

Committee(s): Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Decision	Dated: 22/05/23
Subject: City Arts Initiative Recommendations to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	3, 7 and 10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	n/a
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	n/a
Report of: Damian Nussbaum, Director of Innovation & Growth	For Decision
Report author: Tania Harrison, Programme Curator	

Summary

This report presents the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative (CAI) which met on 23 February 2023. At this meeting CAI considered public art proposals 1, 2 and 3, City Arts Initiative also considered a Blue Plaque application from the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks.

1. Tideway – Poems – Update on Legibility
2. 40 Leadenhall Street – Wind Mitigation Sculpture
3. London Festival of Architecture – Common Ground
4. London Festival of Architecture – Fleet Street Plant Press
5. Lester Partners Ltd – Shizo – A Replica of Alexey Navalny’s Prison Cell
6. Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks – Blue Plaque Application

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee are asked to:

Ratify the City Arts Initiative's recommendations in relation to proposals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 above as follows:

1. Tideway – Poems – Update on Legibility – approve.
2. DP9 Ltd/Vanquish Properties – Wind Mitigation Sculpture - approve subject to accessibility checks, evidence of consultation with local stakeholders and relevant permissions sought from City Planning.

3. The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) – Common Ground - approve subject to further accessibility checks and relevant permissions sought from City Planning and Highways.
4. The London Festival of Architecture (LFA) – Fleet Street Plant Press - approve subject to safety checks and relevant permissions sought from City Planning and Highways.
5. Lester Partners Ltd – SHIZO - reject due to political nature of the installation and insufficient time to gain planning permissions or consult with Highways.
6. Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks – Blue Plaque Application - approve subject to the applicant gaining listed building consent, a standard licence agreement and any other necessary planning permissions.

Main Report

Background

1. The CAI was established to improve the management of public art in the City. It provides advice to your committee on proposals for new public art. Included in its remit is the maintenance of the City's existing public art and decommissioning.
2. The CAI met on 20 April 2023 to consider the proposals outlined below.
3. Further background information is circulated electronically with this report and is available in appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Full details of all the applications to the CAI are available on request from the Programme Curator.

Proposals

1. Tideway Poems – update on legibility
4. The CAI received an update from Tideway on their original application made in November 2018 for three permanent ventilation columns on Blackfriars Bridge which include the text of poems by Dorothea Smartt. See appendix 1 for more details.
5. The ventilation columns are 5.1 metres high and made of cast iron to reflect the design of the new public realm in which they are located. The poems will run, in a single line, up the narrow, polished strip on the side of the columns to a height of approximately 3.5m.
6. The poems for the Blackfriars site (informed by the Lost River Fleet) are as follows:
 - The furious Fleet flows red with Roman blood, Boudica battles bravely (64 characters).

- St. Barbara's defended, lost. Buried beneath you Bazalgette's workers, tunnelling mudlarks swathed by the forgotten rivers of this town (137 characters).
 - The stillness of refuge seeps from old St Pancras Church, soothing this troubled mind to recovery, a tranquillity sourced from the buried river (146 characters).
7. The CHL approved this application at the 11th December 2018 committee meeting subject to confirmation of the final font and font size.
 8. At the 20 April 2023 CAI meeting, members considered images of the text received from Tideway on the new font. Sentence case Doves font was confirmed, the text measures 60mm including heads and tails. The City Access Advisor has also been consulted and confirmed good legibility.
 9. The CAI recommends that this application is approved now a full update on legibility has been obtained and relevant permissions given.

2. DP9 Ltd/Vanquish Properties – Wind Mitigation Sculpture

10. The CAI received an application from DP9 Ltd on behalf of Vanquish Properties for a permanent installation of a wind mitigation sculpture. The wind mitigation sculpture is to be placed on private land of the developer. See appendix 2 for more details.
11. The proposal forms part the wind mitigation planning conditions that recommends how wind migration and pedestrian comfort could be achieved on Billiter Street via a screen. This application relates solely to the installation of the figures and not the screen; the screen already has approval.
12. The developer of 40 Leadenhall have engaged with artist Lee Simmons to undertake initial concepts for a site-specific art installation that incorporates the wind mitigation planning condition. The initial concept looks to take the inhabitants of the city and their movements as design inspiration.
13. The CAI sees no reputational issues with such a structure but noted that the design aesthetic may not capture what we want to achieve as Destination City. The design may be perceived as sterile and homogenous in terms of colour and height.
14. The CAI recommends that the accessibility of installation is reviewed to ensure the structure can be detected by white cane users in the City. It is recommended that the installation should be placed on a plinth if this does not disrupt wind mitigation.
15. CAI recommends that the applicant talks to Planning to ensure that the structure does not obstruct pedestrian flow.
16. CAI also recommend that the applicant consults with local stakeholders to advise on the project before the structure is put in place.

17. The CAI recommends this application be approved in principle subject to confirmation of permissions from City Planning, confirmation of accessibility for white cane users and evidence of consultation with local stakeholders.

3. The London Festival of Architecture – Common Ground

18. The CAI received an application from The London Festival of Architecture for the Common Ground installation which is proposed to be placed at Bow Churchyard on a temporary basis. See appendix 3 for more details on design.

19. The installation will be in place throughout The London Festival of Architecture in June 2023 and will be taken down at the end of August.

