
Articles You May Have Missed

Susanne Friend, column editor

“Everything Old Can Look New Again,” *SoMdNews.com*, 05/01/2009

It’s not easy to make really old stuff look new again. Ask the few conservation, preservation and restoration professionals in Southern Maryland, who have spent years of training and schooling to be qualified to work on historic buildings and artifacts. Though their jobs are easily overlooked by passersby as workers scrape away moss from gravestones, scrub bronze statues in a lobby or balance with cleaning supplies on a scaffold in front of a building, they’re necessary.

The profession has grown in recent years as demand by the private sector for specialized craftsmen has increased. Because of their proximity to the nation’s capital, local conservators’ work takes them all over the state and country for government-funded projects. But that doesn’t mean they aren’t constantly itching for a chance to work on Southern Maryland’s own historic treasures when funding for such becomes available.

“We are in a way, coming out of our shell. Half of the industry is working in the private sector. For a while, the field was much more dominated by institution-based conservators. The demographic has changed in last 15 to 20 years. It reflects a need for conservation services in general, certainly in the art world,” said Paul Messier, spokesman for the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. “The growth of conservation businesses has been very good. ... There is now a consciousness that we need to raise our profile as a considerable portion of our clients is coming from private sector.

Conservation is not just for large institutions. It’s for family photographs, people with fine furniture ... it’s for auction houses and private collectors.” Demand has grown for such professionals after disasters as well, particularly after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005.

“Havana’s Historic Architecture at Risk of Crumbling into Dust,” *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, 05/03/2009

Chunks of this city’s rich and eclectic architectural history tumble to the ground every few days, piece by piece, forever lost in the rubble. Neo-Baroque and Art Deco treasures deteriorate

at an alarming rate. Every three days, there are two partial or total building collapses in Central Havana alone, according to architectural experts.

Experts say a combination of age, decay, neglect and the elements threatens important 19th century neo-classical villas and Spanish colonial mansions, along with some of the world’s finest examples of 20th-century architecture — Art Deco palaces from the 1930s and modernist structures from the 1950s.

“Many buildings will be totally lost in 10 years,” said Orestes del Castillo, a retired architect and restoration expert with the office of the city historian. Centuries-old colonial buildings and picturesque squares in Old Havana have been restored since UNESCO, the cultural arm of the United Nations, designated it a world heritage site in 1982. The city historian’s office paid for the restorations. Similar financing schemes don’t exist for historic neighborhoods such as Central Havana, Vedado and El Cerro.

The communist state has been a reluctant supporter of capitalist ventures. The result: the city’s vast architectural repository is crumbling. Other architecture experts said just the opposite is true: A half century of communist rule saved the capital’s stunning architecture from developers, even though a lack of money for repairs has taken a toll.

“Famed Nefertiti Bust ‘a fake’: Expert,” *Agence France Presse*, 05/05/2009

The bust of Queen Nefertiti housed in a Berlin museum and believed to be 3,400 years old in fact is a copy dating from 1912 that was made to test pigments used by the ancient Egyptians, according to Swiss art historian Henri Stierlin.

Stierlin, author of a dozen works on Egypt, the Middle East and ancient Islam, says in a just-released book that the bust currently in Berlin’s Altes Museum was made at the order of German archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt by an artist named Gerardt Marks. On December 6, 1912, the copy was admired as an original work by a German prince and the archaeologist “couldn’t sum up the courage to ridicule” his guest, Stierlin said. The historian, who has been work-

ing on the subject for 25 years, said he based his findings on several facts.

“The bust has no left eye and was never crafted to have one. This is an insult for an ancient Egyptian who believed the statue was the person themselves.” He also said the shoulders were cut vertically in the style practiced since the 19th century while “Egyptians cut shoulders horizontally” and that the features were accentuated in a manner recalling that of Art Nouveau.

It was impossible to scientifically establish the date of the bust because it was made of stone covered in plaster, he said. “The pigments, which can be dated, are really ancient,” he added. Stierlin also listed problems he noted during the discovery and shipment to Germany as well as in scientific reports of the time.

