

AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION	PRESENTED: February 3, 2014	
TITLE: Accepting the report of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee (32645)	REFERRED:	
	REREFERRED:	
	REPORTED BACK:	
AUTHOR: Amy Scanlon, Secretary	ADOPTED:	POF:
DATED: February 3, 2014	ID NUMBER:	

Members present were: Stu Levitan, Chair; Erica Fox Gehrig, Vice Chair; Christina Slattery, Jason Fowler, David McLean, Marsha Rummel, and Michael Rosenblum.

SUMMARY:

Rebecca Cnare, Planning Division, briefly explained the mission of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Committee, the meeting structure, and the Committee priorities including the context of the block, the siting considerations of Frank Lloyd Wright, the outdoor room, the solar access, the historic significance of the existing properties and the views from the street toward the house and the views from the house to Lake Mendota.

Cnare described the Committee's recommendations were to preserve the views to the house and to the lake, balance preservation and economic development, study potential historic district, gaps in building masses above the fourth story on East Washington Avenue to allow sunlight to reach the interior of the block, maintain 6-story height limit on Webster, and request the retention of residential character in context.

Gehrig asked what was involved in determining the three different levels of historic significance. Scanlon explained that the determination was based on integrity as viewed from the exterior and the review of the preservation files and other City resources.

Gehrig asked if the determination was based on any pending development proposals. Staff explained that it was not.

Levitan asked if the acceptance of the report implicates the Landmarks Commission in the consideration of the proposed historic district.

Cnare explained that the Committee found that a historic district is worth studying to determine the possibility of eligibility for a National and local historic district.

Levitan asked if this report is considered a special area report/plan.

Cnare explained that it is a special area report/plan and asked that the Commission review the revised resolution language which adds, "...as a supplement to the City's Downtown Plan."

Levitan suggested that “as a special area report” be added to the end of that clause.

Zellers explained that the Committee and staff did an outstanding job reviewing numerous topics and balancing considerations related to cultural resource and heritage tourism.

Jack Holzhueter, representing Frank Lloyd Wright Wisconsin, registering in support and wishing to speak. Holzhueter urged the Commission to recommend the acceptance of the report. Holzhueter explained that the Committee’s objectives provide for development and sensible protection of the Lamp House and of the views to and from the house, the study toward creation of a historic district and of height standards, and the retention of views to and from the house. Holzhueter asked who would undertake the work of implementing the recommendations in the report.

Rummel asked how the rarity of the block can be realized when the graphics in the report show the majority of the site redeveloped and the report suggests a balance of preservation and development. Holzhueter explained that implementation of a balanced approach allows for a historic district and for new development while retaining views and sunlight.

Michael Bridgeman, registering in support and wishing to speak. Bridgeman explained that the historic district recommendation should be considered. He requested that the roles of City staff and Commissioners have in the implementation process be defined to inform the role the public might have in the process.

Bruce Bosben, registering in opposition and wishing to speak. Bosben explained that his business owns most of the properties shown in the proposed historic district and he is concerned about property rights. He explained that he was assured by a previous Preservation Planner that the houses on Mifflin except the one on the corner were not able to be landmarked based on the Downtown Preservation Plan (1998). Bosben agreed that the Lamp House should be preserved, but he questioned whether views out over other properties should be considered.

Bosben questioned the relevancy and factualness of numerous statements in the report including the importance of this building in Wright’s long career; the responsibility of Wright in the configuration of topography; the similarities between the existing floor plan and that of the Ladies Home Journal plan; the popularity of the floor plan; that the pergola suggests Wright’s interest in Japanese architecture; that the house at 18 North Butler was moved for reasons other than to construct the Lamp House; the rarity of the collection of structures on the block; the significance of Mr. Lamp’s ability to view the lakes from the roof, the importance of the views to the house; the importance of sunlight on the Lamp House; and the concept of the outdoor room.

Bosben described numerous concerns about the recommendations in the report; the unfairness of the allocation of property rights; the unfairness of the speaking time given to those he believed were opposed to development during the Committee meetings; and the undermining of the efforts of the Downtown Plan by this planning process.

