

Fredrick Sauthoff/ R. Richard Wagner Residence  
739 Jenifer Street  
Prepared for the Madison Landmarks Commission  
Gary Tipler  
June 8, 2026

I believe that the proposal to demolish historic sections of the Madison Landmark at 739 Jenifer Street is a decision that needs to be revisited. The historic brick rear wing and a brick addition are important to the interpretation of the history of the house and its occupants. The house is significant for its early German immigrant history, and its association with the Frederick Sauthoff family and for its more recent resident, R. Richard "Dick" Wagner.

Wagner was a leader in the LGBTQ movement state-wide, a leader in the civic works the Plan Commission and Landmarks Commission, a founder of the Historic Madison, Inc., of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc., the LGBT Alumni Association, and New Harvest Foundation, which funded LGBTQ organizations, arts and projects. He held fundraisers for political candidates and community efforts at his home and served on the board of the Olbrich Botanical Gardens. He was a mentor in politics for Tammy Baldwin, David Clarenbach and many others when they were considering their early efforts.

According to the standard, could the history of the house be represented without the rear wing of the house? It is where Dick Wagner's kitchen and his upstairs study were located important, where he did much of his work on the community groups and city commissions and where he wrote his groundbreaking books, *"We've Been Here All Along"* and *"Coming Out and Moving Forward"*, published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Wagner's homes were listed in the Underrepresented Communities, a historic preservation planning study commissioned by the City of Madison. In his books, he discussed and illustrated the history of Keith McCutcheon and Joe Koberstein who lived there in the 1930s through 1960s, and were at the center of a gay social circle in that area. As such, 739 Jenifer Street has been an important place in Madison's history as a safe gathering place for gay men, beginning in the 1930s.

In addition, if this were to be reviewed by State and federal officials per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties for eligibility under the tax credit program of the National Park Service, I believe it would not meet the standard in the removal of a historic original section of the house and its original locally-made brick.

The photos below identify the west wall of the rear wing in its original position offset from the house by a brick width, and which has only slightly revised in repairs. It has its original shed roof, blank wall as

does the 1870s side wing of the brick house to the west. The vermillion-colored brick in all visible parts of the rear wing and the brick addition was made in John George Ott's brick yard, which was located on East Wilson Street until 1873 when the last of the brick was used in the construction of Ott's Landmarked house across the street at 754 Jenifer Street. This clearly places the brick addition to the rear wing by 1873. The foundation of the west wall of the rear wing is exposed at the rear corner, and is a match to the brick foundation seen in the circa 1870s image of the street side of the house.

The rear wing was originally built two windows wide as is seen on the rear. A less expensive means of building lintels was employed, and a limestone sill for the east addition to the rear wing was installed. Would this be the Prairie du Chien limestone used in the State Capitol in the 1860s?

Rear wings on substantial houses of this kind were common. Even in frame houses, the kitchen wing was generally smaller and built to divert kitchen fires from taking the rest of the house. A photo shows that the width of the wing was expanded to be placed at or near the east wall of the house.

On the west wall, the brick is slightly different color and finish due to it being reversed when the wall was rebuilt for structural reasons, according to previous owner Dick Wagner's tenant of 40-some years. This gave the brick a more fresh and smoother finish because it had not been worn by time. That is when the square window was installed.

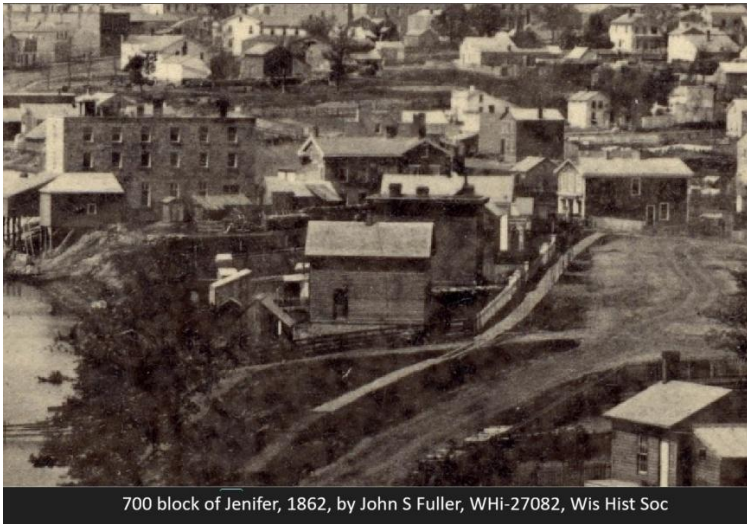
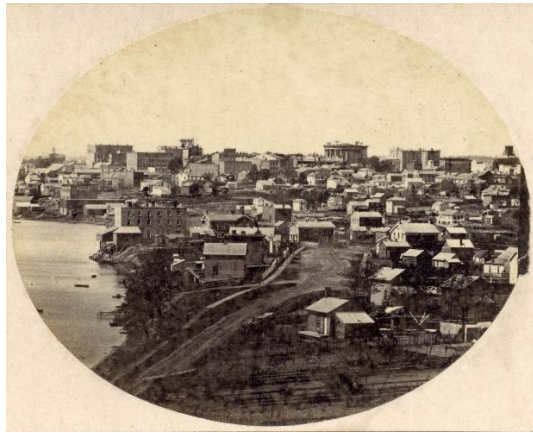
The history of the house is on-going.

