

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 2/15/21

TITLE: Buildings Proposed for Demolition - 2021

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 2/17/21

ID NUMBER: 63346

Members present were: Anna Andrzejewski, Katie Kaliszewski, David McLean, and Maurice Taylor. Excused were Richard Arnesen, Betty Banks, and Arvina Martin.

SUMMARY:

Christopher Gosch, registering in support and wishing to speak

Jason Iverson, registering in support and wishing to speak

Brian Munson, registering in support and wishing to speak

Alex Saloutos, registering neither in support nor in opposition and wishing to speak

Jeffrey Zelisko, registering in support and wishing to speak

Randy Christianson, registering in support and available to answer questions

Kevin Burow, registering in support and available to answer questions

David Diamond, registering in support and available to answer questions

Mark Goehausen, registering neither in support nor in opposition and available to answer questions

Bruce Bosben, registering in support and available to answer questions

Also present: Alder Verveer, District 4

Bailey discussed the Landmarks Commission's role in the demolition review process. She explained that the Landmarks Commission makes an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission about the historic value of the buildings proposed for demolition. The Plan Commission then decides how to incorporate that recommendation into the rest of the standards they use to review a project. She said that the Landmarks Commission reviews information on each property that primarily comes from the City's preservation files, but could also come from the Wisconsin Historical Society or National Register nominations. Andrzejewski pointed out that the Landmarks Commission has guidance from their policy manual on demolition reviews, but not from the ordinance. Kaliszewski asked if people who have further concerns about the proposed demolitions should write to the Plan Commission directly. Bailey confirmed they should and explained that the Landmarks Commission is one avenue where properties are publicly reviewed, but the focus is on a property's historic value. She said that if people have other concerns, the Plan Commission is the ultimate decider that looks at all facets of a proposed demolition and any related developments. Andrzejewski asked about the Urban Design Commission's role, and Bailey said that they are involved if a project is within an Urban Design District or the Downtown Core, so the Landmarks Commission's recommendations also go to the Urban Design Commission as applicable.

Bailey said that staff recommends a finding of no known historic value for the buildings at 2822 Milwaukee Street, 3758 E Washington Avenue, and 2649 East Springs Drive as there are no preservation files or Wisconsin Historical Society site files for the properties.

A motion was made by Kaliszewski, seconded by McLean, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the buildings at 2822 Milwaukee Street, 3758 E Washington Avenue, and 2649 East Springs Drive have no known historic value. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Bailey said that the properties at 322 W Johnson Street, 315 W Gorham Street, 317 W Gorham Street, and 341 State Street were part of one project, and the site is being proposed for redevelopment for student housing. She said that the three properties at 322 W Johnson Street, 315 W Gorham Street, and 317 W Gorham Street were determined to be contributing to the proposed State Street National Register Historic District, which was proposed in the 1990s. Because there was majority owner objection, the district did not proceed to designation; however, it was determined to be eligible to the National Register. She said that the three properties were constructed in the mid-1920s and were originally used for automotive sales and service. The buildings are all varieties of revival-style architecture, which she said spoke to what was happening in the auto industry at the time. In the 1920s, automobiles were still fairly new, so revival architecture was used as a link to heritage and respectability. After this period, we see a shift in building designs to be more streamlined and modern to reflect what they were selling cutting edge technology. She said that the revival-style of these buildings is fascinating as commercial architecture. She said that the building at 341 State Street was constructed later, in the 1980s, and was identified in the Underrepresented Communities Historic Resources Survey as being significant to the LGBTQ community. She said that the building housed the Wisconsin Student Association Community Pharmacy, which engaged in significant education and outreach during the AIDS pandemic in the 1980s-90s.

Brian Munson referenced the letter he sent to the commission and explained that the project team is looking to integrate the façades of 322 W Johnson, 315 W Gorham, and 317 W Gorham into the project. He explained that it is early on in the process, but they are excited about the ability to return to retail uses on the street level and having that tie to the architecture of the site by integrating the existing façades into the project. Jeff Zelisko pointed out that the project team has integrated historic façades in other projects like the Hub and the James, where he thinks one can see the care and delicacy that went into that process, and they intend to do the same for this project.

Alex Saloutos suggested that staff include recommendations for the demolition review findings in the demolition report, and the public should have a historic structure report for the buildings as well. He said that he appreciates the willingness of the project team to integrate the façades and suggested the commission recommend that the façades be refurbished or renovated to the Secretary of the Interior standards. He said there should also either be a historic easement or the façades should be landmarked. Andrzejewski said that for demolition reviews, the commission arrives at their conclusion during the meeting and doesn't look to staff in the same way as for other projects. Kaliszewski thanked Saloutos for the comments and suggested he submit a public comment to the Plan Commission, who has the ultimate decision in how the project moves forward.

McLean said that it is a shame to see the buildings at 322 W Johnson, 315 W Gorham, and 317 W Gorham go because they are somewhat iconic in that part of the city. He said that it is encouraging to hear that the developer sees value in these façades, and he appreciated that they intend to keep them. He said that the buildings were a unique design for automotive structures, and they have stood the test of time on the exterior. He pointed out that the automotive presence has disappeared from downtown Madison, and while these buildings are no longer auto shops, they are the remnants that have survived. He suggested the buildings fit under the Landmarks Commission's demolition criterion "c."

