



Report of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee

January 2014

January 14, 2014

City of Madison

Report of the Lamp House Ad Hoc Plan Committee

Adopted by the City of Madison Common Council on _____ (Resolution # 32645)

Committee members:

Nan Fey, Chairperson
Anna Andrzejewski, Vice Chairperson
Richard Arnesen
Alder Denise DeMarb
William Gates
Henry Lufler (*resigned 12-10-13*)
David Mollenhoff
Alder Michael Verveer

City of Madison

Paul R. Soglin, Mayor
Steven R. Cover, Director, Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development
Katherine Cornwell, Director, Planning Division

Planning Division Project Staff

Rebecca Cnare, Urban Design Planner, Project Manager
Bill Fruhling, Principal Planner
Amy Scanlon, Preservation Planner
Tim Parks, Planner



Process

Recognizing that previous planning efforts in the area had not adequately considered the Lamp House as a historic and cultural community asset, in September 2013, the Mayor and the Common Council created the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee. Six citizen members (consisting of persons with significant knowledge about Frank Lloyd Wright, architecture, and/or cultural resources, downtown development knowledge, and neighborhood residents) and two Common Council members were appointed to advise the Plan Commission and the Common Council about an appropriate vision and special area plan for this important heritage block (Legistar # 31386). The Committee was expected to complete its work as quickly as possible. The Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Committee held 7 meetings as follows:

October 22, 2013	Orientation and organization. General issues discussion.
October 28, 2103	Tour of the block and the Lamp House site.
November 12, 2013	Public design workshop.
November 26, 2013	Discussion of results from public design workshop (Legistar #32253); Framework discussion to begin formulation of plan recommendations 3-D modeling (Legistar #32252).
December 10, 2103	Continued discussion from previous meeting Additional 3-D modeling (Legistar #32252).
December 17, 2013	Formulation of plan recommendations (Legistar #32252) .
January 14, 2014	Finalize recommendations and report.

Lamp House Architectural Significance

The significance of Frank Lloyd Wright's Madison designs

Few cities have a more potent Frank Lloyd Wright legacy than Madison, Wisconsin. The architect is arguably the most famous person born in Wisconsin and the most celebrated architect of the twentieth century, and Madison is his hometown. In the Madison area, Wright designed 32 buildings, and they spanned nearly every category undertaken during his independent architectural practice, 1893 to 1959. Counting Monona Terrace, 12 were built and 9 still stand.¹ The potential of these buildings for heritage tourism could be substantial.

The architectural importance of Frank Lloyd Wright's Lamp House

The Robert M. Lamp house, constructed in 1903, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a locally designated landmark². While the Lamp House is one of Wright's most important surviving pre WWI structures³ and is Wright's earliest surviving work in Madison, it is also Wright's most personal work in the City; Lamp and Wright were best friends from the time they met as children in the 1870s until Lamp's death in 1916.

The building was sited and designed to optimize Lamp's views of the capitol and Lakes Monona and Mendota and provide a suburban-like experience despite its placement mid-block and downtown. Lamp desired to watch sailboat races on the lakes so Wright added fill to increase the elevation of the highest point of the block which was already one of the highest points on the Isthmus, raised the basement well above grade level, and added a roof garden.

The house is ideally situated between Wright's earlier and more mature work. The compact and affordable floor plan proved popular with middle-class Americans; it was featured in *Ladies Home Journal* in 1907 and has been copied thousands of times since. The roof garden with its full pergola—a Japanese-influenced framework for vines and plants—illustrates Wright's interest in Japanese architecture and allows Wright to integrate the entire landscape including the lake views, the skies, and the constellations. The home is one of Wright's earliest experiments with more abstract shapes.

1 See Paul Sprague (ed.), *Frank Lloyd Wright and Madison: Eight Decades of Artistic and Social Interaction*, (Madison, Wisconsin: Elvehjem Museum of Art, 1990), pp. v, 1-7.

2 Jack Holzhrueter, "Lamp House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1976; and Jack Holzhrueter, "Lamp House," City of Madison Landmarks Commission Nomination Form, 1975.

3 See Jack Holzhrueter, "Lamp House History Outline," a paper distributed to the committee on October 22, 2013, pp. 2-3; and Jack Holzhrueter, "Wright's Designs for Robert Lamp," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 72 (Winter, 1988-1989), pp. 83-125.

Significant Characteristics of the Block

This block has the following significant characteristics:

A. Frank Lloyd Wright designed building in downtown Madison



The Lamp House is located at 22 North Butler Street, in the middle of a block that is bounded by North Webster, East Mifflin and North Butler Streets, and East Washington Avenue. The building's location was selected by Wright and the landscape in the center of the block was designed by him. This downtown location is only one block from the Capitol Square.

B. Existing context



Sanborn fire insurance maps are available from several years both before and after the construction of the Lamp House. These maps show the evolution of the parcel configuration, common building size, and relationships of adjacent building footprints. Except for the Odessa apartment building (2002), the buildings on this block are largely as they existed when the Lamp House was constructed in 1903. The Lamp House is highlighted on the maps above. The 2013* map is an updated version of the 1951 map, altered to show the addition of the Odessa apartment building.

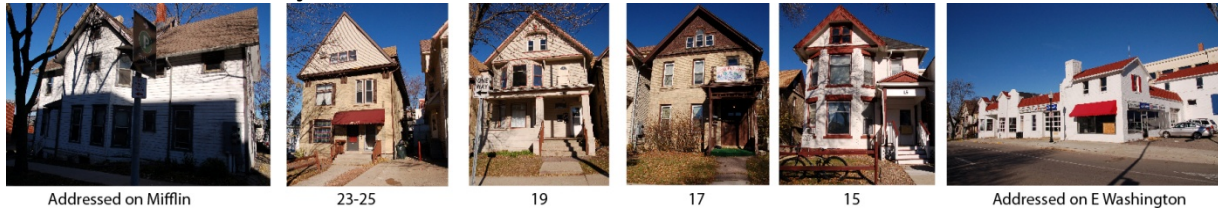
Of particular interest, the building currently located at 18 North Butler was moved to allow the construction of the Lamp House and create the entrance view we see today.

These photos show the existing commercial character of the East Washington Avenue block face and the residential character of the North Webster, East Mifflin and North Butler Street block faces.

