The proposal for Light Night Leeds 2016 was a further development of 3 years experimentation of filming with the high-resolution capability of an iPhone in creating digital film installations. The idea for the submission was based on the event’s concept of ‘The four elements.’ The submitted idea was to create the illusion of a 3-storey building filling with water. This was to be realised by projecting from the inside of a building onto thin material screens placed into the windows on each floor.

Once commissioned, I designed a set, in consultation with the photography technician at Leeds Arts University, to film the rising water. A wooden plinth was designed and constructed by the Woodwork technicians at the University on which to place a large glass fish tank. The plinth had a large circular hole cut in the top to enable a lighting rig to shine light up and through the rising water. A water hose attached to the mains water supply was clamped above the tank and the bright light from below highlighted the bubbles created by the falling water. Two further lighting rigs set to the sides created a stronger visual contrast of the running water, The iPhone, mounted on a tripod filmed at 1080p at 60fps the rising water from in front of the glass tank.

The final film and accompanying sound track was constructed and rendered in Adobe Premiere Pro. From this master copy, 3 films were cropped, resized and rendered to create the projections for each floor of the building. The digital production company Lumen were then able to programme the 3 films to enable them to be played in sync on 3 separate Bright sign media players.

The Festival sourced, after much discussion, a suitable 3 vertically aligned windows at Leeds Civic Hall and this was programmed as the site for the work. However 3 days before the opening night I was informed that the top floor of the
building had become unavailable. To maximise the proposed effect required a 3-storey building. I searched, with this very short deadline, for an alternative venue in the city centre on the proposed audience route. I found a potentially suitable vacant building on Park Square that was available to rent. I urgently gained access through the estate agents to check practical logistics and then successfully negotiated the use of the building with the building owners.

Each floor of the building was a single open room 6 metres wide and 12 metres deep and contained 2 street windows. There was sufficient projection depth inside the rooms to increase the scale of the project by being able to project onto both windows on each floor. As the building also faced onto a large ornamental garden park there was not only good viewing from the street but also at distance from the park.

This required a last-minute re-edit of the films and for them to be re-programmed by Lumen. Lumen supplied and set up and tested the three 3000 lumen digital projectors, Bright sign media players and cabling, in 3 hours for the opening evening, The PA operated from the ground floor with the waterproof speaker place outside the front door with the cables hidden by running them through the letterbox!

Thin cotton material was pinned to the inside of the window frames to create screens and the staircase windows were covered in blackout material to ensure the integrity of the illusion of the building filling with water was complete. To ensure unrestricted viewing the road side immediately in front of the building was coned off by Festival stewards to prevent cars parking. I also produced and distributed a flyer to highlight the change of venue from the official programme.

The films ran from 6pm until 11pm for both evenings with the majority of the audience preferring to view ‘Building Dreams’ from immediately across the street.
LIGHT NIGHT
LEEDS 2016

6th–7th October from 6pm

As darkness falls, come and see the city in a new light...

6th–7th October from 6pm

In darkness falls, come and see the city in a new light...

Light Night Leeds 2016
Thursday, Friday
6-11pm
7th/8th October 2016

Building Dreams
Graham Tindley
11 Park Square East