



Guidance Notes for Planning a Statue Project

by Chris Stride & Ffion Thomas

Introduction... and a request.

This document aims to provide guidance for, and identify common questions, issues and problems faced by individuals or organisations contemplating or planning a sports statue project – though many of these issues would be equally applicable to any statue or art installation. It is based on our research over the past decade on 1000+ sports statues around the world, the database of which is freely available to all at www.sportingstatues.com. The list below is not exhaustive, nor is it intended as a detailed guide to getting from an idea to a finished statue. We have simply outlined the different project elements that need to be considered at the start of the process, some of the choices that have to be made, and some of the issues that are likely to occur.

We are always happy to provide further, more detailed advice in person, though depending on how much of our time you require, we may charge a nominal fee for this. For example a 30 minute chat on the phone will cost you nothing, whereas a day visiting you in person, advising on designs, siting, funding sources, options for choice of sculptor, etc., would most likely require at least a refund of our travelling costs and time.

However, there is one thing we would ask of you. If you use this document, and find it helpful in any way in carrying out a statue project, we would love to hear from you. Our sport statues project is unfunded, and the academic benefit to our respective Universities for the time we have spent comes through being able to demonstrate the project's positive impact.

So please drop us a line on info@sportingstatues.com to let us know if you have used these notes in any way that has made your project run more smoothly or even just got you started.

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Design

Along with plaque/plinth inscription, statue design will have most impact on how the statue subject is remembered by present generation and perceived by future generations. Statues don't just reflect memories, they create them.

Statue design will also impact on how people think about the host city or sports club/organisation in general, and how people think about and remember themselves. Does the design feature trophies, or depict a famous moment? Does the design bring to mind childhood memories, such as experiences shared with friends watching the subject?

Design Types

- Action (including interaction with fans)
- Posed (standing or sitting)
- Triumph (moment and/or with trophy)

Action statues predominate in football, and in sport more widely. Coach or Manager statues, though, tend to be posed or triumph type. Getting a sense of movement and hence life into a statue is perhaps the hardest task. Manager statues tend to focus more on bringing out personality.

Incorporation of Sports Equipment

For example...

- Football: Ball? Bench? Goal?
- Cricket: Wickets? Bat?
- Tennis: Racket?
- Baseball: Bat? Glove?

Design Inspiration

- 'Flashbulb memory' – photos or video
- Family memories
- Free interpretation

Style

- Almost always deeply traditional, figurative portraiture.
- Motion-blur adaptations of figurative statues have been used occasionally in the US!
- Abstract/impressionist statues are very rare

Fans have been divided/opposed to non-traditional, realist statues – they are not so interested in the artistic aspect, at least not knowingly. They just want a recognisable image that reflects their view(s) of the subject. The chosen sculptor should at very least appreciate this.

Material

- Bronze (by far most used; relatively light, long-lasting, gives sense of antiquity/tradition)
 - Patination – chemical enhancement of bronze to add colour/shade
 - Colour from painting? See Billy Bremner (Leeds)
- Stone
- Cement
- Resin
- Plastic

Sculptor Choice Process

- Competitive
 - Open competition (used where public money involved – transparency is critical)
 - Limited competition (several sculptors shortlisted, asked to submit designs)
 - Extent of design brief can vary from specific to completely free
- Direct commission

Competitive processes prolong time taken to get statue erected

Sculptors tend to prefer direct commissions! Not just for obvious reasons – some think competitions are beneath them – but because, once chosen, they can then work on the design with the project committee/suggest tweaks/enhancements in a collaborative way, rather than having to second guess designs prior to entering a competitive process.

Sculptors

Many different sculptors have carried out figurative sports-related work. See www.sportingstatues.com to view their work. We are not affiliated with any sculptors, but are happy to put you in touch with any of the sculptors that we interviewed as part of our project.

Cost

- Typical cost of single figure UK footballer/manager statue – circa £80K. Range £50K to £200K!
- Variability primarily sculptor choice, but also
 - fluctuations in price of bronze,
 - cost of casting statue,
 - plinth (design, materials),
 - installation, landscaping, lighting,
 - unveiling event costs

Funding

Options vary between/include combinations of

- Sports organisation/club funding
- Public funding
 - lottery funding
 - 'percentage for art'
 - other civic funds
- Commercial sponsorship (sometimes in return for plaque inscription, limited edition maquettes)
- Fan funding – makes fans feel part of the final monument
 - fundraising events
 - sales of maquettes (mini-statue-replicas) and related souvenirs
 - online crowd-funding
 - bucket collections

Location

Macro Location

- Sports facility
 - Within Stadium
 - Outside Stadium
- Civic
 - Town centre square
 - Shopping precinct
 - Park
- Museum
- Graveyard

Issues to consider are

- Visibility
- Foot-fall
- Security
- Crowd-flow at busy periods
- Planning permission!

Micro Location

- How fans will approach statue
- Visibility with respect to surrounding buildings

Presentation

A really important issue in terms of conveying sense of subject's importance, making statue visible and promoting/inhibiting the degree of interaction the public have with it. There is a natural interaction with macro and micro location...

- Plinth
 - Height relative to surrounding buildings
 - Impression given of subject (dominating leader/'emperor' vs man of the people)
 - Shape (square vs cylindrical vs other random shapes!)
 - Material (usually stone, many options in terms of colour and type (e.g. black granite vs sandstone))
- Incorporation of seating, lighting and paving

Inscription

Almost as important as design in shaping how future generations will view the statue subject

Type of inscription presentation

- Plaque(s) fixed to plinth or adjacent walls, surfaces
- Plinth inscription(s)
- Inscriptions in paving

Content of inscription (Sometimes less is more!)

- Name, dates
- Quotes
- Memories
- Career statistics
- Subject's relationship to club/fans
- Sponsor and funder names
- Sculptor's and unveilers' names

Unveiling

- Matchday or not (crowd issues)
- Who will do it – most often family, but often past players, club chairmen, civic leaders
- How to involve fans in the day?