



S A V A N N A H - C H A T H A M C O U N T Y
HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION

Petitioner: City of Savannah Park & Tree, Kimberly Tabakian
File No.: 26-004602-HM
Address: Lafayette Square
PIN: 20015 43001
Staff Reviewer: Alexander Merced
Date: October 1, 2026

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant would like to remove, clean, and re-patinize the existing bronze Colonial Dames plaque in Lafayette Square. They would then like to reinstall it upon a new Georgia Granite stone to be installed in the same location on the square.

FINDINGS:

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

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:

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 new installation will not overcrowd the site and will not infringe on any other existing objects. It will be on the same site as the existing plaque, just elevated. The standard is met.

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

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

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

The proposed site should be easily accessible to pedestrians and the physically challenged (excluding marker sites).

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

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

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

The proposed site should be easy to maintain.

All of the above standards are met.

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

The Georgia Granite stone is a tasteful addition that will enhance the character of the space and will make the existing monument more prominent and visible without infringing on the square.

The standard is met.

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

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

The installation of the object should 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).

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

The above standards are met.

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.*

The proposed site should not disrupt an established theme pattern.

If the proposed theme falls into an existing theme pattern, the proposed site should also follow the corresponding site pattern.

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.

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

The location of monuments in the Landmark District should respect the Oglethorpe Plan, particularly in terms of historic viewsheds and sight lines.

The location of the existing plaque will not change. It will just be placed on top of the granite stone. The standards are met.

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.

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.

Monuments should be considered permanent and designed accordingly.

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.

Monuments and public art should be designed to 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.

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

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

The Georgia Granite stone that is being proposed will measure approximately 16”x26”x30” tall and will have a 45-degree angle at the top face to receive the plaque. The stone will be permanent and is resistant to weathering. There will be no sharp edges or loose parts, and the stone will be installed on a reinforced concrete foundation in place of the already existing brick area that currently houses the plaque. There will be a granite exposure of approximately 1” around the plaque and the restored plaque will be epoxied in place. The above standards are met.

Monuments should not resemble gravestones.

Although similar stones can be used as gravestones, staff feels that the size, location, and configuration of the stone sufficiently differentiates it from a typical gravestone. The standard is met.

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.

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

This is not a replica of other monuments in the city, and it is not planned as a template for other monuments in the future. The standard is met.

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.

As stated previously, the Georgia Granite stone is a tasteful addition that will enhance the character of the space and will make the existing monument more prominent and visible without infringing on the square or the neighborhood around it. The standard is met.

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

The existing plaque is respectful of the site and the context of the site and will not change. 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.

As evidenced by the model built by the applicant, the stone will be compatible in size with the rest of the square, including the fountain in the middle of the square. The stone will complement the scale without being overbearing. The stone material is also compatible in this context. The standard is met.

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

The stone is an effective way to enhance the existing plaque. The standard is met.

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 existing plaque honors the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America who originally installed it. The new granite stone will not have any names inscribed. The standard is met.

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.

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) and the artist (for public art) 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 base will be a granite stone without the need for exceptional fabrication work. Therefore, the above standards do not apply.

Text. *The text for a marker, monument or work of art is considered part of the overall design concept. Placement of the text, font type and size, etc. should be included with the final design drawings.*

Text should be well-researched and based on historically accurate, documented facts.

The text should accurately and effectively convey to the reader the desired message.

Quotations should be noted accordingly and permission from the appropriate authority received.

Text should avoid offensive, obscene, or inflammatory language. Donor names may be included provided the names are in an identical but smaller font than the rest of the text and that no slogans or corporate logos are included.

The text of the existing plaque will not change and there will be no new text on the granite base.

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 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 acknowledged responsibility for funding the monument. The City of Savannah Park and Tree Department has come to an agreement with the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Georgia(NSCD-GA) to pay the overall total of \$4,960 as quoted by Landmark Preservation, LLC for the entire scope of work including the purchase, delivery, and installation of the granite monument base, and the relocation and restoration of the existing plaque. The standard is met.

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 applicant has acknowledged that the monument will become city property, but there was no confirmation of an Escrow Payment given. Staff recommends that the applicant confirm their understanding of the escrow 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 has received no public comment regarding this proposal.*

Staff Report – Historic Monument
File No. 26-004602- HM
Address: Lafayette Square
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to the Savannah City Council, for the request to restore and relocate the existing NSCD-GA plaque to a newly installed granite stone base in Lafayette Square with the following condition because the project otherwise meets the standards within the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art:

- 1. Acknowledge the responsibility for the required escrow payment to the City.**

MW: CC: APM

Note: This recommendation could change subject to new information provided at the Historic Site and Monument Commission meetings. Decisions or recommendations will be made by the Historic Site and Monument Commission at the public hearing based on information provided at the meeting, as well as information submitted for the staff recommendation.