

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** October 14, 2013

**TITLE:** 716, 790 & 800 Langdon Street –  
Memorial Union – Phase II/Alumni  
Park. 8<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (31851)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Amy Scanlon, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** October 14, 2013

**ID NUMBER:**

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Members present were: Stuart Levitan, Chair; Marsha Rummel, David McLean, Jason Fowler, Michael Rosenblum, Christina Slattery and Erica Fox Gehrig.

### SUMMARY:

Registered in support were Nathan Novak, representing the Memorial Union; Julie Grove and Gary Brown, both representing the UW-Madison.

The area in question is the aesthetic of the zone immediately between the red gym and the east side of the loading façade. Character and development of the east supporting wall for the ramp, also the railing. A planter has been introduced where vines will grown on the low wall. On the north side there is a larger grade change where a planter will be added to help green up that façade. The wall will be concrete but it is their intent to screen it with vegetation. They have met with the State Historical Society, who do not wish them to use red brick on the retaining walls. The Historical Society also shared staff's concerns that the landscaping was not creating enough of a space for gathering. The lower level is where the existing grade is today. The park is getting pulled up because of the need for vertical clearance for the underground loading parking, and to try to align them with the finished floor elevations of the Memorial Union. It also provides the opportunity, when you're standing at the park level, you are at grade with the finished floor of the Union for direct access in and out of that east side of the building.

Rummel noted that the rear area seems like a missed opportunity and suggested trying stone or a seating area instead of what looks like concrete.

Brown remarked that the UW is committed to better landscaping in the space; something new and of this time, not something created as a false history to match the red gym.

### ACTION:

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Rosenblum, the Landmarks Commission **GRANTED** the Certificate of Appropriateness with staff comments noting that staff shall work with the applicants on final landscape design and if necessary come back to the Landmarks Commission for additional review and approval. The motion passed by voice vote/other.



Project Address: 716, 790 & 800 Langdon Street  
 Application Type: Certificate of Appropriateness for alteration to a landmark site  
 Legistar File ID #: 31851  
 Prepared By: Amy L. Scanlon, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

**Summary**

Applicant/Property Owner: Gary Brown

Requested Action/Proposal Summary: The applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the alteration of the landmark site located at 716, 790 & 800 Langdon Street.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: Section 33.19 of the Madison General Ordinances (see below)

Review Required By: Landmarks Commission

**Background Information**

Parcel Location & Information: The subject site is a landmark site due to the location of the UW Armory/Red Gym located on the same site. The site is located in the Bascom Hill National Register Historic District. The UW Armory/Red Gym is a National Historic Landmark and is individually listed on the National Register.

**Relevant Landmarks Ordinance Sections:**

33.19(2) Landmark site means any parcel of land of historic significance due to a substantial value in tracing the history of aboriginal man, or upon which an historic event has occurred, and which has been designated as a landmark site under this section, or an improvement parcel, or part thereof, on which is situated a landmark and any abutting improvement parcel, or part thereof, used as and constituting part of the premises on which the landmark is situated.

33.19(5)(b)4. Upon filing of any application with the Landmarks Commission, the Landmarks Commission shall determine:

- a. Whether, in the case of a designated landmark or landmark site, the proposed work would detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any exterior architectural feature of the improvement upon which said work is to be done; and
- b. Whether, in the case of the construction of a new improvement upon a landmark site, the exterior of such improvement would adversely affect or not harmonize with the external appearance of other neighboring improvements on such site; and

33.19(8) Maintenance of Landmarks, Landmark Sites and Historic Districts.

(a) Every person in charge of an improvement on a landmark site or in an Historic District shall keep in good repair all of the exterior portions of such improvement and all interior portions thereof which, if not so maintained, may cause or tend to cause the exterior portions of such improvement to fall into a state of disrepair. This provision shall be in addition to all other provisions of law requiring such improvement to be kept in good repair.

## Analysis and Conclusion

Generally, the proposed Alumni Park design does not adversely affect the landmark. More specifically, the location of the underground tunnel and other improvements near the landmark structure causes some concern. First, the actual excavation and construction in close proximity to the Red Gym should be carefully monitored to ensure that the work does not damage the existing building. Second, the landscape design should transition to the Red Gym so that the Red Gym can be realized in an appropriate context. Finally, the ramp to the underground loading space should have a more appropriate appearance as it relates to the Red Gym. For example, the walls could have a red brick veneer instead of the modern appearance of concrete and the glass panel could be a green screen. Staff believes the stark contrast between the Red Gym and the ramp is visually intrusive and the ramp treatment does not harmonize with the Red Gym.

## Recommendation

Staff believes that the standards for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed project may be met and recommends approval by the Landmarks Commission with the following conditions of approval:

1. The construction shall be closely monitored to ensure that the adjacent work does not damage the landmark building.
2. The landscape design of Alumni Park shall be revised to provide a more appropriate context that will harmonize with the landmark building.
3. The appearance of the proposed ramp shall be revised to provide a more appropriate appearance that harmonizes with the landmark building.