

POETRY PATHS

Poetry Paths fosters new ways of seeing our city and forges new connections in our community by bringing poetry and art into people's daily lives. www.poetrypaths.org

PUBLIC COMMENT: CLIPPER MAGAZINE STADIUM

Poetry Paths values your opinion! We are collecting public comments on design proposals for Clipper Magazine Stadium. Each design was tasked with incorporating the words from Le Hinton's *Our Ballpark* (see right). With your help, one of the following design concepts will be chosen to be installed at the Ballpark Entrance. Please Vote on either A or B, and share with us your comments.

Our Ballpark

This is the place where my father educated us: an open-air school of tutelage and transformation. It is here where we first learned to count to three, then later to calculate the angle of a line drive bouncing off the left field wall. We studied the geometry and appreciated the ballet of third to second to first, a triple play.

This moving canvas of color was our art school. He gave us lessons on impressionistic blue skies and white lines, the realism of brown dirt and green grass, and the tangible abstraction of red, white, and blue waving beyond the outfield wall.

We committed to memory his catechism of morality: faith and opportunity, fairness and hard work. We learned that if we are still playing, there is still hope. However, what we came to understand most is that sometimes for your team, for your family a sacrifice is the most important play of the game.

PROPOSAL A

I propose to build a bronze sculpture on a stainless steel box pedestal. The poem will be etched in a plate of stainless steel that is bolted to the front of the pedestal. Facing the poem I will build a simple stainless steel bench.

THE SCULPTURE

The sculpture is a response to Le Hinton's poem. The first two stanzas of the poem discuss learning the basics of school on the ball field from his father. But the final lines speak of learning to be a good person: morality, work ethic, sacrifice for you community. For years I have been building sculpture based on the human spine, or vertebrae from the spine. This work grew out of the idea of "spine" or "backbone" as a metaphor for being a good person.

When someone is described as "having a backbone", it has long meant that they have courage, work ethic, solid morality and toughness. I was not interested in a literal, physical representation of the poem, or of baseball itself, that's what the poem and the ball field are for. Instead I wanted a somewhat abstracted sculpture that sprang from the concepts of the poem, and offers a separate point of contemplation for visitors.

The sculpture itself is a stack of three

bronze vertebrae. They are giant, 20" across each, and not exactly like human bones, but rather an invented vertebrae, a slight abstraction of a back bone. They are hand built of hammered sheet Everdur bronze, welded and ground clean. They will appear hand-made (as they are) to coincide with the poem's idea that the ballpark is a place a personality can be built. There will be slight variations between them, but they will nestle together in a stack, again referencing the poem's, and baseball's, idea of teamwork, parts fitting together. The sculpture will be tactilely inviting, people will want to feel the curves and shapes. The surfaces will pick up a rich and varied patina from the continuous touching of visitors.

