

June 26, 2020

Staff and Members of the Urban Design Commission,

My previous comments to the commission focused architecturally on the inability for this proposal to meet UDD 4 item 4.b.iv: The architecture of new in-fill buildings, additions to existing buildings and major exterior remodelings should be compatible with that of **existing** adjacent buildings.

Much has happened since the Downtown Plan was adopted in July 2012. My comments will focus on process while serving on UDC from 2008 to 2018 and as chair of the Historic Preservation Plan Advisory Committee from 2018 to 2020.

In 2017 Common Council's resolution that created the Historic Preservation Plan Advisory Committee indicates 'during the development of the Downtown Plan, several commissions stressed the need for a City Historic Preservation Plan to ensure that historic preservation remains an effective tool to preserve the City's historic resources'; and 'will include focused research regarding the local history of underrepresented communities and related historic resources'.

On May 19, 2020 Common Council adopted the Historic Preservation Plan 'as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan, directing staff to implement the recommendations contained in the plan, accepting the *Underrepresented Communities Historic Resource Report*'. The plan focuses to ensure the resources provided, places preserved, and the history shared includes underrepresented communities. The first area prioritized for survey includes this site. This development would preclude staff from implementing the recommendations in the adopted plan.

The citywide goal of conserving the special character of this neighborhood is evidenced by the support of Common Council providing forgivable loans to owner-occupants for costs purchasing and renovating existing residential rentals. The dedication of members of underrepresented communities contributes to the success of the Mansion Hill-James Madison Park Small Cap TIF program. The small cap TIF program closed in 2017.

During the 2019 spring election, Mayor Rhodes-Conway responded to the Marquette Neighborhood Association Green Spaces and Trees Committee: 'As Mayor, I will work to make sure our infrastructure and operations are prepared for our changing climate. Every new development and every policy decision should make the problem better, not worse. In this hot new world of ours, it's irresponsible to do anything less.'

On January 21, 2020 Common Council accepted the final report and recommendations from the Urban Forestry Task Force. The first recommendation is to achieve an optimal tree canopy coverage goal of 40%. This development does not. The size of the existing individual parcels is not the problem. This proposal makes the problem worse with a multi-parcel development so out of scale it severs a cohesive urban fabric by removing homes and mature canopy trees.

In August 2018 the Comprehensive Plan was adopted stating 'housing conservation and rehabilitation will help achieve the City's sustainability goals, as the most sustainable housing stock is that which already exists.'

The Comprehensive Plan also provides clear actions to 'Preserve historic and special places that tell the story of Madison and reflect racially and ethnically diverse cultures and histories. Actions: a. Complete, adopt, and implement a Historic Preservation Plan as a framework for the future of Madison's historic preservation program. b. Finish updating the Historic Preservation Ordinance by revising the standards for each of the local historic districts. c. Identify ways to retain older buildings and places that contribute to the special character of an area, or are associated with diverse cultures, through the adoption of sub-area plans prior to redevelopment pressures. d. Update the zoning code and height maps to better link the code with the City's historic preservation plan and ordinance'.

A Special Area Plan must be adopted prior to redevelopment pressure. This context is vastly different from the 800 block of E Washington. The 800 block is located on HWY 151 and had a Special Area Plan for staff and commission members to evaluate how the immediately surrounding properties could transition the scale of redeveloping vacant lots into highrises down to the scale of the existing established neighborhood without demolishing it.

Not reflected in your materials presented by the developer is the March 2014 Report of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee adopted by Common Council as a supplement to the City's Downtown Plan. The report includes recommended maximum heights to preserve Lake Mendota views from the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Lamp House. The report's recommended changes to allowable maximum heights include reducing 6 and 8-story maximum heights to 3 and 4-story maximum heights.

The below diagrammatically reflects the eastern boundary of the first area prioritized for survey in the Historic Preservation Plan in red; the view shed of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee Report; and existing Historic Districts. Refer to each noted plan for details. Individually designated historic properties are not shown in this diagram, instead only districts as a whole contributing to the special character of an area or are associated with diverse cultures. The city has not designated any Local Historic Districts since 2002. This neighborhood is surrounded by designated resources and requires survey before more historic resources are lost.



Do not approve this redevelopment proposal because the proposed architecture is not compatible with that of the **existing** adjacent buildings.

