

# Needhams Walk Art Corridor

**FEASIBILITY STUDY**

V1.0



# PREFACE

Mantle Arts has been asked by North West Leicestershire District Council to explore the feasibility of an artwork corridor along Needham's Walk in Coalville, Leicestershire.

## Aim:

- Make the walk more visually interesting.
- Encourage people to use the walk.
- Attract visitors to the town.

## Concepts Include:

- Suspended artwork.
- Artwork that is potentially changeable at regular intervals throughout the year.

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The background is a solid green color with a pattern of palm fronds visible at the top, bottom, and right edges.

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# Methodology

- We explored the site and took reference photographs.
- We submitted a search to [line-searchbeforeudig.co.uk](http://line-searchbeforeudig.co.uk), an online service for the building industry that helps pinpoint underground utility assets (pipelines and cables), in order to identify any impact on a potential building project.
- We contacted artists, including Janet Echelman ([www.echelman.com](http://www.echelman.com)), and Steve Messam ([www.stevemessam.co.uk](http://www.stevemessam.co.uk)), who specialise in site specific and suspended artwork.
- We also contacted engineers Arup, ([www.arup.com](http://www.arup.com)) a company with extensive experience in this area, and which also manages the structural assessments for fourth plinth



artwork in Trafalgar Square.

- We had direct conversations with Steve Messen and with Andy Pye of Arup.
- We also posted a news item on the Arts Council's Artsnews mailing list asking for input from artists and companies that have undertaken suspended artwork.



# Site



Needhams Walk is a path roughly 200 metres in length that connects Belvoir Road in Coalville with the car park that serves Coalville Market and the Co-Operative supermarket.

On the left as you face the car park, are the backs of the Belvoir Centre shops, separated from the walk by a fence and a service road for deliveries. The

rear of the shops are around twelve to fourteen metres from the path. There is some basic lighting on lamp posts between the path and the service road. There are no buildings on the right of the path but there is a row of trees that extend for about fifty yards.

The owners of the Belvoir Shopping Centre plan to demolish a section of the shops to create



a new entrance to the centre from Needhams Walk. This will mean that the walk becomes a more significant thoroughfare in the future.

The search for underground utilities showed nothing that might interfere with the project, although the service is not completely comprehensive as some suppliers, e.g. BT, do not subscribe to the service. A more extensive search would be required before embarking



on any project.





# Community Involvement

Has there been any interest from the community in having artwork in Needhams Walk?

Public art can divide opinion, and a negative response can be generated if there is a sense that unwanted artwork has been imposed on a community or that public money has been diverted to an unpopular work at the expense of local infrastructure e.g. schools, hospitals, roads.

Negative responses can be moderated by community involvement in the design of new artwork. This could take the form of a consultation process based around an exhibition of potential designs, or a series of practical community based workshops that generate elements of the final design.

We have built Community consultation into the budgets for all the options in this document.





## Option 1: Suspended Artwork



# Concept



The inspiration for suggesting suspended artwork originally came from images of colourful umbrellas and kites suspended over streets from a network of cables. These kinds of artworks are normally created in urban streets with buildings on each side, relatively close to each other. Bolts are drilled into the buildings and cemented in place with epoxy cement. High tensile cable is stretched between the bolts to create a network that can support rel-

atively light items, such as umbrellas.

The bolts and cables have to be rated to ensure that they can support the weight of the artwork. In addition, wind loading on bolts, cables and the artwork itself must be calculated to ensure that they will not be damaged by high winds. They must be able to support the additional weight of a person or persons, in the event that someone tries to climb the artwork or hang from it.

Provision must be made for the cleaning, maintenance and repair of the artwork, as despite the above, damage is almost inevitable and items such as umbrellas have been described by Steve Messam as having 'built in self destruct'. For all these reasons this kind of artwork tends to be a temporary installation rather than a permanent feature.

# Infrastructure

The issue with Needhams Walk is that there are no existing structures or buildings that are suitable for supporting a network of cables. There are no buildings on the right of the walk, and the backs of the shops on the left have been assessed by Andy Pye as being too low and too far away. The statutory minimum height for suspending anything above a road in the UK is 5.3 metres, and the cables would stretch over the service road and have to comply with this.

