

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION	PRESENTED: November 7, 2011
TITLE: Wisconsin Historical Society Staff presentation of "The Top Ten Ways to Mess Up Your Historic Building. Contact: Jen Davel and Mark Beuchel (24390)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: November 7, 2011	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Gehrig, Vice Chair; Robin Taylor, David McLean, Marsha Rummel, and Michael Rosenblum. Christina Slattery excused. Alder. Rummel left during discussion of Item 1.

SUMMARY:

Jen Davel and Mark Buechel, Preservation Architects at the Wisconsin Historical Society provided a presentation that they previously presented at the 2011 Wisconsin Local History and Historic Preservation Conference titled "Top Ten Ways to Mess Up Your Historic Building".

#10 Creating an airtight building: Old buildings must breathe. Traditional building materials including soft mortar and oil-based paints were breathable, allowed water to escape, and allowed the building to expand and contract. New mortars and latex paints are tight and do not allow movement. The improper installation of insulation can create moisture problems.

#9 Cleaning your building with sand: Sandblasting in the State of Wisconsin is a crime. Buildings develop a patina over time. This patina is typically not causing any harm to the building and should be left alone. Some buildings have been painted and the owner wishes to have the paint removed. If one must clean their building, start with the gentlest means possible (soapy water and sponge or chemical product mixed with water). If using equipment, one must use the proper equipment in an appropriate way. The spray wand should be set at less than 1000 psi. and be held at least 12 inches from the surface. Incorrect cleaning may result in damage to the wall material.

#8 Painting/Sealing Masonry: The application of paint or sealer on the outside surface of the wall may trap moisture in the wall. This may cause spalling of the surface. Do not paint or seal masonry.

#7 Replacing original materials with something different: Always attempt to repair rather than replace. Most replacement materials (vinyl, resins and composites, faux shingles) do not match the original material in durability, longevity, workability and sheen. "Maintenance free" usually means that the item cannot be repaired.

#6 Repointing with saw and concrete: Historic mortar is different than modern mortar. Historic mortar had more aggregate in it and was typically softer than modern mortars. When repointing, the new mortar must match the color, composition, hardness and profile of the original mortar. Mortar that is too hard or harder than the adjacent masonry will damage the masonry. Inappropriately applied mortar (different profile, wrong color,

etc.) will change the character of the wall. Grinders should not be used to remove existing mortar because of the risk of damage to the wall material.

#5 Building additions in front of and on top of historic buildings: Do not destroy the character of the historic building massing. One should be able to distinguish old from new. Additions should not compete with the main building.

#4 Putting lipstick on a pig: Respect the style of the building. Do not over embellish to add more character than what is appropriate. Changing a bungalow style into a Queen Anne is in appropriate. Use historic photos to document original or historic treatments for reconstruction and restoration.

#3 Allowing water to run freely: Do not allow vegetation to grow on a building. Climbing vines will grow into mortar joints and cause damage to the wall. Use a trellis system to keep vines off of the building wall. Tree roots can cause foundation problems if planted too close to building.

#2 Replacing historic windows: Windows are a very important character defining features and the weakest links in a building. The R-value is slightly increased by the installation of a replacement window, but the costs will never be recouped in energy savings. Vinyl windows can fail in as little as 7 years due to high expansion rate. Wood windows can last 20 years. Do your research. Don't replace windows (especially original ones) unless they are rotted or damaged beyond repair. Put in a storm window. Think long-term about sustainability. The installation of caulking and weather-stripping to original single pane wood sashes is better than getting stuck in the replacement cycle where your energy savings never repays your investment in a replacement window. About 1/2 of landfills are construction waste.

#1 Demolition: Be creative. Reuse historic properties in interesting new ways. Provide incentives and use tax credit programs. Demolition is final.