

THE ART COMMISSION
CITY OF PORTLAND
OREGON

1103 Failing Bldg., Portland Oregon.

To the Council

Portland, Oregon.

Gentlemen :-

This is in reference to Calendar # 5202- an application by Jay H. Upton, in behalf of the Spanish War Veterans of the State of Oregon- for approval of a memorial to Theodore Roosevelt, proposed to be placed in Battleship Oregon Memorial Park- received by the Commission on August 29th.

The Commission had a meeting at the Park on September 8th with the sculptor, Mr. O. Barrett and Mr. Freeman of the Planning Commission. The question of precise boundaries of the tract was discussed and the Commission concluded that until these boundaries were definitely known, it would be premature to give any decision on location. However an opportunity was given the Commission to see photographs of the finished work of the sculptor, as set up at Bend and we have concluded that there is no objection to the work, either as to general design or as to medium in which it is carried out. This therefore is our tentative approval of the memorial, but we desire to reserve our final approval and to discuss placement when the uncertainties as to the site shall have been removed. Additional time is therefore asked for our definite and final recommendations. This will interpose no difficulties as the donors have agreed to a delay in setting up the work.

Very respectfully

The Art Commission of Portland by

R. F. Deibel

Chairman .

Portland, Oregon,
August 25, 1938

Mr. O. R. Bean,
Commissioner of Public Works
City Hall,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Mr. Bean:

The Spanish War Veterans of the State of Oregon have accumulated through many years a fund to erect a memorial to Theodore Roosevelt, who was the outstanding figure among the Spanish War Veterans.

The committee in charge of the fund engaged Professor Oliver Barrett, head of the Department of Sculpture, University of Oregon, to create a memorial.

The memorial is a symbolic figure, standing 14-1/2 feet high on a concrete base which is 4 feet high. It is made of tuffaceous stone, and at the base are stone seats projecting from either side, making a total width at the base of 14 feet. On each side of the figure and under the arms there are carvings - on one side an exact portrait of Theodore Roosevelt and on the other side the information that it has been erected by the Spanish War Veterans. The monument itself will weigh about eight tons.

Mr. Barrett is doing the work at Bend and is trying to accomplish in three months what it would ordinarily take twice that time, and because he is working night and day he has neglected submitting a design or a request to the Art Commission for its approval. The writer believes that Mr. Barrett's work is known to the Art Commission of Portland as he was the sculptor who created the Shemanski fountain now in the city.

As chairman of the committee in charge of the Roosevelt Memorial, I hereby request you to present

this letter to the City Council so that the matter may officially come before the Art Commission for its approval.

We have planned to unveil the monument on Tuesday, September 13th, during the ceremonies of the Encampment of the United Spanish War Veterans. The monument will be erected in the Battleship Oregon Park near the foot of Jefferson street.

It will require about a week prior to September 13th for Mr. Barrett to have the monument in place so he may complete the final work thereon.

Yours very sincerely,

Gay S. Lupton

THE ART COMMISSION

CITY OF PORTLAND

OREGON

April 18th, 1939


Honorable Mayor and City Council
c/o Auditor's Office
City Hall
Portland, Oregon

Re: Calendar No. 5202 - Letter from Jay H. Upton,
Chairman, Committee in charge of Roosevelt
Memorial, in regard to unveiling of said monu-
ment (Roosevelt, Theodore) on Sept. 13, 1938
in Battleship Oregon Park, near foot of S. W.
Jefferson Street.

At regularly called meeting of the Art Commission, March 7th,
1939, motion was made and duly passed that no action be taken,
either approving or disapproving, the statue described in letter
of Jay H. Upton, dated August 25th, 1938, since the figure has
already been placed in Marine Park.

It is requested, however, that design for base of the statue
and design for placement of the "Old Tillamook Light" be
referred at the proper time to the Art Commission for study
and recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald L. Woodward, Secretary

236 SW Bldg.

December 17, 1971

Property Control Division

Office of City Engineer

Mr. James L. Apperson, City Engineer

Theodore Roosevelt Statue

Dear Mr. Apperson:

Could you please supply any information concerning the final disposition of the attached statue.

