

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

## I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common  
Edna Taylor Conservancy Mound  
Group

(2) Historic (if applicable)  
Phlaum-McWilliams Mound Group  
(47 DA-32)

## II. Location

(1) Street Address  
802 Femrite Drive

(2) Aldermanic District  
Twenty-Second

## III. Classification

(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)  
Indian Mounds

(2) Zoning District  
R1 W

(3) Present Use  
City Park

## IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Name(s)  
City of Madison - Parks

(2) Street Address  
Madison Municipal Building, Ste. 120  
Madison, WI 53710

(3) Telephone Number  
266-4711

## V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Parcel Number  
0710-214-0099-1

(2) Legal Description: Lot 1,  
Certified Survey Map #996, recorded in  
Dane Co. Reg. of Deeds in Vol. 4, p. 263  
of Certified Surveys.

## VI. Condition of Property

(1) Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)  
Fair

(2) Altered or Unaltered?  
Altered

(3) Moved or Original Site?  
Original Site

(4) Wall Construction  
Not applicable

(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

**VI.(5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:**

The Phlaum-McWilliams mound group is located in the Edna Taylor Conservancy [REDACTED] near Lake Monona in Madison, Wisconsin (Fig. 1-4). It presently consists of a tailed animal effigy mound and portions of six long linear mounds. Three of the existing linears [REDACTED] while three other linears and the effigy are located [REDACTED].

The earliest reference to the Phlaum-McWilliams group (Phlaum is also spelled Pflaum) was by McLachlan (1914:156-158) who described eleven mounds: the effigy, eight linears, one long curved mound, and a conical (see Fig. 1). Some of these were already damaged by farming activities at the time of McLachlan's observations. Since then much of the [REDACTED] part of the group has been obliterated by farming and farm construction. The [REDACTED] end of the group was cut off [REDACTED]. The remaining mounds, except for the effigy, have been affected to one degree or another by recent recreation-related activities. Peterson (1979) mistakenly reported in 1979 that all mounds except for two linears had been destroyed. The only reported objects associated with the mounds are [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] (McLachlan 1914:156).

The following description of the mounds is derived from field visits made by the Archeology Section of the Division of Historic Preservation at the State Historical Society in the Fall of 1989. The reader should refer to Figure 2. This nomination only covers visible mounds. It is quite possible that subsurface remnants of other mounds remain, but this can only be established by future fieldwork.

Mound 1. This linear was partially destroyed by [REDACTED]. It is oriented [REDACTED] and is presently 212 ft. long, 12-14 ft. wide, and 2-3 ft. high.

Mound 2. This linear is 343 ft. long, 14-17 ft. wide, and 2-3 ft. high. Until recently, a foot trail ran along the crest of the mound, but this has been repaired by the City of Madison.

Mound 3. This linear is currently 484 ft. long, 14-15.5 ft. wide, and 2-4 ft. high. The southwestern portion (approximately 223 ft.) has been obliterated by cultivation. Until recently, a foot trail ran along the crest of the mound, but this has been repaired by the City of Madison.

Mound 4. This linear is located [REDACTED] where it is oriented in a north/south direction. It is 200 ft. in length, but its northernmost end has been cut off by [REDACTED]. It ranges from 8 to 10 ft. in width and is 2-3 ft. high.

Landmark Nomination  
Edna Taylor Mound Group  
Description, continued

Mound 5. This linear is located on the [REDACTED] and is oriented northeast/southwest. The southwest end of the mound has been damaged by [REDACTED], and a 25 ft. wide area near the center of the mound was removed during the [REDACTED]. A low area is eroding between the two sections of the truncated mound suggesting the presence of a subsurface pit or intaglio running the length of the mound. A footpath crosses the [REDACTED] of the mound.

Mound 6. This linear is located on the [REDACTED] and is oriented northeast/southwest. A 25 ft. wide area near the southwestern end of the mound was removed during the [REDACTED]. As with Mound 5, a low area is eroding between the two sections of the truncated mound suggesting the presence of a subsurface pit or intaglio running the length of the mound. A footpath crosses the tip of the mound.

Mound 7. This mound is a well-preserved animal effigy oriented in a northeast/southwest direction. It is 139 ft. long with a maximum width of 39 ft. It ranges in height from 1 to 3 ft.

