

By Aaron Nathans
and Judith Davidoff

The Capital Times

Madison developer Marty Rifken is working on buying up a prime block of State Street across from the Overture Center in hopes of replacing buildings with new housing, retail space and an underground parking lot.

The Fairchild Street side of the block fronts on what will be the glass-walled concert hall designed by Cesar Pelli, offering condo dwellers an intimate view of what promises to be a world-class cultural complex.

Rifken has already bought 120 W. Mifflin, the home of Badger Office Supplies, on the back side of the block. According to City Assessor records, Rifken paid \$380,000 for the storefront, \$165,000 more than its assessed value.

Property owners on the odd-numbered side of the 100 block of State Street said they've received generous purchase offers from Rifken, and some are considering them.

The triangular block connects the new Overture Center to the Capitol and houses some of Madison's most popular little stores, including the House of Wisconsin Cheese and Myles Teddywedgers, and numerous above-ground apartments. Rifken said many of the buildings aren't in good shape, and more can be done with the block.

"It's been unfortunate so little has been done with what's happening at the top of State Street," Rifken said on Thursday. "If anything, it's been deteriorating for years."

"It's a prudent place to put investment dollars, and the city needs it."

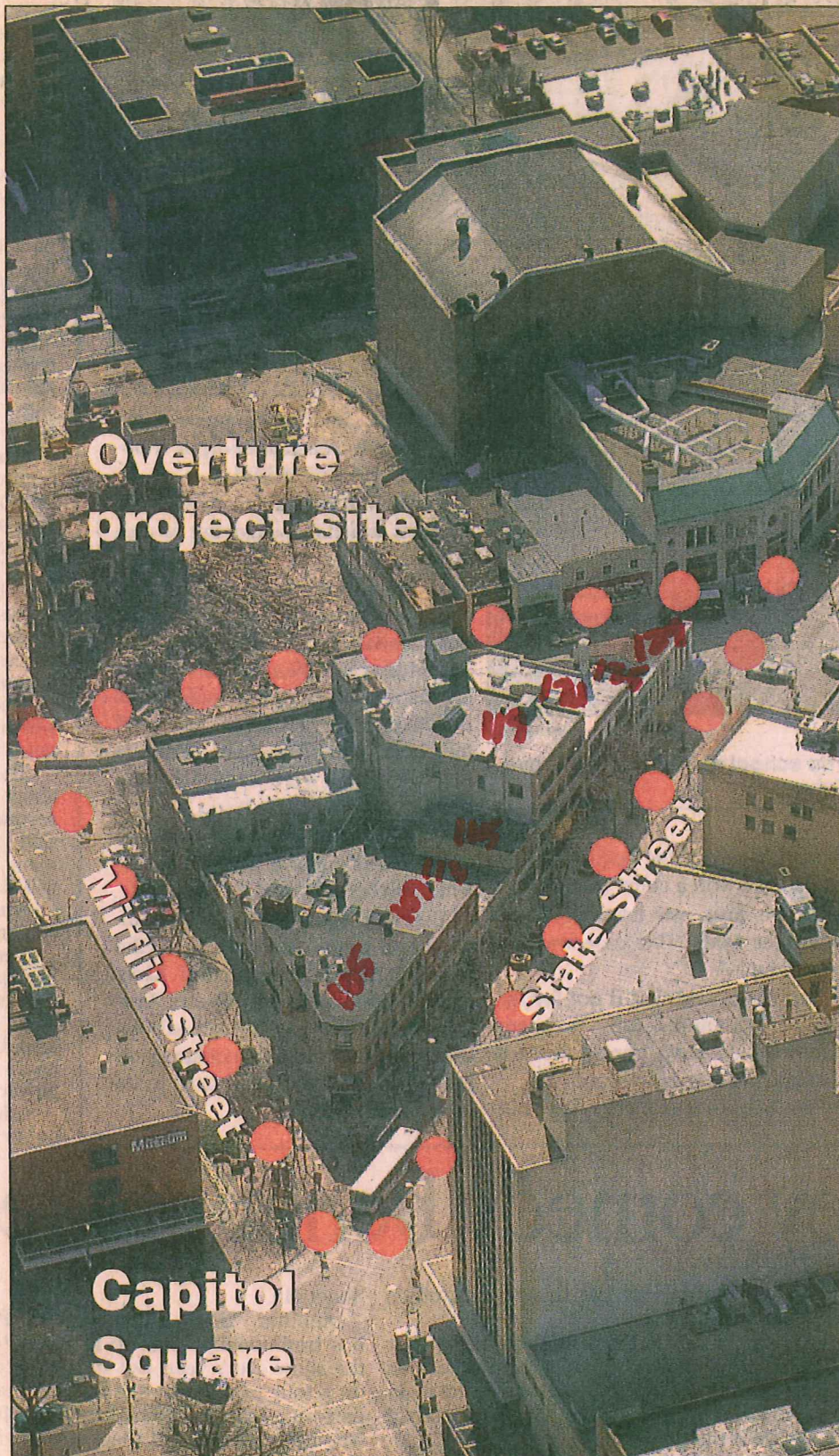
Despite speculation from some property owners, Rifken said neither the Overture Foundation nor its benefactor, Jerry Frautschi, are involved. Rifken said he has some out-of-town partners in the project.

