

Lawrence M. Hands
404 S Blount St., Unit 101
Madison, WI 53703

July 6, 2015

Dear Landmarks Commission,

I ask that you approve the development proposal at 906-910 Williamson Street.

Clearly, replacing extensive gravel parking and an obsolete single-family home in the middle of three lots with a multi-unit mixed-use development would significantly benefit the people of the City and the State. The property tax benefit due to the new development would be at least a factor of 10 or 20 greater than the current property tax paid. This additional property tax would benefit the City of Madison and work to make our schools and public services stronger.

The existing structure is out of character with the surrounding area, being only one of two houses on the block. The neighboring structures house offices, bars, night-clubs, cafes, retail establishments and restaurants. It is no longer a single-family residential block, and the property should be allowed to move to a higher and better use. Removing this existing structure with the surrounding gravel parking lot would not adversely diminish the Third Lake Ridge Historic District and would strengthen the economics of maintaining the existing groups of historic structures in the District.

In terms of any new developments in the Third Lake Ridge historic district, I ask that the neighborhood and the commission carefully review the guidelines for new development in the near future as the location and accessibility of the neighborhood is such that it is in high demand. The City of Madison is blessed to be so attractive and it should maximize the development potential of the neighborhood by considering approval of perhaps even larger buildings. It has been close to 30-years since the Marquette Neighborhood Design Criteria has been developed and perhaps it is time to take another look at this Design Criteria in today's environment. In a carbon-constrained world, building a dense urban fabric is good for the environment.

Again, please approve the development proposal at 906-910 Williamson Street.

Yours truly,



Lawrence M. Hands

To: The Landmarks Commission of Madison, WI

Re: Rehearing on a demolition permit for (906-910 Williamson Street)
July 6, 2015

I live in the neighborhood and pass by the single family residence in question several times a week on my way to shop, dine, and visit my health care provider. I have lived in the neighborhood since the end of 2009. The status of the house has continued to decline. Livingston street has added a significant multiunit building with first floor retail, and I have noticed no adverse impact to the fabric of the community. My neighborhood is in transition, and the proposed project is consistent with recent developments on the North side of Williamson Street.

I begin with the principle of living gently on the planet, reducing our carbon footprint, and maximizing the opportunity to use the limited resource of living space on our special isthmus prudently. Our city grid - we do live in a city - will only benefit from the thoughtful addition of 26 living units, and supporting retail space. Denying such projects will only contribute to unsustainable, unhealthy sprawl encroaching on farmland, and costing our city tax base and jobs. The developer is seeking no subsidies, only permission to create an attractive development like others have along Williamson street. Such an instinct should be embraced, not thwarted.

I moved to this neighborhood for the health benefits of a walking lifestyle. More living units nearby support a livelier retail scene, enhancing my shopping choices within walking distance, keeping my money circulating in the city, and neighborhood. Willy Street Coop is concerned about losing its edge as other food stores also offer organic produce. The Coop would certainly benefit from 22 more households in the neighborhood who can afford to shop there.

The tax revenues from the proposed new development will be 20 times what the current dilapidated house provides. If the REAL concern is the loss of four affordable, below market rate housing units, then permit this building to add another story, with the proviso that the developer create four affordable units in return for the extra story. The current constraints artificially limiting building height to 3.5 stories makes creation of affordable units and meeting a reasonable rate of return from the project mutually exclusive.

I believe the proposed project of new construction of 26 living units, and 4000 square feet of retail space, replacing the four bedrooms of the current house, will be an asset to my neighborhood, city and taxbase, without damaging the historic nature of the district. I support granting the demolition permit, and allowing the proposed project to move forward.

Karen D. Kendrick-Hands
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July 6th, 2015

Re: 906 Williamson St

To Members of the Landmarks Commission:

While I should be encouraged that this matter is being re-opened for consideration before the Commission, I was more than disappointed to find out about it a mere two hours ago.

I strongly support you to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for Demolition of 906 Williamson St. under MGO 33.19(5)(c)3. Standards. (for Demolition) In determining whether to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for any demolition, the Landmarks Commission shall consider and may give decisive weight to any or all of the following:

f. Whether the building or structure is in such a deteriorated condition that it is not structurally or economically feasible to preserve or restore it, provided that any hardship or difficulty claimed by the owner which is self-created or which is the result of any failure to maintain the property in good repair cannot qualify as a basis for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness

I have worked in the restoration industry for a leading national firm for over 3 years. We have worked on historic landmarks such as the Orpheum Theatre and residential homes that other companies wouldn't consider taking. In more than one case, we renovated properties that even the insurance adjuster thought the property was a total loss requiring demolition. I've also renovated properties on own. Not just a paint job; I have lifted trusses up a ladder without assistance, shingled, done plumbing, electrical, plaster work, flooring, you name it.

The property at 906 does not seem to be in my estimation to be financially solvent to repair. The foundation is crumbling. It is taking on water and causing mold issues. Once a new foundation were excavated and poured, added cracking to the already sagging walls would require the entire building to be gutted and re-drywalled. The other problems noted in the report issued in March suggest a repair bill that would immediately put any potential buyer underwater from day one. As such, this property will continue to be an eyesore on the community until it is demolished.

When I joined the MNA Board, I thought the Preservation and development Committee was a natural fit. I could not only use my expertise to protect our Historic Assets, but could also aptly discern when a property wasn't fixable. My other experience is community organizing has allowed me to facilitate neighborhood discussions to find common ground and move forward when interests appear to diverge.

There have been 4 P&D meetings, 2 subcommittee meetings, 2 neighborhood meetings, 4 board meetings and now 3 Landmarks Commission meetings where this has been discussed exhaustively. The developers have been willing to negotiate with the neighborhood and have

granted us almost every concession we have asked for. In an era of increasingly deregulation by the State Govt, we have fewer and fewer tools other than the good will of developers and our credibility to extract these concessions in the future. Your decision to ignore our recent majority vote in favor of this project undermine our capacity to better our neighborhood. Please stop.

Furthermore, I will say that the tone from a minority of our Board, our Alder, and at least one member of this Commission have not always been productive. I would remind everyone that aside from this issue, we share aligning values on a host of other issues and I would ask every to rectify their professionalism. We can disagree without being disagreeable.

Sincerely,

Jesse Pycha-Holst

Chair P&D

MNA Board

LOUIS FORTIS

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July 6, 2015

City of Madison Landmarks Commission

Re: Granting 906 Williamson Street Certificates of Appropriateness

Dear Landmarks Commission Members,

I am pleased to participate in the reconsideration of this project at the invitation of Alder Rummel. We continue to believe this project is worthy of your approval and appreciate your open-mindedness to reconsider your past decision.

I wanted to take a moment in this letter to address the items specifically identified in your previous motion to deny a Certificate of Appropriateness, Ordinance Sections 33.19(5)(c)3b.,3c. and 3g.

Section 33.19(5)(c)3b

Addressing whether the existing house, "though not itself a landmark building, contributes to the distinctive architectural or historic character of the district as a whole."

This is a judgement call. I believe you will agree the character of this historic district is very eclectic. It has a palpable rhythm all its own, with new, not so new, and older structures working together successfully. If the Marquette Neighborhood is "A Place for all People," the Willy Street Historic Corridor could certainly be considered an eclectic "**Place for all Buildings.**" We ask you to review your decision through this paradigm. Our new building will contribute to this successful rhythm in lieu of the existing structure.

Section 33.19 (5)(c)3c

"Whether the demolition of the subject property would be contrary to the purpose and intent of this chapter..... and to the objectives of the historic preservation plan".

This is, again, a judgment call. Please ask yourselves, as a layperson would – "Does the demolition of this structure and the construction of the new proposed building adversely affect the objectives of the historic neighborhood plan?" As part of your reconsideration, please take a moment to consider the cornucopia of diverse buildings of all shapes and sizes that make up this historic district. We have included some photos of the district to illustrate this point. When recognizing the bounty this district contains, the case can be made that the deconstruction of the existing structure and construction of a new building will not be contrary to the objectives of the historic plan, but will simply contribute to its variety and evolution.

Section 33.19(5)(c)3g.

"Whether the new structure proposed to be constructed.....is compatible with the buildings and environment of the district..."

Your third objection is within our control. We have had considerable discussion about all facets of our proposed building and have made many major and minor changes to it throughout the approval process; we have received the recommendation of the Marquette Neighborhood Association Board.

Alder Rummel and Amy Scanlon, Historic Preservation Planner, approached us with the following request: Would we consider the removal of the curved roof, align the windows on all facades and simplify our exterior materials? We believe our current design reflects the desires and interests of the neighborhood, but we are willing to make these sincere accommodations to the proposed building's design as a sign of good faith in winning your approval at this time.

It is my preference to win this Commission's approval, and I have demonstrated my sincere desire to do so. Measured on many levels, this is a genuinely worthy proposal worthy of your support. I greatly appreciate the hard work and sacrifice your public service on this committee represents. Thank you again for your reconsideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louis Fortis", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name "Louis Fortis".

Louis Fortis