

## Public Art and City Identity

political and cultural issues in the development of public art in the UK city of Leeds.

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Public art by its nature concerns not only aesthetics, but situated in public space it is contextualised by social, cultural and political issues. Public sculpture, for example, both defines and is mediated by its spatial location, and as such is part of a social dynamic in which ‘the processes through which a person defines him / herself in a society are not restricted to making distinctions between oneself and significant others, but extends with no less importance to objects and things, and the very spaces and places in which they are found.’ (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff :1983). This is pertinent not only to space within the localized environment, but also to whole constructed identities such as towns and cities. For example in Leeds, a major UK city located in the north of England, such contextual variables have helped to determine the city’s changing relationship with public art, and in particular with publicly placed sculpture.

The city of Leeds is 320 kilometres north from London, and with a population of 725,000 is the third biggest city in the United Kingdom. Covering an area of 562 square kilometres it is also the largest Metropolitan area outside London under a single local government authority. Although it does have areas of social deprivation, Leeds has been successful in resisting economic recession, and with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the United Kingdom, it has a ‘dynamic and thriving local economy that has coped with the decline of traditional manufacturing industries by embracing new sectors and turning itself into a national leader in the provision of financial services’ (Smales and Burgess: 1999). Currently, Leeds has aspirations to become a major European city, and as its current official guide maintains, its desire ‘to establish itself as a key European city and visitor destination, has ensured that Leeds sees itself as a serious-minded international player well into the millennium.’

However, for a city with such international aspirations, Leeds has very little in the way of contemporary or modern public art, and until very recently public art did not feature very prominently in its development programmes. For a number of years, contemporary or modern public art in Leeds could be exemplified by such as the unexceptional *Dortmund Drayman*, a gift in 1980 to Leeds from its twinned city Dortmund, and by the fibreglass sculpture, entitled *Androgyne* by Glenn Hellman. The latter, resulting from a competition held in 1965 by a property development firm, is badly sited and neglected, situated alongside a broken escalator in a dank scruffy corner of a shopping precinct.



*Dortmund Drayman, 1980*



*Androgyne, by Glenn Hellman, 1965*

Examples of more notable publicly placed modern sculpture are confined to a reclining figure by Henry Moore outside the Henry Moore Institute and a work by Austin Wright outside a fashionable city centre office.<sup>1</sup>



*Reclining Figure, by Henry Moore*

And while there were a few other examples, including the occasional contemporary mural, nonetheless in 1996 Smales and Whitney commented that in Leeds there was ‘a marked absence of meaningful and relevant public art and sculpture’ and that ‘Leeds had no clearly articulated policy towards the use and development of public art within the city.’ (Smales and Whitney :1966).

In contrast, there are 39 Victorian, figurative and commemorative statues in Leeds, which has lead some to regard Leeds as ‘the city of sculpture’.<sup>ii</sup> However, many have been neglected or inappropriately re-sited, although as important examples of the sculpture of their time, they reveal a city once determined during past periods of commercial and industrial growth to express its civic pride and confidence by art and architectural expression, epitomised by its Victorian town hall.

With regard to more contemporary art it was not surprising then, that at a Leeds Metropolitan University symposium on Leeds and Public Art held in 1996, an audience of artists, designers, planners and architects expressed some dismay at the lack of significant contemporary public art in Leeds and for the apparent absence of any visible strategic support for the public utilisation of art in the design and planning of the city environment.<sup>iii</sup>

Paradoxically, the caution and reluctance of Leeds as a corporate city to have developed contemporary public art can partly be attributed to art itself, or rather from the political and cultural fall-out implicit in a proposal for a major piece of innovative public sculpture and its subsequent rejection. The events surrounding the Leeds *Brickman*, while complex, are illustrative of the political and social context of public space as a contested domain.<sup>iv</sup>

In 1987 a group known as the Holbeck Triangle Trust, with the support of a local millionaire industrialist and Public Arts, a regional but nationally successful public art agency, developed an idea, originated by a commercial gallery (St. Pauls) and British Rail, for a piece of sculpture to be erected in an area known as the Holbeck Triangle.

