



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Project Address: 115 Langdon Street (2nd Aldermanic District - Ald. Zellers)
Application Type: Conditional Use
Legistar File ID # [46283](#)
Prepared By: Chris Wells, Planning Division
Report Includes Comments from other City Agencies, as noted
Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

Summary

Applicant & Contact: Steve Harms; Tri-North Builders; 2625 Research Park Dr.; Madison, WI 53711

Property Owner: Chi Omega – Nu; 115 Langdon St.; Madison, WI 53703

Requested Action: The applicant requests approval of a Conditional Use for an existing legal nonconforming sorority house.

Proposal Summary: The applicant is seeking approval of a Conditional Use to make some modifications to an existing legal nonconforming sorority house. The applicant proposes to renovate the interior - particularly remodeling the fourth floor (currently an attic) in order to add four bedrooms with a total of eight beds. An additional staircase up to the fourth floor will be added which will result in one two-bed room on the third floor being removed and a study area created in the residual space. This will result in a net gain of three bedrooms and six beds. Construction of site improvements, including providing short-term bike parking and a trash enclosure consistent with code requirements, are also proposed. Exterior improvements to the building such as tuckpointing parts of the brick façade and as well as roof repairs are also proposed.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: This proposal is subject to the standards for Conditional Uses [MGO §28.183(6)] as §28.072 of the Zoning Code lists *lodging houses, fraternities or sororities* as conditional uses in the DR2 (Downtown Residential 2) zoning district. The Supplemental Regulations [MGO §28.151] contain further regulations for these uses.

Review Required By: Plan Commission

Summary Recommendation: The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the Conditional Use standards are met and **approve** the request to continue the lodging house, fraternity or sorority use at 115 Langdon Street. This recommendation is subject to the input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the reviewing agencies.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The project site is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Langdon and Carroll streets and is comprised of approximately 9,900 square feet (0.23 acres). The site is in Aldermanic District 6 (Ald. Zellers), the Mansion Hill Historic District, the Langdon Street National Historic District, and the Madison Metropolitan School District.

Existing Conditions and Land Use: Currently the project site is comprised of one, four-story principal structure located centrally on the site. Overall, the building is comprised of roughly 11,300 square-feet in gross floor area (not including the finished basement and unfinished attic) with a sleeping occupancy of 36. Currently, one on-

site parking space exists in the paved driveway located along the northeastern lot line and is utilized by the Resident House Director who lives on-site or part-time staff. Six bicycle parking stalls are provided in front of the building and adjacent the driveway. While a refuse receptacle area is provided near the eastern corner of the site, it does not currently meet the city’s screening requirements pursuant to MGO §28.142, “*Landscaping and Screening Requirements.*”

The property was zoned R6-General Residence District under the City’s 1966 Zoning code. The project site has been home to the Chi Omega Chapter House sorority since approximately 1960, when they purchased the lot. Given that the existing sorority use was established prior to the adoption of the city’s current (and previous) municipal code, it is considered a legal nonconforming use.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

Northwest: Residential; DR2 (Downtown Residential 2) zoning;

Northeast: Residential; DR2 zoning;

Southeast: Residential; DR1 zoning; and

Southwest: Residential; DR2 zoning.

Adopted Land Use Plan: The [Comprehensive Plan \(2006\)](#) identifies the project site as part of the Langdon Downtown Residential Sub-District. This area is generally defined as being located north of the downtown core and being developed with student housing including fraternities and sororities. Some nonresidential uses such as the Edgewater Hotel are also located in this sub-district. Recommended land uses in this area include, but are not limited to, mixed-use buildings, multi-unit residential (16 to 60+ dwelling units per net acre), and small-scale neighborhood commercial uses. The [Comprehensive Plan](#) recognizes the historic resources in this area and states, “*Historic preservation and neighborhood conservation are issues that need to be addressed as properties in this sub-district are redeveloped.*” (City of Madison Comprehensive Plan, Pg.2-114).

The [Downtown Plan \(2012\)](#) identifies the project site as being within the Langdon Neighborhood, which is generally defined as traditional student-oriented neighborhood, including a concentration of fraternities, sororities, and multi-family rental structures being generally located adjacent to the UW campus between Lake Mendota and State Street. The [Downtown Plan](#) recommends that the Langdon Neighborhood should continue building on its history as a traditionally student neighborhood, including a concentration of fraternities and sororities and to encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of contributing historic buildings.

