

INDICATIVE EXPENDITURE

The Durham Market: Setting Out A Stall	50,000
Claypath Bridge: Linkage with Millennium Place	260,000
City Of Letters major commissions (assume annual @ 70k)	350,000
The Vennels	up to 100,000
The Durham Plinths (<i>assumed 10 @ an average of 40k</i>)	up to 400,000
Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature	50,000
Durham Railway Station: Steps	20,000
Durham Railway Station: Underpass	80,000
Temporary visual arts projects (<i>assume an average of 10k p.a.</i>)	50,000
Indicative Management Fees @ 15%	<u>255,000</u>
TOTAL	£1,615,000

INDICATIVE INCOME

Durham County Council – annual basic contribution of 20k*	100,000
Arts Council England (NE) – annual basic contribution of 20k**	100,000
Durham County Council – contribution to specific projects	500,000
ONE/Durham Economic Partnership – contribution to specific projects	500,000
Other stakeholders (i.e. Durham University, Durham Cathedral)	65,000
Charitable Trusts and Bodies (inc. Landfill Tax)	100,000
Private Sector %forArt contributions***	<u>250,000</u>
TOTAL	£1,615,000

** Note: Investment from Durham County Council will be a future decision for the Unitary Authority*

*** Note: a level of core funding from project partners is essential to stabilising the activity into an actual programme of strategic activity, particularly in reference to an annual City Of Letters commission*

*** Note: Income levels from the Private Sector will vary enormously from year to year, and are impossible to predict. The suggested sums can only be taken as a 'best guess' based on recent activity and the assumption that the majority of %forArt activity will remain on the developer's own sites and outside of the control of the Steering Group.*

Note: The Market Place projects: relocation of the statues, flooring schemes, and equipping the space for events would be agreed by the Market Place regeneration scheme with the design team's overall management and ownership of the process.

4.8 Key recommendations

The first key recommendation is that the City Council's %forArt Supplementary Planning Document represents a major asset in the development of high quality public art throughout the City, both on new development sites and as a levied fund for agreed City projects. It is a clear and robust policy which sets out the Council's expectations of developers, and all possible steps should be taken to have a similar policy adopted by the new authority.

The second is that a programme of commissions such as those outlined in this report need to be curated and managed within a strategic vision, and that this will require a stable delivery body and the ongoing engagement of a steering group. The role of curating and project managing the programme, and of servicing the steering group that will oversee activity, could be undertaken by Durham City Arts.

The third recommendation, based on experience in other local authorities, is that available funding should not be allocated to the delivery of one commission, but instead 'invested' on the first two phases of a number of public art commissions: outline proposals and a further research and development phase. Proportionately these two phases take up a small amount of the overall budget and a large amount of the project time, and using available resource to take a project through these phases readies them to take advantage of any funding opportunities that might arise.



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v1 Prepared by Grit & Pearl on behalf of DCA (Durham City Arts), October 2008

v2 Revised in line with guidance from City of Durham Council, December 2008