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**Title:** Public realm design projects

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**Note:** Creative enhancement proposals - Ginnel, Barrow in Furness

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# GINNEL, BARROW IN FURNESS

26.4.2009 v2

creative enhancement proposals

## Background

*Regeneration By Design* is a West Lakes Renaissance (WLR) initiative funded in partnership with Arts Council England, and tasked with raising aspirations and standards in relation to issues of design, public art, architecture, urban planning, landscape design and creativity within the WLR programme. The *Regeneration By Design* team were invited to review and engage with a number of projects within the programme, including the Ginnel in Barrow In Furness – which as an unusual space was felt to represent a unique and particularly appropriate site for a different approach.

The outline proposals contained in this report are developed from a response to the site itself, to the 'Portland Walk Passageway Draft Report' (June 2006) commissioned by Barrow Borough Council from Gillespies, and to the draft design scheme by Capita Symonds. These proposals were presented by *Regeneration By Design* to the Dalton Rd Pre-Project Board (including representatives from Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Capita Symonds and West Lakes Renaissance) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009.

The proposals divide into the following strands:

- **steelwork (screens, grilles and gates)**
- **the Service Yard**
- **cladding treatments**
- **entrance points and waymarking**
- **creative lighting**
- **support items for Forum28**

This report summarises that presentation, providing additional explanatory text and indicative costings for consideration by the Project Board. In many respects it makes the case for additional funding resource in line with the £200k budget originally indicated in the Gillespies document.

## Steelwork

A substantial proportion of the proposed creative schemes are to create or replace metal screens and barriers within the Ginnel. These items would be designed by an artist to a brief which clearly sets out the security and access requirements of each item. From the meeting of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the main elements that require replacing as agreed by all parties are as follows:



*replacement screens to both sides of the carpark stairwell*



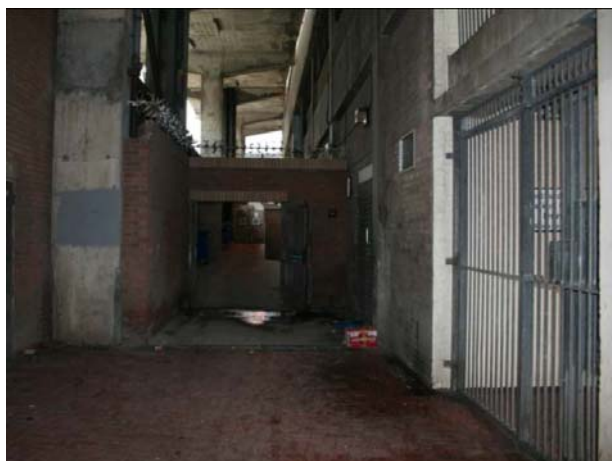
*replacement screens to both sides of the Wilkinsons disabled access walkway*



*New screen/gate to the retail service alley, and a replacement screen to the foot of the carpark stairwell*

Each of these screens will act to bring the overall design of the Ginnel up to date, and to give the space a sense of design, but their primary function is to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour. There are currently particular issues with items being thrown down onto pedestrians from the car park and stairwell, with urination and with the number of hiding places – all of which combine to make the Ginnel an unpleasant but necessary route for many people. The new screens would be designed to limit opportunities for this kind of behaviour, and to make the general public feel much safer when they use the Ginnel.

The most important element is the new front screen and gate to the service alley, which will obscure a truly appalling view, provide additional security for retailers and go a long way towards reducing opportunities for anti-social behaviour. However the space would not be fully screened unless the side panels of the carpark stairwell are in-filled with blockwork.



*The view into the  
retailers' service alley*



*Location of screens to be replaced with block infill (to  
the left), removing the side view into the alleyway*

One space not marked for a similar treatment is the roller shutter and fire escape panel for the Forum 28 building, which in current plans will be either simply painted or treated as an art mural. The latter approach is not recommended as it has significant maintenance implications, and does not match the other design-led projects within the Ginnel. A paint treatment is the 'minimal intervention' option, but as this space is immediately adjacent to the stairwell screen and service alley screen on one side, and the new steelwork proposed for the Forum28 loading bay on the other, it is recommended that a similar screen/gate treatment is applied to this space as well.



