

From: gtipler tds.net [mailto:gtipler@tds.net]

Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2012 12:22 PM

To: rrdickwagner@gmail.com; Rummel, Marsha; dokroley@dorschnerassociates.com; trbarchi@aol.com; jaharrin@tds.net; rslayton@erdman.com; mhuggins@charter.net; lufler@education.wisc.edu; Martin, Al; Monks, Anne; George Austin

Subject: Vallender Building, 127-129 State Street

Dear members of the Urban Design Commission:

I urge you to consider retaining the Vallender Building at 127-129 State Street within the project for the 100 Block of State Street.

While the condition of the Fairchild Street side has been overstressed, the State Street facade is in quite remarkable condition, with a different structure, mass, and architectural design. It is capable of being refurbished, restored or renovated to accommodate new uses.

The Fairchild side does require attention, and if retained could have additional windows and an improved appearance without destroying the whole building. The State Street facade masonry is of the quality that it could be cleaned of its paint, the stucco removed, the brick repaired as need, and a new storefront installed.

I've attached a statement portraying the importance of the Vallender Building as an extremely important and rare example of architecture worthy of retaining.

At its recent meeting, Landmarks Commission members stated that if it were coming to them as a Landmark nomination, that they'd have no trouble in recommending a designation.

More importantly, if it were renovated under the Historic Tax Credit program administered by the National Park Service, the owners could achieve tax credits for the Vallender and any of the other buildings in the project that met the standards for eligibility. As one who does this kind of work, I have no doubt that a different approach would qualify these buildings under that program.

I encourage you to help retain this important building and urge that it be incorporated it into the plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gary Tipler
Tipler & Associates
807 Jenifer Street
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 286-1844, gtipler@tds.net

Vallender Building Historic Statement

129-129 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin

Prepared by Gary Tipler, February 15, 2012.

Significance

The Vallender Building is significant an excellent example of a rare architectural style in Madison, the Rundbogenstil or American Round Arch Style, a subcategory of the German Romanesque Revival style, a particularly German rendition of the style employed by German immigrant architects and builders in the United States. It embodies the characteristics of a German-built structure, reflecting the culture and history of its immigrant entrepreneurial builders, owners and inhabitants, the Vallender family. It is also significant as an increasingly rare building type of its period in Madison -- one that housed both business and residence for its owner.

The Rundbogenstil contrasted against the Gothic and Classical styles of its time. It was embraced in Germany, then Prussia, and in the United States, notably by German immigrant architects of that period.¹ It was expressed largely in churches, public buildings and private institutional buildings, but made its way into the design of residential and commercial buildings, as well, whether designed by architect, designer or builder.

The main proponent of the Rundbogenstil in Madison was the architectural firm of Donnel and Kutzbock. August Kutzbock, the designer of the firm, who came to the United States from Bremen, Germany in 1852 and settled in Western New York, then in 1854 in Ohio. It is believe that is where he met Samuel Hunter Donnel, an engineer, and they began their work together soon after they arrived in Madison in 1855. Their earliest known works in Madison were in 1855 in large residences and commercial buildings, and within a short period of time they were embraced by the great builders and decision makers of Madison and the State. They designed the City Hall on West Mifflin at Wisconsin Avenue (1857) and the Wisconsin State Capitol (1857-1859). They also designed the exuberant house, 424 North Pinckney Street (1857), for Alexander McDonnell, the contractor for the construction of the Capitol, as a showcase for his work. They employed the Rundbogenstil or German Romanesque Revival style in many of their buildings including the City Hall, the G.A.R Hall and the State Capitol, along with several residences, most of which are gone. The other remaining examples of the Rundbogenstil in Madison are by Donnel and Kutzbock. They are the McDonnell residence at 424 N. Pinckney and the Gates of Heaven Synagogue in James Madison Park. Arguably, the Van Slyke House at 24 East Gilman may fall into the same classification. After Donnel's death in 1861, Kutzbock practiced alone until the fall of 1864, then left for San Francisco, but returned to Madison in the fall of 1867.

