Historic England

Public Art 1945-95

Introductions to Heritage Assets

Summary

Historic England's Introductions to Heritage Assets (IHAs) are accessible, authoritative, illustrated summaries of what we know about specific types of archaeological site, building, landscape or marine asset. Typically they deal with subjects which lack such a summary. This can either be where the literature is dauntingly voluminous, or alternatively where little has been written. Most often it is the latter, and many IHAs bring understanding of site or building types which are neglected or little understood. Many of these are what might be thought of as 'new heritage', that is they date from after the Second World War.

This IHA provides an overview of the main trends in post-war public art. Statuary has long been a feature of our townscapes, but the proliferation of public art following the Second World War was rather different. Public art is defined here as fixed artworks which members of the public are able to access and appreciate. Works may be sited in the public, civic, communal or commercial domain, in semi-public or privately owned public space, or within public, civic or institutional buildings. Artworks which form part of the structure or decoration of buildings may also be categorised as public art. Post-war public artworks, which number several thousand, comprise everything from abstract, fine art sculptures to concrete reliefs and fibreglass murals. They are sited not only in formal settings but also in everyday locations such as schools, shopping centres and office plazas. Their artists ranged from the internationally known to the totally unknown.

This guidance note has been written by Lynn Pearson and edited by Paul Stamper.

It is one is of several guidance documents that can be accessed
HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/listing-selection/ihas-buildings/

First published by Historic England January 2016.

HistoricEngland.org.uk/advice/

Front cover
A group of three totemic concrete sculptures (1966) at Salford Technical College (now the University of Salford), Greater Manchester, by leading public artist William Mitchell. The Mayan-style columns were each made up from four concrete blocks and measure nearly 6m in height; they were listed Grade II in 2012.

Contents

Introduction

Statuary has been a feature of our townscapes since stone images of saints and martyrs appeared on the facades of medieval cathedrals. Over the centuries royalty, politicians and military heroes have all been immortalised by statues, particularly during the period of 'statuemania' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the proliferation of public art following the Second World War was rather different. Public art is defined here as fixed artworks which members of the public are able to access and appreciate. Works may be sited in the public, civic, communal or commercial domain, in semi-public or privately owned public space, or within public, civic or institutional buildings. Artworks which form part of the structure or decoration of buildings may also be categorised as public art.

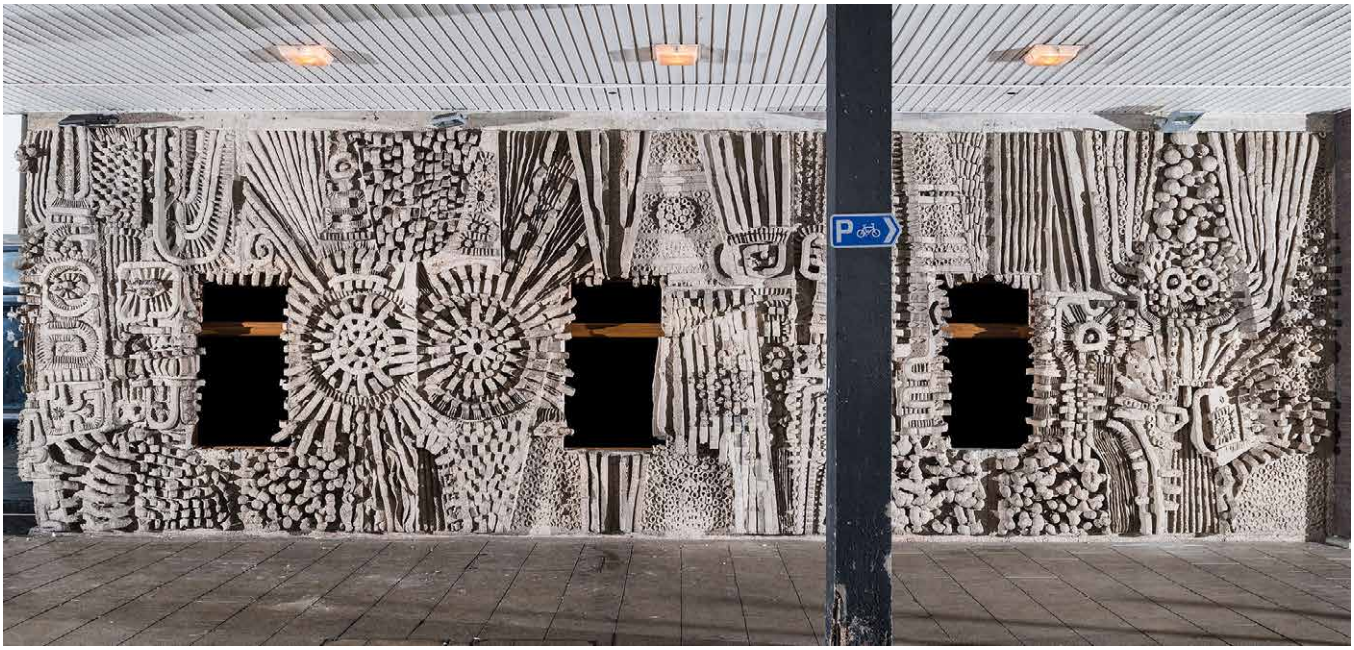

Figure 1
The concrete mural wall (1966, William Mitchell, listed Grade II) of the former Three Tuns pub in Coventry, West Midlands, shows Mitchell's typical relief detailing created using his own innovative casting techniques; it measures about 4m high and 11.5m long. The reverse of the structural wall, with its less obvious relief design, was originally part of the pub's interior design.

