

**CITY OF SAINT PAUL
HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

FILE NAME: 515 Laurel Avenue

APPLICANT: City of Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation

OWNER: City of Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation

DATE OF APPLICATION: June 20, 2016

DATE OF HPC REVIEW: July 14, 2016

HPC SITE/DISTRICT: Historic Hill Heritage Preservation Districts

CATEGORY: Non-Contributing

WARDS: 1

DISTRICT COUNCIL: 8

CLASSIFICATION: Pre-Application Review

STAFF INVESTIGATION AND REPORT: Bill Dermody

DATE OF REPORT: June 30, 2016

A. SITE DESCRIPTION: The park site contained Webster School until some time before 1937, most likely until 1926 when the “new” Webster School was built (now Obama Elementary School) a few blocks to the west. The site has since been open land and/or park space. The tennis court and playground have been present since at least 1991. Currently, there is some ornamental fencing and chain-link around the tennis court. The entrance is marked by two brick columns. There are two open lawns and a circular play area with sand. There is currently a plaque in the Park with information about Arthur Joseph McQuillan and on the opposite side is a map of the Hill District with sites noted.

*According to *The Street Where You Live*, This approximately one-half-acre park at Laurel Avenue and Mackubin Street, once the site of “old” Webster School, was acquired from the Board of Education in 1955. The name honors Arthur Joseph McQuillan (1895-1954), known as the “Mayor of Selby Avenue.” Well-connected politically, he was DFL Chair for Ramsey County and a reliable source of patronage jobs for neighborhood residents in the Depression years. He is also remembered as the first white master plumber in St. Paul to hire a black plumber. The McQuillan family has tended to business in St. Paul since 1857. According to librarian Josiah Chaney, the area of this park had been, prior to the building of the school, a large marsh and shallow lake that was later drained through the sewer. (Empson 180)*

B. PROPOSED CHANGES: The Parks and Recreation Department intends to replace the play equipment and potentially make other changes such as removing the tennis court, adding ornamental railings, adding seating, and installing landscaping. Upcoming community engagement will inform further design decisions.

C. BACKGROUND: Parks and Recreation staff discussed the proposal with HPC staff in May 2016.

D. GUIDELINE CITATIONS:

Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District - Guidelines for Design Review

Sec. 74.64. - Restoration and rehabilitation.

(a) General Principles:

1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a

- property for its originally intended purpose.*
- 2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.*
 - 3. All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.*
 - 4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.*
 - 5. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.*
 - 6. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.*
 - 7. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.*
 - 8. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.*
 - 9. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.*
 - 10. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.*

Sec. 74.65. - New construction.

(a) General Principles: The basic principle for new construction in the Historic Hill District is to maintain the district's scale and quality of design. The Historic Hill District is architecturally diverse within an overall pattern of harmony and continuity. These guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation and quality design while maintaining the harmony and continuity of the district. New construction should be compatible with the size, scale, massing, height, rhythm, setback, color, material, building elements, site design, and character of surrounding structures and the area.

(b) Massing and Height: New construction should conform to the massing, volume, height and scale of existing adjacent structures. Typical residential structures in the Historic Hill District are 25 to 40 feet high. The height of new construction should be no lower than the average height of all buildings on both block faces; measurements should be made from street level to the highest point of the roofs. (This guideline does not supersede the City's Zoning Code height limitations.)

(c) Rhythm and Directional Emphasis: The existence of uniform narrow lots in the Historic Hill naturally sets up a strong rhythm of buildings to open space. Historically any structure built on more than one lot used vertical facade elements to maintain and vary the overall rhythm of the street rather than interrupting the rhythm with a long monotonous facade. The directional expression of new construction should relate to that of existing adjacent structures.

(d) Materials and Details: Variety in the use of architectural materials and details adds to the intimacy and visual delight of the district. But there is also an overall thread of continuity provided by the range of materials commonly used by turn-of-the-century builders and by the way these materials were used. This thread of continuity is threatened by the introduction of new industrial materials and the aggressive exposure of earlier materials such as concrete block, metal framing, and glass. The purpose of this section is to encourage the proper use of appropriate materials and details.

(2) The materials and details of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing nearby buildings.

(4) Color is a significant design element, and paint colors should relate to surrounding structures and the area as well as to the style of the new structure. Building permits are not required for painting and, although the Heritage Preservation Commission may review and comment on paint color, paint color is not subject to Heritage Preservation Commission approval.

(f) Site

(2) Landscaping

Typically, open space in the Historic Hill District is divided into public, semipublic, semiprivate and private space. The public space of the street and sidewalk is often distinguished from the semipublic space of the front yard by a change in grade, a low hedge or a visually open fence.

(a) The buildings, landscaping elements in front yards, and boulevard trees together provide a "wall of enclosure" for the street "room". Generally, landscaping which respects the street as a public room is encouraged. Enclosures which allow visual penetration of semipublic spaces, such as wrought-iron fences, painted picket fences, low hedges or limestone retaining walls, are characteristic of most of the Historic Hill area. This approach to landscaping and fences is encouraged in contrast to complete enclosure of semipublic space by an opaque fence, a tall "weathered wood" fence or tall hedge rows. Cyclone fence should not be used in front yards or in the front half of side yards. Landscape timber should not be used for retaining walls in front yards.

