PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 6, 2026

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Project Name & Address:	**1440 E Johnson Street**
Application Type(s):	Certificate of Approval for alteration to a landmark site
Legistar File ID #	93761
Prepared By:	Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared:	July 2, 2026

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact:	Emma Krug, City of Madison Parks Division
Requested Action:	The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Approval for an alteration to a landmark site

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject property is Tenney Park, a designated landmark site

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

A Certificate of Approval 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 Approval 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 Approval 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 will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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 proposed project is to replace a portion of an existing asphalt path with a beige crushed stone, held in place with an elastomeric binding agent, and to complete regrading at the ice rink. The property is Tenney Park, designed by O.C. Simonds. It was designated a Madison landmark for its Prairie-style landscape architecture. The work proposed by Madison Parks continues to align with the original plan with adaptations to meet current environmental conditions. While the color of the path will be changing, the proposed change in materials will give the path a more natural appearance, which is in keeping with the intent of the Prairie-style landscape design. Because this property was built on top of a Ho-Chunk village that was active until the City removed the inhabitants in order to make the park, this property is also an archaeological site.

A discussion of relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. There is no proposed change to the use of the site.
2. The asphalt of the path is not a character-defining feature. The path and its location will be maintained, but the change in material will allow for a more natural appearance and introduce more sustainable materials, which is in keeping with the Prairie-style landscape architecture of the site. The regrading of the ice rink area is part of maintaining this landscape feature.
3. These changes will not create a false sense of history and does not introduce conjectural features.
4. The asphalt paths have not acquired historical significance in their own right and have been repeatedly replaced as part of their material life cycle. The ice rink is not proposed to be removed and the regrading will allow the public to continue to use it.
5. No distinctive materials, features, finishes, or construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be removed as part of this work.
6. The replacement of the asphalt with a more sustainable material rather than replacing it again with asphalt is an alteration that is in keeping with the character of the park. As the asphalt is not a character-defining feature, this alteration meets the standards.
7. N/A

8. As part of creating the park, the City removed so much of the land as part of creating this park, that there is limited potential for archaeological materials. However, as a property owned by a municaplity with a historic designation, the State Historic Preservation Office will have conditions about the archaeology as part of the City acquiring State Compliance approval.
9. The new material for the path can be removed in the future, just as the asphalt has been repeatedly replaced over the years.
10. The essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment will be unimpaired by this work.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Approval are met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project as proposed. Madison Parks will need to secure State Compliance approval from the State Historic Preservation Office in compliance with Wisc. Stat. 66.1111.