

Long-Term Maintenance opinion on “Los Alamos Heritage Gate”

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Looking at the proposal. The gate is designated to be powder coated. All industrial coatings are only manufactured to last 5-7 years, this is the standard for when you start to see coatings fail. With annual maintenance you can get these coatings to last longer. Powder coatings tend to chip off when rust occurs under the surface or when they are bumped or scratched. Los Alamos is a pretty dry area so rust generally occurs more slowly than in a more humid environment.

The artist states that they are sending touch up paint for losses. Chips can be inpainted, but without sanding the edges down and then painting a visual section (i.e. an entire bar), you will see the edges of the losses. Most people would not notice this if they are not looking closely at the gate, so this may be O.K. with everyone.

Powder coats also tend to fade and blanch. I would suggest that a UV varnish such as Golden MSA varnish is applied 6 months or so after the gate is installed, or maybe go through one inspection cycle and then apply the coating. You should not wait more than a year to coat the fence. Also, if you do not apply a UV coating then any of the inpainting may not match the original coating if it has faded.

The fabrication and cleaning of the fence prior to powder coating will determine in part how well the coating attaches to the fence.

The goal with this would be to wash annually, get a UV coating on it and then keep up with inpainting any chips annually. If this is done, the fence should last 20 years without having to sandblast and recoat it. The UV coating should be changed out every 3-5 years depending on how it is faring. because there is not much space between the elements, this could be difficult and time consuming. The UV coating that we suggest is removed with mineral spirits or naphtha by wiping it off. Then a new coat would be spray applied. This would take about 2-3 work days for one person, two days to remove the coating and about 1/2 day to reapply it- depending on skill level. The first application will take 1/2 day to wash and then apply the Golden brand MSA coating.

You can look to other artworks in your collection that are powder coated to see how long items fair in your particular environment. Lumisphere 1,2,3 & Asymmetric Bench Club & Loveseat has a powder coating on it. Where it is chipped, it was rusting. The most damage I've seen on this artwork is UV damage. We applied a Golden brand MSA varnish coating to it 2 years ago and it is holding up well. However, this artwork is very easy to access from all directions, unlike the fence that is layered. We have not yet needed to remove the MSA coating and replace it. It also was able to mask some of the lightening of the surface from UV.

I am not sure if the fence will be matte or glossy, I would highly recommend not going with any matte paint or powder coating, it weathers the worst. Gloss holds up over time much better than matte.

For installation, when handling the actual gate, installers should wear clean gloves, either new nitrile/ latex gloves or soft cotton gloves. The gate should be laid out on a packing blanket. When in the gate is standing to install, a packing blanket should be placed underneath to ensure that the bottom powder coat is not dinged during installation. Photographs of the gate should be taken upon arrival and unpacking and also after it is fully installed.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.