



SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

MONUMENT PART II RECOMMENDATION

PETITIONER: Lucy S. Brannen and Catharine Varnedoe

FILE No.: 24-002610-MON

LOCATION: Columbia Square

DATE: September 5, 2024

STAFF REVIEWER: Caitin Chamberlain

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for a monument application, Part II: Final Design and Funding, to install a monument commemorating the seven ladies who founded the historic preservation movement in Savannah, first with the saving of the Davenport House in 1955. The proposed location is Columbia Square with the intention of commemorating these women and making sure their legacy is not forgotten. The monument will include their names and a brief description of their accomplishments.

The Seven Ladies were:

Katherine Judkins Clark (1897-1993)
Elinor Adler Dillard (1903-1992)
Anna Colquitt Hunter (1892-1985)
Lucy Barrow McIntire (1886-1967)
Dorothy Ripley Roebing (1904-1977)
Nola McEvoy Roos (1895-1980)
Jane Adair Wright (1901-1991)

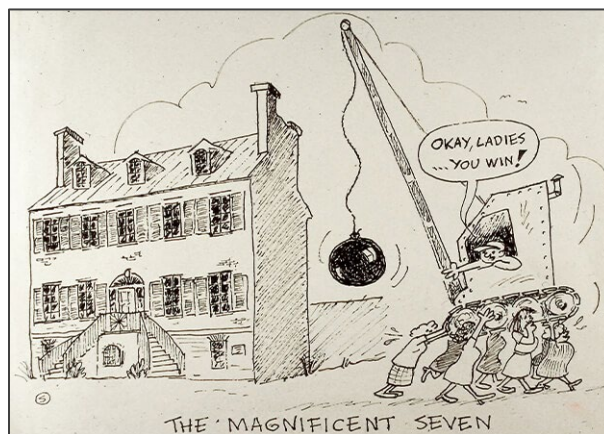


Image: Savannah Morning News via HSF website

PROJECT HISTORY:

In July, Historic Site and Monument Commission members recommended approval to the Savannah City Council for Part I: Theme, Location, and Preliminary Design, and at the August 8, 2024, City Council Meeting, Part I was unanimously approved.

FINDINGS:

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

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.*

The design of the monument has not changed overall since the original submittal. Some minor grammatical and spelling edits were made, and the actual photos of the seven ladies were provided, which will be used instead of the seven silhouettes used as a placeholder for Part I.

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 monument takes the form of a granite marker. This is a commissioned, site-specific monument.

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 monument 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 is the DePue Monument Company of Savannah, GA, and was inspired by the Liberty Ships monument on River Street (pictured in the application packet). The material is granite, which performs satisfactorily in the local climate.

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

Any monument in a public square is subject to vandalism. There are other granite monuments in Savannah that have not been vandalized but removal of graffiti on granite can be done with masonry graffiti cleaners if the need arises.

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.

The monument is being placed within the square which already has such elements.

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

The standard is met.

Monuments should not resemble gravestones.

Gravestones come in many different shapes, sizes, and materials. While it could be argued that the monument somewhat does resemble a gravestone, a similar design was approved for the Liberty Ships monument. The fact that a plaque with text will be installed atop the granite, will easily differentiate it from a gravestone that is etched directly into.

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.

Because the design a granite marker, the content is what is original. There are granite markers throughout the City, but this is the only one that will tell the story of and commemorate the Seven Ladies.

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

In this case, the proposed monument is not a sculpture, statue, or work of art. The medium which the information is conveyed is a granite marker which itself is not original or copyrighted to one specific monument. As mentioned above, the content is original. It is inspired by the Liberty Ship Monument, but it is not an exact replica. The Liberty Ship Monument is stacked on two granite slabs, whereas this is proposed to be atop one granite slab. The Liberty Ship Monument has one plaque affixed to it, whereas the Seven Ladies will have a bronze plaque of the ladies' silhouettes, and a second plaque with text.

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 is a fountain at the center of the square and a historical marker sign at the corner near the Davenport House, but the inclusion of the proposed monument will not overcrowd the site because it is not placed in an area where it would impose upon either.

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

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.

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

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 DePue Monument Company has served the Savannah area since 1974. Their work does include creation of memorial stones for gravesites, but they are not limited to that. Other work can be seen at the WWII Memorial on River Street and the Sugar Explosion Memorial in Port Wentworth. The DePue website also has a photo portfolio of their work and they have been in business in Savannah since 1974.

The applicants have begun discussions with DePue and are confident that they can meet the proposed timeframe of 14 months 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 fundraising efforts put forth by the applicants have been successful, with the majority of the funds raised to cover the cost of the monument. An invoice from the DePue Monument Company was provided with the Part II submittal, showing a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the project.

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 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.*

Staff Report – Seven Ladies Monument

File No. 24-002610-MON

September 5, 2024

Comments were not received as of the writing of this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to City Council for the application of Part II: Final Design and Funding for the creation of a monument dedicated to the Seven Ladies, to be installed in Columbia Square, as requested because the project meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art.

MW: JM: CC