

## 8/12/15 UDC Meeting - Staff Notes for Item 11, 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue

On the whole, the proposed mix of uses can fit well on this unique corner site, which presents a key redevelopment opportunity on the near north side. However, at this point, the proposal could benefit from UDC guidance to Plan Commission regarding the scale, massing, rhythm, and architectural details of this long 4-5 story building. Here are some specific comments and questions staff would like for the UDC to consider and weigh in on at the August 12 meeting:

- **Flatiron Corner** - Staff appreciates the usable plaza right on the corner, but is concerned that the one-story element stepping back to the upper floors is not the best way to address the corner. Staff suggests that the UDC consider other options, including the option of a flat-iron building with a similar plaza, and provide the applicant with further guidance on how to appropriately address this acute corner.
- **Façade Rhythm** - The scale of vertical repetition is too small for a building over 300' long. Rather than so many small changes in height (the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor stepback, occasional 5th floor loft elements), it may be better to vary the height of the building by breaking it up into 2-3 larger components of different heights. For instance, a 4-story element starting at the corner, stepping down to a 3-story element on the south side of the building. Staff would like UDC feedback and ideas related to this issue.
- **Vehicular Access** - How might the massing be changed to either eliminate or better integrate the vehicular pass-through under the building, while still maintaining access from both streets? Staff suggests that perhaps by shortening the building, vehicle access could be provided from Sherman Avenue on the southern portion of the site. Staff would like UDC feedback and ideas related to this issue.
- **Materials** - The palette of materials is overly complex. How can the architecture be simplified, while still achieving meaningful articulation along such long facades?
- **Pedestrian Access** - How can the main pedestrian entries be made more prominent by calling attention to them with the exterior architecture?

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In order to recommend approval for the proposal, staff must find that all Conditional Use Standards are met. The UDC review is most relevant to Conditional Use Standard 9:

9. *When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building or an addition to an existing building, the Plan Commission shall find that the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area and the statement of purpose for the zoning district. In order to find that this standard is met, the Plan Commission may require the applicant to submit plans to the Urban Design Commission for comment and recommendations.*

*Statement of Purpose for Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMX) District*

*The NMX District is established to encourage and sustain the viability of commercial nodes that serve the shopping needs of residents in adjacent neighborhoods. The district is also intended to:*

- a) Encourage pedestrian, bicycle and transit use as a means of accessing these commercial areas.*
- b) Encourage diversification of uses, including residential, commercial, and civic uses, in order to enhance the vitality and appeal of these areas.*
- c) Facilitate preservation, development or redevelopment consistent with the adopted goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor, or special area plans.*

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

PRESENTED: August 12, 2015

TITLE: 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue – Advisory Presentation at Planning Staff’s Request for a New Mixed-Use Development Containing 60 Market-Rate Apartments and Approximately 6,700 Square Feet of Commercial/Retail Space, in addition to a 6,667 Square Foot Commercial/Retail Pad Site to be Developed in the Future. 12<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (39566)

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: August 12, 2015

ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Tom DeChant, John Harrington, Cliff Goodhart, Richard Slayton and Lois Braun-Oddo.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of August 12, 2015, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** on a new mixed-use development containing 60 apartments and approximately 6,700 square feet of commercial/retail space, in addition to a 6,667 square foot commercial/retail pad site to be developed in the future located at 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project Kirk Keller, Jeff Lee and Suzanne Vincent, all representing McKenzie Place, LLC.

There are three principal buildings currently on the site to be demolished. There are no zoning changes being requested. They have met with the neighborhood association and received very positive feedback. What is driving this project is fitting a rectangle into a triangular shape for a neighborhood area; they listened and responded to what the neighborhood wants. You enter through underground parking (62 stalls) for 60 apartments. They are cognizant of the groundwater because of the property’s previous use as a gas station. They will be 100% covered bicycle parking. A third floor community room is proposed for the apartment units, as well as two roof gardens. Being across from Burr Oaks Park they are proposing “parking” and storage for canoes and kayaks. They have been in conversation with the owners of Banzo next door, who wish to utilize some of the greenspace between the properties for growing produce to use in their restaurant. There are no walpaks or mechanical grills in the building, no stucco and no vinyl products proposed; there is a high

percentage of brick and high efficiency glass. The outpad portion of the property is proposed for a 2-story bank building in the future.

