

SAVANNAH - CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

October 2, 2008

4:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HSMC Members Present:

**Walter Wright, Chairman
Gordon Smith, Vice-Chairman
Walt Harper
Phillip Williams**

HSMC Members Not Present:

LaVerne Ricks-Brown, Secretary

HSMC/MPC Staff Present:

**Ellen Harris, Preservation Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant
Sarah Sisser, Historic Preservation Intern**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present for the petition was Mr. James J. Holmes.

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

II. PETITION OF THE CRAWFORD SQUARE ORGANIZATION

File No.: C-080918-57635-2

**Monument Application: Request for Site Evaluation, Part 1: Theme and Location, Part II:
Design and Funding
Crawford Square Monument**

NATURE OF REQUEST: The petitioner is requesting that Crawford Square be evaluated and determined as an "Available Site" for a minor monument. This is the first step in the application process for a monument on public property, as outlined in the Master Plan and Guidelines. The theme, design, and funding will be reviewed separately.

FINDINGS:

Crawford Square is not currently listed in as an Available Site in the Master Plan and Guidelines. The square, located in Crawford Ward, is on Houston Street between Oglethorpe Avenue and Liberty Street in the Landmark District.

There is one minor monument currently in Crawford Square, the Cisterns Monument. This monument consists of a small brick base with concrete top and brass plaque. It is located to the south of the central gazebo. The basketball court occupies the north half of the square.

There are 17 criteria used to evaluate sites (see page 24 of the Master Plan). The following criteria were used in the original assessment of the site to eliminate Crawford Square as an Available Site:

- The proposed site should be large enough to accommodate an object, and should not encroach on... designated green space.
- The proposed site should not be utilized for special events...

The south side of Crawford Square is an open grass area, with exposed brick cistern tops. The north side is a basketball court. A gazebo is in the center. There are numerous small landscaped islands scattered throughout the square. The petitioner is proposing locating a monument on the in one of the landscaped areas. It would not require removal of landscaping.

Crawford Square is an active square with frequent use of the basketball court. The proposed location would not interfere with the court.

The applicant has proposed a monument approximately two feet wide by two feet deep by two feet tall of brick with a concrete top, matching the existing Cisterns Monument. A plaque with the history of the basketball court will also be part of the monument.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends considering the site available with the following stipulations:

- The site approval is only for the limited two-foot by two-foot area of the landscaped island.
- The site will be “reserved” for the petitioner for a period of one year, or until the petitioner withdraws the petition in writing. After the period of one year, the site will revert to its previous “unavailable” status.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Harper made a motion that Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission approve the Request for Site Evaluation, as submitted. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

NATURE OF REQUEST: The petitioner is requesting that Part 1: Theme and Location and Part 2 Design and Funding approval for a minor monument in Crawford Square.

FINDINGS:

THEME: The monument commemorates an event in local history. In 1946 the Bureau of Leisure Services held a basketball tournament with the prize to be a basketball court. The Crawford Square team won and the court was built in 1947.

LOCATION: The monument is site-specific and is located in the appropriate location.

DESIGN: The design of the monument will be (approximately) two feet by two feet by two feet and will match the existing Cisterns Monument on the site. The base will be brick, the top concrete, and there will be a bronze plaque. See attached for proposed text.

FUNDING: The monument is being privately funded and all funds have been secured.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with the following revisions to the text:

“Crawford Square Basketball Court

The City of Savannah’s Bureau of Leisure Services held a basketball tournament in 1946 and the winning team was to be awarded a paved basketball court. The Crawford Square team won, and in 1947 the basketball court was constructed. The basketball court helped to develop and expand recreational opportunities for youth in the community, and established what remain as the only active recreational square in Savannah. Many of those players went on to pursue athletic careers in colleges and become productive citizens.”

Mr. Williams asked how long the Crawford Square cistern monument has been there.

Ms. Harris stated that she is not sure but that it is less than 50 years.

Mr. Williams stated that the Crawford Square monument might not weather as well as the Washington Square monument because it was built better. He said that the proposed monument is basically an extruded plaque with brick and concrete, that it leaves room for dirt, becomes a maintenance headache, and has to be cleaned. If the plaque extends all of the way or most of the way to the edge, there will be less surface to get dirty. The concrete is fine but he would use the Washington Square monument as an example. The monument could be the same dimensions but to make the plaque larger with less concrete border and make the text larger.

Mr. Wright asked about the funding.

Ms. Harris stated that the funding is private and is fully secured.

PETITIONER’S COMMENTS:

Mr. James J. Holmes stated that if they change the style then it won’t match the existing monument. He said that is why they chose the same style so that it would be balanced.

Mr. Williams stated that the brick pedestal and concrete can be exactly the same. He said if you make the plaque larger, then you won’t see the staining as much. It could be the same design but make it larger.

Mr. Holmes asked if they could increase the letters in size and the number of words.

Mr. Wright answered yes.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Wright made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission approve the design and funding with an increase in the size of the plaque, increase the size of the text and the number of words, and that it come back to Staff for final approval. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

III. MEETING MINUTES

A. July 3, 2008

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Harper made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp