

May 4, 2010

NATIONAL  
TRUST  
FOR  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION®

Madison Landmarks Commission  
City of Madison  
210 Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd  
Madison, WI 53703

Midwest  
OFFICE

Dear Madison Landmark Commissioners,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is concerned about the potential implications of your May 10 decision on the Edgewater proposal. The Commission is being asked to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed Edgewater expansion project. You have been advised to make a determination of appropriateness based on the compatibility of the tower addition with other buildings in the "visually-related area." It is our understanding that the "visually-related area" has been defined to include the National Guardian Life Insurance building. This building is a modern commercial building built among modestly scaled residential properties before the Historic District was established. It was for that reason designated a "non-contributing element" within the district. A non-contributing element signifies an intrusion in the district that would not have been considered compatible had the Mansion Hill guidelines been in place when it was proposed.

It is also our understanding that the city's long-time Preservation Planner has noted that the precedent for decisions where an incompatible intrusion is located in the visually-related area is that the intrusion is discounted when considering a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The purpose of historic district designation is to preserve the characteristics of a district that make it significant. These characteristics are most often defined in terms of size, scale, setback, materials and siting. The intent is to let these features guide new construction in the district and take them into account when reviewing the compatibility of new construction. While the proposal for the rehabilitation of the original Edgewater hotel building and the improvement of the public terrace appear to be compatible with the intent of the Historic District guidelines, the size and scale of the proposed tower addition does not, because its scale relates only to a non-contributing element.

Midwest Office  
53 West Jackson Blvd., Suite  
350  
Chicago, IL 60604  
P 312.939.5547  
F 312.939.5651  
E mwro@nthp.org

National Office  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
P 202.588.6000  
F 202.588.6038  
E info@nthp.org  
[www.PreservationNation.org](http://www.PreservationNation.org)

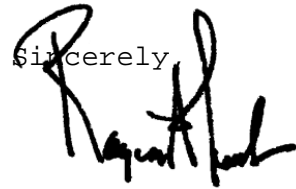
Madison Landmarks Commission

May 4, 2010

Page 2 of 2

A decision to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for this proposal would set a precedent that would allow, or even encourage, density creep in all of Madison's historic districts when allowable density and height of new construction within the visually-related area is based on non-contributing elements. It would also compromise the integrity of the Landmarks Ordinance, weakening its ability to maintain the important characteristics of the city's historic districts.

We urge you to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for this proposal based on the incompatibility of the proposed addition with the buildings in the visually-related area that embody the significant characteristics of the Mansion Hill district.

Sincerely,  


Royce A. Yeater, AIA  
Midwest Director

C Jason Tisch, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

**Dennis C. Davidsaver  
624 West Shore Dr.  
Madison, WI 53715  
608 257 2396**

April 6, 2010

Madison Landmarks Commission  
C/O City of Madison  
Madison Municipal Building  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53701


Dear Landmarks Commission Member:

At your April 14th meeting I encourage you to vote in support of the proposed Edgewater renovation and expansion. Among the issues raised by opponents is the mass and volume of the new tower, a concern which no longer has merit. Listening to neighborhood concerns, the developer has downsized the project and relocated the new tower, increasing the distance from the original Edgewater tower to open up an even larger lake view, overlooking a terrace leading down to the water for all to access and enjoy.

Several neighborhoods, including my own lakeside neighborhood, have facilitated commercial developments. They keep badly needed jobs and economic development within our city limits, while providing for the growing need for retail, professional services, health care, and recreational opportunities. Further, done right, such developments will bring new features and add to the vitality of the immediate neighborhood, leading to more positive investment. In the Edgewater's case, we can expect it will attract more permanent residents to a neighborhood which is overwhelmingly non-owner occupied, along with more renovation to the residential structures and a general upgrade to the area through greater pride in ownership.

Unlike many of the uninspiring structures that were constructed on Langdon St. and in the Mansion Hill district over the past decades, the architecture of the Edgewater is classic and the amenities that that it will offer are substantial. The Edgewater is historic as will be the new tower. It should be built as Madison moves forward.