*Forum 28: fire exit and roller doors*

In addition to these items, one major addition to the Ginnel scheme is proposed: a major screen and gate system that divides the Ginnel from the Service Yard (see over).

## The Service Yard



*The Service Yard, Forum 28 Loading Bay and dividing wall between the Service Yard and Ginnel*

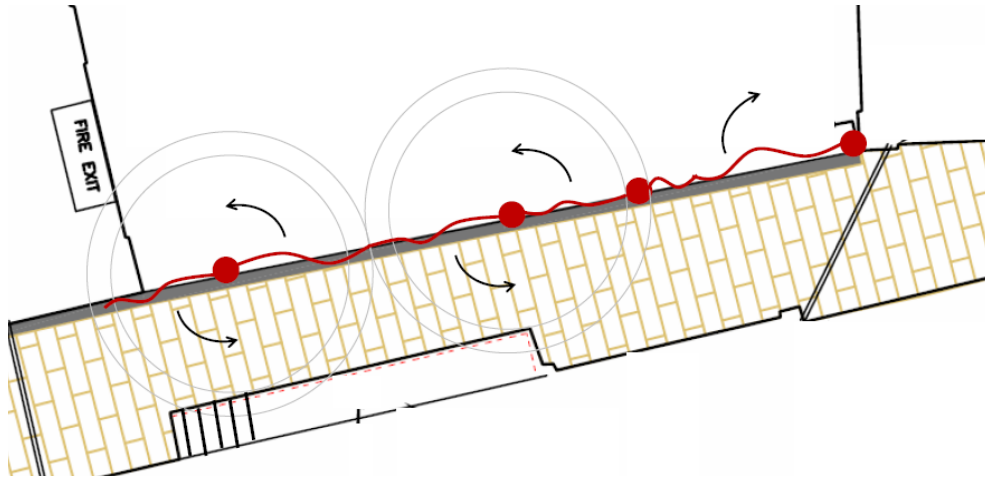
The two main issues relating to this space are the visual quality of the main Service Yard itself, and the public Health & Safety risk relating to the Forum 28 loading bay. The Service Yard is a functional space of very low visual appeal, and its only value to the experience of walking through the Ginnel is to break-up the claustrophobic atmosphere and provide some welcome daylight. Access is required from the Loading Bay to the Ginnel for two purposes – lorry access to the Forum 28 loading bay, and the use by retailers for wheeling deliveries between the Service Yard and their premises within the Ginnel.

Both the original Gillespies report and earlier versions of the Capita Symonds scheme proposed some visual enhancements to the Service Yard in the form of floor treatments and advertising/artworks to the building facades. However, these elements have been dropped from the latest design following negative comments from the major store owners, and perceived difficulties in securing the legal agreements necessary for installing such elements. This current scheme only extends slightly into the Service Yard, effectively ignoring the ongoing issue of its poor visual quality.

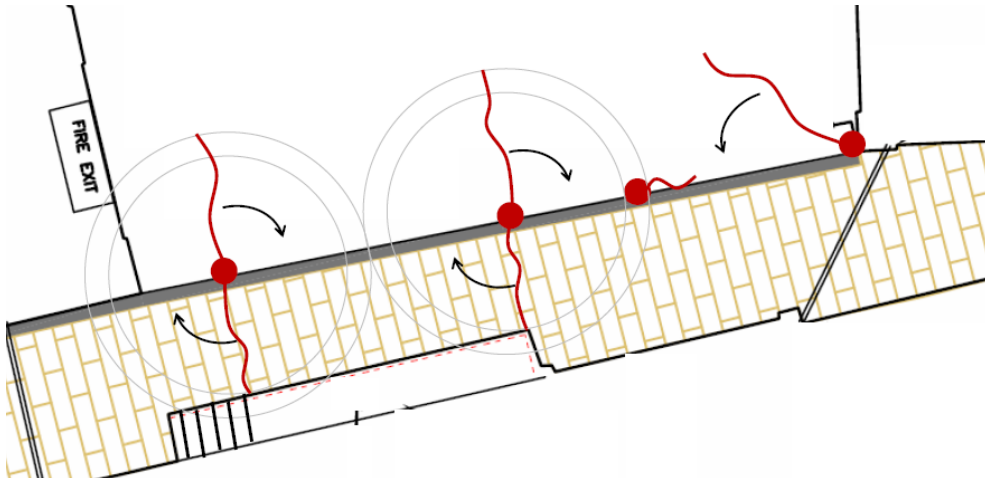
The proposed solution to both the main issues is to create a screen between the Service Yard and the Ginnel. Effectively this removes the first issue of the Service Yard's lack of appeal by obscuring the view of it, and, if designed to the right height and at the right location, will still allow a sense of space and light within the Ginnel. Lorry access across the Ginnel to the Forum28 loading bay – the second issue – will be maintained by rotating certain sections of the screen to create a clearly defined, safe, pedestrian route around the loading operation. A smaller gate will be provided within the screen to allow access for traders within the Ginnel to wheel deliveries through from the service yard, whilst discouraging public access into the Service Yard.



