

December 2020 Update on Louis XVI

Metro staff continues to contact conservation professionals for assessment and treatment estimates and recommendations for the Louis XVI statue, which was damaged during protests in summer 2020. Research to date includes conservators affiliated with the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), as well as recommendations from colleagues in the region.

Obtaining estimates is an ongoing challenge due to the level of specialization required for the severely damaged marble sculpture and workload within the conservation industry as many cities are making efforts to address vandalism of public art that occurred over the summer of 2020. Most of the prospective vendors also are located outside the region.

In addition, conservation professionals are currently re-examining their approach to preserving cultural heritage, especially for contested monuments. While contacting conservators, we were referred to the AIC Position Statement, October 2020, *On Contested Commemorative and Confederate Monuments* (link below).

The Position Statement outlines community-centered treatment considerations, including “the preservation of a monument may include preserving damage such as vandalism done in the name of social justice” – a consideration that has been posited by multiple conservators that we have contacted.

Link for AIC Position Statement:

https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/administration/governance/aic-positionstatement-contested-monuments-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=e83c0b20_8

See summary report on following page.

Conservation Vendor	Status	Estimate	Recommendation
Vendor, Louisville	Declined to bid, outside area of expertise		Contact marble specialists. Hand can be repaired; cleaning may be possible. If it can be cleaned, recommend reinstall indoors.
Vendor, Louisville	Declined to bid, outside area of expertise		
Vendor, Nashville	Declined to bid		Provided references for 2 specialists. Possible to clean and repair but long, slow, costly. Suggested budget (at least) \$5K for assessments, \$75-100K for treatment, plus transportation costs. Recommended move indoors for winter.
Vendor, Minneapolis	No response		
McKay Lodge, Oberlin	Estimate for site visit/assessment received; estimate for treatment after visit	\$2,907 for site visit/assessment	Possible to clean and repair, but impossible to remove all paint. Can treat surface to cover staining. Recommend reinstall indoors.
Materials Conservation, Philadelphia	Estimate received	\$8,000 for site visit/assessment; preliminary estimate \$75,000-100,000 for treatment	Recommend new design for sculpture base for protection (cost TBD).
Vendor, Chicago	No response		
Vendor, St. Louis	Declined to bid, no longer working in region		
Vendor, Chicago	No response		
Vendor, Chicago	Declined to bid		Provided reference for a specialist; we had already contacted the specialist recommended.
Vendor, Chicago	Considering option to bid, reviewing with partner agencies		Site visit/assessment before estimate for treatment. Consider preserving "as is" as artifact.
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