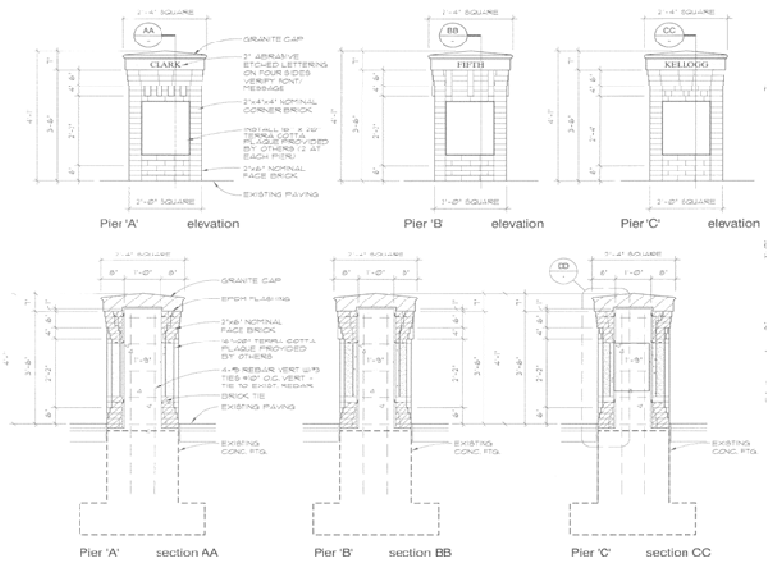


COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF FIFTH STREET BRICK PIERS AND ART RELIEFS

BACKGROUND:

The City's Public Art Commission (PAC) manages the inventory of public art throughout the Ames community. In 1999, 15 brick piers were installed at street corners along 5th Street. One additional pier was installed in 2001. The 16 total brick piers are shown on the attached map (two at Pearle Avenue, four at Clark Avenue, three at Burnett Avenue, three at Kellogg Avenue, two at Douglas Avenue, and two at Duff Avenue). Each brick pier is approximately 48 inches in height, is capped with an engraved stone containing the intersecting street names, and contains two ceramic relief inserts. A typical example is shown below:



The piers were one of several components of a Downtown District Development Plan pursued by the City in the late 1990s. This plan involved an inventory and mapping of the downtown area, development of streetscape standards (including specific elements for the 5th Street Corridor), and creation of designs and construction documents. In addition to other streetscape components created as result of this plan, Main Street, 5th Street, and 6th Street each received unique corridor elements: Main Street received brick piers with lighted columns and a mosaic tile wall at Burnett and Main, both designed by David Dahlquist (and both recently deaccessioned and removed due to deterioration); 6th Street received small-scale brick piers at street corners on which the street lights were mounted; 5th Street received the 4-foot brick piers with terra cotta reliefs.

The brick piers on 5th Street were installed by a contractor. The ceramic reliefs were created by the artist David Dahlquist and later installed into the completed piers. The reliefs are the portion of the installation that are contained within the City's public art inventory; the brick piers themselves are not considered "art" within PAC's control.

Staff has been unable to determine the original construction cost for the brick piers. The creation and installation of the reliefs were financed in part through an Iowa Community Cultural Grant through the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs (\$15,000 grant). The cost of the original 30 reliefs was \$17,000, and the two reliefs created for the additional pier in 2001 cost a further \$2,500 (\$19,500 total for the 32 reliefs).

Although the piers were installed in compliance with accessibility standards, some of them are located in places where they provide only the minimum amount of required clearance (4 feet), resulting in accessibility challenges. Additionally, the brick has deteriorated over time, particularly near the bottom of the piers where freezing and thawing and contact with salt can occur. It does not appear feasible to relocate the brick piers given their condition and complexity of construction.

Based on these issues, at its March 7, 2023 meeting, PAC approved a recommendation to deaccession the ceramic reliefs and remove the brick piers. PAC consulted with Ames Main Street, which expressed support for the removal of the piers (see attachment). **Both PAC and Ames Main Street indicated a desire to attempt to retain the reliefs for potential future projects, such as incorporating them into a new display.**

Public Works staff consulted with a contractor to determine the estimated cost to complete the removal. The contractor's quote is \$1,500 for each pier (\$24,000 total, for the removal of each pier, demolition of the footing below the adjacent pavement, and replacement with colored concrete to match the adjacent pavement (where applicable). It should be noted that due to the varying ages of the concrete around each pier, the colored concrete may not exactly match.

The contractor's quote does not include the cost to remove and preserve the 32 ceramic reliefs. Neither staff nor the contractor are confident that the reliefs can be removed intact. City staff believes they would be damaged, if not destroyed outright, by attempting to remove them.

