



Staff Report

PLANNING DIVISION

DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY and NEIGHBORHOODS

To: Salt Lake City Planning Commission
From: Lex Traughber, Senior Planner
lex.traughber@slc.gov or (801) 535-6184
Date: August 26, 2026
Re: PLNHLC2026-00364 –
Designation of Gilgal Sculpture Garden as a Landmark Site

Local Landmark Site Designation

PROPERTY ADDRESSES: 749 E. 500 South
PARCEL IDS: 16-05-308-068
MASTER PLAN: [Central Community](#)
ZONING DISTRICT: OS – Open Space &
RMF-35 – Moderate Density Multi-family Residential District

REQUEST

At the direction of Mayor Erin Mendenhall, the Planning Division is undertaking the process to designate Gilgal Sculpture Garden, a city owned park, as a landmark site. Such sites are of exceptional importance to the city, state, region, or nation, and impart high artistic, historic, or cultural values. The local landmark designation process is technically a zoning map amendment in accordance with City Code Section 21A.50 – Amendments and requires Planning Commission action. Properties designated as local landmark sites would be subject to the zoning ordinance provisions of the H-Historic Preservation Overlay (Section 21A.34.020 of Salt Lake City Code), which provides demolition protection and City oversight to review any modifications to ensure historic appropriateness and the ongoing protection of important historic resources.

Planning staff notes that consistent with City Code Section 21A.06.050(C)(4), the Historic Landmark Commission heard the request in a public hearing on August 6, 2026, and voted to forward a positive recommendation on to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the local landmark designation request.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. [ATTACHMENT A: Context Map](#)
- B. [ATTACHMENT B: Applicant Materials - Historic Site Form](#)
- C. [ATTACHMENT C: Analysis of Standards for Designation](#)

D. [ATTACHMENT D: Zoning Map Amendment Standards \(21A.50.050\)](#)

E. [ATTACHMENT E: Public Process & Comments](#)

SITE HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Located mid-block between 700 and 800 East Streets and 400 and 500 South Streets at 749 East 500 South, on a .89 acre parcel, the Gilgal Sculpture Garden was the vision of Thomas Battersby Child, Jr., a former masonry contractor and bishop of the Jesus Christ Church of Latter-day Saints (LDS) Tenth Ward. The Garden was originally a part of Child's backyard of his residential property located 452 South 800 East.

Gilgal Sculpture Garden is a contributing property in the Salt Lake City East Side (Benion-Douglas) National Register District. A consultant was engaged to conduct an Intensive Level Survey (ILS) of the Garden in order to pursue designation of the property as a local landmark Site (Attachment B). Being located in the Salt Lake City East Side District and/or a listing on the National Register of Historic Places does not protect the Garden from inappropriate alterations or demolition from an historic perspective, however a listing as a local landmark site would.

The property consists of 16 sculptures and sculpture groupings, 30 engraved stones, and over 70 engraved floor stones representing various figures and themes from the Bible and the Book of Mormon as well as other religious, philosophical, literary, and patriotic inspiration. The largest stone elements are boulders gathered from various locations in Utah, weighing between 1 and 78 tons and made of materials such as quartz, granite, and gneiss. The entire site and its sculptures and structures are considered contributing resources. The following 16 sculptures and groupings are noted in the Historic Site Form (Attachment B):

1. Gilgal
2. Captain of the Lord's Host
3. The Alter (Sacrifice)
4. The Sphinx (Restored Church)
5. The Monument to the Trade (Work)
6. The Monument to the Priesthood
7. Bertha Child Memorial (Love)
8. Testimony of Job
9. Malachi (Work for the Dead)
10. The Monument to Peace
11. The Last Chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes (The Teachings of Ecclesiastes; Death)
12. Elijah's Cave
13. Daniel II: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream
14. The Eagles
15. The Birdhouses
16. The Bowery

Vicinity Map





Gilgal



The Monument to the Trade (Work)



The Sphinx (Restored Church)

Work on the garden began in 1945, when Child was 57 years-old, and continued until his death in 1963. The Period of Significance (POS) of the art installations on the property is 1945 to 1963. According to the consultant, this POS establishes the time period when Mr. Child actively worked on the Garden starting in 1945 and ending at the time of his death.

The designation of Gilgal Sculpture Garden is warranted because it is the state's only "visionary art environment", an expression that has been assigned to similar works of art that are typically fabricated from "found" materials by people without formal artistic training to express a moral or personal conviction. Gilgal Sculpture Garden retains historic integrity in terms of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

APPROVAL PROCESS AND COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing and review the request by applying 21A.50.050 – Zoning Map Amendment Standards. Applying the H – Historic Preservation Overlay District is technically a zoning map amendment which requires review and action by the Planning Commission. Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission shall recommend approval, approval with modifications, or denial of the proposed local landmark site designation. The recommendation of the Planning Commission will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

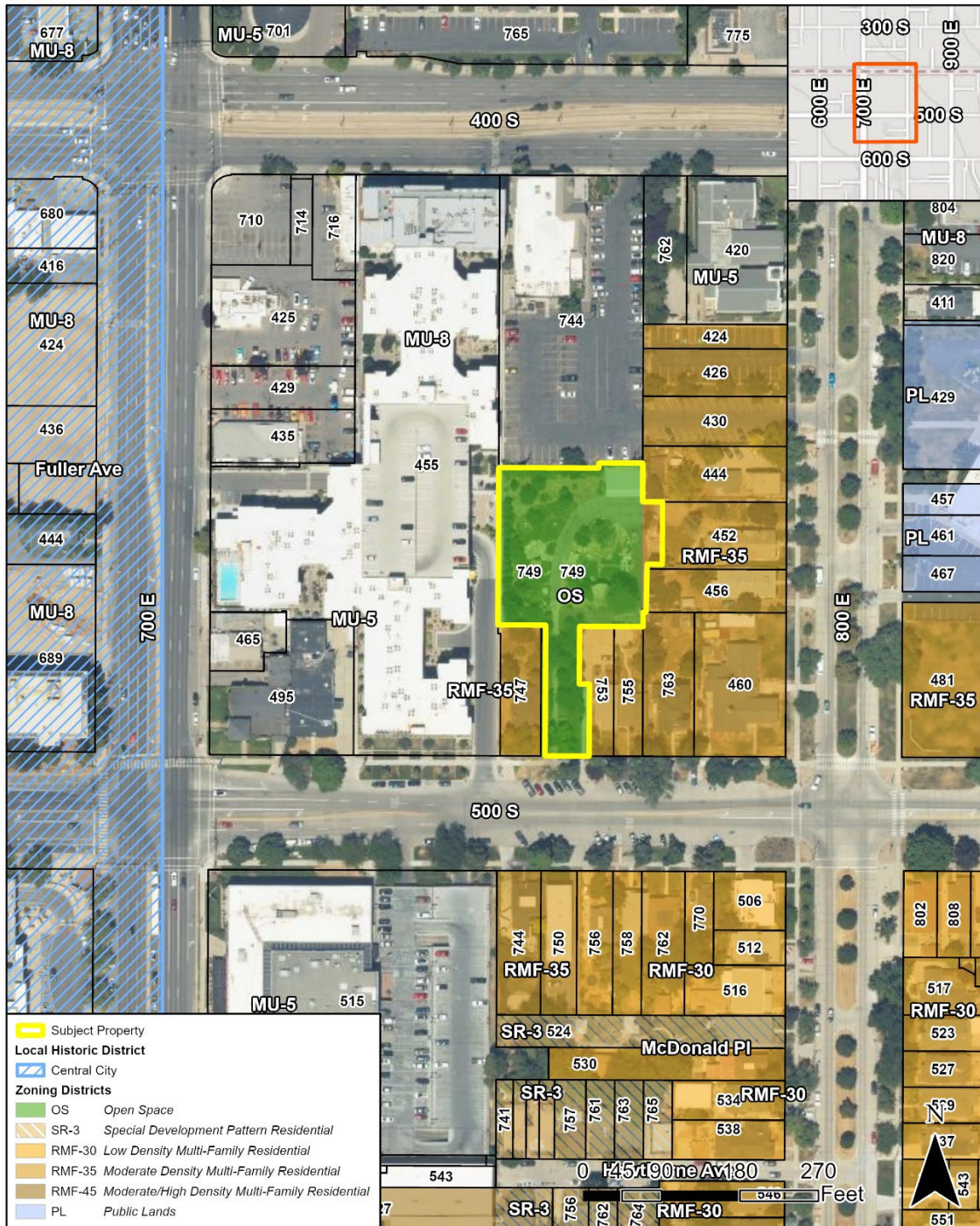
Based on the analysis and findings of the staff report, it is the Planning Staff's opinion that the proposed local landmark site meets the applicable standards for a zoning map amendment (21A.50.050). Therefore, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a positive recommendation to approve the request to the City Council.

NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission's recommendation for the proposed local landmark site will be forwarded to City Council. The Historic Landmark Commission heard the designation request on August 6, 2026, and voted to forward a positive recommendation on to the City Council for consideration. The next step is a public hearing with the City Council regarding the proposed landmark site and establishing an H-Historic Preservation Overlay. Should the City Council approve the proposed local landmark site, the site would then be subject to the H – Historic Preservation Overlay District standards found in City code section 21A.34.020.

ATTACHMENT A: Context Map

Vicinity Map



Salt Lake City Planning Division 7/27/2026

ATTACHMENT B:

Applicant Materials – Historic Site Form

HISTORIC SITE FORM

UTAH STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



(8-22)

1. IDENTIFICATION

Name of Property: Gilgal Sculpture Garden (Thomas B. Child, Jr. Garden)

Address: 749 East 500 South

Township: 1S **Range:** 1E **Section:** 5

City, County: Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County

Lat/Long: 40.7585065, -111.8697076

Current Owner Name: Salt Lake City Corporation

USGS Map Name & Date (if used):

Current Owner Address: 451 South State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Tax Number: 16-05-308-068-0000

Legal Description (include acreage): 0.89 acre; BEG N 89°57'49" E 54.50 FT FR SW COR LOT 2, BLK 31, PLAT B, SLC SUR; N 0°00'59" W 149.86 FT; S 89°57'49" W 54.50 FT; N 0°00'59" W 180.14 FT; N 89°57'47" E 114.83 FT; N 0°00'59" W 5.75 FT; N 89°57'47" E 50.17 FT; S 0°00'59" E 5.75 FT; S 0°00'59" E 38.50 FT; N 89°57'47" E 22.91 FT; S 0°00'58" E 71.76 FT; N 88°39'42" W 17.31 FT; S 1°01'30" W 55.17 FT; S 89°57'49" W 3.36 FT; S 0°00'59" E 16.50 FT; S 89°57'49" W 72.84 FT; S 0°00'59" E 66 FT; N 89°57'49" E 11.60 FT; S 0°00'59" E 82.50 FT; S 89°57'49" W 50.50 FT TO BEG.

2. STATUS/USE

Property Category

- ☐ building(s)
- ☐ structure
- ☒ site
- ☐ object

Evaluation

- ☒ eligible/contributing
- ☐ ineligible/non-contributing
- ☐ out-of-period

Use

Original Use: Outdoor sculpture garden within a residential property

Current Use: Public park and outdoor sculpture garden

3. DOCUMENTATION

Photos: Dates

- ☒ digital: 3/23/2026
- ☐ prints:
- ☒ historic: ~1950s

Drawings and Plans

- ☐ measured floor plans
- ☒ site aerial/sketch map
- ☐ Historic American Bldg. Survey
- ☐ original plans available at:
- ☒ other: **Friends of Gilgal Garden Map**

Research Sources (check all sources consulted, whether useful or not)

- ☒ abstract of title
- ☐ tax card & photo
- ☐ building permit
- ☐ sewer permit
- ☒ Sanborn Maps
- ☐ obituary index
- ☐ city directories/gazetteers
- ☒ census records
- ☐ biographical encyclopedias
- ☒ newspapers
- ☐ city/county histories
- ☒ personal interviews
- ☐ USHS Research Center
- ☒ USHPO Preservation Files
- ☐ USHPO Architects File
- ☒ genealogy websites/libraries
- ☐ local library:
- ☒ university library: **University of Utah Special Collections**

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Walsh, Rebecca, "Preservation Of Garden Hinges On Park Status," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, January 11, 2000, 12.

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"Utah Architects Elect," *Salt Lake Telegram*, December 31, 1946, 7.

"Utah Sculptor Doing S.L. Church Statuary," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1953, 10.

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Deseret News, November 18, 1939, 23.

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Researcher/Organization: Adrienne White (House Genealogy)

Date: April 19, 2026

4. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Style/Type: Folk-Art Sculpture Garden

Materials: Quartz, Granite, Gneiss, Flagstone, Concrete, Brick, and Mortar

Alterations: ☐ none ☒ minor ☐ major (describe below)

Number of associated outbuildings 1 *and/or structures* 16

Introduction

Gilgal Sculpture Garden, constructed between 1945 and 1963, is in the East Central neighborhood in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County. It is a 0.89-acre public park located mid-block between 700 and 800 East Streets and 400 and 500 South Streets at 749 East 500 South. The landscaped site contains 16 sculpture and structure groupings, 30 engraved stones, and over 70 engraved floor stones representing various figures and themes from the Bible and the Book of Mormon as well as other religious, philosophical, literary, and patriotic inspiration. The largest stone elements are boulders gathered from various locations in Utah, weighing between one and 78 tons and made of materials such as quartz, granite, and gneiss.¹ Gilgal Sculpture Garden was designed by masonry contractor Thomas Battersby Child, Jr., in the backyard of his residential property at 452 South 800 East [Figures 1 and 2]. The residence itself lies outside the nominated boundary. The entire site and its sculptures and structures are considered contributing resources. Gilgal Sculpture Garden retains historic integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Setting

Gilgal Sculpture Garden is located in a walkable, mixed-use urban neighborhood in the East Central area of Salt Lake City. The garden occupies a mid-block parcel on the south side of the block between 700 East and 800 East Streets, immediately west of 700 East, one of the city's primary north-south arterial corridors. The surrounding block contains a mixture of small restaurants, a multifamily residential building with over 250 units, two religious facilities, and several single-family and duplex dwellings, reflecting the varied land uses characteristic of the East Central neighborhood. A light-rail station along 400 South is located within a short walking distance to the north, and Bennion Elementary School stands directly across 800 East. Trolley Square, a large historic complex now adapted for commercial use and serving as a major commercial landmark in the area, is located one block to the southwest of the garden. The immediate streetscape includes mature street trees, sidewalks, and angled parking along 500 South that provides free access to the garden's entrance. Within this context, the garden presents as a landscaped interior parcel enclosed by fencing and accessed through a pedestrian entrance, creating a secluded garden environment within an otherwise active urban block.

Site Plan

Gilgal Sculpture Garden is accessed from a long north-south concrete walkway that begins at the pedestrian entrance on 500 South, marked by an iron gate and signage [Photographs 1 and 2]. The walkway extends north to the interior garden entrance, where the space opens into the primary sculptural area in the northern half of the parcel and the path transitions to asphalt [Photographs 3 and 4]. Benches and shade trees line the eastern side of the entry walkway, providing seating before visitors reach the interior garden [Photographs 3 and 33]. Sculptural groupings and engraved stones are arranged primarily

¹ Smith, Hortense Child, Letter to Mary E. Schwartz, November 21, 1990. Box 1, Folder 1. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

in the northern half of the parcel, with secondary flagstone footpaths branching from the main walkway to reach individual features and benches placed along the circulation routes [Photograph 10]. These interconnected paths create a meandering visitor experience, with sculptural features and landscaped areas accessible from multiple points throughout the garden.

Interpretive signage and a box containing educational brochures in English and Spanish are located near the interior garden entrance [Photographs 4 and 33]. A contributing bowery structure stands in the northeast corner of the parcel and contains historic images of the garden's construction with corresponding educational captions for visitors [Photographs 14 and 15]. A large square picnic table with four benches is located in the northwest area of the garden, offering a designated place for visitors to sit and share a meal [Photograph 11]. A flagpole stands on the northwest side of the asphalt walkway, set on a circular polished-granite base installed during the period of significance by the Boy Scouts of Troop 6 in the Tenth Ward [Photograph 12]. The site is enclosed by a combination of masonry, iron, and chain-link fencing [Photographs 1, 2, 3, 6, 13, 16, 18, and 33].

The designated boundary for Gilgal Sculpture Garden encompasses only the garden itself and does not include the historic Child residence to the east. During the garden's acquisition, the original property lines on the block were found to be misaligned by several feet and required correction.² The Friends of Gilgal Garden subsequently completed a parcel consolidation, recorded in August 2021, which simplified the legal description and combined the multiple historic parcels into a single unified parcel that reflects the corrected boundary.

Sculpture and Structure Groupings

All sculptural and structural features described are considered contributing resources. Each was constructed, sculpted, built, or installed during the established period of significance (1945–1963), corresponding to Thomas B. Child, Jr.'s lifetime and active work in the garden. No non-historic alterations have been made aside from restoration work intended to preserve their original appearance.

1. Gilgal

- a. Description: A large 15-ton boulder engraved with the word "GILGAL" is positioned along the west side of the interior garden entrance pathway. The stone is set slightly in front of the main sculptural area and functions as a marker of the transition into the historic garden space originally developed by Thomas B. Child, Jr. The stone was acquired at the mouth of Bair Canyon, just east of Kaysville, Utah. [Photograph 1 and Figure 3]
- b. Context and Meaning: The engraved "GILGAL" stone serves as the conceptual and symbolic foundation of the garden and functions as the namesake feature of the site. Child selected the name for its biblical associations with sacred stones and covenant memory, noting that the term refers to a "stone circle or a circle of sacred stones," and appears in the Book of Joshua as a site of spiritual significance. He described his garden as a modern counterpart to that ancient setting, writing that he was "locating a Gilgal in our modern Promised Land" and that the stones would stand as a testimony of faith.³

² According to longtime neighbor, garden volunteer, and Friends of Gilgal Garden board member Grant Fetzer, the original property lines on the block were misaligned by several feet and required correction. Fetzer reported that the lines were shifted south and west to reflect their accurate placement. This information was shared with Adrienne White via email on April 16, 2026.

³ Child, Thomas Battersby, "Gilgal," Box 4, Folder 7. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*. ACCN 1877. University

- i. “The name ‘Gilgal’ was chosen by Child because it refers to a biblical event that occurred near the town of Gilgal in Israel. Gilgal is mentioned in the Bible (Joshua 4:19-24) in the narration of Joshua leading the Israelites to the Promised Land. When they arrived at the flood-swollen River Jordan, God stopped the water from flowing so that the Israelites were able to cross dry-footed (Joshua 3:7-17). After the crossing, God commanded Joshua to select twelve men, one from each tribe, and have each collect a stone from the middle of the River Jordan. The stones were carried to that night’s encampment at Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho (Joshua 4:2-20) and placed there as a memorial to the miraculous crossing of the River Jordan (Joshua 4:21-24).”⁴



2. Captain of the Lord’s Host

- a. Description: This sculpture was constructed in 1955 and consists of a 38-ton vertical silica quartzite boulder from Point of the Mountain, Salt Lake County that was set upright with a crane and shored up temporarily until it was underpinned. It has been engraved with an oxyacetylene torch to depict the outline of a warrior holding an unsheathed sword, rendered in a linear style that follows the natural coloration and veining of the

of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

4 Pimentel, Ursula M. Brinkmann, *Gilgal: A Sculpture Garden in Salt Lake City*. Salt Lake City: Associated Art Historians, Inc., 1996, 1.

stone.⁵ The front of the rock is inscribed with the text “Joshua 4 & 5 – BC 1451 – Young – AD 1847 – McKay – AD 1955.”

