



July 27, 2020

To: Sydney Prusak, via email
City of Madison Planning

Re: Memo addressing additional height
502 & 510 West Washington Avenue

City planning staff requested that we submit a memo addressing the criteria of allowing for additional height of 2 floors above the 4 stories. We believe the project meets the criteria as outlined below.

Related Zoning Section and Response:

h) When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed in [Section 28.071\(2\)\(a\) Downtown Height Map](#), except as provided for in [Section 28.071\(2\)\(a\)1.](#) and [Section 28.071\(2\)\(b\)](#), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:

1. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.

Response: The zoning code states that 6 stories may be allowed provided there is a 30' step-back along West Washington Ave. The building complies with the 30' step back. The Mifflandia Plan recommends 6 stories on this site with a 30' step-back on West Washington and 10' step-backs on all the other sides, the building design complies. The downtown building height plan allows for 6 stories without step backs on the north half of the remainder of the block adjacent to our site. The downtown plan recommends 6 stories on West Washington Avenue if there is a significant step back on the upper 2 floors, the building design complies. The current building design of 6 stories will align with future developments on the block and in the neighborhood. The building complies with all other set backs and step backs in the Mifflandia Plan.

2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.

Response: The additional density allows the lower 4 floors adjacent to the street and pedestrians to have a higher quality of exterior materials. Brick is used almost exclusively on the lower 4 floors especially along the street facades. Massing of the building is enhanced with the stepped back upper stories adding interest and creating a 2-story top to the building. The upper two floors allow for added outdoor terrace space for the residents and increases the amount of green roof area.

3. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the project and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.

Response: There are no landmarked buildings adjacent to this development. The 6-story building does contribute positively to the grand nature of West Washington Avenue leading to the Capitol Square.

4. For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.

Response: The building does not block the viewshed to the Capitol from West Washington Avenue. The viewshed is from the Avenue, the building is set back approximately 58' from the street curb and then the top two floors are stepped back an additional 30' feet for a total setback for the top two floors of approximately 88 feet from the street.

Additional Comments:

Limiting this project to four-story building would be a loss of density in the central part of the city where more density is needed. According to the city projections, the city expects to add 70,000 new residents by 2040 and needs to build roughly 40,000 units – about 2000 a year – to meet demand. The additional 2 stories allow the project to add 28 units. The loss of these units would never be able to be regained, this is approximately 30% of the project's density.

Additional density at this centrally located site supports Bus Rapid Transit, and allows residents to walk to amenities, entertainment and employment opportunities reducing the need for personal vehicles. Additional density in this central part of the city helps to reduce sprawl and reduce vehicular trips and traffic.