

**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE –
29 OCTOBER 2001**

**REPORT ON: ALBERT SQUARE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT
CONSULTANTS DESIGN BRIEF**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 324-2001

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the approval of a Consultants Design Brief for the Environmental Improvement of Albert Square.
- 1.2 To seek approval to issue the Brief to selected Consultants inviting the submission of proposals, with a view to selecting a Consultant to undertake the project in due course.
- 1.3 To seek approval to consult frontagers on the Brief.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee
 - a approves the Consultant Design Brief;
 - b remits the Director of Planning and Transportation to issue the Brief to selected Consultants;
 - c issue the Brief to Albert Square frontagers for their information;
 - d remit the Director of Planning and Transportation to report back to Committee the findings of the study.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The first stage is the invitation of three Consultants to submit proposals for the Environmental Improvement for Albert Square which will be on a competitive basis and will involve overall fees of £9,000. The Council's contribution to this is £3,000 with Scottish Enterprise Tayside contributing the balance. The expenditure of £3,000 in the financial year 2001/02 is included within the current approved Financial Plan for the year 2001/02.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 By the successful improvement of an important city centre open space, the distinctive character of the city centre will be enhanced and will assist in addressing a key theme of Dundee 21 "Places, spaces and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility!"

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Environmental Improvement of Albert Square will take into consideration the requirements of the disabled and disadvantaged groups and improve accessibility to the cultural, leisure, recreational and tourist facility that is McManus Galleries.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 A key enabling activity of the City Centre Initiative Economic Development Strategy 1998 – 2003 is the provision of a high quality physical environment. One of the strategic actions is to support visitor generation through the physical improvement to the surroundings of key visitor attractions, such as McManus Galleries. The Economic Development Strategy recognises that image enhancement is a key issue. The first impression of visitors are vital and the surroundings to visitor attractions are key elements in the city centre.
- 6.2 Proposal BEN1 (Built Environment) included within the Dundee Local Plan also identifies a future programme of environmental improvements in the city centre, including the upgrading of Albert Square.
- 6.3 Experience in implementing previous major schemes in the city centre indicates a long lead in time should be allowed prior to implementation. The time is right therefore to initiate the process leading to the appointment of an appropriate Consultant to take the project forward.
- 6.4 It is intended to initially invite Consultants to submit proposals for Albert Square. A fee of £3,000 is to be offered to each Consultant to allow them to develop a considered scheme in some detail. These submissions will be assessed and it is expected that a Consultant will be appointed thereafter. This will be subject of a further report to Committee.
- 6.5 A Consultants Design Brief is appended to this report. The Brief will be issued to the selected Consultants. The Brief will also be used to consult with Albert Square frontagers.
- 6.6 Traffic Management considerations form an integral part of the Brief. The Brief to be issued will include further coloured plans showing the context of Albert Square within the City Centre and the Square's Transportation and Townscape Considerations. These plans will be available for view in the Members Lounges and will be on display at Committee.

7 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services, Director of Corporate Planning, Director of Leisure & Arts and Scottish Enterprise Tayside, have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 The Albert Square Environmental Improvement Consultants Design Brief.
- 8.2 Report No 49-2001

Traffic Management – Central Area – Introduction of 4th Traffic Zone
Director of Planning and Transportation

Mike Galloway
Director of Planning & Transportation

Keith Winter
Policy and Regeneration Manager

22 October 2001

KW/PMJ/KR Temp 1

Dundee City Council
Tayside House
Dundee

REVISED BRIEF OCTOBER 2001

ALBERT SQUARE ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT CONSULTANTS DESIGN BRIEF

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise Tayside, under the auspices of the Dundee Partnership, are seeking a consultancy team to undertake a Design Study of Albert Square.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Albert Square is dominated at its heart by McManus Galleries which is without doubt one of the city's finest buildings and a major visitor attraction. Much work has been carried out to recreate the splendour of the original building and to accommodate an increased range of activities, enabling this resource to make a far greater contribution to the cultural life of the City.
- 2.2 This investment has been made over a long period against the background of a restricted approach from all sides and a less than appropriate environment for this civic and architectural masterpiece, a formative element of Dundee's cultural history. McManus Galleries is basically located on a traffic island, and access by pedestrians from the pedestrian zone is not seamless and can be off putting.
- 2.3 The Dundee Partnership intend to comprehensively upgrade the environs of Albert Square to create a high quality urban space and new visitor and tourist attraction, for the new Millennium, further developing McManus Galleries as a major visitor and tourist attraction for the City.