Madison's German-speaking community was intimate. Frank Vallender would undoubtedly have known Kutzbock, may well have worked on one of his buildings and may have been influenced by him during his work several years prior to the construction of Vallender's building. It isn't known whether Kutzbock had any involvement in this building design. However, the Vallender Building has an extraordinary architectural presence, given its size and the stature of its owners and their respective businesses.

The Vallender Building is a rare building type in Madison – a mixed-use commercial and residential building built in the 1860s – built by an entrepreneurial owner for both business and

¹ Curran, Kathleen. Dec.,1988. "The German Rundbogenstil and Reflections on the American Round-Arch Style." *Journal of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 47, No. 4: 251-373.
Capital Times, "Design of Synagogue Here Is Identified" January 11, 1971. p.16.

space and residence. Virtually all the commercial examples of that period, 1850s-1860s, are gone from the Capitol Square and only two other ones remain on State Street that are visibly identifiable of the period, the building at 402 State, the George Sherer building (1866) in which the Badger Liquor business is located and the N.A. Brown Building at 414 State (1855). Another is the building at 128-130 State Street, though it was remodeled in 1928-29, in a design by Frank Riley.²

Historically, the Vallender Building embodies the characteristics of a German-built structure, reflecting the culture and history of the immigrant entrepreneurs, Frank and William Vallender. It was hand built of locally-made brick and locally-quarried sandstone and the increasingly rare locally-made vermilion-colored red brick. Buildings built of the locally made red brick were built in older areas that have been undergoing redevelopment for many decades and have demolished.

Building Description

The Vallender Building was built in two stages, on Lot 1 of Block 76, with the eastern part of the building being built first, as a two-and-a-half-story building.³ It is likely that the expansion of the second stage, occupying the corner and the full third floor was begun once it became apparent that the apartment wouldn't be large enough. William's son Frank W. was born during that year, and Frank (Sr.) was likely considering retiring from masonry and intended to open a tavern in the corner commercial space.

The building was built with a locally quarried sandstone rubble foundation with an entrance stair within the N. Fairchild Street right-of-way. The bearing wall in the basement separates the basement into two rooms. The balance of the building was built with vermilion colored brick, possibly made in John George Ott's brickyard on East Wilson Street.⁴ It is a soft red brick that has exhibited some deterioration on the Fairchild Street side, likely due to airborne road salt and greater sun exposure, which causes considerably more freeze-thaw cycles than the State Street side of the building. On the State Street side very little deterioration above the splash line above the sidewalk can be found. The building was last painted prior to 1994, but the date is unknown. The paint is in poor or moderate condition and exhibits peeling.

The State Street façade of the building consists of two individually built sets of brick piers and window bays for the east and the west side of the facade. The widths of the piers and bays are slightly different for each side of the State Street façade. The window and (original) door bays or fields are inset from the piers. Each of the masonry openings for windows and doors, according to historic photos, had a half-round arch of the same red brick, corbelled to have a slight protrusion. The two storefronts were altered, the east half of the façade was altered by jeweler Ernest Templin in his 1946 alteration to install a display window and new entrance on the east side of the façade for his store. A similar storefront alteration was undertaken many years later on the west side of the building. The masonry arches of the west side of the ground floor façade have been exposed at the time of signage changes a couple

² Miller, Elizabeth for City of Madison, State Street Historic District National Register of Historic Places nomination. (1997).

³ 1867 City Tax List, p.31, 1867 Special Tax List p. 29, and 1868 Tax List, p.63.

⁴ Vallenders undoubtedly knew Ott, a neighbor and leader in the largely German neighborhood centered along the west end of Williamson, Jenifer and Spaight Streets.

times in past decades. They remain intact above the steel beam that was inserted to create the storefront opening. The exterior wooden stair to the second floor was removed in the 1946 alteration and most of the old window and door masonry openings in the Fairchild Street were infilled with brick. The date of the existing steel fire escape is unknown. The small rear entrance enclosure was added in the mid-1980s when the apartments were again renovated for use.

The roof is a low-pitched hipped roof with a ridge over the east part of the building, almost unseen from the street. The minimally ornamented brick parapet wall of the State Street façade hides it from view on that side.

