

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

Introduction

The [ART ENVIRONMENT] was created by [THE ARTIST(S)]. Brief history of the site and its significance.

EXAMPLE: The example below was written for a preservation report about the Liberty Fountain in Humboldt, Iowa, by Preservation Services, Inc.

The fountain was built as a memorial to Fay Hessian, a young girl from Humboldt. The marble statue in the center of the fountain is a statue of Fay, and was carved in Italy. Fay had attended a Catholic college in Dubuque, where she converted to Catholicism. After his wife's death, Fay's father, Denis Hessian, took Fay (who had contracted tuberculosis and was in her early 20s), to Arizona, where she died in 1912. Mr. Hessian returned to Humboldt and commissioned Father Dobberstein to build the fountain as a memorial to his beloved daughter, although he died before its completion. "The fountain was built in segments at West Bend, the parts then being transported by truck to Humboldt to be assembled in the park by Father Dobberstein who commuted daily from West Bend while engaged in the project." The statue was completed in 1917. The fountain was dedicated on September 22, 1918, at a ceremony that was "attended by thousands."

The Liberty Fountain is an outstanding example of Father Paul Dobberstein's original vision for creating structures of elaborately embellished concrete, his superior craftsmanship, and his zeal for creating devotional and civic structures in Northwestern Iowa and throughout the upper Midwest. Dobberstein's fountain at the Grotto of the Redemption, created in front of St. Peter and Paul's Church, was also created as a war memorial, underscoring the concept of a fountain, with flowing water (comparable to an eternal flame), as a war memorial with animate features. As a civic fountain it is unique in Father Dobberstein's oeuvre. It has strong significance within the scope of his work and in the history of civic monuments in Humboldt and the region. As a combined memorial for an individual from the community and bold expression of collective patriotic values, it exemplifies a way honoring both individual and society in a democratic context. It's an exquisite work of art that despite its poor condition and non-functionality, can and should be restored to its original glory, as closely as possible.

Original condition

Outline the original condition of the site, as built by the artist. Refer to all vintage photo documentation. "Vintage" refers to the site during the lifetime of the artist, before any major changes occurred.

Example: From two vintage postcard views the fountain originally functioned by spilling water from four copper waterspouts on each side of the rim of the upper core/pedestal into the basin below; water in the basin spilled into the lower pool from four spouts the basin rim, centered between each scroll. Considering the front of the fountain oriented to the front of the statue, there was a concrete plinth to the left and behind the fountain. The plinth was low to the ground with a slanted top and table (possibly an information

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

plaque) with a wheel ornament on the side facing the fountain. To the right and behind the fountain there was a drinking fountain.

It's likely that there are numerous photos taken over time, showing the fountain from various sides, and details of it, in Humboldt area collections.

Description of Fountain elements

Fountain components include:

- A. **Statue**
- B. **Statue base:** concrete footing on top of core/pedestal that statue rests on.
- C. **Core/pedestal rim,** with four upright rocks at corners and four copper water spouts in the center of each horizontal section.
- D. **Core/pedestal:** this supports the statue, and has 4 "swag" brace supports, one at each corner. The fountain plumbing is within.
- E. **Core/pedestal supports (4)**
- F. **Scroll brackets (4)**
- G. **Basin**
- H. **Basin rim**
- I. **Basin base**
- J. **Pool**
- K. **Pool rim,** includes words: VICTORY, HUMANITY, LIBERTY, JUSTICE in each quadrant
- L. **Pavement** surrounding fountain

For the purpose of identification the fountain is organized in quadrants according to the words in the rim. Digital images are labeled according to the corresponding quadrant of each elevation:

VICTORY elevation: statue faces front

HUMANITY elevation: right side, facing the statue

LIBERTY elevation: rear of statue

JUSTICE elevation: left side, facing the statue

Existing conditions

Please refer to [Report Images](#) in the appendix.

- A. **Statue:** The statue is in fair condition. The left hand is missing all four fingers and thumb. The statue surface has some organic growth or environmental pollution seen in darkening in the creases in the head, hair and in folds of the garment. The surface has areas of pitting.
- B. **Statue base:** The flat concrete base is in good condition. There are traces of yellowed epoxy on the concrete surface, indicating that cracks had been sealed.
- C. **Core/pedestal rim:** Appears to be in good condition. Condition of interior plumbing to the waterspouts was not examined.

