



Courtesy Sangamon Valley Collection

Working to Preserve Washington Street

An Affordable Alternative to Demolition

Downtown Springfield
Heritage Foundation





February 20, 2022

Statement Regarding Proposed Horace Mann Downtown Building Demolition/Parking Lot Project

Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation

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The demolition of 120 lineal feet (over a 1/3 of a city block) of historic buildings located in Downtown Springfield's National Register Historic District one half block from the Old State Capitol would be an irretrievable loss for our community. Demolition of historic buildings in Downtown Springfield for any reason, especially to create surface parking, is wrong and sends the message that Springfield has little regard for the city's unique fingerprint in American history.

The community should *expect* the preservation of Historic Downtown Springfield or, if nothing more, the legacy of our community leaders' actions to steer the direction on this important issue to a preservation alternative. The future of downtown Springfield has and will forever be measured by the decisions made to protect our unique cultural heritage.

The Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation encourages The City to find alternative solutions to preserve these historic structures while satisfying property owner's parking needs.

Our core concerns:

1. One of these contributing buildings scheduled for removal is included in the Downtown Springfield National Register Historic District. This alone favors preservation over demolition.
2. This council action will set a precedent of using TIF funds for the *demolition* of historic buildings. Funds used for demolition runs counter to the TIF, which relies on tax revenue, which will herein be eliminated with the demolition of revenue generating properties.
3. The original historic upper story façades of the buildings at 618, 622, 624 and 626 East Washington remain intact behind the later 'modern' façade additions and can be restored. (See attached historic photo from Sangamon Valley Collection showing the original historic façades on the south side of 600-626 East Washington)
4. The city center has sufficient parking; downtown Springfield is currently littered with surface lots which deteriorate the historic connected urban streetscape.

The Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation encourages the City to use TIF funds to help stabilize these historic buildings and to work with Horace Mann, the Heritage Foundation and the development community to explore long-term adaptive reuse strategies, a better result than gaining a another parking lot. We encourage Horace Mann to pause their project while these options can be explored.

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Letter from Landmarks Illinois

February 21, 2023

Mayor and Alderpersons
City of Springfield
800 E Monroe Street
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Mayor Langfelder and Alderpersons:

This letter is in reference to Agenda Item 2023-040, which is listed for action within the Consent Agenda for your council meeting on February 21, 2023. Passing this ordinance would authorize the use of TIF funds for demolition of 618 East Washington Street. This proposed action would be in violation of the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, as the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing structure to the Central Springfield Historic District.

Section 11-74.4.3(a)(q) of the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act (65 ILCS 5, Illinois Municipal Code) states:

No cost shall be a redevelopment project cost in a redevelopment project area if used to demolish, remove, or substantially modify a historic resource, after August 26, 2008 (the effective date of Public Act 95-934), unless no prudent and feasible alternative exists. "Historic resource" for the purpose of this paragraph means (i) a place or structure that is included or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places or (ii) a contributing structure in a district on the National Register of Historic Places. This paragraph does not apply to a place or structure for which demolition, removal, or modification is subject to review by the preservation agency of a Certified Local Government designated as such by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior.

As building stabilization and rehabilitation options have not been considered nor exhausted, the City of Springfield's approval of TIF expenditures as presented would violate this state law. We respectfully request that Agenda Item 2023-040 be removed from the consent agenda and tabled.

We encourage the city to explore how the TIF can best support reuse and revitalization options, achieving the TIF's purpose to spur economic development in the historic downtown.

Sincerely,
Quinn Adamowski
Regional Advocacy Manager



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Letter from The Lakota Group

February 27, 2023

The Honorable James Langfelder, Mayor of Springfield
Honorable Aldermen and Alderwomen of the City Council
James Zirkle, Esq., Corporation Council, City of Springfield

Municipal Center West, Room 106
300 South Seventh Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701

RE: Central Springfield National Register Historic District

Dear Mayor Langfelder, Aldermen and Alderwomen of the City Council, and Mr. Zirkle,
Corporation Council,

I am writing to you in regard to the Central Springfield National Register Historic District, of which I prepared and completed a Boundary Extension and Additional Documentation Nomination in 2015. The City of Springfield engaged the Lakota Group in 2014 to prepare the nomination.

