



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
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## Meeting Minutes - Approved LANDMARKS COMMISSION

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Monday, January 28, 2008

4:45 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Room LL-130 (Madison Municipal Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

**Present:** 6 -

Brenda K. Konkell; Daniel J. Stephans; Stuart Levitan; Robin M. Taylor;  
Michael J. Rosenblum and Erica Fox Gehrig

Guests: Mr. Michael K. Bridgeman, Mr. James Westring, Ms. Sonya Newenhouse, Mr. Joe Lusson, Ms. Ledell Zellers, Mr. Brody Richter, Mr. Tom Neujahr, Mr. Carlos Osorio, Ms. Rosemary Lee, Ms. Carolyn Freiwald, Ms. Ann Waidelich, Mr. Laurence Crocker, Ms. Patricia Crocker, Mr. Stan Kaufman, Mr. Kurt Stege, Mr. James Curtis, Ms. Sam Crownover, Mr. Michael Quietto, Ms. Carol Crossan

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Levitan, seconded by Konkell, to refer consideration of the minutes of the January 14, 2008 meeting to the February 11, 2008 meeting. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

*None.*

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. [06956](#) Amending Section 28.04(22) of the Madison General Ordinances to change various provisions of the ordinance regulating the demolition of buildings.

A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Rosenblum, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation(s) written up by Ms. Rankin to the PLAN COMMISSION, with one change – the wording of the last sentence in the recommendations for Sec.28.04(22)(c)1.d. to “If the Landmarks Commission determines that the property has historic value, it (delete may) shall submit a report to the Plan Commission for its consideration.” The motion passed by voice vote/other.

*Ald. Konkell said that it was important to keep this proposal moving so that there is a better process in place for the review of demolitions. Mr. Stephans noted that Mr. Page, former Chairperson, had sent an email supporting the proposed recommendations. Mr. Stephans added that he thought the recommendations will answer the concerns about demolition procedures that the Plan Commission wanted*

*addressed without unduly creating more delays and red tape.*

## NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

### Public Hearings and Consideration of Landmark Nominations

2. [07792](#) Doris House, 603-605 West Main Street - Proposed Landmark Nomination  
*Owner: Pville-78-2 LLC*  
*Contact: Carolyn Freiwald, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation*
- The Landmarks Commission recommends that the Doris House at 603 West Main Street be designated a landmark on the grounds that it meets criteria 1 and 3 of the City of Madison General Ordinances (33.19(4)a. Namely, that it exemplifies or reflects “the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or community” as a significant remnant of the mid-nineteenth century development of the Bassett Neighborhood, and because it is one of the few relatively intact examples of a Greek Revival style house built of the old red brick that is an indigenous and distinctive material used in the pioneer decades of Madison’s history.
- A motion was made by Gehrig, seconded by Konkel, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**
- Ms. Freiwald, of the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, noted that the current proposals for landmark nomination were part of the Madison Trust’s efforts to complete research and get listed those properties identified in the Downtown Historic Preservation Plan as potential landmarks. She noted that they started the nomination process for the Doris House several years ago.*
- Mr. Bridgeman spoke in favor of the nomination, noting that the Doris House is one of the few original Irish houses remaining in the Bassett neighborhood.*
- Mr. Kaufman said that he was opposed to the nomination of the Doris House because it had been quite altered by the addition of a new roof and by the gutting of the interior. He said it would send the wrong signal to people that a building can be so altered and still be eligible to be a Landmark. No one else wished to speak at the public hearing.*
- Mr. Levitan asked Ms. Rankin to address Mr. Kaufman’s concerns. She noted that almost all older buildings in the city had been reroofed numerous times since they were built. She stated that alterations to the interior are not of concern since the Landmarks Commission’s purview is to address those parts of an historic building that are visible to the general public. She also noted that neither the Trust nor Planning staff have heard from the owners of the property. Ms. Taylor said that she was impressed that Mr. McGrath, the developer of the site, decided to retain the Doris House, when he could have made more money demolishing it and using the site for additional condominiums. Ms. Gehrig said that by Landmarking the building, the Commission would be acknowledging that a building has been saved.*
3. [08925](#) Schubert Building, 120 West Mifflin Street - Proposed Landmark Nomination  
*Owner: Central Focus LLC*  
*Contact: Carolyn Freiwald, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation*
- The Landmarks Commission recommends that the Schubert Building at 120 West

Mifflin Street be designated a landmark on the grounds that it meets criterion 3 of the City of Madison General Ordinances (33.19(4)a. Namely, that it embodies "the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship," as a representative and unusually intact example of a small Queen Anne commercial building, designed by noted architect, Ferdinand Kronenberg.