Keller discussed Planning Division concerns of the project, which include:

- The 1-story element (the owner is strongly in favor of stepping the building back);
- The idea of the building taking on more of a flat iron design (that's the vertical piece they do not want to do; they do not want stacking 4-5 stories in that area, the neighborhood would rather see 3-stories);
- The palette is overly complex (the forms have been smoothed out with less articulation in the depth, they have made a strong effort to address that);
- How might the massing be changed to either eliminate or better integrate the vehicular pass through under the building while still maintaining access to both streets. Staff suggests that perhaps by shortening the building, vehicle access can be provided from Sherman Avenue on the southern portion of the site. The goal is to eliminate excess curb cuts and to give a very concise statement to the property..

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Nice job. Take a look at how that park works and see if you can get what you're looking for by having more of a grid in this area, which would become perhaps more serving because of the shade.
  - I had thought that too.
- You talked about this gracious walkway but it's still a garage kind of setting. Is there any way to indent it to bring light to the ends of the sidewalk?
  - We do have some angles we can work with to make it more inviting as an entry point.
- You're probably lucky that we're burned out on flat irons. This would make a great site for a flat iron building.
- Unless the road is changed to a "T" interchange.
  - It's a unique site that brings a unique product to this area. The apartments at the third floor step back quite a bit with nice views.
- The flat iron building has a one-story volume at the prowl that is essentially transparent. What I'm looking at here is something that you're kind of looking to do, if it's a single volume of a restaurant or retail, if that piece were very lightweight, almost transparent, you still have an elevation behind which should be treated as a primary façade. Whether you follow the true form of the property line or not, this

façade needs to be treated as a primary composition that happens to have a very light transparent piece below it.

- Point taken. I think we should look at it and I struggled specifically at this inside corner. I can see your point of bringing this façade across through here, how do I work with signage then? Do I have to look at a variance to go with a little more glazing, is it metal to try to lighten it up, to change the material from the brick to something lighter there, do I still look at a...
- If it's a beautiful building, you'll find a spot for signage. Don't think of this as an inside corner, think of this as an elevation that you've now clipped a light piece in front of. I'm talking big gesture. The mass of the building is broken up into so many colors and materials, it does lose the sense of what you initially talked about, is a volume with ins and outs, maybe it's more of a recess on the Sherman side to create the sense of a really big outdoor room on this upper level that people would celebrate, and thinking about on Sherman, not thinking so much about the outdoor rooms towards the prowl, but really celebrate that view to the park. And if you make that façade so beautiful, people would wonder why aren't we closing Sherman. Make them close it. Make it such a good space and consider putting your outdoor room on the first floor.
  - I agree because some of the discussion, if Sherman is closed, yes we would expand the retail right through here.
- What's the plan for the outlot pad site?
  - The long-term plan is we're looking at fulfilling the second part of the neighborhood plan with our future development.
  - (Wendt) One thing that's very important about that plan is that it's not approved. Right now it's in process and it will come back to this body for review. But to refer to it as the neighborhood plan is a misnomer at this point, it is merely in process.
- What is the potential for a commercial node out here with this space and what's existing, and what may exist. How can we see this in that broader context, not just your own parcel. That would be a piece we'd need to see when you come back.
  - Currently there is already commercial there.
- But talking about this with pedestrian connections and how this is a node, we need to see how this node works.
- I would agree with the staff report about the use of materials and the request to simplify the material palette. When you talked about this creative expression of volumes going in and out, it's almost lost with the mix of modern details and some more traditional ones that we see on a lot of projects. When I look at how the project you brought to us on John Nolen Drive is turning out, it has a nice expression of

how the retail is. It does have ups and downs but it's really cohesive, a little bit more cohesion of the composition would improve your concept. But as an overall volume I can see how you could do something really interesting without changing the footprint, but really taking it in one strong direction.