The integrity of the building is quite strong. It is largely intact except for the removal of some of the first floor masonry piers. Most of the alterations are easily reversible. The storefront alterations do not significantly detract from the building's historic character. The building was determined to be a contributing building in the State Street National Register Historic District nomination in the 1990s.

Vallender Family

Frank or Franz Vallender was born in Germany (Prussia) in about 1815.⁵ His family had been farmers. With his wife Maria Sophia, son Wilhelm (12), son Mathis (8) and infant Margaretha, less than a year old, he left Prussian and traveled, via Antwerp, Belgium aboard the Centurion, and arrived in New York on May 3, 1852.⁶ Franz changed his name to Frank and worked as a stone mason.⁷

When Frank Vallender first arrived in Madison in 1852 he purchased property on the 800 block of Jenifer Street, then listed as No.12 Jenifer, later renumbered 833. It is a property where he lived most of his life in Madison, and in which some members of his family lived or owned into the 1930s.

In 1866, Frank Vallender bought the triangular corner lot on State Street at Fairchild from Benjamin Franklin Hopkins, a real estate speculator, for \$850.⁸ By the end of 1867, he completed the present red brick building in two stages at the intersection of State and Fairchild, primarily for his son's growing family and to house their respective businesses, a saloon for himself and a barbershop for his son William.⁹ His saloon was listed as being located at No. 15 State Street in the 1868 city directory.¹⁰

Frank Vallender was listed as working as a laborer as late as the 1895 city directory, and listed in the 1898-99 city directory, reverting to his original name, Franz. During his last few years, he was blind and lived at 325 W. Mifflin with his daughter Elizabeth Schweinem.¹¹ His

⁵ 1900 Census.

⁶ Germans To America, Lists of Passengers Arriving At U.S. Ports 1850-1855, Vol. 2, May 1851-June 1852, p.315.

⁷ 1858 City directory.

⁸ City tax rolls.

⁹ Wisconsin State Journal, "Building in Madison." March 25, 1868. Buildings erected in 1867, a list provided by W.T. Fish, a builder, of principal buildings built during the previous year.

Wisconsin State Journal, Mrs. Schweinem, 90 on Monday, Is Oldest Worshipper at Holy Redeemer Madison, Wisconsin, March 26, 1944. p.9. Elizabeth Schweinem recounts that her father built the State Street building and was a stone mason.

¹⁰ In the original street numbering system, addresses were listed as the numbers of buildings on the street rather than by numbered blocks. That was changed to the present system in 1883.

¹¹ He was last listed in 1900-1901 City Directory at 325 W. Mifflin, along with his daughter Elizabeth Schweinem.

wife, Sophia is last listed in the 1902 directory, living at “o 127 State”, a typical designation for apartments located above a commercial street address.

In his death announcement on December 17, 1900, Frank Vallender was credited with his work as a mason on several prominent buildings including the Federal courthouse and post office that once stood on East Mifflin at Wisconsin Avenue.¹²

Wilhelm Vallender was born in Cologne Germany (Prussia) in about 1840, to Franz (Frank) and Sophia Terressa Vallender. Upon arriving in the United States with his parents and siblings in 1852, he changed his name to William. He had been a farmer and later became a barber who had his shop in the State Street building immediately following its completion in 1868, and moved with his wife and daughters into the apartment above his shop.¹³ His son Frank W. was born during that year. The two-level apartment above was accessed via an exterior wood stair on the Fairchild side of the building. In 1874, he was elected foreman of the Andrew Proudfit Engine Co., No. 2, located next door, which had been formed in 1857. The engine and company were named after Mayor Proudfit.¹⁴ William Vallender served as volunteer firemen for many years with the largely German-speaking fire company. In 1875-76, William Vallender served on the County Board of Supervisors.¹⁵ After his wife died in the mid-1890s, he remarried, continued to operate his barbershop until around 1911 when he retired and lived in the building until his death in 1921.¹⁶ His wife Anna (Mayer) lived there until her death in 1935.

Frank W. Vallender, William’s son, was born around the time the Vallender Building was being built on State Street. Perhaps because of his father’s work as a volunteer fireman, he also became one and during the course of his service was elevated to Fire Captain of the Fire Station No. 2 by 1910, next door to where he had grown up. He didn’t live in the State Street building after childhood, though a sister continued to live there into the 1920s with her mother. He lived with his family for several years in the former Frank Vallender home at 833 Jenifer Street, and other houses on Mifflin and Webster.

The Vallender family was integral to the development of Madison’s early German-speaking community in their contributions to business, civic volunteerism and church. At least five generations of Vallenders and their descendants have been associated with Holy Redeemer Church. The Vallenders were a founding family of the German language congregation when it first met in the late 1850s following the Vallenders’ arrival in Madison. The other German-speaking families who married into the Vallenders included members of the Casper Mayer, Heim, Schulkamp, Schweinem, Baas, and DuFreene families.

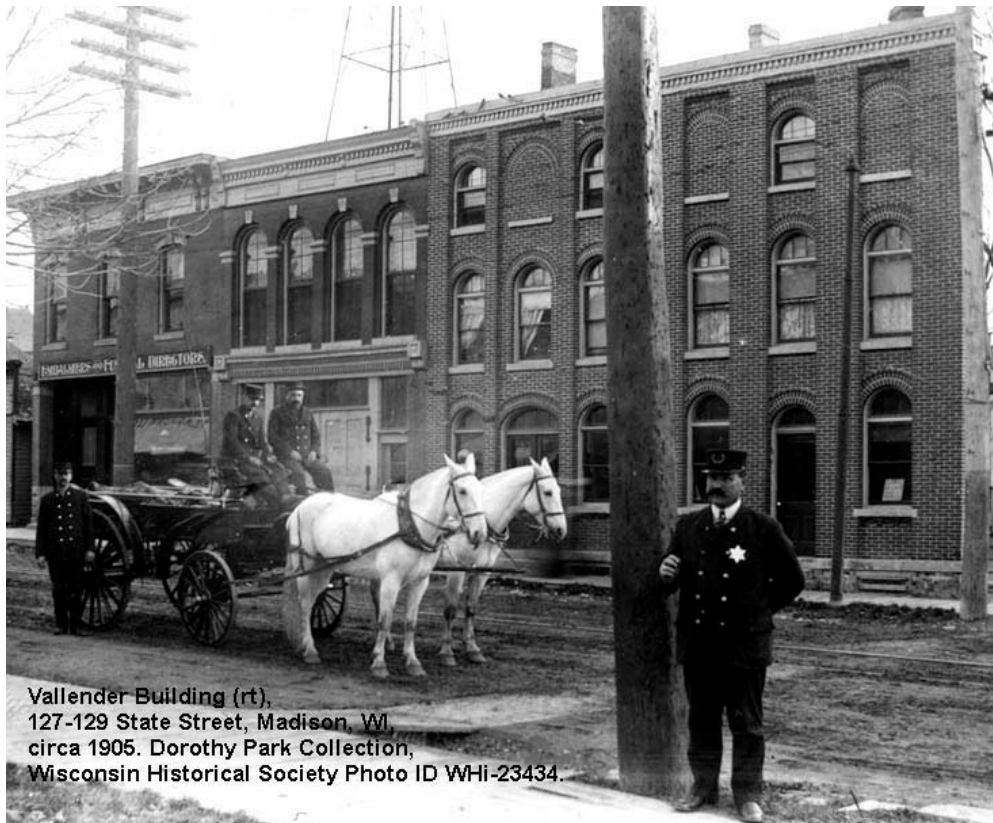
¹² Wisconsin State Journal, December 17, 1900. “F. Vallender Dead.” p.8.

¹³ Tax rolls. City directories.

¹⁴ Wisconsin State Journal, July 15, 1945. p.8.

¹⁵ History of Dane County Wisconsin. p.411.

¹⁶ City directories.



Vallender Building (rt),
127-129 State Street, Madison, WI,
circa 1905. Dorothy Park Collection,
Wisconsin Historical Society Photo ID WHI-23434.



100 block of State Street, 1915. (Left to rt) Buell Building,
Fire Station No.2, and Frank Vallender Building (1867).
Wisconsin Historical Society Photo ID WHI-25141.

Photos courtesy of Wisconsin Historical Society.