

**From:** [Richard Chandler](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Preserve State Street; Oppose Appeal of of Plan Commission Decision to Deny Demolition Permit for 428-444 State Street (Legistar File 82802)  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 21, 2024 5:30:17 PM

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To All Alders --

Here's a copy of my testimony opposing the demolition of three traditional buildings at 428-444 State Street, presented on behalf of the more than 500 members of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation.

Thank you, Rick Chandler

## **City of Madison Common Council**

Public Hearing Regarding Appeal of Plan Commission

Denial of Demolition Permit for 428-444 State Street

(Legistar File 82802)

Remarks by Rick Chandler, Representing the

Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

May 21, 2024

I'm Rick Chandler, President of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, with more than 500 members throughout the city. We oppose the appeal of the Plan Commission decision to deny a demolition permit for the buildings at 428-444 State Street.

The City's Downtown Plan says State Street is Madison's premier street, due to its unique environment, with a lively corridor in much of the street of two- to four-story buildings with local stores and restaurants. The architecture and the activities create a vibrant streetscape that adds to the quality of life for residents and attracts many visitors. This would be lost if State Street becomes a canyon of tall, bulky, bland buildings with chain stores and restaurants.

Many stories about Madison feature photos of the traditional blocks of State Street. Those blocks are a key part of Madison's identity and appeal. We should preserve them, as the Downtown Plan urged, and as other cities such as Stoughton and Evansville are doing with their main streets.

The Landmarks Commission said these buildings have historic value, and the Plan Commission concluded that they should not be demolished. The Plan Commission noted that demolition would be contrary to the demolition statement of purpose in the Madison General Ordinances, which encourages preservation, and would be contrary to the implementation of Downtown Plan Recommendation 75, which encourages preservation and adaptive reuse of sound older buildings that contribute to the character of downtown.

It's been argued that the buildings at 428-444 State Street are unsound and it would not be economically feasible to maintain them. Developer John Martens, a member of the Madison Trust, strongly disagrees. John has carefully reviewed the condition reports for the buildings and says there are no issues that cannot be addressed by common and affordable repair, restoration and renovation techniques.

John has long experience in this area. He has successfully renovated buildings that were in similar or worse condition. He owned and renovated the Madison Candy Company historic brick building on Williamson Street that for many years housed the El Dorado Grill and now houses the Ahan Restaurant and offices. He renovated the Goodman Community Center on the Near East Side. Those buildings are economic successes and are distinctive and attractive contributors to their neighborhoods.

The Madison Trust wants to preserve the best elements of our history and heritage as we collectively shape the future. We have supported development projects that are compatible with the preservation of key buildings and neighborhoods. We understand the need for more housing and jobs, while we also know that people in Madison want to maintain the fabric of our most important historic neighborhoods and places.

Newspapers such as the Daily Cardinal and Badger Herald have written about the importance of maintaining the special character of State Street. The State Journal has pointed out the need to balance development with historic preservation. In this case, the demolition request should be denied and the special character of State Street should be maintained.

Thank you.

Rick Chandler

810 Ottawa Trail

Madison, Wisconsin 53711

**From:** [Bob Klebba](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** State Street  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 22, 2024 6:44:04 AM

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Hi,

I drafted this email last night when I got home. I didn't know what the outcome would be.

When I testified tonight I knew I had to focus on the standards of demolition and I hope I conveyed that. However I also wanted to point out how fragile the preservation of our iconic State St is. Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, I was pleased to see that many alders recognize how important the diversity of architecture on the 100-400 blocks is to Madison's identity.

There will be more challenges to our shared historic resources on State Street in the coming year. I hope we all keep in mind what is most important to the long-term well being of our city.

best, Bob

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