

5. Review of Practice

5.1 Outline of Projects

5.2 Review of Projects



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Stone Hirst

process

I worked with the park designers, Sheffield City Council Landscape Department, the project co-ordinator and manager (one of whose main functions is community involvement) and representatives of community groups. Installed on site in May 2003, my involvement with the scheme began in 2000 with the initial planning stages and outline design proposal for the complete park.

location

Situated in Sheffield's Manor district, notorious for its social problems and failed post-war housing, Stone Hirst is a small portion of the large new urban park. It is seen as a crucial element in the regeneration of the area with the park providing not just amenity and community focus but an encouragement to private investment.

brief

There was no brief - just the idea, which grew out of consultation and design meetings, to provide some sort of seating that was robust, might be used by and engage teenagers and relate to different types of spaces and activities. I submitted various different costed ideas and this one was chosen by the landscape designers primarily because of the ease with which it could be included within the contractual process.

design response

Through consultation events, I was involved in the initial plans for the park and my proposals were for the development of a series of veins - a *geology* of history, time and aspirations - that would run through the park and at times become seating. Their logic was visible in a central space where the veins of objects cast in resin by children were to rise up to form a viewing platform. These plans did not get funding and the seats that are left, intended as extrusions of the veins, sit rather uncomfortably in the stone walls although the fact that they are concrete, harsh and urban is intended as a deliberate contrast.



Galton Valley

process

A competition, involving three selected artists, to a fixed budget, working for British Waterways through Public Arts (a public art commissioning agency). Along with several other public art projects in the area, this project is reviewed in a booklet *Beyond the Cut* (British Waterways). Completed March 2004

location

Four miles from Birmingham City Centre Smethwick was a former industrial area which now supports a vibrant and culturally diverse community. The site, where the Birmingham Old and New Mainline Canals run parallel, forms a corridor of natural vegetation and wildlife and provides significant amenity value with its rich heritage and visual interest.

brief

Established by a site visit and a short briefing session by a member of British Waterways Tourism Development team, the brief was for three major seats to increase the amenity value of the site.

design response

After looking at the site and its requirements in my submission I suggested six smaller seats. These fit less obtrusively into the site and by providing regular resting places make the site more accessible. The time scale for design, production and installation for this project was very short so I made an early decision to use cast iron (appropriate to the site) so that some of the production strain would be taken off my workshop. In addition, after the initial cost of design and making the patterns, the benches are relatively cheap to make and I hope to encourage the client to have more - both as work for me and increasing the accessibility of the towpath.



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Graves Art Gallery

process

Selected to produce a design to a fixed budget, I worked in direct contact with the Education and Exhibition Coordinators who reported back to wider Gallery Team. The process involved submission and revision of several design suggestions and the work was completed in April 2004.

location

Graves Art Gallery in Sheffield's City Centre exhibits the city's permanent collection and stages temporary exhibitions. The Gallery is on the top floor of the elegant and finely crafted 1930s building which also houses the city's library.

brief

To design and manufacture an oak bench suitable for the Friends and Family Gallery that could also be moved to other galleries and provide a model for more general seating. It was thus to fit within the overall feeling and materials of the gallery whilst being appealing to children and useful for educational groups.

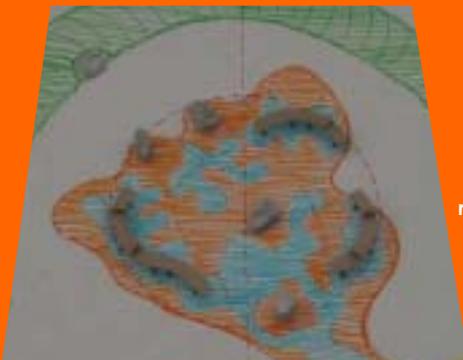
design response

I designed a number of smaller units which can be arranged in different ways by the staff. The sculpted forms invite people to sit and curves suggest conversation with others or with the pictures. Form, materials and texture were seen as a way of linking the seats with the collection and building.





To create a place to run and to jump, to sit and to listen,



to roll down the grassy bank and to lie looking up at the trees, to read and to dream,



A place of adventure and of security, of quiet and of noise,



for the old and the young, the big and the small, the wheelchair and the pushchair

Queen's Park Chesterfield

process

A competition, involving three selected artists, to a fixed budget, working for Chesterfield Borough Council through Public Arts (a public art commissioning agency). I review the competition proposal submitted in August 2004.

location

Queens Park in Chesterfield was conceived in the Victorian era to improve the physical conditions of the rapidly expanding industrial town. The 25 acre park has a boating lake, bandstand, miniature train, a cricket pitch and pavilion as well as play and teenage facilities.

brief

Established by a site visit and a short briefing session by a member of the town council's landscape design team, the seating is part of the restoration and rejuvenation of the park. Set in a horseshoe of lime trees the commission is conceived as an 'interesting artwork fulfilling a functional role' and the main theme behind the commission is that it should be a story telling bench.

design response

My proposal is for a number of *seating objects* set on a hard surface, within a crescent shaped grass mound. Like the scheme for the Graves these consist of a juxtaposition of formal and informal elements with *sitting stones* made from concrete with recycled glass aggregate (to be developed with the Department of Engineering, Sheffield University) and more conventional cast aluminium and oak benches. Consultation is included as an important element within the proposal.