

**Remarks by Frederic E. Mohs
September 6, 2017
UDC Agenda
MATC Campus Redevelopment**

The MATC campus that is the subject of this discussion is located across Wisconsin Avenue from the two-story First Methodist Church and park. It is also across West Johnson Street from the two-story Bethel Lutheran Church. Both of these properties have set-backs from the sidewalk. The most relevant is the Bethel Lutheran Church setback which is about twenty feet from the sidewalk. The former Madison High School was a three-story building that also had a setback from Wisconsin Avenue. The Bethel Lutheran Church on West Johnson Street is setback from Johnson Street as is the existing Madison Technical College Building and its parking structure.

In the original map of Madison North Wisconsin Avenue, originally, and MLK Blvd., formerly South Wisconsin Avenue, provided for deep setbacks after the first streets radiating from the Square, namely Dayton Street to the North and Doty Street on the South. After that, all of the properties beginning with Johnson Street on the North and Doty Street on the South had deep setbacks from the sidewalk. On MLK Blvd., formerly South Wisconsin Avenue, both the City County Building and the Municipal Building maintain serious setbacks.

It is the contention of the neighborhood that any redevelopment of the former MATC Building site should replicate and maintain a serious setback, 15 to 20 feet, from Wisconsin Avenue. Additionally, the setback currently in place along West Johnson Street should be maintained for any new construction on the Johnson Street side of the block. A setback replicating the current MATC Building on Dayton Street is sufficient.

The existing MATC Building fronting on North Carroll Street is a handsome building and in the opinion of the neighborhood, any new construction would respond in some effective way either by material, or design, or both to the brick material and other features of the original building.

After examining the plan, the consensus of the neighborhood is generally to support the hotel use of the existing building but to require that it contain parking adequate to serve its guests and a certain number of its employees. The scheme intended to co-occupy that space between hotel guests and employees and an office building is clearly not feasible. There is ample room on the site to provide parking that will meet the needs of the hotel. It is the neighborhood's recommendation that that parking be made part of the plan. The remainder could be used as an office building as the developers suggest. However, the office building aspect, in order to be a "first class office building", needs sufficient parking in order to meet that criterion which could result in a lower height office building. Common knowledge is that office building users would much rather have parking in their building than to be on a very high floor.

One could easily say that neighbors and historic preservationists are asking a lot. We would like to remind the decision makers that this is a precious part of Madison that tells its original story just as the scrupulously preserved street layout and assemblage of parks, avenues and open spaces, and preservation of historic buildings has been accomplished in Washington D.C. Both Washington D.C. and Madison could have been ruined and they have not been. It is our contention that the current decision makers should proudly protect the design and heritage that is so far been remarkably maintained. We must remember that the City of Madison transferred the site to MATC

(Madison College) with the understanding that this campus would be maintained and that that promise was a major part of the agreement to sell land at Truax that became the new Madison College campus. How unfair it would be for the City of Madison to give its Central High School site MATC and to agree to sell the Truax property at a modest price only to have MATC back out of promises and performance that were part of the deal. The citizens of Madison, and for that matter, the citizens of Wisconsin deserve better. This is all of our Capitol City. It is right that we allow for growth, but with conditions such as the Capital View Preservation Ordinance. We have a chance to preserve one of Madison's grand avenues and its approach to Madison's and Wisconsin's first, and arguably most important, historic district. Owners of property in the historic district have given up all redevelopment opportunity. Is it too much to ask that the historic setbacks along Wisconsin Avenue and Johnson Street be observed and that no more than the permitted height of eight stories contained in the downtown plan be permitted.