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**Sent:** Sunday, January 29, 2012 5:51 PM

**To:** Scanlon, Amy

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**Subject:** Vallender Building Historic Statement, for Jan. 30, 2012 Landmarks agenda

Dear Ms. Scanlon and Members of the Landmarks Commission,

Please find attached a history and statement of significance for the Vallender Building at 127-129 State Street to aid in your deliberations for Monday's agenda item on the topic.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

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## Vallender Family and Building Historic Statement

129-129 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin

Prepared by Gary Tipler, January 29, 2012.

The Vallender building is significant on two points. It is an excellent example of a rare building type in Madison, the German Romanesque Revival style. It is also significant because it embodies the characteristics of a German-built structure, reflecting the culture and history of the immigrant entrepreneurs.

### Vallender Family

Frank or Franz Vallender was born in Germany [Prussia] about 1815.<sup>1</sup> He, his wife and son were farmers and left Germany, then Prussia, and arrived in Madison in 1852. He brought his wife Maria Sophia, son Wilhelm (22), son Mathis (8) and infant Margaretha, less than a year old, via Antwerp, Belgium aboard the Centurion and arrived in New York on May 3, 1852.<sup>2</sup> Franz changed his name to Frank and worked as a stone mason.<sup>3</sup>

When Frank Vallender first arrived in Madison in 1852 he purchased property on the 800 block of Jenifer Street. It was listed as No.12 Jenifer, later renumbered 833. It is a property where he lived most of his life in Madison, and in which succeeding generations of the family owned and lived, into the 1930s.

In 1866, Frank Vallender bought the triangular corner lot on State Street at Fairchild from Benjamin Franklin Hopkins, a real estate speculator, for \$850.<sup>4</sup> The following year, he built the present red brick building in two stages at the intersection of State and Fairchild, primarily for his son's family and to house their respective businesses, a saloon for himself and a barbershop for his son William.<sup>5</sup> His saloon was listed as being at No. 15 State Street in the 1868 city directory.<sup>6</sup>

Frank Vallender was listed as working as a laborer as late as the 1895 city directory, and listed in the 1898-99 city directory, adopting his original name, Franz. During his last few years, he was blind and lived at 325 W. Mifflin with his daughter Elizabeth Schweinem.<sup>7</sup> His wife, Sophia is last listed in the 1902 directory, living at "o 127 State", a typical designation for the apartments above the street address.

In his death announcement on December 17, 1900, Frank Vallender was credited with his work as a mason on several prominent buildings including the Federal courthouse and post office that once stood on Mifflin at Wisconsin Avenue.<sup>8</sup>

Wilhelm Vallender was born in Cologne Germany [Prussia] in about 1838, to Franz [Frank] and Sophia Terressa Vallender. Upon arriving in the United States with his parents and siblings in 1852, he changed his name to William. He had been a farmer and later became a barber who had his shop in the building immediately following its completion in 1868, and moved with his wife and daughters into the apartment above his shop.<sup>9</sup> His son Frank W. was born during that year. The two-level apartment above

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<sup>1</sup> 1900 Census.

<sup>2</sup> Germans To America, Lists of Passengers Arriving At U.S. Ports 1850-1855, Vol. 2, May 1851-June 1852, p.315.

<sup>3</sup> 1858 City directory.

<sup>4</sup> City tax rolls.

<sup>5</sup> Wisconsin State Journal, "Building in Madison." March 25, 1868. Buildings erected in 1867, a list provided by W.T. Fish, a builder, of principal buildings built during the previous year.

Wisconsin State Journal, Mrs. Schweinem, 90 on Monday, Is Oldest Worshipper at Holy Redeemer Madison, Wisconsin, March 26, 1944. p.9. Elizabeth Schweinem recounts that her father built the State Street building and was a stone mason.

<sup>6</sup> In the original street numbering system, addresses were listed as the numbers of buildings on the street rather than by numbered blocks. That was changed to the present system in 1883.

<sup>7</sup> He was last listed in 1900-1901 City Directory at 325 W. Mifflin, along with his daughter Elizabeth Schweinem.

<sup>8</sup> Wisconsin State Journal, December 17, 1900. "F. Vallender Dead." p.8.

<sup>9</sup> Tax rolls. City directories.

was accessed via an exterior wood stair on the Fairchild side of the building. In 1874, he was elected foreman of the Andrew Proudfit Engine Co., No. 2, which had been formed in 1857. The engine and company were named in honor of Mayor Proudfit.<sup>10</sup> William Vallendar served as volunteer firemen for many years with the largely German-speaking fire company. In 1875-76, William Vallender served on the County Board of Supervisors.<sup>11</sup> After his wife died in the mid-1890s, he remarried, continued to operate his barbershop until around 1911 when he retired and lived in the building until his death in 1921.<sup>12</sup> His wife Anna (Mayer) lived there until her death in 1935.

Frank W. Vallender, William's son, was born around the time the Vallender building was being built on State Street. Perhaps because of his father's work as a volunteer fireman, he also became one and during the course of his service was elevated to Fire Captain of the Fire Station No. 2 by 1910, next door to where he had grown up. He didn't live in the building after childhood, though a sister continued to live there into the 1920s with her mother.

At least five generations of Vallenders and their descendants have been associated with Holy Redeemer Church. The Vallenders were a founding family of the German language congregation when it first met in the late 1850s following the Vallenders' arrival in Madison. The other German-speaking families who married into the Vallenders included members of the Casper Mayer, Heim, Schulkamp, Schweinem, Baas, and DuFreene families.

