

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION REPORT**  
Certificate of Appropriateness  
Section 20-92

**TO:** Heritage Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Planning Staff  
**MEETING DATE:** May 24, 2022

**PROPOSAL:** Installation of a duck statue/sculpture in Riverside Park.

**PROPERTY OWNER:**  
City of La Crosse  
Parks, Recreation, and Forestry  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**APPLICANT:**  
Barbara Kroner  
George Kroner, Jr

**BACKGROUND:** The HPC was given responsibility to review all proposed improvements to locally designated sites that requires a permit from the City per Section 20-92 of the La Crosse Municipal Code.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**  
The applicant is proposing to install a sculpture/statue in Riverside Park between sidewalk along Veterans Memorial Dr and the Mississippi River Bank just south of the La Crosse Queen dock and shelter. (See Adjacent and Below Pictures)





The sculpture consists of a bronze mother duck and four ducklings. The entire sculpture measures 65" (5 1/2 feet) long and 14" wide. The mother duck measures 24" tall x 18" long and 9" wide. The baby ducklings average about 12" tall and 9" long. The weight is approximately 200 pounds. The sculpture will be affixed to a cement base that will be approx. 6 ft x 20 in x 4 in in size and will be the shape of the statue base with an extra 3 inches all around.

**SEE ATTACHED  
PLANS FOR MORE  
INFORMATION.**



## **ANALYSIS:**

Riverside Park has a rich history in La Crosse. Created in 1911 it was one of the major elements in the "system" of parks and playgrounds planned in 1908 by the noted landscape architect John Nolen for the newly established Park Board of Commissioners under the leadership of the progressive mayor Dr. Wendell Anderson. The concept of a park at this site was considered even earlier in 1906 when the U.S. government was requested to mow the six-foot channel farther out from shore to allow for a future park at this site. The La Crosse Dredging Company to begin to fill-in the harbor area with sand from the Mississippi in May of 1911. The planting of trees, shrubs and "winding walks" was begun in the spring of 1912 according to the plan supplied by John Nolen in 1910." Structures and plantings have been added to and removed from the park and plantings substitutions have been made, as well, over the years. Numerous buildings, structures and objects have been placed in the park: war memorial (1918), Fish Control Laboratory (1924); pergola (1920); Dr. Wendell Anderson Memorial bandstand (1930). In the 1940s, the pedestrian esplanades and drive in the south end of the park was removed and replaced with grass and a sidewalk and the Main and Pearl street entrances were closed. In more recent years, additions and intrusions on Nolen's Levee Park plan include the "Hiawatha" sculpture, "Hoeschler" Fountain, State St Eagle Sculpture, La Crosse Queen dock and shelter, public restrooms, time capsule (Front & State Streets), as well as other sculptures by local artists have all been an additional intrusion on Nolen's park design. Additionally, Riverside Park, historically used for passive recreation, has become a gathering site for many community events, such as Riverfest.

Riverside park is largely considered historic due to its associated with John Nolen and his design of the park as part of the proposed "system" of parks for La Crosse, particularly his landscape architecture plan. Unfortunately, his design was largely not implemented which has diminished its historic significance on a national level.

Riverside Park has developed a significant local history which includes less about the original landscape and more about the history of its use for community events and incorporation of local memorials and art. This may require a larger discussion between the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Board of Park Commissioners on how to cooperatively review future projects.

## **FINDING**

The proposed project of an art installation is in keeping with the local historic nature of the park and appropriate to the park.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION BY STAFF:**

This Certificate of Appropriateness is recommended for approval.