



Sculpture for a pedestrian environment
by John Gregg Berryman

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ART in APPLIED ART
Montana State University
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Abstract:

Extensive study of sculpture and practical experience with welded metal provide a basis for individual confrontation with a spatial problem for an existing site.

An environmental approach is developed for improving circulation and aesthetic conditions in the chosen area.

Experience gained in client communications, finances, and fabrication processes are related.

Models of the site and proposed sculpture are illustrated as are significant development steps in both finished and scale forms.

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Mr. Cyril H. Conrad

Mr. Robert K. DeWeese

The late George K. Conkey

The School of Art Staff

The Campus Development Committee

The Senior Class of 1966

1098P

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ABSTRACT

Extensive study of sculpture and practical experience with welded metal provide a basis for individual confrontation with a spatial problem for an existing site.

An environmental approach is developed for improving circulation and aesthetic conditions in the chosen area.

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Models of the site and proposed sculpture are illustrated as are significant development steps in both finished and scale forms.

INTRODUCTION

The search for a thesis project began with a quest for available funds because the realization of a full scale sculpture was the primary aim of the artist. A decision was made to press for an actual sculpture, for herein would lie possibilities which could benefit both artist and client. Also, experiences gained in a sculptor-sponsor relationship would be of tremendous value, not only to the artist, but to future students at this institution. The Montana State University campus, experiencing rapid growth through new construction would provide a perfect setting for sculpture.

Financial sources within the campus community were investigated and gradually reduced to just one. Traditionally the graduating senior class has set aside funds to provide a memorial to be of some benefit to the campus. Mr. Steve Roeffler, senior class president, was approached and found to be very enthusiastic about a campus sculpture. He was instrumental, along with the artist in convincing the 1966 senior class of the potential value of the project to the campus and securing their financial endorsement. Eventually \$2,900.00 was authorized for the project by past senior class presidents whose memorial funds had not been previously used.

Mr. Cyril Conrad, Director of the School of Art, was very excited about the possibilities of a campus sculpture and encouraged the artist to proceed with it as a thesis problem.

Approval for acceptance of the project was found to lie within the powers of the Campus Development Committee which necessitated its becoming

the second member of a very unusual two-client situation. Although the financial client endorsed the project, approval was never received from the Campus Development Committee to realize the final solution, thereby making the thesis a proposal.

SITE

Before selecting a site for the sculpture, many areas of the Montana State University Campus were studied. A lake-side site to the west of the Hedges living complex was surveyed but was found to be too restricted from campus and public view. Similiar drawbacks existed for the area between the driveway and the sidewalk of Hannon Hall. East of Danforth Chapel a tree-filled area offered a site, but the proximity to the religious edifice virtually demanded a subjective type form and again would require an out of the way walk to view the piece.

Mr. William Johnstone, Vice-President for Administration, suggested the area between the Library and the west entrance to the Student Union Building as a possible site. After investigating the history and future of this area with regard to projected campus development, it was found that many previous attempts were made to solve the problems of this space, but none were entirely satisfactory. The challenge of these successive failures coupled with a sincere personal desire to benefit the Montana State University campus made the selection of this site irresistible. (fig.)

Ground area within the space is bordered on the north by Garfield Street which in the future will be transformed into a pedestrian mall, while still retaining its role as the campus "Main Street". East and south boundaries are defined by the Student Union Building and its forthcoming addition. The Library Building draws the border to the west. Generally the space involved forms a court opening to the future mall.

Existing paving is concrete, much of which is in desperate condition.



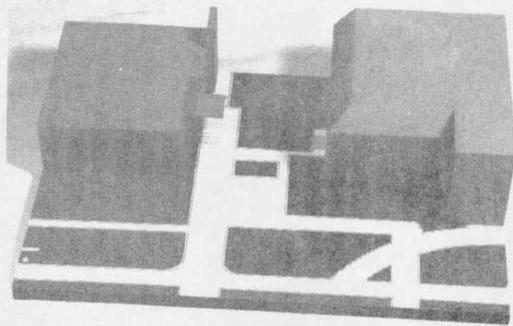
SITE



SITE



SITE



MODEL SITE

The paving pattern is composed of a main east-west arterial sidewalk which parallels Garfield Street, sidewalks connecting this main walk with the Library and the Student Union Building, and two secondary walks joining these two buildings. Of lesser importance is a projected concrete walk which will follow the west wall of the Student Union Addition south to a new building entrance. A slope from west to east causes unsatisfactory water drainage and severe icing problems during the cold weather. Resultant pools of water and sheets of ice are in a large measure responsible for the unsightly decomposition of concrete paving in many places throughout the site. This patchwork of concrete surrounds three grass islands and defines peripheral planting areas around the east side of the Library and the west and north sides of the Student Union. Trees, both conifer and deciduous, and shrubs abound in these plots, gently integrating the brick red walls of the Library and Student Union with the predominantly concrete ground plane. These brick walls rise to a height of from twenty-two to thirty-two feet on the Student Union. The Library walls soar twenty-six feet and are capped by a red roof which rises another twelve feet.

The climatology of the site is extremely variable. Fall quarter usually includes an Indian summer with warm sunny days and cold nights. During November, the temperature drops drastically and snow falls with regularity, often being blown by a prevailing west wind. Winter quarter finds a low average temperature of 10° F., winds from the west, and snow constantly covering the ground. During spring quarter, ground snow begins

to melt, usually leaving for good in April to be replaced by afternoon and evening rain storms for the duration of the quarter, being blown by shifting winds. As the days lengthen, summer quarter brings hot days with an average temperature of 80° F., but cool nights. Shifting winds regularly bring bring afternoon and evening thunderstorms and occasionally some hail. Sunshine constantly floods all of the site save a small area directly north of the Library.

Circulation in and around the site is all pedestrian except for limited vehicle travel on Garfield Street. Future campus development calls for this street, with the exception of service traffic, to be entirely a pedestrian thoroughfare. Pedestrian traffic directly related to the chosen space may be seen in the traffic pattern survey. (fig.) From this study the inefficiencies of the paving grid are readily apparent. Much traffic flows to and from the site without regard for the existing walkways, in the process forming paths through the grass plots. This campus cutting has in turn forced the placement of unsightly warning signs. The close proximity of the site to the two most used campus buildings makes it the most circulated about position in the University complex.

