

11-14-11

To: Joint meeting of Landmarks and Urban Design Commission
Re: 100 Block State Street Proposal

This plan is wasteful, unnecessary and worst of all, divisive. Why, with the excessively divisive Edgewater debacle still raging, would the business and artistic leadership class of Madison want to plunge us right back into another drawn out fight over our cherished downtown identity.

This plan disrespects the architecture and history that makes Madison unique. The building owners have plenty of money, so it appears that imagination is what they lack.

If you want to make a glass fantasyland, please do it somewhere other than one of Madison's most icon and historic blocks. If you need to tear things down, please be sure that the buildings are not official local landmarks and landmark-eligible buildings the people and the common council have said are too valuable to be lost.

If you can't figure out how to beautifully restore this important part of Madison's history, perhaps you should let someone else do it.

More than 10 years after Overture, I suspect that we are less in awe with the owner's money this time around.

I have a feeling people are beginning to realize that if we tear down this block, we will have gone too far.

If the buildings you own have rusty fire escapes, then paint them. If the fire escape holds a bag of garbage, ask your tenants to remove it.

As a city, it is time for us to stand up and say 'No,' we won't let our distinctive and distinguished architecture be thrown away in the name of more efficient office rental space. -- we can do better than that.

Please -- go back to the drawing board. And make sure your new plan includes restoring these wonderful buildings, not tearing them down. A beautifully restored block that respects and celebrates Madison's earliest history can be a wonderful compliment to Overture, the Public Library and the Historical Society museum. How ironic it would be to tell our future generations that we once had lovely historic buildings, and we had plenty of money to restore them, but we lacked the imagination and foresight to do it right.

We can do better.

Thank you.

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