

THE ADAM SMITH STATUE

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND



The Adam Smith Institute's project to build a statue of the great 18th century Scottish economist and philosopher is nearing completion.

An imposing landmark monument to **Adam Smith** – the pioneering Scottish economist, philosopher, and author of *The Wealth of Nations* – will be unveiled soon.

This, the first important public monument to Adam Smith, will take the form of a large bronze statue on a massive stone plinth, and will stand in the historic heart of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital and the city where he worked and died.

This honour is long overdue. As author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith was the pioneer of what today we call economics. He championed the benefits of specialization and free trade, creating the very idea of the modern market economy that dominates the free world today.

Edinburgh City Council has given its permission to place the statue in one of the most striking sites which Scotland's capital has to offer.

The chosen spot is in the Royal Mile, downhill from the Castle that dominates the City, just outside the Cathedral, and immediately opposite the City Chambers. Appropriately, the statue will stand on the site of an ancient market. The old Mercat Cross remains, just a few steps away.

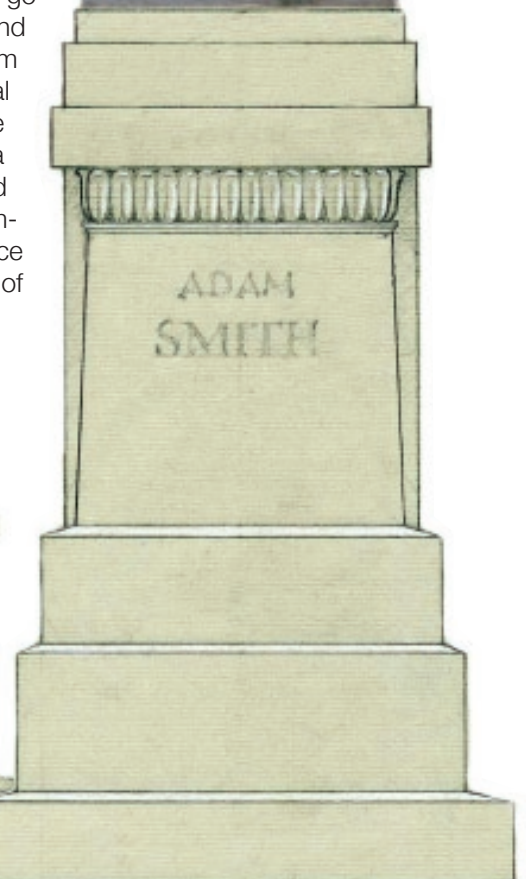
The Smith monument will be in line of sight of the recent statue of Smith's friend David Hume, and will

look downhill to the Canongate (where Smith is buried), towards the harbour of Leith (with its connotations of trade and commerce), and over the sea to the county of Fife, where Smith was born. It could hardly be a better position.

Over five million tourists a year go to Edinburgh, and nearly all of them visit the Royal Mile. That is five million people a year who will find themselves coming face to face with the likeness of



The sculptor's initial clay model of how the statue will look



The finished statue will be 6m (20 ft) high

the great defender of free trade and free markets, Adam Smith.

It will be a ten-foot (3m) bronze statue, showing Smith in period dress and academic robes, with symbols representing industry, agriculture, and learning. There is even a reference to Smith's famous 'Invisible Hand' – his will be concealed under his academic gown. The bronze likeness will stand on a massive stone plinth of equal height.

To create it, the Adam Smith Institute commissioned the famous Scottish sculptor **Alexander Stoddart**, whose work includes monuments to David Hume (the philosopher) and Robert Louis Stevenson (the author of *Kidnapped*) in Edinburgh, to John Witherspoon (the Edinburgh cleric who became one of the signers of America's Declaration of Independence) in both Princeton and Glasgow, plus works in Atlanta and other world cities, and even statuary in Buckingham Palace.

From his initial small clay model of how the



Catriona Stoddart measures up the working model



Sculptor Alexander Stoddart welds the armature which will support the full-size clay model

statue might look, Stoddart made larger and larger models, using a special frame to scale up to the full-size clay likeness. This was so large that it had to be built around a specially made steel armature, and needed to be constantly sprayed with water to prevent the massive weight of clay drying out. Modelling the upper half of the clay required a head for heights, and a lot of time on ladders.

