

Mortonhall Memorial – design revealed

A bronze baby elephant sculpture has been chosen as the preferred memorial for Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens by parents affected by historic practices at Mortonhall Crematorium.

The sculpture, which will be created by renowned Kelpies sculptor Andy Scott, will stand approximately two metres high and be embossed with a coat of forget-me-not flowers to reinforce that the city will not forget.

Small footprints will be shown leading up to the elephant's trunk, which is curved as if cradling an invisible infant. The nature of the memorial will be simply described in an inscription along the plinth.

A memorial garden was opened at Mortonhall Crematorium in December 2015, but some parents felt they could not return to the crematorium, so a second memorial site in West Princes Street Gardens was identified.

Parents were asked to decide between the elephant design and a rocking horse design with the elephant being the popular choice. Andy and his team will now work on the memorial which will take up to a year to create and install.



Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Environment Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "We needed to reflect the wishes of those affected parents who felt a second memorial should be created in addition to the tranquil walled garden at Mortonhall as they felt unable to go back to the crematorium.

"The baby elephant design is very fitting as it shows

Edinburgh will not forget what happened in the past and the site in West Princes Street Gardens will give affected parents and other visitors to the city a place for quiet reflection.”

Sculptor Andy Scott said: “I am deeply humbled to undertake this memorial sculpture for the affected parents of Mortonhall. I have tried to encapsulate emotions of grief and loss but with a sense of uplifting hope for the future.

“The sculpture echoes the adage ‘elephants never forget’ and I hope that the approachable simplicity of the sculpture coupled with its engraved surface of Forget-Me-Not flowers will create a fitting memorial. I hope the sculpture is used: played with, hugged, and loved, and it will be sculpted to invite interaction of both grown-ups and children.”

Nicola Welsh, Chief Executive SANDS Lothians, said: “SANDS Lothians are pleased to learn the work on this memorial will start to take shape. We are happy to be working in partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council on this project and hope it will be a peaceful place to remember, reflect and gather for Mortonhall affected families, all bereaved parents and visitors to the city.

“The memorial will be a lasting legacy and reminder that all our babies are never forgotten and nor are the families. We would like to remind affected families that our one to one befriending and counselling is available to anyone who needs support. An elephant never forgets and neither do we”

Sara Fitzsimmons, Executive Charity Director SiMBA, said: “As a representative of SiMBA I was on the Multi-Agency Working Group from the outset and through this I was able to be a voice for the parents, and also give some reassurance to those same parents that although extremely difficult throughout the investigation, that progress was being made.

“The memorial garden at Mortonhall was welcomed by some parents, but for those who voiced that they may never be able

to return to Mortonhall; the baby elephant sculpture by Andy Scott, in Princes Street Gardens will finally give parents a place to visit. We understand that this has been an extremely difficult journey for all involved, SiMBA will continue to offer support as and where we can.”

Dame Elish Angiolini’s report into the historic practices was published in 2014 and contained 22 recommendations. A Multi-Agency Working Group was set up by the Council and an action plan produced which has resulted in all the recommendations being fully implemented.

SANDS Lothians and SiMBA can provide support to families:

To access SANDS Lothians please contact info@sands-lothians.org.uk or call 0131 622 6263.

To access SiMBA please contact www.simbacharity.org.uk/support or call 01368 860141 Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm.