

**From:** [Kurt Stege](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 6.26.23 Plan Commission meeting, Agenda Item 11  
**Date:** Friday, June 23, 2023 2:57:31 PM

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I intend to be present for the meeting on the 26th and to offer testimony in this matter.

During the course of the steering committee discussions related to this application, I made a specific request of the designer to prepare some perspectives that I hoped would provide helpful information to anyone considering the appropriateness of the project. One perspective that was created and seemed relevant was not submitted by the applicant to the Urban Design Commission at the time of the UDC's June 29, 2022 meeting. As a consequence, I made arrangements to have it available during the meeting. I made it available again when the UDC addressed the application for a fourth time on March 29, 2023. The perspective is page 2 of the "Public Comments" to the UDC's March 29, 2023 meeting, in Legistar file 69486.

There have been several revisions to the applicant's design of the project since the perspective was created, but I believe it remains quite relevant to the current Plan Commission evaluation. It shows how the massive structure being proposed would not blend with the other buildings on the North side of the 400 block of State Street, Madison's "premier street."

I ask that the same image (the context elevation on page 2 of the 3-29-23 Public Comments) be shown during my testimony on Monday, June 26. Please arrange for the person in charge of tech for the meeting to do so.

Thank you.

Kurt Stege  
Co-chair, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation Advocacy Committee.

Plan Commission  
Meeting of June 26, 2023  
Agenda #s 11 and 12, Legistar #s 69791 and 69792

### Demolition

Ordinance provisions:

- “The purpose of this section [approval of demolition] is therefore to *ensure the preservation of historic buildings*, encourage applicants to strongly consider relocating rather than demolishing existing buildings, aid in the implementation of adopted City plans, maximize the reuse or recycling of materials resulting from a demolition, protect the public from potentially unsafe structures and public nuisances, and require the use of safe and orderly demolition or removal methods.” MGO 28.185(1), emphasis added.
- “The Plan Commission shall consider the factors and information specified in items 1—6 and find that the proposed demolition or removal is *consistent with the statement of purpose of this section* and with the health, prosperity, safety, and welfare of the City of Madison.” MGO 28.185(9)(c), approval standard #7, emphasis added.

Demolition would not be consistent with the statement of purpose. The statement of purpose says the ordinance is “to ensure preservation of historic buildings.” Ensuring preservation is strong language – it is not merely having a goal of ensuring preservation. And “historic buildings” does not just mean landmarks or buildings in historic districts (otherwise MGO 128.185(7)(c) would not be needed).

The 400 block of State Street is the last intact block on State Street. Of the 17 buildings in this block: 9 were built from 1855-1896; 7 were built from 1902-1927; and, 1 (440 State) was built in 1962. With only one non-historic building (non-historic as compared to the other buildings), a building which is only two stories and only 44 feet in frontage, the block retains its historical appearance. Attached is a page with some basic data about the 400 block of State Street.

Perhaps the purpose of ensuring preservation could be overridden if a building report proved the buildings are falling down and irreparable. There is no such report. Nor is this a case where historic buildings are being demolished for the greater good. (For example, the discussion of the hotel proposed for the 100 block of State focused a lot on the fact that the hotel would activate a troubled corner.) This proposed building would create a large restaurant and a mere 26 housing units. That hardly justifies the demolition of two historic buildings. The health, prosperity, safety, and welfare of State Street, a street regularly described as iconic, depends on retention of these old buildings, as articulated in the Downtown Plan.

### Conditional Use

“The vibrancy and intimacy of State Street is largely attributable to the *rhythm of its buildings, with their typically narrow, small first floor commercial spaces* that accommodate a wide variety of small businesses; and it is *essential that both the scale and rhythm* of the buildings and the diversity of uses be retained.” Downtown Plan, pages 44-45, emphasis added.

- The demolitions and CSM would result in a property with 96 feet of State Street frontage. The median street frontage for the block (both sides) is 38 feet. The only

frontages that are over 50 feet are the Peace Park and the 3 flatiron buildings on the corners.

- The building would be 92 feet long. Only one building on the block, a corner building, is even close to that length (466 State at 80 feet).
- The center of the building between entries (the area with the two opening garage doors) is about 57 feet in length. Only 3 buildings in this block are that long, or longer and all are corner buildings: 466 State at 80 feet, 403 State at 62 feet, and 437 State at 56 feet. Mid-block buildings range from 22-44 feet, with an average of 30 feet.
- The proposed building would have a State Street façade 51' in height (with the parapet). Page 2 of this link illustrates the inconsistency of that height as compared to the historic buildings, resulting in a building that does not maintain scale and rhythm.

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11804150&GUID=0E831731-521E-4BF3-B4D3-3FB8CB5B76D3>

The letter from the City Parks Division focuses on construction impacts. But how will the users of Peace Park perceive this 6-story structure, with another 22 windows overlooking them? The park provides a sense of respite, a sense that will be diminished if not obliterated if this proposed building is constructed.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Linda Lehnertz

| Address      | Year | Name                          | Style                 | frontage |
|--------------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 402 State St | 1866 | George Scherer Meat Market    | Commercial Vernacular | 22       |
| 404 State St | 1866 | MB French Building            | Commercial Vernacular | 25       |
| 414 State St | 1855 | N.A. Brown Store              | Commercial Vernacular | 24       |
| 418 State St | 1927 | N. Borenstein Building        | Commercial Vernacular | 27       |
| 422 State St | 1896 | Michael Davy Building         | Romanesque Revival    | 34       |
| 428 State St | 1893 | Henry Pecher Building         | Commercial Vernacular | 21       |
| 434 State St | 1927 | H. Halperin Building          | Commercial Vernacular | 33       |
| 440 State St | 1962 |                               |                       | 42       |
| 452 State St |      | Peace Park                    |                       | 68       |
| 466 State St | 1888 | O'Connell Store               | Commercial Vernacular | 80       |
| 403 State St | 1906 | Kirch Building                | Queen Anne            | 62       |
| 409 State St | 1887 | Thomas P. Coyne Building      | Commercial Vernacular | 24       |
| 411 State St | 1919 | Fred Klein Building           | Commercial Vernacular | 26       |
| 417 State St | 1895 | Hubert Schmitz Boarding House | Queen Anne            | 35       |
| 419 State St | 1902 | Hubert Schmitz Building       | Queen Anne            | 34       |
| 425 State St | 1909 | Nicholas Weber Building       | Commercial Vernacular | 42       |
| 433 State St | 1907 | Henry Schulkamp Building      | Commercial Vernacular | 44       |
| 437 State St | 1888 | Henry Schulkamp Building      | Commercial Vernacular | 56       |