- The owner has requested "truth in advertising" to the modernist statement here. He wants to come in with more of the metal look, the red which appears both on the Sherman and Fordem entrances. Looking for even less of a traditional statement, more of a modern statement but even with the modern statement you can have traditional forms that function for the residential.
- Do you really need a vehicular entrance off of Sherman Avenue?
  - Yes we feel we need it because of the traffic volume, the neighborhood very much wants to keep the traffic on the Fordem side. But we may lose, depending on what becomes with the long-term of the neighborhood, with the EEPY Plan, we would lose this entry right here. So I need to keep this through here, but there is also street parking available here.
- You have the other street (McGuire) where a resident coming down Sherman Avenue could very easily take a right on McGuire and drive in on the Fordem side.
  - I think you would get strong resistance from the neighbors.
  - The folks that live up Sherman Avenue, one of the concerns about shutting down Sherman is that McGuire intersection is not an easy left given that there's a large building and with their landscaping and the way they're pushed up to the road, you cannot see down Fordem if you're looking to take a left there.
- So the neighbors prefer the Sherman Avenue? But they're also pushing to abandon Sherman Avenue?
  - No.
- The fact that you have parking on both sides makes it seem rather pedestrian unfriendly. Maybe there's only parking on one side that makes that less of a garage type setting.
- Maybe look at other buildings that feature that, like the Randy Bruce one on University Avenue.
  - I've heard well the concern of treating the entry and getting more of a design element there, Dawn's good comments there, and what I look for is in the notes that that advisory list could be put together in a way that can be worked at and we can come back in a successful manner.
- You might look at is there a way to use plants to separate the parking from the pedestrian area.
  - With this being up to about 15-feet through here, I can do lots of different things with texture and color.
- Mesh panels that could be tinted.
- More clarity would help.
- I think this is going to be challenging to do this one-story portion.

- One elevation.

(Wendt) One of the reasons this is here tonight is for the conditional use standards. Staff was concerned about the evolution of where the building was at and moving forward straight to Plan Commission, so we made a recommendation to have you guys look at it. I don't think the design team quite captured what we're getting at. The flat iron, Dawn you started to get to what our concern was. When one considers the urban form, right now we have an existing condition, we have a flat iron corner. There is a proposal that potentially Sherman might go away. The chances of that we don't know; most likely it's not going to happen any time soon given Engineering outlooks and things like that, based on budget. Maybe it'll happen in the future but very possibly it might not. So from an urban standpoint, how is this building addressing the corner? At the applicant, how they're looking at the clear glassy corner, or whatever it might be, staff has concern about what that end piece might be and how it relates to that corner from an urban form perspective. I don't think the building has quite gotten it yet. We aren't recommending a five-story elevation here by any means, but we don't feel it successfully addressed that corner the way that we always ask things. The façade rhythm, how the breaks are, this is something we see again and again. Are there too many breaks in this façade, is it too busy, can we simplify this? That relates directly to the material palette as well. The vehicular access, basically we haven't seen an elevation that ties those two together to see what that really looks like. I think it could work and be an interesting element, but as it is right now we basically have about a 60-foot parking bay and an additional pedestrian space that adds, so it's 65 or 75-feet, broken into three bays with columns coming down. How does that work on the façade, is there a better way to treat that, is it some sort of portal that goes through, getting to Cliff's point, does it even need to be there? That's another question that we're asking of you. That ties back to the pedestrian access, can we call attention to those access points, how does that work. What we're asking of you, from an advisory standpoint, what is your recommendation based on two conditional use standards on the bottom of this page: "When applying the above standards to any new construction of a building, the project creates an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing and intended character of the area." So what is the urban intended character of what you guys see this going forward? The NMX district statement of purpose ideas, from this body's perspective, what would your recommendation be on some of these concerns that we have?

There are a lot of issues that are not resolved and we would expect, as with any other informational matter, that it would come back trying to address some of those concerns that we have raised.

The applicant could request referral from their schedule from the 24<sup>th</sup> to go to the Plan Commission, and the next one would be the 21<sup>st</sup>. Maybe what could happen then is come back to this body so you can move forward with an affirmative advisory recommendation.