But a clay model is unstable and easily damaged. A bronze foundry needs something more solid to work on. So specialist mould makers **Mike and Caroline Crofton** were called in to cast the full-size clay model into plaster. That involved making a hard plaster 'negative' of the model, cracking it open, and using it as a mould to create a hard plaster 'positive'. The sculptor then added some finishing touches before this was then cut into manageable sections and transported, in pieces, to the foundry.

The foundry, **Morris Singer**, is a specialist fine-art foundry that has worked on



Alexander Stoddart puts some finishing touches on the full-size clay model ...



... and contemplates the plaster model at the foundry

bronzes for many great artists, including Joseph Epstein and Henry Moore. From the original plaster 'positives' they again made another 'negative' mould, from which they made new 'positives' in hard wax. These were fitted together to check any misalignment, and the sculptor, Alexander Stoddart, again worked on them to make sure that the detailing is absolutely perfect.

The next stage is for the wax positives to be coated in a specialist ceramic concrete, which is left to harden. It is then heated in a kiln, so that the wax melts, leaving a void into which the hot bronze will eventually be poured in a spectacular, difficult, (and potentially dangerous) operation.

After casting, the different parts of the statue will be welded together by the foundry's specialist team. But still the process is not over. Any remaining flaws must be corrected, and the statue has to be given an appropriate colour or patina through the application of various finishes applied under heat.

Meanwhile, the statue plinth is being prepared. It will be fashioned by master stonemason **David Lindsay**, who has created many bases for important monuments in

Scotland. The plinth will use the highest quality Stanton Moor sandstone from Stoke Hall Quarry. To construct the plinth requires a massive 35-ton crane and will take three to five days – during which the nearby road into

Square will have to be closed. This means the work will have to be done over a long weekend, with the approval of the police and the city transport authorities.

The finished plinth can be protected until the statue is ready to be placed on top, which will be a few days before the unveiling. This again requires a large crane and some road closures, so the plan is to do the job early on a Sunday.

All this means that finding the right time to erect and unveil the statue is rather tricky. Currently we do not have an exact date for the unveiling, but we expect that it will take place in October or November 2007.

The front of the plinth will be inscribed with just two words – the name of Adam Smith. On the back will be a bronze plaque listing the major donors to the project. Near the statue will be another, small, plaque telling people how to find Adam Smith's tomb, which is further down the hill towards Holyrood Palace.



Fine detail is added to the waxes from which the final moulds will be made

THE STORY SO FAR

- March 2003: The Adam Smith Institute contacts Edinburgh City Council about the poor state of Adam Smith's tomb. During discussions, the idea of erecting a statue of Smith is raised.
- May 2003: The Adam Smith Institute commissions leading Scottish sculptor Alexander Stoddart to explore the viability of the project.
- August 2003: Dr Eamonn Butler of the Adam Smith Institute writes formally to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh to propose the statue.
- October 2003: Butler and Stoddart meet with the relevant departmental heads in Edinburgh City Council and a site in the Royal Mile is agreed.
- January 2004: Baroness Thatcher writes to endorse the project, and other early pledges of support are received.
- February 2004: Sculptor Alexander Stoddart produces initial clay sketch model for the statue.
- April 2004: Architects are retained and a planning application is lodged.
- May 2004: Local heritage groups endorse the project.
- August 2004: Edinburgh City Council approves planning consent for the statue.
- November 2004: The Adam Smith Institute produces the first information brochure on the project for public information and fundraising.
- April 2005: First major donations to the project are received.
- September 2005: Sculptor Alexander Stoddart completes the clay working model, which will be scaled up to produce the final version.
- October 2005: Stoddart begins welding the steel armature that will support the full-size clay model.
- July 2006: Full-size clay model converted into full-size plaster cast
- October 2006: Plaster casts transported to the foundry
- December 2006: Plaster casts converted into wax impressions
- January 2007: Alexander Stoddart begins work on the wax impressions prior to the foundry making the ceramic moulds into which the bronze will be poured
- February 2007: Work on the mould-making in progress at the foundry
- March 2007: Building warrants received from Edinburgh City Council
- Stonemason David Lindsay commissioned to create the statue plinth



The Adam Smith Institute wishes to thank all those who have contributed in order to make the Adam Smith statue a reality. If you would like to contribute to the project appeal, please contact Dr Eamonn Butler at:

The Adam Smith Institute
23 Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BL
+44 20 7222 4995 statue@adamsmith.org