- i. The head of the figure is represented by an unworked stone set above the engraved body. In front of the main boulder, a circle of twelve stones is arranged on the lawn, each roughly similar in size but varied in shape and color, forming a defining ring that frames the base of the monument. A grapevine grows within the center of the circle of stones. These stones were sourced from Davis County, and near Mt. Olympus and in the Cottonwood Canyons in Salt Lake County. The flat-topped pedestal stone positioned between the Captain and the twelve stones came from the base of Mt. Olympus and weighs approximately twelve tons.
 - ii. Behind the sculpture is a small patio composed of engraved flagstones set within the lawn. The backside of the sculpture bears a bronze plaque mounted on the stone dedicated “in loving remembrance” to Child’s ancestors, his wife’s ancestors, Queen Victoria, the Watson brothers who taught his father the masonry trade, John Dobbie who was instrumental in locating many stone, onyx, and marble quarries in Utah, and “all others who have contributed to our happiness.” A large boulder sourced near Mt. Olympus is positioned along the rear edge of the patio and functions as a natural bench. Some of Child’s favorite hymns and quotes from religious and secular sources are sandblasted into the flagstones in this area. The patio is bordered by additional boulders that visually extend the composition of the monument. This monument is located on the west side of the asphalt path, just northwest of the GILGAL stone. [Photographs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 29; Figures 3, 4, 5, and 12]
- b. Context and Meaning: Since the name of the garden refers to a site that the Israelite leader Joshua created at God’s command, the first sculptural monument visitors encounter draws directly on the biblical narrative associated with Joshua’s leadership. Behind a circle of stones is a rock carved with the outline of a warrior who appeared before Joshua when the Israelites reached Jericho.
- i. As Child explained, “Joshua 4 & 5 tells the story of the children of Israel as they were encamped on the banks of the river Jordan and received their instructions from their leader Joshua regarding their entrance into the Promised Land.”⁶ He understood the Captain of the Lord’s Host episode as the pivotal moment when Joshua, preparing to conquer the land, “looked up and saw a man with a sword drawn in his hand,” and asked, “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” The reply — “Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord I now come” — is drawn directly from Joshua 5:13–14 and forms the narrative basis for the monument. Child emphasized that this encounter revealed divine authority guiding Israel’s victory, a theme he sought to materialize in stone.
 - ii. The head of the sculpted figure is represented by an unhewn rock. Child explained that he left it uncarved to “take advantage of the liberties of modern art,” noting that “the nature of this monument does not require accuracy... It is sometimes more potent to suggest and cause wonderment than to explain in detail,” and that the unworked stone was “in harmony with the poetry of the soul.”⁷

5 Thompson, Lisa, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*. Salt Lake City: Friends of Gilgal Garden, 2024, 6; Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 3.

6 Child, Thomas Battersby, “Addenda to Gilgal,” Box 4, Folder 6. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

7 Ibid.

- iii. Child considered Brigham Young, successor to Joseph Smith (Founder and Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon Church)), a modern-day Joshua guided by God to lead the LDS faithful to their Promised Land in Utah, and included David O. McKay because Child worked on this sculpture in 1955 when McKay was Prophet and leader of the LDS Church.
- iv. The twelve distinct rocks placed in a circle at the foot of the sculpture represent the twelve tribes of Israel and refer to the biblical Gilgal, reinforcing the garden's themes of remembrance and divine guidance. Child selected each stone intentionally so that every tribe would be represented by a rock that was "distinctively and individually different," noting that the main stone at the head of the circle symbolized Ephraim, with a red stone beside it representing Manasseh. He observed that a "beautiful yellow boulder" to the left of Ephraim bore a head and mane reminiscent of an African lion, which he associated with Judah, the next most important tribe.⁸ The grapevine planted at the center of the circle carries additional symbolic meaning for Child, who understood it as a fulfillment of the blessing in Genesis 49:22 that Joseph's branches would "be fruitful and run over the wall," reinforcing the monument's themes of covenant lineage and divine favor.
- v. A flat stone in front of the circle is inscribed with a passage from Joshua 5:15 in which the Captain of the Lord's Host tells Joshua to remove his shoes, as he stands on holy ground. A second stone is engraved with a passage from Joshua 4:21-24, again referring to the stones as a symbol of God's assistance to the Israelites.
- vi. The patio area commemorates Child's family, centered on a bronze plaque listing his and his wife's ancestors, others who contributed to their happiness, and Queen Victoria. Queen Victoria was included because the widow's pension she authorized enabled Child's family to emigrate to the United States, a circumstance for which he felt a lasting "debt of gratitude."⁹
- vii. The large, unhewn boulder that serves as a natural bench caused Child to be "like a kid with a piece of candy" when he brought the stone home, in his later years he spent many hours on this "throne" meditating and contemplating the genealogical inscriptions before him.¹⁰ He installed polished granite lettering at the head of the patio with the opening line of the hymn "We Thank Thee O God For a Prophet," which he regarded as the greatest in the Latter-day Saint tradition—one that, in his words, "stood exactly for my feelings" and articulated the faith and loyalty of the "humble working man."¹¹ He explained that the purpose of the patio was to affirm that God continued to watch over modern Israel and had led His people "in safety to freedom's last abode."¹² Three hymns engraved on the quartzite stepping stones leading into the patio further symbolize what Child called "Modern Israel," reinforcing the space as a site of covenant identity and spiritual remembrance. This setting became Child's favored place for meditation and reflects the personal, devotional, and commemorative dimensions of the garden.¹³

8 Child, "Addenda to Gilgal," 5.

9 Child, "Addenda to Gilgal," 10.

10 Lythgoe, Dennis, "Gilgal Garden," *Deseret News*, September 10, 1995.

11 Child, "Addenda to Gilgal," 21.

12 Child, "Addenda to Gilgal," 23.

13 Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 3.



3. The Altar (Sacrifice)

- a. Description: This sculptural composition is constructed of rough silica boulders from Point of the Mountain, Salt Lake County and three large, unhewn flagstones from Wayne County. Measuring approximately 8 feet wide, 24 feet long, and 2.5 feet high, the altar is formed by horizontally laid flagstones supported by stacked stone walls, creating a long, table-like platform. Child emphasized that the rough, unworked character of the stones was intentional, noting that “dirt and rough unhewn stone have a religious appeal” and that the natural slabs “determined the size of the altar.”¹⁴
 - i. At the south end stands a brick furnace modeled after a traditional Middle Eastern tannur. Child selected brick because it is “one of the most ancient building materials, particularly in the vicinity of Babylon, the original country of Abraham,”¹⁵ and because bricklaying was central to his own trade. The furnace was detailed and cut by his son, Robert Child, and laid by Henry Goss, a lifelong friend and longtime employee who introduced Child to his wife.
 - ii. Just north of the center sits a hollowed-out stone bowl sourced from the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Child described the stone as being in its natural shape “except that we hollowed it out,”¹⁶ preserving its unworked character.
 - iii. The altar is located beneath a weeping willow planted by Child, across the asphalt pathway from the GILGAL stone to the east and just south of The Sphinx.
[Photographs 21 and 31; Figure 6]
- b. Context and Meaning: The Altar expresses Child’s interpretation of ancient sacrificial practice and its relationship to priesthood, covenant, and personal devotion. Drawing on Joseph Smith’s description of an altar at Adam-ondi-Ahman,¹⁷ Child wrote that “there is no religion without sacrifice,”¹⁸ and understood sacrifice as a principle that “implies sharing, saving, and sacrifice” in keeping the first and second commandments.¹⁹ He further connected sacrifice to LDS Priesthood obligation, noting that these principles “are also obligations to those who are ordained to the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God.”²⁰
 - i. Child constructed the altar of natural, unhewn stone in deliberate reference to Exodus 20:24, explaining that although ancient stonework “had never reached greater heights than in Egypt,”²¹ it was associated with pagan worship, whereas unworked stone conveyed humility, purity, and divine instruction. The rough flagstones, which he described as “natural pieces brought in from Wayne County,”²² represent “the orders of the three grades of the Priesthood,”²³ linking the physical structure to Latter-day Saint priesthood hierarchy.

14 Child, Thomas Battersby, “The Altar,” Box 4, Folder 11. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

15 Child, “The Altar,” 9.

16 Child, “The Altar,” 10.

17 Adam-ondi-Ahman refers to a location in Daviess County, Missouri, that Latter-day Saints believe was a settlement of Adam and his posterity after leaving the Garden of Eden. In LDS teachings, it is also understood as a future gathering place connected to events preceding the Second Coming of Christ.

18 Child, “The Altar,” 1.

19 Child, “The Altar,” 3.

20 Ibid.

21 Child, “The Altar,” 4.

22 Ibid.

23 Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 3-4.

- ii. The brick furnace, or tannur, reflects both ancient practice and Child's personal identity as a mason. He modeled it after examples illustrated in Giecke's *Hours With the Bible*, noting that such furnaces were often "very crude, built up and plastered with mud,"²⁴ but chose brick to honor its antiquity and his own lifelong association with brickmaking.
- iii. At the opposite end of the altar, the hollowed-out stone bowl, what is often called the "lamp of truth," embodies the covenantal dimension of the composition. Child explained that in parts of India a burning lamp or flame is invoked as a witness when promises are made, with parties affirming their sincerity by pointing to the flame or declaring, "We invoke the lamp of the temple."²⁵ He understood this practice as a living analogue to ancient covenant-making and as a symbol of divine oversight.
- iv. Embedded in the ground before the altar are three engraved stones naming biblical sacrificial sites—Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Nissi, and Jehovah Jireh—along with additional inscriptions referencing prophetic sacrifice, Latter-day Saint scripture, and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Child wrote that "Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the light," and described Christ's sacrifice as "infinite and eternal," situating the altar within a continuum of ancient and modern covenant-making.²⁶
- v. Child acknowledged that the altar was not intended as a literal reconstruction of Adam-ondi-Ahman, writing that "no necessity is felt to defend the altar or to claim that it is a duplicate," and that his research showed that an altar "can mean anything from a single stone or table to a temple."²⁷ Instead, he sought to "depict that foundations are laid in the nature of things,"²⁸ using stone, brick, and scriptural inscription to materialize themes of sacrifice, priesthood, and divine guidance.



24 Child, "The Altar," 9.

25 Child, "The Altar," 10.

26 Child, "The Altar," 3.

27 Child, "The Altar," 5.

28 Child, "The Altar," 4.

4. The Sphinx (Restored Church)

- a. Description: This sculpture is made of a 25-ton quartzite boulder that depicts a stylized sphinx form incorporating the face of Joseph Smith. The west center tower of the LDS Salt Lake Temple is engraved into the rock below Smith's portrait, including the constellation motif beneath the battlements of the Temple. Surrounding unhewn stones are placed to suggest a crouching animal and the main body of the sculpture is carved with angular planes and projecting paws that reinforce the sphinx form. Child hired sculptor Maurice Brooks to create the face using an oxyacetylene torch in 1956. It is located on the east side of the asphalt pathway, north of The Altar and south of the mount on which several other monuments are located. The Sphinx is the most well-known sculpture in the garden. [Photographs 4, 22, and 29; Figures 7, 8, and 12]

There is a flat stone at the foot of the sphinx with a quote by Brigham Young:

“When I first heard him preach, he brought heaven and earth together; and all the priests of the day could not tell me anything correct about heaven, hell, God, angels, or devils: they were as blind as Egyptian darkness. When I saw Joseph Smith, he took heaven, figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God.”²⁹

- b. Context and Meaning: The sphinx expresses Child's belief that life's deepest questions cannot be resolved through intellect alone but require faith and, according to Child, is “the basis for thought or inspiration for all that is built around it.”³⁰ He was drawn to the sphinx because it “stands as a monument of the unsolved mysteries of life,”³¹ and because the ancient form, with its “worn, defaced, and damaged”³² appearance, conveyed the sense of mystery and endurance he wished to express in stone.
 - i. Child selected the Great Sphinx of Giza as his model, noting that it was “generally thought to have been built by Khafrā... about 2869 or 2811 BC,”³³ and that his interest was heightened because “competent authorities declare that stone masonry has never demonstrated greater skills than the age in which the sphinx, pyramids, and temples of Egypt were built.”³⁴ As a lifelong mason, he saw the ancient monument as a pinnacle of the craft and an ideal form through which to explore the relationship between ancient workmanship and modern faith. He embraced the contrast between ancient and contemporary methods, remarking that “we finish in an age of fire”³⁵ in reference to the oxyacetylene torch used to carve Joseph Smith's face.
 - ii. By replacing the traditional pharaonic visage with the face of Joseph Smith, Child expressed his conviction that the LDS Priesthood reveals the answers to life's spiritual mysteries. The engraved Salt Lake Temple tower reinforces this theme. Child included the constellation Ursa Major beneath the battlements—“the

²⁹ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 5 (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1857), 55.

³⁰ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 8.

³¹ Child, Thomas Battersby, “The Sphinx,” Box 4, Folder 12. Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Child, “The Sphinx,” 41.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Child, “The Sphinx,” 40.

pointers arranging themselves to the North Star”—to symbolize spiritual navigation: just as travelers orient themselves by the stars, those “lost” spiritually may find their way through priesthood authority and revealed truth.³⁶

- iii. The inscribed Brigham Young quotation at the foot of the sculpture further emphasizes the revelatory power Child associated with Joseph Smith, underscoring the sculpture’s thematic focus on divine guidance, spiritual clarity, and the bridging of heaven and earth. Child hoped the figure would “deliver a message or at least an interesting subject for thought,”³⁷ inviting contemplation rather than offering a single, fixed interpretation.



5. The Monument to the Trade (Work)

- a. Description: This monument includes a corbelled stone canopy constructed with large and small flagstone pieces arranged in stepped, projecting layers that form a semi enclosed niche. Beneath the canopy stands a full body sculptural figure of Child, one fifth larger than life size, constructed from quartzite, brick, and mortar. Child posed for a

³⁶ Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 4.

³⁷ Child, “The Sphinx,” 40.

photograph from which sculptor Maurice Brooks created the working model, but the fabrication of the figure was a complex, multi-stage process carried out on site. The head is an unworked stone gathered near Willard, Box Elder County; the coat and shoes were carved from purple quartzite sourced in Big Cottonwood Canyon, for which Child obtained written permission from the Wasatch National Forest. Burning the coat out of the rough stone took approximately three months, as the rock required slow, careful heating and constant cooling with water.³⁸

- i. The trousers were made of brick to represent that branch of the trade. Child laid the bricks “in the mud” while still unfired, forming two piers for the legs and shaping them to a pair of his own trousers hung as a pattern. Brooks modeled the trousers from the wet brick, which were then dismantled, numbered, fired, and reassembled—though the firing process blurred the numbers, forcing the pieces to be reconstructed like a puzzle.³⁹
- ii. Behind the figure, an engraved stone panel depicts the Tenth Ward Chapel. On either side of the niche, Child mounted tools representing the full range of masonry trades, including: (i) soft stone tools such as a crandall, jointer, and bolster; (ii) hard stone tools such as a granite cutter’s peen hammer, patent ax, and pitching tool; and (iii) specialized implements such as calipers made in Child’s shop for gauging the burning of Joseph Smith’s face on The Sphinx. An anvil and several pieces of machinery donated by contractors who admired Child’s workmanship are set at the base of the monument.
- iii. The entire composition rests on two water washed gneiss boulders weighing approximately 60 tons, which Child had long admired in a canyon east of Kaysville, Davis County. With no road to the site, the stones had to be dragged out with a cable and winch and hauled one at a time into the yard. Behind the niche stands a 78-ton boulder from the Point of the Mountain, Utah that was hauled by the Salt Lake Transfer Company and set in place with large cranes. Child designed the structure with architect Henry Fetzer and engineer George Nelson, incorporating one inch steel reinforcement bars, a deep concrete footing, and a cantilevered rear boulder to support the corbelled roof. The underside of the slab is faced with rock spalls from Parley’s Canyon, set in Bentonite and washed clean after curing. The flagstones used for the roof and canopy were cut, sawed, and meticulously corbelled by hand with evenly laid mortar joints. Child estimated this monument to be the most expensive project in the garden. It is located east of The Altar and west of The Eagles, following the same general north–south orientation within the garden as the adjacent monuments.
[Photographs 4, 19, 20, 21, 27, 31, and 32; Figures 9, 10, 11, and 28]

- b. Context and Meaning: This monument embodies Child’s desire to honor both his religious convictions and the masonry trade that shaped his life. He described the subject of the monument as “my love for my religion and my trade,”⁴⁰ explaining that the Bible in the figure’s right hand and the depiction of the Tenth Ward Chapel express his striving for the “spiritual indispensable,” while the tools on the left represent the earthly labor through which he “learned the lessons of life.”⁴¹ Child drew inspiration from Thomas

38 Child, Thomas Battersby, “The Monument to the Trade,” Box 4, Folder 9. Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

39 Child, “The Monument to the Trade,” 11.

40 Child, “The Monument to the Trade,” 1.

41 Child, “The Monument to the Trade,” 2.

Carlyle's verse about the "toil worn craftsman," seeking to honor "Him who is toiling for the spiritual indispensable, not daily bread, but bread of life."⁴²

- i. The tools mounted on the walls were intentionally selected. Child chose not to display modern pneumatic equipment but instead focused on hand tools to honor the workers who used them, many of which had been used in his own shop. Their inclusion reflects his belief that masonry was "a leading trade in Utah"⁴³ from the earliest settlement period, drawing on sandstone, limestone, granite, and cobble rock from local mountains and canyon washes. Child's reverence for the craft extended to the materials themselves. He wrote that "there is nothing superior in building material than burnt clay" and "nothing greater or more significant in nature than the unhewn stone."⁴⁴
- ii. The monument also reflects Child's deep connection to the Tenth Ward, where he served as Bishop for nineteen years and oversaw the restoration of the chapel after a 1927 fire. He wrote that he "loved the Tenth Ward and her people, her pioneer background," and that he belonged to "the working class," as did most members of the ward.⁴⁵ The monument's autobiographical elements—brick trousers referencing his work with local brick companies, the stone coat carved with extraordinary care, and the tools representing every branch of the trade—express his belief that true education came through labor, discipline, and accomplishment. As he reflected, if forced to choose between a college education and the training he received in his trade, he "would choose the trade."⁴⁶
- iii. Together, the sculptural figure, the engraved chapel, the carefully selected tools, and the massive, engineered stone canopy form a deeply personal tribute to craftsmanship, labor, faith, and the dignity of the working man. The monument stands as one of Child's most technically ambitious and symbolically layered works, integrating structural ingenuity, autobiographical narrative, and spiritual meaning.