R. Richard "Dick" Wagner bought the house in 1981 on land contract and died in 2021 as had just sold it and was planning his move. His story is essential, too.

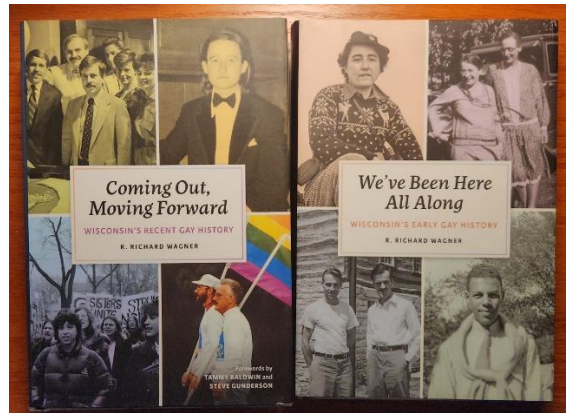
A more thorough evaluation based on the facts of the building's history should be reconsidered. Thank you for your consideration.

Gary Tipler  
Madison

PHOTOS below



700 block of Jenifer, 1862, by John S Fuller, WHI-27082, Wis Hist Soc



Landmarks Commission  
Meeting of June 8, 2026  
Legistar #60576, Agenda #1

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Landmarks Commission voted to approve a new addition to 739 Jenifer. This new addition requires demolition of about 30% of the brick home. This 30% has been referred to as an "addition."

The Commission did not review whether the 30% was, in whole or in part, an addition or whether the 30% was an original part of the house. Perhaps that was due to the fact that the record lacks evidence supporting the assertion that the 30% is an addition. The Letter of Intent merely speaks to a "clear visual distinction where the mismatched bricks meet the original house" and "the simple shed roof." As noted in the 8/25 staff report, the original roof for the entire building was a flat, or shed, roof. While the easterly "clear visual distinction" is due to a seam, a similar seam can be seen in the photo of the rear, perhaps indicating that just this corner is an addition. To the extent that any addition was constructed, such addition was constructed prior to 1892 per Sanborn maps.



Applicant's 5/2026 submittal titled "East Elevation Lakeside of Late-Brick Addition"



Applicant's 8/2025 submittal titled "Rear Elevation (no corresponding photo in 5/26 materials)"

The applicant's 5/26 materials appear to show a corresponding seam on the west side of the building. That apparent seam is actually just an offset, and the color of the brick matches the front portion.



Applicant's 5/2026 submittal titled "West Elevation of Late-Brick Addition"

Courtesy, Gary Tipler

The Commission did not discuss whether the 30% has historical significance. Historical significance is discussed in detail below. However, a few key points are:

- The nomination form described the house as a "vernacular house of rose colored brick." About 60% of the brick used in the back portion is indistinguishable from the brick used in the front portion. While the "wide eaves and painted white brackets" are mentioned in the nomination, so is the fact that "the house enjoys an excellent lakefront view," something only obtained from the rear of the house. This indicates that the entire house, including any portion that may have been constructed between 1858 and 1892, is the designated landmark.
- The 8/25 staff report referred to the brick on this 30% as "historic masonry." Staff told the Commission: "The glass walls will also allow you to continue to read the masonry, the historic masonry, of the historic resource behind."
- A determination of historic significance is not needed if the back portion of the house is part of the original construction.

### Recap of Landmarks Commission Actions

In August 2025 the Commission approved removal of a wood addition that had been built in the 1950's which would allow the owner to construct a new addition. (See the blue portion in the photos on page 1.)

Subsequent to this approval, a structural engineer recommended the replacement of the foundation supporting the brick addition. This foundation work would, reportedly, make the project financially infeasible unless changes were made to the new addition. Thus, the owner asked to demolish the brick addition and received approval at the May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

These two illustrations from the applicant's materials illustrate the differences between the two Landmarks approvals and show the extent to which the brick house would be demolished.



