



In response to the invitation from the City of Madison Arts Commission, Spatula&Barcode propose a project that explores and values the past and present of the occupants and visitors of the 400 block of Gilman Street.

Contents:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
SOME WORKING TITLES.....	3
ABOUT SPATULA&BARCODE	3
OUR PROPOSAL (Project Concept and Rationale).....	3
Possible Events, Weekly and Concluding	4
Preparation for the event	6
OPEN QUESTIONS	7
BUDGET.....	8
DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION.....	9
SITE SURVEY DATA.....	10
West side (in order from University Avenue to State Street)	10
East Side (in order from State Street to University Avenue)	10
CONTEMPORARY SITE SURVEY	11
HISTORICAL SITE SURVEY	17

AUGUST HAAK Cash Grocer



461 W. Gilman St. Phone 699 Madison, Wis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We propose a summer-long (or longer) series of events and experiences, each centered on a building or enterprise located on the 400 block of West Gilman Street, with the aim of connecting occupants and passers-by in conversations about the value of place. Each event, about one each week, will be developed in collaboration with occupants. If feasible, the project may culminate with a block festival and/or an exhibit of historical and present images and reflections.

SOME WORKING TITLES

400&
Summer of Gilman
Celebrating Gilman Street
What's Eating Gilman Street?
What Does Gilman Street Mean to You?

ABOUT SPATULA&BARCODE

Spatula&Barcode is a Madison-based arts collaborative founded by Laurie Beth Clark and Michael Peterson. Since 2008, we have been creating projects devoted to commensality, conviviality, and criticality. Our “social practice” projects have taken place in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa. At least once a year, we try to make something happen in Wisconsin. You can learn more about our work at <https://www.spatulaandbarcode.art/>

OUR PROPOSAL (Project Concept and Rationale)

What does it mean to value a place? If you're there for a long time, it may be “home”; if you are just passing through, you might not notice it. Our proposal seeks to connect the past and the fleeting present of the 400 block of West Gilman Street to encourage multiple stakeholders to value this historic yet mundane place.

Anyone, whether they are an entrepreneurial businessperson, new property owner, short-term resident (such as a student), or even someone taking a shortcut from University Avenue to State Street, can be encouraged to recognize and value the past, present, and future life—or lives—of a city block.

There are roughly a dozen buildings on each side of the street, depending on how one counts the corner buildings. Of these 25 buildings, ten are now purely residential, while the remainder are either commercial or mixed use. Four of the buildings open onto other streets, leaving roughly ten businesses.

Possible Events, Weekly and Concluding

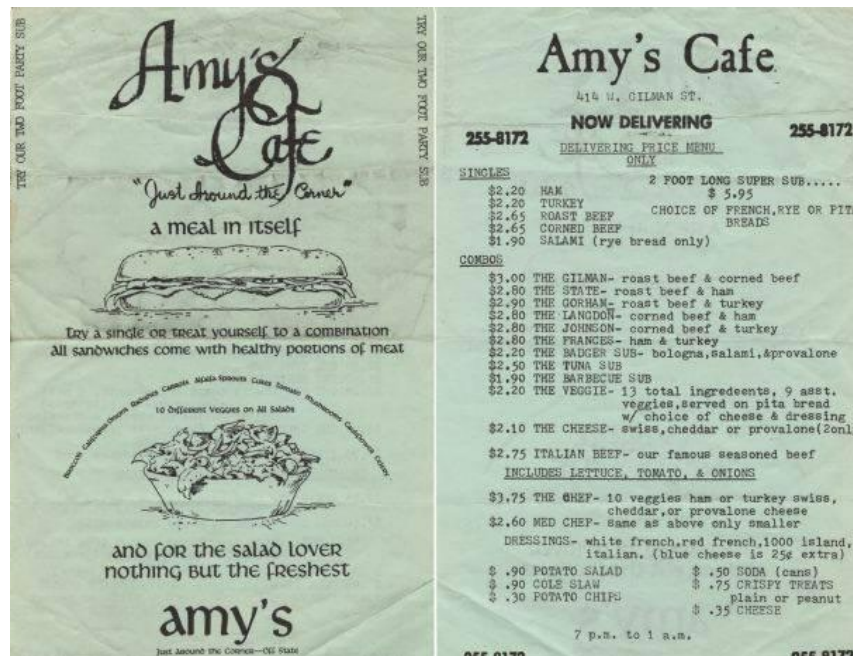
We propose to devote one day this summer to each of the buildings that currently or in the recent past have housed businesses. While our focus here is on the commercial properties, which is what we think can be reasonably addressed within the timeframe and budget, we could also consider adding events for each of the residential buildings if the project were to be extended into the fall--perhaps something to coincide with the start of fall leases and/or the new semester at UW.



Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative's store cat Harvey Goldberg, just before the store's closure in 2016.
<https://tonemadison.com/articles/rainbow-bookstore-closing-its-doors/>

We will work with current and past occupants to devise the specific nature of each moment of celebration. For example, we might engage former manager Marsha Rummel in a conversation about [Rainbow Bookstore](#), a cooperative that occupied the storefront at 426 West Gilman for over 25 years until its closure in 2016. We might offer a tasting menu from Chin Up, a restaurant featuring lesser-known street foods from China that opened in 2024 at #461, which in the early 1900s housed the grocery depicted on the cover of this application. We might showcase the work of former resident [Grimm's book bindery](#) in a small exhibition, commission artists to offer temporary (henna) tattoos outside the [Blue Lotus Tattoo](#) parlor, or host an outdoor film screening with [Four Star Video](#). We're interested to talk with the proprietors about how trendy urban barbershop [Magico](#) might deepen its engagement with folks on the sidewalk. And so on.

While each event will be unique, all events will have in common that we bring some aspect of the business (or residence) out onto the sidewalk in order to engage the public. Each event will be developed in collaboration with current and past occupants, in ways that will offer benefits to both the public and the business owner. We will use some of the budget to compensate business for supplies and services. However, we will also ask businesses to match these funds with in-kind contributions. For example, we might work with [Paul's Pelmeni](#) to serve free dumplings for a few hours one evening. That evening might also include a celebration of the historic Amy's Café, which occupied the same building at #414 for nearly 40 years until it closed in 2015.



https://www.reddit.com/r/VintageMenus/comments/1arkhvn/amys_cafe_414_w_gilman_st_in_madison_wi_circa/#lightbox

We will host roughly one event per week, each unique to the location spread through July and August (using June for planning and preparation and September for documentation).

All events will be recognizably branded with a logo created to celebrate Gilman Street. This will appear on a farmer's market-style canopy, which will both mark the project as it moves up and down the street and provide shelter from sun and rain. Logoed banners, signage, and flyers/posters at participating businesses will create visibility on the street for current and upcoming events. Since all Spatula&Barcode events involve both food and gifts, we will be serving homemade cookies at every event that is not

associated with a restaurant, and we will devise a small giveaway (something on the scale of a wristband, tote bag, or keyring) that also celebrates the block.

At each event, we will interview the public (as well as the business owners) about what Gilman Street means to them, what they see as its challenges and affordances, and what (if anything) needs to be done to improve its outlook and image. This content will be edited (next fall) into a podcast or radio program. As we are finding interesting historical visuals of Gilman Street (some shared at the end of this document, we are also considering compiling a book and/or website to showcase this content.

We'd also like to consider some kind of all-block event at the end of the project; this might be a few hours on a Sunday afternoon where we try to produce as much buzzing activity on the sidewalks as possible, or something more like a traditional street fair, but incorporating our themes and materials developed during the process. A related culminating idea, which might overlap or coincide with the above event, would be a hybrid exhibition showcasing historical materials with images and words from the present. This could be on a single site such as a parking lot, or distributed along the facades, lobbies, and business interiors.

Preparation for the event

Below, we list some of the current and former residents based on our own daily knowledge and observation during two walk-throughs and a photo survey of the block. However, it is our intention to research the block in depth through a combination of oral histories and archival investigations.

In a typical project, we would have already enlisted the participation of at least some if not all of the potential collaborators. This would have allowed us to list in the application actual rather than hypothetical in kind contributions. Given the short turnaround time for this invitation, we have conducted only preliminary research into potential partners.