Post-war public art includes everything from abstract, fine art sculptures to concrete reliefs and fibreglass murals, and the works could be found not only in formal settings but in everyday locations such as schools, shopping centres and office plazas. Sculptures were often free-standing but might be attached to buildings, while the murals – in the broadest sense of the term – varied from traditional painted works to sculptural, structural walls (Fig 1). Their artists ranged from the internationally known to the totally unknown.

As yet, there is no definitive count of post-war artworks. In 2004 the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA) estimated that there were over 15,000 works of public sculpture of all eras in Britain. Considering solely England, and taking quantitative data into account from the PMSA's ongoing National Recording Project, set up in 1997, a reasonable estimate of the number of substantial post-war sculptures might be of the order of 6,000, with those dating from prior to 1986 numbering in the region of 2,000. Many areas saw rises in commissioning during the 1950s-1960s and even more sharply from the 1990s. As for the murals, a database available via the Twentieth Century Society lists just under 600 surviving works installed in England between 1946 and 1985, although there is some overlap with the PMSA data on mural reliefs.

Historic England's listing selection guide Commemorative Structures (2011) gives brief consideration to 20th-century public sculptures. There are currently about 90 post-war sculptures, including four fountains, on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE); eleven are listed at Grade II*, the rest Grade II. The youngest listed stand-alone public sculpture at time of writing was the *Desert Quartet* (1989, Elisabeth Frink) in Worthing, West Sussex, listed at Grade II* in 2007. However, the Grade I listing in 2015 of the British Library (1982-99) in the London Borough of Camden, includes the sculpture *Newton (after Blake)* (1995, Eduardo Paolozzi) as a component of the library's design.

Around 30 Second World War memorials, some of which have significant sculptural content, are also listed. There are also eleven mural reliefs (dating from 1949-68), the latter all Grade II. A further 60 or so post-war murals of all types, including painted, mosaic, concrete and ceramic tile works, are features of buildings appearing on the NHLE, and are often detailed in their List entry descriptions.

1 Historical Background

The post-war institutional promotion of sculpture and other art forms, characterised as bringing art to the people, was an intrinsic part of the reconstruction and regeneration programme necessitated by wartime devastation. Some of the earliest bodies to commission and buy artworks were education authorities, especially those of Leicestershire and Hertfordshire, the intention being to improve the school environment and encourage creativity (Fig 2). From the late 1940s Leicestershire's schools received a startlingly broad range of contemporary art, including

Figure 2
Family Group (1947-9, Henry Moore, listed Grade II), was installed at the Barclay School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, in 1950; it was the first important post-war secondary school to be built. The bronze sculpture, originally intended for a Cambridgeshire college, was initially sited outdoors but now stands in the entrance hall. Its form emphasises the parental role played by the school.

abstract sculptures; no new building was without a sculpture or mural as a focal point. In Hertfordshire, between 1949 and 1953, a third of one per cent of the budget for each new school was set aside for the purchase of works of art.

Art patronage by the London County Council (LCC) began in the summer of 1948 with its sponsorship of an open air sculpture exhibition in Battersea Park (London Borough of Wandsworth), which over 170,000 people paid to attend; the public were allowed to touch the works, which included two by Henry Moore. The exhibition turned out to be the first of a triennial series of seven; four more were held in Battersea Park (Fig 3) and two at Holland Park (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea). They were organised in collaboration with the Arts Council, which was formed in 1945 from the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, itself set up in 1940. During the late 1950s the Arts Council organised nationwide touring exhibitions of outdoor sculpture.

The immediate post-war era's most significant display of artistic patronage came with the 1951 Festival of Britain. Over eight million visitors to its South Bank Exhibition in London saw more than 30 sculptures by a combination of well-known artists and rising talents. The Arts Council commissioned three of the works, by Jacob Epstein, Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, while the government-funded Festival of Britain Office paid for the rest. The intention was to show how sculptures could be an integral part of the modern townscape, with individual works sited in a positive relationship to the surrounding buildings;

Figure 3
A view of the 1966 open air sculpture exhibition in London's Battersea Park, the seventh and last in a triennial series organised by the LCC and its successor, the Greater London Council. The 42 sculptures on display included works by Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and Eduardo Paolozzi.

as a marriage of art and architecture, it was generally thought to be successful. The South Bank Exhibition also featured around 100 murals executed by almost as many different artists. Most were figurative, painted, works for interior locations, although there were a few abstracts including Victor Pasmore's ceramic tile mural, which covered a prominent outer wall of the Regatta Restaurant.

The LCC's policy of including artworks and decorative features in newly-built housing estates and schools began in 1954. At first the costs were included in the overall construction budget, but from 1957 a sum was set aside annually for commissioning and buying new artworks; 51 were acquired by 1961, many of major significance. Additionally, in 1958 the LCC hired two young artists, William Mitchell (b.1925) and Antony Hollaway (1928-2000), to collaborate with their architects and workmen on the installation of a wide range of inexpensive artworks. They pioneered the use of polyurethane foam as concrete formwork, and their methods and output were widely influential. Artistic patronage of public art away from London initially relied on the post-war new towns programme, instigated in 1946 as an attempt to alleviate housing shortages, particularly the capital's. The new settlements provided architects with an opportunity to design urban centres in which artworks were fully integrated.

