



2025 Annual Report

Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

Staff Liaison – Mathias Hughey, Associate City Planner

2025 COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP: Baird Jarman (Chair), Michael Meehan (Vice Chair),
Cliff Clark, Amy Machacek Shonka, Robert Stangler, Jesse Steed, Aaron Street, Sarah Beimers

Youth Members: Cameron McMillan, Anna Forbord (through June 2025) Astrid White,
Teagan Noetzel (through 2026)



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LOCAL INVENTORY AND PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

Northfield has an updated local inventory that is kept in the electronic files of the Community Development Department. The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) works closely with the Northfield Historical Society (NHS) to keep and maintain records. The NHS continues to catalog these items for display and proper storage at the Museum. The [HPC's webpage](#) on the City's website contains survey and inventory information and has been updated to include more information for the public. The [Heritage Preservation webpage](#) and the [City Maps webpage](#) include maps of historic properties. A new [historic properties map](#) was created with links to survey forms. HPC meetings are livestreamed and recordings and minutes of the meetings are accessible on the [City website](#).

LOCAL DESIGNATIONS

The City designated Central Park, Public Square on the original town plat, as a local Heritage Preservation Site in 2025. When filing the original plat of the city, John North dedicated the block now known as Central Park for use as a public square. North went on to contribute to the founding of the University of Minnesota, the drafting of Minnesota's state constitution, and the westward expansion of the country. The square played a significant role in the founding and development of Northfield and retains a high degree of integrity.

Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

Northfield, Minnesota

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The following summary of projects, reviews and activities is hereby reported to the State Historic Preservation Office for fiscal year 2024:

October 1, 2024
through
September 30,
2025.



NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS OR COMMENT

No new nominations or comments were made in the 2025 fiscal year.

LONG-TERM PLANNING

The HPC continues to align its work plan with the City's Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Statewide Historic Preservation Plan. The City adopted its 2045 Comprehensive Plan in 2025, which includes provisions for the continued preservation of historic resources within the community.

In 2025, the city was awarded a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to develop an updated preservation plan. Staff anticipate releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) and selecting a consultant to perform that work by the end of 2025, with a target of late 2026 for completion.

PERMIT REVIEWS

Northfield City Code distinguishes "major" and "minor" work for Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) within the Historic-Overlay District and on Heritage Preservation Sites. Major work includes anything not identified as minor work, and includes new construction, demolition, remodeling, and more. Minor work includes ordinary and routine maintenance or reconstruction with historically appropriate, identical materials, minor amendments to approved COAs, and signs. Major work COAs must be approved by a majority vote of the HPC, while minor work may be approved by city staff. All work not meeting the definition of minor work is considered major work.

Major COAs

In the 2025 fiscal year, the HPC reviewed and approved 5 certificates of appropriateness (COA) for major work. The HPC also amended 1 COA for major work to specify that certain proposed site furnishings for the Bridge Square COA were incompatible with the Historic District and directed a more appropriate selection. Copies of the resolutions for the applications approved in the 2025 calendar year are attached. Staff approved 1 COA for minor work that was not a sign, and 6 COAs for signs, which also qualify as minor work.

