

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

April 19, 2021

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name & Address: 402 N Thornton Avenue, Tenney Park

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

Legistar File ID # [64877](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: April 13, 2021

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Gregory Marshall, Wisconsin Sign and Graphics Co.

Requested Action: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of pedestrian bridge wing walls.

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 for the replacement of the failing wing walls and asphalt path on either side of a historic pedestrian bridge in Tenney Park. Tenney Park is designated as a Madison landmark for its Prairie-style landscape architecture. The bridge was constructed in 1930 and is considered a contributing structure to the landmark designation.

The Landmarks Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness for rehabilitation of this bridge in 2011, which included installation of limestone retaining walls. Those walls are now failing due to muskrat activities. The proposal is to replace and expand the retaining walls to prevent further erosion from undermining the bridge and increase the safety of pedestrians. The asphalt path has settled as part of the failing retaining walls and is proposed to be replaced in-kind as part of the reworking of the retaining walls.

The style and arrangement of stone is in keeping with the style of shoreline improvements found elsewhere in the park and the use of natural materials are in keeping with the landscape architecture prevalent in Tenney Park.

A discussion of the relevant standards follows:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. No proposed changes in use.
2. The proposal will retain the historic bridge and will not remove historic materials.
3. The introduction of improved retaining walls are not a conjectural feature and will read as a new element on the landscape that is complimentary, yet differentiated from the historic.
4. N/A

5. N/A
6. The deteriorated asphalt path and retaining walls are not historic features and their repair does require replacement, which is proposed as materials in-kind.
7. N/A
8. While there are archaeological resources in Tenney Park, this proposed work is on a previously disturbed site and no archaeology is likely to be impacted. However, the City will still need to secure project approval from the Wisconsin Historical Society.
9. The new work will be differentiated from the old, but compatible with the design of the historic landscape.
10. The proposed work will not impact historic resources and is removable if needed for future work on the site.

Recommendation

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