

October 3, 2024

David Bennett  
Public Works Director/City Engineer  
City of Northfield  
801 Washington Street  
Northfield, MN 55057

RE: Bridge Square-Riverside Park Improvement Project – Phase 1  
90% Design  
Northfield, Dakota and Rice Counties  
SHPO Number: 2022-1266

Dear David Bennet:

Thank you for continuing consultation on the above referenced project. Information received in our office on July 30, 2024, has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Office by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (Minn. Stat. 138.665-666) and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act (Minn. Stat. 138.40).

As stated in the correspondence, the City of Northfield is proposing improvements to Bridge Square and Riverside Park, which are contributing resources within the **Northfield Commercial Historic District**, a historic property which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Accordingly, in order for our office to determine that the project will not adversely affect the historic property, the proposed work must be designed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (SOI Standards).

Phase I of the Bridge Square-Riverside Park Improvement Project, which is the focus of this review, includes The Plaza, The Green, and The Terrace.

We have reviewed the following documentation that was submitted to our office on July 30, 2024:

- 106 Group Letter: *Design Review for Bridge Square-Riverside Park Improvement Project – Phase I, Northfield, Dakota and Rice Counties, SHPO Number: 2022-1266* (July 30, 2024)
- *Site Plan*
- *90% Construction Documents: Northfield Bridge Square, Northfield, MN* (06/28/2024, Damon Farber Landscape Architects, et al.)

Our comments are provided below.

#### **Design Review**

Based on our review of the submitted documentation we agree that the project, as currently proposed in the 90% construction documents, has been designed in accordance with the SOI Standards and will have no adverse effect on the historic property. Regarding the public art, we understand that the Northfield Arts and Culture Commission approved the public art elements in early July. Although the proposed structures are relatively tall, we agree that their general scale and location within the park along Water Street should not adversely affect the historic landscape/viewsheds. We also agree that the proposed etched granite pavers will not adversely affect the historic property.

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MINNESOTA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

50 Sherburne Avenue ■ Administration Building 203 ■ Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155 ■ 651-201-3287 [mn.gov/admin/shpo](http://mn.gov/admin/shpo) ■ [mnshpo@state.mn.us](mailto:mnshpo@state.mn.us)

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**Archaeological Resources**

One archaeological site, site **21RC0076**, has been identified within the project area. We consider this site to be a contributing resource to the Northfield Commercial Historic District. The site may also have individual significance. We agree that archaeological monitoring should be conducted during project construction, as well as during installation of the proposed public art. We understand that the 106 Group will draft an Archaeological Monitoring and Unanticipated Discoveries Plan (Plan) that will include potential mitigation measures for any unanticipated discovery that occurs. We look forward to reviewing the Plan when it becomes available.

**Consulting Party and Public Engagement**

Thank you for providing a summary of the City's consultation with various consulting parties and the public. We understand that the City has been consulting with various constituent groups, including the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the Arts and Culture Commission, the Planning Commission, City Staff, the Mayor, and the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, Carlton College, St. Olaf College, Northfield Schools, local business owners, the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Garden Club, special project groups and individual citizens. We understand that the Arts and Culture Commission is collaborating with local indigenous artists to create the public artwork in Bridge Square.

If you have any questions regarding our comments, please feel free to contact me at 651-201-3285 or [kelly.graggjohnson@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.graggjohnson@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,

*Kelly Gragg-Johnson*

Kelly Gragg-Johnson  
Environmental Review Program Specialist

cc: Mathias Hughey, Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission