

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
other names/site number

2. Location

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| street & number | 917 East Mifflin Street | N/A | not for publication |
| city or town | Madison | N/A | vicinity |
| state Wisconsin | code WI | county Dane | code 025 |
| | | | zip code 53703 |

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally _ statewide _ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**
(check as many boxes as apply)

private

X public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)

district

structure

X Site

object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing

noncontributing

1

Buildings 2

sites

Structures 1

objects

Total 4

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources**previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/sports facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION/sports facility

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH/20TH Century Revival: Mediterranean

Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stone

roof ceramic tile, asphalt

other brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property 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 lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

 Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

 1925 - 1964

Significant Dates

 1925-1926
 1933-1934

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

 N/A

Cultural Affiliation

 N/A

Architect/Builder

 Claude & Starck, Architects Madison, WI (1925)
 Civil Works Administration (1934)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Name of Property

Dane
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.53

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------------|---------------|---|------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | 1/6 | 0/3/0/6/7/2/9 | 4/7/7/2/5/5/5 | 3 | 1/6 | 0/3/0/6/9/3/6 | 4/7/7/2/6/0/7 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 | 1/6 | 0/3/0/6/8/6/6 | 4/7/7/2/6/8/5 | 4 | 1/6 | 0/3/0/6/8/0/3 | 4/7/7/2/4/8/4 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| name/title | Patricia A. Lacey | date | July 7, 2014 |
| organization | | telephone | 715-743-4799 |
| street & number | W5055 US HWY 10 | zip code | 54456 |
| city or town | Neillsville | state | WI |

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|
| name/title | City of Madison Parks Division / Amy Scanlon Preservation Planner 608-266-6552 | | |
| organization | City – County Building Suite 104 | date | July 7, 2014 |
| street & number | 210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. | telephone | 608-266-4711 |
| city or town | Madison | state | WI |
| | | zip code | 53703 |

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

Start description on line below

Introduction

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field is located at 917 East Mifflin Street, just eight blocks east of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building. The field encompasses 4.53 acres of land (an entire city block) in an area which supports 19th and 20th Century residential homes and light industry. It is bound on the south by East Washington Street, on the east by North Brearly Street on the north by East Mifflin Street and on the west by North Paterson Street. The most prominent features of the Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field is the C-shaped 1925 Claude and Starck canted angled brick grandstand, the 1934 CWA concrete bleachers and 1934 CWA perimeter stone wall. The grandstand rests within the west, southwest and northwest portions of the field, bordering North Paterson Street. The concrete bleachers extend east from the east facing edge of the grandstand, paralleling East Mifflin Street.

In 1934, the Civil Works Administration made several additions to the field. A large span of concrete bleachers was built on the north portion of the field. The rear wall of the bleachers is an imposing twenty-foot high sandstone wall. The wall is clad with rough-cut sandstone laid in a random ashlar style. At the east end of the bleachers the stonewall drops to a height of eight-feet and continues around the field as a perimeter wall. The CWA project also made changes to the exterior brick wall of the grandstand. The original small arched windows were removed and larger windows identical to those found on the north wall of the bleachers were added.

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field is the oldest city owned and operated athletic field in the City of Madison. It is also the oldest extant masonry grandstand in Wisconsin.¹ This facility has been in continuous use since its opening day on May 5, 1926. Very diverse venues have been held within the facility ranging in nature from baseball to circuses. Currently, Breese Stevens Municipal Field is host to soccer and rugby games and tournaments. The 1925 grandstand, 1934 CWA bleachers and perimeter stone wall have been painstakingly restored while retaining a high degree of historic integrity.

Description

The 1925 Claude & Starck grandstand's foundation is composed of concrete pillars that support nine rows of reinforced formed concrete risers that provide the seating for the grandstand. The riser seating slab also forms the ceiling of the interior spaces. The plank marks of the concrete forms are still visible on the underside of each row. A photograph, which is on file in the Madison Parks Office, shows that

¹ Eric J. Wheeler and Joanne Raetz Stuttgen, Carson Park Baseball Stadium, National Register of Historic Places nomination, May 2002, page 4

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
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the nine wide concrete riser rows originally supported wooded benches. The benches had a wood plank seat and a two-plank backrest. The wood bleacher benches rested on u-shaped metal legs that were bolted to the concrete. These benches have been removed due to their deteriorating condition. They will be replaced with benches similar to the benches found in the bleacher area; however this cannot be done until the grandstand meets the code required by the City of Madison for additional accessible bathrooms. Current capacity for the facility is 3,700.

The low grandstand wall that parallels the playing field is constructed of concrete. A chain link fence rests on top of the concrete wall. It protects the spectators but still allows for a clear field of vision. Originally, several window openings and two dugouts were located along this wall. All of the window openings have been bricked in and the interior of the dugouts no longer exist. Currently, two stairways descend to openings which enter the lower grandstand. A main interior hall travels through the entire lower area and provides access to the locker rooms and other inner spaces. The interior floors and ramps are concrete.

The saltbox shaped roof that covers the grandstand rests on bolted steel truss framing. The entire roof rests on steel posts that rise above the brick walls. The open area between the top of the brick walls and the bottom of the roof is enclosed with chain link. The top of the steel roof framing is first covered with wood planking and then clad with asphalt shingles.

The outer walls and inner secondary walls of the grandstand are constructed of pinkish red brick that is laid in an American bond pattern (six rows of stretchers per one header row). Some of the interior brick walls are covered with an additional square ridged orange terra cotta tile. On the exterior, two rows of cream colored terra cotta tiles rest on top of the exterior brick walls. The first row of terra cotta tiles is crafted to appear as cyma recta molding with a smooth surface. The second row of terra cotta tiles is rectangular in nature, block like, also having a smooth surface. Above the two rows of cream colored terra cotta tile is a narrow shed roof covered with two-rows of barrel-shaped red ceramic tile.

The exterior facades of the C-shaped 1925 Claude and Starck grandstand are divided into bays by brick pilasters. The brick pilasters extend from the ground to beneath the two rows of cream colored terra cotta tiles that appear at the top of the wall. The first row of cream colored terra cotta form a stylized capital around the top of each pilaster. Similar cream colored terra cotta tiles are used to form the base of each pilaster. The southwest and northwest canted angled elevations are separated into six bays and the west elevation, which parallels North Paterson Street, is separated into seven bays. Some of the bays are punctuated with undecorated window openings which appear at the mid-level of the wall. Other bays have large Mediterranean style arched widow openings which begin at the base of the walls and have highly decorated terra cotta tile surrounds. Large square Mediterranean style

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
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visitor gate openings, which access the grandstand, are found within other bays. (Note elevation drawings).

