

Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environments

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Telephone: 213/463-1629



19 September 1988

Joseph W. Snell, Executive Director
Kansas State Historical Society
120 West Tenth
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Mr. Snell:

I hope you are familiar with our organization. The Historical Society should have received our latest newsletter last week. Simply, we are a national organization concerned with preserving and documenting large-scale environmental art including such sites such as the National Register Monument (1977) S. P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden in Lucas, Kansas. Kansas is especially blessed with these environments.

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 buyer who would responsibly maintain the site can be found.

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

Please advise us on your intended course of action. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to let us know. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Seymour Rosen
Director

cc: Mike Hayden, Governor of Kansas
Ms. Dorothy L. Ilgen, Exec. Dir. Kansas Arts Commission
Jennie Chinn, Kansas State Folk Arts Coordinator
National Register of Historic Places
Kansas Grassroots Art Association