



Agenda Item #: 6
Project Title: Buildings Proposed for Demolition - 2024
Legistar File ID #: 81161
Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner
Members: Present: Richard Arnesen, Edna Ely-Ledesma, Molly Harris, Katie Kaliszewski, Ald. Amani Latimer Burris, Jacob Morrison, and Maurice Taylor

Summary

Duane Johnson, registering in support and wishing to speak

Duane Johnson spoke on the proposed demolition of 306 N Brooks Street, which is related to the demolition of 521 E Washington Avenue. They said that Porchlight has occupied 306 N Brooks Street for 15 years, and Porchlight recently received an offer of a new facility in exchange for the property on N Brooks Street. The site at 306 N Brooks Street would be developed into student housing, and Porchlight would move to the site at 521 E Washington Avenue. Johnson said they understood the university YMCA had a long history of important uses and activities as outlined in the Underrepresented Communities Survey. They added that there was other important history related to the TA organization and strike in this building that they hope to better understand. In the new development, they hope to have a legacy wall outlining the history of the former building and telling its stories in an engaging way so that its history is not forgotten. They said that the building has exceeded its lifespan and is now a financial burden to its users.

Bailey said that staff recommended a finding of no known historic value for the buildings at 521 E Washington Avenue, 1430 and 1436 Monroe Street, 3535 University Avenue, and 3553 University Avenue.

For the building at 202-208 S Baldwin Street, Bailey said that staff recommended a finding of historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment. As Trachte buildings are a rare remaining resource, staff recommended that the applicant explore salvage and relocation of the existing structures, with photographic documentation of the site and structure prior to demolition.

For the buildings at 210 S Baldwin Street and 212 S Baldwin Street, Bailey said that staff recommended a finding of historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, but the buildings themselves were not architecturally or historically significant.

For the building at 306 N Brooks Street, Bailey said that staff recommended a finding of historic value for its historic association with the Women's Rights Movement and Gay Liberation Movement. She said that the building was listed in Madison's Underrepresented Communities Historic Resources Survey, which further discussed its association with the UW women's center and Lesbian Switchboard. She referenced Johnson's public comment about labor history that also happened on this site, which was information brought forth by Ald. Rummel. Harris concurred with staff's recommendation that this building had value related to its cultural and historic significance. She said that the Landmarks Commission does not make the final decision on whether the building is demolished, but if it does end up being demolished, she thought the ideas that Johnson spoke about in their public comment to capture the history of the building were important for those who live there in the future and the public.

Arnesen asked if the memorial would be in the new building on N Brooks Street or the new site on E Washington Avenue. Johnson confirmed it would be on the N Brooks Street site.

Action

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Ely-Ledesma, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the buildings at 521 E Washington Avenue, 1430 and 1436 Monroe Street, 3535 University Avenue, and 3553 University Avenue have no known historic value. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Ely-Ledesma, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 202-208 S Baldwin Street has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment. As Trachte buildings are a rare remaining resource, the Landmarks Commission recommends that the applicant explore salvage and relocation of the existing structures, with photographic documentation of the site and structure prior to demolition. The buildings at 210 S Baldwin Street and 212 S Baldwin Street have historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, but the buildings themselves are not architecturally or historically significant. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

A motion was made by Harris, seconded by Ely-Ledesma, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 306 N Brooks Street has historic and cultural value related to its historic association with the Women's Rights Movement and Gay Liberation Movement. The motion passed by voice vote/other.



Primary Info			
AHI Number	241079		
Historic Name	University YMCA		
Other Name			
Property Address	306 N. Brooks Street		
County	Dane	Municipality	Madison
Civil Town		Unincorporated Community	
Parcel		PLSS (T-R-D-S-Q-QQ)	
Style	Contemporary	Wall Material	Brick
Historic Use	recreational building/gymnasium	Structural System	
Year Built	1953	Year Demolished	
Structural Additions			
Architects			

Other Info	
Survey Year	
Tax Credit Case Number	
WHS Project Number	
Bibliographic Reference	
Additional Comments	

