



Project Name & Address: 801 S Whitney Way

Application Type: Demolition Historic Value Review

Legistar File ID # [90161](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Date Prepared: October 3, 2025

Summary

Relevant Ordinance Section:

28.185(7) Review for Historic Value. Every application for demolition or removal of a principal structure shall be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission, which shall provide input to the Building Inspection Division regarding the historic value of the property with the building or structure proposed for demolition or removal.

- (a) If the Landmarks Commission determines that the property with the proposed demolition or the structure proposed for removal has no known historic value, the demolition or removal may be approved administratively under sub. (8)(b) below, provided that at least one of the standards for administrative approval have been met.
- (b) If the Landmarks Commission determines that the property with the proposed demolition or the structure proposed for removal has historic value, then the Plan Commission shall approve the demolition or removal under sub. (9) below, after considering input from the Landmarks Commission.
- (c) Nothing in this subsection eliminates the requirement in MGO Secs. [41.09\(1\)\(c\)](#) and [41.12\(3\)](#) that the demolition of landmark structures or structures in historic districts must also be approved by the Landmarks Commission through the issuance of a Certificate of Approval.

41.28 HISTORIC VALUE ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION

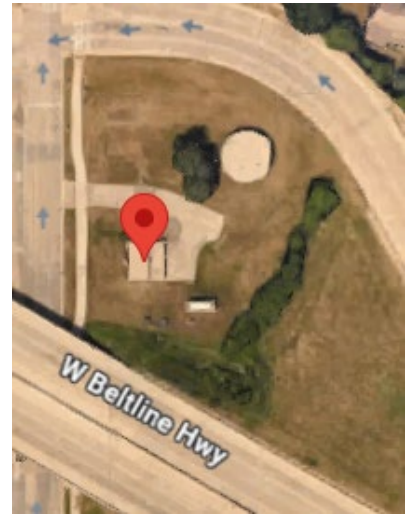
- (1) Review for Historic Value. Following a review of MGO Sec. 28.185 applications for demolition by the Landmarks Commission and based upon application materials, and a report by the City's Preservation Planner, and any public testimony, the Commission shall review [MGO Sec. 28.185](#) applications for demolition and assign one of the following Categories to each principal building proposed for demolition:
 - (a) Category A Demolitions: denotes that the Landmarks Commission finds that the building has historic value based on architectural significance, cultural significance, historic significance, as the work/product of an architect of note, its status as a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and/or as an intact or rare example of a certain architectural style or method of construction.
 - (b) Category B Demolitions: denotes that the Landmarks Commission finds that the building has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, cultural practices, or as the work/product of an architect of note, but the building itself is not historically, architecturally or culturally significant.
 - (c) Category C Demolitions: denotes that the Landmarks Commission finds that the building has no known historic value. This category may also denote sites or properties that have historic value, and the significance will not be negatively impacted by the removal of the building itself. This category may also include sites or properties that have archaeological or other site findings of significance, but where removal of the building itself will have no impact.
- (2) Presence of Archaeology. When applicable, each finding shall also note the presence of an archaeological or burial site on the site of the building proposed for demolition.

801 S Whitney Way

Well house and reservoir constructed in 1957



Google Streetview



Google Earth

Applicant: Isaac Steinmeyer, SEH

Applicant's Comments: The proposed project includes reconstruction of Madison Water Utility's Unit Well 12, including demolition and replacement of the existing wellhouse and reservoir at the site. The project is needed to replace aging infrastructure that has reached the end of its useful service life for municipal water supply and to improve water supply resiliency and redundancy for the future of Madison Water Utility and its residents.

Staff Findings: There is no preservation file or State site file. There is no previously identified archaeology on this property.

This well house was part of a series of wellhouses the City constructed from 1918-1960s. They utilized yellow brick or stone with Prairie School style architecture, to mimic the appearance of the Nichols Station pump house, which was the central pumping station at 311 N Hancock St, constructed in 1917. This building retains good architectural integrity and speaks to the early history of our municipal water service. A similar wellhouse at 845 Vilas was determined eligible to the National Register in 2001. This building is slightly different from the earlier iterations, which used the blond brick and it showed the evolution of the design program to incorporate a more Midcentury Modern style with the shift to the irregularly sized, coursed stone.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends a finding of (b) as this property speaks to the vernacular context of Madison and the evolution of the Prairie-style design for municipal water service structures.