Jeff Bartell, attorney for the Overture Development Corp., said his client has no part in the project.

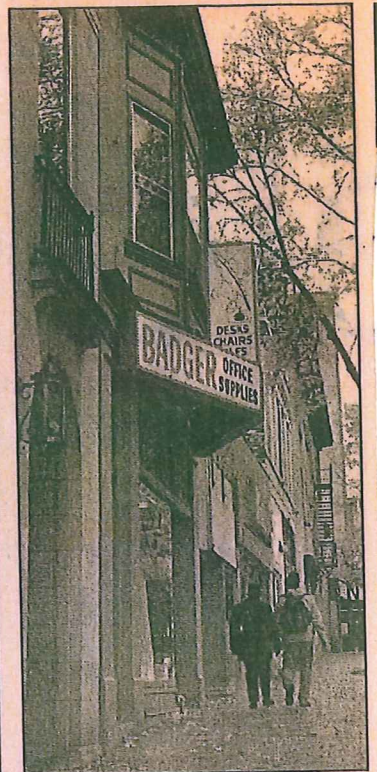
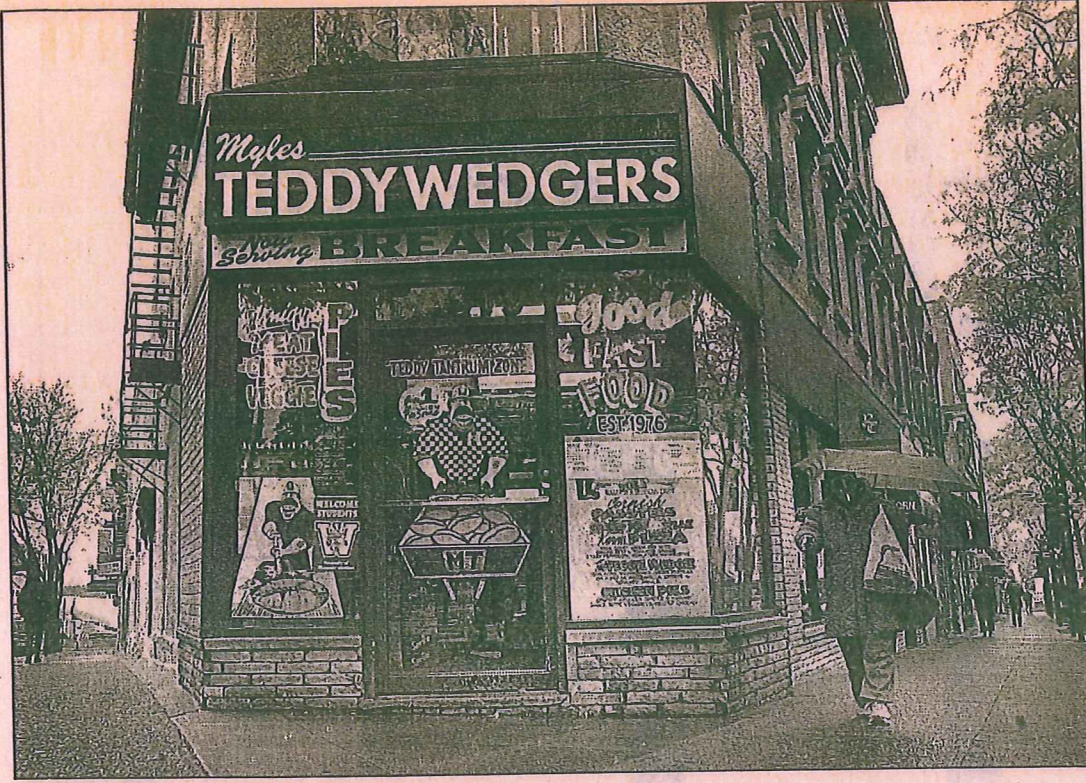
If Rifken's plan comes to fruition, most buildings on the block would need to be replaced to put in underground parking, Rifken said. He said he appreciated the historical character of many of the buildings, and was willing to consider moving some of them.

