Trusted Advisors
Since 1982

HERITAGE
CONSULTING GROUP

National Presence
Local Expertise

MEMO

TO: Heather Bailey, City of Madison Preservation Planner, Planning Division

FROM: Jen Davel

CC: Linda Irving, Trinitas Ventures

Neil Reardon & Burt Coffin, ESG Architecture & Design

DATE: July 12, 2024

RE: New Project at West Mifflin Street (current addresses of 619-699 W. Mifflin Street)

Our team would like to respond to the report for the proposed project at the current addresses of 619-699 W. Mifflin Street dated June 26, 2024. We contend the proposed project aligns with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as detailed below. Please note, there is no work proposed to the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse and as such Standards 1 – 8 are not applicable. Furthermore, the proposed scope of work consists of new construction to be located outside of the historic boundary. In a prior staff report the scope of review in some places appeared to refer to the properties as conjoined instead of bifurcated as proposed. Our responses are in blue below.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

We believe items 1 through 8 below are not applicable to scope of review of this project as the project being reviewed is new construction on a separate parcel beyond the boundary of the landmark property.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
   No work is planned for the Landmark building, not applicable to new construction.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
   No archeological resources will be disturbed on the Landmark building / property, not applicable to new construction.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
   As noted in this memo the new construction is to be located on a separate adjacent parcel. Because the new construction will not be attached to the Landmark building, the historic materials and features will be retained for the Wiedenbeck building. The new construction design is differentiated from the Landmark building. It is compatible by proposing masonry cladding in a compatible hue and integrating punched window openings of a similar scale and size on the first three stories aligning with the Landmarked buildings. Above the third story the design is especially and intentionally differentiated in its materiality and architectural elements. The intent with the design approach is to not falsify history but compliment it by building upon the well-built design features that are adjacent to the proposed new building.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
    The new construction will not be attached to the Landmark building, thereby retaining the historic form and integrity of its materials.

July 17, 2024

Re: Legistar File #84153, Land Division on a Designated Landmark Site
619 W. Mifflin St.
Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse Property

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing on behalf of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation.

At your meeting of July 1, the Landmarks Commission was introduced to a proposal for construction of a new mixed-use project that would involve:

- Dividing the landmark parcel at 619 W. Mifflin St. and consolidating part of this parcel with the neighboring parcel at 699 W. Mifflin St.;
- Demolishing a two-story apartment building constructed in 1987 on part of the landmark parcel; and
- Constructing a three- to 10-story building on the newly consolidated parcel.

The proposed project raises two serious concerns about impacts to two City of Madison landmarks—the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse and the Milwaukee Road Depot—situated immediately east and west of the proposed project. First, that the massing of the 10-story building is clearly out-of-scale to these neighboring landmark buildings. Second, that the proposal to subdivide the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin land parcel would constitute a "boundary change" that triggers reconsideration of the property's National Register and Madison Landmark statuses.

The Madison Trust will have more comprehensive comments on the massing issue at such time as the Landmarks Commission performs its adjacency review as Legistar File #84514. Our focus in the present communication is on the land division issue. Specifically, we hold that the land division, as currently proposed, would leave the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin building with a site so small and so constricted by the proposed neighboring building as to jeopardize its continued landmark status.

Preserving the historic character of any property depends on maintaining the relationship of building and site improvements to the land parcel on which these improvements are located. The Wiedenbeck-Dobelin property is landmarked not only for the architectural significance of the building ("as an intact example of a turn of the century commercial-warehouse building

(Continued)

designed by an important Madison architectural firm, Claude and Starck") but also for its significance as an exemplar "of the development of Madison as an important commercial center in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century."[1] To continue in its landmark role, the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin property needs to retain enough site area so that viewers can envision the original commercial/industrial use.

Currently the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin site is 46,248 square feet (1.06 acres) and contains two buildings—the original 1907 warehouse with 1915 addition and the 1987 free-standing building. Under the proposed land division, the landmark site would be reduced to 12,458 square feet (0.29 acres). The proposed land division would leave the 1907/1915 landmark building with setbacks to the west and property lines of only 5.5 feet. The proposed new building would be set back from the corresponding east property line by 9.2 feet for a total distance between the buildings of 14.7 feet. The proposed construction project would replace an existing passageway and a courtyard between the landmark building and the building constructed in 1987.

The project developers argue that these minimal setbacks should be accepted because:

- These proposed distances are practically the same as those that now exist between the landmark building and the 1987 building; and
- The landscaped passageway and courtyard spaces that now exist between the historic building and the 1987 building will be maintained into the future because the developer will own both (future separate) land parcels.

As to the "same as now" argument, we note that MGO 41.181 requires that adequacy of a Madison landmark site be judged per the US Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, Standard 9 of which required that "…related new construction will not destroy historic…spatial relationships that characterize the property." A letter from Linda Lehnertz to the Landmarks Commission dated July 1, 2024, details the relevance of this standard with particular regard to changes in preservation practice since the 1987 building was approved.

As to the "we own both parcels" argument, we note that current joint ownership of both parcels is no guarantee of continued joint ownership and/or common operation. The whole point of land division, of course, is to create two distinct legal and separately marketable parcels. Six months or six years from now, the two parcels could be under entirely different owners with entirely different visions.

The threat that the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin building will be obscured by the proposed 10-story neighbor is imminent. Views of the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin building are already compromised by recently-constructed surrounding properties (Lark apartments at 110 Bedford St., Art Lofts at 620 W. Mifflin St., West Washington Place project at 622 W. Washington Ave.). In fact, the only remaining views of the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin building from off-site are from the property immediately neighboring to the east at 602 W. Washington Ave.—the former railroad freight depot now used as a U-Haul storage and truck rental facility. That property, consisting of 1.5 acres of land bearing only two small buildings, is accurately described by City of Madison

(Continued)

[1] Landmark Nomination-619 W. Mifflin Street (1989), Section VII, page 2.

Assessor as “prime for redevelopment.” Lacking adequate site area itself, the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin property could well become lost in a canyon of tall neighboring structures.

These concerns lead us to call on the Landmarks Commission to:

- deny the proposed land division; or, at the least,
- require that any future land division leaves a minimum of 50 feet between the revised Wiedenbeck-Dobelin site and the new development parcel. (Such spacing would approximate the distance between the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin building and the newer building that lies southeast of the subject at 622 W. Washington Ave.), and
- evaluate the effects of the massing of an adjacent, imposing 10-story building if a land division is considered.

Under either scenario, we urge the Landmarks Commission to advise the Trinitas development team to scale back its new construction proposal so as to leave the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin landmark parcel with space sufficient to evoke the property’s historic spatial relationships.

Sincerely,

Richard Chandler

Richard Chandler
President
Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

Cc: Linda Irving
Trinitas Development LLC
159 N. Sangamon St., Ste 200
Chicago, IL 60607
lirving@trinitas.ventures