**City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)**

**VII. Significance**

<b>(1) Original Owner</b> People of the Late Woodland Stage Effigy Mound Tradition	<b>(2) Original Use</b> Ceremonial and Funerary
<b>(3) Architect or Builder</b> People of the Lake Woodland Stage Effigy Mound Tradition	<b>(4) Architectural Style</b> Not applicable
<b>(5) Date of Construction</b> ca. 800-1100 A.D.	<b>(6) Indigenous Materials Used</b> Not applicable
<b>(7) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the significance of the nominated property and its conformance to the designation criteria of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (33.01), limit of 500 words.</b>	

**VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used**

1. Please see continuation sheet
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**IX. Form Prepared By:**

**(1) Name and Title** Robert A. Birmingham, State Archeologist, and  
Katherine H. Rankin, Preservation Planner

**(2) Organization Represented (if any)**  
 State Historical Society of Wisconsin and City of Madison

**(3) Address** P.O. Box 2985  
 Madison, WI 53701

**(4) Telephone Number**  
 266-6552

**(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared**  
 March 13, 1990

Landmark Nomination  
Edna Taylor Mound Group  
List of Bibliographic References Used

Arzigian, Constance

1986 - The Emergence of Horticultural Societies in Wisconsin. In William F. Keegan (ed.) Emergent Horticultural Societies of the Eastern Woodlands. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale Center for Archeological Investigations Occasional Paper No. 7.

Benn, David

1979 - Some Trends and Traditions in Woodland Cultures of the Quad-State Region in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The Wisconsin Archeologist. 60 (1):47-82.

Brown, Charles E.

1925 - Fifth Addition to a Record of Wisconsin Antiquities Part I. The Wisconsin Archeologist. 1 (4):119-167.

Brown, Charles E.

n.d. MS, Box 22, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Mallam, R. Clark

1976 - The Effigy Mound Tradition in Iowa: An Interpretative Model. Report No. 9. Office of the State Archeologist, Iowa City.

1984 - Some Views on the Archeology of the Driftless Zone in Iowa. Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science.

McLachlan, W. G.

1914 - The Mounds of the Lake Waubesa Region. The Wisconsin Archeologist 12 (4):107-166.

Peterson, Robert

1979 - The Wisconsin Effigy Mounds Project, I. Unpublished report on file, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

Salkin, Philip

1987 - The Late Woodland Stage in Southeastern Wisconsin. Wisconsin Academy Review, pp. 75-79.

Scherz, James

1987 - New Surveys of Wisconsin Indian Mounds. Wisconsin Academy Review, pp. 63-66.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

**VII.(7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:**

The Phlaum-McWilliams group consists of remnants of an unusual mound group representing the Late Woodland Stage Effigy Mound Tradition. Although the group has been damaged, it maintains sufficient integrity to yield significant information on the Late Woodland Stage.

Effigy mound groups are generally dated to the Late Woodland Stage circa 650-1200 A. D., although the zenith of mound building appears to have occurred during a rather narrow time span of 800-1100 A. D. (Benn 1979, James Stoltman, personal communication). Effigy mounds themselves have been variously interpreted as clan designations, ideological/cosmological symbols, and representations of the night skies. Mound groups are believed to have functioned as ceremonial centers for the periodic reinforcement of kinship ties and belief systems of individual Late Woodland social groups.

Dane County once contained over 1,000 mounds in approximately 115 locations or centers that are attributable to the Late Woodland Stage (Peterson 1979:53). This figure includes at least 289 effigy mounds. Most of these were found in the lakes area around Madison and most have been destroyed by agricultural practices and urban expansion. Approximately 200 mounds in approximately 50 locations remain. These include fewer than 60 effigies.

The Phlaum-McWilliams group represents one of the comparatively few groups that maintain some integrity, even given recent damage. Most other remaining mound groups in this area have been heavily impacted or nearly obliterated. The linears found [REDACTED] are among the longest recorded for the Madison and the "four lakes" area. This fact, along with the arrangement of the mounds on the landscape, led early mound surveyor W. G. McLachlan to call this group "one of the most remarkable groups in the region." (McLachlan 1914:156).

The Phlaum-McWilliams group has the potential to yield important information on the Late Woodland Stage. For example, ceramics and other artifacts can help clarify the nature of the Late Woodland sequence. This is important since it has recently been proposed that not all Late Woodland populations participated in the construction of effigy mounds (Salkin 1987). Charcoal and other organic material associated with ceremonial activities can provide radiocarbon dates that will further refine the temporal span of mound construction. Recently, the role of maize horticulture in Woodland society has been a research issue (Arzigian 1987). Since these types of mounds frequently contain burials, analysis of teeth and bone chemistry can provide insights into diet of the effigy mound people.