Rifken said he didn't have a specific plan for developing the block. If he cannot acquire all of the properties, he said he would work on improving the buildings he buys. He called the development "a 10-year dream."

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Madison developer Marty Rifken is working to purchase this triangular-shaped block of State Street across from the Overture Center and wants to build the existing buildings with new housing, retail space and an underground parking lot.



MIKE DeVRIES/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Developer Marty Rifken has targeted the 100 block of State Street for possible redevelopment. Current buildings on the block include Myles Teddywedgers (left) at 101 State St. and Badger Office Supply at 120 W. Mifflin St.

Block

Continued from Page 1A

City Planning Director Mark Olinger said he had no direct knowledge of the project. But he said any plan that would require gutting an entire block of State Street would be a long shot.

"There are many, many issues that would need to be addressed and overcome before that vision could be realized," Olinger said.

He said that the project would raise serious issues about building size, height and historic preservation.

Joe Lusson, president of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, said the city must protect its architectural history.

"The 100 block of State Street is at the core of Madison's identity," Lusson said. "I think we should be celebrating that history and not erasing it. It features some of the oldest and most beautiful buildings in the city."

Downtown Ald. Mike Ver-

including Rifken. Jack Van Metre, an attorney who owns properties at 122 and 124 W. Mifflin St., said Rifken has offered him money "significantly" beyond the building's assessed value. He said he was in no rush to sell.

Gus Paraskevoulakos, who owns the building at 117 State St. as well as The Comedy Club at 119 State St., said Rifken has made generous offers, but was not selling.

But Rifken has refused to take no for an answer so far, Paraskevoulakos said.

"I built the place on my own. I built the place when there was nothing there. People said you're making a big mistake. I worked hard. I survived. My place is not for sale," Paraskevoulakos said.

Dennis Denure, who owns the store Game Haven at 129 State St., doesn't like Rifken's vision for the street.

"I don't think the city needs any more condominiums," said Denure, who does not own the building.

Rifken said he was willing to wait a long time to make his dream happen, but he is realistic that the plan may not work.

"I may fall off the ship anytime, because you can only wait so long, and then I'd move on to other things," Rifken said.

location, and so anything Rifken does will clearly be scrutinized like never before, and rightfully so. Demolition on that block is going to be a very, very controversial undertaking," Verveer said.

Rifken conceded that "under today's codes," high-rise condos right along State Street would be impossible because of height restrictions. But he said he would set taller buildings back from the street and put retail businesses along State Street.