Situated in the southern industrial part of Leeds just outside the Leeds main railway station, the site is surrounded by railway lines. The proposal that emerged was for a 35 metre statue, entitled *Brickman* by the artist Antony Gormley, not so well known then as he is today with works such as his *Angel of The North*.



*Brickman Maquette, Antony Gormley*



*Brickman Proposal, Antony Gormley*

The *Brickman* proposal engendered much controversy and debate, not only in Leeds but also in the national press of the time. After a sometimes bitter struggle with local politicians and media, the project failed in 1988 to achieve planning permission from the Leeds City Council and the project was eventually abandoned. Not only was an opportunity lost for Leeds to have been internationally innovative with a high profile contemporary public art development, but the *Brickman* might have gained for Leeds the kind of publicity and influence on regeneration that the *Angel of The North* appears to have achieved for the North East of England a decade later.<sup>v</sup> However, the *Brickman* debacle, given the bitter hostility shown to the proposal by key local

politicians and the local press, inhibited further public art development within Leeds for a number of years.



*Angel of the North, Antony Gormley*

There are many interrelated reasons why the *Brickman* project failed. It did not help that while its advocates argued for its local relevancy as a site-specific work, symbolic of the industrial history of Leeds, the sculptor himself specified with insistence that rather than using local material it should be made from brick from a neighbouring and rival area of Northern England. The selection process by which the Antony Gormley proposal was adopted was also counterproductive - for although originally proposals from 15 selected artists were exhibited in the city art gallery in October 1985 for public comment and vote, it was not made clear that this public vote was for guidance only. Accordingly a hostile local press exploited the fact that the selection committee rejected the first two favourites of the public.<sup>vi</sup>

Although the *Brickman* proposal received support from many leading figures within the art world and also from some local and national politicians,<sup>vii</sup> it failed in the end to gain the support of those local politicians who were most influential, including the then Chair of the City's Planning Committee, and the Leader of the Council. Their opposition was strengthened by political expediency, as the local press, supporters of the opposing political party, the Tories, conducted an aggressive campaign against the project. One prominent local newspaper held a public telephone vote and claimed that with 2,284 votes for and 3,114 against, the public of Leeds as a whole had rejected the *Brickman*. The poll was later condemned as biased and methodologically unsound by a leading international polling organisation, Mori.

The *Brickman* proposal and the space it was to occupy were construed with meanings and sub texts that go beyond the prosaic practicalities considered by the planning committee and the stated reasons for its rejection.<sup>ix</sup> For the proponents of the proposal and for those nationally established figures from the world of arts and culture that expressed support for the project, the *Brickman* was construed as a new iconic symbol for Leeds, a stimulus for regeneration and an expression of creative confidence for the city. In contrast, for those local politicians who opposed the concept, such opposition was seen as a populist expression of local common sense, as they uncritically welcomed the results of the local newspaper poll. For example the Chair of the Planning Committee of the time commented, 'I very much welcome this poll, which gives an indication of public opinion. Certainly the result will be noted when we discuss the planning application next month.' Further, the then Leader of the Council commented, 'I am delighted but not surprised with the formidable common sense of the Leeds public. The result demonstrates that the scheme should not go ahead.'<sup>ix</sup>

Undoubtedly political expediency had a role to play, and there was a concern that the opposition would make political capital from the project, especially as the factually incorrect notion that large sums of public money were to be involved was gaining credence. However, it is significant that in spite of the lack of its objectivity, the local newspaper poll should have been seized upon as 'evidence of the formidable common sense of the Leeds public'. That the then Leader of the Council should also add that such a common sense view 'contrasts sharply with the airy fairy views of celebrities who don't live within a hundred miles of the city,' is significant of how Leeds, its public and hence its spaces were construed. The myth of the down-to-earth, common sense, anti-intellectual, proudly independent 'salt of the earth' UK Northerner is one that is well documented as ideologically sustained within cultural and historical processes, for example as in Shields (1991). From the author's experience this stereotype perception had some currency within the labourist orientated local Labour Party of the time, particularly with regard to contemporary visual culture. The suggestion is that an innovative, and at the time a bold and very high profile proposal did not accord with how the general public and hence public space was perceived by the ruling politicians, or how they thought the city by way of its public space and objects should be perceived. As well as being typically modernist in its paternalism, an appeal to a mythical and generalised down-to-earth common sense generalised Leeds public could be regarded as a manifestation of the Northern stereotype that has emerged historically from the construction of the industrial working class with its 'demotic cultural style' on the one hand, and the creation of a middle class identity in which the northern businessman is depicted as philistine on the other, (Rawnsley: 2000). The political implications of such are identified by Shields who states:

These images and stereotypes, an imaginary geography of places and spaces, are shown to have social impacts which are empirically specifiable and located not only at the level of individual proxemics....but also at the level of social discourses on space which (1) underpin the rhetoric of ideologues and politicians and (2) pervade and subvert even the rationalistic discourse of planning and regional development policy..... (Shields 1991:6).

Another possible sub-text, illustrating the political nature of city space, is that a few years previously Leeds had experienced a traumatic period in which an infamous serial killer, known as the Yorkshire Ripper, had perpetrated a number of murders and violent crimes against women, creating an atmosphere of fear that pervaded the city. The presence of the Yorkshire Ripper also coincided with the growing political and cultural expression of feminism, particular strong in Leeds with regard to visual art. Some local feminists felt that even though visually its gender was equivocal, to have a huge image of a man towering over Leeds was inappropriate for a city whose women had been subjected to a particular brutal period of terror by a male. If titled differently, the project might have gained more support, especially among members of the District Labour Party, who were rightly sensitive to the concerns of women at that time.

Thus the hitherto lack of contemporary public art development in Leeds might be regarded as a product of socio-political processes located within the cultural construction of urban meaning and city identity. Similarly it might be considered that any manifestation of change in Leeds' civic attitude towards public art, would be

determined by a change in construed city identity and meaning, (particularly if this involved a shift away from a protective paternalism). While not unequivocal, there are some signs that such a change might appear to be taking place, necessitated by the opportunities afforded by the British lottery and its grant support for the arts, but particularly by the official aspirations of Leeds to be regarded as an international city and the construction of new perceptions to further this.

Of all the city's stated objectives, there is one aim that is highlighted in most of its planning and economic development publicity material and which features in the growing number of press articles extolling Leeds' virtues (Nicholson 1991: Williams, 1994). This is to be 'one of the principal, progressive cities of Europe' (Leeds City Council, 1994). For the observer trying to discern trends and patterns in the city's current evolution, this ambition provides a recurring theme in a broad range of design initiatives. (Smales and Whitney:1996)

Smales and Whitney also commented 'that if there is one clear omission from these attempts to improve the quality of public space along European lines, it is the marked absence of meaningful and relevant public art and sculpture in the city.' However, there now appear to be some signs of change with an increasing number of public art proposals within the city and a growing recognition that contemporary public art might have a role to play in cultural and urban development, and in local economic and social regeneration. A new draft cultural strategy for the city acknowledges the role of art for the environment and the need for a commitment to the 'highest standards of design and architecture' and 'better liaison between the City Council and the city's visual artists,' (Leeds City Council 1998). The action plan, *Vision for Leeds* of The Leeds Initiative (1999), a city council supported grouping of business, political, academic and cultural representatives formed to facilitate economic growth and regeneration for Leeds, lists as an important aspiration for development, 'the use of public art to mark main entrances to the city.'

In the same year as the Smales and Whitney critical article appeared and as the Leeds Metropolitan University symposium on public art took place, The Leeds Initiative had already begun to promote as its Millennium project, *Pride in the City*. This was a major integrated proposal for the overall refurbishment and redesign of several Leeds' public squares, as well as for the establishment of new 'gateways' to mark the main arterial routes into the city. The proposal was to involve co-operation among planners, architects, artists and craft designers, and to involve the local schools and communities, enabling them to take some ownership of the creative exploration of the designated sites. Although there were problems in establishing funding for the complete program, the proposal could be seen to mark the beginnings of a significant change in the city's attitude to urban design and public art. Moreover, supported by the city council, the first major city square project is now under development with the creation of a new dynamic public space to be known as Millennium Square. The development of this space involves several short-term public art projects as a major contribution to the ambiance and cultural life of the new square.

