

29 June, 2015

**TO: Ad Hoc Landmarks Ordinance Review Committee**  
**FROM: Madison Trust for Historic Preservation**  
**RE: Recommended revisions to the draft Landmarks Ordinance.**

*Red text represents recommended changes to the draft ordinance.*

*Blue text is commentary, not ordinance language*

#### 41.02 DEFINITIONS.

**Character** (of a building and a historic district) means the sum of all physical and **temporal** attributes in a historic place which can include setting, **history**, property types, form, proportion, architectural style, construction methods, and materials. Commission means the Landmarks Commission created under this section.

*Character of historic properties should be limited to observable physical characteristics. Physical characteristics (and their historic integrity) bear witness to a place's temporal/historical significance, but temporal significance does not bear not the "character" of a place. Also, temporal aspects of a historic place are not subject to alteration by any means that would be regulated by this ordinance.*

#### **Gross Volume -**

We recommend reinstating the definition of "Gross volume."

**Master** means an architect or designer of recognized greatness who is responsible for a **large** body of published work or **notable** structures **that are notable of their quality, innovation, or level of proficiency within their craft.**

*Quantity of work does not necessarily make one a master. An example is Cora Tuttle. She is listed as Master architect in Madison for the purposes of National Register eligibility because of her proficiency designing bungalow forms, but her built projects number less than ten.*

#### 41.11 CREATING HISTORIC DISTRICT ORDINANCE

(1)

##### **(b) Gross Volume**

*We recommend reinstating "gross volume" as one of the standards the Landmarks Commission should consider when proposing a new historic district designation under this ordinance. While we agree that scale and proportion are important considerations when evaluating visual compatibility of new construction relative to historic buildings, the volume of new construction (also relative to historic buildings) certainly has the potential to change the character in a historic district. No other term of measure gets at the same aspect of size and footprint. Historic districts made up of homes or buildings of a consistent size, with consistent views between them as one walks along the street possess a distinct rhythm of solids and views that defines the character of the district. Pedestrian passageways between those buildings, whether they are formalized or informal, can also be an important aspect of the district's character. When the effect of volume (of new construction) is not considered in a district where consistent volume helps define the*

*character, it has the potential to allow the closing of view, voids, and passageways, even when the perception from the street may be one of distinct facades at a smaller scale.*

*As an example, see images of the 200 block of S. Limestone in Lexington, Kentucky, where a row of five Victorian homes, with a distinct rhythm and views between them, was infilled on the rear with new construction that connects them all with a single mass along their back sides. This block was built with a rhythm of masses and views. After the construction along the rear, it's rhythm can still read from the street, but the views between them has been completely blocked by a single massive addition of unsympathetic volume.*



