



Canterbury Underpass Design Competition  
**Canterbury on its feet in the sunlight**  
Information pack  
September 2008



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The first version of this information pack was submitted to the Canterbury Underpass Design Competition in 2008 in the UK.

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Document version information:

Canterbury Underpass Design Competition - Canterbury on its feet in the sunlight - Information pack

Version 1.02

released March 2009

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Underpasses as **attractive, minimalist and functional links in a holistic, uplifting, and sociable network**. Polished near-white concrete walls with no art to disrupt the flow. On the ground scintillating white tarmac containing recycled glass.



Underpass entrance artist's impression

- 1.2 **Bathed in sunlight** piped in by a Parans system, at night the hybrid luminaires use internal fluorescents to flood the underpasses with light. Linear strips of LEDs behind refurbished stainless-steel handrails supplement head-height Collingwood LED lights in the ramp walls.
- 1.3 Our proposal creates **positive physical and mental environments** in the underpasses and further enhance this by creating attractive, sociable, and relaxing garden environments at both ends that draw people through.
- 1.4 We have concluded that certain aspects of the underpasses' history are symptomatic of city-wide issues which architecture, art and design can only begin to address when they are used in **a totally integrated way that includes context at all**

**levels:** from the micro, choice of materials, avoiding counter-productive art/design on walls etc., all the way up to the macro, city-wide, level.

- 1.5 **We recognise the full context of the underpasses**, critically their role within a city-wide pedestrian transit system, and impact on the mental landscape, and realities, of both visitors and residents.
- 1.6 We have studied the **yellow book report of June 2005** (Canterbury: City of Imagination) in detail and our thinking and approach has very much taken account of this landmark document. **We address several parts of the report's action plan:**
- Theme 3: Urban Design and the public Realm, particularly "... to establish a rich network of routes, spaces and places" and
  - Theme 4: The Canterbury Experience, specifically: "Priority actions to improve aspects of the Canterbury experience for local people and visitors".
- 1.7 We believe that our proposals **offer Canterbury a way to differentiate itself from all other small European Cities**, one that engages with all Canterbury's people.
- 1.8 Our proposals also provide **opportunities to integrate with and enhance the Canterbury festival** and other city-wide events.
- 1.9 As two artists we might be expected to introduce paintings, or decoration, or sculpture, but all of these would be counter-productive in a functional underpass environment. This has been proved many times over in the past.
- 1.10 The art in this proposal is not in paintings on

walls, or sculpture in gardens, it is in the incredible potential of Canterbury's people to use the underpasses in context, and a pedestrian network linking beautiful garden spaces, in way that allows them their own creativity within this framework: to build **a remarkable, sociable and beautiful version of Canterbury, not in the distant future but in the next few years**. This is art at a macro level with the future of Canterbury as its people.

## 2 Underpass Design and Materials

- 2.1 To realise our vision for a positive physical (and mental) underpass environment we have chosen visually simple materials that are beautiful and tough. Polished near-white concrete cladding panels and scintillating white-tinted tarmac with some crushed recycled glass will reflect the sunlight piped in by the Parans system (see Section 3).



Underpass 1 – Interior artist's impression

### WALLS AND CEILING

#### POLISHED SHIMMERING UNDERPASS WALLS

- 2.2 We propose polished concrete cladding panels for both the tunnel and ramp walls. Polishing concrete reveals its beauty, giving it a luminous and shimmering quality. The panels will be manufactured and polished off-site to allow rapid and safe installation on-site.



Polished concrete

#### INSTALLATION

- 2.3 The pre-cast and polished panels will be brought on-site and can either be fixed directly to the existing wall or mounted to a metal resistance grid depending on exact requirements.

#### MAINTENANCE AND DURABILITY

- 2.4 Products we have researched e.g. Forticrete Medici Specification Masonry products, have a high degree of weather resistance which will minimise cleaning and maintenance requirements.
- 2.5 Panels are resistant to fire for between 2 to 6 hours.
- 2.6 Panels can be cleaned using mild detergents.