“Floods Force Vienna to Evacuate Albertina Museum,” *Reuters*, 06/24/2009

Vienna’s Albertina Museum, home to landmark Impressionist works by Monet and Renoir, will start removing 950,000 artworks from its leaking underground depot following some of Austria’s heaviest downpours in 50 years.

The gallery, which remains open, will start moving the works on Thursday, including pieces by Flemish painter Rubens and Italian master Michelangelo. “There has not been any damage to the works so far,” gallery spokeswoman Verena Dahlitz said on Wednesday.

One of the 200-year-old gallery’s most important pieces, a delicate watercolour of a hare by Albrecht Durer from 1502, has already been saved. The collection will be moved from central Vienna to another location in Austria and the museum does not yet know how long the operation will take.

Austria has put 10,000 soldiers on standby to cope with the flooding, which has mainly affected towns along the Danube River in northern and western Austria.

The Albertina, housed in a Neo-Classical palace which was rebuilt after World War Two bomb damage, is one of Vienna’s main tourist attractions, drawing some one million visitors a year. Apart from the rain, the museum has also been hit by the financial crisis, with donors pulling 2 million euros (\$2.81 mil-

lion) in sponsorship earlier this year. **“Leonardo Unbound: Splitting the Master’s Tome to Save His Words,”** *The New York Times*, 05/08/2009

In a windowless room in the underbelly of the Ambrosiana Library here, a group of restorers, most of them Benedictine nuns from the Abbey of Viboldone, has been working for months to unglue the pages of the Codex Atlanticus, the largest-known collection of drawings and writings by Leonardo da Vinci.

They have been unbinding the Codex since March to preserve better the works in Leonardo’s hand. But splitting up the manuscripts — which were compiled and bound into book form 400 years ago by the sculptor Pompeo Leoni — also means that more pages can be exhibited to the public, making it a potential moneymaker for the Library, which has owned the Codex since 1637.

Come September, pages will be available for public viewing at the library and in the Milanese church where Leonardo painted “The Last Supper.” After the original pages are detached from their paper supports, they will be reframed, using acid-free mat boards. The individually mounted pages will be kept in special archival boxes and stored in the vault, where the temperature and humidity are carefully monitored.

“Palace of Fine Arts Offers Peek at Restoration,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 05/09/2009

Fencing around San Francisco’s beloved Palace of Fine Arts will come down by the end of the month, unveiling the latest refurbishments in the multiyear, \$21 million project to make the neoclassical monument seismically safe and strong.

Gone are the safety nets that have hung under the rotunda’s ceiling since the 1989 earthquake. The ceiling has been seismically braced and painted, extensive cracks on all of the structure’s surfaces have been repaired, and graffiti and what architects politely referred to as “animal deposits” have been removed.

But enjoy it while you can - the fencing will go back up in late fall, after swans’ and other birds’ nesting season, to complete the third and final phase of the refurbishment.

The Palace of Fine Arts is the only surviving structure of the 1915

Panama-Pacific International Exposition, which was called “Jewel City” and took place in what is now the Marina neighborhood. The palace was always intended to be temporary, as was evidenced by its original materials: plaster, hemp and chicken wire. But philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst, mother of newspaper owner William Randolph Hearst, led a drive to save it, calling it too beautiful to be torn down.

The third phase, to begin this fall, will include adding some of Maybeck’s original features that have been lost, including landscaping similar to what was there in 1915, new formal entrances featuring “architectural rooms” intended to draw visitors into the site in a more intimate way, a decorative rotunda floor featuring medallions inlaid into colored concrete, a terrace jutting off the rotunda’s edge into the lagoon, and panels to educate visitors about the 1915 fair and Maybeck.

“Thomas Becket Paintings Unveiled in Spain,” *BBC News*, 05/15/2009

For the first time in 30 years, wooden protective boards and a glass panel have been taken away to fully reveal a rare medieval artwork.

