

Regarding: 619 - 625 Henry and 140 - 145 Iota Court – Construct “The Waterfront” a 7-story housing development adjacent to a designated landmark (Psi Chi Lodge) and in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District.
 2nd Ald. District
Contact: J. Randy Bruce
 (Legistar #28348)

Date: November 26, 2012
Prepared By: Amy Scanlon, Preservation Planner

General Information:

The Applicant is requesting to demolish three contributing structures in a National Register Historic District to construct a new development and improve the exterior appearance of two additional buildings. The PUD development parcel/zoning lot is adjacent to a landmark site and therefore, the project must be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission.

Relevant Landmarks Ordinance sections:

- 28.04(3)(n) Any development on a zoning lot adjoining a landmark or landmark site for which Plan Commission or Urban Design Commission review is required shall be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission to determine whether the proposed development is so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjoining landmark or landmark site. Landmark Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission and the Urban Design Commission.
- 28.12(12)(c)1.d. The Plan Commission shall consider the report of the City’s historic preservation planner regarding the historic value of the property as well as any report submitted by the Landmarks Commission.

Background Information:

The character of a neighborhood is guided by its development history which then informs predominant features like building type/use type, architectural style, building spacing, building scale and mass, building materials and dates of construction. These features combine to create a neighborhood with a unique character that is distinct from other neighborhoods. Some neighborhood development histories are more historically or architecturally significant than others.

The Langdon neighborhood has a distinctive character that is based on the development pattern of the area and the architectural trends of the time. The Langdon neighborhood was originally part of the Mansion Hill neighborhood and was home to prominent businessmen and University faculty. As the University population grew, the Langdon area became a popular neighborhood for Greek letter societies and housing for students. These Greek letter societies established chapter houses in existing stately structures or constructed new high-style period revival buildings. Since the University provided only one dormitory for female students, large residences in the area were turned into boarding houses and apartment buildings were constructed. With significant growth in University enrollment, the neighborhood transitioned from a prestigious neighborhood of professionals to a student enclave that is known for its buildings of high-style period revival architectural styles.

In addition to being known for its architecture, the Langdon neighborhood has the following character defining features:

- Irregularly sized blocks along Langdon Street that relate to the waterfront.
- Buildings on small irregularly shaped lots.
- Higher density for historic student and Greek letter society housing.
- Buildings of similar scale and form (typically three stories with traditional form).
- Buildings of similar materials (largely brick and siding).
- Small yards (lot coverage is high).
- Alleys and walkways.

The Landmarks Commission reviewed the demolition notices for 619 and 625 Henry Street and 145 Iota Court on August 13, 2012 (the demolition report from the August 13, 2012 meeting is attached). At that time the Commission provided a recommendation to the Plan Commission that the three buildings have historic value. The motion follows:

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Rummel, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the Landmarks Commission strongly opposes the proposed demolition of three contributing structures in the National Register historic district for many reasons, but most importantly due to the inconsistency with the newly adopted Downtown Plan recommendations 77, 78 and 168 as well as the concern regarding the long term implications of the health of the National Register district as a whole since every demolition request is followed by another. The motion was approved by a voice vote/other.

The historic information describing each building follows:

145 Iota Court

The Craftsman style building was erected in 1912 as the Batchelor Apartments. Its style is marked by a unique Craftsman/Classical style entrance feature and tall parapet with decorative brickwork making it one of the finest large Craftsman style apartment buildings in Madison.

619 North Henry Street

The building was built in 1911 as the Spooner Apartments as designed with Arts and Crafts and Colonial Revival elements by premier Milwaukee architect Alexander C. Eschweiler, FAIA. Eschweiler is considered one of the finest designers to practice in Wisconsin.

625 North Henry Street

Constructed in 1916 as the Sigma Nu Fraternity, the building was designed in the Prairie Style by Alfred Clas of the Milwaukee firm Ferry and Clas.

Plans and programs including the Langdon Street National Register Historic District, the Downtown Plan and the 2006 Comprehensive Plan have been put in place to protect the context and character of the Langdon neighborhood.

The Langdon Neighborhood National Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. The nomination form is linked to Legistar. The National Register nomination states,

“The Greek letter societies along with landlords and developers cashing in on the demand for student housing, demolished or altered most of the older buildings in the district. But, they also erected some distinctive high-style replacements, executed in the

latest period revival architectural styles by some of Madison's best architects. This new construction of Tudor, Georgian, Colonial and Mediterranean revival buildings, alongside the older styles, resulted in an eclectic mix of buildings which distinguishes the Langdon Street historic district from any other area in the city."