The voussoir arched window openings are trimmed with cream colored terra cotta tiles. Each tile has a bead and reel pattern embossed on the face of the tile. A large rosette is centered upon each tile. Within the tympanum of the arch is a cream colored terra cotta sunburst motif that radiates from a cream colored semi-circular terra cotta tile. The semi-circular tile is embossed with a half-shell motif. The tympanum rests on a row of tiles that are a smaller version of the tiles which surround the opening. The entire terra cotta surround rests upon plain plinths. A row of cream colored terra cotta tiles that are shaped like molding traverses the base of the window opening. Currently the arched openings of the west facing façade are bricked in. The arched openings on the northwest and southwest facing facades are entrance doors. At the time of construction the northwest and southwest facades were mirrors of one another.

The gate openings on the northwest and southwest facing facades of the 1925 grandstand are surrounded with rectangular undecorated cream colored terra cotta tiles. Each of these doors is closed with a metal overhead door.

The undecorated window openings of the 1925 grandstand support steel windows which divide into several combinations of lights, some with panes that have an operable awning or hopper sections. These windows are divided into four over three, five over three, or four over two windows units. When viewing the original 1925 Claude & Starck blueprint it appears that smaller arched windows, similar in nature to the larger arched window openings, were originally present.² They have been removed and larger steel windows have been cut into the masonry. Because the current steel windows of the 1925 grandstand are identical to the windows of the 1934 rear wall of the bleachers, it is assumed that these window changes were made at that time.

The concrete bleachers that are located on the northern portion of the field and a perimeter sandstone wall were constructed as part of the 1934 Civil Works Administration project. The massive amount of sandstone used in the project is said to have been quarried from a quarry located in Madison's Hoyt Park. The north wall of the bleachers and the perimeter stone wall are constructed of irregular, rough-faced ashlar sandstone blocks that have ruggedness reminiscent of the ashlar masonry characteristic of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture.

The twenty-foot high sandstone wall that forms the rear of the bleachers in many ways mimics the design of the exterior walls of the grandstand, only in a much more rustic fashion. The rear north

² Claude & Starck, Architects Madison, Wisconsin, "A Baseball Grandstand for the City Athletic Field", Sheet #5, Date 4-20-25(1925)

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

stone wall of the bleachers begins behind and slightly west of the bleachers. Here the stone wall meets and attaches to the northwest end of the brick wall of the grandstand. It is the same height as the bottom edge of the saltbox roof of the grandstand. From the point of attachment, the stone wall continues northeast at the same angle of the grandstand until it reaches the sidewalk which parallels East Mifflin Street. At this point the twenty-foot high stone wall makes a 45% turn to the east and continues eastward becoming the rear wall of the bleachers. The bleachers parallel East Mifflin Street and extend approximately three-quarters of the length of the block.

The portion of the twenty-foot high stone wall that extends from the brick wall of the grandstand to the corner of East Mifflin Street exhibits a single square service door, a tall entry door, four steel window units and a ticket window. The steel window units are divided into several combinations of lights, some with panes that have operable awnings or hopper sections. Two stone pilasters, with limestone caps, rise three-quarters of the way up the wall separating the wall into bays. The square service door, three window units and the ticket window appear in one of the bays and the tall entry door and two window units appear in the other bay. On what appears to the eye as a second story, two square openings appear centered above the service door and three-window section of the stone wall. These openings resemble the small square windows found in a Stone Keep castle.

The twenty-foot high sandstone north wall of the bleachers supports four square service doors and three spectator gates which enter the rear of the grandstand from East Mifflin Street. Dispersed between the service doors and spectator gates are several (thirteen) window units. The steel window units divide into several combinations of lights, some with panes that have operable awnings or hopper sections. The window units rest on a limestone sill. Each window unit, service door or spectator gate is separated by a sandstone pilaster that rises three-quarters of the way up the wall. Each pilaster is topped with a limestone cap. The window and door openings found on the rear wall of the bleachers are starkly undecorated.

The bleachers themselves are constructed of formed reinforced concrete, which is supported underneath by concrete pillars. This is the same concept of construction that is used in the 1925 grandstand. The bleachers are entered through three East Mifflin Street spectator gates. There are fourteen rows of wide concrete risers on which long plank benches are bolted. The CWA sandstone wall is visible behind the final top row of bleachers. The bleacher area is open-air seating and is not covered with a roof. Three of the four large north-side field light poles, each of which supports eight floodlights, rise from the top of the grandstand in front of the stonewall. The bleachers are behind and above a concrete wall which parallels the field. A chain link fence rests on top of the concrete wall. It protects the spectators but still allows for a clear field of vision. Originally home plate was centered in front of the grandstand. Once the bleachers were completed, home plate was moved within the corner created by the joining of the bleachers to the grandstand. That positioning placed the bleachers facing the third base line.

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
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Interior spaces

The areas beneath the concrete seating risers of both the grandstand and the bleachers are very utilitarian in nature. The exceptions are the player's locker rooms, the referee locker rooms and the bathrooms which have been part of the updating process of the facility. Many of the spaces inside the grandstand and the bleachers are not utilized for any specific purpose and remain empty. (Note the floor plans of 1925 grandstand and the 1934 bleachers)

Sandstone perimeter wall

A large gated driveway opening appears at the east end of the 1934 CWA bleachers. The eight-foot high stone wall that extends completely around the field begins at a point on the east side of the driveway. The stone wall is constructed with a repetitive pattern of square columns that rise higher than the stone panels that are located between them. The surfaces of the columns and panels are clad with irregular, rough-faced ashlar sandstone blocks. Rectangular coping blocks top the walls and rough cut caps top the columns.

The stone wall that parallels the remaining length East Mifflin Street has no openings. The stone wall that parallels North Brearly Street has one centered wall opening. The East Washington Street stone wall has four evenly spaced wall openings. Each of the stone wall openings either supports a lattice iron gate or a fixed lattice iron panel that resembles the iron gates.

