

May 26, 2011

Save the Hogan's Fountain Pavilion in Cherokee Park
c/o Tammy Madigan
2048 Douglass Boulevard #1
Louisville, Kentucky 40205

Dear Ms. Madigan:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning Hogan's Fountain Pavilion. As you know, I have been concerned about this structure for some time. I appreciate your efforts to call attention to it and highlight the need for sympathetic care and stewardship. As per our recent discussions, I am writing to provide a general assessment of the pavilion's architectural and historical significance and to suggest strategies for preservation.

This past semester, Mr. John Spenlau, a graduate student in the Department of History, undertook a detailed investigation of the pavilion. Based on his findings and my independent analysis of the structure, I believe that the pavilion constitutes an important example of mid-twentieth-century recreational architecture. Although contextual information about the development of the Louisville park system during this era is limited, Mr. Spenlau's research more than demonstrates the importance of the pavilion. An iconic example of recreational architecture in one of Louisville's most popular parks, it reflects important trends in architectural design and park development. In particular, the pavilion illustrates the growing influence of modernism and increasing importance of specialized recreational facilities in the decades after World War II.

Mr. Spenlau's investigations determined that the pavilion is significant mainly for its architectural design. Built in 1964, it merges a modernist form and structural design with elements of rustic styling. The result is an innovative expression of park architecture in midcentury America. The pavilion's towering profile marks a bold departure from earlier modes of design. Use of laminate timbers as structural elements highlights the advancements in technology that formed a defining theme of the modernist era. The cedar-shingled roof recalls earlier varieties of park architecture, particularly Shingle-style buildings of the late nineteenth century and the rustic style characteristic of early national parks. Although the principal inspiration for the design is unknown, the pavilion bears strong parallels to contemporary designs by architects such as Phillip Johnson, Eero Saarinen, and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Although further research is needed to situate the pavilion in the context of the work of its designer, architect E. J. Schickli, and the development of the municipal park system during the 1950s and 1960s, the structure may also be important for its role in the evolutionary development of Cherokee Park. In the decades after World War II, population growth, suburban development, and automobile ownership placed new demands on Louisville's municipal parks. Cherokee and Seneca parks especially felt the brunt of suburban growth. Although further research is needed to fully understand the process that unfolded, information gathered to date shows that public use of Cherokee Park changed significantly. The pavilion appears to be one of several structures erected to accommodate new needs. In this sense, it may have social and cultural significance comparable to its architectural

import. Further investigation will be needed, however, to accurately assess this dimension of the pavilion's history.

In sum, the pavilion is a locally-important example of midcentury recreational architecture. Its design represents an innovative, highly-distinctive union of modernist influences and traditional modes of park architecture. In broader terms, the pavilion suggests important directions in the development and use of municipal parks during the post-World War II era.

In your efforts to ensure preservation of the pavilion, I encourage you to pursue designation as a local landmark under the terms of Louisville's historic preservation ordinance (1999 Louisville Code, § 32.510). This would bring recognition and suggest the value of maintaining the structure in accordance with its historic design and use. In addition, I recommend working with the Kentucky Heritage Council to prepare a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. National Register listing would bring further recognition and provide opportunities for financial and technical assistance. The pavilion deserves consideration under both of these programs. Although neither will guarantee its preservation, each can play an important role in increasing awareness and fostering appreciation of its history.

I hope this provides you with the information you need. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by telephone at (502) 852-7583 or by email at daniel.vivian@louisville.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Vivian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Vivian
Assistant Professor and Director,
Public History Program

cc: Ms. Tina Ward Pugh, Louisville Metro Council
Ms. Rachel Kennedy, Preservation Kentucky, Inc.
Ms. Marianne Zucker, Preservation Louisville, Inc.
Ms. Mimi Zinniel, Olmstead Parks Conservancy
Mr. Michael J. Heitz, Louisville Metro Parks
Mr. Greg Fischer, Louisville Metro Government
Mr. Mark Dennen, Kentucky Heritage Council