

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: September 27, 2010
	Agenda Item No. 60 Roll Call No. <u>10-1614</u> Communication No. <u>10-587</u> Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp Park and Recreation Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Receive and file the Historic Preservation Plan for the Fort Des Moines National Historic Landmark and refer to the City Manager for review and recommendation to update the SuperBlock Master Plan.

SYNOPSIS:

Staff recommends that City Council receive and file the Historic Preservation Plan for the Fort Des Moines National Historic Landmark as prepared by Keffer/Overton Associates, Inc. and Genus Landscape Architects and that the City Manager be directed to review said Plan and return to the City Council for recommendation regarding an update to the SuperBlock Master Plan to take into account the findings of the Historic Preservation Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

Amount: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Last year, the City contracted with Keffer/Overton Associates, Inc., who teamed with Genus Landscape Architects to prepare a Historic Preservation Plan for the Fort Des Moines National Landmark. The Historic Preservation Plan is one step in moving forward the SuperBlock Master Plan, such that it helps to assess the rehabilitation needs and opportunities in the Fort area.

Fort Des Moines is a valuable asset to the City as well as the Country for its significance in black history, women’s history, and military history during World War I and World War II. It served as the Provisional Army Officer Training School, which marked both the U.S. Army's first recognition of its responsibility to train black officers and the establishment of a military tradition among African Americans. Fort Des Moines was also the birthplace of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), later renamed the Women's Army Corps (WAC), during WWII. It was the first and largest such training center during the war, training over 72,000 women, including 3,069 officers--the first women officers in the Army at any level. Since WWII the Army has disposed of major portions of the original 640 acre tract, reducing it to approximately 170 acres. Only 43 of the nearly 350 original buildings remain. The Historic Preservation Plan addresses 35 of those remaining buildings.

The consultant team was tasked with the following scope of work:

1. Review of existing assessments of historic significance of each building, features of the site, and cultural landscape with updates as needed;
2. Assessment of physical and structural condition and integrity of buildings, infrastructure, and features of the site;
3. Identification of preservation, rehabilitation, and mothballing efforts necessary;
4. Priority schedule of preservation and rehabilitation work;
5. Estimated cost of preservation and rehabilitation efforts;
6. Recommendations for adaptive reuse and connections among the features of the site; and
7. Recommendations for easements or other legal tools to ensure ongoing preservation.

The consultant team worked with a planning committee consisting of property owners, neighborhood representatives, and City staff from Parks and Recreation, Community Development, Economic Development, and Engineering. The committee held five meetings, including a public input meeting.

General recommendations resulting from this study include:

- Rehabilitation of Landscape and Buildings – Rehabilitation allows for adaptive reuse of land and buildings to meet current needs, while preserving those portion or features which convey historical, cultural, or architectural values.
- Land Use Protection Areas – The Consultant team identified three separate areas for the purpose of determining future land use and development opportunities. These include areas of 1) highest integrity, 2) moderate integrity, and 3) lowest integrity. The map below is included for reference. The level of flexibility in terms of use and construction would vary from strict to lenient depending upon the degree of integrity.



Land Use Protection Area Map

- Appropriate new uses – Successful rehabilitation efforts for other historic forts across the country have relied on one or a small group of dedicated entities to lead the way. This could be college or business campuses, larger scale residential housing providers, and civic groups.
- Design Guidelines – Design guidelines would help to provide enforceable area guidelines for redevelopment that a developer could follow, which would be acceptable by the State Historic Preservation Office and the City, while also providing oversight to ensure appropriate redevelopment in the area.
- Marketing and Image – A strong identity and marketing strategy will in part determine the ultimate success of rehabilitation efforts at Fort Des Moines. Joint marketing was a recommendation of the SuperBlock Master Plan and continues to be a recommendation of the Fort Des Moines National Historic Landmark Historic Preservation Plan.
- Fort Des Moines Cultural District – An advisory committee should be set up to oversee development and programming of a Cultural District. The group would act as an advocacy association of stakeholders and could be extended to representatives of the State Historic Preservation Office, local officials, and area community members. The District would promote arts, entertainment, and a live-work-play environment.

