

AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: June 13, 2011

TITLE: 1021 University Avenue - Luther Memorial Church Landmark Nomination Review (22775)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: June 13, 2011

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Ald. Marsha Rummel, Christina Slattery, Daniel J. Stephans, Robin M. Taylor and Erica Fox Gehrig.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of June 13, 2011, the Landmarks Commission **APPROVED** the nomination process for Luther Memorial Church located at 1021 University Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project was Gary Tipler, who prepared the landmark nomination and considered the church an excellent example of 20th Century Gothic Revival. The church was the second building by architects Claude & Starck, who developed a relationship with the church community and had built the chapel now called the “Church Key.” He described the interior of the church and some of the history behind various areas of the building, as well as some of the building materials. The church had been remodeled in the 1990s. The school building next door is more finished in a post-Deco styling with plain unadorned columns. He described this as one of the most important examples of 20th Century Gothic Revival, both in the church and the school, but the church represents one of the greatest works by the architects Claude & Starck. Architect Reginald Stehr who designed the school building was born and raised in Madison, and was the architect for record for the church for its many alterations between the time of the education building construction and the time of his death. Al Larson, president of the church, registered in support and spoke to the church’s architectural importance. He stated the church is very popular for weddings, and that University students who return to the Madison area often return to the church as well. Members of the church and members of the community have always considered the church to be a landmark. A recent proposal for a 12-story high rise on the same block could influence membership in the community and the operation of the church itself. If the church ceased to exist on that particular location it would be a great loss to the community. Franklin Wilson, senior pastor at Luther Memorial, registered in support and stated that some 20 years ago church members began the process of asking for landmark status. The church feels that if the building were given landmark status it could have some effect on how the Plan Commission reaches its decision regarding the St. Francis House redevelopment. Gehrig asked how the reaction was of the Grand Central building behind the church. Wilson replied the parish has always been right in the midst of student life. The congestion that Grand Central has brought has been a difficulty for them, but not overwhelming. The noise has been a bigger factor for them because of the reverberation from Grand Central, making liturgical events difficult in the nave. They also have to contend with the Chemistry Building and its HVAC systems. Jason Tish from Madison Trust for Historic Preservation stated their support for this nomination and informed the Commission they (MTHP) had paid for part of the nomination preparation. The Secretary stated that July 25 would be the

earliest the Landmarks Commission could have a public hearing. Unless the St. Francis redevelopment stops or is taken out of the City system, that process has already started.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Rummel, to approve moving forward with the nomination process. The motion passed on a vote of (5-0).