

**From:** [Paul Bailey](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Item 81. File# 75633  
**Date:** Monday, February 6, 2023 12:36:33 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I'm writing regarding the landmark nomination for Filene House (1617 Sherman Ave)

I have three issues with this nomination.

First, no historic value to preserving the building itself has been articulated. The building is not expected to be operated in service to that history and preserving it would serve a lot less value than other method of marking the spot could, at much less cost to the city in terms of increased housing costs.

Second, nominating a building as historic after a proposal for development has already been submitted will curtail the interest of developers in our area. This same action was undertaken with Wonder Bar and has become a problematic pattern.

A pattern of designating properties as historic after developers purchase them and start a proposal will decrease what developers can expect and add uncertainty to their proposals. This, in turn, will make them less attractive to lenders or financiers. These two costs will be reflected in costs in the only place they can come from: rents tenants will pay will have to be higher to make up the gap.

Finally, as stated by the preservationist, they didn't actually care enough about Filene House to identify or document its historical status before it was up for redevelopment. In their own words this takes time to research and no party in Madison cares to under take that commitment or time or expense. This is not a sad or happy statement, but simply a statement that this is not a priority for any group in Madison, the city, the historical society. We should consider the proposal for designation in this light, it is nobody's priority.

Best,  
Paul Bailey  
125 S Segoe rd Madison WI

**From:** [Michael Bridgeman](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Filene House (Item 81 02.07.23)  
**Date:** Monday, February 6, 2023 5:01:16 PM

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TO: All Madison Alders  
FR: Michael Bridgeman  
DT: 6 February 2023  
Respect the process.

As a person who lived in Madison for 30 years, I learned to understand and respect "process" as a citizen and as a member of two commissions. Madison is sometimes chided for being too process driven. But, at their best, good processes provide clarity and for getting things done in an orderly way.

It is, in part, out of a respect for process that I encourage the council to support the landmarking of Filene House.

After reviewing the landmarks ordinance, the Filene House nomination, and the staff report, the only reasonable choice for the common council is to approve Item 81 on the agenda for Tuesday, February 6, 2023 -- 75633 Landmark Nomination for the Filene House (1617 Sherman Ave); 12th Ald.

**Dist.**

Per 41.07 (03), a well-prepared nomination with supporting documentation was presented, reviewed, and submitted to the Landmarks Commission.

Per 41.02 (2), the nomination proposed that Filene House was eligible for landmark status based on two standards in the ordinance:

- (a) It is associated with broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community.
- (b) It is associated with the lives of important persons or with important event(s) in national, state or local history.

The ordinance states that a landmark needs to meet any (i.e. one) of the five standards for designation.

This nomination explicitly and openly stated that it was not proposing designation for architecture (standard (d)). Nonetheless, the building has been scorned for being "nondescript" (Cieslewicz) or "bland and outdated" (Wisconsin State Journal). Those comments are irrelevant to the standards under which Filene House is nominated.

Per 41.02 (5), the Landmarks Commission had a public hearing and forwarded a recommendation to this body. For the council to "Not Adopt landmark nomination" (per action 2), would be an assertion that "The nomination does not meet the criteria for designation as a Madison Landmark." That would be an irrational and irresponsible decision given that:

- o the nomination clearly meets at least one standard for designation and,
- o the process for making that recommendation was followed as outlined in the ordinance (as adopted/amended June 4, 2022).

Respect the process.

**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:** [Susan Daugherty](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Landmark Status for Filene House  
**Date:** Saturday, January 28, 2023 1:54:11 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing in support of designating Filene House a city landmark. Madison's architectural history is being erased at an alarming rate. Soon it will look like Everywhere, USA. I am not opposed to developing the rest of the site appropriately but please realize that erasing our history will be looked at in future as a huge mistake.

Best wishes,  
Susan Daugherty  
509 Hillington Way  
Madison, WI 53726

**From:** [jl.davis@charter.net](mailto:jl.davis@charter.net)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** [All Alders] Filene Building Historic Preservation  
**Date:** Friday, January 13, 2023 5:32:45 PM

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**Recipient:** All Alders

**Name:** Joseph L Davis  
**Address:** 445 sidney Street, Madison, WI 53703  
**Phone:** 608-234-8759  
**Email:** [jl.davis@charter.net](mailto:jl.davis@charter.net)

**Would you like us to contact you?** No, do not contact me

**Message:**

I am writing this letter in the event that the Council agrees to consider the Landmarks Commission's recommendation of landmark status for the Filene building abutting Tenney Park. The Commission apparently agreed with the argument in one John Rolling's nomination paper requesting such status. The kernel of his 33 page argument is the structure's importance to Madison's legacy as the home of the nation's first Credit Union. Like Mr. Rolling, I have a Ph.D. in American history – I assert that Rolling and the Commission by its action misuse the intent of Historic Preservation. Rolling's argument rests not on the actual significance of the structure, per se, but rather on building's being the birthplace of the credit union movement essentially granting a building the status of the creation of an idea.

My wife and I have lived in the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood for 50+ years and I offer a counter argument – a growing Madison desperately needs housing especially on a location so close to the City's burgeoning downtown labor market one could even argue that in the new Madison Tenney-Lapham is a downtown community. Expanded housing would enable new residents to work and play in a location grown increasingly inaccessible to working folks – with minimal reliance on private automobiles – a win/win for all. A prominent plaque or installation could certainly be situated in the new complex to honor the Credit Union legacy. And, permit me to add a coda concerning a subject which I know is very important to the Council: in the past few years a national consensus has grown around the realization that economic, demographic and racial diversity can only be advanced through the judicious construction and dispersal of multi-family housing. For too many years I have seen the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association the neighborhood's collective voice one could argue give lip-service to affordable housing and diversity, while actively defending the sanctity of single-family housing.

I would hate to think that a dubious eleventh hour historical preservation claim could, yet again, keep the neighborhood frozen in time – let's have common sense allow Madison to grow responsibly and sustainably.

**From:** [eeze2@yahoo.com](mailto:eeze2@yahoo.com)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** [All Alders] Landmark designation for Filene House: agenda 81, item 75633  
**Date:** Monday, February 6, 2023 1:14:57 PM

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**Recipient:** All Alders

**Name:** Judith Ela  
**Address:** 1630 Sherman Ave., Madison, WI 53704  
**Phone:** 608-320-0414  
**Email:** [eeze2@yahoo.com](mailto:eeze2@yahoo.com)

**Would you like us to contact you?** No, do not contact me

**Message:**

We are in favor of the Landmark Designation.

Dick and Judy Ela

**From:** [Patricia Elson](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Save the Filene House  
**Date:** Monday, February 6, 2023 8:51:16 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing in support of landmarking the Filene House. This will be a great asset to the City of Madison, the State of Wisconsin and the whole country. The history of the credit union movement is extremely important and we as a city are privileged to be such a big part of it.

Patty Elson  
Alder district 10

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Eric Hamilton](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Do not landmark Filene House #75633  
**Date:** Monday, February 6, 2023 10:47:55 AM

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Hello, my name is Eric Hamilton and I live in District 6, just down the river from the Filene House.

I encourage you to \*not\* landmark this building. Instead, we should allow more useful development of this area.

As you know, the nomination to landmark the Filene House was submitted only after a development with a number of much-needed housing units was proposed. That timing alone suggests a cynical use of city ordinances to block development that some people don't like. We should not reward this manipulation.

Additionally, neither the nomination nor Landmarks Commission assert that the building itself is special. Yet, because of one speech given by a president and the use as offices of worthy organization, they propose preserving the building in perpetuity. Given that the building has no architectural significance, commemorating this history could be accomplished with a plaque.

There have always been, and will always be, speeches by important people commemorating the work done by good organizations. But what makes these organizations special is not where they do the work but the work they do. Let's not confuse these two and arbitrarily preserve buildings just to stand in the way of progress.

Please oppose this designation of a nondescript building as a landmark. Instead, vote at a future meeting to erect a plaque to the credit union association.

Thank you,

Eric

**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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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

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**  
**Deforest, WI 53532**  
**(608) 846-1575**  
**(608) 846-1577 Fax**

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 was 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 moved 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 its 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:** [Ed Jordan](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Melissa Coons](#)  
**Subject:** Filene House Landmark Nomination - Agenda Item 75633  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:49:26 AM

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Hello,

Hello,

We are writing in support of the Landmark Nomination for Filene House at [1617 Sherman Ave](#). The history is significant both locally and nationally. We believe a historically significant building should not be destroyed. It should be absorbed into and reused in the planned redevelopment of 1617 Sherman Avenue. Just as credit unions strive to make the financial system accessible to the community, a development of this size should also strive to keep our neighborhood accessible to the community. What would be a better way to do this than to save the structure, make it a centerpiece of the development, and present itself as an egalitarian gateway to the community and Tenney Park.

Thank you.

Ed Jordan & Melissa Coons

[22 Sherman Ter #6](#)

**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 10:08:57 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  
[www.mcclone.com](http://www.mcclone.com)



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**From:** [Lindsey Lee-CC](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Please oppose landmarking 1617 Sherman Ave.  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:07:08 AM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Madison alders,

I urge you to vote against giving landmark status to 1617 Sherman Ave.

It is a real stretch to consider that property a landmark site. Giving it such designation would set a precedent for more “landmark designation creep.”

A vote for giving this property special protection would also be sending a message that our city is not serious about overcoming the housing shortage that we are currently facing. As has been much reported (including in today’s Wisconsin State Journal) many of our fellow citizens are struggling to find housing for the coming year. Please do not send a message to them that their interests are of a secondary concern.

Best wishes to all of you,

Lindsey Lee  
731 Williamson Street

Sent from my mobile phone

**From:** [Tibi Light](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** the Filene House  
**Date:** Sunday, January 29, 2023 9:30:11 AM

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Hello,

I am a 52year Madison resident, and the 5th of my generation to live here. I have seen and heard about a lot of changes in Madison, some very fine like Olbrich Gardens and the Garver Feed Mill development, the Picnic Point natural preservation, the Frank Lloyd Wright Convention Center, and all of the bike and walking path development. Our town has become a big bustling city with recent apartment buildings popping up everywhere. And yet most of these apartments/condos are out of the range of working and middle-class people, not to mention the poor. And our green spaces, which have been one of the hallmarks of our beautiful city are being compromised at every development opportunity.

