



RSUA Water Canon Design Competition
Entry 141 Supporting Document
WATER FROM THE WELL

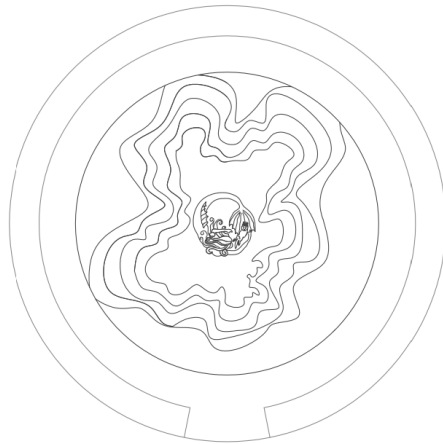
Entry 141

WATER FROM THE WELL

"The lough will claim a victim every year." This line from Seamus Heaney's A Lough Neagh Sequence is used here as an epigraph to frame the project as a civic reminder that water requires deliberate management.

This proposal places a circular, above ground water pavilion at the top of Stormont Hill, adding a quiet reminder that insists on water's civic importance. The site is a broad drop-off point of tarmac known as 'the bull ring', where people linger, with nowhere meaningful to gather after the security gates close at 4 pm. The installation turns that moment of neglect into a moment of reflection: a circular water pavilion that reads as both ancient and provisional.

We begin symbolically with Lough Neagh and the legend of Lí Ban (The paragon of woman) who, according to legend, survived the lake's formative flood spilling from an overflowing well and was later transformed into a mermaid-like figure and even venerated as a saint. This lends the project a mythic origin, a local story that frames water as life, loss and transformation. Using Lí Ban as a patron figure establishes a cultural lineage that ties Stormont's contemporary governance to the lough's deeper ecological and narrative history.



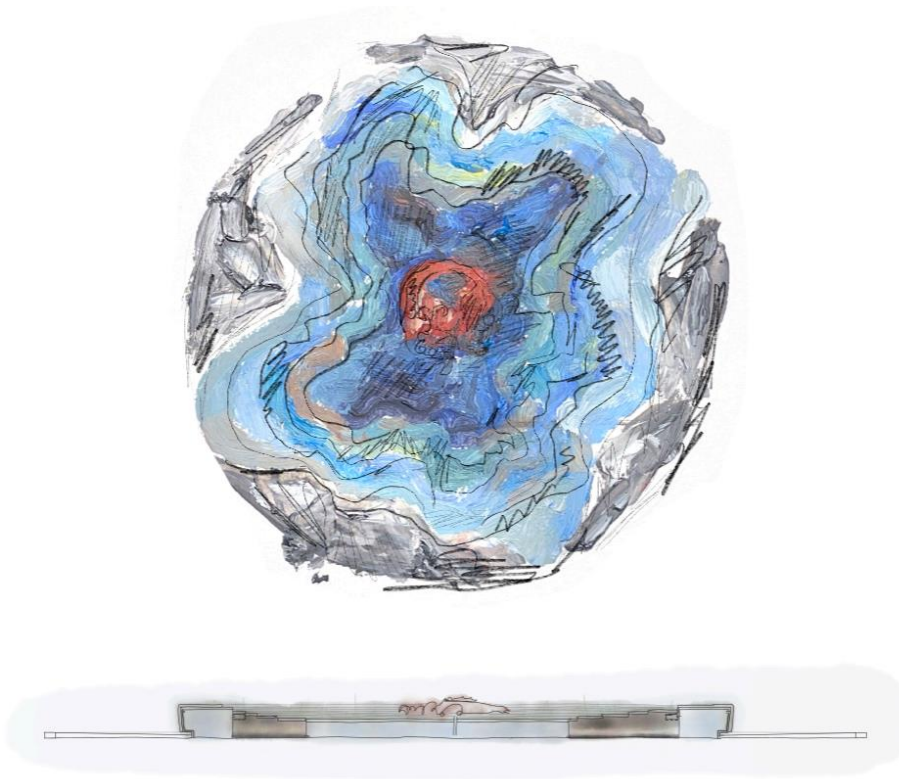
Plan of pavilion 1:200



Site location



Image of Lí Ban, Clonfert Cathedral



Abstract Plan and Section

DESIGN CONCEPT - CIRCULARITY & BIOPHILIA

The pavilion's form is intentionally circular to read as an elemental "canon" of water. Rain is collected, filtered, displayed, then overflows and is collected once more. This circular continuous loop also echoes the lifecycle motif in the Lí Ban story and Heaney's repetition; water returns, is reclaimed, and returns to use. The structure is entirely above ground, relatively lightweight and modular. The aim is permanence of idea, not of footprint: the installation is designed to be read as permanent but to be relocated if required.

