

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: September 19, 2011

TITLE: 5117 University Avenue – Marshall
Erdman & Associates Office and shop
Landmark Nomination, 19th Ald.
District. (23432)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: September 19, 2011

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Gehrig, Vice Chair; Robin Taylor, Christina Slattery, David McLean, and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

Amy Kinast, 5018 Tomahawk Trail, gave reasons to nominate this property. Marshall Erdman was born 1922 died 1995. He and his wife, Joyce, were a talented team. Erdman built the Unitarian Meeting House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and countless other buildings. Erdman and William Kaeser, architect, masterminded Doctor's Park Medical Clinics and fair affordable housing in 1950's when critical. Erdman moved into this building in 1949 and stayed the rest of his career, 45 years, and then Erdman Company continued for a while in this building. He always adapted to fit his needs. She favors landmark status for the building, and submitted the landmark nomination.

Robert Procter, representing Erdman Real Estate Holdings, LLC, registered in opposition. The owner is opposed to landmarking the building. Mr. Procter explained that Erdman is best known because he built a large construction company and large medical facilities throughout the country. The family believes the legacy is based on building large medical facilities. Pre-fabricated houses were part of his legacy.

Marla Maeder, 5030 LaCrosse Lane, spoke in support of landmarks designation. She likes the site, the sculpture and the unique history.

Alan Hembel, 2504 Nina Court, Middleton, WI, spoke in opposition. He spoke before Plan Commission on August 29, 2011 and supported staff recommendation to not landmark this site. He submitted a letter for Landmarks review. He served as Erdman's financial confidant and never heard Erdman request that this building or site be landmarked or saved.

Darin Burleigh, 5018 Tomahawk Trail, spoke in support. Erdman was an innovator and a visionary. Erdman built a thriving business that is reflected by this building. The building should be a landmark.

Jon Snowden, 1409 Lewan Drive, representing Erdman Holdings, LLC, spoke in opposition. 5117 University was just a place to work and served that purpose. He believes the original building, where the Erdman business began, was at Cornell Court. He believes Erdman's character is largely historic due to his association with Frank Lloyd Wright. Erdman Holdings appreciates the attention given to Erdman and will continue to work with preservation groups to possibly nominate other sites that better represent Erdman's contributions.

Jeff Turner, 5106 Minocqua Court, spoke in support. He lives across the street and his house was in Parade of Homes in 1955. He believes the site is important to the development of the neighborhood and should be made a landmark.

Jason Tish, 2714 LaFollette Avenue, Executive Director of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, spoke in opposition. He went through the four criteria and read from his formal letter to the Commission which explained the reasons for opposition.

Paul Lenhart, the Lenhart Company, 16 S. Allen Street, spoke in opposition. The timing of the application is unfortunate and he believes it is being used as a blocking tactic to the proposed development. He explained that the nomination puts all parties in a difficult position.

Ald. Mark Clear, 19th Ald. District, registered in opposition and not wishing to speak, but available to answer questions.

ACTION:

1. Levitan stated there were two different issues before the Commission – a determination whether the property satisfied one or more criteria for designation as a landmark, and, if it did, what action the Commission should take. He noted there are different opinions on how to interpret the ordinance, but that his interpretation was that the Commission, if it found the property satisfied one or more criteria, still had discretion whether or not to make a recommendation. He noted the ordinance read that if the Commission found one more criteria were satisfied, the Commission “may” recommend to the Council that it landmark the property, and that if the Council had intended to require the Commission to make such a recommendation, it would have used the mandatory “shall.” He added that the ordinance requires the Commission to provide its reasons for making a recommendation for landmark status (or rescission thereof), but that reasons are not required when the Commission does not make a recommendation.

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Slattery, that the Landmarks Commission find that 5117 University satisfies Criteria 2, historic personage of Section MGO 33.19.4a. The motion was passed on a voice vote/other.

2. A motion was made by Taylor, seconded by Rosenblum, to not make a recommendation to the Council to designate 5117 University Avenue as a historic landmark. The motion was passed on voice vote/other.

Taylor said points brought forward show that this should not be a landmark. Rosenblum agreed and stated that other properties should be evaluated for landmark purposes. McLean stated that this nomination and discussion has brought and elevated Marshall Erdman’s importance to the community and this is a good thing. Levitan stated that we have not stalled the process (as has been recently portrayed in the media); the nomination is due to go to the Common Council on October 4, 2011.

3. A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Slattery, to have staff redraft the nomination to correct the historic record as staff’s schedule allows. The motion was passed on a voice vote/other.