

2/2/2015

To the Common Council and All Staff of the City of Madison (re: Agenda item #81):

Early in the process of the development by Urban Land Interests, The Baskerville voiced its general approval of this project contingent on the presumption that ULI would provide solutions for our concerns at no cost or very minimal cost to us. At the time, ULI made promises that they would accommodate us on the issues that we raised including a no-cost, permanent space for our trash, and considerations for light, sound, etc. We proceeded based on the assumption that this would happen.

Unfortunately, that appears not to have been the case. Upon reaching this point of the process, The Baskerville found that ULI wants to build in such a way that we can no longer use the alley between our building and the Anchor Ramp for trash, HVAC, and bike storage and instead would like to become our landlords leasing us a space for these purposes, that we will have to pay thousands of dollars to relocate pipes and condensers to accommodate their building plans, and on top of reducing overall sunlight to the Baskerville windows, they proposed most recently to cement over two lower level windows completely.

Perhaps even more disconcerting is that they propose to reduce the size of the alley from approximately 15 feet to 5 feet which we have used for at least 65 years, such that the way we do repairs to the historic landmark of which we are the stewards will no longer be feasible. The alley as they have planned it will not accommodate boom trucks, which we have used for many years to do make repairs to the building and wash the windows of 22 residential units. It turns out that the solution to this problem ULI had suggested previously (scissor lifts) are not capable of servicing a building of our height. It is unclear in what way, if any, the historic Baskerville will be able to be repaired should ULI's plans be implemented, nor what the additional costs might be for our condo association and its homeowners.

Due to these reasons, The Baskerville, through its Board of Governors, opposes the ULI development as now planned. We ask that you refrain from pledging millions of dollars in public funds for any aspect of this project until the needs of this historic landmark and its community of homeowners are settled fairly and completely. We are in the process of scheduling a meeting with City Staff through Amy Scanlon of the Landmarks Commission to air our grievances and work out a solution. We ask that the City not allow this project to proceed until such a solution is found.

As we have shown previously, we are not anti-development and welcome a development to that block so long as it maintains the functional status quo as to use of the alleys, light, and noise, and does not impinge on the ability of owners of either of the two historic buildings that would be its neighbors to care for and preserve these vital parts of Madison's architectural and cultural history. In GOAL E of the TIF Joint Review Board Approval, it indicates "assisting in the revitalization of historic buildings...and enhancements of historic districts." It seems clear that for this to be true of this project, the ability to repair these buildings, which are on The National Historic Registry and listed as Madison Landmarks, must be maintained.

With the City's help, we hope that a way forward can be found. Please help us preserve our historic landmarks by voting against the granting of TIF funds to the ULI project until such an agreement is reached.

Sincerely,

Will May
Chairman of the Board
The Baskerville Condo Association