**A motion was made by Levitan, seconded by Taylor, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

*Ms. Waidelich said that she strongly supports the nomination and has admired the Schubert Building for its fine integrity and particularly for its lovely and unusual stained glass transom window.*

*Ms. Freiwald noted the letter of support the Commission had received from the Dane County Historical Society. She noted that the Trust had received considerable support of this nomination from the general public.*

*Ms. Lee said that she supports the nomination of this building and noted that the building has housed significant local businesses in its time. She said that the building was one of the few old commercial buildings to be so intact. She noted that the buyers had paid two or three times its assessed value, adding that the owners probably intended to demolish and redevelop. She noted that when the Overture Center was built a blight study was done to support its construction. The study defined blight as buildings that are out of character and scale with the surrounding area, adding that, by that definition, the Overture Center is now a blight and the Schubert Building is not.*

*Ms. Zellers spoke on behalf of the Capitol Neighborhoods, noting that its executive council had voted unanimously to support the designation of the Schubert Building as a landmark. She noted that they had met with Mr. Rifken and let him know their concerns.*

*Mr. Kaufman said that the Schubert Building is a rare and intact example of a Queen Anne style commercial buildings and noted it is one of the few such buildings in the downtown. He noted also that it was a major work by an important local architect - Ferdinand Kronenberg. He said that the block was vitally important to the downtown and it was important to preserve its character. Removing the Schubert Building would harm the historic enclave of buildings at the top of State Street.*

*Mr. Bridgeman noted that he had been involved with the preservation of the drawings from Kronenberg's practice. He said that the presence of the Overture Center could only enhance the rental values of this block. No one else wished to speak at the public hearing.*

*Mr. Levitan said that this nomination was a no-brainer. He questioned why the people who had bought up several buildings on this block had paid so much above the assessed values. When the idea to demolish the whole block was first suggested, he was stunned that anyone would think to take out such an important urban block. Ms. Gehrig noted that the rusty fire escapes mentioned in Mr. Rifken's letter were on buildings his company owns.*

### Preliminary Consideration of Landmark Nominations

*The Commission asked for speakers to address all three buildings (items 4, 5 & 6) at once. Ms. Freiwald noted that the Trust's intent in nominating the buildings on this block, which they decided to do some time ago, was not to stand in the way of the recently proposed development, but rather to recognize buildings that had been identified in the Downtown Historic Preservation Plan and in the Downtown 2000 Plan, which recommended preservation of this block.*

*Mr. Osorio, who owns the Atrium building and the small building next door, said that he opposes the nomination. He said that he was surprised by the nomination and that he hadn't had time to find out what it would mean for his property. He asked for more time before the public hearing, if one is held, to find out more about what it means for a building to become a landmark.*

*Mr. Tom Neujahr of Urban Land Interests said that it was his company that is in the early stages of looking at the potential for some redevelopment on the block. He said he neither supports nor opposes the designation, but thinks that it would be premature to proceed at this time before his company can finish their schematic plans for the block. He asked for the public hearing to be delayed until after their preliminary studies are complete. He noted that his firm has a strong record of preserving historic buildings and were not opposed to the idea of doing some of that in this block. He noted, however, that there are several gaps between historic buildings that could be better replaced with new construction and might necessitate some changes of the façade locations. He said that this block was one of the least developed properties around the square, noting that behind the buildings was an unused warehouse, a bank drive-up and parking lots. He noted that they are looking to have better service areas for the existing businesses, underground parking and accessibility for disabled people. He said that City staff and elected officials had already conveyed to them the importance of retaining the American Exchange Bank building which they own. He said that they would like 90 to 120 days to complete their studies.*

