

### The Finney Library Planter History

In 1953 The Original Finney Library had a Lannon Stone planter projecting 21' west from the north-west corner of the main structure at the intersection of Sherman Boulevard and North Avenue. The Library realized that managing a 21' L X 5'W X 3' H stone and concrete planter posed an insurmountable challenge to maintain. If filled with enough dirt to keep plants alive, it will self destruct with frost expansion, while it is too large for potted plants. Frost killed the plants and destroyed the stone veneer. When an Addition was constructed at the rear of the building in 1979, the planter was repaired filled with granite river rock Bolders and cement intending to serve as a "maintenance free" cap. The river rock cap was "in-appropriate" and caused the whole structure to break apart and decay a second time.

### The Third attempt to rebuild the "planter" for a sustainable use in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In the purchase agreement with The Department of City Development it was stipulated that the planter be restored. In 2015 the planter restoration plans were approved and a Certificate of Appropriateness was presented by the Historic Preservation Committee (see Attached photographs). Masonry restoration consultants recommended using potted plants rather than dirt in-fill, and like the Library before us we have been unable to propagate potted plants and keep them alive in the quantities needed.

In 2019 The Shops At Finney Market opened. The retail shops occupying the building requested the installation of outdoor signage. A charrette was held to determine criteria required for its design and ultimate approval by the DCD and the HPC. It was determined that the design most likely to receive the required permissions would be classified as a Type A Freestanding Monument Sign. We submitted our plans, consulted with Plan Examiner Tanya Roeglin of the Dept. of Neighborhood, and made design modifications to ensure that the design complies with the Type A specification. Her confirmation email is attached to this submission.

### The following paragraph is taken from the Milwaukee Design Guidelines for Freestanding Signs:

*"A type A freestanding sign is characterized by a continuous sign base that extends from grade to the display area and is at least 75% as wide as the display area of the sign. Only individual letters or symbols may be internally illuminated. This type of sign includes, but is not limited to: letters or symbols cut from an opaque panel such as metal; pin-set letters where individual letters may be backlit, carved entablature-type signs and other general individual-letter, non-illuminated signs. Signs of this type are commonly referred to as "monument signs"."*

A list of design elements that The Historic Preservation committee would be likely to approve was compiled.

The question was posed: ***Can the existing planter base be re-purposed as a conforming Type A Monument Sign base while remaining true to the architectural integrity of the structure?*** We concluded that re-purposing for a 21<sup>st</sup> century use was most likely to result in the long term preservation of the "failed Planter". Three visual elements will be used to remain in keeping with the original 1953 Grassold-Johnson design with a fourth benefit of pedestrian safety.

- 1.) Proportioning the sign in a "horizontal 4:1 aspect ratio" orientation often seen in the Mid-Century design would complement the horizontal lines of the planter, 4:1 keeps the 64 sqft sign face well within the Type-A sign 100 sqft limit. And less than 5 % of the Facade elevation sqft.
- 2.) Pin Mounted lettering. External lighting with pendant type fixtures.
- 3.) A "cantilevered overhanging cap" element, ***similar to, but not copied from existing*** cantilevers utilized at the entrance and windows of Finney.
- 4.) The cantilever cap design and the 8' height are expected to deter children from climbing.