



13 August, 2012

Amy Scanlon – Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development
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The Madison Trust for Historic Preservation is wholly opposed to the proposed demolition of three contributing buildings in the Langdon Street Historic District.

Knothe and Bruce Architects have requested permits to demolish 145 Iota Court, 619 N. Henry St., and 625 N. Henry St. All three buildings, clustered at the corner of Iota Ct. and N. Henry St., in the center of the Langdon Street district, are considered contributing properties in the federal Langdon Street district. Demolishing them would be a significant degradation of the integrity of the district, whose significance depends on the assemblage of post-1900 revival style buildings constructed for student housing and for Greek letter societies at the University of Wisconsin.

Because this is a federal historic district, and these buildings are not included in a locally designated historic district, there is no legislative protection against degradation and demolition. Instead, the federal preservation program, in conjunction with a state tax credit, provides a significant financial incentive for restoration and rehabilitation of contributing buildings in federal historic districts. Many other property owners in the Langdon St. district have taken advantage of this tax credit program to repair, maintain, and improve their properties. This program leverages millions of dollars of economic activity annually in Madison and many thousands in the Langdon Street district. We believe this is a legitimate option for the repair and upgrade of these three buildings, which do not appear, from the exterior, to be so deteriorated that demolition is necessary.

The Langdon Street Historic District already has several non-contributing properties scattered evenly throughout the district. If the number of contributing properties in this district continues to decline the whole district risks being delisted from the National Register of Historic Places, removing the tax credit program as an option for other owners in the district, and taking of the table a major incentive for investment in the unique historic character of the district.

We request that the Landmarks Commission make a strong statement of these facts to the Plan Commission and Common Council, and encourage those bodies to deny the demolition requests.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Tish', is written over a white background.

Jason Tish
Executive Director, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation