



SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

MONUMENT PART I RECOMMENDATION

PETITIONER: Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent Garden Club

FILE No.: 23-002804-MON

LOCATION: Kavanaugh Park

DATE: July 13, 2023

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for a monument application, Part I: Theme, Location, and Preliminary Design, to install a commemorative fountain in honor of the late Mary R. Myrick, in the center of Kavanaugh Park within the Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent neighborhood.

Per the applicant:

“The proposed monument is a minor monument (500 cubic feet or less) in celebration of the Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent Garden Club’s 50th Anniversary. The fountain would be dedicated to its founder, Mary R. Myrick. It will be a lasting tribute that would stand the test of time and add elegance to the natural beauty of Ardsley Park.”

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art apply:

Theme Patterns for Monuments. There are several established theme patterns of existing monuments in Savannah. These are general patterns only and may occasionally have variations or deviations.

Evaluating Themes for Markers and Monuments. New markers and monuments commemorate and honor people, places, and/or events.

Proposed themes should fall into one or more of the following categories.

Arts and Humanities. Includes art, architecture, music, theater, literature, education, etc.

Science and Engineering. Includes technology, inventions, medical, communications, etc.

Civil and Institutional.

Social and Humanitarian.

Industry and Commerce. Includes economics, agriculture, transportation, etc.

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Politics and Government.

Military History. Includes people, places, or events.

Religious History. Includes people, places, or events.

Maritime History.

Colonial History.

Local History. Includes folklore and/or local heroes.

Cultural and Ethnic History.

Education.

The relevant themes for this project include Civic and Institutional; Social and Humanitarian; and Local History.

- Civic and Institutional

Per the applicant, *“Mrs. Myrick was a true friend of the City of Savannah. She worked to beautify many spaces in the city including creating a garden on the grounds of the Savannah Widow’s Society, and to the American Red Cross building downtown, and establishing the Fragrant Garden for the Blind in Forsyth Park in 1963. Mrs. Myrick frequently offered her home at Wild Heron to the Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations for visitors and smaller conventions. She was known in the city as ‘the City’s official hostess.’*

“During World War II, Mrs. Myrick held a Georgia state office; she was appointed by the Governor to chair the Women’s Division of Civilian Defense from 1941-1943. In honor of her civic work, Savannah Mayor John Rousakis declared June 12, 1978, as Mary Myrick Day.”

- Social and Humanitarian

Myrick loved gardening, and through this love, she formed many clubs in Savannah including the Downtown Garden Club of Savannah in 1969, and the Ardsley Park Chatham Crescent Garden Club in 1973. She became the president of the Garden Club of Georgia and during her tenure, 538,702 trees were planted by the organization. Myrick was also the director of the Deep South Region of Garden Clubs.

While also president of the Garden Club of Georgia, Mrs. Myrick spearheaded the Keep Georgia Beautiful anti-litter campaign, and had a slogan “Savannah’s Beauty is our Duty!” It was her lifelong commitment to beautify public spaces and areas that would lift the spirit of the less fortunate.

Per the applicant, *“On a grander scale, Mrs. Myrick helped to form a national organization of Landscape Design. Working in conjunction with an instructor at the University of Iowa, Mrs. Myrick created a partnership between landscape schools and garden clubs throughout the United States.”*

- Local History

Per the applicant, *“Atlanta born Mrs. Myrick spent her time, talent and finances improving her adopted town of Savannah. She opened the doors of her home to assist*

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local leaders hosting conferences. She organized other women and assisted them in starting additional garden clubs in Savannah; these clubs continue today based upon her solid foundation. In addition, her touch was felt on many historic preservation sites throughout the Savannah area.

Mrs. Myrick also wrote a column called “The Garden Corner” for the Savannah News Press, for more than 30 years. On her 90th birthday, Mayor John Rousakis declared June 12, 1978 “Mary Myrick Day” where a proclamation was read, and she was given a key to the city.