The statement above suggests that the buildings built during the period of historic development, between 1900 and 1930, are significant to each other and to the overall character of the neighborhood. While the specific buildings proposed for demolition have individual historic value due to the significance of the architect, architectural style, and early development history, they are most valuable as part of the collection of buildings in the unique context of the Langdon neighborhood.

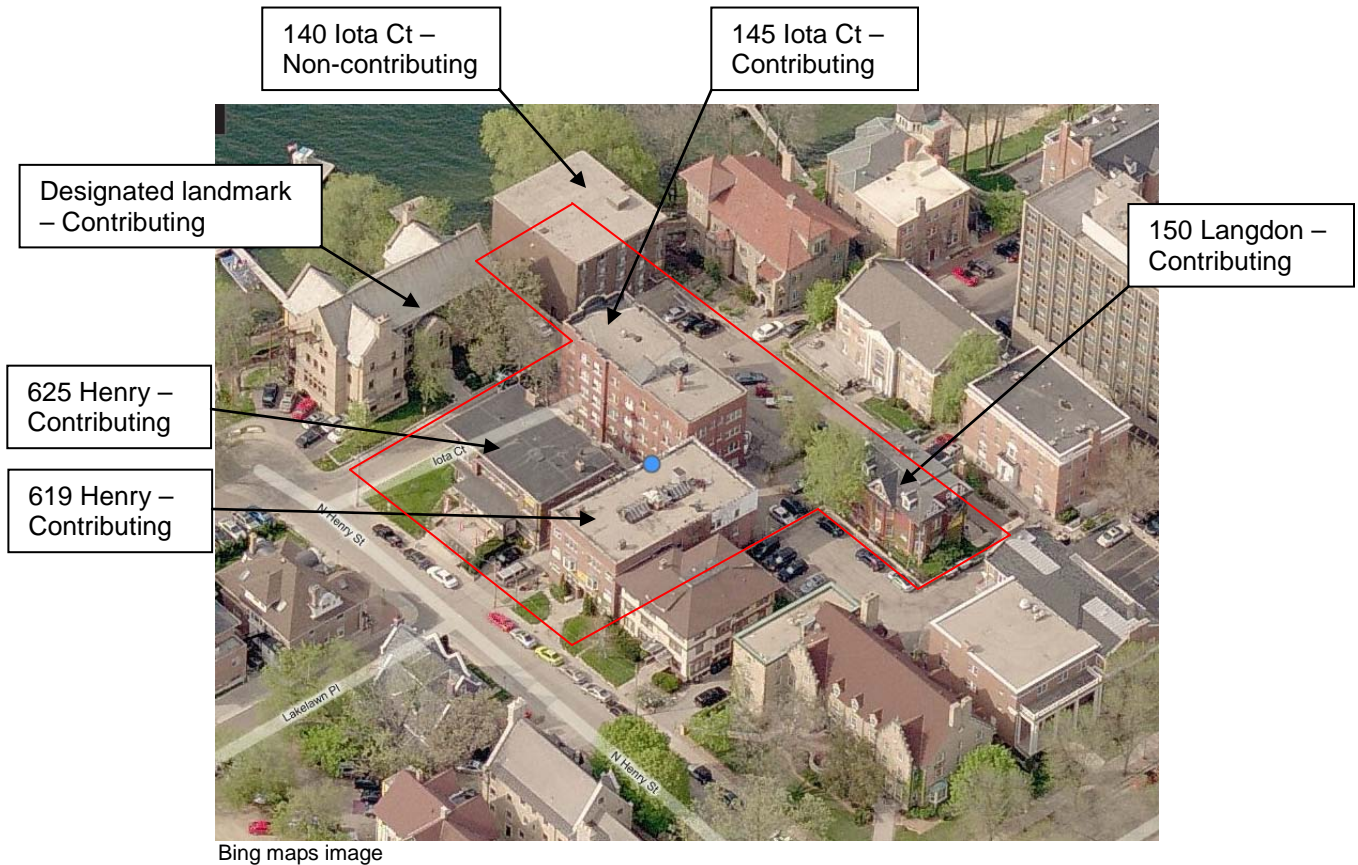
"Despite the fact that streetscapes of similar buildings are rare in this district, there is a continuity of scale, building materials, and form among the contributing structures. Of the 113 total buildings in the district, most are three stories in height (73, or 65%). Only 16 (14%) are over three stories in height, and of these 11 (61%) are post-1950 contemporary high-rise apartment buildings. Only 24 of the 113 buildings (21%) are two stories in height, and there are no single-story buildings, other than the four garages...All of the non-contributing buildings in the area have flat roofs, but only 15 (17%) of the contributing buildings do. Other contributing buildings have either a gable roof (41, 46%), or a hip roof (33, 37%). These statistics illustrate the continuity of scale and form which exists in most of the district, and means that one building does not necessarily dominate any streetscape."