The Public Art Commission's Public Art Administration account currently has a balance of \$24,265, with an additional \$6,000 in funding becoming available in FY 2023/24. However, the use of this funding source exclusively would have a substantial impact on other planned public art activities for the next 18 months. Because the brick piers are located within the right-of-way, the removal costs are eligible to be financed using Road Use Tax funding. **Staff is proposing that the removal of the piers be completed using \$8,000 in PAC funds (1/3 of the estimated demolition costs), and the**

remaining \$16,000 in costs (2/3 of the demolition cost) be financed from the Road Use Tax Fund available balance.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the deaccession of 32 Dahlquist ceramic reliefs from the City's Public Art Inventory, authorize the demolition of the reliefs and 16 brick piers located on 5th Street, and use \$16,000 from the available balance in the Road Use Tax Fund to pay for the project with the remaining funding coming from PAC funding.
2. Authorize the demolition of the 16 brick piers on 5th Street, but direct staff to obtain quotes to have the ceramic reliefs removed for use in other art projects.
3. Refer this request back to the Public Art Commission or staff for further information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The 16 brick piers and the associated ceramic reliefs have been exposed to challenging conditions including ice, salt, and water over the past 24 years. The brick piers present challenges to the navigation of the sidewalks and crosswalks along 5th Street, particularly for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, it is the desire of the Public Art Commission and Ames Main Street to deaccession the art and remove the piers. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.

Brick Pier Locations (in red)



Phillips, Brian

From: Elizabeth Erbes <eliz@avecdesignbuild.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 19, 2023 9:35 PM
To: Erica
Cc: Angie DeWaard; Phillips, Brian; Crystal Davis
Subject: Re: Ames Main Street - Brick pillars with reliefs - 5th St
Attachments: FIFTH STREET PIERS.jpg; 8 - PIERS AT PEARL.jpg; 5 - PIERS AT BURNETT.jpg; 7 - PIERS AT CLARK - SOUTH.jpg; 6 - PIERS AT CLARK - NORTH.jpg; 4 - PIERS AT KELLOGG AND BURNETT.jpg; 3 - PIERS AT KELLOGG.jpg; 1 - PIERS AT DUFF.jpg; 2 - PIERS AT DOUGLAS.jpg

[External Email]

Greetings!

Thanks for the invitation to involve the AMS Design Committee in regards to the brick pillars on fifth street. I have attached the original drawings showing the type and location of the 16 pillars. The Design Committee has often discussed the visual and physical barriers of these pillars. We looked at your options and offer our opinions below in Blue text:

1. As the pillars are technically and barely within ADA guidelines, leave as-is. (This would require no further action.) [Maintenance may still be required on several of the columns.](#)
2. Attempt to move the pillars to a better location near their current placements. (This would require some further research on feasibility dependent upon condition and other concerns.) [The piers sit on a deep, 2' diameter footing. Moving the piers would require digging down to the base of the existing footing to remove it. Then a new footing would be required under the relocated pier. This option could require excavation of a 10'x10' area including removal of sidewalk in that area.](#)
3. Decommission the pillars altogether, but (if possible) cut out the terra cotta reliefs and try to incorporate them into a different display, potentially in City Hall or other. [This is the option we prefer. We would suggest decommissioning all the piers, then removal can happen as needed without returning to the City Council for approval as projects move forward.](#)

I have attached the original plans and images of the piers with terracotta reliefs. The piers are noted as to which corner of the intersection they are located NE, SW, etc. The third letter designates the side of the pier the terracota is located. You will notice there are several duplicates.

Possibilities for reuse (we very much like this idea):

inserts in benches in parks downtown
inserts in walls in new AHM galleries
inserts in planters along the streetscape

Erica, just to clarify, there are only three piers at 5th and Kellogg, the fourth corner features the fountain.

Let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Thanks, Eliz

ELIZABETH ERBES

Architect | Partner | AIA | CEFP | LEED BD+C

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On Wed, Feb 8, 2023 at 10:51 AM Erica <ebriest@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hello Eliz,

Allow me to introduce myself; I am Erica Briest, the current Chair of the Public Art Commission and I need to clarify which brick pillars we are talking about. On the map there are only 3 pillars indicated at the intersection of 5th & Kellogg, but all 4 pillars are problematic. At the Douglas intersection only the pillar labeled #6 is an issue. I hope that didn't confuse anyone, but if it did, please ask me. Looking forward to working with you on a solution that works for everyone.

Serving With Perfect Vision,
Erica

Sent from Erica's iPhone

On Feb 8, 2023, at 9:18 AM, Angie DeWaard <angiedewaard@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, Eliz! I wanted to reintroduce myself - I'm Angie DeWaard. I'm past-chair on the Ames Public Art Commission. I have included Erica Briest (our current chair), and Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager.

I believe when we first started discussing the wall at Tom Evans Plaza and the lighting fixtures, you had mentioned that some of the brick pillars with the terra cotta reliefs on them were in disrepair. Due to budgeting and other concerns, we limited our scope to one area at a time.

We've had it brought to our attention that, while technically within ADA guidelines, a few of the pillars (see attachment for pillars in question) crowd the crosswalk and are a potential impediment for the vision-impaired, bikers, etc. In combination with your earlier concerns, we wanted to revisit these pillars with your group and get your input and opinions.

After discussing at our meeting last night, we would like to take your input and ours to City Council with recommendations for the pillars in question (and potentially the future of others). The three practical solutions we could see are:

1. As the pillars are technically and barely within ADA guidelines, leave as-is. (This would require no further action.)
2. Attempt to move the pillars to a better location near their current placements. (This would require some further research on feasibility dependent upon condition and other concerns.)
3. Decommission the pillars altogether, but (if possible) cut out the terra cotta reliefs and try to incorporate them into a different display, potentially in City Hall or other.

Would you happen to have any input or thoughts on these ideas, or potentially have any other ideas we haven't considered? We'd love to partner with you on this.

Thanks so much, Eliz!
Angie

--

Angie DeWaard
angiedewaard@gmail.com

