



Date June 9, 2025

RESOLUTION CLOSING HEARING AND APPROVING REQUEST FROM THE CITY OF DES MOINES (OWNER), REPRESENTED BY DWAYNE MYERS (OFFICER), FOR DESIGNATION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 602 ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE, INCLUDING THE ARGONNE ARMORY (ARMORY AND WORLD WAR MEMORIAL BUILDING) AS A LOCAL LANDMARK

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines (owner), represented by Dwayne Myers (officer), located at 602 Robert D. Ray Drive ("Property"), have made application to designate the "Argonne Armory" (Armory and World War Memorial Building); and

WHEREAS, the Property is legally described as follows:

A PART OF ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE RIGHT OF WAY, AS PRESENTLY ESTABLISHED AND A PART OF DES MOINES STREET RIGHT OF WAY; AS PRESENTLY ESTABLISHED, LYING SOUTH OF AND ADJACENT TO LOT 3, BLOCK 1 OF EAST FORT DES MOINES AND ALL OF VACATED DES MOINES STREET AS DESCRIBED IN ORDINANCE 2038 AND ALL OF LOTS 2 AND 3, BLOCK 1, EAST FORT DES MOINES AND A PART OF LOT 1, BLOCK 2, EAST FORT DES MOINES AND A PART OF LOT 14, THE SIBLEY ADDITION, ALL BEING OFFICIAL PLATS, NOW INCLUDED IN AND FORMING A PART OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, POLK COUNTY, IOWA AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 2; THENCE SOUTH 15°(DEGREES) 18'(MINUTES) 26"(SECONDS) EAST, 54.89 FEET; THENCE NORTH 74°41'34" EAST, 13.08 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 15°18'26" EAST, 26.43 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 74°41'34" WEST, 13.08 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 15°18'26" EAST, 95.60 FEET; THENCE NORTH 74°41'34" EAST, 13.08 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 15°18'26" EAST, 26.46 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 74°41'34" WEST, 13.08 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 15°18'26" EAST, 49.44 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 74°41'34" WEST, 125.52 FEET; THENCE NORTH 15°18'26" WEST, 253.02 FEET; THENCE NORTH 74°47'04" EAST, 125.52 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING AND CONTAINING 32440 SQUARE FEET.

WHEREAS, the application contains detailed references and explanation regarding the historical nature of the building located at 602 Robert D. Ray Drive; and,

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission voted 7-0 to recommend that the "Argonne Armory" (Armory and World War Memorial Building) be designated a local Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the City Plan and Zoning Commission has advised that at a public hearing held on July 18, 2024, its members voted 13-0 in support of a motion to recommend **APPROVAL** of a



Date June 9, 2025

request from the City of Des Moines (Owner), to designate the “Argonne Armory” (Armory and World War Memorial Building) as a Local Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the Des Moines Municipal Code section 58-60 requires a public hearing be held to consider the application; and,

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2025, by Roll Call No. 25-0736, it was duly resolved by the City Council that the request for Local Landmark Designation be set down for hearing on June 9, 2025, at 5:00 p.m., to be held in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 400 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, Iowa; and

WHEREAS, due notice of the hearing was published in the Des Moines Register, as provided by law, setting forth the time and place for hearing on said proposed Local Landmark Designation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. The public hearing on the application is hereby closed.
2. The “Argonne Armory” meets the requirements of Des Moines Municipal Code section 58-58 to be designated as a local landmark because the Property located at 75 East Army Post Road:
 - Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture; and
 - Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; and,
 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
3. The City Council accepts the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Plan and Zoning Commission and grants the application of the City of Des Moines to have the “Argonne Armory” designated a local landmark.
4. The City Clerk is directed to file the designation and description of the “Argonne Armory” with the Development Services Department and record this resolution as



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the designation and description of "Argonne Armory" in the office of the Polk County Recorder.

Moved by _____ to adopt. Second by _____.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

/s/ Lisa A. Wieland

Lisa A. Wieland

Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN				
SIMONSON				
VOSS				
COLEMAN				
WESTERGAARD				
MANDELBAUM				
GATTO				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		

Mayor

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

City Clerk

Date June 9, 2025

Agenda Item 57

Roll Call # _____

July 22, 2024

Communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at their July 18, 2024 meeting, the following action was taken on Request from the City of Des Moines for designation of the Argonne Armory Building at 602 Robert D. Ray Drive as a Local Landmark.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

After public hearing, the members voted 13-0 as follows.

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Abstain	Absent
Francis Boggus	X				
Leah Rudolphi					X
Abby Chungath	X				
Kayla Berkson	X				
Chris Draper	X				
Laura Kessel	X				
Todd Garner	X				
Johnny Alcivar	X				
Justyn Lewis	X				
Carolyn Jenison	X				
William Page	X				
Andrew Lorentzen	X				
Emily Webb	X				
Katie Gillette					X
Rick Trower	X				

Approval that the property "Argonne Armory (Armory and World War Memorial Building)" be designated as a local Landmark.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION

Staff recommends that the property “Argonne Armory (Armory and World War Memorial Building)” be designated as a local Landmark.

