

LAS POZAS CONSERVATION STUDY

prepared for Kaco Gastelum

November 1997

by Zuleyma Aguirre & N.J. Bud Goldstone

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GOAL

During an amazingly productive span of twenty years until his death in 1984, Edward James created a large number of surrealistic structures called "Las Pozas" near Xilitla, Mexico. The goal of this study is to provide a document containing each task and cost element necessary to prepare an architecture and engineering (A&E) report for the conservation, repair and completion of this unique monument. The A&E report will:

- a) identify the needs for visitor safety and site security;
- b) identify areas requiring repair work or completion to meet the stated plans of Mr. James;
- c) identify any requirement for tests either on-site or off-site, such as soil and materials tests and/or investigations necessary;
- d) identify a series of suggested repair designs and repair materials using cost-effective materials and processes;
- e) provide cost estimates for each element of the report and
- e) establish a reasonable schedule for the repair and completion of Las Pozas.

INTRODUCTION

The present owner of this monumental work, Mr. "Kaco" Gastelum, has commissioned this study. Las Pozas is an elaborate series of surrealistic constructions designed by Edward James and built under his supervision by local craftsmen near Xilitla over a twenty-two year period from about 1962 to 1984. During the building periods, the number of workers reportedly went from 40 to perhaps as many as 150. Various dates emerge from available reference materials - one says the work started in 1949, another says 1962. In any case, the work apparently ended with James' death in 1984. The cost to James was perhaps \$5,000,000 US.

SUMMARY

Key issues have been identified in this study which are to be resolved during the A&E Report development. Among those issues are site safety and security, access to the structures on the site for materials deliveries and by the repair crews; access on site to electric power; training facilities for laborers in the use of approved repair materials and the latest conservation techniques, minimizing costs for staff and laborer housing and food costs, and arranging for adequate on-site reviews by qualified, conservation-oversight organization representatives. The steps listed below are proposed to produce an A&E Report. Those steps, with time estimates for the time required for completion, are:

A. Work elements to be done in the U.S. Cost estimate

- a) accumulate and review historic documentation and available photographs of the artworks. A bibliography has already been assembled. Each document and film will be reviewed and a summary of the results will be published. (16 hours)
- b) based on available information, a preliminary site plan will be published, with each structure identified as to its location and approximate size; (16 hours)
- c) based on available information, individual, preliminary plan views and necessary elevation views of each of the individual structures will be published; (40 hours)

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d) based on available information, a preliminary photographic documentation plan with estimates of the number of photographs required to define all surfaces for each of the structures will be published; NOTE: a suggested grid size is 4 feet square. (8 hours)

e) a plan will be prepared for the site inspection, government permits shall be obtained, as well as passports, visas and travel tickets. Necessary equipment and support facilities in Mexico shall be procured or requested. (24 hours plus \$1,500)

B. Work elements to be done at Las Pozas

f) necessary local permits and government inspections, if required, shall be obtained. per diem for the professional staff (tbd)

g) all necessary office equipment and supplies shall be procured including color film, paper, diskettes, rental computer for data collection, supplies, scientific and safety equipment, etc. (tbd)

h) approximately 2,000 technical photographs will be taken, developed and stored (two or three of each of the surfaces on each of the structures with data back stamps on each negative or image); (80 hours)

i) each damaged area will be identified on each individual work by the grid code designators; (8 hours)

j) all data shall be entered into a computer database using a relational database program, such as Paradox (c), for each structure; (16 hours)

k) labor manpower availability along with labor costs and training costs shall be determined (tbd)

l) costs of local materials, rental equipment, scaffolding, electric power sources, logistics for transporting materials and workers shall be identified; (16 hours)

k) a comprehensive summary report shall be prepared; (8 hours)

l) the summary report and findings will be reviewed with Mr. Gastelum and Mr. Danziger; (8 hours)

