



Project Address: 17, 19, 25 North Webster Street and 201 East Mifflin Street
Application Type: Advisory recommendation for development adjacent to a designated landmark
Legistar File ID # [31119](#)
Prepared By: Amy L. Scanlon, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Summary

Applicant/Property Owner: Fred Rouse

Requested Action/Proposal Summary: The Applicant is requesting that the Landmarks Commission provide an advisory opinion regarding the proposed new development adjacent to the designated landmark, Lamp House located at 22 N Butler Street to the Plan Commission. The Applicant came before the Landmarks Commission on August 12, 2013 for an Informational Presentation and again on November 25, 2013 for a recommendation, but requested referral until the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee report was finalized.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: Section 28.144 of the Madison General Ordinances (see below)

Review Required By: Landmarks Commission, Plan Commission

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject development site is along North Webster Street and is adjacent to the site of the designated landmark, Lamp House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Relevant Zoning Ordinance Sections:

28.144 DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO A LANDMARK OR LANDMARK SITE.

Any development on a zoning lot adjoining a landmark or landmark site for which Plan Commission or Urban Design Commission review is required shall be reviewed by the Landmark Commission to determine whether the proposed development is so large or visually intrusive as to adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the adjoining landmark or landmark site. Landmark Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission and the Urban Design Commission.

Analysis and Conclusion

Lamp House history and significance information was included in previous staff reports and can be found in the public record for this item.

LAMP HOUSE CONTEXT

The Lamp House was constructed after the majority of the other buildings in the context and it can be assumed that the design of the Lamp House was affected by the existing context. Placing the building on the highest portion of the site to gain views of the lakes also meant the house was pushed in very close proximity to the rear property line. This placement allowed for an extensive front and side yard which affected the entry approach sequence and the design of the surrounding landscape buffer. The placement may have also altered the design of the building by reducing the number of windows on the rear elevation or manipulating the interior configuration of spaces. One can also assume that the views of the Lamp House from the street were

considered by Mr. Wright. The Landmarks Commission should review the compilation of Sanborn maps and the date of construction map for more information about the context.

While the proposed new development is not directly impacting the Lamp House, the context in which the Lamp House has been a part is being modified. This change will affect the Lamp House context in many ways. First, the height of the proposed new development is much taller than the existing residential context and staff feels that it is visually intrusive to the Lamp House. The scale of the Lamp House is negatively impacted by the height of the neighboring building proposal. Finally, the loss of the appropriate context removes the Lamp House from its intended composition and affects its historic integrity.

Integrity can be measured and weighed in many ways. A new building with fewer stories may be less visually intrusive and have a less negative impact on the integrity of the Lamp House. A previous staff report suggested that the building could be divided into two or three buildings to meet the current zoning and maintain the view of the Lamp House from Webster Street. This suggestion could maintain a certain level of integrity of the Lamp House.

It should be noted that the sites involved in the proposed development are currently zoned DR-1 and the new development will seek a rezoning to UMX which would allow for the volume of the proposed building. The DR-1 zoning would allow buildings with maximum widths of 60 feet. The DR-1 zoning may evoke a more appropriate design solution adjacent to the landmark than rezoning to UMX.

The development proposal provides a significant area of green space directly to the southeast of the Lamp House which will give the Lamp House an appropriate buffer. The development proposal has been revised to allow for a first floor level gap between building masses to allow passersby to get a glimpse of the Lamp House along North Webster Street in the approximate location of the existing gap.

The proposed redevelopment project will affect the context of the Lamp House. This information is provided to describe the context of the landmark building and establish that it has a level of integrity that relates to its context. The Landmarks Commission shall determine if the integrity of the landmark is adversely affected by the redevelopment proposal.

LAMP HOUSE BLOCK AD HOC PLAN COMMITTEE REPORT

Because the development proposal was submitted before the acceptance of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Committee report (accepted by Common Council on February 25, 2014) and before the implementation of any report recommendations, the Applicant is not required to respond to the recommendations of the report; however, the Applicant has provided submission materials that show the recommendations of the report have been willingly accommodated. This information is not part of the consideration of the recommendation of the Landmarks Commission based on Chapter 28.144, but shows that the project has been revised in good faith and explains the origins of the revisions that have shaped the development proposal that is being considered by the Landmarks Commission.

THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The current development proposal has been revised by providing significant setbacks at the upper stories to reduce the appearance and affect of the height. The building facades are articulated to further reduce the scale and reflect the residential character and rhythm of single family residential structures. The building has been broken into two halves with a recessed central connector element. Each half is treated in a different color brick to reduce the appearance of one large building. An opening at the first level between building masses has been included to provide a gap to view the Lamp House from North Webster Street.

Recommendation

While numerous aspects of the project design have improved, staff is unable to conclude, based on the submission materials, that the height and mass of the building does not make the development so large and visually intrusive that it adversely affects the historic character and integrity of the adjoining landmark. Staff requested that the Applicant provide realistic perspective drawings before the meeting to show the context of the Lamp House in relation to the proposed development as it is more naturally viewed. A flat elevation drawing does not provide a sense of the stepbacks and articulation.

If the requested drawings are not provided with an appropriate amount of time for staff review, staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission refer the action on the item until the review can occur.