

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

April 30, 2014

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION



Project Name/Address: 702-706 Williamson Street
Application Type: PUBLIC HEARING
Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of existing building and construction of new development in a historic district
Legistar File ID # 32584
Prepared By: Amy L. Scanlon, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Summary

Project Applicant/Contact: Martin Rifken

Requested Action/Proposal Summary: The Applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing building and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction. A public hearing is required for this review due to the demolition of a building in a historic district.

The Applicant requested that the public hearing be referred to April 7 and provided the Landmarks Commission with an Informational Presentation on March 17. The Applicant also extended the determination period (in writing) of the Landmarks Commission on the demolition request by 30 days from the original submission date of February 17, 2014. Due to the request for referral from the previous meeting, the Applicant has extended the determination period in writing by an additional 30 days.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is located in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District

Relevant Landmarks Ordinance Sections:

33.19(5)(c)3. Standards. (for Demolition)

In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for any demolition, the Landmarks Commission shall consider and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:

- a. Whether the building or structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State;
- b. Whether the building or structure, although not itself a landmark building, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the District as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State;
- c. Whether demolition of the subject property would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this chapter as set forth in Sec. 33.19 and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable district as duly adopted by the Common Council;
- d. Whether the building or structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and/or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense;
- e. Whether retention of the building or structure would promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage;
- f. Whether the building or structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve or restore it, provided that any hardship or difficulty claimed by the

owner which is self-created or which is the result of any failure to maintain the property in good repair cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness;

- g. Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the buildings and environment of the district in which the subject property is located.

33.19(1) Purpose and Intent It is hereby declared a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this section is to:

- (a) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements and of districts which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history.
- (b) Safeguard the City's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such landmarks and historic districts.
- (c) Stabilize and improve property values.
- (d) Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past.
- (e) Protect and enhance the City's attractions to residents, tourists and visitors, and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry.
- (f) Strengthen the economy of the City.
- (g) Promote the use of historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the City.

33.19(11)(d) Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Manufacturing Use.

1. The gross volume of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
2. The height of any new structure shall be visually compatible with the buildings and environment within its visually related area.

33.19(11)(f) Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Commercial Use.

1. Any new structures shall be evaluated according to both of the criteria listed in Sec. 33.01(11)(d); that is, compatibility of gross volume and height.
2. The rhythm of solids and voids in the street facade(s) of any new structure shall be compatible with the buildings within its visually related area.
3. The materials used in the street facade(s) of any new structure shall be compatible with those used in the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
4. The design of the roof of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
5. The rhythm of building masses and spaces created by the construction of a new structure shall be compatible with the existing rhythm of masses and spaces for those sites within its visually related area.

33.19(11)(h) Guideline Criteria for new Development in the Third Lake Ridge Historic District - Parcels Zoned for Residential Use.

1. Any new structure shall be evaluated according to all criteria listed in Sec.33.01(11)(f).
2. The directional expression of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
3. The materials, patterns and textures of any new structure shall be compatible with those of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.
4. The landscape plan of any new structure shall be compatible with that of the buildings and environment within its visually related area.

Analysis and Conclusion

The building being proposed for demolition was constructed in 1926. The building has brick walls and a curved roof structure. There is not a history of the original building provided in the preservation file. The addition at the Williamson Street frontage was probably constructed in the 1950s and is also being proposed for demolition. It has synthetic stucco walls and a flat roof structure. The street façades have been modified numerous times.

