

Madison Street Steps Collection

Donated December 2020

From David L. Dahlquist

David Dahlquist was a landscape architect for the City of Dubuque. During that time, he prepared the documents in this collection as a proposal for upgrading the Madison Street Steps. The project was not completed.

The original wooden steps were built to allow homeowners and visitors on the bluff to easily visit Madison Park. The wooden steps were replaced in 1918 with an ornate, eight-flight construction that included a spiral staircase. By 1942 the steps had deteriorated once again and were closed. In 1956 portions of the steps were demolished and the rest was allowed to collapse. In 1977 Dahlquist was hired to develop a plan to replace the steps, but the project was never funded. However, the design did win the Special Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects. Finally, in 1989 new steps were built, but the structure was much simpler, consisting of three concrete landings, 190 square feet of sidewalk, and two flights of wooden steps.

Folder 1: Slides and Images

80 colored slides including the site as it was in 1977, historic photos of the 1918 structure, and the proposed replacement structure

2 negatives showing the proposed plan. In manila envelop.

4 sleeves of negatives.

Photo #3: the view from the upper platform of the spiral steps of downtown Dubuque and the distant river bluffs is today much as it was when G. A. Heyne constructed the Madison Street Steps in 1918. Photo by David Dahlquist. B&W. 1976.

Photo of the bluffs and vegetation. B&W. Handwritten C on back.

Photo #7: although closed to public use in 1942, the deteriorated structure of the Madison Street Steps remains today as a legacy of Dubuque's architectural heritage. Photo by David Dahlquist. B&W. 1976.

Photo of old structure on the bluff. B&W. Handwritten A on back.

Photo from the top of steps looking down. B&W.

Photo #4: Heyne's design for the Steps incorporated a meandering course of steps and platforms graced with ornate light fixtures, decorative balustrades, and urns filled with flowers and shrubs. Photo courtesy of W. N. Rettenberger, original source unknown. B&W. 1918.

Seminary Hill cor Seventeenth and Madison Streets, Dubuque. B&W. Handwritten B on back.

Heyne's Madison Street Steps. B&W. Handwritten D on back.

Folder 2: Items from folder labeled 8023—DECADE—MADISON ST STEPS

Copyright Status Questionnaire and Permission Forms regarding publication of an article on the design in Decade.

Letter to Mr. Dahlquist from Steven G. Barkus, editor and publisher of Decade. January 23, 1979.

Immunity Form, not completed.

Letter to Dave from Judith A Palko, typist. August 26, 1978.

Manuscript – The Madison Street Steps: a proposed plan for recreating a unique Dubuque landmark. Article and design by David Dahlquist. Assistants: Larry Dunkin and Sandy Welsh. (2 copies).

Rough draft of the The Madison Street Steps: a proposed plan for recreating a unique Dubuque landmark manuscript.

Handwritten notes about the photos to be included in the manuscript.

Rough draft of the The Madison Street Steps: a proposed plan for recreating a unique Dubuque landmark manuscript.

Rough draft of the The Madison Street Steps: a proposed plan for recreating a unique Dubuque landmark manuscript with handwritten corrections and notes.

Contact sheet of photos related to the article.

Two photocopied photos of the Madison Street Steps.

Typed document about the project. By Sandy Welsh handwritten at the top.

Letter to Dan Dittmore, Dubuque City Planner from George Deininger Vice President DDDKG Architects. May 17, 1977.

Original Descriptive Text Madison Street Steps.

Letter to Sandra Welsh Planning and Zoning Department, City of Dubuque from Martha Bowers, Historian, Iowa State Historical Department. July 11, 1977.

Memo from Brown, Lacy, and Clewell Law Offices regarding Appropriation for Park Purposes. February 5, 1919.

2 photocopied articles from the Telegraph Herald – Madison Steps Still Disputed (March 30, 1943) and Madison Steps Still Debated (May 4, 1943).

2 photocopied articles from the Telegraph Herald – Madison Steps can't be used (April 13, 1943) and Council Tells Board to Make Steps Safe (March 2, 1943)

Letter to Honorable Mayor and Councilmen, City of Dubuque from Daniel Dittmore, Director of Community Development, City of Dubuque. Staff report on "Reconstruction of the Madison Street (Seminary Hill) Steps." May 9, 1977.

Landscape Architecture, ASLA 1977 Awards Issue. July 1977.

Copy of a letter to Steven Barkus of DECADE from Design Collaborative at Ames. March 20, 1979.

Letter to David Dahlquist from Steven Barkus Editor and Publisher of DECADE. March 7, 1979.

Copy of a letter to Steven Barkus of DECADE from Design Collaborative at Ames. September 6, 1978.

Sales ticket from Iowa State University Photo Service. September 5, 1978.

Sales ticket from Iowa State University Photo Service. August 16, 1978.

Copy of a letter to Steven Barkus of DECADE from David Dahlquist. June 1, 1978.

Copy of a letter to Steven Barkus of DECADE from David Dahlquist. August 20, 1978.