East Washington Avenue Façades



North Webster Street Façades



East Mifflin Street Façades



North Butler Street Façades

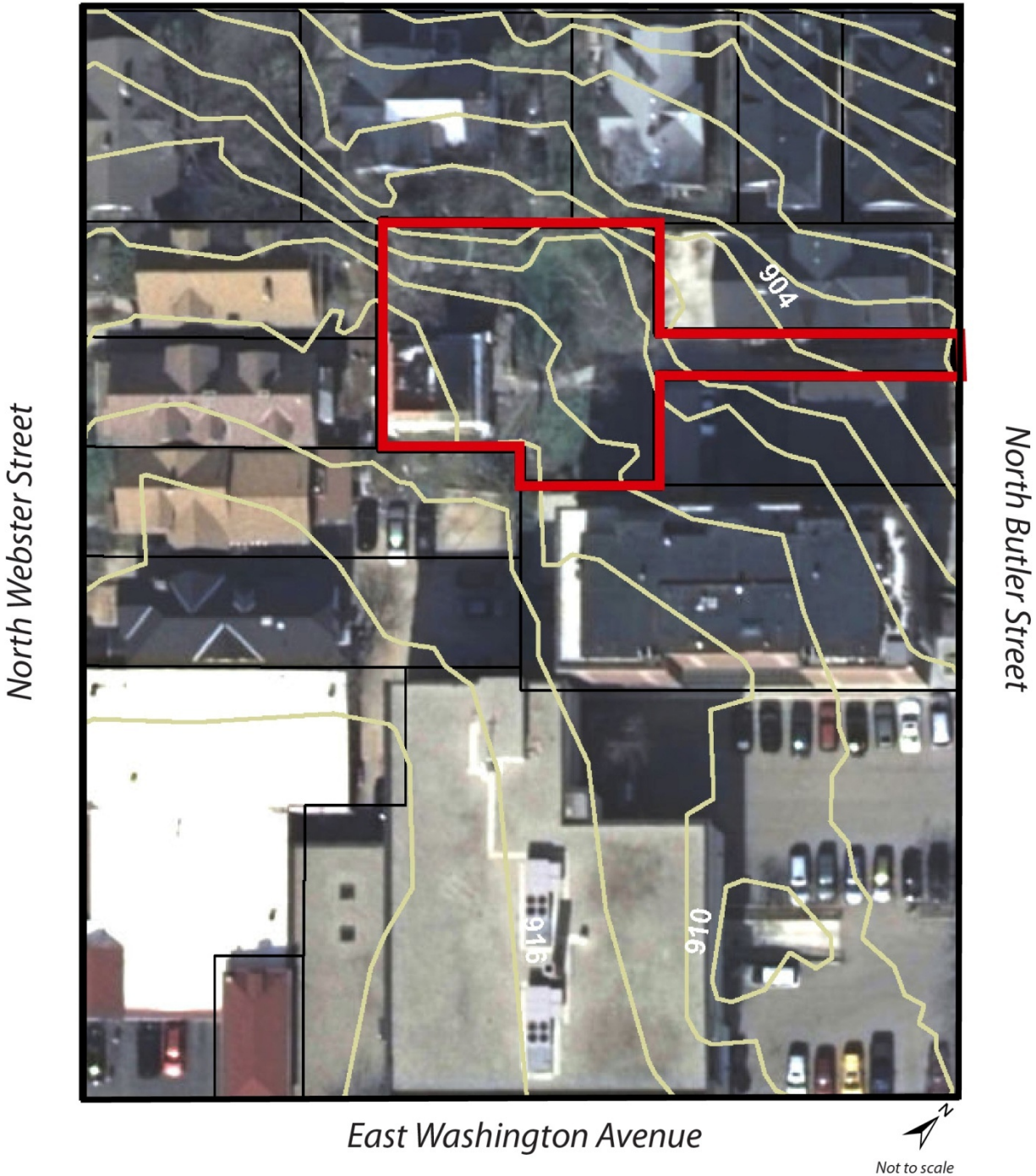


This map illustrates the locations of all of the existing buildings on the block. The Lamp House parcel is outlined in red.



C. Topography

East Mifflin Street



This map shows the Lamp House parcel in red and two-foot contour lines across the entire block. It illustrates how Frank Lloyd Wright modified the topography and added fill to create an elevated platform for the Lamp House.

Priority Issues

During the process, a number of significant issues emerged that were considered by the Committee. The initial issues list was generated during the design workshop, with the highest priority issues listed below (the unedited results can be found attached at Legistar #32253):

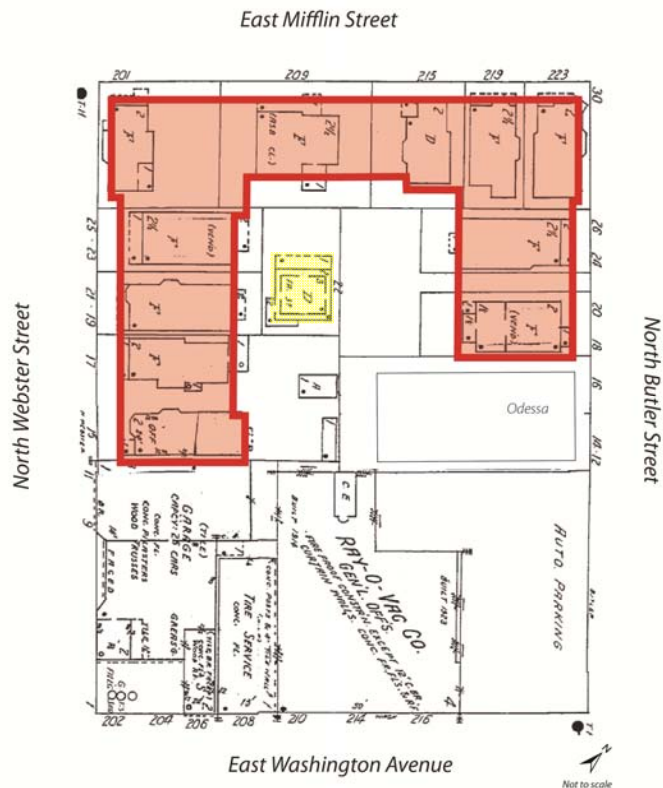
- How can redevelopment enhance and revitalize the Lamp House?
- The economic value of development including surrounding area.
- Need a plan to preserve the historic character of the block and context.
- Perception of scale for new development from the street.
- Maintain existing views to the Lamp House (North Butler and East Mifflin are priorities).
- Consider the Lamp House as a cultural object.

Following is an overview of the Committee's exploration of these, and other, issues.



Base Model

An interactive, scaled base model of the existing block was created to understand different preservation and redevelopment approaches. This model was used throughout the process to test different development scenarios, views, and effects of shadows.



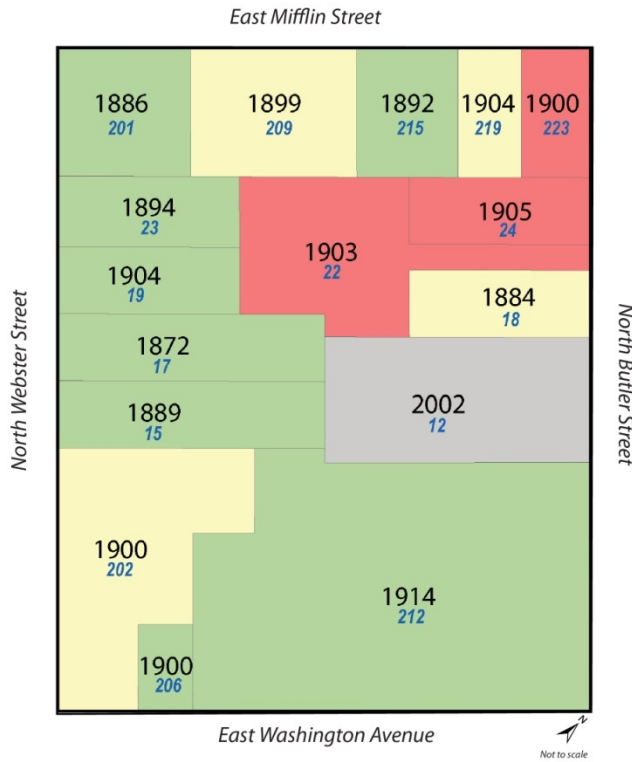
Outdoor Room

The Committee considered the historical relevance of the entire Lamp House site. The interface between the site and the adjacent parcels — particularly the location and design of the rear façades of the structures — was of critical importance.

