

Before the Tennessee Historical Commission

Re: "Ikon," a sculpture

Petitioner: National Ornamental Metal Museum

PETITION FOR PERMISSION TO RELOCATE THE SCULPTURE "IKON" COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF OVERTON PARK

TO: Tennessee Historical Commission
Attn: Tennessee Heritage Protection Act and Outreach Coordinator
2491 Lebanon Pike
Nashville, TN 37214 ASK.TH@tn.gov

This Petition for Waiver is submitted pursuant to the Tennessee Heritage Protection Act of 2016, in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated 4-1-412. This Petition for Waiver concerns a sculpture commemorating the 100th anniversary of Overton Park located on public land owned by the City of Memphis, leased by the National Ornamental Metal Museum, Inc. ("Metal Museum").

Statement of Request

The Metal Museum requests, with the support of the City of Memphis, the Overton Park Conservancy and the Memphis College of Art, to relocate "Ikon," a sculpture by Edwin "Ted" Rust that commemorates the 100th anniversary of Overton Park, to a new sculpture path, approximately 175 feet away from the current location.

Background

"Ikon" is a sculpture by Edwin "Ted" Rust (1910-2010) that was installed in the east entrance plaza of the Memphis College of Art building in 2001 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Overton Park.

Overton Park is a large, 342-acre (138 ha) public park in Midtown Memphis, Tennessee. The park grounds contain the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis Zoo, a 9-hole golf course, the Memphis College of Art, Rainbow Lake, Veterans Plaza, the Greensward, and other features. The Old Forest Arboretum, one of the few remaining old growth forests in Tennessee, is a natural arboretum with labeled trees along trails. In the 1960s and 1970s Overton Park was the subject of controversy when 26 of its 342 acres were slated by highway planners to be demolished to build Interstate 40 through the park. Citizens to Preserve Overton Park challenged the plan in court. Ultimately, the United States Supreme Court ruled in their favor in the landmark case Citizens to Preserve Overton Park v. Volpe.

The Memphis College of Art closed in 2020. In May 2022 the Metal Museum signed a lease to renovate and operate the building. The Memphis College of Art deeded “Ikon” to the Metal Museum on October 22, 2024 to ensure that the sculpture would remain in Overton Park and be properly maintained by the Metal Museum. A copy of the deed of gift is attached to this application (Exhibit 1).

Justification

The former Memphis College of Art building is undergoing a \$24 million renovation to transform the former school into a museum. Addressing years of deferred maintenance and upgrades to meet current codes is necessary for the reoccupation of the building. The east entrance plaza, where “Ikon” is located, is being redesigned and regraded to meet ADA requirements and to create an inviting entrance. “Ikon” must be moved as part of the renovation of the plaza.

“Ikon” will be moved to a new sculpture walk along the south side of the property when the renovation of the plaza begins. As the sculpture commemorates the 100th anniversary of Overton Park, the new location along the sculpture path will link “Ikon” more directly with the park itself. A new plaque with additional information about the sculpture will be installed along the sculpture walk. A drawing showing the approximate location of the sculpture is attached (Exhibit 2).

Reports

There are no existing reports showing a material or substantial need for a waiver based on historical or other compelling public.

Parties with an Interest in the Sculpture

We hope our request to move “Ikon” to a more appropriate location along the sculpture walk will be approved by the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Carissa Hussong
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