### UNDERPASS CEILING

- 2.7 The existing concrete ceiling will be cleaned and reconditioned to give it a minimalist, clean, contemporary feel. Access for maintenance will be maintained.
- 2.8 The Parans luminaires will be recessed into the ceiling and covered by strengthened safety glass to protect them from dirt, dust and possible damage.

### ENTRANCE/EXIT RAMP WALLS

- 2.9 Once furnished with polished concrete cladding/panels the entrance/exit ramp walls will have recessed Collingwood lights with brushed stainless steel surrounds installed at head-height on both sides.



Collingwood lights in ramp walls

- 2.10 The existing stainless steel handrails are in good condition and we recommend that these be reconditioned and refitted after the ramps are clad.



LED strip lighting

- 2.11 LED lighting strips will be placed behind the

handrails to provide additional illumination and create a contemporary feel for the ramp areas in the evening. The LED Strips use 3.6 watts per metre and are made from PVC.

### ENTRANCES MARKED BY ELEGANT ARCHES

- 2.12 The entrances of the underpasses are gateways into the city-centre and should therefore reflect this, both for visitors and local people.



Entrance arches – artist's impression

- 2.13 At the entrance we propose to place two brushed stainless steel tubes at either side. These tubes will rise vertically into the air before curving back down to the ground several metres further on.
- 2.14 These twin arches will provide an elegant support for the Parans solar panels for the sunlight capture/transfer system.

### SCINTILLATING WHITE FLOORING

- 2.15 The flooring will be white tinted tarmac containing some recycled glass. This will extend throughout underpasses including the ramps. This is both a beautiful and practical solution to bring the whole area together and to scintillate with light.



White tinted tarmac

### GLASS ENCASED RAILINGS

- 2.16 The external railings surrounding the entrance and exit ramps to the underpass will be refurbished and then the sides and the ends of the railings will be encased in a toughened laminate with a light blue opaque interlayer e.g. Stadip Color by Saint Gobain Solaglas.



Light blue laminated glass

- 2.17 The top of the casing will be finished in durable brushed stainless steel for appearance and practicality.

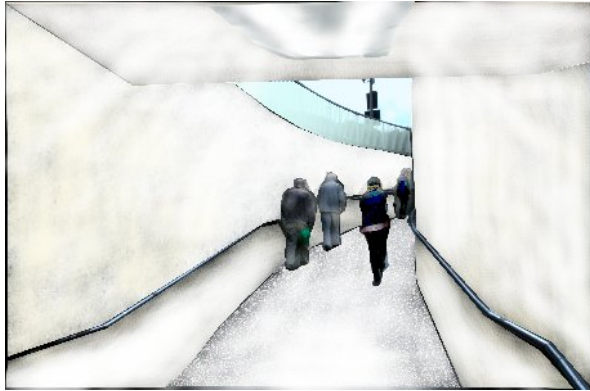
## 3 Sunlight Transfer/Lighting System - Parans

### SUNLIGHT IS VITAL

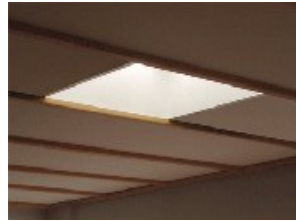
- 3.1 We believe that piping sunlight into Canterbury's underpasses is critical to their future.
- 3.2 A key part of our approach to the redesign of the underpasses is to create significantly better mental and physical environments, and sunlight has an invaluable part to play in this. This also means being ruthlessly honest and pragmatic about the reality of an underpass as an express/high-volume link in a city-wide pedestrian transit system: this is why we believe that art in underpasses, for example, is counter-productive at a number of levels.
- 3.3 When natural sunlight is available it makes sense to use it, not only to save energy but, critically, to promote the natural positive responses to sunlight that we all have as human beings. In addition to visually simple but beautiful materials that increase the integration of the underpasses function and appearance we believe that bathing the underpasses in sunlight piped in by a Parans system will positively influence people's experience of, and reactions to, these necessary environments.