(b) For the intimate space of a shallow setback, ground covers and low shrubs will provide more visual interest and require less maintenance than grass. When lots are left vacant, as green space or parking area, a visual hole in the street "wall" may result. Landscape treatment can eliminate this potential problem by providing a wall of enclosure from the street. Boulevard trees mark a separation between the automobile corridor and the rest of the streetscape, and should be maintained.

(g) Public Infrastructure

(1) The traditional pattern of public streets, curbs, boulevards, and sidewalks in the area should be maintained. Distinctive features of public spaces in the area, such as brick alleys, stone slab sidewalks, granite curbs, and the early twentieth century lantern style street lights, should be preserved. The same style should be used when new street lights are installed. New street furniture such as benches, bus shelters, telephone booths, kiosks, sign standards, trash containers, planters and fences should be compatible with the character of the district.

(2) Brick alleys and stone slab sidewalks generally should be maintained and repaired as necessary with original materials; asphalt and concrete patches should not be used. When concrete tile public sidewalks need to be replaced, new poured concrete sidewalks should be the same width as the existing sidewalks and should be scored in a 2 foot square or 18 inch

square pattern to resemble the old tiles; expansion joints should match the scoring. Handicap ramps should be installed on the inside of curbs as part of the poured concrete sidewalk; where there is granite curbing, a section should be lowered for the ramp.

E. FINDINGS:

1. On April 2, 1991, the most recent expansion of the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District was established under Ordinance No. 17815, § 3(II), reflecting today's boundaries. The Heritage Preservation Commission shall protect the architectural character of heritage preservation sites through review and approval or denial of applications for city permits for exterior work within designated heritage preservation sites §73.04.(4).
2. The site is categorized as non-contributing to the District, however, this has been open or park space since the 1930s.
3. The potential ornamental railing and landscaping could appropriately help provide a "wall of enclosure" for the street "room" by maintaining or building upon the effect provided by existing fencing and landscaping.
4. *Lots [that] are left vacant, as green space or parking area, [may create] a visual hole in the street "wall,"* which can be avoided with thoughtful placement of shrubs and ornamental fencing and/or maintenance of existing fencing and landscaping, such as proposed.
5. Landscaping consisting of *ground covers and low shrubs will provide more visual interest and require less maintenance than grass*, such as shown in Concept B.
6. No removal of historic fabric is proposed.
7. Color is a significant design element and the play equipment should be of a color(s) that are compatible to the adjacent District.
8. The McQuillan plaque should be continued to be maintained and if moved, shall stay on site and in an easily accessible location.

G. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Landscaping changes should incorporate ground covers and low shrubs to replace some of the grass along Laurel Avenue. Decorative fencing should be maintained or otherwise incorporated into the design. New play equipment should be a compatible color and the plaque should be maintained.

H. ATTACHMENTS

1. HPC Preliminary Review Application
2. Photographs
3. Conceptual Plans



Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission
Department of Planning and Economic Development
25 Fourth Street West, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102
Phone: (651) 266-9078
ApplyHPC@stpaul.gov

HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION

This application must be completed in addition to the appropriate city permit application if the affected property is an individually designated landmark or located within an historic district. For applications that must be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission refer to the HPC Meeting schedule for meeting dates and deadlines.

1. CATEGORY

Please check the category that best describes the proposed work

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repair/Rehabilitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign/Awning | <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction/Addition/
Alteration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence/Retaining Wall | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pre-Application Review Only |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

2. PROJECT ADDRESS

Street and number: 515 Laurel Avenue Zip Code: 55102

3. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of contact person: Bryan Murphy

Company: City of Saint Paul - Department of Parks and Recreation

Street and number: 400 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth Street

City: Saint Paul State: MN Zip Code: 55102

Phone number: _____ e-mail: _____

4. PROPERTY OWNER(S) INFORMATION (If different from applicant)

Name: _____

Street and number: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone number: _____ e-mail: _____

5. PROJECT ARCHITECT (If applicable)

Contact person: Bryan Murphy

Company: City of Saint Paul - Department of Parks and Recreation

Street and number: 400 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth Street

City: Saint Paul State: MN Zip Code: 55102

Phone number: (651) 266-6411 e-mail: bryan.murphy@ci.stpaul.mn.us

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completely describe ALL exterior changes being proposed for the property. Include changes to architectural details such as windows, doors, siding, railings, steps, trim, roof, foundation or porches. Attach specifications for doors, windows, lighting and other features, if applicable, including color and material samples.

Parks and Recreation has started the design process with community engagement input for the replacement of the play area at McQuillan Park (515 Laurel Ave). Oftentimes with our play area replacement projects, we look at the entire site to make improvements as our budget allows in order to provide benefits to park users for the next 20 - 25 years. At McQuillan Park, we are considering the removal of the tennis court, addition of ornamental railing, additional seating areas, and landscaping.