42 Child, "The Monument to the Trade," 1.

43 Child, "The Monument to the Trade," 3.

44 Child, "The Monument to the Trade," 3.

45 Child, "The Monument to the Trade," 13.

46 Child, "The Monument to the Trade," 14.



6. The Monument to the Priesthood

- a. Description: This monument consists of four elements: a keystone arch featuring the letters A and O, a stack of four cast-stone books, an unfinished purple boulder, and a tall quartzite aggregate spire. The arch is constructed of eleven large stones, including a white-quartz keystone carved with the letters A and O, and rounded voussoirs arranged to form a semicircular opening supported by two massive white base stones. The eleven stones in the arch weigh over 100 tons.⁴⁷ Adjacent to the arch is a sculptural stack of four cast-stone books resting on a large boulder weighing 45 tons, with the books decreasing in size from bottom to top forming an ascending stack, each book rectangular in form with incised edges suggesting pages. Nearby is a large purple boulder left uncarved. A tall, narrow spire constructed of quartzite aggregate rises behind the arch and books. The spire consists of a central vertical shaft with a shorter side projection and is topped with a wire figure representing the Angel Moroni. This monument stands along the eastern edge of the primary grassy area where most of the other monuments are located, arranged in a north–south sequence beginning with the purple boulder and continuing with the spire, the arch, and the books. The purple boulder aligns with the mount that holds several other monuments, the arch aligns with the Captain of the Lord’s Host on the western side of the garden, and the books align between the two northernmost eagles across the mulch path to the east. [Photographs 15, 18, 19, 21, 28, 29, and 30; Figures 12 and 13]
- b. Context and Meaning: The white-quartz keystone in the arch is carved with the letter A for Alpha and O for Omega, representing Christ as the beginning and the end. The five stones on either side of the keystone represent ten prophets who, according to LDS belief, passed on their authority to Joseph Smith by returning the Keys of the Priesthood to earth. The arch rests on two massive white boulders meant to symbolize God and Adam, who were present at the beginning of this world and who, in LDS teaching, will be present at its end. The rock on which the stack of books sit represents the Rock of Revelation upon which the LDS Church is built. The books represent the standard scriptures used by the LDS Church that contain these revelations. The Bible forms the base that supports, in ascending order, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.⁴⁸ Child’s plan was to place a large stone globe, carved with the continents, atop the books. The large purple boulder, resting on the ground nearby, was to be carved and used as the globe. Child died before completing this part of the monument. The tall spire of quartzite aggregate symbolizes the LDS Priesthood. The taller shaft represents the Melchizedek Priesthood⁴⁹ and the shorter projection represents the Aaronic Priesthood.⁵⁰ The notches on the two spires represent the different offices in the priesthood: Elder, Seventy, High Priest, Priest, Teachers, and Deacons.⁵¹ At the top of the spire is a wire sculpture of the Angel Moroni, the heavenly messenger who delivered the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith according to LDS belief.⁵² Child’s neighbor and

47 Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 8.

48 Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 8-9.

49 In LDS belief, the Melchizedek Priesthood is the higher of the two priesthood orders, associated with spiritual authority, governance, and the administration of sacred ordinances. It is named for Melchizedek, a biblical high priest and king referenced in Genesis and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

50 In LDS belief, the Aaronic Priesthood is the lesser, or preparatory, priesthood, associated with outward ordinances such as baptism and the administration of the sacrament. It is named for Aaron, the brother of Moses, and is understood as a foundational order of priesthood authority.

51 Fetzer, Grant, “Gilgal,” n.d., unpublished 14-page tour packet created prior to Gilgal Sculpture Garden becoming a public park, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive.

52 Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 9.

one of his assistants in the garden, Grant Fetzer, recalled that Child understood this wire figure “like a radio antenna,” suggesting that the viewer was the receiver and that one’s actions were akin to “tuning the radio to the right station” in order to “receive inspiration from Heavenly Father.”⁵³ Together, the arch, books, boulder, and spire articulate Child’s vision of priesthood authority, scriptural foundation, and divine guidance.



⁵³ Fetzer, Grant, Email message to Adrienne White, April 9, 2026.

7. Bertha Child Memorial (Love)

- a. Description: A marble bust of Child's wife, Bertha, is located in a small niche within a larger brick wall next to the flagstone stairs that once led to Childs' former residence. A polished stone plaque set beneath the bust bears the inscription, "He who would have fine guests, let him have a fine wife." The bust was sculpted by Maurice Brooks. The sculpture is carved from two visibly different types of stone: the head is rendered in a lighter marble, while the chest and shoulders are formed from a darker, red-toned stone, creating a deliberate contrast between the two sections. The niche is constructed of brick and is capped by a projecting, gabled roof that form a triangular pediment above the opening. The roof extends beyond the face of the wall, creating a protective overhang that shelters the bust. A stone bench is positioned in front of the sculpture, and a flagstone set between the bench and the niche is inscribed with the phrase, "Sole partner, and sole part of all my joys, dearer thyself than all." [Photographs 16, 17, and 18]
- b. Context and Meaning: The bust of Bertha is a tribute to Child's great love and admiration for his wife. Its placement in a dedicated brick niche along the former approach to the Childs' home underscores her importance within the personal landscape he created. The contrasting stone colors used for the head and torso further highlight the care taken in its design, reflecting Child's desire to honor Bertha with a work that was both prominent and visually distinctive. The monument reflects Child's appreciation for the support Bertha provided throughout the period he developed the garden, acknowledging her steady presence in the environment that framed his artistic work.



Sculptures and Monuments on the Mount

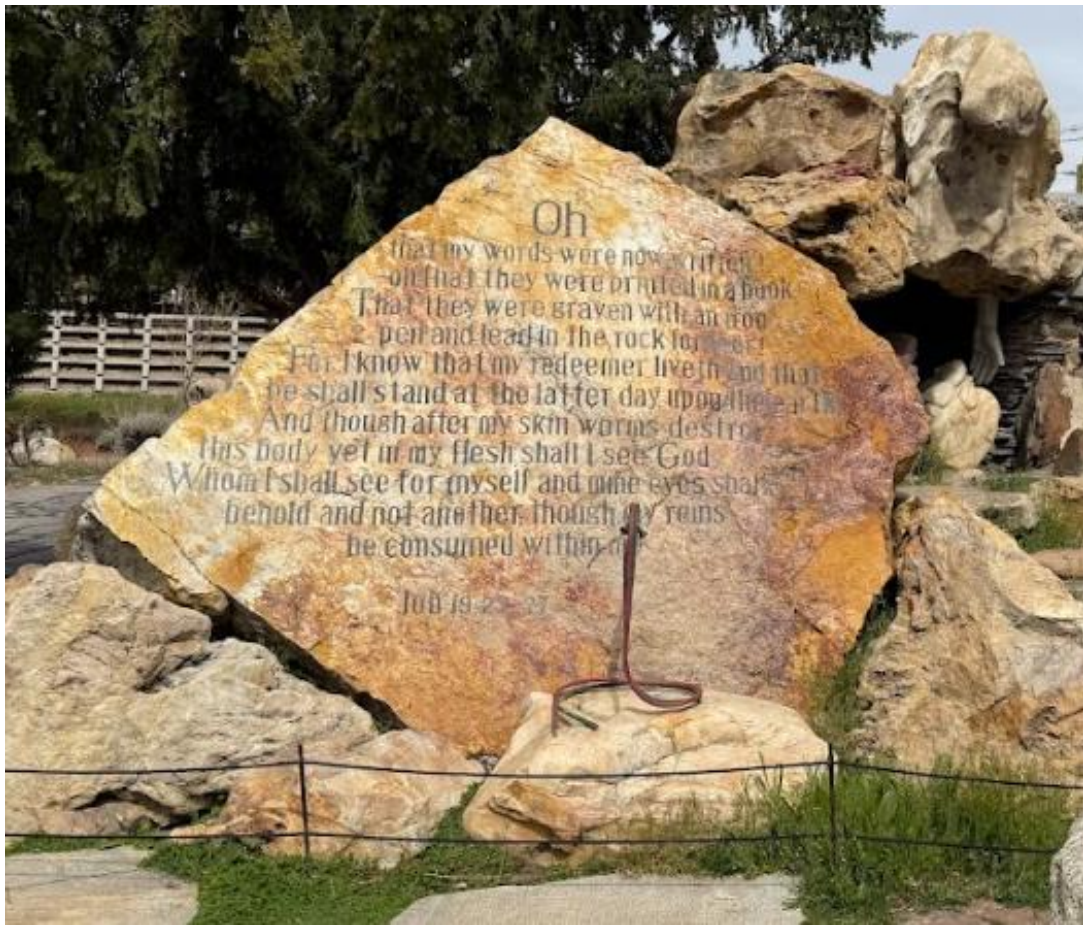
8. Testimony of Job

- a. Description: The biblical passage of Job 19:23-27 (“Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me”) is engraved in a large, gnarled rock of silica with a split surface. “The rock came from the Point of the Mountain at the south end of the Salt Lake Valley, and east of the main state highway and the new penitentiary, about one-quarter of a mile up the hill from the Union Pacific tracks and the same distance east of the big silica pit.”⁵⁴ Child had one portion of the rock transported to the garden on October 24, 1949. Initially, Child planned to sandblast the quote into the rock, but found that the surface was not smooth enough for the stencil to hold the lettering. Child then decided to use the oxyacetylene torch (the “iron pen”) for cutting the inscription. Child and his son-in-law, Bryant H. Higgs, created special tips for the torch, allowing it to be used for fine lettering. It took two granite cutters four weeks to perform this task. Soft lead was then pounded into the half-inch deep letters. An oxyacetylene torch was embedded in a stone at the foot of this rock. Some of the lead and the torch were removed by vandals. The Friends of Gilgal Garden restored the lead lettering and replaced the stolen torch.⁵⁵ This monument is located on the southwestern section of the mount, south of Daniel II and west of Malachi. [Photographs 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 29; Figures 7, 8, and 14]
- b. Context and Meaning: This monument interprets Job 12:23-27, in which Job longs for his testimony to be “graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever.” Child explained that, “Seeing my work around the yard being done in rock with an iron pen (the oxyacetylene torch), I decided to fulfill the rest of Job’s desire and lead his words in the rock forever... This rock was very pleasing to me, as I wanted a sort of worn, worm-eaten appearance, which I felt harmonized with Job’s sick and worn out condition.”⁵⁶ Child first attempted to have the inscription sandblasted, but when the letters could not be cut deeply enough to hold lead, he and his workers used a small oxyacetylene torch to finish the carving and then pounded soft lead into the grooves, literally using “lead in an iron pen” as the scripture describes. Although some of the lead was later removed by vandals, the restored inscription continues to embody Child’s intention to give Job’s words physical permanence. Together, the engraved passage, the torch-cut lettering, and the deliberately weathered stone express Child’s meditation on suffering, endurance, and the enduring hope articulated in Job’s declaration, “I know that my redeemer liveth.”

⁵⁴ Child, Undated journal entry quoted by Lambert, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive.

⁵⁵ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13; Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 7; date unknown.

⁵⁶ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13.

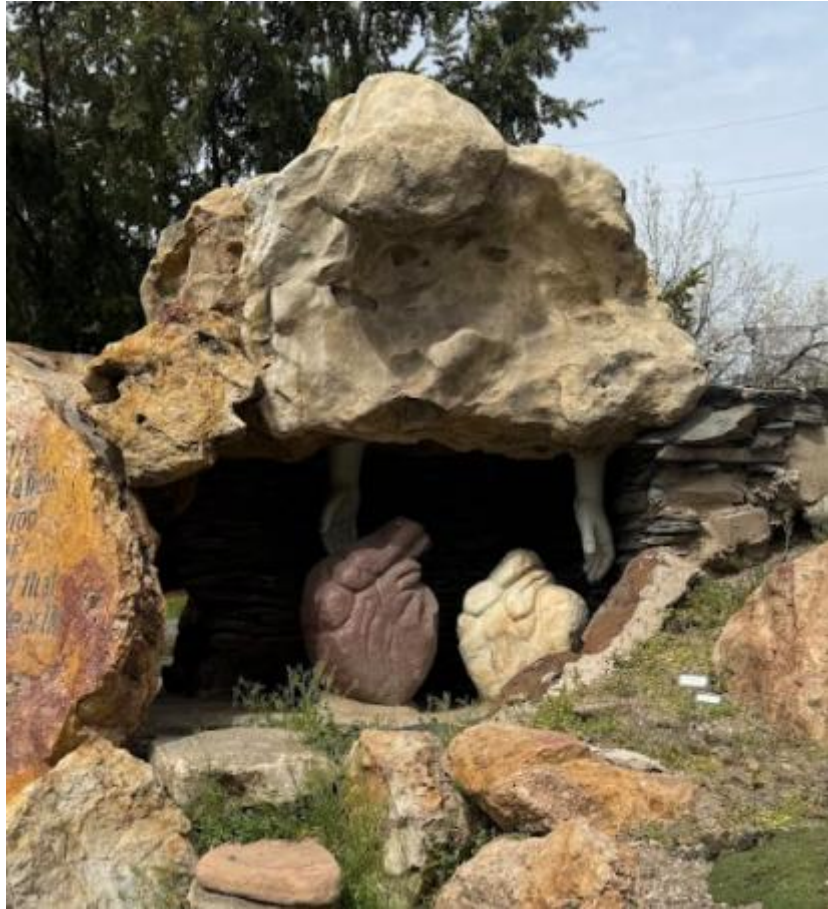


9. Malachi (Work for the Dead)

- a. Description: This piece features a grotto that contains two quartzite hearts – one white and one red. Two sculpted hands are attached to the ceiling of the grotto, pointing downward and positioned as if turning the hearts toward one another. The hands were missing from this piece for many years. The Friends of Gilgal Garden hired a sculptor to recreate the hands using the one remaining original hand kept safe as a model.⁵⁷ The grotto is attached to and located slightly behind the Testimony of Job on the mount, with the large Job boulder forming its western wall and supporting the boulder that serves as the grotto's ceiling. [Photographs 23 and 24]
- b. Context and Meaning: This arrangement of sculptures portrays Malachi 4:5-6 (“...I will read you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...”). Child’s use of this passage refers to the LDS belief that Elijah held the keys of the sealing powers that make it possible for families to be sealed together for time and eternity. The white heart represents the dead and the red heart represents the living.⁵⁸ The two hands emerging from the grotto ceiling represent Elijah turning the hearts of the fathers and the children toward one another, visually enacting the prophecy in Malachi. This monument represents themes of intergenerational connection, spiritual continuity, and the uniting of the living and the dead.

⁵⁷ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13; Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 6; date unknown.

⁵⁸ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13; Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 6.



10. The Monument to Peace

- a. Description: This monument is an iron sculpture composed of alternating iron spears and pruning hooks above swords welded to a plowshare at the base. The spears and pruning hooks are set in alternating sequence and overlap slightly as they spread outward, creating a layered, fan-like array. The Friends of Gilgal Garden restored the spears and pruning hooks, refurbished the plowshare, and replaced the swords that were missing for several years.⁵⁹ The monument is located on the southern edge of the mount, between Malachi to the west and The Teachings of Ecclesiastes to the east. [Photographs 25, 26, and 30; Figure 15]
- b. Context and Meaning: Child created this sculpture in reference to Isaiah 2:2-4, which prophesies a future era of peace in which nations “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.” By depicting weapons transformed into agricultural tools, the sculpture materializes this scriptural imagery and conveys Child’s belief in the ultimate triumph of peace over conflict.

⁵⁹ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 10; date unknown.



11. The Last Chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes (The Teachings of Ecclesiastes; Death)

- a. Description: This multi-element monument consists of a cluster of large, irregularly shaped stone boulders arranged in a compact grouping. Three of the stones bear engraved inscriptions from Ecclesiastes (i.e., 12:7, 12:8, 12:13-14). To the rear of the grouping stands a small masonry structure known as the “Little Well House,” built of cobbles that Child noted were “picked up on the subway going down into the Provo River bottom area after leaving Kearns,” with the roof stones sourced from Park City.⁶⁰ The most prominent element is the stone featuring Ecclesiastes 12:7, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it,” which also includes an intertwining carved square knot motif at its upper edge and a roughly carved house-like form with a roof, window, and door in the bottom right corner below the Bible verse. In front of this central boulder are three sculptural elements: a carved pink quartzite head depicting an elderly man sourced from “the creek bed on the left side of the deposit resulting from the dam at Willard, Utah,”⁶¹ a grasshopper carved from a green boulder sourced from the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon, and a roughly carved jug form made of a red stone. Many of the “rocks used in this religious display came from the silica bed at the Point of the Mountain east of the State Prison.”⁶² Child planted an almond tree on the mount as part of this monument, which flourished for many years before dying in 1963, the same year Child passed away. It is located on the southeastern section of the mount, just east of The Monument to Peace. [Photographs 25 and 26; Figure 16]

⁶⁰ Child, Thomas Battersby, Undated journal entry quoted by John Lambert, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive, accessed April 3, 2026.

⁶¹ Child, Undated journal entry quoted by Lambert, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive.

⁶² Ibid.

- b. Context and Meaning: This monument interprets several verses from the last chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes. The elements refer to Ecclesiastes, the Preacher, who warns of the Last Judgment Day and counsels all to “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man for God shall bring every work unto Judgement with every secret thing whether it the good or whether it the evil” (12:13-14). Ecclesiastes 12:5-6 reads, “...the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden...the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.” Child created the head of the elderly man to represent the first verses of this chapter, which he interpreted as meaning, “In spite of ourselves, we get sick, weak, and die, and are not the masters of the situation.”⁶³ This monument represents death and the need for personal reflection, as Child felt that people are often too hurried to enjoy life. The well house with a missing wheel and the pitcher signify the loss of water and, by extension, the end of life. The carved grasshopper reflects a symbol of death familiar to the early pioneer settlers in the valley. The almond tree Child planted on the mount further reinforced this symbolism, flourishing for many years before dying in 1963, the same year Child passed away. Together, the engraved verses, sculptural forms, and planted tree express Child’s meditation on life’s transience, the return of the spirit to God, and the moral accountability emphasized in Ecclesiastes’ final chapter.



63 Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 11.

12. Elijah's Cave

- a. Description: Elijah's Cave is a small, constructed grotto formed by two large upright boulders supporting a long, flat boulder that serves as the roof, with two smaller stones positioned at the base of the opening. Inside the cave are several natural materials placed by Child, including a hollowed-out lava rock, a piece of petrified wood, a fragment of a small red boulder, and a textured stone inset into the concrete flooring. In front of the cave, two large flagstones engraved with the text of Psalm 139 are set into the grass; the larger stone contains a vertical crack that runs from top to bottom but does not significantly impede legibility. The cave is located on the northeastern section of the mount, just north of The Teachings of Ecclesiastes. [Photograph 27]
- b. Context and Meaning: This small cave was created as a reference to the biblical prophet Elijah who lived by a stream, was fed by ravens (I Kings 17:2-6) and later took shelter in a cave after fleeing into the wilderness (I Kings 19:2-9). Child placed an engraved stone reading, "He who reads me in ashes is my son in wishes," at the base of the cave to express his belief that, although he would die, his testimony would endure within the garden he created.⁶⁴ The two engraved stones bearing Psalm 139, positioned at the entrance to the cave, reinforce themes of divine presence, spiritual searching, and being known and guided by God, linking the monument to the psalm's emphasis on God's intimate awareness of the individual.



⁶⁴ Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 11; Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 5.

13. Daniel II: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

- a. Description: This monument is topped with a large 32-ton boulder Child found near Willard, Box Elder County. He hired the Salt Lake Transfer Company to haul the rock using a 16-wheel truck to the Union Pacific Railroad yards and said it was "very difficult to get."⁶⁵ It was raised with a crane onto a scaffold of railroad ties, then transported to the garden and tipped from the scaffold onto a set of concrete piers that Child built. He filled in the area around the piers with dirt to create the mount on which this and several other pieces sit. The sculpted rocks featured in this piece include several body parts that are individually carved and scattered on the mount: a giant's head, his torso, two individual legs, and two feet. Child spent weeks searching for stones of different colors to match the description of the giant's body in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the Bible. The stones were sketched with Child's regular method of using an oxyacetylene torch. The gold-colored boulder used for the head was found at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon "just above the lower powerhouse."⁶⁶ The multicolored face of the giant developed unexpected light streaks during torching, which Child felt enhanced the visual interest of the piece.⁶⁷ The stones used for the arms and shoulders were "found east and south of the Old Mill on the way to Big Cottonwood Canyon."⁶⁸ The stomach made of "brass stone was dragged out of the creek bed on the North Fork of the Ogden River only a mile or two below where the Monte Cristo Highway takes off from the road going over to Blacksmith's Fork."⁶⁹ The legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay were located "about halfway up Big Cottonwood Canyon above the Meridian Quarry."⁷⁰ The Daniel 2 stone located at the bottom of the monument below the body parts was "taken from a farm a couple of miles south of Willard, Utah."⁷¹ This project took more than two years to complete. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream is located on the northwest section of the mount, just north of the Testimony of Job. [Photograph 28; Figure 17]
- b. Context and Meaning: This piece portrays the shattered giant from the biblical story of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2:2-45. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream that left him unable to sleep. He commanded the wise men in his kingdom to tell him his dream and to interpret it. When they protested that no one could know another's dreams, Nebuchadnezzar became very angry and decreed that all wise men be killed. When Daniel, a Judean wise man and captive of the king, heard of this from Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, he prayed to God for deliverance and was rewarded with a vision that revealed the king's dream. Daniel sought audience with the king so that his and all wise men's lives might be spared. He described the king's dream of seeing "a great image" with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thigh of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay that was destroyed by "a stone cut out without hands." This stone then "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:31-35). Daniel interpreted the dream to mean that successive kingdoms would rule the earth, with Nebuchadnezzar's represented by the golden head and those following his by silver, brass, iron, and clay. All would be destroyed by the kingdom set up by God that would rule the earth forever (Daniel 2:36-45). Child used different

65 Child, Undated journal entry quoted by Lambert, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive.

66 Child, Undated journal entry quoted by Lambert, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive.

67 Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13.

