



Project Name & Address: Madison Gas & Electric Powerhouse, 717 E Main

Application Type(s): Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of an exhaust stack on a landmark site located in a historic district (PUBLIC HEARING)

Legistar File ID # [43524](#)

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Date Prepared: July 7, 2016

Background Information

Project Applicant/Contact: Bryan Kleinmaier, Stafford Rosenbaum

Parcel Location/Information: The exhaust stack is located on E Main Street on a landmark site in the Third Lake Ridge historic district

Relevant Ordinance Sections:

41.18 STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS. A certificate of appropriateness shall be granted only if the proposed project complies with this chapter, including all of the following standards that apply.

- (2) Demolition or Removal. In determining whether to approve a certificate of appropriateness for any demolition or removal of any landmark or structure within a historic district, the Landmarks Commission shall consider all of the following, and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:
- (a) Whether the structure is of such architectural or historic significance that its demolition or removal would be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
 - (b) Whether a landmark's designation has been rescinded.
 - (c) Whether the structure, although not itself a landmark structure, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the historic district as a whole and therefore should be preserved for the benefit of the people of the City and the State.
 - (d) Whether demolition or removal of the subject property would be contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and/or to the objectives of the historic preservation plan for the applicable historic district as duly adopted by the Common Council.
 - (e) Whether the structure is of such old and unusual or uncommon design, method of construction, or material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty and/or expense.
 - (f) Whether retention of the 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.
 - (g) The condition of the property, provided that any deterioration of the property which is self-created or which is the result of a failure to maintain the property as required by this chapter cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for demolition or removal.
 - (h) Whether any new structure proposed to be constructed or change in use proposed to be made is compatible with the historic resources of the historic district in which the

- subject property is located, or if outside a historic district, compatible with the mass and scale of buildings within two hundred (200) feet of the boundary of the landmark site.
- (i) Prior to approving a certificate of appropriateness for demolition, the Landmarks Commission may require the applicant to provide documentation of the structure. Documentation shall be in the form required by the Commission.

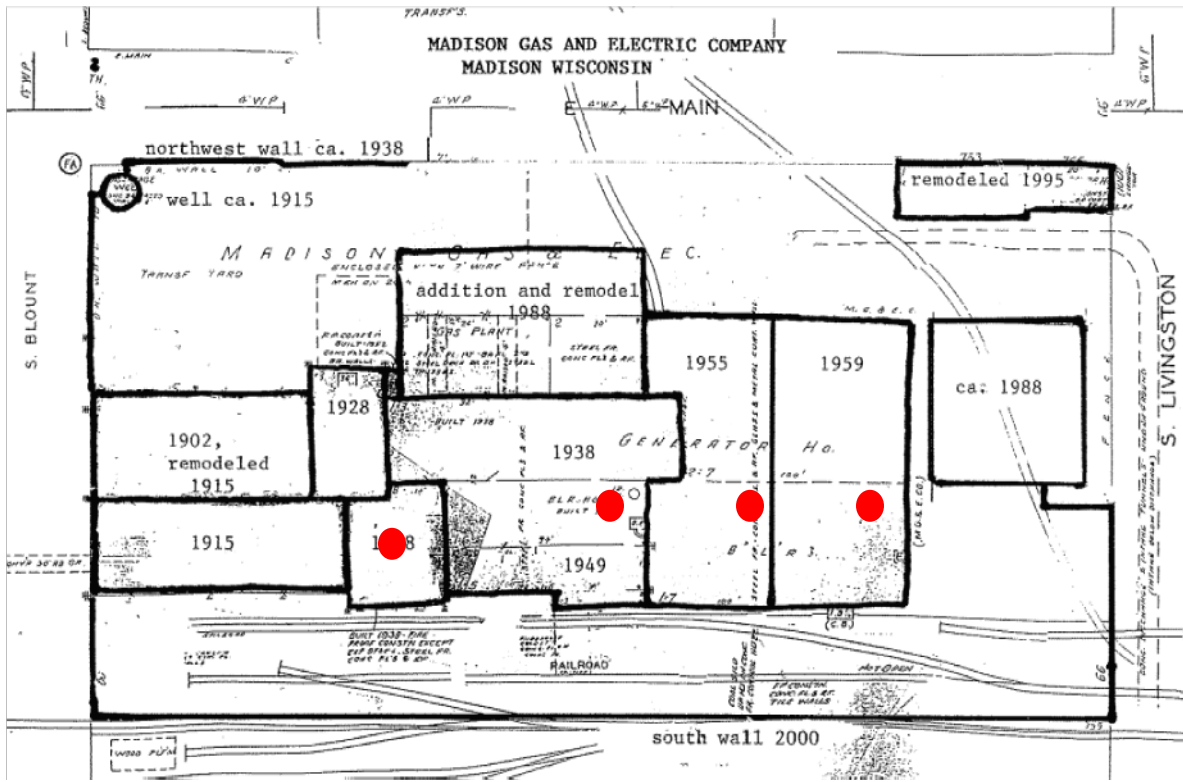
41.01 POLICY AND PURPOSE. The Common Council recognizes that the City of Madison contains buildings, structures, signs, features, improvements, sites, and areas that have significant architectural, archaeological, anthropological, historical, and cultural value. The Common Council further recognizes that these historic resources represent the City's unique heritage, contribute to the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the City's residents, and serve as a source of great interest to the City's residents and visitors. Therefore, the Common Council hereby finds that it is in the public interest to identify, protect, preserve, promote, conserve and use historic resources within the City. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to:

- (1) Accomplish the identification, protection, promotion, preservation, conservation and use of the City's historic resources, as embodied and reflected in the city's historic districts and landmarks.
- (2) Ensure that the City's growth sensitively incorporates the City's historic resources.
- (3) Enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the City by ensuring that new design and construction, when it happens, complements the City's historic resources.
- (4) Provide a framework for appropriate reinvestment in the City's landmarks and historic districts that ensures new design and construction, when it happens, complements the City's historic resources and conforms to the standards of the historic district.
- (5) Safeguard the City's historic resources and investment in them by establishing an obligation to maintain them, and encouraging the vigorous enforcement of this ordinance.
- (6) Recognize that the city's historic resources are economic assets that can attract residents and visitors, create jobs, stabilize and improve property values, and stimulate business and industry.
- (7) Foster civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past.
- (8) Promote the use of and investment in historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the City.
- (9) Provide a clear regulatory framework for implementing, balancing, and accomplishing the public policy announced in this chapter.

Analysis and Conclusion

The portion of the landmarks site that contains the exhaust stack also is located in the Third Lake Ridge historic district. Because the demolition of the exhaust stack does not result in an alteration to an existing building and because the demolition on a landmark site is the higher standard of review, the standards for exterior alterations in the historic district are not discussed in this staff report.

The Madison Gas & Electric Powerhouse property was designated a landmark on October 15, 2002 and according to the landmark nomination, it is significant "in history as Madison's most important private utility and one of the city's major employers." The landmark nomination does not specifically describe the exhaust stacks. According to the submission materials, the exhaust stack was constructed in 1922 "and was designed to last 40 years." The exhaust stack is located within a structure(s) that was constructed in 1938. This request to demolish the exhaust stack will not alter the associated building(s). The landmark property is also listed on the National Register.



Site plan from nomination form. Approximate locations of existing exhaust stacks added for this staff report. Exhaust stack located to the far left is the stack proposed for demolition at this time.



Google aerial view. Exhaust stack proposed for demolition at this time indicated by arrow.

A brief discussion of the demolition standards 41.18(2) follows:

- a. The exhaust stack is identifiable as part of Madison's skyline and is physically part of the Powerhouse. The nomination form however, does not specifically mention the exhaust stack when describing the Powerhouse or its historic significance. According to the submission materials, the retention of the exhaust stack may be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and the State as it relates to safety. The demolition of the exhaust stack would not be detrimental to the public interest and contrary to the general welfare of the people of the City and State as it relates to the intent of this standard.
- b. Not applicable
- c. Not applicable
- d. The removal of the exhaust stack is not contrary with the policy and purpose of the ordinance and will allow for the continued use of the landmark building.
- e. The exhaust stack was constructed for a specific purpose and is therefore of an unusual or uncommon design and method of construction. The material used to construct the exhaust stack is fairly common. The exhaust stack could be reproduced with great difficulty and expense due to its height and specific use. The exhaust stack is functionally obsolete and cannot be adaptively reused.
- f. The exhaust stack does not provide any architectural or historic significance and its demolition would 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.
- g. The Applicant has explained that the exhaust stack is in poor condition, was constructed to last 40 years, has been maintained since it was taken out of service, and no poses a possible threat to human safety and to other adjacent historic resources.
- h. Nothing will be constructed in place of the existing exhaust stack. According to the Applicant, there are four buildings surrounding the exhaust stack. None of the buildings are connected to the stack. The buildings include the Softener Building, LP Boilerhouse, #3 Turbine Hall, and #5/6 Boilerhouse.
- i. Staff recommends that the existing exhaust stack and the demolition process be documented through photographs.

Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of the exhaust stack are met and recommends that the Landmarks Commission approve the Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions of approval:

1. The Applicant shall document the existing stack and the stack demolition process through photographs and provide the photographs to the City after the demolition work is completed.