OPEN QUESTIONS

This proposal has necessarily been developed quickly, and we have identified several elements of the lives of the block as open questions that we might engage with block occupants and city stakeholders.

- We have not explicitly addressed the interests or involvement of property-owners/landlords, and it seems potentially valuable though not strictly necessary to do so.
- We think it might be possible to involve the Alderperson representing the area, as well as business groups such as the Greater State Street Business Association.
- At different times of day/days of the week, one encounters folks who do not appear to be residents, workers, customers, or even to be passing through. “Hanging out” is an activity that happens in various styles and locations around downtown Madison. It can seem dysfunctional in some cases, or like a part of a culturally vibrant city culture. This block has little formal infrastructure for pro-social “hanging out,” and this project might reflect on how the built environment and the activities of occupants might adapt to further promote a welcoming, safe, and inclusive “vibe”.
- Several facades on the block are the back doors of apartment buildings and businesses on Frances or State Street. The occupants and users of these buildings are also stakeholders and potential participants. We have especially noticed kitchen and service workers for whom the block is part of their “break space.”

BUDGET

Artist fees \$6000

- \$1000 June/project development (\$500 per person = \$25 per hour x 20)
- \$2000 July/project execution (\$1000 per person = \$25 per hour x 40)
- \$2000 August/project execution (\$1000 per person = \$25 per hour x 40)
- \$1000 September/project development (\$500 per person = \$25 per hour x 20)

Project expenses \$4000

- Printing & Construction Supplies: \$1000
- Food and Service Purchases from Gilman Street businesses: \$3000

Cash Contributions

- \$2500, through research funds awarded us by the University of Wisconsin, to be paid to a graduate student assistant who will work 100 hours @ \$25 per hour on development, execution, and especially documentation and evaluation of the project

In-kind Contributions

- Artist labor: \$6000 - match to artist fees
- Donations of labor and products from local business (anticipated but not yet secured): \$4000
- Studio space provided by University of Wisconsin: \$1000/month X three months

How we calculated the value of our time:

- \$25 per hour is what we currently pay our studio assistants (according to this [living wage calculator](#), slightly above the \$22.18 for single adults without children).
- Our In-Kind: At the University of Wisconsin, our wages might be calculated at \$50-\$100 per hour if dividing an annual salary into a 40-hour work week during the school year. We have used the lower of these figures to determine a value for our in-kind contribution, matching the payment we are asking from the city.

DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

As “social practice” artists, we consider documentation a key professional practice, but it is important that the document not be mistaken for the work itself, which is made up of human interaction. For this project, documentation is likely to include lots of photography and textual records of interactions. We might also involve audio and/or video, although that can sometimes hinder as much as it helps. Throughout, we will gather responses from people on the street--their impressions of the block, their thoughts on its history and present life. At the project’s conclusion, we will survey participating occupants about their experiences and how their view of the block has changed.

As artists, our primary metric is public engagement. If we are able to successfully realize the project for an interested group of participants, it means that they felt *intrigued* by what we were doing, *interested* in the topic as they explored it, *involved* in how that exploration occurred, and in some way *energized* or *empowered* by their experiences.

That said, we have collaborated with many entities--museums, professional organizations, research institutes, farmers’ markets, universities, etc.--and we always strive to understand our collaborators’ values and their understanding of success. In the call for proposals, the Madison Arts Commission lists the following metrics:

- Improvement in pedestrian counts and behaviors
- Improvement in public perception of the site
- Reduction in Police Calls for Service
- Increased public/private investment
- Reduction in vacancies
- Growth in business activity
- Increase in positive community events

While we believe that our proposal is in alignment with these metrics, as artists we are not in a position to calculate pedestrian counts, police calls for service, investment, vacancy rates, or business activity. We will have to rely on your expertise for these measures but would welcome the participation of stakeholder representatives in an evaluation process. We are also happy to be evaluated by a team of local “experts” which might include other artists, stakeholders, city officials, or members of the public. We are open to suggestions for other documentation and evaluation methods.

