

## PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 23, 2022

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



**Project Name & Address:** 917 E Mifflin Street, Breese Stevens Field

**Application Type(s):** Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations to a Designated Madison Landmark

**Legistar File ID #** [68535](#)

**Prepared By:** Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

**Date Prepared:** May 17, 2022

### Summary

**Project Applicant/Contact:** Sarah Close, City of Madison Parks Division

**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the repair of masonry and relocation of south gate.

### Background Information

**Parcel Location/Information:** The subject site is a Designated Madison Landmark

#### Relevant State Statute Section:

**Wisc SS 62.23(7)(em)2m.** In the repair or replacement of a property that is designated as a historic landmark or included within a historic district or neighborhood conservation district under this paragraph, a city shall allow an owner to use materials that are similar in design, color, scale, architectural appearance, and other visual qualities.

#### Relevant Ordinance Sections:

- 41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.** A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.
- (1) New construction or exterior alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
    - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
    - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
    - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction on any property located in a historic district, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
    - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a certificate of appropriateness is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.

#### Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Analysis and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to repair masonry and reconstruct the south gate. While the masonry work is underway, a temporary gate and fencing will be installed to allow for ongoing use of the property during construction activities. Breese Stevens Field has a grandstand designed by Claude & Starck in the Mediterranean Revival style, which was constructed in 1925. In 1934, the Civil Works Administration constructed the perimeter stone wall using stone quarried from what is now Hoyt Park. It was designated a Madison landmark in 1995.

The proposal is to address stresses and deterioration of the main gate to Breese Stevens. The cast iron gate is attached to stone piers, and the rust at the points of connection has led to exfoliation and spalling of the stone, which has led to cracks and structural failures. The proposal is to deconstruct the piers, excavate out the area to install concrete footers and reinforced concrete block piers, then reinstall the stone as a veneer, and finally reattach the historic gates.

Staff has asked for consultation when it comes to planning for the reconstruction of the piers to ensure that the methods of preparing the stone to serve as a veneer will preserve the stones. It will likely be unclear until we deconstruct and learn the depth of the existing stones to be able to determine what modifications (if any) will need to take place to allow the existing stones to serve as a veneer. Some of the stone may need to be cut, other stones are cracked or deteriorated to the point where they need to be repaired. The points of connection for the gates to the piers need to be a nonreactive metal to prevent future deterioration of the stone.

Staff also recommends numbering and documenting the existing configuration of each area to be deconstructed so that it can be accurately reconstructed with the face of stones going back to the previous configuration.

A discussion of the relevant standards follows:

**41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS.** A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.

- (1) New construction or exterior alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
  - (a) This property is a designated landmark, so the work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

**Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

1. No proposed changes in use to the property.
2. The proposed work will preserve the character of the property and reinforce the historic features of the main gate so that they can continue to serve their purpose.
3. No conjectural features are proposed.
4. N/A
5. By documenting the location of the existing stones and reconstructing them so as to replicate how the New Deal CWA originally designed the piers, this project will preserve the example of the historic craftsmanship of the entrance gate.
6. This work will repair the stone where possible and replace areas with similar stone where the original has failed. The work to convert the existing stone to veneer will need to be carefully undertaken so as not to destroy the historic stones reclaimed from the deconstruction of the piers. Replacing the type of metal that is connecting the gate to the piers so that rust does not destroy the stone will protect the pier from future deterioration. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Any surface cleaning of the reclaimed stones will need to be done with the gentlest method possible.
8. There are no known significant archaeological resources that will be impacted by the project, but the contractor should be mindful of inadvertent discoveries.
9. The alterations to the masonry piers will be undertaken in a way that the changes should not be visible.
10. N/A

## Recommendation

Staff believes the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness could be met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the project with the following conditions:

1. Updated plans showing the footings encompassing the full extent of the reconstructed pier, including the area covered in veneer.
2. Documentation and numbering of the stones on the existing piers to be submitted to staff.
3. Contractor meeting with staff to determine best course of action for converting the existing stones to serve as veneers.
4. Final specifications for method of connection of gates to the masonry piers to be approved by staff.