A discussion of the demolition standards 33.19(5)(c)3 is below:

- a. This specific structure is not of such architectural or historic significance that it meets standards for landmark designation as the language of this standard suggests. Instead, with the other commercial and industrial structures in the district, this structure better relates to standard b.
- b. The building contributes to the commercial and industrial character of this area of the District. The loss of this structure will diminish the number of structures in this area that communicate this architectural and historic character.
- c. The Landmarks Commission is charged with protecting and enhancing the perpetuation of historic districts and the City's cultural heritage. The purpose and intent of the Landmarks Ordinance also focuses on stabilizing and improving property values, and strengthening the economy of the City as it concerns the architectural quality and historic significance of the city.
- d. The existing building is a structure that conveys the commercial and industrial growth of the City and the area. The building is not of such extraordinary value that it could not be replaced without great difficulty or expense.
- e. The retention of the existing building would probably not promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State by encouraging study of American history, architecture and design or by developing an understanding of American culture and heritage; however, the general welfare of the public is promoted by the retention of the City's cultural resources and historic identity, as well as high quality design and construction of new development.
- f. The condition of the building is not being claimed as a hardship.
- g. The new structure proposed to be constructed is largely compatible with the buildings and environment of the district.

A discussion of the new development standards 33.19(11)(f) is below. The Visually Related Area (VRA) map is attached to this report.

1. Review Sec. 33.19(11)(d):
 1. The gross volume of the proposed building is of a similar gross volume to other buildings in the VRA, and the design is generally compatible with the other buildings. The design could be modified to be more visually compatible with the buildings in the VRA. These modifications may include providing a building "top" at the upper story, stepping the building mass down toward the adjacent buildings leaving the corner element at the proposed height, and/or providing horizontal elements to offset the vertical design vocabulary.
 2. The proposed building is taller than the neighboring buildings and the other buildings in the VRA, but is relatively consistent with the heights. The standard relates to visual compatibility of the height and therefore, the design of the proposed building could be modified so that the height is more visually compatible as described above.
2. The rhythm of solids and voids in the street façade(s) of the proposed building are generally compatible with the buildings in the VRA. To improve compatibility, the proposed building should take more design cues from the adjacent buildings. Staff noted that the windows of the 6th floor on the Blount Street elevation are taller than other windows and suggests that the windows be changed so that they all have a consistent height and proportion. The windows of the corner element "storefront" are part of the design and can remain as submitted.

3. The materials used in the street façade(s) of the proposed building are not compatible with those used in the buildings and environment within the visually related area. The size of the Modular Masonry is not noted, but appears to be queen or standard size brick which better relates to the materials of other buildings in the VRA. The brick areas that hover over the glass storefront should be visually linked to the ground to better relate to the material treatments of the other buildings in the VRA. The first level glass storefront walls should die into a low solid wall or base instead of going to grade to better relate to the treatments of other buildings in the VRA. While not specified in the Ordinance, staff suggests that the Nichiha fiber cement material in the non-street façades be changed to the same brick material used on the street facing façades or a large format unit masonry.
4. The proposed building has a flat roof which is compatible with other buildings in the VRA.
5. The rhythm of building masses and spaces created by the construction of the proposed building is compatible with the existing rhythm of masses and spaces within the VRA.

Because this building is a mixed use building (retail and residential) and zoned TSS, it is technically a commercial building and is located in a context of historically commercial buildings. The Third Lake Ridge Ordinance specifies standards for different zoning types: commercial buildings, residential buildings and employment buildings. Because this building is zoned for commercial use, the appropriate section of the Ordinance about properties zoned for commercial uses is discussed above. Because residential uses are also allowed in this zoning district, the residential standards for new construction are included above, but not discussed in detail.

Recommendation

Staff believes the standards for granting the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition may be met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the request contingent on the approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction. If the Commission is not able to grant or deny the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition, the Commission shall request another 30 day extension of the determination period from the Applicant.