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Case Overview:** The subject property is located on the west side of Robert D. Ray Drive next to the Des Moines River. Directly to the south is the Brenton Skating Plaza at the intersection of East Grand Avenue and Robert D. Ray Drive. The site contains a 240-foot by 112-foot Argonne Armory Building that was constructed circa 1934 according to the Iowa Site Inventory form from 1987.

On June 26, 2024, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the recommendation that the “Argonne Armory” be designated a local Landmark and recommended approval of the request. The Historic Preservation Commission and the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for review in accordance with Chapter 58-60 and Chapter 82-40 of the City Code. If the structure is designated as a Landmark, any alteration, new construction, or demolition would be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission and require approval by the City Council.

2. **Size of Site:** 1.728 acres.

3. **Existing Zoning (site):** “P2” Public, Civic & Institutional District.

4. **Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:**

North – “P1”; Use is Parks and Open Space consisting of a paved surface parking lot and City-owned parkland and trails.

South – “P2”; Use is Public/Semi-Public consisting of City Hall.

East – “DX2” & “DXR”; Use is Downtown Mixed Use consisting of office buildings primarily used for State of Iowa offices, multiple-household residential, and light industrial.

West – “DX2” & “F”; Uses are Downtown Mixed Use and Parks and Open Space consisting of a MidAmerican Energy Company power substation and City-owned parkland.

5. **Applicable Recognized Neighborhood(s):** The subject building is located in Downtown Des Moines Neighborhood. All recognized neighborhoods were notified of the meeting by mailing of the Final Agenda on July 12, 2024. All agendas are mailed to the primary contact(s) designated by the recognized neighborhood association to the City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division. The Downtown Des Moines

Neighborhood Association mailings were sent to Deb Madison-Levi, 111 10th Street, Unit 203, Des Moines, IA 50309.

6. PlanDSM Land Use Plan Designation: Downtown Mixed Use.

- 7. Applicable Regulations:** Pursuant to Chapter 82-40(a) of the City Code, the Plan and Zoning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council and is a key factor in the growth and development of the city. Therefore, the Commission reviews all local Landmark and Historic District nominations in accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance and for compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan and forwards a recommendation to the City Council.

II. APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF THE CITY CODE

Section 58-56 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance contains the landmark purpose statement. Section 58-58 contains the criteria for the designation of a landmark and Section 58-60 establishes the nomination process.

Sec. 58-56. Purpose.

It is declared as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this article is to:

- (1) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;
- (2) Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such improvements;
- (3) Stabilize and improve property values;
- (4) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;
- (5) Protect and enhance the city's attractions to residents, tourists, and visitors and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry;
- (6) Strengthen the economy of the city; and
- (7) Promote the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the city.

Sec. 58-58. Designation criteria.

- (a) For purpose of this article, a landmark or landmark site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and that:
 - (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;

- (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
 - (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
 - (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.
- (b) Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures; properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes; structures that have been moved from their original locations; reconstructed historic buildings; properties primarily commemorative in nature; and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the landmark designation. However, such properties will qualify if they fall within the following categories:
- (1) A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.
 - (2) A building or structure removed from its original location which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
 - (3) A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance, if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.
 - (4) A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.
 - (5) A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived.
 - (6) A property primarily commemorative in nature, if design, age, tradition or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance.
 - (7) A property achieving significance within the past 50 years, if it is of exceptional importance.

Sec. 58-60. Procedures.

- (a) The historic preservation commission shall consider the nomination of landmarks and landmark sites located within historic districts, and make a report and recommendation on such nomination to the city plan and zoning commission and city council as provided below. The landmark review board shall consider the nomination of landmarks and landmark sites located outside historic districts and make a report and recommendation on such nomination to the city plan and zoning commission and city council as provided below.
- (b) Notice that an application for designation of a landmark or landmark site is being considered shall be given to the owner of the parcel on which the proposed landmark is situated or which is part of the proposed landmark site in accordance with the following:
 - (1) Such notice shall be served by certified mail, addressed to the owner at his or her last known address as such appears in the records of the county treasurer's office, or if there is no name on such records, such notice may be served by regular mail addressed to "owner" at the street address of the property in question.
 - (2) Such owner shall have the right to confer with the historic preservation commission or landmark review board, as applicable, prior to final action by the commission or board on the application.
 - (3) The historic preservation commission or landmark review board, as applicable, may, in addition, hold the public hearing of the proposed designation by giving notice as required by law.

- (c) After such investigation by the historic preservation commission or landmark review board as is deemed necessary, but in no case more than 60 days after the receipt of the complete application, the application for designation shall be recommended for approval or disapproval. Such recommendation shall be in writing and signed by the chair of the historic preservation commission or landmark review board, as applicable, and shall state the reasons for recommending approval or disapproval. The recommendation may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site as described in the application or may include modifications thereof. Such recommendation shall be forwarded to and filed with the plan and zoning commission, within five days after making such recommendation.
- (d) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the plan and zoning commission shall schedule a public hearing at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (e) Within 30 days after the public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall forward such application to the city council, together with the recommendation of the historic preservation commission or landmark review board. The plan and zoning commission may adopt the recommendation of the historic preservation commission or landmark review board as its own or may prepare a written recommendation of its own. The plan and zoning commission may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site or may include modifications thereof. If the modification requires an additional public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall hold such hearing before forwarding the application to the city council.
- (f) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the council shall schedule a public hearing to consider the recommendation at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (g) The city council, after public hearing, may approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the recommendation of the plan and zoning commission by a majority vote of its membership. If the plan and zoning commission shall have failed to act within the time limit set forth in this section, the city council may, nevertheless, approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the proposed landmark or landmark site as originally proposed or modified by a majority vote of its membership.