The paintings in the ruined church of St. Nicolas in the Spanish town of Soria tell the story of the murder of the English Archbishop Thomas Becket. Becket is remembered as the Archbishop of Canterbury who stood up to a king and for his trouble was murdered by the king’s knights while he was praying.

King Henry II never forgave himself for his role in the murder of his political foe and his guilty conscience found its way to Spain. His daughter, Eleanor of England, married the Spanish King, Alfonso VIII. As a way of asking God to forgive her father, Eleanor commissioned paintings of the murder of Becket to adorn the walls of a church in the northern Spanish town of Soria.

Today the church of Saint Nicolas is a complete wreck near Soria’s main square, but three decades ago, builders were stabilizing the ruin when they rediscovered these medieval paintings in excellent condition. Since then a glass panel together with a wooden board have been the only protection for these beautiful works of art that are otherwise exposed to the open air.

Compared to photos taken when they were rediscovered in the late 1970s, half of the work has vanished. The ruined church was still in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church until about five years ago when it became the responsibility of the town council.

In a bid to boost tourism, the town council has been campaigning to secure state funding to restore the historic centre of Soria. The mayor has announced a restoration project that will contribute about half a million euros to restore the ruined church - including the crypt area and the paintings. The results of the efforts, he believes, will be visible during this year.

“They Rode the Rails in Style,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 05/28/2009

Seeing Henry Morrison Flagler and John Ringling’s private railroad cars -- their interiors, furniture and opalescent glass skylights gleaming from recent renovations -- you’d never know that by the 1950s one had become housing for migrant farm workers, and another a fishing shack.

Now, thanks to the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach, Fla., and the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Fla., visitors can get a glimpse of the lives of tycoons whose careers were so closely intertwined with rail travel. Flagler (1830-1913) created the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC), and Ringling (1866-1936) was advance man for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Both men used their cars for business and only incidentally for pleasure.

The car, built in 1886 by the Jackson & Sharp Co. of Wilmington for \$70,000, had a copper roof with a Victorian-styled, wood-paneled lounge, sleeping berths for visitors, and a private stateroom with bath for Flagler. There was a copper-lined shower, a dining area, and a small food preparation area with an ice box and wood stove.

Today, Car 91 looks better than ever, with no sign of its period as farm housing in Virginia. In the Ringling’s Circus Museum building in Sarasota, one must view John and Mable Ringling’s railcar, the Wisconsin, from the outside -- because it’s still being worked on. The Wisconsin’s interiors are mahogany and other woods, decorated with elaborate moldings and gold-leaf stencils. There

are toilets in each compartment, and the Ringlings had a private bathroom, including tub. The rear compartment in the 79-foot car is the observation room, which could be used as a lounge or office. There are also crew quarters and a kitchen. All rooms get extra daylight from a clerestory of opalescent glass.

“Does Plastic Art Last Forever?” *Slate*, 07/01/2009

In the early 1960s, curators at the Philadelphia Museum of Art noticed something funny about one of their modern-art sculptures: It smelled like vinegar. Worse, the once-clear plastic sculpture had begun browning like an apple, and cracks had appeared on its surface.

By 1967, Naum Gabo’s translucent, airy *Construction in Space: Two Cones* looked like Tupperware that had gone through the dishwasher too often.

In the 1920s, Gabo and other artists began experimenting with plastic, both because it offered the freedom to create any shape in any color and because they believed artists should embrace technology and a plastics-based industrial future. Plastics manufacturers assured the artists that cellulose acetate was durable—Greek marble for a new generation.

Not quite. It turned out plastics were no more intrinsically stable (and sometimes less stable) than wood, paint, or any other media—a detail Gabo and the Philadelphia curators never suspected until too late. As plastics revolutionized the making of furniture, toys, health care products, and electronics, museums of industry, design, and medicine began snapping up plastic objects that were either historic (the first artificial heart) or culturally important (Barbie dolls). Plastics hold up well for the decade or so during which a consumer uses most products. But museums, unlike consumers, are in it for the long haul, and when plastics crash, they crash precipitously. As a result, museums of all sorts have been having Gabo moments in the past decade.