**ACTION:**

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** no formal action was taken by the Commission.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall rating for this project is 6.

August 17, 2015

CITY OF MADISON PLANNING DIV  
215 MLK JR BLVD  
PO BOX 2985  
MADISON WI 53701-2985

Planning & Development Staff:

I am writing to express my opposition to the 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue development, i.e. McKenzie Place, LLC, as proposed by John Fish.

Our Burrows Park neighborhood is presently zoned for a mixed use neighborhood with buildings not to exceed 3 stories. We want the zoning to remain as such, and no zoning variance or conditional use permit issued to allow a 5 story mixed use building.

The Emerson East - Eken Park Neighborhoods Plan includes our Burrows Park neighborhood. The plan goals "ensure that rehabilitation and new construction in the neighborhood is consistent with the character and integrity of the neighborhood. Retain the architectural scale of the neighborhood to reflect the predominant one to two story height of buildings, with the exception of some areas along East Washington Avenue."

The McKenzie Place plan with 5 stories does not take that goal into consideration, and it would be the only building of that magnitude along the entire Fordem/Sherman/North Sherman Avenue route.

The idea of having approximately 13,000 square feet of retail space in a small area plagued with traffic problems is impractical. Building farther North towards the Sherman/Fordem/North Sherman intersection will create more problems as visibility for traffic heading North is already limited by Tony's Litho building. Expanding that footprint would block more of the view to safely enter North Sherman. Piles of snow in the winter would make this extremely dangerous, and this is already an accident plagued intersection.

As far as the terrace is concerned, I can't imagine anyone wanting to sit out there on a chair with the traffic, the traffic noise and the traffic exhaust, especially with the city busses idling while waiting to turn North.

Please vote NO and do not allow a development that is out of scope with the neighborhood and the neighborhood development plan. Limit the height of the building to 3 stories as currently zoned.

Thank you.

Annie Johnson  
[REDACTED] Northfield Place  
Madison, WI 53704-4628



**Stouder, Heather**

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**From:** Shirley Aasen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2015 3:31 PM  
**To:** Stouder, Heather  
**Subject:** Fw: Letter to City Planning  
**Attachments:** City of Madison Planning Div.rtf

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Shirley Aasen  
**Address:** [REDACTED] Northfield Place  
Madison, WI 53704

**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2015

I am in agreement with the comments made by Annemarie Johnson in an e-mail which she sent to you earlier today.

## Stouder, Heather

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**From:** Axel Lorenzsonn [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2015 8:19 AM  
**To:** Stouder, Heather  
**Subject:** McKenzie Place

To Madison Plan Commission and Staff:

My wife and I oppose the construction of any building (McKenzie Place) higher than the three stories allowed by zoning, for the following reasons:

1. A four-story building would be out-of-character in this neighborhood of one and two story businesses and homes.
2. The 60-unit apartment building would be squeezed between busy Sherman and Fordem Avenues, and its vehicles would create traffic problems esp. during rush hours.
3. A four-story apartment building at this site would diminish the beauty of Burrows Park next to it. The park is a green entrance to Madison, is well-used, and contains a large, protected effigy mound.

Please visit this site before making your decisions. Thank you.

**Stouder, Heather**

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**From:** Terrence Wall [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2015 8:08 PM  
**To:** Stouder, Heather

I support Legistar ID 39483 (location 2107 - 2249 Sherman Ave). I live just a couple blocks from the development. Please forward my support to the city plan commission.

- Terrence Wall

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iphone - which means there may be formatting issues upon receipt.

August 17, 2015

CITY OF MADISON PLANNING DIV  
215 MLK JR BLVD  
PO BOX 2985  
MADISON WI 53701-2985

Planning & Development Staff:

I am writing to express my **opposition to approving a conditional use permit** for the 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue development, i.e. Mckenzie Place, LLC, as proposed by John Fish.

Our Burrows Park neighborhood is presently zoned for a mixed use neighborhood with buildings not to exceed 3 stories and a maximum of 40 ft. in height. We want the zoning to remain as such, with no zoning variance or conditional use permit issued to allow a 5-story/57 ft. mixed-use building.

The Emerson East - Eken Park Neighborhoods Plan includes our Burrows Park neighborhood. The current plan goals are to (1) ensure that rehabilitation and new construction in the neighborhood is consistent with the character and integrity of the neighborhood, and (2) retain the architectural scale of the neighborhood to reflect the predominant one to two story height of buildings, with the exception of some areas along East Washington Avenue.

The McKenzie Place plan with 5 stories (and over 17 ft. of the city guidelines of 40 ft.) does not take those goals into consideration, and it would be the only building of that magnitude along the entire Fordem/Sherman/North Sherman Avenue route. And more importantly, it will be the only building of that magnitude in the middle of single family housing facing a beautiful quiet park. Furthermore, once a 5-story/57 ft. building is put in the middle of this neighborhood, precedence will be set and other buildings could start to be built at the same height. This would then be the loss of the single family home environment which was the reason we in my community purchased our homes.

The idea of having approximately 13,000 square feet of retail space in a small area plagued with traffic problems is impractical. A taller building at the Sherman/Fordem/North Sherman intersection will create more problems since visibility for traffic heading North is already limited by Tony's Litho building which is only 2 stories high. Expanding that footprint would block more of the view to safely enter North Sherman. Piles of snow in the winter would make this extremely dangerous, and this is already an accident-plagued intersection. Adding all the extra parking needs and people will create a serious problem. This area cannot handle any more cars or parking. A traffic study needs to be completed to show the impact of adding retail and housing at the Fordem/Sherman intersection. This is not East Washington Ave. It is an area of

single-lane streets and single-family homes.

There are only 62 parking spots underground for 60 apartments and 23 surface parking spots. Given the number of tenants needing parking spaces AND retail needing parking spaces, this will not be adequate. The proposal states that there is street parking but in reality that is extremely limited. What will happen is that people will park along the park in front of people's homes that face the park. That is not acceptable!!!

I feel that Burrows Park which is directly impacted by this development proposal on the Sherman Street side is not like any other park. Each park in this city has a distinctive "energy" and purpose. George B. Burrows left his Baywood Property from Lake Mendota to Sherman Avenue to the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association "upon the express condition that they shall forever keep and maintain the same as a public park to be always called and known as the Burrows Park." This park has a restorative nature where people can go for shade, relaxing under the trees, wind surfing and sailing, kids playing soccer, walking, biking, even cross-country skiing. It is definitely one of the best places to watch the sunset. It has a lovely shelter where many people host parties or celebrations of life. It also has a most impressive Native American effigy mound which many people come to visit and reflect on the history of this piece of land. This park helps restore the soul which is needed in our fast-paced and stressful lives. We bought our homes here because of this quiet beauty. By adding so many more people increases environmental issues like air pollution, traffic, and noise.

As the governing body with the authority to approve conditional use permit, I am assuming you will be applying the generic guidelines for this neighborhood to see if the request meets the needs for the neighborhood it affects. This process should not just be a rubber-stamped approval just because it meets generic guidelines. Approval should be given only if the proposal meets the needs of and enhances the already existing beautiful neighborhood and environment. High density makes sense on East Washington, but not in the Burrows Park neighborhood!

**In summary: Please DO NOT approve the conditional use permit request and DO NOT allow a development that is out of scope with the neighborhood and the neighborhood development plan. Please limit the height of the building to 3 stories and 40 ft., as is currently zoned.**