68 Child, Undated journal entry quoted by Lambert, Friends of Gilgal Garden Archive.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

colored stones, shaped like a head, torso, legs, and feet to portray pieces of a broken statue, and scattered them on the slope. The gold, silver, and purple-colored stones represented the successive kingdoms. The monument reflects Child's interest in material symbolism, prophetic imagery, and the ultimate triumph of divine authority.⁷²



Additional Contributing Sculptures and Structures

14. The Eagles

- a. Description: Child salvaged four stone eagles from the Interurban Station located at the corner of West Temple and South Temple Streets in Salt Lake City where Symphony Hall now stands (NRIS #79002501). Two eagles face to the right and the other two face to the left. One of the eagles retained some damage where one wing was broken off. The Friends of Gilgal Garden (FOGG) relocated the eagles into the garden when the boundaries for the garden were established.⁷³ FOGG hired a professional masonry restoration firm to repair the damaged eagle, reinforced the existing masonry fence, and commissioned new pedestals to support the eagle sculptures.⁷⁴ The Eagles are evenly

⁷² Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 5; Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13.

⁷³ Date unknown.

⁷⁴ Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 9; Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13; date unknown.

spaced out along the eastern masonry wall, positioned just south of the historic flagstone stairs that once led to Child's home. [Photograph 18; Figure 18]

- b. Context and Meaning: The eagles were installed in the garden to symbolize Child's patriotism.⁷⁵ According to Grant Fetzer, the eagles were "placed in the garden for the love that Thomas B. Child had for this country, where he was free to build such a garden if he so desired."⁷⁶



15. The Birdhouses

- a. Description: Two birdhouses stand on the east side of the garden property. One birdhouse is much smaller than the other. The larger of the two is often referred to as the Pigeon House. The smaller birdhouse is 4.5 feet tall, mounted 13 feet above ground and mounted on a fence post. The wooden structure is a narrow, octagonal shaft painted white and pierced by multiple circular entry openings arranged in a symmetrical vertical pattern. The red roof is steeply pitched, forming a pointed, tower-like cap that gives the structure a slight castle-like silhouette. Small triangular gable elements project from the upper portion of the shaft, each containing an additional circular opening. The overall form is slender and elongated, with the stacked openings emphasizing its verticality. The Pigeon House is a 7-foot-tall multi-story, rectangular wooden structure mounted 15.5 feet above ground on a tall metal pole. Its façade is organized into three horizontal tiers, each

⁷⁵ Pimentel, *Gilgal*, 9; Thompson, *Gilgal Sculpture Garden*, 13.

⁷⁶ Fetzer, "Gilgal."

containing evenly spaced arched entry openings arranged in a regular grid. The roof is steeply pitched and clad in red panels, with three front-facing gabled dormers projecting from the main roof slope and each dormer contains an additional arched opening. The walls are painted white, and the openings are trimmed in contrasting dark material. The overall form resembles a miniature multi-unit dwelling, with symmetrical massing and a vertically stacked arrangement of nesting chambers. The birdhouses were restored in 2012 by Peter Johannes, a professional woodworker and neighbor who lives a block south of the garden. The Friends of Gilgal Garden hired Johannes to complete the work, which he carried out in his home workshop after the birdhouses were transported there by forklift. [Photographs 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 30; Figures 2, 8, and 19]

- b. Context and Meaning: Child interpreted the birdhouse as a personal “Symbol of Freedom,” using it to express his belief in individual rights and the liberties afforded in the United States. He explained that “the birdhouse was made for and housed pigeons,” and that he constructed it in response to historical accounts in which “the poor peasant could not so much as own a pigeon” and had no protection from aristocratic intrusion.⁷⁷ Although the structure drew complaints because of the pigeons it attracted, Child insisted on keeping it, stating that it represented his conviction that “no one in this land of freedom could lawfully take them away from him.”⁷⁸



16. The Bowery

- a. Description: The Bowery, likely constructed in the early-to-mid-1950s, is an open-sided, wood-framed shelter with a low-pitched, front-gabled roof clad in corrugated metal panels. The roof structure is supported by exposed wooden trusses that span the width of the building. The trusses consist of dimensional-lumber chords and web members joined

⁷⁷ Smith, Hortense Child, Response to questionnaire requested by Mary E. Schwartz, November 20, 1990. Box 1, Folder 1. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*, ACCN 1877, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Special Collections.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

with metal gusset plates. Square wooden posts support the roof along the front and sides, with diagonal bracing at the corners. The rear elevation is enclosed by a continuous wall of concrete masonry units, forming a solid backdrop beneath the roofline. The Friends of Gilgal Garden (FOGG) were awarded grant funding through the Zoo, Arts, and Parks (ZAP) program to repaint and reroof The Bowery in 2019.

- i. Along the rear wall, a series of historic photographs and accompanying interpretive plaques are mounted in evenly spaced intervals. These materials were installed by FOGG as part of a curated educational display. The structure occupies the northeast corner of the property and remains in the same location and configuration documented during Child's lifetime, retaining its historic footprint, massing, and utilitarian character. [Photographs 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 30; Figures 7, 13, and 20]
- b. Context and Meaning: The Bowery contributes to the historic character of the property as a documented outbuilding that existed during the period of significance. A historic photograph of Child standing in the garden shows the structure—then likely under construction without its current roof—in the background, confirming its early presence on the site [Figure 13]. Located in the northeast corner of the lot, the shed served multiple functions for Child: originally used as a garage and wood-storage area, it later became a workshop for his garden projects and a sheltered space for large gatherings and garden parties, where dinner tables were set up beneath the structure.⁷⁹ Its continued presence reflects both the social life of the garden and the practical labor that shaped the site. As one of the few surviving functional structures associated with Child's active use of the property, the Bowery embodies the working environment in which the garden was created. Its documented use as both gathering space and work area links it directly to the development of the garden's sculptural program. The structure's location, form, and utilitarian character remain consistent with its historic appearance, allowing it to convey its association with Child's period of creative activity. For these reasons, the Bowery retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association and is considered a contributing structure within the open-space parcel of the historic property.

⁷⁹ Smith, "Response to questionnaire," Box 1, Folder 1; Smith, Hilary Groutage, "Garden tour will help Gilgal grow," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 26, 2004, 36.



Landscaping

Although Thomas B. Child, Jr. shaped the overall spatial organization of the garden, relatively little is known about the specific plants, flowers, and trees he cultivated during his lifetime. Several elements of the original vegetation are documented through photographs, personal accounts, and surviving plant material. Child planted the weeping willow that still stands over The Altar and the almond tree incorporated into The Teachings of Ecclesiastes, the latter of which flourished until 1963, the year both the tree and Child himself died. According to Grant Fetzer, Child also maintained red-twig dogwoods and Russian olive trees within the garden, along with a large pine tree located just east of the garden boundary in Child's backyard.⁸⁰ In addition to these trees and shrubs, Child kept modest flower beds near the flagpole, at the driveway entrance, and along the east side of the garden, providing seasonal color without competing with the stonework.⁸¹ These plantings, combined with a maintained central lawn and trimmed shrubs, formed a simple but intentional landscape framework that complemented the rock-garden character Child envisioned and ensured that the engraved stones and sculptural compositions remained clearly visible.

Following Child's death, stewardship of the property passed to the Fetzer family, who continued routine maintenance for more than three decades. Fetzer emphasized that the garden was "always presentable,"⁸² with green grass, trimmed bushes and trees, and inscriptions that remained visible, and he recalled that the family made regular efforts to keep the space cared for. He noted that weeds were a persistent issue along the dirt driveway and the north side but stated that the main garden space received ongoing attention. Undated photographs show periods when vegetation appears overgrown and some features are partially obscured; however, without firm dates, it is unclear whether these images reflect the later years of Fetzer ownership or conditions closer to the time of the City's acquisition. [Figure 21]

80 Fetzer, Grant, Personal communication with Adrienne White, April 7, 2026, Friends of Gilgal Garden board meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah.

81 Ibid.

82 Fetzer, Grant, Email message to Adrienne White, April 9, 2026.

Fetzer observed that later descriptions of the garden as a jumbled mess were amplified in the news as a way “to create interest and raise money to save the garden,”⁸³ rather than an accurate reflection of the garden’s condition.

After the City of Salt Lake acquired the property, the Friends of Gilgal Garden (FOGG) initiated a more intentional approach to landscape care. They partnered with master gardeners to rehabilitate the grounds, replacing invasive growth and annual-heavy beds with a more sustainable palette of perennials and flowering species. Early in this period, many plantings were annuals sourced from the Salt Lake County greenhouse, which required seasonal removal and replanting. As Master Gardener Judi Short recalled, this left little time for weeding or broader improvements. When she assumed leadership of the Master Gardener team in 2011, she shifted the garden toward long-blooming, low-maintenance perennials that would return each year and provide color from early spring through late fall.⁸⁴ Volunteers contributed plants from their own gardens, experimented with unfamiliar species, and added select trees and shrubs to diversify the landscape.

FOGG also planted a row of trees along the main entry pathway and installed benches beneath them, creating a shaded, welcoming approach into the garden [Photographs 3 and 33]. Over time, the volunteer-driven plantings have produced a layered landscape that includes trees such as willow, pine, hornbeam, cedar, and cherry; shrubs including lilac, mock orange, ninebark, elderberry, and dogwood; and a wide range of perennials such as daisies, goldenrod, agastache, verbena, sedum, coneflowers, hibiscus, columbine, hellebore, peony, sage, chrysanthemums, and lavender. Bulbs and corms—including tulips, daffodils, crocosmia, and Star of Bethlehem—provide additional seasonal color, and roses such as Macy’s Pride, Abe Lincoln, Tropicana, and Queen Elizabeth contribute to the garden’s ornamental character.⁸⁵

Although the formal Master Gardener program no longer exists, volunteers continue to maintain the plantings and manage the landscape on a regular basis. The result is a layered landscape that reflects the site’s evolving stewardship: Child’s original spatial framework and rock-garden design; the Fetzer family’s decades of maintenance; and FOGG’s ongoing commitment to preserving the garden’s visibility and legibility while sustaining a diverse and seasonally expressive planting palette.

Alterations

Gilgal Garden has undergone a series of alterations since its creation, many of which reflect the evolving stewardship of the site rather than changes to Thomas B. Child’s sculpture garden. During the period of significance, Child expanded the garden by removing several existing structures from the property. He documented that “two houses have been removed to make room for my ever-expanding stone project,”⁸⁶ and additional records indicate that a utility building and a greenhouse were also demolished to create space for the sculptures and associated landscape features.⁸⁷ [Figures 6 and 7] These removals were part of Child’s intentional shaping of the site and contributed to the open spatial character that continues to define the garden.

⁸³ Fetzer, Grant, Email message to Adrienne White, April 9, 2026.

⁸⁴ Short, Judi, Email message to Adrienne White, April 10, 2026.

⁸⁵ Short, Judi, Plant list provided to Adrienne White, April 7, 2026, Friends of Gilgal Garden board meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁸⁶ The two houses removed to make room for the garden were single-story dwellings located mid-block off the private court shown on the 1911 Sanborn map; their addresses were 751½ and 753½ East 500 South.

⁸⁷ Thomas B. Child, Jr., Personal Journal, typescript, March–April 1961, p. 42, Box 1, Folder 8, *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*, ACCN 1877, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Special Collections.

Following Child's death, the Fetzer family became stewards of the property. Their approach to the landscape and built features appears to have been largely custodial aside from routine mowing, no significant alterations or additions are documented during this period. As part of the acquisition process, the City noted its intention "to demolish the home located at 751 East 500 South, to landscape the site, and to incorporate that Property into the Garden,"⁸⁸ and the demolition of that house created the open area where the pedestrian entrance to the garden now stands. [Figure 22]

After the garden entered public ownership, the Friends of Gilgal Garden (FOGG) initiated a series of preservation-driven improvements. Early efforts focused on rehabilitating the landscape, including the removal of invasive vegetation and the introduction of new plantings such as daisies, phlox, foxgloves, and dahlias. FOGG also planted a row of trees along the main entry pathway and installed benches beneath them, creating a shaded, welcoming approach into the garden. Soon after the City acquired the property, architect Robert "Bob" Bliss (1921–2018) —founder of the University of Utah's Graduate School of Architecture and a longtime advocate for public design—played a major role in shaping the garden's new public-facing infrastructure. Bliss designed the curved wrought-iron gate at the main entrance, the picnic table in the northwest corner, and the retaining wall at the north end of the garden in the early 2000s, integrating these elements in a way that supported public access while respecting Child's original spatial framework. [Photographs 1, 2, 11, and 13] Long-term plans included the renovation of the Bowery—Child's former tool shed—which was envisioned as a restored gathering space for picnics and poetry readings. FOGG also replaced the Bowery's deteriorated roof in 2019, ensuring the structure's continued stability and usability. Although the Salt Lake County Master Gardener program that supported these efforts is no longer funded, volunteers continue to maintain the plantings and landscape on a regular basis.

Beginning in 2009, FOGG undertook a sustained program of masonry conservation and restoration, hiring professional conservators to address deterioration across the site. [Figures 23 and 24] These efforts included cleaning, repointing, and repairing the root cellar; replacing missing or damaged ground stones; recoloring incised lettering on multiple monuments; fabricating and installing new sections on the Monument to the Priesthood; and stabilizing or reconstructing stones where original fragments were located. Many of these projects were funded through grants and carried out by specialized masonry firms, reflecting a shift toward professionalized preservation practice. Additional work included repainting the birdhouse pole, installing protective stanchions around vulnerable sculptures, and developing interpretive signage to reduce visitor impacts. Restoration has progressed steadily in the years following the City's acquisition, with FOGG completing work as funding, professional recommendations, and site conditions have dictated.

In 2021, a formal parcel consolidation unified the legal boundaries of the garden. Taken together, the alterations to Gilgal Garden reflect a layered history of use, stewardship, and preservation. Child's own modifications—primarily the removal of earlier structures—were integral to the creation of the garden's sculptural landscape, while subsequent changes by the City and FOGG have focused on stabilizing, restoring, and interpreting the site. These later interventions have respected the garden's historic character and reinforced, rather than diminished, its ability to convey its significance.

Historic Integrity

⁸⁸ Salt Lake City Corporation and Friends of Gilgal Garden, "AGREEMENT: Regarding the Acquisition and Maintenance of Real Property Located at 749 East 500 South Known as Gilgal Garden and Additional Real Properties Located at 751 East, 753 East, and 755 East 500 South," recorded June 30, 2000.

Gilgal Garden retains a high degree of historic integrity, preserving the essential physical characteristics that convey its significance as a mid-twentieth-century visionary art environment created by Thomas B. Child, Jr. The garden's spatial organization, sculptural compositions, and overall experiential qualities remain consistent with Child's original design intent. The site remains closely linked to Child's religious, artistic, and philosophical expressions, and the continued presence of his sculptural program ensures that the garden communicates its historic themes with clarity.

The garden remains in its original location on the rear portion of Child's former residential lot, and the relationship between the sculptures, open lawn, and surrounding boundaries continues to reflect the site's historic configuration. The Bowery remains in its historic location and retains its utilitarian character, despite repairs and a replacement roof undertaken by the Friends of Gilgal Garden (FOGG) in 2019. The removal of the house at 751 East 500 South created the pedestrian entrance now used by visitors, but this change did not alter the internal spatial logic of the garden. Despite adjacent development, including the Liberty Blvd project,⁸⁹ the garden's setting remains legible. Mitigation measures required the developer to retain and modify the east boundary wall, install anti-graffiti coatings, and fund a landscape buffer, ensuring that the garden's enclosure and visual character were preserved.⁹⁰

The sculptures retain exceptional integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Child selected each stone for its color, shape, and symbolic resonance, often sourcing material from different mountain locations to achieve the desired effect.⁹¹ As masonry conservator John Lambert has noted, Child "...wisely chose species of stone that by their nature and composition are very durable....," and most stones remain in good condition.⁹² Many are set on thick mortar beds that have performed well over time. Minor deterioration—including exfoliation, spalling at the edges of incised letters, and cracking in some ground stones—has been carefully documented through surveys by Chelsey Zamir for the American West Center at the University of Utah (2016)⁹³ and Abstract Masonry Restoration. These conditions have been addressed through targeted conservation rather than replacement, preserving original materials wherever possible.

FOGG's preservation program, initiated after the garden entered public ownership, has emphasized professional conservation treatments that respect original workmanship. Projects have included cleaning, repointing, dutchman repairs, stabilization of loose stones, and the recoloring of incised lettering—an original treatment remembered by Grant Fetzer.⁹⁴ These interventions have been executed using compatible materials and methods designed to extend the life of the sculptures without altering their appearance. The Bowery's roof replacement, construction of a small retaining wall, and installation of benches and trees along the entry path have improved visitor access while maintaining the garden's historic character.

89 The Liberty Blvd development project, constructed immediately east of Gilgal Garden in 2015, introduced a 267-unit multifamily housing complex that occupies a substantial portion of the mid-block area. Its proximity prompted a formal mitigation agreement to protect the garden's setting, boundary wall, and visitor experience during and after construction.

90 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Liberty BLVD Associates LLC, and Utah State Historic Preservation Office, "Memorandum of Agreement Regarding the Liberty BLVD Apartments," with concurring parties Friends of Gilgal Garden, Salt Lake City Corporation, and Utah Heritage Foundation, approved December 11, 2015, and fully executed by December 15, 2015.

91 Smith, "Response to questionnaire," Box 1, Folder 1.

92 Lambert, John, Letter to the Friends of Gilgal Garden, March 18, 2018.

93 Peterson, Eric, "Tending the Gilgal Sculpture Garden," *Utah Life*, May/June 2025, 10.

94 Lambert, John, Letter to the Friends of Gilgal Garden, March 18, 2018.

Despite changes to the surrounding neighborhood and the necessary conservation work undertaken over the past two decades, Gilgal Sculpture Garden retains historic integrity in all seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The sculptures remain in their historic positions, the spatial organization of the garden is intact, and the interventions by the City and FOGG have been preservation-oriented, carefully executed, and fully compatible with the site's historic character. As a result, the garden continues to convey its significance as a rare and highly individualized visionary art environment created by Thomas B. Child, Jr.

