

## Review of the Literature of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties<sup>1</sup>

- I. **Historic District Designation.** Within the area of The Bridge Square Draft Improvement Plan, the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form identifies three contributing sites (4<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge, Bridge Square and Riverside Park), and one contributing structure (Civil War monument)<sup>2</sup>. It also notes one structure (the fountain) that is non-contributing because it is eight years short of the 50 yr. minimum.
- Monument. Based on the Secretary of Interior standards, the “contributing” monument was dedicated in 1921 and should remain in its historical context/placement to retain its integrity and contributing status (for definition of “integrity” and other terms, see IV)
  - Fountain. Based on the standards, the 1980 fountain, if moved, would be eligible for contributing status in eight years. If it remains in place, its integrity would be in its location in a highly public, trafficked location; and is associated with a local artist, a nationally known local business (donor), and the sounds and vision of water that are connected to the near-by river and falls. Location, design, setting, and association are all aspects of integrity.<sup>3</sup>
  - 4<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge. The survey document indicates that the 1914 bridge was updated in 1986. “The original concrete balustrade, set between concrete piers, and historic lighting have been replaced with compatible steel railings and lighting. Despite the loss of the historic concrete balustrade and other features, the structure continues to retain enough historic integrity to be contributing to the district.”<sup>4</sup> Care should be taken in adding or removing features of the current bridge in Phase 3; details of the proposed features are unclear.
  - Park. Little information was found in the 2016 Zellie survey and the related nomination document about the historical features of the park area next to the river as designed by Wyman in 1916. The National Register noted that “Both the square and small park both retain perimeter features from the 1916 plan by Minneapolis landscape architect Phelps Wyman as well as features from the mid-1970s and 1999 plans that introduced hardscape and additional plantings.”<sup>2</sup> More research is needed.

## II. **Treatment** [bold added below for emphasis]

a. Of the four Sec. of Interior treatments of historic properties, the treatment for the Bridge Square site would be Rehabilitation (vs. Preservation, Restoration, or Reconstruction).

“Rehabilitation standards acknowledge the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses **while retaining the landscape’s historic character**”<sup>5</sup>

b. The Guidelines for rehabilitating cultural landscapes “begins with recommendations to identify those landscape features and materials important to the landscape’s historic character and which must be retained. **Therefore, guidance on identifying retaining and preserving character defining features is always given first**”.<sup>6</sup> That first step of rehabilitation, as identified by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, was not completed and would have been initiated by the consultants. Those features considered to “contribute to the landscape historic character and must be retained” have yet to be identified.

c. Some of the additional standards for “rehabilitation” include the following:

- i. “requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships”<sup>7</sup>
- ii. “removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided”<sup>7</sup>

- iii. “Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved”<sup>7</sup>
- iv. “The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment”<sup>7</sup>
- v. New additions. . . or related new construction will not destroy historic features, materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property”<sup>7</sup>

**III. “Alterations/Additions for the New Use.** When alternations to a cultural landscape are needed to assure its continued use, it is most important that such alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining spatial organization and land patterns or features and materials. . . Such work may also include the selective removal of features that detract from the overall historic character.”<sup>8</sup>

- a. New additions should be avoided, if possible, and considered only after it is determined that those needs cannot be met by altering secondary, i.e., non-character-defining, spatial organization and land patterns or features.”<sup>6</sup>
- b. New additions are not recommended that detracts from or alters the historic topography, e.g., a new feature that would obscure an historic shoreline.”<sup>8</sup>
- c. Designing and installing compatible new circulation features when required by the new use should assure the preservation of historic character of the landscape, e.g., controlling and limiting new curb cuts, driveways, and intersections along a historic road.”<sup>9</sup>

#### **IV. Definitions:**

**“Historic character** – the sum of all visual aspects, features, materials, and spaces associated with a cultural landscape’s history, i.e., the original configuration together with losses and later changes.”<sup>3</sup>

**“Character-defining feature** – a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a cultural landscape that contributes significantly to its physical character. Land use patterns, vegetation, furnishings, decorative details and materials may be such features.”<sup>3</sup>

**“Integrity** – The seven qualities of integrity as defined by the National Register Program are location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and materials.”<sup>3</sup>

**“Significance** – the meaning or value ascribed to a cultural landscape based on the Register criteria for evaluation. It normally stems from a combination of association and integrity.”<sup>3</sup>

**V. Draft Illustrative Process for a Historic Landscape Property** (definitely a rough draft and includes other staff work, but illustrates the needed role of the HPC)

- Staff plans preliminary process
- Staff hire consultants who propose planning process
- Consultants pursue identification of features that need to be retained (HPC involved?)
- Consultants obtain input from stakeholder groups including city commissions/committees
- Consultants produce draft plan
- Consultants revise plan based on input including the HPC
- Consultants ask for public input including stakeholder groups
- Consultants revise plan and present to HPC for a CoA
- Staff forwards approved CoA to Council

## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> This research was conducted by A. Thomas who is responsible for any errors or misconceptions.

<sup>2</sup> *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Northfield Commercial Historic District*, National Park Service, United States Department of Interior. Section 7, p. 11-12

<sup>3</sup> *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes: Defining Landscape Terminology*, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, <https://www.nps.gov/Tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/terminology.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Zellie, C. and Lucas, A, August 2016, *Northfield Commercial Historic District Survey Revision Project*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup> *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes: The Approach*, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/rehab/approach.htm>

<sup>7</sup> *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes: Standards for Rehabilitation*, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/rehab/index.htm>

<sup>8</sup> *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes: Topography*, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/rehab/topography.htm>

<sup>9</sup> *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes: The Approach: Circulation*, Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/landscape-guidelines/rehab/circulation.htm>