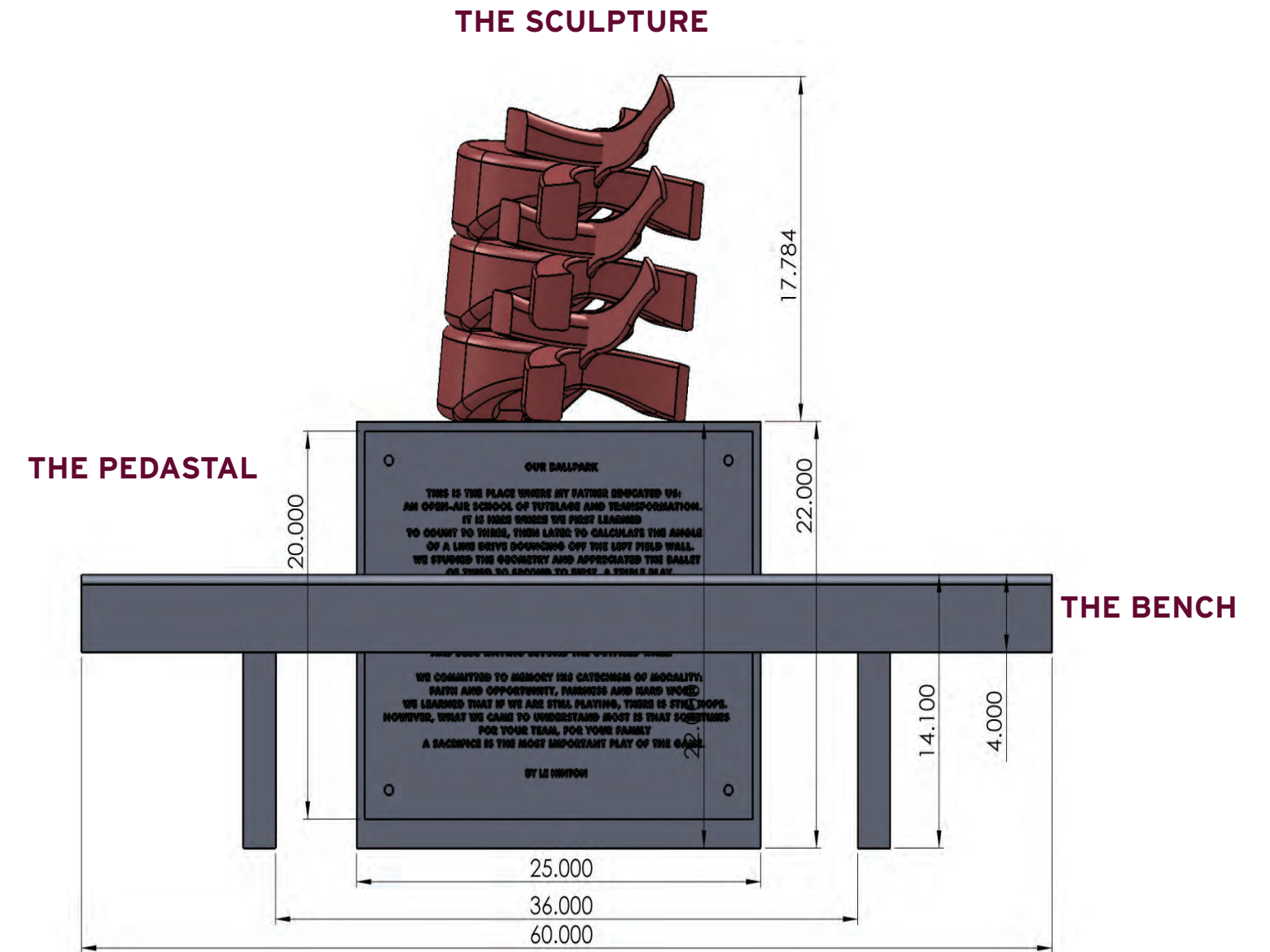
THE PEDESTAL

The pedestal will be a 2 foot cube of 3/16" stainless steel, welded and ground smooth, corners rounded. The poem will be etched onto a stainless steel panel that bolts on to one face of the pedestal.

THE BENCH

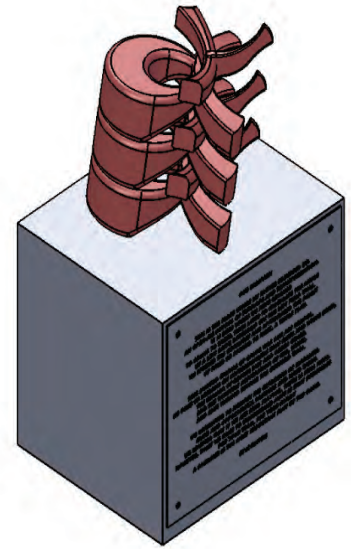
The bench will be a flat piece of 3/16" stainless steel with the front and back rolled down, to form an upside-down "U" or channel. The bench will be welded to two simple box legs, which are in turn bolted to the ground.