The excerpt above states that the historic district has a continuity of scale and form. The existing buildings that are proposed for demolition relate to this scale and form.

"The distinctive type of housing in the district, and the emphasis on post-1900 construction, sets this neighborhood apart from its surrounding built environment. There are large, institutional buildings of the University of Wisconsin campus bordering the western edge of the district, and a wide, intrusive street (Wisconsin Avenue), with open space and new construction beyond it, borders the district to the east. Lake Mendota, to the north, is an obvious boundary, and to the southwest of the district, bordering lower Langdon Street, are commercial buildings related to Madison's lower State Street business district."

The excerpt above shows that the large buildings, incongruent improvements, and non-typical use patterns are used to define the edges of the historic district.

It should be noted that properties found to be contributing to a National Register Historic District are eligible for tax credits for rehabilitation. This means that if an owner of a building in a National Register Historic District substantially restores or adaptively reuses a property in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, the owner can be eligible for a tax credit on the amount expended on the rehabilitation. The tax credit program is an incentive that has been used by other property owners in this historic district to maintain and rehabilitate their properties. Staff is concerned that the continued loss of contributing structures within the National Register Historic District may result in the future loss of the district thus terminating the tax credit program for all property owners. Of the five existing buildings included in this proposal, four buildings are considered contributing to the district (and would be eligible for tax credits for rehabilitation) and three of those four are proposed for demolition. One building is considered noncontributing.



The recently adopted Downtown Plan features the Langdon area in Key 4: Maintaining Strong Neighborhoods and Districts and in Key 7: Build on Historic Resources. The historic preservation related objectives, recommendations, and discussion points that relate to this redevelopment proposal (on pages 56, 57, 92 and 93 of the draft plan) are listed below:

- *New development must enhance the essential character of the neighborhood and not diminish views of the lake.*
- *This plan recommends that a local historic district be considered to support the National Register designation and clarify the desire to preserve the historic character.*
- *Wholesale redevelopment is not the goal, but a limited amount of new development to replace non-contributing, blighted housing will benefit the area.*
- *Opportunities for implementing these amenities (access to the lake and formalization of pedestrian walkway) should be pursued in conjunction with new development that occurs adjacent to these corridors, but that potential should not be justification for approving new development that is otherwise inconsistent with the recommendations of this plan.*
- *The Langdon neighborhood should build on its history as a traditional student neighborhood, including a concentration of fraternities and sororities. It should continue to accommodate a limited amount of higher-density residential redevelopment on selected sites while maintaining the area's historic and architectural integrity. Preserving and enhancing Langdon Street as the spine of the district will be key. The pedestrian walkway between the lake and Langdon Street should be formalized to enhance its aesthetics and safety and to make stronger connections to the lakefront path.*
- *Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of contributing historic buildings.*
- *Encourage relatively higher-density infill and redevelopment that is compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non-landmark locations and sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District.*

- *Update the Downtown Design Zone standards for the Langdon Street area and incorporate them into the Zoning Ordinance.*
- *Explore financial incentives (such as small cap Tax Increment Finance loans or grants) to rehabilitate landmarks, potential landmarks, and contributing buildings within existing TIF districts, including for rental properties.*
- *Preserve historic buildings and groupings of buildings that contribute to the essential character of Downtown and its neighborhoods.*
- *Establish (later changed to “Consider establishing”) local Historic Districts as identified and as described in this Downtown Plan.*

Excerpts of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan as specifically mentioned in the submission materials are as follows (Please note that the Applicant provided submission materials that should refer to Objective 79 instead of 76):

Objective 75: Promote land use diversification and increases in development densities at selected locations in Madison’s downtown area.

Policy 1: Promote and preserve the downtown’s unique social and cultural character by:

- *Enhancing daytime and nighttime activities;*
- *Providing and maintaining public spaces*
- *for community entertainment, exhibits and public gatherings;*
- *Supporting and enhancing the vitality of the arts and entertainment for diverse ethnic, age, and social groups in the downtown;*
- *Involving a diversity of people in decision - making and planning for downtown arts, cultural and entertainment activities.*

Policy 2: Increase high - quality employment and diverse housing opportunities in the downtown area by identifying appropriate redevelopment and infill sites through the planning process, and facilitating development at these locations.

