

December 3, 2024

Mathias Hughey  
Associate City Planner  
City of Northfield  
801 Washington St.  
Northfield, MN 55057

RE: Local designation of Central Park, surrounded by 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, College and Winona streets, SHPO Referral Number 2025-0170

Dear Mr. Hughey,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced local designation. It has been reviewed pursuant to Minnesota Statute §471.193, subd. 6., and Section 8.5.7 (3) (a) of the City of Northfield Code of Ordinances.

Central Park is a square parcel of open land comprised of one city block located three blocks east of downtown Northfield. Original and early character-defining features of the park include a row of trees on the outer edge of each of the four sides, two diagonal crosswalks, and a circular plaza in the center of the park surrounded by a low limestone wall. Three of the park's four quadrants are undeveloped open spaces; the northern quadrant contains playground equipment. Overall, Central Park has undergone few changes, and it retains a high degree of historic integrity.

Central Park was laid out and designated as a "Public Square" in 1855 when Northfield was platted as a village. Through the 1890s the park received minimal improvements, but by 1899 trees had been planted, diagonal sidewalks laid out, and a fountain was constructed in the center. Through the years Central Park has been used continuously by residents for various purposes including passive and active recreation, musical events, social gatherings, meetings, reunions and more. An initiative in the late 1940s to transform the park to athletic fields for an adjacent school met with community resistance and ultimately led to a 1950 decision by the Minnesota Supreme Court confirming the use of Central Park as a public park in perpetuity. For these reasons, we concur that Central Park is an ideal candidate for local designation.

If you have any questions regarding our assessment of this property, please contact me at 651.201.3291 or [michael.koop@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.koop@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,



Michael Koop  
State Historic Preservation Office

cc: Baird Jarman, HPC Chair