I fervently request the council members to allow the Filene House to be designated as a landmark, and its surrounding property to be developed sensitively with attention to quality of life, green spaces and creative re-development.

This is what makes a great city moving into the future.

Vermilion Development LLC, has no stake in making our city a great place, other than making their profit. Their reasoning why the Filene House should be torn down is because there is more profit in razing the old and building new, than in creatively figuring out ways to integrate new with old and provide something that gives back to the community rather than more crowding, congestion and visual walls of apartments. For them, it is about the money.

The treasures and pleasures of our city were not done in haste nor to make a fast buck. You are making decisions which will continue our legacy for the future....padding developers pockets in the short term, or making a vibrant, creative, environmentally friendly city of the future is what is at stake. It is simple to focus just on the profit and bottom line, not necessarily easy, but it takes vision and passion to create something truly good.

Please choose very carefully. Your decisions affect all of us and for generations.

sincerely,  
Tibi Light, Madison, Wisconsin

**From:** [waynemorris@charter.net](mailto:waynemorris@charter.net)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** [All Alders] Approve Vermillion Development housing project  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 1:05:46 PM

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**Recipient:** All Alders

**Name:** Wayne Morris  
**Address:** 7833 E Oak Brook Circle, Madison, WI 53717  
**Email:** waynemorris@charter.net

**Would you like us to contact you?** No, do not contact me

**Message:**

Please approve the newly revised Vermillion Development project proposed for the Tenney Park area. Let's provide some much needed housing. It is time to move forward and quit living in the past. The Filene building has outlived it's usefulness and is not worthy of Landmark status.

**From:** [Madison Trust for Historic Preservation](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Lynn Bjorkman](#); [Advocacy Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Madison Trust Letter - File #75633  
**Date:** Friday, February 3, 2023 5:49:55 PM  
**Attachments:** [MTHP Letter Filene House File75633 2023-02-03.pdf](#)

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Council members,  
Please find attached a letter from Madison Trust President Lynn Bjorkman regarding the Landmark Nomination review of the Filene House. Please contact me if you have any issues with the attachment.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer

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**Jennifer Gurske**  
Program & Technology Manager  
Madison Trust for Historic Preservation  
Call/Text: (608) 441-8864  
[www.madisonpreservation.org](http://www.madisonpreservation.org)

# MADISON TRUST



for Historic Preservation

P.O. Box 296  
Madison, WI 53701-0296  
(608) 441-8864  
info@madisonpreservation.org  
www.madisonpreservation.org

February 3, 2023

Re: Filene House Landmark Nomination Review, File #75633

Dear Council members,

The Madison Trust for Historic Preservation supports the landmark nomination for the Filene House. This building, in many ways, represents the long history of the credit union movement in Madison. There are several reasons that the Madison Trust believes it is important to preserve the proposed landmark.

First, the building is not elaborate in its design or construction. It is easy for historic preservationists to identify high-culture and unique vernacular architectural features in buildings that contribute to our cultural landscape. But in its lack of architectural embellishments, the Filene House represents Edward Filene's advocacy of "economic democracy," one of the core tenets of the credit union movement. Thus, the utilitarian original building and the 1966 additions are representative of CUNA's ethical and cultural foundation.

The construction of the 1950s building was completed with a minimal budget that started with donations from individual credit unions. As documented in the nomination, decorative features, such as marble in the building's lobby, were funded or donated by local and state credit union leagues. A high level of cooperation across the country was thus required to build the national headquarters. Filene House fully represents the movement's cooperative efforts to promote social reform through progressive banking associations.

Through the work undertaken at Filene House, CUNA and the World Council of Credit Unions promoted credit unionism around the world, starting in the 1950s and continuing until the organization moved its headquarters to Mineral Point Road in 1979. Cooperation with the University of Wisconsin and the federal government allowed CUNA to expand the reach of credit unions in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. Thus, the nomination of the Filene House recognizes the organization's important work, both national and international.

We ask the Commission to approve the nomination to designate the Filene House as a City of Madison Landmark, a building that is significant not only to the history of Madison, but also to the development of the credit union movement world-wide.

Sincerely,

Lynn Bjorkman  
President

***Dedicated to Preserving Madison's Historic Places***

*A local partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation*

**From:** [Janet Murphy](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Evers, Tag](#)  
**Subject:** Filene House  
**Date:** Friday, February 3, 2023 4:46:28 PM

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Dear Alders,

I am a member of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, and have been keeping up on the Filene House landmark nomination.

It sounds like the Filene House was the setting for some important historical moments. The building itself, however, doesn't seem very remarkable according to the nomination papers.

We need infill, transit friendly housing. This building should not be preserved unless it is of enough architectural importance that, stripped of its place in history, we would keep it.

Marking historical events is important. This can be done more meaningfully with plaques, signage, photos, sculptures and Historical Society Museum displays. We don't need a large building as a marker (the fact that I've never heard of Filene House says the building doesn't work as a marker nor as a landmark building).

