



ALL HALLOWS GUILD

WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL GARDENS

Sculpture Conservation in the Bishop's Garden – October 2018

The Bishop's Garden, on the grounds of Washington National Cathedral, is home to a number of 15th - century bas-reliefs and a Carolingian-era baptismal font. Time and atmospheric exposure have taken their toll on our sculpture, and these unique garden elements now require proper conservation care.

In 2016, All Hallows Guild engaged conservation professionals to survey the sculpture of the garden and six artifacts have been prioritized for care. All Hallows Guild is funding this project at a cost of \$20,000, and the conservation work will run October 1 through October 12, 2018. Visitors may watch this fascinating and painstaking process.

Expect to see the ongoing sculpture conservation of the Carolingian Font in the Hortulus, and five 15th-century bas-reliefs (one in the Norman Court, three in the stone wall behind the Bishop's Garden upper Perennial Border, and one in the same wall above the St. Catherine Pool). We will work with McKay Lodge Art Conservation Laboratory staff to protect the plant and aquatic life while providing appropriate sculpture conservation.

These extraordinary works of art were originally purchased for the Bishop's Garden by generous donors – and came from the collection of George Gray Bernard. Bernard was a noted sculptor who was interested in medieval art. Following World War I, he gathered medieval fragments from France and collected them in his New York home. That collection formed The Cloisters, now part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



The Carolingian Font in the Hortulus

The font, with its marble top and Caen limestone pedestal, is attributed to the time of Charlemagne and reputed to have come from the Abbey of St. Julie in the Aisne. It was acquired from the collection of George Grey Barnard, and was installed in the Bishop's Garden in 1927, given by Mrs. Henry Hudson Barton of Philadelphia in memory of her husband. When first purchased, "the cost of the great font was far less than its original price to a museum, thanks to George Grey Barnard."



Crucifixion of Christ with Mary and John

This 15th century granite bas-relief found in the Norman Court depicts the crucifixion of Christ with Saints Mary and John. Also from the George Grey Barnard collection, it was installed during the construction of the court in 1928. Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf gave the bas-relief in recognition of the work of Dean and Mrs. Bratenahl.



St. Catherine and other Figures

In the wall above St. Catherine's Pool, the 15th-century granite bas-relief depicts St. Catherine on the left holding the wheel, accompanied by three other figures. The bas-relief was acquired from the collection of George Grey Barnard in 1937. Mrs. Robert Low Bacon donated the sculpture in memory of her sister, Mrs. Henry Marquand.



Kneeling Figure

In the wall behind the perennial garden east of St. Catherine's Pool, the 15th-century granite panel depicts a kneeling female figure with hands clasped in front of her chest. Also from Barnard's collection, it was dedicated in the Bishop's Garden on May 22, 1931. The Junior Gardeners of Philadelphia gave the bas-relief in memory of Eleanor Pepper Newbold, their first president.



Four Figures

Also set into the stone wall, this granite bas-relief was installed in 1931 (or later) as a gift of the Noanett Garden Club of Massachusetts. Florence Bratenahl described the bas-relief: "Saints, martyrs, heroes – this being the last of a number of museum pieces acquired from the noted Gothic collection of George Grey Barnard." Julien Chapuis, Assistant Curator, The Cloisters and the Metropolitan Museum of Art noted: "Three figures are depicted in monastic dress and must therefore be members of a religious order."



Kneeling Figure

The Bird Font sits in front of the bas-relief of a kneeling figure at the East end of the perennial border. The 15th-century granite bas-relief is, according to Julien Chapuis, "The kneeling female figure of a lady of some rank." The bird font is a 13th-century capital of Caen limestone from Cluny, France. Acquired from Barnard's collection, it was installed in the Bishop's Garden in 1928. Miss Edith Notman of New York gave the bas-relief and bird font in memory of her father and mother, Peter and Jane C. Notman.

For more information about the artifacts in the Bishop's Garden, and in other locations on the Cathedral Close, please visit our website: www.allhallowsguild.org

Note: the photos included above were taken prior to the commencement of the conservation work.