Three properties closest to the State Capitol, including the building that houses Myles Teddywedgers Cornish Pasty, have a city landmark designation, although that only pro-

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Three properties closest to the State Capitol, including the building that houses Myles Teddywedgers Cornish Pasty, have a city landmark designation, although that only provides some protection to the buildings' exteriors. Rifken said it may not be necessary to demolish that corner building to put in a parking ramp.

The Landmarks Commission holds a public hearing and reviews any plans for demolition of a landmark, said Kitty Rankin, preservation planner for the city.

"It means there is a landmarks review, but it doesn't mean for sure it can't be torn down," Rankin said.

Rifken's Central Focus LLC, organized on Sept. 18, 2001, bought the Badger Office Supplies building on June 21. Members of the Milsted/Caputo family, whose individual properties make up much of the block, said they've received offers from Rifken, but haven't sold. If they do, it will be together, John Caputo said.

"We met, we made a decision and it's all for one, and one for all," said Caputo, who owns several properties on the block. The block's current assessed value is \$5.4 million.

The block has nine owners,

Savvy

Thursdays.

The Capital Times

EXTRA FLAVOR!

Beautiful and bleak face off as Overture rises on Fairchild

10/19/02

By Judith Davidoff and Aaron Nathans

The Capital Times

A gleaming concert hall is rising on North Fairchild Street, but across the road, it's not exactly elegant.

On a recent tour of the Overture site, several City Council members noted the scruffy look of the 100 block of North Fairchild Street, said downtown Ald. Mike Verveer. The block is the back of the buildings on the first block of State Street and the 100 block of West Mifflin.

"All of us commented that something had to be done with the backside of those properties," Verveer said.

The Overture Center's main hall includes a 5½-story glass wall that will stretch for half a block. But the hall, now under construction, will face weathered, patchy brick buildings, messy fire escapes and faded banners.

Both Overture and city officials admit to being concerned about the view.

"The Overture board has noticed the state of repair of some of those properties and lamented a bit that the front door of Overture Hall faces properties that are not kept up very well," said Jeff Bartell, who represents the Overture Development Corp., the real estate arm of the cultural arts center.

Bob D'Angelo, director of the Overture Center, is hoping for at least a minor face-lift.

"We would like the landlords of the buildings across the street to dress up their buildings," he said Friday.

The Capital Times reported Friday that developer Marty Rifken has a more radical idea. Rifken is trying to buy the entire triangular block bounded by State Street, West Mifflin Street and Fairchild Street.

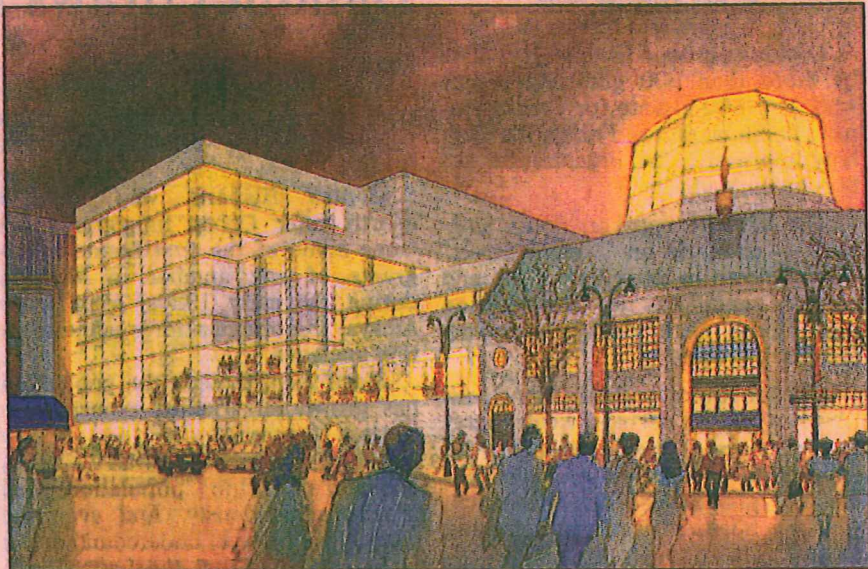
Fairchild Street faces the Overture Center, the new cultural arts district that is the result of a \$100 million gift from Jerry Frautschi and that has been designed by world-class architect Cesar Pelli.

