

The Union Canal in Edinburgh has a unique character. This handbook defines that character and provides a flexible brand toolkit, enabling us all to communicate consistently.



Brand Character Handbook

Who and what is this handbook for?

The handbook is divided into three clear parts. Parts 1 and 2 give you the background and elements that define the brand character.

Part 3 contains examples across a number of disciplines. The branding is flexible enough to cope with the diversity of expression and audience. Live examples will be added over time as they are produced and rolled out, and so the brand will evolve as these communications become part of the audience experience.

These guidelines can be applied to varying degrees according to the user groups:

- The independent business
- The specialist interest group or local community
- The design or production agency

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Part 1

Introduction

What is the Union Canal?

Opened in 1822, the Union Canal soon established itself at the heart of the nation's social and economic prosperity. Times have changed and for some this significance has been forgotten – but today its potential is further revealed with every visit.

Stretching nearly 32 miles from Fountainbridge at the very heart of Edinburgh to the iconic Falkirk Wheel, providing the thrilling link for onward travel to Glasgow, it is distinguished by the richness of life it encompasses. Natural beauty, architectural wonder, individual communities and new leisure opportunities come together to reward visitor and resident alike.

We want to celebrate and reward the people who live, work and journey along its length and who visit and enjoy its multiple attractions.



The Union Canal in Edinburgh

The Union Canal runs from Fountainbridge to the Falkirk Wheel where it joins with the Forth & Clyde Canal.

Union Canal in Edinburgh

This brand character handbook is for the section that runs from Edinburgh Quay to Almond Aqueduct.

A Canal Rich in Life

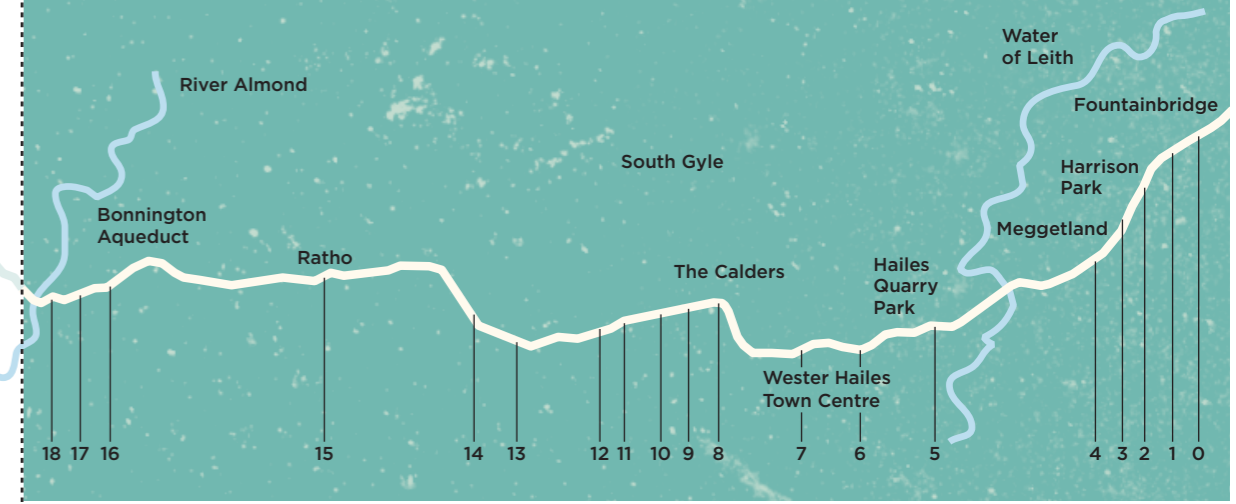
The natural tranquillity and beauty of the Union Canal in Edinburgh belie the energy and variety that it encompasses. Seven 'canal hubs' along its length introduce their own individual characters and attractions, community and recreational facilities, and opportunities to learn, work, and enjoy life.

Within the protective living skin of the natural environment, each element contributes to a genuine sense of identity that marks out the Union Canal as a destination worth exploring.

This offers a unique sense of enjoyment, a true reward for the adventurous spirit.

Scottish Canals

EDINBURGH
YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR CITY



Part 1

Background

Today

For many, the canal and the opportunities to access it are largely unknown. In some cases this results from barriers created by preconceptions – that it remains neglected; that it carries associations with a grubby industrial past; that it may be dangerous; that it’s no more than a utilitarian urban corridor; or simply that it serves no purpose.

For those who do know it, the canal serves a very practical purpose as a walking or cycling route or a more pleasant way to get to and from work.

For some of these people, the recreational possibilities are becoming apparent. Attitudes vary depending on how much use they make of it.

For a growing number of enthusiasts, the canal offers a real chance to live a different life in Edinburgh – on the water, on the edge of the water, or around the waterside. It presents the potential to work, live, learn, and enjoy life in a very different environment.

Tomorrow – Desired Perceptions

This is Edinburgh made vibrant, interesting, and fun. The canal has always connected places, and today it also brings people together. It’s a social hub, less of an urban corridor and more of a recreational route. It encourages and rewards a wide diversity of activities. People want to be part of it – it’s a fun place.

Stature and Status

Many other parts of Edinburgh are better known and because of that can be perceived to have greater stature. Understanding how those areas have earned their reputations can inform our thinking – but the Canal offers something very distinctive.

Looking across Edinburgh, we might observe that the Old Town offers contrasts of buzz and peace; The Shore in Leith demonstrates that historic perceptions can be overturned; the Meadows shows the potential for a range of self-generated activities for the public; and Portobello shows the continuing community affection for the waterfront. These are just a few examples in a lively city. We need to be as well understood.

Most of the above have the heritage of shared memories to act as foundations for respect and regard. Although there is an obvious heritage story to tell with the Canal, recent memories are more limited. This can help by countering any relatively uninformed preconceptions and allows the canal to be presented as something of the present rather than the past – for example, through the suggested ‘future memories’ initiative.

Personality

We’re looking to develop a personality that’s adventurous and proud to be rooted in Scotland.

It is a big personality and unafraid to be edgy where appropriate.

It is purposeful and its vibrancy encourages a spirit of opportunity-taking.

Warmth, flexibility, and cool style are important ingredients. Indeed, this place, like a person, reveals more the better we get to know it. And as in any relationship, there are always new things to learn and be surprised by.

This is a place where community matters and active involvement is encouraged. It’s a colourful environment where quirky individualism is encouraged not feared. Indeed it attracts people who prefer to live on the edge rather than the middle of the road.

Its soundtrack captures the wide variety of moods that engagement guarantees – think ‘cool jazz’.

Audiences

There are many audiences with varying experience of what the canal can offer. Although there will be a growing appeal to tourist audiences, our core audience will be Edinburgh residents and there is obvious relevance for family audiences.

Nevertheless, in developing a sense of place we need to be very aware of the role that people will play in creating and maintaining that. We need to be sure that anything developed from this brief reflects the slightly maverick, even eccentric, nature of the people who make the canal different. They need to feel included and a part of any communication.

- The Union Canal is where Edinburgh comes to life.
- It is where life is enjoyed at the edge and not in the mainstream.
- It is a more adventurous Edinburgh.
- The water is the constant but life around it is always on the move.

Key Assets

**Role of Heritage**

The Union Canal is rich in stories along its length and within its hubs. One of those stories is its history and heritage, which is of genuine interest to many and sets a foundation for understanding. This is a living destination and the past informs but does not define its future.

**Colour/Variety**

This could be one of the most distinctive differentiators with other Edinburgh destinations.

The hubs ensure that no one visit completes the story. There is always something more to discover.

**Water**

An obvious point, perhaps, but it is noteworthy that for too many existing users, its the path rather than the canal that is better used and known. The boats bring the canal to life and their journeys add continuity to the narrative.

**Energy**

This is a place that bristles with energy, particularly as developments grow and more people become involved.

This is reinforced by the diverse range of activities along the canal bank and, indeed, on the water.

**Nature and Wildlife**

A unique natural habitat juxtaposed with, and offering respite from, an otherwise urban environment.

**Community and communities**

These are the living stories that populate any narrative.

**A combination of peace and buzz**

Any portrayal of variety must preserve the space that the canal offers for quiet reflection.

The Union Canal Narrative

Community

The enthusiasm and engagement of the many communities involved along the length of the canal is often best brought to life in their own words. They may revel in its heritage; share the day to day stories of where they live; tell tales of an unusual commute; glory in their sporting prowess; or take quiet satisfaction in the peace that they find. It is their stories that provide a narrative for the sense of place.

Visitors

The instances of delight that await any visitor capture the character of the canal better than any argued proposition. Their tales will enrich our narrative and help us to discover more of what enriches their lives.

Memories

Memories are fundamental to the understanding of the canal and its evolving narrative. They form a historical context for the canal and creating positive new ones will continue to define its importance within its communities and drive its success.

The Union Canal Personality Values

Vibrant
Ambitious
Warm
Adventurous
Edgy
Proud

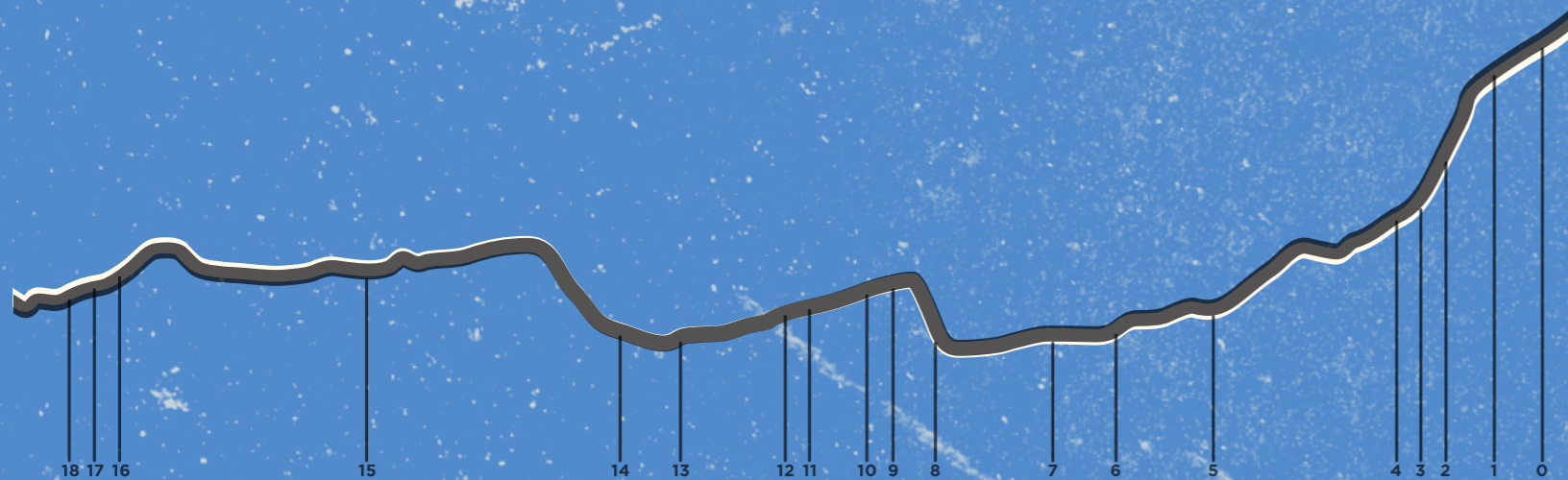
A Sense of Place

This is a seductive story, a seductive place. There are many rational reasons to use and visit; the personality is attractive and inviting. But the more that is revealed, the more one realises that there is a truth to this place that goes well beyond skin-deep. It always offers more and the seduction never stops.

Part 2

The Logo

The Union Canal logo has been designed as a flexible device that can be tailored to work with any section or arrival point on the canal. It is rooted in the bridge numbering that has been in use since the canal was constructed.



Union Canal in Edinburgh



The logo is made from 4 elements.

- The numbers
- The bridge graphic
- The canal line
- The name

The composition of the logo is fixed, with the exception of the bridge numbers which can be changed to be relevant.

Bridges

The bridge numbering device emphasises the connectivity that the Union Canal provides, not only along its length but also at those access points and wayfinding references where it connects with the communities through which it passes.

By more closely linking the bridge numbering to the places, hubs and attractions it enables a broader narrative to emerge while giving each location or area an ownable identity.

At a Bridge



When used at a single bridge destination, or to promote that destination, an individual number can be used, always located centrally as shown.

Section / Between Bridges



When used between bridges, or to promote a particular section of the Union Canal in Edinburgh, the numbers can be placed as shown. The lowest number should appear on the left and the highest number on the right.