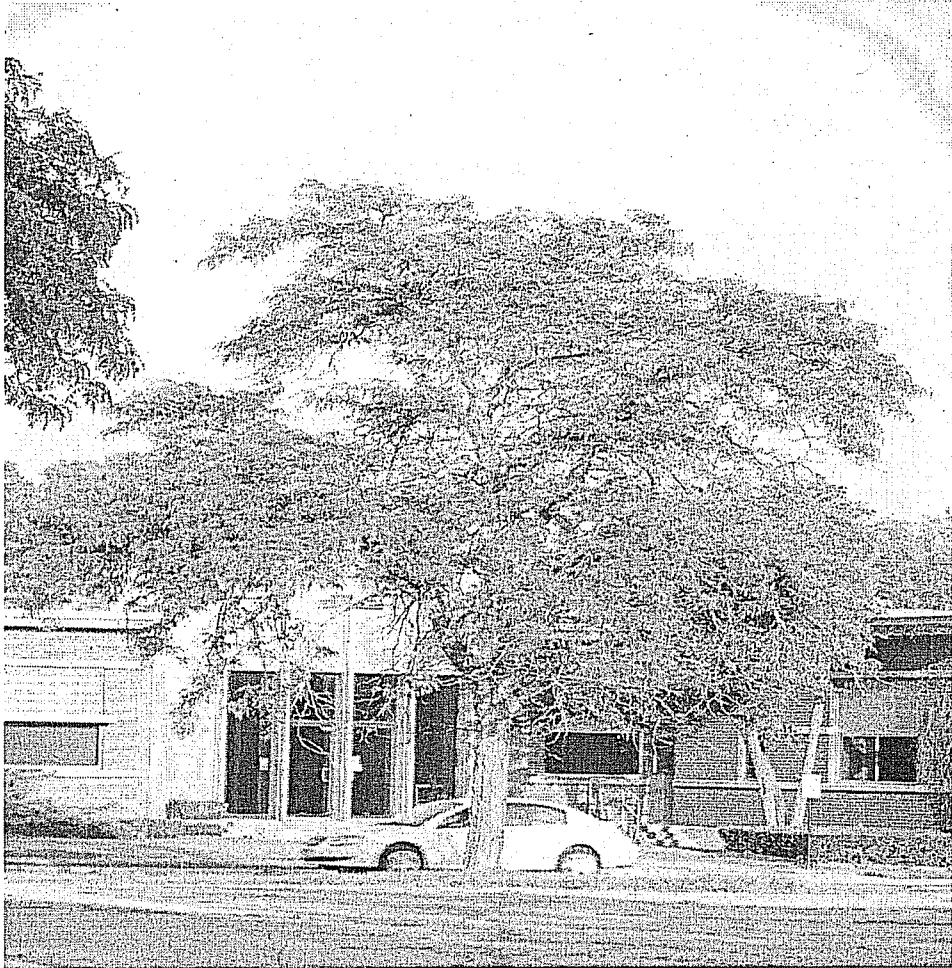
Thank you.

Jennifer Argelander  
[REDACTED] Erie Court  
Madison

PHOTOS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

View from Fish property with small tree, facing Webcrafters on Fordem. There are a few spots in front of Webcrafters for street parking but not enough to be used for the Fish proposal.

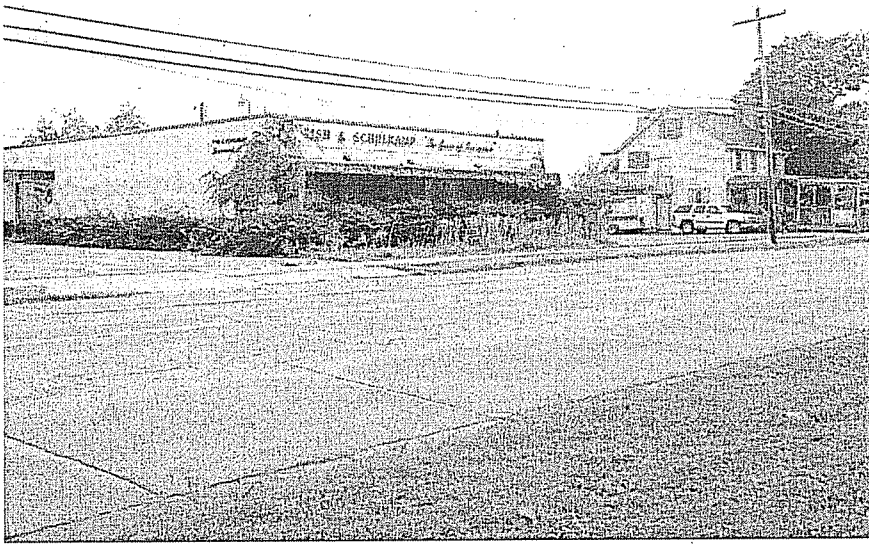
Can this tree be saved and/or moved to Burrows Park???