Yours truly,

Donald W. Eckton
Property Control Officer

DWE:pm

Attach

cc: Mr. Les Davis, Supt.
Bureau of Maintenance
Stanton Yard

Unlovely and unloved

Time hides fate of memorial to T.R.

By ANDREW MERSHON

of The Oregonian staff

The Colossus of Portland is no more. And few people even miss it.

Conceived in the mind of the late Oliver Barrett, head sculptor for the University of Oregon during the last days of the Great Depression, the 18-foot-high memorial to Theodore Roosevelt was financed by the Spanish-American war veterans.

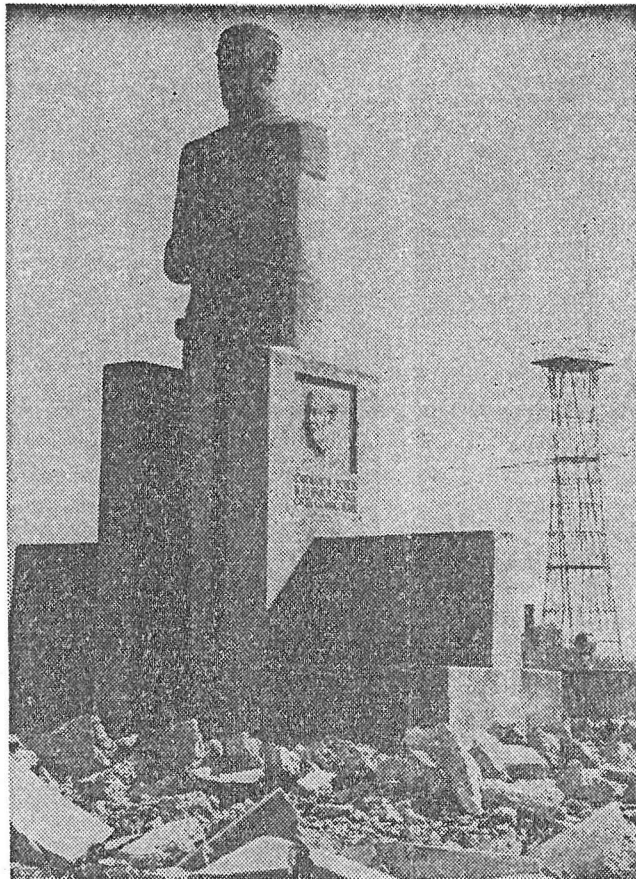
The statue, described by many as "uncommonly ugly," also had the misfortune to resemble Italian dictator Mussolini at a time when the world was poised on the edge of World War II.

Completed in February, 1939, the statue was shuffled off to the City of Portland's Stanton Yards for temporary storage less than three years later. It was not around long enough to even be a landmark.

Facts unknown

Little is known about the monument aside from fragmentary newspaper accounts. How much it cost, or what happened to it after a civic storm broke around it in the tense times before Pearl Harbor remain a mystery.

Originally placed in the Battleship Oregon Park, which in the late 1930s was located on Harbor Drive south of the Hawthorne Bridge, the statue and the battleship were forced to move because of a highway project. It was just as well,



INTO OBSCURITY — Theodore Roosevelt memorial stood watch over Battleship Oregon (in background) for more than two years, then disappeared.

according to contemporary critics, because it was apropos of nothing.

Sculptor Barrett admitted

that the human figure atop the monumental pile was not intended to be anyone historical. It was not, he told

the Oregon Journal, supposed to be anyone at all.

"It is not designed as a likeness of Roosevelt or anyone else. Rather, it is an attempt to symbolize his indomitable spirit — fighting, but constructive."

A profile of Roosevelt was carved in relief on the side of the bookend-like upright that flanked the statue's left side.