(see continuation sheet)

Landmark Nomination  
Edna Taylor Mound Group  
Significance, continued

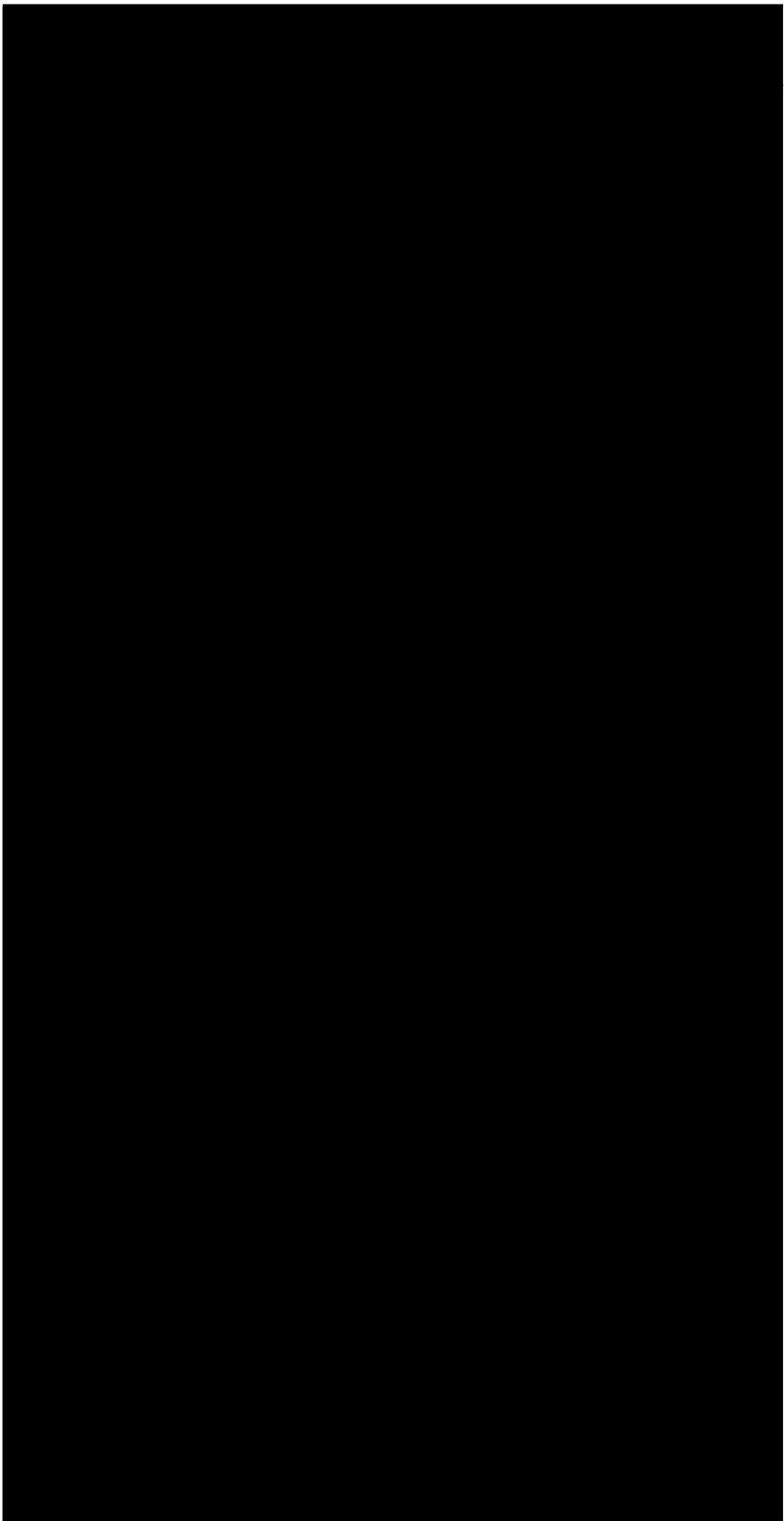
However, in light of the fact that mounds are now protected as burial places under Wisconsin State Law, it is relevant to point out that significant information concerning Late Woodland peoples can be gained from effigy mound groups such as Phlaum-McWilliams through non-destructive studies. Clark Mallam (1976) has studied the location and arrangement of effigy mound groups as well as effigy mound types in Iowa and has gained some insights into Late Woodland social systems and ideology. By analyzing the geographical distribution of effigy mound types, for example, he was able to determine that a number of separate social groups were responsible for effigy mound construction in northeastern Iowa.

In a more recent essay, Mallam (1984) suggests that the meaning and function of effigy mound groups can be addressed through such analysis aided by ethnographic analogy. He observes, for example, that effigy mound groups tend to be located near zones of predictable and annually occurring resources. This suggests to him that a complex set of ideological, social, political, and economic relationships may be involved in mound construction. He suggests that mounds ". . . are not so much burial sites as they are metaphorical expressions about the idealized state that should exist between nature and culture -- balance and harmony" (Mallam 1984:19). In his view, the Late Woodland people were expressing their "cosmological convictions" by "sacralizing the earth" through the construction of mounds.