Usage

Exclusion zone

To ensure the logo always has space to breathe, no other graphic elements should be placed within an area equal to twice the height of the bridge numbers.

**Minimum size**

To preserve legibility the logo should not be used with a width of less than 40mm.



✗ What Not to Do



Do not distort the logo.



Do not recolour the logo.



Do not alter individual elements of the logo.



Do not rotate the logo.



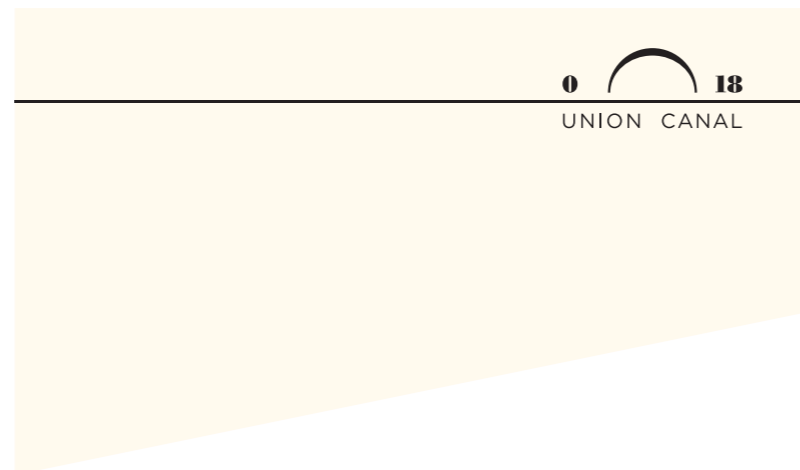
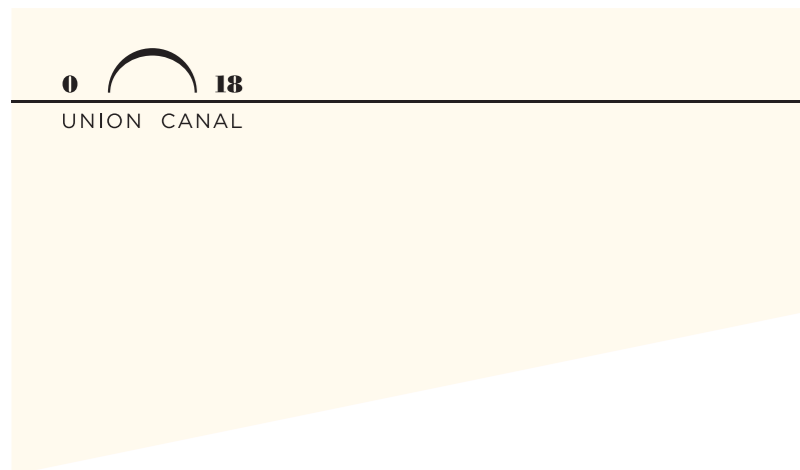
Do not use the logo on a background of insufficient contrast.



Do not use the logo on a photograph of insufficient clarity or contrast.

Positioning

The horizontal 'canal' line can be extended across the full width of the item on which it appears. The body of the logo is then free to slide along this line for best positioning.



Endorsement

When the logo is required as an endorsement, when promoting an individual location or organisation, it should be positioned in the bottom corner on either the front or back cover as shown here. The extended canal line shown on the previous page should not be used.



Part 2

Toolkit

'The Union Canal in Edinburgh' brand is more than just a logo. There are a range of elements that work together to support the logo and create a whole brand character.

Typefaces

Two typefaces can be used to express the brand. The first is *Bodoni Poster* and should be used as the lead character font for headlines and bridge numbers.

Bodoni Poster

**I'm big, bold
and recognisable**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The second is *Gotham*. It is clean and clear and should be used for all supporting copy. It is available in a wide range of weights but usage should be limited to *Light* and *Bold* where possible.

Gotham Light and Bold

I'm clear, legible
and friendly

I'm a sans serif font and fully DDA Compliant

Tone of Voice

Language is vital for capturing the allure of the canal, and expressing our personality. It helps create a unique dialogue with the user, and nurture a rich, lasting relationship.

Our language should be flexible and open, too. Let real people's voices come through, and use their own words when it's relevant (see page 12). When we're creating our own words, they should sound like they come from a real person, not a faceless marketing department.

Clichés kill character. When people read stuff like 'a delightful stretch of water, with a unique character and rich heritage...' their eyes glaze over. They've heard it all before. Plus, it's not vibrant, ambitious, warm, adventurous, edgy or proud. It's just a bit bland.

Try to find fresh, natural ways to say what you want to say. Keep sentences generally short – they're quicker and easier to read. And use everyday words – the words ordinary people use. Think about how you talk – how would you say what you've been asked to write?

For example, 'a delightful stretch of water, with a unique character and rich heritage...' might be more lively and interesting as something like, 'It's been through the wars, this old canal. And its history's given it a fascinating character all of its own.'

Vibrant and Edgy

Surprising, challenging
and humorous

Ambitious and Adventurous

Passionate, energetic
and optimistic

Warm and Proud

Honest, accessible
and approachable

Warning signs

**Careful: it gets
slippy here.**

**DANGER: ICE!
Careful – we
want you home
in one piece.**

If there's a danger, people need to be told about it clearly and quickly. But you can still be friendly about it.

Viewpoint

**Now that's a view.
That's [place] to
the left, where the
church spire is,
and [place] is way
off to the right. If
it's clear, you can
probably see it.**

An example of the sort of language that might be fun and useful at a viewpoint.

Permanent sign

**< This way for
Hailes Quarry Park

That way for Wester
Hailes Town Centre >**

You can add a bit of friendly voice to the simplest of information.

Events, Special Interest Materials, Etc.

The water cycle
Riding along the Union Canal

**Drink in the
scenery**
A guide to scenic pubs on the canal

Make the most of opportunities to have some fun and make people smile, as well as passing on useful info.

Colour and Texture

The art of screenprinting has a correlation with the industrial heritage of the canal and can be re-energised for a modern audience, expressing a mix of craft, heritage and creativity. The process itself creates a number of recognisable elements that can be utilised as part of the Union Canal in Edinburgh brand.

Primary Colour Palette

Flat areas of colour, with random overlaps, give a robust palette of colours with a tonal quality that is unique to screenprinting as it adopts the colours of the paper and inks underneath. Colour is a great way of expressing the huge diversity on and around the canal and a variety of colour is encouraged for gearing to individual communication needs.