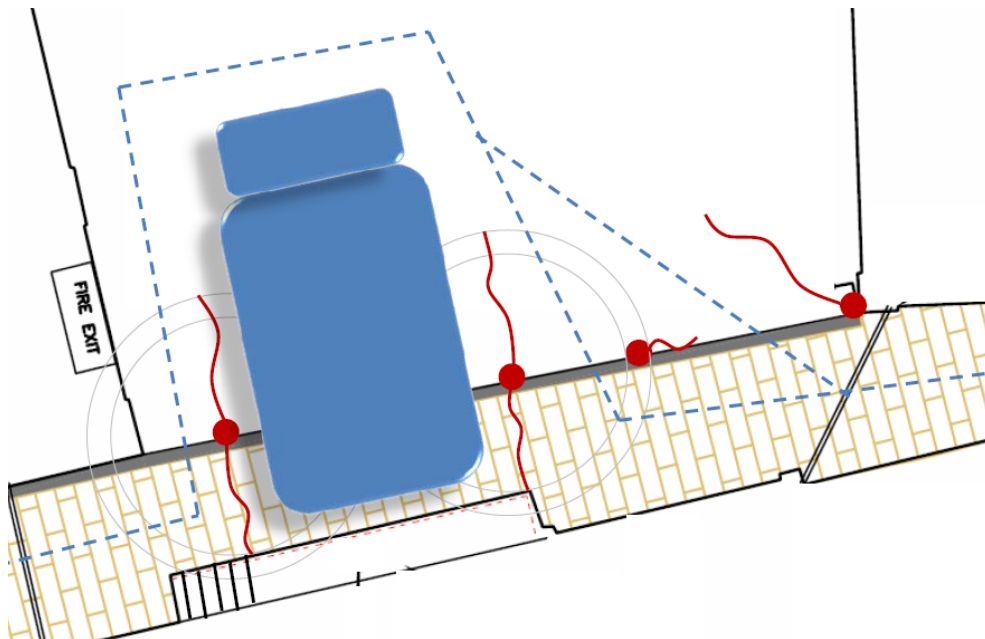
## the screen in operation



*The screen in its closed formation, creating a visual and physical divide between the Ginnel and the Service Yard.*

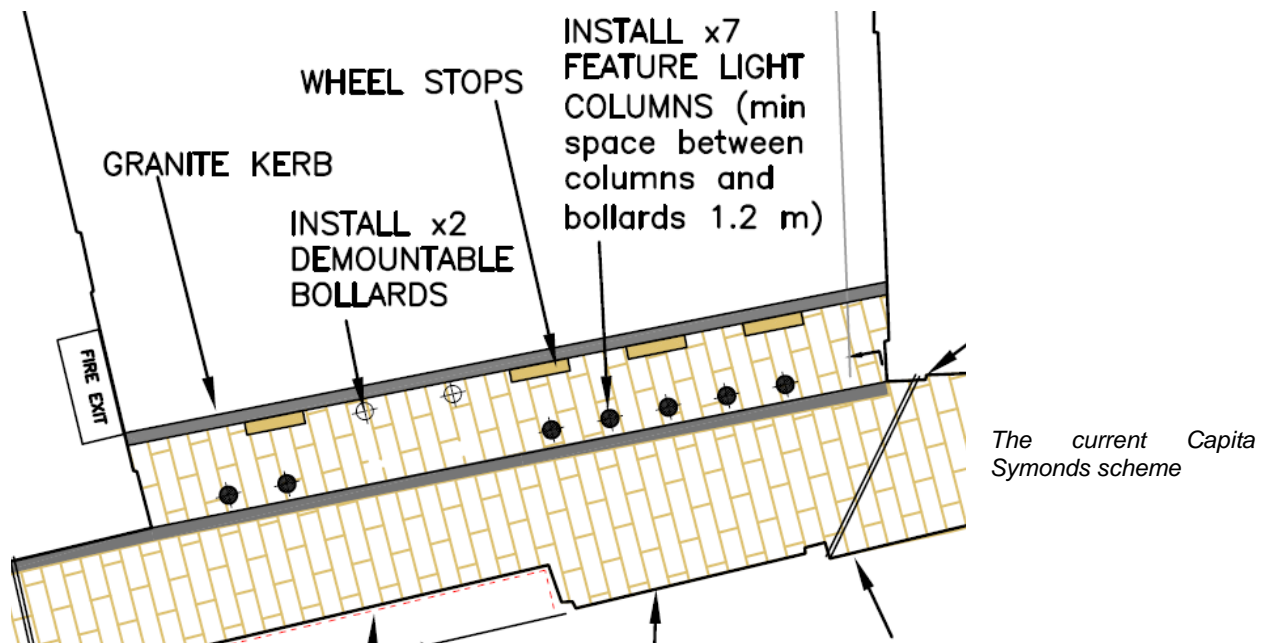


*The screen in its open formation – the two larger sections connecting to the Forum28 loading bay, creating an enclosed and secure space.*



*The screens in operation, creating safe pedestrian route around the Forum28 loading bay. The design of the screens would include directional signage for pedestrians*

The current Capita Symonds design 'reclaims' a small strip of the Service Yard for the Ginnel space by extending the new flooring and adding bollards, wheel stops and lighting columns. Within this scheme the lighting columns are the only distraction from the unappealing view of the Service Yard, which would remain on view.



The Capita Symonds scheme and the screen proposed in this report are largely compatible, and it would be a simple task to incorporate the screens into the overall scheme. In particular the columns around which the sections of screen would pivot can also function as light columns, there is some leeway in the line of the screen itself, and the wheel stops would still be required adjacent to the smaller gate. Only the bollards would be extraneous.

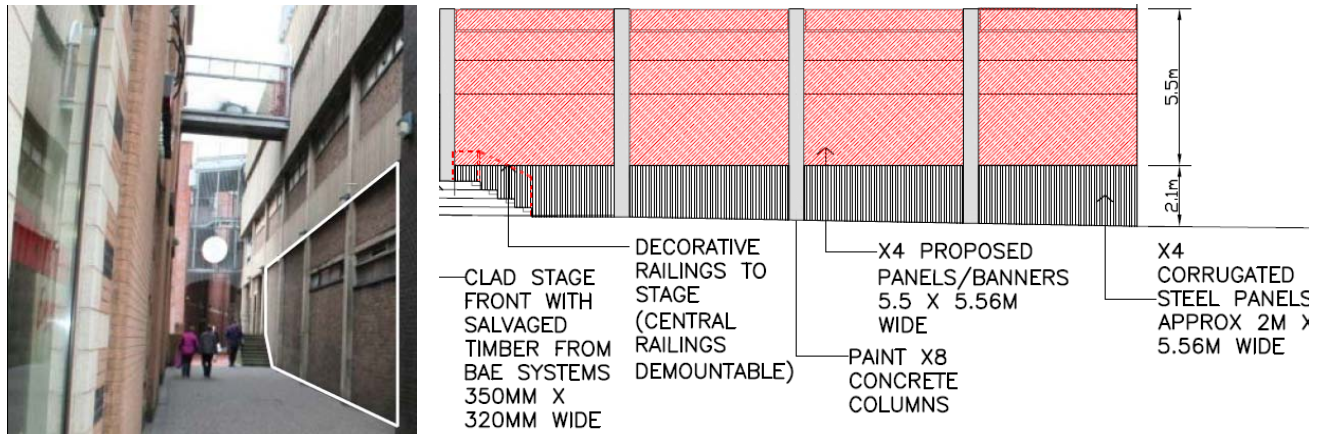


*Examples of pivoting gates in Newcastle and Portishead.*

*The screen for the Ginnel would utilise the same technique, but would provide a higher level of screening than these relatively open examples*



