

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION HPC #2025-001

A RESOLUTION BY THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA, RECOMMENDING A HERITAGE PRESERVATION SITE
DESIGNATION FOR 421 4TH ST. E. CENTRAL PARK

- WHEREAS, the City of Northfield (City) has a significant number of historic resources throughout the community; and
- WHEREAS, the Northfield City Council has declared as a matter of public policy that the preservation, protection, perpetuation, promotion and use of areas, places, buildings, structures, lands, districts and other objects having a special historical, community or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare in the community; and
- WHEREAS, Northfield City Code, Chapter 34, Section 8.5.7, provides the process for the City, from time to time, in determining that certain places, buildings, structures, properties, or district areas or properties within the community are of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, landscaping, and culture and those locations should be subject to additional review as it relates to the Land Development Code as heritage preservation sites; and
- WHEREAS, the property proposed for heritage preservation site designation is known as Central Park located at 421 4th St. E., and such location is depicted and legally described on Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and
- WHEREAS, pursuant to Northfield City Code, Section 8.5.7(C), in considering an application for site designation, in addition to the following approval criteria the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) may also refer to the applicable Secretary of the Interior standards, and current procedure as recommended by the State Historic Preservation Office when determining if a site should qualify as a heritage preservation site:
- (1) That the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, landscaping, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; or
 - (2) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
 - (3) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

- (4) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- (6) That have a unique location or singular physical characteristics representing established and familiar aspects of a view, vista, site, area or district in the city; and

WHEREAS, prior to designating a proposed Heritage Preservation Site, the HPC shall forward information concerning the proposed designation to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MN SHPO) for comment within 60 days; and

WHEREAS, MN SHPO was notified of the review of Central Park as a local Heritage Preservation Site on November 12, 2024; and

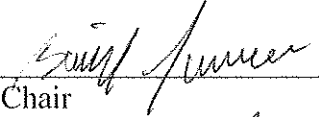
WHEREAS, MN SHPO provided a response letter on December 3, 2024, and based on the reasoning in their letter, they "...concur that Central Park is an ideal candidate for local designation," as described in the City findings regarding the same incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit B; and

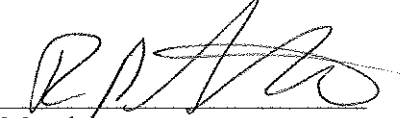
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA, that the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission has duly considered the required criteria contained in the LDC as applicable to the above-requested Local Heritage Preservation Site Designation regarding the property, and hereby adopts the findings of fact contained in the staff report regarding the same, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit B.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission recommends that the property be designated a Local Heritage Preservation Site subject to the following condition:

The period of significance shall extend from 1855 to 1954 to include the construction of the circular seat wall located in the center of the park.

PASSED by the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Northfield this January 6, 2025.


Chair


Member

VOTE: Absent CLARK Y BEIMERS Y JARMAN Y STREET
Y MEEHAN Y STANGLER Absent MACHACEK SHONKA

EXHIBIT A

LOCATION DESCRIPTION

Public Square, Northfield Original Town Plat

EXHIBIT B

FINDINGS OF FACT

(1) That the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, landscaping, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; or

Findings:

Central Park possesses integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association, and is significant to local culture as a characteristic feature of Northfield from the time of its founding and the earliest neighborhood.

(2) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

Findings:

Central Park has made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Northfield's history. The site was included in the original 1855 town plat and designated as a Public Square for purposes of free passage or of ornamentation and improvement as grounds of pleasure, amusement, recreation, or health. The original surveyor, Caleb W. Iddings, also placed a stone at each corner of the Public Square to make future measurements from, and to establish the original street grid. The status of the park has been central to several court cases, including a Minnesota Supreme Court case that reaffirmed the status of the park as held in trust by the City and aided in preserving its historic configuration.

(3) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

Findings:

The park was included in the original plat of the city as established by John North, at the founding of Northfield. In addition to founding Northfield, Mr. North was involved in the framing of the state of Minnesota's constitution and the founding of the University of Minnesota.

(4) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

Findings:

Not Applicable.

(5) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or

Findings:

Not Applicable.

(6) That have a unique location or singular physical characteristics representing established and familiar aspects of a view, vista, site, area or district in the city; and

Findings:

Central Park's location is unique and exclusive to the public square established in the original plat and has continued in that use, uninterrupted, through to the present day. It is surrounded by some of the earliest houses built in Northfield, and located two blocks east of the historic business district. The park retains many of its character-defining features including two diagonal walks that cross in the center of the park, a central, circular area at the center, rows of shade trees along the streets, and the park-like landscaping of mowed turf combined with ornamental plantings, and shade trees. The park predates most of the homes in the neighborhood and is therefore a defining feature of the earliest neighborhood in the City.