### THE UNDERPASSES

- 3.4 Underpass 1 - Ivy Street Gardens to St George's Gate (Chaucer Hotel to Wilkinson's) includes an approximately 20 x 2m tunnel oriented in an east south east to west north west direction. The last few metres of both ends of the tunnel are curved.



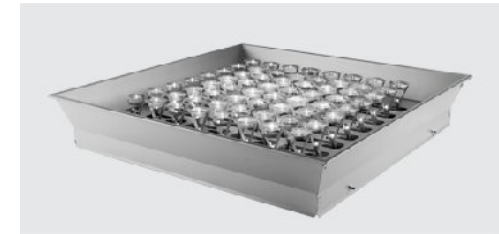
Underpass 1 – Interior artist's impression



Parans L5



Parans L4



Parans SP2

- 3.5 Underpass 2 - St George's Gate (Wilkinson's to Fenwick's) includes an approximately 20 x 2m tunnel oriented in a north north east to south south west direction. The last few metres of both ends of the tunnel are curved.

#### LIGHTING PROPOSAL IN DETAIL

- 3.6 Our proposal is to replace the existing light fittings in each tunnel with 16 new ruggedised Parans fittings. Parans hybrid fittings will use both sunlight from the Parans Solar Panels and light from fluorescent lamps as light sources, with the fluorescent lamps dimmable, and only on when required, in low or no sunlight conditions.
- 3.7 Our preferred luminaire fittings are ruggedised versions of the square Parans L5 hybrid units mounted recessed in the ceiling. Our alternative proposal is to use rectilinear Parans L4 hybrid units corner-mounted between the ceiling and wall-top.

- 3.8 We propose that ruggedised versions of the above mentioned Parans luminaires be made by Van Doorn Lighting B.V. [www.vdc.nl](http://www.vdc.nl) in the Netherlands. This is the company that created the Hong Kong subway luminaires referenced in our examples below.
- 3.9 Each underpass will require four Parans (SP2) Solar Panels mounted two at each end of the underpass tunnel entrances. These solar panels will be mounted to face South (as near as possible) and be inclined at approximately 50°, with as little shading of the panels as possible. Sunlight from these solar panels will be transferred by 16 x 6mm diameter Parans optical cables to the luminaires in the tunnels.

- 3.10 Underpass Tunnel Area = c. 20 x 2m = c. 40m<sup>2</sup>.  
Average solar luminance from the 16 luminaires = c. 10,000 lumen\* / 40m<sup>2</sup> = c. 250 lux  
\*With 4 Solar Panels active simultaneously, average cable length = 7.5m, Solar Luminosity = 100,000 lux

#### ARCHES - ABOVE GROUND MARKERS AND SOLAR PANEL MOUNTS

- 3.11 At each underpass tunnel entrance two Parans solar panels will be mounted between two brushed stainless-steel arches that start at the tunnel entrance, rising vertically 5-7 metres then arching backwards and returning to ground a few metres behind the entrances.
- 3.12 Note: We have discounted an alternative (proposed in stage one) to span the complete width of the carriageways and link the tunnels above ground, as this would be unlikely to be approved.
- 3.13 These arches will be visually attractive and act as above ground markers for the tunnel entrances, aiding orientation.

#### INSTALLATION

- 3.14 Installation of the luminaires is similar to other lighting systems but with the hybrid units requiring connection with an electrical connection for the

integral fluorescent and an optical cable for sunlight transmission.

## MAINTENANCE

- 3.15 The Parans solar panels require the same glass cleaning as an ordinary window. Parans recommend the glass be cleaned one to three times per year depending on how dirty the local environment is. N.b. Parans SP2s can also be ordered with self-cleaning glass.

## EXAMPLES

- 3.16 Parans have supplied us with information on two comparable underpass schemes: one in Hong Kong, and one in Melbourne.

