

Smith Memorial Arch



PROJECT

Smith Memorial Arch
Fairmount Park
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CLIENT

Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, Inc.

DATES

2004 Structural Assessment

DESCRIPTION

Located on North Concourse Drive near Memorial Hall, this large stone sculpture was created by a dozen artists as a gateway arch. It flanks Concourse Drive and consists of two rusticated pedestals connected by a Palladian arch on either side of the street. The Smith Memorial Arch (1897-1912) was created to honor Pennsylvania's Civil War military heroes. The arch contains five full statues and nine busts of distinguished Pennsylvania military men. Each interior pedestal is topped with a column serving as a base for a standing bronze figure. Each exterior pedestal supports an equestrian bronze figure. Although not a Civil War hero, one of the statues is of Richard Smith, whose wealth came from making printer type, and who paid to create the work.

CHALLENGE

Settling, alignment, stone displacement, and fracturing were issues that had arisen due to structural shifts. The goal for the assessment was to determine if the large columns and components of the arched sculpture were in structural distress or required stabilization efforts. Inspection of the interior of the columns required descending into a small access way through the adjacent sidewalk and then scaling a narrow ladder within the column itself.

SERVICES

Structural Assessment

Inspected the connections of each bronze statue, equestrian, bust, and various ornamentation.

Inspected the foundation and interior structure of each column.

Utilizing a high-reach, laser levels and plumb lines, the team measured the columns' displacement and found the alignment was adequate and the structures were sound.

Recommended continued monitoring to track any future structural shifts.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Among the various sculptors associated with the Smith Memorial Arch are Alexander Stirling Calder and Daniel Chester French.