Rifken hopes to build housing and retail spaces for the site, along with an underground parking ramp. He recently acquired one property on the block, which has nine different owners. He has made offers to every owner.

Friday's report about Rifken's plan drew some concern from city officials who fear losing historic buildings.

But city Planning Director Mark Olinger said the 100 block of Fairchild Street may need improvement.

He noted that the unsightly fea-



DAVID SANDELL/THE CAPITAL TIMES AND THE OVERTURE FOUNDATION

Rough building backsides on the 100 block of Fairchild Street (above) directly face what will be the glass-walled main entrance to glittering Overture Hall across the street (top).

tures of the street are in many cases the back doors of the buildings that are still "functional entrances."

Fixing up the street with plants or other accessories, he said, is not that easy, given space limitations.

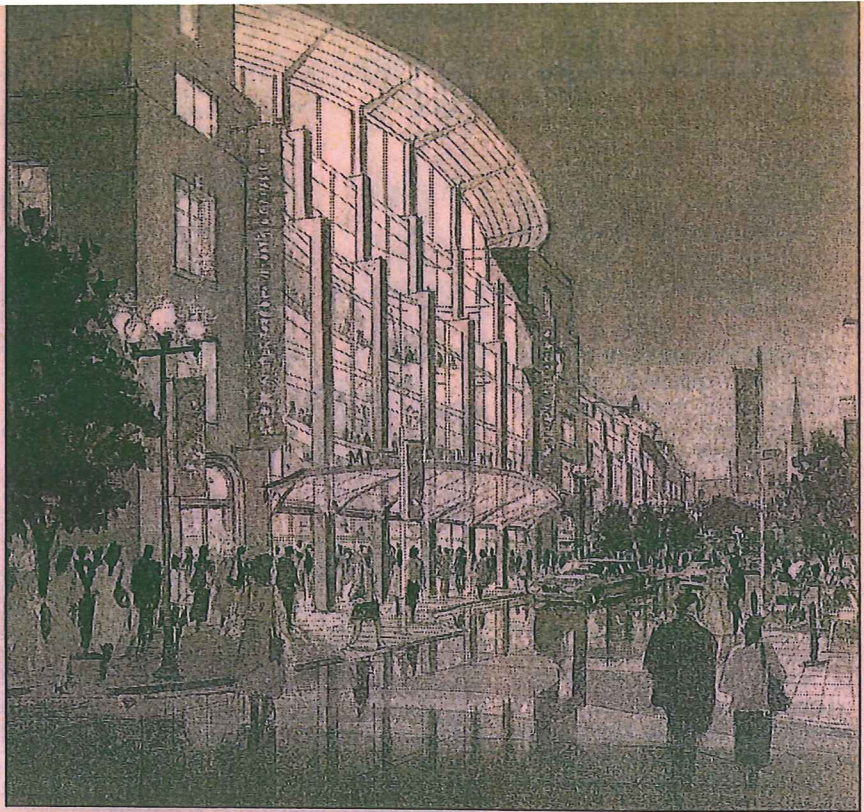
"I think we can do some things, but it's a tight urban space and not a lot of room in which to work," Olinger said.

The State Street redesign project, which has been in development many years, will address the Mifflin and Fairchild portions of the backside of State Street, Olinger said.

"We want to improve the connection between the Capitol Square and both the library and Overture Center," he said. "We think that intersection should be so much more than what it is now."

Gus Paraskevoulakos, who owns the building at 117 State St. and The Comedy Club at 119 State St., said he has done plenty of work on the back of his building. He said he moved the kitchen exhaust vent from the back side to the roof to remove the eyesore.

See FAIRCHILD, Page 3A



OVERTURE FOUNDATION

Above: A rendering of the Overture Center performance hall entrance that will face the back of the buildings on Fairchild Street. Below: The disrepair of the buildings on Fairchild Street is evidenced by crumbling and patched brickwork.