### HONG KONG - SUBWAYS NS83 & NS277 (INSTALLED SPRING 2008)

- 3.17 Subways NS83 & NS277 are two large pedestrian and cycle subways in the heart of Hong Kong. The NS83 Subway tunnel at 30 x 5.5m (165m<sup>2</sup>) and the NS277 Subway tunnel at 22 x 5.5m (121m<sup>2</sup>) are over four and three times larger respectively than the Canterbury underpasses (at 40m<sup>2</sup> each).



Subway NS83 - Hong Kong



Subway NS277 - Hong Kong

- 3.18 The installations of Parans systems in the two Hong Kong subways use four Parans SP2 Solar Panels per tunnel and hybrid fittings that emit sunlight and automatically maintain the light level with dimmable fluorescent lamps in low/no-light conditions. The solar panels are installed on the walls outside the tunnel.

### MELBOURNE - FLINDERS STREET STATION (PROPOSAL 2008)

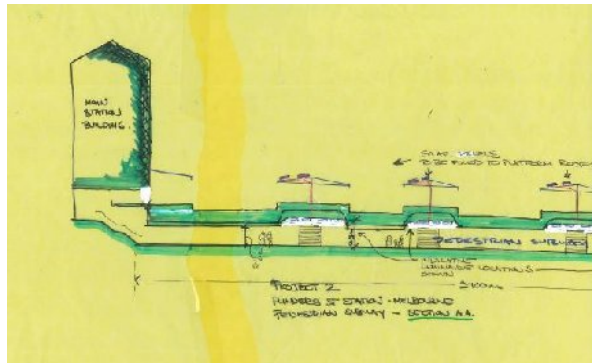


Flinders Street station - Melbourne

- 3.19 Flinders Street station is Melbourne's central railway station. All Melbourne's suburban trains terminate here. The station services over 110,000 commuters and 1,500 trains every weekday.
- 3.20 The proposed installation of a Parans system in pedestrian subways in Melbourne's Flinders Street railway station uses Parans SP2 solar panels mounted on the railway station's roof and Parans hybrid light fittings.

## 4 Pedestrian Metro System (Pedro)

### UNDERPASSES IN A CITY-WIDE CONTEXT



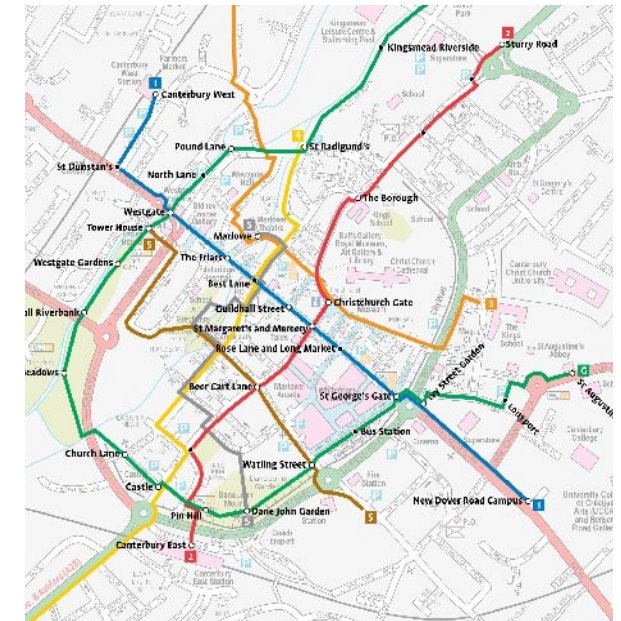
Flinders Street subway section



Flinders Street subway



Flinders Street under platform



Pedro network

- 4.1 Context is all important in our proposal. We have extended the brief to use the underpasses as part of a bigger strategy involving the creation of a city-wide network of walking routes, garden-stations and information panels.
- 4.2 At the ends of the underpasses (Ivy Street Gardens and St George's Gate) we propose that the environments be developed into feature areas with attractive modern street furniture, planting, and routing and information signage.
- 4.3 Adjacent to the Chaucer Hotel, and at the eastern end of Underpass 1, we believe an 'Ivy Street



Garden' should be developed into beautiful and relaxing garden with water, generous seating and opportunities for sociability. At St Georges Gate we believe that a feature area should be developed with seating interspersed with garden elements, on a smaller scale. Elements on both sides of the access road would be integrated but allow for maximum flow and access through the middle.

