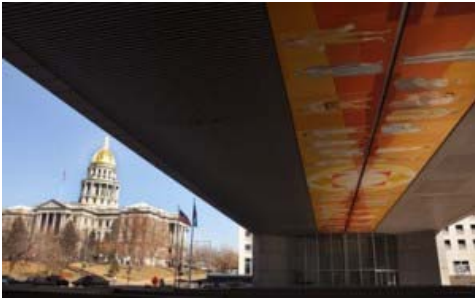


Colorado Judicial Mural To Be Destroyed

Posted on 08 June 2010

Tags: Angelo di Benedetto



“Justice through the Ages” by Angelo di Benedetto measures 20 feet by 150 feet

LAW WEEK COLORADO

DENVER — The massive mural that overlooked the old Colorado Supreme Court Law Library will be destroyed this week, a state project manager says. Asbestos in the panels on which the mural is painted prevents its safe removal and conservation.

The Colorado Judicial Building, where it hung for three decades, is being demolished this summer to make way for a new courts complex. The judicial branch had planned to find a new home for the mural before discovering its panels were 30 percent asbestos.

“It looks like the mural is going to be disposed of,” said Bill Mosher of Trammell Crow, who oversees the building project. “This is really frustrating and disappointing considering all the time and effort that’s gone into it.”

“Justice through the Ages” by Angelo di Benedetto will be removed this week, Mosher said, and the panels will be disposed of the same way any other asbestos would be.

There were several factors behind the decision to abandon preservation efforts.

“Because of the hazardous nature of this material, there is certainly a cloud over whether this can be placed anywhere, and almost any public entity that I’ve worked with can’t take it,” Mosher said. “And much as people want to help out, they can’t.”

Besides the health concerns, there were worries that the integrity of the painting would be compromised. Its panels are very thin and prone to breaking upon removal. Broken panels can release airborne asbestos and must be destroyed according to state law, which would have rendered the 74-panel mural incomplete.

The Colorado Council on the Arts recently deaccessioned the mural, Mosher said, over these and other concerns.

But the mural could live on, in another form, when the Ralph L. Carr Justice Complex opens in 2013. Hundreds of photos of the mural have been taken in the judicial branch’s documentation efforts, Mosher said. A reproduction, perhaps 2 feet by 12 feet, might be placed either in the new law library or “learning center,” a place where young students will learn about the courts. A plaque describing di Benedetto and the mural may also be installed.