Policy 3: Facilitate through detailed sub - area planning and incentives, the development of Transit - Oriented Developments at appropriate locations within the downtown area.

Policy 4: Strategically use existing City tools and powers, such as land assembly, eminent domain, tax incremental district financing, and revenue bonding, to help implement downtown reinvestment projects identified through City planning

Objective 79: Increase the amount of housing in the downtown/campus area and provide a variety of housing choices for different household types, sizes, and incomes, including families and lower/middle - income households.

Policy 1: Develop downtown housing as part of vibrant mixed - use neighborhoods that include a range of neighborhood serving retail, service and recreational activities.

Policy 2: Identify and guide new housing to appropriate residential and mixed use development locations in downtown neighborhoods, in the East and South Campus areas, and in the near east, west and south Isthmus neighborhoods that provide significant housing opportunities convenient to the downtown.

Policy 3: Develop and implement strategies to encourage owner - occupied or long - term rental/lease residential properties in established neighborhoods.

Policy 4: Locate a large proportion of housing for University students within walking distance of campus.

Policy 5: Efforts to build additional housing in the downtown/Isthmus area should not result in extensive demolition of quality, existing housing that is perceived by the community to be valuable to the neighborhood.

Policy 6: As housing markets change, foster the rehabilitation and redevelopment needed to ensure a quality - housing environment for all people.

Policy 7: Explore the creation of City programs to rehabilitate historic downtown residential properties.

Additional excerpts of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan that relate to historic preservation issues are as follows:

Objective 34: Guide the processes of preservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment in established City neighborhoods through adoption and implementation of neighborhood plans, special area plans and major project plans consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1: In established neighborhoods identified in the Comprehensive Plan as recommended locations for near - term or longer - term transition to different or more - intensive land uses, prepare and adopt a detailed neighborhood plan that clearly defines the locations where redevelopment, changes in use and/or increased density are recommended, the areas where no significant changes in use or intensity are recommended, and the essential character, scale and design elements that are critical to ensuring that new development is compatible with existing development.

Policy 2: Develop and implement a process for regularly reviewing, evaluating, and updating neighborhood plans to keep the recommendations current.

Policy 3: Changes in established neighborhoods should be carefully planned in collaboration with neighborhood residents, businesses, owners and institutions.

Policy 4: Balance the preferences of residents with City - wide and neighborhood planning objectives and priorities when determining the acceptability of changes to parcels of land in or adjacent to existing residential development.

Policy 5: Adopt regulations and design standards to protect the desired street and block patterns, land use patterns, and development characteristics of the City's established neighborhoods, such as building size and height, building setbacks and placement on the lot, density, parking, landscaping, and streetscape improvements.

Objective 40: Protect Madison's historic structures, districts and neighborhoods and encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance and adaptive reuse of high - quality older buildings.

Policy 1: Continue to enforce existing City regulations, policies and programs that protect Madison's historic structures, districts and neighborhoods and foster the preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of existing buildings.

Objective 41: Maintain a balance between redevelopment and preservation in established neighborhoods that recognizes the general satisfaction of many residents with their neighborhoods as they currently are and focuses redevelopment activity on selected areas and sites within the neighborhood where the objectives of increased density and a wider range of uses will be most supportive of objectives to maintain existing neighborhood character and quality.

Policy 1: Protect residential areas from inappropriate commercial and industrial encroachment by directing those activities to the locations identified in adopted plans.

Policy 2: General locations where a transition into a denser neighborhood or district is appropriate should be identified in the Comprehensive Plan and in detailed neighborhood development plans and other special area plans.

Policy 3: In general, predominantly single - family blocks within established neighborhoods should continue in this use, since significant intensification in these areas could be detrimental to the neighborhood and exceed infrastructure capacities.

Policy 4: In neighborhoods that currently are deficient in neighborhood supporting uses, such as neighborhood activity centers and gathering places, convenience shopping and services, or recreational opportunities, neighborhood plans should explore the interest in these amenities and seek to identify appropriate locations where limited amounts of these additional uses might beneficially be introduced.

Policy 5: Where appropriate, as determined by adopted neighborhood plans, established neighborhoods may be retrofitted with neighborhood - serving civic uses such as parks, recreation centers, library branches, schools, or day care, which offer opportunities for building community, but which do not unnecessarily dislocate viable existing housing stock.

Objective 42: Ensure that new development is compatible with the existing and planned design and development characteristics of the neighborhood and minimize land use conflicts between infill or redevelopment projects and existing neighborhood development.