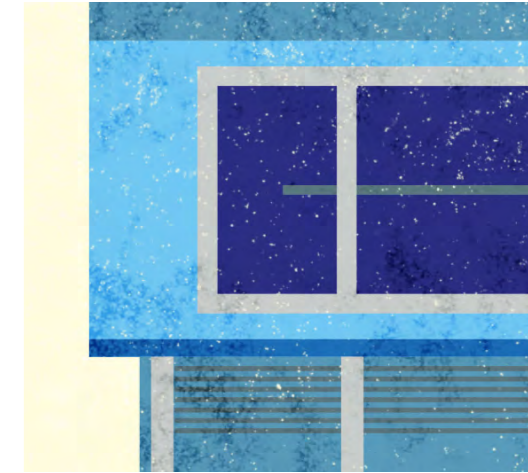
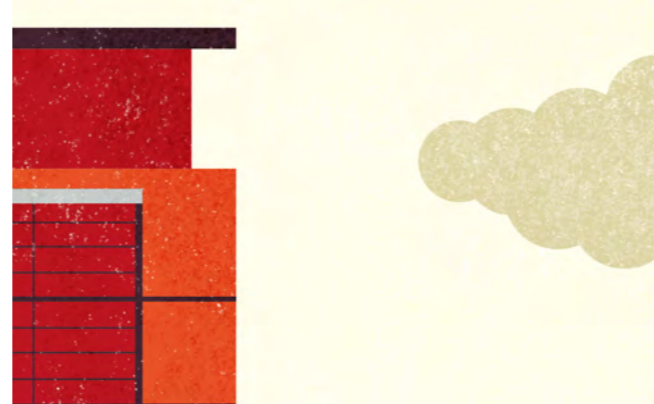
However, there may be occasions where there needs to be a more branded approach to colour choice and this is where the secondary palette should be used (see overleaf)

Layers

As the construction of the image is built up in flat layers there are elements of revelation and discovery.

Texture

The process of laying down the colour results in imperfections, adding humanity and a visually tactile result.



Colour and Texture

Secondary Colour Palette

Colour choice should be driven by the needs of the individual communication. When the communication is not geared to a specific event or location then this secondary palette should be used.

This will ensure brand consistency across the broader Union Canal communications.

Pantone 563

C57 M9 Y34 K0
R110 G184 B176
HEX #6eb8b0

Pantone 660

C63 M40 Y0 K0
R99 G138 B205
HEX #638acd

Pantone 7446

C42 M41 Y0 K0
R151 G147 B207
HEX #9793cf

Pantone 7417

C1 M74 Y59 K0
R239 G104 B96
HEX #ef6860

Pantone 583

C41 M17 Y87 K3
R169 G178 B64
HEX #a9b240

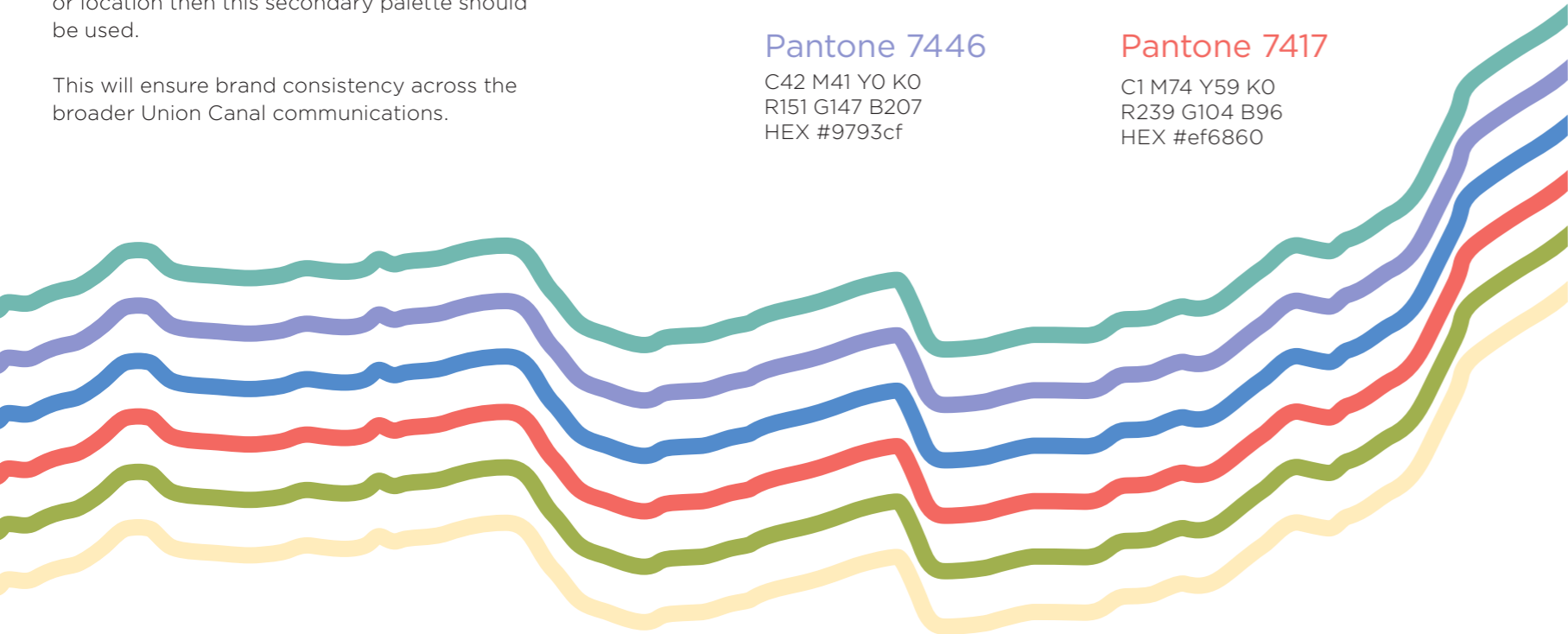
Pantone 7499

C2 M5 Y32 K0
R250 G236 B185
HEX #faecb9

For some other examples of how colour and texture can help bring the brand to life please visit:

[www.pinterest.com/studiolr25/
union-canal-brand-character](http://www.pinterest.com/studiolr25/union-canal-brand-character)

These examples have been chosen to show the breadth of personality you can achieve and also give an idea of how individuality can be embraced while retaining brand consistency.



