

October 23, 1996

SUBJECT: VANCOUVER AIDS MEMORIAL

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board accept the donation from AIDS Vancouver of the AIDS Memorial and approve its installation in the wooded area above Ceperley Park Fieldhouse in Stanley Park, subject to the completion of the standard public art contract and with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

POLICY

The Board has guidelines to govern Commemorative installations in parks.

The Board adopted the Public Art Committee's Acceptance Guidelines for Longterm Gifts of Public Art in 1988.

BACKGROUND

AIDS Vancouver is requesting permission from the Vancouver Park Board to install, in the treed area above Ceperley Park Fieldhouse a public art monument to the memory of those who have died from Aids (Appendix 1)

In February, 1996, a sub-committee of AIDS Vancouver (the Vancouver AIDS Memorial Project) held a province wide artist call for a commemorative monument. Eighty artists made submissions and, in a two step selection process, four finalists were chosen. The proposals were exhibited at the Vancouver Public Library. On July 12, 1996, a panel, consisting of Arthur Ericksen, Joe Average, Leslie Poole, Ann Rosenberg, Easter Aramas-Mikulik and Dr. Joss DeWet, made the final selection.

DISCUSSION

The selected proposal is a "names memorial" submitted by a team of three artists: Bruce Wilson, Susanna Barrett and Marc Tessler. This memorial is a 'ribbon' of three foot wide, 1/2 inch deep, Cor-ten steel panels which will weave through the site. The panels will range in height from between four and eight feet, with an average height of six feet. Names of those who have died of AIDS in B.C. will be laser cut through the panels. The cuts will give the wall a light, transparent quality. It is intended that flowers may be woven into the names. (Appendix 2)

A passage of poetry by philosopher George Santayana will be inscribed along the top of the panels:

With you a part of me hath passed away,

For in the peopled forest of my mind

A tree made leafless by this wintry wind

Shall never don again its green array.

...Another, if I would, I could not find,

And I am grown much older in a day.

But yet I treasure in my memory

Your gift of charity and young heart' s ease,

And the dear honour of your amity,

For these once mine, my life is rich with these

And I scarce know which part may greater be,-

What I keep of you, or you rob from me.

When first installed, the memorial will be thirty feet long (10 panels) and contain nearly 2000 names. Some allowance will be made for the addition of future panels. A pathway will be constructed to lead visitors from the park entrance past the wall and out towards the picnic area.

The selected site is a wooded and grassy area. The artists have consulted with Planning and Recreation staff to evaluate the effect on the area. They have met on site with Arboriculture staff to find ways to install the monument with minimal impact on the trees. Consultation will continue as final plans are developed. The new pathway is seen to have a general circulation benefit for the area in that it will facilitate an additional separation of pedestrians from bicycles and rollerbladers. The site may also be used once or twice a year for gatherings associated with the monument. This area is able to sustain such activity.

Grounds Operations staff have been and will continue to be consulted to insure that this installation does not result in any additional maintenance costs.

The material, Cor-ten steel, was chosen because of its strength and durability as well as the quality of sustaining an evenly oxidized surface without further corrosion. Each panel will be anchored securely and separated from the next by a small space. The sponsors will have an engineer develop stability plans and specifications for installation. Risk Management will be consulted. The wall will not provide opportunity for concealment because of the transparent

quality effected by the laser cutting.

In accordance with the Public Art Policy, the sponsor will make a maintenance deposit to the City' s Maintenance Reserve based on an estimated 10% of the total value of the work.

In addition, the sponsors are committed to raising funds for an endowment which will permit the addition of panels as they become required. This endowment may also cover the costs of any extraordinary maintenance costs should this be necessary. (eg. special edging or clearing of the base, power washing to remove graffiti etc.)

A standard contract addressing ownership, maintenance and other issues will be developed.

The Process

The Public Art Committee discussed the AIDS Memorial at its meeting of October 21, 1996. While the Vancouver AIDS Memorial Project did not follow the established process to obtain site approval prior to the artist call, the Committee noted that the process for artist selection followed by the Vancouver AIDS Memorial Project did conform with the principles in the City' s Public Art Policy. In addition, the proposed site has been reviewed by staff and found to be suitable. However, it should be noted that City and Park Board staff will be devising an application procedure to ensure that, in the future, due process will be followed.

CONCLUSION

This project provides a powerful, site specific monument in an area of Stanley Park which is suitable for this purpose.

Prepared by:
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SG