

**From:** [Stephen Smith](#)  
**To:** [PLLCApplications](#)  
**Subject:** Regarding Proposed Demolition of 519 and 521 West Washington Avenue Houses  
**Date:** Monday, March 7, 2022 2:55:10 PM

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Regarding the proposed demolition of the houses at 519 and 521 West Washington Avenue, agenda item #9 for the March 7, 2022 Landmarks Commission meeting.

The demolition permit application for these structures should not be approved.

\* There was minimal notice to the neighborhood and groups interested in preserving the character of the Bassett and Mifflin neighborhoods. Submitted demolition permit requests, site plans and associated supporting documents submitted for approval are not easily found on the City of Madison's web site; there are no links on the Planning Division's web pages; and the demolition request for this site could not be located in the City's legislative information center. If a full application is available on the Internet it could not be found and fully evaluated. These houses are part of a cluster featuring one of the last remaining Queen Anne multi-family residential buildings in Madison.

\* The Planning Division Staff Report is cursory at best regarding the historic value of these houses. The report simply states: "A preservation file for this property does not exist. There is no site file with the Wisconsin Historical Society." The staff report does not indicate when the houses were built or who the original owners were. Apparently property records including local, university and state archives were not searched completely. This lack of due diligence and minimal historical research is not acceptable when viewed against the diminishing number of original structures on the Isthmus. Were the houses built by owners of nearby businesses, dairy operations, hotels, or warehouses associated with the railroad in this area? Did any now famous Madison citizens or University alumni reside in the houses? Can the applicant prove that these houses are historically insignificant? More information is needed before the demolition application can be justified and supported by the Landmarks Commission.

\* These houses contribute to the residential character of the Bassett and Mifflin area and should be viewed as worthy of historical preservation given their proximity to better-maintained and better-reserved older houses on the same block not associated with the applicant's proposed project. Removal of the houses at 519 and 521 West Washington would contribute to the loss of a vernacular neighborhood on an important gateway to downtown Madison.

Stephen Smith

Sent from AOL Mobile Mail