## Cladding treatments



*Section for new vitreous enamel panels outlined in white*

The wall of the Forum28 building presents as series of unappealing brick walls, concrete, ventilation and heating ducts, and broken or boarded up windows. Opposite, the Wilkinson's building is in good condition but suffers from the half-hearted display windows. The current proposed scheme sees vinyl panels applied at high level to the Forum28 building, possibly utilising the 'I Love Barrow' branding, and with the first two metres from ground level clad in corrugated steel.

Corrugated steel can look good, especially when side lit, but can often raise negative responses and associations from the general public. During the presentation it was argued that the lower sections of wall were particularly important (especially in comparison with the higher levels, which would not commonly be looked at due to the nature of the space), and as an alternative to corrugated steel a number of materials and processes were proposed. These included imagery cut into steel panels, colour-changing panels, vitreous enamel panels, and lenticular panels (i.e. images that animate or change as you move past them). Feedback suggests that vitreous enamel panels would be the preferred option if budget was available. The scheme would have much more integrity and presence if the Wilkinsons building could be included, and every effort to secure the necessary legal agreements should be made.



## Waymarking & Entrances



*The Gillespies visualisation, with dancing girl sculpture and contrasting floor treatment*

One significant aspect of the Gillespies report that differs from the Capita Symonds scheme is Gillespies' proposal to create a clear sense of entrance into the Ginnel. Gillespies recommended the use of a floor surface that contrasts with the flooring in the adjacent streets, and for that new floor surface to extend out of the Ginnel. This new 'visual attractor' for the Ginnel route would then be reinforced by a pair of sculptural figures literally pointing into the Ginnel from each end.

The solution proposed by Gillespies is poor in its understanding of art commissioning, and unworkable at one end due to the need for vehicle access, but the underlying principle is extremely sound. The Ginnel is a key route from the Town Hall to the town centre, but is poorly defined and 'sign-posted' to the general public. The Ginnel needs a public face on the streets at either end.



*The two entrances to the Ginnel, hardly noticeable in the streetscape and largely reliant on the knowledge of locals*

The first, easiest step to achieving this is through the flooring. The sandstone flooring specified by Capita will contrast well with the tegular blocks at the Town Hall end, and extending this flooring out of the Ginnel to a defined edge will help to advertise the Ginnel's existence. At the retail end this will be more difficult as the main road will also be resurfaced with sandstone. The solution would be to create an edging strip or band in an alternate material with a strong tonal and colour contrast.

Sculptural features or signage would also have a role to play, defining the boundaries of the Ginnel and creating markers that are visible from a distance along the streets. It would also be invaluable in turning the Ginnel from being a non-space (a space leftover by the edges of properties) into a place with a clear identity and legibility.



*Opportunities for a revised flooring design, and for sculptural signage promoting the entrance point (without obstructing vehicular traffic on the road itself)*



*Additional object to resolve a personal safety risk (mugging) by filling a hiding place*

Partway through the Ginnel is the concrete column for the car park, which creates a physical and visual obstruction and an acknowledged personal safety risk. 'Filling' this hiding space with a similar sculptural object (which would ideally incorporate lighting) would remove this risk and provide a visual connection through the Ginnel.



## Forum 28 enhancements

Alongside the proposed solution to the safe delivery to Forum28, discussions with the management have identified three small additional elements that would benefit Forum 28. The first, at the entrance to the Ginnel, is to replace the existing planting bed and railing with flagstones, creating a small but functional outdoor seating area for the Forum 28 cafe. The raised bed is somewhat at odds with the more contemporary feel proposed for the Ginnel, so this proposal is of some benefit to the wider scheme as well. It was indicated at the meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> April that this would be feasible and that Barrow Borough Council would source the funding for this small addition to the scheme. Adjacent to this is the brick wall housing the large Forum28 signage banner, and it is recommended that the lower section becomes the site for new, lockable display cabinets for the promotion of events and activities.