Attach additional sheets if necessary

7. ATTACHMENTS

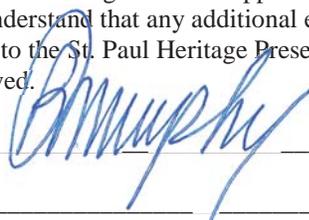
Please list any attachments that are included in this application. Refer to the [Design Review Application Process Checklist](#) for required information or attachments.

Existing site plan
Existing site photos
Preliminary concepts

Attach the above listed to this application or attach in an email to ApplyHPC@stpaul.gov

Will any federal money be used in this project? YES NO
Are you applying for the Investment Tax Credits? YES NO

I, the undersigned, understand that the Design Review Application is limited to the aforementioned work to the affected property. I further understand that any additional exterior work to be done under my ownership must be submitted by application to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission. Any unauthorized work will be required to be removed.

Signature of applicant:  Date: June 20, 2016
Signature of owner: _____ Date: _____

Send completed application with the necessary attachments to ApplyHPC@stpaul.gov or to:
Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission
Department of Planning and Economic Development
25 Fourth Street West, Suite 1400
Saint Paul, MN 55102



McQuillan Park Play Area

Improvements 2016

EXISTING SITE AERIAL

JULY 12, 2016





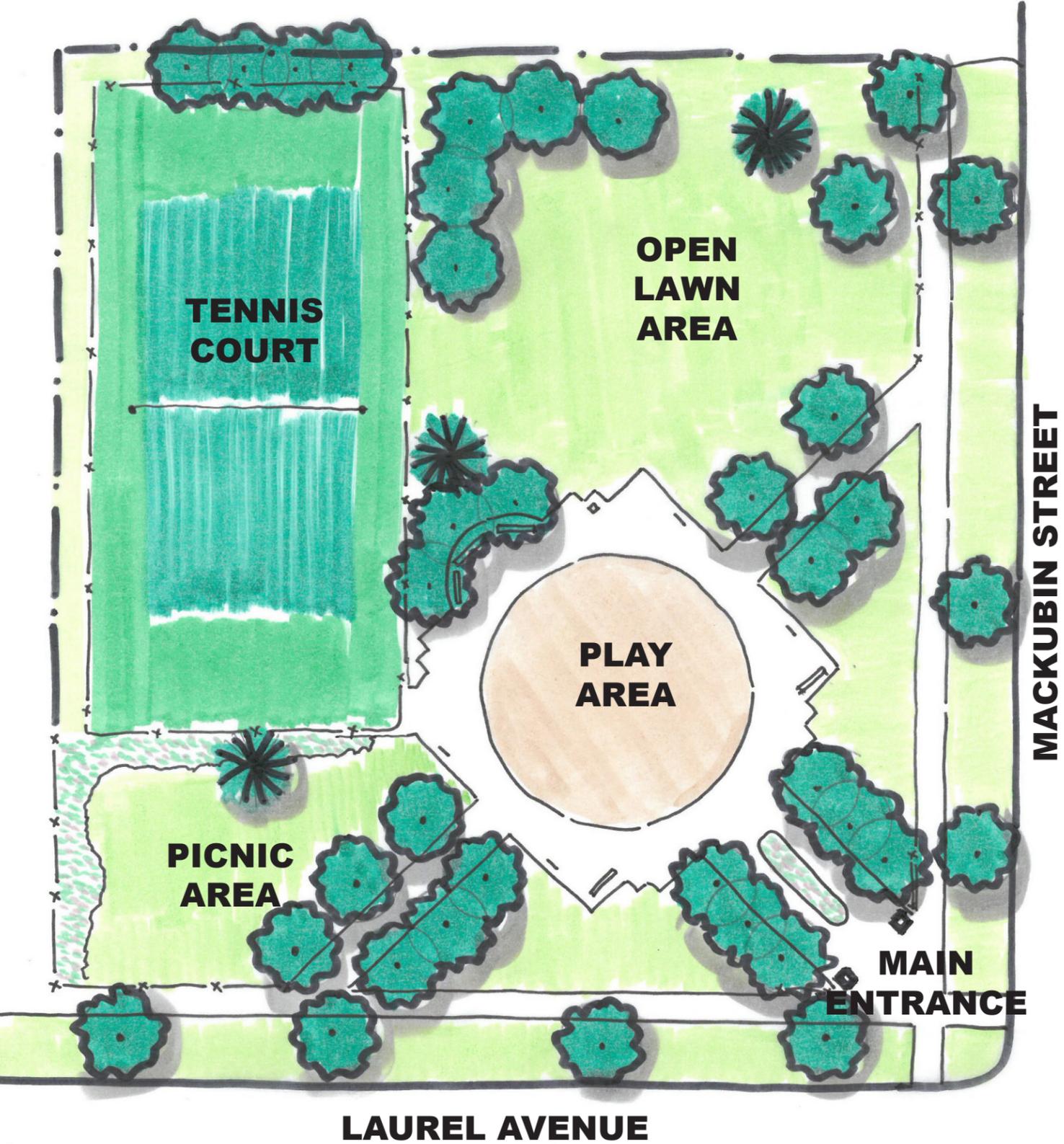








CONCEPT A



CONCEPT B