*Ms. Zellers noted that this is the most intact commercial block in the Square and that it was critical to the heart and soul of the downtown.*

*Mr. Lusson said that he believed the only reason to delay landmarking would be to give the developers time to tear down some of the buildings. He said that the block had thriving businesses and didn't see that there was anything dramatically wrong with this block as it is now.*

*Ms. Lee said that it was imperative to keep the historic buildings on this block. She urged that the Landmarks Commission not delay consideration of landmarking for much more than 30 days.*

*Ms. Newenhouse, the owner of the Winterbotham building, spoke next. She said that she had received a letter from the Trust about the nomination but had not heard about the meeting until she read the newspaper in the morning. She said that she also wants more information about what landmark status would mean. She wasn't sure how "facadism" might come into play in the redevelopment and what the Landmarks Commission's opinion of it might be.*

*Mr. Westring, the president of the Trust, said he was happy that many people came*

out to show their support of the Trust's action and apologized if the owners had not been properly informed.

Mr. Bridgeman noted that the potential for landmarking of these properties had been public knowledge since the recommendations of the Downtown Historic Preservation Plan had been adopted by the City in 1998 and was part of the City's comprehensive plan.

The Commission then began their discussion. Ms. Gehrig noted that the nomination of these buildings had been cooking for years. She noted that no decisions were going to be made today and that the owners would have time to find out more about landmarking before the public hearing. She reminded Ms. Newenhouse that she had told her about this meeting. Mr. Levitan said that he believed it would be best to wait 90 days so that the owners and developers could get up to speed. He said that he wanted the owners and developers to know, however, that the Commission is going to do everything it can to save the historic buildings on this block.

Ms. Rankin noted that the Trust is between a rock and a hard place. When landmark issues come up after a development is proposed, people typically ask why they waited until the last minute to bring up the historic issue. When they are proactive and do it ahead of a development proposal, people ask them to delay consideration of landmarking until the development proposal is made.

Ald. Konkel said that it might be a good thing for the owners and developers to hear the testimony from the public sooner than later. She suggested that the Commission could hold the public hearing in about 30 days and then hold it open for a time afterward, if needed. She noted that there was no procedure in the ordinances for notifying owners before this preliminary meeting, but said that she thought there should be. Ms. Gehrig asked Mr. Neujahr why landmarking would be a problem for them since they understand that some of these facades, at the least, should remain. Mr. Neujahr replied that landmarking a property predisposes the public to think that the entire building should be preserved. He noted that only one-fourth of the Olson-Veerhusen block is still intact. He said that landmarking would raise the "don't tread on me" flag.

Ms. Taylor said that the buildings are both important historically and beautiful. She said she would like to go forth and hold the public hearing.

4. [08926](#)

Hobbins Block/Olson and Veerhusen Building, 7-9 North Pinckney Street - Proposed Landmark Nomination

Owners: Owen Keith Decker and Jane M. Decker

Contact: Carolyn Freiwald, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

**A motion was made by Levitan, seconded by Taylor, to Discuss and continue to hold a public hearing on this nomination in about 45 days. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

5. [08927](#)

Maeder Building/Ellsworth Block, 21-25 North Pinckney Street - Proposed Landmark Nomination

Owner: Osorio Investments LLC

Contact: Carolyn Freiwald, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

**A motion was made by Levitan, seconded by Taylor, to Discuss and continue to**

hold a public hearing on this nomination in about 45 days. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

6. [08928](#) Winterbotham Building, 27 North Pinckney Street - Proposed Landmark Nomination  
*Owner: Crescent LLC*  
*Contact: Carolyn Freiwald, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation*

A motion was made by Levitan, seconded by Taylor, to Discuss and continue to hold a public hearing on this nomination in about 45 days. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

7. [07804](#) Secretary's Report  
*The Commission advised Ms. Rankin that they would like to elect a new vice-chairperson at its next meeting. Mr. Stephans asked that an item be added to the next agenda to discuss applying for a CLG grant for archeological work.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.