



Steve Brown Apartments Q&A

Questions and answers about the issues related to granting Landmark status to the structure currently located at 123 W. Gilman St.

1. What is Steve Brown Apartments' (SBA) interest in these issues?

Steve Brown Apartments (SBA) owns the land and structure currently located at 123 W. Gilman St. SBA purchased both in 1989 and has been managing and maintaining the structure as a residential rental property since then.

2. What is SBA's position on the petition to grant Landmark status to 123 W. Gilman St.?

1. SBA applauds and supports recognizing the importance of Mr. Clarenbach's and others' efforts to secure and protect the rights of members of the LGBTQ community that occurred during and after Mr. Clarenbach's tenure in the structure.
 2. SBA believes the historic district where the land and structure are currently located needs to be able to accommodate appropriate housing and public safety changes required to maintain the districts economic viability.
 3. SBA believes that the process for determining and granting Landmark status, as currently constituted in Madison, does not properly recognize or respect the need to engage those who own the property (structures and land) being considered for Landmark status.
 4. SBA supports moving the structure to a nearby location within the Historic District and then granting the structure Landmark status.
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3. What are SBA's concerns regarding the economic viability of historic districts?

Historic districts are not supposed to be isolated curiosities – a collection of brick "snapshots" if you will – that slowly decay as time passes. Rather, they are intended to be living, respectful reminders of those who went before and the lives they led.

All of us at SBA treasure these districts and the beautiful buildings, many of which help to hallmark the city's history. We own many buildings in the downtown historic district and have invested heavily and responsibly in their maintenance and preservation. We understand, however, that the wellbeing of these historic districts – like the communities in which they exist – ultimately depends upon keeping the districts and the communities economically viable. We know that keeping them viable requires both responsible preservation programs and responsible interaction with changing community demographics and needs.

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3. What are SBA's concerns regarding the economic viability of historic districts?

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The structure currently located at 123 W. Gilman St. was built in 1886. At that time, Madison's population was around 16,000, enrollment at the UW was well under 10,000, there was one police station, four banks, 16 Incorporated businesses, and just six city districts. At that time, a small residential property may have been appropriate to the needs of the area, neighborhood and community.

Today, Madison's population is considerably larger (252,551), as is the UW-Madison's enrollment (43,820). Massive new student housing projects have been built near the historic district, and equally large apartment complexes, built to serve the city's exploding young professionals population, now frame both sides of East Washington Avenue, just a few blocks away from the Capitol Square.

These new structures have changed the need for student housing and the expectations and demands of professionals seeking housing. Given these new realities, the economic viability (and we would argue the quality of life and public safety) of the important downtown historic district hinges on its ability to accommodate responsible, appropriate change, including the development of new structures that can both sustain the memories and beauty of the area and attract the residential consumers the neighborhood needs to survive.

4. What are SBA's concerns about the role of property owners in the decision-making processes that affect their properties and historic districts in which those properties hope to survive and prosper?

SBA believes that Wisconsin needs to require owner consent in the Historic Landmark authorization process. This will ensure that ownership of historic properties does not become a form of second class citizenship in which owners are not only expected to invest in complying with expensive rules and regulation but are also effectively prohibited from undertaking or supporting appropriate development necessary to the economic and social wellbeing of their own investment and of the district in which they own property.

Real estate and property development contribute to the long-term viability of historic districts. To encourage this type of investment, real estate transactions disclose clear expectations and requirements affecting the property and attempt to provide a certain level of confidence to the investor. Conversely, when a local municipality creates a historic district or designates a historic property it places a restrictive covenant on property. When a local municipality is allowed this power without owner consent it erodes investor confidence, clouds expectations and jeopardizes the long-term viability of a region or district via lack of economic activity.

Requiring property owner consent is the only mechanism that provides property owners with some ability to: a) require consideration of the legitimate issues and questions they are raising; b) ensure that sustaining economic viability and livability will be given appropriate weight in the decision-making process; and c) have enough standing in the approval process to give appropriate weight to the idea of ownership in Wisconsin.

5. What is SBA's proposal for resolving the issues related to the structure currently located at 123 W. Gilman St.?

SBA has sent a letter to Gary Tipler and David Clarenbach (see attached). The letter contains the following proposal:

"In an effort to enable all the interested parties to achieve their objectives, I [Margaret Watson, CEO] make the following proposed win-win solution on behalf of Steve Brown Apartments.

- Steve Brown Apartments, owner of the structure currently located at 123 W. Gilman Street, will gift the structure free and clear to the Clarenbach House Project, the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation, or the appropriate 501(c)(3) organization (estimated value \$175,000).
- Steve Brown Apartments will have the structure professionally moved to the vacant lot at 113 W. Gorham St., approximately 300 feet away within the Mansion Hill Historic District (estimated moving cost \$200,000).
- Steve Brown Apartments will negotiate a \$0 lease for the land with the new owner of the structure.
- Steve Brown Apartments will support Landmark status for the structure at its new location.

Our proposed solution of gifting and moving 123 W. Gilman St. to fill a vacant lot in the Mansion Hill Historic District champions Clarenbach's contributions while also leaving the door open to a first step towards neighborhood revitalization."

We look forward to working with the community, city and the author toward a win-win solution.