4.4 At the city-wide scale we propose that these two feature areas would become 'stations' (St. George's Gate and Ivy Street Garden) in a Canterbury Pedestrian Metro (Pedro) network of pedestrian routes.



St. George's Gate and Ivy Street Garden stations

4.5 Initially we envisage two Pedro lines, routes, passing through these 'stations' and the underpasses: '1' a main route from New Dover Road to Canterbury West and 'G' a route linking green open spaces throughout Canterbury.

4.6 At the garden-stations signage will provide network route maps as well as local information (as per Underground/Metro stations) helping visitors to navigate Canterbury and encouraging residents, and others, to explore and walk rather than ride.

4.7 Improvements to the underpasses and, even more importantly, their immediate and wider context will increase the flow of pedestrians through the city. Real engagement and pride in these places will change attitudes and minds, improving behaviour and making the city a safer more sociable place to traverse on foot, day and night.

### A PEDRO 'STATION' DEFINED

4.8 A Pedro station is a beautifully designed garden with copious seating and integrated information about the Pedro network and its location; run, developed and owned by people in the immediate vicinity.



Ivy Street Garden - artist's impression of a Pedro garden-station

4.9 The minimum elements that a Pedro station *must* have are:

- A beautiful garden – coordinated planting and design to create an inspiring area that is a jewel-like addition to the city.
- Copious seating – plenty of elegant modern seating to relax and socialise on, fully

integrated into the station-garden design.

- Integrated information about: the Pedro network, current route(s), amenities, and local directions. This information would be displayed on contemporary way-marker panels (see Zürich example below).
- That it is developed, owned and run, on an ongoing basis, by people in the immediate vicinity.

4.10 Over and above the minimum requirements stated above, a Pedro station could have several of the following integrated into it, or close by:

- Toilets/Baby-changing Facilities
- Refreshments
- Water Fountain(s)
- Picnic Areas
- Children's Play Areas
- Sports/Recreation
- other facilities

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY TO PEDRO STATIONS AND PEDRO

4.11 It is critical that these 'stations', throughout the network, are 'owned' by the community, and the community (particularly schools and residents) would be actively engaged in the design, maintenance and running of these garden areas. Other activities would include ongoing design, planting, organising events, fund-raising etc.

4.12 Community involvement in the garden-stations would include:

- Schools

- Colleges
- Residents (associations)
- Playgroups
- F/E and H/E Institutions
- and a wide variety of other groups and individuals (Age Concern, WI, Brownies...)

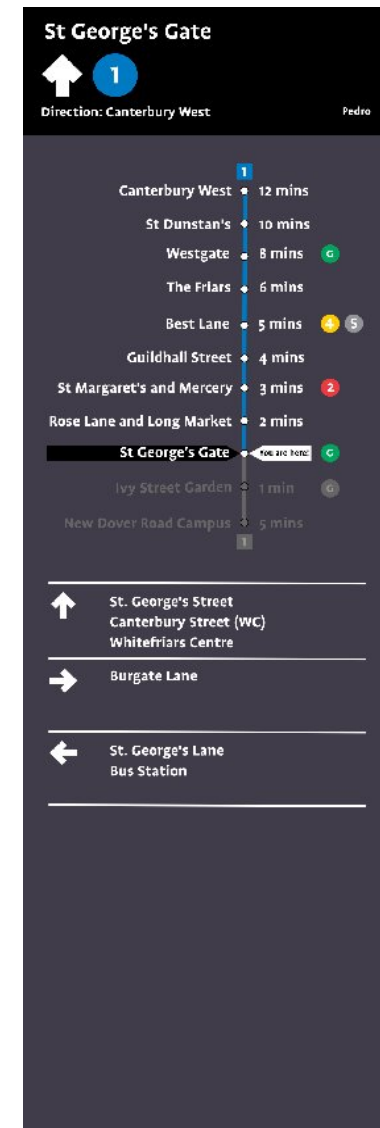
visitors and locals experience of Canterbury. Along Pedro lines the contemporary panels will provide a heads-up display of Pedro routing and other information facing towards someone following a route. Walking times in minutes to the remaining stations ahead will be displayed. Arrows against a list of amenities and local streets etc. will provide rich navigation and orientation information.

panels to display civic information including festival and cultural events and other information.