Policy 1: Infill development or redevelopment in existing neighborhoods should be designed to incorporate or improve upon existing positive qualities such as building proportion and shape, pattern of buildings and yards, building orientation to the street, and building materials and styles.

Policy 2: Recognize that infill development is not inherently “good” simply because it is infill, or higher density because it is higher density. Where increased density is recommended, it is always only one among many community and neighborhood objectives, and other factors such as architectural character and scale (including building height, size, placement and spacing) block and street patterns, landscaping and traffic generation are also important.

Objective 44: Encourage private investment and property maintenance in existing developed areas to prevent property deterioration and promote renovation and rehabilitation.

Policy 1: The City shall continue to offer programs and incentives to property owners to foster the maintenance and enhancement of existing properties.

Policy 2: The City shall continue to enforce applicable property maintenance, building, and zoning codes to minimize the physical deterioration of properties in established neighborhoods.

Policy 3: Building code requirements for the rehabilitation of existing buildings should protect the safety of building occupants, while also recognizing the need for flexibility that comes with rehabilitating existing buildings.

Policy 4: Public and private monies can be used to develop new programs that attract private property owners to redevelop strategic sites.

Objective 51: Protect and enhance features and places within the community that are of architectural and historical significance.

Policy 1: Continue to enforce existing City regulations, policies and programs that protect Madison’s historic structures, districts and neighborhoods and foster the preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of existing buildings.

Policy 2: Existing buildings that add to the vitality of the street and the historic fabric of the City should be preserved or adapted to meet the changing needs of our neighborhoods.

Policy 3: New developments should create harmonious design relationships between older and newer buildings, particularly in older neighborhoods with an established character and buildings of historic or architectural interest and value.

Staff Comments and Recommendations:

In response to the relevant Landmarks Ordinance sections, Staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission advise the Plan Commission and Urban Design Commission on the following issues:

1. The redevelopment proposal does not provide a design that is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood in mass or scale. The architectural style attempts to be compatible with the context, but does not rise to an exceptional quality that could balance the loss of three contributing structures. In addition, the practice of combining lots to create one very large redevelopment site will change the character of the neighborhood. Typically the large buildings, incongruent improvements, and non-typical use patterns physically and visually alter existing contexts. Staff believes the current proposal (The Waterfront) is so large and visually intrusive that it adversely affects the historic character of the existing context and the adjoining landmark site (Psi Chi Lodge). Please review the black and white maps that are attached to this report. These maps show a figure ground study that compares the existing conditions with the proposed conditions of the character of the built environment. The proposed map shows a building footprint that is large and out of character within the context.
2. The Landmarks Commission reviews the historic value of all buildings proposed for demolition based on the criteria for landmark designation and the demolition standards for landmarks or buildings within historic districts. The Downtown Plan recommends that the Langdon neighborhood be considered for local historic district designation and the Landmarks Commission has indicated an interest in following this recommendation. Due to the two statements above, Staff suggests that this proposal be reviewed with knowledge of the demolition standards. The Landmarks Ordinance states (Sec 33.19(5)(c)3. Standards):
“In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for any demolition, the Landmarks Commission shall consider and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
 - a. *Whether the building or structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State;*
 - b. *Whether the building or structure, although not itself a landmark building, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the District as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State;*
 - c. *Whether demolition of the subject property would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this chapter as set forth in Sec. 33.19 and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable district as duly adopted by the Common Council;*
 - d. *Whether the building or structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and/or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense;*
 - e. *Whether retention of the building or structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history,*

architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage;

- f. Whether the building or structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve or restore it, provided that any hardship or difficulty claimed by the owner which is self-created or which is the result of any failure to maintain the property in good repair cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness;*
- g. Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the buildings and environment of the district in which the subject property is located.”*

The proposal does not demonstrate that there is any structural deficiency in the existing buildings that would warrant the need for demolition or the need to stray from the recommendations in the recently adopted Downtown Plan or the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Exterior restoration, window repair, roofing, painting, energy efficiency retrofits, structural repairs and upgrades, interior finishes and fixtures, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing system upgrades would be considered eligible projects for the tax credit program which would assist with the rehabilitation of the existing buildings.

