

Specifying Stone Carving



Throughout the centuries carved limestone has contained the shapes that represent the highest aspirations of the human spirit. Each successive generation adds its vision to the legacy "written in stone".

The use of carved Indiana limestone is determined by building styles, construction methods, financial considerations and time constraints. But perhaps the most important factor affecting the "successful use" of carved Indiana limestone is **"correct specification."**

"Successful use" means that you get what you want. In order to do so, "what you want" must be conveyed clearly, and in time, to the carver who will produce the stone. Realize that it takes time to make a carving, which when complete, will represent your statement for time and time to come.

What Do You Want

Most people who desire carved stone do so because of recollections of work they have seen. Most failures to please a client result from the failure to communicate those ideas clearly to the carver. Unless you are quite willing to "take what you get" you do yourself no favor, in terms of price or product, to be vague or to expect a carver to read your mind. If, for example, you expect a carving to be authentic to a certain period (for instance, German Gothic or French Renaissance) you must say so and the designer must convey any information pertinent to what you expect, to the carver. This process is referred to as **"specifying the carving."** At Shannon Stone Company, our design team is willing to assist your personnel in any way, from research, to drawing, to sculptural modeling as well as the carving of the final work.

Notations

There are five basic methods of "specifying the carving". These are referred to as the **"notation"**. The degree of control over the finished work increases with each method in order.

The Notations:

- 1. Free Carving**
- 2. Shaded or Sectioned Drawing**
- 3. Fractional Scale Model**
- 4. Full Scale Model**
- 5. Match Existing**

1. Free Carving

The carver is given complete freedom to produce, within certain basic limitations of the size of the stone or the general shape of the object. This method is almost only used for sculptural work from a carver personally known to the client. It is not a "catch-all" notation for someone unable to say what they want as it presumes the acceptance of the carving produced.

2. Shaded or Sectioned Drawing

This is a two-dimensional graphic of the proposed stone work either to a specified scale or at full scale. Shading may be employed to indicate shadow anticipated under certain lighting conditions. Section lines through the carving at various places indicate the contours and dimensions of the projecting stone. As no two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional object can anticipate actual conditions encountered, the completed carving can only be expected to approximate the drawing. Actual field lighting conditions and viewing angles may create an effect somewhat different from that anticipated in the drawing. Textures or modeling which are not specifically indicated are at the discretion of the carver.

3. Fractional Scale Model

This is a three-dimensional notation, smaller than the actual size, of the shape of the proposed stone carving. The typical scales are 1/4, 1/3 or 1/2 scale. This method of notation allows the effect of the carving to be tested for various lighting conditions and viewing angles as well as assuring the continuity of surface elements.

Although more reliable than a drawing in representing the finished carving, a change in scale may alter the visual impact of the carving. Fractional scale models are more difficult to carve from than full scale models and leave more to the discretion of the carver. Fewer points of reference are generally taken, and with greater difficulty, than would be common with a full scale model.

The fractional scale model offers portability and shows greatest benefit where widely separated persons require access to the proposed shape (for example: architects, lighting engineers, historic preservation agencies).

Preparation of the Model

Scale models must be produced in a durable, stable, monochromatic material for use in the carving process, (for example: plaster, gypsum cement, polyester resin, etc.). The steps in the production of a scale model generally include a concept drawing, a rough maquette (small approximate model to determine general suitability) and a clay model made to scale. Following approval of the clay model, a mold is made from which the scale model is cast.

If a carving is to contain areas of critical detail (for example: portrait faces), and a fractional scale model is used for the bulk of the carving, it may be necessary to also execute full scale models of those critical areas. The person preparing the models must properly reference the full scale details to the fractional scale model.

4. Full Scale Model

This is a three-dimensional notation of the proposed stone carving exactly the same size as the intended work. The steps in its production are similar to those of the fractional scale model. Owing to its size, it is generally less portable and significantly more costly than a fractional scale model. The full scale model offers the most precise method of indicating surface texture and other variables, and is quite often easier to carve from than any other form of notation.

5. Match Existing

This is a notation in which an existing carving is to be duplicated. If the existing work is able to be moved to the carving facility, it may be treated as a full scale model. Most commonly, the existing work must be measured, photographed and patterned, or a mold made from the existing work in the field. Access to the original, and previously mentioned notation method, will dictate the degree of accuracy to detail.

Additional Considerations

P.S.F. - Points per Square Foot: Typically the carver determines the number of points (single three-dimensional reference measurements) which will be taken from any notation in order to execute a carving. When the client believes it necessary for quality control, they may specify the number of points per square foot to be taken and specify that the marks remain on the finished carving. Such a specification must be made prior to bid and may result in increased cost.

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