As post-war rebuilding gathered pace during the late 1950s, an increasing number of civic, educational and commercial developments offered sites for a wide range of artworks. A small minority of architects welcomed collaboration with independent artists, the apotheosis of this approach being the Cathedral of St Michael (1951-62) in Coventry (West Midlands) by Basil Spence. However, the majority of architects, often modernists, tended to reject the incorporation of artworks into their designs, aside from the assorted wall relief finishes popular from the early 1960s. Sculptural works were still commissioned with the intention of enhancing buildings and company images, but with little discussion of the relationship between the architecture and the art.

Figure 4
St Aidan's Church (1957-9, Basil Spence) in the New Parks suburb of Leicester, with its huge ceramic tile mural by William Gordon depicting scenes in the life of St Aidan. It was the first major tile commission for Gordon, who previously worked at the Walton Pottery in Chesterfield (Derbyshire). The Diocese of Leicester asked Spence to design the church after hearing about his low-cost parish churches in Coventry.

These works were often sited in semi-public spaces in front of buildings, encouraging criticism of their irrelevance. This type of installation was famously dubbed the 'turd on the plaza' by American architect James Wines in 1978.

The City Sculpture Project organised by the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation in 1972 was intended as a return to site specificity. Sculptors were invited to create works for eight English and Welsh cities, but the results, installed without public consultation, were generally unpopular and some were vandalised. Many of the public artworks created during the decade following

the mid-1970s were mural reliefs, often with a local historical theme, decorating the proliferating offices, hospitals, supermarkets and underpasses. Sculpture parks and trails also sprang up from the late 1970s, initially in rural locations. They included Grizedale Sculpture, near Hawkshead (Cumbria); the Irwell Sculpture Trail (from Bacup in Lancashire to Salford Quays in Greater Manchester); the Cass Sculpture Foundation at Goodwood (West Sussex); the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail at Coleford (Gloucestershire); and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, near Wakefield (West Yorkshire) discussed below.

The foundation of the Public Art Development Trust in 1983 signalled an attempt to foster greater collaboration between artists and architects. Local authorities and developers regularly began to commission artworks for new buildings from the mid-1980s as the creation of public art became increasingly professionalised. The Percent for Art scheme, promoted from 1988 by the Arts Council, argued that a percentage of the capital cost of building schemes should be set aside for commissioning artists and craftspeople; more than 50 local authorities had adopted the policy by 1992.

Public art as an element of regenerating areas was seen at the series of national garden festivals beginning with the Liverpool Garden Festival of 1984, where 11 works were commissioned and another 44 loaned by their sculptors. Festivals at Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (1986) and Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (1990) followed, and from the mid-1990s public artworks were often promoted as environmental improvements to sites needing regeneration, from ageing seaside resorts and moribund town centres to former industrial locations. Funding for artworks could be supplied by a variety of agencies including the National Lottery, the European Union, the Millennium Commission and the Arts Council as well as local councils and businesses.

The success of the Gateshead Garden Festival encouraged Gateshead Council to build on their Art in Public Places programme, begun in 1986, and commission a landmark work to mark the approach to the town and symbolise the area. Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* was eventually erected in 1998 and heralded a succession of massive landmark sculptures designed to publicise their localities; they were sometimes also memorials. Local commissioning bodies became very active, often working with community groups. From the late 1990s there was also a resurgence of interest in erecting traditional memorial and commemorative works; football-related statues were particularly popular. The extraordinary rise in the amount of public art installed in the second half of the 20th century resulted in many areas already having more post-war public artworks than the total surviving from the previous hundreds of years.

2 Development of Post-War Public Art

In terms of public art, the post-war era can be divided very broadly into three overlapping periods: up to the 1960s, the 1970s and 1980s, and the 1990s onward. In the early years much sculpture was loosely based on human or animal forms, mural work continued in a fairly conservative manner, and architects attempted to collaborate with artists. By the 1970s sculpture and murals included a diversity of materials and techniques, but the relationship between architects and artists had changed; artworks were seen as decorative items rather than elements of the design. The public art revolution of the 1990s brought new commissioning bodies, professional public artists and community involvement.

A strong thread throughout the development of post-war public art, applying to both sculptural and mural works, has been the occasionally tense relationship between architect and artist. At one extreme, architects such as Basil Spence, Robert Matthew (one of the Royal Festival Hall's designers) and YRM (Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall) collaborated closely with artists in various media. Architects including Gordon Cullen and Kenneth Barden were themselves mural designers. Other architects took the view that hand-made decoration was a thing of the past; constructive collaboration between artist and architect affecting the design of buildings and artworks was rejected. Tough, textured wall surfaces were sometimes acceptable, however, along with stand-alone sculpture. There was some discussion of this attitude – the *Architectural Review* enquired in 1961 why concrete did 'in order to be truthfully expressed, have to look like hairy wood?' – but the majority view leant towards a modernist, minimalist vision of architecture to which artworks were an occasional addition.