VIEW THROUGH THE BENCH TO FRONT OF PEDASTAL

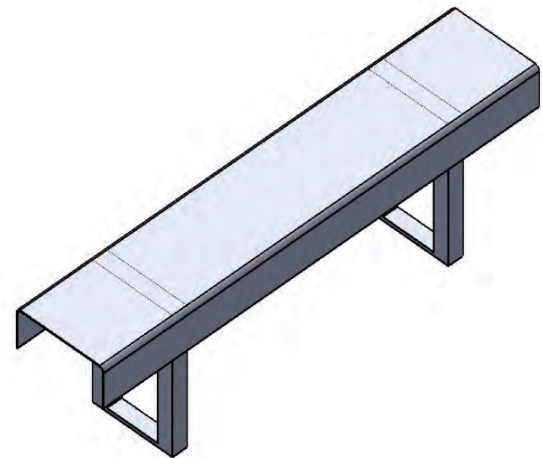


PROPOSAL A

ISOMETRIC VIEW OF INSTALLATION

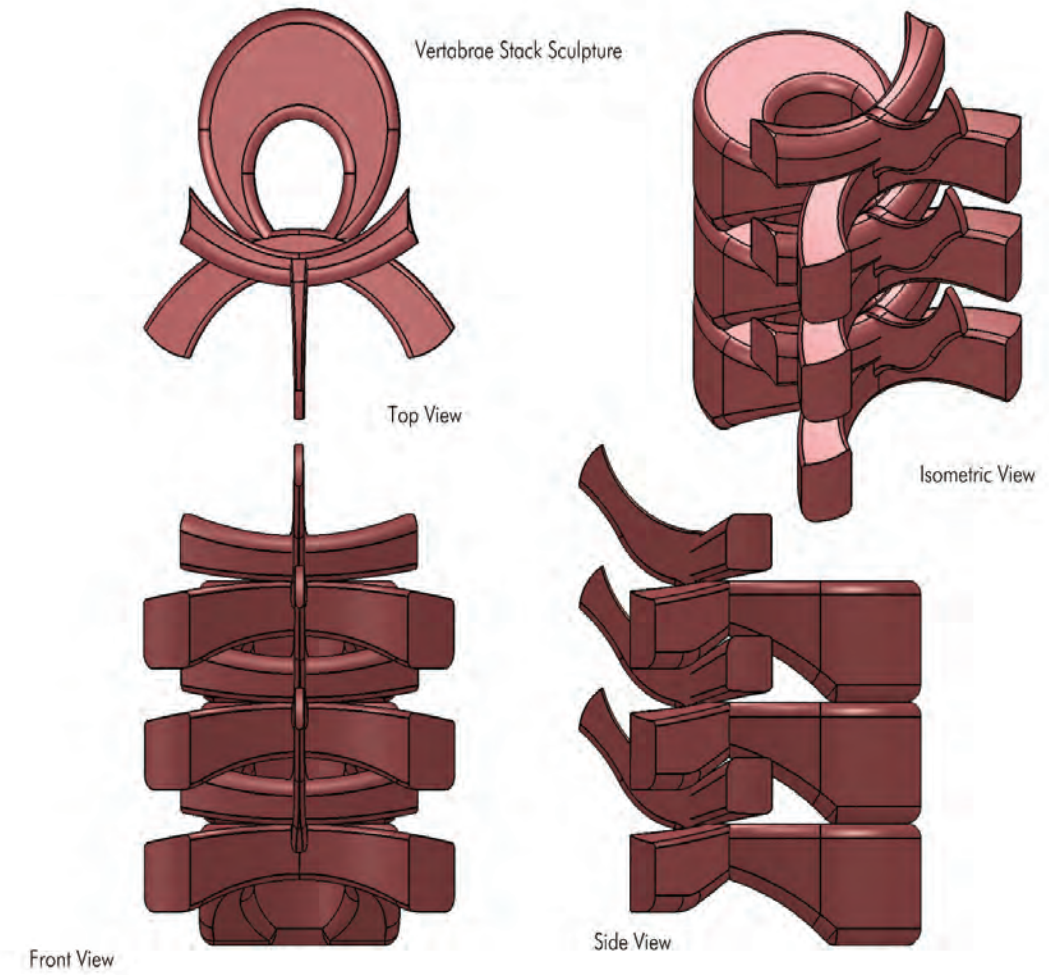


Isometric View



PROPOSAL **A**

SCUPTURE DETAIL



PROPOSAL **A**

PROPOSAL B

As an artist, I try to approach each new public piece with fresh eyes. The existing architecture, the landscape, even the orientation to the rising Sun can affect how a piece will finally manifest itself. My goal is to create a work that adds something new, surprising, and special to the place it is sited, simultaneously integrating into its surrounding environment. As I consider this, I ask myself, what is it that already makes this place special? Is its geographic location, the breathtaking views or the interesting architecture?

