



DEVELOPMENT
BROKERAGE
MANAGEMENT

14 W. Mifflin, Suite 300
P.O. Box 2077
Madison, WI 53701
Office: 608-258-4640
Fax: 608-258-4647
rifken@rifken.com
www.rifken.com

January 25, 2008

Ms. Katherine Rankin, Secretary
Madison Landmarks Commission
Department of Planning and Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI 53703



Dear Ms. Rankin and Members of the Landmarks Commission:

The Madison Trust for Historic Preservation has nominated 120 West Mifflin Street for local landmark status which is the subject of a public hearing on January 28, 2008. As the property owner, I write to oppose the nomination and recommend that the Madison Landmarks Commission place the nomination on file.

This property does not rise to the stature for designation as defined in Section 33.19(4)(a) of the Madison General Ordinances. The Trust's November 25, 2007 press release stated "A landmark designation will encourage the building's continued role as part of the vibrant State Street commercial district..." This building isn't on State Street and there are other more important buildings, historically and architecturally, on the block that are actually on State Street that don't have landmark status. It is curious why this building would be a priority if the intent is to preserve the character of State Street. The nomination appears to be an attempt to prevent future development opportunities. Wouldn't a better strategy be to work with the property owners on the block first to discuss the opportunities to strengthen the block and improve the historic properties than this piecemeal approach? For this reason alone, the Commission should place the nomination on file.

I purchased the property in 2002 and have continued to maintain it, making needed repairs. While the commercial space is currently vacant, the apartment remains rented. Structurally, the building is not in good shape and is in need of substantial repairs. I recently hired a structural engineer to review the building's current condition. After receiving the engineer's report, my contractor reviewed the recommendations and determined that over \$400,000 would be needed to fully implement the needed repairs to the structure and façade. Such repairs would place the cost of the property in excess of \$780,000 after considering the original cost of the real estate. This simply isn't economically feasible when one considers that, after making the needed improvements, the property can realistically only generate income of \$29,500 in today's market. But clearly, that isn't why I purchased the property. My vision is to revitalize the entire block and to implement a design that would raise the accessibility and aesthetic appearance of all properties within the block.




DEVELOPMENT
BROKERAGE
MANAGEMENT

This brings me to a more significant point. Since I am trying to bring an encompassing vision to the entire block, I need flexibility to consider all design options. In my view, the cornerstone of any re-design plan could be to preserve, as much as possible, the complete face along State Street, which has many excellent buildings with historic significance and substantially better structure and construction. It just seems logical that if I am to consider preserving the State Street buildings, I would need flexibility with those back properties facing Mifflin and Fairchild Streets, which are currently scarred by bricked up windows, rusted fire escapes and deteriorating facades. To implement the right design, all options, including building demolition, must be on the table in order to make the entire block more appealing, uniform, accessible and functional. In my vision, the right plan to revitalize the block would include replacing the exterior fire escapes with safe interior stairways, unblocking the windows to allow more natural light and rebuilding the façades to match the State Street exteriors. Further, the right development plan would permit the construction of more elevators and open lobbies, thereby making all buildings within the block ADA accessible and in conformance with fire codes and public safety requirements.

For these reasons, the building should not be designated a City of Madison landmark. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter into your record.

Sincerely,
THE RIFKEN GROUP, LTD.



Martin F. Rifken
President

c. Mayor David Cieslewicz
Ald. Michael Verveer

Attachment: Arnold & O'Sheridan Engineering Report

Walk-thru Evaluation of 120 West Mifflin Street
Madison, WI
Date of Walk-thru-01/17/08. Date of Report 01/18/08.
A+O Job Number 080027



GENERAL COMMENTS

The building is two story with A basement. First floor is retail occupancy and single occupied apartment on second floor. For the purpose of this report east/west is taken to paralleling Mifflin Street. The building is roughly 18'x65' interior dimensions.

BASEMENT

Floor is cast in place concrete on grade. Stains on bottom of wood columns indicate water entry over a period of time. Column bases to the north are rotting at the bottom. The rubble foundation walls appear in good condition. Basement access thru the sidewalk vault has been covered over with a concrete slab. The electrical and water service are in this room. The vault slab is shored up with wood cribbing on east /west faces. Repair to the bearing of this slab is thus recommended which would necessitate removal of a sidewalk panel or two.

FIRST FLOOR FRAMING

The first floor is roughly 3" concrete/tile topping on wood decking on 2x10 wood joists at 16" o/c. Floor joists span east/ west to a center support line. The floor shows significant deflection. Wood shoring has been placed along both east and west basement walls to re-support floor joists where they have rotted at their bearing in the rubble wall. The center beam line has been re-supported by metal posts to deal with rotted original wood columns. In certain areas of the center beam line the joists are pulling away from the support ledger. There have been wood materials added to deal with the ledger condition but they are not, in the writer's opinion, a permanent solution. The floor appears to sag toward the southwest stair. The support of both the first and second floor appears marginal in this area.

The quantity of defects and the deflection in the first floor result in the suggestion to replace of the entire floor system as the most logical course of action. A new floor might be constructed of concrete fill on metal form deck on sheet metal joists. It remains a possibility to re-establish support for the existing floor, but the deflection would largely remain.

The second floor is a clear span from east to west wall. Beams (probably wood) span east/ west, spaced at roughly 5'-6" o/c. Wood joists presumably span between these beams. Viewing the floor from the top side shows little deflection particularly considering the amount of materials stored on it. The floor is thus taken to be in reasonable condition.

ROOF FRAMING

The roof framing was observed by looking through the ceiling hatch. The ceiling is wood framed with about a 3 foot height up to the wood framed roof. Framing runs east to west. It appears the roof joists bear down with a cripple wall to the ceiling joists. The ceiling joists appear to be supported on the second floor partitions (where they exist at the bedroom/bathroom areas) and clear span at

the living room. From the hatch, the alignment of the roof/ceiling framing appeared to be acceptable.

EXTERIOR WALLS



The walls on the east and west sides were observed from the alleyway running along the east side. The grade level walls appear to be a porous brick with a painted parging at the surface. The pargings are usually placed to cover defects in the brick- which appears to be the case here. Areas where the faces of the brick have fallen off were observed. The east wall steps back at the second level. At this location sheet metal siding is used. The west wall was not observed but is probably a party wall with the adjacent property.

The observed walls were judged to be structurally stable but in need of repair to maintain water tightness. One option might be to cover the existing brick with an exterior insulation and finish system to economically reestablish the water barrier. Any repair system chosen should be investigated for its own tendency to trap moisture in the wall. Any projection beyond the existing wall line would have to be verified with property rights.

CONDITIONS OF THE REPORT

Existing condition observations made and reported within the context of this report were based on a visual inspection only and did not contemplate or involve the dismantling or moving of any objects or portion of the premises. Latent and concealed conditions, defects and deficiencies are excluded from our review. Arnold & O'Sheridan, Inc. shall have no liability for concealed from view or inaccessible conditions which were not or were not able to be directly observed. Our observations are limited to the conditions as they existed on the date of our observation, the real property and not the review of any personal property.

The due diligence report prepared herein is not a warranty, guarantee, insurance policy, or substitute for real estate transfer disclosures which may be required by law. This report will comment on major visible defects only with minor defects reported as a courtesy.