Therefore the infrastructure for supporting artwork will have to be created from scratch. The two main options are:

A. Poles permanently concreted into the ground on either side of the walk from which cables can be stretched.

B. A series of less permanent structures that are free-standing but ballasted e.g. weighted down with concrete blocks or similar.

Both options are costly. For

Janet Echelman's 'She Changes' in Porto, the foundations and steel cost more than the artwork.

In 2015 the cost of installing a single street light was £2000 ([www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/streetlight\\_purchase\\_and\\_install](http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/streetlight_purchase_and_install))

Though this project would not involve the electrical aspect of a lamp post, the cost could be similar, as the poles would have to either be a bespoke creation or involve modification of an existing structure.

Similar infrastructure: a 6 metre steel flagpole costs £900. A 4 metre one is £700. <https://www.flagpoleexpress.co.uk/steel-banner-posts>. These would need modification to support high tensile cable.

On top of these costs there would be the cost of installation.

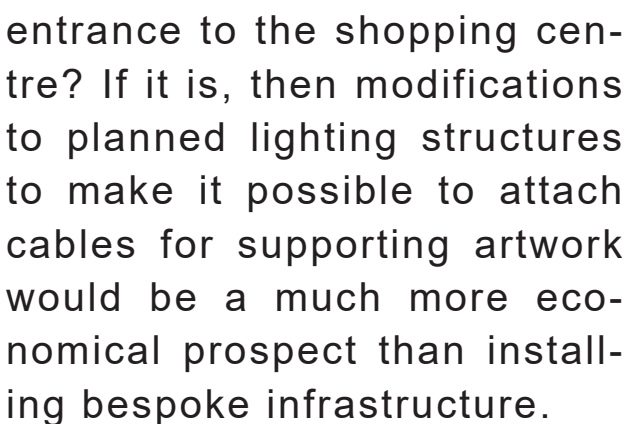
Option B. avoids that cost but since it would definitely have to be a bespoke design it would



Of the two options, A seems the only one that would be suitable.

Arup advise paying a retainer to a local engineering firm for periodic checking, maintaining and repairing the infrastructure, involving moving a cherry picker along Needhams Walk.

One way to make it more economical would be to piggy-back public art provision on the development of the Belvoir Centre. E.g. Is any new lighting proposed for Needham's Walk, to develop it as a new



entrance to the shopping centre? If it is, then modifications to planned lighting structures to make it possible to attach cables for supporting artwork would be a much more economical prospect than installing bespoke infrastructure.



# Artwork



We have assumed a quarterly changeover of artwork on the site, possibly linked to the seasons.

Regularly replacing the artwork means that one would have to recalculate the loading for each new artwork, otherwise the existing infrastructure potentially might not support the new design. One solution to this is to create a format that is repeated each time with different designs applied e.g. always a series of flag shapes, on which different artists can create different designs. This means you are replacing like for like and the loading issues do not occur.

The more flexible solution is to create a series of rules for the artworks, to which each new artist has to adhere, e.g. permitted materials, maximum weight, maximum wind loading. This would become part of the brief for each new artist. This is the way the fourth

plinth in Trafalgar Square is managed.

There also needs to be a system in place for managing each new commission, e.g. putting out a call for artists, assessing submissions, short-listing, interviewing and selecting the final artwork. This could be done in house by NWLDC or managed by an external organisation. Only offering commissions to artists based in the Midlands would restrict applicants and make the commission process more manageable.