New statue sought

In an apparent attempt to mollify the Spanish-American war vets, who could have been expected to resent the city's cavalier shuffling off of their monument, the possibility was raised of relocating Henry Waldo Coe's South Park Blocks bronze of the mounted Teddy to the new Battleship Oregon Park.

The City Council, however, would have none of that and also turned down a suggestion that the Skidmore Fountain be added to the park.

Barrett's work, meanwhile, took several days to dismantle because of its size and the hardness of the Central Oregon tufa of which it was made.

No inventory kept

The entire monument weighed about 15 tons; the humanoid representation stood 14 feet high, set on a four-foot base. City crews had to cut it into sections, lowering it on jacks onto skids for transport cross the Willamette River to the storage yard.

Whether Barrett's work ever arrived at Stanton Yard is a matter for conjecture.

The statue was dismantled many years before the council decided it needed an inventory of public monuments and other city property, so the Roosevelt piece appears nowhere on the municipal books.

Don Eckton, property control officer, was one of several city employees who worked on that inventory after World War II.

"I think I remember it cracked when they were taking it apart," he said recently. "Anyway, Stanton Yard doesn't have any record of it, and nobody seems to know what finally happened."

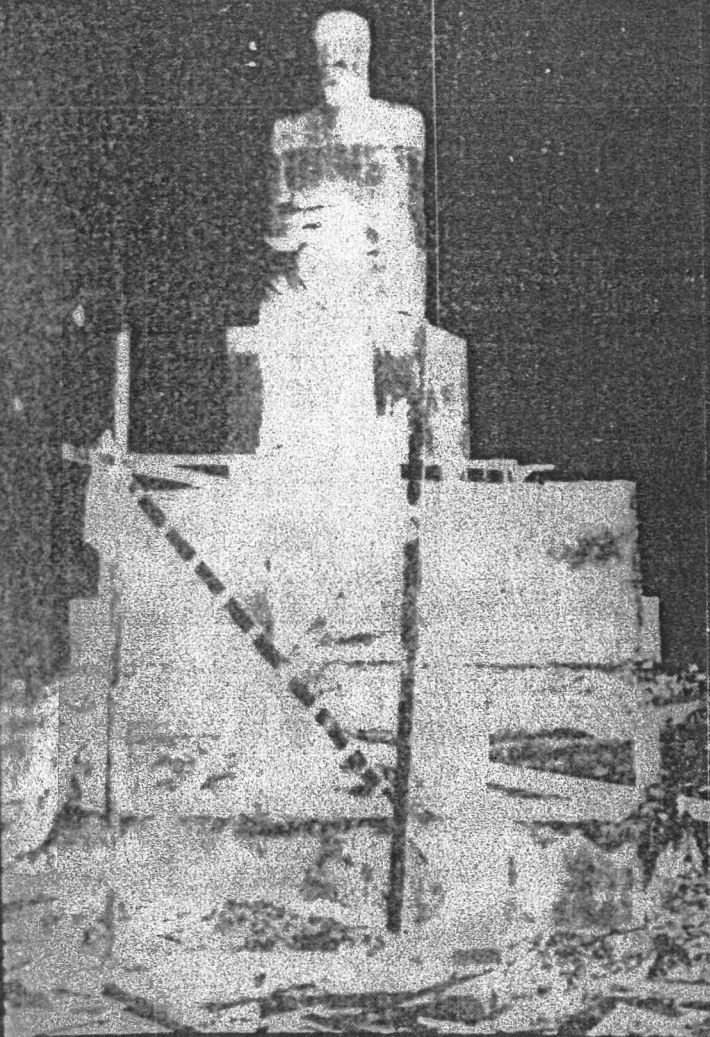
Eckton, nevertheless, detailed two of his trainee employees to research the statue when its whereabouts were questioned recently. The trail led them, finally to a picture in the Oregon Historical Society and to some old newspaper articles.

