

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
State Historical Society of Iowa
Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

Site Number __ 82-02184 ____
Related District Number _____

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Name of Property _____ Dillon Memorial _____ County _____ Scott _____

Address _____ South Main Street _____ City _____ Davenport _____

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Dillon Memorial located on South Main Street, near the Davenport riverfront, on a small parcel of land between West River Drive and Beiderbecke Drive.

The structure is sited in LeClaire Park, a public area that runs parallel to the Mississippi River from near the memorial, westward to the Davenport Municipal Stadium.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Dillon Memorial is a concrete, sculptural object set on a circular foundation. The memorial is principally an upright, fluted column with a lantern set atop the platform capital. The base of the column features bas-relief sculptural panels of lion heads and garland swags. The column sits in a round basin, which is in turn placed in a circular pool/fountain.

Condition

The Dillon Memorial appears to be very well maintained. There is no apparent deterioration of the construction material.

The loss of the Municipal Natatorium and the Lend-a-Hand Building, which once embraced the memorial, results in a significant loss of historic integrity.

PROPERTY HISTORY

The Dillon Memorial was constructed in 1918 on a site devoid of other structures or buildings. In 1922 the Municipal Natatorium was built west of the memorial, and in 1923 the Lend-a-Hand Building joined it on the east. This trio of structures became a visual anchor in this portion of the riverfront, with the memorial its centerpiece.

John Forrest Dillon was a successful Davenport attorney and Iowa Supreme Court Justice. Following his death on May 4, 1914, a bequest provided for the riverfront memorial in his honor.

As noted in the 1983 Svendsen/Bowers historical survey, Franklin and Arthur Ware designed the memorial, in association with Paul Schultz. The New York artists gained the commission through a design competition sponsored by the Levee Improvement Commission.

The context of the Dillon Memorial was compromised with the demolition of the Municipal Natatorium in 1981 and the Lend-a-Hand building (date unknown.)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Dillon Memorial was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 under Criterion B in its association with John Forrest Dillon. It must be said that the loss of the Municipal Natatorium and the Lend-a-Hand Building have had a significant, adverse effect on the object's historic context, and thus its historic integrity.

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This c.1918 image documents the memorial shortly after it was erected in 1916.

(SOURCE: Image courtesy of the Richardson-Sloane Special Collections of the Davenport Public Library)

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View of LeClaire Park and the Dillon Memorial, looking southwest.

This historic image is not dated, but likely documents the memorial shortly after it was erected in 1916. The Municipal Natatorium (1922) as not yet taken its place on the west side of South Main Street.

(SOURCE: Image courtesy of the Richardson-Sloane Special Collections of the Davenport Public Library)

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This undated, historic aerial provides a view of the Dillon Memorial within its historic context. Note the Lend-a-Hand building sited east of the memorial (recognizable by the full-height pilasters of its façade) and the Municipal Natatorium sited on the west. The road curved around the memorial between these two structures.

(SOURCE: Image courtesy of the Richardson-Sloane Special Collections of the Davenport Public Library)

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RIVER DRIVE



The arrow indicates the location of the Dillon Memorial.

(SOURCE: City of Davenport – Planning Department – 1/2005)

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Special Collections

Davenport Public Library; Richardson-Sloane Special Collections
Davenport City Directory Collection 1890-1940
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection
Quad Cities Photograph Collection

AKAY Consulting Postcard Collection. Boone, Iowa.

Local Publications

Svendsen, Marlys. "Davenport, Where the River Runs West: A Survey of Davenport History & Architecture". ND.

Internet Resources

www.scottcountyiowa.com/assessor. Scott County Assessor.