*Replace the planting and railing with paving for a cafe space, install display cases below the vinyl banner*



Forum 28 Facade



The main entrance space for Forum 28 is to be extended by enclosing the porch area, requiring a new metal gate/screen to the side of the entrance. Whilst some distance from the Ginnel, it is recommended that the artist appointed to design the Ginnel steelworks be contracted to develop an outline design on behalf of Forum28 as well. The budget for the fabrication would then be sought by Barrow Borough Council as an integrated part of their extension project.

## Creative Lighting

Underpinning all these small commissioned elements is the implementation of a well-designed lighting scheme. As with other aspects of the current Capita design, budget constraints have necessitated a fairly stripped down approach, in which the poor quality existing lighting is replaced by a contemporary, better quality alternative. This would provide statutory lighting levels but miss out on the opportunity to create an interesting and welcoming environment that matches aspirations elsewhere in the town centre.



*Existing uplighters*



*Undersides to carpark and stairwell – two examples of many flat surfaces that would benefit from a colour wash*

The additional investment of time and funding that is proposed for artworks, screens and other items should be matched by the approach to lighting, which has the potential to have a transformative effect on the space at dusk, night-time and in the winter months. This challenge in meeting this opportunity is to fund and facilitate a collaborative process between the artists/craftspeople creating the bespoke elements in the Ginnel and a lighting designer – ensuring that the lighting binds the scheme together and enhances each element within it.



*Lighting solutions: inset into flooring, suspended above walkways, colour-washes to architecture*



# Summary of recommendations

## Physical projects

- Commission a new screen with rotating sections and gate to divide the Ginnel from the Service Yard, obscuring the view of the yard
- Commission a new screen and gate for the Ginnel service alleyway
- Replacement screens for the overhead carpark stairs, Wilkinsons access and base of the stairwell
- Commission a new screen and doors for the Forum28 fire escape and roller doors
- New steelwork for the Forum28 loading bay railings
- Remove the view into the service alleyway from the carpark stairs by replacing the existing steel grill with blockwork
- Include the design of the new gate/screen required for the front entrance of Forum 28 into the Artist's Brief for the Ginnel metalwork
- Pave over the planting bed at the Ginnel entrance to create a small outdoor seating area for the Forum 28 cafe
- Procure and install changeable, lockable display panels for Forum 28, for their ongoing promotion of events and activities
- Vitreous enamel artwork panels on the Forum 28 building
- New CCTV to include coverage of the vitreous enamel panels on the Forum 28 building
- Additional lighting components throughout the Ginnel, designed and specified in collaboration with the appointed artist(s)
- Extension of the floor surface towards the Town Hall, and clearer definition at the retail end of the Ginnel
- Sculptural signage to each end of the Ginnel, and mid-way adjacent to the car park column

## Underlying principle of collaboration

Many of these strands could, and for best results should, have overlap – achieved by commissioning appropriate artists and designers, and managing their close collaboration during detailed design. Sufficient time should be allowed for the designs and inter-relationships between elements of the design team to develop and be refined. Management of the design team should support and push the designers to achieve the best possible solution for Barrow.

