

Save the Teepee

Today I plan to meet friends for one of our usual walks in Cherokee Park. Hogan's Fountain has been our meeting place, but I always look to see what is going on across the way, in the Teepee, one of Louisville's most revered landmarks. Every time there is pleasant weather, I see picnickers and other groups enjoying the shelter and ambiance of this historic structure. It's no secret why people love to use this structure for their meetings: it is a landmark easily found — especially for the uninitiated — and it offers shelter in case a thunderstorm occurs.

When I hear that the Parks Department wants to demolish this icon in favor of some sort of substitute structure, I become very skeptical. The Department doesn't have an exemplary track record recently when it comes to design: note the non-descript restroom recently added to the Cherokee Triangle park. Could they come up with a better iconic idea than the Teepee? This is highly doubtful, especially with current budget constraints in mind. One rule of thumb is that if you take down a beautiful structure, you had better replace it with something just as significant architecturally. Once the Teepee is gone, one could hardly imagine that to be the case, based on past experience.

As part of our collective memory concerning what is exceptional about this community, one could only hope that common sense will prevail, and that we will be able to continue to enjoy this architectural gem.

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