



**Project Name & Address:** 619-699 W Mifflin Street  
**Application Type(s):** Certificate of Appropriateness  
**Legistar File ID #** [85180](#)  
**Prepared By:** Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner, Planning Division  
**Date Prepared:** October 1, 2024

## Summary

**Project Applicant/Contact:** Linda Irving, Trinitas Ventures  
**Requested Action:** The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a nonhistoric structure on a landmark site, construct a new building on a landmark site, and complete a land division/combination.

## Background Information

**Parcel Location/Information:** The subject property is a designated landmark, Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse.

### 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.

- (1) New Construction or Exterior Alteration. The Landmarks Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for exterior alteration or construction only if:
  - (a) In the case of exterior alteration to a designated landmark, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - (b) In the case of exterior alteration or construction of a structure on a landmark site, the proposed work would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
  - (c) In the case of exterior alteration or construction on any property located in a historic district, the proposed exterior alteration or construction meets the adopted standards and guidelines for that district.
  - (d) In the case of any exterior alteration or construction for which a certificate of appropriateness is required, the proposed work will not frustrate the public interest expressed in this ordinance for protecting, promoting, conserving, and using the City's historic resources.
- (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.

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.

- (4) Land Divisions and Combinations. The commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for land divisions, combinations, and subdivision plats of landmark sites and properties in historic districts, unless it finds that the proposed lot sizes adversely impact the historic character or significance of a landmark, are incompatible with adjacent lot sizes, or fail to maintain the general lot size pattern of the historic district.

#### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## **Analysis and Conclusion**

The proposed project is to demolish the el-shaped multi-unit residential building constructed in 1987 and replace it with a new multi-unit residential building that would span the property at 619 W Mifflin and the adjacent 699 W Mifflin. As part of that work, the applicant is also proposing to combine the two properties and create a new land division that would create a lot that only contained the historic resource and a lot that only contained the new construction.

The Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse was constructed in 1907 (design by Claude and Starck) with an addition in 1915 (designed by James R. Law). Wiedbeck-Dobelin was originally a supplier of blacksmithing and wagon-making supplies. In 1986, the property began redevelopment from industrial to residential use. The interior of the historic warehouse was converted to apartment units and an adjacent similarly-scaled apartment building was constructed in 1987. The site continued to evolve with an adjacent apartment building being constructed in 1989 and the courtyard between this property and that development is also located within the landmark site. The property was designated a Madison Landmark in 1989 as significant for its commercial history and as a significant representation of an early industrial warehouse architectural typology. The two-story masonry building is el-shaped and its character defining features are the tall windows and style of masonry construction.

### **Concurrent Actions**

Along with this redevelopment proposal, the Landmarks Commission will need to provide an advisory recommendation to the Urban Design and Plan Commissions on the proposed new construction in relation to the adjacent landmark at 640 W Washington as part of a separate action. Finally, there is a landmark boundary amendment on this agenda to reflect the proposed land combination/division proposed for the Certificate of Appropriateness. That will need a separate action and will be informed by the action the commission takes in relation to the Certificate of Appropriateness.

### **Demolition**

The redevelopment proposal would demolish the multi-unit residential building, constructed in 1987, reconfigure the courtyard space to the west of the historic warehouse, and replace the metal gate and fencing that encloses the courtyard space, which is attached to the historic warehouse and the adjacent 1987 building. The 1987 apartment building is not significant to the history of the property and the proposal appears to meet the demolition standards in the historic preservation ordinance. No demolition activities will impact the historic warehouse building other than replacing the nonhistoric courtyard fencing with the gate that currently attaches to the structure.

### **Land Combination/Division**

As part of the redevelopment of this site, the applicant would also demolish the adjacent apartment building at 699 W Mifflin (constructed 1989) and replace both of the demolished buildings with one new apartment building. In order to comply with building code, which will not allow for construction to cross lot lines, the applicant is

proposing to combine the lots-of-record for 619 and 699 W Mifflin, resolve the underlying lot lines, and divide the property so that the historic resource is on a separate lot from the new construction. At the informational presentation at the July 1, 2024, Landmarks Commission meeting, the commission requested that the applicant adjust the western setback from 5 feet to 10 feet to provide better separation between the landmark structure and the adjacent new construction. The updated site plan has an 11-foot setback on the western side of the 1907 wing and a 10-foot setback on the north and west sides of the 1915 wing of the historic structure.

