



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

Madison Municipal Building, Suite 017
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
P.O. Box 2985
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985
Phone: (608) 266-4635
Fax (608) 267-8739
www.cityofmadison.com

March 22, 2024

Memo To: Common Council

From: Rebecca Cnare, Heather Bailey, Ryan Jonely, Karin Wolf, Meri Rose Ekberg, Breanna Collins

RE: Sesquicentennial Markers Replacement

General Overview

As part of the celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the City of Madison in 2006, then Mayor Cieslewicz created a Sesquicentennial Committee comprised of: Michael Bridgeman, David Mollenhoff, Alder Jean MacCubbin, Joel Skornicka, Mary Lang Sollinger, Mark Gajewski, and Joe Sensenbrenner.

The Committee selected stories from a public input process and placed 12 historical markers within the original plat of Madison (Yahara River to Park Street.) Several donors provided funding for the project. At the time of their installation, the Committee hoped that these 12 markers would be the beginning of a larger project.

2021 Plaque Assessment Report (attached)

In the winter of 2021, the Planning Division staff did a condition review of all 12 markers and found:

- 9 intact markers in varied conditions, but mostly faded, and with some damage
- 2 markers in storage (removed with reconstruction of MLK, Jr. Blvd)
- 1 partially missing, no plaque, but post remains in situ.

2022 Madison Historic Preservation Plan

In the recently adopted Madison Historic Preservation Plan, an emphasis was placed on promoting historic preservation in Madison beyond the traditional plaques at designated landmark buildings, including:

- Goal 1: Promote historic preservation in Madison
 - Objective 1a: promote cultural tourism and civic pride by sharing Madison's unique culture and character. Strategies include:
 - 1a-i. Place plaques at existing buildings and places, lost buildings, and cultural sites to identify significant historical events and locations. Buildings and places should emphasize the actions and events associated with underrepresented groups including Native Americans, Latino/a, African Americans, Hmong, LGBTQ, and women.
 - 1a-ii. Locate storytelling plaques at cultural and historical buildings and places throughout the city. Signage can assist in the promotion and understanding of Madison's unique culture and character. The buildings and sites can be identified on walking tour maps, social media, and online resources.

2024 Project Proposal

After a review of the plaques' condition and Historic Preservation Plan Goals, staff have developed a proposed replacement program.

Step 1: Common Council Resolution to create new Historic Place Marker Program

Step 2: Remove Current Plaques

- Remove unsightly and faded plaques
- Cost: **Estimated at \$5000.** Can be done in-house by transferring Preservation plan funds to Parks/Mall Maintenance.

Step 3: Design New Markers

- Staff has created a design inspired by the UK's Historic markers program. (*See attachment for draft design and draft language.*)
- Draft language for markers will be vetted by varied stakeholder groups chosen by the Landmarks Commission, the Madison Landmarks Commission will approve all final language.

Step 4: Install up to six new markers - *Cost estimate \$5,000-\$8,000*

- **2 Markers along Lake Mendota Drive – Indigenous Village Group/ White Oaks, Dugout Canoes**
 - Coordinated with Lake Mendota Drive reconstruction process/budget for two Indigenous peoples' markers. Staff will work with Ho-Chunk Nation representatives on language.
- **1 marker about Indigenous Mounds Groups –**
 - Location / language to be coordinated with Ho-Chunk Nation
- **1 Marker at Hill Grocery Site - First African American Neighborhood**
 - Draft languages will be vetted by stakeholder groups approved by Landmarks Commission
- **Wisconsin Geology**
 - Could be delayed to coordinate with John Nolen Drive Project
- **Outdoor Markets**
 - Language should be reviewed/revise to better reflect underrepresented communities.

Future Phases:

- Larger undertaking to determine what stories should be told, and where those stories could be celebrated.
- Process approved by Landmarks Commission as this is an implementation of the HPP
- Funding could come from varied existing funding sources, including Neighborhood Grants, Placemaking, Public Works Street projects. If successful, funding could be included in future Capital Budgets for up to 5 new plaques per year.

Draft Design Example of new Historic Marker

(Wording subject to change after consultation with Stakeholders)



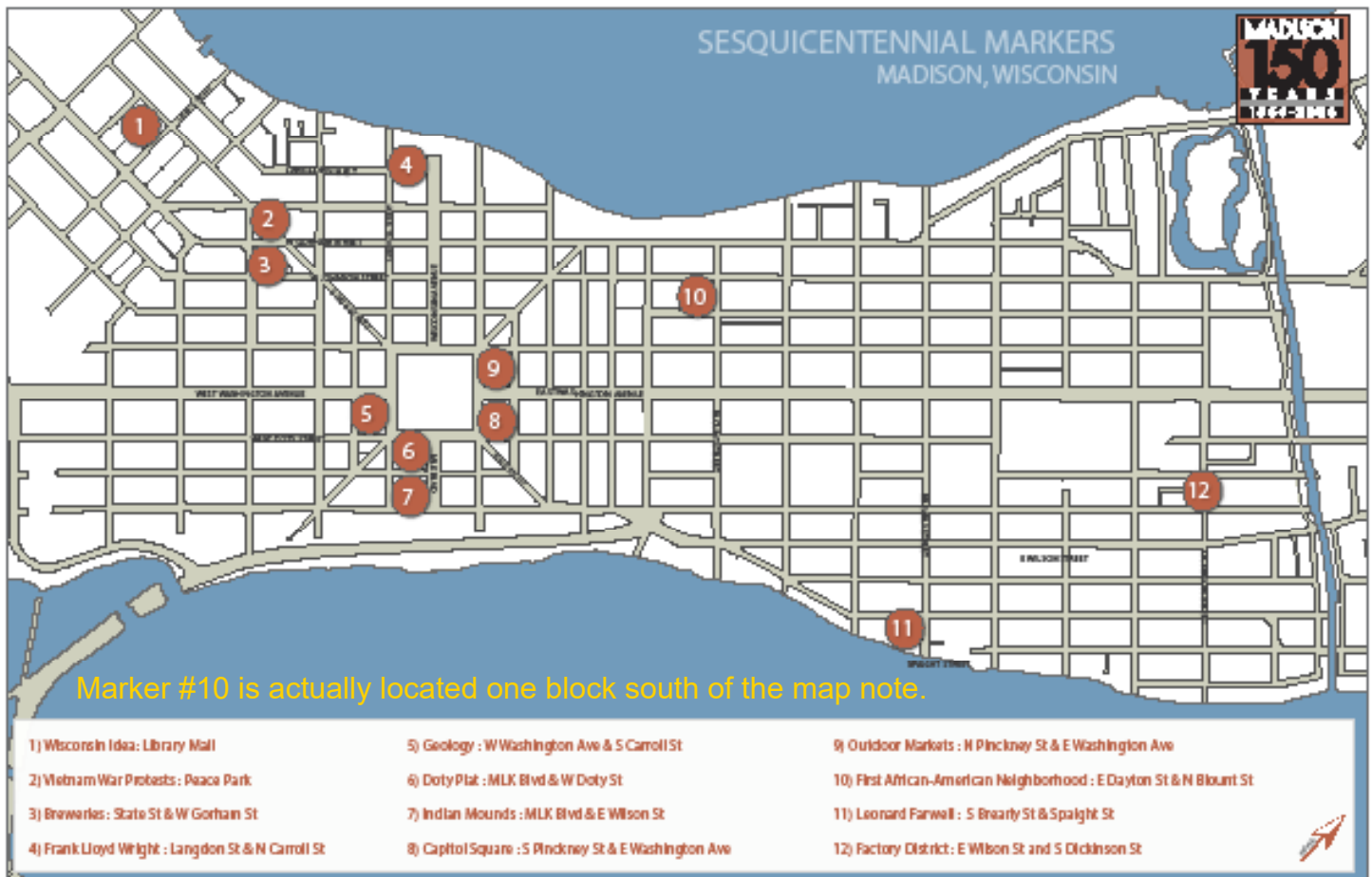
Sesquicentennial Markers Condition Review

General Overview

As part of the celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the City of Madison, 12 historical markers were placed around the downtown and near Eastside giving passersby a glimpse of Madison's past. See map below for locations.

In 2021 there are still 8 wholly intact markers in their original location with three missing and one partially missing. Two, which were on MLK BLVD, were removed during the reconstruction of the public right of way. One, which was placed near the intersection of East Mifflin Street and North Blount Street, could not be located. The partially missing sign was placed on the bike path just off of South Dickinson Street and while the post is still there, the sign has been removed and replaced with graffiti.

All of the markers show signs of aging as they are 15 years old. Some of the markers have fared better than others, but all show signs of weathering. All of the posts have rusted, but the rust appears to be on the surface and all of the posts are still sturdy.

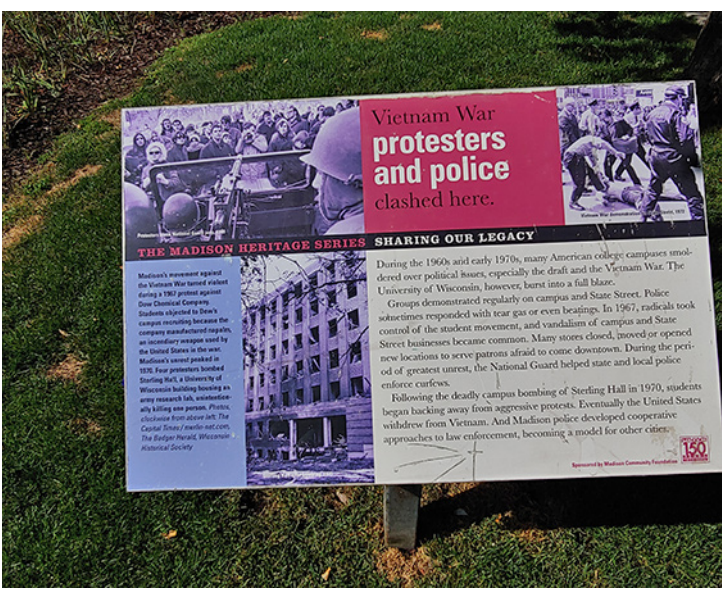




1) Wisconsin Idea: Library Mall

Observations:

The plaque shows minor signs of fading and is wearing around all sides with the top being the most damaged. There is minor chipping across the plaque. It seems like some of the material used in making the plaques has run down the back side. The post has rust on it, but none of it seems severe and the structure of the post seems solid.



2) Vietnam War Protests : Peace Park

Observations

The plaque shows minor signs of fading and is wearing around all sides with the the top having the most damaged. There was intentional damage done to the plaque along with other chipping. The post has some rust on it but mostly seems solid.



3) Breweries : State St & W Gorham St

Observations:

The plaque shows minor signs of fading and is showing some wear around all sides
 The post has a small amount of rust that is mainly one the base. The rust has been leaching onto the sidewalk. The post seems solid.



4) Frank Lloyd Wright : Langdon St & N Carroll St

Observations:

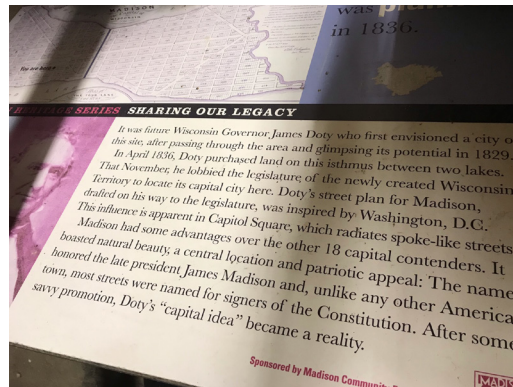
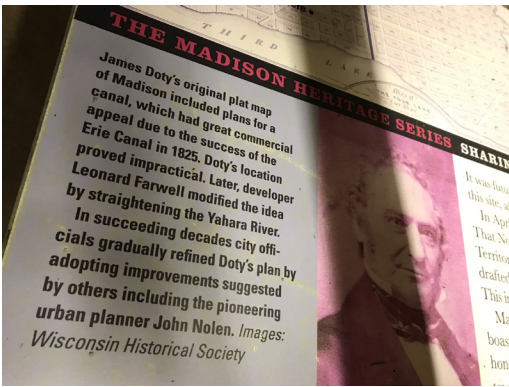
The plaque is fading badly and is wearing around all sides with the top showing the most weathering. There is substantial damage across the face of the plaque, including the lower left corner missing, and is generally in poor shape. The post has a large amount of surface rust, but still seems solid.