There are several other projects proposed or in progress involving resources and or the support of Leeds City Council, private developers and commissioning agencies such as Public Arts. For example, at Seacroft, a large working class estate in the east of the city, a major public art proposal involves a funding partnership between private and public agencies and the involvement of the East Leeds Family Learning Centred Educational Programme. Such a project is concerned not only with urban aesthetics but the role of public art in social facilitation, creating shared spaces and images to encourage social discourse and community well being.

At the east end of The Headrow, one of the city centre's central roads, a disused petrol station has been converted into a fountain to be operable at the beginning of the new Millennium year, a project supported by *both* the city council and the Scurrah Wainwright Charity, a trust which is involved in other public art proposals for Leeds, significantly involving new sculpture.<sup>x</sup> A new hotel, restaurant and retail centre, The Light, currently being constructed just off the Headrow will also involve public art, following the recent completion of Number One City Square which features commissioned sculpture as part of its front façade.



*Scheme for re-siting existing City Square statues*

Given that applications for such as lottery funding for new public art and urban designs schemes for Leeds have not been helped by the city's neglect of its Victorian public art heritage, the existing main City Square statues are to be re-sited in a design that will allow them to be more coherently visible in both defining and contributing to a major pedestrian friendly public space.

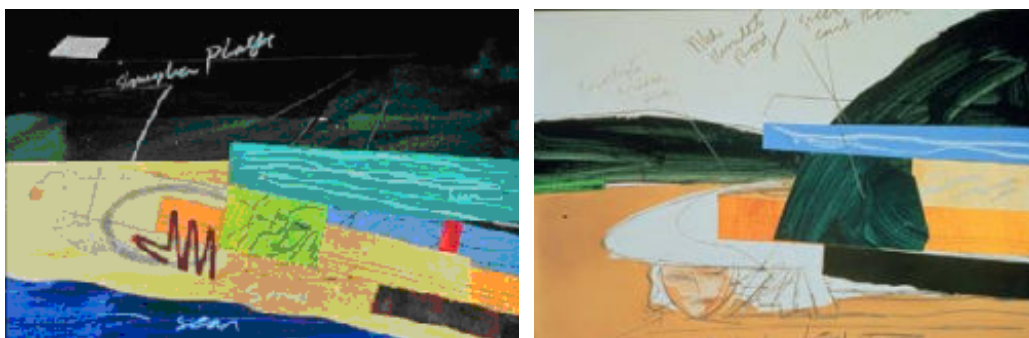
Although such projects are perhaps more indicative of an incremental and opportunist development rather than the result of any consistent strategic policy, there is some evidence that structural changes and processes are being put in place that will act as social and political drivers for public art developments within the city. These include a change in the role of the civic architect, given a more executive conceptual and creative role, and the establishment of a Leeds City Centre Urban Design Strategy (Smales and Burgess 1999). An important structural factor is the emergence of greater collaboration among business, design professionals, artists, planners and politicians, facilitated by the setting up of The Leeds Architectural and Design Initiative, LADI, one of several sub groups of The Leeds Initiative. The mission of LADI is to 'enhance the appearance and quality of the built environment of Leeds' with its first stated objective being to 'promote the highest standards of design in the built environment, including architecture, landscape and public art.' The emergence of LADI and its



growing influence has demonstrated the importance of a structural mechanism for developing a strategic overview in the use of quality design and the incorporation of art in the environment. LADI in effect has begun to ensure that both creative design and aesthetic considerations are beginning to be part of public planning and urban development within Leeds. Its support for *Signs of The City*, a major public art proposal for Leeds developed by Public Arts, is indicative of a new commitment to environmental public art in Leeds. And while that proposal has still to find funds for its overall implementation, LADI had ensured that some city council funding is available to support the public art component of the Seacroft development, which in effect has been adapted to realise one example from the *Signs of The City* proposal. Currently, LADI is in the process of developing a strategic policy framework for public art in Leeds.