The rear walls of the existing adjacent buildings create an enclosure or “outdoor room” that the Lamp House sits within. This map illustrates the outdoor room concept overlaid on the 1951 Sanborn fire insurance map updated with the Odessa apartment building, built in 2002.

Significant Historic Resources

The Committee also considered the historic context of the block which remains a rare downtown enclave of late 19th and early 20th century structures. At the Committee’s request, the relative significance of each property was quickly researched by the City’s Preservation Planner.⁴ This initial research was based on the level of architectural integrity and/or social history associated with each building and its property, as determined by exterior building surveys and the review of existing, but incomplete, building records and preservation files and does not suggest a final determination of historic significance.



This map shows a concentration of the more historically significant properties in the quadrant of the block closer to the intersection of East Mifflin and North Butler Streets. It illustrates the remaining historical context of the Lamp House site.

4 Planning Division Report regarding the significance of historic resources of block 109, December 10, 2013 (Legistar #32252)



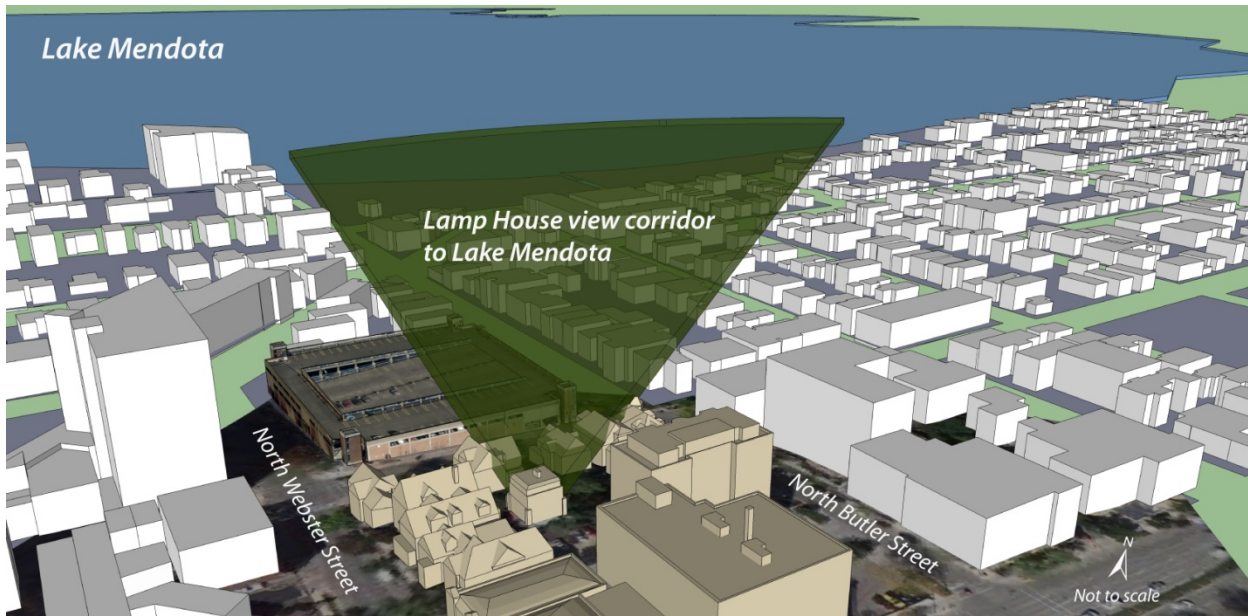
Public Views to the Lamp House

The Lamp House’s location in the middle of the block provides very limited views to the house from public property, and the Committee studied and prioritized each of them. This illustration shows the extent of views from the street towards the Lamp House.

It was the intention of the architect to locate the house on the highest point of the site to provide views outward, but also to provide a secluded location to buffer the home from the dense urban environment.

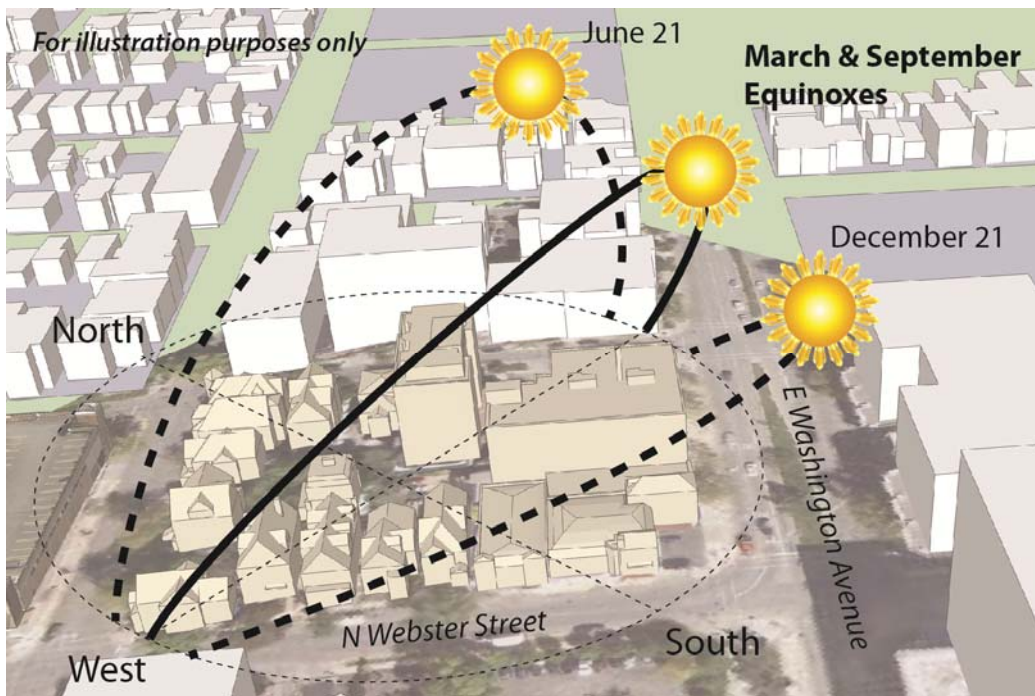


These two East Mifflin Street views into the Lamp House site provide public glimpses of the building from the sidewalk.



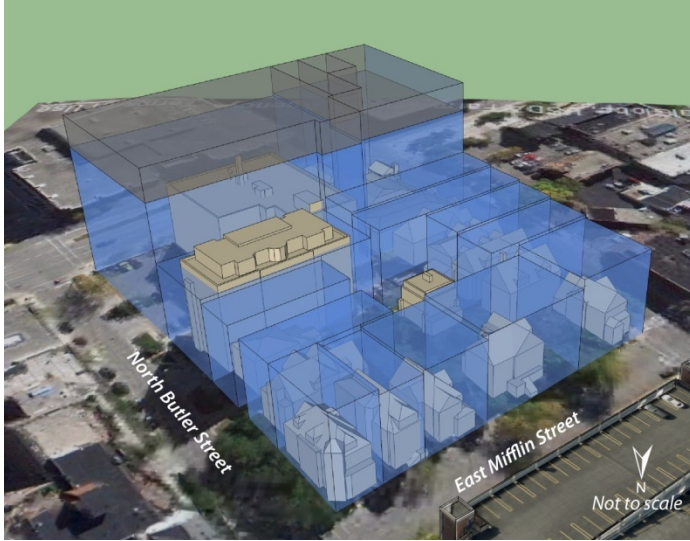
Views to Lake Mendota

Providing a view to the lakes was one of the fundamental reasons for the siting of the Lamp House. The Committee considered the importance of the remaining lake views relative to the historic context of the site, and evaluated the current view corridors.



