

Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments
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Telephone: 213/463-1629



23 September 1988

Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Historic Register
1100 L Street N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Registrar:

I hope you are familiar with our organization. Simply, we are a national organization concerned with preserving and documenting large-scale environmental art including such National Register Monuments as Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts and S. P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden in Lucas, Kansas. Both accepted on the Register in 1977.

We just received a call from Wayne & LouElla Naegele, owners of the Garden of Eden, who told us that the property is for sale. At this moment, I don't know if Mr. Naegele has alerted any preservation groups about his decision to sell so we thought we would let you know. Of course we hope that a sympathetic person or agency would take responsibility for the site.

In New Mexico the U. S. Park Service took over another National Register Monument, "Pop" Shaffer's Hotel, for their local headquarters, thereby protecting the hotel from the bulldozers. Shy of a private, sympathetic buyer who would maintain the site, we hope that the town of Lucas or the Federal or State government would take an interest in this site. Candidly speaking, we are at a loss of what we can do from this distance and hoped that your agency could make some suggestions or could find a way to help preserve the site.

The Naegeles have respected the site while it has been in their charge. The Garden of Eden is a splendid site known all over the world. It draws over 20,000 tourists each year to Lucas and it would be a great loss to the state if it was destroyed or turned into a Disneyland by people less sensitive than the current owners.

Should you wish to contact the Naegeles, following is their address and phone number, in case you do not have them:

Wayne & LouElla Naegele - S. P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden
2nd and Kansas Avenue - Lucas, Kansas 67648
(913) 525-6395

If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

Seymour Rosen
Director

cc: Mike Hayden, Governor of Kansas
Douglas Hickman, Mayor of Lucas, KS
Dorothy L. Ilgen, Kansas Arts Commission
Jennie Chinn, Kansas State Folklorist
Joseph W. Snell, Kansas State Historical Society
National Register of Historic Places
Kansas Grassroots Art Association