

AGENDA # 9

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 10/14/19

TITLE: Buildings Proposed for Demolition - 2019

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 10/21/19

ID NUMBER: 54302

Members present were: Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, Katie Kaliszewski, and David McLean. Excused were Betty Banks and Arvina Martin.

SUMMARY:

Bailey said that the core of the property at 4918 Lake Mendota Drive was constructed in the 1880s. President Cleveland had lunch on the property in 1887 and there is a 65' Panther Effigy Mound between the building and the lake, which has a large plaque marking the mound. She said that she has spoken with the project architect regarding ways to build a new house on the site. She explained that the sewer line is on the other side of the mound, so when plumbing was run to the house, the line connecting it to the sewer line goes through the middle of the mound. She said that the new property owner is hoping the existing pipes still work because if they do not, they would need to run new pipes around the mound. Kaliszewski said that she understood they plan to demolish the existing house and move the new house further from the mound. Bailey said that the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation has been working with the new owner to document the property prior to its demolition. McLean asked if this was the primary structure on the site, and Bailey said that it is. McLean asked if it is right on the lake, and Arnesen said that it is. Bailey explained that when the property first went on the market, there was a flurry of neighborhood interest and concern about the house and mound. Andrzejewski asked if they are looking at the mound or the building because to her, the mound is a building. McLean said that the mound needs to be protected, and Kaliszewski said that it was protected and the project would be reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office. Bailey said that the City is aware of the mound and will not issue a building permit without an approval letter from the State. She said that the house is pretty rough, and she isn't sure how much original building fabric is left on the exterior, but the interior was heavily remodeled in the 1950s and has not been maintained. McLean said that there is a lot of vernacular present, and the mound is significant as well. Andrzejewski said that they don't know if the building has historic value. McLean said that the site has historic value because of the mound, and Andrzejewski agreed.

Bailey said that the building at 216 S Hamilton was constructed in 1853 and was originally the home of Gabriel Bjornson, who served as registrar in the Dane County Courts and was a member of the State Assembly; in 1902, he was called a "notable Madison Norwegian." She said that there is a proposal for a new commercial building on the site, and pointed out that everything around this property has already been redeveloped. She said that she has met with the development team and encouraged them to explore architectural salvage if the building is approved for demolition. McLean said that he was surprised to see it in the demolition review, and Arnesen agreed. Arnesen asked if it was part of an assemblage of properties. Bailey said that it was not, and the proposed structure would be a three-story office building. She said that it is an oddly shaped lot, and the new building has more square footage, will fill out the site more, and also includes some onsite parking. Andrzejewski suggested it fits criterion c, and Arnesen and McLean agreed. Bailey said that the project team

pushed back on her saying they have listed other properties for notable Norwegians, and in a statement to the Plan Commission, the project team argued that there are a preponderance of properties listed for associations with great white men and to list another would be racist. She said that apparently during the Civil War, Bjornson made some pro-slavery statements, which the project team is including as their evidence that this would be a racist proposal. Kaliszewski said that she cared more that it was an 1853 house, and Andrzejewski agreed and said that it was intact. Bailey said that it is one of the oldest buildings in the city. She said that if this property has a problematic racial history, she would see value in using it as a location to talk about uncomfortable histories and the evolution of race relations.

Bailey said that the property at 6225 University Avenue was constructed in 1961, and there is no preservation file. Andrzejewski said this is a Marshall Erdman building, and pointed out the 4' units. McLean said that everything is modular. Andrzejewski said that they are losing buildings like this left and right not just in Madison, but all over the country. She said that this one is in sad shape, but the building has a wonderful mid-century interior. McLean said that it sounds like a prime resale property, and Andrzejewski said that the interior is cordoned off in small single offices and is not usable for today. Arnesen said that these buildings were not built particularly well. Bailey said that if there are fun interior finishes, they should encourage the applicants to explore architectural salvage. McLean suggested criterion b.

ACTION:

A motion was made by Andrzejewski, seconded by McLean, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 4918 Lake Mendota Drive may have historic value, but the building itself is not historically, architecturally, or culturally significant; and the effigy mound makes the site historically and culturally significant. The motion passed by voice vote/other. Kaliszewski recused herself, so the Chair, Andrzejewski, voted.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Kaliszewski, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 216 S Hamilton Street has historic value based on architectural significance, cultural significance, historic significance, and as an intact or rare example of a certain architectural style or method of construction. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

A motion was made by McLean, seconded by Kaliszewski, to recommend to the Plan Commission that the building at 6225 University Avenue has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment, but the building itself is not historically, architecturally, or culturally significant. The motion passed by voice vote/other.