



Project Review Sheet

Committee: Landmarks Commission	Meeting Date: 11/6/2019
Agenda Item Number: 19-1221	Historic Name/District: Buchner Spring
Request: List Buchner Spring as a Local Landmark	

Details: The applicants are seeking a recommendation by the Landmarks Commission and other interested Boards, as well as approval by the Common Council, to list the Buchner Spring, located in Buchner Park, as a Local Landmark.

John P. Buchner was born in Bavaria in 1832. He immigrated with his family to the United States at the age of five and grew up in what was then the township of New Berlin. He made his fortune in the California Gold Rush, returned to New Berlin, and moved to Waukesha in 1877. He was a prominent local real estate investor and a supporter of the city. He donated part of the land that is now Buchner Park, including the spring, to the city in 1915, and the rest following his death in 1923. Development of the park began in 1927, and the spring was altered to its current appearance in the 1930's.

The Springs era, from the late 1860's through the 1910's was Waukesha's most significant period of growth and notoriety. People came from all over the country to drink the local spring water, which was believed to have medicinal properties, and Waukesha became known as "The Saratoga of the West." Of the few remaining springs four are Local Landmarks. Two of them-Silurian Spring and Hobo Spring-are located in parks. The other two are on private property and the city has easements to allow the Landmarks Commission to maintain them. Maintenance of the springs is done using CDBG grant money, along with help from local volunteers.

Designation as a Local Landmark would mean any alteration of the spring would need to be approved by the Landmarks Commission. The Landmarks Commission uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties, as well as the city ordinance, to determine the appropriateness of any alteration. A statewide survey of Historic Preservation Commissions and property owners who had sought their approval for work on historic properties between 2015 and 2018 found that 98% of Certificate of Appropriateness applications were approved and 72% of applicants were satisfied with the process.

Local Landmark status would apply to the Buchner Spring only, not to the rest of the park.

Paint and Repair Grant Information: Not Applicable



Relevant Standards: The city ordinance allows designation of a site as a Local Landmark if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

(a.) Exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, natural, economic, or social history of the City of Waukesha, State or Nation.

(b.) Is identified with historic personages or with important events in National, State, or local history.

(c.) Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for study of a period, style, construction method, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

(d.) Is representative of notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influences an era.

Staff Recommendation: If the Commission determines that the Buchner Spring meets either criteria a. or criteria b. above it may recommend listing it as a Local Landmark.