Access to Sunlight

To fully understand the impacts of potential development on the amount of sunlight reaching the Lamp House rooftop, the Committee studied the shadow impacts of different redevelopment scenarios for other properties on the block. While the Committee reviewed numerous lighting conditions, there was intentional focus on the shadows created during the equinoxes as a measure of the average amount of sunlight that falls on the block throughout the year.



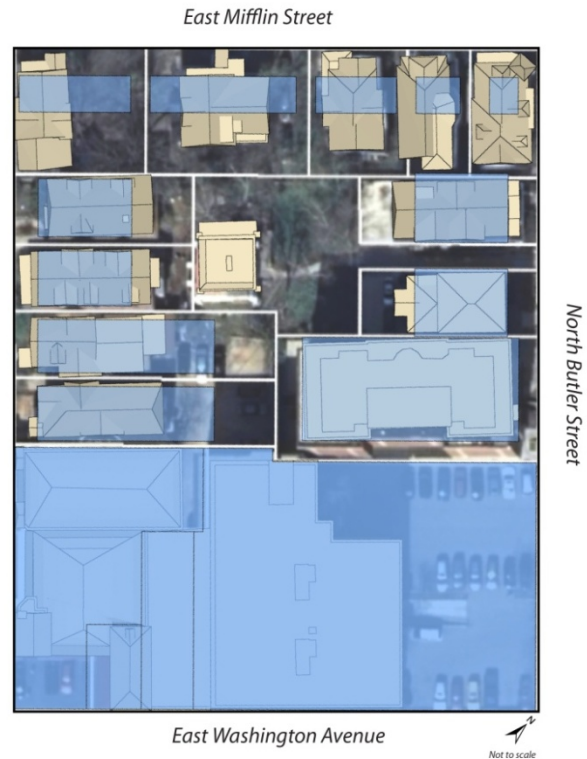
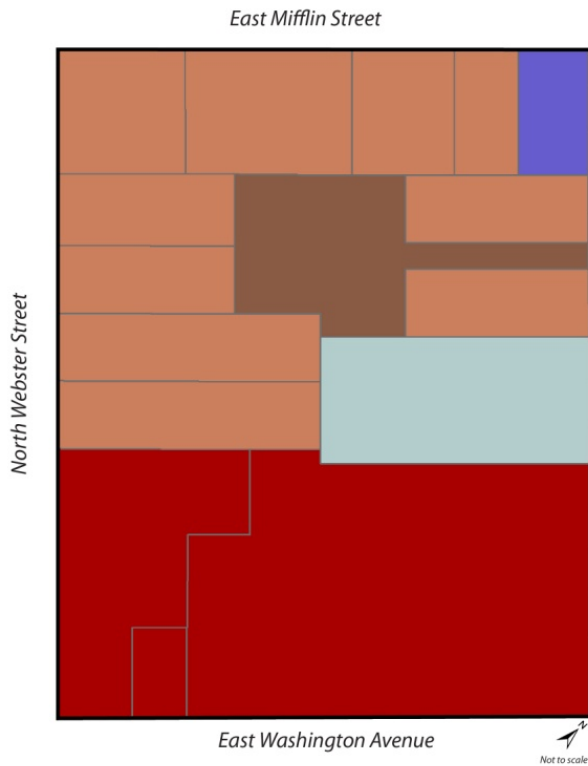
Maximum Building Heights Allowed

When the maximum building heights permitted by the Zoning Code were overlaid in blue and grey, the results suggested a capacity for a substantial amount of new development.

The East Washington Avenue block face illustrates 8 stories in blue, plus 2 potential stories in grey, assuming a commercial floor-to-floor height of 12 feet. The remainder of the block illustrates 6 stories, assuming a residential floor-to-floor height of 10 feet.

Buildable Area from Current Zoning

When front and rear yard setbacks required by current zoning (lower left map) are applied to the block, the maximum building area footprint (shown in blue, at lower right) is extremely limited due to the shallowness of the lots.



- ZONING**
- Downtown Core (DC)
 - Downtown Residential 1 (DR-1)
 - Downtown Residential 1 Historic-Landmark (DR1-HIS-L)
 - Planned District (PD)
 - Urban Office Residential (UOR)

Vision

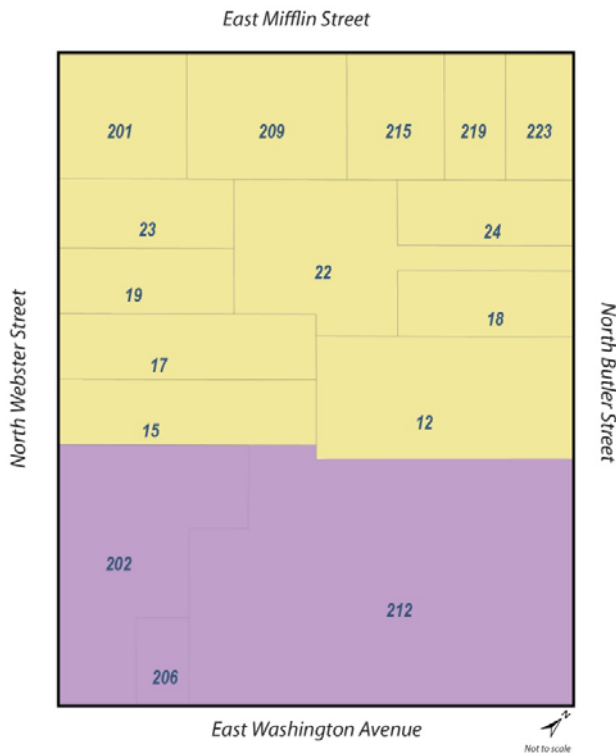
After considering a broad range of issues, analyzing and understanding the historical context and current conditions, the Committee discussed its collective goals and values to articulate a vision for the block, which is:

The Lamp House Block will be a thoughtful and vibrant built environment that:

- 1) Balances historic preservation and economic development values by encouraging appropriate development around the Lamp House; and
- 2) Recognizes the potential economic value of heritage tourism⁵ for the Lamp House when accessible to the public; and
- 3) Preserves the residential character of the area immediately around the Lamp House by retaining the compatible residential scale and feel of surrounding buildings; and
- 4) Protects Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Lamp House on its original site, including associated views to the house from the street and from the house to Lake Mendota, as well as the "outdoor room" created around the house by its distance from the surrounding buildings.