In the end I think a place is just a place; it is the people that make it special. My visit to Clipper Magazine Stadium and the city of Lancaster reminded me of this. As I toured the stadium I met the people who made it all happen. From the people tending the field to the gentleman running concessions, to the busy people in the office, keeping everything organized. Everyone took time to talk with me, to tell me their story, glowing with pride about their stadium and their team the Lancaster Barnstormers. It was through these meetings and stories that I came to see that the real power of the stadium was its extraordinary ability to bring the citizens of Lancaster together, a few innings at a time and possibly beyond. It became clear to me that the "community unifying" function of the stadium should be the core concept of the

public sculpture I will present.

Considering the parameters of this project, and using the idea of coming together as a starting point, I began to investigate the game of baseball with its rich and epic history. As is often the case in my work, I was looking for something simple, an image or symbol that tells an entire story with a single idea. After more than one trip back to the drawing board, I found the inspiration for the answer I was looking for in the most unlikely yet completely obvious place, my desk. Early on in the process, I had rummaged through the forgotten corners of my closet and found an old baseball, a little worn, but still in good shape. Being a tactile person, I just needed something to hold in my hand, to get the creative energy flowing. It took a few days before I stopped playing with it, actually paused, and really looked at the ball. There staring me right in the face were 108 of the answers I was looking for.

Meandering around the ball in a continuous and unbroken line of deep red were the hand sewn stitches that hold the familiar and inviting shape of a baseball together. This was it, the idea is simple, the imagery is graceful, and the concept is relevant. My plan is straightforward; I am going to stitch Clipper Stadium and the City of Lancaster together.

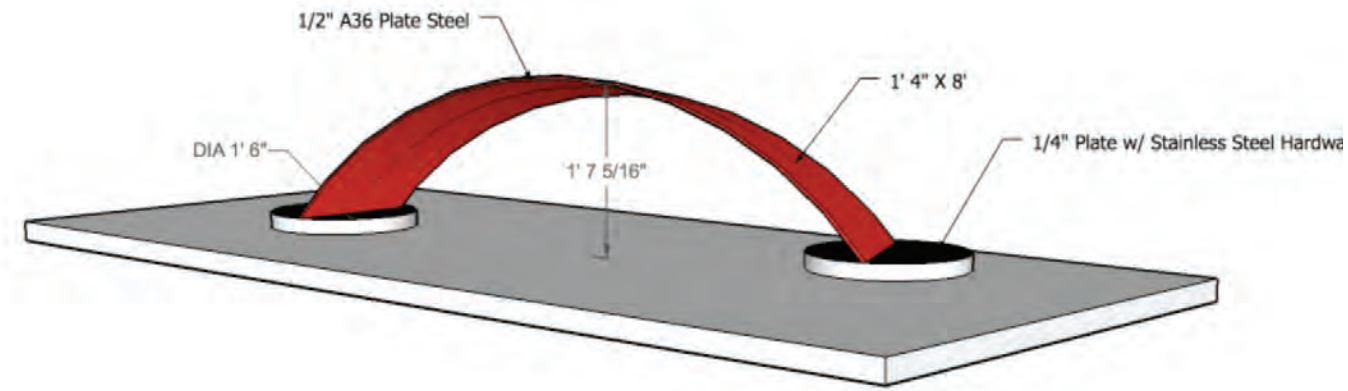
CONCEPT MODELS



Silhouette height is approximately 6' tall

PROPOSAL B

SCHEMATIC OF SINGLE BENCH



Each bench will be approximately 6' from foot to foot, 16" wide and 18" from the ground to the apex of the arch.

PROPOSAL **B**

CONCEPT MODELS

Front view as you approach the main entrance to the stadium



Top View



INSPIRATION:
EXAMPLE OF
BASEBALL STITCH



PROPOSAL **B**