C. Work elements to be done in the U.S.

m) repair materials, techniques and a schedule for repairs shall be defined and the A&E Report will be drafted (24 hours)

o) the cost estimate will be prepared (8 hours)

p) meetings will be arranged with conservation officials in US for review of findings and key portions of A&E Report; (8 hours)

q) the draft of A&E Report shall be sent by FAX to Mr. Gastelum, Mr. Danziger, the Getty Conservation Institute, and other interested groups (INAH) for comment; (1 hour)

r) comments will be incorporated as necessary and the A&E Report will be released. (4 hours)

COST ESTIMATE

A. Work elements to be done in the U.S. Cost estimate

a) accumulate and review historic documentation and all available photographs of the artworks. (16 hours)

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- b) based on available information, a preliminary site plan shall be published, with each structure identified as to its location and approximate size; (16 hours)
- c) based on available information, individual, preliminary plan-views and all necessary elevation views of each of the thirty-some individual structures shall be published; (40 hours)
- d) based on available information, a preliminary photographic documentation plan with estimates of the number of photographs required to define all surfaces for each of the 32 or 36 structures shall be published; NOTE: a suggested grid size is 4 feet square. (8 hours)
- e) a plan shall be prepared for the site inspection, government permits shall be obtained, as well as passports, visas and travel tickets. Necessary equipment and support facilities in Mexico shall be procured or requested. (24 hours plus \$tbd)

B. Work elements to be done at Las Pozas

- f) necessary local permits and government inspections, if required, shall be obtained. (tbd)
- g) all necessary office equipment and supplies shall be procured including color film, paper, diskettes, rental computer for data collection, supplies, scientific and safety equipment, etc. (tbd)
- h) approximately 2,000 technical photographs will be taken, developed and stored (two or three of each of the surfaces on each of the structures with data back stamps on each negative or image); (80 hours)
- i) each damaged area will be identified on each individual work by the grid code designators; (8 hours)
- j) all data shall be entered into a computer database using a relational database program, such as Paradox (c), for each structure; (16 hours)
- k) labor manpower availability along with labor costs and training costs shall be determined (tbd)
- l) costs of local materials, rental equipment, logistics for transporting materials and workers shall be identified; (16 hours)
- k) a comprehensive summary report shall be prepared; (8 hours)
- l) the summary report and findings will be reviewed with Mr. Gastelum and Mr. Danziger; (8 hours)

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- r) comments will be incorporated as necessary and the A&E Report will be released. (4 hours)

DAMAGE SUMMARY

Introduction

There has been no thorough inspection of the structures or none has been made available for this study. However, in the film which was released in 1996 and made during an unknown period before then, considerable surface damage to the structures is apparent and exposed steel reinforcements may be seen in several structures.

Damage comments prepared by Avery Danziger, October 1997

"The only major damage that has occurred ..is during the September 19th, 1986 Hurricane (called GERT here in Mexico) which dumped over 3 feet of water .. in less than three days. This brought VW sized boulders down the river, causing a lot of damage to the river structures, and the rains caused a major mud slide to occur immediately above the HOUSE OF 3 FLOORS THAT COULD BE 5 - (Estructura de tres pisos...) p29,49,61. This mud slide covered part of this structure and knocked several free standing walls above and to the cascada side (NW) of the structure. Some of the mud has been removed from the structure and a few small repairs were done replacing the broken concrete leaves which adorn the concrete support columns which had several leaves broken off of them. The James Foundation gave .. \$6,000 to build 1/2 km long, 3 foot deep stone lined culvert which basically follows the straight black line shown on the map surrounding and just above the structure which terminates just above the Bathtub In The Shape Of An Eye. This seems to have prevented further damage from mud slides as excess water is channeled into Poza #7. One of the biggest tasks will be to remove the stones that have collected in Poza #8 to the depth of about 5 meters, ..since ..'84 and the inundation of '86 it has remained full of stones. The structures here and immediately below in Poza 7 have suffered the most obvious damage."

