

The approximate acquisition and rehabilitation cost of \$51,600 was discussed with potential buyers. During this time, the potential buyers included: the City of Madison, Blooming Grove Historical Society, East Madison Jaycees, and Karmenta Health Care Center. In the end, none of the entities selected to purchase the site because of the concern for rehabilitation of the building.

Hiestand School House was designated an official Madison landmark in 1976, but by 1989 it had been boarded up. The current owner of the property operates a Montessori school in the building.

A Larger Park on the Growing East Side

The central feature of the neighborhood is Hiestand Park. Many dedicated individuals worked to expand the park for neighborhood use. Below is a summary of acquisitions that occurred to make the park the showcase it is today.

Radar Hill

The Truax Communications Facility Annex, known locally as Radar Hill, was located on the highest point of Hiestand Park. The site was used for many years by the U.S. Government for operations by the U.S. Air Force at Truax Field, specifically for communication purposes. In 1972, the 8.13-acre site was declared surplus by the federal government. The City Parks Department and Madison Area Technical College submitted competitive applications to acquire the site. The U.S. Government selected the City of Madison to acquire the site for park purposes.

To improve the site for park purposes, the City of Madison adopted a resolution on February 27, 1973 to improve the newly acquired park area. The major objective was to establish a major reservable group picnicking facility utilizing the existing road and building that would help satisfy the lack of such facilities in the eastern and northern quadrants of the City. The improvements included:

- Aesthetic alternations to the existing building's outer face. Total Cost: \$13,000
- Installation of serviceable public restrooms including tie-in to public sewer and partitioning of the building to provide several separate shelter units. Total Cost: \$20,000

The building and site were improved in 1973. Upon completion of the improvements to the newly renovated building, vandals destroyed the shelter prior to its dedication for public use. The park shelter was demolished shortly after the vandalism occurred since it was beyond reasonable repair.

Pfister-Munz Acquisition

The northeast portion of the park was purchased by the City of Madison in 1979. Twenty-seven acres were purchased from the Pfister family and six acres from the Munz family.

Although the Milwaukee Street frontage was designated for an East Side Hospital site, it was never pursued for this type of use. Today Hiestand Parks and Woods comprise 57.8 acres of park and open space.

Tidbits

- Q: Where did the name Hiestand come from?
A: Jacob and Mary Hiestand were settlers who came to Blooming Grove from Ohio in 1850.
- Q: Was Hiestand Park and Woods originally platted as it is today?
A: It was neighborhood leaders and City alderperson (Fred Arnold) working with City and federal officials, private developers, and others to acquire lands that encompass the 57.8 acre park today.