### **Building Description**

The Vallender building was built in two stages, on Lot 1 of Block 76, with the eastern part of the building being built first, as a two-and-a-half-story building.<sup>13</sup> It is likely that the expansion of the second stage, occupying the corner and the full third floor was begun once it became apparent that the apartment wouldn't be large enough. William's son Frank W. was born at about that time, and Frank (Sr.) was likely considering retiring from masonry and wanted to open a tavern in the corner commercial space.

The building was built with a locally quarried sandstone rubble foundation with an entrance stair within the N. Fairchild Street right-of-way. The bearing wall in the basement separates the basement into two rooms. The balance of the building was built with vermilion colored brick, possibly made in John George Ott's brick yard on East Wilson Street.<sup>14</sup> It is a soft red brick that has exhibited some deterioration on the Fairchild Street side, likely due to airborne road salt and greater sun exposure, which causes considerably more freeze-thaw cycles than the State Street side of the building on which very little deterioration above the splash line above the sidewalk can be found. The building was painted prior to 1994, but the date is unknown. The paint is in poor or moderate condition. The paint isn't necessarily well bonded to the brick and exhibits peeling, but isn't all that bad, considering its age.

The State Street façade of the building consists of two individually built sets of brick piers and window bays for the east and the west side of the facade. The widths of the piers and bays are slightly different for each side of the façade. The window and door bays or fields were inset from the piers. Each of the masonry openings for windows and doors, according to historic photos, had a half-round arch of the same red brick, corbelled to have a slight protrusion. The two storefronts were altered, the east half of the façade was altered by jeweler Ernest Templin in his 1946 alteration to install a display window and

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<sup>10</sup> Wisconsin State Journal, July 15, 1945. p.8.

<sup>11</sup> History of Dane County Wisconsin. p.411.

<sup>12</sup> City directories.

<sup>13</sup> 1867 City Tax List, p.31, 1867 Special Tax List p. 29, and 1868 Tax List, p.63.

<sup>14</sup> Vallenders undoubtedly knew Ott and may have been temporarily housed at Ott's home on Williamson at the time of their arrival. Ott was well known to have welcomed and housed newly arrived Germans.

new entrance on the east side of the façade for his store. A similar storefront alteration was undertaken many years later on the west side of the ground floor. The masonry arches of the west side of the ground floor façade have been exposed at the time of signage changes a couple times in past decades. They remain intact above the steel beam that was inserted to create the storefront opening. The exterior wooden stair to the second floor was removed in the 1946 alteration and most of the old window and door masonry openings in the Fairchild Street were infilled with brick. The date of the existing steel fire escape is unknown. The small rear entrance enclosure was added in the mid-1980s when the apartments were again renovated for use.

The roof is a low pitched hipped roof with a ridge over the east part of the building, almost unseen from the street. The minimally ornamented brick parapet wall of the State Street façade hides it from view on that side.

The integrity of the building is quite strong. It is largely intact except for the removal of some of the first floor masonry piers. Most of the alterations are easily reversible. The storefront alterations do not significantly detract from the building's historic character. The building was determined to be a contributing building in the State Street National Register Historic District nomination in the 1990s.

### **Significance**

The Vallender building is significant on two points. It is an excellent example of a rare architectural style in Madison, the German Romanesque Revival style and as an increasingly rare building type. It is also significant because it embodies the characteristics of a German-built structure, reflecting the culture and history of the immigrant entrepreneurs.

The Vallender building represents a rare architectural style in Madison, the Rundbogenstil, or round arch style, or German Romanesque Revival style that contrasted against the Gothic and Classical styles of its time. It was embraced in Germany and in the United States, notably by German immigrant architects of that period.<sup>15</sup>

Also, it is a rare building type in Madison – a mixed use commercial and residential building built in the 1860s – built by an entrepreneur owner for both business and space and residence. Virtually all the commercial examples of that period, 1850s-1860s, are gone from the Capitol Square.

Kutzbock, the designer of the firm, Donnel and Kutzbock, employed the German Romanesque Revival style in many of their buildings including the City Hall, the G.A.R Hall (Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard) and the State Capitol of 1857-1859, along with several residences, most of which are gone. The other remaining examples of that style in Madison, which also happen to be by Donnel and Kutzbock, are the McDonnell residence at 424 N. Pinckney and the Gates of Heaven Synagogue in James Madison Park.

After Donnel's death, Kutzbock left for San Francisco and returned to Madison in the fall of 1867. Madison's German-speaking community was intimate; Vallender would undoubtedly have known Kutzbock, may well have worked on one of his buildings and may have been influenced by him. There is no information as to whether Kutzbock had any involvement in this building design, however, the Vallendar building has an extraordinary architectural presence, given its size and the stature of its owners and their respective businesses. Kutzbock's commissions of the few months that he was in Madison 1867 and 1868 remain unknown.

The building embodies the characteristics of a German-built structure, reflecting the culture and history of the immigrant entrepreneurs, Franz and William Vallender. It was hand built of locally made brick and locally-quarried sandstone. In addition, it is built of an increasingly rare locally made material. Buildings built of the locally made red brick are becoming rare since most such buildings were built in older areas that have been undergoing redevelopment for many decades and have been torn down.

This historic building is quite capable of being renovated to last another 150 years.

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<sup>15</sup> Capital Times, "Design of Synagogue Here Is Identified" January 11, 1971. p.16.