3 CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Dundee Partnership has successfully implemented an ambitious programme of environmental projects within the context of the Dundee City Centre Initiative Economic Development Strategy. This Strategy is programmed to continue until 2003 and one of its key aims is to develop a vibrant cultural, leisure and visitor economy. The Strategy has also developed a range of key enabling activities and the provision of high quality physical environments to the surroundings of visitor attractions is seen as essential to supporting visitor generation.
- 3.2 The Dundee Partnership has to date expended in excess of £7 million on its City Centre Environment Programme Projects. A fundamental feature of projects is the use of high quality, mainly natural paving materials in conjunction with the distinctive use of public art.
- 3.3 As recognition of the Dundee Partnership's determination to achieve quality, the Environment Programme has received numerous awards including the overall winner of the 1998 UK Town Centre Environment Award run by the British Council of Shopping Centres and the Royal Town Planning Institutes Award for Planning Achievement 2001. These awards were given to environmental improvement project that clearly showed excellence in terms of design quality, community involvement and sustainability, and showed the excellent results that can be achieved from an effective public and private sector partnership.

4 STUDY AREA

4.1 For the purposes of this brief, Albert Square comprises:

- * the landscaped areas and grounds adjacent to McManus Galleries
- * the carriageway and footways of Meadowside between Reform Street and Panmure Street ie to the south and east of McManus Galleries
- * the carriageway and footway of Courier Place and part of Euclid Crescent and Panmure Street to its junction with Meadowside ie to the north and west of McManus Galleries

5 EXISTING SITUATION

5.1 McManus Galleries

McManus Galleries, originally the Albert Institute, was opened in 1867. It is the largest memorial to Prince Albert outside London and was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the master of 'Victorian Gothic' style. See also paragraph 5.4.

With the assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Council intends to develop McManus Galleries as a popular city centre family visitor attraction through phased redevelopment of its displays, improvements to its visitor facilities, and a year round programme of events. It will include displays which interpret the city's collections to visitors in an accessible and interactive way making full use of available information technology and new interpretation techniques. It is proposed that this will form the "core" heritage provision for the City and act to provide context for other heritage attractions such as Discovery Point, Verdant Works, the Old Steeple, RMS Unicorn and the emerging Cultural Quarter based around the Rep and DCA.

5.2 Dundee Local Plan - The principal use in buildings surrounding Albert Square is offices and as such the area is presently identified as an Office Sector within the Local Plan. Within this office sector there is a general presumption in favour of office use and against development which would materially prejudice the office sector. However, certain uses which could complement the office sector including restaurants and bars, will be encouraged which would greatly enhance the ambience of Albert Square. There are encouraging signs that this is already happening. It should be noted that the Local Plan is presently undergoing a Review. However, it is expected that the emerging mixed use character of the buildings fronting Albert Square will be further encouraged.

5.3 Movement Considerations

a Traffic Management

Prior to developing this design brief, it was necessary to explore the various options for traffic movement around the Square and how these might impact upon optional areas for environment improvement. At present the north and west sides of Albert Square accommodate buses and service vehicles, and the south and east are congested at peak periods with general traffic. A decision has been made to carry out traffic management within this sector of the city centre which, when implemented, will maximise the opportunities for

environmental improvement. The Central Area Fourth Zone Prohibition and Variation of Waiting Order 2002 will come into effect in February 2002. These measures rely on changes elsewhere in the city network, but for the purposes of this brief the measures will be in place in time for the implementation of the project.

