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