Part 3

Implementation

The following section explains how you can use the elements in a way that is appropriate to your needs. We outline how a project could be approached, show some examples and give links to existing work that fits the brand character.

We have split the guideline users into three broad groups:

- The Canal side businesses
- The specialist interest group or local community
- The design or production agency

How to Implement These Guidelines...

The Canal side businesses

As an independent business we'd encourage you to adopt the endorsement guidelines outlined on page 23.

However, by using some of the other elements you will strengthen the links your communications have with the canal, inevitably driving energy and enthusiasm for all users. In turn, it will help contribute to the expressed vision for the Union Canal in Edinburgh and benefit your future business.

Becoming a proactive part of the vision will ensure the canal's future as a richer environment. There are huge opportunities to connect with other enterprises along the canal and any joint enterprise should use these guidelines as a brand foundation to promote its activities.

How to Implement These Guidelines...

The special interest group or local community

As one of these organisations you will already have strong ties with the Union Canal, whether physical or emotional (or both).

You will have your own brand to consider and so the adoption of the brand elements outlined here will be more relevant to some organisations than others.

As a minimum design requirement we'd encourage you to adopt the endorsement guidelines outlined on page 23.

For those keen to embrace more of the brand the following pages give examples of how it can come to life and how you can create your own individual expression without undermining the wider brand.

The design or production agency

As part of a team bringing the brand to life, you will benefit from thorough knowledge of the content of this handbook. The examples in this document and on Pinterest will give you a sense of the brand character.

Please look over the examples of what is possible within the brand guidelines. We hope you will find them inspirational and, more importantly, inform an approach to tackling your project.

Approach - On the Ground

Most user experiences will be with the canal itself and the brand elements that are expressed will form a lasting impression and offer an understanding of what the canal has to offer. Whether those touchpoints are navigational, informative, sculptural or interpretive, they should all reflect the personality of the brand.