Registered mail receipt #726. August 23, 1978.

Registered mail receipt #727. August 23, 1978.

Copy of receipt from James Shaffer Photographic Services. April 22, 1978.

Letter to David Dahlquist from Steven Barkus Editor and Publisher of DECADE. June 6, 1978.

Letter to David Dahlquist from Steven Barkus Editor and Publisher of DECADE. February 28, 1978.

Handwritten note.

Folder 3: Items from folder labeled Madison Avenue Steps 8023

Travel advance receipt for David Dahlquist to attend a conference at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. October 1976.

Postage reimbursement to David Dahlquist. March 11, 1977.

Copy of a letter to Fran Black of East—West Network from Larry Dunkin of City of Dubuque Planning and Zoning. February 24, 1978. (second copy with handwritten notes)

Letter to Dan Dittmore City Planner of the City of Dubuque from George Deininger Vice President of DDDKG. May 17, 1977.

Copy of letter to Wayne Norman from David Dahlquist. May 11, 1977.

Copy of letter to Paul Rossiter from David Dahlquist. May 11, 1977.

Copy of letter to Dick Kramer from David Dahlquist. May 11, 1977.

Copy of letter to John White from David Dahlquist. May 11, 1977.

Copy of letter to Al Lundh from David Dahlquist. May 11, 1977.

Copy of letter to C. Robert Justman from David Dahlquist. May 11, 1977.

Report titled Restoration of Madison Park Stairs (Seminary Hill Stairs) submitted by Rossiter and Hamm, Architects and Engineers.

Report titled General Descriptive Text Madison Street Steps. Edited.

Letter to Sandra Welsh, Planning and Zoning Department City of Dubuque from Martha Bowers, Historian Iowa State Historical Department. July 11, 1977.

Letter to Iowa State Historical Department attention Tod Mozingo from Sandra Welsh. June 1, 1977.

Memo from Brown, Lacy & Clewell Law Offices regarding Appropriation for Park Purposes. February 5, 1919.

Letter to honorable Mayor and Councilmen, Dubuque from Daniel Dittmore. May 9, 1977.

Black and white photograph key. Photocopy.

Color slides key (all slides taken in 1976 and 1977). Photocopy.

“Landscape Architecture” Magazine Text, Madison Street Steps.

Copy of letter to Gilbert Chavenelle from David Dahlquist. May 9, 1977.

Copy of letter to Executive Director of the American Society of Landscape Architects from David Dahlquist. March 8, 1977.

1977 Professional Awards Program Entry Form completed by David Dahlquist. March 8, 1977.

Letter to David Dahlquist from Gilbert Chavenelle. April 26, 1977.

Copy of letter to Gilbert Chavenelle from David Dahlquist. April 25, 1977.

Letter to Mayor Alvin Lundh from David Dahlquist. November 2, 1976.

Copy of letter to Gilbert Chavenelle City Manager from Daniel Dittmore. February 24, 1977.

Copy of letter to Charles Unterreiner, Imangin-Ering Sales from David Dahlquist. December 6, 1976.

Copy of letter to Jim Edwards, Edwards Precast Concrete Company from David Dahlquist. October 25, 1976.

Copy of letter to Jim Edwards, Edwards Precast Concrete Company from David Dahlquist. June 28, 1976.

Letter to Mayor Alvin Lundh from David Dahlquist. May 19, 1976.
Copy of handwritten diagrams labeled Madison Street Survey.
Copy of handwritten notes labeled Madison Street Steps. December 11, 1975.
Memo from David Dahlquist regarding Initial Meeting of the Task Force – Madison Avenue Steps and Lover’s Rendezvous Reconstruction. October 27, 1975.
Diagrams on graph paper.
Madison Street Steps Survey. Handwritten. May 17, 1976.
Five pages of handwritten notes.

Folder 4: loose items

Soil Survey of Iowa, Dubuque County by the Agricultural Experiment Station, Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Soil Survey Report No. 35. September 1924.
Madison Street Steps: Elevation drawing (2 copies).
Madison Street Steps: Proposed plan drawing (2 copies).
Copy of article by David Dahlquist in DECADE. “The Madison Street Steps: a proposed plan for creating a unique Dubuque landmark”. January Issue p42-45.
Council to view Madison Street steps plan by John Bulkley. Telegraph Herald. May 16, 1977.
The steps are getting Mary Down by Mike Hendricks. Telegraph Herald. March 14, 1982.

Rolled Documents

Lighting System
Footing Plan 2
Step and Platform “Stringer” Plan 3
Elevated Platform Plan 4
Precast Steps 5
Handrail, Arch, Balustrade 6
Madison Street Steps: Proposed Plan. Architectural rendering at 1:48 scale. Painted.
Madison Street Steps: Elevation. Architectural rendering at 1:48 scale. Painted.
Madison Street Steps: Proposed Plan. Architectural rendering at 1:48 scale. B&W. 2 copies.
Madison Street Steps: Elevation. Architectural rendering at 1:48 scale. B&W. 2 copies.