

MCC's bronzed heroes warned to keep off the grass

Royce Millar
City Reporter

The Melbourne Cricket Club's plan for a \$1 million Parade of Champions outside the MCG is threatened by a crackdown on monuments in city parks.

Melbourne City Council wants to make it harder for community groups to win approval for statues and memorials that it considers compromise parkland.

The cricket club has proposed 110 large bronze statues of sporting heroes along a proposed new entrance to the stadium. Gambling giant Tattersall's is financing the project.

The first statue, of cricket legend Donald Bradman, is finished. Olympic gold medal sprinter Betty Cuthbert is next in line for the bronze treatment.

"The club wants a grand entrance (to the MCG) with avenues of supersized statues .. I think we have some concerns about too much of a good thing," said the council's enviro-

onment committee chairwoman, Kate Redwood. "We have grave concerns about any alienation of parkland."

She said the statues should be kept to the concrete /asphalt area immediately around the stadium walls, and not extend into the parkland.

While the MCG Trust has control of the ground and the concreted area immediately around it, the council manages the grassed Yarra Park surrounding the stadium.

The council believes that lack of a clear policy in the past allowed substandard and poorly located statues to appear in Melbourne's parks.

Under a policy adopted by the council's environment committee last night, new monuments will have to meet strict criteria and win the backing of an expert panel including the National Trust and the Australian Garden History Society.

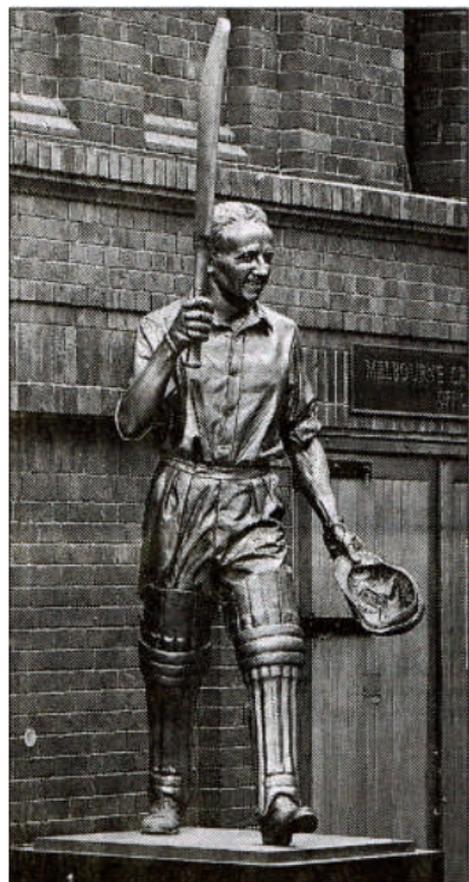
A council report notes that since the mid-1990s, Maltese, Greek and police memorial monuments have been erected in the Domain parkland near the Shrine of Remembrance, despite community and National Trust objections.

"We seem to have an increasing number of monuments .. the council is informally approached by innumerable groups wanting to commemorate someone or other," Cr Redwood said.

Melbourne Cricket Club assistant secretary Peter French said he was not aware of the council's new hard line. He said the Parade of Champions was set for completion over three years.

The club has chosen, but not announced, the remaining eight heroes to be immortalised in bronze. Mr French said the precise route for the parade had not been decided but it may run from the north through Yarra Park to the stadium.

Yarra Park will be redesigned as part of preparations for the 2006 Commonwealth Games.



The bronze Bradman in its temporary niche at the MCG members' entrance.