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

- D. Core/pedestal:** Exterior is in good condition. The **LIBERTY** plaque is corroded. An abalone shell on the left lost its nascent surface. The form where an abalone shell had been, to the right of the plaque, has traces of epoxy, indicating that it had been readhered in the past, became detached, and possibly is stored. The interior of the pedestal was not examined. The interior presumably contains the plumbing to the waterspouts and structural supports carrying down to the bottom of the pool.
- E. Core/pedestal supports:** All four appear to be in good condition; they were not examined for structural stability and the condition of interior rebar is unknown. The junctures where a few of the supports meet the basin rim were repaired with grey Portland cement, suggesting that the structural stability was in question.
- F. Scroll brackets (4):** All four appear to be in fair to good condition. They were not examined for structural stability, and the condition of interior rebar is unknown. A few areas show slight expansion along the underside seams and some detachment of embellished concrete surface, so moisture has most likely entered some areas of the interior rebar, causing iron to corrode and expand.
- G. Basin (labeled Bowl on diagram):** The basin, interior and exterior, is the most deteriorated element of the sculpture. The interior has large areas that were repaired unprofessionally with gray Portland cement. The exterior has large areas where the embellished concrete panels have become detached from the substrate. Many sections are missing and are presumed to be stored. Some were reattached unprofessionally and are out of alignment with the surface embellishment. Please refer to Report Images for the condition descriptions.
- a. **VICTORY elevation:** Two or more embellished panels are detached and stored or missing. 2 x 4's support a panel that was reattached with grey Portland mortar. Rocks have become detached from the base. There are large areas of efflorescence (leaching of calcium and other elements of the mortar due to water penetration) on the exposed concrete substrate and coming from the bottom of the lower embellished panels. This condition occurs around the entire basin. The mortar attaching the embellished panels to the substrate has lost integrity.
 - b. **HUMANITY elevation:** One embellished panel is missing from the top rim. Large areas of efflorescence at the bottom of the basin.
 - c. **LIBERTY elevation:** Strapping and 2 x 4's support embellished concrete panels that were reattached with grey Portland cement. Large areas of efflorescence at the bottom of the basin.
 - d. **JUSTICE elevation:** One large vertical embellished panel is detached from the left of the basin. Large areas of efflorescence at the bottom of the basin.
- H. Basin rim:** The basin rim is in fair to poor condition on the inside, with areas of repair, especially near the juncture of the scrolls to the core/pedestal swag supports. The top and exterior have much cracking of embellishment and areas where sections of embellishment are becoming detached.

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

- I. **Basin base:** Areas of the basin base have detached rocks and stones and sections of embellishment detached. The condition of the base behind the embellishment was not examined.
- J. **Pool:** The pool appears to be fairly stable and in good condition with the exception of cracking throughout. The cracking is not heaving sections or causing serious damage.
- K. **Pool rim:** The embellished pool rim appears to be in excellent condition, but contains a buildup of grass clippings and organic growth. Since the snow fencing covered much of the rim, the rocks and embellishment were not checked to determine if they are all solidly attached or if there are loose elements.
- L. **Pavement surrounding fountain:** Good condition.

Recommendations

The restoration of the Liberty Fountain will require considerable effort and should be addressed as a community project focusing civic energy and pride into a project that will result in a lasting legacy for the City of Humboldt. As such, it should involve many constituencies.

We recommend that the project be addressed in phases. We did not put a time frame on the phases, as the progress will depend on the level of community involvement, the support of preservation agencies (local, state, and national), the success of fund raising efforts, identifying appropriate professional consultants, contractors and technicians, and training volunteers.

The 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Liberty Fountain will be September 22, 2018. We think that nine years is a reasonable time frame to garner community support, raise funds, and complete restoration activities. We recommend that you set this date as a goal for the completion and work toward it. It can of course be completed earlier and dedicated on that date, and it's possible that it will take longer.

Phase 1, now/soon

Develop community awareness and build involvement

- Get approval from the City to pursue a restoration project that will engage the community, and commit to the restoration of the fountain by August 2018, using some City funds but dependent on successful fund-raising.
- Draft a mission statement, such as: The goal of the Liberty Fountain preservation project is to restore the Fountain to its original condition and to preserve it as a civic and cultural treasure for the City of Humboldt and the public. The project strives to restore the artistry of Father Paul Dobberstein as closely as possible to the original, guided by archival documentation.

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

- Determine if the City, the Historical Association, or another entity will be the not-for-profit fiscal receiver for the site, and manager of the project. Create a separate fund that people can donate to immediately.
- Enlist the Humboldt County Historical Association, the local arts group (Ms. Crabtree suggested this group would embrace the project), and other appropriate partners, including area communities with works by Father Dobberstein, to support the Liberty Fountain Preservation Project and become involved.
- Educate the community in the significance of the fountain and the importance of its preservation to the community. This can be done through press releases and news articles, Historical Association activities, working with teachers in area schools, etc . Educate *the entire community*, not just those who will contribute funds or volunteer. Keep track of all contributors and volunteers from the beginning.
- If it will help to have an outside professional present a slide lecture on Father Dobberstein's legacy in the region and it's radiating influence on sculptures and sculptural environments throughout the Upper Midwest, and the outstanding significance of the Liberty Fountain. If you don't have a local person who can give a lecture, please contact SPACES for recommendations of lecturers.

Physical site

- Remove snow fencing, wood supports, and strapping from the Fountain perimeter. Clean up the site.
- Place a sturdy fence around the fountain to deter people from climbing in it, walking on the rim, and damaging it further. The fence should be park-like in appearance as it will most likely be up for several years.
- Create signage that indicates that the restoration of the Liberty Fountain is in the early stages. Include vintage photographs and some history. State that you're seeking historical photographs and information and where photos and information can be sent, and how people can donate to the project and/or volunteer.
- Organize all stored fragments in a safe place. Label fragments according to the location they were taken from, if known. Label all fragments that are removed from this point forward, with their original location and date removed. Create a fragment inventory.
- Research engineering firms to do core samples of the fountain. (Contact information is in the appendix.)