5. HISTORY

Architect/Builder: *Thomas Battersby Child, Jr.*⁹⁵

Dates of Construction: 1945–1963

Historic Themes: *Mark themes related to this property.*

(see instructions for details)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Economics | ☐ Industry | ☐ Politics/
Government |
| ☐ Architecture | ☐ Education | ☐ Invention | |
| ☐ Archeology | ☐ Engineering | ☒ Landscape | ☐ Religion |
| ☒ Art | ☐ Entertainment/
Recreation | Architecture | ☐ Science |
| ☐ Commerce | ☐ Ethnic Heritage | ☐ Law | ☒ Social History |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Exploration/
Settlement | ☐ Literature | ☐ Transportation |
| ☐ Community Planning
& Development | ☐ Health/Medicine | ☐ Maritime History | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Conservation | | ☐ Military | |
| | | ☐ Performing Arts | |

Statement of Significance

Gilgal Sculpture Garden in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, is significant as an extraordinary and exceptionally intact sculptural landscape constructed between 1945 and 1963. The sculpture garden was created through the collaboration of two artisans: Thomas Battersby Child, Jr., who conceived and designed the garden's symbolic landscape, and Maurice Edmund Brooks, the accomplished stone sculptor whose technical skill brought Child's most ambitious figures into being. Child orchestrated the garden as a deeply personal expression of faith, selecting and arranging stones with deliberate symbolic intent, while Brooks executed the most complex carvings with a level of craftsmanship that elevates the work beyond vernacular production. The garden's artistic importance has been recognized nationally; the Smithsonian Institution's Art Inventories Catalog documents Gilgal Sculpture Garden and records its inclusion in the Save Outdoor Sculpture Utah survey (1994), its formal inventory by Smithsonian staff (2000), and its receipt of both a Save Outdoor Sculpture Assessment Award (2000) and a Conservation Treatment Award (2001).⁹⁶ The garden's cultural value was further affirmed when it became the first Utah property recognized as a Distinctive Destination by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in July 2020.⁹⁷ Together, Child and Brooks produced a unified work of art unparalleled in Utah and rare in the United States, blending religious narrative, autobiographical symbolism, and masterful stonework into a cohesive artistic statement. As Child explained, "The work represents my thoughts and expression of my religion and facts which are sacred to me," a reflection that underscores the spiritual purpose at the heart of the garden's creation.⁹⁸ The garden's preservation and continued stewardship ensure that

⁹⁵ With support from sculptor Maurice Brooks, son-in-law Bryant H. Higgs, grandson Thomas Child Higgs, longtime friend and employee Henry Goss, and neighbor Grant Fetzer.

⁹⁶ Smithsonian Institution. "Gilgal, (Sculpture)," Art Inventories Catalog, accessed April 12, 2026, https://www.si.edu/object/gilgal-sculpture:siris_ari_320125.

⁹⁷ Stephenson, Kathy, "Salt Lake City's Gilgal Sculpture Garden earns honor from national historic group," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, July 11, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2020/07/11/salt-lake-citys-gilgal/>.

⁹⁸ Friends of Gilgal Garden, "Child Supervising," interpretive plaque, Gilgal Sculpture Garden, Salt Lake City, Utah, n.d.,

this singular collaboration—and the cultural values it embodies—remain legible to contemporary audiences.

Criterion C: Work of a Master

Gilgal Sculpture Garden is the product of an extraordinary creative partnership between Thomas Battersby Child, Jr., the visionary designer who conceived the garden’s symbolic landscape, and Maurice Edmund Brooks, the skilled stone sculptor whose technical mastery brought Child’s most ambitious ideas into physical form. Child approached the garden with an intensity of thought and introspection that permeates every corner of the site, shaping a landscape where scriptural interpretation, personal reflection, and a lifelong devotion to learning are embedded in stone. Brooks complemented this vision with a sculptor’s precision, carving the complex figures and forms that anchor the garden’s artistic display.

Child and Brooks worked within a highly specialized on-site workshop that enabled the creation of Gilgal’s monumental stone forms. Child maintained a fully equipped fabrication space on the property, outfitted with a lathe, shaper, drill press, saws, electric welder, air compressors, blacksmithing tools, chain blocks, derricks, vises, and other machinery necessary for handling and shaping massive stone. His son-in-law, Bryant H. Higgs, assisted in both the construction of the garden and the development of custom equipment, fabricating specialized tools for lifting, moving, and cutting the boulders Child sourced from quarries across Utah. The stones—ranging from one to seventy-eight tons and composed of quartz, granite, and gneiss—were transported to the site as raw material and shaped entirely on the premises. Child and Higgs adapted an oxy-acetylene torch technique first used by a contractor on the Elton Tunnel project in the nearby Oquirrh Mountains, refining the method to rough-shape the garden’s hardest stones and establishing the technical foundation for the sculptural work that followed. Preliminary stonework was carried out by Higgs, his son Tom, and neighbor Grant Fetzer, whose father produced architectural drawings for the garden. Once the rough forms were prepared, Child and Higgs trained Brooks in the adapted torch-carving method, enabling him to execute the garden’s most complex figures with precision. Together, these two masters transformed an ordinary Salt Lake City backyard into a deeply expressive environment—one that defies conventional boundaries between art, landscape architecture, and religious belief.

Thomas Battersby Child, Jr. (1888–1963)

Thomas B. Child (1888–1963) was born in a small adobe house at 145 South 700 East in Salt Lake City, the eldest of eight children in a family deeply rooted in the masonry trade. His father, Thomas Battersby Child, Sr. (1862–1924), was a mason, and Child learned the craft in his early teenage years, building and paying for his first house at age nineteen. His maternal grandfather, Charles Livingston (1835–1908), also worked in stone soon after arriving in Utah, helping his brother and uncle quarry and shape the coping for the Temple Block wall and the granite used in the Salt Lake Temple. Child described driving his grandfather to the quarries in a newly purchased cart, a memory that underscores how deeply the rhythms of stonework and quarrying shaped his early life. Masonry quickly became the defining professional pursuit of his life, and even in his youth he approached it with unusual seriousness and skill. As he later reflected, “I feel like I am enjoying all that was promised, all that my pioneer forbears looked forward to their posterity enjoying... [because] I was taught to work.”⁹⁹ By the time Child married Bertha Derrick Rumel in 1911, he had already demonstrated an unusual combination of

photographed March 23, 2026.

⁹⁹ Child, “The Monument to the Trade,” 15–16.

technical skill, ambition, and artistic sensibility, constructing their lifelong home at 452 South 800 East on land her family provided.

Masonry was never merely a livelihood for him. It was a medium through which he understood both craft and meaning. As he later wrote, “To me, there is nothing superior in building material than burnt clay (brick). The final test of everything in this old world is, ‘Can we stand the last burning?’”¹⁰⁰ This philosophy, rooted in decades of hands-on experience, shaped not only his professional work but also the conceptual and material foundations of the sculptural environment he would eventually create. His writings reveal a man who saw labor as a sacred discipline:

“I believe a man’s greatest contribution to this world is his daily work and toil. No man is perfect but when he is performing his daily task to the best of his ability, he is being perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect according to his abilities and opportunities... I think the working man is at peace with himself and his fellowman.”¹⁰¹

After his father’s death in 1924, Child became president of Thomas B. Child & Company, working alongside his brothers on major institutional, civic, and religious buildings throughout the Intermountain West. His firm contributed to the LDS temples in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and Idaho Falls; South High School; the Relief Society Building; the Pioneer Memorial Building; Ogden High School; the Ogden–Weber City and County Building; St. Benedict’s Hospital; and numerous university, hospital, and commercial buildings across Utah and Wyoming. His expertise was widely recognized: in 1934 he served as the code representative for Utah and Wyoming for the masonry industry,¹⁰² and in 1949 he received a certificate of merit from the American Institute of Architects for excellence in masonry.¹⁰³ Child’s own writings echo this professional stature, emphasizing the dignity of skilled labor and the moral value of craftsmanship: “I admit I am an admirer of those who work honestly every day to contribute the necessities for our generation to live... I believe the honest workman feeds the world.”¹⁰⁴

Child’s role in building Gilgal Sculpture Garden also reflects the depth of his masonry experience. He developed the engineering approach for the garden, selected and hauled the massive stones, and coordinated the specialized equipment and custom tools needed to move, cut, and set them. His ability to read stone, anticipate how large pieces would behave once placed, and design stable foundations for boulders of exceptional size grew directly out of decades of hands-on practice. Working with his son-in-law, Bryant Higgs, he oversaw the fabrication of hoists, clamps, and cutting tools that made the garden’s most complex installations possible. [Figure 26] His logistical leadership demonstrates an understanding of the garden’s materials and complex construction mechanics that reflects mastery of masonry as both a craft and a practical engineering discipline.

Child’s professional stature was matched by his civic and religious leadership. He served on the Advisory Council of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, was a long-standing member of the Building and Construction Congress, and held prominent roles in the Sons of Utah Pioneers. He was the inaugural president of Days of ’47, Inc. (1943–1954), the inaugural chairman of the board for the modern Deseret Industries organization, and an elected official on the Salt Lake City Board of Education. His ecclesiastical service was equally significant: he served nineteen years as bishop of the LDS Tenth Ward

¹⁰⁰ Child, “Gilgal,” 4.

¹⁰¹ Child, “Addenda to Gilgal,” 40–41.

¹⁰² Middleton, Eugene, “Personality Portraits of Prominent Utahns: Thomas B. Child,” *Deseret News*, November 27, 1934, 12.

¹⁰³ “Thomas B. Child, 75, Church Worker, Dies,” *Deseret News*, November 4, 1963, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Child, “Addenda to Gilgal,” 40–41.

and another eighteen years on the Park Stake High Council. According to his family, “The greatest motivating force for his activity has been his belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and service to his Church and fellowmen.”¹⁰⁵ Child himself affirmed this inseparability of faith and labor:

“You can’t explain the rocks around my project or hobby without bringing in the gospel of Jesus Christ as I have been taught it all my life... Words cannot express my love for the gospel and those who have contributed my happiness.”¹⁰⁶

Despite his demanding professional and ecclesiastical commitments, Child cultivated an “insatiable appetite for learning” and amassed one of the largest private libraries in Salt Lake City, with more than 1,000 volumes spanning philosophy, scripture, history, and literature.¹⁰⁷ He kept notebooks filled with quotations and reflections, drawing inspiration from authors such as John Ruskin, Henry Adams, William James, and the Apostle Paul. He wrote in his journal:

“As I have read and contemplated on the lives of the philosophers and their attempts to find happiness and meaning in life, I have felt the urgent desire to make the surroundings of my home of such a nature as would lead me in my old age to enjoy peace and contentment as I stroll around the yard.”¹⁰⁸

Although he regretted never receiving a formal education, he compensated with rigorous self-study and constant reading, which shaped both his worldview and his artistic ambitions that took material form in Gilgal Sculpture Garden.¹⁰⁹

Child began work on the sculpture garden in 1945 at age 57, transforming his backyard into a symbolic landscape that fused scripture, personal philosophy, and autobiographical expression. He approached stone selection with a reverence that bordered on spiritual discipline. “The stones and bricks belonging to the different exhibits in the yard are sacred to me because my hands and the hands of my friends have touched them. They have had prayerful and careful selection.”¹¹⁰ As he developed the garden’s conceptual framework, Child articulated a clear sense of purpose:

“I still feel an inward keen delight in my humble attempts to express my own thoughts and experiences in my own way in and around my own home... My story still speaks to me strongly and I love to express it in my own way.”¹¹¹

This desire for self-expression was rooted in faith, labor, and personal history and became the driving force behind the garden’s creation. [Figure 28]

He went to extraordinary lengths to obtain these materials, often hiring large trucks and heavy-equipment operators to extract boulders he located while traveling throughout the state. He selected stones from mountain quarries for their color and form, sometimes hauling pieces weighing up

105 Child Family, “A Portrait of Thomas B. Child.” Written on the occasion of his 70th birthday, May 6, 1958. Box 2, Folder 1. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

106 Child, “Addenda to Gilgal,” 33.

107 Child Family, “A Portrait of Thomas B. Child,” Box 2, Folder 1.

108 Friends of Gilgal Garden, “Child and Unfinished Rock,” interpretive plaque, Gilgal Sculpture Garden, Salt Lake City, Utah, n.d., photographed March 23, 2026.

109 Child Family, “A Portrait of Thomas B. Child,” Box 2, Folder 1.

110 Child, “The Altar,” 9.

111 Child, “Gilgal,” 4.

to seventy-eight tons. [Figure 27] He was highly selective in his choices, and many of his canyon trips yielded no usable material because each stone had to meet his exact vision. On one occasion, he requested that the County temporarily close a canyon so he could bring in the machinery needed to remove a particularly promising specimen, a request the County granted. According to Grant Fetzer, the largest of these stones exceeded the lifting capacity of any crane in Salt Lake City at the time, requiring Child to rent two cranes from Geneva Steel and have them brought to the site so the boulder could be set in place for the Monument to the Trade.¹¹² Child also wrote about the significance he attached to raw stone, noting, “There is nothing greater or more significant in nature than the unhewn stone. It is the base of nature.”¹¹³

With the help of his son-in-law Bryant Higgs, he used an oxyacetylene torch to rough-cut the stone—an advanced technique for the period that allowed the shaping of extremely hard quartz and granite. [Figure 25] Child relied heavily on Higgs’ mechanical expertise, which made the garden’s most ambitious installations possible. As Child wrote:

“Bryant has made the tools for the sculptor (i.e., Maurice Brooks) and all special equipment necessary for the handling and cutting of the various phases of the work. We proudly say that only raw materials have been brought into the yard. All labor with its many problems and details is done here on the job.”¹¹⁴

Higgs fabricated custom hoists, clamps, and cutting tools that allowed Child to manipulate massive stones with precision. Together, these innovations created the conditions necessary for the next phase of work.

Child hired assistants—including his grandson Tom Higgs and a young neighbor, Grant Fetzer—to help prepare the stone and carry out the demanding physical labor required to position and stabilize the boulders. Their efforts formed the essential groundwork for the sculptural carving that followed, bridging the gap between Higgs’ mechanical preparation and the fine-carving work.

The most technically demanding sculptural work was entrusted to Maurice Edmund Brooks, a professional sculptor who translated Child’s conceptual sketches into carved forms. Working under Child’s direct supervision and using tools fabricated specifically for the project, Brooks contributed to the shaping of the Sphinx, the Monument to the Trade, the Bertha Child figure, Daniel, and additional carved elements within the garden. Their partnership was grounded in mutual respect: Child provided the symbolic program, the stone, and the engineering; Brooks provided the technical artistry required to realize the forms. Together, they produced a body of work that neither man could have created alone.

The garden was the culmination of Child’s intellectual, spiritual, and artistic life. It expressed his love for his family, his reverence for the working man, his devotion to scripture, and his belief in the right of self-expression. Child’s inscriptions throughout the garden reveal his conviction that scripture, poetry, and hymnody were essential interpretive tools. “The various exhibits around the yard have been enlarged by inscriptions from the scriptures. They are quotations which have appealed to me and constantly come to my mind. Also I thought they would be explanatory and interesting to the curious visitor.”¹¹⁵ These inscriptions were not decorative; they were integral to the garden’s narrative structure, guiding visitors toward the meanings Child hoped they would consider.

112 Fetzer, Grant, Email message to Adrienne White, April 9, 2026.

113 Child, “The Monument to the Trade,” 3.

114 Child, “The Monument to the Trade,” 1.

115 Child, “Addenda to Gilgal,” 40.

He also understood the garden as an expression of personal freedom and national belonging. “I appreciate the blessings I enjoy in living in this promised land... I wouldn’t be permitted to do the things I am doing under many governments existing today.”¹¹⁶ This statement underscores how deeply he linked his creative autonomy to his identity as both a Latter-day Saint and an American.

In his will, Child allocated \$4,000 “to finish the stone sculpturing and landscaping project”¹¹⁷ at his home, indicating that he considered the garden an ongoing artistic endeavor at the time of his death. It is unknown if or how these funds were used, yet some personal accounts state that no money was leftover for this wish to be fulfilled.

Child also acknowledged the garden’s role in sustaining his intellectual life: “One of the main objects which I had in building this project or hobby was to keep my mind active in my old age; to stimulate my thinking... You don’t have to agree with me. You may think I am a nut, but I hope I have aroused your thinking and curiosity.”¹¹⁸ By the time of his death in 1963, Child had created a sculptural environment of remarkable complexity and originality—one that reflected not only his mastery of masonry but also his intellectual depth, spiritual conviction, and lifelong commitment to craftsmanship.

Gilgal Sculpture Garden stands today as the fullest expression of Child’s creative identity: a visionary landscape shaped by a man who believed that ideas must be made tangible, that faith could be carved in stone, and that the labor of one’s hands was a sacred form of knowledge. His professional achievements, artistic innovation, and documented influence on the built environment of the Intermountain West firmly establish him as a master of his professional and personal crafts.

Maurice Edmund Brooks (1908–1970)

Maurice Brooks was born in Edgemont, Nevada, on January 23, 1908, and moved to Utah with his family at age thirteen. His father was a machinist who worked in various mines in Nevada and Utah. Brooks quickly became known in Utah for his natural sculptural ability, having modeled “things from clay ever since he was old enough to hold clay.”¹¹⁹ Even as a young artist, he was described as “a rebel against modern art” who “worked in his own robust, realistic style since the age of four,”¹²⁰ an early indication of the artistic independence that would characterize his career.

While in college, Brooks “devoted himself chiefly to the study of anatomy and sculpture,”¹²¹ and the *Deseret News* reported that his “work reveals an unusually promising future.”¹²² As a student, he was commissioned by *The Salt Lake Tribune’s* garden editor, Maud Chegwiddden, to sculpt “a little more than life size” bust of Clytie, a water nymph in Greek mythology, for her garden in 1932.¹²³ Chegwiddden designed the entire garden around the plaster bust, which was specially treated to withstand outdoor conditions. This commission marked Brooks’ first garden sculpture and foreshadowed the large-scale outdoor work he would undertake more than two decades later for Thomas B. Child’s visionary landscape. He graduated from the University of Utah and served his sculpting apprenticeship under the

¹¹⁶ Child, “Addenda to Gilgal,” 37.

¹¹⁷ 73 “Last Will and Testament of Thomas B. Child,” March 6, 1950. Box 2, Folder 9. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*. ACCN 1877. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections.

¹¹⁸ Child, “Addenda to Gilgal,” 46.

¹¹⁹ “Salt Lake Sculptor Seeks to Inspire Art Interest,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, October 22, 1943, 17.

¹²⁰ O’Neil, David, “Profile: Sculptor Maurice Brooks and His Career,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, September 1, 1968, 54.

¹²¹ “Students Show Strong Work,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, June 5, 1932, 50.

¹²² *Deseret News*, June 4, 1932, 20.

¹²³ Chegwiddden, Maud, “Garden Gate,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, September 18, 1932, 37.

direction of Millard Fillmore “Phil” Malin, Jr. (1891–1975) on the Sugar House Monument, a formative experience that grounded him in large-scale public sculpture.¹²⁴

From 1936 to 1939, Brooks was employed by the federal government as a working artist for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the arts division of the Federal Art Project (FAP). During his tenure as a WPA project sculptor, he showcased “his growing deftness in the art,” and produced several “fine examples of his anatomical understanding.”¹²⁵ The mediums he worked in during this period included clay, plaster, and Manti oolitic limestone—a material he described as “an ideal medium for the sculptor’s hand.”¹²⁶ This early experience carving natural stone established the technical and tactile foundation that later enabled him to work confidently with the massive, irregular boulders Child sourced for Gilgal Sculpture Garden.

Before the FAP was discontinued, Brooks taught sculpture classes for children and adults through the Utah State Art Center, an extension program of the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts offered in cooperation with the WPA Art Program in 1939.¹²⁷ This work further established his reputation as a skilled sculptor and instructor. This teaching experience prepared him for his subsequent role at the Art Barn, where he continued to work as both a sculptor and instructor after leaving the WPA program in 1940.

During this period, Brooks’ professional reputation expanded rapidly. He was “engaged in modeling a series of busts for allocation to permanent art collections throughout the state,”¹²⁸ reflecting the growing institutional demand for his work. By this point in his career, he was “well known to Utah art audiences,” and several of his works were also “being circulated throughout the country to the 82 art centers under the sponsorship of the WPA art project,”¹²⁹ demonstrating the reach of his developing career. These circulating works placed him within a national network of WPA-supported artists, further elevating his profile.