2.1 From 1946 to the 1960s: Sculpture

During this period public sculpture emerged from the studio and evolved away from versions of human or animal forms towards more abstract and industrial works, many made specifically for external locations (Fig 5). The 30 or so sculptures shown at the Festival of Britain's South Bank Exhibition in 1951 hinted at the huge range of visual languages available in the immediate post-war era, and also illustrated the use of new materials and techniques. There were traditional figurative pieces, abstract human forms, purely abstract works, constructivist pieces, kinetic sculptures and even works approaching the soviet realist style. Many sculptures were made on a budget using inexpensive materials and were lost when the exhibition was dismantled. However, several survived including two by Barbara Hepworth. These were *Turning Forms*, a kinetic helical work in concrete (now at St Albans, Hertfordshire), and *Contrapuntal Forms*, a pair of abstract figures, which was the first work to be acquired by the Harlow Arts Trust in Essex. Both were listed at Grade II in 1998.

Harlow was designated a new town in 1947. Frederick Gibberd, who drew up its master plan and served as chief architect, was keen to incorporate sculptures, wanting the town's centre to be home to 'the finest works of art, as it is in Florence and other splendid cities'. The Harlow Arts Trust, founded in 1953, had installed

Figure 5
The Apollo Pavilion (1969, Victor Pasmore) at Peterlee in County Durham was listed Grade II* in 2011. Design work on the abstract sculpture-cum-bridge began in 1963; it was intended as a focus for the surrounding housing but eventually became dilapidated. Conservation work during 2009, partly paid for by the Heritage Lottery Fund, included restoration of its biomorphic murals.

27 sculptural works on public sites by 1973. Other new towns followed suit, commissioning or buying works which were often visions of the human figure, with varying degrees of abstraction. The playful *Joyride* (1958-9, listed Grade II in 1998) by Franta Belsky, commissioned by Stevenage Development Corporation in Hertfordshire as a symbol of the town's future, epitomises the post-war spirit of optimism.

The fusion of art and architecture was a significant component of new town planning, but was also attempted in individual buildings elsewhere. In London, the curving, almost organic shape of Franta Belsky's complex bronze fountain (1963, listed Grade II) stands in the courtyard of the Shell Centre on the South Bank (London Borough of Lambeth), while Henry Moore's stone screen (1953) forms part of the Grade II*-listed Time and Life Building's facade on New Bond Street (City of Westminster); the four abstract pieces are able to be seen in the round. But more generally, artworks on the new buildings of the 1950s and early 1960s tended to be abstract forms mounted on plain walls. An instance is Geoffrey Clarke's spiky *Spirit of Electricity* (1958-61; listed Grade II) at the former Thorn House in Upper St Martin's Lane, (City of Westminster). The 23.5m high aluminium casting was remounted on a re-clad wall in the 1990s. Similarly Barbara Hepworth's 6m high stringed aluminium *Winged Figure* (1961-3; listed Grade II*) adorns the John Lewis store in Oxford Street (City of Westminster); it is passed by thousands of people daily, making it one of the most visible public sculptures in England.

By the start of the 1960s Henry Moore's work, often suggestive of the human body, began to dominate the public vision of sculpture, vying with Barbara Hepworth's more abstract forms (Fig 6). However, there was always a strong undercurrent of more easily understood traditional bronze statuary, beginning with the equestrian *Lady Godiva* (1944, William Reid-Dick, listed Grade II*) unveiled in 1949 in Coventry, West Midlands, through Field Marshal Jan Smuts (1956, Jacob Epstein, listed Grade II) in Parliament Square (City of Westminster) to Mahatma Gandhi (1968, Fredda Brilliant, listed Grade II) in Tavistock Square Gardens (London Borough of Camden). Completely different, but in the same vein of celebration and commemoration, was *Gorilla* (1961; listed Grade II) by David Wynne, in Crystal Palace Park (London Borough of Bromley). Although the statue had to be set on a plinth, the sculptor's intention was to encourage children to climb on and interact with the figure; in this it was a forerunner of much late 20th-century community art.

In total contrast to these figurative works was a variety of abstract and industrial forms produced by the likes of Phillip King and William Mitchell. King's *Declaration* (1961; listed Grade II), six geometric elements cast in concrete and strung along a metal pole, was an early and complete departure from organic forms. Bought for a Leicestershire school in 1966, it now stands at Beaumanor Hall, Leicestershire County Council's conference centre near Loughborough. Just as radical were William Mitchell's highly textured

Figure 6
Family of Man (1970, Barbara Hepworth) at Snape Maltings, near Aldeburgh, Suffolk. The maltings concert hall was the first permanent home of the Aldeburgh Festival, established by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears. The three abstract forms – Ancestor I, Ancestor II and Parent I – were chosen by Hepworth from a larger group of nine, all with familial roles; they were installed at Britten's request in 1976.

concrete *Corn King and Spring Queen* (1964, listed Grade II) at the former Cement and Concrete Association site in Wexham Springs, Buckinghamshire, and his over 9m tall cast concrete *Spirit of Brighton* (1968, demolished 1992) in Brighton, East Sussex.