Fairchild

■ Continued from Page 1A

But with talk of the block being bought, or the possibility of property owners being pushed out by eminent domain, there's little incentive to remodel the Fairchild exteriors, he said.

"My neighbors are nice people. They try. They're willing to do it, I'm sure," Paraskevoulakos said of remodeling.

Former Mayor Paul Soglin, who spearheaded creation of the State Street pedestrian mall and the Civic Center, said there are all sorts of oppor-

portunities for the block that Rifken is eyeing.

"If there were ever a need for public-private partnership, this is it. There are tremendous opportunities there," said Soglin, who is running for mayor again.

Mayor Sue Bauman, before she left for Italy on a sister-city trip Friday, said through her spokesman she did not wish to comment on Rifken's plans.

Verveer said the buildings along Fairchild Street, all of which have State or Mifflin addresses, are "architecturally underwhelming."

The buildings "that are directly across the street from the Overture Center" have a desperate need of some



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Frautschi makes quiet deals to buy Overture's neighboring properties

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Frautschi makes quiet deals to buy Overture's neighboring properties

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Posted: Monday, November 22, 2010 7:00 am

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The private Overture Foundation has acquired properties for a redevelopment on the triangular 100 block of State Street. The foundation intends to present a redevelopment proposal next year. JOHN HART - State Journal





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IF YOU GO

What: The Madison City Council is expected to decide whether the city or a private entity should take ownership of Overture Center and set conditions for city financial support.

When: 6:30 p.m., Nov. 30

Where: City-County Building, 210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 201

This story appeared first in the Sunday edition of the Wisconsin State Journal newspaper.

Quietly over the past eight years, philanthropist W. Jerome Frautschi — who donated \$205 million to build Overture Center and has been a driving force in its evolution behind the scenes — has been buying properties on the adjacent 100 block of State Street for future redevelopment.

The \$6.5 million in purchases by Frautschi's private Overture Foundation, under the name of Central Focus LLC, are for far more than the current assessed values and have come as the arts center has struggled financially.

The six properties are on the historic, triangular block of State, North Fairchild and West Mifflin streets, Overture Foundation President George Austin confirmed. Foundation officials see the purchases as a way to prevent inappropriate development and pursue a project that complements the facility and Capitol Square, he said.

Initial ideas call for some buildings to be demolished to make way for the creation of a public plaza that would allow Overture patrons to look across North Fairchild and see the Capitol.

But the plans raise questions about historic preservation and the Overture Foundation moving secretly to spend millions on property while the arts center struggles with finances and the city decides whether or not to acquire it.

"I do think a question is going to be raised, if you have the resources to (buy property), why don't you create an endowment for the long-term future of Overture Center?" Mayor Dave Cieslewicz said. "It is Jerry Frautschi's money. He can use it any way he pleases. If it were me, I would want to make sure I used resources I had to ensure the long-term future of Overture."

Austin said criticism of Overture Foundation investments in the 100 block of State Street is "unfair" because Frautschi and his wife, Pleasant Rowland, have donated a quarter-billion dollars to build Overture, support resident companies and help eliminate Overture's debt.

The foundation's property acquisitions "shouldn't have any impact on long-term governance and operations issues being decided by the council," Austin said, speaking for Frautschi.

"The intent here is not to make money," Austin said. "The intent is to support the philanthropic interest and the investment in Overture Center."

Overture Foundation was created by Frautschi in 1996 to implement philanthropic goals centered on the arts and culture. The foundation was used as a means to provide funds to build Overture Center but has no connection to the operation of the arts facility.

The city is considering whether to pursue private or public ownership and the size of a subsidy for Overture as part of a path to erase \$28.6 million in debt. The City Council is expected to make a decision on Nov. 30.

The Overture Foundation is a separate organization from the Madison Cultural Arts District, Overture's Center's operator, and 201 State Foundation, the arts center's fundraising arm and the nonprofit designated to assume operations after ownership of the arts center is decided.