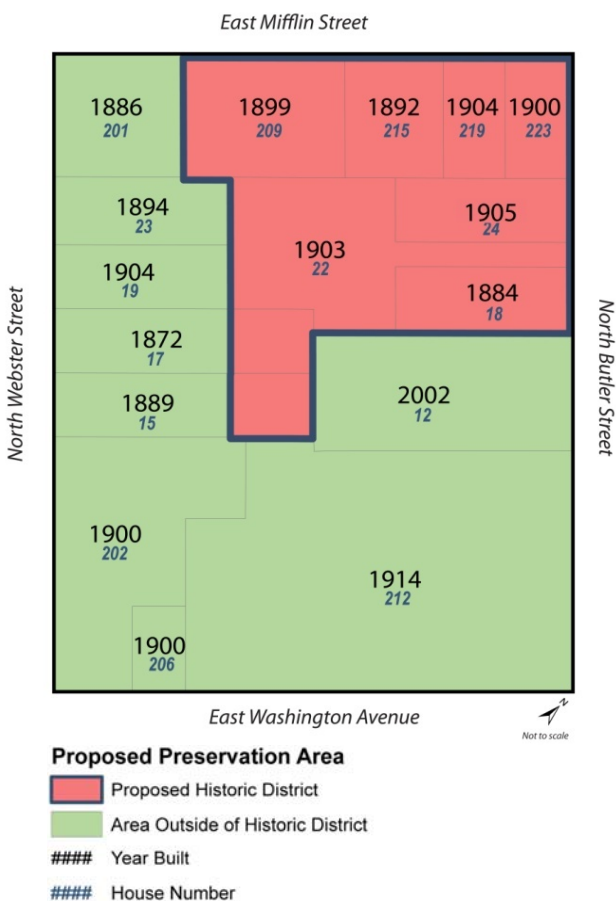
5 The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United State defines heritage tourism as: Travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.

Recommendations



A. Land Use

The recommendations for land uses on the block remain unchanged from the adopted 2012 Downtown Plan. Commercial and mixed-uses are recommended for the East Washington Avenue block face, and residential uses are recommended for the remainder of the block.



B. Preservation

The Lamp House is the historic centerpiece of the block and should not be moved. The historic context of the Lamp House should also be preserved while allowing for potential redevelopment around it. This could be accomplished by the creation of a small historic district that focuses on the most significant cultural resources on the block.

Areas in red, as shown, have the highest potential for constituting a small historic district. Areas in green may indicate potential redevelopment opportunities on the block. The creation of both a National Register Historic District and a Local Historic District would provide tax credit opportunities for rehabilitation and restoration, as well as the protections offered by local district designation.

In addition, the preservation of these historic resources could help to support a growing heritage tourism industry that provides significant economic opportunities for areas with concentrations of historic and cultural resources.

C. Preserve Views to the Lamp House

There are currently four direct views to the Lamp House from the street. These view corridors provide opportunities for the public to see the house and are important in helping visitors and passersby understand the Lamp House's unique context. These views have different priorities as described below.

The yellow volume within the model of the block illustrates the existing view corridors into the Lamp House from the street.



View 1: North Butler Street

The most important view to maintain is from North Butler Street. This view was created by the architect when he moved and altered the building at 18 North Butler to make room on the site for the Lamp House.



North Butler Street Lamp House Entrance View

Views 2 & 3: East Mifflin Street

There are two different views from East Mifflin Street as shown on page 10. View 2, the easternmost view, is both a street view into the side yard of the house and also helps frame the view to Lake Mendota from all levels of the Lamp House.



This East Mifflin Street View from the parcel illustrates views in and out of the parcel at ground level.

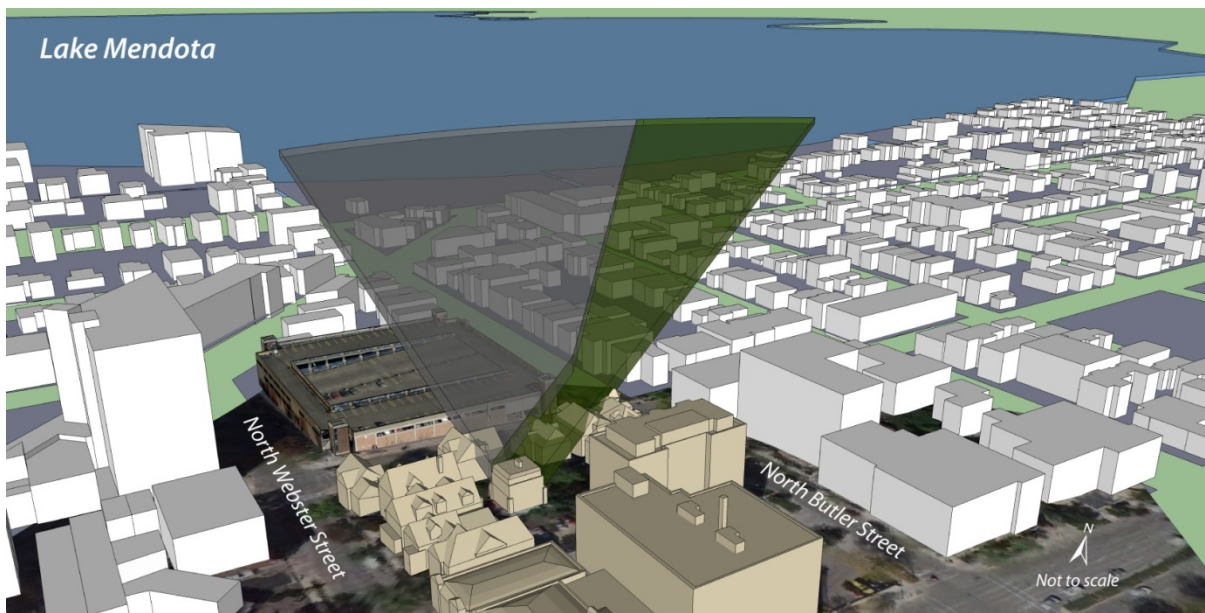
View 3, the westernmost view, is one of the less obstructed views from the street into the site. It is important to maintain these two views, although their precise location is less critical, and they could shift slightly.

View 4: North Webster Street

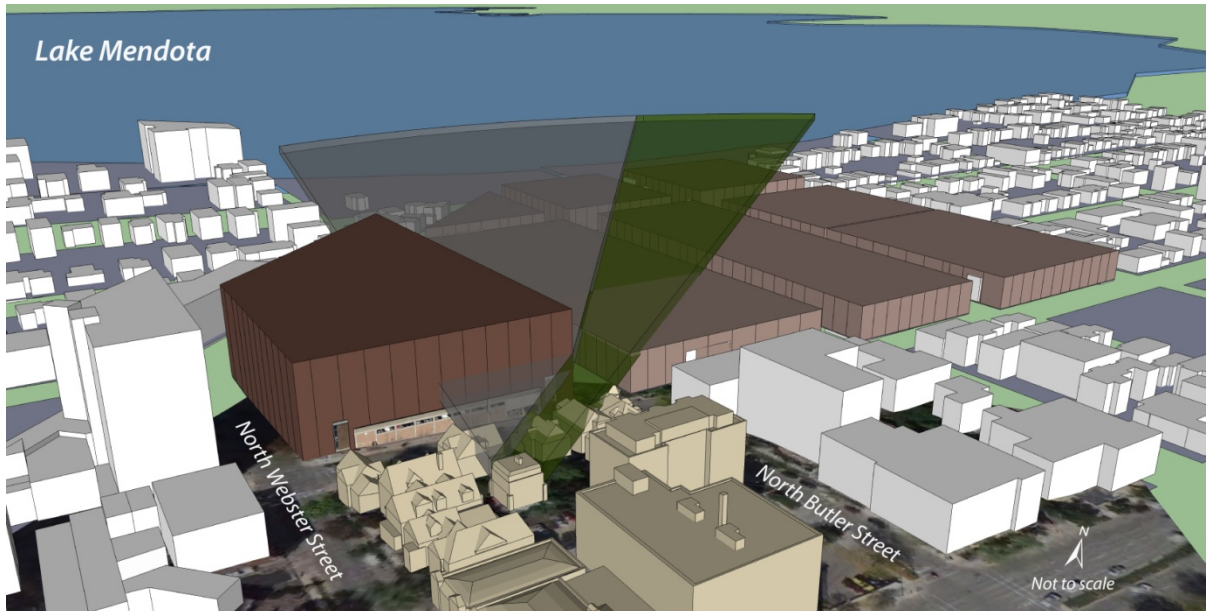
There is currently a very limited view between two houses into the backyard of the Lamp House. This view is less about offering a view of the house, and more about providing breaks between the surrounding buildings, and to allow for sunlight to reach the interior of the block. A street view or views along this block face should be encouraged to remain in some form, but not be required.

