



Office of the Common Council

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March 25, 2019

Re: Agenda item #13 - 901-929 E. Washington Avenue; Urban Design Dist. 8; 6th Ald. Dist.: Consideration of a demolition permit to demolish commercial buildings at 945 E. Washington Avenue and 924 E. Main Street; consideration of a conditional use in the Traditional Employment (TE) District to allow construction of a building exceeding five stories and 68 feet in height, both to allow construction of an eleven-story, 257,200 square-foot office building and 693-stall parking garage along E. Washington Avenue; and consideration of an alteration to an approved conditional use for the approved hotel at 901 E. Washington Avenue to provide an amended parking plan.

Dear Members of the Plan Commission:

There is a lot to like about the redevelopment of the Mautz block so far. I am thrilled with the reuse of the historic Kleuter warehouse as Hotel Indigo and the new addition for the hotel. I appreciate that the developer applied for and received designation on the National Register of Historic Places for the Kleuter building. Last fall, I asked the Plan Commission to delay the demolition of 924 E. Main Street until an actual plan to redevelop the rest of the block was presented, and you agreed.

Only Phase 1 is before the Plan Commission tonight: the construction of an 11-story office building on E. Washington Avenue, an alteration to an approved conditional use that provides an amended parking plan, and the request to demolish 945 E. Washington Avenue and 924 E. Main Street. While I have a sentimental attachment to 945 E. Washington Avenue as the home to many City and neighborhood meetings that led to the changes we see in the Cap East District today, and the literal home to the towering architectural model of the Archipelago Village c2005, which sparked so much conversation, I accept its demolition because of its location on E. Washington Avenue. The developer has already received previous approval for the demolition of 910 E. Main Street to create the surface parking lot, which I also supported.

Phase 2 promises to fill in E. Main Street and develop the Madison Credit Union parcel on E. Washington Avenue, but there is no guarantee if/when this would happen. The parking arrangement with the Parking Utility, if approved, could last up to four years. The questions about potential residential uses in the employment district we have worked so long to nurture are unresolved, and there is no clear path to orderly development of residential units. You can make the argument that the economic value of the Phase 2 development is greater than the existing building, but the new development is hypothetical and so is its value. The 900 block of E. Main Street is waiting for a future that is uncertain.

I am concerned that Phase 1, as proposed, does not meet the goals for E. Main Street found in the recommendations of the Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan and that demolition of 924 E. Main Street is not consistent with those plans and our ordinances.

If 924 E. Main Street is demolished, two-thirds of the block will either be a surface parking lot or open space. While 924 E. Main Street is not a grand architectural specimen like the former Kleuter grocery

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warehouse, it is part of the cluster of historic brick industrial buildings that contribute to the character of E. Main Street. The preservation file for the building indicates that it was constructed as the National Biscuit Company Warehouse and was designed by Edward Tough and built by George Cnare and Sons. The Landmarks Commission provided Plan Commission with a formal advisory finding on the demolition as required by ordinance (the demolition was not "informally reviewed" as stated on page 7 of the staff report). Landmarks said that the building has historic value related to the vernacular context of Madison's built environment as the work of a known architect, but that the building itself is not historically, architecturally or culturally significant. However, our adopted plans say otherwise, and the Landmarks Commission was not asked to review the adopted plans when we made our advisory findings.

The E. Washington Avenue BUILD-Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan

(http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Capitol_Gateway_Corridor_Plan.pdf) clearly mentions standards and guidelines for E. Main Street:

1. E. MAIN STREET Blair to Ingersoll Streets - This is a working street dominated by utilities, industrial functions, and parking lots while being the entry and access to many small and established businesses. However, the Corridor should become more pedestrian friendly as a strong link to downtown and retain its cluster of historic industrial brick buildings. East Main Street facades should include pedestrian entries, but large, intensive parking and loading areas should be concealed with access directed to the north-south side streets, where possible. (see p. 23, attached)
2. SPECIFIC URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS Segment 2 #1 Preservation of industrial era historic structures. (see p. 25, attached)

I am disappointed the staff report does not mention that the fate of E. Main Street is unknown.

