

507-645-8833  
northfieldmn.gov



801 Washington Street  
Northfield, MN 55057

January 2, 2026

Barbara A.M. Howard  
Environmental Review Historian  
State Historic Preservation Office  
50 Sherburne Ave.  
Saint Paul MN 55155

**VIA E-MAIL**

RE: Celestial Beings, Northfield Public Library (NEA Grant #1950118-54-26)

Northfield, Rice County  
SHPO ERP # 2026-0171

Dear Ms. Howard,

The Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) appreciates the opportunity to participate as a consulting party in the City of Northfield's Section 106 review of the proposed Celestial Beings project ("undertaking") proposed for the Northfield Public Library grounds.

At its January 7, 2025 meeting, the HPC reviewed and discussed the undertaking and its potential impacts to historic properties and sites.

The HPC understands that the undertaking involves installing a series of 10-foot-tall sculptures ("Celestial Beings") adjacent to the patio of the Northfield Public Library. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) will be providing a grant for the project and therefore, the HPC is asked to comment as a consulting party under section 106.

The Northfield Public Library is located within the City's Historic-Overlay district (RC-NFC-00263-Northfield Commercial Historic District) but is non-contributing and ineligible for national register status. Potential impacts of the undertaking are therefore limited to the visual impact from the Historic Downtown Commercial District.

The HPC understands that Celestial Beings will be located along the Western and South-Western sides of the library grounds. Due to the topography of the site, and the library's location up hill from them, they will not obscure views of the building, or views from the building to the historic district. Their location, above the street level, and set into the library lot, will limit visual impacts from the street.

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The impact on the district of the sculptures at this location is smaller than the potential impact at their original proposed location, Bridge Square.

For these reasons, the HPC feels that locating the Celestial Beings on the Library Grounds would have no adverse impact on the Northfield Commercial Historic District.

Any response may be provided by email to the City's Heritage Preservation Commission via the staff liaison, Mathias Hughey, AICP, Associate City Planner, at [Mathias.Hughey@NorthfieldMN.gov](mailto:Mathias.Hughey@NorthfieldMN.gov).

Sincerely,

Baird Jarman  
Chair, Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

Mathias Hughey, AICP  
Associate City Planner, City of Northfield