



Deaccession Policy + Octahedron Report

CRA Board Presentation | January 2017



DEACCESSION POLICY

Recommended Policy Language

- Developed using resources from:
 - City of Cambridge Public Arts Commission
 - Americans for the Arts
 - Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990 (VARA)
- Deaccessioning is a procedure for the withdrawal of an artwork from public exhibition and is intended to maintain the value of the CRA's collection and guard against the arbitrary disposal of any of its pieces.



DEACCESSION POLICY

Conditions for Deaccessioning

- When the artwork's present condition poses a safety hazard to the public or two or more of the conditions are met and documented by CRA Staff.
- Changes in code
- Restoration not feasible
- Architecture issues
- Site context
- Maintenance/workmanship
- Security
- Requested removal
- Authenticity
- Unabated overwhelming public objection – 10 yrs



DEACCESSION POLICY

Steps for Deaccessioning

- Staff prepares a Deaccession Report
- CRA Board reviews report, provides a recommendation to deaccession (or not), and guidance on method
- CRA Staff contacts artist, provides public notification,
- Options:
 - Indefinite Loan
 - Trade or donation
 - Sale
 - Storage
 - Destruction
- Artist signs final Deaccession Agreement
- CRA Staff executes



Recommended Language for Future Public Art Contracts

- Americans for the Arts *Model Public Art Agreement for Public Agencies* published in June 2005.
- Should be used in any future CRA contracts with artists for the production of site-specific artwork.
- The two alternative options take into consideration that the Agency may insist on an unencumbered right to remove, relocate or destroy the Artwork to ensure that any current or future construction at the Site is not hindered.

A QUICK DEACCESSION POLICY STORY





THE OCTAHEDRON

- **Title:** *Octahedron (Definition: a three-dimensional shape having eight plane faces, especially a regular solid figure with eight equal triangular faces)*
- **Artist:** Karl Schlamming
- **Original Location:** Cambridge Center Plaza, north side of Main Street, nearby Kendall Square red line MBTA station and Marriott hotel entrance
- **Current Location:** CRA Parcel 7, near corner of Binney Street, Galileo Way and Fulkerson Street
- **Creation Date:** 1985
- **Removal Date:** 2012
- **Materials:** Unknown synthetic composite with real gold leaf on the exterior, supporting structure is a steel tube **Dimensions:** 160” wide along widest dimension at the center on each side and 240” high including the metal pole



THE OCTAHEDRON

History and CRA Background

- The two defining architectural features of the Plaza
 - a) the colorful patterned paver layout for the hardscape specially designed to evoke a Persian carpet, and
 - b) the 75-foot tower situated in the southeast corner of the Plaza near Main Street with a series of descending steps framing the base of the tower facing into the middle of the Plaza instead of toward the street.
- The Octahedron was commissioned in 1985 specifically to be featured as the visual focal point atop the tower as part of the overall artistic vision of the Plaza as a complete unified scheme.
- No records of the selection process or artist contracts
- Seamless composite or fiberglass exterior with gold leaf mounted on a steel tube and metal frame with a trap door
- 2012 Plaza reconstruction and removal of Octahedron
- Move to current site at CRA's Binney Street lot
- Current condition