The corner of the stone wall at East Washington and North Brearly Street and the corner of the stone wall at East Washington Street and Paterson Street are rounded appearing as perhaps the base of a turret from a castle. The East Washington Street and Paterson Street corner has a square opening similar to the square openings on the northwest facing bleacher wall. It is cut into the round portion of the corner. Just east of the round corner of the stone wall at East Washington Street and North Paterson Street is a marker, similar in nature to an early Colonial notice board. The marker rises above the eight foot height of the stone wall. It is rectangular in nature and is constructed of smooth ashlar stone. The top of the marker is arched and is finished with a stone molded cornice. The base of the marker is supported by two stone brackets. In the center of the marker an eagle sits atop a cartouche. The cartouche is inscribed with "CWA/1934.

The stone wall continues at a canted angle from the rounded corner at East Washington and Paterson Street until it reaches the southwest edge of the 1925 grandstand. There it attaches to the brick wall. Between the rounded corner of the stone wall and where the stone wall attaches to the brick wall of the grandstand is a large opening which contains an iron gate. This gate provides access to the field. The gate is flanked on either side by sandstone columns which are taller than those of the rest of the stone

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
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wall. To the right of the gate a rectangular stone plaque is inset into the wall. It reads; Breese Stevens Field. To the left of the gate is a plaque that reads;

Breese Stevens Field

Madison's oldest sports park is named for Breese Stevens (1834 - 1903). A New York Native, he came to Wisconsin in 1856 to look after family land interests. Stevens became mayor of Madison in 1884, UW Regent in 1891, and Doctor of Law in 1902.

Until the mid-1960's, this was the only city park with lights. Almost all major outdoor events took place here, including major and minor league baseball, all Madison High School football games and midget car racing.

The City purchased the land in 1923 and built the brick grandstand in 1925. The exterior surrounding stone wall was built in 1934 with quarry rock from Hoyt Park.

The field is covered entirely with grass. Currently the center of the field has white lines indicating the boundaries of the soccer field. The areas between the grandstand and North Paterson Street, are landscaped with concrete, trees and plantings creating an inviting patio area complete with tables, benches and bicycle stands.

Noncontributing Resources

Located in the southeast corner of the field are two small sheds of recent construction that house the irrigation system and the mechanics for the cell tower. Midway along the East Washington Street soccer field boundary line is a rectangular press box which rests on tall iron posts. The press box was installed in 2011. The two sheds and the press box are non-contributing to this nomination.

Alterations

The alterations to the window openings in the brick walls of the 1925 Claude & Stark grandstand and the removal of the original wood grandstand bleachers have been discussed previously in the text. The configurations of the spaces beneath the grandstand and the bleachers have been changed over the years to accommodate modern locker rooms, code required bathrooms and concession areas.

Restorations and renovations have taken place at the facility during three specific timeframes. In 1981 when the idea of demolition was rebuked by the Madison public, repairs were made to the grandstand, stonewall and the electricity was updated. In 2007, a phase 1 stabilization process began. This included making repairs to the concrete risers to stop extent water from infiltrating and causing further

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damage. New restrooms were also installed. In 2009, phase 2 of stabilization saw repairs to the brick, terra cotta surrounds and to the stone wall. Referee specific locker rooms were installed and the old wood press box was removed. The metal roof structure was repaired and new asphalt shingles were installed. In 2011 the patio areas were created between the grandstand and North Paterson Street. An elevated press box was installed along the south soccer field boundary in 2011. During 2013 and 2014 the remaining original light poles were removed and new light poles were installed. In addition a new audio system was installed.³

Integrity

The 1926 Claude and Starck grandstand, the 1934 concrete bleachers, the north bleacher wall and perimeter stonewall retain excellent historic integrity. In 1981 when the fate of Breese Stevens Municipal Field was in jeopardy, the citizens of Madison loudly spoke out that they did not want this field destroyed. The City of Madison has been a true participant in the restoration and maintenance of this historic field.

Part of the future plans for Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field is to remove the natural grass and install artificial turf. This is being done at the request of several venues who want to use the field for various events. Currently, the spring soccer activity damages the field to such an extent that the field must stand idle during part of the summer months to give the grass time to re-grow. The City of Madison would like to see high school football return to the facility as well as the return of the High School State Soccer Championships. The installation of artificial turf would also provide a home field for the Madison semi-pro football team the Madison Mustangs. This decision to remove the grass is reversible should the next movement be to return the field to a natural surface.

Having the flexibility to make adjustments to the playing surface enhances the security of this recreational facility. The preservation and continued use of this facility is more assured today due to the willingness of the City of Madison to fully explore the potential uses of Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field.

 End of Description of Physical Appearance

³ Interview of Thomas J. Maglio, City of Madison Landscape Architect, Madison Parks Division, June 2014

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

___ Insert Statement of Significance

Introduction

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, in the area of entertainment and recreation. We are seeking a local level of recognition. Over the last eighty-eight years, the complex has served as a multi-purpose facility for both sports and entertainment venues. The field is located at 917 East Mifflin Street, just eight blocks east of Wisconsin's State Capitol rotunda. The complex encompasses an entire Madison city block, known as Block 159, which is found on the first plat of the *Town of Madison on the Four Lakes* dated July 1, 1836. The complex is bordered on the south by East Washington Street, on the west by North Paterson Street, on the north by East Mifflin Street and on the east by North Brearly Street. The areas to the north and to the east of the field support residential homes from the late 19th and early 20th century. The areas south and west of the field support commercial properties and light industry. Located between the walls of the field and the surrounding streets are sidewalks and a small strip of lawn that is punctuated with trees.

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field gains additional significance as one of the small number of baseball facilities that were either built or expanded by the Civil Works Administration (CWA).⁴ The 1934 CWA project expanded seating, updated maintenance and created a perimeter enclosure. The rustic ashlar sandstone wall provides security for the field and creates a wonderful earthy natural boundary separating the field from the surrounding houses. Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field retains an extremely high degree of historic integrity.

