

AGENDA # 5

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 13, 2012

TITLE: Buildings Proposed for Demolition –
2012 145 Iota, 625 & 619 North Henry,
816 Christianson (25183)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 13, 2012

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Gehrig, Vice Chair; Christina Slattery, David McLean, Marsha Rummel, Jason Fowler and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

Jason Tish, 2714 LaFollette Avenue, representing Madison Trust for Historical Preservation, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Mr. Tish briefly explained that the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation opposes the demolition of three contributing structures in the Langdon Street Historic District. He noted that the demolition of this contributing cluster of buildings would be a significant degradation to the integrity of the district. He noted that the character of this neighborhood/district is largely that of post 1900 Revival Style Mansions, Greek letter housing, and early student housing.

Mr. Tish said that many property owners in this district utilize the tax credit program. The Langdon Street National Register Historic District has many non-contributing buildings scattered throughout the district. The loss of three more contributing buildings is a threat to the tax credit incentive due to the potential loss of the National Register District.

Levitan asked why this district has not been designated a local historic district.

Bill White, 1 S. Pinckney Street, representing Pallisades Development, registering in support. Mr. White explained he is representing the property owners and would like to explain the larger picture of the proposed development and the area. Mr. White explained that the proposed building will have four corner masses with an internal connective structure.

Slattery asked if there was any consideration for rehabilitation of the existing buildings. Mr. White explained that in order to bring the existing buildings and amenities up to 2012 standards, there would not be a significant improvement based on money spent.

Staff noted that there are three recommendations in the recently adopted downtown plan that directly relate to development in the Langdon area. Those recommendations include:

- Recommendation 168: that the historic properties in the Langdon Neighborhood be inventoried and that a local historic district be considered for the area that would be generally coterminous with the National Register historic district.
- Recommendation 77: to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of contributing historic buildings.
- Recommendation 78: to encourage relatively higher-density infill and redevelopment that is compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non-landmark locations and sites that are not identified as contributing the National Register.

Mr. White noted that he believes this specific block was targeted for higher density redevelopment in the Downtown Plan. Staff noted that there are ways to increase density in the area which would not require the demolition of contributing buildings.

Levitan noted that the demolition of three contributing properties to create higher density is inconsistent with the downtown plan.

Rummel requested a structure report to understand the condition of the properties.

Gehrig noted that she resided in 619 in the 1980s and at that time it had a beautiful stair with intact craftsman details. Gehrig noted that she agrees with the Madison Trust comments.

Gehrig asked if this block was included in the area for bonus stories in the downtown plan. Staff noted that it is and that in a previous meeting with the developers, there was discussion about restoring the building at 150 Langdon Street.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Rummel, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the Landmarks Commission strongly opposes the proposed demolition of three contributing structures in the National Register historic district for many reasons, but most importantly due to the inconsistency with the newly adopted Downtown Plan recommendations 77, 78, and 168 as well as the concern regarding the long term implications of the health of the National Register district as a whole since every demolition request is followed by another. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

The Landmarks Commission noted that there is no known historic interest in the structure at 816 Christianson.