You received a letter from the Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) in your packet. MNA's letter supports the retention of the façade of 924 E. Main Street as a way to help preserve the industrial character the Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan says we care about. While I would prefer retaining and reusing the entire building, I would support preserving the façade. I am in general support of MNA's recommendations regarding transportation and traffic management, green roofs, nonpolluting light, and non-reflective and bird-friendly glass.

I request the Plan Commission add a condition to incorporate the façade of 924 E. Main Street into the development proposal and delete Conditional Use standard #11, "Recommend that any existing façades not be salvaged, as it will impact and limit the design possibilities to develop the site. [Staff/Author's Note: No existing façades are shown to be preserved in the Plan Commission plan sets.]"

In addition, I request a condition requiring bird-friendly and glare-resistant glass be incorporated into the building.

Thank you for considering my comments and requests.

Sincerely,



Marsha Rummel
Alderpersn, Sixth District

enc: Page 23, E. Washington Avenue BUILD-Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan
Page 25, E. Washington Avenue BUILD-Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan



Figure 29: East Washington Avenue Character

In order to achieve a consistent and cohesive appearance along East Washington Avenue, as well as a diverse and interesting Avenue environment, some urban design elements should be consistent and others should vary.

Unifying Elements

- Uniform setbacks
- Limited palette of building materials
- Consistent Streetscape design and amenities
- Focused view of the Capitol
- Lower street level facade heights
- Gateway features
- Signage types and locations

Elements Adding Variety

- Architectural styles
- Overall building heights (within defined limits)
- Areas of different focus (i.e., river orientation, neighborhood orientation)
- Areas of different scale (i.e., neighborhood scale, Corridor center scale, park orientation)

EAST MAIN STREET

Blair to Ingersoll Streets - This is a working street dominated by utilities, industrial functions, and parking lots while being the entry and access to many small and established businesses. However, the Corridor should become more pedestrian friendly as a strong link to downtown and retain its cluster of historic industrial brick buildings. East Main Street facades should include pedestrian entries, but large, intensive parking and loading areas should be concealed with access directed to the north-south side streets, where possible.

Dickinson Street to the Yahara River - This segment has a mix of vacant buildings, industrial businesses, parking lots, and new residential development. While the area is currently underutilized it should be revitalized as an active street with pedestrian improvements and on-street parking serving both the new residential on the south and the reuse of historic buildings on the north. Although non-residential uses are recommended for the north side of the street, larger buildings and more intensive development should be concentrated along the East Washington Avenue frontage and step down toward the East Main Street frontage.

Yahara River to North First Street - This segment has, and should continue to have, a residential character. Traffic should be kept to low volumes and low speed; development/redevelopment on the north side should be concentrated toward East Washington Avenue and away from the existing homes on the south side of East Main Street.

EAST MIFFLIN STREET

Blair to Ingersoll Streets - This segment is characterized by: commercial and light industrial uses; a number of public spaces including Breese Stevens Field, Reynolds Field, and Lapham School; and two block faces of residential uses. Future plans for this area should include a better defined streetscape at a walkable, pedestrian scale with on-street parking. The area should remain mixed use with employment, residential and public uses connected by the existing community spaces.

Ingersoll to Dickinson Streets - This is primarily a single-family residential area with tree-lined streets. This area should remain a residential area with on-street parking and be protected against traffic effects from development along East Washington Avenue.

YAHARA RIVER & THORNTON STREET

The Yahara River frontage and Thornton Street corridor currently contains uses that do not relate to the river or the riverfront. This corridor should become an active, recreation and pedestrian area, characterized by new residential and mixed-use/retail development along the Parkway. New development should be cohesive with the new Yahara River bridge pathways and underpass and should tie into the riverfront. New development should provide adequate setbacks and maintain a low-scale frontage on Thornton to provide solar access along the Parkway. All structures fronting on Burr Jones and the river should have transparent and articulated facades with visible activity and functions that interact with the riverfront.

SPECIFIC URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

EAST WASHINGTON AVENUE CAPITOL GATEWAY CORRIDOR

February 2006