Please indicate in your motion the necessity for a Special Area Plan per the direction of the Comprehensive Plan and survey of the first area prioritized per the Historic Preservation Plan.

Thank you, Dawn O’Kroley 646 E Gorham Street, a Claude and Starck designed home that the community twice saved from demolition and is now a City of Madison Landmark in James Madison Park and the Fourth Lake Ridge National Register Historic District.

From: [Parks, Timothy](#)
To: [Cleveland, Julie](#)
Subject: FW: 10-story highrise
Date: Thursday, June 25, 2020 9:03:12 PM

For UDC re: 414 EWA

From: Ashley Hartman Annis <ashley.hartman.annis@gmail.com>
Sent: June 25, 2020 1:09 PM
To: Parks, Timothy <TParks@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: 10-story highrise

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Tim,

Many people living in the James Madison Park neighborhood have never had a chance to weigh in on how our neighborhood should be developed - or even if it should be redeveloped. We need city officials to reconsider not just whether new developments should be 8 stories or 10; we need them to consider rezoning our neighborhood to allow developments that seamlessly merge with the scale of our community.

The fact that this proposed development is being pushed through during a public health emergency has further prevented our community from having a say.

This area is a vibrant, attractive, human-scale neighborhood with many affordable housing options. The city needs to hear us before making an irreversible decision that will have negative impacts on our neighborhood.

Do NOT approve a 10-story highrise at 414 East Washington Ave, and take the neighborhood plans back to the drawing board!

Sincerely,
Ashley

Ashley Hartman Annis
she / her / hers
ashleyhartmanannis.com

From: [Jess Draws](#)
To: [PLUDCAplications](#); [Glaeser, Janine](#); [Cleveland, Julie](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Parks, Timothy](#); [Heck, Patrick](#); president@capitolneighborhoods.org
Subject: Opposition to Plan for New 8-10-Story Mixed-Use Building on E. Wash
Date: Monday, June 29, 2020 8:01:55 AM

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To whom it may concern,

I recently became aware that LZ Ventures wants to tear down buildings on East Washington Ave between N Franklin St and N Hancock St to build a 10-story luxury apartment building. This massive highrise would tower over the neighborhood, casting its shadow over nearby houses and apartments for much of the year.

Many people living in the James Madison Park neighborhood have never had a chance to weigh in on how their neighborhood should be developed - or even if it should be redeveloped. I need you to reconsider not just whether new developments should be 8 stories or 10; I need you to consider rezoning the neighborhood to allow developments that seamlessly merge with the scale of their community. I used to live directly in this affected area, and the development of a new high rise would significantly impact my decision to live nearby in the future.

The fact that this proposed development is being pushed through during a public health emergency has further prevented the community from having a say and is not acceptable at all.

Do NOT approve a 10-story highrise at 414 East Washington Ave, and take the neighborhood plans back to the drawing board!

Thank you for listening,
Jess Draws

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Jess Draws
3212 Bluff St #1, Madison WI 53705
(920) 428 - 9137 || jessicalyndraws@gmail.com
Pronouns: she/her/hers

From: [Ellen Zweibel](#)
To: [Glaeser, Janine](#); [Cleveland, Julie](#)
Subject: Proposed LZ Ventures Luxury Apartment Building
Date: Monday, June 29, 2020 6:53:54 AM

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Dear Urban Design Commission Members,

I'm writing to object to the proposed 10 story luxury apartment building proposed by LZ Ventures for 414 E. Washington Ave. it seems to me to be totally out of the charming character of the James Madison Park area, would have a deleterious effect on the quality of life for blocks around due to its looming presence, and, as a "luxury property" will put an additional squeeze on affordable housing at a bad time for Madisonians. Please veto this project.

Sincerely,

Ellen Zweibel
1511 Rutledge St.

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William L. Kraushaar Professor of Astronomy & Physics
Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor

Letter to UDC for July 1 Meeting
— 414 E. Washington Avenue

06/30/20

Dear UDC Members,

I live in the neighborhood, one block from the proposed development, and am in favor of the project, albeit it is unfortunate the proposed units are too upscale to be affordable.

Compatibility with Character of Surrounding Area

Walking around our small neighborhood at present day, it is immediately obvious the development does not fit the rhythm of existing structures.