We have suggested a comparative scale of **1:5000** for the lough, which matches the diameter of the Carson statue, but this isn't set in stone (*sic*) and can be amended to meet the requirements of the RSUA with regards to size and cost.

TACTILITY, PEDAGOGY AND POLITICS

The pavilion is a civic classroom disguised as a memorial. A band of interpretive text tells the story of Lí Ban; simple diagrams explain the sand filter, the algal bench and how treated water is reused. The installation is subtle - no grand water jets or LED spectacle. Its democratic choreography invites small groups to pause, touch, rest, and read – The 7 poems that comprise the Lough Neagh Sequence are carved on the outer water collection ring.

As the site sits at the top of Stormont, the pavilion stages an everyday reminder for those who pass to and from the seat of government: water policy is not distant bureaucracy but local practice. The political topography is harnessed as pedagogy - a daily prompt for decision-makers, citizens and school groups alike.

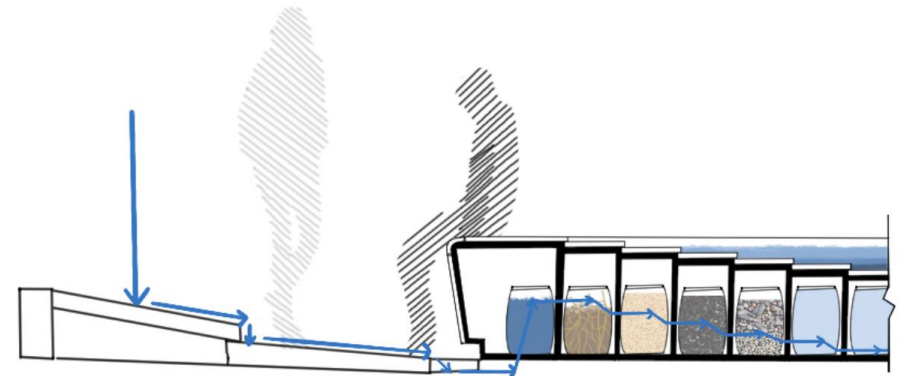
NATURAL GREYWATER FILTRATION & MATERIALS

Treatment is passive and biophilic. Runoff and collected rainwater pass through a layered filter that incorporates Lough Neagh sand - a nod to the area's characteristic sediments. The filter is composed of graded local sand, washed gravel and planting that perform sedimentation and phytoremediation.

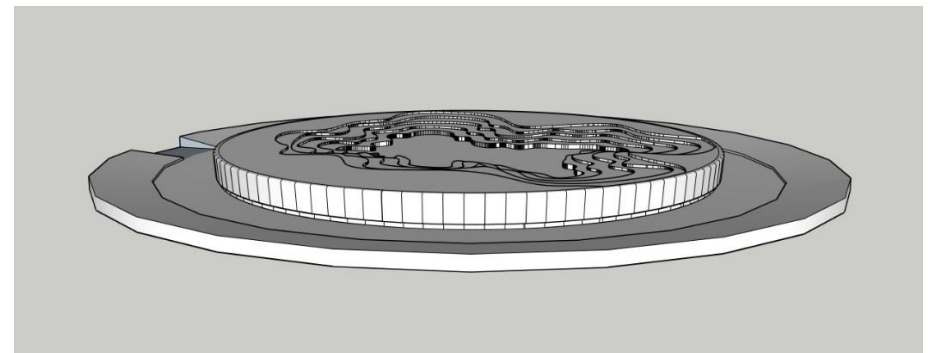
We propose the experimental use of reconstituted stone with a cement substitute created from algae. The resulting porous surface, designed to replicate the rough granite texture and tone of the Carson statue plinth, is seeded with non-toxic microalgae strains that aid nutrient uptake and oxygenation while giving the benches a living, changing texture. The algae layer becomes a visible, tactile sign of treatment: soft, green veils in summer; slow, sculptural crusts in winter.