This is a very desirable property. Let's use it the best we can.

Thank you for all the work you do.

Janet Murphy  
District 13

**From:** [Robert Newbery](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Filene House Landmark Nomination. Common Council Meeting, February 7, 2023. Legistar #75633  
**Date:** Saturday, February 4, 2023 9:35:09 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

In the matter of the Filene House Landmark Nomination, which is on the Agenda of the Common Council Meeting, February 7, 2023. Legistar #75633.

In my 40 plus years in Historic Preservation, the process of balancing approval of a project with recognizing the historic significance of affected historic resources has required formal recognition both of the need for the former and the importance of the latter. Each part has standards, guidelines, and a format for appropriate documentation. You have before you a thoroughly researched and professionally prepared document which lays out the historic significance of the Filene House. The appropriate course of action for the Council at this point is to recognize the significance of the Filene House and approve the nomination. The next determination will a bit more challenging: Which of two competing community values should prevail? Finally, if the decision is to allow the project, as currently proposed, to proceed, is there reasonable mitigation for the loss of the Filene House?

Note: It is important that the Council make the right decision for the right step in the process. That step now is the consideration of the historic significance of the Filene House. The correct decision here is to approve the Nomination, recognizing the historic significance of the Filene House locally and nationally.

Robert S. Newbery  
Staff Historian, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 1980-2011.  
Currently employed by a private transportation engineering firm.

**From:** [Josh Olson](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Opposition to Filene House (75633)  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:02:20 PM

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Hello Alders,

I wrote the following to the editor at the Wisconsin State Journal and would like to share it with you.

To the editor,

I believe everyone wants to make this city better. Madison is where our kids will grow up, where we will meet lifelong friends, enjoy wonderful food, and be entertained by Wisconsin sports.

I love this city, I call it home. I also see that it can be improved and there's lots of opportunity to do just that. Replacing Filene House with housing represents that opportunity to me. We can create new buildings that bring more people together, next to a place like Tenney Park. Those people may already call Madison home, or maybe they will start to call it home after moving in. We do best as a city when we embrace the benefits of community and say yes to win-win scenarios.

I think transforming the Filene House site from a building that brought financial protection and opportunity to families across the country (through CUNA), to new buildings that can now provide families housing and opportunity here in Madison is Filene House's destiny and what the previous tenants would have wanted.

Thank you.

...

At the Landmarks Commission meeting where I could only discuss the historical significance of the site and not the incredible value Madison would get from upzoning this lot, I said that we should build a monument or a plaque to commemorate the history of credit unions in Madison. The building is a poor way to commemorate the history, no one knew it's significance before and very few know it now. The history deserves to be seen in Tenney Park, with the new residents of the building first to see what took place near their new homes.

Also, in Chicago they commemorated the spot where Barack and Michelle Obama first kissed with a plaque. It's pretty cool, and I think more people will think this is the best way to recognize historical events rather than through a nondescript building.

Thank you,  
Josh Olson

**From:** [Alyssa Ryanjoy](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Please vote no on designating Filene House as a Historic Landmark  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:38:46 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders,

I'm writing to comment on the Historical Landmark Designation for Filene House. I live at 1028 E Dayton Street and I work at CUNA Mutual Group, but my opinion expressed here is my own and in no way represents the views of CUNA Mutual Group.

CUNA Mutual Group has just complete a new building project on its campus. Part of the project was demolishing the building at 5810 Mineral Point Rd. This building brought together a group of organizations dedicated to the credit union movement - CUNA Mutual Group, CUNA, World Council of Credit Unions, and Filene. While it served those organizations well, it had outlived its usefulness and has been replace with a beautiful new building. The old building had unique architecture and many esteemed visitors. An effort to designate this as a historical landmark never come before the Landmarks Commission.

The group that is now pursuing this designation for Filene House is leaning on the significance this building to the credit union movement and history. As far as I am aware, none of the four organizations in Madison most involved with the credit union movement and that care deeply about credit union history (CUNA Mutual Group, CUNA, World Council of Credit Unions, or Filene) have registered support for the historic landmark designation. It's difficult to believe that the historical designation is being pursued because of this building's tie to our city's credit union history.

My guess is that people living close to Filene House are not happy with the potential increase in traffic and density that the proposed development would bring and are seeking this designation to make development on the site more complex in an effort to dissuade development. Less traffic and housing density are perfectly fine things to pursue, but this is not the place to do it. Pursuing historical landmark designation for this purpose is circumventing the appropriate process for discussing development and degrades the significance of the historical landmark designation.

The site that Filene House sits on is perfect for adding more housing supply and lowering housing costs in Madison, and Filene House itself has limited historic value. Many fantastic sites in Madison have the designation, and I hope you'll consider my comments before adding Filene House, a pretty basic old office building, to this group.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. Thank you for reading, and I hope you have a productive discussion this evening.

Sincerely  
Alyssa Ryanjoy

**Alyssa Ryanjoy** (she/her/hers)  
608-449-7128  
[ajkesler@gmail.com](mailto:ajkesler@gmail.com)

**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 than protecting the structure.

Thank you

Richard Sandrock

**From:** [Jan Schur](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Filene house  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:23:35 PM

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I support historic designation  
Jan Schur  
333 west main st  
Madison wi.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [David Staple](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Please vote "NO" on Landmark status for 1617 Sherman Ave)  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:20:23 AM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders,

Please vote 'NO' on the question of whether to grant landmark status to the building at 1617 Sherman Ave. I have lived within a few blocks of 1617 Sherman Ave for almost 15 years. The building is unremarkable, as acknowledged by those advocating for its landmark status. The preservation or demolition of that building does not change the relationship between Madison and the history of credit unions. While the story about that relationship is a somewhat interesting one, the presence of that building does nothing to share that story or to illuminate it in any way.

Best,  
David Staple  
1236 Sherman Ave, Madison, WI 53703

**From:** [Kurt Stege](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** February 7 vote on the Filene House landmark nomination. Legistar 75226  
**Date:** Thursday, February 2, 2023 9:50:27 PM

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The Common Council will be asked on February 7 to weigh the historic significance of the Filene House. That history cannot be conveyed in merely a couple of paragraphs.

These are some of the topics that course through Filene House history:

- the history of the credit union movement in this country and elsewhere,
- the lifetime accomplishments of Edward Filene,
- Wisconsin's early 20th century progressive record,
- the reason Madison was selected above all other communities as the location for this building,
- the isolationist movement in this country after World War II,
- US foreign policy during the Cold War,
- the significance of Truman's dedication speech,
- the Peace Corps,
- the philosophy behind the credit union movement,
- the phenomenal growth in credit union membership,
- and the role that CUNA (and affiliated entities) has played in the growth and significance of Madison since 1934,

All of this knowledge is necessary for someone to fairly judge whether the Filene House should be a landmark in Madison.

Please read, at a minimum, the following before voting on February 7:  
[The Landmark Nomination https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11533570&GUID=1D78D2EE-4ED3-4BDE-B0A5-178F2828A6CE](https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11533570&GUID=1D78D2EE-4ED3-4BDE-B0A5-178F2828A6CE)

[Isthmus Opinion piece](https://isthmus.com/opinion/there-are-good-reasons-to-landmark-madisons-filene-house/)

<https://isthmus.com/opinion/there-are-good-reasons-to-landmark-madisons-filene-house/>

[Edward Filene – Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Filene)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Filene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Filene)

Thank you.

Kurt Stege

*Sherman Terrace Neighborhood Association*

February 4, 2023

Dear Members of the Common Council:

I am representing the Sherman Terrace Neighborhood Association. We are the immediate neighbors of Filene House. The building is already a landmark for us. In conjunction with the Tenney Locks, we use it to give directions to friends visiting Sherman Terrace. Its unpretentious mid-twentieth century modern style is pleasing to the eye. The thirty-four 7-foot by 7-foot glass windows on the two-story facade reflect the light of the sky in the evening and mirror the clouds at sunset. Its brown and cream color brick not only evoke other buildings in Madison from the same era, but add to the beauty of the natural color palette, all framed by the mature maples and pines. I would be surprised if there were anyone currently living in the neighborhood who remembers a time when this building was not part of the local landscape. Its presence evokes the passage of time, continuity with the past, and hope for the future.

Some of us actually knew something about its historic significance as the home of CUNA well before the issue was brought to the attention of the Landmark Commission because the dedication by President Harry Truman 72 years ago is commemorated in the lobby. And though the building may not warrant landmark designation for the speech Truman gave, the remarks he made to the 5000 people who attended the event speak to the building's significance. The president said "Credit unions offer people who have few resources a way of getting funds when they need them."<sup>1</sup> The activity of credit unions "is a tribute to the values of thrift and self-help and mutual assistance." He went on: "This building will service credit unions in the United States and Canada, and other areas of the Western Hemisphere. It will be a truly international headquarters--and, as such, it symbolizes the international character of cooperative activities. In whatever country they may be found, these activities speak a common language and have a common goal."

He used the words "cooperate" or "cooperative" 13 times in his remarks as he went on to discuss problems in other registers of concern. He used the expressions "common language," "common goal," "common destiny," "common cause," "common welfare," "common defense" and

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes are from President Harry Truman's Address at Dedication of the Credit Union National Association's Filene House, Madison Wisconsin. <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/public-papers/132/address-dedication-credit-union-national-associations-filene-house>.

“common good.” He calls our attention to our collective life together.<sup>2</sup> This building tells a story infused with central democratic values. It is worthy of landmark status for its historical significance as the center of an international financial movement from 1950 to 1979.

We recognize that the timing of this nomination pits the needs of the present against the value of the past. Neither value should be maximized. We support appropriate development. The 2016 Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara Neighborhood Plan, adopted as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan on January 5, 2016, suggests a compromise in recommending the preservation and repurposing of the building as its first preference for the redevelopment of this site.<sup>3</sup> We endorse this alternative and support landmark designation.