Intensive architectural surveys were done by the City of Madison in 1984, 1994 and 2013. The City of Madison Landmarks Commission placed Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field on their Landmark Register in 1995. This current project has been funded with the assistance of a grant-in-aid from the Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. Historic Preservation grants-in-aid are administered in Wisconsin in conjunction with the National Register of Historic Places program by the Division of Historic Preservation of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Summary of Significance

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field has had a very personal relationship with the citizens of Madison over the last eighty-eight years. The importance of that relationship became very apparent in

⁴ Eric J. Wheeler and Joanne Raetz Stuttgen, "Carson Park Baseball Stadium, Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin, National Register Nomination, May 2002, Section 8, page 1

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1980 when the City of Madison budgeted \$60,000 to tear down the stadium. Madison citizens protested the fields emanate demolition and encouraged that their tax payer dollars be used to fund restoration and rehabilitation. The monies which were earmarked to demolish the field were expanded and the grandstand and stone wall were repaired, the electricity was updated and the stands were made handicap accessible.

The facility was originally designed as a baseball stadium. In the 1920's baseball had become America's favorite pastime and Madison was no different in their enthusiasm for the game. With the onset of the Great Depression and then World War I, baseball was the country's most popular social activity and many followed baseball as an escape from the reality of the times. This facility has been in continuous use since 1926 for baseball, high school football and soccer. However, as an entertainment facility a multitude of venues from midget car racing, concerts, circuses, track and field events, religious services and drum and bugle corps competitions have been held at the field.

Period of Significance

The period of significance begins with construction of the grandstand and field in 1925 and extends to 1964. This span of time indicates the field's continuous use. The date of 1964 is used as it is the end of the fifty year date for historic properties,

Brief History of Madison Wisconsin

James Duane Doty, a Wisconsin landowner and representative in the Michigan legislature, lobbied tirelessly for the creation of the Wisconsin Territory. On July 3, 1836 President Andrew Jackson created the Territory of Wisconsin with lands which eventually would become the states of Iowa, Minnesota and the eastern portions of North and South Dakota. Additional lobbying by James Duane Doty assured that the capital would be located in Madison, Wisconsin.⁵

When the Federal Government opened land sales in Wisconsin in 1835, one year prior to the creation of the Territory of Wisconsin, Doty and Michigan Governor Stevens Mason created the Four Lakes Land Company and purchased 1,000 acres of land in an area of Dane County known as Four Lakes (Sections 13, 14, 23, 24).⁶ Specifically, their land was located in the swamp and forest area between Lake Mendota (Fourth Lake) and Lake Monona (Third Lake). When former president James Madison died on June 28, 1836, Doty named the capital city in his honor. Doty was ingenious in implementing

⁵ *History of Dane County Wisconsin*, (Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1880), pages 41-51

⁶ *History of Madison*, Daniel S. Durrie, librarian of the Historical Society of Wisconsin, (Atwood & Culver Printers, Madison, Wisconsin, 1874), page 46, 58

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
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anything that would help him procure the favor from the board who would decide the placement of the Wisconsin Territory capital.⁷

James Duane Doty quickly hired surveyor John Suydam and together they created a hypothetical map of the city. Doty needed something to present to the board of delegates who would vote on the location of the capital. If Madison was selected, Doty and Mason stood to make a big return on their investment.

In the summer of 1837 James Duane Doty hired surveyor Joshua Hatheway to survey the land designated to become the City of Madison in detail. Hatheway surveyed section lines which met and crossed in the center of Capitol Park. The city's streets and avenues were then laid out like the spokes in a wheel which is the same format used by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in platting Washington, D.C.⁸

In 1817, Major S. H. Long used the description *Four Lakes* when writing about the area now known as Madison, Wisconsin. The Winnebago Indians called the area Tay-cho-pe-rah, a collective name referring to the four lakes.⁹ When Simeon Mills, one of Madison's early settlers came to the area in 1849, the four Madison lakes were known as First, Second, Third and Fourth Lake by the Winnebago Indians. Mills employed Frank Hudson to survey the University Addition to the Madison Plat. Hudson was an avid reader of Indian lore and named lakes Third and Fourth, Monona and Mendota, after Indian legions. Governor Leonard Farwell decided in 1854 that all of the lakes should have Indian names. With the help of the first secretary of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Lyman Draper, the Ojibwa names Kegonsa and Waubesa were select for First and Second lakes and were made official on February 14, 1855.¹⁰

In 1838, by an appropriation of the United States Congress, a road known as the United States Road was commissioned to be built from Milwaukee to a point on the bank of the Mississippi opposite the city of Dubuque, Iowa. This new road passed directly through Madison and created a travel corridor, which opened up the southern Wisconsin prairies of Dane County for settlement.¹¹ Settlers eagerly

⁷ Madison Magazine, "What's in a Name" by Adam J. Schrage, www.madisonmagazine.com/Madison-Magazine/May-2014/Whats-in-a-Name, page 1

⁸ Turning Points in Wisconsin History, *Surveying In Wisconsin in 1837*, by Franklin Hatheway (Wisconsin Historic Collections Vol. XV), wisconsinhistory.org, page 390

⁹ *French fort at Prairie du Chien and Tay-cho-pe-rah the Four Lakes County*, Professor J. D. Butler L.L.D., (Reprinted From Vol. X Wisconsin Historical Collection 1888) pages 64-67

¹⁰ *Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns; being a history and guide to places of scenic beauty and historical note...early intercourse of the settlers with the Indians...with a complete list of county supervisors and officers and legislative members*, (W. J. Park & Co., 1877), pages 204-206

¹¹ *History of Dane County Wisconsin*, (Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1880), pages 377-518

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purchased the fertile land and established prosperous farms. Silas Chapman wrote in the *Handbook of Wisconsin* in 1855 that Dane County was considered one of the best agricultural counties in the state.¹²

The cornerstone for the Capital was laid in 1837. Madison was incorporated as a village on February 3, 1846 with a population of 283. After achieving statehood on May 29, 1848 the Wisconsin State Capital remained in Madison.¹³ Further expansion occurred with the arrival of the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railroad in 1854.¹⁴ The City of Madison was incorporated on February 2, 1856 and by this time the population of Madison had exploded to over 8,600 citizens.¹⁵

The City of Madison was prospering as the seat of Wisconsin government. It had become a boom town of commerce. On July 26, 1848 the University of Wisconsin was established. Culture and the sense of preserving history were addressed with the establishment of the Wisconsin State Historical Society on January 30, 1849. In such an expanding city, attorneys were needed for land transactions and legal claims. Madison welcomed the young attorney Breese J. Stevens to come and practice law in 1856.

Breese Jacob Stevens

Breese Jacob Stevens was born at Sconondoah, Oneida County, New York on March 22, 1834 to Elizabeth and Augustus C. Stevens. Breese Jacob Stevens is a direct descendant of Major John Burrowes, an officer in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. At twenty-two years of age Burrowes and his brother-in-law Jonathan Forman organized the 1st New Jersey Company, mustering the 1st New Jersey Company out of the Burrowes' home. Major John Burrowes served under General Sullivan during which time he participated in the campaign against the Six Nations (six Indian nations siding with the British).

Stevens attended Oneida County's Whitesborg Academy and Cazenovia Seminary. In 1853, Stevens graduated from Hamilton College in Clinton, NY. Three years later he received an additional Master of Arts degree from the same school. He began to pursue a law degree, first studying with the Honorable Timothy Jenkins in Oneida Castle NY and then apprenticing with the firm of Graves & Wood in Syracuse NY. In 1856 Stevens came to Madison, Wisconsin to handle the land interests of his uncle Sidney Breese. He immediately opened a law firm with J. W. Johnson and H. M. Lewis. J. W. Johnson left after one year leaving Stevens and H. M. Lewis to practice law together until 1868 when James M. Flowers was added as an additional partner. In 1870 the law firm became known as

¹² *Handbook of Wisconsin*, by Silas Chapman, (1855), pages 59-61

¹³ *Handbook of Wisconsin*, by Silas Chapman, (1855), pages 59-61

¹⁴ The Milwaukee Road A Brief History, www.oldmilwaukee.com/content/brief/page08.htm, page 1

¹⁵ *Handbook of Wisconsin*, by Silas Chapman, (1855), pages 59-61

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Stevens, Flowers & Morris with the addition of W. A. P. Morris who had been a classmate of Breese at Hamilton College. After Flowers left, I. C. Sloan joined the firm and when Sloan retired Breese, J. Stevens and W. A. P. Morris continued their partnership for several years.

Breese J. Stevens handled some of the most important railroad, land-grant and water litigations ever brought before the courts of Wisconsin and Michigan. Stevens was the attorney for the Fox & Wisconsin River Improvement Company and he was the President of the Green Bay & Mississippi Canal Company from 1866 to 1880. Breese J. Stevens was solicitor general for the Madison & Portage Railroad Company, the attorney for the Illinois Central Railroad, the attorney for the Michigan Land & Iron Company, the director of the First National Bank of Madison and the president of the Madison Land & Lumber Company and the Monona Land Company.¹⁶

In 1869, Breese J. Stevens married Emma Curtis Fuller (b. c1845). Emma died on September 18, 1870 as a result of child birth complications. Daughter Amelia Fuller Stevens survived being born six days earlier on September 12, 1870. On October 25, 1876, Breese J. Stevens married Mary Elizabeth Farmer. They had one child Helen Elizabeth Breese Stevens who was born on December 13, 1878.¹⁷

Breese J. Stevens served as the Mayor of Madison from 1884 to 1885. In 1891, Governor George W. Peck appointed him as the regent of the University of Wisconsin, where he continued in this capacity until his death on October 28, 1903 after a four month illness.¹⁸

In 1923, his widow, Mary Elizabeth, and daughters Amelia and Helen, agreed to sell Block 159 to the City of Madison on a land contract for a price of \$35,000. Block 159 encompassed an entire city block and was only eight blocks from the capital building. Block 159 is located to the north of North Washington Street and is bordered on the east by North Brearly Street, on the north by East Mifflin Street and on the west by North Paterson Street.

The land contract for Block 159 was executed on November 10, 1923 and recorded on November 21, 1923 Vol. 62 of Miscellaneous Records page 256, Document 429613. When the land contract was satisfied by the City of Madison on December 1, 1936 the warranty deed was recorded on December 14, 1936, Vol. 379 of Deeds page 171, Document 591365. The final document contained a restrictive covenant from the grantors upon the City's use of the land. That covenant stated:

¹⁶ *History of Dane County Biographical and Genealogical Vol. 2*, (Western Historical Association, Madison, 1906), pages 846-851

¹⁷ Doran Viste Assistant City Attorney Madison, Wisconsin, Legal Review of the Stevens' land covenant, January 20, 2012, Madison City Attorney's Office, pages 1-5

¹⁸ *History of Dane County Wisconsin Biographical and Genealogical Vol. 2*, (Western Historical Association, Madison, 1906), pages 846-851

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“It is understood and agreed, as a condition of this agreement and as a part of the consideration thereof, that said block shall forever be known and designated as the “Breese Stevens Athletic Field and that said premises shall never be used for any other purpose than that of an athletic Field.”

Mary Elizabeth, the widow of Breese J. Stevens, died in 1925. The Stevens oldest daughter Amelia never married and died in 1961. Their youngest daughter, Helen, married Dr. Reginald H. Jackson Sr. on June 4, 1908. They produced one son, Reginald H. Jackson Jr. who was born on May 15, 1909. Reginald H. Jackson Jr. never married; therefore upon dying in 1986 he did not leave a direct heir.¹⁹

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field

The popularity of baseball in America had grown at all levels at which it was played. Babe Ruth debuted with the Boston Red Sox on July 11, 1914. Everyone followed their favorite team, both in person or over the radio. In 1922, the citizens of Madison presented a petition to the city containing 7,000 signatures in favor of constructing a baseball field. In October of that year the City of Madison passed a budget of \$8,000 that was earmarked for creating a baseball field. In the spirit of the zeal of the citizens of Madison at wanting an athletic field, the widow and daughters of Breese J. Stevens sold Block 159 to the city on a land contract for \$35,000 in November of 1923.²⁰

On November 23, 1923, \$500 was appropriated to begin grading the field. John McDonald was hired by the city on October 24, 1924 at a cost of \$7,970 to complete the field preparation. In April of 1925, the finance committee recommended a budget of \$50,000 for the construction of a stadium which would parallel North Paterson Street at the west end of Block 159. The city passed an ordinance in 1925 to issue “Memorial Stadium Bonds” to fund the project. The Second Ward Security Company purchased 55,000 of the Memorial Stadium Bonds. Since 1924 was the ten year anniversary of the onset of World War I, the City of Madison decided that the stadium would be built as a memorial to those who had served honorably in World War I.²¹

The City of Madison hired the Madison architectural firm of Claude and Strack to design a grandstand for Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. Construction began on the grandstand toward the end of 1925. The December 31, 1925 *Capitol Times* wrote “The erection of concrete stands and the beginning of an enclosing wall of architectural beauty, stamps this piece of civic construction as epoch-making.”