II. ANALYSIS

1. **Landmark Nomination Criteria:** A nomination must demonstrate that the subject building or site possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets one or more of the following criterion.

- (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;
- (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The nomination suggests the site meets Criteria 1, 2, and 4. The Argonne Armory is a contributing structure in the Civic Center National Historic District. The following excerpts

from the Armory and World War Memorial Building Iowa Site Inventory sheet from the Civic Center Historic District nomination (prepared by Barbara Beving Long, 1987) make the case for how the site meets those criterions:

- “The Armory was the 7th and last building of the river front Civic Center (6 are extant). It contributes strongly to the uniformity of color, height, and placement that characterizes the Civic Center. It also calls attention to the role of the federal government in funding long-held plans for the Civic Center.”
- “The Armory displays typical features of the Art Deco Style. Stone laid with narrow, unobtrusive joints provides a hard-edged, smooth surface. Vertical lines (actually groups of rounded vertical molding) in panels at the windows and on pilasters provide a vertical emphasis. Another Art Deco element are the raised parapets at the two east entries which give a stepped effect and emphasize the geometric form of the building.”
- “The Armory, one of the best examples of the Art Deco Style in Des Moines, marks the demise of the Beaux-Arts influence on public buildings in general and on the Des Moines civic center in particular.”
- “Construction began in 1934, making the Armory the last of the seven public buildings (six remain) to grace the river front and comprise the civic center.”
- “The Armory originally had a dining room, kitchen, club room, storage and rifle range in the basement. Club rooms and offices were dotted throughout the first and second floors as well. The dominant room was the two-story drill hall. The interior has been completely modified to accommodate city and county offices, including addition of another floor to use all the drill hall space. As late as the 1960’s, the drill hall was intact, but was used for municipal recreation purposes.”
- “There is ample precedent for provision of an armory on the river front. In 1900 it was announced that a 110 foot x 150 foot armory would be built there south and west of the Grand Avenue bridge. The Robinson Plan of 1909 also included an armory on the river front. And in 1911 the Chamber of Commerce was behind efforts to gain a river front armory.”
- “In 1919 plans were announced for a \$500,000 Memorial Auditorium and Art Museum on the river front. Brainchild of the Des Moines Ad Club, the idea had the blessing of the Town Planning Commission, the American Legion, the Equality League, and the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts. The favored site was the block south of the Municipal Building, across from the Library.”
- “In 1921 the Planning Commission recommended construction of a memorial building “for the boys from Polk county who served in the army and navy during the world war.” However, it soon became clear that the legal status of the additional tax levy to underwrite construction was in question, and no progress was made. With the 1930s Depression and federal relief programs came renewed calls for a river front armory. Problems with financing immediately surfaced, especially concerning the type of bonds to use. One of the results was that the City obtained ownership of the building, and the State leased space for the Argonne Post of the American

Legion. The federal government paid for a portion of the labor and materials through the PWA.”

The following is an excerpt from the Civic Center District: The City Beautiful Movement and City Planning in Des Moines, Iowa 1892-1938 Report prepared by Barbara Beving Long in 1987:

“The Civic Center district of river front buildings, structure and land forms is unique in the city. No other group of buildings and landscape combines to illustrate as strongly and directly the important themes outlined in the Multiple Properties Cover Document, the City Beautiful Movement and City Planning in Des Moines, Iowa, 1892-1938.

Civic Center buildings and structures are distinguished by their river front locations and by their harmonious design, style, scale, use, siting, and materials. River front improvements – river walls, bridges, dams specialized sewer systems – marry environmental and manmade considerations. They show the effect of a major, flood-prone river upon urban development and the steps taken to diminish flood damage.”

2. **PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow:** The PlanDSM Comprehensive Plan was approved on April 25, 2016. The proposed nomination is supported by numerous PlanDSM Goals and Policies including:

Land Use Goal 5

Continue to support the development of Downtown as the economic, cultural, and residential core of Des Moines.

LU29: Support downtown development that investigates and incorporates green building techniques and design.

Land Use Goal 6

Recognize the value of Des Moines’ historic building stock and landscapes and ensure their preservation.

LU33: Promote preservation, restoration, and reuse of historical structures and landmarks.

LU 35: Encourage expansion and establishment of National Historic Districts, local historic districts, and local landmarks.

Community Character and Neighborhood Goal 1

Embrace the distinct character offered in each of Des Moines’ neighborhoods.

