

# **Christ's Lane *Wall of Letters***

## **Artist's Proposal**

## The Christ's Lane *Wall of Letters* by artist Jane Watt

### What is the Christ's Lane *Wall of Letters*?

The *Wall of Letters* is a 45 metre long, 5 metre high, free-standing glass screen that will run along much of the length of Christ's Lane. It will consist of approximately 100 glass panels and will incorporate almost 32,000 letters in total, creating a monumental scale 'word-search'. Land Securities is making a significant investment in the arts through their commissioning of the *Wall of Letters*, which has been created by artist Jane Watt.

### What will it look like?

The tall, bespoke glass panels will be pale blue in colour with a contrasting brighter tone being used for the thousands of letters. The reflective surface of the glass will greatly enhance the aesthetic appearance of Christ's Lane, obscuring the Christ's College wall behind and giving a seamless visual synergy to the new lane and its surrounding environment. The choice of colours and materials used will add to the design concept by making a stroll through the busy thoroughfare a bright and pleasant experience, helping to establish Christ's Lane as a destination for shoppers, residents and visitors to the City.

Right:  
An image  
showing what  
the *Wall of  
Letters* will look  
like.

See Appendix A  
for an architect's  
drawing of the  
*Wall of Letters*.



## The wall at night

At present Jane Watt is in consultation with leading light specialists BDP Lighting Ltd to develop a lighting system which will illuminate a selection of words across the wall, as natural light levels fall. It is anticipated that a different set of words will be illuminated each evening. This changing lighting will add to the intrigue and complexities of the hidden texts.

## Where do the words and letters come from?

Award winning artist Jane Watt has carried out extensive research in Cambridge archives and through talking to local people to generate the idea for this site-specific piece. She comments that:

*“One of the main concepts for the wall was to create an artwork that is built up from different people’s associations and experiences of the area. Each time a person looks at the wall they might find a different word. It will provide a unique experience for each viewer, with some finding a few words and others constructing more complicated stories. Every viewing will be different, adding an element of intrigue to the wall.”*

## Who chooses the words and letters?

The words and texts for the wall will be submitted by local people, of all ages, living and working in the area. There will also be an education campaign which will include workshops, e-mail exchanges, contact with local schools and other interested parties to generate content for the wall. The campaign will be developed by Land Securities with Jane Watt to ensure that the wider development profile is raised through the process.

## Who is Jane Watt?

Jane Watt's significant international reputation has developed over many years, showing both temporary artworks as well as many permanent installations. All of Jane's work has approached a subject or material which at first is easily recognisable but which has been treated in a manner to appeal to all ages yet to constantly make the viewer question pre-conceived notions. All have succeeded in building a site's reputation and creating public interest as well as gaining public attention.

Examples of her work include *Reflectagon* (Tetbury, Gloucestershire), *Star Gazing* (Edinburgh Dental Institute) and the celebrated temporary performance event *A Taste of Summer* (Helsinki). Further information on these works of art is attached overleaf:

## *Reflectagon*

The image below of a temporary work exhibition at the *Westonbirt Arboretum*, as part of the International Festival of the Garden, is an octagonal 'off the shelf' shed. Jane has applied a reflective surface to the outside of the shed so that from various angles it can almost disappear into the surrounding gardens, to look like a floating roof. Once inside, the artwork reveals a camera obscura within and from the image reflected onto the table inside one can see the gardens around and people approaching.



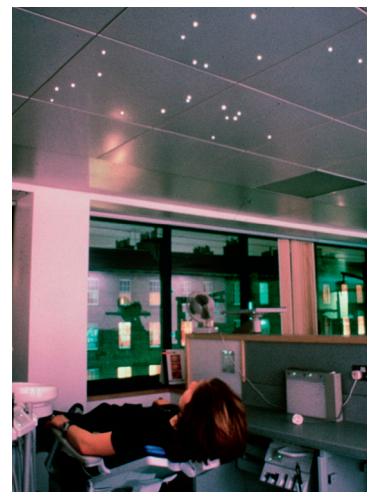
### *Star Gazing*

*Star Gazing*—a permanent work for the Edinburgh Dental Institute—is installed throughout the surgeries in the hospital. Jane approached this commission by considering what patients having dental treatment invariably spent time looking at. She therefore recreated 34 star constellations using fibre optics, sited above the dentals chairs throughout the hospital, creating artworks providing a visual stimulus and point of meditation.

Note:  
the star  
constellations  
are the points  
of light in the  
ceiling above the  
dental chairs,  
seen in the right  
hand corner of  
the photograph.

The pink wall  
to the left by  
artist Stephen  
Skrynka,  
references the  
colour of dental  
mouth wash  
used by patients.

Photography:  
Keith Hunter





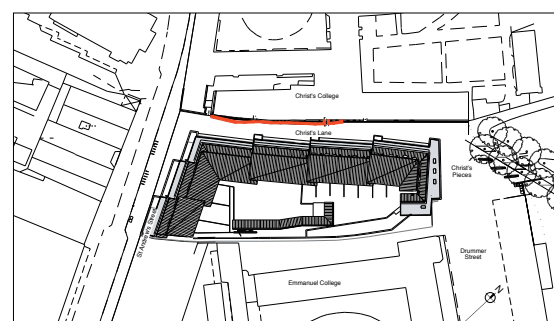
*A Taste of Summer*

One temporary work which created an enormous amount of publicity was a piece entitled *A Taste of Summer* 1999. During this temporary art event Jane, following her research into life in Helsinki, decided to bring a taste of summer to Helsinki. Jane dressed in white and pushed a bicycle and ice-cream cart—with an umbrella from which emitted UV rays—around the streets of Helsinki, handing out free ice-cream. Images of this work are still regularly displayed, the work loved and admired by all ages.



### Land Securities' commitment to Public Art



Within many developments, Land Securities has successfully raised the profile of the arts as a valuable component to its retail schemes. Land Securities recognises that integrating art works into developments not only enhances the visual appeal of the environment being created but also acts as a genuine way to involve communities in development schemes. Public art is a part of Land Securities' Corporate Social Responsibilities Policy. Through art consultants InSiteArts, Land Securities has commissioned Jane Watt to create a significant artwork which not only provides aesthetically pleasing solutions to the more practical and less attractive features along Christ's Lane but also refers to the rich heritage that is Cambridge. Ultimately, it will become a major attraction for Cambridge itself.



## FOR PLANNING

**Materials Key**

1. Frameless glass panels incorporating artwork by Jane Watt
2. 300mm kick plate zone constructed from Yorkstone and Perforated metal
3. PPC aluminium flashing
4. Flush stainless steel fixings
5. Galvanised steel frame
6. Insect mesh / grillage

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