The proposed theme should have documented significant, clear and direct local relevance to the history and development of Chatham County. The local focus should be the predominant theme of the monument.

There is local relevance to the theme, as Mrs. Myrick was heavily involved in the beautification of the city and devoted herself to preserving greenspaces in Savannah over the course of her life.

The level of significance should be high enough to warrant a public presence.

Mrs. Myrick made many significant contributions to Savannah including writing a column for the Savannah News Press for over 30 years.

The person, place or event commemorated should not have been sufficiently commemorated elsewhere in the County. The theme should be distinct and original, and not be duplicated in other existing markers or monuments.

There are no other monuments for Mary Myrick in Savannah or elsewhere in the County.

The theme should reflect a larger connection to the community as a whole, and not only to one distinct group.

The work that Myrick did positively impacted the community as a whole for the reasons mentioned above.

Commemorated persons should have enduring historical significance and have been dead at least twenty-five years. Living persons should not be commemorated.

Mrs. Myrick passed away on March 26, 1983, and thus has been deceased for more than twenty-five years.

There should be significant documented evidence (written or oral) of the commemorated event, person, or place.

Information about Mrs. Myrick can be found in various newspaper articles and in archives at the Bull Street Library, Georgia Historical Society, and Garden Club archives.

Evaluating Sites for Markers, Monuments, or Public Art. *Certain factors should be taken into consideration when evaluating whether a site is the appropriate location for a marker, monument or public art [hereto referred to as “object” to indicate the inclusion of all three types]. These factors include:*

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The installation of an object should not cause overcrowding of the site, if there are existing objects. Objects should be sited far enough away from other objects as to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each individually.

The fountain would be in the center of the park and would not overcrowd the site.

The proposed object should not damage or disturb existing established vegetation on the site including low tree limbs, or significant tree roots.

The applicant is working with the City to ensure that this is done in a way that would not disturb established vegetation.

The proposed object should not require the removal or alteration of existing above or below ground utilities.

There are no above-ground utilities affected and the applicant is working with the City to ensure that there are no below-ground utilities affected either.

The proposed site should be large enough to accommodate an object, and should not encroach on other existing object sites, buildings, or designated green space.

The site is large enough to accommodate the fountain and will not overwhelm the space nor will it encroach on other existing object sites, and buildings. Kavanaugh Park is a designated green space that the fountain will enhance rather than encroach upon.

The proposed site should not be utilized for special events (such as sports, festivals, ceremonies, etc) on a regular basis which an object would disrupt.

The fountain would not disrupt any events that may happen in Kavanaugh Park.

The proposed site should not be prone to frequent automobile accidents which could damage the proposed object.

The site is not prone to automobile accidents.

The proposed site should be easily accessible to pedestrians and those with mobility issues (excluding marker sites).

The site is within a public park with walkways and benches. Street parking is available all around the park.

The proposed site should be visible and accessible from a public right of way.

The standard is met. The site is surrounded by Abercorn Street, East 46th Street, Kavanaugh Place, and Washington Avenue and is highly visible.

The proposed site should have adequate parking nearby (excluding marker sites).

Street parking is available.

The proposed site should not have a high probability of significant archaeology unless an archaeological study is part of the proposal.

The soil in this area has already been disturbed, and the site is unlikely to yield a high volume of archaeological data.

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The proposed site should be easy to maintain.

The standard is met.

The installation of the object should enhance the space and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The installation of the object should not require the alteration or removal of existing signage (traffic, street, etc).

The standard is met.

The installation of the object should not significantly affect automobile traffic sight lines.

Although visible from the road, being within the center of the park allows this to not significantly affect traffic sight lines.

The installation of the object should enhance the design of the overall site.

A fountain in the middle of Kavanaugh Park will enhance the design of the overall site.

The installation of the object should not require the removal or alteration of existing sidewalks, unless it is part of a comprehensive redesign for the entire site (which is generally discouraged).