D. Preserve Views from the Lamp House towards Lake Mendota

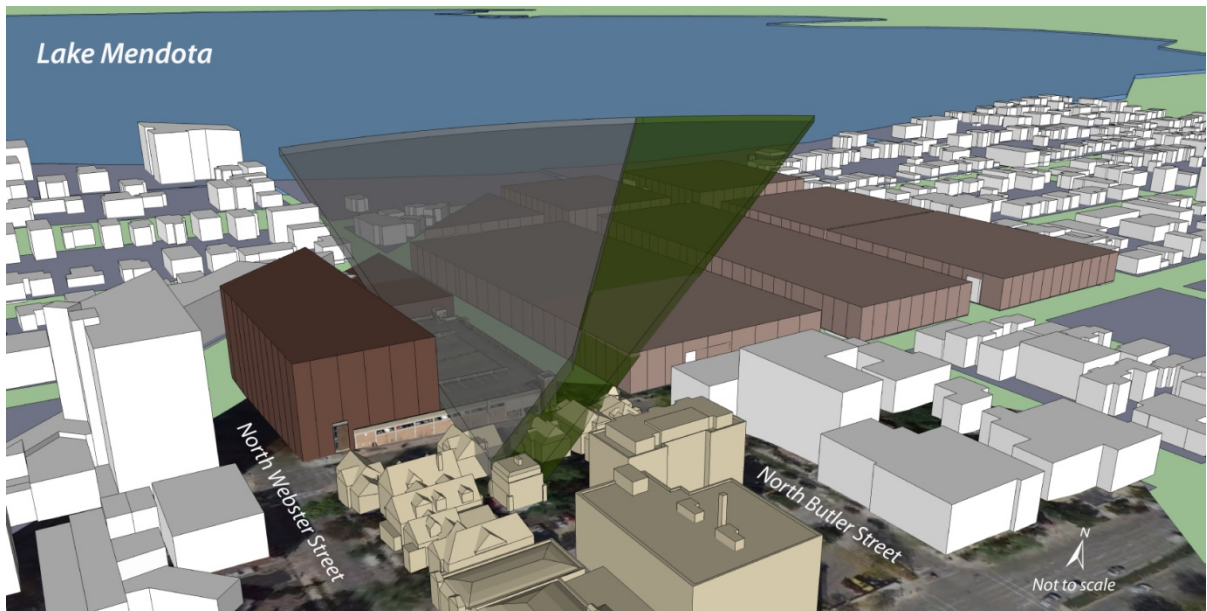
The views from the Lamp House are an important part of the home's design and history. While views of Lake Monona and the Capitol Building are no longer visible, views to Lake Mendota remain, and should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. The illustration below shows the existing views from the house over the Capitol North parking garage in gray, and views over the James Madison Park Neighborhood in green.



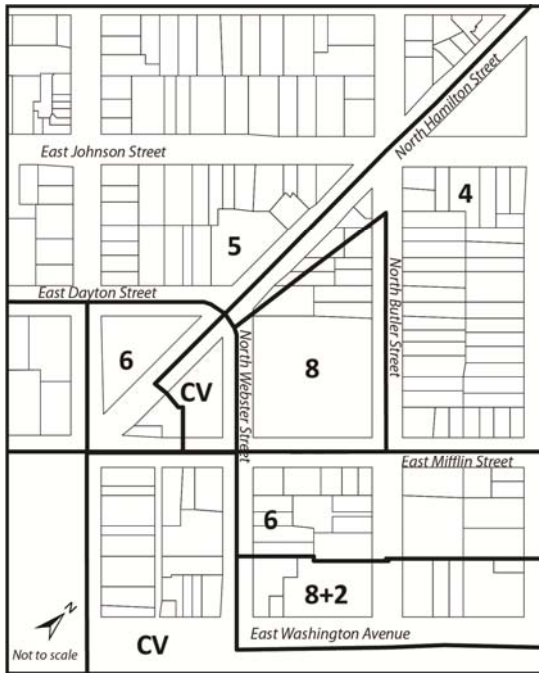
The diagram below shows the impact on views of Lake Mendota if redevelopment occurs at the maximum building heights currently allowed by zoning. The diagram below shows the viewshed corridor in comparison to the zoning code maximum height requirements. The Capitol North parking garage is shown at eight stories (88 feet) and significantly reduces the lake views from the house, while the James Madison Park Neighborhood, shown at four stories (44 feet), has little or no effect on these lake views.



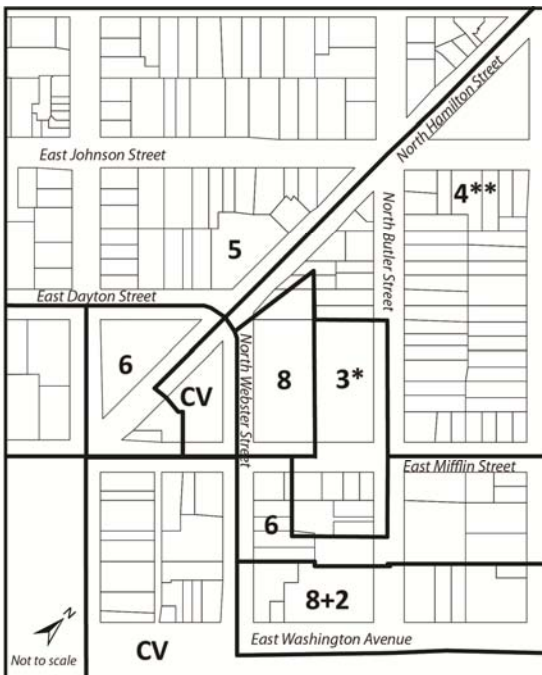
The illustration below shows that the effect of development on lake views could be greatly reduced if the eight story maximum height is limited to the North Webster Street facing half of the parking garage block directly north of the Lamp House.



Recommended Maximum Height Map to Preserve Lake Mendota Views



Existing Maximum Heights



Recommended Maximum Heights

Maximum Building Heights

- Maximum Number of Stories

CV - Capitol View Preservation Limit

The upper map illustrates the recommended maximum building heights in the Downtown Plan as adopted in 2012. The lower map illustrates the recommended changes to the maximum building heights in this small area to preserve views of Lake Mendota from the Lamp House.

Recommended changes to allowed maximum heights:

Lamp House Block

While protection of views could be addressed by a local historic district, any new development on the portion of the Lamp House block indicated with a 3* should be limited to a maximum of 3 stories not to exceed the height (in feet) of the peak of the existing structures.

Capitol North Parking Garage Block

Redevelopment on the block located directly to the north of the Lamp House block has the potential for some of the greatest impacts on existing Lake Mendota views. Three changes have been proposed; the 8-story maximum has been limited to the western half of the block, the area indicated with a 3* should be limited to a maximum of 3 stories not to exceed the height (in feet) of the existing structure, and the northern portion has been reduced to 4** stories to match the rest of the James Madison Park Neighborhood.