In 1977, Illinois SHPO first nominated the historic core of downtown Springfield to the National Register of Historic Places incorporating 63 contributing and nine non-contributing buildings. In 1986, Illinois SHPO prepared a second nomination, amending the original to include six new contributing properties. The 2015 nomination, which amends the 1986 nomination, adds 71 additional contributing buildings and 18 non-contributing properties. In total, the Historic District now includes 158 commercial and institutional buildings, representing a variety of defined architectural styles and vernacular commercial building types from the early and mid-1800s to the 1960s.

The National Register of Historic Places, established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 passed by the U.S. Congress, is this nation's official list of buildings, sites, structures, and objects worthy of preservation for future generations. The National Park Service and Illinois SHPO jointly administer the National Register in the State of Illinois. While National Register listing, whether individually or as part of a district, does not restrict the use or disposition of properties, it does make commercial and income-producing buildings eligible for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (HPTC), a significant incentive to encourage building adaptive use and rehabilitation. In Illinois, National Register-listed properties are also eligible for both the State of Illinois and River Edge Historic Preservation Tax Credit programs. All three programs have led to significant reinvestments in historic properties in communities across the state over the decades. Therefore, listing historic downtown commercial buildings in the National Register provides important financial benefits to property owners. These benefits were the prime motivating factor to undertake the 2015 Boundary Extension: to consider other properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register that could also potentially take advantage of the tax credit incentives.

In regard to 618 and 622 Washington Street, both properties were included as part of the 2015 Boundary Extension Nomination. As specified by the National Park Service, the base requirement for listing properties in the National Register, is that they must be 50 years of age or older. Other standards for listing include whether the property is associated with a significant historical event that shaped broad patterns of our history, the life of a person significant in our past, or they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

Continued



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Contributing properties added in the 2015 Boundary Extension nomination are considered significant under the last standard for their distinctive architectural design.

When drawing historic district boundaries, properties will be evaluated as "contributing" or "non-contributing" to the history and significance of the historic district. Contributing properties are any buildings that add to the historical integrity or architectural qualities that make the historic district significant. Non-contributing properties are those younger than 50 years of age, have substantial alterations from their original design, or do not meet other National Register eligibility requirements.

When completing the nomination, our firm evaluated the property at 618 Washington Street as contributing to the district, given its intact upper façade representative of the Art Deco and Commercial architectural styles found in many downtowns during the 1910s and 1920s. This is a unique vernacular expression of both styles. It is my understanding the building was modified with a circa 1990s Post Modern storefront, which in itself would not disqualify the building for its contributing status. As long as the building exhibits a strong sense of feeling, association, design, and workmanship, it remains contributing to the history and architecture of the district. In time, the storefront will itself be considered significant as it reaches 50 years of age in the years ahead.

As 622 Washington Street, the building was classified as non-contributing to the district principally due to the age of its last alteration, which occurred in 1973 according to our research. Therefore, as the nomination was prepared in 2015, the property alteration was not 50 years of age and therefore not eligible as a contributing property to the district. If the nomination were to be prepared today, it would be considered a contributing property as it would meet the 50-year threshold. It would also serve as a representative example of a Late Modern-International Style commercial building found in many downtowns across the country.

When making this evaluation, we understood through our research that this building consisted of two original buildings that received a façade slipcovered alteration. If the façade alteration had been reversed, both original buildings would be considered contributing buildings. Last, if additional research and documentation demonstrate that the façade alterations occurred before 1966, then the building would also be considered a contributing resource to the Central Springfield National Register Historic District.