Last year's approval which shows the wood portion replaced by an addition.



The May 4<sup>th</sup> approval which shows the 30% removed.

### Historical Significance

The reason why 739 was deemed to be significant, and merited landmark status in 1977, is key to determining whether the brick addition, if it is an addition, is historically significant. While the nomination form described the building's physical construction and appearance, as required, the significance of the building is not due to its architecture. Under the section of the nomination describing significance, the architecture is only mentioned in passing: "the firm little brick house of vernacular stylistic derivation is a symbol of the stolid commitment these new arrivals made to the city."

The significance of this house is in the family which resided there. The Sauthoff House "is particularly symbolic as a home of a nineteenth century merchant family who contributed to the growth of the city ..." This enclave of German-speaking people "contributed importantly to the provision of services which supported Madison's nineteenth century economic and physical growth." Three generations of the Sauthoff family occupied this house from 1857-59 to 1917 and the accomplishments of the children in the family - Gus, Carrie, Anna, Louis and Fred (William was not mentioned) – are mentioned. The Sauthoff family also played an important cultural role, including the Turnverein, the Maennerchor, the Fuller Theater Orchestra, playing drums for the Ringling Brothers Circus, sailing, and a daughter was the first woman to swim across Lake Monona.

Clearly, 739 was nominated based on the history of not just the patriarch who had the undisputed original portion of the house built, but also the children. The history of this family, both economic and cultural, happened over many years and continued until 1917 according to the nomination form. (In fact, at least one family member resided in 739 many years after that – Carrie was reported to be resident at 739 at the time of her death in 1931.)

#### Secretary's Standards

Any new construction or exterior alteration to 739, due to its landmark status, must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ("Standards"), MGO 41.18(1)(a).<sup>i</sup> There are 10 Standards. Standard #4 states: "Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved."

Whether a change has acquired historic significance in its own right is a judgement call, and is specific to the particular property. The National Park Service offers some guidance to help make this determination.

- The nomination form will describe why the property is significant. An example is: an "addition to a school to accommodate growing enrollment may be important when the property is significant for its associations with the history of education in the community."
  - If a school is significant for its associations with the history of education, an addition can be important. Similarly, 739 is significant for its history as the home of a pioneering family, a family that grew after 1858 from 2 to 6 children, and which the family lived in until at least 1917. Any addition to the home which was made during the family's tenure is part of that history and is, at least arguably, historically significant.
- A later change to a building may not be significant if the property is important as an example of a specific architectural style or the work of a particular architect.
  - 739 was nominated based on its history, not for its vernacular architectural style or the work of a particular architect.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/acquired-significance-standard-4.htm>

Historic resources, and landmarks in particular, represent the City's unique heritage. Whether the rear portion of 739 Jenifer is an addition should be known before a partial demolition is approved. And, if an addition, its historic significance should be fully evaluated.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Linda Lehnertz

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<sup>i</sup> Landmarks in historic districts are also subject to the historic district standards. MGO 41.11 defines historic resources in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District as including: designated landmarks; designated landmark sites; and, properties constructed during the period of significance, 1850-1929.

MGO 41.18 provides (emphasis added):

A Certificate of Approval shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including **all** of the following standards that apply.

- (1) New Construction or Exterior Alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a Certificate of Approval for exterior alteration or construction only if:
  - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction **on any property located in a historic district**, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
  - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a Certificate of Approval is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

**I. Name of Building or Site**

**(1) Common**

Sauthoff House

**(2) Historic (if applicable)**

Sauthoff House

**II. Location**

**(1) Street Address**

739 Jenifer Street

**(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)**

6th District, 1st Ward

**III. Classification**

**(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)**

Building

**(2) Zoning District**

R-4

**(3) Present Use**

Residential

**IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)**

**(1) Name(s)**

Richard Crabs

**(2) Street Address**

741 Jenifer Street

**(3) Telephone Number**

255-1896

**V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)**

**(1) Parcel Number**

0709-134-1610-7

**(2) Legal Description**

Lot 7, Block 127

**VI. Condition of Property**

**(1) Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)**

Good

**(2) Altered or Unaltered?**

Slightly altered

**(3) Moved or Original Site?**

Original

**(4) Wall Construction**

Rose brick

**(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).**

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

**VI.(5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:**

Sitting between Lake Monona and Jenifer Street is a square, 2 story vernacular house of remarkable rose colored brick. The style of the house has been variously derived from the Federal, Greek Revival and Italianate. The flat roof is characterized by wide eaves and painted white brackets. The tall windows are symmetrically placed and capped by carved stone lintels on the first floor, and flat lintels on the second story. On the north side of the house is a 2 story square bay window structure painted white.

