



Project Name & Address: **Filene House Landmark Nomination
1617 Sherman Avenue**

Application Type(s): Review of local landmark nomination

Applicant: John Rolling

Legistar File ID # [75633](#)

Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

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Background Information

Parcel Location/Information: The subject site contains two lots, addressed as 1617 and 1601 Sherman, creating an 8.22 acre site containing a two-story commercial structure constructed in 1950, with additions in 1966 and 2000. There is also a surface parking lot located behind the structure.

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.07 DESIGNATING LANDMARKS.

- (1) Designation. The Common Council, after considering the recommendation of the Landmarks Commission under sub. (5) below, may designate a landmark according to this section.
- (2) Standards. A site, improvement, or site with improvements may be designated as a landmark if the proposed landmark meets any of the following:
 - (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.
 - (c) It has important archaeological or anthropological significance.
 - (d) It embodies 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.
 - (e) It is representative of the work of a master builder, designer or architect.
- (3) Nomination. Any person may nominate a site, improvement, or site with improvements for designation as a landmark. The person shall submit the nomination to the City Planning Division, to the attention of the Preservation Planner, on a nomination form approved by the Landmarks Commission. The nomination shall clearly identify the proposed landmark, landmark site, and document why it qualifies under sub. (2). The Preservation Planner may ask the person to submit additional information and documentation as needed to complete or clarify the nomination. When the Preservation Planner determines that the nomination is complete, the Preservation Planner shall refer the nomination to the Landmarks Commission.
- (4) Landmarks Commission Review and Public Hearing. Whenever the Landmarks Commission receives a complete, accurate nomination under sub. (3), the Commission shall review the nomination. As part of its review, the Commission shall publish a hearing notice according to Sec. 41.06 and hold a public hearing on the nomination. The Commission may also conduct its own investigation of the facts, as it deems necessary.

- (5) Landmarks Commission Action. After the Landmarks Commission holds a public hearing and completes its review under sub. (4), the Commission shall report to the Common Council a recommendation supporting or opposing the proposed landmark designation. The Commission may recommend landmark designation subject to terms and conditions that are consistent with this chapter. The Commission shall send a notice of the recommendation to each owner of record of each lot on which the proposed landmark is located at least ten (10) days before any meeting at which the Common Council may act on the Commission's recommendation.
- (6) Common Council Action. After considering the Landmarks Commission's report recommendation under sub. (5), and based on the standards under sub. (2), the Common Council shall vote to designate or decline to designate the property as a landmark. The City Clerk shall promptly notify the Building Inspector and the City Assessor of each landmark designation. The City Clerk shall record the designation with the Dane County Register of Deeds at the City's expense.
- (7) Voluntary Supplemental Restrictions. The Common Council may at any time supplement the terms of a landmark designation, pursuant to an agreement between the landmark owner and the Landmarks Commission, to enhance the preservation and protection of the landmark.
- (8) Recognition of Landmarks. Whenever the Common Council designates a landmark under sub. (6), the Landmarks Commission shall affix a plaque identifying the property as a landmark to the landmark or landmark site. The plaque shall be placed so that it is easily visible to passing pedestrians. In the case of a landmark structure, the plaque shall include the accepted name of the landmark, the date of its construction, and other information that the Landmarks Commission considers appropriate. In the case of a landmark that is not a structure, the plaque shall include the common name of the landmark and other information that the Commission considers appropriate. If the Commission determines that because the landmark is ecologically or culturally sensitive a plaque would be inappropriate, no plaque is required. No person may remove or modify a plaque without approval of the Preservation Planner.

Analysis and Conclusion

At its January 9, 2023 meeting, the Landmarks Commission reviewed the draft landmark nomination for the property at 1601-1617 Sherman. After extensive discussion, the Commission found that the nomination had made a successful case for being historically significant under 41.07(2)(a) for the economic and social history related to the national and international work that Credit Union National Association (CUNA) undertook during their time operating at this site (1950-1979). The Landmarks Commission did not agree that the nomination had made a successful case under 41.07(2)(b) as a significant event for Truman's dedication in 1950 being a significant event linked to the successful passage Point Four Program to address global economic investment through Collaborative Capitalism. However, they believed that the nomination made a successful case under 41.07(2)(b) for the site being a memorial to the work of Edward Filene, founder of CUNA and namesake of the building and site.

Please see the [Landmarks Commission Action Report](#) for details of the discussion and also the [staff report](#) from that meeting, which evaluates the substance of the draft nomination.

Per MGO 41.07(6), the Common Council must complete its own review, after consideration of the report from the Landmarks Commission, of if the proposed nomination meets the criteria for designation as set forth in MGO 41.07(2):

Standards. A site, improvement, or site with improvements may be designated as a landmark if the proposed landmark meets any of the following:

- (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.
- (c) It has important archaeological or anthropological significance.
- (d) It embodies 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.
- (e) It is representative of the work of a master builder, designer or architect.

Possible Common Council Actions

The Common Council may take any of the following actions:

1. Adopt landmark nomination

a. as drafted

Findings: 1601-1617 Sherman is eligible as a Madison Landmark under 41.07(2)(a): economic and social history for the work of Credit Union National Association at this site, with a period of significance from 1950-1979; and under 41.07(2)(b): significant event for the Truman dedication, with a period of significance of 1950.

b. with recommended changes from the Landmarks Commission

Findings: 1601-1617 Sherman is eligible as a Madison Landmark under 41.07(2)(a): economic and social history for the work of Credit Union National Association at this site, with a period of significance from 1950-1979; and under 41.07(2)(b): significant person as a memorial to the work of Edward Filene, with a period of significance of 1950-1979.

2. Not Adopt landmark nomination

Findings: The nomination does not meet the criteria for designation as a Madison Landmark.