SOURCING, STORAGE AND REUSE

Water storage is intentionally low-tech and resourceful: repurposed 5-gallon drums (cleaned and arrayed in modular banks beneath the benching) act as intermediate holding tanks. This choice models reuse and circular economy thinking for waste containers given to civic services. The system uses existing drainage where possible - the nearest manhole serves as a sump point only when gravity and overflow necessitate it. Otherwise, all treatment and storage remain above ground to avoid intrusive excavation into the tarmac. Flow is driven by small, solar-powered pumps that move water through the sequence and back to display features or to flower beds used for seasonal planting. Highlighting reuse is central: treated water irrigates flowering swales, replenishes central basin from which visitors can scoop water and feel its temperature, clarity and scent.



Water capture and filtration



3D model work in progress



SUSTAINABILITY, RESILIENCE & RELOCATION

The relatively lightweight, above-ground approach reduces embodied energy and simplifies decommissioning. Structural components are bolted, not welded, allowing the entire installation to be lifted and reassembled elsewhere. This supports RSUA's call for creative ideas that are flexible and replicable. Waste-minimising choices (repurposed drums, local sand, low-energy solar powered pumps) align with a small-scale but high-impact sustainability brief: demonstrate methods that scale from neighbourhood interventions to policy pilots.

TACTILITY, PEDAGOGY AND POLITICS

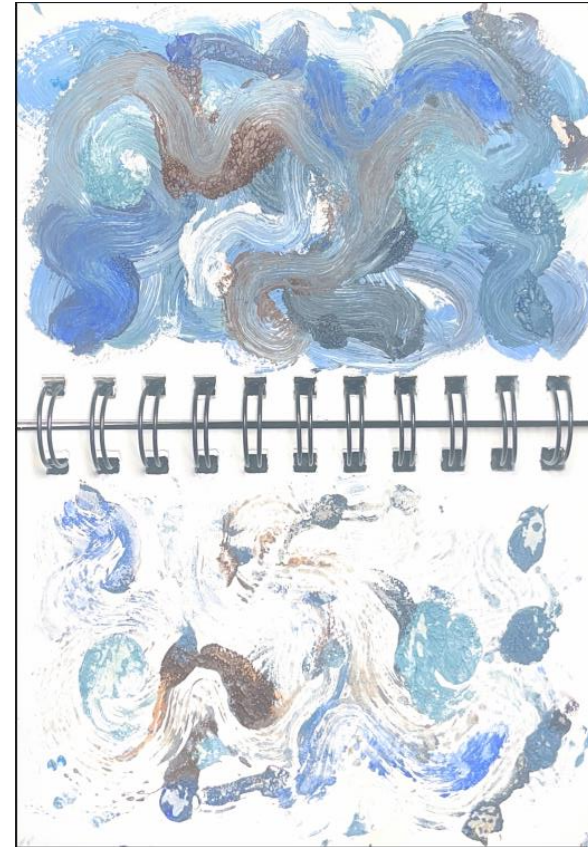
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POETIC RITUAL & CIVIC CEREMONY

The design imagines an annual “Offering of the Waters” – a simple civic ritual on a stormy autumn day when a symbolic volume of water (topped up from a small, labelled drum containing water sourced from each MLAs constituency) is poured into the pavilion’s rim and allowed to circulate through the sand filter and algal bench. The ceremony connects local story, poet and politics: Lí Ban’s origin, Heaney’s cautionary line, and Stormont’s ongoing decisions about water infrastructure. The ritual insists that governing bodies remember where water comes from, and what it takes to keep it clean.

CODA

This entry proposes a modest but resonant architecture: a circular, above-ground water pavilion that is at once laboratory, shrine and classroom. It ties the mythic resonance of Lí Ban and Seamus Heaney’s Lough Neagh Sequence to practical strategies for greywater filtration, water treatment and local reuse. Modular, demountable and pedagogic, the pavilion transforms a grim, tarmacked threshold at the top of Stormont into a daily reminder that water, like politics, demands continual tending.



Early Concept Sketch