Sincerely,



Larry Nesper

Sherman Terrace Neighborhood Association

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<sup>2</sup> Truman’s use of the term “common” also reflects his own epiphany regarding race being the first president to speak to the NAACP and desegregating the Armed Services of the United States by Executive Order.

<sup>3</sup> Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara Neighborhood Plan, pp. 1, 25.

**From:** [Victor Toniolo](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item 75633  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:05:54 PM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Alders,

I'm writing to oppose the landmarks designation for 1617 Sherman Ave based on both the substance and the spirit of the general ordinances, chapter 41:

First, the substance. 41.07(2) (B) Nobody claims this property associated with the life of Harry S Truman. It was also not associated with a historic event at any level. Can anyone name the speech? In my experience historic events have names, or at least nicknames...The speech is not a historic event, and if it was they would have at least kept the cornerstone to commemorate it. A plaque on the site would be a perfectly suitable replacement for keeping the entire building. The ridiculousness of this criterion was, just today, joked about in a poll: [should we landmark the site President Biden visits tomorrow?](#) I would sincerely hope not.

As far as subsection (A) goes, what about the spirit of the legislation???  
Like many, I had never heard the term "national credit union movement" before this site was proposed as a landmark, what does that mean?

I think that movement amounts to providing equity and access. Access to basic human rights for all. Standing up for the little guy. Not shutting people out.

I think there's a very sad, even disgusting irony that this recommendation amounts to a few wealthy landowners trying to keep lower class renters down and out.

**I'm going to repeat that: there's a sick irony in a few landowners using CUNA's legacy to keep basic human needs from the disadvantaged.**

If the council wants to adhere to the spirit of the national credit union movement, they need to stand up for the little guys. You may hear from many property owners tonight, but you are unlikely to hear from many of the would-be residents of the new development. Don't just represent those who can afford an entire evening off. Think of the hundreds of future constituents. Keep your purpose constant here.

Best Regards,

Victor Toniolo

**From:** [URBAN ASSETS LLC](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Bailey, Heather](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 81 - Filene House Landmark Nomination  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 5:33:32 PM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)  
[2023 02 07 Common Council Vermilion Sherman.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Common Council Members –

I am writing on behalf of Vermilion Development regarding the proposed landmarking of Filene House at 1617 Sherman Avenue. The Vermilion team is opposed to the landmark nomination. We believe there are other opportunities to commemorate the history of the credit union movement on this site without landmarking and preserving the building. We are hoping to present attached slides at tonight's meeting but wanted you to have them to review at your leisure.

Vermilion is proposing to create a public gathering space to be located on Sherman Avenue, adjacent to the City Madison parks property, overlooking Filene Park and Lake Mendota. The space will be planned in collaboration with the city and neighborhood and will provide a space to gather and learn the story of the credit union movement. We urge you to deny approval of this landmark nomination.