Kaliszewski agreed they fit demolition criterion "c." She said that the buildings were found to be contributing to a potential National Register Historic District, and that district has been determined eligible, so we know the buildings have historic value for their contributing status to the proposed State Street National Register Historic District. She said that it was important to acknowledge this in their comments to the Plan Commission and suggested they include the report that determined the State Street National Register was eligible. Andrzejewski asked what year the State Street National Register Historic District was proposed and whether there are

updates to the proposal. Bailey said she thought it was proposed around 1998, and a couple of years ago the current State Historic Preservation Officer informally made an assessment that the district still held together as a potential National Register Historic District. Bailey said that the City's 2012 Downtown Plan also looked at a potential State Street commercial district with the same boundaries as the National Register district. Andrzejewski suggested they try to find more recent documentation if it exists, and Bailey said she would ask the State Historic Preservation Office.

Taylor said that he was leaning toward demolition criterion "b" because he didn't think the buildings quite met criterion "c," though he understood other commissioners' reasoning.

Bailey added that the building at 315 W Gorham was also a music venue in the 1960s called The Factory, where some famous acts performed and where Otis Redding had been scheduled to perform the day he died.

Andrzejewski agreed that the three buildings in question met demolition criterion "c" based on what they know about the potential State Street National Register Historic District.

A motion was made by Kaliszewski, seconded by McLean, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the buildings at 322 W Johnson Street, 315 W Gorham Street, and 317 W Gorham Street have historic value based on architectural significance due to their revival style commercial architecture, and historic significance due to their early automotive sales history, and their status as contributing structures in an eligible National Register Historic District.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: 3 - Anna Andrzejewski, Katie Kaliszewski, and David McLean

Noes: 1 - Maurice Taylor

Excused: 3 - Richard Arnesen, Betty Banks, and Arvina Martin

Commissioner Taylor recommended that the structures did not rise to the high level of significance and recommended a finding that the structures had value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, but the buildings themselves were not historically, architecturally or culturally significant.

Andrzejewski continued discussion of 341 State Street, which was identified as significant in the Underrepresented Communities Survey, which is part of the Historic Preservation Plan. Kaliszewski said she thought it fell between demolition criterion "b" and "c." She thought they should place value on the findings of the Underrepresented Communities Survey because it sounds like an important place in local LGBTQ history; however, she could understand the argument of not finding that it meets criterion "c." She said that with her background as a preservationist, she tends to follow the 40-50 year rule to consider something historically significant. McLean agreed and asked if the 50-year rule applied for culturally significant resources. Bailey said there is no age requirement for local landmark designations, and the survey did recommend this property as being eligible as a local landmark. Andrzejewski agreed that she wanted to support the Underrepresented Communities Survey, and it was difficult to recommend against it, but she also thought it was in the "b" or "c" range. Taylor said he thought it fit criterion "a" given the age of the building; it didn't rise to the level of having historic significance for him, but he shared respect for the Underrepresented Communities Survey and the significance of the building for the LGBTQ community. McLean suggested they attach the Underrepresented Communities Survey entry to the report for the Plan Commission.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Kaliszewski, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 341 State Street has historic value related to the cultural history of the LGBTQ community in Madison, but the building itself is not architecturally significant at this point in time. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Bailey provided background information on the buildings at 313 S Henry Street, 315 S Henry Street, 321 S Henry Street, 145 W Wilson Street, 147 W Wilson Street, 149 W Wilson Street, and 151 W Wilson Street. She said that 151 W Wilson was identified as an eligible landmark in the 1998 Downtown Preservation Plan. The Madison Trust for Historic Preservation nominated 151 W Wilson as a landmark in 2008 and withdrew the

nomination in 2009. She said that part of the nomination called out character-defining fluted porch columns, which were removed.

Alex Saloutos said that he was neutral on the historic value of these properties, but he would like to see more information on the properties including a staff report with recommendations on the historic value.

Ald. Verveer said that he represented this district when the landmark nomination for 151 W Wilson was created and withdrawn, and he knows that the property owner put the fluted porch columns safely in storage. Bruce Bosben, property owner, confirmed the porch columns are in storage. He said they were in poor condition and were removed because of a Building Inspection order that found the railings were too low and the porches unsafe. He said they intended to repair the columns, but ultimately decided to remove them and put in storage in case they were ever needed. He said that he remembered the columns being gone before the landmark nomination was completed and wanted to make it clear that he didn't remove the columns because the property was nominated. Andrzejewski said this is an interesting point of historic preservation butting against Building Inspection and safety concerns, which happens all the time and speaks to the fact that historic preservation is a balancing act. Bosben added that the nomination had asserted that the property was unusual in its intact vernacular 3-flat Queen Anne style. He said that at that time, he had presented several examples of other intact 3-flats to the Landmarks Commission. He said that the nomination was heard at great length with hours of testimony, so the nomination was not withdrawn before the condition had been discussed.