Rummel asked what Bosben’s intention is for his properties on this block. Bosben explained that he previously introduced two concepts for the properties, but economics of the time made it impossible to pursue development options. He explained that he would like a medium sized residential building on his properties and that it could be complementary to the Lamp House. He explained that at one time he wanted a condominium building that used the Lamp House as a museum/public venue.

Gehrig asked if he believed the properties would be valued less if they were in a historic district. Bosben explained that he estimates they would be valued less than half and that in this location, these houses have run

their course. He explained Donovan Rypkema was supportive of his redevelopment idea on this block and that the buildings did not merit preservation.

Gehrig noted that she was in attendance at the Rypkema discussion and remembered the discussion was more about how to preserve the Lamp House and how to develop on top of the parking garage.

Rummel asked where the other rare enclaves are located. Bosben explained that there are blocks and blocks of original buildings on Johnson and Gorham Streets as well as in the Jenifer/Spaight area.

Rosenblum asked what the committee meant by “rare enclave”. Cnare explained that the committee was intrigued by the collection of original intact houses in such close proximity to the Capital Square.

Levitan asked what it means for the Landmarks Commission to accept this report. Cnare explained that the Landmarks Commission is a recommending body to the Plan Commission and Common Council and that the report recommendation would supplement the recommendations in the Downtown Plan. By accepting the report, the Landmarks Commission is saying they agree with the report and that the Council should adopt it.

The Commission discussed that development adjacent to the Landmark site would require Landmarks Commission review based on the Ordinance and that this report and its recommendations do not change that.

Bill Gates, representing the Lamp House Ad Hoc Committee, registering in support and available to answer questions. Gates explained that numerous historic district boundaries were considered and the proposed boundary seemed to strike a balance. He also explained the Committee regarded Holzhueter as an architectural historian and expert on Wright.

Staff explained the language in the existing ordinance and the draft ordinance related to the ability for staff to be involved in the preparation of historic preservation plans as a means to create a historic district.

Gehrig asked if the historic district was hinged on the location of the Lamp House. Staff explained that the purpose of the committee was because of the Lamp House. Levitan explained that without the Lamp House, the historic district would have little significance.

McLean asked about zoning and development potential on the parcels surrounding the Lamp House. Cnare explained that due to the location of the Lamp House and the resulting shallow lot sizes, the buildable area within the current zoning code was limited. The Committee wanted to guide an appropriate response to the small buildable areas without deviating from current zoning provisions.

Cnare explained that the Committee considered the economic value of heritage tourism that could be leveraged by the works of Frank Lloyd Wright in Madison.

Cnare also explained that there was discussion about the value of the state and federal tax credits that would be available to property owners if this became a National Register Historic District. Levitan asked if the existing buildings would meet the standards of the National district. Staff explained that more information is needed, but the State was interested in assessing the area toward National Register designation.

Cnare suggested that the Landmarks Commission review the resolution language. The recommendation is to explore the possibility of a historic district. Levitan explained that the Landmarks Commission needs to be very clear that recommending adoption of this report/resolution does not constitute the endorsement of the creation of a historic district.

There was discussion about numerous aspects of the report including the labeling of the graphics; the boundary of the possible historic district; the perceived endorsement of future redevelopment proposals based on report language; the determination of significance of buildings; the current Zoning; the importance of the outdoor room concept; and the language of the resolution.

John Schlaefer, registering in support but not wishing to speak.

Franny Ingebritson, registering in support but not wishing to speak.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Rosenblum, seconded by Fowler, to recommend adoption of the report of the Lamp House block Ad Hoc Plan Committee with the following amendments:

- 1) To repeat map on Page 9 in place of the map on Page 14 and delete the first two sentences of the second paragraph under B on Page 14.
- 2) To include the revised language (shown in blue) in the resolution.
- 3) To add, "...a City of Madison "landmark" in the first Whereas statement after the words "Lamp House."

The motion passed by voice vote/other.