The house has been transformed from a single family dwelling to several apartments. Several windows on the south side of the house have been altered - one bricked in, and two filled with thick glass cubes. The front steps are not original.

For being almost 120 years old, the house appears to be in good condition. The only area requiring attention would be the brick work surrounding the doorway and the door itself.

The house enjoys an excellent lakefront view and terraced backyard. The front of the house is landscaped attractively with hedges and clusters of potted flowers.

**City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)**

**VII. Significance**

**(1) Original Owner**

Fredrick Sauthoff

**(2) Original Use**

Residential

**(3) Architect or Builder**

Michael Zwank (?), Bldr.

**(4) Architectural Style**

Vernacular

**(5) Date of Construction**

1857-58

**(6) Indigenous Materials Used**

Rose Brick

**(7) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the significance of the nominated property and its conformance to the designation criteria of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (33.01), limit of 500 words.**

**VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used**

1. Tax Assessment Rolls, City of Madison, 1846-1900
2. City Directory, Madison, 1858, 1866, 1875, 1885, 1889-1975
3. "All Around the Town", Alexis Baas, Capital Times, June 3, 1950
4. U.S. Census, 1860
5. History of Dane County Biographical and Genealogical, Western Historical Association, 1906
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**IX. Form Prepared By:**

**(1) Name and Title**

Anne V. Rugg and Lance M. Neckar

**(2) Organization Represented (if any)**

Research Committee of Landmarks Commission

**(3) Address**

2325 Center Avenue

**(4) Telephone Number**

241-3715

**(5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared**

May 15, 1977

**City of Madison Landmarks Commission**  
**LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)**

**VII.(7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:**

The Sauthoff House is particularly symbolic as a home of a nineteenth century merchant family who contributed to the growth of the city in its boom years and to the vitality of the small, but significant, enclave of German-speaking people who lived at the west end of Third Lake Ridge. This enclave of merchants, laborers, craftsmen, and the like contributed importantly to the provision of services which supported Madison's nineteenth century economic and physical growth. Not to be discounted, however, was the cultural role played by these immigrants, particularly the Sauthoff's. Additionally, the firm little brick house of vernacular stylistic derivation is a symbol of the stolid commitment these new arrivals made to the city.

Three generations of the Sauthoff family have occupied this house from 1857-8 to 1917. Its original owner was Friedrich Sauthoff, who with his wife, left Hannover, Germany at the age of 31. A year later, 1857, he began construction of his home at 739 Jenifer (or Rutledge as it was sometimes cited in the city directories.) Sauthoff had been trained at the Kaufmannsschule in Hamburg, a type of vocational training school, where he had apparently learned tailoring. However, for some time here in Madison he also worked for his neighbor Edward(?) Baus, a cigar maker located on King Street. Later Sauthoff was listed in the directories as a tailor and proprietor of gents' furnishings store. In 1875 he was in partnership with a man named Olson (later of Olson and Veerhusen?,) and in 1885 with his sons.

A brief glance at the neighborhood in the 1850's and 60's reveals that Sauthoff had at least three neighbors (within four houses) who were also German-speaking tailors, Jacob Schmitz, Joseph Lohrs and Adolph Klose. Living in Sauthoff's house in 1860 was a Hessian butcher, Johann Wissler. Across the street lived Michael Zwank, a Prussian mason who may have built Sauthoff's house. Next door lived Julius Vogel, a master turner (lathe operator) from Saxony. Cabinet makers, blacksmiths, and wagonmakers lived on Jenifer and Williamson rounding out the immediate neighborhood.

The Sauthoff's were active in community organization and cultural life, particularly those of Germanic derivation. They were athletically inclined. Friedrich and his son Gus were members of the Turnverein along with a number of their neighbors including John George Ott. Friederich was also a sailor and he raced his boat "Venus" on Lake Monona. Carrie, a daughter was an oarswoman and the first woman to swim across Lake Monona.

Gifted musically, the family contributed in many ways to the cultural life of the city. Friedrich was a member of the Maennerchor along with his neighbors Ott, C. Hinrichs, Baus, Joseph Kilb, and C.W. Heyl. His daughters Carrie and Anna played piano and sang taking lessons from their live-in teacher Anna Hudson. Louis, a son, was a member of the Fuller Theatre Orchestra. Fred, another son, played drums and later traveled with the Ringling Brothers Circus.

At one time Friedrich was also an alderman for the Sixth Ward. (c. 1885)