

Memo

To: Historic Preservation Committee, Village Board

Fr: Trevor Fuller, Director of Planning and Community Development

Re: ACTION RE: LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR THE MONUMENT COMMEMORATING THE SITE OF THE FIRST COURTHOUSE IN WISCONSIN LOCATED AT 2640 S. WEBSTER AVENUE (Heritage Hill State Park)

Date: 12 March 2021

Heritage Hill State Park, located in the Village of Allouez, has requested the village to locally designate the monument commemorating the site of the first courthouse in Wisconsin as a historic landmark. Chapter 248 of the village ordinances provides the village with this authority upon the recommendation by the Historic Preservation Committee and approval by the Village Board that the structure follows the below criteria. Heritage Hill has provided pictures and supplemental information for background and reference (see attached). If designated as a historic landmark, alteration or demolishing plans for the structure will first need a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Committee.

§ 248-4 Historic structure, site and district designation criteria.

A. For purposes of this chapter, a historic structure, historic site, or historic district designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon, or any area of particular historic, architectural, archaeological or cultural significance to the Village, such as historic structures, sites, or districts which:

- (1) Exemplify or reflect the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community;*
- (2) Are identified with historic personages or with important events in national, state or local history;*
- (3) Embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;*
- (4) Are representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer or architect who influenced his age; or*
- (5) Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.*

Staff recommends approval of the historic landmark designation if the above criteria is determined to be met.

The Historic Preservation Committee found that the structure met the relevant criteria and recommended approval of the designation at the February 24, 2021 meeting.

The Village Board is asked to review the request and the criteria above and determine whether or not to designate the structure.



**Monument Commemorating the
Site of Wisconsin's First Courthouse
Heritage Hill State Park**

Dedication Ceremony: July 25, 1934; An official state tercentennial celebration sponsored by Wisconsin's Governor, the State Legislature, and Legislative Joint Committee.

1934 was the Tercentennial (300 years) since the French Explorer Jean Nicolet set foot on what was to become the State of Wisconsin.

Presiding: Colonel John Hannon, (Chairman of the State Board of Control)
Also attending: Dr. Joseph Schafer, (Director of Wisconsin Historical Society),
Harold T. Shannon (Tercentennial Committee-Green Bay)

Monument Description: Wisconsin Granite Hemicycle, approximately forty-eight (48) feet long and ten (10) feet high. Deeply cut into the granite is the inscription **"Site of the First Courthouse in Wisconsin" and "Erected in 1825"**. The cornerstone contains a copper box time capsule.

Location: Extreme North end of what was then the State Reformatory Grounds
Construction: Granite quarried by inmates at Antigo,WI, polished and treated at Reformatory shops, and erected by Inmates from the State Reformatory in 1934.

Excerpts from Colonel John Hannan's Address which takes place during the nation's economic recovery from the great depression; the defining event of the 1930's.

The just, humane, and economical way in which to administer an institution for the reformation of law offenders is to train there, if possible, so that they will not offend again....In an institution like this, reformation is accomplished through education and training in industry....The experiences of men have demonstrated, that there is no training so effective, so abiding, so stabilizing as training in habits of industry. When that training is coordinated to an academic, educational program, and fitted to the needs, the capacity, the industrial desires of each individual, it possesses an added value. It promotes ambition. It produces a fixation and steadfastness of purpose essential to the proper development of youth"....
"However, I wish that each person who views this structure could also have another picture and give to this monument a present as well as an historical value."

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" It matters not how we appreciate its beauty or worth as a piece of architecture, or what artistic or physical attributes it has to common itself to your judgement; these do not reveal the hidden value of this memorial, which, ...transcends and pales all its other merits. **That hidden value is the inexpressible satisfaction**

of those who participated in its design, in its workmanship, in its erection....It is not only a record of an important incident in Wisconsin's history, but also it is an expression of Wisconsin's humane effort to redeem misguided youth...it is significant that the manner of its building adds to its value as it is a practical expression of Wisconsin's adherence to the principles of social justice, expressed in the opinions and deeds of Judge Doty in Wisconsin's first courthouse."

"Upon the site of this monument, within the walls of the courthouse which stood here, James Duane Doty made the first efforts put forth in Wisconsin to bring order out of the chaotic conditions he found in the primitive pioneer settlements of the Bay Country, and to force a betterment of social conditions....A study of the services of Judge Doty, not only as an interpreter of the law, but as Governor, justifies the conclusion that his decisions and his acts merit not only commendation, but justify a monument to preserve the fame of the building within which he toiled on behalf of the people of this State. He was a man of ability, of steadfastness, honest purpose, of broad vision, of deep understanding, and of such charm that he was able to succeed where others in all possibility would have failed."
" In my judgement, his (Judge James Doty) decision in the trial of Chief Oshkosh for murder,....was one of great moment, in that it evidenced to the Menominees and other Tribes, that the white man would deal justly by the Indian."

The courthouse is moved from this site.

The courthouse services at this site were presided over by Judge James Doty from October 4, 1824, through 1832. Judge David Irvin served until the formation of the Wisconsin Territory in 1836. De Pere was chosen as the new County Seat in January, 1837. On a winter day in 1837, the log courthouse was moved on the frozen Fox River to De Pere. On April 1, 1837, Menomineeville (Shantytown) ceased to be the seat of Brown County.