



Dumbarton House Garden Niche

WASHINGTON, DC

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America (NSCDA) has been committed to preserving the Dumbarton House since 1928. In 1931, Fiske Kimball designed the North Garden Niche, inspired by architect William Kent, for the NSCDA. EverGreene was contracted to assess the niche, design an appropriate treatment for the interior surface, and stabilize the interior wall and bench.

We observed that most of the limewash coating on the surface was lost, and the pointing of the Aquia Sandstone base and bench had deteriorated. There were multiple cracks throughout the niche wall and beneath the bench, where insects had nested. Additionally, the lead fish sculpture, located in the recessed rectangle, had become loose and was hanging off center.

Based on the results of our condition assessment, the following treatment plan was implemented. EverGreene directed and provided quality control for the masonry repairs on the niche, which were completed by Federal Masonry Restoration. The metal conservation included the removal, treatment, and re-installation of the lead figures. The non-symmetrical fountain bowl was covered for protection. After removing insect nests, the cracks in the wall and under the bench were filled and the niche was limewashed. The custom wash was selected based on historic documentation, which revealed that the color of the niche and walls in the house garden was intended to match the Aquia Creek sandstone architectural details, and approved by the client. Two coats of limewash were applied, and the walls were misted repeatedly for the following week to ensure that it dried properly. The deeper larger cracks dried at a slower rate than other areas because of the amount of moisture that was needed to properly in-fill them during patching. The sandstone bench and exterior base joint were repointed with a custom, color-matched mortar.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/dumbarton-house-garden-niche/>

SERVICES PERFORMED

Conservation Treatments
Metal Conservation
Surveys & Condition Assessments

PROJECT DETAILS

Client

Dumbarton House

Designer

Fiske Kimball

Subcontractor

Federal Masonry Restoration

