



Project Name & Address: 425 N Frances Street

Application Type: Demolition Historic Value Review

Legistar File ID # [90465](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: November 5, 2025

Summary

Relevant Ordinance Section:

28.185(7) Review for Historic Value. Every application for demolition or removal of a principal structure shall be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission, which shall provide input to the Building Inspection Division regarding the historic value of the property with the building or structure proposed for demolition or removal.

- (a) If the Landmarks Commission determines that the property with the proposed demolition or the structure proposed for removal has no known historic value, the demolition or removal may be approved administratively under sub. (8)(b) below, provided that at least one of the standards for administrative approval have been met.
- (b) If the Landmarks Commission determines that the property with the proposed demolition or the structure proposed for removal has historic value, then the Plan Commission shall approve the demolition or removal under sub. (9) below, after considering input from the Landmarks Commission.
- (c) Nothing in this subsection eliminates the requirement in MGO Secs. [41.09](#)(1)(c) and [41.12](#)(3) that the demolition of landmark structures or structures in historic districts must also be approved by the Landmarks Commission through the issuance of a Certificate of Approval.

41.28 HISTORIC VALUE ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION

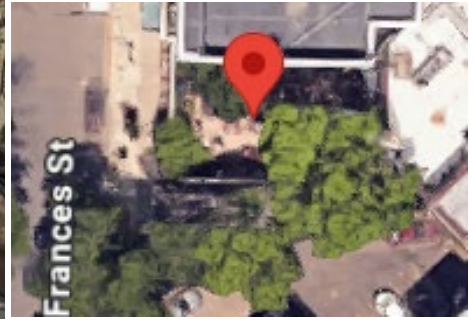
- (1) Review for Historic Value. Following a review of MGO Sec. 28.185 applications for demolition by the Landmarks Commission and based upon application materials, and a report by the City's Preservation Planner, and any public testimony, the Commission shall review [MGO Sec. 28.185](#) applications for demolition and assign one of the following Categories to each principal building proposed for demolition:
 - (a) Category A Demolitions: denotes that the Landmarks Commission finds that the building has historic value based on architectural significance, cultural significance, historic significance, as the work/product of an architect of note, its status as a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and/or as an intact or rare example of a certain architectural style or method of construction.
 - (b) Category B Demolitions: denotes that the Landmarks Commission finds that the building has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, cultural practices, or as the work/product of an architect of note, but the building itself is not historically, architecturally or culturally significant.
 - (c) Category C Demolitions: denotes that the Landmarks Commission finds that the building has no known historic value. This category may also denote sites or properties that have historic value, and the significance will not be negatively impacted by the removal of the building itself. This category may also include sites or properties that have archaeological or other site findings of significance, but where removal of the building itself will have no impact.
- (2) Presence of Archaeology. When applicable, each finding shall also note the presence of an archaeological or burial site on the site of the building proposed for demolition.

425 N Frances Street

Commercial building constructed in 1925



Google Streetview of Frances storefront



Google Earth



Google Streetview of Gilman storefront

Applicant: Brian Munson, Vandewalle & Associates

Applicant's Comments: Pending demolition request as part of the redevelopment of the site. Demolition of the existing buildings would be undertaken early 2026 with any reusable materials diverted from the landfill per the reuse & recycling plan.

Staff Findings: There is no preservation file, but there is a State site file. The building was designed by James R Law and Edward J Law and constructed in 1925 and housed the George E Leonard Store. This is a simple commercial building typical of the early 20th century with minor decorative elements that frame the upper windows of the street façade and a dentiled cornice. While this is the work of noted local architects, this is not one of their more distinctive buildings in Madison. As such, this building does not appear to be architecturally significant and there are no known significant historic associations. There is no previously identified archaeology on this property.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends a finding of (c) no known historic value.