Additionally, historic research for the landmark boundary amendment revealed that the present lot configuration reflects the reconfiguration of the site from 1986-1989 rather than the historic configuration. While the 1907 structure clearly crosses the platted lot line for the property, the 1915 addition features a chamfered corner at the northwest side in order to not cross the platted lot line that crosses diagonally through the lot of record/parcel. The lot configuration proposed by the applicant would create a more constrained lot, more in line with the historic configuration, albeit adjusted to include the northwest corner of the 1907 wing of the structure.



City of Madison GIS showing the parcel lines in green and underlying lot lines in blue.

### New Construction

When any part of a lot-of-record/parcel is within the boundary of a landmark site, all of it is considered within the landmark site. At present, while there is a proposal to amend the landmark site boundary based upon the proposed new lot configuration, that has not been approved by the Common Council, so the landmark site boundary remains as defined by the 1989 landmark designation. As such, the Landmarks Commission must review the proposed new construction using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in relation to the historic Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse on the landmark site.

The proposed new building features a three-story masonry base of a similar height datum to the historic structure and would be set back 14-feet 8-inches from the street façade of the historic warehouse. The building would then rise to 10-stories with a 36-foot stepback from the edge of the eastern edge of the street façade, placing it 45-feet away from the historic warehouse. The tower is proposed to be clad in white, gray, and terra-cotta colored metal panels. The significant stepback allows for the mass of the structure to not overwhelm the adjacent historic warehouse. The similar height of the masonry base of the building allows for the new structure to relate to the historic warehouse, but is executed in a way as to read as a product of its time with new brick and the shorter modern floorplates. The application materials also provide renderings showing this new structure in relation to the recent redevelopment projects in the vicinity where the tower portion would also relate to the more recent new construction in this area of the city. The result is a building that both relates to the historic structure on the landmark site, while making room for additional massing that relates to the surrounding skyline of the cityscape in the immediate vicinity.

A discussion of the relevant ordinance sections follows:

#### **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) The 1987 structure is not of architectural or historic significance.
  - (b) N/A.
  - (c) This property is not in a historic district.
  - (d) Demolition of this nonhistoric structure is not contrary to the policy and purpose of this ordinance and the property is not in a historic district.
  - (e) The 1987 building is not 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) Retention of the nonhistoric structure would not promote the general welfare of the people of the City and the State.
  - (g) N/A.
  - (h) The new structure is designed to both be compatible with the historic structure on the site and with the mass and scale of the other buildings within two hundred (200) feet of the boundary of the landmark site, most of which are of similar height, mass, and scale with a similar architectural character.

Staff does not believe there is a need for additional photographic documentation beyond what has been supplied to the City as part of the project's application for demolition to Plan Commission.

- (4) Land Divisions and Combinations. The Landmarks Commission requested that the applicant adjust the western lot line from a 5-foot setback to a 10-foot setback in order to not adversely impact the historic character of the landmark at 619 W Mifflin and the new lot configuration complies with that request. There is a mix of lot configurations and this proposal appears to be compatible with that variety.

#### **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

1. The property's use shifted from being an industrial warehouse to housing in 1987. As a Federal preservation tax credit project, that adaptive reuse of the site was completed in a way that preserved its architectural character. The property will continue to have a residential use and the new construction

will be further set back from the historic structure from the current 10 feet to nearly 15 feet along the street façade. No physical changes are proposed to the historic building and the proposed lot reconfiguration aligns with the historic spatial relationships of the originally platted lot lines.

2. The height of the masonry base of the proposed new constructure, setback from the historic resource and the significant stepback of the tower on the new building allows for the historic character of the property to be retained. No distinctive materials or historic features, spaces, or spatial relationships will be adversely impacted.
3. The proposed new building will read as a product of its time.
4. The 1987 building and courtyard space between the historic warehouse and the 1987 apartment building and the 1989 courtyard space between the 1987 and 1989 apartment buildings have not acquired historic significance in their own right.
5. No physical changes are proposed to the historic warehouse.
6. N/A.
7. N/A.
8. There are no previously identified archaeological sites on this property and the 1987-1989 redevelopment of the property created substantial ground disturbance making it highly unlikely that any archaeological materials remain.
9. The proposed new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The proposed new work would be differentiated from the old and compatible with the historic materials and features of the historic warehouse. The new construction creates compatible size, scale and proportion, and massing through a significant stepback between the masonry base and the metal-clad tower in order to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. The new construction would be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Recommendation

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

1. Final courtyard fencing, landscaping, and hardscape specifications be approved by staff.