

**PLANNING DIVISION REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
of November 5, 2007**

RE: I.D. #07839, Demolition Permit– 621 W. Doty

1. Requested Action: Approval of a demolition permit for a single-family residence at 621 W. Doty Street.
2. Applicable Regulations: Section 28.04 (22) provides the guidelines and regulations for the approval of demolition permits.
3. Report Prepared By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Planner

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Applicant and Contact: Joseph P. Bartol; Stroud, Willink, and Howard, LLC; 25 W. Main Street, Suite 300; Madison, WI, 53703

Property Owner: J.H. Findorff & Son, Inc.; 300 S. Bedford Street; Madison, WI 53703
2. Development Schedule: The applicant wishes to proceed as soon as all necessary approvals have been granted. Completion is anticipated three to four weeks upon commencement.
3. Parcel Location: An approximately 2,805-square foot parcel located west the intersection of Bedford and Doty Streets; Aldermanic District 4; Madison Metropolitan School District.
4. Existing Conditions: A 962 square foot single-family homed, zoned M1.
5. Proposed Use: Demolition of home to accommodate a landscaped green space.
6. Surrounding Land Use and Zoning: The subject parcel and surrounding parcels are zoned M1. A commercial parking lot serving an adjacent office building is located immediately east of the subject property. These adjoining properties and the subject property are under common ownership. The Wisconsin and Southern Railroad is located immediately to the south of the site. Condominiums and office buildings are across the street from the subject property.
7. Adopted Land Use Plan: The Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as the Downtown District- "Findorff Yards". Specific recommended uses include mixed-use buildings, neighborhood commercial, and public / private open space.
8. Environmental Corridor Status: The site is not located within a mapped environmental corridor.

9. Public Utilities & Services: This property is served by a full range of urban services.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW

This application is subject to the demolition standards of Section 28.04 (22).

ANALYSIS, EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The applicant requests approval to raze the subject residence and an accessory building to create a landscaped area. This proposed project would add perimeter landscaping next to an existing parking lot. This application is subject to the demolition standards of Section 28.04 (22).

The subject property was purchased by J.H. Findorff & Son Inc in December 2006. Purchase of this property gave Findorff and its affiliates control of several adjoining properties along the south side of Doty Street. The 2,805 square foot subject property is triangular in shape and is adjacent to a 20-stall surface parking lot that serves the adjoining office building. The applicant notes that Findorff did not plan to demolish the residence immediately upon its purchase. Rather, the company intended to include the demolition of the home as part of a comprehensive redevelopment project for the adjoining properties within the next five to ten years. Due to the condition of the home and related safety concerns, the applicant requests approval to demolish the home in advance of a more substantial redevelopment proposal.

City records indicate that the subject residence was constructed in 1879 and is 926 square feet in area. The 1.5 story home includes three bedrooms and one bathroom. The letter of intent states that the house is dilapidated and uninhabitable for a variety of reasons. There have not been permanent occupants in the home since the 2006 sale and the structure is frequently used as temporary lodging for homeless individuals. The applicant notes that ongoing efforts to secure the residence have failed, as there have been continued break-ins to access the home. Further, it is noted that there is evidence that wild animals are living beneath the residence and that there is a substantial amount of pet waste inside the structure.

The Planning Division has not inspected the inside of the residence to be demolished but believes the house to be in poor condition based on photos and descriptions provided by the applicant. No interior photos were provided and the applicant states that biohazard-protective clothing is required to enter the house due to the amount of animal waste. The reuse and recycling plan submitted with this application will need approval from the Recycling Coordinator prior to the issuance of a wrecking permit.

The City of Madison Preservation Planner indicates that the residence is not of historical significance and is not a candidate for City landmark designation.

The applicant intends to replace the residence with a landscaped green space, primarily to enhance the appearance of the adjacent parking lot. A coordinated landscape plan for both properties has been included. New plantings are provided along the perimeter of the site.

Existing vegetation, including existing maple and cottonwood trees would be preserved per the applicant's landscape plan. Much of the site will be seeded with grass.

Plans indicate that some of the existing and planned improvements encroach into the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad right-of-way. This includes portions of the home's rear porch and existing shed on the subject property. On the adjacent property, a portion of the existing parking lot also appears to have similar encroachment issues. In addition to the existing improvements, a small amount of the proposed landscaping appears to extend beyond the subject property into the rail right-of-way. The Planning Division recommends that the applicant provide documentation that these are permitted encroachments or in the alternate, revise the landscape plan to move new plantings onto the subject property.

The Planning Division believes that this request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, designating this site as a part of the "Findorff Yards" planning area. A variety of uses are recommended for this area including neighborhood commercial, mixed-use buildings, and public / private open space. The current single-family home is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and is also considered a legal non-conforming use under the property's M1 (Limited Manufacturing District) zoning.

The Planning Division believes that applicable demolition standards are met with the proposed project. Although not addressed by the applicant, staff believe that there would limited economic feasibility in relocating this structure based on provided photos, descriptions of existing conditions, and the Preservation Planner's opinion that the residence lacks historic or landmark significance. Further, staff believe that redevelopment options located exclusively on subject parcel are limited. It is unlikely that other development options consistent with the Comprehensive Plan could be accommodated solely on the triangular-shaped 2,805 square foot subject parcel. The proposed project should not impair any future redevelopment projects for the block or surrounding properties. Finally, the proposed demolition would remove a potentially blighting influence on the neighborhood and the addition of landscaping and green space on this small parcel should help to improve the aesthetics of the adjacent parking lot.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Division believes that the Plan Commission can find that the project meets all applicable demolition standards and **approve** the proposed request for a demolition permit, subject to input at the public hearing and the following conditions:

1. Comments from reviewing agencies.
2. That the applicant provide documentation that landscape improvements are an allowable encroachment into adjacent rail right-of-way or in the alternate, revise the landscape plan to locate all proposed landscape improvements onto the subject property.