

19 August 2010

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Dan Stephans – Chair, Madison Landmarks Commission

In advance of the Landmarks Commission's August 23 meeting, please see comments below on agenda items from the *Madison Trust for Historic Preservation* and *National Trust for Historic Preservation*.

I am unable to attend the August 23 meeting but would like to add the following comments to the Public Comment item on the agenda:

1. E. Dayton St. Historic District

647 E. Dayton St. - The city-produced plaque for the E. Dayton St. Historic District that was attached to the house at 647 E, Dayton St. has been removed. We have no information as to who removed it or why it was removed. A Board member received an inquiry from a neighbor about why it was missing.

Also, the Madison Trust received an inquiry from, Diane Hill-Vann, granddaughter of John W. Hill who owned the buildings in the district and operated Hill's Grocery in the E. Dayton St. National Historic District (also a local Landmark). Ms. Hill-Vann is interested in expanding the boundaries of the Landmarks designation to include 114 and 118 N. Blount St.

Ms. Hill-Vann is also interested in buying out her siblings' interest in the properties and is looking for a creative way to fund the purchase that may include a non-profit organization, or some kind of preservation grant. She is the only one of several siblings who wants to keep the property in Hill family ownership.

2. Period Garden Park

Joe Bonardi, Mansion Hill resident who has taken on the role of caretaker of Period Garden Park next to the Landmark Keyes House, has taken the initiative of repainting two city plaques in the park (See attached photos). Through a diligent process of trial and error he arrived at a successful methodology for repainting the plaques using a black primer and goldleaf paint. He asked about restoring other plaques in the neighborhood using the same method. Can someone advise Joe and I on whether there is an approval process for this type of work, and whether it would be OK for him to proceed with other plaques. Joe is available at joebonardi@yahoo.com

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Also, Joe has coordinated with the Parks Department to repair the crumbling steps that lead from the sidewalk along Gorham St. into the garden. As in the past, The Madison Trust granted \$500 toward the project which will be completed in the coming weeks.

Item 1 - 2001 Van Hise Avenue

Only plan drawings are available on Legistar. Proposal is difficult to interpret without elevation drawings or a description of the proposed addition. We're unable to comment, and defer to Preservation staff and the Commission to assess the appropriateness of the proposal.

Item 2 - 2017 Kendall Avenue

No concerns. We concur with staff report.

Item 3 - Landmarks Ordinance Revisions

In light of the inquiry regarding the Landmark Hill Grocery and Thomas House from Ms. Hill-Vann I looked Section 33.19 (5) – Sale of Landmarks. I would like to comment on the language of that section in light of the Commission's review of the ordinance.

(5) (h) Sale of Landmarks and Landmark Sites:

The first sentence contains language that gives authority over Landmark sites to people who may not necessarily own the property. .

*“Any party who is listed as the owner of record of a landmark site **at the time of its designation...**may petition the commission for a rescission of its designation.”*

Presumably, it is not the intention of this paragraph to stipulate that only the person who owned the property “at the time of its designation” may petition for rescission of the designation, even if the Landmark site has been sold to a subsequent owner since its designation. Nor is it likely that it is intended to stipulate that the owner “at the time of designation” may petition for rescission even after he sold it to a subsequent owner.

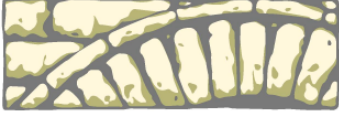
Simply striking the phrase “at the time of its designation” from the language would eliminate this misinterpretation of the intent of the ordinance.

Item 4 - Buildings proposed for demolition - 2010

We are concerned about the potential loss of two of the properties proposed for demolition along University Avenue. The Merrill Springs Motel and the Marshall Erdman office building are likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. That is the opinion of Elizabeth Miller, historic preservation consultant for the Wisconsin Department on the University Avenue reconstruction

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project. Marshall Erdman was a prominent local builder who worked closely with Frank Lloyd Wright to build the Unitarian Meeting House and to develop plans for a line of prefabricated houses.

The Merrill Springs Motel is an example of a motor court style motel that would have been on the outskirts of the city when it was built in the 1950's.

The Madison Trust has no plans to assess these properties' eligibility for Landmark status, but it would be beneficial to get extensive interior and exterior photo-documentation and copies of critical records for city files and other repositories of historical records.

Respectfully submitted,

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