2.2 From 1946 to the 1960s: Murals

There was an explosion of interest in murals during the late 1950s and 1960s, along with continued experimentation with new materials. The pre-war tradition of mural painting resumed quite rapidly after its boost at the South Bank Exhibition; a good example was Mary Adshead's spectacular scheme for the Jungle Restaurant in Selfridge's Oxford Street department store. Painted between 1949 and 1951, it was destroyed in 1967. However, mural painters were joined from the late 1950s by artists in other media, initially ceramic tiles. The majority of mural designs featured stylised images relating to the commissioning body, with restaurants, cafeterias and bars being popular locations; abstract works were relatively rare. Some were on a huge scale, for instance the 18m long mural (1957, Gordon Cullen) in Coventry's Lower Precinct symbolising the spirit of the city's post-war recovery; it was relocated within the Precinct in 2002.

Murals carried out in mosaic, concrete and fibreglass, and occasionally metal and stone, followed. The demand for mural works was so great that an average of more than one substantial work per fortnight was installed in England during the 1950s and 1960s at a broad range of locations. The mosaics were often abstract, while the concrete murals and mural reliefs can be divided into three types: mass produced repeats, abstract reliefs and figurative or historical works, the latter increasingly popular during the 1970s. One advocate of mass production techniques was the New York-born artist Mitzi Cunliffe, who wanted sculpture to be 'produced by the yard in factories and used in buildings as casually as bricks'. Her vast concrete repeat *Cosmos 2* (1964) at Sunderland Technical College, later the University of Sunderland (Tyne and Wear), was demolished in 2008. Cunliffe's completely different carved stone relief (1955) at Heaton Park Reservoir pumping station (Greater Manchester), a stylised figurative piece, was listed Grade II in 1998.

The prolific and innovative architectural sculptor William Mitchell is best known for his massive, highly textured abstract concrete reliefs carried out during the late 1960s and early 1970s (see above for *Corn King and Spring Queen*). He also worked in different materials, notably fibreglass, as in 1968 at County Hall, Lewes (East Sussex) where the mural is cleverly inset with coloured glass. Other artists working in concrete, mosaic and mixed media include Alan Boyson, whose mural (1962) at Cromwell Secondary School in Salford (Greater Manchester) was listed Grade II in 2009, before the rest of the school was demolished (Fig 7). Crucially, mural artists of this era who frequently worked with developers were very flexible; they could be relied upon to solve design problems and were capable of working in almost any medium.

Figure 7
The bold mural *Tree of Knowledge* (1962) covered most of the northern facade of the former Cromwell Secondary School in Salford, Greater Manchester. It is a bespoke work by the prolific artist Alan Boyson (b.1930) including ceramics, concrete and other media, and a good example of 'bringing art to the people'. Listed Grade II.

2.3 The 1970s and 1980s: Sculpture

The 1970s was a difficult decade for public sculpture. The vocabulary of form and materials had expanded greatly, but the abstract experiments produced by artists were generally disliked by the public, discouraging commissioning. The 1972 City Sculpture Project failed to change perceptions, although one of the Project's two Birmingham works – *King Kong* by Nicholas Monro, a 5.5m high fibreglass gorilla – ultimately became popular. Distaste for public artworks was seen in its most dramatic form with the arson attack on David Mach's *Polaris* (1983), made from 6,000 rubber tyres arranged to form a nuclear submarine. It was actually a gallery work but its sheer size (a taste of things to come in public sculpture) necessitated a public site, in this case outside the Hayward Gallery on London's South Bank (London Borough of Lambeth).

Amidst this pervasive disgruntlement with public artworks, traditional statuary continued, if not exactly to thrive, then at least to continue fulfilling its normal commemorative role, particularly in London. The standing figure of Sir Winston Churchill (Ivor Roberts-Jones, listed Grade II), wearing a military greatcoat, was unveiled in Parliament Square in 1973 (Fig 8). Many others followed, including rather static depictions of Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery (1980, Oscar Nemon) on Whitehall and Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding (1988, Faith Winter) outside St Clement Danes Church on the Strand (City of Westminster); a livelier Field Marshal Earl Alexander (1985, James Butler), raising his binoculars, stands on Birdcage Walk (also City of Westminster).

The new towns and universities could also be relied upon to continue commissioning works. Milton Keynes (Buckinghamshire) has accumulated a large collection of public artworks; the concrete and fibreglass *Cows* (1978), created by artist-in-residence Liz Leyh, eventually became almost synonymous with the town. There are now over thirty artworks in the central area alone of Milton Keynes, including the figurative and humorous *Vox Pop (The Family)* (1988) by John Clinch, intended to show the diverse local

Figure 8
The statue of Sir Winston Churchill (1973, Ivor Roberts-Jones, listed Grade II in 2008), at the north-east corner of Parliament Square, London. The larger-than-life bronze, commissioned by the Royal Fine Arts Commission, is one of six listed statues of statesmen in the square itself and the most recently listed.

community. Clinch's witty artworks, and other figurative but non-traditional works like *Untitled 1986* (John Buckley), which protrudes from the roof of an Oxford house and is better known as the 'Headington Shark', found a way to make art acceptable to the public, if not the critics. In contrast universities tended to buy or commission more difficult or challenging pieces across the spectrum of contemporary practice, although Barry Flanagan's *Bronze Horse* (1983), installed in the First Court of Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1988 was in the classic tradition. More typical is the University of Warwick's commissioning of *Let's Not Be Stupid* (1991, Richard Deacon), two huge, looped steel forms emerging from a cage.