CCN1: Celebrate the City’s culture and diversity through the creation of vibrant neighborhood nodes and corridors.

Community Character and Neighborhood Goal 4

Protect Des Moines' historic and cultural assets that contribute to neighborhood and community identity.

CCN25: Partner with the historic preservation community to promote Des Moines' rich history through education and outreach on historic structures, districts, and landscapes.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

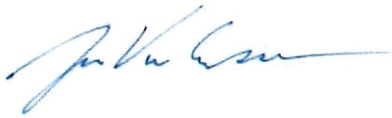
Johnny Alcivar asked if any member of the public or commission desired to speak on the item. No one requested to speak.

COMMISSION ACTION:

Rick Trower made a motion for approval that the property "Argonne Armory (Armory and World War Memorial Building)" be designated as a local Landmark.

THE VOTE: 13-0

Respectfully submitted,



Planning & Urban Design Administrator

JMV:mrw

Landmark Nomination Form**IDENTIFICATION:****SITE NAME** Armory and World War Memorial Building (Argonne Armory)**LEGAL DESCRIPTION** _____**OWNER(S) NAME** City of Des Moines**OWNER(S) SIGNATURE** See Attachment "A"
(signed owner's letter of support or petition can be attached in lieu of signature here)**OWNER(S) ADDRESS** 400 Robert D. Ray Drive Des Moines Iowa 50309
(street address) (city) (state) (zip)**CATEGORY:****STRUCTURAL/ARCHITECTURAL** ☒ **LANDSCAPE** ☐ **ARCHEOLOGICAL** ☐**COMPONENTS** Armory and World War Memorial Building**USE** (present) City of Des Moines Offices (past) Armory**DESCRIPTION:****DATE OF CONSTRUCTION** 1934 **ARCHITECT/BUILDER** Tinsley, McBroom & Higgins**BUILDING TYPE:**Single-family dwelling ☐ Industrial ☐ Other institutional ☐ Religious ☐
Multiple-family dwelling ☐ Educational ☐ Public ☒ Agricultural ☐
Commercial ☐

EXTERIOR WALLS: clapboard ___ stone X brick ___ board and batten ___ shingles ___
stucco ___ other _____

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: wood frame with interlocking joints ___ masonry load-bearing walls ___
wood frame with light members (balloon frame) ___ iron frame ___ steel frame with curtain walls ___
reinforced concrete ___ other X - steel and concrete

CONDITION: excellent X good ___ fair ___ deteriorated ___

INTEGRITY: original site X moved--if so, when_

-

from where _____

Information on alterations, additions (with dates & architect, if known) and any other notable
features of building/site: _____

See Attachment "B"

RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY: barn ___ other farm structures ___ carriage house
___ garage ___ privy ___ other _____

SURROUNDINGS OF THE SITE: open land ___ woodland ___ scattered outbuildings ___
commercial X industrial ___ residential ___ densely built-up ___ other _____

Prepared by _____ Stacey Hanley, Urban Designer, City of Des Moines

Date 6-20-24 _____

Address _____ 602 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Telephone (515) 283-4287

Email srhanley@dmgov.org

Organization City of Des Moines

SIGNIFICANCE: (Indicate all sources of information for all statements)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

See Attachment "B"

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

See Attachment "B"

SOURCES (for primary and secondary sources give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

See Attachment "B"



Roll Call Number

24-0673

Agenda Item Number

39 B

Date May 6, 2024

**APPROVING REQUEST FROM THE CITY MANAGER TO INITIATE
PROCEEDINGS FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE ARGONNE ARMORY AT 602
ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE AS A LANDMARK**

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines owns the Argonne Armory site ("Site"), locally known as 602 Robert D. Ray Drive; and

WHEREAS, the Site contains a contributing structure in the Civic Center Historic District as listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, Scott Sanders, as City Manager, requests to initiate proceedings to recognize the Site as a landmark pursuant to Municipal Code §58-59; and

WHEREAS, such proceedings will allow for public input and, if approved as a designated landmark, will mandate any future redevelopment of the site to comply with additional historic requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, that:

1. The request from the City Manager to initiate proceedings to designate the Site as a local landmark is hereby approved and referred to the Development Services Department for consideration and hearings at Historic Preservation Communication and Plan and Zoning Commission before returning to the City Council for further action.

(Council Communication No. 24-203)

★ Roll Call Number

24-0673

Agenda Item Number

39B

Date May 6, 2024

MOVED by Coleman to adopt. Second by Gatto.

