

A. MORTON THOMAS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

THE HUNT FOR SOUTHEAST 8

By C. Langelan

The last missing D.C. boundary stone has been recovered.

Southeast 8, near Blue Plains, was exhumed March 20, 1991 by a Potomac Chapter excavating crew comprised of C. Langelan, J. Lawrence, and M. Melvin of Metrex Excavation Company.

The old monument was found lying on its side 7 feet below the surface, surrounded by the twisted remnants of an iron cage, all inside a piece of 60-inch concrete pipe just as had been predicted by Mickey Shackelford.

The correct spot to dig was established over previous months using a combination of D.C. Surveyor's records, some dating to 1921, and modern W.M.A.T.A. control furnished by Don Falken. Survey work for the project was done by A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc. for the D.C. Boundary Bicentennial Committee (D.C.B.B.C).

Engineers

After its discovery, the old stone was removed from its burial spot, washed and inspected. It was a brown sandstone monument, 12 inches by 12 inches by 2½ feet in length, with no markings or carvings. This indicates that it is not the original 1792 stone, but a later replacement.

Surveyors

Further digging revealed a solid stone base still in place. Using this, the monument was re-set upright on its base, with care being taken to "mate" the stonework precisely. The hole was then backfilled with clean gravel liberated from a nearby construction site. The gravel held Southeast 8 securely in position, with only its top visible, 4½ feet down in the

Planners

hole. Mission accomplished, or so it seemed . . .

A D.C. Police sergeant, in charge of security for the area, had been watching the whole operation. Now he warned that if the monument was left visible and unprotected, it would be promptly stolen, and he wasn't kidding. Apparently, everything in this particular part of D.C., even a 300-pound rock, is a tempting target.

Some method had to be found to safeguard the old stone, while still providing easy access to it for surveying the D.C. boundary.

With permission from the superintendent of a nearby construction site, who was also a surveyor and happy to help, a piece of damaged concrete pipe was salvaged from a "reject" pile and fitted vertically over the top of Southeast 8. It formed a perfect little shaft down to the top of the monument.

The excavation was then quickly backfilled, leaving the pipe protruding from the ground to mark the spot. A traffic barrel was placed over the pipe to protect it, and the job was complete.

There Southeast 8 remains today, awaiting further action by the D.C.B.B.C. And one mystery also still remains: What happened to ORIGINAL Southeast 8?

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Landscape
Architects