One sculptor to achieve a high degree of public acceptance throughout the 1970s and 1980s was Elisabeth Frink. Her considerable number of public works were often based on human and animal forms and carried out in bronze, although this made them no less demanding (Fig 9). She consistently ignored new developments in British art which had no appeal for her and continued to produce forceful

bronzes, such as her large-scale studies of male heads. Her *Desert Quartet* (1989) in Worthing (West Sussex) is currently the youngest post-war stand-alone sculpture to be listed, at Grade II* (Fig 10).

The introduction of artworks by the property company Rosehaugh Stanhope into their spectacular Broadgate office development in the City of London from 1986 onward proved influential. More than a dozen works were installed, created by an international array of artists in a variety of media and styles. Traditional statuary was notable by its absence, although the six gloomy, raincoat-wearing bronze figures of George Segal's *Rush Hour* (1987) came closest. In contrast Richard Serra's *Fulcrum* (1987), a 17m high tower of five angular, rusting (self-weathering) Corten steel plates, although to a certain extent site specific, can be seen as a massive piece of gallery art. Whatever the reaction to individual works, the Broadgate development was generally perceived to be successful, and certainly generated a huge amount of publicity for public art.

From the late 1980s developers became more confident about commissioning art, generally from better-known artists whose work was beginning to gain more general acceptance, even though anything but figurative. In London, for instance, Eduardo Paolozzi's huge bronze man-machine images or mutilated heads appeared in High Holborn, in the London Borough of Camden (*The Artist as Hephaestus*, 1987; later moved) and outside the Design Museum on Butler's Wharf, in the London Borough of Southwark (*Newton after James Watt*, 1990). Away from the capital, local authorities were more often the commissioning bodies, and sculptures tended to be introduced into redeveloped areas to provide a focal point. Artistic style was less of an issue than the suitability of the artwork for the site in terms of expected impact and acceptance.

Figure 9
Horse and Rider (1975), London, listed Grade II in 2015, was commissioned by commercial developers Trafalgar House from the internationally-known sculptor Elisabeth Frink (1930-93) for a significant site on Piccadilly, now a café forecourt. Figurative modelling of men and animals, especially horses, dominated her work.

Figure 10
The *Desert Quartet* (1989, Elisabeth Frink, listed Grade II* in 2007), stands on a loggia outside the unlisted Montague Shopping Centre in Worthing, West Sussex. The four huge bronze heads were inspired by ancient monument in Tunisia, and were intended to complement the neighbouring early 19th-century terraces. At time of writing, Desert Quartet is the youngest stand-alone sculpture to be listed.

2.4 The 1970s and 1980s: Murals

Overall, the number of new mural installations declined sharply during the 1970s and especially into the 1980s. Historically-themed concrete murals, however, prospered during the 1970s, often being commissioned by supermarkets and other large stores for external locations. The husband and wife team of Henry Collins (1910-94) and Joyce Pallot (1912-2004) were responsible for many of these, using concrete in combination with more colourful materials including glass and mosaic. The surface variety was intended to encourage people to feel the murals. Several have survived; their 1978 work for Sainsbury's in Southampton (Hampshire), a 19m long history of the city, was removed in 1990 but reinstalled at a new site in 2011.

Similar locally-themed, usually figurative murals were carried out by Philippa Threlfall (b.1939) and her husband Kennedy Collings (1933-2002). Their concrete-based multi-media works were sited mainly in shopping centres and offices. The Scottish artist Charles Anderson also produced large-scale concrete works for developers, local authorities and other commercial clients. His best-known English work is the 46m long mural (1974) formerly located on the facade of the Thompson Centre, Burnley (Lancashire), which depicted massive, stylised sporting figures. The building was demolished in 2009 but the mural was saved and relocated to a local leisure centre in 2011.

Commissions in materials other than concrete were relatively rare, but three such schemes of exceptional quality were carried out in the mid-1980s. The sculptor Walter Ritchie (1919-97) produced five large, carved-brick panels on the theme of *Creation* (1984-6) for the exterior of Bristol Eye Hospital. On the same scale was Eduardo Paolozzi's colourful series of twelve 6.4m by 3m mosaic panels commemorating the local needle manufacturing industry unveiled inside the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch (Worcestershire) in 1983. The installation was funded by Redditch Development Corporation, the Arts Council and local industry. Even more extensive was Paolozzi's spectacular glass mosaic scheme (1983-85) at London's Tottenham Court Road tube station (City of Westminster).

There was also a resurgence of interest in politically-themed painted works during the 1980s, a good example being the still-extant Hackney Peace Carnival mural (1985, Ray Walker) in London's Dalston Lane (London Borough of Hackney). Looking beyond this period, mural works in different media were still being created into the 1990s and onward, although in nowhere near the same numbers as during the 1960s peak.

2.5 The 1990s onward

In the manner of post-war reconstruction, post-industrial regeneration became a significant driver behind numerous public art projects during the 1990s. As public art was revitalised, so size did begin to matter; a large sculpture, especially one by an internationally known artist, came to be seen as a significant sign of progress in local regeneration and an asset to the community. Commissioning bodies also grew in number, and funding from the National Lottery was important. The transport charity Sustrans installed a wide range of artworks in rural and urban locations on the National Cycle Network during its Art and the Travelling Landscape programme; it was said to be the longest outdoor art gallery in the world (Fig 11).

