

Memo

To: James Hagler, Director of Historical Resources

cc: Ed Lavallee, Len Bramble, Bob Daniels

From: Michelle Harm, Curator and Collections Manager

Date: May 6, 2015

Subject: Unauthorized painting of historic streetlight lamppost

The historic circa 1927 streetlight located in front of the Venice Museum & Archives (part of its collection) was painted today by COV Public Works without the museum's prior knowledge. The VMA was in the process of addressing the rust issue. Now that it has been painted with an inappropriate material, the conservation treatment will cost even more to remove the paint in order to get to the damaged area and repair it (see photos below).

An attempt to arrest the rusting was made in the fall of 2009, prior to my employment, when metal restorer David Cohen of Forms in Sculpture (Sarasota) was hired to reshape and weld the badly damaged joints, sandblast the cast iron base and top, and apply a powder coat for a total cost of \$3,745 (invoice attached). This treatment only temporarily fixed the problem and lasted approximately five years.

In August 2013, Michael Lee of the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, MA did a two day site visit at the museum for the Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) grant we received. In his February 2014 report, Mr. Lee's observations of the lamppost and its accelerated rusting supported my concern for the need for a professional objects conservator. Pages 44-45 of his report are attached. Over the past year, the museum's collection issues identified in the CAP report have been prioritized and addressed, as staff time and budgetary resources have been available. Conservation treatments are also needed for other objects within the collection, such as the Eagle Point Bell that is susceptible to damage from being on display outdoors.

The lamppost is in need of a full condition assessment and treatment plan by a conservator trained in working with museum collections. The high cost of hiring a qualified objects conservator will likely not fit within our typical annual budget. Therefore, we must seek outside funding or persuade the COV to add the expense to the Historical Resources budget in the next cycle. Please let me know if you would like me to pursue contacting an objects conservator at this time.

Added green paint



Detail of green paint covering corrosion