The favoured changes to traffic flows *at this time* are considered to be :

- * the retention of buses and restricted service vehicle use on the northwest sides of Albert Square.
- * the section of Meadowside between Reform Street and Chapel Street will initially become one way east-bound taxi and cycle only to prevent through traffic from passing through Albert Square. As part of the Environmental Improvements however, it is the intention to make this length of street totally pedestrianised. A new site for a taxi rank will have to be found.
- * the section of Meadowside between Chapel Street and Panmure Street will be available to all traffic, including buses to allow access to Chapel Street, the Forum Centre and Commercial Street.
- * in the longer term, consideration is to be given to allowing general traffic access to the restricted northwest side of Albert Square, in order to allow greater permeability for vehicles to support the development of the evening economy.

b Pedestrian Accessibility

The Square is accessed by several streets (see plan). The most significant of these in pedestrian terms are Panmure Street to the east, which links through to the Wellgate and Murraygate prime shopping areas, and Commercial Street and Reform Street to the south, which links to High Street, the major shopping street and the central and historical core of the city centre. Meadowside, between Chapel Street and Panmure Street, will become a reduced bus route and stance area but will remain a focus for pedestrians heading to/from the city centre.

c Car Parking

One of the principal objectives of the Brief is to develop additional car parking as outlined in paragraph 6.3. and which will compensate for the loss of on street parking as a result of the Fourth Zone Order.

5.4 Urban Design Context

Albert Square offers the potential for the most attractive open space in the city centre. The buildings fronting the Square are all of exceptional quality in townscape terms and, in particular, Dundee High School and its tree-lined setting, the Chamber of Commerce Buildings and Dundee Courier building contribute significantly to the Square. The flower beds, lawns and trees around the Galleries are also significant assets.

Apart from three modern interventions all of the buildings in the Square are Listed Grade B or above. McManus Galleries, Dundee High School, the Chamber of

Commerce and the Commercial Street facade returns into Albert Square are all Listed Grade A. Albert Square is located within the Dundee City Centre Outstanding Conservation Area.

The vistas towards and from within Albert Square are important features, none more so than that from Reform Street towards Albert Square which is focused directly on the Doric pediment of the High School. The vista westwards from Panmure Street towards Ward Congregational Church across the High School tree lined playground is also significant.

There are several significant statues in Albert Square the most notable being to Robert Burns and Queen Victoria, which is also Listed Grade B. The horseshoe Renaissance style stairway affixed to the western Gothic facade of the building is a powerful townscape element which should be featured strongly in any proposals.

6 BROAD STUDY OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The foregoing outlines the importance of this civic space in relation to its historic environs and its tourism and visitor potential. A scheme is required which fulfils this potential. Whereas schemes recently completed have been designed in hard landscaping terms eg City/Square; High Street, Murraygate; a softer approach is required at Albert Square which builds upon the existing attractive features, principally the formal gardens and trees but which should also be more accessible to the public. Therefore the creation of a further 'green lung' within the city centre is expected. The other important consideration is that the Square should be designed not only as a passive space, but that new activities should be introduced which will develop further tourism and encourage more visitors to the city. The future role and use of this space has to be given careful consideration.
- 6.2 Buses are to remain in the north and west sides of Albert Square, in both directions but the extent of carriageway has the potential of being reduced, especially to the west and north west of the Albert Institute at Courier Place and adjacent to Dundee High School.
- 6.3 In addition to its use as a two way bus route and stances (see para 5.3a) the Dundee Partnership therefore feels it is appropriate to use the north side of Albert Square, Panmure Street, for a new high amenity car park which will be of considerable benefit to McManus Galleries, help address the loss of on street car parking as a result of creating the Fourth Traffic Zone, assist the 'evening economy' of the area by providing car parking close to the restaurants, bars etc and generally assist with accessibility in the area. Approximately 40 car parking spaces could be developed.
- 6.4 The area to the south of McManus Galleries, particularly between Reform Street and Chapel Street will become increasingly important because it is the intention to develop new outdoor seating and café set between the two existing porches. This will reveal internal activity in the building will also give the building greater visitor exposure and awareness, and therefore the design of its setting on the south of the building should be given strong emphasis to develop and maximise this exposure. As most visitors will likely access McManus Galleries from Reform Street and Commercial Street the design of this space should aim to increase the draw of visitors across Meadowside
- 6.5 The area between Chapel Street and Commercial Street, whilst remaining accessible for general vehicles, should be designed as a continuation of the pedestrianisation

between Reform Street and Chapel Street to further enhance the “café area” and south access to McManus Galleries.