A strong team of commissioning bodies in north-east England produced a huge concentration of public art in the area during the 1990s, in a wide range of styles, for instance the 22 bronze semi-human figures of *Conversation Piece* (1998, Juan Muñoz) in South Shields (Tyne and Wear). There were several landmark sculptures including David Mach's 39m long brick *Train* (1997) in Darlington (County Durham) and Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* (1998) in Gateshead. The 20m high, 54 m wide steel figure, described by the artist as 'quite an ugly brute, really', has become an instantly recognisable symbol of the town and a tourist attraction, although it was initially unpopular locally. It is a good example of the

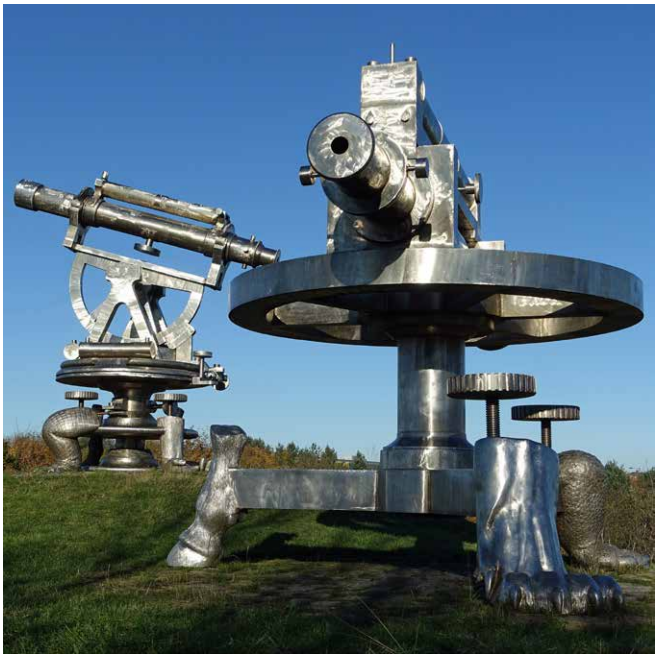

Figure 11
Terris Novalis by Tony Cragg, winner of the Turner Prize in 1988, was installed beside a cycle path running through the derelict site of a former steel works in Consett (County Durham) during 1996. Both elements, a theodolite and engineer's level raised on heraldically-inspired feet, were cast in stainless steel and stand about 6m high. The work was commissioned by transport charity Sustrans in 1991.
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artwork as destination. Of course the majority of 1990s English public artworks were much smaller in scale and were often made with community involvement. They were frequently dual purpose, being street furniture, gateways or even part of sea defences.

Traditional statuary still continued to be produced, and indeed there was a significant revival in figurative sculpture from the mid-1990s. On average, more than one commemorative statue was erected annually in London alone during the final decades of the century, although this was also a provincial phenomenon. Their subjects were, as ever, mainly politicians, military heroes and historic figures. Bronzes of *Harold Wilson* (1999, Ian Walters) in Huddersfield (West Yorkshire) and *Eric Morecambe* (1999, Graham Ibbeson) in Morecambe (Lancashire) show both men in lifelike, characteristic poses. The late 1990s also saw a new surge in commissioning statues of sporting heroes, particularly footballers (and club managers), their subjects generally seen posed with a ball, in action or at a moment of triumph.

Occasional departures from the straightforwardly figurative included Paolozzi's massive *Newton (after Blake)* (1995) in the piazza of the British Library (London Borough of Camden), which was listed Grade I in 2015 (Fig 12), and the *International Memorial to Seafarers* (2001, Michael Sandle), a tiny seafarer perched upon the bow of a huge bronze ship emerging from the headquarters of the International Maritime Organisation on London's Albert Embankment (London Borough of Lambeth).

Although the rate of commissioning public artworks has probably decreased since the late 1990s, many sculptures have been and are still being installed, some of them extremely large-scale works which gain significant publicity. Alongside, as usual, figurative statuary continues to fulfil a communal need for memorialising and commemoration.

Figure 12
Newton (after Blake) (1995, Eduardo Paolozzi) stands in the piazza of the British Library in London. In 2015 the British Library and the artworks integral to its orginal design were listed Grade I, making Newton (at present) England's youngest listed sculpture, albeit not a stand-alone work, in terms of its existence as a component in the library's overall composition.

3 Associations

Post-war sculptures and murals were installed near, inside and on an extremely wide range of building types, from churches to factories and more. Stand-alone works could also be found in rural settings, on cycle paths and riverside walkways, and even in the sea; *Couple* by Sean Henry was installed above a breakwater at Newbiggin by the Sea (Northumberland) in 2007. Post-war public art is a versatile townscape and landscape asset.

Much post-war public art is site-specific, made with a particular building or location in mind, and sometimes reflecting or portraying the activities carried out within or nearby, currently or in the past. Thus there are strong associations between pieces produced for former industrial areas and their local communities; they are reminders of the past which may prevent industries and events from being completely forgotten. Over time, even abstract works, perhaps initially disliked or regarded as irrelevant, become accepted through familiarity, leading to a sense of communal ownership and local historical significance. Works by internationally-known artists can confer broader significance on their locations, a sense of artistic, cultural and even financial worth.