- 3. The redevelopment proposal is in direct conflict with numerous historic preservation related recommendations in the Downtown Plan, the Comprehensive Plan, and PUD and Design Zone standards. All recommendations and standards in adopted plans apply to this property – not only the sections on bonus stories and increased density. Each PUD application must be carefully evaluated against the standards for approval. In this case, the loss of three contributing structures is not balanced by the proposed design of the development (The Waterfront). Detailed information about the restoration of 150 Langdon had not been submitted for review at the time of the preparation of this report. Staff believes that the rehabilitation of the 150 Langdon structure would not mitigate the loss of the three contributing buildings and the effect of the mass and scale of the proposed development on the prevailing development pattern in this area.
- 4. The submission materials state that the new development will allow for significant energy efficient upgrades that will include “sustainable design opportunities and green roof systems for stormwater filtration/pre-treatment”. Sustainable design principles consistently strive to minimize waste including demolition waste. The restoration and reuse of an existing building is the most effective way to realize a sustainable design. All existing buildings can be made more energy efficient.
- 5. Because they are integral to the development of the historic Langdon neighborhood, the three buildings proposed for demolition are most valuable as part of the larger collection of buildings in context. Without these buildings, the character of the Langdon neighborhood is diminished and the historic context is eroded. The buildings proposed for demolition have individual historic value based on historic development pattern, architectural style, and being the work of master architects.

0 130 260 Feet

1 inch = 133 feet

Existing



0 130 260 Feet

1 inch = 133 feet
Proposed



Regarding: **Buildings Proposed for Demolition - 2012
(Legistar #25183)**

Date: August 13, 2012
Prepared By: Amy Scanlon, Preservation Planner

145 Iota Court, 619 and 625 North Henry

145 Iota Ct. is a 33 unit apartment building, constructed in 1912 as the Batchelor Apartments.
619 N. Henry is an 8 unit apartment building, constructed in 1911 as the Spooner Apartments.
625 N. Henry is a 17 unit apartment building, constructed in 1916 as the Sigma Nu Fraternity.



Google maps image

625

619

145



145

625

619

Bing maps image



Assessor photo (approximately 15 years old) 145 Iota Court



Assessor photo (approximately 15 years old) 619 North Henry



Assessor photo (approximately 15 years old) 625 North Henry

Applicant: Randy Bruce, Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC

Applicant's Comments: The development shall include the deconstruction of 3 buildings to make room for a single student housing structure.

Staff findings for buildings proposed for demolition in this development: The reports of former Preservation Planner, Kitty Rankin, prepared in 2008, are attached to this report. All buildings are contributing structures in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District. The Downtown Plan (Recommendation 168) recommends that the historic properties in the Langdon Neighborhood be inventoried and that a local historic district be considered for the area that would be generally coterminous with the National Register historic district. When the NR nomination was written in 1985, there were 89 contributing structures and 113 total structures in the area. Since 1985, some structures have been demolished. As contributing structures continue to be destroyed, there is the possibility that at some point the State Historic Preservation Office could request that the National Register historic district be removed due to the loss of contributing buildings. This would remove the tax credit incentive for all properties in the area and result in a drastic change in the historic neighborhood.

816 Christianson

Single family residence, constructed in 1964.

