

February 21, 2024

City Planning Division
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI 53701

Subject: Proposal for Demolition of 117-125 W Mifflin Street / PC Agenda – February 26, 2024

To Plan Commissioners,

The Mifflin District of Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc. met with representatives of Hovde Properties at our monthly meetings on January 3 and February 7, 2024. We also attended the virtual neighborhood meeting conducted by the City on February 19. We appreciate the community outreach provided by the applicant.

Representatives of the adjacent Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) project were also present at the February meetings. From the information we have received from the WHS, we understand that they believe the demolition of the Hovde buildings increases the safety of the construction of the Wisconsin History Center, which no doubt translates into cost savings. Additionally, the WHS stated that the use of the Hovde property for staging would allow them to save four of the existing trees and increase the width of the pedestrian/bicycle route through the Mifflin Plaza during their construction work.

During the course of the community meetings, we expressed serious concerns about the future of the demolition sites after the History Center project no longer uses the area for construction staging. While Hovde Properties has indicated that they intend to abide by the following conditions we believe they should be documented as conditions for the approval of the demolition of 117-125 W Mifflin Street.

- The site should be improved immediately after the History Center construction staging is finished. We would like to know if the WHS can vacate it so that it can be improved by the time the History Center opens. We understand that Hovde Properties will replace the pavement in the 12-foot access easement and the same number of parking spaces currently being used by their tenants. We note they have some parking spaces near Mifflin Street that are not currently used, presumably because of the vacant buildings – those should not be replaced. The balance of the site should be a well-kept green space enclosed by a decorative aluminum fence on all sides.
- No trees will be damaged or destroyed during the course of demolition.
- As recommended by the Landmarks Commission, Hovde Properties must preserve as much of the terracotta as possible for future use.
- Use of the site for events should have reasonable limits for hours of use and amplified sound, similar to restrictions put on outdoor eating establishments.

Finally, because of our concern about the subject property remaining vacant and potentially poorly maintained after construction of the History Center, the request to reduce the footprint of the demolition was raised in our neighborhood meetings. Additionally, there was concern from some neighbors that the “Bus Barn” at 15 N Fairchild has historical significance. After these discussions, at the February 19 meeting, Hovde Properties told the neighborhood that they are going to amend their application and remove 15 N Fairchild. At the time of writing this letter, we are not aware that 15 N Fairchild has been removed. If Hovde Properties does not withdraw it, we would oppose the demolition of the structure at this time.

Best Regards,

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