Murals surviving along with the buildings originally designed to house them provide an immediate connection with the building's history and the reasons for its construction. The external historically-themed murals popular in the 1970s, often produced largely in concrete and designed for urban supermarkets and stores, retain a resonant local interest and are heritage assets in their own right. Murals may, of course, be added to buildings after their construction, as at the Royal Festival Hall, London Borough of Lambeth (1949-51, Robert Matthew, Leslie Martin and Peter Moro), where a terrazzo mural by Bruce McClean was installed in 1988, the year the building was listed at Grade I.

4 Change and the Future

Although vandalism and theft of sculptures – usually for scrap value – are problems, perhaps the greatest threat to post-war public art installations is redevelopment. Many works are sited in or near late 1950s and 1960s civic or commercial buildings which are subject to refurbishment or even demolition. The fate of artworks that have been in the public domain for well over half a century can be decided with no community or wider consultation if the work is privately owned. Disputes over ownership can also occur if the developments in which they are situated change hands several times. The saga of Henry Moore's *Draped Seated Woman* (1957-8), originally sited on a Hackney council estate in London (where she was known as 'Old Flo') and currently at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, illustrates the legal difficulties endangered pieces sometimes encounter. The projected removal of works can provoke anger, and local communities may suspect a wish to 'cash in' on the financial value of the artistic asset. Cuts to local authority budgets may cause an increase in the number of councils wishing to raise funds by ceasing to maintain or even selling public artworks.

In contrast to sculptures, most murals have little collectable value (although works by the graffiti artist Banksy have proved an exception) but may become unwanted once their original commissioners move on, and their unprotected surfaces are vulnerable to damage. They may be overpainted, boarded over or otherwise hidden, and then can simply be forgotten. On the other hand, they can be 'rediscovered' by a new audience, which may assist in their preservation. Murals are normally difficult to move; relocation tends to be an expensive option. At present there is no obvious single home for unwanted murals, which have to be considered case by case, as with the Grade II-listed ceramic panels (1960) from London's Fleet Building, successfully moved to the Barbican Centre in 2013 and now owned by the City of London Corporation (Fig 13).

Figure 13
The nine ceramic panels (1960) by Dorothy Annan (1900-83) lining part of the Highwalk at the Barbican Centre, London, were originally installed on the Fleet Building in Farringdon Street, the city's largest telephone exchange when it opened in 1961; they were listed Grade II in 2011. The panels, semi-abstract representations of elements in communications technology, were moved to the Highwalk in 2013 and are displayed in their original sequence.

5 Further Reading

Of the few books covering the entire post-war timespan, Margaret Garlake's *New Art New World: British Art in Postwar Society* (1998) is strong on the social and political background. *Architect's Choice: Art and Architecture in Great Britain since 1945* (1992) is Eugene Rosenberg's well-illustrated personal selection of public artworks, with a helpful text by Richard Cork. The Department of the Environment and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation sponsored *Art for Architecture* (1987), edited by Deanna Petherbridge, a guide to commissioning artworks with a useful, if short, historical introduction and many photographs. Lynn Pearson's *Public Art since 1950* (2006) offers a brief survey and gazetteer.

Robert Burstow's article 'Modern Sculpture in the South Bank Townscape' (*Twentieth Century Architecture*, **5**, 2001) discusses Festival of Britain sculptures while Derek Boorman's *For Your Tomorrow* (1995) considers a broad range of Second World War memorials. Sporting statuary, much of it post-war in date, is discussed and illustrated in *Immortals of British Sport* (2013) by Ian Hewitt and Sampson Lloyd, and football is the focus of 'From Pitch to Plinth: Documenting the United Kingdom's Football Statuary', *Sculpture Journal* **22** (2013) by Christopher Stride, John P. Wilson and Ffion Thomas. Alison Stace's *Sculpture Parks and Trails of Britain and Ireland* (2013) provides a detailed guide with many photographs.

An excellent overview of mural painting appears in *British Murals and Decorative Painting, 1920-1960* (2013) by Alan Powers *et al*, along with several case studies of artists. Post-war architectural mural work of all types is discussed in Lynn Pearson's article 'Roughcast Textures with Cosmic Overtones', *Decorative Arts Society Journal* **31** (2007), and William Mitchell's autobiographical *Self Portrait: The Eyes Within* (2013) relates the story of his numerous public art commissions. The Twentieth Century Society's Murals Campaign (http://www.c20society.org.uk/murals-campaign) highlights endangered post-war murals and includes many photographs of examples throughout the country. A selection of London's murals, mostly late 20th-century painted and mosaic works, is described and illustrated by the London Mural Preservation Society (http://www.londonmuralpreservationsociety.com/).

Although Geoff Archer's *Public Sculpture in Britain: A History* (2013) covers all eras, it includes and illustrates much post-war work, as does the exemplary Public Sculpture of Britain series produced by the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (http://www.pmsa.org.uk); the introductions to these volumes are particularly useful.

6 Acknowledgements

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Editor
Paul Stamper

Design and layout
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Images
Cover: © Historic England, James O. Davies (DP158168)

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HEAG089
Publication date: January 2016
Design: Historic England