



Project Addresses: 411-433 W Gilman Street
Application Type: Demolition Permit and Conditional Use
Legistar File ID # [91234](#), [91236](#), and [90614](#)
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Report includes comments from other City agencies, as noted
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At the March 16th Plan Commission meeting, the Plan Commission referred the demolition permit requests for 415 W Gilman Street (ID [91234](#)) and 433 W Gilman Street (ID [91236](#)) (and associated conditional use requests, ID [90614](#)) to the April 13, 2026 Plan Commission meeting with a request that the applicant submit building conditions reports of the two structures. Additionally, during the discussion of these proposed demolitions, the Commission asked questions of meeting registrants and staff regarding the architectural style and context of Master Hall and about how to consider policies in adopted plans. The purpose of this addendum is to provide information related to these topics.

Building Condition Reports

As requested by the Plan Commission, the applicant has subsequently submitted these two reports which have been uploaded to the public records for these requests and are linked here:

- The [building conditions report](#) for 415 W Gilman Street. At the time of the March 16, 2026 report, staff was unaware of any evidence that the seven-story multi-family dwelling is in deteriorated condition or that structural or fire hazards, unlawful uses, or public nuisances are present on the property. Staff was also unaware of any additions or substantial modifications to the structure over the years which would impact the historic integrity. The submitted conditions report concludes that “the building shell could remain standing for years” but that the building is considered to be functionally obsolete due to the extensive improvements that would be required to meet building code and address ADA and energy efficiency standards.
- The [building conditions report](#) for 433 W Gilman Street. At the time of the March 16, 2026 report, staff was unaware of any evidence that the five-story multi-family dwelling is in deteriorated condition or that structural or fire hazards, unlawful uses, or public nuisances are present on the property. Despite several modifications over time, both on the exterior as well as interior, the staff report noted that the building has nevertheless been identified over the years as a potential landmark, such as in the 2012 Downtown Plan (see Page 87). The submitted conditions report concludes that “the building’s structural design coupled with the spatial allowances within the building footprint make it infeasible to ever achieve the necessary renovations that would bring this property into compliance. The work and renovations necessary to maintain the building even in its current condition, or to upgrade for improved accessibility and life safety, most likely would compromise structure and overall integrity of the building due to the historic repairs following the fire damage and the alterations over the years which have materially modified much of the original structure and layout.”

Additional Information Regarding Master Hall and Brutalism

During initial deliberations on March 16, questions were raised regarding Brutalist Architecture in Madison and other known examples. The City's Preservation Planner provided the following additional information relevant to this discussion.

The Planning Division has recently started a federal grant-funded project to complete a historic context survey of civic and commercial architecture from 1960-1989, which would include Brutalist architecture. As the City receives more requests for demolition of buildings constructed during that time period, the Landmarks Commission wants to understand the significance of any of these architectural styles. Most of the Brutalist buildings are public or civic buildings, but there are some commercial Brutalist buildings.

At this time, the City does not have a Madison-specific study that contextualizes which, and how many, Brutalist buildings remaining in Madison are historically significant. Without this, staff are not certain if other examples of these commercial buildings are architecturally significant enough to be considered eligible to become a City of Madison landmark. The staff and Landmark Commission recommendation regarding 415 W Gilman was in part based on this specific building being a high-style version of this type of architecture. ('High-Style', in architectural history terminology, means architect designed and meant to be a showcase version of that architectural style (as opposed to 'vernacular' style)).

Additional Information Related to Adopted Plans

During the discussion regarding the proposed demolition at 415 W Gilman Street, some Plan Commissioners asked questions and provided comments regarding how recommendations in adopted plans relate to the Commission's consideration of the demolition standards. Staff noted that adopted plans contain policies both regarding future growth and development as well as preservation. In addition to the excerpts of the [Downtown Plan](#) and [Comprehensive Plan](#) included in the March 16, 2026 staff report, the Commission may find the following sections of these elements of adopted City plans relevant:

- Regarding preservation of historic buildings/cultural elements:
 - Comprehensive Plan's Culture & Character Element, including Strategy 2 (pages 76-79)
 - Downtown Plan policies regarding the State Street (pages 44-45) and Historic Preservation (pages 85-92)
- Regarding infill, increased development intensity in downtown, and a mix of housing options:
 - Comprehensive Plan's Land Use & Transportation Element, including Strategies 5 (pages 36-37) and 7 (page 40)
 - Comprehensive Plan's Neighborhoods & Housing Element, including Strategies 2 (page 49) and 3 (pages 50-51)
 - Downtown Plan policies regarding State Street (pages 44-45)
 - Downtown Plan policies to Enhance Livability (pages 59-66), particularly housing for students (pages 61-62)

Past Demolition Requests

Several changes were adopted to City's Demolition Standards in 2021, including removing the Plan Commission's approval of a proposed future use as part of the consideration of demolition applications. Between that update and a subsequent update in 2025, the Plan Commission reviewed 27 applications in which the Landmarks Commission found there was historic value (or what is now the "Category A" finding). In those instances, 19 were approved, seven were placed on file, and one was withdrawn.

These demolition requests included two that are within the "State Street" area of the Downtown Plan where a similar combination of plan recommendations were present.

- 223-225 W Gilman St – the demolition permit request to raze a three-unit dwelling at 225 W Gilman Street was approved. In its unanimous approval, the Plan Commission found that the standards were met. During the deliberation, individual Commissioners acknowledged the historic plan-related recommendations in the Downtown Plan, the thoroughness of the building condition reports, and that facts regarding each demolition must be made on a case-by-case basis. (Legistar File [84451](#))
- 428-444 State St – The demolition permit requests were placed on file. Conditions reports were submitted for the Plan Commission's consideration. In its action, the Plan Commission noted it did not find the demolitions consistent with the approval standards at that time and specified that the demolitions were not consistent with Downtown Plan Recommendation 75 regarding historic preservation. (Legistar File [81565](#))

Further changes to the demolition standards were approved in 2025, which included the establishment of new (and current) review standards and limits the Plan Commission's demolition review only to structures found by the Landmarks Commission to have some historic value (include "Category A" and "Category B" findings). Under these current standards, the only "Category A" findings the Commission has reviewed were those at the March 16, 2026 meeting, including the subject buildings and the approved demolition request for 5534 Medical Circle (Legistar File [94159](#)).

In its approval of 5534 Medical Circle, the Plan Commission noted that the proposed development serves the goals for development set forth in the West Area Plan and that it also meets Approval Standard 2 given the information provided by the developers regarding the current condition of the building and the comments by the current owner. The Commission noted public comments that the Marshall Erdman family did not believe the buildings along Medical Circle were historically significant examples of his work, and their preservation was not an intended objective of Erdman, and others raising questions regarding the condition of other adjacent Erdman buildings and likelihood of a future historic district status for these buildings.