Two large trees in front of one of the buildings to be demolished in the middle of the Fish property . Wish these trees could be saved.



View of the Fish Insurance building next to Banzo Restaurant which is a single family home structure. Would look very awkward to have 5-story building next to Banzo. This side is facing Burrows Park.



View of Fish property and Banzo from the Park. The street parking is limited, in front of Banzo and only allowed at certain times.





View from the Fish property facing the Park, showing the single family homes along the Park. This is where folks may try parking if no parking on the property. In addition, these homes will be in full view of the proposed property.



Another view showing Banzo, the open sky, and side of Burrows Park, along Harbort Rd.



The 2-story empty retail building across the street from Tony's Litho on Fordem. There is parking that goes with this building. There is no street parking here.



Across the street from Tony's Litho looking at Northfield Place—all single family homes. Only street parking on one side on Northfield which the residents need to use.



From the corner of the triangle at Tony's Litho looking down North Sherman Avenue; there is no street parking along North Sherman. All structures are 2 story.



**Stouder, Heather**

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**From:** Vogel, Laura L (GE Healthcare) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2015 11:15 PM  
**To:** Stouder, Heather  
**Subject:** Comments on proposal for 2107 – 2249 Sherman Ave

Hi Heather,

Can you please share my comments with the Plan Commission. This relates to the August 24 meeting.

Thank you.

Laura

Members of the Madison Plan Commission:

I reviewed the proposal for the development at 2107 – 2249 Sherman Ave. and request that the Plan Commission **reject the conditional use request**. The Madison ordinance has a limitation of three floors and forty feet. The submitted proposal is nearly 17 feet taller than the current zoning limit. The tallest buildings in this area facing Sherman Ave. are only three stories; a five story structure would not be in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. One side of this development faces Burrows Park, which is a small 10 acre park on Lake Mendota, surrounded by one and two story single family homes.

I applaud the developer for submitting a proposal to improve this area of land and think his idea for a mixed use structure (apartments and commercial) will significantly enrich the neighborhood. However, I feel at five stories (4 complete floors plus a loft level) the current proposal would have a detrimental impact on the neighborhood.

A development that complies with the current city ordinance (no higher three floors and forty feet high) would be an enhancement to the neighborhood.

Laura Vogel  
[REDACTED] Bayside Drive  
Madison, WI 53704  
[REDACTED]

**Stouder, Heather**

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**From:** zivan vizer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 18, 2015 7:23 PM  
**To:** Stouder, Heather  
**Subject:** McKenzie Place

To Madison Plan Commission and Staff:

McKenzie Place should be three stories. Four stories would look stupid and stick out like a sore thumb.

Thank you,  
Zivan Vizer  
A concerned Madison resident

Nancy E. Thayer-Hart  
Harbort Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53704

August 18, 2015

To: City of Madison Plan Commission - Melissa Berger, Bradley Cantrell, Sheri Carter, Michael Heifetz, Steve King, Ken Opin, James Polewski, Maurice Sheppard, Ledell Zellers

Re: Conditional Use Request for 2107 - 2249 Sherman Avenue

Dear Plan Commission Members,

First, I would like to thank each of you for your service to our community. It indicates that you have a strong commitment to preserving the values and character that make Madison such a special place to live. My own desire to preserve the values and character of a unique and precious Madison neighborhood is what impels me to write to you.

Second, I would like to emphasize that I would support a thoughtful plan for reinvigorating the properties at 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue that meets the current zoning code restricting buildings to three floors or a maximum height of 40 feet. The plan you are being asked to approve is 42% higher than the permissible height!