# Budget

<b>Initial Costs (Yr 1 only)</b>			
	Infrastructure Installation		
	24 4m modified poles @ £900 each		21600.00
	Installation of poles		8000.00
	High Tensile Cable x 750 metres		150.00
	Installation of cable		900.00
	VAT @ 20%		6130.00
	TOTAL		36780.00
<b>Annual Costs</b>			
	Artwork		
	Design x 4		4000.00
	Construction x 4		4800.00
	Materials x 4		6000.00
	Community Consultation Workshops		
	x12 @ 125 each		1500.00
	Workshop Materials		360.00
	Artwork Installation		
	Artwork Transport + Installation x 4		10000.00
	Installation Materials		120.00
	Maintenance and Repairs		
	(1 day per quarter + regular checks)		1500.00
	VAT @ 20%		5656.00
	TOTAL		33936.00
<b>OVERALL TOTAL (Yr 1)</b>			<b>70716.00</b>

Assumptions about the cost of creating and installing artwork and the infrastructure to support it, are based on our experience of previous projects. The many variables in this proposal, have considerable budgetary implications. Therefore this initial budget should be regarded as notional.





## Option 2: Permanent Sculpture Trail



# Concept

This option consists of a number of permanent artworks along the length of the walk. Similar projects that Mantle has undertaken are the East Midlands Airport Perimeter Sculpture Trail, and the Watermead Park Jurassic Play Trail.

Artwork is conceived to lead the viewer through a particular environment. Artwork can be thematically linked or create a cumulative narrative. Commissioning a single artist is one way to create a consistent vision. We might also commission a number of different artists all working in the same material, or ask artists to respond to a particular theme.

One theme to consider is 'The story of Palitoy'. Recent ini-

tiatives by Coalville Heritage Society and the district council, 'May The Toys Be With You' (2018) and The Many Faces of Palitoy (2019-2020), have proved very popular, attracting local, regional, national and international visitors to Coalville. This option could be extended further to have a greater impact on the town centre. This would be investigated further if this option was considered for development.

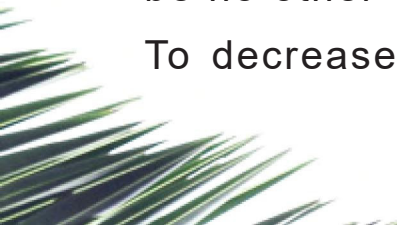
We are assuming that this option would consist of either three medium to large artworks or five or six small to medium works.

## Infrastructure

This option has the advantage that no infrastructure needs to be created to support it. Each artwork will be permanently installed and apart from cleaning and maintenance there will be no other costs.

To decrease the possibility of

vandalism we can restrict the commissions to those materials more resistant to any interference e.g. stone, metal.



# Budget

<b><u>Costs</u></b>			
	Artwork		
		Design	2000
		Construction	10000
		Materials	6000
	Installation		
		Transport and Installation	2250
		Installation Materials	1250
	Community Consultation Workshops		
		x 6 @ 125 each	750
		Workshop Materials	120
		VAT @ 20%	4474
		TOTAL	26844
<b><u>Annual Costs</u></b>			
	No further costs apart from any maintainence and repairs.		

Assumptions about the cost of creating and installing artwork and the infrastructure to support it, are based on our experience of previous projects. This initial budget should be regarded as notional.





### Option 3: Ephemeral Installations/ Land Art

# Concept

The third option is to create artwork that is deliberately ephemeral.

Andy Pye suggested the option of utilising the existing trees along the site as a way of supporting artwork. Other elements of the site could also be used.

Installations such as the land art of Andy Goldsworthy, the willow sculpture of Laura Ellen Bacon or projected artwork onto the backs of building could be commissioned. Some would naturally decompose or could be removed after a set amount of time.