Specific Recommendations for Buildings include:

- Building Treatments -- Rehabilitation options include mothballing, rehabilitation of the building envelope, complete rehabilitation, and new addition and exterior alternations. The Plan provides a cost estimate for each of these options for each building.

- New Building Uses and Development Opportunities -- New uses and development can build constituency for the site. Possible new uses include conference space for hosting an event of up to 500 people or developing a campus environment. Other ideas include residential uses, small business incubators, studio spaces for artist or other community oriented spaces.

Specific Recommendations for the Cultural Landscape include:

- Circulation Patterns -- Maintain and enhance historic vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns along with their linear viewsheds. This includes lighting, utilities, landscaping, fences, signage, and parking areas.
- Large Scale Vegetation Patterns - The Fort's landscape was historically characterized by a mixture of lush canopy tree-lined streets and manicured turf lawns, with pasture to the south and west. The Plan sets forth recommendations for street trees, utilities, lawns, foundation plantings.
- Stormwater Management Strategies – Stormwater was historically managed in different ways throughout the fort grounds from curb and gutter roads with storm intakes on primary roads to open swale along secondary roads. The Plan sets forth recommendations for where curb and gutter or bio swales or other green management techniques could be used.
- Small Scale Site Features – These include outbuildings and structures such as sheds and garages, artillery guns, flag poles, fences and other non-habitable structures. The bandstand that was located along the Parade Grounds is recommended to be reconstructed.
- New Landscape Uses – New uses of the landscape and open space include trail connections, low-impact sports fields, community gatherings, interpretive elements and signage, and removal of chain-link fences with barbed wire.

Through the building and landscape assessments, cost estimates, and recommendations of this Plan, the needs and priorities of the Fort have been identified. This assists the City and other property owners to move forward with economic development and planning tools to implement the Plan's recommendations.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: September 28, 2009

Roll Call Number: [09-1760](#)

Action: [Authorizing](#) City Manager to execute an agreement to accept a grant awarded through the National Trust for Historic Preservation to be used as partial funding for a historic preservation plan for Fort Des Moines. ([Council Communication No. 09-679](#)) Moved by Coleman to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: July 27, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-1341

Action: [Proposal](#) from Keefer/Overton Architects to complete a Historic Preservation Plan for Fort Des Moines and authorizing and directing City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract. ([Council Communication No. 09-505](#)) Moved by Meyer to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: May 18, 2009

Roll Call Number: [09-870](#)

Action: Authorizing and directing the City Manager to apply on behalf of the City for a grant in the amount of \$46,776.00 from the State Historical Society of Iowa for a Historical Resource Development Program grant for the purpose of helping to fund the development of a Historic Preservation Plan and execute the contract portion of such grant application. Moved by Kiernan to approve. Motion carried 6-0. (Council Communication No. [09-316](#))

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Historic Preservation Commission

Date: July 29, 2010

Action: Receive, file and refer the Fort Des Moines Historic Preservation Plan to the City Council for further study.

Plan and Zoning Commission

Date: July 15, 2010

Action: Receive, file and refer the Fort Des Moines Historic Preservation Plan to the City Council for further study, suggest relocation of the 5th Judicial District correctional facilities; reinstate the parade ground by replanting trees, rehab Allen Circle in order to construct the bandstand, and reconstruction of Butner Street and Dickman Road to restore this area for vehicular traffic.

Date: April 3, 2008

Action: Approve the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan and recommend approval to the City Council.

Park Board

Date: August 24, 2010

Roll Call Number: 10-069

Action: Refer the Fort Des Moines Historic Preservation Plan to City Council for further study.

Date: June 22, 2010

Roll Call Number: 10-057

Action: Receive and file the Fort Des Moines Historic Preservation Plan

Date: March 25, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-030

Action: Approve the conceptual SuperBlock Master Plan and recommend approval to the City Council.

Date: February 26, 2008

Roll Call Number: 08-024

Action: Receive and file the SuperBlock Master Plan

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Update the SuperBlock Master Plan based upon the findings of this study.

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