

11 March, 2011

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In advance of the Landmarks Commission’s March 14 meeting, please see comments below on agenda items from the *Madison Trust for Historic Preservation* and *National Trust for Historic Preservation*.

**Item 1 - Development Process Initiative Report**

Generally, the recommendations relevant to the Landmarks Commission in the current version of the Development Process Initiative Report (as amended on February 16, 2011) are an improvement over those in the previous version.

Following are comments on specific recommendations of the current draft:

F.2 (p.29) “Redefine supermajority requirement...”

The supermajority requirement should be retained in its current form in order to retain strong protection for our historic places. The redefinition recommended by the Report would do nothing to improve the efficiency of the development approval process. It would merely lower the bar for getting around the review of the Landmarks Commission.

G.7.d (p.31) “Amend the Landmarks Ordinance to make it easier to interpret while not diminishing its effectiveness.”

We wholly support this recommendation, but recognize that “its effectiveness” is open to interpretation. We support the ordinance revisions that the Preservation Planner and Landmarks Commissioners themselves have been discussing in recent months and will present to the Council as their preferred revisions. These proposed revisions have been crafted to maintain the effectiveness of the ordinance with respect to the underlying intent of the ordinance to protect the character of important historic places in Madison, and encourage their continued use.

**Item 2 – Landmarks Ordinance Revisions**

No additional comments.

**Item 3 – Landmarks Commission Procedures**

No additional comment

*Dedicated to Preserving Madison’s Historic Places*

**Item 4 - Buildings proposed for demolition**

**723 State St.** – While we cannot support the demolition of St. Paul’s Catholic Church and Student Center, we recognize the needs of St. Paul’s to expand facilities that cater to a student population that has increased dramatically since the church was built in 1967. We also recognize that there is no zoning designation on the parcel that prevents demolition based on the Center’s historic or architectural significance. The current church was designed by Kenton Peters and built with reinforced concrete poured into wooden forms in the manner of Marcel Breuer’s St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota ten years earlier. St. Paul’s church is a good representation of the principles of the “Brutalist” vein of the Modern Movement in architecture – dramatic, sculpted, heavy forms constructed with raw concrete. The design is a bold departure from the architectural traditions of the Catholic Church and reflects the architectural freedom allowed congregations by the Second Vatican Council.

**3502 Monroe St.** – We cannot support the demolition of Parman’s Service Station. This 1930s gas and service station undoubtedly qualifies as a local Landmark, although it has not been nominated. Its potential for reuse and continued viability is high. The station is the prototypical example of the box-type service station that was developed in the 1930s, and dominated gas station design until the 1960s. The property represents the early decades of automobile dominance in Madison. There are numerous examples of similar stations being converted to new, viable commercial uses. The prominent location of Parman’s on Monroe St. and adjacent to a residential neighborhood makes it a good candidate for commercial rehabilitation.

Respectfully submitted,

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