SITE SURVEY DATA

West side (in order from University Avenue to State Street)

- (Poke It Up)
- 458 West Gilman: [Blue Lotus Tattoo & The Piercing Lounge](#)
- 454 West Gilman: formerly [Grimm Book Bindery](#), [now apartments](#)
- 450 West Gilman - Residential
- 446 West Gilman - Formerly [Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative](#), now residential and commercial but not public-facing
- 438 West Gilman - back side of a giant residential complex that opens onto Frances Street
- 430 West Gilman: [Haven](#) and Blue Velvet Lounge (closed)
- Backside of residential building that opens to Frances Street or University Avenue
- 426 West Gilman: [Facial Collective](#)
- 414 West Gilman: [Paul's Pelmeni](#)
- (Stop & Shop)

East Side (in order from State Street to University Avenue)

- (Kung Fu Tea and Tropic Jewel Bead Store)
- 411 West Gilman: [FuGu Asian](#)
- 415 West Gilman: [Master Hall Apartments](#)
- 421 West Gilman - old house
- Parking lot
- 433 West Gilman - [Stratford Atrium Apartments](#)
- 439-443 West Gilman - Apartments
- 445 West Gilman - [Victoria Apartments](#)
- 447 West Gilman:: [Magico Barber Shop](#)
- 453 West Gilman: [Cheba Hut "Toasted" Subs](#)
- 459 West Gilman: Campus Tailor Alteration
- 459 West Gilman: [Four Star Video](#)
- 461 West Gilman Chin Up Restaurant
- (Bill's Key Shop and Locksmith Service)

(Businesses in parentheses do not have an address on Gilman Street but could be included in an expanded project).

CONTEMPORARY SITE SURVEY



Source: WROC Aerial Imagery
<https://geodata.wisc.edu/catalog/7166496e-cedc-11eb-b8bc-0242ac130003>



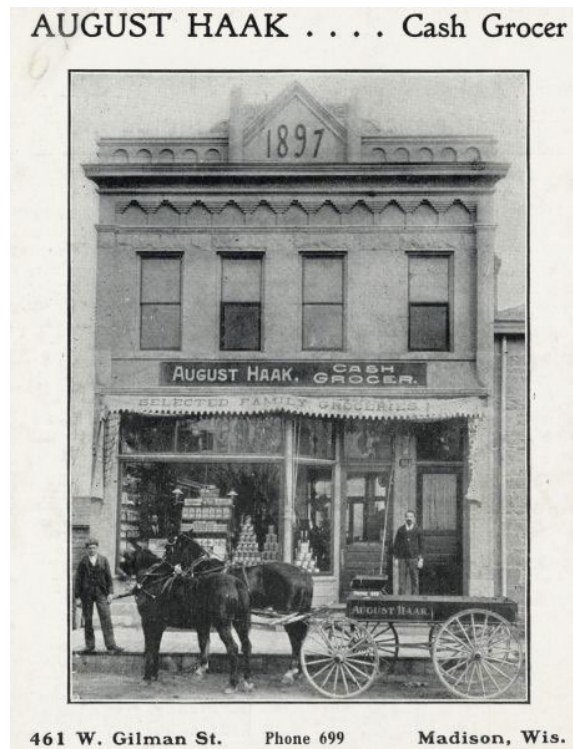








HISTORICAL SITE SURVEY



Circa 1901
Caption reads: "August Haak Cash Grocer" and "461 W. Gilman St. Phone 699 Madison, Wis."
The awning has a sign that reads: "Selected Family Groceries."
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM43844>



1974 (Vinje, Arthur M.)
Exterior view of the same brick building at 461 West Gilman Street, which has the date it was built, 1897,
displayed prominently on the front.
[Chin Up, a well-regarded Chinese street food restaurant, currently occupies the ground floor.]

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM13119>



1945 (Potter, James T.)

Wolff-Kubly & Hirsig Hardware Store, 401 West Gilman Street, at the corner of State Street.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM36236>



1953 (McVicar, Angus B.)

Wolff-Kubly & Hirsig, State Street at 401 West Gilman Street, display window featuring "Builder's Hardware," including door knobs, hinges and drawer handles.