“Making Work Presentable a Job for Pros,” *The Columbus Dispatch*, 05/14/2009

Don’t be fooled by the modestly dressed subjects (including two holding Bibles) in these family portraits: The

Clarks of Morrow County were a dirty bunch. Who wouldn’t be, after so many decades without a good cleaning?

Wanting to spruce up the 1844 paintings, the Columbus Museum of Art hired Kenneth B. Katz to handle the delicate restoration work. Conservation and Museum Services, a Detroit company owned by Katz, helps museums, corporations and private collectors in Ohio and Michigan care for paintings.

Not only were the portraits featured in the museum’s “Meet the Clarks” display -- dirty and cracked after almost 70 years in storage, but a previous restorer had brushed varnish over older layers of dirt and grime. Each work required 10 to 15 hours of attention, which included filling cracks with putty and repainting damaged areas. Sometimes, restoration can yield surprises. While working on a painting owned by a Michigan family, Katz determined that a full head of hair had been added to the subject during a previous restoration. “So he had to go back to the family bald.”

“Michelangelo’s Self-Portrait?” *The Toronto Star*, 07/03/2009

The restoration of Michelangelo’s frescoes in the Vatican’s Pauline Chapel may have produced a special prize: a previously unknown self-portrait of the artist.

Chief Vatican restorer Maurizio De Luca said yesterday that the face of a man on horseback in the artist’s *The Crucifixion of St. Peter* could well be the artist, though De Luca told AP Television News that nobody will ever know “with absolute certainty that the face is Michelangelo’s.”

The Vatican announced that the restoration had been completed after five years at a cost of \$5.2 million (Canadian). The frescoes were commissioned by Pope Paul III and painted between 1542 and 1549, when Michelangelo was 75. They were his last works. The chapel, generally known by its Italian name *Cappella Paolina*, is used by the Pope and is not open to the public. It has two Michelangelo frescoes, the other of which depicts the conversion of St. Paul.

“Polishing a Lost Gem to Dazzle Tourists,” *The New York Times*, 07/08/2009

The beauty of the exquisitely preserved ancient mosaic only seemed

to underline the incongruity of its surroundings. Modern Lod is a diverse city characterized by hardship. The late-Roman-era mosaic floor, one of the largest and finest in Israel, was unveiled by the authorities last week for just the second time since it was discovered in 1996 in the dilapidated eastern section of this poor town near the international airport, south of Tel Aviv.

Some 1,700 years old, the magnificent tiled floor spreads over almost 2,000 square feet and depicts a panoply of colorful birds, fish, exotic animals and merchant ships. The archaeologists of the Israel Antiquities Authority believe the mosaic, which lacks any inscriptions, was commissioned by a wealthy individual who owned a grand villa here.

The mosaic will be removed to a laboratory in Jerusalem for painstaking conservation. In 2010, a section will be sent to the United States for exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Two years from now, the entire mosaic is supposed to be returned to this patch of ground in eastern Lod and put on permanent display in a protected environment.

“Joan of Arc Statue out for Repairs,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 07/24/2009

Don’t look for the gracious, golden Joan of Arc in her usual spot near the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The 15-foot-tall statue, created in France by sculptor Emmanuel Fremiet and erected in Philadelphia in 1890 in honor of the centennial of the French Revolution, is off for repairs.

“We knew she was in need of restoration,” said city public art director Margot Berg, who said the planning had begun three years ago. “There’s a significant crack” in the granite pedestal, she said, and the gold-leaf gilding on the bronze statue needs replenishing. The \$75,000 restoration is being done by Milner & Carr Conservation in Philadelphia and Gold Leaf Studios of Washington.

About two-thirds of the cost is coming from the city’s capital budget - not its operating budget - and was encumbered several years ago, Berg said. The rest is from a grant from the French Heritage Society. The statue of the French peasant girl who led her countrymen to victories in the Hundred Years War will return in about three months.

