

## PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 12, 2021

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



**Project Name & Address:** 3902 Regent Street, Hoyt Park

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

**Legistar File ID #** [66138](#)

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

**Date Prepared:** July 7, 2021

### Summary

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

**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the realignment of hiking trails.

### 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 realignment of hiking trails. Hoyt Park was designated a landmark in 1995 for its historic association with the Park & Pleasure Drive Association, and for the architecture of the WPA-constructed structures within the park. While the existing trails connect to the park structures, such as the overlook, it is unclear if the route of the paths is historic. Regardless, as noted in the submittal materials, the cliff-face at the edge of the park has eroded and the pathways are now dangerously close to the edge, and in some instances may be contributing to the erosion. The proposal is to reroute existing pathways to both address safety of pedestrian users and maintenance of the park landscape so it can continue to be used as a recreational resource.

The existing crush gravel pathway will be rerouted through the wooded areas, stepping the pathway away from dangerous areas. The new route will replicate the crushed gravel appearance. There are some areas of the existing pathway that are paved, and those areas are directing water off of the path, over the bluff, and onto an adjacent property. The proposal is to remove the remaining pavement, install temporary natural barricades to prevent pedestrian access to the abandoned pathways, and install native vegetation to reclaim the landscape in those areas. The proposed work will also include removal of a large dead oak tree.

A discussion of the relevant standards follows:

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

1. Proposed work will continue the use of the area as a site of public recreation. While the trails will be slightly rerouted, they will be in the same vicinity and the overall use of this area of the park will remain the same. No significant structures will be altered in the area.

2. While it is unclear if the pathway routes or the asphalt paving are historic, the proposed alteration to the site design will retain the character of the overall property. The stone structures that are called out as significant in the landmark nomination will not have changes as part of the proposed work.
3. The rerouted paths will not create a false sense of historical development.
4. N/A.
5. The distinctive features and finishes are largely found on the stone structures in the park. There does not appear to be distinctive craftsmanship in relation to the composition of the pathways. However, the plans to mitigate the previous route by introducing native plantings will return the site to a natural appearance, consistent with the landscape of this area of the park.
6. The deteriorated pathway cannot be repaired in its present location, so rerouting it to follow a similar trajectory and connect with the rest of the pathways allows it to retain the functionality of this part of the park. The oak tree must be removed because it is dead. As an ephemeral resource, plantings are expected to complete a life cycle within a historic landscape.
7. N/A
8. There are no known significant archaeological resources in this area. As the site of a former quarry, the locations are likely highly disturbed.
9. No historic materials will be destroyed in removal of the existing path or introduction of the new route. The oak tree is historic in the landscape, but must be removed. Otherwise the alterations to the site preserve the character of the historic recreational use in this area of the park.
10. The new pathway could be reclaimed in the future. New trees will continue to self seed within the forested area of the park. As such, the overall character of the park landscape will retain historic integrity.

## Recommendation

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