



Outlook

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**Central City Plaza**

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**From** Tish, Jason L - WHS <jason.tish@wisconsinhistory.org>

**Date** Fri 1/24/2025 2:50 PM

**To** Askin, Tim <taskin@milwaukee.gov>

Hey Tim. I saw the video of your HPC meeting last week. I also looked at the report of the Alonzo Robinson survey. You know all this, but I thought it might be helpful to hear it from another professional as the city works through the Central City Plaza situation. And of course I'm speaking from the NRHP perspective, not the city landmark perspective.

First of all, you conveyed a very good summary of the plaza's history.

The Robinson survey report concludes that the Plaza (including all three buildings that make up the complex, as they were designed together to function together) is potentially eligible as a complex of 3 buildings. Elizabeth Hilton and Daina Penkiunas confirmed this when they visited. The demolition of any one of those buildings would be a significant hit to the historic integrity of the complex. It's hard to say whether the remaining buildings would adequately convey the history of the community who designed, built and operated the plaza. And with new construction among them, a case for eligibility would be even more difficult to make.

If the complex was listed in the NRHP the owners, including non-profit owners, would be eligible for tax credit programs - non-profits can only the state program, but that's 20%. Both the state and federal tax credit programs allow new construction adjacent to or connected to the designated historic properties, so if the Salvation Army is interested in preservation the history of the Black community there, they could do so, get tax credits for rehabilitating the existing buildings, and also build the new construction they need to expand their program space. This approach could be a winning strategy for everyone.

-Jason

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