



PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 4, 2020

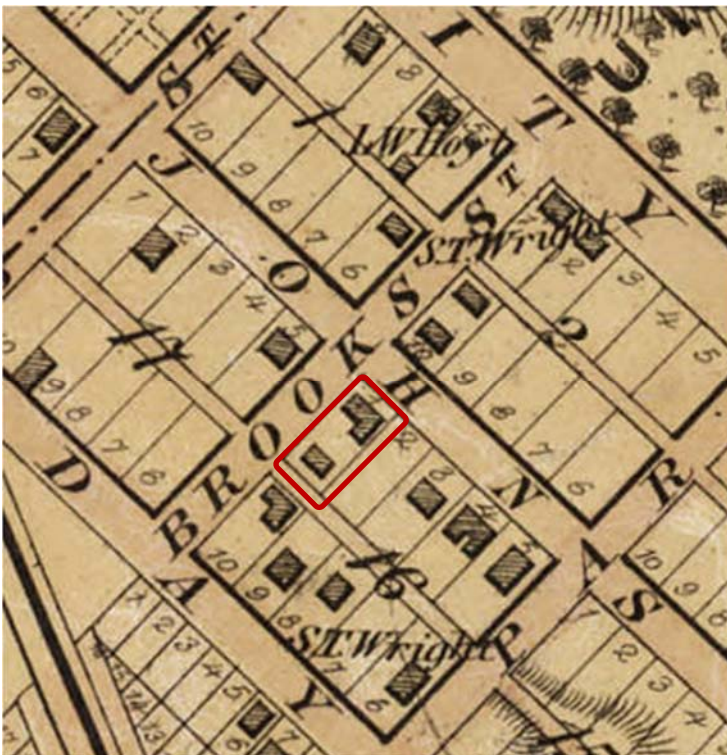
PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Project Address: 935 W Johnson Street
Legistar File ID # [59133](#) & [59810](#)
Prepared By: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division
Date Prepared: April 16, 2020

Background

On March 9, 2020, the Plan Commission asked for a more detailed report from the Preservation Planner on the history of the structure located at 935 W Johnson. Due to the current health crisis, the Preservation Planner does not have all resources available for research on the property. Without physical access to the Register of Deeds office and only the digital resources available through other repositories, the research is incomplete. At the April 13 Plan Commission meeting, they voted to refer this project to the Landmarks Commission for that body to review the findings of the Preservation Planner and provide an advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission regarding the historic value of the property.

The preservation file on the property contains an inventory form from 1983, which had identified the property owner as the original owner as Daniel Mackman. Early city directories identify a Henry Wackman as living in that vicinity. In early Madison, properties outside of the downtown core did not have addresses, so Henry Wackman is addressed simply as living at "Brooks n Johnson" in 1858. The property in question shows two houses on the parcel in 1855, one smaller building to the south and an ell-shaped building that is the current structure under review.



Map of the City of Madison, 1855

Henry Wackman was a carpenter and was drafted to serve in the Union Army in June 1863. Through a digitally available deed, the Henry and Margaret Wackman family sold the southern half of the property in April 1864. The next deed our Real Estate Office was able to track down digitally was when Sarah Johnston sold the northern half of the parcel in 1869 to an Edison F. Smalley. Sarah Johnston shows up in the 1866 and 1868 city directories as living at the corner of Johnson and Brooks, so it is likely that she purchased the property from the

Wackmans at some point during the Civil War. By 1868, Henry Wackman was living at 74 State Street per the city directory. It is interesting that both the northern and southern halves of the parcel were sold to widows in the midst of the Civil War.

After 1869, the next property owner associated with the property isn't until 1875, when Albert Hawkins is located as living at the corner of Brooks and Johnson, which is later addressed in city directories at 935 W Johnson Street. Albert Hawkins was an engineer for the Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad while he lived there with his family from ca. 1875 to when they sold the property in 1892. Albert Hawkins was also a Civil War veteran, having served as a private in Company D, Regiment 24 of the Wisconsin Infantry from 1862 to 1865. In subsequent city directories, Albert's daughter Alice is identified as being a student, and his son is first identified as a student and later a machinist at MH Ball.



A. Ruger's Birdeye Map of Madison, Wisconsin in 1876

The Hawkins family sold the property to Edward and Lillie Teckemeyer in 1892. Edward had moved to Madison from St. Louis to help run the Teckemeyer Candy Company, which his brother William had founded in 1888. While the original candy factory is no longer extant, the subsequent building, constructed in 1909, located at 1 N Bedford Street remains and is currently known as the Bassett Street Warehouse Apartments. In 1900, the Teckemeyer's constructed a new house on the southern end of the parcel, which became their primary residence and the house at 935 W Johnson became a rental property.



1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

There were a series of tenants at 935 W Johnson, mostly with connections to the University of Wisconsin. In 1902 the city directory identified Stephen Hadley as a student, living there with his wife, Adeline. In the 1904 city directory, traveling salesman Willis Shepherd lived there with his wife Ulla (the Teckemeyer Candy Company had several traveling salesman, so it is possible there was a business connection). From 1907 to 1911, a group of female tenants resided at the property. Isabella McCulloch was a library assistant at the University of Wisconsin and her sisters and mother (a widow) also lived with her, including Harriet McCulloch, who was identified as a teacher. Also at that address was Elizabeth Schaefer, also a library assistant at UW. In 1909, the McCulloch family were living at 955 W Johnson, which was likely a differently addressed apartment within this building. In 1911, the city directory only lists Catherine McCulloch (no identified occupation), Isabella McCulloch (library assistant at UW), and Clara B. Leonard (teacher at Draper School, which was located across the street) all at 935 W Johnson.