*James Madison Park Neighborhood (4**)*

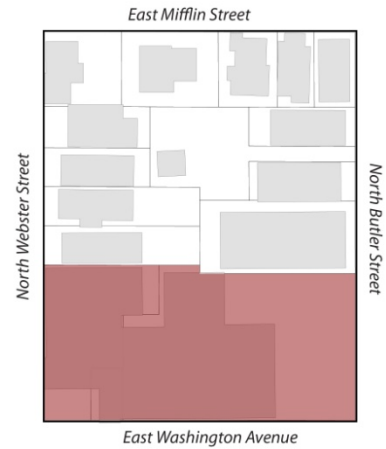
Any proposals for buildings above 4 stories in the James Madison Park Neighborhood that lie within the Lamp House's Lake Mendota viewshed should be studied for their impact on the lake views from the house.

E. Redevelopment on East Washington Avenue and North Webster Street Block Faces

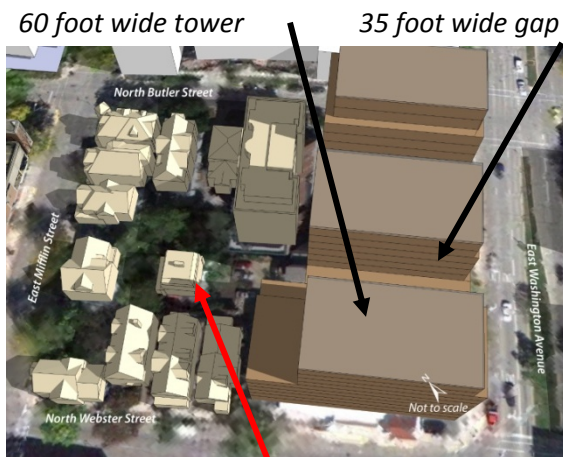
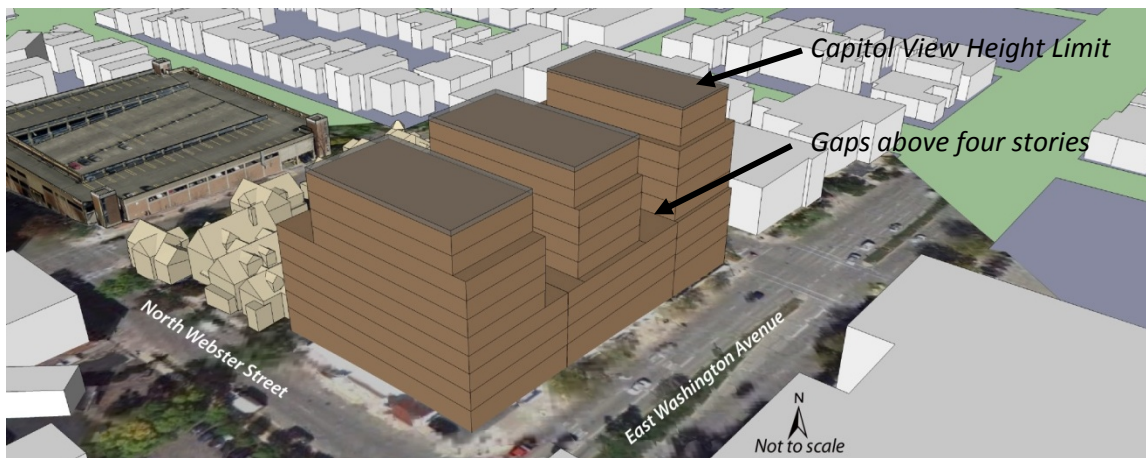
The committee recommends that redevelopment on the East Washington Avenue and North Webster Street frontages could be acceptable within the parameters described below.

East Washington Ave Block Face

- No change in land use recommendations from Downtown Plan (Downtown Core).
- No change in maximum building height from Downtown Plan/Zoning Code (8 stories with potential for 2 additional stories).
- Any building height above 4 stories should require a shadow study to ensure meaningful sunlight reaches the Lamp House rooftop at the equinoxes. Design characteristics to achieve an adequate amount of sunlight may include, but are not limited to, setbacks, stepbacks and gaps between building masses.



These illustrations of the recommended maximum height, bulk and massing for East Washington Avenue show techniques that can limit the impact of shadows cast on the Lamp House by more intensive redevelopment: gaps above four stories, thinner towers perpendicular to East Washington Avenue, and buildings that step down along North Webster Street.

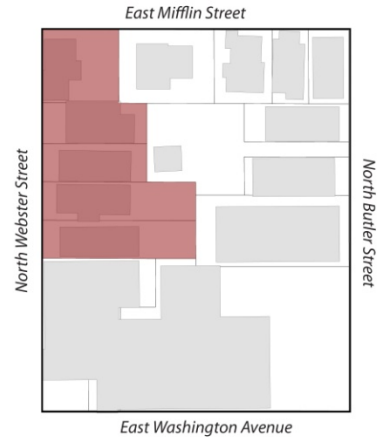


Sunlight reaches Lamp House rooftop



North Webster Street Block Face

- No change in land use recommendations from Downtown Plan (Predominantly Residential).
- No change in maximum building height from Downtown Plan / Zoning Code (6 stories).
- Redevelopment is acceptable, but should require a shadow study to ensure meaningful sunlight reaches the Lamp House rooftop at the equinoxes. Design characteristics to achieve an adequate amount of light may include, but are not limited to, setbacks, stepbacks and gaps between large building masses.
- A street view or views along this block face should be encouraged to remain in some form, but not be required.
- The front walls of the existing buildings are generally acceptable as front yard setbacks for redevelopment.
- Redevelopment should enhance the character of the “outdoor room” in which the Lamp House sits by maintaining the setbacks currently established by the rear façades of the existing structures. Other measures to enhance the character of the “outdoor room” include using high quality architectural materials, darker tones to contrast with the lightness of the Lamp House, articulating façades that face the Lamp House, stepping down the mass of taller buildings toward the interior of the block, providing gaps between buildings, concealing mechanical equipment and utilities, and landscaping.
- Redevelopment proposals for this block face should be designed to reflect the historic scale and character of the street. Design approaches to achieve this could include, but are not limited to, façade articulation, high quality materials, front porches, balconies, individual and/or multiple street entrances, pitched roofs, and other design techniques used to minimize the scale and massing of new buildings.



This illustration shows the recommended maximum height, bulk and massing for North Webster Street. The red arrow shows that almost a full story can be gained on this site through the natural topography. Other design features, including façade articulation and techniques to reflect the historic character of the street would be required for approval of any redevelopment project.



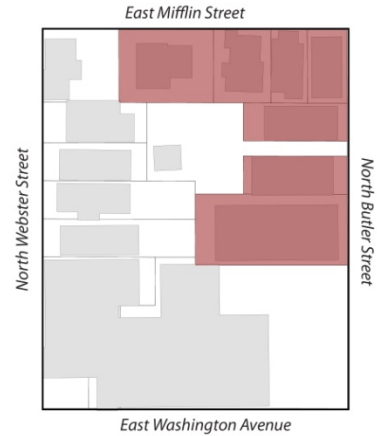
This illustration shows two new buildings with an arrow pointing to a gap along North Webster Street and a setback along the corner of East Mifflin Street to allow views into the interior of the block.