Critics consistently praised the technical and artistic qualities of his work, observing that he combined “excellent modeling with design so that his sculptures have vitality and life bringing out the full range of his medium.”¹³⁰ They also noted his deliberate approach to composition, remarking that “in working on a model, Brooks always considers the ultimate placing of the piece,” a practice that allowed his work to show “a range from the architectural to the impressionistic and classical.”¹³¹ These assessments underscore the breadth of his skill and the sophistication of his sculptural judgment—qualities that would later define his contributions to the Gilgal Sculpture Garden.

He had his first one-man show at the Utah State Art Center in early 1940, which was the largest collection of his work assembled up to that point and revealed him “as one of the most talented of Utah’s younger workers in the medium of sculpture.”¹³² His works in this collection ranged from impressionistic to Greek classicism to modern, all with a “genuine anatomical understanding.”¹³³ Within

124 “Prominent Sculptor Dies At 62,” *Deseret News*, December 3, 1970, 37.

125 “Achievements Under Federal Art Project,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 24, 1936, 65.

126 “Sculptor Praises Utah Stone,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 12, 1938, 12.

127 *Deseret News*, November 18, 1939, 23.

128 “Statuette Depicts WPA Workman,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 16, 1938, 10.

129 “Brooks Lectures at Center,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1940, 29.

130 *Deseret News*, February 10, 1940, 23.

131 Ibid.

132 “Attractive Art Collections Shown for Center Patrons,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, February 18, 1940, 56.

133 Ibid.

this 1940 collection, he exhibited a biblical piece titled *Adam and Eve*, a subject that aligned closely with the religious themes he would later explore at Gilgal.

During World War II, Brooks contributed to the war effort and was required to make sculpturing a hobby rather than a full-time profession, temporarily interrupting his artistic career.¹³⁴ Despite this interruption, he resumed sculptural work with renewed technical ambition in the postwar period.

Brooks began using the oxyacetylene torch for sculpting after learning the method from Child and his son-in-law Bryant H. Higgs while working on the monuments now standing in Gilgal Sculpture Garden as early as 1949. Speaking about this modality, Brooks said:

“Chipping with a chisel is slow. The usual method of a sculptor is to do his subject in clay, next in a plaster mold which is carefully pointed up. If the work is to be done in bronze, the plaster model is then shipped to a foundry where it is cast. Otherwise he copies it by hand in stone or whatever medium is selected. With portrait busts, I still follow this careful method but I find that by using the ‘ribbon torch,’ I can work directly on stone, eliminating the first two steps – when it is not portrait work. It is novel and exciting and shortens the necessary time immensely.”¹³⁵

While working at Gilgal, Brooks often modeled figures in clay for Child’s review before committing them to stone, ensuring that each composition met both the symbolic intent of the designer and the technical standards of a trained sculptor. In 1949, Brooks was “devoting considerable time to work in the Child gardens where two immense blocks of quartz, weighing 20 and 30 tons” were “being subjected to the magic torch.”¹³⁶ This work formed part of the monument known as Daniel II: Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream, one of the most technically demanding features in the garden. Child’s 1956 day planner records payments to Brooks totaling \$1,000 for work on the Sphinx, Daniel II, and other sculptural elements, confirming his direct involvement in the garden’s most technically demanding features.¹³⁷ His mastery of the torch—an extremely difficult tool to control on quartz, a stone seven times harder than granite—demonstrates the high level of technical expertise he brought to Child’s project.

Brooks was a member of the Catholic Church and sculpted a five-foot statue of Christ and the 14 Stations of the Cross for Sacred Heart Catholic Church at 174 East 900 South in Salt Lake City in 1953.¹³⁸ The following year, Brooks worked with his mentor, Millard F. Malin, and fellow sculptor Torleif Knaphus to carve the Angel Moroni and the baptismal font and its oxen for the Los Angeles LDS Temple.¹³⁹ He also completed architectural decorations for the Cathedral of the Madeleine and produced sculptural work for the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, further demonstrating the breadth of his ecclesiastical and institutional commissions. These projects demonstrate the degree to which Brooks was trusted with large-scale, religiously significant sculptural work during the same period he was contributing to Child’s garden.

In 1956, Brooks was commissioned by local department store Auerbach’s to design seagulls in bas-relief on antique white cast stone as a part of their expansion and remodeling.¹⁴⁰ This commercial commission

134 “Salt Lake Sculptor Seeks to Inspire Art Interest,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, October 22, 1943, 17.

135 “Torch Supplants Sculptor’s Chisel,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, September 4, 1949, 48.

136 “Torch Supplants Sculptor’s Chisel,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, September 4, 1949, 48.

137 Child, Thomas B., 1956 Day Planner, April 14, 1956, Box 1, Folder 3, *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*, ACCN 1877, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Special Collections.

138 “Utah Sculptor Doing S.L. Church Statuary,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1953, 10.

139 “Baptismal Font Sculptured For Los Angeles Temple,” *Deseret News*, January 23, 1954, 19.

140 “Auerbach’s Completes Year of Expansion, Remodeling,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1956, 35.

illustrates the breadth of his mid-century practice, which extended beyond ecclesiastical and monumental work to include architectural ornamentation for prominent local businesses. His versatility was further evident in his restoration work at the Lagoon amusement park, where he “repaired with tender care the beautiful old carved merry-go-round.”¹⁴¹ These varied commissions demonstrate a sculptor capable of adapting his skills to multiple contexts while maintaining a consistently high level of craftsmanship.

Brooks worked out of a remodeled garage on his property with a counter on one side to hold his work and tools. Despite the modest setting, he modeled in clay and casts with precision and discipline, often with the help of his son. His ability to produce refined, large-scale work in such a humble workspace parallels Child’s own practice of building Gilgal’s monuments on his residential property, underscoring the resourcefulness and self-reliance that characterized both men’s approaches to their crafts. His work was considered “representational in feeling, full of sensitivity in choice of forms, contours, and volumes,”¹⁴² a characterization that aligns with the expressive yet disciplined sculptural language he brought to Gilgal.

Brooks described his career as “bittersweet,” as it alternated between “winning awards with his work and picking up odd jobs to make ends meet.”¹⁴³ At age 60, he said that he hadn’t been able to make a living from art except for two years of his life.¹⁴⁴ He often had to supplement his income from sculpture with work on commercial casting and carpentry.¹⁴⁵ Reflecting on his career, he noted that his involvement in the WPA during the Great Depression allowed him to work while not worrying about eating. Over the course of his career, he received multiple awards and purchase recognitions, including at the Utah State Fair, and his work continued to be acquired by public institutions, further affirming his standing within Utah’s artistic community. Despite financial instability, his artistic reputation remained strong, and his technical mastery was widely acknowledged.

Additional Historical Information

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) was founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith in upstate New York. Smith reported a series of visions beginning in 1820, including an appearance of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and later angelic visitations that, according to LDS belief, restored ancient priesthood authority and revealed additional scripture. One of the most significant of these visitations was from Moroni, described in LDS teachings as an ancient prophet who appeared to Smith as a resurrected being and directed him to a set of metal plates that Smith translated as the *Book of Mormon*. Moroni is a prominent figure in Latter-day Saint iconography and appears frequently in LDS art and architecture, including the angel statues placed atop many LDS temples. His presence in Child’s garden reflects this broader symbolic tradition.

Smith organized the church, established new settlements, and introduced doctrines emphasizing continuing revelation, temple worship, and the gathering of believers into covenant communities. After periods of conflict and forced migration in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, Smith was killed by a mob in Carthage, Illinois, in 1844. Following his death, Brigham Young, senior apostle and later second

141 Selby, Carol, “Art,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, August 19, 1956, 59.

142 Ibid.

143 O’Neil, David, “Profile: Sculptor Maurice Brooks and His Career,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, September 1, 1968, 54.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid.

president of the church, led the majority of Latter-day Saints westward. In 1847, Young and the first pioneer company entered the Salt Lake Valley, which became the center of LDS settlement and governance. Under Young's leadership, church members established hundreds of communities throughout Utah and the Intermountain West.

A central concept in LDS belief is priesthood authority, understood as the power and authority to act in God's name. Latter-day Saints believe that this authority was restored to Joseph Smith through angelic ordinations and is organized into two divisions: the Aaronic Priesthood, associated with preparatory ordinances and administrative duties, and the Melchizedek Priesthood, associated with higher spiritual authority and leadership roles. Child's writings and sculptures reference both priesthoods, and several elements in the garden—including the spire topped with the wire figure of Moroni—symbolize aspects of priesthood authority as he understood it.

LDS congregations are organized geographically into units called wards, each led by a bishop. A bishop is a lay leader who oversees the spiritual, administrative, and welfare needs of ward members. Bishops typically serve for several years while maintaining their regular employment. Child served as bishop of the Salt Lake Tenth Ward for nineteen years, a tenure that reflects both his standing in the community and the degree to which ecclesiastical service shaped his daily life. His long service as bishop informed his understanding of leadership, responsibility, and religious duty—concepts that appear throughout his writings and are embedded in the symbolic program of the garden.

The idea of Zion—a scriptural term associated with a covenant people gathering in a promised land—has been significant in Latter-day Saint belief since the church's founding and continues to hold meaning for many members today. For nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latter-day Saints, including Child, Utah was often understood as a modern expression of Zion: a place of refuge after decades of persecution and a landscape where spiritual, civic, and communal life could flourish. Child frequently expressed gratitude for living in what he understood as a promised land and believed that the opportunities he enjoyed were the fulfillment of hopes held by earlier generations of Latter-day Saint pioneers. This worldview shaped both his artistic choices and the inscriptions he selected for the garden, many of which reference themes of gathering, covenant, and divine guidance.

The Fetzer Family

Henry Peter Fetzer (1906–1991) was the oldest child of prominent architect John Fetzer and Margaret Baer Fetzer in Salt Lake City. Before he graduated from high school, his father sent him to supervise the construction of a Carbon County school. He also designed the leaded glass windows in the 8th Ward LDS Chapel in Salt Lake City as a teenager. He married Florence Jackson in Salt Lake City in June 1931. He studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1932. Due to the Great Depression, Henry worked odd jobs to make ends meet, including cleaning attics and cutting marble, before being hired as an architect for the Salt Lake City Board of Education in 1935.¹⁴⁶

John Fetzer (1882–1965) became a partner in the architectural firm Cannon & Fetzer in 1909, working alongside Lewis Telle Cannon. The firm employed James L. Mullen for two decades before it amicably dissolved in 1937, at which point two firms were created: Cannon & Mullen and Fetzer & Fetzer. When the new family firm was established in 1937, Henry—already trained as an architect but unable to join his father's earlier partnership during the Depression—entered the practice alongside his brothers, John

¹⁴⁶ Jackson, Richard Woolley, "Funeral Sermon for Florence Jackson Fetzer," August 8, 1992, FamilySearch, accessed March 31, 2026, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/tree/person/memories/KWCN-BBW>.

B. and Emil. Henry designed many noteworthy buildings, including the Abraham O. Smoot Administrative Building and the J. Reuben Clark Building on the Brigham Young University campus, the University of Utah Chemistry Building, and the M. Lynn Bennion Elementary School—located just across 800 East from Gilgal Sculpture Garden and Thomas B. Child’s former residence.¹⁴⁷ This proximity helped strengthen the relationship between the two men.

In 1935, Florence Jackson Fetzer’s parents purchased the home located at 763 East 500 South. In 1940, the Jacksons and the Fetzers traded houses: Henry and Florence Fetzer moved into the 500 South residence with their growing family, while the Jacksons relocated to 422 South 900 East.¹⁴⁸ The Fetzers raised their eleven children in this home, including their son Grant, who assisted with several of the sculptures in the Gilgal Sculpture Garden. Through their proximity and shared ward connections, Henry Fetzer and Thomas B. Child developed a close friendship. Among their shared interests in building and construction, Child and Fetzer both served as bishop of the Tenth Ward. Henry helped Child “put his dreams on paper” to “show others what he was trying to accomplish in his garden,”¹⁴⁹ providing architectural clarity to Child’s evolving vision.

In 1946, Henry was elected president of the Utah chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).¹⁵⁰ More than four decades later, he received the first Career Achievement Award at age 80 from the Utah AIA chapter “for his many contributions to the profession of architecture, the quality of his work and his leadership in the community and among his colleagues.”¹⁵¹ Although his brothers had retired from the family firm by that time, Henry continued to work actively, with no intention of retiring.

Following Henry’s death in 1991, his children became the key stewards of Gilgal Sculpture Garden. The Fetzers owned most of the single-family dwellings south of the garden, and three of the houses surrounding the site remain in the family today. For many years, the Fetzers provided the only regular public access to the site by opening the garden on Sundays. As the last private owners of the land before its purchase by Salt Lake City, the Fetzer family played a central role in preserving and protecting Gilgal from demolition and development. Their stewardship ensured that Child’s work survived long enough to be recognized, restored, and ultimately preserved as a public historic site.

Becoming a Public Park and the Friends of Gilgal Garden

The Friends of Gilgal Garden (FOGG) is a nonprofit organized in 1997 to prevent development on the site and ensure its preservation for public enjoyment. The group formed following earlier advocacy by the Associated Art Historians (AAH), a nonprofit group of artists and scholars who began documenting and promoting the garden’s significance in 1996. Their *Gilgal: A Sculpture Garden in Salt Lake City* publication, authored by Ursula M. Brinkmann Pimentel, was a foundational study of the site. According to Grant Fetzer, the family never planned to sell the garden to a Canadian company, as frequently reported by the press.¹⁵² Rather, they explored replacing the three homes south of the garden with condominiums to generate funds for long-term maintenance.¹⁵³ As he explained, “the information about the garden took on a life of its own,” and some widely circulated claims were “not true—just good

147 “Fetzer to receive first AIA award,” *Intermountain Contractor Magazine*, May 18, 1987, 14.

148 Jackson, Richard Woolley, “Biography of Samuel Andrew Jackson,” 1976, FamilySearch, accessed March 31, 2026, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/tree/person/memories/KWCF-61B>.

149 Fetzer, Grant. Email message to Adrienne White, March 31, 2026.

150 “Utah Architects Elect,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, December 31, 1946, 7.

151 “Fetzer to receive first AIA award,” *Intermountain Contractor Magazine*, May 18, 1987, 14.

152 Walsh, Rebecca, “Preservation Of Garden Hinges On Park Status,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, January 11, 2000, 12.

153 Fetzer, Grant, Email message to Adrienne White, April 9, 2026.

press.”¹⁵⁴ Even so, the absence of formal protections and the possibility of redevelopment galvanized artists, preservationists, neighbors, and civic leaders to organize around the garden’s future.

As preservationist and FOGG advocate Cindy Cromer notes, the effort to acquire Gilgal Sculpture Garden unfolded in three overlapping phases. The first was an advocacy phase led by AAH and joined by community members, which established the garden’s cultural significance and built public support for its preservation. The second phase involved the entry of prominent figures and organizations, including architect Bob Bliss, the nationally recognized Trust for Public Land (TPL), and, in the final days of negotiation, former Salt Lake County Recorder Katie Dixon. The third phase centered on the Fetzer family’s willingness to grant an extended fundraising period, during which advocates successfully secured the support of both County and City officials.¹⁵⁵

To secure the property and prevent its redevelopment, FOGG partnered with TPL, a national nonprofit specializing in land conservation and public-access acquisitions. Chain-of-title research confirms that TPL held an option to purchase the property under an Option Agreement dated March 26, 1999, and directed the sale, even though TPL does not appear in the grantor or grantee sections of the Special Warranty Deed. The arrangement required FOGG to raise the full \$600,000 purchase price, with TPL acting as intermediary to manage the complex real-estate transaction and ultimately assist in the transfer of land to Salt Lake City.

Meeting the \$600,000 requirement demanded an intensive, multi-year fundraising campaign. Over three years, FOGG secured a \$100,000 pledge from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, another \$100,000 from the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, and \$400,000 from Salt Lake County. Additional donations came from artists, architects, neighborhood residents, and supporters who viewed Gilgal as a valuable cultural resource. Fundraising events, including a “Secret Gardens” tour in 2000, added more than \$10,000 and ultimately pushed the campaign past its goal.¹⁵⁶ The preservation effort was built on “three years of fund-raising, negotiating and even pleading”¹⁵⁷ to keep the garden from being razed. When FOGG’s option on the property was set to expire, the Fetzer family granted a three-month extension, allowing fundraising and negotiations to continue.¹⁵⁸

Even with the funds in place, the path to public ownership was far from straightforward. The City Council initially balked at the financial and legal liability of owning and maintaining the garden. Boundary discrepancies further complicated the process when it became clear that “the fence isn’t necessarily the property line,”¹⁵⁹ requiring survey work and legal clarification before the city would accept the title. Despite these challenges, persistent lobbying by FOGG, preservationists, and community members ultimately persuaded the council to move forward.

With the final funds secured, Salt Lake City Corporation purchased the garden from the Fetzer family on July 7, 2000. This milestone marked the culmination of years of coordinated effort among the Fetzer family, FOGG, TPL, and city leaders. Yet significant work remained, and FOGG committed to raising additional funds for restoration and long-term stewardship.

¹⁵⁴ Fetzer, Grant, Email message to Adrienne White, April 9, 2026.

¹⁵⁵ Cromer, Cindy, Email message to Adrienne White, April 13, 2026.

¹⁵⁶ Jacobsen-Wells, Joann, “Secret Gardens: Tour benefits efforts to turn Gilgal Garden into a park,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 28, 2000, 71.

¹⁵⁷ Walsh, Rebecca, “Preservation Of Garden Hinges On Park Status,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, January 11, 2000, 12.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Walsh, Rebecca, “Gilgal Garden Purchase Snagged Over Boundaries,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, June 8, 2000, 18.

Following the transfer of ownership, FOGG assumed responsibility as the garden's curator and began a comprehensive program to stabilize, restore, and enhance the site. The organization created a formal entrance, installed security fencing, constructed a 110-foot retaining wall, restored the historic bowery in the northeast corner, and developed a new seating area to support public use. FOGG also undertook the careful restoration of the garden's sculptures and engraved stones, many of which had suffered from weathering, invasive plant growth, and decades of vandalism. Guided by professional conservators, the group employed expert craftspeople to gently repair damaged stones and replace missing elements, ensuring the long-term preservation of Child's artistic legacy.

In 2001, the Salt Lake County Master Gardener Association adopted Gilgal Garden as one of its community projects, and Master Gardener volunteers donated thousands of hours clearing overgrown areas, improving soil conditions, and planting new flowers and shrubs. Their work continued for several years under the Salt Lake County Gardening Association. Although the formal Master Gardener program no longer exists, the garden is now maintained by a dedicated group of community volunteers—many of whom are trained master gardeners—who continue to care for the landscape independent of any specific organization. With financial support from Salt Lake City, the garden now benefits from a new irrigation system and a simplified, lower-maintenance planting plan.

Today, FOGG remains central to the garden's care and interpretation, maintaining the site and ensuring its continued public accessibility. Their sustained involvement reflects the same community-driven stewardship that saved Gilgal Sculpture Garden from demolition and secured its future as a public park.