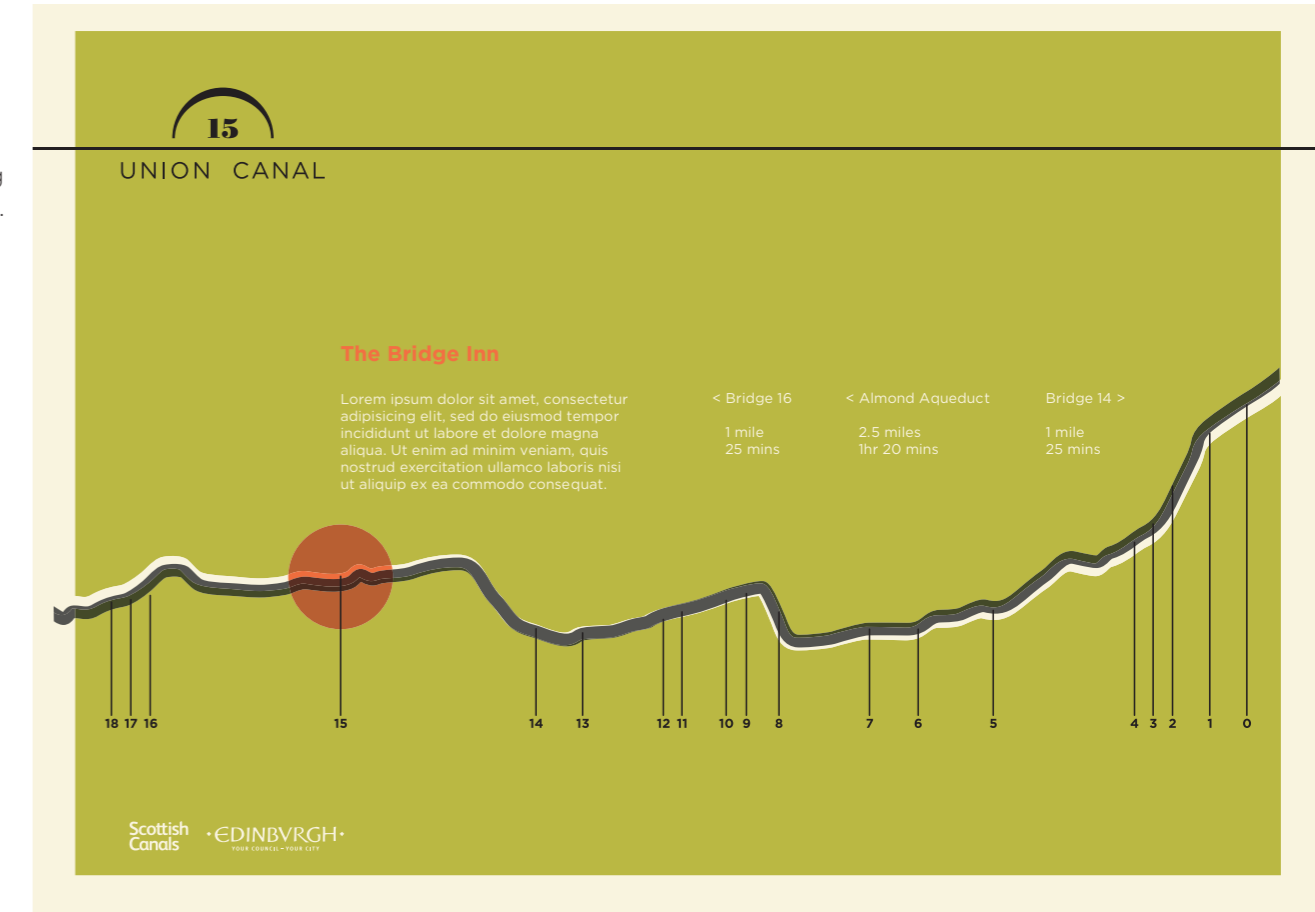
Implementation types

- Orientational
- Directional
- Bridge markers
- Interpretation

Examples

Example Orientation

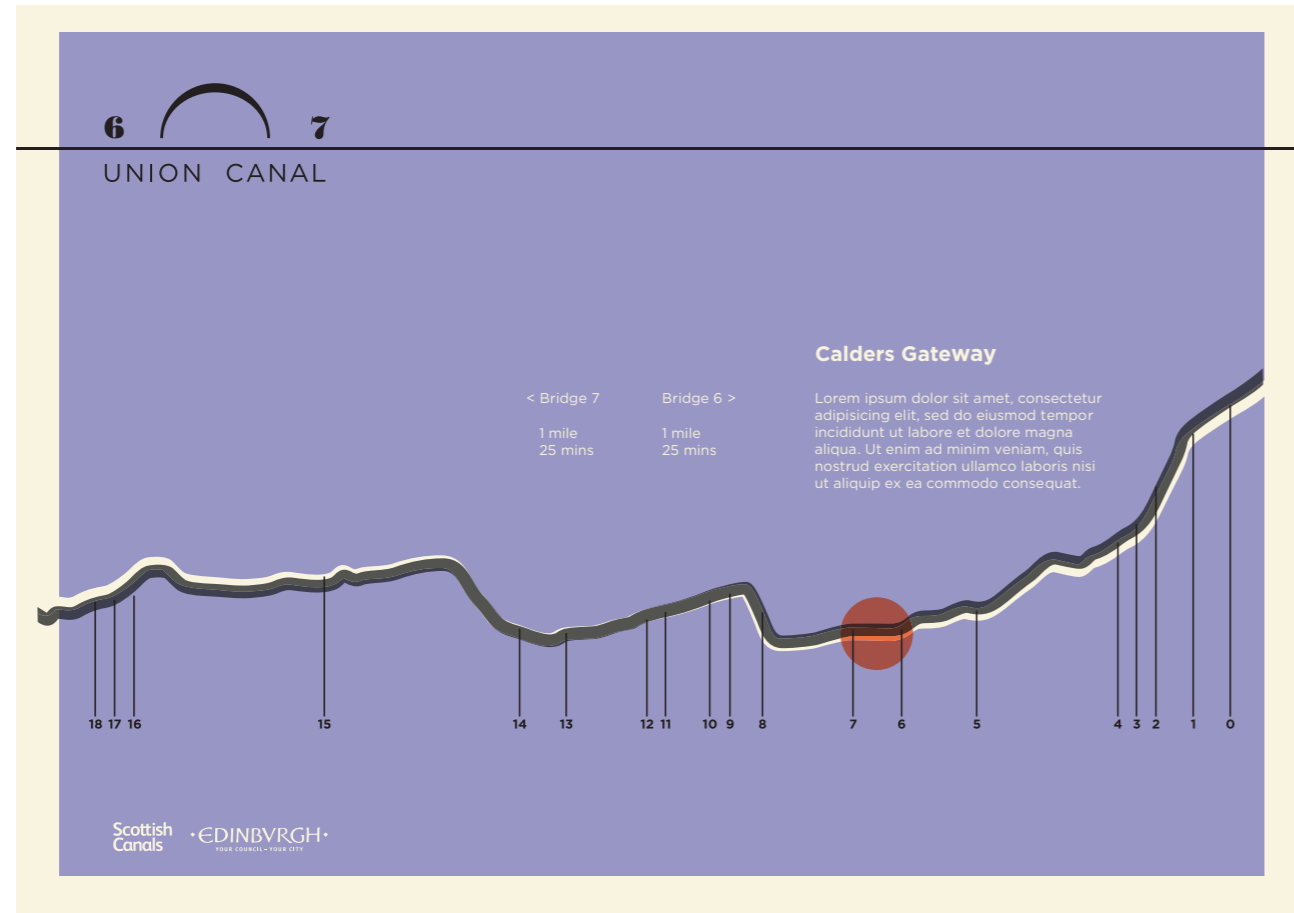
Located at a bridge access point, giving the visitor an understanding of the Union Canal in Edinburgh and informing them of local attractions.



Examples

Example Orientation

Located at an access point between bridges, giving the visitor an understanding of the Union Canal in Edinburgh and informing them of local attractions.



Materials

Each installation location should be treated individually whilst expressing the core brand elements.

It is important that each location should tell its local and uniquely relevant story. The choice of local materials will ensure credibility and contribute to the richness of the wider story. Where possible, we should aim to involve the knowledge and understanding of local suppliers and craftspeople. This will not only ensure the material aesthetic is in keeping with the surroundings but it will also strengthen the community connection with the canal.

For examples of how material choice can help bring the brand to life please visit:

www.pinterest.com/studiolr25/union-canal-brand-character

These examples have been chosen to show the breadth of personality you can achieve and also give an idea of how individuality can be embraced while retaining brand consistency.

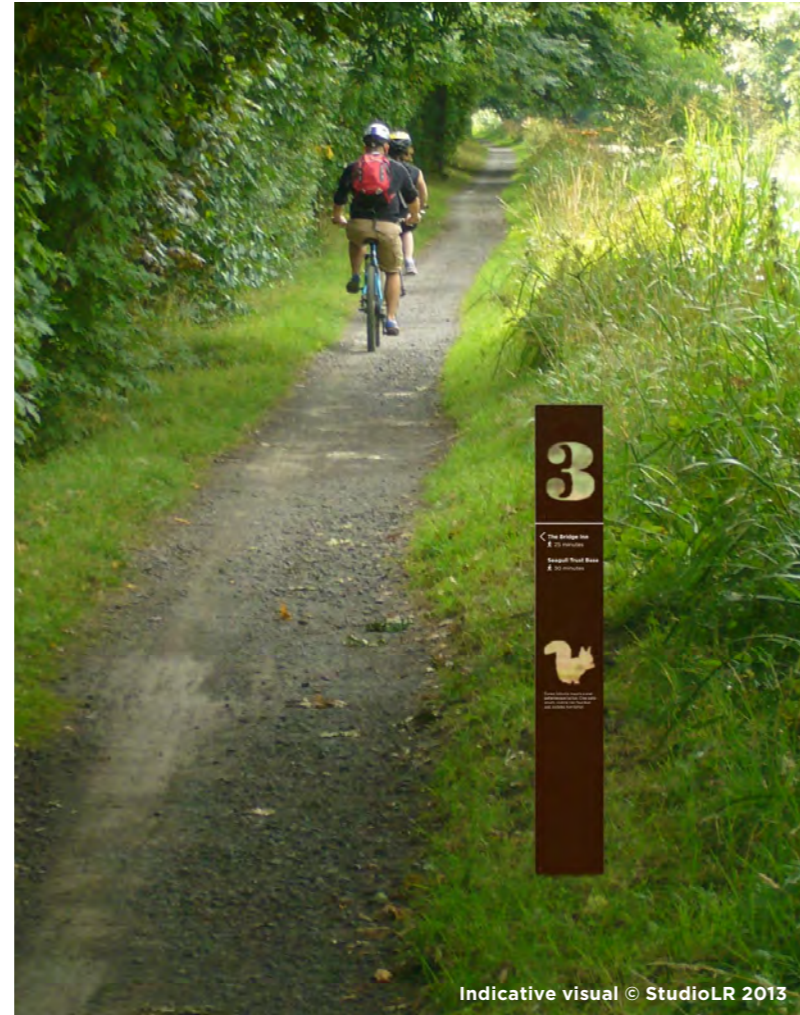
Examples

Bridge Markers

Examples of bridge markers that can become part of the canal experience.