A motion was made by Kaliszewski, seconded by Taylor, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 147 W Wilson Street has no known historic value. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Regarding 313 S Henry Street, 315 S Henry Street, 321 S Henry Street, 145 W Wilson Street, 149 W Wilson Street, and 151 W Wilson Street, Kaliszewski said that they are nice vernacular buildings, and it is sad to see these kinds of houses being rapidly demolished across the isthmus. She pointed out that most of the buildings seem to have been altered and none appear to have any historical, architectural, or cultural significance at this time, though they may have at one point before any alterations. Andrzejewski agreed and said that it is unfortunate to see the loss of so much of the city's historic fabric from this period of time, especially in a group like this. She said that it is like a part of Madison's history is being cut out. She said they are significant as a vernacular grouping, but in terms of individual significance, there are other 3-flats in Madison with higher levels of integrity than 151 W Wilson. McLean said he was surprised no one has discussed 149 W Wilson, which has a good shape and hasn't been altered much. He referenced the staff report and pointed out that George Sayle had a hand in early Madison developments in the public sector as a mayor and his involvement in other civic activities, which is significant to the early years of the city.

A motion was made by Kaliszewski, seconded by Taylor, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the buildings at 313 S Henry Street, 315 S Henry Street, 321 S Henry Street, 145 W Wilson Street, 149 W Wilson Street, and 151 W Wilson Street have historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, but the buildings themselves are not historically, architecturally or culturally significant. 149 W Wilson Street also has associations with George Sayle, Jr. who was influential in early the 20th century development of Madison. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Bailey discussed the property at 216 S Hamilton Street, which the Landmarks Commission previously reviewed on October 14, 2019 and made the recommendation that the property was architecturally and historically significant and was a rare remaining resource due to its age, as it was constructed in 1853 and still retained a great deal of historic integrity. She said that in January 2020, the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation supplied an additional report, which recommended this property was eligible as a local landmark under criterion A, association with the settlement and development patterns during the Farwell boom (1846-1856) and criterion D because it embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an 1850s gabled-ell structure. She explained that the applicants have provided updated information on the property and are requesting that the commission provide a new advisory recommendation on the property.

Christopher Gosch said that the existing structure has been modified over the years and changed from a single-family home to a commercial use in 1952, so the structure has lost a significant amount of context. He referenced the report the applicants submitted, which differs from the Madison Trust's report in terms of context. He pointed out that the property is in a designated redevelopment zone and has been reviewed a number of times over the years but never landmarked. He said that he understands it is old, but downtown has changed and single-family homes are not allowed in the current zoning district. He said the developers have had a number of neighborhood meetings, and no one has objected to the demolition. He said the interior of the house has been significantly altered, and the owners are committed to salvaging as many of those materials as possible. He said that the original owner of the house, Gabriel Bjornson, had an untoward history and held pro-slavery views during the Civil War.

Jason Iverson, property owner, referenced the interior walkthrough of the building they submitted to assess any value it may have left. He said they purchased the building in 2016 and have done what they can to keep it from deteriorating further, but there isn't a lot of historic context left. He said that Deconstruction Inc., an architectural salvage company, thought the interior staircase and stained glass were valuable. He said that it is unfortunate there is so little historic context left in the building, but it is the reality. Andrzejewski said that the commission generally doesn't look at the interior of properties.

McLean suggested demolition criterion "b" because of the vernacular architecture, and there may be some cultural significance as well. He referenced the Madison Trust's report, which concluded the property met two of the seven aspects of historic integrity according to National Register criteria and two of the five standards for local landmark eligibility, primarily due to alterations of the exterior materials. He said that it would be a shame to lose the building, especially in this setting as everything grows around it.

Taylor said that with the building alterations discussed by the applicants as well as the pro-slavery history of the original inhabitant, he thinks demolition criterion "a" is more appropriate, a finding of no known historic value. Bailey clarified that the Madison Trust report was not making an argument for the original owner, Bjornson, being significant; she acknowledged that he is a problematic person. She explained that the significance was about the property being representative of the mid-19th century building boom and its eligibility as a local landmark due to its age and architectural type, being representative of 1850s Gabled-Ell structures. The significance is not related to the person who first lived there.

Andrzejewski said that she reluctantly agreed on demolition criterion "b" because of the building's age and the physical form still conveys its significance as a vernacular form from the 1850s, despite the changes. She said that there are not a lot of surviving buildings from that period, and it does speak to the vernacular context of the city of Madison.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Kaliszewski, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 216 S Hamilton Street has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, but the building itself is not historically, architecturally or culturally significant. The building is representative of 1850s Gabled-Ell structures, which are increasingly rare in Madison.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: 3 - Anna Andrzejewski, Katie Kaliszewski, and David McLean

Noes: 1 - Maurice Taylor

Excused: 3 - Richard Arnesen, Betty Banks, and Arvina Martin

Bailey referenced the staff report submitted to the Plan Commission in January regarding the demolition of the parking structure at 100 N Hamilton Street. She said that she recommended that the parking structure has no historic value. She explained that the log cabin on top of the parking structure is a historic resource that will be relocated and reinstalled when they complete the exterior play area at the Madison Children's Museum.

ACTION:

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