Bibliography

The significance of the works of Edward James may be understood best by reviewing the following references:

NEWSPAPER articles

"Eccentric Exile : Edward James and his Garden of Eden", by Patrick Boyle , Sunday Magazine - DAILY TELEGRAPH - London, May 8th, 1977 p. 20-29

"Builder of Dreams", by George Melly, OBSERVER -(DAILY TELEGRAPH-LONDON) Dec. 13th, 1981

"Private Lives" -excerpts from Edward's personal archives from the James Foundation - HARPERS & QUEEN, March 1991

"In Search Of Shangri-La", by Sara Love, Scene Magazine- COLUMBIA (MO) DAILY TRIBUNE- Oct. 28th, 1993 p.12-13

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"Fantasy Garden in Mexico's Jungle", by Allen Myerson, NEW YORK TIMES-Feb. 19,'95
- Travel section, p. 16 (multi-page article)

"A Surrealist Dream In The Huasteca", by Jim Budd, MEXICO CITY TIMES - Dec.
16th, 1995 p. 19 (full page article)

"An Englishman's Xanadu Mirrors A Fantasy World Created By Poe" , by Gerald Jonas,
LOS ANGELES TIMES - May 12th,'96 - p. L15 (full page article)

This **quote** was in the Friday July 23, 1965 issue of the Los Angeles Free Press. "Sustain the vision". "Though a desire to build unauthorized and unorthodox architecture may be less rare than most of us realize, the will to carry out the realization is the truly remarkable achievement. Many may feel themselves inspired; especially after a few drinks, lots of men and women sense stirrings of original genius. What distinguishes the real genius is the ability to sustain the vision."

Edward James. Poet

BOOKS (which contain major sections about Edward James or Las Pozas):

Luis Bunuel "My Last Sigh" (chapter The Civil War (1936-39), by Luis Bunuel,
published by Vintage (Alfred Knopf), (C)1984

Edward James "Swans Reflecting Elephants- My Early Years" by Edward James,
published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson (C)1982

Julien Levy "Memoir of an Art Gallery" by Julien Levy, publisher - G.P. Putnam's Sons
(C) 1977

John Lowe "Edward James - Poet, Patron, Eccentric : A Surrealist Life" by John Lowe,
published by Collins (C)1991, 262 p

Philip Purser "Where is he now? The Extraordinary Worlds of Edward James" by Philip
Purser, publisher - Quartet Books (C)1978, 128 p

Philip Purser "Poeted : The Final Quest of Edward James" publisher - Quartet Books
(C)1991, 211 p

Michael Schuyt, Joost Elffers, George Collins "Fantastic Architecture" publisher - Harry
N. Abrams (C) 1980

MAGAZINE articles

page 9

Betjeman, John "Edward James", poem by John Betjeman, England's Poet Laureate, PUNCH - Oct.29, 1958 (later that year also published in the "New Yorker Magazine")

Budd, Jim "Xilitla - Turismo Surrealista", PAULA magazine, April 1996, p.72-76 (Spanish)

COCKBURN, ALEXANDER "HOUSE AND GARDEN JUNE 1987, P 7

Cohan, Tony "Missions Improbable / Surrealist Disneyland", WESTWAYS magazine, Oct. 1996 p. 26-32

FODOR'S EXPLORING MEXICO.

Hapgood, Fred Smithsonian April 1994, Volume 25, Number 1, "Mr. James Builds His Dream House" by Fred Hapgood

* FODOR'S BERKELEY BUDGET GUIDES 1997 MEXICO.

Hoepker, Von Thomas "Zaubergarten : Edward James - Im Dschungle Blueben Orchideen aus Beton", ART magazine, Feb. 1996 p.44-49 (German)

Kernan, Michael "Mr. James Builds His Dream House", SMITHSONIAN magazine, April 1994 p.60-70

Lambert, Elizabeth "Enrolling at West Dean", ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST - May 1990

Manley, Self Made Worlds pub Aperture

Rosen, Seymour "Edward James - Builder of Dreams / Review", SPACES - RAW VISION magazine Spring 1996 p.59-60

THE MEXICO HANDBOOK 1996

Sauvat, Catherine "Un Surrealiste Grandeur Nature", - MARIE CLAIRE MAISON, July 1995 p36-39 (French)

Warren, John "Concrete Poetry - Mexican Surrealism", WORLD ARCHITECTURE, Sept. 1990 p.44-49