¹⁹ Doran Viste Assistant City Attorney Madison, Wisconsin, Legal Review of the Stevens’ land covenant, January 20, 2012, Madison City Attorney’s Office, pages 1-5

²⁰ Breese Stevens Field Historic Structure Report, River Architects Inc., August 15, 2003, pages 6,7,54,55

²¹ *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 21, 1925, “Council Committee Recommends \$50,000 for City Stadium”

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The article further stated that when the field was completed, "it will give Madison the leading civic athletic field in the state"²²

Madison Architectural Firm of Claude & Starck 1896-1929

Wisconsin born architects, Louis Ward Claude and Edward F. Starck, began their architectural firm in Madison, Wisconsin in 1896. They are credited with designing over one-hundred-seventy-five buildings in the Madison area and over thirty Carnegie Libraries throughout Wisconsin and the surrounding states. Many of these libraries were designed in the Prairie Style.

Louis Ward Claude was born in 1868 in Devils Lake, Wisconsin. He attended grade schools in Baraboo and Madison before graduating from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in civil engineering.²³ In the early 1890's he worked in the offices of architects Adler & Sullivan in Chicago and then, in 1893, with Chicago architects Burnham & Root who were the architects for the World's Columbian Exposition. Claude's life-long friends were Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.²⁴

Edward F. Starck was born in 1868 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As a child, Starck attended public school in Madison, Wisconsin. After graduating from high school, Starck sought no higher education. Despite the lack of additional schooling, Starck was an accomplished draftsman. He worked in the offices of Madison architect D. R. Jones, Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix and Chicago architects Handy & Cady (Jeremiah K.).

The partnership of Claude & Starck continued until 1929 when they decided to dissolve the firm. Both remained living in Madison, Wisconsin until their deaths; Louis Ward Claude died in August of 1951 and Edward F. Starck died in October of 1947.²⁵

Mediterranean Revival Architecture

The Mediterranean Revival style is demonstrated in the design of the exterior of the Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field grandstand. It is a relatively rare form of architecture in Wisconsin. Claude & Starck built two other excellent examples of the Mediterranean Revival in Wisconsin; the 1924 Dwight T. Parker Library in Fennimore, Wisconsin and the 1916 Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin prior to the grandstand at Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field.²⁶

²² *Capital Times*, December 31, 1925, "Architects See 1926 as Record Building Year", by John Culman

²³ Chase Sturos, "Claude & Starck", <http://www.ss.mtu.edu/CopperCountryArchitects/cs/htm>, page 1

²⁴ Ruth Ann Montgomery, "Eager Free Public Library", <http://www.evansvillehistory.net/files/39WestMain.html>, page 1

²⁵ Chase Sturos, "Claude & Starck", <http://www.ss.mtu.edu/CopperCountryArchitects/cs/htm>, page 1

²⁶ Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin; Volume 2, A Manual for Historic Properties*, (Historic

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The Mediterranean Revival style is eclectic in nature and was first introduced in the United States at the turn of the 19th century. The style evolved from a rekindled interest in Italian Renaissance palaces and seaside villas that dated from the 16th century. Mediterranean Revival is characterized by stuccoed or brick wall surfaces, flat or low-pitched terra cotta tile roofs and arched openings framed in terra cotta.

The Mediterranean Revival style peaked in popularity in the late 1920's especially in the coastal areas of California and Florida. Architects August Geiger and Addison Mizner popularized this style in Florida and architects Sumner Spaulding and Paul Williams did the same in California.²⁷

The opening and dedication of Breese Stevens Municipal Field

When the grandstand and the playing field were completed in 1926, the City of Madison had spent a total of \$125,000 on the project.²⁸ Opening day celebrations began with a parade on May 5, 1926. Mayor Albert G. Schmedeman asked businesses to close at 3:30 so all citizens could attend the first baseball game and participate in the dedication of the field.²⁹ Nearly 4,000 people attended the game between the Madison Blues and the Beloit Fairies. Governor John Blaine threw the first pitch to the acting catcher Mayor Albert G. Schmedeman. Unfortunately the Madison Blues lost a heartbreaker to the Beloit Fairies 7 – 5.³⁰ The Madison Blues were a local baseball team that played at Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field until 1939.

Wayne Iron Works built steel bleaches in the northwest corner of the field in March of 1931 for a cost of \$6,760.00. Floodlights were installed by Madison Electric Decoration Company that same year at a cost of \$29,100. In addition, a public address system was installed and two men were hired in full time positions to oversee the maintenance of the field.³¹

On November 29, 1933, forty-five Madison men were employed through the Civil Works Administration (CWA) to begin construction of concrete bleachers, the ashlar sandstone wall behind the new bleachers and an ashlar sandstone wall that would enclosed Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. The construction of the first section of bleachers and the CWA stone masons working

Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June 1986), page 2-32

²⁷ www.potiori.com/Mediterranean_Revival-architecture.html, Mediterranean Revival Style Architecture, page 1

²⁸ Daina Penkiunas, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation Landmark Nomination Form, "Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field, submitted July 7, 1995

²⁹ *Capital Times*, April 29, 1926, "Governor, Mayor Lift Diamond" and May 5, 1926 "City Dedicates New Field" by Bryn Casserly, *Wisconsin State Journal*, April 29, 1926

³⁰ *Capital Times*, May 5, 1926, "Circuit Swats Thrill 4,000 as Beloit Fairies Down Blues 7 – 5" by Hank Casserly

³¹ Breese Stevens Field Historic Structure Report, River Architects Inc., August 15, 2003, pages 6,7,54,55

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on the stone wall is visible on a 1934 photograph included with this nomination. The project was completed by Mid-March of 1934.³² The sandstone used in both the north wall of the bleachers and the wall that surrounds the field is said to have been quarried from the former city quarry at Hoyt Park.³³

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order establishing the CWA “jobs” program on November 8, 1933. The Great Depression was crushing the economy and with the onset of the winter of 1933-34 there were concerns of a social disaster, including starvation. The CWA’s mission was to create jobs that paid good wages and in turn those wages would stimulate the economy.

