

**From:** [William Butcher](#)  
**To:** [council](#)  
**Cc:** [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Why You Should Oppose 1617 Sherman Ave Designation  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:36:14 PM

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Dear Council Members,

The application for historic status at 1617 Sherman is a misguided effort by a few well-intentioned citizens, and perhaps a few not so well-intentioned, who have tried to overwhelm the approval process with a mountain of weak arguments. That the credit union national headquarters occupied an office building there a half century ago is, itself, a bizarre claim to historic value. When viewed in light of its relative insignificance compared to the current gravity of the housing crisis in Madison, the mind boggles. Rather than debate the veracity of the history (whether a banking group was here for a few years or whether a President spent an hour here on a national tour), ask whether it matters more than the pressing need for housing. Further, if the importance of banking history in Madison is so important, why not work with the developer to establish a monument on the site to remind and educate while also contributing to, not diminishing, the economic health of the city? Or one could acknowledge that CUNA had three transitory headquarters in Madison, the third of which happened to be at 1617 Sherman Ave for ten years, before settling in its permanent and now half-century-old permanent HQ on Mineral Point Rd.

A less magnanimous view could see this as property-owners grasping at tenuous strings to oppose dense development in their neighborhood, exactly as designed by that same neighborhood during the public planning process for this site in the Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara Neighborhood Plan in 2016. It's almost impossible not to see this as an attempt by the few to manipulate the process to preserve their lifestyle over the essential housing needs of the many. More distressing is how enthusiastically the Landmarks Commission has played along.

The urgency of the housing crisis has only intensified since that neighborhood plan was approved in 2016 supporting more and denser housing on and near transit-oriented sites, of which this site is specifically included in the new Transit Oriented District ordinance approved resoundingly last month by this very sensible and prudent Common Council. Preserving single family home-owners' property values and lifestyles on the Isthmus is at odds with providing a better quality of life for the vast majority of current and future residents who cannot afford the \$450k+ average home price within a half mile of the site.

If Landmarks Commission support for a few neighbors' efforts to '*preserve*' their status quo, rather than balance historical (in)significance with common sense, sways the plan commission and common council, it will be a blow to the City's planning authority and processes. Whether the Landmarks Commission's actions here and recently call into question its legitimacy as an advisory body are a separate question I hope the Council will consider.

Thank you for your consideration.

William Butcher

cell [608.301.5008](tel:608.301.5008)

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**From:** [csi@inxpress.net](mailto:csi@inxpress.net)  
**To:** [council](#)  
**Cc:** [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 2/7/23 Council Meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:33:20 PM  
**Attachments:** [Bailey Letter 121922.PDF](#)

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Good Afternoon,

I am writing this email to encourage you to decline to designate the property located at 1617 Sherman Avenue as a landmark at tonight's meeting.

For your reference, attached is a copy of the letter sent in December to Heather Bailey outlining the reasons we object, and reiterating them today.

As current owners of the property for nearly 25 years, this is the first time any interest has been shown in creating a historic value. We support the efforts Vermillion is proposing to providing much needed housing in the City of Madison.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Jankowski

Tenney Place Development, LLC  
639 S Main Street, Suite 103  
Deforest, WI 53532  
608.846.1575

**TENNEY PLACE DEVELOPMENT, LLC**  
**639 S. Main Street, Suite 103**  
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December 19, 2022

Heather L. Bailey, PhD  
Preservation Planner  
Neighborhood Planning, Preservation & Design Section  
Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Planning Division  
215 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Suite 017  
Madison, WI 53701-2985

Via email at [hbailey@cityofmadison.com](mailto:hbailey@cityofmadison.com)

**RE: Landmarks Commission demolition review**  
**1617 Sherman Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin**

Dear Heather and Members of the Landmarks Commission:

The above referenced property has submitted for review the proposed demolition. As current owners of the property and in support of the developer, Vermillion, we would like to submit the following written response into the public record for consideration and look forward for the opportunity to discuss the matter.