However, if we consider a broader context of the East Wash corridor, and also the greater forces affecting Madison, the building is compatible. Namely:

- The height and scale fit in with other recent projects along East Wash such as around Festival Foods and the AC Hotel.
- Population in Madison is growing more rapidly than the housing supply, in a market that already has a very low vacancy rate.
- Near East has seen year-over-year price growth of 10% (!) indicating demand to live in this area is booming. More housing supply will likely help to slow price growth in the long run, even if it appears to immediately destroy affordable housing and replace it with luxury units.

Moreover, building denser near the capitol is the responsible move from an environmental standpoint; more urban living helps to prevent sprawl and allows people to bike, walk, or take a bus in lieu of using cars.

Thanks to the committee members for listening and for your valuable work for the city,

John Stromme

From: [Sofia Brichford](#)
To: [PLUDCAplications](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 11 - 414 E. Washington Proposed Development
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 10:19:07 PM

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As a current resident of the neighborhood I oppose the proposed development project for the 400 block of E.Washington Ave. I am particularly opposed to granting this project the 2 bonus stories.

- The excess height is not compatible with the current buildings.
- The building will cast a large shadow, decreasing the desirability of neighboring properties.
- The excess height does not allow the building to be of higher quality than it would be at 8 stories.
- The design is unexceptional. The building is quite frankly ugly and uninspiring. Excess height should be rejected for this reason alone.

Thanks for your time,
Sofia Brichford

From: [Terrence Bush](#)
To: [Parks, Timothy](#)
Cc: [Heck, Patrick](#)
Subject: Objection to the 400 block East Washington proposal
Date: July 01, 2020 12:17:18 PM

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Mr. Parks:

I am writing to register my objection to the 400 Block East Washington proposal to be considered by the Urban Design Commission later today.

I have lived at 15 North Hancock Street, directly adjacent to the area of the proposed project, for 20 years. The building I live in is three stories high on the street side. Nearby buildings are also three or four stories high facing Hancock Street. The proposal for the 400 block of East Washington envisions a massive apartment tower that will be 10 stories facing the street, stepping down to six stories in the rear, right next to the building where I live.

As I understand the process, the zoning for the parcel on East Washington Street currently allows construction of a building eight stories high, with an additional two stories if the proposal meets specific criteria in the zoning code, including compatibility with the character of the surrounding area. This proposal absolutely is not compatible with other properties in this neighborhood. The building will be about as tall as the AC Hotel two blocks up East Washington, and even more massive. The only comparable residential buildings nearby are the Galaxie and Constellation projects several blocks away, not the mix of much shorter and smaller apartments and homes in the James Madison Park neighborhood.

I urge the Urban Design Committee to reject the proposal for the 400 block of East Washington in its current form. The proposed structure is too high and too massive for this neighborhood. The excess height beyond the eight stories allowed in the zoning code is not compatible with the character of the surrounding area. And no matter what the design, a building with the overall mass and scale of the existing proposal cannot be compatible with the adjacent structures.

I would appreciate it if you would forward these comments to the members of the Urban Design Committee. And thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Terrence Bush
15 N. Hancock St., #105
terrence.j.bush@gmail.com

From: [O'Brien, Daniel J.](#)
To: [PLUDCApplications](#)
Subject: FW: May 27 Agenda Item 58980, 414 E. Washington-Written comments
Date: Wednesday, July 01, 2020 4:47:11 PM

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Dear UDC:

Regarding Agenda Item #11, the development proposal for 414 E. Washington, I wish to send along the comments below. I sent these same comments in opposition to the proposal for "bonus stories" at your meeting on May 27. I have taken the liberty of re-sending them, in opposition to the proposal in its entirety, for today's meeting (July 1).

Thank you for considering them.

Daniel J. O'Brien
110 S. Franklin

From: O'Brien, Daniel J.
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 1:14 PM
To: 'udcapplications@cityofmadison.com' <udcapplications@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: FW: May 27 Agenda Item 58980, 414 E. Washington-Written comments

From: O'Brien, Daniel J.
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 1:09 PM
To: 'mailto:udcapplications@cityofmadison.com' <<mailto:udcapplications@cityofmadison.com>>
Subject: FW: May 27 Agenda Item 58980, 414 E. Washington-Written comments

Let's try this again.