“Stripping Away the Darkness as Murals Are Reborn,” *The New York Times*, 07/26/2009

For the last nine months the murals in the lobby of 30 Rockefeller Plaza have been cleaned by a team of six conservators who have all but moved in and will be there for the next two years. Carefully concealed behind giant scrim, they spend hour after hour methodically removing decades of yellowed varnish from the building’s famed murals, one inch at a time. Their work is so quiet and the scrim — blown-up photographs of the murals — so unobtrusive that nobody seems to notice them.

EverGreene Architectural Arts is restoring the murals, which include paintings by the Spanish painter José María Sert. Their two biggest challenges still lie ahead: “Time,” Sert’s mural on the lobby’s ceiling, and “American Progress,” at the information desk. To work on Sert’s dramatic ceiling, conservators plan to build what EverGreene owner Mr. Greene calls a “dance floor” above the foot traffic. More difficult will be tackling “American Progress” because it conceals electrical and mechanical equipment from the elevators. “Over the years there has been damage from decades of floods,” Mr. Greene said. “We want to avoid radical surgery. First we will clean the mural, stabilize it, reattach pieces of canvas that have gotten loose, and flatten pockets that have formed.” And as they have throughout the project, conservators will delicately paint in any discolored or damaged surfaces.

Conservators plan to build what EverGreene owner Mr. Greene calls a “dance floor” above the foot traffic. More difficult will be tackling “American Progress” because it conceals electrical and mechanical equipment from the elevators. “Over the years there has been damage from decades of floods,” Mr. Greene said. “We want to avoid radical surgery. First we will clean the mural, stabilize it, reattach pieces of canvas that have gotten loose, and flatten pockets that have formed.” And as they have throughout the project, conservators will delicately paint in any discolored or damaged surfaces.

“Babylon’s Ancient Wonder, Lying in Ruins,” *The Washington Post*, 07/29/2009

A report released this month in Paris by the United Nations’ cultural agency, UNESCO, says that the U.S. forces’ 18-month stay in the archaeological site of Babylon caused “major damage” and represented a “grave encroachment on this internationally known archeological site.”

According to the report, which comes after five years of investigation by a team of Iraqi and international experts, foreign troops and contractors bulldozed hilltops to serve as parking lots for military vehicles and trailers, pulverizing fragile pathways and archeological frag-

ments. They dug trenches where they stored fuel tanks for their helicopters, which landed near an ancient theater.

U.S. forces did not exactly destroy the 4,000-year-old city, home of one of the world’s original seven wonders, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Even before the troops arrived, there was not much left. But they did turn it into Camp Alpha, a military base, shortly after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. Among the structures that suffered the most damage, according to the report, were the Ishtar Gate and a processional thoroughfare.

Facing mounting criticism from archaeologists in Iraq and around the world, troops vacated it in summer 2004. It was reopened this June, despite warnings from experts that the ruins might suffer further damage unless they were first restored and given proper protection. Now, with security in Iraq improving, officials hope to start work on a \$700,000, two-year project funded by the U.S. State Department to restore the site. The United Nations is also trying to name the place a World Heritage site, a designation that would provide support and protection.

“Mexico’s Diego Rivera Murals get Restoration Treatment,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 07/29/2009

Anyone with even a passing interest in Latin American art and culture will be familiar with Diego Rivera, the Mexican painter and muralist. Rivera, who is credited with being one of the founders of the Mexican muralist art movement, was also an active communist and husband of the equally famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo.

Between 1922 and 1953, Rivera painted murals in Mexico City, Chapingo and Cuernavaca here in Mexico, as well as in San Francisco, Detroit and New York City. Mexico City’s Palacio Nacional, or National Palace, is home to some of the paintings that Rivera did under government commission, and those works are currently the focus of a restoration project by the government.

Diligent specialists are touching up missing color with watercolor paints, and using a weak alcohol solution to wash away dust and grime that the murals have collected. The restoration is expected to be completed in September.