None of these sources revealed what happened to the Colossus of Portland, but Eckton has an idea:

"It wouldn't surprise me a bit," he said gazing down toward Harbor Drive, "if it isn't underneath that highway."

So in a way, the "Little Bulldog" of American statesmanship, is still "standing silent watch over the Old Bulldog of the Navy."

Rough Rider Ready to Ride



Workmen Wednesday started the task of moving the modernistic statue which has stood, as a symbol of Theodore Roosevelt, in the Battleship Oregon park. Several days will be required to chip away the base and transfer the huge work of art to the Stanton street storage yard, where it will remain until a suitable site is determined.

Council Bans Fount Move

Skidmore Dispute Closed by City

While the city council Wednesday refused to move the Skidmore fountain to the Battleship Oregon park, the massive symbolic Theodore Roosevelt statue was being removed by workmen in preparation for the widening of Front avenue at that point.

The limestone statue was raised on jacks and later placed on skids to be taken from the park and placed in storage until a more suitable site can be found. It will be taken apart in sections because of its size and weight and because the mortar joining the sections is today harder than the limestone of which the statue is made.

There have been many suggestions for the adornment of the park when it is reconstructed after Front avenue is widened. One of them includes the removal of the original life-like Roosevelt statue from the park blocks to this site, while others include an ornamental flagpole.

The suggestion that the Skidmore fountain be moved stirred up objections from many elements which insisted the statue should remain in its historic setting at S. W. 1st avenue and Ankeny street.

One objector said the fountain marks the site of a pioneer cemetery before 1854 and that it is a landmark of the early days of the city and should be preserved there.

THIS WAS PORTLAND

Oregon Journal SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 1956

By Louise Aaron
Journal Staff Writer

Portland has few public statues but two of heroic size have been given to the city to honor the memory of Theodore Roosevelt, "Roughrider" and 26th president of the United States.

Still a landmark is the bronze equestrian portrait statue of Roosevelt astride a horse, which stands on a large granite base in the South Park block opposite Portland Art museum, where the old Ladd school stood when the statue was dedicated on Armistice day, 1922. It was a gift to the city from the late Dr. Henry Waldo Coe and the sculptor, A. Phimister Proctor, came to Portland for the impressive dedication ceremony.

"TEDDY" ROOSEVELT on his horse has been a popular statue—with the public and the seagulls which often perch

on TR's hat or the metal mane of the horse. No U. S. cavalry horse posed for the artist. Proctor chose a California horse with "just a strain of thoroughbred" although he had his choice of any the cavalry had. Such realism as an army horse was not necessary, the sculptor felt. That satisfied the public.

Time moved on and so had "modern" art when Spanish War Veterans commissioned the late Oliver Laurence Barrett, then head of the sculpture department of the University of Oregon, to create a memorial sculpture to Theodore Roosevelt. Barrett chose to use tufa stone of central Oregon in the 14-foot high symbolic figure which was placed on a four-foot base in Marine park on Portland's waterfront where the "bulldog" of the navy, the battleship



REMEMBER THIS Roosevelt symbolic statue? Disappearance of 14-foot high stone sculpture caused no public concern.



MOST PORTLANDERS know location of this equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt given to city in 1922.

Oregon, was then berthed.

BARRETT USED broad planes in creating the memorial figure which was flanked on both sides with smaller works—a profile portrait of Roosevelt and a memorial inscription.

When Marine park was being reconstructed in 1941 to make way for SW Harbor drive improvement, the sculpture was ordered moved. It was supposed to go into storage at the city's Stanton street warehouse but there is no recorded evidence that it ever reached there.

News stories of the period indicate that it was to have been reerected at another site. Its base had been broken in September of that year, an "incident" to development of Harbor drive.