There was a regular changeover of tenants in the subsequent years. Morius Jensen and his wife Johanna Jensen each have separate entries in the 1914 city directory as tailors, and also a Jenny Jensen has an entry as a dressmaker. In 1916, land dealer Fred Hayssen and his wife Jennie lived there with their daughter Irma who was a student. In 1917 there are a five residents listed in the city directory, and another that lists 935 W Johnson as his residence in his WWI draft card (Joseph Corcoran, a laborer). The occupations at this time also speak to the economic conditions of the wartime period: laborer Joseph Maisano and his wife Josephine, laborer Dennis Madanlo, barber Don Madanlo, widow Mary Madanlo, barber Theodore Matranga. Laborer William Schoen was living at the property in 1918 per his WWI draft card, and he and his wife Katherine were still residing there in the 1919 city directory.

In 1921 and 1923, Orville and Irene Top lived at the property. Initially Orville was identified as being a chauffer and then a laborer. Also at the address at this time are a Martin Kelly (no identified occupation) and a Roxenna Williams who was a clerk at Guardian Life Insurance Company. From 1925 to 1929, the city directories list a May MacRavey as the primary resident, and she was the superintendent of the women's department at the Madison Employment Bureau. Also living with her were Frank MacRavey (initially an assistant instructor at UW and then just identified as a teacher) and his wife Julia, and Alonzo MacRavey (student at UW).

After this period this is another wave of regular tenant turnover. The city directories identify the following residents: In 1931 there was carpenter William Lawry and his wife Lydia; in 1933 there was electrician William Endres and his wife Dorothy; in 1935 there was Charles and Catherine Haack with students who were likely their children (Edith, Margie, and Herman). In 1937 and 1939 there was Alvin Nelson (first a laborer at UW and then a laundry worker) and his wife Alverda. In the 1941 city directory there is a James Nelson (unclear if there was a relation to Alvin and Alverda), who was an assistant manager at the Strand Theatre. Also living there was a George Nelson (no occupation identified) and meat cutter Norman Moore. In 1943 Earl Zimmerman (coach operator at WP&L Company) and his wife Doris lived there as well as two waiters: Frances Steffie and Irene Stramann.

What the grouping of tenants at that time seems to indicate are two separate units in the building. That layout is further evident when Milton and Lillian Mellor purchased the property in ca. 1946 and they appear in the city directories initially as living in Apartment A at 935 W Johnson. The 1942 and 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps still show two residential buildings on the property, but identify 935 W Johnson as a dwelling as opposed to the southern building being a rooming house (and other buildings on the block being flats, or apartments).



1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

Milton was initially listed in the city directories as a salesman. In 1947 there was also a CR Schroeder, an assistant professor at UW, living at that address with the Mellors living in the attached apartment. After this, the Mellors started a real estate company, but then Milton passed. Lillian continued to operate the business with her living in one of the units in the house and the business operating out of the other unit. She operated Mellor Real Estate Company from this location until she passed and her daughter Sandra Meier purchased the property in 2003. Sandra operated the property as rental housing until her death in 2018. When UW purchased the property, the records from the family real estate company were still onsite and were reclaimed by the family.

Relevant Standards

MGO 28.185(7)(a)(4):

“The Plan Commission shall consider the report of the City’s historic preservation planner regarding the historic value of the property as well as any report submitted by the Landmarks Commission.”

The Plan Commission has seen a version of this research from the Preservation Planner. New information was incorporated for the Landmarks Commission’s consideration. In determining if this property has historic value to the City of Madison, staff looked at the criteria for landmark designation and the property has the potential to meet the following criteria MGO 41.07(2)(a): “It is associated with broad patterns of cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community”

The updated research identifies how the property has evolved over time. In the early years, this house was a residence for working class families, likely housed two Civil War veterans, and was the residence of one of the owners of the Teckemeyer Candy Company. In the early 20th century, the property portrays the waves of rental housing near the university, serving students and also working-class residents. Of particular note, though, is that this building housed female professionals at different points in the first half of the 20th century. Finally, this was the longtime location of the Mellor Real Estate Company, which was a female-owned business for the second half of the 20th century.

However, the Landmarks Commission should also take into account the condition of the building as part of its review of the historic value of the property. The University acquired a property that was suffering from marked neglect.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Landmarks Commission evaluate this property as it does other proposed demolitions for properties without a local historic designation and support their advisory recommendation with specific findings.

Motions for Advisory Recommendation on Demolitions

- a. The Commission finds that the building(s) has no known historic value.
- b. The Commission finds that the building(s) has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, or as the work/product of an architect of note, but the building itself is not historically, architecturally or culturally significant.
- c. The Commission finds that the building(s) has historic value based on architectural significance, cultural significance, historic significance, as the work/product of an architect of note, its status as a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District, and/or as an intact or rare example of a certain architectural style or method of construction.