- The firm that designed 1617 Sherman Avenue does not believe there is an architectural significance to the building. Potter Lawson's predecessor firm (Law, Law, Potter and Nystrom) was the architect for the existing building at 1617 Sherman Avenue. Potter Lawson does not believe there is historical significance in the stripped-classical style of architecture, which is essentially classical, without any of the classical elements that make the building interesting.
- The building's age is not significant for Landmark status. The City of Madison website identifies 182 buildings and sites that have received Landmark status. All 182 are older than the building at 1627 Sherman Avenue. The age of the existing building is not historically significant.
- We do not believe this location has significance to the founding of the credit union movement. The movement's founding is traced back to a meeting in Este Park, CO in 1934 where 52 credit union leaders from 21 states and the District of Columbia met to establish the Credit Union National Association (CUNA). Madison a designated their temporary headquarters. The first headquarter building in Madison was located at 142 East Gilman Avenue which was later demolished in 1940 after CUNA move to their second headquarter location at 1342 East Washington Avenue. 1617 Sherman Avenue was the third CUNA headquarter building for approximately 10 years from 1950-1960 before the company outgrew the building. In 1960 CUNA relocated to its fourth headquarters at 5910 Mineral Point Road where it exists today.
- Numerous U.S. Presidents have visited Madison. Truman's visit in 1950 was not his first visit to Madison, nor was 1617 Sherman Avenue it's purpose. Truman's 1950 visit focused

on delivering a "peace address" at the UW-Madison Field House prior to commencement of the Korean War. Truman's visit to 1617 Sherman Avenue was another stop on that trip.

There are various other Presidential visits to Madison:

- Ulysses S. Grant
  - Rutherford B. Hayes, September 10, 1878
  - James Garfield
  - Chester Arthur
  - Grover Cleveland
  - William McKinley
  - Woodrow Wilson, October 26, 1911
  - William H. Taft, May 5-7, 1915
  - Theodore Roosevelt, May 28, 1918
  - Warren G. Harding
  - Herbert Hoover, November 5, 1932
  - Harry Truman, October 14, 1948
  - Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 28, 1949
  - Harry Truman, May 14, 1950
  - John F. Kennedy, October 23, 1960
  - Bill Clinton, October 1, 1992
  - Jimmy Carter, March 1, 1994
  - Barack Obama, February 12, 2008
  - Bill Clinton, February 14, 2008
- When Tenney Place Development, LLC purchased the 1617 Sherman Avenue property, we had several conversations with the City of Madison regarding residential development. During that time, there was never mention that the property could have historical value and that there would be limitations for future usage.

Renovations that were completed since we took ownership include the following items, and again there was no mention nor impediments based on historical value.

- A metal structure that was attached to the building was removed.
- A new front entrance was constructed, dramatically changing the appearance.
- At least two major interior remodels were completed.

We do not believe the neighborhood and the City of Madison consider this building to be significant. City of Madison's Emerson East – Eken Park – Yahara Neighborhood Plan was developed in 2016 as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan with input from neighborhood groups and city staff. The plan recommends that the building at 1617 Sherman Avenue "be adapted for use as a residential structure, or for it to be razed and new residential structures built in its place." The feasibility of converting this building to residential has been reviewed and deemed functionally obsolete for this purpose.

We respect that the City of Madison may consider the cornerstone itself to be historically interesting. The proposed developer, Vermillion is willing to donate the cornerstone to the Madison Historical Society or is willing to incorporate it into an historic marker onsite. We fully support Vermillion's development and are willing to work alongside them and with the Landmarks Commission on forming a path forward.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Mikel J. Schaefer  
Member, Tenney Place Development, LLC

**From:** [Randy Krantz](#)  
**To:** [council](#); [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 1617 Sherman Ave Building Historic Status  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:08:58 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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Dear Common Council ,

The application to designate this property as historic is silly and mis guided. I oppose this being done. The need for affordable housing is great in Madison is great and there is no good reason this property should not be redeveloped.

**Randy Krantz, CIC**

p 6082382686 | C 608 235-4290

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**From:** [Richard Sandrock](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [council](#); [Mayor](#); [hslouder@cityofmadison.com](mailto:hslouder@cityofmadison.com); [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Item 81 File 75633 on Feb 7 Common council agenda  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:07:10 AM

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Decision makers on Action item 81 = 1617 Sherman Ave Landmark  
Support for the

Although I have confidence that common sense based on the consequences to the community as a whole will oppose the request for historical preservation. The alternative ways to respect the banking history are many and certainly of more status then protecting the structure.

Thank you

Richard Sandrock