A further important influence is the emergence in Leeds of organisations such as Concourse. Concourse, encouraged by LADI, brings together a number of professional, training and educational bodies with a common interest in promoting good design and creativity in the Leeds urban environment. In the Summer of 1999, its Leeds city centre symposium, *Concourse On Capital*, enabled a sharing of good practice in the realisation of art and design within architectural developments and identified issues in the securing of development funding for such, (Sandle and Roberts: 1999).

Another organisation, which has some part to play in contributing to an increased consideration of public art issues within the city is Axis, a national organisation providing an information service on contemporary visual artists throughout the United Kingdom, and also internationally.<sup>xi</sup> Axis, located within Leeds Metropolitan University, strongly supports greater co-operation among artists, architects and planners. In facilitating such, it has organised a series of symposia, entitled *Creative Collaborations*. Significantly, one has been held at the Leeds City Art Gallery with Irena Bauman, a Leeds based architect, as one of the key speakers. Bauman is influential in bringing artists to work within her architectural practice, for example her collaboration with the artist Bruce Maclean in the creation of a new promenade for the town of Bridlington, a seaside resort 120kms from Leeds. The award winning design was notable in that the artist was not brought in as an after- thought, but was involved in the conceptual stage of the project. His colour drawings were an integral part of the conceptual exploration of the project at the very outset of the design process.



*Drawings for Bridlington Seafront, by Bruce Maclean*

The final product is an illustration of how the visual creativity of the artist can be embodied in an architectural project, with architect and artist working closely together to realise aesthetic, design and social solutions.

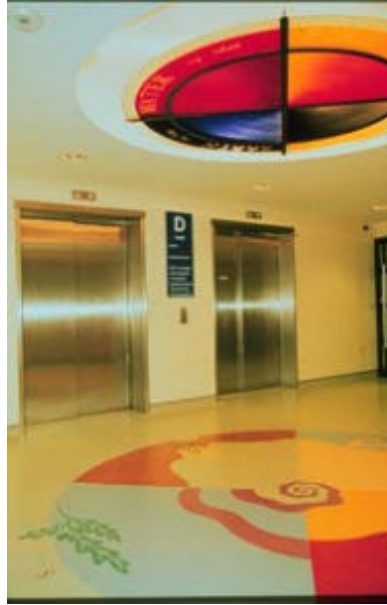


*Views of Bridlington Seafront, Bauman Lyons/Bruce Maclean*

A key speaker at a forthcoming *Creative Collaborations*, to be held in the South West of England, will be Gail Bolland, Director of the Leeds Arts and Healthcare Programme. Bringing professional art and design to the hospital environment, whether as an integral part of the architecture, or as activities to facilitate well being among patients and staff, the programme is rapidly expanding within the Leeds Teaching Hospitals, the largest teaching hospital organisation in Europe.



*Floor, Leeds General Hospital*



*Floor and ceiling, Leeds General Hospital*

Within the programme artists and craft designers have been commissioned to work closely with the architects in applying their work to the hospital environment to make it more interesting, creative and user friendly. Such projects have included the creation of a relaxing roof garden and a large banner to welcome visitors to the hospital car park.



*Banner at entrance to hospital car park*

Hospital staff, as well as patients, have been involved in art projects, such as in the creation of a mural photomontage that depicts in an amusing way the contribution made to hospital life by a diverse range of support workers - cleaners, gardeners, kitchen staff, electricians, and so on. Those hospital staff involved in this project generally felt it had significantly contributed to raising appreciation for their work and in raising their profile in an otherwise elitist and hierarchical environment.