MODEL



MODEL



OPENING



1980'S



1990'S-2000'S







THE OCTAHEDRON

Challenges

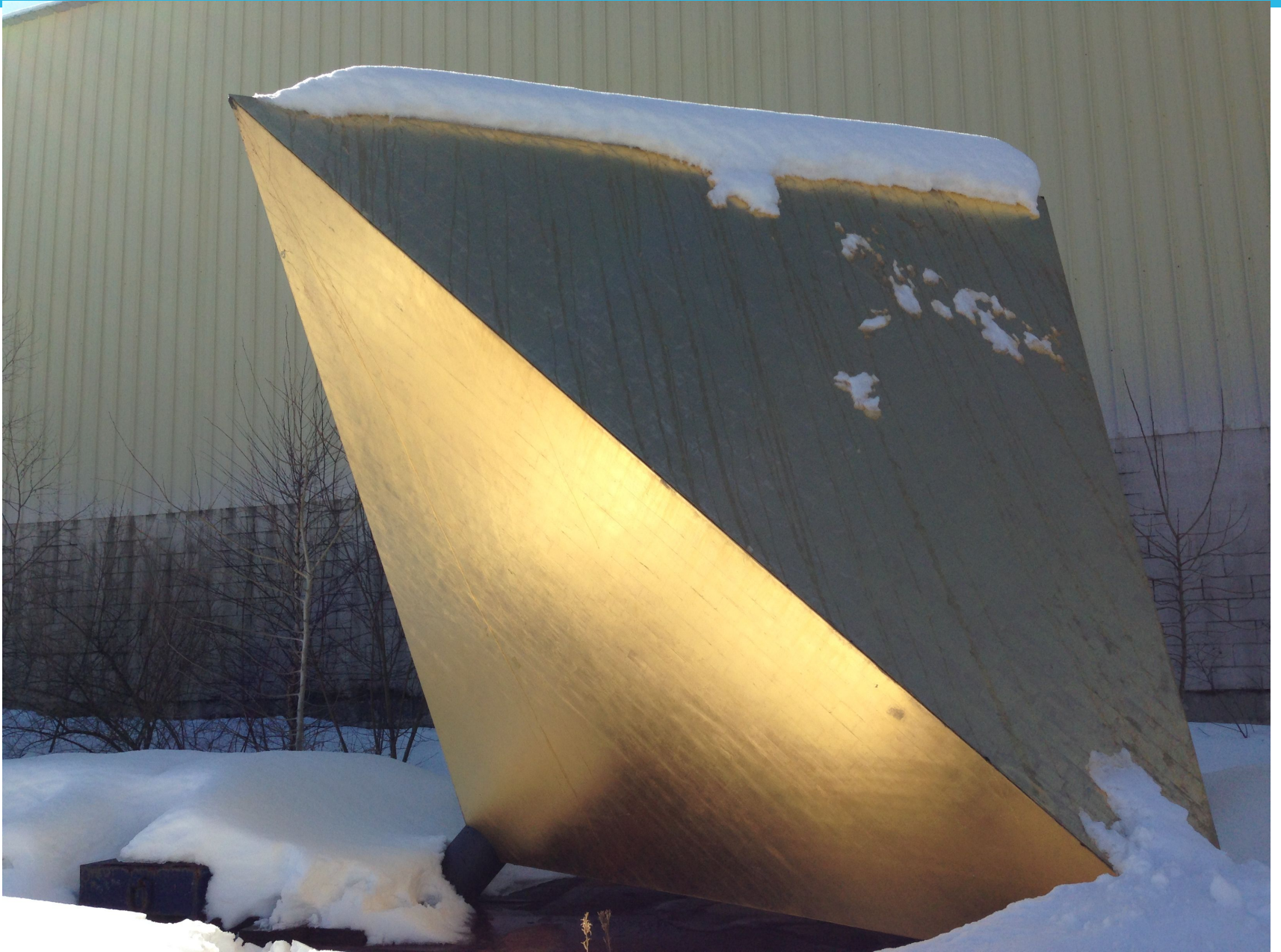
- Context is gone
- Without the context, the scale makes little sense
- Structural support system - foundation
- Gold leaf on top is worn
- Safety analysis of fasteners
- Trap door is missing
- Moving is expensive in current form, possibly easier if disassembled



THE MISSING DOOR



IN STORAGE



IN STORAGE



ON FLAT BED TRUCK FROM METHUEN



LIFTING ONTO BINNEY STREET LOT



AT BINNEY STREET LOT



THE OCTAHEDRON

Deaccessioning Analysis

- The restoration of the artwork's structural or aesthetic integrity is technically not feasible, or repair and conservation will render the work false, or the expense of restoring it exceeds 50 percent of the original cost of the artwork
- The architectural support (building, wall, plaza) is to be destroyed and the artwork cannot be removed intact for relocation



THE OCTAHEDRON

Deaccessioning Analysis

- Significant changes in the use, character, or actual design of the site have occurred, and/or the artwork may have lost its contextual meaning and it cannot be re-sited, or re-siting the artwork would be inappropriate, thereby prohibiting the retention of the artwork as originally conceived
- An artwork is not, or is rarely, on display because of lack of a suitable site
- Removal has been requested by the organization or property owner displaying the artwork (if other than the CRA) or removal has been requested by the artist.



THE OCTAHEDRON

Initial Contacts

- MassMoCA
- DeCordova
- Mass Society of Guilders
- The Artist (Karl Schlamming)
- Moshe Safdie's office
- Various waste haulers and transport companies



THE OCTAHEDRON

Options for Deaccessioning

- Options:
 - Indefinite Loan
 - Trade or donation
 - Sale
 - Storage
 - Destruction
- Recommended Next Steps:
 - Contact Ms. Lipsky and explore donation options
 - Contact Moshe Safdie's office regarding donation
 - Provide public notification per policy
 - Artist signs Deaccession Agreement
 - Action executed





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