

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

October 28, 2019

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 402 North Thornton Avenue

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations on a landmark site

Legistar File ID # [57894](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: October 21, 2019

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Sarah Lerner – City of Madison Parks Division

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for shoreline stabilization and restoration.

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The landmark site is located at 402 North Thornton Avenue.

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 stabilize the shoreline areas in Tenney Park, including planting more flood tolerant species. The Landmarks Commission approved a similar proposal in 2015, however the flooding of 2018 destroyed much of the vegetation. The current proposal implements a plan that would retain the character of the designed park landscape with native species that are in line with the intent of the Prairie-style landscape architecture, while also addressing the new environmental conditions.

Tenney Park, designated in 1995, is listed as a landmark for its Prairie-style landscape architecture, designed by O.C. Simonds, with subsequent changes by John Nolen.

A discussion of the relevant standards is as 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) As a designated landmark, the proposed work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - (b) N/A

- (c) N/A
- (d) The proposed work does not appear to frustrate the public interest. In fact, the work proposed is to preserve a damaged significant landscape so that it can be conserved for the general public.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. While there is no proposed change of human use of the property, the change in environmental conditions necessitate modifying the designed landscape to accommodate the likelihood for periodic flooding. The proposal is to make those modifications in a way that will require minimal changes to the defining characteristics of Prairie-style landscape architecture by using indigenous plants that are both in keeping with the original landscape plan, but can also survive the current conditions.
2. While some of the plant species are proposed to change, the changes are done in a way so as to preserve both the design and intent of the original plans for Tenney Park.
3. The changes do not appear to create a false sense of history.
4. N/A
5. The proposed changes are in keeping with the landscape architecture of the park.
6. The shoreline mitigation is based upon previous conditions and will prevent additional erosion. Plants are an ephemeral resource, so the changes of plantings is part of ongoing landscape maintenance.
7. N/A
8. The applicant is working with the Wisconsin Historical Society to ensure that the proposed work will not impact any of the archaeological resources on the property.
9. The proposed landscape changes will not destroy historic materials.
10. N/A

Recommendation

Staff believes that standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) for are met and recommends the Landmarks Commission approve the project as proposed.