- 6.6 Whilst the context of Albert Square is historic, in terms of a broad design a contemporary approach is expected with the emphasis on simplicity, legibility and durability.

7 PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The poor accessibility to the Square and McManus Galleries by pedestrians must be addressed in any proposals. Whilst the south and east legs of the Square (Meadowside) will remain open to vehicular use, volumes will decrease considerably as a result of the creation of the Fourth Traffic Zone designed to stop non essential through traffic. The section of roadway between Reform Street and Chapel Street will be totally pedestrianised. The consultants will have to use whatever environmental, and traffic management techniques are at their disposal, to allow pedestrians a seamless progression on to Albert Square from the retail core area via Panmure Street, Commercial Street and Reform Street without compromising pedestrian safety.
- 7.2 The access to McManus Galleries is on the northern ‘hidden’ side of the building when approaching from the main pedestrian core of the city centre. This entrance will require to be given greater emphasis and awareness in the design of the proposals. The building of a contemporary glazed foyer structure as part of the McManus Galleries development proposals would also assist in this. The HLF bid will also propose the creation of a new access to the building on the south side, opposite the junction of Commercial Street and Meadowside. Part of the McManus Galleries HLF bid will be to find a solution for the basement damp problems. This is envisaged to entail a reduction in ground level around the perimeter of the building to form an open gap between square and building foundations.
- 7.3 A pedestrian arc linking the Wellgate through the Square to Reform Street and Overgate should be encouraged to complement but provide an alternative to the more direct linear shopping route along Murraygate and High Street.
- 7.4 Service access to McManus Galleries uses the existing north entrance to the building. This will have to be maintained to cater for the steady flow of artefacts to and from the building and the exhibitions which regularly visit the Galleries. The design must allow for this to continue but in a discreet manner sharing space with pedestrians.
- 7.5 Service access to other premises, , will also have to be considered. In particular, Dundee High School presently experiences peak hour difficulties due to pupils being dropped off and collected from school by parents vehicles and buses serving outlying areas. At present such vehicles exit via Courier Place.
- 7.6 Disabled access must be maintained to McManus Galleries and a drop off point should be retained. However, present staff car parking should be removed.
- 7.7 Bus Routes will be reduced in volume and remain two way, using the north and west legs of Albert Square. Some stances will still be required for both east-bound and west-bound buses. The tourist bus stances will remain for the foreseeable future. The consultants will be expected to procure bus shelters of an innovative contemporary design as part of the proposals.

- 7.8 Taxis The present taxi rank in Meadowside adjacent to McManus Galleries will require to be removed. A new site for a rank for this sector of the City Centre will be found outwith this Design Brief. This will be considered before the implementation of any proposals.
- 7.9 Car Parking See paragraph 6.3.
- 7.10 Lighting. The importance of Albert Square and McManus Galleries is such that their night-time identity should be given careful consideration. At present the building is floodlit but this has been in place for a number of years and the quality should be reviewed. A lighting scheme for Albert Square should be developed as part of the proposals, respecting its new pedestrian scale. Whilst innovative methods of lighting are welcomed careful consideration should be given to durability and the ease and cost of maintenance. Close consultation with the Council's Street Lighting Division will be required.
- 7.11 Materials. It is the intention to build upon the 'softer' elements of the Square, but considerable areas of hard landscaping will be incorporated. Materials should be of the highest quality, and relate to the historic setting of the Square. Careful consideration should be given to the use of materials to lessen the present impact of broad areas of blacktop where vehicular use is to be retained in this important historic and civic space. However, the need to accommodate buses must be borne in mind. The use of natural materials will be encouraged, in particular Caithness Stone, granite, cubed setts and granite slabs and thus the existing palette of natural materials used in the city centre should not unnecessarily be extended. Existing trees should be retained as far as possible. The existing 'green' garden areas should be altered where appropriate.

8 MAINTENANCE/SECURITY/SAFETY

- 8.1 The consultant should give careful consideration to the future maintenance of the scheme and a fully costed maintenance schedule will form part of the final design study. Through experience the use of natural materials eases the maintenance burden. This should be coupled with robust and durable detailing. Litter collection, street sweeping and street washing by Council equipment should be considered in any layout and awkward corners etc should be avoided. Consultation should take place with statutory undertakers in order that their future plans are taken into consideration. Future ducting requirements should be anticipated.
- 8.2 The layout should be evolved through reference to Secure by Design criteria.
- 8.3 Detailing should avoid the creation of potential pedestrian safety hazards, eg longitudinal steps diminishing into slopes. In particular the requirements of the disabled and partially sighted must be taken into consideration. Dundee Access Group will be a key consultee.

9 OUTPUTS OF THE DESIGN STUDY

- 9.1 This must clearly address the Study Objectives outlined in this Brief.

Initially a range of options should be presented which should be viable in practical, financial and planning terms.

An indication of how the proposal can be phased over a timeframe of three financial years.

Submission should include:

- a narrative setting out the rationale behind the proposals;
- layout plans, sections etc and any other visual images which illustrate the proposals;
- a narrative which clearly sets out the economic benefits in terms of added tourist and visitor value to the City;
- an indication of the capital cost and likely maintenance implications.

10 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 The Albert Square Environmental Improvement Project will be managed by a Client Group which the Consultants will report to. It is expected that the Client Group members will change over the life of the project. Initially however the following Client Group is proposed. The day to day project management will be carried out by the Project Leader.

Peter Johnston, Planning and Transportation, Project Leader, Dundee City Council
Steve Carter, Scottish Enterprise Tayside
John Stewart Young, Arts and Heritage Manager, Dundee City Council
Merrill Smith, Leisure Services Development Officer, Dundee City Council
Stan Anderson, Planning and Transportation, Dundee City Council

11 SUBMISSION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

- 11.1 The consultant appointed to carry out the proposals will require to demonstrate multi-disciplinary professional skills including the following:
- Landscape Architecture
 - Architecture with an emphasis towards historic buildings
 - Tourism and Cultural Development
 - Civils and Traffic Engineering
 - Quantity Surveying
 - Lighting