- 4.13 Each station-garden has to have a Champion or Champions and an associated group engaged with the initial design and the running and ongoing development.
- 4.14 A yearly city-wide Pedro 'station' competition would be held with multiple categories: e.g. 'Best station with school involvement' etc. Culminating in awards and tours of the best, perhaps as part of the Canterbury festival (see Canterbury City of Imagination - Festival section 1.2). Special events could be held at each station as part of festivals with the help of institutions and groups.
- 4.15 The Pedro station-gardens would need to be overseen by a Council committee as would the Pedro network itself. Within the Canterbury city council a Champion and Co-ordinator would co-ordinate, monitor and help station-garden groups, and help mind/moderate an online-forum and website.



Way-marker panel at Ivy Street Garden station – artist's impression



Way-marker panel north of St George's Gate – proposed design

4.18 Way-marker panels at stations will also provide a Pedro network map and a local street plan.

4.19 We would recommend the inclusion of ideas from Zürich such as:

- Pull down and embossed maps at stations to increase accessibility to disabled users (people with visual impairments and wheelchair users)
- Dynamic sign elements at the top of the

4.16 From an information/orientation point of view we believe that the Pedro can both act as a pedestrian routing aid for those less familiar with the city, or an area which a route traverses, as well as providing a massive increase in information around the stations.

4.17 Pedro way-marker panels are critical to enriching

4.20 Whilst our proposal of the installation of additional

signs may be controversial we believe that a signage system of the type we propose (similar to that proposed in Zürich), i.e. way-markers, will actually be visually unobtrusive, and immensely enriching to the experience of the city.

- 4.21 Pedro Maps will be produced along the lines of metro maps, with indexes of sites and streets in 3-fold leaflet format. These leaflets will also clearly identify amenities at each Pedro station.
- 4.22 Online information would be presented in a dedicated Pedro website with information on the network, news, and navigation tools. A forum dedicated to, and run by, the various participants engaged in running and maintaining the station-gardens would also be provided; to help promote knowledge sharing and mutual assistance.
- 4.23 Tourist attractions, hotels, businesses and others along the Pedro lines would be encouraged to identify their nearest Pedro station in literature and online and also be supplied with leaflets.

## EXAMPLES

- 4.24 Our research has identified some comparable projects, although nothing which appears to be as integrated as this proposal.

## SPACIAL METRO

- 4.25 There was a pan-European initiative (completed in May 2008) called Spacial Metro: "Spatial Metro is an international project dedicated to finding new and exciting ways of improving city centres for pedestrians."
- 4.26 SpacialMetro.org: "Ten partner organisations from the UK, France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland are working together to achieve this in the five cities of Norwich, Bristol, Rouen,

Koblenz and Biel/Bienne."

- 4.27 Spacial Metro's stated aim was to: "... to make city visits more enjoyable for pedestrians by making them easier to navigate, easier to walk around, and easier to understand and appreciate."
- 4.28 The project, which had major European funding ran from 2005 until 2008.

## NORWICH

- 4.29 Norwich in the UK appears to have mainly improved environments for pedestrians although it also tantalisingly mapped a small scale pedestrian metro without taking the idea further.
- 4.30 The intentions of Norwich's map are described as: "The Norwich Walking Metro sets out some of the best places in Norwich along thematic shopping, retail and heritage 'lines'. It gives a good sense of what there is and where places are in relation to each other, but is not intended as a traditional wayfinding map." **We believe that this is missing important potential benefits; that are typically underestimated by someone who already knows a place well.**

## BRISTOL

- 4.31 Bristol identified the key aspects of providing an enriched information experience: "Providing this kind of welcome information has several benefits for the city. It enhances the visitor's experience and understanding of the city and hence their perceptions of Bristol. There are benefits from the shift to public transport and walking, and also economic benefits when visitors undertake more activities in the city and potentially return for alternative activities, such as the business traveller returning for leisure activity with their family."