In other words, they consecrated the mosaic environment with its varied resources and ecological relationships by defining it as sacred space. If the rhythm--balance and order--of this region could be maintained, the resources on which humans depended would continue. In this sense, mound building may be perceived as an ongoing world renewal ritual, a sacred activity humans entered into in order to ensure regular and consistent production of natural resources (Mallam 1984:19).

Mapping of mound groups and mound alignments have convinced others that at least some mounds functioned as seasonal calendars or astronomical markers (Scherz 1987). Whether or not this is the case, certainly the intriguing arrangement of the Phlaum-McWilliam group deserves special study.

Analyses of mound group location, arrangements, and physical relationships to other sites can make substantial contributions to our understanding of Late Woodland society in the southwest and south central part of Wisconsin.



PFLAUM-McWILLIAMS GROUP

Figure 1: Map from McLaclan (1914).

Figure 2

EDNA TAYLOR  
CONSERVATION PARK

THE PHLAUM-McWILLIAMS MOUND GROUP  
47 DA 32 / BDA 271

- Transit Stations
- ☉ Existing Mounds
- ☉ Disturbed Portions of Mounds
- ☉ Previously Reported Mound Boundaries  
(W. G. Mc Lachlan 1914)
- ☉ Property Boundaries
- ☉ Wooded Areas
- ☉ Fence Lines

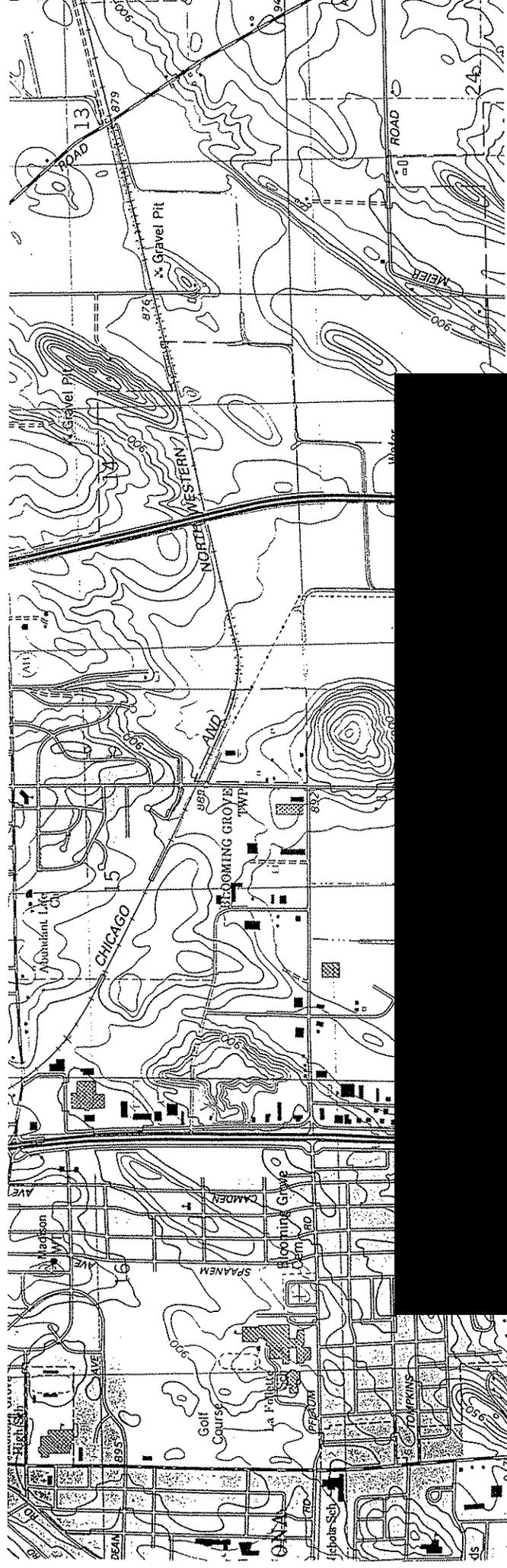
Contour Interval 10 feet



Figure 3: Above, Mounds 1 and 2, looking southwest.  
Below, Mound 2 looking northeast



Figure 4: Above, south end of Mound 4.  
Below, Mounds 5 and 6



Phlaum-McWilliams Mound Group  
UTM  
4769350 N  
311820 E

