

DATE: August 17, 2016
TO: Urban Design Commission
SUBJECT: 223 & 219 W Gilman—Demolition and Addition File #41975

In the Wisconsin Historical Society's Architecture and History Inventory of historic residential properties in Madison built in 1883, there are 13 that have survived to date—the H.L. & Mary Gage House at 219 W Gilman is one of them. In 1983 when the Mansion Hill National Register Historic District was designated, the property met the federal criteria for its vernacular architecture.

One hundred years after the original section of the house was built, a photo was taken for the WHS's inventory. In 1987 the property was purchased by Clark & Patricia Culver who in 1997 sold it to Christopher F. Culver who sold it in 2012 to Chabad Lubavitch Inc.

Unfortunately the calculated speculation, neglect and dismal stewardship of the previous owner(s) was greatly rewarded when Chabad Lubavitch paid \$470,000 for the property—\$125,000 more than the assessed value. Even then, after all the neglect that the house had endured, the condition report is not that bad. Clearly the house is not beyond repair.

The bottom line is, a vote to allow demolition of the entire Gage House will set a precedent for future demolitions of contributing buildings within Madison's historic districts. Today this same degree of neglect and lack of maintenance can be found in most of Madison's local and national historic districts.

The Gage house is a contributing building to the Mansion Hill National Register Historic District. **Historic districts are about the whole, not the individual properties.** Two letters from the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation (May 2002 and April 2016) opposing the demolition of the Gage House, clearly explain the reasons why this property is important to the integrity of the **whole historic district.**

I greatly admire the programming provided to students at the Chabad House. They have been good neighbors and long term residents of Mansion Hill want them to remain in the neighborhood and be successful. Despite the noncontributing/non-historical Lutheran student center at 220 W Gilman and the Buckeye parking lot, the look of the streetscape should continue to reflect the historic residential appearance of the 200 block of W Gilman Street.

A win-win for Chabad House, the Mansion Hill neighborhood and all historic districts throughout the city would be:

- restore the porch and original front section of the Gage house to serve as a foyer/welcoming space;
- move the porch and front section forward to match the setback of 223 W Gilman;
- build an addition that is much larger than the remaining original porch and front section but perhaps not as large as Chabad's current dream addition (How many days of the year will an assembly hall for 300 be needed?);
- build an addition that looks residential with residential windows; and
- over time purchase another nearby property for future growth.

Thank you for your time.

Franny Ingebritson