The program initially operated with monies from the Public Works Administration (PWA). While the PWA concentrated on larger projects such as improving city water works, constructing city halls and institutions, the CWA focused on parks and playgrounds. The program called for one-half of the jobs to go to those receiving relief and one-half of the jobs to go to anyone who needed work. The wages were union scale at \$15.00 per week and were paid equally to both black and white workers. By January of 1934, the nation-wide CWA program was employing four million workers. Approximately one billion dollars was spent on 180,000 public property projects such as improvement of school buildings, 50,000 teachers, 1,000 airports and 3,500 playgrounds.³⁴

In Wisconsin, the CWA employed 161,395 and spent \$35,160,000 on federally funded projects. Due to the rising cost of the program, Roosevelt dismantled the CWA in 1934.

After the completion of the bleachers and sandstone wall, eight metal framed light towers were erected inside the walls of the field. The multiple lights provided a sufficient amount of lighting for night-time baseball games. Until the 1960’s, Breese Stevens Municipal Field was the only lighted field in Madison. Originally home plate was centered in front of the grandstand. After the concrete bleachers were installed, home plate was oriented within the northeast corner of the field, between the grandstand and the bleachers.³⁵ A press box of wood construction was installed on the north wall above the bleachers in 1939.³⁶

³² *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 29, 1933, “Jobs Pledged All Able Men on Relief List”

³³ Daina Penkiunas, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation Landmark Nomination Form, “Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field”, submitted July 7, 1995

³⁴ “This Week in History: November 7 – 13, 1933 The Civil Works Administration,
http://www.schillerinstitute.org/educ/hist/eiw_this_week/vin35_nov7_1933.html, pages 1-4

³⁵ Breese Stevens Field Historic River Architects Inc., August 15, 2003, pages 6,7,54,55

³⁶ Historic Madison Inc. of Wisconsin, “Man Behind the Field”, www.historicmadison.org/.../manbehindathleticfield.html, page 1-2

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Over the years, Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field has hosted a myriad of events. Four Madison high schools; Wisconsin High School (closed 1964), East High School, Central High School (closed 1967) and Edgewood (Catholic) High School played their football games on the field. Track and field events as well as softball, boxing and wrestling matches, ice skating, religious services and concerts were held at the field. Even the circus came to Madison in the summer and put on performances at the field. The Madison Scouts also held their drum and bugle corps competitions at the field.

Sports reporter Tom Butler recalled that Olympic Gold Medalist, Jesse Owens, raced a thoroughbred horse on the Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field track.³⁷ After the 1936 Olympic Games, Owens had difficulty finding work and resorted to racing horses at fairs and baseball games. Earning as much as \$5,000 per event, Owens raced horses at these staged events over fifty times.³⁸

Midget car racing debuted on July 23, 1938. The field supported a quarter mile cinder track. Popular racers such as Bob Muhlke and Lloyd Axel battled for first place. Racing was discontinued in 1940 at the request of the local high school coaches who felt the car racing was damaging the field for other sports activities.³⁹

Everyone's favorite pastime, baseball, was played on the field at both the local and minor league level. Prior to the construction of the field, Madison had a minor league baseball team known as the Madison Senators who played their home games in Madison from 1907 to 1914. Madison did not have a minor league baseball team again until 1940. From 1940 to 1942, a minor league team known as the Madison Blues, who played in the Three-I League, played their home games at Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. The Madison Blues were a farm team for the Chicago Cubs. They played against teams within their league as well as teams from the Negro league. Summer try-outs were held at the field in the late 1940's for such teams as the Philadelphia Phillies and the St. Louis Cardinals.⁴⁰

The popular left-handed hall of fame pitcher for the Milwaukee Braves, Warren Spahn, played for the Three-I League Evansville Bees during this time period. It is possible that Spahn may have pitched against the Madison Blues at Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. The outbreak of World War II brought a halt to the Three-I League.⁴¹ After the end of the war, baseball teams from the city's Industrial League played at the field.

³⁷ Historic Madison Inc. of Wisconsin, "Man Behind the Field", www.historicmadison.org/.../manbehindthefield.html, pages 1-2

³⁸ United States History, "Jesse Owens". www.u-s-history.com/pages/h3746.html, page 1-2

³⁹ "The Brief History of Midget Auto Racing at Breese Stevens Field, Madison, Wisconsin", www.bmara.com/archives/scrapbook.html, pages 1-4

⁴⁰ Tom Fisher letter, dated March 22, 1949 from the Philadelphia Phillies, on file at the Madison Parks Department

⁴¹ "Three-I League", www.baseball-reference.com, pages 1-13

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By the late 1960's, more modern facilities such as Mansfield Stadium caused Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field to be utilized less and less. Hoping that the Madison Area Technical College (MATC) would relocate to the area and assume the responsibility for the maintenance of the field, the city deferred spending tax payer dollars on the facility and the integrity of the site declined. By early 1980 there was talk of demolishing the historic stadium and in 1981 the Madison Parks Department budgeted \$60,000 to demolish the Claude & Starck grandstand. The public outcry was overwhelming to save the field. Instead of demolishing the grandstand and the bleachers ending the facility's legacy, the City of Madison decided to rehabilitate the grandstand and field. Structural repairs were made to the grandstand and the stone walls were repaired. The electrical systems were upgraded and handicap ramps were added. The cinder track and the baseball diamond were removed and grass was planted over the entire field.⁴² On March 23, 1982, the city authorized the expenditure of \$97,200 for the purpose of completing the Breese Stevens Field restoration project.⁴³

At this time there was a need for a facility for the rapidly growing sport of soccer. Soccer grew tremendously in popularity in the 1970's and 1980's. Thus the baseball field was converted to a soccer field and Breese Stevens Municipal Field became Wisconsin's premier soccer stadium. It became the home field for the soccer teams from the University of Wisconsin, East and LaFollette high schools, Edgewood College and MATC. The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) played their state soccer tournaments at the field from 1989 to 2003.⁴⁴ The Madison 56ers, who play in the National Premier Soccer League, has played their home games at Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic field since 1977.⁴⁵ This is also the home facility for the Wisconsin Adult Soccer Association (WASA).

Some of the latest activities, other than soccer, that have been held at the Breese Stevens Municipal Field are; the Madison Shakespeare Company produced the play, *Anthony & Cleopatra*, which was held at the field in 2013, the USA Rugby Club hosted their national meet on May 31, 2014 at Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field and a free community concert was held at the field on July 8, 2014.