The Central Springfield National Register Historic District is an important preservation and economic development tool that can leverage tax credit benefits to facilitate new retail, office, and residential uses in historic buildings. Local tax-increment financing should be used in support of tax credit investment projects that generate higher property values and tax dollar receipts. Many cities across the country make use of tax-increment financing for such aims.

I am available to answer any additional questions from the Council.

Cordially,
Nicholas P. Kalogeresis, AICP
Associate Principal



2015 Historic District Expansion Map

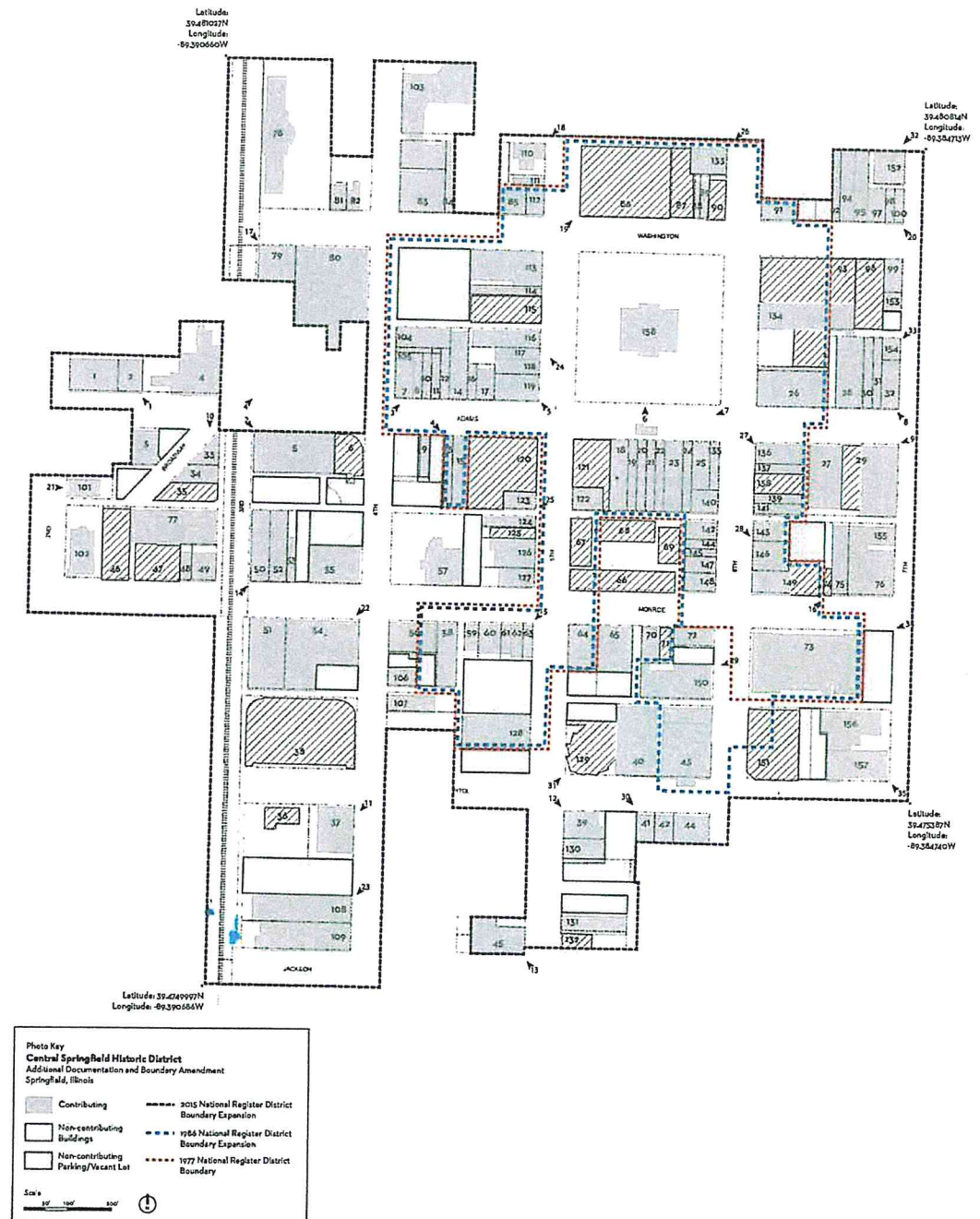
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East Washington Historic Facades