From: O'Brien, Daniel J.
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 1:00 PM
To: 'mailto:udcapplications@cityofmadison.com' <<mailto:udcapplications@cityofmadison.com>>
Subject: May 27 Agenda Item 58980, 414 E. Washington-Written comments

FROM: Dan O'Brien
110 S. Franklin (long-time owner-occupant in First Settlement)
TO: UDC

Dear UDC:

Regarding agenda item # 58980, the development proposal for the 400 block of E. Wash and the 100 block of N. Franklin.

Please register me as STRONGLY OPPOSED to the proposed "bonus stories." Indeed, please register my opposition to the project as currently proposed with or without the "bonus stories"

for the following reasons:

1. Regarding the requirements of city ordinance chapter 28, this proposal is wholly incompatible with the mass, scale, heights, and rhythm of the surrounding residential neighborhood. The neighborhood into which it would be imposed consists of low-rise homes and commercial structures four stories or less.
2. A strikingly similar proposal for the block immediately east, the 500 block of E. Wash., was rejected within the past three years for incompatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. This is the same neighborhood.
3. While high-rise development up to eight stories is allowed *along* E. Wash., this proposal is not just *adjacent* to the surrounding neighborhood; it *invades* that established, living, breathing neighborhood, displacing many residents, by removing several fully-occupied, functionally sound, and historically significant homes.
4. This is unlike the large, high-rise buildings built further east down E. Wash. Those were built on vacant lots or on little-used former industrial land, replacing surface lots or dilapidated, unoccupied structures. They did not invade an existing, fully functional, historic neighborhood.
5. This is unlike the large AC Hotel development on Webster St., which, while it allowed for the demolition of some homes, it largely in-filled the under-utilized Pahl Tire lot. An example of a more compatible development is one block east of the AC, on Butler and E. Wash., where the portion of Butler Plaza fronting on E. Wash. is, I believe, only four stories, and fits more closely into the rhythm of the surrounding buildings and the E. Wash. streetscape as it descends down to Blair St. That height, scale and mass is closer to what might work here; 8-10 stories simply does not work here.
6. A project this height and mass is more appropriate for the site directly across the street: the city-owned surface parking lot called "Brayton Lot." As a First Settlement district resident of over three decades, I am appalled that the city continues to refuse to put out an RFP for development of this site. This, despite the fact that over 25 years ago, First Settlement residents headed by Mary Lou Muntz and Bert Stitt raised \$15,000 to hire an architect and craft a model (somewhere in city storage after we residents presented it to the city) for the proposed development of Brayton lot. The residents' proposal for the lot, with no help from the city, called for high-rise development along E. Wash., sloping down to low-rise residential development along E. Main and S. Hancock, and commercial development along S. Butler, with underground parking for several hundred vehicles. The city should not be forcing residents to move out of their affordable homes, and should not be approving the demolition of functional and historically-significant homes in one of Madison's oldest and still fully-functional residential neighborhoods, until it has exhausted such readily available in-fill opportunities with such minimal impact on their surroundings as the surface lot across the street currently provides.
7. Before you vote, please walk through the neighborhood, not just along E. Wash. Note the rhythm, mass and scale along N. Franklin and Hancock Sts., and everywhere on those streets behind the 400 E. Wash block leading down to James Madison Park. Note that the scale, height and mass mirror that of the 500 block where a similarly massive project was rejected not long ago. When you walk down E. Wash., note not only the historically significant homes that will be demolished, but also how an 8 or 10 -story building will

engulf the sunlight of the homes allowed to survive behind it, and dwarf venerable St. John's Lutheran church to its immediate west. Cross the street and note how the rhythm of the buildings along Washington rises gradually as you proceed up the hill from Blair Street, entirely, consistent with their surroundings, all the way up to the AC Hotel on Webster, where higher density is compatible with the taller office buildings allowed near the Square and the massive GEF building across the street. Note from across the street in the 400 block of E. Wash how the existing landscape will be radically interrupted by such a tall, massive building.

8. A sensible alternative for this site would be removal of only the Klinke building, to be replaced with a four- to six-story building. That lot alone is sizable enough for a viable yet compatible development proposal.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Dan O'Brien