MCAD and 201 State Foundation have not been involved in property purchases or planning for the 100 block of State Street, Austin said.

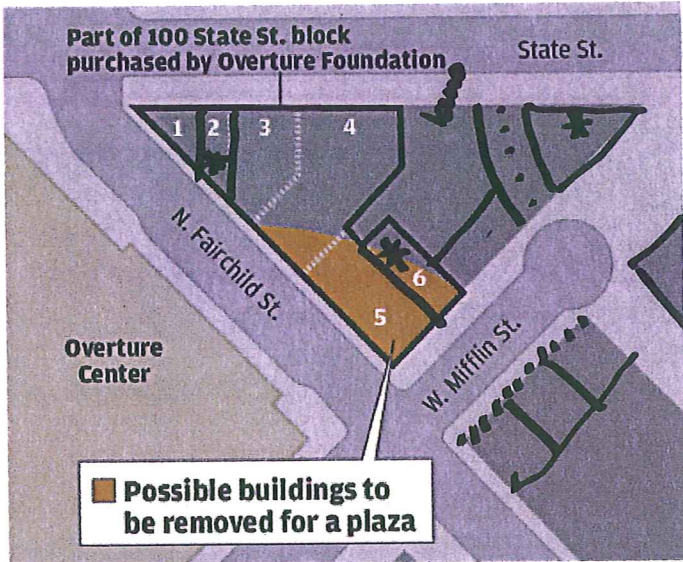
Redevelopment plan

It's long been suspected that Frautschi might be behind purchases on the 100 block of State Street. Austin confirmed the connection after the State Journal obtained a copy of a private study on the properties commissioned by the foundation.

Over the years, there was speculation about large-scale redevelopment on the block involving hotels or office buildings and the foundation wanted "to ensure inappropriate development did not occur there," Austin said.

State Street concept

The Overture Foundation is preparing a plan to redevelop its properties on the 100 block of State Street. The foundation has done a financial analysis of options and intends to submit a plan next year.



Property	Year purchased	Purchase price	Current assessment
1. 129 State St.	2005	\$972,000	\$240,000
2. 125 State St.	2009	\$1,000,000	\$264,000
3. 121-123 State St.	2004	\$1,900,000	\$1,052,000
4. 119 State St.	2006	\$1,254,000	\$1,332,000
5. 122-124 W. Mifflin St.	2007	\$1,000,000	\$690,000
6. 120 W. Mifflin St.	2002	\$380,000	\$264,000
Total:		\$6,506,000	\$3,842,000

SOURCE: Overture Foundation; Madison Assessors Office

State Journal

The foundation's study, done in summer 2008, shows a \$12.4 million redevelopment that would preserve State Street facades, combine some interiors and improve buildings, and demolish two buildings on West Mifflin Street for a plaza.

The study includes images of how the redevelopment would open pedestrian areas and views between the Capitol and Overture Center.

The foundation intends to submit formal plans for the properties in 2011 with the hope of starting construction late next year, Austin said.

"The hope for the block is that it remains a vital, productive element of State Street and the retail corridor and that it complements very important civic buildings — the Capitol, Overture Center and the new library," Austin said.

Any redevelopment proposal, Austin said, would maintain the scale of the block, keep it mixed-use, improve the quality of buildings, and contribute to the success of Downtown and Overture Center.

But any redevelopment also would be complicated and controversial. Two of the acquired buildings, 125 State Street and 120 W. Mifflin St., are city landmarks and any changes would require Landmarks Commission approval, according to a memo prepared for the State Journal by city historic preservation planner Amy Scanlan. The other acquired buildings touch landmarks and the commission would have to provide an advisory opinion to the Urban Design and Plan commissions.

Cieslewicz said he would oppose redevelopment of the full block, but a more modest proposal might work.

"I wouldn't rule it out," he said. "But I'm highly skeptical any time you talk about playing with buildings around the Capitol and State Street."

