



Solar III Sculpture

GALLUP GARDENS, LITTLETON, CO

We were requested to assess Solar III, a concrete masonry unit (CMU) and painted stucco sculpture by the artist Edgar Britton. The abstract sculpture is composed of three distinct components – an 18' tall stele with a round penetration, an offset arch, and a curved arched wall. The sculpture was installed in 1976 in the Gallup Gardens across from the Littleton Museum.

According to documents from the time of installation, the sculpture was finished with stucco containing fine white marble dust which gave it a brilliant glow in the sunlight. Not long after installation, there were complaints of vandalism and “telegraphing” of the mortar joints through the stucco finish. Today the original finish is obscured by multiple stucco repair campaigns and modern paint coatings. The assessment was aimed at determining the root cause of failure in the stucco surface and a means of repairing damage and reversing inappropriate interventions.

The main condition plaguing the sculpture is the extensive network of cracks and disbondment of the stucco finish. This situation is worse on the curved wall but is present to a lesser degree in the stele and arch. Probes into the curved wall confirmed that the wall is constructed of unreinforced concrete block set using a stack bond over an insufficient footing. Rising damp has mobilized salts in original and repair materials which have been trapped by the modern paint coatings. Sub-fluorescence is causing the stucco to detach from the CMU.

Testing was limited to a scope that would help inform the treatment recommendations provided, including finish analysis, mortar testing and in situ absorption tests. A budgetary cost estimate was provided to assist with financial planning for the future conservation of the sculpture.

MORE INFORMATION:

<https://evergreene.com/projects/solar-iii-sculpture/>

SERVICES PERFORMED

Research & Documentation
Surveys & Condition Assessments

