

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

**I. Name of Building or Site**

(1) Common

Elmside Mounds

(2) Historic (if applicable)

Elmside Mounds (47 DA-560)

**II. Location**

(1) Street Address

Elmside Park, corner of Maple and  
Lakeland

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)

16th Aldermanic District

**III. Classification**

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

Effigy Mounds

(2) Zoning District

C (Conservancy)

(3) Present Use

Parkland

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

(1) Name(s) Mr. Dan Stapay, Director  
City of Madison - Parks

(2) Street Address

Suite 120, Municipal Building  
Madison, WI 53710

(3) Telephone Number

266-4711

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

(1) Parcel Number

0710-053-4201-0

(2) Legal Description

See continuation sheet

**VI. Condition of Property**

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

Excellent

(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).

### Legal Description

The mounds are located in what is commonly called Elmside Park, which, according to the legal description is officially part of the larger Olbrich Park. For purposes of the legal definition, the parcel on which Olbrich Park is located is considered the landmark site: Part of Sec. 5 and 8, T7N, R10E, all land used for Olbrick (sic) Park in the W 1/2 said sections adjoining Lake Monona and vacated Lakeland Avenue.

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

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

The Elmside Mound Group is located in Elmside Park overlooking Lake Monona. It presently consists of two animal effigy mounds. One has been referred to as a bear, and the other, a lynx (Brown 1922:138-139, Peterson 1979:105). The animals they actually represent is not clear. Both are heading west. The westernmost effigy currently measures 65 ft. (20 m.) x 30 ft. (9 m.) while the eastern effigy measures 80 ft. (24 m.) x 53 ft. (16 m.). They are approximately 60 ft. (18.5 m.) apart. Comparison to early maps indicates that the shape and dimensions of the effigies have been modified by landscaping.

The Elmside mounds are the only surviving members of the Oakridge Mound group which reportedly consisted of two animal effigies, 1 tapering linear (or tailed conical), and 2 conical mounds (Brown 1922, 138-139, Mss. box 22). The linear and conicals have been destroyed by residential development.

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

**VII. Significance**

(1) **Original Owner**  
People of the Late Woodland Stage  
Effigy Mound Tradition

(2) **Original Use**  
Ceremonial and Funerary

(3) **Architect or Builder**  
People of the Late Woodland Stage  
Effigy Mound Tradition

(4) **Architectural Style**  
Not applicable

(5) **Date of Construction**  
ca. 800 - 1100 A.D.

(6) **Indigenous Materials Used**  
Not applicable

(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.

**VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used**

1. Arizigian, Constance. 1986, The Emergence of Horticulture 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.
2. Brown, Charles E., 1922, Lake Monona. The Wisconsin Archeologist. 1 (4): 119-167.
3. Brown, Charles E., n.d., MS, Box 22, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
4. Peterson, Robert, 1979, The Wisconsin Effigy Mounds Project, I. Unpublished report on file, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.
5. Salkin, Philip, 1987, The Late Woodland Stage in Southeastern Wisconsin. Wisconsin Academy Review, pp. 75-79.

**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**  
August 1, 1989

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

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

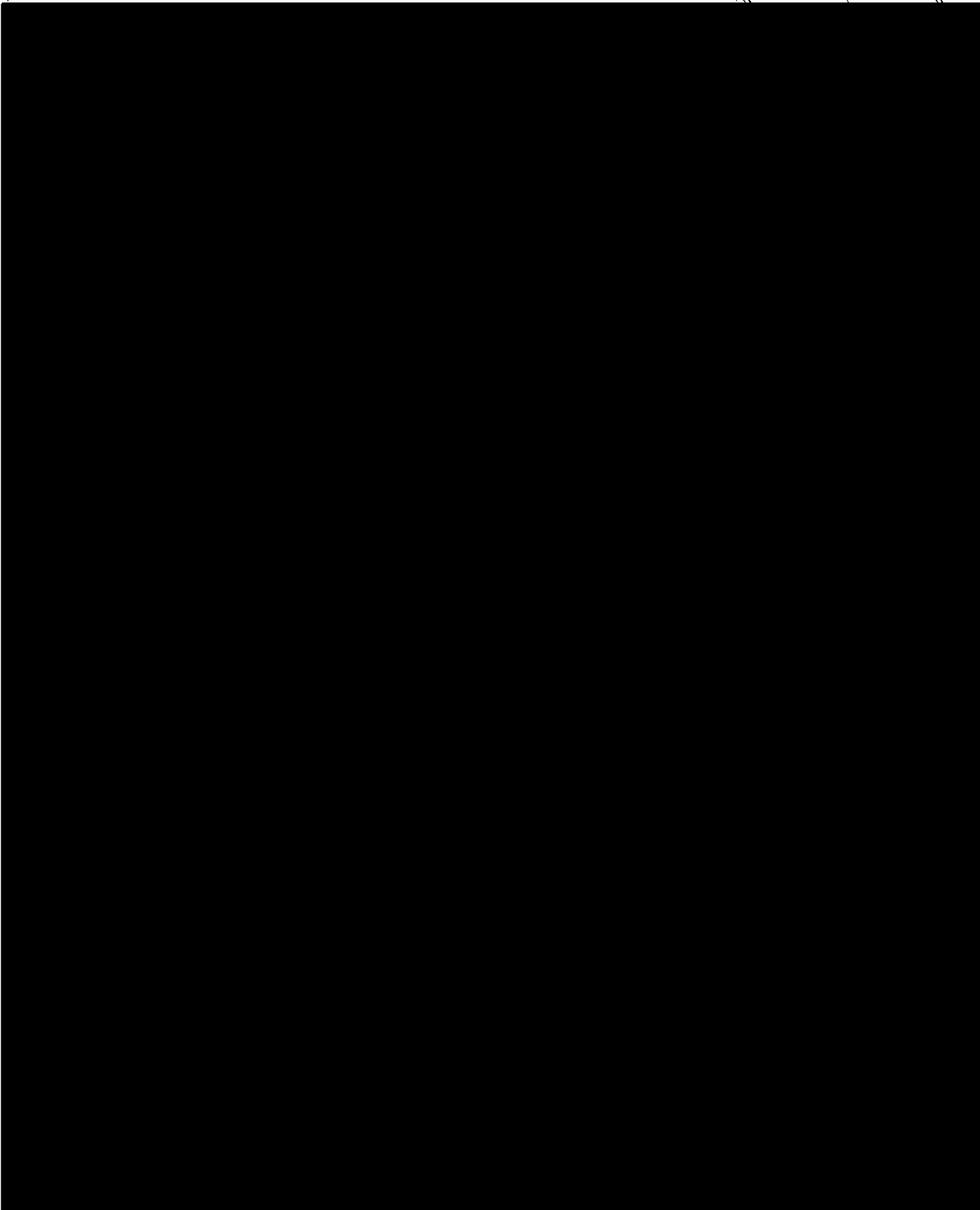
The Elmside Mound Group consists of two well-preserved effigy mounds representative of Late Woodland Stage Effigy Mound Tradition. As such, they have potential to yield significant information on the Late Woodland Stage in south central Wisconsin. The mounds are also significant because they are the last survivors of the Oakridge Mound Group.

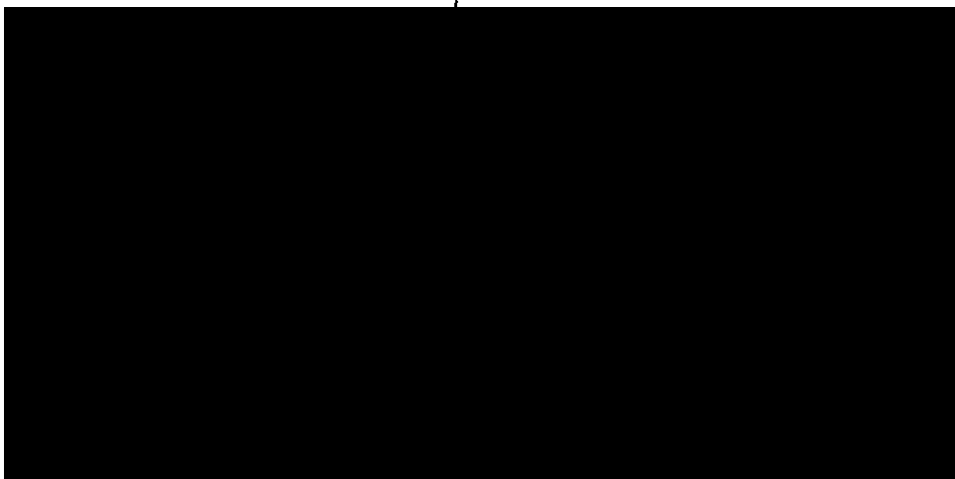
Dane County once contained over 1,000 mounds that are attributable to the Late Woodland stage (Peterson 1979:53-53). This figure includes 289 effigy mounds. Most of these were found in the Madison and Four Lakes area of the county. Approximately 200 mounds including less than 60 effigies remain. The Elmside mounds are the last remaining members of a small Late Woodland effigy mound group that was once situated on the east shore of Lake Monona. Although the exact function and meaning of effigy mound groups is unclear, most archeologists believe that they were built by discrete social groups separated in space and/or time. In this light, the Elmside mounds may contain the only information there is concerning the mortuary and ceremonial activities of a Late Woodland group that lived on or used the northeast shore of Lake Monona. Additionally, the mound has the potential to yield important information on the Late Woodland Stage, in general. 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 (Salvin 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 Late 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. Analysis of the features, artifacts, and interments found in these types of effigies and a comparison of this information to other types of effigies may help further our understanding of the meaning and function of the mounds.



Elmside Mounds looking west (above), looking east (below).

Elmside Mounds.





The Oakridge or Elmside Group as drawn by Charles E. Brown circa 1922.  
Arrows show surviving mounds.



49 DA -10

Four Lakes mounds. N. side of L. Monona.  
On SE SW of 5 and NE NW of 8 - 7-10.  
Dane County, Wisconsin.

Surveyed by J. J. Lewis, Aug. 9, 1888.

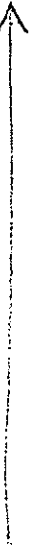
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Scale 1:2000.

MMAS ARCHIVES

30.C.10.6F

of the Minnesota State Archives  
located in the Archives/Manuscripts  
Division of the Minnesota Historical  
Society.



# ELMSIDE PARK MOUNDS

47 DA 560/BDA 269

- MANHOLE COVER
- LARGE OAK TREES
- FIRE HYDRANT
- LARGE ROCK WITH PLAQUE
- DATUM POINTS
- MOUND OUTLINES

10  
5  
F E E T

MAGNETIC  
NORTH

Contour Interval 1 Foot