1928 (McVicar, Angus B.)
Vecto Store Window at night at 422 W. Gilman Street, at the American Radiator Company.
G.N. Boucher, Vecto Dealer.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM21662>



1928 (McVicar, Angus B.)
Interior of Vecto Store, located at 422 West Gilman Street. Included in the view are American Radiator Company furnaces, hot water heaters, and a woman sitting at a typewriter.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM21661>



1928 (McVicar, Angus B.) Grimm Book Bindery at 454 W. Gilman Street.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM21867>



1947 (Vinje, Arthur M.)
 The bar at Schwoeglers Bowling Alley, 437 West Gilman Street
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM48534>



1944 (McKillop)

Exterior view of Madison News Agency, 446 West Gilman Street. Coronet magazine poster is in one of the windows.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM13323>



Office interior of the Madison News Agency, 446 West Gilman Street, taken from entrance. Employees are sitting in the room, and in the background a group of men and children are standing and sitting.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM13517>



1943 (McVicar, Angus B.)
Slightly elevated view of the Madison News Agency, 446 West Gilman Street, work room with six workers sorting periodicals. An office is in the background.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM13516>



1943
Madison News Agency, 446 West Gilman Street, office interior with room on left showing a man at a desk, and the room on the right showing two women at a desk with an adding machine.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM13538>



1930 (McVicar, Angus B.)
 Interior of Ludlow Radio Co., 448 W. Gilman Street
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM20028>



1974 (Potter, James)
 Exterior view of Master Hall at 415 West Gilman Street.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM36239>



1935 (Vinje, Arthur M.)
Four new Cadillac automobiles in Pyramid Motor Company showroom, 434 W. Gilman Street.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM36664>



1945 (Vinje, Arthur)
Interior view of the Pyramid Motor Company, 434 West Gilman Street. They were a Cadillac and Oldsmobile automobile dealer.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM43844>



1947 (Vinje, Arthur M.)
 Parts counter and stockroom at Pyramid Motor Company, 434 West Gilman Street
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM47437>



1955 (Vinje, Arthur M.)
 A "grease monkey" stands underneath an automobile at the Pyramid Motor Co., 434 W. Gilman Street.
<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM109836>



1954 (Vinje, Arthur M.)

Four salesmen pose near an Oldsmobile car inside the showroom at the Pyramid Motor Company at 434 West Gilman Street.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM89783>



1944 (Vinje, Arthur M.)

Pyramid Motors mechanic Wells "Slim" Kleinfeldt turning an "under cutting," a starting motor armature, in the service shop at 434 West Gilman Street.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM38274>



1950 (Vinje, Arthur M.)

Portrait of Calvin Beverly, age 40, of 807 Mound Street. Beverly was one of seven employees of the Pyramid Motor Company, located at 434 West Gilman Street, who was injured in the fire and explosion at the company that shattered a downstairs window and rocked adjacent buildings. Mr. Beverly suffered first and second degree burns on the head and hands and was released after treatment at Methodist Hospital.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM64356>



1957 (Stein, Edwin)

Coroner Michael Malloy standing inside the blast-damaged Pyramid Motors garage at 434 West Gilman street and pointing at a paint can and hot plate that caused the explosion. The blast killed business owner Leroy Banks, 33, of 1836 Baird Street. The incident was witnessed by his wife, Ollie, and two young sons. Ollie Banks and John O'Connor suffered burns during a rescue attempt.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM138623>



1959 (Stein, Edwin)

A reproduction of a 1901 Oldsmobile at Pyramid Motor Company, 434 West Gilman Street. It is owned by Sears Roebuck and Company and is part of an open house sponsored by the Madison Automobile Association.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM142086>



1950 (Vinje, Arthur M.)

Spectators watch as black smoke pours from the burning second floor of the Pyramid Motor Company at 434 West Gilman Street after a gas tank explosion that shattered a downstairs window and rocked adjacent buildings. The explosion and fire injured seven employees.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM64347>



1950 (Dieckmann, June.)

State Journal photographer Arthur M. Vinje, camera in hand, arrives at the scene of the fire at the Pyramid Motor Company, 434 West Gilman Street, to take pictures only to discover that it was the gasoline tank of his car that exploded in the fire. The explosion shattered a downstairs window and rocked adjacent buildings and injured seven employees.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM64351>



1937 (Waste, Elwin G.)

The Smart Motor Company dealership located at 437 West Gilman Street, designed by Harry Alford. Signs in the show windows read: "Willys" and "Hupmobile."