

POETRY PATHS

Poetry Paths fosters new ways of seeing our city and forges new connections in our community by bringing poetry and art into people's daily lives. www.poetrypaths.org

PUBLIC COMMENT: LANCASTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Poetry Paths values your opinion! We are collecting public comments on design proposals for the Library. Each design was tasked with incorporating the words from Emily Dickinson's *I Dwell In Possibility* (see right). With your help, one of the design concepts below will be chosen to be installed at the Duke Street Alcove. Please vote on either **A or B**, and share your comments by emailing poetrypaths@fandm.edu.

I dwell in possibility (#657)

I dwell in Possibility--
A fairer House than Prose--
More numerous of Windows--
Superior--for Doors--

Of Chambers as the Cedars—
Impregnable of Eye--
And for an Everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky--

Of Visitors--the fairest--
For Occupation--This--

The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise—

— *Emily Dickinson*

PROPOSAL A

“i” is a beginning, “i” is information and “i” is the budding possibilities inherent in the reader. Motivated by the poem’s dedication to finding the potential within yourself, our team created a life-sized beacon of inspiration in the silhouette of the poem’s first letter, “i”. The “i” sculpture is a bench, a lantern, and a lens for understanding the place through the words of Emily Dickinson’s poem, *I Dwell in Possibility*.

We observed this highly-used space on North Duke Street throughout the day and noticed that it is missing some basic components of successful urban spaces that enable community interaction and gathering. Seating is extremely limited, as the existing bench only comfortably accommodates one person, and lighting is non-existent.

Circulation around the site is problematic, as there is a constant flow of foot traffic from the building next door and no boundary to the site on the north side. As an exposed alcove, the site presently lacks a level of intimacy and shelter adjacent to the constant hum of activity on North Duke Street. Though proximal to the Lancaster Public Library, the space bears no particular reference to the literary world or its resources just footsteps away.

As a sculpture, the “i” engages and alters the present dynamics of the space, and connects – both conceptually and visually – to the surrounding context of the library, city hall and urban streetscape. The “i” sculpture defines a courtyard and anchors the place vertically

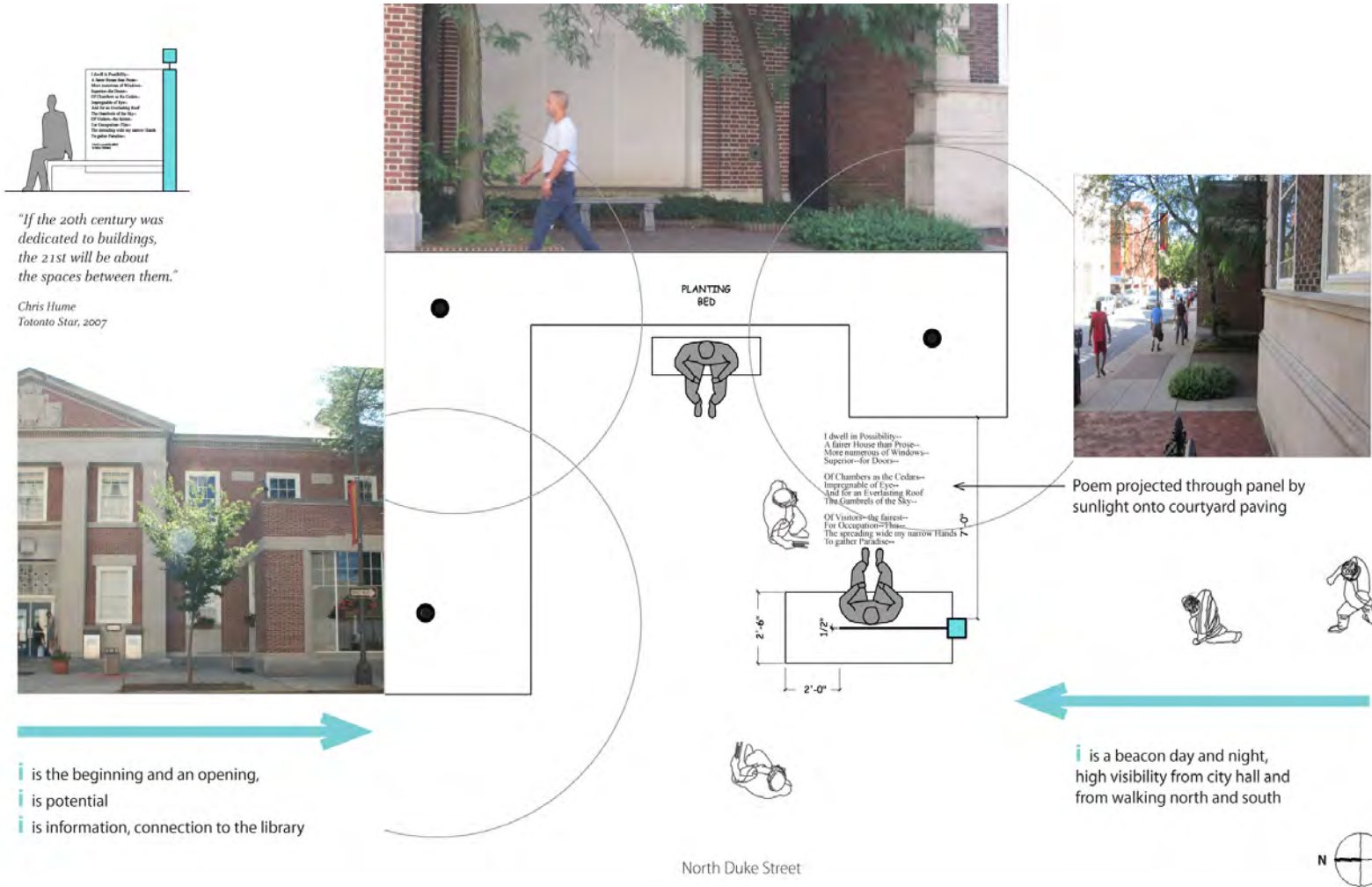
with bright color and bold form, while creating a more intimate setting for conversation and contemplation. Rooted in the poem’s notion of finding the potential within oneself, the “i” beckons to people walking both north and south on North Duke Street. It can be seen by those coming from East Marion Street and from the windows of City Hall.

This artwork is multi-faceted, and like Dickinson’s poem, replete with possibility: It brings beauty to the streetscape both day and night; prompts discovery and exploration through language, form, and materials; and resolves existing functional and circulation issues within the space. Sunlight activates the solar lantern in the dot of the “i”, enlivening the evening streetscape. During sunny afternoons, sunlight casts the poem across the pavement inside the courtyard, making possible multiple readings and interpretations. The juxtaposition of opaque metal against translucent acrylic recalls the “windows” and “doors” of Dickinson’s text, while stenciling out the text into metal evokes the origins of printing and book-making.

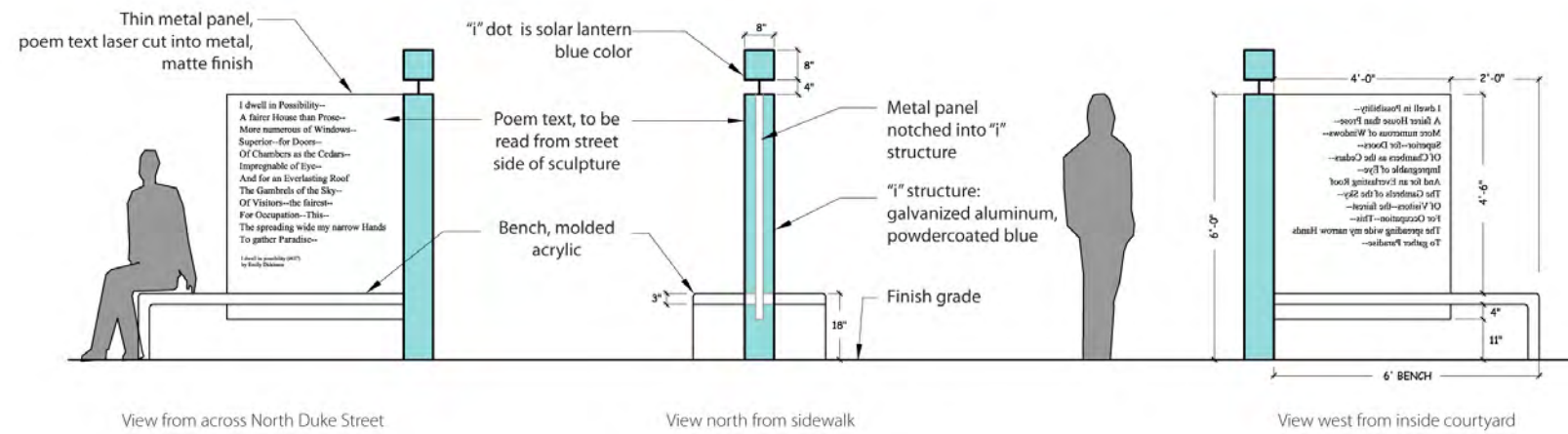
As it transforms the landscape, the “i” becomes a long-standing invitation to the community. It welcomes passersby into the courtyard by creating a place to rest and reflect, a place to socialize and interact, and a place to simply observe the interplay between light, shadow and street life.

PROPOSED DESIGN IMAGES:





Site Plan



Elevations

PROPOSAL A

PROPOSAL A

PROPOSAL B

My 8' x 8' mosaic wall mural will complement Emily Dickinson's words with a semi-abstract design that is beautiful, engaging and suggestive of the concept of *possibility*.

I live an hour away from Emily Dickinson's home in Amherst, MA. I like to imagine her in the Amherst of the mid 1800's: rolling rural landscape with numerous New England stonewalls, hay-fields, pasture and the like. I would use the colors of the summer landscape as my palette – where I live here in Buckland, the scenery is still remarkably rural and reminiscent of what Ms. Dickinson would have lived with. I also learned she dressed in white, and this will be a prominent color in my mosaic, as it will work with the limestone and allow for the lettering to be clear and legible. As the poet was a devoted gardener, I may include some loosely shaped floral imagery in one of the borders around the central hand image.