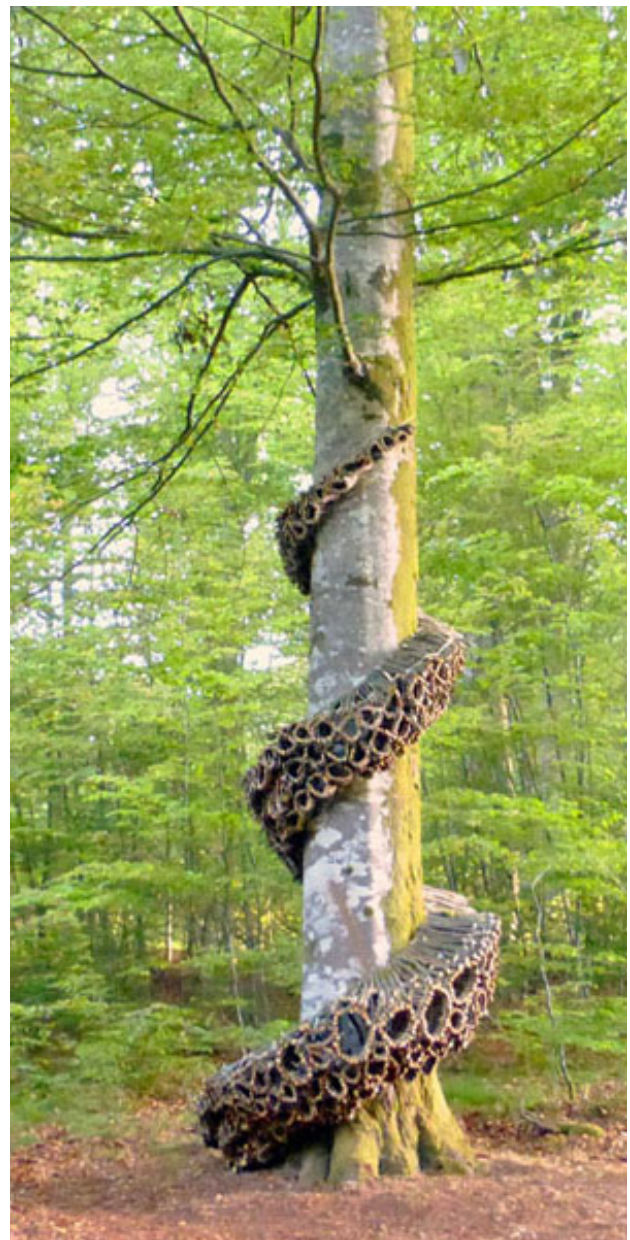
Artists would be asked to respond to the physical nature of the walk itself, or themes around the site and the town.

The advantages of this option are flexibility and variety. The artwork is responsive to the site, and each installation would be unique and different, maintaining public interest in the project.

On the other hand this could be more low key and have

less impact than the other two options that involve bigger and more permanent work.

We have again assumed four installations a year.





# Infrastructure

Again there would be little need for installing new infrastructure. There could be a need for support for installation if something complex involving trees was commissioned. But for some options there might be minimal installation required.



# Budget

<b>Annual Costs</b>		
	Artwork	
	Design x 4	2000
	Construction x 4	8000
	Materials x 4	2000
	Installation	
	Transport and Installation x 4	1200
	Installation Materials	200
	Community Consultation Workshops	
	x6 @ 125 each	750
	Workshop Materials	110
	VAT @ 20%	2852
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>17112</b>

Assumptions about the cost of creating and installing artwork and the infrastructure to support it, are based on our experience of previous projects. This initial budget should be regarded as notional.



# Summary and Conclusions

**Option 1**, the suspended artwork would be costly due to the lack of existing infrastructure, which makes this kind of thing relatively economical in areas that can easily support it e.g. urban streets with closely spaced buildings to act as anchor points. Installing suitable infrastructure will be more expensive than commissioning the artwork itself, and runs the risk of diminishing the impact of what it is supporting.

It is also vulnerable to weather and to vandalism.


Regular replacement of the artwork adds to the cost, and the issues with wind rating any new artwork limits the range of designs that are possible.

**Option 2**, a permanent sculpture trail is more economical to create and maintain. Much more variety in design is possible. It will still require maintenance and repair over the years but there will not be con-

tinuing installation costs.

**Option 3**, a programme of ephemeral land art and other kinds of installation has the advantage of being more flexible and potentially more simply and easily installed and taken away. It could be achieved more cheaply than the other two options. It also has the most potential for variety in design and execution. Depending on scale it might have less impact than option 2, and it would require a continuing marketing input to make sure people are aware it is happening.