## Indicative costs

		Cost
<b>Capita Scheme</b>	Paving	£25,000
	Banners	£5,000
	CCTV Camera	£32,000
	<del>Light fittings (downlighters and columns)</del>	<del>£37,000</del>
	<del>Steelwork</del>	<del>£50,000</del>
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£62,000</b>
<b>Design fees</b>	Artist (steelwork): Outline design fees (3 x £1500)	£4,500
	Artist (panelling): Outline design fees (3 x £1500)	£4,500
	Lighting Designer: Initial design costs	£1,500
	Artist Design fees (split between two commissions)	£13,500
	Lighting Designer: detailed design fees	£4,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£28,000</b>
<b>Steelwork</b>	Wilkinsons overhead screens (x2)	£5,000
	Car Park stairwell screens (x2)	£28,000
	Car Park stairwell entrance screen and gate	£10,000
	Service Alleyway entrance screen and gate	£20,000
	Service Yard screen and rotating sections	£35,000
	Forum 28 fire escape and roller doors	£14,000
	Forum28 loading bay balustrades	£2,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£114,000</b>
<b>Panelling Sculptural signage Lighting Installation Additional</b>	To Forum28 walls	£40,000
	Three items (either end and central)	£15,000
	Allowance for light fittings and columns	£50,000
	Allowance for installation inc. at height	£15,000
	Allowance for additional flooring	£3,000
	Removal of items and additional cleaning of site	£5,000
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>£128,000</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>@10%</b>	<b>£33,000</b>

**TOTAL £365,000**

*Note: total excludes Capita fees*

## Procurement

Two separate artists and contracts will be required – one for the Forum 28 wall panelling, and one for the steelwork screen and gates. A standard public art procurement route would be used, as follows:

- Capita & Regeneration By Design collaborate on the Artist Briefs, and the selection of 3 artists for each of the two commission strands.
- A selection panel is formed, comprising the Project Group and relevant invitees such as the Forum28 Manager.
- The selection panel appoints a lighting designer to the scheme, chosen by interview and review of portfolio from 3 candidates (shortlist to include Capita's Lighting Designer plus two others agreed between Capita and Regeneration By Design).
- For each contract, the 3 shortlisted artists are contracted for outline design proposals, paid a fee of £1500 and given 8 weeks to develop their proposals.
- For each contract, the 3 shortlisted artists present their proposals to the selection panel, which would comprise the Project Group and relevant invitees such as the Forum28 Manager.
- The Selection Panel selects 1 artist for each contract. A scoring sheet is completed by each panel member (70% Quality, 30% Value for Money), and scores/notes scanned and collated for any future auditing. These individual sheets are appended to a short narrative report recording the decision and the key points in the discussion.
- The successful artists are contracted for a detailed design development stage, during which their key tasks will be to:
  - Collaborate with the appointed Lighting Designer
  - Liaise with the Project Team and other stakeholders
  - Develop the outline proposals into detailed designs
  - Produce visualisations for use in planning applications and advocacy work
  - Develop fabrication drawings or print-ready files
  - Obtain detailed quotations from fabricators
  - Provide a basic Gantt Chart for the delivery phase of the project
- The artists will conclude the detailed design phase with a presentation and report to the Selection Panel, who will endorse the designs.
- The detailed designs will be submitted to the NWDA for final sign-off, and the contract to fabricate and install the works will then be issued.

## Duration

The exact duration depends on availability for meetings etc, but would ideally be a minimum of:

2 weeks – selection of shortlist and agreeing briefs  
8 weeks – artists develop outline designs  
1 week – artists selected, and contracted for detailed designs  
8 weeks – detailed designs developed  
1 week – sign-off and contracting for fabrication  
**20 weeks**

Fabrication and installation period would vary depending on materials, techniques proposed by the selected artist, but would be expected to take less time than the procurement and design phases. Assuming the project is formally agreed and started in May 2009, then all works will be complete by the end of the financial year.

## Regeneration By Design involvement

Regeneration By Design's role in the scheme from this point will be focused on the procurement and support of the artists, collaborating with Capita on the key tasks of:

- Shortlisting 3 suitable artists
- Drafting a high-quality brief
- Shortlisting 3 suitable lighting designers
- Ensuring an auditable procurement trail
- Site visits and discussions with the creative team
- Technical review of proposals

## NWDA sign-off

To allow progression on the overall Town Centre scheme, it is proposed that the NWDA and WLR treat the Ginnel in a similar fashion to that of a 'reserved matter' in planning permissions. NWDA and WLR will endorse the contents of this report (i.e. the overall approach, specific items to be procured, the ring-fenced budget, timescale, the procurement route and the role of Regeneration By Design within the project) and allow the rest of the Town Centre scheme to proceed according to agreed designs and plans. The NWDA will then review detailed designs of the Ginnel and sign these off before fabrication commences.

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