

# LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING REPORT

February 10, 2025



**Agenda Item #:** 2  
**Project Title:** Amending the Report of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee  
**Legistar File ID #:** 86824  
**Prepared By:** Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner  
**Members:** Present: Richard Arnesen, Edna Ely-Ledesma, Katie Kaliszewski, Ald. Amani Latimer Burris, Jacob Morrison, and Maurice Taylor  
Excused: Molly Harris

## Summary

*Nan Fey, registering in opposition and wishing to speak*  
*Bruce Bosben, registering in support and wishing to speak*  
*Kurt Stege, registering in opposition and wishing to speak*  
*Linda Lehnertz, registering in opposition and wishing to speak*  
*Alex Saloutos, registering in opposition and wishing to speak*  
*Robert Klebba, registering in opposition and wishing to speak*  
*Randy Christianson, registering in support and available to answer questions*  
*Nick Smith, registering in support and not wishing to speak*

Bill Fruhling, Planning Division, provided an overview of the changes proposed to the report that were suggested by Ald. Bennett.

Kaliszewski asked what would happen if the commission were to not recommend approval of the amendments. Fruhling said the Urban Design Commission had a similar discussion at their 2/5 meeting and ultimately recommended to place this on file without prejudice. The City has moved to a new area planning framework, and the UDC decided that this would be better handled in that venue where it could be looked at more comprehensively.

Ald. Latimer Burris asked if it was typical to go back and revise portions of plans that were approved over a decade prior. Fruhling said it was not typical, and with the creation of the new Downtown Area Plan coming up, it would be an opportunity to revisit any existing plans in the area and pull up relevant recommendations into the new area plan.

Ald. Bennett spoke about why she proposed the amendments to the plan. She said that if we want to preserve history, we should be working with people who own properties to see how they can make the Lamp House more accessible to the public and create new development for homes that are in need of repair. Redevelopment in this area isn't possible under the current plan due to the views being protected. She said that developers are coming to her to propose developments in her district. Because housing is a near and present issue to be addressed, she put these amendments forward. She was not proposing to impact the Lamp House, but she thought we could build housing and preserve at the same time.

Nan Fey, Kurt Stege, Linda Lehnertz, Alex Saloutos, and Robert Klebba spoke in opposition.

Bruce Bosben spoke in support.

Morrison said they would need to look through the lens of the Landmarks Commission in their discussion, and it is ultimately up to the Plan Commission to weigh other priorities present that may outweigh the priorities of the Landmarks Commission. He discussed the different views, saying that he was less worried about the views from the

house than the views to the house so that people are able to see and appreciate it, from a landmark perspective. Regarding height, most houses are already about as tall as the Lamp House and buildings to the south area much taller. He didn't think they should change the report itself but could instead add an appendix with updated information to give people the full context of what was originally written and approved and what was changed.

Arnesen, who served on the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee, pointed out that it was a long time ago, but his recollection was that the views from the Lamp House were just as important because they were important to the homeowner who hired Frank Lloyd Wright. With respect to how the house is historic and how Wright designed it, the views looking out were important, so they shouldn't disregard that. He said that he was reluctant to amend the original plan in any way. He said that after the plan was adopted, there was a development that was built, so the developer found a way to do it and at least partially preserve the view from Butler. He was sympathetic to the need to provide more housing in the city, but he didn't think every group of old buildings was necessarily appropriate for redevelopment. There have been big changes downtown with redevelopment over the past decade, and there are plenty of other opportunities that don't interfere with a historic building and its viewsheds. He said that he was opposed to the proposed amendments and wanted to leave the report as is. He disagreed that this area is subject to no redevelopment because of the Lamp House.

Latimer Burris asked how this resolution came about, how much time was spent on this in 2013, and if this could be addressed elsewhere like an area plan. Fruhling said the committee met from October 2013 to January 2014 and had seven meetings, a public design workshop, and a tour of the block. He said there was extensive effort with great discussion and input, and the committee did a thorough job of looking at all sides. The current resolution came from Ald. Bennett, who approached staff and indicated that she wanted to propose amendments to the plan. He explained that the Urban Design Commission thought this decision would be more appropriately discussed during the creation of the Downtown area plan.

## Action

**A motion was made by Arnesen, seconded by Morrison, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation to Place on File without prejudice. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**