FORM APPROVED:

/s/ Lisa A. Wieland

Lisa A. Wieland

Assistant City Attorney

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
BOESEN	✓			
SIMONSON	✓			
VOSS	✓			
COLEMAN	✓			
WESTERGAARD	✓			
MANDELBAUM	✓			
GATTO	✓			
TOTAL	7			
MOTION CARRIED	APPROVED			

CERTIFICATE

I, LAURA BAUMGARTNER, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Connie Boesen Mayor

Laura Baumgartner City Clerk

Iowa Site Inventory

Office of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
East 12th & Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Site Number _____
District Name _____
Map Reference # _____

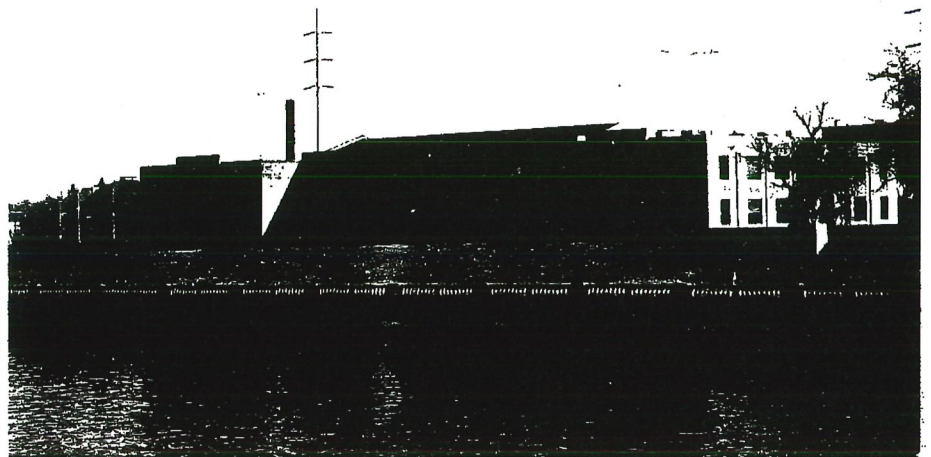
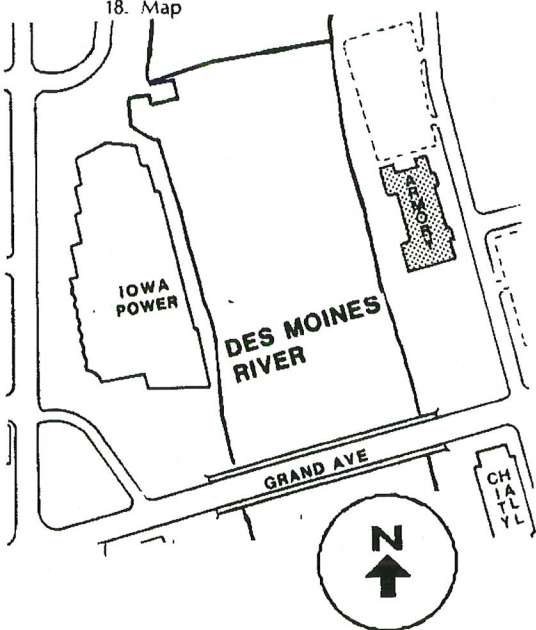
Identification

1. Site Name Armory and World War Memorial Building
 2. Village/Town/City Des Moines Township _____ County Polk
 3. Street Address East First and Des Moines Streets
 4. Legal Location _____
 Urban: _____ subdivision _____ block _____ parcel _____ subparcel _____
 Rural: _____ township _____ range _____ section _____ 1/4 section of 1/4 section _____
 5. UTM Location: zone _____ easting _____ northing _____; Acreage _____
 6. Owner(s) Name City of Des Moines
 7. Owner(s) Address _____
 (Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
 8. Use: Present city and county offices Original armory

Description

9. Date of Construction 1934 Architect Tinsley, McBroom & Higgins
 10. Building Type:
☐ single-family dwelling ☐ industrial ☐ other institutional ☐ religious
☐ multiple-family dwelling ☐ educational ☒ public ☐ agricultural
☐ commercial
 11. Exterior Walls: ☐ clapboard ☒ stone ☐ brick ☐ board and batten ☐ shingles ☐ stucco
☐ other _____
 12. Structural System: ☐ wood frame with interlocking joints ☐ wood frame with light members (balloon frame)
☐ masonry load-bearing walls ☐ iron frame ☐ steel frame with curtain walls ☐ reinforced concrete
☐ other _____
 13. Condition: ☒ excellent ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ deteriorated
 14. Integrity: ☒ original site ☐ moved—if so, when? _____
 Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:
 15. Related Outbuildings and Property: ☐ barn ☐ other farm structures ☐ carriage house ☐ garage ☐ privy
☐ other _____
 16. Is the building endangered? ☐ no ☐ yes—if so, why? _____
 17. Surroundings of the building: ☐ open land ☐ woodland ☐ scattered outbuildings ☐ densely built-up ☐ commercial
☐ industrial ☐ residential ☐ other _____

18. Map



Significance

(Indicate sources of information for all statements)

20. Architectural significance

- ☒ a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
☐ b. Contributing structure
☐ c. Not eligible/intrusion

Like other public buildings along the river front, the Argonne Armory (termed the "Armory and World War Memorial Building" on the blueprints) displays a smooth grey stone facade. However, having been built during the 1930s Depression, it was designed using a style current during that period. The Armory, one of the best examples of the Art Deco Style in Des Moines, marks the demise of the Beaux-Arts influence on public buildings in general and on the Des Moines civic center in particular. Yet the use of similar materials, shape, size, and siting render the Armory a contributing element along the river front. It is located at the north end of the civic center with a green space separating it from the Municipal Building. Construction began in 1934, making

21. Historical Significance

Theme(s) _____

- ☒ a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
☐ b. Contributing structure
☐ c. Not eligible/intrusion

The Des Moines architectural firm of Tinsley, McBroom & Higgins designed the Armory. Blueprints are dated September 1933 with interior revisions in December 1934 and June 1935. The basic design remained unchanged, although slate was specified for the "striped" panels at the windows instead of the stone which was used. Also, small decorative pedestals with tapered monoliths (similar to the present east facade light fixtures) were apparently not constructed on the west side.

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

Des Moines Leader, November 11, 1900.

Des Moines News, October 29, 1919.

Clippings dated February 4, 5, 17, 1921 and December 16, 22, 30, 1933, February, February 23, March 1, July 18, 1934, April 8,

Prepared by Barbara Beving Long Date 1987
3140 Easton, Des Moines Telephone 266-4964
Address Midwest Research
Organization _____

For Office of Historic Preservation Use Only

1. Office Information Sources on this Property

- ☐ County Resource File
☐ Windshield Survey
☐ National Register
☐ Grants-In-Aid: _____
☐ Determination of Eligibility

☐ Review and Compliance Project:

- ☐ Other _____
☐ Other _____
☐ Other _____

2. Subject Traces

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

3. Photo Images _____

- _____

20.

the Armory the last of the seven public buildings (six remain) to grace the river front and comprise the civic center.

The Armory displays typical features of the Art Deco Style. Stone laid with narrow, unobtrusive joints provides a hard-edged, smooth surface. Vertical lines (actually groups of rounded vertical moulding) in panels at the windows and on the pilasters provide a vertical emphasis. Another Art Deco element are the raised parapets at the two east entries which give a stepped effect and emphasize the geometric form of the building.

East entrances and some west window groupings are inset slightly, giving a faceted effect, another feature of the Art Deco. Hard-edged low-relief detail and sculpture, notably eagles above the entries, highlight these areas, and, with the "striped" details, the principal decoration. Light fixtures flank the doors and consist of moulded pedestals for smooth tapered shafts from which now one and originally three lights were affixed. Above the doors are patriotic phrases ("For the Service of the People" and "For God and Country" on the east, "In Memory of Comrades and Their Achievements" on the south, and "A Fit Soldiery is the Guaranty of Liberty" on the west). The south entrance projects from the main facade, providing a vestibule (originally for the Legion hall).

The 240 x 112' building is roughly rectangular in outline, with the exception of the slightly projecting (16') ends of the west elevation. Between these projecting ends are seven large openings with curved heads. Originally six windows and a centered entry with a double ramp leading to it, these openings lighted the two-story drill hall.

The Armory consists of two stories resting upon a slightly raised basement. The basement has deeply inset rectangular windows (not unlike the Library) while the upper floors originally had paired casement windows topped with a transom. A moulded course occurs between the basement and the first floor. The north or service facade is tan brick. It does not rise the full two stories for it was the location for the boiler system.

The Armory originally had a dining room, kitchen, club room, storage, and rifle range in the basement. Club rooms and offices were dotted throughout the first and second floors as well. The dominant room was the two-story drill hall. The interior has been completely modified to accommodate city and county offices, including addition of another floor to use all the drill hall space. The Argonne Post of the American Legion retains space in the basement. As late as the 1960s, the drill hall was intact, but was used for municipal recreation purposes.

Continuation Sheet
Armory

Several windows at the southwest corner have been shortened and panels with concrete "striped" effects designed to resemble the existing stone panels added. The original groups of three lights on the east facade have been replaced by single, similar ones. Windows have been replaced (except for some in the basement) with energy-efficient versions; however, their configuration is similar to that of the originals. A concrete ramp allowing handicapped access has been placed on the south entrance.

The Armory is located on the east bank of the Des Moines River north of the Municipal Building and Grand Avenue. An expanse of green space, named Pete Crivaro Park in 1987 after a former mayor, is situated between Grand Avenue and the building. Two modern wood and metal benches (probably from the 1970s) are located there on a small concrete pad with modern landscaping around them. A low hedge outlines two ?? sides of the park. There is also a boulder with a plaque commemorating "the first licensed ferry at the junction of the Des Moines and Racoon Rivers, 1847, the first pontoon bridge at Sycamore Street (now Grand Avenue), 1856, the first toll bridge at Court Avenue, 1856." The Abigail Adams Chapter of the D.A.R. erected the boulder in 1933. It has not been determined if the boulder was placed at this site in 1933.

21.

The cornerstone at the northeast corner is dated 1934, and a 1939 newspaper article also gives 1934 for the construction date. It has not yet been determined when work was completed, although blueprint revisions for interior work were dated 1934 and 1935.

There is ample precedent for provision of an armory on the river front. In 1900 it was announced that a 110x150' armory would be built there south and west of the Grand Avenue bridge. The Robinson plan of 1909 also included an armory on the river front. And in 1911 the Chamber of Commerce was behind efforts to gain a river front armory.

In 1919 plans were announced for a \$500,000 Memorial Auditorium and Art Museum on the river front. Brainchild of the Des Moines Ad Club, the idea had the blessing of the Town Planning Commission, the American Legion, the Equality League, and the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts. The favored site was the block south of the Municipal Building, across from the Library.

In 1921 the Planning Commission recommended construction of a memorial building "for the boys from Polk county who served in the army and navy during the world war." However, it soon became clear that the legal status of the additional tax levy to underwrite construction was in question, and no progress was made.

Continuation Sheet
Armory

With the 1930s Depression and federal relief programs came renewed calls for a river front armory. Problems with financing immediately surfaced, especially concerning the type of bonds to use. One of the results was that the City obtained ownership of the building, and the State leased space for the Argonne Post of the American Legion. The federal government paid for a portion of the labor and materials through the PWA.

22.

1939 in Planning & Zoning Department Scrapbooks.
Blueprints, Office of City Engineer.

21., cont., The Armory was the 7th and last building of the river front Civic Center (6 are extant). It contributes strongly to the uniformity of color, height, and placement that characterizes the Civic Center. It also calls attention to the role of the federal government in funding long-held plans for the Civic Center. See multiple propoerty cover document for details.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CITY OF DES MOINES
NOTICE OF DECISION
In the Following Matter

REQUEST FROM:	:	CASE NUMBER: CAHP-2025-000054
	:	
CITY OF DES MOINES	:	
	:	
PROPERTY LOCATION:	:	MEETING DATE: JUNE 26, 2024
	:	
602 ROBERT D. RAY DRIVE	:	

SUBJECT OF THE REQUEST:

Nomination of the Argonne Armory (Armory and World War Memorial Building) as a Local Landmark.

FINDING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

The subject property meets one or more of the designation criteria as outlined in the City of Des Moines Municipal Code Chapter 58, Section 58(a) and therefore the Commission recommends designating the site as a Local Landmark.

VOTE: A vote of 7-0 was registered as follows:

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Allison	X			
Barry				X
Green	X			
Herlocker				X
Hildebrand	X			
Nelson	X			
Schmid	X			
Shaw	X			
Taenzer	X			

Approved as to form:



Stacey Hanley, AIA, PLA, LEED AP
Urban Designer



Jason Van Essen, AICP
Planning & Urban Design Administrator

Historic Preservation Commission

Meeting Minutes- June 24, 2024

HPC PARTICIPANTS: Tiffany Allison, Martha Green, Mike Hildebrand, Chad Nelson, Ann Schmid, Evan Shaw, and York Taenzer.

STAFF PARTICIPANTS: Jacob Couppee, Stacey Hanley and Jason Van Essen.

Item 5

Nomination of the Argonne Armory (Armory and World War Memorial Building), located at 602 Robert D. Ray Drive, as a Local Landmark.

STAFF REPORT TO COMMISSIONERS

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The subject property is located on the west side of Robert D. Ray Drive next to the Des Moines River. Directly to the south is the Brenton Skating Plaza at the intersection of East Grand Avenue and Robert D. Ray Drive. The site contains the 240-foot by 112-foot Armory building constructed circa 1934 according to the Iowa Site Inventory form from 1987.

II. APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF THE CITY CODE

Section 58-56 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance contains the landmark purpose statement. Section 58-58 contains the criteria for the designation of a landmark and Section 58-60 establishes the nomination process.

Sec. 58-56. Purpose.

It is declared as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this article is to:

- (1) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;
- (2) Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such improvements;
- (3) Stabilize and improve property values;
- (4) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;

- (5) Protect and enhance the city's attractions to residents, tourists, and visitors and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry;
- (6) Strengthen the economy of the city; and
- (7) Promote the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the city.

Sec. 58-58. Designation criteria.

- (a) For purpose of this article, a landmark or landmark site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and that:
 - (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;
 - (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
 - (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
 - (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Sec. 58-60. Procedures.

- (a) The historic preservation commission shall consider the nomination of landmarks and landmark sites, and make a report and recommendation on such nomination to the city plan and zoning commission and city council as provided below.
- (b) Notice that an application for designation of a landmark or landmark site is being considered shall be given to the owner of the parcel on which the proposed landmark is situated or which is part of the proposed landmark site in accordance with the following:
 - (1) Such notice shall be served by certified mail, addressed to the owner at his or her last known address as such appears in the records of the county treasurer's office, or if there is no name on such records, such notice may be served by regular mail addressed to "owner" at the street address of the property in question.
 - (2) Such owner shall have the right to confer with the historic preservation commission prior to final action by the commission on the application.
 - (3) The historic preservation commission may, in addition, hold the public hearing of the proposed designation by giving notice as required by law.
- (c) After such investigation by the historic preservation commission, but in no case more than 60 days after the receipt of the complete application, the application for designation shall

be recommended for approval or disapproval. Such recommendation shall be in writing and shall state the reasons for recommending approval or disapproval. The recommendation may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site as described in the application or may include modifications thereof. Such recommendation shall be forwarded to and filed with the plan and zoning commission, within five days after making such recommendation.

- (d) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the plan and zoning commission shall schedule a public hearing at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (e) Within 30 days after the public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall forward such application to the city council, together with the recommendation of the historic preservation commission. The plan and zoning commission may adopt the recommendation of the historic preservation commission as its own or may prepare a written recommendation of its own. The plan and zoning commission may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site or may include modifications thereof. If the modification requires an additional public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall hold such hearing before forwarding the application to the city council.
- (f) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the council shall schedule a public hearing to consider the recommendation at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (g) The city council, after public hearing, may approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the recommendation of the plan and zoning commission by a majority vote of its membership. If the plan and zoning commission shall have failed to act within the time limit set forth in this section, the city council may, nevertheless, approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the proposed landmark or landmark site as originally proposed or modified by a majority vote of its membership.

The Historic Preservation Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to the Plan and Zoning Commission and the City Council for review in accordance with Section 58-60 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Historic Preservation Commission and the Plan and Zoning Commission are recommending bodies in this process. The decision to designate a property or site as a local Landmark is a public policy decision made by the City Council.

If the property is designated as a Landmark then any alteration, new construction, or demolition would be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission.

III. ANALYSIS

A nomination must demonstrate that the subject building or site possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets one or more of the following criterion.

- (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;
- (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The nomination suggests the site meets Criteria 1, 2, and 4. The Argonne Armory is a contributing structure in the Civic Center National Historic District. The following excerpts from the Armory and World War Memorial Building Iowa Site Inventory sheet from the Civic Center Historic District nomination (prepared by Barbara Beving Long, 1987) make the case for how the site meets those criteria:

- “The Armory was the 7th and last building of the river front Civic Center (6 are extant). It contributes strongly to the uniformity of color, height, and placement that characterizes the Civic Center. It also calls attention to the role of the federal government in funding long-held plans for the Civic Center.”
- “The Armory displays typical features of the Art Deco Style. Stone laid with narrow, unobtrusive joints provides a hard-edged, smooth surface. Vertical lines (actually groups of rounded vertical moulding) in panels at the windows and on pilasters provide a vertical emphasis. Another Art Deco element are the raised parapets at the two east entries which give a stepped effect and emphasize the geometric form of the building.”
- “The Armory, one of the best examples of the Art Deco Style in Des Moines, marks the demise of the Beaux-Arts influence on public buildings in general and on the Des Moines civic center in particular.”
- “Construction began in 1934, making the Armory the last of the seven public buildings (six remain) to grace the river front and comprise the civic center.”

- “The Armory originally had a dining room, kitchen, club room, storage and rifle range in the basement. Club rooms and offices were dotted throughout the first and second floors as well. The dominant room was the two-story drill hall. The interior has been completely modified to accommodate city and county offices, including addition of another floor to use all the drill hall space. As late as the 1960’s, the drill hall was intact, but was used for municipal recreation purposes.”
- “There is ample precedent for provision of an armory on the river front. In 1900 it was announced that a 110 foot x 150 foot armory would be built there south and west of the Grand Avenue bridge. The Robinson Plan of 1909 also included an armory on the river front. And in 1911 the Chamber of Commerce was behind efforts to gain a river front armory.”
- “In 1919 plans were announced for a \$500,000 Memorial Auditorium and Art Museum on the river front. Brainchild of the Des Moines Ad Club, the idea had the blessing of the Town Planning Commission, the American Legion, the Equality League, and the Des Moines Association of Fine Arts. The favored site was the block south of the Municipal Building, across from the Library.”
- “In 1921 the Planning Commission recommended construction of a memorial building “for the boys from Polk county who served in the army and navy during the world war.” However, it soon became clear that the legal status of the additional tax levy to underwrite construction was in question, and no progress was made. With the 1930s Depression and federal relief programs came renewed calls for a river front armory. Problems with financing immediately surfaced, especially concerning the type of bonds to use. One of the results was that the City obtained ownership of the building, and the State leased space for the Argonne Post of the American Legion. The federal government paid for a portion of the labor and materials through the PWA.”

The following is an excerpt from the Civic Center District: The City Beautiful Movement and City Planning in Des Moines, Iowa 1892-1938 Report prepared by Barbara Beving Long in 1987:

“The Civic Center district of river front buildings, structure and land forms is unique in the city. No other group of buildings and landscape combines to illustrate as strongly and directly the important themes outlined in the Multiple Properties Cover Document, the City Beautiful Movement and City Planning in Des Moines, Iowa, 1892-1938.

Civic Center buildings and structures are distinguished by their river front locations and by their harmonious design, style, scale, use, siting, and materials. River front improvements – river walls, bridges, dams specialized sewer systems – marry environmental and manmade considerations. They show the effect of a major, flood-prone river upon urban development and the steps taken to diminish flood damage.”

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the property “Argonne Armory” (Armory and World War Memorial Building) be designated as a local Landmark.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Stacey Hanley presented the staff report and recommendations.

Jack Porter, 1815 18th Street, expressed his support for the building and future uses to preserve the building.

COMMISSION ACTION

Chad Nelson made motion for approval of the property “Argonne Armory” (Armory and World War Memorial Building) be designated as a local Landmark.

Evan Shaw seconded the motion.

THE VOTE 7-0