No sidewalks or walkways will be removed or altered with this project.

If periodic memorial services are likely, the site should be able to accommodate them without causing undue disruption to the neighborhood, plantings, etc.

The ability of Kavanaugh Park to accommodate memorial services will not be decreased by the addition of a fountain.

Site in Relation to Theme for Markers or Monuments. *The relationship between site and theme for a marker or monument is critical in determining the appropriate site for a particular theme.*

Monument. *Monuments should be erected on sites to which the theme has relevance.*

There is relevance to this site because Myrick's former residence can be seen from the park, and since Myrick was a leader in the garden clubs and beautification measures in Savannah, a public greenspace is an ideal and relevant location.

The proposed site should not disrupt an established theme pattern.

There is currently no established theme pattern that this would disrupt.

The proposed site should be the most relevant location available to the monument theme, as demonstrated through the documentation regarding the direct local relevance of the proposed theme.

See above sections for explanation on why this is the most relevant location available.

The context of the proposed site should be a major consideration in the mass and scale of the proposed object.

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The context of a public greenspace is of utmost consideration.

***Design.** The design of a marker, monument, or public work of art should be of the highest quality and caliber, and enhance public space. In order to promote the high standards the City of Savannah has historically enjoyed in its markers, monuments, and public art, the following guidelines should be observed.*

***Monuments and Public Art.** Monuments may take on many forms including works of art, benches, statues, sculptures, obelisks, sundials, etc. Monuments are typically commissioned, site-specific pieces.*

This particular monument is taking the form of a commemorative fountain, site-specific to Kavanaugh Park.

The applicant may choose to commission a work of art or monument. The artwork or monument must be of the highest quality and should adhere to the guidelines.

Monuments should not be fabricated prior to approval.

The fountain is not yet fabricated.

Monuments should be considered permanent and designed accordingly.

The standard is met.

Monuments and public art should be designed and constructed of materials suitable for outdoor display. All proposed materials should have performed satisfactorily in the local climate for a period of time long enough to assure permanence. Future maintenance and conservation requirements should be considered.

The proposed designer of the fountain is Robinson Iron, who has a local example of the fountain in Lafayette Square as well as repair work to the Forsyth Park fountain. The proposed material is cast iron, which performs satisfactorily in the local climate.

Monuments and public art should be designed to be reasonably resistant to vandalism.

Vandalism to fountains in Savannah has fortunately been rare, and the design would be reasonably resistant to vandalism.

Monuments and public art should be designed so as not to pose a danger to the curious public, such as the use of sharp objects or loose parts.

There are no sharp objects or loose parts proposed.

Monument and public art design should include landscaping, paving, seating, drainage, lighting, fencing, or other protective measures which may be considered necessary.

All of the above are included.

Monuments and public art should be of superior quality and craftsmanship.

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The proposed fountain would be designed by Robinson Iron, who, in addition to the fountain in Lafayette Square, has several successful examples of the quality and craftsmanship of their work.

Monuments should not resemble gravestones.

The proposed fountain does not resemble a gravestone.

A monument should be of original design, and public art should be an original work of art (one of a kind) or reproduced in editions of less than 200.

The design elements include a female figure based on Flora, the goddess of flowers and flowering plants. Per the applicant, “*She [Flora] symbolizes love, beauty, and abundance. She is associated with the season of Spring, a symbol of hope and perseverance. A woman holding a water bowl represents giving life. Water is considered a symbol of vitality, renewal, and purification.*” The applicant also notes that the fountain will be an Art Nouveau design to match the style of the original lamp posts in the park.

Monuments and public art should not replicate an original monument or work of art.

There are no other fountains with this specific design in Savannah.

Monuments and public art should be designed to complement and enhance the site in which it is located. It should not compete with, dominate or encroach upon existing monuments, public art, or buildings.

There are no other monuments or public art currently in Kavanaugh Park thus there will be no competition or encroachment.