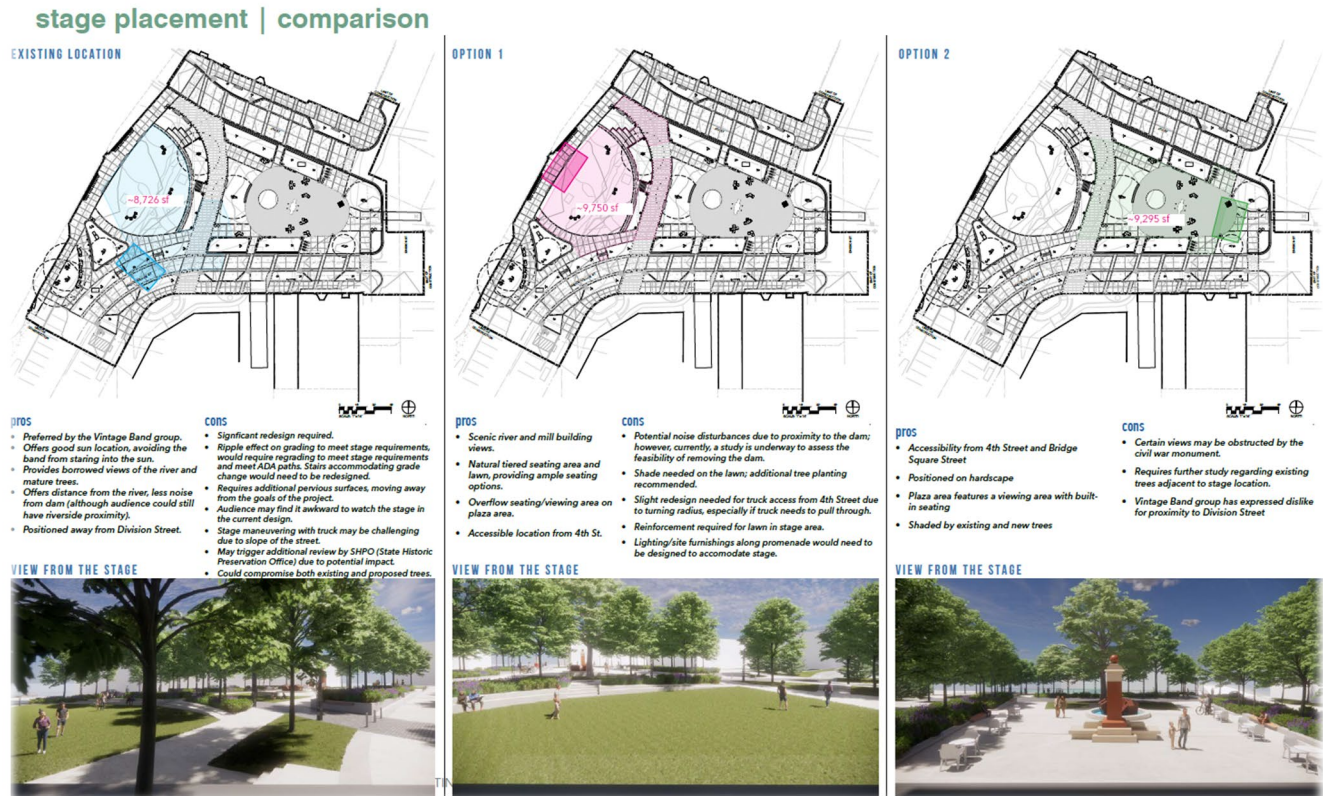


Figure 1: Bridge Square Stage Placement Comparisons

Bridge Square:

The HPC reviewed and approved the application to rehabilitate Bridge Square. The HPC later amended the COA to add conditions related to the proposed site furnishings, including the lighting, benches, bollards, and bike racks.

17 Bridge Square – Boston Shoe Store:

The HPC reviewed and approved the application to rehabilitate the storefront.

319 Water St. S. – Ames Mill:

The HPC reviewed and approved the application for site improvements including repaving portions of the parking lot, installing a new generator pad, shed, and fence screen in the rear.

305, 307, & 309 Water St. S. – Ebel Block, State Bank Building:

The HPC reviewed and approved the application to paint the wooden portions of the storefronts of these interconnected buildings. The State Bank Building had previously received a COA to repaint.

306 Division St. S. – Alex Marshall Building:

The HPC reviewed and conditionally approved the application to repair and replace the existing upper-story window inserts, specifying that any repairs to the existing wood frames would match in style, profile, and material.

Minor COAs

Staff approved the following COAs for minor work.

- 109 E. 4th St – the Lyceum Building: Staff approved a COA for reconstruction/repair of the existing wood windows and the installation of interior storms.

Sign Permits

Six (6) sign permits were reviewed and approved for the following properties:

Figure 2: Cannon River Coworking, Downtown Northfield – Sign Mockup





- 410 Division St. S. – Rebstock Bakery: Robin's Egg Bakery
- 300 Water St. S. – Plummer Corner: West Wind Tattoo
- 311 Division St. S. – Northfield News Building: Vintage etc.
- 313 Division St. S. – Northfield News Building: Boho Peacock
- 507 Division St. S. – Nelson Building: Cannon River Coworking
- 420 Division St. S. – Morris Building: Tin Tea

TEXT AMENDMENTS

The HPC has been regularly updated on all signs approved under the changes made to the City's zoning code last year, which reclassified signs as minor work, subject to staff approval.

