

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION (LPC)

of the City of Racine, Wisconsin

AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORADUM

AGENDA DATE: Landmarks Preservation Commission July 16, 2018

SUBJECT: Discussion of the Park Theatre building at [3015 Washington Avenue](#)

PREPARED BY: Matthew G. Sadowski , Assistant Director/Principal Planner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On June 28, 2018 Kenneth Plaski, the Chief Building Inspector for the City of Racine, issued a Raze and Remove order for 3015 Washington Avenue. After conducting an extensive inspection of the entire structure on June 25, 2018, it was determined that the structure had deteriorated structurally to the point where the building was no longer safe to be inhabited. The entire building was also placarded on June 25, 2018 as Unfit for Human Habitation and each of the six tenants occupying the building where given a copy of the order to vacant by July 25, 2018.

Over the past seven years the property owner John Apple has received numerous orders from the Building Department's Code Compliance Inspector to repair the building. Orders covering the masonry tuck pointing on the exterior and exterior windows were not complied with, and either citations were issued to Mr. Apple or the orders were given to the City Attorney's office to be prosecuted in Municipal Court. Over the past seven years Mr. Apple has been given forfeitures totaling thousands of dollars.

On August 28, 2017 the Building Department issued a violation notice to Mr. Apple requiring him to make needed repairs to the building. This extensive violation order included building, plumbing and electrical violations which needed to be corrected. As of this date there have been no permits issued nor have any repairs taken place to correct the code violations as outlined in the violation letter dated August 28, 2017.

Copies of the order to raze and violation notice are attached to the legistar file with the file name of *Building Files*.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS: Subject property highlighted in red below



Landmark Status:

Park/Capitol Theatre is neither a local or national landmark. It was inventoried in 2001 as part of a

West Racine reconnaissance survey the LPC undertook with WHS funding. At that time it was determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In the intervening years neither the owner nor Landmarks Preservation Commission took action to provide the property a level of review and protection through a National Register nomination or a local designation.

A history of the property

The Park Theatre (aka Capitol Theatre) is described as "... built in c. 1920 (1928), (the theatre) is recommended as eligible for the National Register under *Criterion C: Architecture* as an example of the Mediterranean Revival style. The two story brick theater exhibits a tile roof, polychromatic tile work, and decorative string course between the first and second floors. Windows have concrete sills, while there center windows feature molded concrete decoration and pilasters on each side. The first floor has a recessed entryway, also with pilasters and several added storefronts. The theater is a good example of Mediterranean Revival-inspired style applied to a theater and retains good integrity, and is recommended as eligible for the National Register under *Criterion C; Architecture*." In 1975-76 the theatre was converted to two screens.

The theatre was purchased from Carmichael & Associates by the Marcus Corporation in 1981 for \$50,000. Marcus renovated the theatre, renamed it the Park Cinemas 1 & 2, and reopened on 11/20/1981. Used for mainly second-run films Marcus closed the theatre 9/7/1987. (source: Journal Times 11/17/1981 and 9/12/1987)

Assessor records indicate that the property was sold in 1987, 1995, 2002 and 2006.

Demolition Waiting Period:

As the property is not designated a landmark, a 15 day (working days) waiting period applies (*Sec 58-65 – Razing of properties*). The owner is not obligated to work with the Commission on alternatives to razing the building.

During the waiting period, Sec 58-65 (b) provides that "the chairman of the commission may, in cooperation with the property owner or owner's agent, cause the structure or site to be documented in accordance with commission guidelines." Photographic documentation of buildings has been conducted in the past.

Building conditions:

As outlined by the Chief Building Inspector earlier in this report, due to the neglect and resulting extensive damage the building is currently in a state of extreme disrepair. The building has multiple issues relating to building, electrical and plumbing violations which render it uncopyable. There has been the accumulation of feces in the basement level resulting related odors emanating from the building at the sidewalk. Efforts by the Building Inspection Division to compel the owner to make the necessary repairs have been met with inaction, thus the placarding of the building as Unfit For Human Habitation and the issuance of a Raze or Remove order was issued.

Delinquent Taxes:

In addition to the building's condition, property taxes are delinquent for the years 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017. Total taxes, special assessments and penalties due equal **\$123,352.53**.

Current Assessment:

The properties current assessment is \$150,000 (\$42,200 for land and \$107,800 for improvements).

Commission's Potential Action:

Prior to the demolition, request that the owner secure the services of an architectural historian who will document the building by creating a historical and photographic record.



BUDGETARY IMPACT: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive and file the item.