F. Redevelopment alternative to preservation on East Mifflin and North Butler Street Block Faces

As described, the Committee’s preferred recommendation is to explore eligibility for historic district designation on the northeastern quadrant of the block. However, to the extent that the preservation option is not realized, the following redevelopment recommendations seek to further the remaining priorities of the Committee.

East Mifflin Street and North Butler Street Block Faces

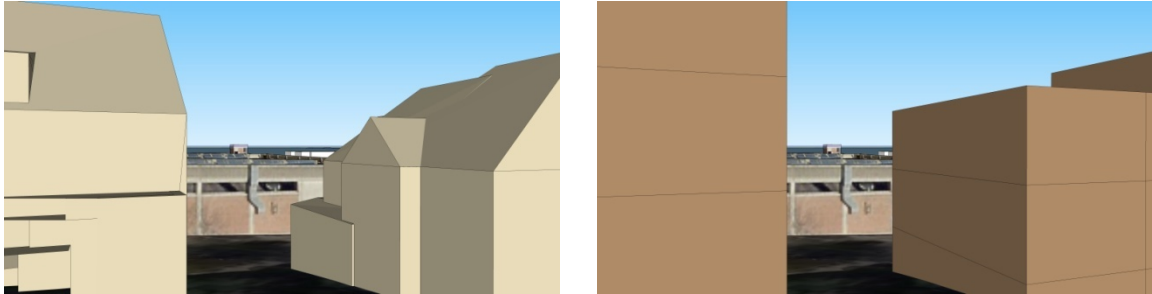
- No change in land use recommendations from Downtown Plan (Predominantly Residential).
- Change in height recommendation: Peak roof heights should not exceed existing heights of buildings near the corner of East Mifflin and North Butler to preserve existing lake views.
- The front and rear walls of the existing buildings are generally acceptable as front and rear setbacks for redevelopment.
- Street views into the interior of the block as identified along East Mifflin Street should remain, although not necessarily in their precise existing location.
- The North Butler Street entrance view of the Lamp House should be preserved.
- Redevelopment should enhance the character of the “outdoor room” in which the Lamp House sits by maintaining the setbacks currently established by the rear façades of the existing structures. Other measures to enhance the character of the “outdoor room” include using high quality architectural materials, darker tones to contrast with the lightness of the Lamp House, articulating façades that face the Lamp House, stepping down the mass of taller buildings toward the interior of the block, providing gaps between buildings, concealing mechanical equipment and utilities, and landscaping.
- Redevelopment proposals for this block face should be designed to reflect the historic scale and character of the street. Design approaches to achieve this could include, but are not limited to, façade articulation, high quality materials, front porches, balconies, individual and/or multiple street entrances, pitched roof forms, and other design techniques used to minimize the scale and massing of new buildings.



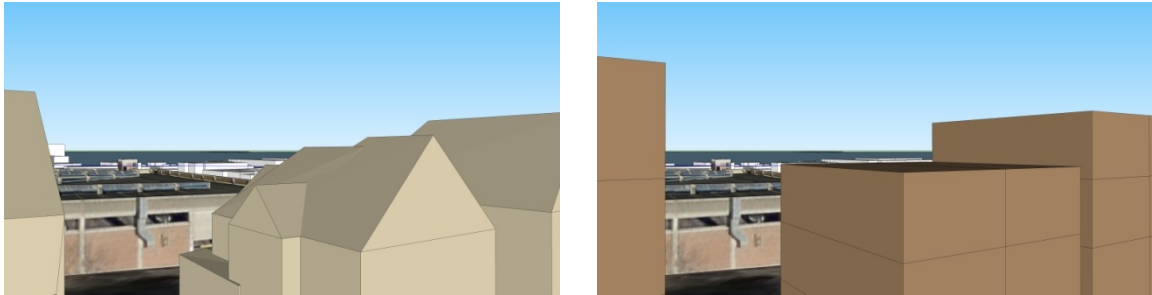
This Illustration shows the redevelopment potential of the northeastern portion of the Lamp House block while preserving the two houses that frame the Butler Street view of the Lamp House.

The following illustrations convey how potential redevelopment on the northeast corner of East Mifflin and North Butler Street should continue to respect the important Lake Mendota views from the Lamp House. The existing views are shown on the left and potential views, after redevelopment has occurred, are shown on the right.

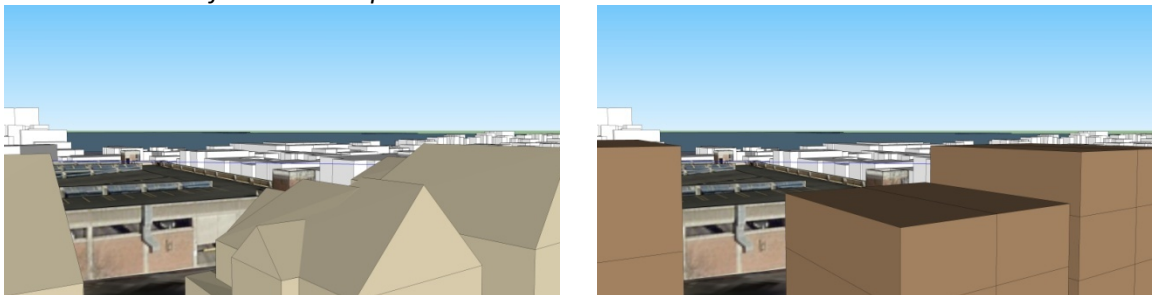
First Floor Views from the Lamp House toward Lake Mendota



Second Floor Views from the Lamp House toward Lake Mendota



Third Floor Views from the Lamp House toward Lake Mendota



Conclusion

Having been asked to advise the Plan Commission and Common Council on a greatly accelerated timeline, the Ad Hoc Lamp House Block Plan Committee strove to find a balance that would encourage redevelopment while preserving important cultural resources. During this process, several significant issues emerged that guided the Committee's final recommendations including redevelopment potential of the area, preservation of the Lamp House and its context, economic potential of heritage tourism, as well as the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood.



The Committee's final recommendations are grounded in a desire to preserve and protect both the Lamp House and its immediate environment including the existing "outdoor room", the limited public views into the site and the remaining lake views from the house which were so important in the original design of the home. A potential local historic district would add the oversight of the City's Landmarks Commission for any changes to the physical environment within the district, and a potential National Register District would offer property owners tax credit incentives for repair and maintenance of the existing structures.

These preservation recommendations are balanced by the opportunities for redevelopment along both North Webster Street and East Washington Avenue. Recommendations along these streets allow for extensive redevelopment within the suggested parameters that maintain the existing character, preserve views and protect the Lamp House's access to sunlight. These recommendations seek to ensure that in the future, both the Lamp House and its context will contribute to a thoughtful and vibrant built environment that could be a model for balancing redevelopment and preservation in the City of Madison.

It is anticipated that this plan will be reviewed by several City commissions with recommendations for implementation to be considered by the Plan Commission and Common Council. The Common Council's final recommendations should be incorporated into the Downtown Plan as appropriate.

Overall Recommendation Images

These illustrations graphically summarize the Committee’s conclusions for potential bulk and massing of redevelopment on the Lamp House block. They do not illustrate façade articulation, architectural features or other design techniques that will help redevelopment reflect the historic character of the block. They illustrate the Committee’s recommendation to preserve the Lamp House on its site, and the existing buildings on the northeast quadrant of the block. They also show the maximum amount of conceptual development recommended for the remainder of the block under the parameters articulated earlier in this plan.



Overall recommendation - view looking south



Overall recommendation – view looking north