

Bailey, Heather

From: John Rolling <jrolling51@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 3:03 PM
To: Bailey, Heather
Cc: Cindy Rolling
Subject: Demolition Application Notice 302 E. Washington

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Heather-- The recent Listserv notification for this building's demolition app caught my attention. I'm guessing this demo notice will come before the Landmarks Commission as early as 4/14? I'm sure you have already found the SHSW Architecture and History Inventory material on this one (Reference # 114880) which cites the historic name as "Capital Times Printing Plant." That's only partly true. In fact, this building housed not only the printing plant but also the general offices for the Cap Times during the period 1927 to approximately 1948. This information is from the several volumes of Wright's Madison Wisconsin City Directory, which I checked at the central library. During the period of Cap Times occupancy here, the paper was known for its affiliation with the LaFollettes (especially Senator Philip and Governor Robert Jr.) and the Wisconsin Progressive Party (1934-1947), for its advocacy of the New Deal generally, rural electrification, public vs. private utilities, and for its anti-fascism (opposition to the German-American Bund). William Evjue, who had founded the paper in 1917, was the publisher and managing editor during the 302 E. Washington period. Evjue entertained notable guests, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, at the office building. My information source, other than the city directories, is the Dave Zweifel and John Nichols book, The Capital Times, published by SHSW in 2017 and Evjue's autobiography, The Fighting Editor (1968). The 302 E. Washington building may not present as an architectural gem in its own right, although it was designed by Madison architect Philip Homer who also designed the recently-demolished Mifflin Arcade and the Terrace Homes Apartments on Breese Terrace, which is Madison Landmark # 122. I do note, however, that the 302 E. Washington building retains some interesting brick and tile work, that the loss of two parapets has little impact on its massing, and that while the original multi-pane windows have been replaced with modern single-pane windows, the window voids remain original. I'll let others with greater expertise evaluate the architectural merits. But I believe the history of this building's occupancy by the Cap Times during an important period supports a Landmarks Commission "A" recommendation to the Plan Commission. To be fair, I would also acknowledge that another extant building-- 106 King Street (also addressed as 113 E. Main) was the original Cap Times HQ (1917-1927). The 106 King building also deserves recognition. Indeed, one could argue that 106 King should be part of a Landmark District covering all of Block 103. Existing landmarks on this block are 102 King (Landmark # 165), 117 E. Main (#151), 121 E. Main (#157) and 119 E. Main (#111). By the way, I wrote the NR nomination for the 119 E. Main building back in 1983-84, so I'm very fond of this block personally. Hope this information helps!