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628

626/624

622

618

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622 - 626 EAST WASHINGTON



Former Distressed Properties Significant Structural Damage, Fully Restored & Renovated

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213 SOUTH SIXTH STREET



CHATTERTON BLOCK -FIFTH & ADAMS



FISHER-LATHAM BUILDING – 100 N. FIFTH

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Heritage Foundation's Proposal

In an effort to provide Horace Mann with the parking they desire, the Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation has crafted a plan that will provide them what they are seeking, while preserving the historic structures on Washington St., all for approximately the cost as demolishing one-third of the block.

As it's a non-contributing portion of the property that was added-on to 624/626 Washington St., we propose removing the back (south) portion of the building off the alley to provide parking for the 628 building.

With Horace Mann currently owning 624/626, our organization would be willing to work with the company to design lot access to 628, and how to feasibly renovate and restore 624/626.

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Section to
be removed





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Cost estimates

618- 626 E. Washington - Alternative/Option to Promote Preservation/Restoration

STABILIZATION

Roof Repairs 618/622 E. Washington	allowance	\$ 50,000
Remediation	allowance	\$150,000
618 E. Washington acquisition (potential donation to HF)	FMV	\$ 75,000
Total		\$ 275,000
		(\$ 200,000)

IMPROVEMENTS

Facade renovation 622, 624,626 E. Washington- North (60' x 40')	2,400 SF @ \$100/SF	\$ 240,000
Façade renovation 624,626 E. Washington – South (40' x 40')	1,600 SF @ \$50/SF	\$ 80,000
Demolition south portion 624,626 E. Washington (40' x 83')	LS	\$100,000
Parking Lot 624,626 E. Washington (40' x 83'')	3,300 SF @ \$20/SF	\$ 66,000

Total **\$ 486,000**

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February 21, 2023

For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

Downtown Heritage Foundation Opposes Horace Mann Downtown Building Demolition/Parking Lot Project

SPRINGFIELD-- With the city council scheduled to act on a Horace Mann proposal to demolish up to historic buildings in Downtown, the Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation has released a statement opposing the project and asking the company and the city to pause while parties and stakeholders can work together on a solution that meets Horace Mann's needs, while also keeping buildings on the sites.

"We appreciate their interest and work in renovating the building at 7th and Washington for their corporate housing, however, leveling buildings for parking and green space, when there is a parking facility directly across the street, is not the direction we'd like to see Downtown going," said Foundation board president Scott Troehler.

This council action will set a precedent of using TIF funds for the demolition of historic buildings. Funds used for demolition runs counter to the TIF, which relies on tax revenue, which will herein be eliminated with the demolition of revenue generating properties.

"We feel the \$600,000 in TIF money Horace Mann is asking for to cover demolition costs would be better spent in stabilizing the existing structures, and allow us and other entities to work together to find new owners that can develop an adaptive reuse plan that doesn't level one-third of the block," said Downtown architect and board vice-president Dave Leonatti.

The original historic upper story façades of the buildings at 618, 622, 624 and 626 East Washington remain intact behind the later 'modern' façade additions and can be restored.

At this time, we are asking for Horace Mann and the city pause this project.

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The Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation was created in 1999 by the leadership of the downtown's 501c6 business association, recognizing a need for a charitable organization to undertake some of the revitalization challenges, including accepting donation of properties and coordinating new ownership in order to save Downtown buildings.

Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation



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