

Elsen, Nikki

From: David Riel <driel1974@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 10:13 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch; Elsen, Nikki
Cc: Acklin, Tim
Subject: Please Uphold Lincoln Middle School Local Historic Landmark Designation

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Dear City Leaders,

I'm writing to encourage you to uphold the Local Historic Landmark designation for Lincoln Middle School and support the Washburn Neighborhood Association. You should deny the School District appeal for the following reasons:

At last month's Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, Dr. Engel expressed concerns that a historic designation could negatively impact the School District's ability to sell Lincoln Middle School. These concerns are not a valid reason to overturn a historic designation, and recent history proves these concerns are unfounded.

The Rivoli Movie Theatre was designated a Local Historic Landmark in 1995, but sold quickly just last year to the Gelatt family. The Funke Candy Co. building was designated a Local Historic Landmark in 1997 when it was Ross Furniture. That historic designation didn't stop Weber Holdings from purchasing the building in 2015, engaging in a \$30 Million renovation and creating The Charmant Hotel. The former Wilson School House on HWY 14/61 was designated a Local Historic Landmark in 2004 and was converted into a successful Bed & Breakfast still in operation today. The former Roosevelt School was sold and redeveloped as apartments. The former Gund and Bakalar factory buildings on South Ave. were both sold and converted into apartments. All of these examples demonstrate the ways in which historic preservation continues to increase economic activity and commerce in our community.

But more importantly, we should remember that Lincoln Middle School is a publicly owned building, and Dr. Engel and the School District work for the taxpayers of La Crosse. Lincoln Middle School was nominated to become a Local Historic Landmark by taxpayers from the Washburn Neighborhood Association, and it was approved by taxpayer volunteers of the Heritage Preservation Commission. To overturn this historic designation would undermine democracy and be incredibly counterproductive. For these reasons, I urge you deny the appeal.

Thank you for your consideration.

-David Riel-