20. An initial site visit has taken place with City Highways, and a further visit with the design team will be arranged if the application is approved.

21. The project is being developed in collaboration with Cheapside Business Alliance which are funding the installation. It has commissioned Urban Radicals and Saqra to design the piece.

22. CAI recommends that the installation should be made more accessible for wheelchair users, and that LFA should ensure the heights of the different surfaces are made to be accessible.

23. The CAI recommends this application to be approved in principle, subject to further accessibility checks and relevant permissions sought from City Planning and Highways.

4. The London Festival of Architecture – Fleet Street Plant Press

24. The CAI received an application from The London Festival of Architecture for the Fleet Street Plant Press installation which is proposed to be placed at Holborn Circus on a temporary basis. See appendix 4 for more details.

25. The installation will be in place throughout The London Festival of Architecture in June 2023 and will be taken down at the end of August 2023.

26. Initial site visits have taken place with the City Highways team, who recommend Holborn Circus as viable for installation. Once the designs are approved and developed further, a final site visit will be arranged.

27. The project is being developed in collaboration with the Fleet Street Quarter BID which is funding the project. Wayward has been commissioned to design an urban greening installation which will focus on sustainability and draw on the history of Fleet Street's famous printing history.

28. CAI recommends that the properties of the plants be checked in case of any danger to the public. A sensory guide for the public has also been recommended.

29. The CAI recommends this application is approved in principle, subject to safety checks and relevant permissions sought from City Planning and Highways.

5. Lester Partners Ltd – SHIZO – A Replica of Alexey Navalny's Prison Cell

30. The CAI received an application from Lester Partners Ltd for an installation of Shizo – A Replica of Alexey Navalny's Prison Cell to be placed at one of four proposed locations on a temporary basis of 2 to 3 weeks from mid-May. See appendix 5 for more details. The planning requirements and nature of the installation mean that CAI does not recommend proceeding with this application.

31. The installation is part of a human rights abuse campaign and has previously been displayed in Berlin, Paris and Dusseldorf.

32. Because of the scale of the installation, CAI has advised that planning advice would be required for the installation. The process includes (i) health and safety assessments, (ii) formal consultations with occupiers and neighbours, (iii) discussions with statutory utilities providers and (iv) underground services. CAI advised the applicant that the process usually takes at least 2 months to complete and therefore they would not be sufficient time to install in May.

33. The CAI has also recommended that the applicant review the accessibility of the installation, due to the nature of the space being inaccessible to wheelchair users.

34. The locations mentioned by the applicant are all near St Paul's Cathedral: St Paul's Churchyard, Paternoster Square and Panyer Alley. CAI has explained that this location would make the potential application more challenging - the applicant has been directed to consult with the City Highways team to confirm a location for the installation and to ensure the correct permissions/licences are in place. CAI has made the applicant aware that Paternoster Square has regular installations planned across the coming months and therefore would not be a suitable location in May.

35. In addition to the difficulties of the scale of the installation, CAI members are conscious of the City of London Corporation's position and have discussed the recommendation below with City officers.

36. The CAI's recommendation in this instance is to not proceed with this application. This recommendation takes into account planning matters, CoLC's political neutrality and additionally, the practicability of the timeline in question as detailed above.

37. The applicant has been told that the City Corporation does not manage permissions for the whole of London. CAI has sought to assist the applicant by advising it to approach other London Boroughs including Westminster, Southwark, Kensington & Chelsea and Camden to host the installation.

6. Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks – Blue Plaque Application

38. The CAI received an application from the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks for a Blue Plaque Application to be placed in its second hall. See appendix 7 for more details.
39. The location of the plaque is proposed at 5 Kings House, 1 Queen Street, EC4R1 which is a Grade II listed building. The building is now owned by Worshipful Company of Vintners.
40. The request is for a further plaque to identify the location of the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks livery hall. Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks already have Blue Plaques located at their 1st and 3rd halls.
41. The suggested text for the blue plaque is: 'On this site from about 1562 until it was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 stood the second hall of the Parish Clerks' Company'.
42. The applicant has confirmed that they will pay for delivery and installation costs of the plaque.
43. The CAI recommends this application to be approved in principle, subject to the applicant gaining listed building consent, a standard licence agreement and any other necessary planning permissions.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – none

Financial implications - funding for CAI projects/installations are funded externally by the applicant or project partner.

Resource implications – apart from officer time handling enquiries and managing the installations, there are no resource implications other than where specifically noted.

Legal implications - none

Risk implications – Due to the political nature, there may be reputational risk in relation to the Lester Partners SHIZO application (see proposal 5).

Equalities implications – Officers from Planning sit on the CAI where they provide access advice within their feedback to applicants.

Climate implications - none

Security implications - none

Conclusion

44. This report summarises the discussions of the City Arts Initiative. It presents recommendations in relation to the public art applications considered on 20 April 2023.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Tideway Poems Supporting Documentation
- Appendix 2 – DP9/Vanquish Properties Supporting Documentation
- Appendix 3 – LFA Common Ground Supporting Documentation
- Appendix 4 – LFA Fleet Street Plant Press Supporting Documentation
- Appendix 5 – Lester Partners SHIZO Supporting Documentation
- Appendix 6 – Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks Blue Plaque Application

Background Papers

Full details of the applications received by the City Arts Initiative are available on request from the Destination City Curator.

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