Leonard Farwell Houses
506 East Washington Avenue and 7 North Franklin Street, Madison
Notes by Gary Tipler, September, 2017

Leonard J. Farwell was the second Governor of Wisconsin 1852-54 and served on the State Assembly, elected in 1860. He was also a land speculator, had built the largest hardware business in Wisconsin, built a mill on the Yahara, built the stone Octagon house he built for himself on Spaight Street in 1854-55, planted street trees on the east side, was a great promoter of the early development of Madison, and was a founder of banks and historical organizations.

506 East Washington Avenue
The house at 506 East Washington Avenue may be associated with Leonard Farwell, so stated previously by several historians, though I haven't researched this building recently. The building is among the oldest remaining in Madison, I recall a circa 1851 construction, and is built of post and beam construction, a rare building type remaining in Madison. (City planning staff notes indicate an 1849 date of construction).
Street View

Leonard J. Farwell house built
1853. https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI114923

7 North Franklin Street
The Wisconsin Historical Society lists the building at 7 North Franklin as the Leonard Farwell investment building that was built circa 1853 by Farwell during the time he was Governor. See further notes below.
One or both of these may be the only houses associated with Leonard J. Farwell that still stand. The residence east of the mouth of the Yahara where the Tenney Park locks are today, as well as, the stone Octagon on the 900 block of Spaight Street have long been demolished.
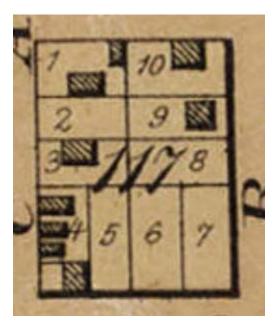Street View:

Leonard J. Farwell Investment house built
1853. https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI97573

Both of these buildings as well as the other two buildings proposed for demolition should have extensive searches done to determine their relative historical and architectural worth prior to committing them to demolition.
   o There are no other known remaining buildings in Madison that are directly associated with Leonard Farwell.
   o There are approximately 150 remaining antebellum structures in Madison.
   o There are even fewer that predate the arrival of the railroad here in 1854, meaning that all the construction materials were local, or carted overland.

Current buildings on 506 E Washington Av and 7 North Franklin St visible on lot 4. Farwell printed 10,000 copies of this map of Madison to promote the Village.

Leonard J. Farwell
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_J._Farwell
Early life
Farwell was born in Watertown, New York, and moved to Wisconsin in 1840, prior to its statehood.[1] He first settled in Milwaukee and moved to Madison in 1847, where he owned a great amount of property, and made considerable improvements to the city.[1]
Career
Elected Governor of Wisconsin as a member of the Whig Party, Farwell served as governor from 1852 to 1854.[1] On July 12, 1853, in one of his more notable actions as governor, he signed a law that abolished the death penalty in Wisconsin and replaced it with a penalty of life imprisonment.[1] This made Wisconsin the first state to abolish the gallows.[1]

In 1857 Farwell ran for alderman in Madison but lost by a close margin. Also that year, Farwell lost his land holdings due to the effects of the Panic of 1857. He served in the Wisconsin State Assembly in 1860.[2]

From 1863 to 1870, Farwell worked in Washington, D.C. as principal examiner in the U.S. Patent Office.[1] He was present at Ford's Theatre the day President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, and was the first person to inform then-Vice President Andrew Johnson of the assassination.

After seven years in Washington, Farwell moved to Chicago and started a patent agency, but he fell victim to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.[1] He then relocated to Grant City, Missouri.