WARREN, JOHN "CONCRETE poetry - WORLD ARCHITECTURE APRIL 91 VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5

Saber/Ver July '97 (entire magazine) (Spanish)

MOVIES / TELEVISION SPECIALS

"The Secret Life of Edward James" Produced by Patrick Boyle (I.T.C. Entertainment Ltd. - England) (C) 1977 56 minutes

"Edward James : Builder of Dreams" Produced by Avery Danziger (Top Drawer Productions) (C) 1995 58 minutes 5) Directors: Avery Danziger and Sarah Stein Producers: Avery Danziger and Lenore Danziger Format: Documentary, video, color, 1996, 58:30 min., Original format: 16mm and video Video by Danziger shown at the Met in New York on Aug. 2nd, 1997

Annual Obituary 1984

LAS POZAS COST ESTIMATE

LAS POZAS STUDY

11/5/97

WORK ELEMENT

EST COST (US

11/5/97	WORK ELEMENT	EST COST (US
A. Work to be done in the U.S. Cost estimate 12 days		\$6,900.00
a)	accum/review hist doc & photos; (16 hours) Aguirre - 8 hrs; Goldstone- 8 hours	\$1,000.00
b)	prep prelim site plan; (16 hours) Aguirre - 8 hrs; Goldstone- 8 hours	\$1,000.00
c)	prep prelim plan and elev views of each; (40 hours) Aguirre - 40 hrs	\$2,000.00
d)	prep prelim doc plan grid size 4 feet sq; (8 hours) Goldstone- 8 hours	\$600.00
e)	plan site insp, govt permits, tickets, equip, facil tbd + \$tbd Cost elements - tickets, rentals, etc.	\$2,300.00
B. Work at Las Pozas 20 Day stay; Aguirre 10; Goldstone 10 days		\$13,400.00
f)	arrange local permits and govt insp if required. 20 days per diem	\$1,400.00
g)	set up office equip, film, paper, disks, comp, suppl, equip. (tbd) Tech assistant - Cost elements	\$500.00 \$2,400.00
h)	prep 2,000 tech photos; (80 hours) Aguirre - 40 hrs; Goldstone- 40 hours	\$5,000.00
i)	ident damage on each work by grid code; (8 hours) Aguirre - 4 hrs; Goldstone- 4 hours	\$500.00
j)	enter all data into computer databases for each structure; (16 hours) Aguirre - 8 hrs; Goldstone- 8 hours	\$800.00
k)	evaluate manpower availability, costs, training facility, (tbd) Aguirre - 8 hrs; Goldstone- 8 hours	\$600.00
l)	eval cost of materials, equip, transp & workers; (16 hours) Aguirre - 8 hrs; Goldstone- 8 hours	\$1,000.00
k)	prepare summary report; (8 hours) Goldstone- 8 hours	\$600.00
l)	Review summary report and findingsr; (8 hours) Goldstone- 8 hours	\$600.00
C. Work to be done in the U.S. 6 Days		\$3,075.00
m)	draft the A&E Report (24 hours) Aguirre - 12 hrs; Goldstone- 12 hours	\$1,500.00
o)	prepare the cost estimate (8 hours) Goldstone- 8 hours	\$600.00
p)	meet with conservation officials; (8 hours) Goldstone- 8 hours	\$600.00
q)	FAX draft of A&E Report for comment; (1 hour) Goldstone - 1 hr	\$75.00
r)	incorporate comments and release A&E Report. (4 hours) Goldstone 4 hrs	\$300.00
TOTAL COST ESTIMATE 38 Working Days		\$23,375.00
Consultant costs as portions of work elements		
Zuleyma Aguirre	136 hrs	\$6,800.00
Bud Goldstone	141 hrs	\$10,575.00
Tech assistant	160 hrs	\$2,400.00
Passport/Visa expense		\$140.00
Ground travel		\$100.00
Air fares		\$1,470.00
Rental of equipment		\$400.00
Office supplies		\$90.00
Per diem		\$1,400.00
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ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING REPORT PREPARATION