

September 14, 2011

Landmarks Commission  
City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703

**Re: 5117 University Avenue (Legistar #23432)  
Marshal Erdman & Associates Shop & Office**

Dear Landmarks Commission Members,

The purpose of this letter is to indicate that the development team for the University Crossing project does not support granting landmark status to 5117 University Avenue. The Landmarks Nomination application has been filed as a blocking tactic to development efforts well underway and occurring on this plat prior to the application. The development team views the applicant's efforts in this regard as strictly a means to delay or stop the development approval process and ultimately harm the development efforts on this site.

Further, we agree with the recommendations of planning staff (August 8, 2011, Staff Report) as summarized below:

1. On both July 26, 2010 and August 9, 2010 during a routine discussion of the demolition report there was no indication by the Commission regarding an historic interest of the property.
2. There are many sites in and around Madison that better represent the contributions of Marshall Erdman with Frank Lloyd Wright and William Kaeser than the building at 5117 University Avenue. The Erdman group has volunteered to work with The Madison Trust in an effort to identify the best candidates and seek land mark status for them. Further, we are considering the best way to honor the memory of Marshall Erdman on the site. These ideas include retaining the iconic metal sculpture presently on the site and locating a commemorative plaque on the site.
3. Owners and developers need to be able to rely on consistent and well informed decisions by public commissions. The Landmarks Commission has a very important role in this community. But it is diminished when decisions are made that change the established review and entitlement process as its actions are part of the larger project review process.

This economy has been struggling for several years making many aspects of the development process more difficult. Project momentum is hard to regain once it is lost and numerous obstacles make the University Crossing project very challenging. For this reason it is unfortunate that we have had to expend so much time and effort to deflect a misguided attempt to landmark 5117 University Avenue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Paul Lenhart