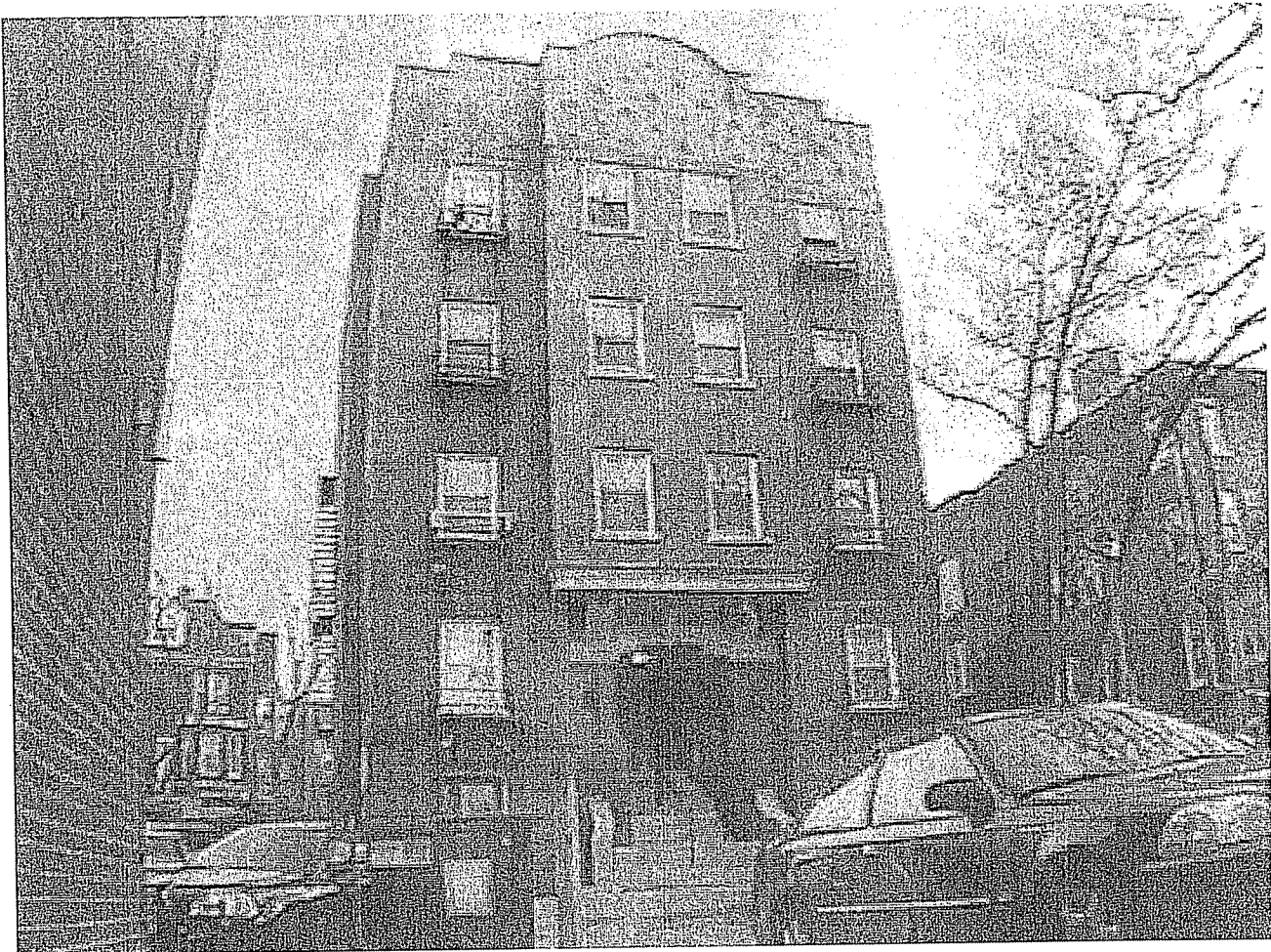


Assessor photo (approximately 15 years old)

Applicant: Scott Kerr

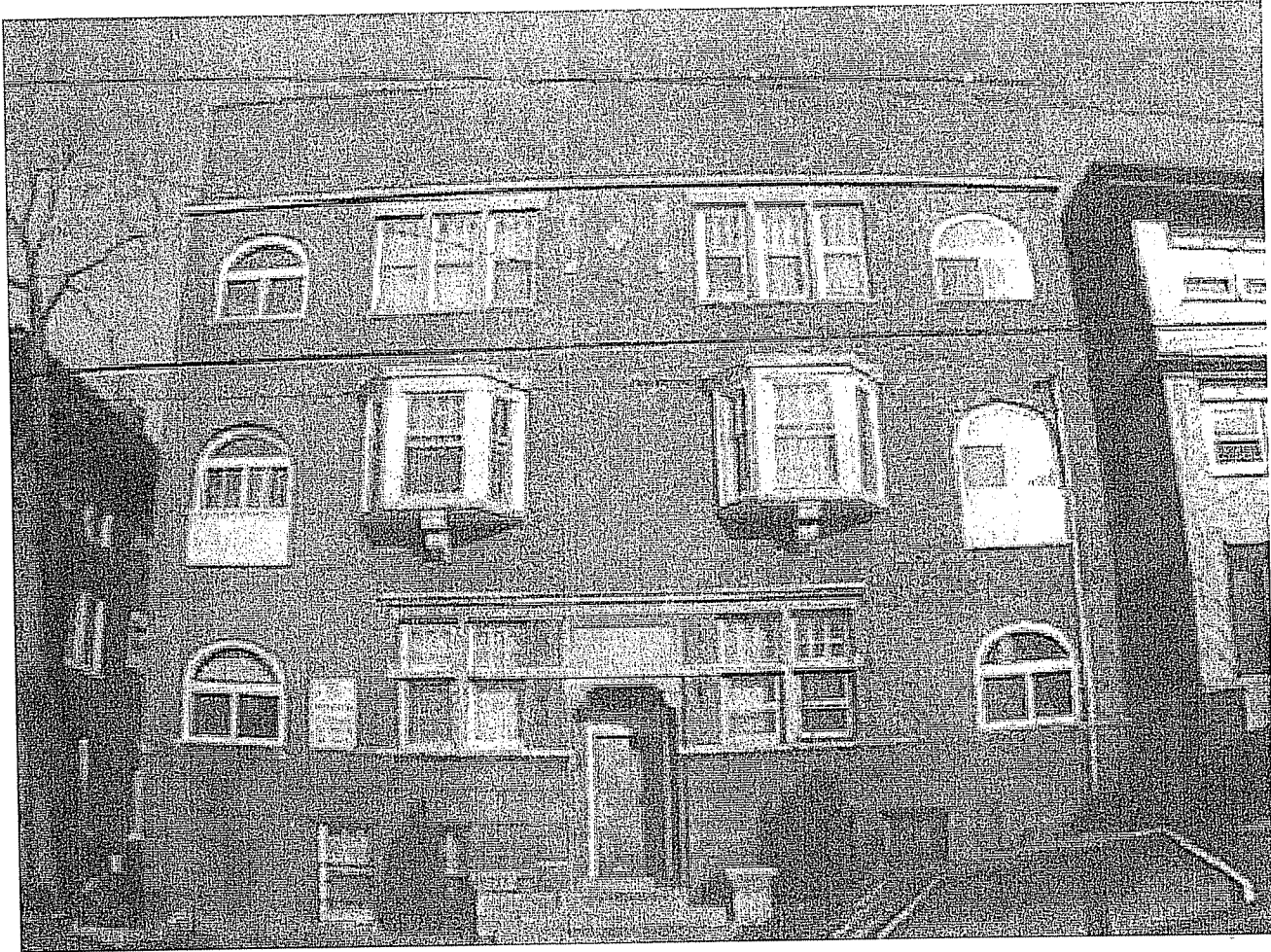
Applicant's Comments: Pipe burst while the home was vacant, over 100,000 cubic feet of water passed through the meter flooding the house. Mold has taken over the building and it has deteriorated to the point that restoration is no longer possible.

