

## **BOGGS PROPOSAL TO COMMON COUNCIL**

The following proposal is for the removal, crating, storage and re-homing of the Franklin Boggs bas relief at city hall. The art piece is part of the mitigation of the building demolition permit with the State Historical Society. The recommendation to preserve the sculpture was discussed at the November 17<sup>th</sup> Common Council meeting as ID #20-1257.

Volunteering to oversee the project is Carmen De La Paz, an internationally known artist working in wood, metal and glass. Additionally, Carmen was voted one of the Top 200 knowledgeable people in the U.S. construction industry by Fixer.com. Her carpentry and design skills were featured on 6 seasons on HGTV's Hammer Heads series. She has also been the carpenter and co-host in two Emmy nominated seasons of the make-over show, Home Made Simple on the Oprah Winfrey Network. She's been a celebrity carpenter on HGTV's Design Star and a judge on Mike Holmes All American Handy Man Competition. Because of her construction and safety knowledge, she has also been the 3M Brand ambassador for 4 years. Carman has offered to volunteer her skill set, use of tools and expertise for what she believes to be a realistic project.

Team members also include Bob Salb and Lisa Salb, with over 20 years of construction experience. They will provide free labor, scaffolding and tool use to remove the sculpture. Others have offered to volunteer. Liability waivers will be signed by all that take part in the project.

Scaffolding and ladders will be used to reach the piece. We have safety harnesses for the scaffolding. The stairway will have to be blocked off completely. Project engineer Katie Jelacic stated that the city could have the railing removed at the landing at the bottom of sculpture, therefore, we will assume that the city will be responsible for all matters regarding the railing. We would ask for use of a room in city hall where we could stage the pieces as they come down.

There are 32 symbol panels and 17 colored marble chip panels in the bas relief piece. The concrete block base wall is coated with mastic and colored marble chips and will not be saved, as the Conrad Schmitt Studios Inc. report indicated that it will be impossible to remove the entirety of this layer without completely destroying it. We anticipate it would take 3-5 days, with a concentrated effort from 10am to 5pm, for removal of the pieces from the wall, to inventory the storage crates to make them, and to pack the pieces with bubble wrap for storage. Custom crates will be made by the team. We will add straps to the inside and outside of the crates to provide easier handling and to move them to offsite storage. Carmen has

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offered to store the sculpture in the crates for free at her Waukesha shop, to meet the removal deadline we are now facing. The “must be removed” date given by Katie Jelacic is Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. There may be bursts of noise during the project and the use of electricity will be required, so we ask to be directed to which outlets we may use. The team would like to get the project done as soon as possible and will ask for the date when we can start, once approved.

Based on the recommendation in the Conrad Schmitt report, removal of the concrete sculpture will be done from top to bottom and outside in. This will be to decipher the puzzle of the linking, for the easiest access to the metal anchor tabs for removing the piece. Our initial intent is to keep the tabs intact, however, there is the likelihood that some tabs will have to be cut. An arsenal of metal, wood and air shims will be used as required, along with oscillating multitools with masonry bits. We are aware that breakage may be inevitable. We are going to save as much of the sculpture as we can before the bulldozer takes down what is left in the building.

The labor and storage space will be free. The storage crates will be built at material cost, which is an estimated \$960-\$1,500 for plywood, 2x4s, screws, straps and bubble wrap. We anticipate use of city found funding for the material cost but if there are shortages, we will pursue public donations.

The team is happy to take custody of the Boggs sculpture if that is the recommendation of the city, but we want to be clear we don't want a personal financial gain. This is a benevolence project and our intent is not for personal profit but for guardianship of the sculpture to put it into the hands of people who desire it.

Our first choice is installation of the Boggs sculpture in whole, to get it placed in its entirety somewhere else, if removal is successful without breakage. If there is breakage, or if a new location for the entire piece cannot be found by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, we will move forward with working with the pieces individually. It was recommended in the DeLind Fine Art Appraisal that since there are so many individual panels, to sell or donate sections or individual pieces. When displayed with a good photograph of the original, the appraisal said it might have wide interest locally. They suggested a low price to cover the cost. Any payments would be split between the Landmarks Commission and Public Art Committee. There will be no strings attached to ownership of the pieces. In April 2021 this procedure

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would be developed and carried out by the team, which will be publicized in the press and on social media platforms.

We contacted the Wisconsin Historical Society on November 23<sup>rd</sup> and got this following response from the Compliance Reviewer: “We have a strong preference to preserve the mural in its entirety. While it might be easier to find locations to display individual panels rather than the entire artwork, this practice isolates elements of the mural, depriving them of their context, disrupting the piece's composition, and irreversibly altering viewers' experiences of the piece.

That said, it would be preferable to save something than nothing at all.

Instead of making a decision regarding the dismantling of the mural under the pressure of a deadline, it may be productive to think about where you could store the mural after December 31 while still looking for its permanent home. With such a large piece of art, it's not unreasonable that it would take a while to find a suitable home. If nothing comes of the search, you have the possibility to divide the mural later.”

We hope that our proposal will be satisfactory to the Common Council and to the Wisconsin Historical Society. Thank you for your time, consideration and efforts in saving the historic Boggs mural. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.