

a growing calm



Inspiration

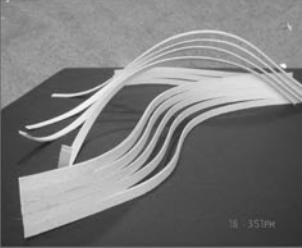
Organic
Harmony
Growth
Rhythm
Blooming

a growing calm



Inspiration

Organic
Harmony
Growth
Rhythm



AIR + WATER + OXYGEN = LIFE

Project goals

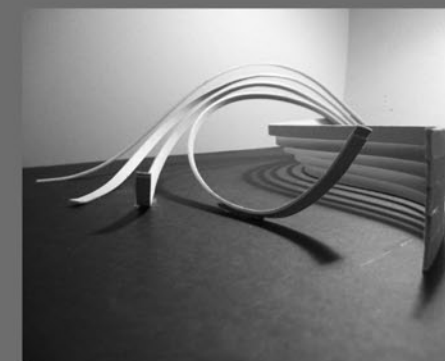
- creating a focal point for an area of Belfast lacking in character and imagination
- creating an open, yet secluded space, shielded from busy city life
- a reflective, almost spiritual space
- an area for everyday activities like eating lunch, or children playing;
- and of course, investigating issues like plasticity, opaqueness, transparency, weight, light and shadow, through the use of concrete.

Proposal

Our proposed site is located at Bankmore Square, Belfast. This urban park goes unnoticed and unused by many passers-by and residents in the area. It is adjacent to a major junction (Dublin Road/Bruce Street), and so, is subject to the noise and air pollution caused by the large amount of traffic that passes by. This infringes on the park area to such an extent, that it can actually be unpleasant to sit in the western half of the park. On spending almost an hour in the area, we observed only a handful of people entering the park, and most of those were simply walking through.

Our sculptural entrance/barrier attempts to address these issues, as well as manipulate the plasticity and opaqueness of the most used, and misused building material, concrete. With its sweeping and graceful curves, we have endeavored to challenge the preconceptions of concrete as a heavy, dull and lifeless medium.

The inspiration for the form of our structure comes from a blooming flower. On the western side (facing the busy road), a 'protective' barrier is formed by an as-yet-unfurled bud, which allows light to shine through from above and reflect off the pool underneath, while shielding the park-goers from the noise and pollution caused by the nearby traffic. In addition, the water cascades from the horizontal curves, further muffling the noise of traffic, and detaching the user from the choking city. From this barrier, stems the group of slender, petal-like curves. They lead inwards and rest delicately on the ground to create structures that can be used to sit on, to stroll through, to play around, depending on the user.

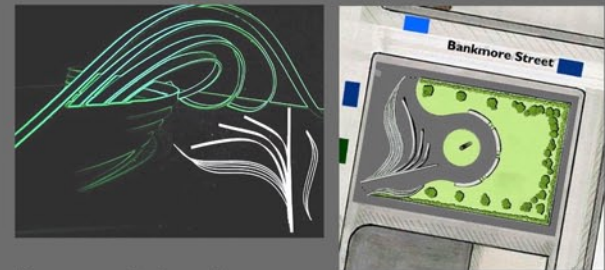


Site plan

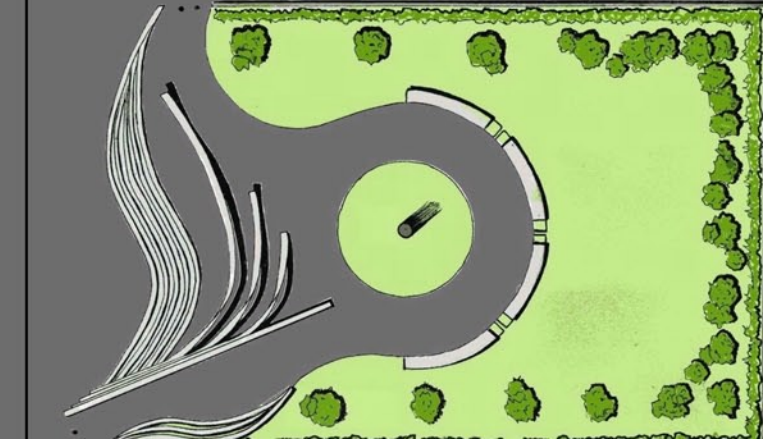


Site analysis

An urban park measuring (approx) 25 metres by 40 metres. To the west is Dublin Road, a busy thoroughfare. Joining the Dublin Road next to the park is Bruce Street, which also experiences considerable congestion. The western side of the existing park is almost completely open to this noise and pollution caused by passing traffic. Bankmore Street runs along the north side of the park, but does not present a problem with regards to large amounts of traffic. This is also the case with the small side street to the east. In the past, proposals have been made for a highway to run through this area. The current situation is unclear, and we see our proposal as an alternative to another road running through the heart of the city - an alternative which enhances (rather than detracts from) the community's experience of the area. To the south of the park, we find a large cinema. An apartment complex, health club and hotel situated across Bankmore Street from the park. Both the cinema and apartment structures are quite tall, giving a sense of enclosure to the park area. The cinema, due to its size and position with regard to the park, would block some sunshine for part of the day, however the east and west views from the park are unobstructed, allowing sunlight to enter.



Proposed site plan



Unity
Flowing
Peace
Focus
Inspiring
Reflection

West elevation



Perspective view Dublin Rd



Perspective view North entrance



CAD imaging



A note on construction

We propose the use of the recently developed fibre-reinforced concrete in our structure. Research suggests that it is up to five times stronger than regular concrete, allowing greater spans and more interesting shapes, with less weight and hence, greater plasticity. Another major suggestion would be the use of an additive such as titanium dioxide, as a 'self-cleaning' agent. The presence of this agent in a concrete mix has been shown to, not only keep the concrete itself bright, but clean the air around it also. We feel that this perfectly fits in with our aims and would greatly enhance our proposal.

OXYGEN + WATER + LIGHT = LIFE
Self cleaning concrete
Cascading water
Reflections & shadows