5) Geology : W Washington Ave & S Carroll St

Observations

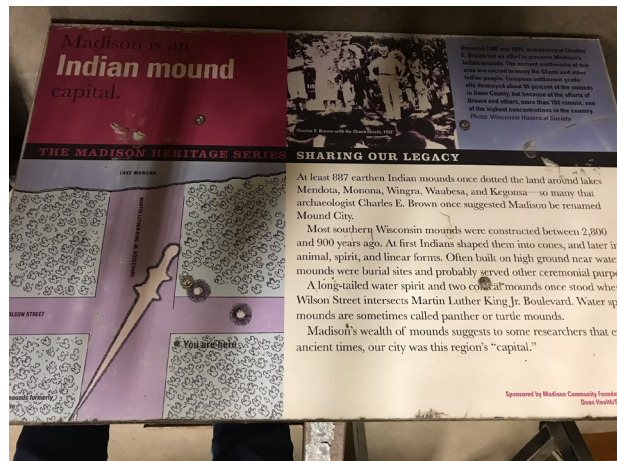
The plaque shows minor signs of fading and is wearing around all sides
The post has a small amount of rust on it but mostly seems solid.



6) Doty Plat : MLK Blvd & W Doty St

Observations

Removed during reconstruction of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and has not been replaced. Stored at Fairchild Building.



7) Indian Mounds : MLK Blvd & E Wilson St

Observations

Removed during reconstruction of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and has not been replaced. Stored at Fairchild Building.



8) Capitol Square : S Pinckney St & E Washington Ave

Observations

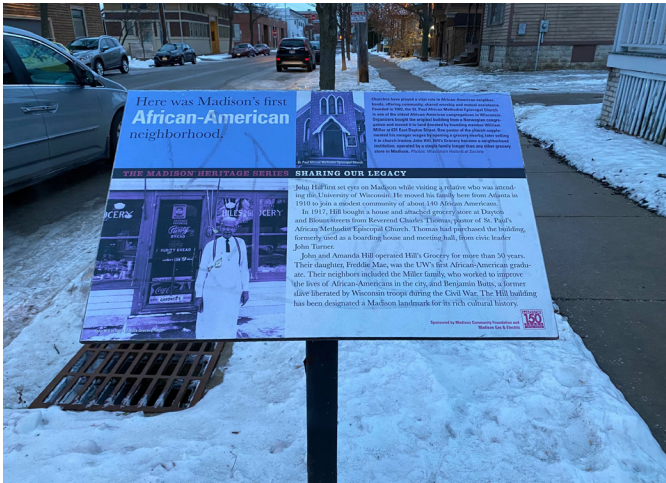
The plaque is fading badly and some wear around all sides. There is some damage across the face of the plaque. The post has a small amount of surface rust, but still seems solid.



9) Outdoor Markets : N Pinckney St & E Washington Ave

Observations

The plaque shows minor signs of fading and is wearing around all sides. The post has a fair amount of rust on it but mostly seems solid.



10) First African-American Neighborhood : E Mifflin St & N Blount St

Observations:

Plaque has graffiti, post in similar condition to others.



11) Leonard Farwell : S Brearly St & Spaight St

Observations

The plaques has some fading and is generally in good shape, but seems like some of the material used in making the plaques has run down the back side. The post has some rust, but mostly seems solid.



12) Factory District : E Wilson St and S Dickinson St

Observations:

The plaque is gone, the smaller mounting area on the post remains, and has graffiti. The post has some rust, but is generally solid.