The city would treat any proposal "with great care, great caution and great sensitivity to the historic character of the block," he said.

Ald. Mike Verveer, 4th District, who represents the core Downtown, said, "In one sense, it's a relief. There seems to be no intention to disturb the State Street streetscape."

As for demolitions on West Mifflin Street, Verveer said, "I think Overture will have to make a very strong argument."

Any proposal "will be sensitive to the historic character of the block," Austin said. "We know it's important."

Officials concerned

Still, Cieslewicz and other city officials voiced concern about why Overture Foundation used a third party to acquire properties and why the foundation instead hasn't invested the money in Overture Center.

Ald. Tim Bruer, 14th District, perhaps the council's sharpest critic of Overture Center's financial struggles, said he's disturbed the foundation bought properties at far above the assessed value while Overture Center officials sought city support to financially support the arts center in 2005 and again this year.

"The question is, what else do we not know that we should?" Bruer said.

"The thing that gives me pause is the secrecy of it," said council President Mark Clear, who praised Frautschi's generosity to the community and said a redevelopment of some sort might be appropriate.

Verveer said it seems "almost perverse" in the face of Frautschi's generosity to be talking about where he should be putting his money.

Austin said it's common to use a third party in private real estate transactions and doing so may have saved Overture Foundation from paying even higher prices.

Frautschi, Austin stressed, donated the money to build Overture and has supported the arts Downtown, and also is a significant contributor to the \$15 million in private funds being used to settle the \$28.6 million in Overture debt.

The redevelopment of the 100 block will get a full public airing and any project would increase the tax base and generate private revenue that can be used to support Overture Center, Austin said.

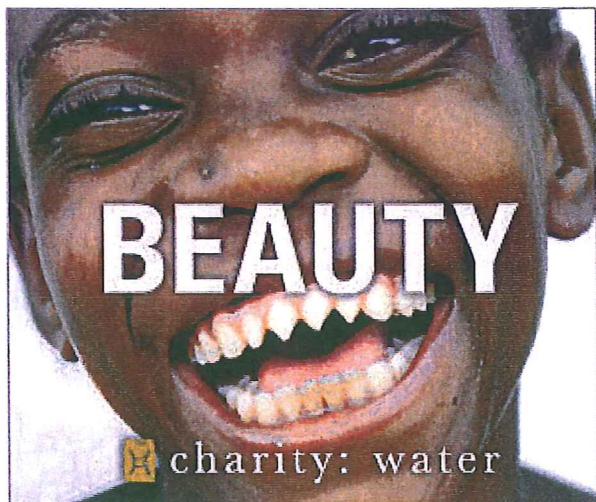
Posted in Govt-and-politics on *Monday, November 22, 2010 7:00 am* Updated: 9:28 am. Overture Center, W. Jerome Frautschi, Overture Foundation, Central Focus Llc, Print First

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November 17, 2005

Joe Lusson, President
Madison Trust for Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 296
Madison, WI 53701-0296

Dear Joe:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the concerns of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation for the future of the 100 block of State Street.

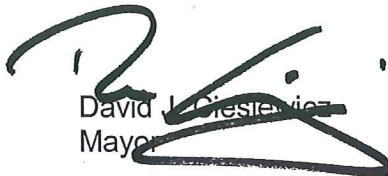
Like you, I have watched recent developments on this block with interest and growing concern. I want to make it clear that I support the long-term preservation of this historic block. I do not believe that much taller buildings, or conversely, the entire clearing of this block, would be in the best interests of the City of Madison, its taxpayers, or any of its residents.

I would view with great skepticism any movement by developers or others to alter the fundamental character or to destroy any of the buildings on this block.

Again, thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



David J. Cieslewicz
Mayor

DJC/III

cc: Ald. Austin King, District 8
Mark Olinger, City of Madison Planning and Development
Kitty Rankin, City of Madison
Susan Schmitz, Downtown Madison, Inc.
Ald. Mike Verveer, District 4
Ledell Zellers, Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.