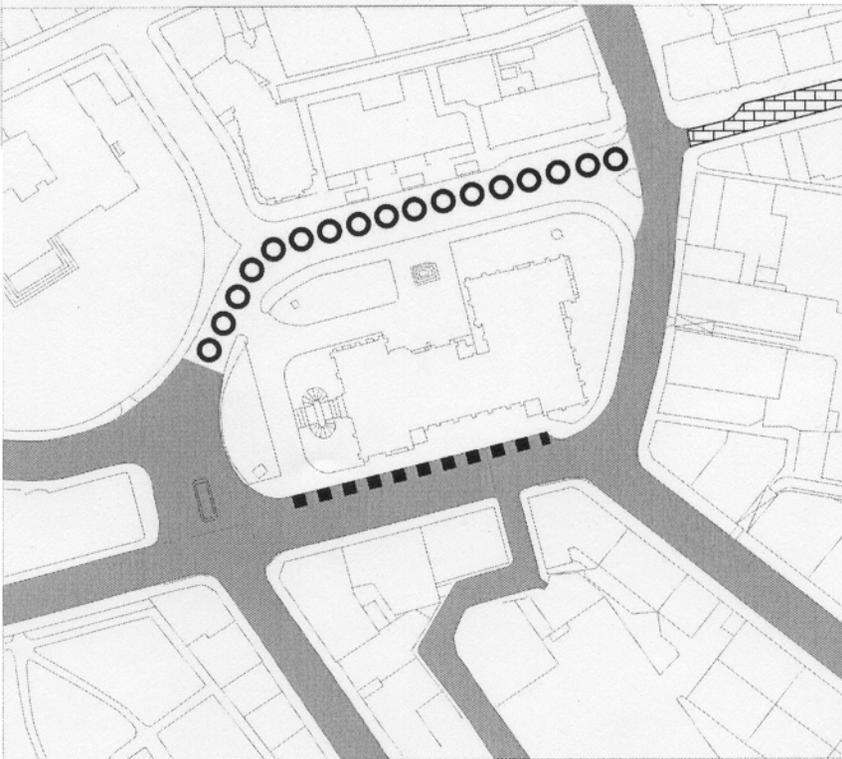
12 TIMESCALE FOR SUBMISSION

- 12.1 The following schedule is proposed:

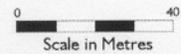
November 2001 – Consultants Brief circulated to selected shortlist of Consultants.
Mid January 2002 – Submissions received.
Mid February 2002 – Consideration of Submissions.

- 12.2 It is anticipated that a briefing meeting will be arranged shortly after the appointment of a consultant and that a series of interim meetings will be held leading up to the production of the final report and drawings.

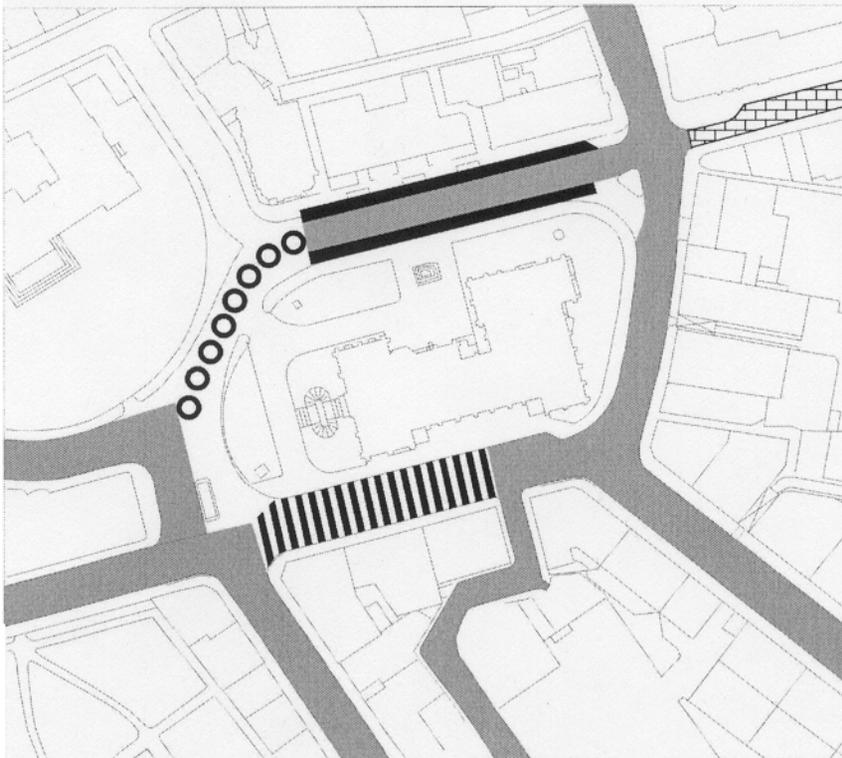
Albert Square Environmental Improvements Traffic Management Scheme



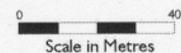
-  General Traffic
-  Restricted Traffic
(Service Vehicles from 11am-4pm)
-  Taxi Rank
-  Buses, Taxis & Cycles Only



Existing



-  Pedestrian Only
-  General Traffic
-  Restricted Traffic
(Service Vehicles from 11am-4pm)
-  Buses, Taxis & Cycles Only
-  Car Parking



Proposed