My approach to art is always deeply rooted in concept. For this commission, the poem is my concept and so I begin by reading and re-reading and thinking a lot about the words and meaning of the poem. I identify language that could be used as launching points and have chosen the words 'windows', 'doors', 'cedars', 'gambrels of the sky' and 'narrow hands' as the most suggestive of imagery. My sketches are always loose and mean to show the direction I want to go, rather than dictating exactly what the finished mural will be like. There is just no

way to depict the richness, texture, flow and reflective qualities of a mosaic in a sketch... I also work best when a mosaic is allowed to evolve; I welcome improvements/additions to the original plan and end up with a more nuanced artwork as a result. Along with my sketch I am submitting an image of a mosaic I created recently that has a similar color scheme to what I am proposing and shows the true materials versus the watercolor image (*see below*).

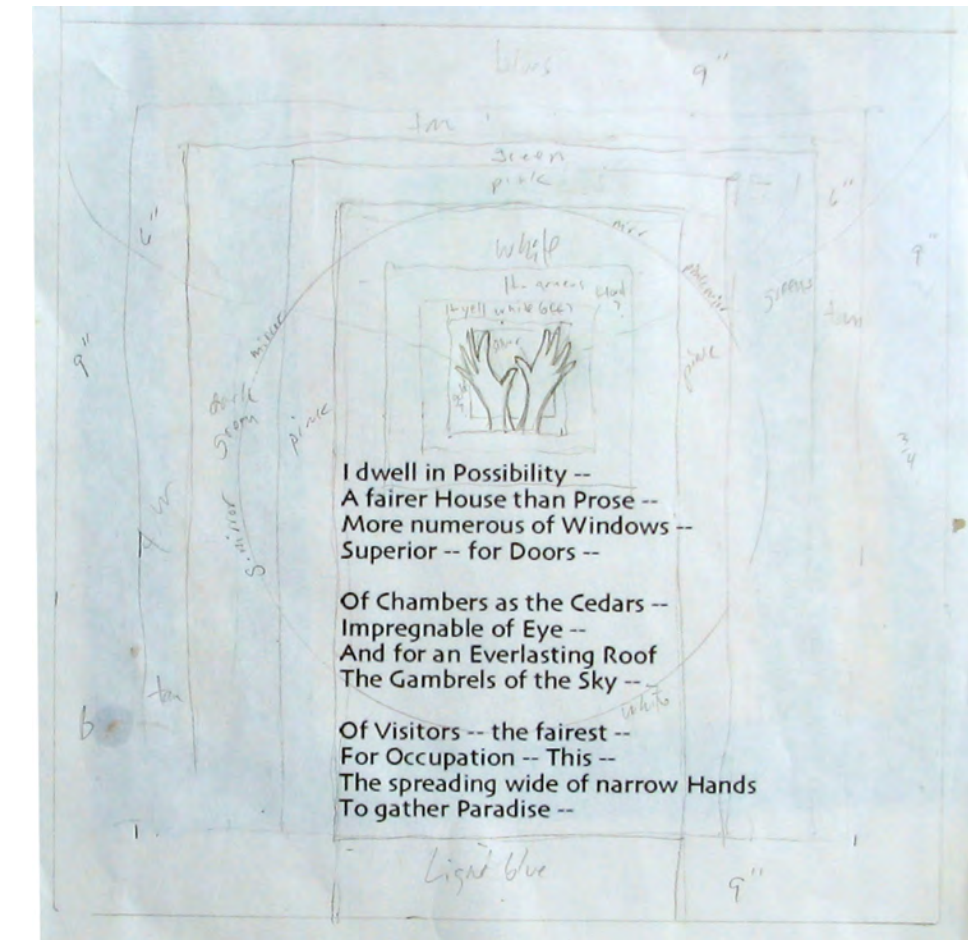
The lettering will be clearly legible from across the courtyard and beyond. Most of the background and design will be done with varying sizes and colors of stained glass. Different colored mirror glass will be used to create the circle. Mirror's reflectivity will attract viewers in a way that is unique to this material; I have used it in other public spaces and the effect is quite striking and always gets commented upon.

I was able to find this poem in Emily Dickinson's handwriting and would like to include it in the light brown border area as a subtle additional element in the mosaic. I would transcribe her handwriting to the backside of pieces of amber semi-transparent stained glass. I always strive to have people linger with my work; this is the kind of detail that may potentially be missed by some viewers, but there for those willing to take their time with an artwork.

CONCEPT DRAWINGS



Color sketch please note, hands will be done in gold or silver smalti OR broken pottery depending on which works best in framework of rest of mosaic



Pencil drawing, showing poem placement

PROPOSAL B

SAMPLE OF ARTIST'S MOSAIC WORK



Proposed Mosaic will have a similar color scheme to this piece.

PROPOSAL B