Regards,  
Melissa

**Melissa Huggins, AICP**  
**Principal**

C: 608.345.0996



# 1617 Sherman Ave

Madison, WI

February 07, 2023 – Common Council Meeting



Future view from Rooftop Amenity Space

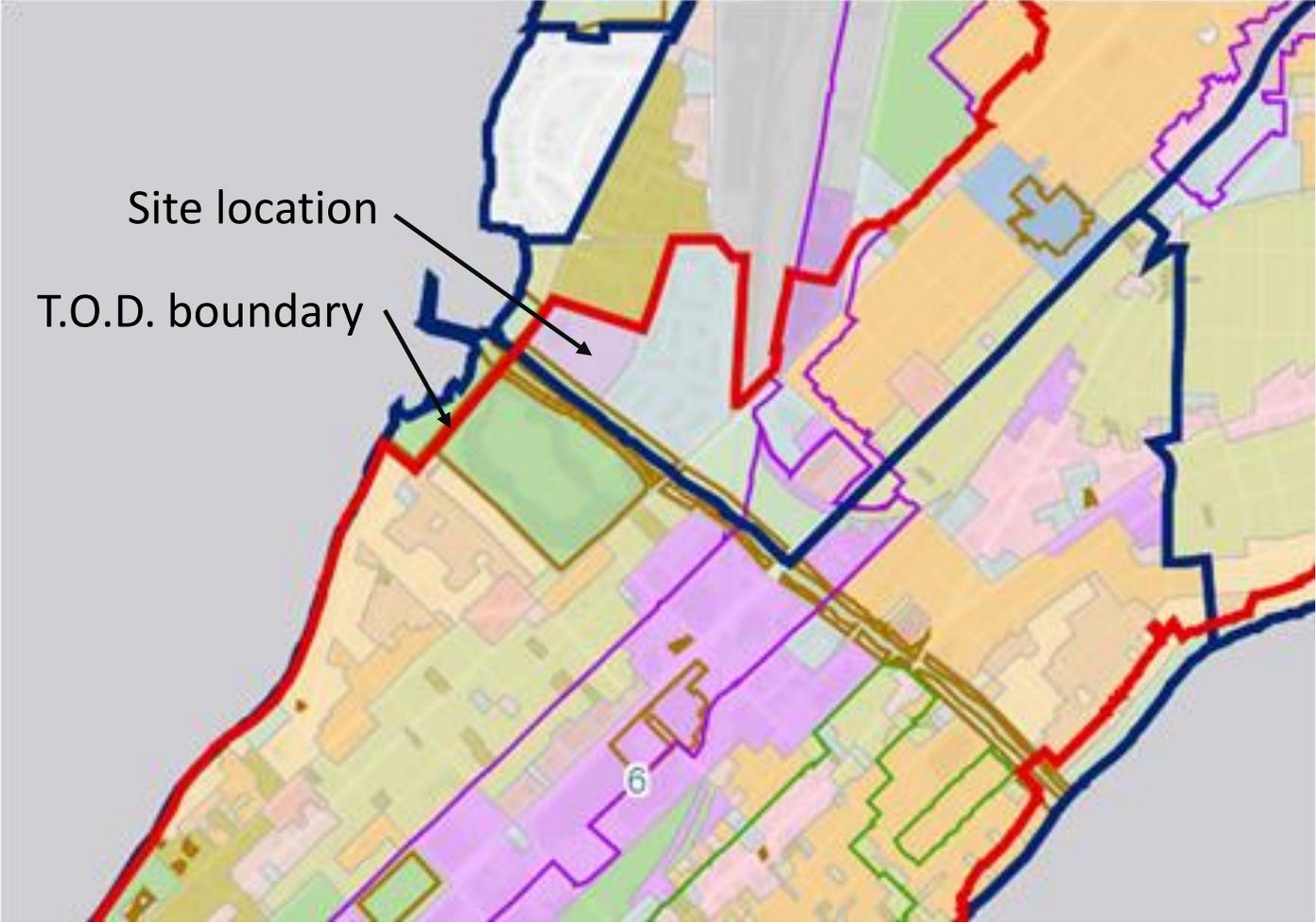
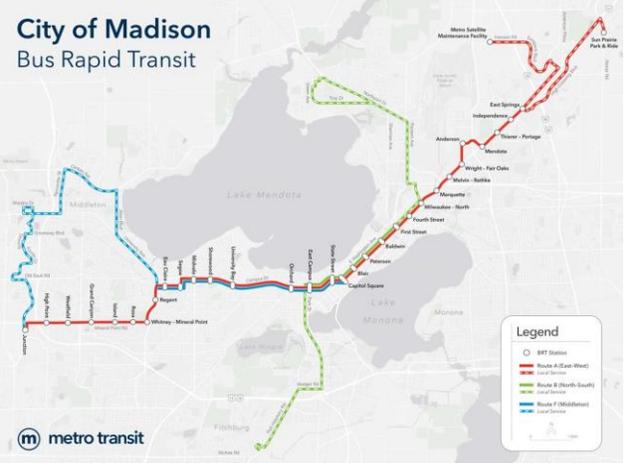
# Emerson East - Eken Park – Yahara Neighborhood Plan

The plan was developed through community input and adopted as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan by the Common Council in January 2016

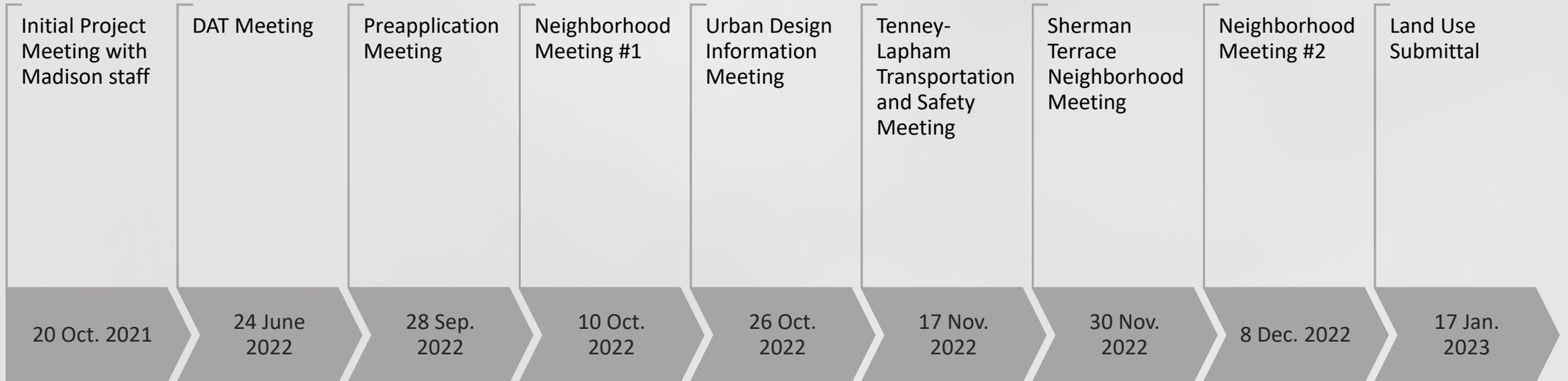
- Recommendation to demolish existing building if not feasible to reuse
- Medium Density Residential is the preferred land use (20-90 units per acre)



# Site is within T.O.D Overlay District



# Project Timeline



# Building Condition

Key points from Isthmus Architects report:

- Structure cannot support additional floors
- Existing building systems would not be compatible with residential use
- Design is architecturally insignificant, per Landmark nomination
- Current site drainage issues exist that impact surrounding properties
- The existing fixed windows are not compatible for residential use
- Less than 50% of the physical building would remain after rehabilitation



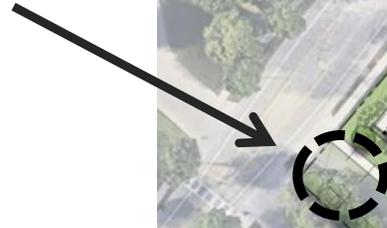
# Landmark Nomination

## Findings:

- Site **DOES** associate with broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community – Credit Union Movement
- Site **DOES** associate with the lives of important persons or with important event(s) in national, state or local history – President Harry Truman
- Site **DOES NOT** embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable as representative of a period, style, or method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.



Proposed location  
commemorating the  
history of the credit  
union movement



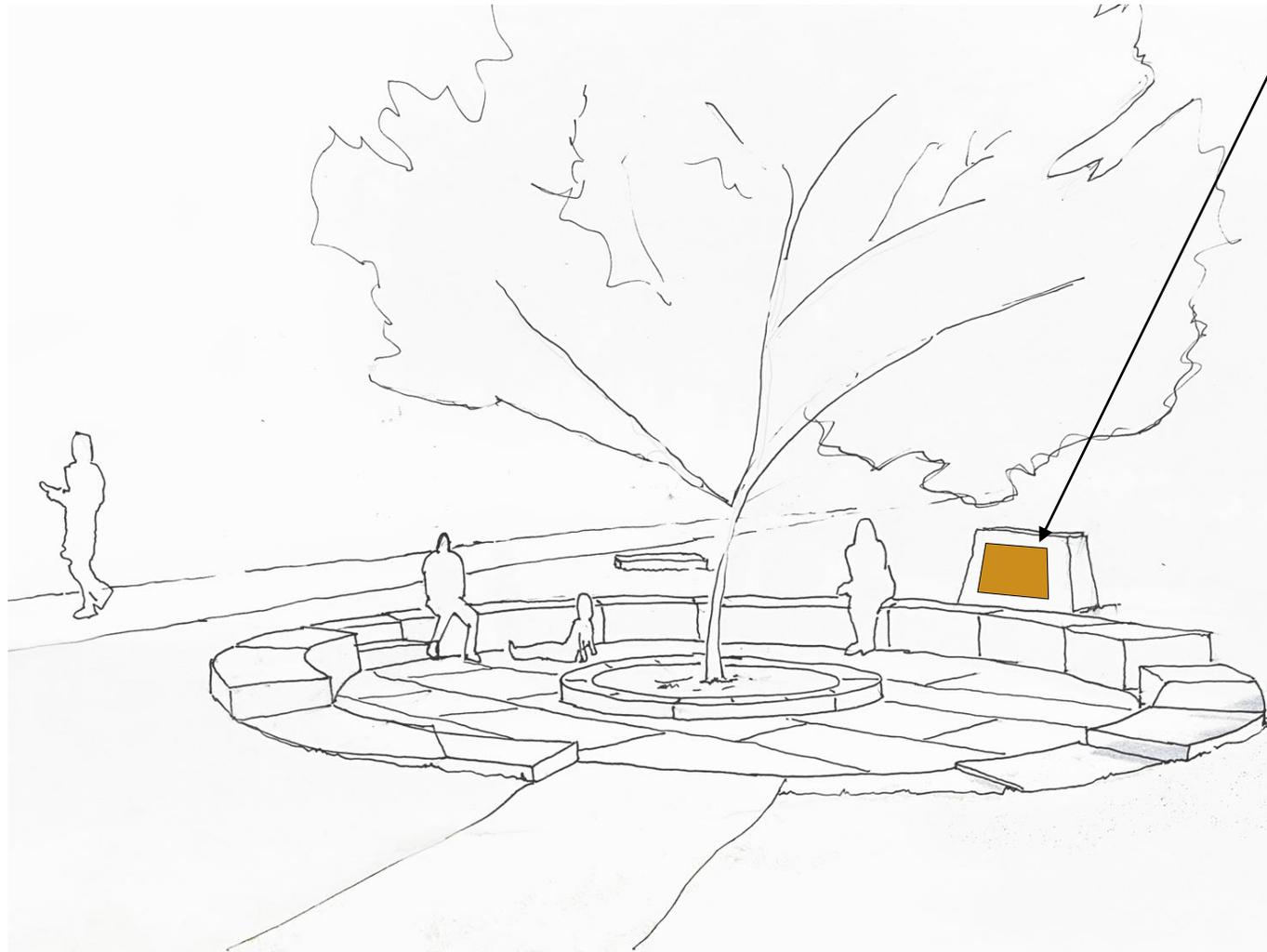
Located along Sherman Avenue  
with public access and adjacent  
to city park land



Looking North Along Sherman Avenue



# Proposal to commemorate the history of the Credit Union movement on the site



Display dedicated to recounting the history of the credit union movement



Sketch of equitable gathering space concept

Precedent Images