Nomination Boundary

Gilgal Sculpture Garden

749 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah 84102

Latitude: 40.7585065°

Map #1

Longitude: -111.8697076°

Image courtesy of Google Earth



Nomination Boundary

Gilgal Sculpture Garden

749 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah 84102

Latitude: 40.7585065°

Longitude: -111.861919°

Map #2

Image courtesy of Google Earth



Nomination Boundary

Gilgal Sculpture Garden

749 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah 84102

Latitude: 40.7585065°

Longitude: -111.861919°

Map #3

Image courtesy of Google Earth

Photo Log

Name of Property: Gilgal Sculpture Garden

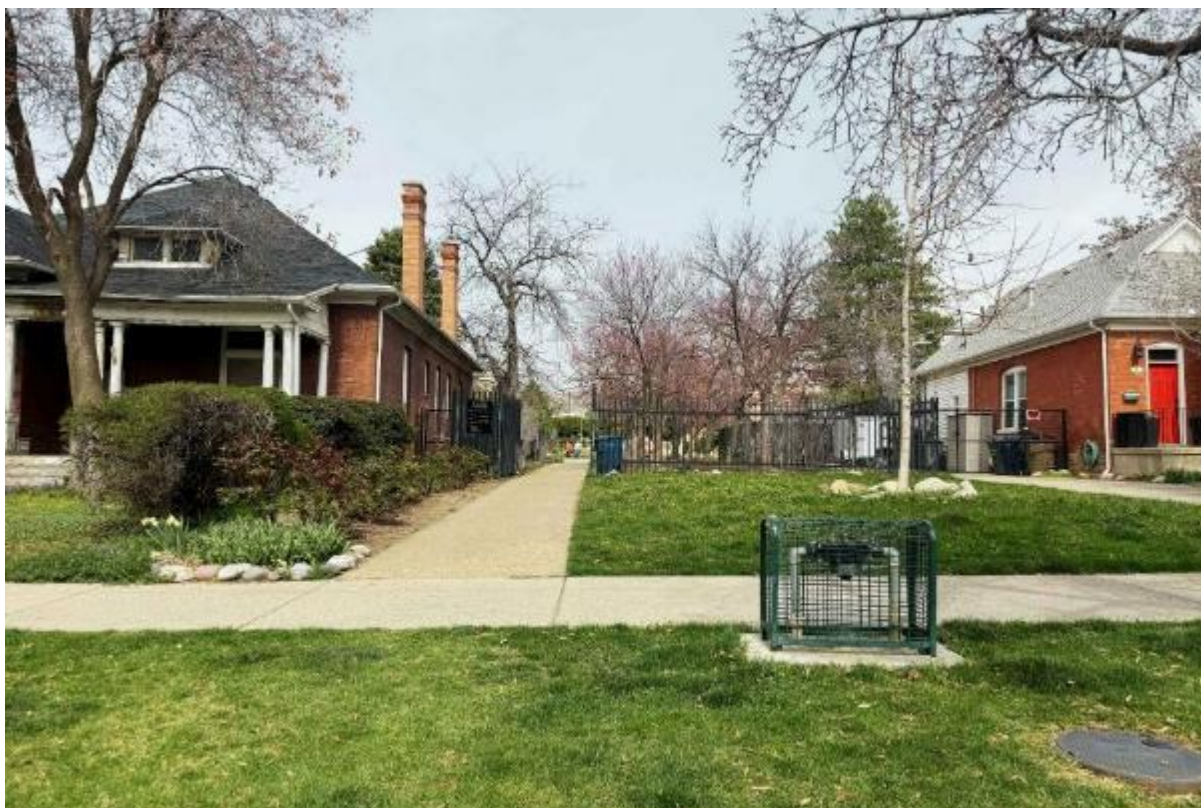
City or Vicinity: Salt Lake City

County: Salt Lake County

State: Utah

Photographer: Adrienne White

Date Photographed: March 23, 2026



Photograph 1

Entrance to Gilgal Sculpture Garden from 500 East. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 2

Curved wrought-iron entrance gate to Gilgal Sculpture Garden. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 3

Entrance walkway and tree-covered seating area with benches. Camera facing north.



Photograph 4

Interpretive signage and educational brochure box. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 5

View from the southwest corner of the primary garden area. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 6

Gilgal in the foreground and Captain of the Lord's Host in the background. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 7

Front of Captain of the Lord's Host sculpture with tribal circle and grapevine. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 8

Back of Captain of the Lord's Host with bronze plaque and rock garden patio. Camera facing southeast.



Photograph 9

Close-up of the bronze plaque on the backside of Captain of the Lord's Host. Camera facing south.



Photograph 10

Example of the secondary flagstone pathways found throughout the garden. Camera facing south.



Photograph 11

View of the landscaping and picnic table in the northwest part of the garden. Camera facing southeast.



Photograph 12

View from the northwest corner of the primary garden area. Camera facing southeast.



Photograph 13

View of the masonry retaining wall and Bowery on the north boundary. Camera facing east.



Photograph 14

View of the Bowery and the historical photos and captions on the north wall. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 15

View of the unfinished purple globe sculpture and the Bowery. Camera facing north.



Photograph 16

View of the two birdhouses, the Bertha Child sculpture, and the brick wall. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 17

Close-up of the Bertha Child sculpture and its niche. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 18

View of The Eagles on their pedestals along the eastern boundary. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 19

View from the southeast corner of the primary garden area. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 20

View of the eastern boundary and the back of the Monument to the Trade. Camera facing northeast.



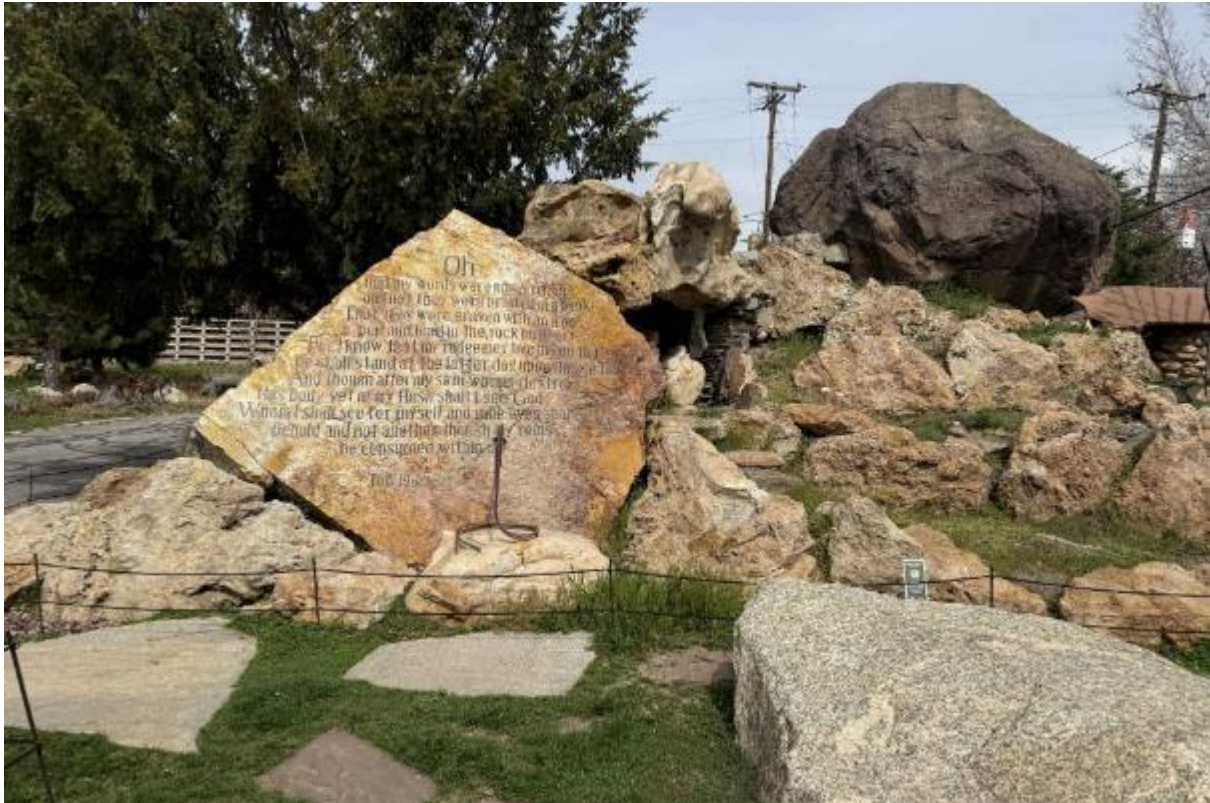
Photograph 21

Close-up of The Altar in the foreground. Camera facing northeast.



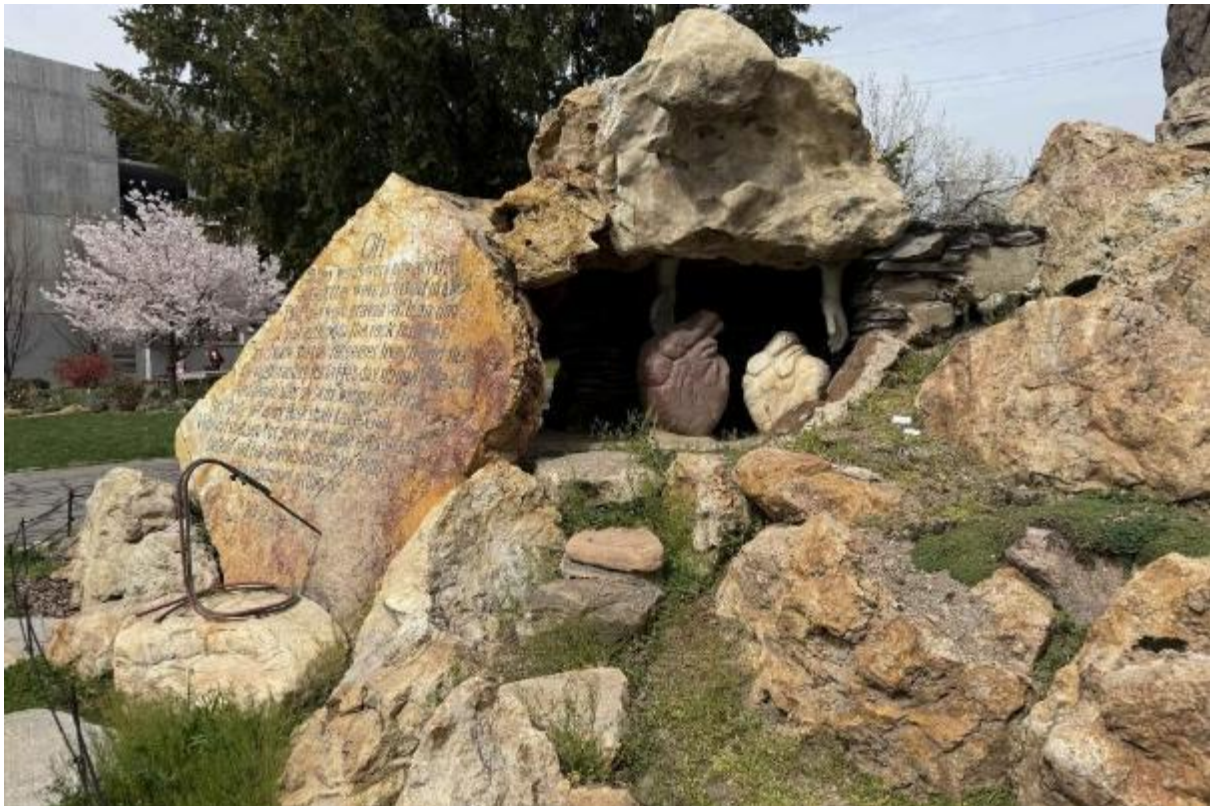
Photograph 22

Close-up of The Sphinx in the foreground. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 23

View of the Testimony of Job on the Mount. Camera facing north.



Photograph 24

View of Malachi to the right of Testimony of Job on the Mount. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 25

View of The Monument to Peace on the Mount. Camera facing northwest.



Photograph 26

View of The Last Chapter of Ecclesiastes on the Mount. Camera facing west.



Photograph 27

View of Elijah's Cave on the Mount. Camera facing southwest.



Photograph 28

View of Daniel II: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream on the Mount. Camera facing southeast.



Photograph 29

Part of The Monument to the Priesthood, including the books and arch. Camera facing west.



Photograph 30

Part of The Monument to the Priesthood, including the globe, spire, and arch. Camera facing northeast.



Photograph 31

View of The Monument to the Trade. Camera facing southwest.



Photograph 32

Close-up of The Monument to the Trade. Camera facing south.



Photograph 33

The entrance walkway and tree-covered seating from the primary garden area. Camera facing southwest.



Figure 1

Thomas B. Child's residence at 452 South 800 East. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 2

The primary garden area in Thomas B. Child's backyard. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 3

Gilgal and Captain of the Lord's Host. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 4

Construction of Captain of the Lord's Host in April 1955. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 5

Construction of Captain of the Lord's Host. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 6

The Altar with one of the demolished dwellings. *Friends of Gilgal Garden website.*



Figure 7

The Sphinx with Bowery and demolished utility building. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 8

The Sphinx with the oxyacetylene torch in April 1955. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 9

Constructing The Monument to the Trade. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 10

Constructing The Monument to the Trade. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 11
Constructing The Monument to the Trade. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 12
Part of The Monument to the Priesthood. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 13

Child with the unfinished purple globe and the Bowery. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives*.

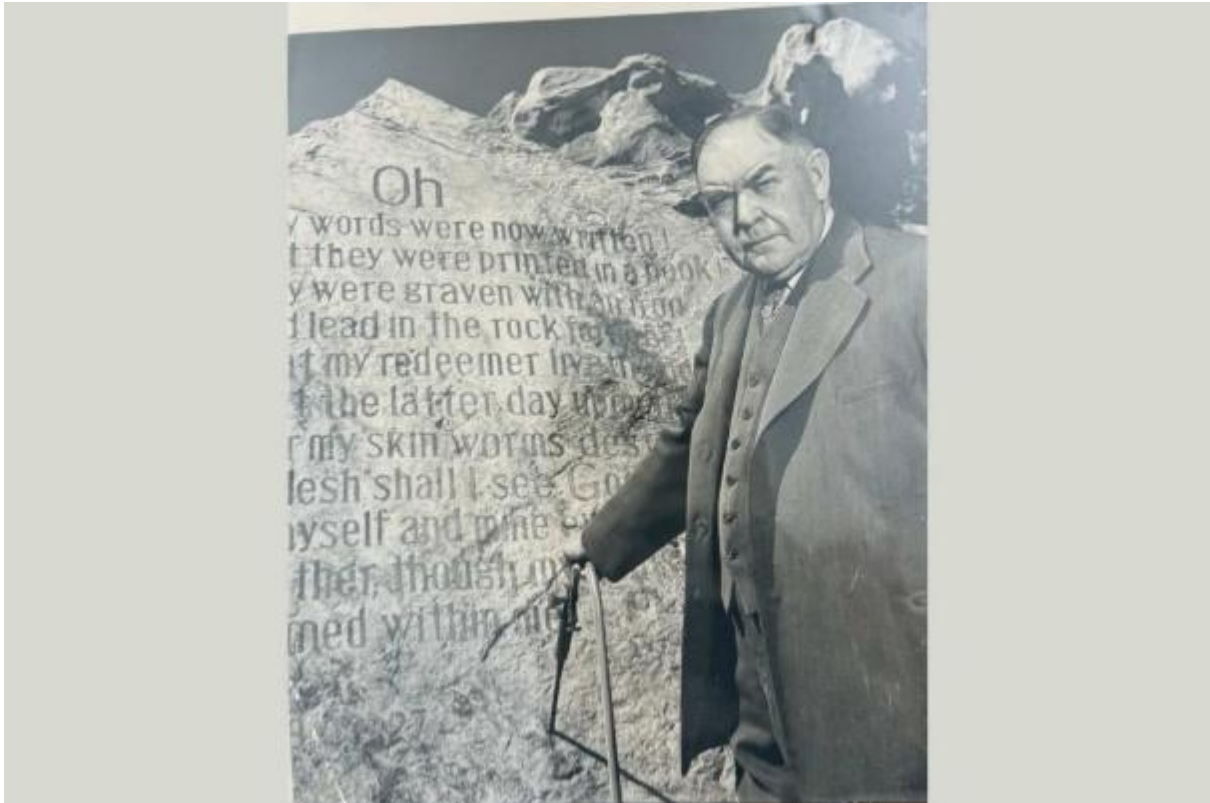


Figure 14

Child holding the oxyacetylene torch on Testimony of Job. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002*.

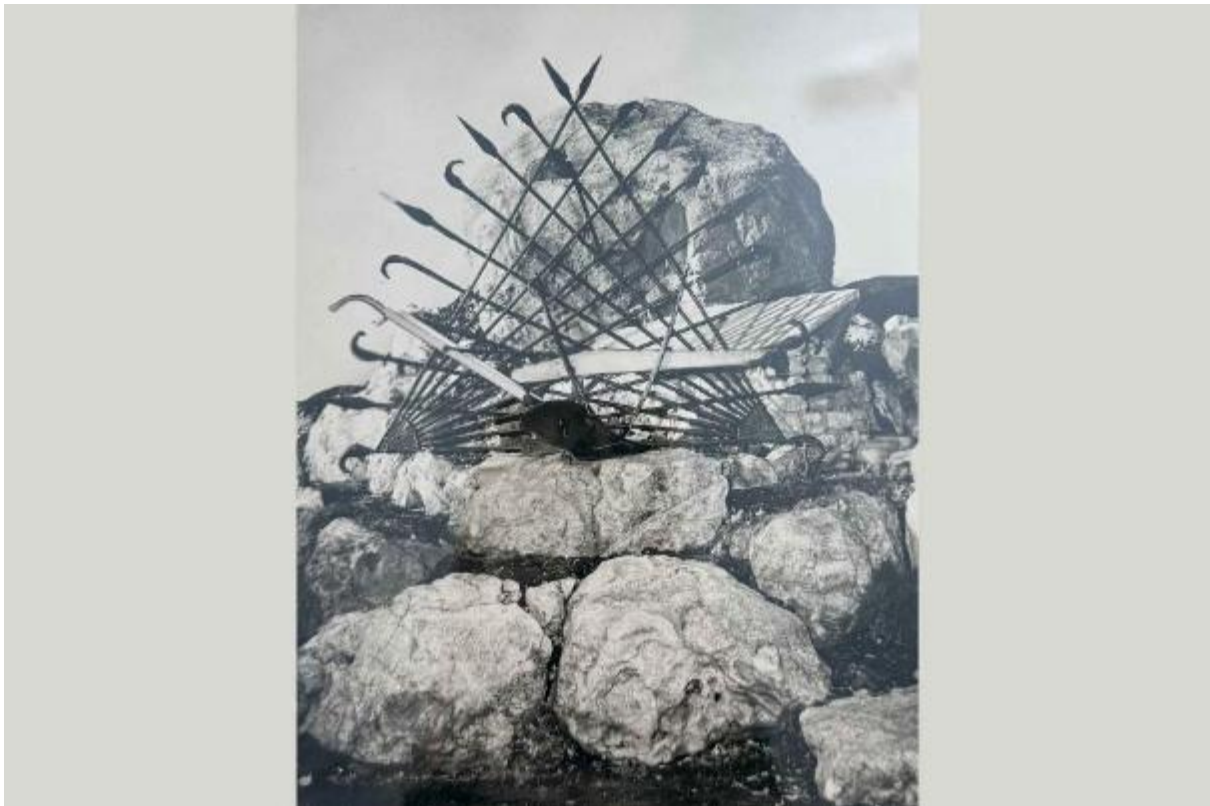


Figure 15

The Monument to Peace. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 16

The Last Chapter of Ecclesiastes. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 17

Daniel II: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 18

Interurban Station in 1924 in Salt Lake City. *Shipler Commercial Photographers Collection.*



Figure 19

Transporting the Pigeon House in 2012. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*



Figure 20

Historic photos and educational captions in the Bowery in 2024. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*



Figure 21

Undated photo of the Mount and surrounding garden sculptures. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*



Figure 22

Historic photo of the demolished Ashman property located at 751 East 500 South. *FamilySearch.*



Figure 23

Masonry conservators restoring The Monument to the Priesthood. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*



Figure 24

In-progress restoration of The Monument to the Priesthood spire. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*



Figure 25

Use of the oxyacetylene torch in Child's garden. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 26

Child supervising the placement of a boulder in his garden. *Thomas Battersby Child Papers, 1909–2002.*



Figure 27

Child supervising the acquisition of a boulder for his garden. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*



Figure 28

Child with his sculptural figure in The Monument to the Trade. *Friends of Gilgal Garden Archives.*

ATTACHMENT C:

Analysis of Standards for Designation

21A.51.040.A – Standards for the Designation of a Landmark Site, Local Historic District or Thematic Designation: Each lot or parcel of property proposed as a landmark site, for inclusion in a local historic district, or for thematic designation shall be evaluated according to the following:

1. Significance in local, regional, state or national history, architecture, engineering or culture, associated with at least one of the following:

- a. Events that have made significant contribution to the important patterns of history, or
- b. Lives of persons significant in the history of the city, region, state, or nation, or
- c. The distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or the work of a notable architect or master craftsman, or
- d. Information important in the understanding of the prehistory or history of Salt Lake City;

Analysis: The Historic Site Form (Attachment B, page 37) notes that Gilgal Sculpture Garden is the work of a Master Craftsman meeting Criteria 1c above. The form goes on to note that, *“Gilgal Sculpture Garden is the product of an extraordinary creative partnership between Thomas Battersby Child, Jr., the visionary designer who conceived the garden’s symbolic landscape, and Maurice Edmund Brooks, the skilled stone sculptor whose technical mastery brought Child’s most ambitious ideas into physical form. Child approached the garden with an intensity of thought and introspection that permeates every corner of the site, shaping a landscape where scriptural interpretation, personal reflection, and a lifelong devotion to learning are embedded in stone. Brooks complemented this vision with a sculptor’s precision, carving the complex figures and forms that anchor the garden’s artistic display.”*

Planning staff asserts that the proposed designation also meets Criteria 1b as Mr. Child served in both civic and religious leadership in Salt Lake City. Civically, he served on the Advisory Council of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, was a long-standing member of the Building and Construction Congress and held prominent roles in the Sons of Utah Pioneers. He was the inaugural president of Days of '47, Inc. (1943–1954), the inaugural chairman of the board for the modern Deseret Industries organization, and an elected official on the Salt Lake City Board of Education. His ecclesiastical service was equally significant: he served nineteen years as bishop of the LDS Tenth Ward and another eighteen years on the Park Stake High Council.

