

On the 19th March the report of the subcommittee was laid before the general committee, who, with the approval of King Edward, decided that the memorial of Queen Victoria should be erected in front of Buckingham Palace, and that, in order to promote this object, a public meeting should be held at the Mansion House, over which the Lord Mayor should preside, the Marquis of Salisbury, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and other members of the committee being present.

On the 26th March a meeting was held accordingly at the Mansion House, and, in the absence of the Marquis of Salisbury, the following resolution proposed by the Right Honourable Arthur J. Balfour, M.P., was unanimously passed: "That, in the opinion of this meeting of the citizens of London, a national monument should be erected to the memory of the late beloved Queen Victoria on the site in front of Buckingham Palace approved by His Majesty the King."

On the same day a letter was addressed by Viscount Esher to Sir Rowand Anderson, Mr. Ernest George, Sir Aston Webb, Sir Thomas Drew, and Mr. T. G. Jackson, asking them if they would consent to meet the executive committee with a view to preparing a design to be submitted in competition for the architectonic treatment of the Mall.

It had been previously decided to offer an honorarium of two hundred guineas to each of these eminent architects on the understanding that when the ultimate selection was made the architect chosen should collaborate with the sculptor appointed, and should receive further remuneration based on the cost of the design.

Mr. Thomas Brock, R.A., was then selected to prepare a design for the group or groups of sculpture, including the statue of the Queen, which it had been decided to place opposite the entrance-gates to Buckingham Palace.

It was subsequently arranged that the plans were to be submitted for examination in the course of the following three months.

On the 30th June they were sent, together with Mr. Brock's sketch model, to St. James's Palace, where they were shortly afterwards inspected by King Edward. The executive committee thereupon met, and at their second meeting adopted the following resolutions: "The committee recommend that Mr. Brock's sketch design be accepted, subject to such modifications as may be necessitated by the scheme of the memorial as a whole." "That Sir Aston Webb's plan for a general treatment of the space in front of Buckingham Palace be accepted, subject to certain necessary changes." "The committee further recommend that the consideration of the remainder of the Mall scheme be postponed until the amount of the subscriptions to the national memorial shall have been ascertained." This resolution was submitted to the Marquis of Salisbury, who decided that the general committee should meet to see the sketch model and the plan.

The general committee approved of the report, and gave instructions that, with the assent of King Edward, the plans and model should be exhibited at St. James's Palace to the public.

It was further decided that Mr. Brock and Sir Aston Webb should construct a model to scale, from which the ultimate work would be carried out, and they were further asked to frame estimates and prepare the necessary contracts.

The public took advantage in large numbers of the privilege accorded by the King to inspect the plans and model, and about ten thousand visitors passed through the room in which they were exhibited at St. James's Palace.

On the 2nd December Viscount Esher wrote, for the information of the Marquis of Salisbury, a memorandum containing an outline of the proceedings in connection with the memorial since the inception of the scheme on the 19th February, upon which the Marquis of Salisbury decided to call a meeting of the general committee.

At this meeting, which was held on the 9th December, it was resolved that Viscount Esher should be authorized to instruct Mr. Brock and Sir Aston Webb to prepare their estimates upon a basis of expenditure not to exceed in the first instance £175,000, a sum subsequently, with the approval of King Edward, increased to the amount available after the public subscription was closed. It was further decided that the general committee, having completed the work intrusted to it by the King, should be dissolved; that when the model was completed that the executive committee should examine the details of the scheme; and that when these were settled a small committee should be appointed by His Majesty King Edward to superintend the carrying-out of the work.

On the 16th December, 1901, Sir Aston Webb and Mr. Brock were informed by Viscount Esher of the decision of the general committee, and the arrangements based on that decision were subsequently made.

The formal contract with Mr. Brock is dated the 21st June, 1902, and was entered into after the model had been completed, and had been seen and approved by King Edward in Mr. Brock's studio, which his Majesty visited on several occasions.

Mr. Brock's design represents Queen Victoria seated in robes of state on a throne. At the back is a group of figures symbolical of Motherhood. At each side of the pedestal are groups representing Truth and Justice. Above the pedestal are eagles, symbolical of Dominion; while above them are seated figures of Courage and Constancy at the feet of a winged figure of Victory. The great base, upon which the monument rests, is typical of the foundations upon which the throne is secured. Power is represented by lions on the four flanking pedestals, supported by figures of Peace, Progress, Agriculture, and Manufacture.

Over the fountains are groups typifying Courage and Wisdom, and the reliefs in bronze and marble of the retaining-walls are tritons and mermaids, symbolical of sea-power.

Sir Aston Webb commenced the portion of his work at present executed towards the end of July, 1903, and it was carried out entirely under his direction, but with the supervision of the special committee appointed by King Edward, consisting of Viscount Esher (Chairman), Lord Redesdale, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, the First Commissioner of Works for the time being, and Sir Schomberg McDonnell (Secretary of the Office of Works).