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Lux Lighting Design executes project for Brewer Fountain

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The iconic, 22-foot tall Brewer Fountain on Boston Common, the oldest public sculpture in America's oldest public park, is now illuminated year-round for the first time since it was installed in 1868, thanks to a project that has created a nighttime attraction and enhanced security the area. The lighting redesign project, was initiated and funded by the Friends of the Public Garden, in partnership with the Boston Parks & Recreation Department, and skillfully executed by Lux Lighting Design of Belmont, Mass.

The previous lighting, attached to four steel posts, did not illuminate the entire fountain, did not highlight the fine details of the sculpted figures and did not operate in the winter.

"The new lighting design for Brewer Fountain brings to life the extraordinary details of this multi-layered sculptural piece, and will provide a beacon of light and beauty year-round for this heavily-traveled area of the Common," said Elizabeth Vizza, executive director of the nonprofit Friends organization.

"The project was aesthetically and technically challenging and enormously rewarding," said Doreen Le May Madden, Lux Lighting Design owner and principal. "I'm honored to have played a role and to now have the fountain lit year-round for the first time in history."

Le May Madden set three aesthetic goals for the project: illuminating the details of the sculpture, making the lighting fixtures as unobtrusive as possible and selecting the proper white light that would enhance the warmth of the bronze. "I'm pleased to say we were able to accomplish all three goals using LED lights that are brighter than the old lights, use 80% less electricity and highlight the fountain's details much better," she said.

Technical challenges arose because the fountain was restored before provision had been made to install new lighting, Le May Madden noted. "So we worked with constraints, including having to use a single existing electrical feed. Another challenge was creating a framework to support underwater as well as open-airlighting that would withstand the winter months and resist vandalism."

Brewer Fountain is a one-of-a-kind bronze casting of a monumental sculpture created by Mathurin Moreau and Alexandre Lambert for the 1855 World's Fair in Paris. Adorned with the sea god Neptune, his wife Amphitrite and other mythological figures, it celebrated the power of water and the creation of a modern municipal water system in Paris.

Boston merchant Gardner Brewer attended the fair and fell in love with the majestic sculpture. He commissioned a bronze cast of the work and donated the cast to the City of Boston.

The fountain was initially installed on the Common near Brewer's home on Beacon Street and moved to its current location near the Park Street subway station in 1917. Over the years it fell into disrepair along with the plaza surrounding it. The City restored the fountain in 2010. The following year the nonprofit Friends organization renovated the plaza and surrounding parkland, creating a vibrant public gathering place.

Led by award-winning owner and principal designer Doreen Le May Madden, Lux Lighting Design of Belmont, MA is a full service lighting design company providing the ultimate in creative and functional designs for interior and outdoor residential and commercial projects. Lux creates custom lighting designs to meet the specific needs of its clients, with unity of the project's appearance in mind. By respecting the built environment, the designs produce lighting that is complementary to the project's aesthetics while being functional for an overall pleasing result.

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