Monuments and public art should be respectful of the architectural, historical, geographical, and social/cultural context of the site.

The standard is met.

Monuments and public art should be compatible in scale, materials, and form with its context. Context includes the buildings, monuments, public art, landscaping and open space to which the monument or public art is visually related.

The standard is met.

The format of the monument should effectively convey the message of the monument to the public.

The fountain is proposed to convey the message and will also have two interpretive plaques explaining the significance of the monument.

Donor names and monument sponsors may be incorporated into the design (such as inscribed on bricks or on a separate plaque) but should be discreet and not detract from or dominate the monument or artwork.

The bottom of the plaque text will include a non-intrusive sentence stating “Donated on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Ardsley Park Chatham Crescent Garden Club.”

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The artist's name may be incorporated into the design but should be in a discreet location on the work of art.

The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) and the artist (for public art) should have completed projects of similar size and scale in the public arena and be able to provide appropriate documentation.

As mentioned above, Robinson Iron has completed the fountain in Lafayette Square and modern repairs on the Forsyth Park fountain. Other projects include fountains of similar size at Opryland Resort in Nashville; Parkersburg, West Virginia; Hillsdale, Michigan; and Louisville, Kentucky to name a few.

The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) and the artist (for public art) should have an excellent reputation and be able to provide verifiable references attesting to the quality of work.

See above comments. Robinson Iron also has a website dedicated to examples of their work throughout the US.

The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) and the artist (for public art) should be able to provide images or samples of existing similar monuments or works of art.

Samples were provided with the application.

The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) and the artist (for public art) should be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the proposed timeframe.

The applicant has begun discussions with Robinson Iron, and is confident that they can meet the proposed timeframe of 6-8 weeks after Part II: Final Design and Funding is approved.

Funding.

Budget. *The Mayor and Aldermen do not fund new markers, monuments, or works of art. The applicant is fully responsible for funding the design, construction, installation, and any necessary landscaping, paving, or lighting involved with a new marker, monument, or work of art.*

The applicant is aware of their financial responsibility.

The applicant must provide a realistic budget in Part II Final Design and Funding. The budget should be based on cost estimates provided by the manufacturer, artist, installer and/or contractor, as appropriate. The budget should include funding goals and deadlines. Should funding goals and deadlines fail to be met, the HSMC may, at its sole discretion, reconsider the application. The applicant must be capable of raising the necessary funding. Construction of the monument or installation of the work of art will not begin until all of the funding has been secured.

The applicant has provided this information along with the funds they have already secured. More specifics will be provided with the Part II application.

Escrow Payment. *All markers, monuments and public art erected on public property become the property of the Mayor and Aldermen. The Mayor and Aldermen assume*

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responsibility for the future maintenance and upkeep of the marker, monument or artwork. Therefore, an initial Escrow Payment is required of the applicant subsequent to approval of the application. The Mayor and Aldermen, or their designee, will determine the appropriate Escrow Payment and will notify the applicant. The Escrow Payment must be paid prior to construction/installation of the monument or public art. Any marker, monument or artwork erected on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.

The escrow payment will be determined by the City after the project has been approved. The applicant is aware of this requirement.

Public Notice. *As required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. Comments were not received from the written notice that was mailed.*

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RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL:

The Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for the application of Part I: Theme, Location, and Preliminary Design for the creation of a commemorative fountain dedicated to Mary R. Myrick, to be installed in Kavanaugh Park, with the following condition because the project meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art.

1. Ensure grammatical and historical accuracy for the plaque text to be submitted with Part II: Final Design and Funding.

DocuSigned by:

Kristopher Monroe

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Kristopher Monroe, Chair
Historic Site and Monument Commission

July 13, 2023
Date

DocuSigned by:

Melanie Wilson

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Melanie Wilson, Executive Director
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

July 13, 2023
Date

DocuSigned by:

Leah G. Michalak

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Leah G. Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

July 13, 2023
Date