*The City requires consideration, in each case, of [the] impact on neighboring land or public facilities, and of the public need for the particular use at a particular location.*

The Conditional Use requested for 2107 – 2249 Sherman Avenue fails to meet the vast majority of the required standards for conditional use. Since your approval of the request can only be granted if every standard is satisfied (zoning code 28 – 236 (6) (a)), I will focus on only a few so this letter does not become overly long.

The uses, values and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood for purposes already established will not be substantially impaired or diminished in any foreseeable manner.

The development site is surrounded by long-established traditional residential neighborhoods and a peaceful natural park. The height and mass of the proposed buildings will have an extremely negative impact on the uses, values and enjoyment of individual home owners as well as the many park users. Looking east from the park and from the homes on either side of the park, the view of beautiful sunrises will be blocked; homeowners on the east side of North Sherman will no longer have a view of the park or sunsets over the lake. The morning sun will no longer reach the windows of my home. The natural, peaceful environment of the park will be subjected to substantially increased traffic and noise, decreasing the value and enjoyment of our property. In addition, the park provides critical resting places to migrating birds which might be affected by the additional noise and congestion so close to the park.

The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.

By dumping exponentially more traffic onto the adjoining streets, which are already congested, and building right out to the sidewalks, the proposed buildings will endanger public safety and the general welfare of those who live, walk, or travel in the area. City staff has refused to conduct a traffic study and so cannot accurately inform you about the magnitude of existing traffic congestion so that you can assess how adding significant numbers of additional cars to the narrow streets will impact public safety.

Public interest in exceeding the height limits.

The proposed development is designed to benefit one person, without regard to its impact on anyone else. There is no public interest in exceeding the height limits. There is no demonstrated need for such a large building, and in fact there are plenty of apartment units nearby and there is unoccupied retail space all up and down Sherman Avenue. While the lure of tax revenue for the City may be presented as rationale, it is doubtful whether the revenue would be sufficient to cover the increased burden on schools, water and sewage utilities, roads, and the environment.

Please deny the conditional use request! You have the opportunity to preserve a gem of a neighborhood, a rare oasis in the city where residents and park users alike come to experience peaceful and natural surroundings. At a minimum, your decision should be delayed pending a traffic study, bird migration assessment, and submission to the Urban Design Commission to ensure that the final proposal meets the standard for sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

Nancy Thayer-Hart

P.S. You might be interested in knowing that we have the signatures of 72 people who oppose the size and magnitude of this one-size-fits-all urban infill plan.



CITY OF MADISON PLANNING DIV  
215 MLK JR BLVD  
PO BOX 2985  
MADISON, WI 53701

Dear Planning Commission:

I am writing to express my opposition to approving the Conditional Use request for the 2107-2249 Sherman Avenue development, i.e. McKenzie Place, LLC, as currently proposed. Those properties are currently zoned as neighborhood mixed use with buildings not to exceed 3 stories and 40 feet in height. The proposed development is significantly larger than those standards and not appropriate for this location.

The McKenzie Place plan is presented as 4 stories but it also includes three fifth story sections which house lofts for six of the apartments. This means portions of the building are almost 17 feet taller than the zoning for that location. The height and mass of the proposed building is not sensitive to the surrounding area of small businesses and single family houses. As a point of reference, the largest building in that area is the Clock Shop building at the corner of Sherman and Fordem. This proposed development would dwarf that 2 story building. It would also loom over Burrows Park, totally changing the atmosphere of that beautiful quiet park.

Adding 60 apartments plus retail space in this location will also create traffic and parking issues. Fordem/ North Sherman Avenue is already a busy street with traffic to and from the North Side and is the route used by multiple emergency vehicles. Cars related to that housing and retail will increase congestion and the likelihood of accidents. There is also a good chance that parking on the property will not be sufficient so overflow vehicles will crowd the surrounding streets.

A final note is that the current design is very "busy" with multiple surface materials and colors. When a building is approved for this location, it should have a more harmonious appearance to reflect the tranquil nature of the park it faces. The "back" of the building should also be attractive since that is what the residents on the other side of Fordem will see daily and what commuters will see as they drive to and from the North Side.

Thank you,

Michelle Martin  
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Madison