

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

**PRESENTED:** November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**TITLE:** 801 Williamson St.  
Third Lake Ridge Historic Dist.  
Demolish current structure,  
replace with a new mixed-use bldg.  
6<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist.  
Contact: Jim Glueck,  
Glueck Architects

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Amy Scanlon, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**ID NUMBER:** 43805

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Members present were: Stuart Levitan, Chair, Lon Hill, Erica Fox Gehrig, David WJ McLean, Marsha A. Rummel, and Richard Arnesen. Excused was Anna V. Andrzejewski, Vice Chair.

### **SUMMARY:**

Levitan clarified with Scanlon that this was not a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness and that the public hearing is a preliminary step.

Levitan opened the public hearing.

Jim Glueck, registering in support and wishing to speak.

Brandon Cook, registering in support and available to answer questions.

Glueck said that his professional opinion is that demolition at 801 Williamson Street is the best course of action due to the current state of the building. The building proposed is a simple, basic proposal at present. A complete application will be submitted if the proposal is successfully referred to a future meeting for a Certificate of Appropriateness. The current proposal shows a three story brick building that will accommodate the slope of the lot (9% grade) and make the entrance more accessible. The project would cut the corner off at the first floor level in order to meet Traffic Engineering's vision requirements for a corner.

Rummel asked what the square footage of the site was. Glueck responded that the site is 2,000 square feet, and the building would be approximately 1600 square feet. Glueck also mentioned that he intends to stay within the confines of the existing zoning.

Rummel asked whether there would be parking provided on site. Glueck indicated that, due to a lack of space, there will likely not be any; underground or otherwise.

Rummel asked how many residential apartments the building would have. Glueck indicated that there will be six total apartment units (three per floor on the second and third floors). The first floor would be commercial.

Rummel asked why the bay would be on the side, rather than the front of the building. Glueck said that the front would be a classic storefront, and the side is more appropriate from a style perspective and would break up the side elevation.

Rummel mentioned that various individuals have contacted Glueck about moving houses to the lot. Glueck and Cook have received those inquiries and are still open to the possibility.

Gehrig asked the Applicants whether or not they would consider a design that would replicate the houses that are already in the area. According to Glueck, the slope would make it difficult to either place or construct a standard house on the lot. And, given that it's on a corner, a commercial use makes more sense in the context of the neighborhood/area.

Scanlon requested that the Applicants describe the materials they intend to use. Glueck described a brick building with some kind of detail (ex. simple cornice with simple details) that is similar to other storefronts in the area. If the budget gets tight, a secondary siding material might need to be used on surfaces not visible from the street.

There was general conversation about the number of stories on surrounding buildings and the visual compatibility map.

Rummel asked the Applicants what type of use they intended to pursue for the commercial space. Cook replied that that is unknown at this point.

John Martens, registering as opposed and wishing to speak.

Martens considers demolition to be premature and inappropriate and further posed the question of why Demolition By Neglect is nullified by passing from one owner to the next. Martens gave a brief, personally recollected, historical perspective of 801 Williamson Street that described a pattern of neglect and lack of intent to preserve the building on the part of the previous owner. Martens suggested that a significant "loophole" exists within the language of the ordinance that allows owners to avoid enforcement of Demolition By Neglect penalties. Staff will review the language with the City Attorney's office.

Levitan asked what Martens believes should be done with 801 Williamson Street. Martens believes that the building should be sold to someone who is willing and able to rehabilitate it, as he believes it is salvageable. His larger complaint is a lack of enforcement on the part of the city when it comes to cases of Demolition By Neglect.

Martens is encouraged by the fact that there is a possibility of putting a home on the lot. Martens disagrees that the corner is an appropriate location for a commercial building. He also said that neighborhood planning documents make specific reference to smaller, residential buildings on that side of the street.

Gary Tipler, registering as neither in support nor as opposed and available to answer questions. Tipler provided historical information about 801 Williamson Street.

Rhonda Plourd, registering as neither in support nor as opposed and available to answer questions.

Plourd asked what the building footprint dimensions will be. Glueck indicated that it will not take up the entire lot, but will take up 85% of it at a maximum.

Levitan closed the public hearing.

There was general discussion regarding the question of demolition and the proposed design.

Scanlon gave more details with regard to the history of the property. There was previously a Demolition By Neglect case brought to the Landmarks Commission. The day the case was to be taken up, Newton (the former owner) sold the property. Brandon Cook (the current owner) is now the party responsible for maintaining/altering 801 Williamson.

Levitan asked Scanlon whether or not the city indicated to Cook that he would be able to demolish 801 Williamson Street if he provided an appropriate plan for its replacement. Per Scanlon, Cook was told that he would have to follow the ordinance standards.

Gehrig asked about the tour the Landmarks Commission took of 801 Williamson Street. Scanlon indicated that there were meeting minutes that described the tour. Scanlon went on to say that demolition in a historic district isn't ever a desirable outcome and that the building was/is in bad shape.

Hill gave a brief recap of the tour and explained that the discussion highlighted many alterations, notable difference in foundations, and possible commercial use in the past. Per Hill, it is difficult to place historical value on the property due to the extreme nature of the alterations. McLean confirmed Hill's comments and indicated that rehabilitation is technically possible, but may not be worth the effort, as it would require a huge amount of time and expense. Scanlon indicated that there may not be enough physical historical material/fabric left for it to be considered historically significant.

Rummel said that the neighborhood association was hoping for a referral because they would like a more detailed proposal and the chance to discuss it at a meeting.

McLean's initial reaction is that the building would generally fit very well within the neighborhood both in size and style.

Arnesen agreed with McLean, but added that the floor to ceiling height might require adjustment.

Gehrig indicated that, in the event of demolition, it seems to be more appropriate to replace it with a residence (2-3 flat) rather than a commercial building.

Rummel agreed with Gehrig and brought up the issue of parking again and further commented that the bay seemed large for the lot.

Arnesen agreed that the bay does seem a little large and revisited the idea that the lot be made exclusively residential rather than commercial. Gehrig echoed this sentiment.

Glueck requested clarification of whether or not demolition is a viable option in the opinion of the Landmarks Commission. Levitan posed the question to the Commissioners with regard to the language of the Ordinance. There was general discussion regarding historical significance of the house/building and its viability.

## **ACTION:**

**A motion was made by McLean and seconded by Rummel to refer the item to a future meeting. The motion passed by a voice vote.**