In her research into the *Brickman*, Thompson (1991) concluded by asking if the failure of the *Brickman* project was symptomatic of an endemic Leeds' civic indifference to public art, or whether the events around the *Brickman* itself contributed to the formation of such. Similarly it might be asked whether the examples given above are symptomatic of a shift in attitude and perceptions, or have happened in spite of the city's governing attitudes. For although Leeds has the elements of a significant contemporary visual arts culture - in an art gallery that has one of the leading collections of British modern art outside London, two University art departments, both with contemporary art galleries, and an art college that have had some notable roles to play in the history of British art, nationally recognised commissioning organisations for visual art such as the Pavilion and the nearby Wakefield based Public Arts, and is home of the internationally prestigious Henry Moore Institute - it could be argued that this is in spite of a local cultural policy that has traditionally centred more on the performing arts such as music and dance. Any lasting development of public art in Leeds will need to be grounded within a broader and robust civic commitment to contemporary visual culture. For example, the current official dropping of the phrase 'public art' in the Millennium Square project could be, as perceived by some, a sign of a continuing lack of civic confidence and a reluctance to offend that mythical down-to-earth northern Leeds public who might regard such as elitist. However, as city sources have claimed, it simply could be to open up the concept and application of public art as a more dynamic intervention that is broader than the notion of static public statues. Such a diversity is symptomatic of the need of the city authorities to gain the confidence of its art professionals and practitioners.

Nonetheless, there are significant signs of change taking place, and in particular the Leeds Initiative through the role of LADI, (and more recently the setting up in 2000 of the Leeds Arts Partnership, another Leeds Initiative group), should provide Leeds with new opportunities for a public art and design policy that could exploit the past hiatus as an opportunity to learn from the experience of others. The *Axis Creative Collaborations* symposia have not only demonstrated the role that public art has for social facilitation, but also have highlighted some of the problems and issues. As a recent report on the symposia stated, 'ignorance of where the other side is coming from has been a regular theme. Fear of escalating budgets, uncontrolled schedules and public reaction is another. Misunderstanding and poor communications are commonly the undoing of projects,' (Hainsworth: 1999). Such pragmatic concerns have also been nationally identified by research such as that by Selwood (1995) and as featured in Jones (1992), and accordingly Leeds could well benefit from the experience of others.

There are of course broader cultural and ideological issues within public art, such as the implicit conflict between the sometimes conservatism of public communities or social institutions and the need to provide opportunities for creative experimentation and aesthetic risk taking. Cities and their spaces are constructs that are both defined by socio-cultural processes and which themselves determine social and cultural identities, and within such the role of public art can be paramount. Accordingly, the opportunity exists to develop a public art practice for Leeds that can radically raise notions not only of art, but of public space and the issues around conventional delineation of the domestic and the corporate, of public and private, and that address gender, age and class issues.<sup>xiii</sup> For example the role of public art and design within the socio-economic geography of Leeds needs to address the imbalance in the distribution of resources, (both economic

and imaginative) so that it is not only the city centre, as a commercial focus that benefits, (though here too public art and design has an important role in redefining the environment and culture of the city centre)<sup>xiii</sup>.

This is not a plea for political correctness, but for a post-modern diversity in which public art might not only express civic values, serve the needs for economic and social regeneration, and the desire for an international identity, but might also at times stand outside and critique dominant received assumptions through a publicly engaging inventiveness, creativity and aesthetic imagination.

A major public art event, *artranspennine98*, involving several cities and towns in Northern England and curated jointly by the director of the Tate Gallery Liverpool and by the late Robert Hopper, then Director of the Leeds Henry Moore Sculpture Trust, has left one lasting exhibit in Leeds, - a manifestation of Joseph Beuys' 7000 Eichen project, significantly bought by funds from the city council. Although purchased more for its oak tree than for its art historical and aesthetic importance, perhaps the acorns of the Beuys inspired oak might eventually come to signify a real creative seeding for public art and visual culture in Leeds.