The City is selecting a consultant to rewrite its zoning code following the adoption of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. The HPC has formed subcommittees to research and provide recommended outcomes for that consultant on several relevant topics, including art & murals in the historic district, solar panels, balconies, demolition review, and the application form and process.

COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Sarah Beimers, Amy Machacek Shonka, and Aaron Street, were appointed to the HPC beginning in 2025. Cameron McMillan and Anna Forbord were appointed to the HPC in 2023 as youth members and served until June 2025, both students graduated this year. Astrid White and Teagan Noetzel were appointed as youth commission members in 2025. Commissioner Street serves as the liaison to the Northfield Historical Society.

PRESERVATION CONFERENCES

In September 2025, Commissioner Robert Stangler and Staff Liaison Mathias Hughey attended the Preserve MN conference in New Ulm, MN thanks to a scholarship from SHPO. Mathias Hughey presented at the conference with resident and former HPC member Alice Thomas on the process of designating Central Park as a local heritage preservation site.

COLLABORATIONS

The HPC continued to work collaboratively on several fronts serving the community. Highlights of those collaborations include:



- Reviewing and giving feedback on planned improvements for Bridge Square, ultimately approving a COA for the project.
- Working to develop recommendations for the Zoning Code update regarding the Historic Overlay district.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- The City, with funding from State Historic Preservation Office' (SHPO's) CLG grant program hosted a National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) training in November 2024. The program was well-attended with over 30 participants.
- The HPC was included as a consulting party in a 106 review for Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) resurfacing of Hwy 19. The HPC submitted a letter requesting additional information regarding impacts to several previously surveyed properties adjacent to the project.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2026

- The city, with funding from SHPO's CLG grant program, will hire a consultant to develop an updated preservation plan for the city.
- The HPC will continue to review COAs for exterior renovations;
 - The HPC anticipates reviewing the COA for the rehabilitation of several buildings that were awarded grants for repairs through the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).
 - The HPC anticipates reviewing the COA for the Scriver Building at 408 Division St. S., which has received several grants for rehabilitation work.
 - The HPC anticipates an increase in COAs in the coming years with the increased availability of funding from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Main Street Revitalization Grant program through SMIF; the return of the Economic Development Authority's (EDA's) Façade Improvement Grant; EDA's Riverfront Enhancement Grant; and Rethos' Looking Up grant.



- Commenting on proposed developments outside of, but adjacent to, the historic district including redevelopment on the corner of 5th St. & Washington St. and 5th St. & Water St.;
- Involvement in the implementation of the Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan, including discussions surrounding the removal and reconstruction of Ames Mill Dam;
- Continuing to update the city's website and improve education for property owners;
- Reviewing CLG or ACHF (Legacy) grant programs for identification, evaluation, and designation of local historic properties;
- Continuing to collaborate with Northfield Historical Society and tour the Scriver Building to learn more about the Historical Society's planned improvements;
- Reviewing the Land Development Code for consistency with best practices, including the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines;
- Pursuing a National Register Listing for Central Park.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

This year, the HPC implemented last year's work on the City's Land Development Code, adopting additional changes to sign regulations. The HPC continues to work on educating property owners and new business owners about historic preservation and regulations and increasing the accessibility of information for the general public. The HPC continues to hear from property owners about the desire for additional financial assistance for the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic properties. There is renewed interest by the community in the work of the HPC with proposed new redevelopment downtown in and adjacent to the historic district.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name	Mailing Address	E-Mail Address	Phone Number
Baird Jarman, Chair	Northfield, MN 55057		
Michael Meehan, Vice Chair	Northfield, MN 55057		
Cliff Clark	Northfield, MN 55057		
Amy Machacek Shonka	Northfield, MN 55057		
Robert Stangler	Northfield, MN 55057		
Aaron Street, Northfield Historical Society Representative	Northfield, MN 55057		

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Sarah Beimers	Northfield, MN 55057
Astrid White, Youth Member	Northfield, MN 55057
Teagan Noetzel, Youth Member	Northfield, MN 55057