Other Eligibility Evaluation	
Individual Eligibility Evaluation	Potentially Eligible
Proposed Historic District	
Contributing	
Evaluation Date	
Eligibility Comments	<p>City of Madison, Wisconsin Underrepresented Communities Historic Resource Survey Report:</p> <p>The Women's Liberation Movement was never monolithic. Even in 1968, the movement nationally was splintering. NOW was the first new national feminist organization in nearly fifty years. They opened the floodgates of a powerful second wave of American feminism by advancing earnest consideration of the issues preventing women's self-determination. NOW had persuaded a critical mass of Americans that women did not have rights or opportunities equal to men. Women, however, were hardly united in their methods for achieving reforms. A younger cohort of feminists took shape in the late-1960s who regarded the leaders of the movement as too conservative. They took a more revolutionary approach to the movement and adopted radical feminism that called for a new social order in which women would be liberated from unjust, sexist norms. They were also eager to join forces with lesbian feminists in the Gay Liberation movement, a partnership that NOW did not embrace. By 1970, the movement was being described as having two branches: one older and more conservative and the other young, college-educated, and protesting. The reluctance of the conservative branch of the movement (led by NOW) to embrace lesbian feminists manifested in Madison as well. It was a clear point of division between the YMCA and the United Way of Dane County over funding in 1972. In an emblematic move, the women's center established under the banner of the Women's Liberation Movement by NOW and the University YMCA at their North Brooks Street building in 1970 was reorganized and relocated by lesbian feminist leaders in 1972.</p> <p>A women's center was originally established in 1970 at the University YMCA at 306 North Brooks Street by people associated with the National Organization for Women and under the banner of the Women's Liberation Movement. The center lost funding when the United Way of Dane County declined to provide money to an organization that is perceived as "politically leftist." In 1972, lesbian feminist leaders raised money for the Center by holding special events at venues coordinated by gay liberation groups: St. Francis House Episcopal Student Center at 1001 University Avenue (now 1011 University Avenue) and the Crossroads Gay Center at 301½ N. Hamilton Street.</p> <p>The availability of counseling was an important component of the Gay Liberation Movement in Madison. In the early 1970s, homosexuality was still listed as a mental illness in the DSM; however, it was removed in 1973. Psychological professionals commonly defended the theory that homosexuality was caused by arrested emotional development, and writers and filmmakers regularly portrayed homosexuals as deviant in popular media. Facing these trends, while also living in a society where discrimination was legal and routine, presented a unique set of emotional burdens for queer people living out their identity. The need for counseling, with peers and professionals, was clear from the beginning of the movement. During the first few years of the Gay Liberation Movement in Madison, the response to this need was informal, consisting of volunteer, peer-run counseling offered by LGBTQ groups.</p> <p>In November 1974, the Lesbian Switchboard opened at the University YMCA at 306 North Brooks Street, a hive of LGBTQ activity in the 1970s and into the 1990s, hosting a variety of social, organizational, therapeutic, and publishing activities by LGBTQ groups with several LGBTQ organizations maintaining office space and publishing newsletters in the building during this time. The Lesbian Switchboard was a collective of para-professional counselors offering connectivity and emotional and social support to lesbians.</p> <p>The Lesbian Switchboard operated a counseling service as a collective with no hierarchy and offered a library of lesbian resources, including information on alternative services in Madison, feminist groups across the country, and other lesbian and gay organizations in the United States. They presented "panel discussions on lesbianism," and sponsored "lesbian coffee houses, women's dances, a lesbian newsletter, concerts by women for women, and protests against oppressive groups in the Madison areas." The Lesbian Switchboard appears to have merged with another</p>

LGBTQ organization or disbanded around 1979 when progressive professionals began offering counseling services that recognized the issues commonly faced by LGBTQ people.

By December 1978, The United located at the University YMCA at 306 North Brooks Street. After the initial threat passed, The United identified new battles and issues and continued their efforts. The YMCA was a hive of LGBTQ activity from the 1970s into the 1990s, hosting a variety of social, organizational, therapeutic, and publishing activities by LGBTQ groups. Several LGBTQ organizations-maintained office space and published newsletters in the building during this time.