Union Canal in Edinburgh



Indicative visual © StudioLR 2013



Indicative visual © StudioLR 2013



Indicative visual © StudioLR 2013

For other examples of how experiential design can help bring the brand to life please visit:

www.pinterest.com/studiolr25/union-canal-brand-character

These examples have been chosen to show the breadth of personality you can achieve and also give an idea of how individuality can be embraced while retaining brand consistency.

Approach – Marketing / Promotional

Marketing communications must always be rooted in the needs and desires of the target audience. As these are many and diverse, the toolkit is not designed as a constraint or template for relevant implementation. It should be used to provide the foundation for consistent understanding and reinforcement of the wider brand.

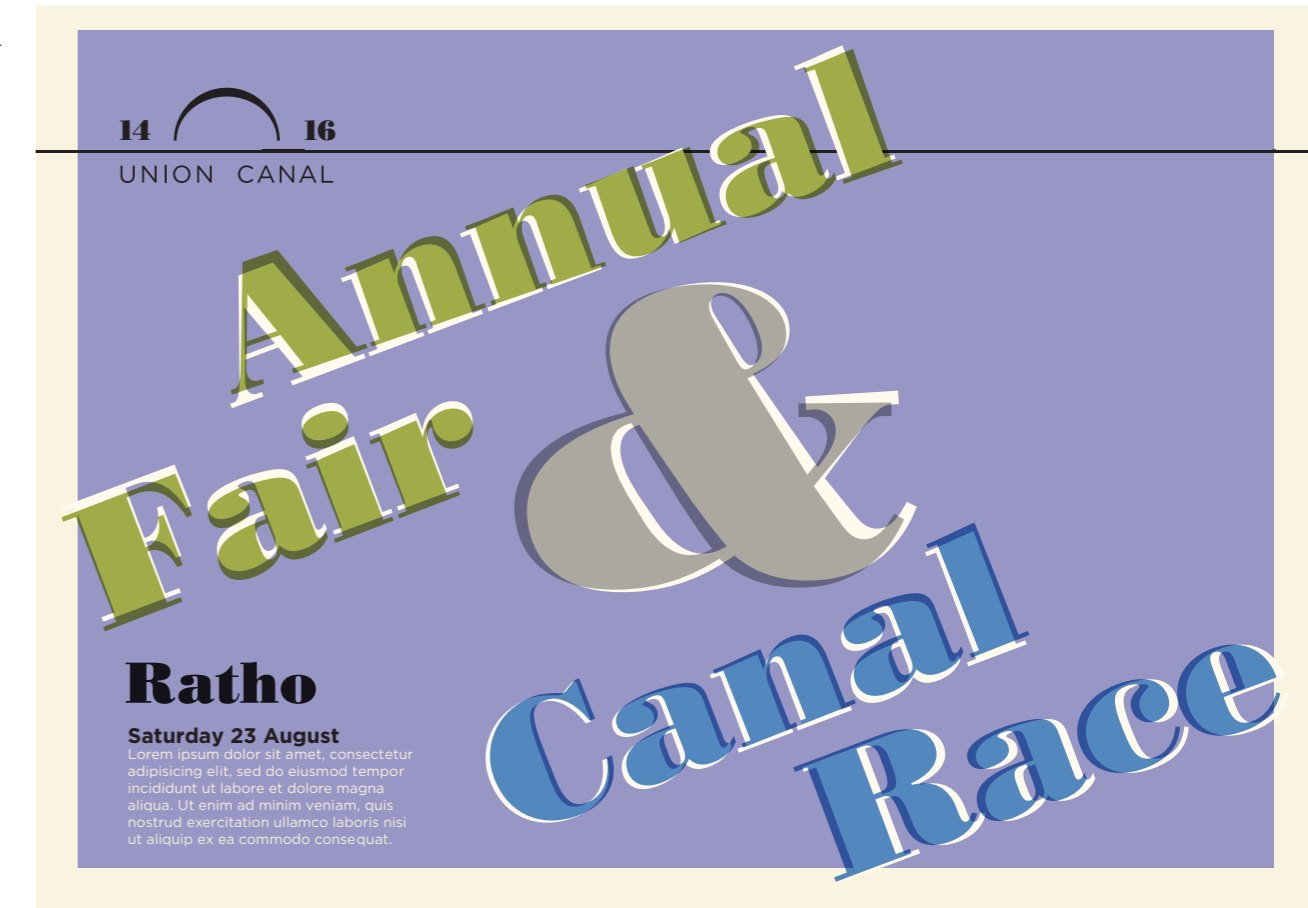
Focussed communication

- Regionals
- Event based
- Hub promotion
- History and Heritage

Examples

Promotion

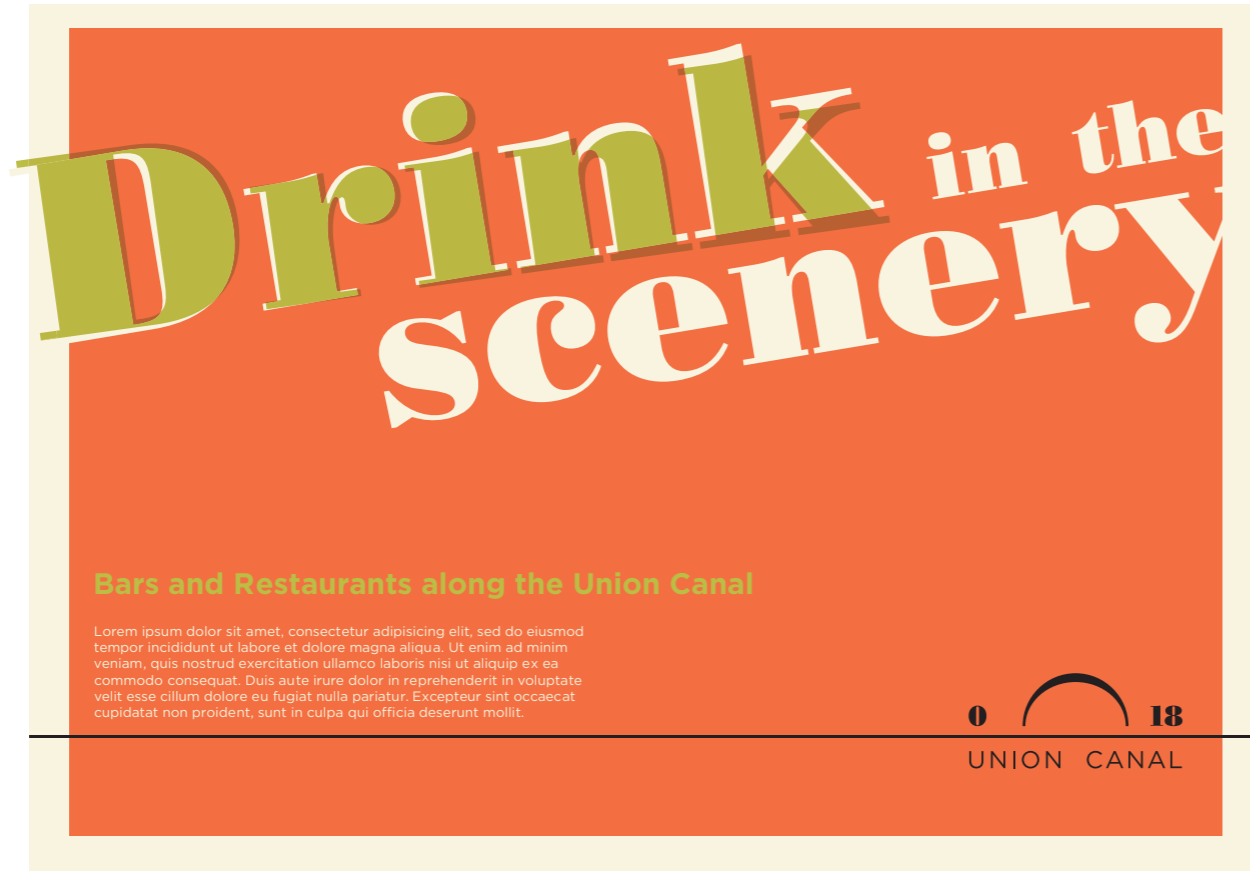
Regional event ad/poster



Examples

Promotion

Special interest group
Food and Drink
ad/poster

**Promotion**

Special interest group
Food and drink
ad/poster



Examples

Promotion

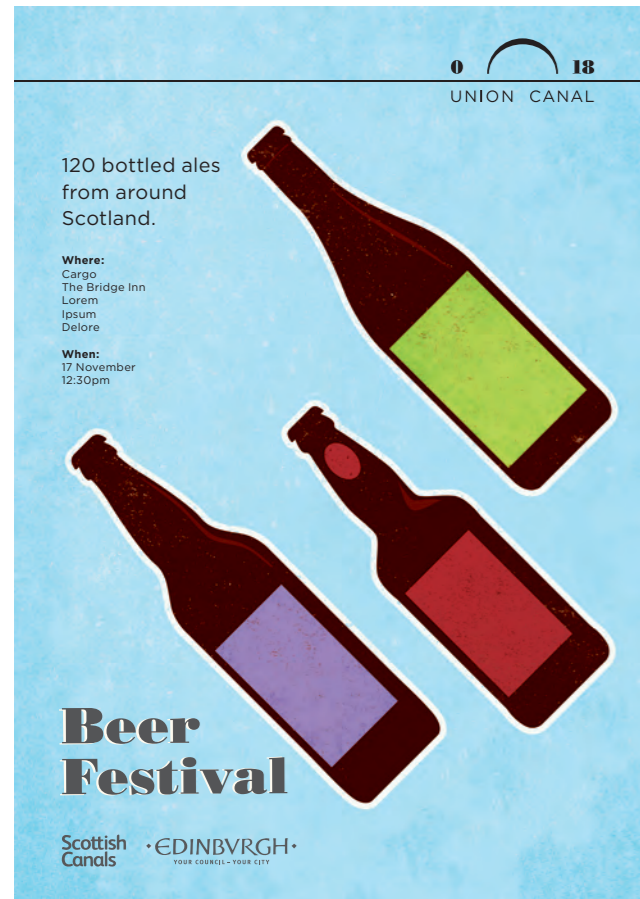
Special interest group
Heritage
ad/poster



Promotion

Special interest groups
Brochure cover





For other examples of how colour and texture can help bring the brand to life please visit:

www.pinterest.com/studiolr25/union-canal-brand-character

These examples have been chosen to show the breadth of personality you can achieve and also give an idea of how individuality can be embraced while retaining brand consistency.

Approach – Art Installations and Events

Art Installations

The acquisition or commissioning of art should satisfy two requirements. Firstly it should reflect the personality of the location for the audience it is intended, and secondly it should be in keeping with the personality of the Union Canal in Edinburgh brand.

Events

Events are a key feature of any destination, but particularly for one with many focal points and activities along its length.

Individual events will reflect the personalities of the local communities. Larger events raise awareness of the canal in its entirety and will reflect the brand values laid out in this handbook.

For other examples of how experiential design can help bring the brand to life please visit:

www.pinterest.com/studiolr25/union-canal-brand-character

These examples have been chosen to show the breadth of personality you can achieve and also give an idea of how individuality can be embraced while retaining brand consistency.

Brand Heirarchy

How does this fit with Scottish Canals branding?

Scottish Canals have gone to great lengths to make sure their corporate brand is applied consistently. However, they're also committed to encouraging local areas, like the stretch of the Union canal between Edinburgh City Centre and Ratho, to flourish. That means sometimes their corporate brand will take a back seat, allowing individual areas and developments on the canal to have their own personality, whilst still being under Scottish Canals umbrella.

For further information on the Scottish Canals brand please visit www.scottishcanals.co.uk/corporate-home

Further Information

If you have any further queries regarding the Union Canal in Edinburgh brand character handbook please contact:

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