## ZÜRICH

- 4.32 Zürich has recognised that pedestrian signage and wayfinding systems can: "...attract visitors and are an important locational factor. They give both visitors and residents travelling on foot the feeling that they are welcome in the city, that they will be looked after and that they will find a safe and attractive route to their destination."
- 4.33 Zürich's implementation of way-markers in their central Oerlikon district has made inroads towards a number of key pedestrian wayfaring objectives:
  - Greater clarification and understanding of the city quarters and the city as a whole
  - Development of pedestrian routes and greater awareness of pedestrians
  - Better integration between public transport and pedestrian routes
  - To make pedestrians feel welcome
  - To make destinations in the city more attractive
  - To improve the image of the city of Zürich



Zürich wayfinding panel

4.34 Zürich way-markers: “After comparing the advantages and disadvantages of different wayfinding systems, signage using information columns [panels] was chosen.”

#### **GARDENS – COMMUNITY AND CITY-WIDE**

4.35 In our concept of community led station-gardens we were particularly inspired by Monty Don's recent seminal BBC television series Around the World in 80 Gardens. Our proposal is undoubtedly influenced by gardens featured in this series such as:

- Community gardens in New York (programme five) and South Africa (programme eight)
- Various minute gardens either side of the streets of Japan (programme six)
- The patio gardens across the city of Cordoba, and the incredible sociable festival of the patios (programme seven) etc.

4.36 In our research we have considered a number of community gardens and approaches including:

- Kent Gardens Trust
- Groundwork Community Garden Case Study – Ceres Court Community Garden
- Community Gardens Network in Chatham-Kent, Ontario, Canada
- Community Gardens in and around Canterbury: Sturry Community Garden

4.37 In particular we were struck by aspects of Islington's Culpeper Community Garden:

- They create ownership by giving out plots

which they say helps by creating self policing.

- They also lend the space out to community groups.
- All spaces are different.
- The key is to get the community involved from the beginning for them to own it.

## 5 Final Thoughts

- 5.1 Our vision for the underpasses is as part of an integrated strategy to welcome locals and visitors alike into a **cultural** and **vibrant** city. By using quality urban design incorporating natural light and plentiful information, and giving the community a primary role in developing their own green spaces, the result will be totally **authentic**.
- 5.2 By connecting the city much more strongly with its outlying residential areas the Pedro lines may connect visitors and locals to parts of the city not always visited as much as the city centre, **reinvigorating and reintegrating the whole city**.
- 5.3 We have taken ideas such as the **Pedro system** with its **garden-stations** and interlinked it with the current **festivals and events**. The garden-stations will change as the seasons change forming living urban areas, created by the community and engaging diverse groups. **Canterbury will be further enhanced as a living community and a unique further legacy for future generations will be created**.
- 5.4 **We have realised part of the yellow book's June 2005 Action Plan** with our design proposal, Theme 3, Urban Design and the public Realm states, "Proposals for intervention to improve the public realm...and to establish **a rich network of routes, spaces and places**," and Theme 4, The Canterbury Experience, "Priority actions to **improve aspects of the Canterbury experience for local people and visitors**".
- 5.5 We feel that with a marketing strategy of: producing map leaflets of the Pedro routes, a website and an online forum maintained by the council, that this will disseminate information

effectively to a wide audience. The interactive forum in particular will feed the growth and development of the garden-stations and events throughout the city; ensuring that all Canterbury's **diverse groups are able to access and contribute** to the development of the system as a whole.

- 5.6 With redesigned sunlit underpasses integrated into a 'Pedro' network, linking vibrant and beautiful gardens, amenities and public spaces, and with full community engagement, our proposal **will help Canterbury into the future as a more sociable, attractive, successful, healthy and thriving small European city, a more wonderful place to live, work and visit**.