“As Art Ages, So Do the Skills to Preserve It,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 07/31/2009

No more than half a dozen or so restoration specialists world-wide have the expertise for the highly skilled task of panel paintings conservation, and most of them are nearing retirement. The only specialist training program for panel painting conservation, located in Florence, Italy, recently shut down.

“It has created this vacuum in expertise,” says Getty Conservation Institute scientist Alan Phenix. To save critical art restoration skills, the Getty Foundation, the Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum have launched a global panel paintings initiative, a global program to train a new generation of panel conservators.

“Clean-up Reveals True Rembrandt,” *BBC News*, 08/07/2009

A portrait thought to have been painted by a pupil of Rembrandt has been proven to have been created by the master himself after a restoration.

Portrait of Pastor Swalmius, painted in 1637, had been the subject of debate by art connoisseurs for centuries. But curators at Antwerp’s Royal Museum of Fine Arts were overjoyed after layers of dark varnish were removed to reveal the Dutch painter’s signature. “There was a very dark varnish on the painting so subtleties within it were not visible anymore and after time people thought it wasn’t genuine,” said museum spokeswoman Veronique van Passel.

The Rembrandt Research Project confirmed the painting’s authenticity after tests showed it was made from the same piece of linen as two other genuine Rembrandts - one on display in Frankfurt and the other in St. Petersburg. It also pointed to features of the collar, beard and wrinkle of the eyes which were characteristic of Rembrandt’s style.

“Why Settle for Imitations of the Past?,” *Toronto Star*, 08/08/2009

Never has the need to preserve been greater. Architectural conservation has always been important, but at a time of environmental crisis, it no longer makes sense to tear down the past to clear the way for the future. Which brings us to Borgo di Vagli.

This 14th-century hamlet, 20 or so kilometres from Cortona, was abandoned after World War II and quickly fell into disrepair. Then in the late '90s, Italian builder and engineer Fulvio di Rosa decided to acquire the property and restore it. The borgo comprises a series of perhaps 20 small stone buildings, some detached, some connected. Presiding over the tiny community is a clock tower, also stone, now transformed into a trattoria. "The intention was to let it be as it has always been," di Rosa explains.

Because the idea was to restore the buildings and sell them as a fractional ownership resort, they had to be brought up to code. That entailed providing earthquake and fire protection, power, insulation and so on. The concrete beams required to stop earthquake damage are hidden between roofs and ceilings. The terracotta comes from nearby Sienna and the plaster is a special chalk-based mix. It is a testament to the power of restoration properly done that this 600-year-old enclave, which reopened in 2006, still feels at one with its rugged landscape.

"Fragile Art takes a Hit in an Interactive World," *Chicago Tribune*, 08/09/2009

Can the public love public art to death? Yes, it can, particularly if the art isn't ready to take the kind of pounding that goes with being displayed in a raucous public place rather than the refined confines of a museum. That is what's happening in Millennium Park, where the Burnham Plan centennial pavilion by Amsterdam architect Ben van Berkel and his UNStudio will close for desperately needed repairs.

Ever since the pavilion opened June 19, the human urge to climb has boldly asserted itself. Children have run up the pavilion's scoop-like curves, gouging openings in its glossy white surface and exposing underlying plywood. Skateboarders have left track marks. Once sleekly sculptural, Van Berkel's design now resembles a beaten-up jungle gym.

The other Burnham pavilion -- a podlike structure by London architect Zaha Hadid -- suffered as well. All too predictably, parkgoers stepped onto its ground-hugging fabric walls, leaving footprint marks. It's easy to point fin-

gers at Van Berkel and Hadid for creating dazzling pieces of sculpture that failed to anticipate how people would behave. Yet it is also true that star architects need tough clients to say no, when they come up with designs that are beautiful but impractical.

"Woman Attacks Mona Lisa," *Telegraph*, 08/11/2009

A Russian tourist sparked a security alert when she threw a mug at the Mona Lisa, officials at Louvre Museum in Paris have revealed. The Russian woman is thought to have bought it minutes earlier at the museum gift shop. However, the Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile was unaffected by the commotion, as the mug bounced harmlessly off the bullet-proof glass shielding her and shattered on the floor.

