

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GATE GUARDIAN SCULPTURES

The designers of the five options for the Gate Guardian sculpture have provided the descriptions below about the background to the sculpture and what it represents.

Option A

This landmark piece depicts a series of lines growing and emerging from the ground of Daedalus Common to evoke the feeling of growth and development in the area. These flowing lines rise up to form the face of the Guardian that is looking up and out, always facing and looking to the future. These lines then taper and form a series of interlocking wave forms that look like they are blowing through the air connecting the piece to the natural elements of the sea and the sense of flight and lift from the wind blowing through.

I have drawn some influence from Daedalus the craftsman and this has influenced the form but the face depicted is non-specific and is drawn to be powerful, thought-provoking and have a sense of contemplation as it looks to the future, all the qualities of a Gate Guardian.

Option B

The inspiration for the sculpture comes from Daedalus himself. Daedalus made wings for his son, Icarus, and himself so that he could escape the island of Crete, where he was being held captive to prevent him from revealing the secrets of the labyrinth that he had designed.

As we know, the ill-fated Icarus flew too close to the sun, fell into the sea and drowned, but Daedalus flew to safety.

Daedalus was grief-stricken at the loss of his son, but the goddess Athena was impressed by his ingenuity and courage and gave him real wings with the power of flight....

The sculpture represents Daedalus taking flight for the first time. Daedalus leaps into the air and spreads his wings, looking toward the sky with his hands open, as if embracing the joy of his new-found ability.

The figure itself is constructed to represent a realistic figure, with enhanced musculature, reminiscent of classic sculpture but with an abstract appearance when viewed closely.

As Daedalus spirals upward his path is traced by fluid lines, their gentle curves suggesting a measured, joyful take off, rather than a hurried, aggressive one.

But these elegant lines serve another purpose. They support the figure and bind it to the ground, reminding us that man will never possess the power of flight alone. Their minimalist design is in complete contrast to the figure, suggesting that through technology, man can be elevated to the skies, and also, the mixture of classical and modern is intended to represent the history of the area.

The sculpture will inspire hope and achievement as well as the joy of discovery.

Its intriguing design will demand a closer inspection when viewed, at a distance, from its elevated position.

Option C

Wing of Daedalus represents in symbolic form the potential to go beyond our human confines, both physically and intellectually. The sculpture design aims to convey potential and growth, the opportunity to create and develop new ideas and look forward to new horizons. The abstracted form of Daedalus's wing represents the classical theme of humans and the desire for flight. This symbolism is further enhanced as a shadow is cast each day forming another wing on the ground, further enhancing the concept of human endeavour. There is a strong underlying narrative to the design and yet is instantly recognisable as a winged form, eluding to the past history and context of the site without over-developing the visual references to past use.

Option D

Daedalus was an inventor and problem solver whose many exploits included creating the Labrynth which contained the Minotaur. There is a symbolism of the maze as a reflection of life and the problem solving and different paths it may lead us on. I felt this could form the base of the sculpture, so that its existence was revealed the closer the viewer got to the sculpture, unveiling another layer to it 'The Winged Victory of Somathrace' - a partly damaged stone sculpture, from the Hellenistic Greek period, which still embodies the feeling of lightness, that it can fly - ultimately the sense the freedom, the power of flight brings in the imagination of the viewer. It is this feeling which I ultimately aim to evoke with my design.

The Swordfish planes which were based at the airfield - 'the last of the wire wings' and a nod to the sacrifices and service of the Fleet Air Arm, in using symbolism from their emblem, such as the Crown of Leaves, and/or using the dimensions of the aircraft as a basis to form the scale of the sculpture

The development of aeronautical engineering and materials in the area would be reflected in the build of the sculpture, where many of the techniques of the industry would be incorporated.

My proposals are for a sculpture of 2-4 times human scale, to produce a landmark piece of real presence, using recognisable human forms, which ally aircraft fuselage structure and historical references, engage the viewer in a sensory stimulating experience, intimate that everything is possible and questions the viewer's imagination. The very 'point of take-off' and all the exciting possibilities it suggests.....

My design has a dynamic pose and is to be fixed onto a raised steel 'plinth' which further adds to the drama of the sculpture and is shaped into the centre part of the Labyrinth maze that Daedalus created.

The sculpture would face towards Newgate Lane East, to give the best all round focal viewpoints. The wings would spread out in line with Gosport Road and Broom

Way, encapsulating the land of the development site and airport behind - a figurehead on the prow of the ship!

The plinth would be profiled like the wing of an aeroplane, with the figure at the point of take-off, on the very tip. Its height and shape will deter climbing. The surfaces of the 'wing' open the possibility of adding colours and insignia that reflect the military history of the site, - for example using the camouflage and markings of one of the planes which flew from the airbase.

The plinth would further elevate the sculpture to ensure its presence is maintained in the future, when the new planting of the overall parkland scheme has matured.

The maze would be extended out across the mound by planting Berberis hedges, or similar, to engage the viewer more on their walk to the base of the sculpture, whilst providing a low maintenance and hardy plant, which discourages vandalism and climbing (evergreen and thorned) and would further enhance the parkland.

Option E

The myth of Daedalus and his son Icarus escaping using feathers assembled with wax and sticks is a universally-known story and the feathers play on this well-known story. One feather is bigger than the other and although the two feathers may symbolise whatever the viewer perceives, the difference in scale is representational of the relationship between a father and son. The small feather could represent Icarus and the large one Daedalus.

The realism of the sculpture to actual feathers will engage the viewer with a sense of two feathers falling from the sky from a different dimension; another world.

Consideration has been given to the fact that the great majority of viewers will be in moving vehicles at a distance of at least 30m to infinity from the sculpture so its simplicity as a silhouette and its potential, therefore, to become an iconic object is increased by its very simple outline and the constantly changing shape of that outline as one travels past the site.