



Project Name & Address: 2019 Fisher Street
Application Type: Demolition Historic Value Review
Legistar File ID # [92855](#)
Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared: April 30, 2026

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.

2019 Fisher Street

Commercial building constructed in 1960-61 with a 1981 addition.



Google Streetview



Google Earth

Applicant: Adam Watkins, Wyser Engineering

Applicant's Comments: 2019 Fisher Street — Partial Demolition The existing building at 2019 Fisher Street consists of two distinct portions: the original contemporary-style church constructed in 1960–1961 by the congregation using salvaged materials from their demolished West Johnson Street building, with a major addition completed in 1981; and a newer section constructed in 2003–2004 and dedicated on August 29, 2004. The applicant proposes to demolish the older portion of the building (1960/1981) while retaining the 2004 section, which houses the current sanctuary and administrative suite. The retained section (2004) will be integrated into the new Family Life Center addition as a single, unified structure. The entire property will be treated as a single parcel, and the Certified Survey Map (CSM) will be updated to consolidate ownership and eliminate underlying parcel lines.

Both properties on the project site are identified in the City of Madison Underrepresented Communities Intensive Survey Report, prepared by Legacy Architecture, Inc. The survey's Chapter 14 (Religion) states: "Mount Zion Baptist Church was established in 1911 as a Baptist mission... In 1960, the University of Wisconsin purchased the church and demolished it. That same year, Mount Zion moved to Bram's Addition neighborhood... A new contemporary style building was constructed for the church at 2019 Fisher Street. An adjacent minimal traditional style parsonage house was also constructed that year at 2025–2029 Fisher Street." The survey further notes: "In 1982, the church established a food pantry and constructed a small ranch style building at 2025 Fisher Street, adjacent to the parsonage and church, to serve as a community center." The survey concludes that "Mount Zion Baptist Church is locally significant to the African American community in the area of Religion from 1911 to the present" and that "this church is potentially eligible for designation as a City of Madison Landmark." The applicant fully acknowledges the landmark-eligible status of both properties and the significance of this site to the African American community in Madison.

Staff Findings: This property is significant for the African-American history of Madison. The property continues its historic use and the largely African-American congregation of Mount Zion Baptist Church continues to grow and reshape this property to suit its needs. The National Park Service defines Traditional Cultural Properties as those that are historically significant based on its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. This is very much a living community and they have continued to grow and change the structures on this property. The proposal is a technical demolition and the church building will remain. The older portions of the building are what the congregation is proposing to remove. The history cited by the applicant in the Underrepresented Communities Historic Resources Survey talks about the changes to the property over time as the congregation continues its use of the site. In this instance the changes to the property highlight the ongoing cultural use of the property by this African-American religious community. Not all of the structure will be demolished and the new construction will contribute to the story of their ongoing use of this site. The portion of the building to be demolished is not architecturally significant and there are no previously identified archaeological resources.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends a finding of (b) because the building has historic value related to the Madison's cultural practices, specifically the African-American heritage of Madison, but this portion of the building is not historically, architecturally or culturally significant because the ongoing cultural use of the property is what is significant to this site.