The woman was seized by two museum security guards and handed over to central Paris police after the incident on August 2. The Russian is being held in custody and has reportedly undergone a psychological examination. Doctors were trying to assess whether she was suffering from Stendhal Syndrome, a rare condition in which often perfectly sane individuals momentarily lose all reason and attack a work of art.

"Battle to Save Chicago's Gropius Architecture has Preservationists and City at Odds," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 08/20/2009

Recently, while studying engineering and architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Grahm Balkany discovered that one of the great minds of modern architecture, Walter Gropius, lay behind many of the small, flat-roofed hospital buildings on Chicago's South Side, built in the 1950s and early '60s in a great gust of urban renewal.

But what began as a triumph for scholarship and Chicago's architectural history has quickly soured. While Balkany was busy attaching Gropius's name to the buildings, the city was laying plans to raze them. Officials want the 37-acre campus of Reese Hospital, which went bankrupt last September, to build an Olympic village for the 2016 Games, for which Chicago is a finalist.

Even if Chicago doesn't win the

Games, officials envision a new residential development that they say will help invigorate the South Side. The decision to demolish has angered preservationists in part because it came with little or no public debate. The city has talked to architects and preservation groups, but so far it has shown little willingness to compromise. Contractors have already cut down trees around the buildings and begun demolition of the interiors.

"Restoration of 'Virgen de la Asuncion' 17th Century Painting Continues," *ArtDaily.org*, 08/07/2009

Known as "Xochimilco Cathedral," San Bernardino de Siena Parish will receive back the restored oil painting "Virgen de la Asuncion", one of the few Colonial paintings with its support united with maguey fiber, a technique that was not used later on.

Painted on board in 17th century by Juan Sanchez Salmeron, one of the greatest New Spain art representatives, the work is part of the altarpiece, and is being restored by National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) experts since January 2009.

Restorer Lucia de la Parra, responsible for restoration of the 90 centimeters long painting, explained the conservation state of the piece: "it was affected by insects' attack, which harmed the wood and caused pictorial layer loss". Fumigation to eliminate insects and larvae was the first step taken. Then deep cleaning took place, followed by surface stabilization.

"An Old Spanish Master Emerges From Grime," *The New York Times*, 09/09/2009

For years the Metropolitan Museum of Art displayed the painting of a mustached man in his mid-30s on the same wall as famous portraits by the 17th-century Spanish master Velázquez. But was "Portrait of a Man," also painted by Velázquez, as thought when it was bequeathed to the museum in 1949? Or was it merely from "the workshop of" Velázquez, as experts concluded a few decades later?

After revisiting a painting that had raised nagging questions, Met curator of European Paintings, Keith Christiansen, and Michael Gallagher, chief of

the Met's paintings conservation department finally have the answer. Decades of varnish had discolored the canvas and the painting had been heavily restored and cleaned in the 1920s and revarnished in 1953 and again in 1965.

When the museum recently started to catalog the Spanish paintings in its collection, Mr. Christensen asked Mr. Gallagher to take another look. He ended up not only studying the painting but also carefully cleaning and conserving it. As details like the individual brushstrokes of a collar emerged, he concluded that Mr. Christiansen's instincts were on target. Buried beneath decades of yellowed varnish and poor retouching were all the marks of Velázquez's hand.

Jonathan Brown, this country's leading Velázquez expert, agreed. "The picture was thinly painted and never intended to be finished," said Mr. Christiansen, who says he believes it was actually a study. "It was a sitting done from life, which gives it great immediacy."

"Mending the Broken Art," *The Buffalo News*, 09/25/2009

It's not quite "Antiques Roadshow," but Buffalo State College has its own version of the popular PBS series. The college's renowned Art Conservation Department held its annual art clinic Friday, during which a few dozen collectors brought in art, antiques and prized heirlooms in need of repair and restoration.