Conclusion: Criterion A – in the area History as it relates to Entertainment and Recreation

⁴² Daina Penkiunas, National Trust for Historic Preservation Landmarks Nomination Form, "Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field", submitted July 7, 1995

⁴³ Breese Stevens Field Historic Structure Report, River Architects Inc., August 15, 2003, pages 6,7,54,55

⁴⁴ David Medaris, Isthmus The Daily Page, "Breese Stevens: Field of Dreams", September 11, 2008 www.thedailypage.com/isthmus/article.php?article=23730,

⁴⁵ Charles Billings, The 56er Striker Newsletter, "Breese Stevens Field Restoration on Schedule", Madison56ers.org/newsletter/Feb2008/article8.asp

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Most early baseball grandstands were rudimentary structures that were built entirely out of wood. They either succumbed to the elements or as tinder boxes of dry wood, burned to the ground. Grandstands that were constructed out of concrete were much more likely to survive. The 1936 Carson Park Baseball Stadium in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, also a CWA project, is a concrete and masonry structure. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in July of 2003.

Baseball has been America's pastime since the late 1800's. It has provided distraction from economic depression, war and has helped to lift the spirits of many, especially young boys who dreamed of playing in the big leagues. With the approach of the 1960's, television broadcasts of major league games created a shift in how people enjoyed baseball. Live fan attendance at smaller venues collapsed and the number of minor league teams declined. While the love of the game nationwide did not diminish, fans were more likely to watch a baseball game in the comfort of their own home than at a local grandstand. However, the varied venues held at Breese Stevens Municipal Field secured the field financially and exposed more than just the baseball fan to a memorable day at the facility.

Thirty-four years ago Madison residents spoke out *loudly* that they did not want to see Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field destroyed. The City of Madison is very proud of its decision not to tear down this facility. First, the facility was renovated. Then the City of Madison placed Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field on their local landmark register. Today, the City is seeking to commemorate its long history as a baseball stadium, entertainment facility and recreation center by taking the steps to have it recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.

It is difficult to describe the relationship so many Madison residents have had with this athletic and recreational field. Over many years Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field has opened its doors to high school sports, college sports, municipal sports, minor league baseball, car racing, concerts, plays and circuses. Many people either attended these games and events or they participated in them. Those experiences have generated affection for Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field that reaches through many generations.

Everyone has at least one story to tell about their memories of Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. One resident spoke of his fond memory of the sounds of the drum and bugle competitions wafting in the summer air through the surrounding neighborhoods.

The most poignant interview was with the Madison Parks Division landscape architect who told the story his family's three generation relationship with Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field. As an eleven year old boy, he rode his bicycle through the streets of Madison to the field to watch matches of the Professional Wrestling Tour. During the early 1970's the Professional Wrestling Tour had

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developed an intensive fan following due to their weekly television show. He even remembered the main event where he saw Chief White Owl fight Flying Fred Curry, complete with fake blood.

He went on to tell of his father's relationship with the field. His dad was a Madison Fire Fighter who played baseball at the field as part of a fire fighter baseball team. His grandfather tried out for the St. Louis Cardinals at a summer baseball camp held at the field.

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field derives additional significant due to the 1934 Civil Works Administration project. That project included the construction of concrete bleachers, the north stone wall behind the bleachers and the perimeter stonewall. The obvious conclusion would be that the field benefited by the increase in seating. If that is the only benefit that one could see one would miss the legacy of the skill stone craftsmen who were idled by the Great Depression. The men from the CWA demonstrated exceptional skill in the cutting and lying of the tons of sandstone rock quarried from Hoyt Park. These rustic stonewalls enhance the esthetics of the field and stand as a testament to the workers of the CWA era.

A California State Parks Department study, sponsored by the National Parks Service, demonstrated the social benefits of having access to an entertainment and recreational in your community. A recreational facility plays an important role in addressing individual health and mental wellbeing. Physical activity can diminish the risk of disease and increase life expectancy. There are also benefits to being a spectator. Watching an activity can reduce depression and relieve stress. Whether a player or a spectator, the activities available at an entertainment and recreational facility serve as a way to relax and are a benefit to a community.⁴⁶

Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field retains all of its essential physical features associated with the original scope and size of the property and exterior materials. The resources contained within the property convey the property's history, character and essence of the time. When standing on the field facing the Claude & Starck grandstand and CWA bleachers one can almost hear the umpire shout "play ball!"

⁴⁶ *The Health and Social Benefits of Recreation – An Element of the California Outdoor Recreation Planning Program*, (California State Parks Planning Division, 2005), Facilitated with a grant from the National Parks Service, www.park.ca.gov/pages/795/files/benefits%20final%20v6-1, pages 1-10

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___End of Statement of Significance

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 End of References

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

 Insert Boundary Descriptions

Verbal Boundary Description:

Legal Description: Block 159, Original Plat Lots 1 to 18 Inclusive. Parcel number 0709-131-2001-3.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field

 End of Boundary Descriptions

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 1

Insert Photo Descriptions

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Name of Property: | Stevens, Breese Municipal Athletic Field |
| City or Vicinity: | Madison |
| County: | Dane |
| State: | Wisconsin |
| Name of Photographer: | Patricia Lacey |
| Date of Photograph: | June 2014 |
| Location of Original Digital Files: | W5055 US HWY 10, Neillsville, WI 54456 |
| Number of Photographs: | 12 |

Photo 1
Rear of grandstand joining 1934 sandstone wall.
Camera looking northeast.

Photo 2
West facing grandstand elevation.
Camera looking east.

Photo 3
Grandstand.
Camera looking west.

Photo 4
1934 Bleachers
Camera looking northeast

Photo 5
Bleachers connecting to grandstand.
Camera looking northwest.

Photo 6
Entire view of bleachers.
Camera looking northwest.

Photo 7
View of south side of the field.
Camera looking southwest.

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Breese Stevens Municipal Athletic Field
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 2

Photo 8

North stone wall of the bleachers.
Camera looking west.

Photo 9

South perimeter stone wall.
Camera looking east.

Photo 10

Civil Works Administration Marker located at west end of the south perimeter wall.
Camera looking north.

Photo 11

West rounded corner of the south perimeter wall.
Camera looking northwest.

Photo 12

East facing perimeter wall.
Camera looking south.

End of Photo Descriptions

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