Options 1 and 2 would require planning permission, and this would have to be built into the timescale for the project. Option 3 could be considered under permitted development regulations. All options would need further liaison with the planning department of the district council.



We don't consider option 1 represents good value for money, and practical issues would limit its artistic variety and therefore impact. Option 2 or 3 are more achievable. The choice will ultimately be about permanence and will depend on what this project is primarily intended to achieve.

It would be advisable not to proceed with any of these options until the plans and timetable for the access and alterations to the Belvoir Shopping Centre are known. Any proposed works in this area might be impacted by these third party plans. The Belvoir Centre owners may also be considering public art as part of their development plans and therefore consultation with them will be important. A joint public art project may be a possibility.

Article on Public Art and Planning:

<https://bit.ly/2WKJxF5>



## 10 Appendix

1. Western Power map of Needhams Walk area, showing cables and underground infrastructure.

Generated by  
linesearchbeforeUdig

2. Potential Sources of Funding





# **POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING**

## **Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants**

Various levels of funding: Up to £15k, £15-£100k, £100,000+

Grants are available for arts, museums and libraries projects that engage people in England with arts and culture.

Notes: Match funding required. Unlikely to fund a project where the art-work itself is a relatively small part of the overall cost, on value for money grounds. Applications for capital or building projects are normally focused on refurbishing or improving existing arts venues.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants)

## **Garfield Weston Foundation**

Level of funding: Discretionary but regular grants up to 100,000

Grants are available to charitable organisations in the UK for a wide range of projects in the areas of welfare, youth, community, arts, faith, environment, education, health and museums and heritage.

Note: will not directly fund local authorities.

<https://garfieldweston.org/>

## **Henry Moore Foundation**

Level of funding: up to £ 20,000

Grants are available to support the growth and development of sculpture across historical, modern and contemporary registers and to fund research that expands the appreciation of sculpture.

Note: Commissions must promote public understanding of sculpture.

[www.henry-moore.org/grants](http://www.henry-moore.org/grants)

## **Severn Trent's Community Fund**

A new Community Fund which will give away more than £10 million to charities and community groups over the next 5 years.

Organisations, charities and communities from across the Severn Trent water region can apply for funding for projects that demonstrate a clear link to one or more of three elements of community wellbeing:

People: Projects that help people to lead a healthier life and gain new skills;

Place: Ideas that help create better places to live in and use; and

Environment: Schemes that will help look after the natural environment, give people greater access to that environment or help look after water.

[www.stwater.co.uk/communityfund](http://www.stwater.co.uk/communityfund)

## **Bardon Community Fund**

**Level of funding:** Grants made from annual fund of £40,000.

Available to applicable local projects; such as community centres, voluntary groups, charities and any other community-centric initiatives that could make a difference to local people.

[www.aggregate.com/news-and-resources/press-releases/bardon-community-fund](http://www.aggregate.com/news-and-resources/press-releases/bardon-community-fund)

## **Shire Grants**

**Level of funding:** Small grants up to £3,000; large grants up to £10,000.

Grants for community based projects and activities that are specifically focused on supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities.

[www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants/shire-community-grant.html](http://www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/grants/shire-community-grant.html)

## **National Forest Small Grants Fund**

**Level of funding:** average grant for community projects around £5,000.

Owners and managers of sites within the Forest, together with organisations, charities, local authorities, companies or individuals who operate within the Forest area, can apply for grants to support a range of projects and activities. These include works relating (but not limited) to: access and recreation; biodiversity; communities and education; heritage; tourism and awareness raising; woodland economy, urban tree planting and the improvement of green spaces.

Notes: Will fund up to 50% of project costs.

[www.nationalforest.org/about/grant-opportunities/small-grants-fund](http://www.nationalforest.org/about/grant-opportunities/small-grants-fund)

## **National Lottery Awards for All**

**Level of funding:** from £300 to £10,000.

Will fund organisations with project ideas that:



-Bring people together and build strong relationships in and across communities.

- Improve the places and spaces that matter to communities.

- Help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.

Notes: Will accept applications from a statutory body (including town, parish and community councils).

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england>