Buffalo State's art conservation program is one of only three comprehensive, graduate-level programs in the United States, and some of the pieces brought into Friday's clinic provide its 20 graduate students with projects to help them master skills they'll need once they graduate and take jobs at galleries and museums. The department faculty looks for a variety of pieces offering just the right degree of challenge for a student to complete over the course of an academic year. As with all the objects and artwork selected, the owner is charged a fee, which helps bring some money into the department.

"Lifting the Lions," *Reuters*, 09/10/2009

Pittsburgh's oldest bank announced today the Phase I launch of a major restoration project and overhaul

of its historic 1871 building on Fourth Avenue, beginning with the removal of its symbolic lions.

The two signature lions will be removed for a complete restoration and replacement that is estimated to take a year. The restored lions will be returned to Pittsburgh to a to-be-determined location in midyear 2010, while the newly sculpted replacement lions will return to Fourth Avenue in about a year.

The lions, sculpted by Max Kohler, each from a single block of quarry-bedded brownstone, represent "guardianship of people's money." A 20-ton crane will lift each 13,000-pound lion from its Pittsburgh perch where it has rested since its original installation just after the Civil War. The lions will be removed and transported by McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory, Inc. to its large sculpture conservation facilities in Oberlin, Ohio.

The lions are extremely fragile and risk the danger of crumbling during the removal period. Each lion must be undercut to insert a lifting cradle to help transport the lions safely to the carrying containers. Friable stone under the surface will require vacuum-assisted alkoxysilane and possibly resin treatments.

The restored lions will be scanned to obtain three-dimensional digital data. This data will control a router in the cutting of high-density foam, making patterns of the restored lions. Lost carving detail will be restored in the foam patterns by hand work based on historic photographs so the patterns will become an accurate basis for the carving of the stone replicas.

In addition to restoration of the original lions, the project under McKay Lodge's direction will produce two new lions each of matching uniform color. The stone itself will be quarried in China from a quarry found to have the only stone that matches the original lions.

"15 paintings from Goa to get 'Major Treatment,'" *The Times of India*, 09/11/2009

The Regional Conservation Laboratory (RCL), Mysore is set to take fifteen paintings from the Goa State Museum for restoration to due to lack of necessary facilities in Goa. M. V. Nair, director of the National Research

Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property, Lucknow, said that Goa needs to utilize the Rs 6 crore central grant to upgrade regional and state museums.

Nair, who is in Goa to inaugurate a two-day workshop on preventive conservation of museum objects, said that Goa has a number of rare artifacts and paintings that need conservation and restoration. He said that grants provided by the central ministry for art and culture could be used by the Goa State Museum to set up its own laboratory.

RCL is a unit of the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property, Lucknow and the only laboratory serving Mysore and the surrounding region. He further said that focus should preferably be on prevention of humidity, as this is the best way to save paintings from deterioration.

"Experts Awed by Anglo-Saxon Treasure," *The New York Times*, 09/24/2009

For the jobless man living on welfare who made the find in an English farmer's field two months ago, it was the stuff of dreams: a hoard of early Anglo-Saxon treasure, probably dating from the seventh century and including more than 1,500 pieces of intricately worked gold and silver whose craftsmanship and historical significance left archaeologists awestruck.

Experts described it as one of the most important in British archaeological history, surpassing the greatest previous discovery of its kind, a royal burial chamber unearthed in 1939 at Sutton Hoo, in Suffolk.

Tentatively identified by some experts as bounty from one of the wars that racked Middle England in the seventh and eighth centuries, the treasure includes dagger hilts, pieces of scabbards and swords, helmet cheekpieces, Christian crosses and figures of animals like eagles and fish. Archaeologists tentatively estimated the value of the trove at 1 million pounds — about \$1.6 million — but say it could be many times that.

And they took a vicarious pleasure in noting that the discovery was not the outcome of a carefully planned archaeological enterprise, but the product of a lone amateur stumbling about with a metal detector.