Sincerely,

  
Dennis C. Davidsaver

CC: City Staff

## Cnare, Rebecca

---

**From:** Peter Gray [phgray@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 04, 2010 10:25 AM  
**To:** Cnare, Rebecca; Fruhling, William; Maniaci, Bridget; dan.stephans@wisconsin.gov; stuartlevitan@sbcglobal.net; rtaylor@restainohomes.com; michaeljrosenblum@yahoo.com; christina.slattery@meadhunt.com; m.gehrig@att.net; gehrigs4@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Schmidt, Chris  
**Subject:** Make Edgewater comply with the Landmarks Ordinance

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Landmarks Commissioners,

I hope you will stand up for the Edgewater project to be modified to comply with the Mansion Hill Historic District ordinance.

A lot of us remain concerned that the project is flawed and should not proceed in its current form. This project concerns all of Madison, not just Mansion Hill residents. It affects our city center and will set precedents for future projects.

Sure we want the economic development benefits of a big project, but let's do it with the right project, and this is the wrong one.

There is a way to improve the Edgewater - but a huge tower in our most important historic district with a \$16 million tab to Madison taxpayers is *\*not\** it.

The NGL building was a flagrant violation of the historic district and it was supposed to be a "never again" situation. For the developer to cite it and other intrusions that diminish the historic district as precedents is perverse.

The approval process has exposed alarming bad-faith behaviors on the part of Hammes Company, which do not inspire confidence that we can trust this developer to respect community concerns going forward.

Again, thank you for taking a hard look at this issue.

Best,  
Peter Gray  
5042 Marathon Drive

cc: Chris Schmidt, District 11 Alder

--

I am cycling for charity on July 17th: [www.bike4bgc.com](http://www.bike4bgc.com)

Please ask me about joining my team.

Or click here to help me support the Boys & Girls Club:

<https://www.bike4bgc.com/donate/?action=validate&id=4>

## Cnare, Rebecca

---

**From:** peter fiala [toofarunderwater@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 09, 2010 12:04 PM  
**To:** Cnare, Rebecca  
**Cc:** ALL ALDERS  
**Subject:** Edgewater Discussion on April 14th

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Rebecca,

Please share this message with the Landmarks Commissioners:

Months ago I wrote to voice my concerns about the Edgewater Hotel development. At that point the highest proposed height was 11 stories above Wisconsin Avenue level. Now that part is roughly 9 stories and is still outside the bounds of the acceptable height limit of the neighborhood. The building is simply too big.

As a resident of 225 E. Lakelawn Place, which is roughly 4 blocks from the proposed sight, it troubles me that the Edgewater could endanger the house that I live in as well as the neighborhood in general.

As Madison becomes more dense we are in danger of losing some fine historic houses. We should not forget to remember our past architecture and the history of our city, which is embodied in our buildings. I am in favor of increasing density but we should do this smartly and without compromising our historic buildings and public access to the lake.

Aside from that, I just don't see how the Edgewater qualifies as a special case. Although it is a historic building that should be remodeled and refined, it is not close enough to the businesses of State Street for most people to walk to, nor Monona Terrace. From what I've read and according to the conversations I've had and the buzz around town, the hotel is not the most important concern in the city to deserve \$14 million in TIF funds. I would say revamping the East Washington corridor and South Park Street is much more important.

Furthermore, can Wisconsin Avenue and Langdon Street accommodate the cars, busses and delivery trucks associated with a larger hotel? So far that I've seen there is not enough parking or room for busses and delivery trucks to maneuver. I'm also afraid Madison's walkability would be overshadowed by a city filled with cars!

In closing I would like the city government to be proactive in its historical preservation. Madison has an identity and it is lost when a historic building is lost. Going through with the Edgewater plan as it stands would endanger the city's identity. Please listen to the Landmarks Commission's recommendations.

Thank you,  
Peter Fiala

225 E Lakelawn Place  
Madison, WI 53703