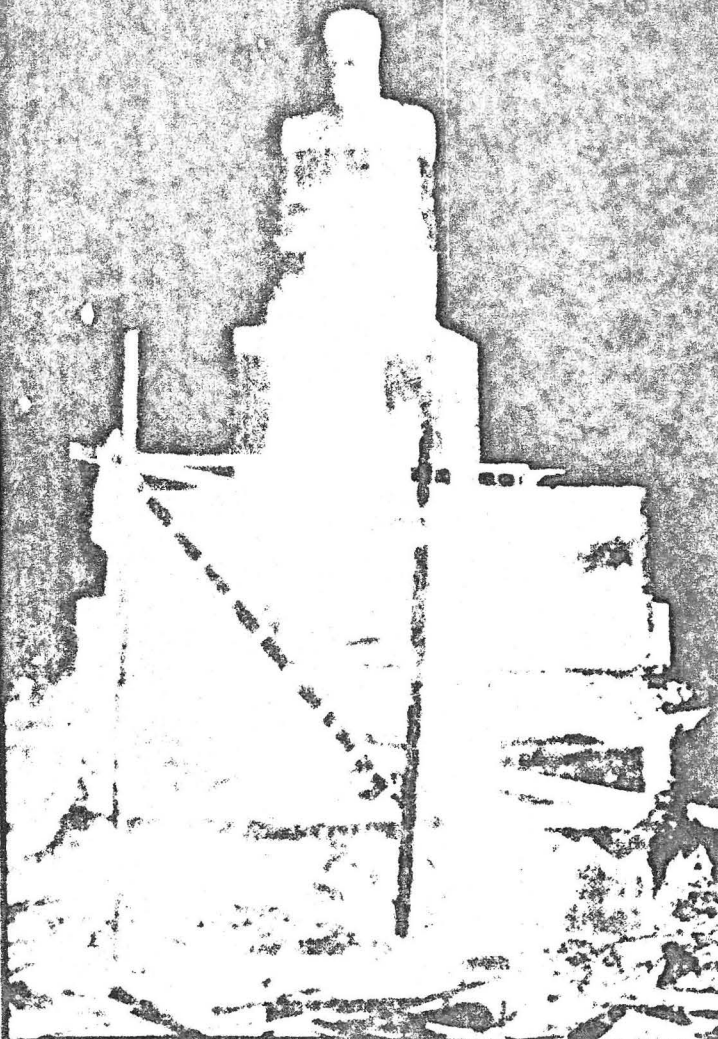
SCULPTOR Barrett did not

die until 1943, but any opinions the creator of this massive piece of work might have had seem not to have reached print.

Portland's public was as vocal about his Roosevelt sculpture as some Salem officials and citizens were about Renoir's "Venus" as a memorial to pioneers. It was referred to in the public press as a "cubistic" figure with "nightmarish contours," a "monstrosity" and "colossus," was dubbed "Gargantua" and "Frankenstein." After the statue supposedly went into storage, the unpopular work of art ceased to be news.

Although official records do not reveal it, this is what The Journal's art editor learned informally. Barrett's Roosevelt sculpture became a victim of a bulldozing "accident" in the moving and its final resting place is as part of the foundation of Harbor drive.

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CITY OF PORTLAND
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
(NOT FOR MAILING)

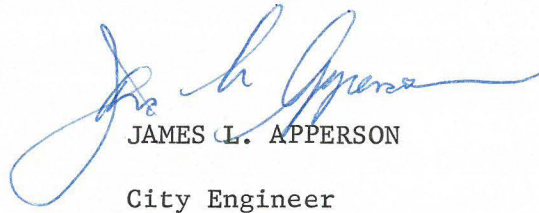
January 13, 1972

*Att. -
Bob
Roosevelt Folder*

From Office of the City Engineer
To Property Control Division
Addressed to Donald W. Eckton, Property Control Officer
Subject Theodore Roosevelt Statue

With regard to your request, concerning the whereabouts of the Theodore Roosevelt Statue, I am advised that we have been asked this question frequently over the years.

I can find no one who has any knowledge of this statue.


JAMES L. APPERSON
City Engineer

JLA:j

DW