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Austin Wright was a Gregory Fellow in Sculpture of the University of Leeds. The University of Leeds is one of a few Leeds' institutions, - the Department of Health and Social Security and the Leeds United Teaching Hospitals being others, - that have supported art within its own partially public buildings and grounds. Hitherto, there had been virtually no private sector public art development, although the Lloyds Bank Black Horse (1976) by Peter Tysoe was a notable exception. More recently, a sculptured contribution by Lorne McKean to a new office development, 1 City Square is a noteworthy development by Norwich Union, a leading financial institution increasingly sympathetic to the use of art and quality craft and design (see Sandle and Roberts 1999). Leeds Metropolitan University has also commissioned a major installation by artist Stephen Hurrell for its new Learning Centre, to be installed in 2001.

ii

Sculptor, Roger Burnett in his website [www.sculpturestudio.co.uk](http://www.sculpturestudio.co.uk) states that 'Leeds can claim to be the city of sculpture.'

iii

*Public Art and Leeds*, Leeds Metropolitan University July 5th 1996. The views expressed at the symposium was expressed in a letter to the City Council, and the concerns raised were supported by the then Member of Parliament for Leeds Central, the late Derek Fatchett and Michael McGowan, the then European MEP for Leeds.

iv

The events surrounding the *Brickman* proposal are documented in Thompson (1991).

v

According to Corinne Miller of Leeds City Art Gallery, the model of the *Brickman* is the most popular exhibit at the gallery. Widespread critical and professional interest for such an ambitious project would have been guaranteed, and was the subject of published comment even before its realisation, as for example:

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The proposal for a brick man at Holbeck Triangle, Leeds, by Antony Gormley, aims to capture the imagination in no uncertain terms....The concept itself is challenging. At 120 feet high it would certainly be seen. What feelings will it draw into itself, its dark interior lit by windows high up in the ears, a hollow cavern like an enormous and misshapen chimney. Perhaps, it is the hollowness that will stand for the twentieth century: a giant man made of dust, and empty.  
(Miles 1989:4)

vi

That the public's first two sculptural choices were rejected, one on the grounds of cost, the other on the grounds that its surface would cause dangerous reflections in the eyes of the drivers of incoming trains, clearly highlights the importance, sometimes neglected in public art commissioning, of ensuring that the artist's brief is specific enough to take account of logistic and technical realities, as well as of creative expression.

vii

Expressions of support were received by the Holbeck Triangle Trust from, among others, Derek Fatchett, then MP for Central Leeds, Mark Fisher, Labour Shadow Minister for the Arts, Merlyn Rees MP, Lord Gowrie of the Arts Council, Lord Harewood, Professor Richard Hoggat, Lord Rees-Mogg, and the architectural historian Dr. Patrick Nuttgens. Many had direct links with Leeds.

viii

The Plans South sub-committee of the Leeds City Council refused planning permission on the 7th November 1988 on the grounds that the proposal was out of scale and character with its surroundings, that it would be detrimental to surrounding buildings and the traditional city centre skyline, that the proposers did not provide evidence or firm proposals for its alleged contribution to future regeneration for the immediate community, and that there was no provision of public parking or of close up public viewing.

ix

The quotes are from the local newspaper, *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 20th October 1988.

x

The Scurrah Wainwright Charity is supporting the development of a figurative sculpture of a Yorkshire couple and their child watching a French boules player, placed at a city centre boules court. It is also campaigning to commemorate Leeds by a new sculpture depicting a suitable person or symbol, for a major new city sculpture by the distinguished Leeds born sculptor, Kenneth Armitage, and for the development of a new sculpture garden near the University of Leeds.

xi

A version of the Axis database can be found at its website [www.axisartists.org.uk](http://www.axisartists.org.uk), and a history of the organisation's development and objectives can be found in Sandle (1998).

xii

Public art could, for example, contribute to both critical consideration and if necessary changes in the social and demographic utilisation of urban locations, for example the risk with increasing age 'of a new urban confinement - especially for women - which, in large

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cities, tends to lead to the complete domestic mono-place confinement of the elderly' (Bonnes and Secchiaroli 1992 : 197). See also Lacy (1995) for a consideration of public art as social and cultural critique, and Miles (1997) for a critical overview of issues regarding public art and the city environment.

xiii

It is noticeable that while the city centre area receives increasing aesthetic consideration as regards street furniture, outward neighbourhood regions such as the Hyde Park area are subject to the most basic and vandal prone street furniture as exemplified by a recent traffic calming scheme. The bollards chosen were brutal, ugly and cheap, and have been increasingly vandalised or damaged contributing to the spiral of deprivation in an area that is blighted by landlordism.

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