



Project Name & Address: Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse Landmark Nomination Amendment
619 W Mifflin Street

Application Type(s): Review of local landmark nomination amendment, boundary adjustment

Legistar File ID # [85181](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: October 1, 2024

Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject site contains one parcel with underlying unresolved lot lines. The boundary amendment aligns with a proposed reconfiguration of the lots through a Certified Survey Map process.

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.07 DESIGNATING LANDMARKS.

- (1) Designation. The Common Council, after considering the recommendation of the Landmarks Commission under sub. (5) below, may designate a landmark according to this section.
- (2) Standards. A site, improvement, or site with improvements may be designated as a landmark if the proposed landmark meets any of the following:
 - (a) It is associated with broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community.
 - (b) It is associated with the lives of important persons or with important event(s) in national, state or local history.
 - (c) It has important archaeological or anthropological significance.
 - (d) It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable as representative of a period, style, or method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
 - (e) It is representative of the work of a master builder, designer or architect.
- (3) Nomination. Any person may nominate a site, improvement, or site with improvements for designation as a landmark. The person shall submit the nomination to the City Planning Division, to the attention of the Preservation Planner, on a nomination form approved by the Landmarks Commission. The nomination shall clearly identify the proposed landmark, landmark site, and document why it qualifies under sub. (2). The Preservation Planner may ask the person to submit additional information and documentation as needed to complete or clarify the nomination. When the Preservation Planner determines that the nomination is complete, the Preservation Planner shall refer the nomination to the Landmarks Commission.
- (4) Landmarks Commission Review and Public Hearing. Whenever the Landmarks Commission receives a complete, accurate nomination under sub. (3), the Commission shall review the nomination. As part of its review, the Commission shall publish a hearing notice according to Sec. 41.06 and hold a public hearing on the nomination. The Commission may also conduct its own investigation of the facts, as it deems necessary.
- (5) Landmarks Commission Action. After the Landmarks Commission holds a public hearing and completes its review under sub. (4), the Commission shall report to the Common Council a recommendation supporting or opposing the proposed landmark designation. The Commission

- may recommend landmark designation subject to terms and conditions that are consistent with this chapter. The Commission shall send a notice of the recommendation to each owner of record of each lot on which the proposed landmark is located at least ten (10) days before any meeting at which the Common Council may act on the Commission's recommendation.
- (6) Common Council Action. After considering the Landmarks Commission's report recommendation under sub. (5), and based on the standards under sub. (2), the Common Council shall vote to designate or decline to designate the property as a landmark. The City Clerk shall promptly notify the Building Inspector and the City Assessor of each landmark designation. The City Clerk shall record the designation with the Dane County Register of Deeds at the City's expense.
 - (7) Voluntary Supplemental Restrictions. The Common Council may at any time supplement the terms of a landmark designation, pursuant to an agreement between the landmark owner and the Landmarks Commission, to enhance the preservation and protection of the landmark.
 - (8) Recognition of Landmarks. Whenever the Common Council designates a landmark under sub. (6), the Landmarks Commission shall affix a plaque identifying the property as a landmark to the landmark or landmark site. The plaque shall be placed so that it is easily visible to passing pedestrians. In the case of a landmark structure, the plaque shall include the accepted name of the landmark, the date of its construction, and other information that the Landmarks Commission considers appropriate. In the case of a landmark that is not a structure, the plaque shall include the common name of the landmark and other information that the Commission considers appropriate. If the Commission determines that because the landmark is ecologically or culturally sensitive a plaque would be inappropriate, no plaque is required. No person may remove or modify a plaque without approval of the Preservation Planner.
 - (9) Amending a Landmark Designation. Any person may petition the Landmarks Commission to amend a Landmark Designation. The process for amending a landmark shall be the same as for designating a landmark under subsections (1)-(7) above.

Analysis and Conclusion

The property at 619 W Mifflin Street was designated a Madison Landmark in 1989. A proposal before the City currently would reconfigure the lot to exclude adjacent new construction. Previous lot reconfigurations of landmark sites did not also include an amendment to the landmark nomination to reflect a boundary adjustment, which has resulted in challenges in correctly administering the preservation ordinance. When the preservation ordinance was updated in 2015, it included a new provision to amend landmark nominations to address new information when it became available and to provide for boundary adjustments. To date, no landmark nomination has proceeded through the amendment process.

The current proposed landmark amendment was prepared by staff to ensure that any new lot configuration would accurately align with the landmark site boundary in order to ensure enforcement of the preservation ordinance for this property. The nomination process allows for staff to prepare nominations and the Landmarks Commission has previously asked for staff to explore staff-written nominations as seen in other communities. As there is no precedent for how to go about a boundary amendment, staff proceeded with the nomination in order to set the precedent for the style of nomination for a boundary amendment to the landmark site.

In gathering information for the history of the lot configurations, the Preservation Planner found that there were some discrepancies in the documentation of the property in the approved landmark nomination. The boundary adjustment then served as an excellent opportunity to correct those errors and provide additional history of the evolution of this site. The previous documentation made a successful case for areas of significance.

MGO 41.07(9) Amending a Landmark Designation.

This standard allows for any person to file a landmark amendment, which must comply with all of the standards of approval for a landmark designation. The amendment would supplement the existing designation. A denial of the amendment would not impact the existing landmark designation. There is no proposed change to the areas of significance. The nomination supplies additional information, updated photographs of the building and site, and a proposed new landmark site boundary that matches the proposed new lot configuration.

MGO 41.07(5) Landmarks Commission Action: "...the Commission shall report to the Common Council a recommendation supporting or opposing the proposed landmark designation. The Commission may recommend landmark designation subject to terms and conditions that are consistent with this chapter."

The Landmarks Commission is a referring entity for landmark nominations. The role of the Commission is to review the proposed nomination and decide if the nomination makes a successful case in relation to the criteria in the Ordinance. The Commission's recommendation is made to the Common Council, who will make a final determination on if the nomination meets the criteria for designation as a Madison landmark. The Commission should make specific findings for their recommendation of approval or denial. The Commission may recommend changes to the draft nomination.

Additional Considerations

The Historic Preservation Ordinance encourages the adaptive reuse of historic structures for new and ongoing uses with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to guide that process, namely the following standards:

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Integration of the historic resource into the proposed larger redevelopment of this site would also align with the policy and purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, namely MGO 41.01:

- (2) Ensure that the City's growth sensitively incorporates the City's historic resources.
- (6) Recognize that the city's historic resources are economic assets that can attract residents and visitors, create jobs, stabilize and improve property values, and stimulate business and industry.
- (8) Promote the use of and investment in historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the City.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance guides reinvestment in our historic places as they adapt for new and ongoing uses.

Recommendation

Staff believes the standards for amending the designation of the property as a Madison landmark are met recommends the Landmarks Commission refer the nomination to Common Council for designation as proposed.