Staff findings: A preservation file does not exist for this property.



145 Iota Court

This large four-and-one-half-story brick building is proposed for demolition for a multiple story residential building. The Craftsman style building was erected in 1912 as the Batchelor Apartments. It has a unique Craftsman/Classical style entrance feature and the tall parapet with its decorative brickwork is also unusual. It is identified in the draft styles document of the comprehensive survey as one of the finest large Craftsman style apartment buildings remaining in Madison. It is considered a contributing element in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District.



619 N. Henry Street

A brick three-and-one-half story Colonial Revival eight-unit residential building proposed for demolition for a large, multi-story residential building. The building has interesting Arts and Crafts elements and was built in 1911 as the Spooner Apartments. It was designed by premier Milwaukee architect Alexander C. Eschweiler, FAIA (1865-1940), one of the finest designers to ever practice in Wisconsin. Other buildings by Eschweiler remaining in Madison include the Chi Psi Lodge around the corner at 150 Iota Court, the Main House across Henry Street at 622 N. Henry, the Scott house at 520 N. Pinckney Street and St. Francis House at 1001 University Avenue. All of these buildings are architecturally significant. This building is listed as a contributing resource in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District. In the draft styles report of our comprehensive survey, it is listed as one of the best examples of the Colonial Revival.

625 N. Henry Street

This three-and-one-half story brown brick building was built as the Sigma Nu Fraternity in 1916. It is proposed for demolition for a multi-story residential building.

Except for infill of porches, which detracts from the overall design of the building, Sigma Nu appears to look very much like it did when it was photographed for a booklet of UW Greek Societies in 1921. The architect for Sigma Nu was Alfred Clas of Milwaukee. His firm, Ferry and Clas, was a close second to Alexander Eschweiler for the finest designers in Milwaukee in their day. The practice of Ferry and Clas was multi-faceted. Their residential, civic and landscape designs were particularly renowned. In Madison they designed such diverse buildings at the State Historical Society, Smith Hall on the UW Campus, the Olin House in University Heights and the Brittingham Boathouse.

Alfred Clas also participated actively in the development of the Milwaukee and Madison parks systems, including the Brittingham Park Boathouse. Their designs tended toward the classical and monumental; as an example, Clas design Wacker Drive in Chicago. Even though Sigma Nu was a rare venture in the Prairie style for the firm, they handled its execution with grace.

The Sigma Nu Fraternity is identified as a contributing element in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District. It is recognized in the draft styles report for the Madison comprehensive survey as one of the finest examples of a large prairie style residential building remaining in Madison.