Staff believes the standards for granting the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction may be met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the request with the following conditions of approval:

1. The Applicant shall bring material and color samples to the meeting for review. The material selections shall be determined by the discussion of the Commission or by the final review and approval of staff or at her discretion, the Landmarks Commission.
2. The Applicant shall confirm that the modular masonry material is a standard or queen brick size.
3. The brick material shall wrap onto the side elevations. The use of large format unit masonry may be acceptable on the east elevation that is concealed by the Olds Building. Staff strongly suggests that the building have brick masonry on four sides with minimal use of metal or fiber cement products as accents.
4. The design shall be modified as described in this staff report and discussed by the Landmarks Commission to be more compatible with buildings in the VRA.
5. The windows of the 6th floor on the Blount Street elevation are taller than the windows on the other elevations and shall be changed to a consistent size and proportion.
6. The final elements shall be reviewed and finalized by staff or at her discretion, the Landmarks Commission.

AGENDA # 3

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: May 5, 2014

TITLE: 702-706 Williamson Street – Third Lake Ridge Historic District – Demolish current commercial building and construct a new six-story commercial/multi-family housing development. 6th Ald. District. Contact: Martin Rifken (32584)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: May 5, 2014

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Fox Gehrig, Vice Chair; Christina Slattery, Jason Fowler, David McLean, Marsha Rummel, and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

Levitan opened the public hearing.

Mark Engman, registering in support and wishing to speak. Engman explained that the project is similar to the one that was reviewed during a recent Informational Presentation. Engman explained that the changes include the exterior material on the side and the rear elevation and the increase in the amount of glass at the corner and the regularization of the window openings. Engman explained that masonry will wrap the corners and then the fiber cement panels will continue.

Jim Brown, registering in support and wishing to speak. Brown explained the proposed materials and that the rendering color on paper is not correct.

Rummel requested information about the articulation of the height. Engman explained that the economics of the project require a 6 story building and that the 6th story is stepped back to express 5 stories on Williamson Street.

Slattery asked how the design team had designed the building to be compatible with other buildings in the VRA. Brown explained the windows are set in from the face of the masonry, the upper story is stepped back, created a base-middle-top, and the proposed brick materials all combine to make the building visually compatible.

Engman explained that the storefront glass system will sit on a low wall instead of going to the floor and that the taller windows of the top story will match the height of the other windows of the lower levels.

Brown explained that the volume of the proposed building is 77,000 cubic feet compared to neighboring buildings (Harvester Building 420,000 cubic feet and Olds Seed 806,000 cubic feet). Brown also explained that

the footprint of the proposed building and the Harvester are 10,000 square feet and the Olds Seed Building is 15,000 square feet.

Brown explained the proposed materials by showing physical material samples. Engman explained the fiber cement panels and that the panels are flat, not beveled like siding.

Brown also explained how the building planes sit in relation to the property lines (upper balcony railings are on the property line stories 2-5 are set back 5 feet from the property line).

Peter Wolff, registering in opposition and available to answer questions. Wolff explained that the Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) unanimously opposed the demolition of the existing building because the proposed building did not meet the BUILD II plan. The neighborhood is most concerned about the height. The heights discussed in the BUILD II plan show the neighborhood preference and retain the view of the capitol dome down Williamson Street.

David Lohrentz registering in support and wishing to speak. Lohrentz explained that he feels the design is compatible with the historic district because of the use of high quality materials, the improvement of the visibility at the corner, and the step back of the upper story.

Joy Newman, registered in opposition and available to answer questions, but also chose to speak. Newman explained that this is a historic district and a beautiful building could be built here, but that this building is designed to reference its location in a historic district. Newman requested that the capitol view be maintained. The desire to have apartments with views of the lake is costly to all residents of the city.

Lindsey Lee, registering in support and wishing to speak. Lee explained that he is a business owner and a property owner in this block. Lee explained that his family is committed to the neighborhood and ways to strengthen the corridor. He believes this proposal will be a positive change. He explained that he wishes the review was less quantitative and more qualitative meaning the review would be based on aesthetics.

Joan Hart, registering in opposition and available to answer questions.

Leslie Schroeder, registering in opposition and not wishing to speak.

Levitan closed the public hearing.

Levitan asked that staff provide clarification about the interface between the BUILD II plan, the TSS zoning district and the Third Lake Ridge historic district. Staff explained that the historic district was established in 1979 based on a historic preservation plan that is referenced in the Ordinance. The BUILD II plan was completed after the historic district was created. The Landmarks Commission, as part of a larger development review process, is aware of the neighborhood plan, but is only charged with interpreting the words of the Ordinance. The Plan Commission will review this project against the BUILD II plan. Staff explained that in the TSS zoning district there is a 3 story height limit with the option to request a conditional use for more height.

Levitan asked if a parcel zoned TSS relates to the Landmarks Ordinance as a residential, employment, or commercial use. Staff explained that it is a commercial use.

Rummel explained that there is an important capitol view from Jenifer Street and she is concerned that this building may affect that view. Rummel explained that a greater upper story step back would be helpful in

creating visually compatibility. She explained that this project will set the tone for future projects and how they relate to the neighborhood plan. Rummel also explained that the opposition by MNA is an important factor to consider.

Gehrig explained that MNA is generally supportive of projects and that having them oppose this project has given her reason to reconsider. Gehrig explained that this corner could support a dense project that relates to the neighboring buildings.

McLean explained that the capitol view is a significant feature that is unique to our city and to specific points within our city. McLean also explained that the Williamson Street façade is compatible, but a 5 story building would be a better fit for the context.

Levitan asked if a 13 foot difference in building height will affect the historic district and if the volume and height are compatible. Staff noted that the Ordinance language says “visually compatible” not mathematically compatible.

Rosenblum explained that the Williamson Street façade relates to Williamson Street and that 5 stories would be better than the proposed 6 stories.

There was general discussion about the order of the Commission reviews and the possibility that the Landmarks Commission could approve a 6 story building and that the Plan Commission could deny the conditional use request for additional height.

Rummel asked for clarification on the staff report recommendations. Staff explained that the top element of the building is very minimal and may be made larger as a way to make this building more compatible with the other buildings in the VRA. Staff explained that the strong corner element holds the corner and has a presence and that the sides of the building could step down to the neighboring buildings. The 6th story of the Blount Street elevation could be stepped back to help transition to the neighboring buildings.

Slattery explained that the height is a concern for the neighborhood, but it seems to work with the VRA and the corner element is successful. Rummel explained that this development has no other green space and is using balconies to meet that requirement. She asked if the balconies should be further recessed to improve the compatibility.

McLean explained that the Williamson Street elevation is successful and that the addition of masonry instead of fiber cement panels would be an improvement. Mc Lean suggested that the stepped back upper story of the Williamson Street elevation be repeated on the Blount Street elevation. The corner element seems fine.

Gehrig explained that this historic district has a history of requesting demolition.

There was general discussion about the proposed materials, the staff report recommendations and the visual compatibility of the height.

Engman described the design elements that they used to create visual compatibility.

Rosenblum explained that the Blount Street side feels large and less compatible. He explained that the design could be modified to reduce the feeling of incompatibility. There was general discussion about the visual compatibility of the Williamson Street elevation.

Gehrig explained that the other review bodies should review the BUILD II plan and note that the MNA opposes the project since the Landmarks Commission has a different charge. She requested that this language be reflected in the motion. Slattery suggested that the 54 foot height of the BUILD plan be in the motion also.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Rosenblum, seconded by Slattery, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of 702 Williamson Street contingent on the land use approvals for the new construction. The motion passed on a 5:1 voice vote. Gehrig voted no. Levitan does not vote.

A motion was made by Slattery, seconded by Fowler, to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction at 702 Williamson Street with the recommendations in the staff report and the discussions of the Commission as conditions of approval. The Commission discussed the importance of the review of the BUILD II plan including the 54 foot prescribed height and the MNA opposition in the approval process by bodies other than the Landmarks Commission.

The motion passed on a 5:1 voice vote. Rummel voted no. Levitan does not vote.