Finding: Gilgal Sculpture Garden is historically significant in local, state or national history, architecture, engineering or culture as Thomas Child Jr. and Maurice Brooks were master craftsmen meeting Criterial 1C, and also Mr. Child was significant in the history of the City meeting Criteria 1b. The proposed local landmark site meets this standard.

2. Historic integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association as defined in Section 21A.62.040. When analyzing historic integrity, the collective historic value of the buildings and structures in a local historic district taken together may be greater than the historic value of each individual building or structure in a district.

Analysis: Gilgal Sculpture Garden retains its historic integrity in terms of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association based on the definition of “Historic Integrity” as found in Section 21A.62.040 - Definitions of the Salt Lake City Code. Because of the nature of the sculpture garden and its massive stone sculptures, little has changed over the decades. Planning staff notes that:

- Location is well defined and remains intact,
- Design and layout of the Garden retains its original configuration,
- Setting retains the original physical environment of the historic Garden,
- Materials are primarily stone, concrete, and steel which remain unchanged,
- Workmanship is evident in the craft of Mr. Child and the creation of his vision/art,
- Feeling of the garden’s aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time remains intact, and;
- Association between Mr. Child and the Garden itself is still directly linked.

Finding: The historic integrity of Gilgal Sculpture Garden remains intact. The proposed local landmark site meets this standard.

3. The proposed landmark site, local historic district or thematic designation is listed, or is eligible to be listed on the national register of historic places;

Analysis: The Gilgal Sculpture Garden is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a contributing property in the Salt Lake City East Side (Benion-Douglas) National Register District.

Currently, Gilgal Sculpture Garden is not individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. That said, there is an application being considered and reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to individually list the Garden. The Historic Landmark Commission will hear the proposal for individual listing on the National Register at a future meeting, making a recommendation to the SHPO for the designation.

Finding: Gilgal Sculpture Garden is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a contributing property in the Salt Lake City East Side (Benion-Douglas) National Register District.

4. The proposed designation contains notable examples of elements of the city's history, development patterns or architecture not typically found in other local historic districts within Salt Lake City;

Analysis: Gilgal Sculpture Garden is a beloved historic resource in Salt Lake City. Its establishment is a reflection of the City’s history as the place where Mormon pioneers settled in 1847, and a legacy of Biblical, Mormon, and other spiritual beliefs. Its development, architecture, engineering, and art is unlike anything else found in Salt Lake City. It is truly a unique setting and artistic display.

Finding: Gilgal Sculpture Garden is a notable example of the City’s history and so unique that a similar historic resource is found nowhere else in Salt Lake City nor the State of Utah. The proposed local landmark site meets this standard.

5. The designation is generally consistent with adopted planning policies;

Analysis: The City Council adopted the [Community Preservation Plan](#) in October 2012. The Plan is the key strategic document that will guide Salt Lake City’s preservation efforts into the future. The purpose of the plan is to address the important goals of historic preservation and community character preservation to ensure the continued preservation of the City’s neighborhoods. The Plan provides vision and established policies that will help preserve those areas of the City that are uniquely historic and tell the story of the City’s historic past.

Relevant Preservation Plan Policies

Policy 3.2a: Local designation of historic resources should occur where the primary purpose is to protect the historic resources for the public interest and not where the primary purpose is something other than that such as to stabilize a neighborhood or preserve neighborhood character.

Policy 3.2b: The pursuance of new locally designated historic resources should focus on protecting the best examples of an element of the City's history, development patterns and architecture. Local historic districts should have logical boundaries based on subdivision plats, physical and / or cultural features and significant character defining features where possible.

Policy 3.2d: Local designation should only occur after the City has an understanding of the degree of property owner and public support for the proposed designation.

Policy 3.2e: Local designation of historic properties should only occur, after the City expends resources to inform property owners of the reasons for the proposed designation and what regulations will be included and the incentives offered for local designation.

Policy 3.2h: Prior to local designation, national designation should be pursued to ensure financial incentives are in place for those historic resources that are regulated locally.

Other adopted City policy documents addressing the role of historic preservation include:

Central Community Plan (2005): Gilgal Sculpture Garden is located within the area covered by the Central Community Plan. Guiding principle #4 states, "Maintain and improve the Central Community's historic fabric".

Relevant Preservation Plan Policies

Policy HP-1.0 Central Community gives high priority to the preservation of historic structures and development patterns.

Policy HP-4.0 Identify new historic sites and expand National Register historic districts as funding is available.

Plan Salt Lake (2015):

- Maintain neighborhood stability and character.
- Support neighborhood identity and diversity.
- Preserve and enhance neighborhood and district character.
- Encourage the incorporation of historic elements into buildings, landscapes, public spaces, streetscapes, neighborhoods, and districts where appropriate.
- Retain areas and structures of historic and architectural value.
- Integrate preservation into City regulation, policy, and decision making.
- Balance preservation with flexibility for change and growth.
- Improve education and outreach about the value of historic preservation.

Finding: The landmark site designation of Gilgal Sculpture Garden is generally consistent with purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of City-adopted planning documents. The proposed designation is consistent with the Community Preservation Plan policy directives regarding designation of new local historic sites, the Central Community Plan, and other adopted policy documents. The proposed designation meets this standard.

6. The designation would be in the overall public interest.

Analysis: The establishment of the Garden as a local landmark site is an initiative by a citizen's group, Friends of Gilgal Gardens (FOGG), in conjunction with Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall. The

preservation of the unique historic landscape and contributing elements in said landscape would benefit the citizens of Salt Lake City and perhaps citizens both State and Nationwide. It is safe to assert that the designation would be in the overall interest of the general public as evidenced by:

- It is a unique cultural and artistic resource and Utah's only visionary art environment,
- It provides public access to an important historic landscape and collection of artwork,
- It contributes to Salt Lake City's cultural heritage and identity,
- It serves educational purposes by interpreting religious, artistic, and social history, and,
- It is a recognized community asset that preservation groups and the public have worked to protect.

Finding: Based on the above referenced staff assertions of the overall artistic, cultural, and educational importance of the Gilgal Sculpture Garden, and also the interest expressed by the Mayor as well as members of the public, the designation of the Gilgal Sculpture Garden as a local landmark site appears to be in the best interest of the City. The proposal meets this standard.

21A.51.040.B – Factors to Consider: The following factors may be considered by the Historic Landmark Commission and the City Council to help determine whether the proposed designation of a landmark site, local historic district or thematic designation meets the criteria listed above:

1. Sites are of an age that allows insight into whether a property is sufficiently important in the overall history of the community as identified in one or more periods of significance in a historic survey report. Typically, this is at least fifty (50) years but could be less if the property has exceptional importance.

Analysis: The Period of Significance for the site begins in 1945 when construction of the Garden commenced, and ends in 1963 coinciding with the death of Mr. Child. The Garden is age eligible as the site and its contributing features are over 50 years old.

2. Whether the proposed local historic district or thematic designation contains examples of elements of the city's history, development patterns and/or architecture that may not already be protected by other local historic districts within the city.

Analysis: As this petition is for a proposed local landmark site (and not a local historic district or thematic designation), this standard does not apply. However, as noted above, Gilgal Sculpture Garden is historically significant for multiple reasons.

3. Whether designation of the proposed local historic district or thematic designation would add important knowledge that advances the understanding of the city's history, development patterns and/or architecture.

Analysis: As this petition is for a proposed local landmark site (and not a local historic district or thematic designation), this standard does not apply. However, as noted above, Gilgal Sculpture Garden is historically significant for multiple reasons.

4. Whether approximately seventy five percent (75%) of the structures within the proposed boundaries are rated as contributing structures by the most recent applicable historic survey.

Analysis: Again, this proposal is for the designation of a landmark site and therefore this standard does not apply. That said, as previously noted, all (100 %) of the 16 structures within the Gilgal Sculpture Garden are contributing.

Finding: Planning Staff is of the opinion that the “Factors to Consider” have been met.

21A.51.040.C – Boundaries of a Proposed Local Landmark Site: When applying the evaluation criteria in Subsection 21A.51.040.A, the boundaries of a landmark site shall be drawn to ensure that historical associations, that best enhance the integrity of the site comprise the boundaries.

Analysis: The Historic Site Form notes both the parcel number and legal description of the site as reflected in County records. This description aligns with the parcel boundaries of the Gilgal Sculpture Garden historically. The site encompasses what was formerly Child's backyard.

Finding: The proposed boundaries of the Gilgal Sculpture Garden are designated to ensure historical associations that enhance and maintain the integrity of the site.

ATTACHMENT D: Zoning Map Amendment Standards (21A.50.050)

A decision to amend the text of this title or the Zoning Map by general amendment is a matter committed to the legislative discretion of the City Council and is not controlled by any one standard. In making a decision to amend the Zoning Map, the City Council should consider the following:

Factor	Finding	Rationale
1. Whether a proposed map amendment is consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the city as stated through its various adopted planning documents;	Complies	The proposal is consistent with the stated purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the City as identified in the Community Preservation Plan, Central Community Plan, and Plan Salt Lake as discussed in this staff.
2. Whether a proposed map amendment furthers the specific purpose statements of the zoning ordinance.	Complies	<i>“The purpose of the zoning ordinance is to promote the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Salt Lake City, to implement the adopted plans of the City, and to carry out the purposes of the Municipal Land Use Development and Management Act, title 10, chapter 9, of the Utah Code Annotated or its successor, and other relevant statutes.”</i> It can be argued that the designation of Gilgal Sculpture Garden as a local landmark site promotes the health, morals, prosperity, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Salt Lake City. As previously noted, Gilgal Sculpture Garden is a beloved historic resource in Salt Lake City. Its establishment is a reflection of the City’s history as the place where Mormon pioneers settled in 1847, and a legacy of Biblical, Mormon, and other spiritual beliefs. Its development, architecture, engineering, and art is unlike anything else found in Salt Lake City. It is truly a unique setting and artistic display.
3. The extent to which a proposed map amendment will affect adjacent properties;	Complies	The proposed Zoning Map amendment will not have any additional effects on the adjacent properties.
4. Whether a proposed map amendment is consistent with the purposes and provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards	Complies	The proposed Zoning Map amendment would add the H – Historic Preservation Overlay District to the subject property and the property would be subject to the standards and regulations in 21A.34.020. The Zoning Map amendment is consistent with the

		purposes of the H- Historic Preservation Overlay District as it provides a means to protect and preserve a significant site and fosters civic pride in the history of Salt Lake City.
5. The adequacy of public facilities and services intended to serve the subject property, including, but not limited to, roadways, parks and recreational facilities, police and fire protection, schools, stormwater drainage systems, water supplies, and wastewater and refuse collection.	Complies	The proposed amendment has all utility and public services necessary to serve the properties and is consistent with this standard. Additionally, the proposed landmark site designation will not affect current or future infrastructure.

ATTACHMENT E: Public Process & Comments

Public Notice and Meetings

The following is a list of public meetings that have been held, and other public input opportunities, related to the proposed project since the application was submitted:

- May 1, 2026 – The East Central Community Council and the Central City Neighborhood Council were sent the 45-day required notice for recognized community organizations.
- May 4, 2026 - Property owners and residents within 300 feet of the development were provided early notification of the proposal.
- May 5 – June 22, 2026 – The project was posted to the Online Open House webpage.
- August 6, 2026 – The HLC heard the proposal and voted to forward a positive recommendation regarding the designation on to the Planning Commission and the City Council for consideration.

Notice of the Planning Commission public hearing for the proposal included:

- August 12, 2026
 - Public hearing notice sign posted on the property.
- August 13, 2026
 - Public hearing notice mailed.
 - Public notice posted on City and State websites and Planning Division listserv.

Department Comments

- July 7, 2026 – Public Lands was contacted regarding the proposal. They indicated that they have no issue with the designation.

Public Input:

As of the writing and distribution of the staff report, five written comments of support (attached) were received from the public for Historic Landmark Commission and Planning Commission consideration.

From: [Kirk Huffaker](#)
To: [Traughber, Lex](#)
Subject: (EXTERNAL) Open House Comment - Gilgal
Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 9:24:43 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

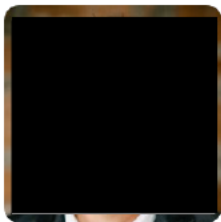
You don't often get email from kirk@kirkhuffaker.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This is an external email. Please be cautious when clicking links or opening attachments.

Lex,

To the proposal to make Gilgal Garden a local landmark, I express my strong and enthusiastic support. Thank you for shepherding the application through the process.

Best Regards,
Kirk



Kirk Huffaker Principal



Create your own [email signature](#)

From: [Casey McDonough](#)
To: [Traughber, Lex](#)
Subject: (EXTERNAL) Re: Designation of Gilgal Gardens on the Local Register as a Landmark Site
Date: Monday, July 27, 2026 3:06:43 PM

Caution: This is an external email. Please be cautious when clicking links or opening attachments.

Lex,

Good to see you are around and taking care of good city business like this! On that note, I am reaching out to express my wholehearted support to designate Gilgal Gardens on the Local Register as a Landmark Site (while we are at it, how about we stretch the Central City Historic District a few blocks east and west).

Thanks!

Casey McDonough

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

July 30, 2026

To: Salt Lake City Historic Landmark Commission

FROM: Judi Short, President, Friends of Gilgal Sculpture Garden

RE: Designation of Gilgal Gardens on the Local Register as a Landmark Site

I am so pleased to be able to recommend Gilgal Sculpture Garden to you as a Landmark Site in Salt Lake City. This journey started in the year 2000, with the first signing of the agreement between Salt Lake City and Friends of Gilgal Sculpture Garden (FOGG).

I will give you a short version of the history of this garden. Thomas Battersby Child owned this parcel; it was the backyard of his home on the 500 block of 800 East in Salt Lake City. Child was very active in the community; he often invited visitors to the garden on Sunday afternoons. He was bishop of the 10th Ward for 19 years. Child was a mason, and he began building this garden when he retired in 1945. After he passed in 1963, the garden was sold to private owners who lived on 500 South, a few lots from what the entrance to the garden at 749 East 500 South is now. In the 1990's, developers wanted to buy the garden and put townhouses between the monuments. The neighborhood was enraged and started raising money to purchase the property. In 1997, Friends of Gilgal Garden was formed to prevent development on the site and ensure its preservation for public enjoyment. Salt Lake County, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Foundation, the George S and Delores Dore Eccles Foundation, and many private donors made the purchase possible. Between them, they raised upwards of \$600,000 and gave most of that money to Salt Lake City to purchase the land, and the property became a Salt Lake City Park. The rest of the money was given to FOGG. This first agreement between the city and FOGG called for a conservation easement, and was signed in June of 2000. It said the owner was Salt Lake City and the Curator was FOGG. As Curator, FOGG is responsible for maintaining the folk art, long-term site development, restoration, and preservation of the sculptures and stones. It was also said that the city would pursue a conservation easement with Utah Heritage Foundation.

It has taken us 26 years to get to the conservation easement, which we have discussed many times. Finally, it was determined that an easement needed to be for a building, not a piece of property. That decision by the city has led us to pursue having this fabulous garden have a Landmarks Designation by the city.

I like to simplify this and say that the city cuts the grass and pays the water bill, and FOGG maintains the art and keeps the garden in beautiful condition. We split the irrigation. I wrote a CIP grant to purchase a new irrigation system, since we had old, rusty pipes, white plastic tubing, and rubber hoses that leaked. Something was always broken. And the squirrels make sure they eat their share of the tubing.

Over the years, there has been major restoration of most of the monuments. We have documented that in our brochure, available at the garden in English and Spanish. The garden is open every day except Christmas, New Year's Day, and Thanksgiving. We have tours, and a steady stream of visitors on most days. We have weddings and other events, just like the other city parks. Many people always bring their out-of-town guests to see the garden. Gilgal Garden is the only "Identified Visionary art environment" in Utah.

We are thrilled to be honored by the designation of a Landmarks site in Utah!

From: [Travis Starley](#)
To: [Traughber, Lex](#)
Subject: (EXTERNAL) Gilgal Sculpture Gardens
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2026 8:15:43 PM

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Hi Lex,

I apologize for not sending this before the June 22 public input deadline.

On behalf of the Central City Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee, I am writing to express our support for the proposed designation of Gilgal Sculpture Garden as a Local Landmark Site.

Although Gilgal Sculpture Garden falls just outside Central City Neighborhood Council's boundaries, it is directly adjacent to our neighborhood and is an important cultural, artistic, historic, and public open-space resource for Central City residents. The garden contributes to the character of the broader central Salt Lake community and provides a unique, publicly accessible place for reflection, art, history, and neighborhood connection.

We support the City's effort to designate Gilgal Sculpture Garden on the Local Register as a Landmark Site. We understand that this designation would provide demolition protection and City oversight for future modifications through the H-Historic Preservation Overlay, helping ensure the long-term protection of this important resource.

The historic site materials make clear that Gilgal Sculpture Garden retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that the site includes contributing sculptures and structures created during Thomas B. Child Jr.'s active work on the garden. The garden is a rare and distinctive example of a folk-art sculpture garden in Salt Lake City and remains a meaningful part of the cultural landscape surrounding Central City.

Thank you for accepting this late comment. Please include the Central City Neighborhood Council Land Use Committee's support in the record for petition PLNHLC2026-00364.

Best,

Travis Starley
Central City Neighborhood Council
Land Use Committee

From: [Susan Vogel](#)
To: [Traughber, Lex](#)
Subject: (EXTERNAL) Gilgal Gardens
Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 1:24:33 PM

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YES!!! I live in the Avenues and Gilgal Gardens is a treasure!! It is the first place I take out of town guests. It, like Allen Park, is such a wonderful place that reflects our quirky SLC history.

Please preserve it.

Susan Vogel, 84102