Research and documentation

- Create a measured site plan in plan view and 4 elevations.
- With the assistance of the Humboldt County Historical Association, research the history of the Liberty Fountain. Collect and organize all archival documentation.
- With the assistance of the Humboldt County Historical Association gather as much vintage photo-documentation as possible. Collect and organize a photo archive; try to gather information on the years photos were taken, and record who owns the originals. Scan all photos. Photo-documentation is the most important tool for site preservation and will guide the accurate restoration and conservation of the monument.

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

- Research the Hessian and Ruse families to see if relatives have archival documentation (and perhaps will support the preservation project).

Fund raising and preservation support

- Identify a person or people in the City and/or community that can be the point person/people for fund raising efforts. It will be helpful to find someone with grant writing experience.
- Contact the Iowa Arts Council, the National Trust for Historic Preservation/Midwest Regional office, and the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance for information on grants and preservation assistance.
- Request assistance from these agencies to develop integrated strategies for preservation and fund raising.

Phase 2

Physical site

- As soon as funds are available, commission an engineering firm to do core samples and concrete tests to determine the makeup and psi of the concrete. We recommend that Preservation Services review the request for proposal, to make sure the scope of the engineering service results in the information necessary to support preservation of the fountain.
- As soon as funds are available, clean the fountain and do a surface survey. We recommend that you [identify preservation professionals] to work with and train local volunteers to do a complete cleaning, to remove environmental pollution and organic growth, and to do a complete survey of the surface, to determine what areas are intact and what areas need repair, and to organize findings according to the site plan. At this time an assessment of fragments can be made, to determine what original material can be reattached, and what areas are completely missing. At this time examination of the structural stability of the scrolls and brackets can also be done. We recommend that the site plan be created in advance. This project is a necessary step leading to the restoration of the fountain.
- As soon as funds are available, undertake a complete examination of the plumbing and mechanical systems that make the fountain operational, including interior elements, exterior water supply, pump, etc. The result of this examination will be key in designing the restoration. It may be appropriate to redesign the basin so it doesn't fill entirely, by adding a secondary system to reduce the depth of the water.

Research, development

- Consider planning field trips for people in the community to visit [any local or regional art environments], to gain knowledge and appreciation for art environments and make connections with other sites.
- Identify someone to write the nomination for [your site] to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. See info on the NRHP, and nominations for art environments, below.

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

Phase 3	Restoration of the Fountain
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After the site plans are made, the engineering tests completed and analyzed, the fountain cleaned and surface survey completed, the plumbing and mechanical systems investigated, and fund raising efforts are underway, the Master Plan for the restoration of the Fountain can be drafted. The Master Plan will outline the preservation philosophy (what will be done and/or not done and why) and will entail the activities listed below, and perhaps others. We recommend that the restoration be designed and overseen by preservation professionals and that much of the work be done by local contractors, technicians, and trained volunteers.

- The engineering analysis (psi strength of core samples, etc.) will determine the scope and processes for conserving and restoring the concrete throughout the fountain. Restoration could entail fortifying soft or deteriorating mortar sections of low psi strength with a consolidant. The tests will also determine the makeup of repair mortar systems.
- Based on the analysis, the treatment of the fountain mechanics and the restoration of the basin can be determined. This will most likely entail:
 - Removal of previous repair mortar.
 - Removal of basin panels that were reinstalled unprofessionally.
 - Treating exposed rebar for corrosion.
 - Possibly altering the interior of the bowl to reduce the depth of the water level.
 - A system for reattaching panels will be designed. This will most likely entail stainless steel bolt-through anchors.
 - A system for infill of lost embellishment the basin and the entire fountain will be designed. This could entail recreation of embellishment based on photo-documentation of the original, or using lacunae or blank infill (a preservation strategy used when lost areas are filled in but not recreated).
 - Designing the restoration of the fountain plumbing to make it operational.
- Based on the analysis, structural stabilization of interior rebar and armatures will be designed. It may be necessary to treat rebar in the scrolls and brackets if they are corroding.
- Recreation of the lost fingers for the statue. A conservator in marble sculpture should be consulted to determine if the pitting should be treated.
- It may be desirable to seal all embellished surfaces of the fountain with a product that deters moisture entry but allows all masonry elements to breathe.
- We recommend that you consider creating onsite interpretation of the Fountain, perhaps with an anodized aluminum plaque that describes its history, the preservation project, and includes vintage photographs. The information could be mounted in a plinth designed to replicate the original plinth, as shown in the vintage color postcard.

Art Environment Name

Preservation Plan: Condition Report and Preservation Recommendations

- We recommend thorough documentation (written and photographic) of all processes.
- We recommend that a plan for ongoing maintenance, outlining who will be responsible for maintenance and an annual schedule for maintenance activities, be made upon completion of the project.