Zoning Summary: The project site is currently zoned DR2 (Downtown Residential 2).

Requirements	Required	Proposed
Lot Area (sq. ft.)	3,000 sq. ft.	9,900 sq. ft.
Lot Width	40’	78’
Front Yard Setback	10’	16’9”
Side Yard Setback	5’ Lot width < 40’: 10% of lot width	12’7” North 22’ South
Rear Yard Setback	Lesser of 20% lot depth or 20’	27’9”
Usable Open Space	20 sq. ft. per bedroom	Adequate
Maximum Lot Coverage	80%	Less than 80%
Minimum Building Height	2 stories	4 story existing building
Maximum Building Height	See Downtown Height Map: 5 stories	4 story existing building
Number Parking Stalls	No Minimum: Central Area	None
Accessible Stalls	None	None

Loading	None	None
Number Bike Parking Stalls	Sorority: 1 per proposed bedroom (4) plus 1 guest space per 4 bedrooms (1) (5 total for additional bedrooms)	6 existing 3 proposed (9 total) <i>(See Comment #6)</i>
Landscaping and Screening	None	Existing site landscaping <i>(See Comments #7 & #8)</i>
Lighting	None	None
Building Forms	None	Existing building
Other Critical Zoning Items	Historic District (Mansion Hill); Barrier Free (ILHR 69)	

Table Prepared by Jenny Kirchgatter, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Environmental Corridor Status: The subject site is not located in a mapped environmental corridor.

Public Utilities and Services: This property is served by a full range of urban services.

Project Description, Analysis, and Conclusion

The applicant is requesting Conditional Use approval for an existing legal nonconforming sorority use in order to add additional occupancy to the house.

The applicant proposes to remodel the 1,600-gross-square-foot fourth floor, which is currently an attic and used for storage. The remodeling will add eight beds in its four bedrooms (one room with one bed, two rooms with two beds, and one room with three beds). The fourth floor will also have a roughly 550-square-foot study area, a partial kitchenette, and three full bathrooms. In order to provide the adequate ingress/egress, the applicant is also proposing to add a set of stairs between the third and fourth floors. In order to accommodate this staircase, the two-bed room, currently located in that location, will be removed and the remainder of the space converted to a study area. As a result of the interior renovations, there will be a net increase of three bedrooms (from 16 to 19) and six beds (from 36 to 42). The remainder of the building will remain in its current configuration.

Exterior improvements to the building such as facade tuckpointing and roof repairs are also proposed. The applicant has noted that these improvements will not result in visual design changes. The applicant is also contemplating replacing the fourth-story windows. Note: the applicant will be required to gain approval from the Landmarks Commission or the Historic Preservation Planner for any exterior changes to the building prior to final signoff.

As part of the applicant's Conditional Use request, site improvements are also proposed, including the addition of additional bicycle parking stalls as well as adequate screening for the refuse receptacle area.

Sorority uses are permitted as a Conditional Use in the DR2 zoning district. As such, they are subject to the Conditional Use review criteria pursuant to MGO §28.183(6). In regards to the approval standards, the Plan Commission shall not approve a Conditional Use without due consideration of the City's adopted plan recommendations, design guidelines, and finding that all of the conditional use standards of §28.183(6) MGO are met. In this case, since the sorority is an existing use, it is considered a legal nonconforming use because it was established prior to the adoption of the city's current code. The applicant's requested Conditional Use, coupled with the proposed site improvements will result in the project site and existing use becoming more in compliance with the city's current code requirements.

The Planning Division believes this request can meet the applicable standards. Given the location of the project in proximity to the university and student housing oriented nature of the existing development and surrounding neighborhood, staff concludes that the continuation of the sorority house use is compatible and consistent with

its surroundings. In addition, based on the submitted information, staff does not anticipate that this use will result in significant impacts on surrounding properties, especially given that the overall sleeping occupancy is only being increased by six.

At the time of report writing, staff was not aware of any concerns on this request.

Recommendation

Planning Division (Contact Chris Wells, (608) 261-9135)

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the Conditional Use standards are met and **approve** the request to continue the lodging house, fraternity or sorority use at 115 Langdon Street. This recommendation is subject to the input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the reviewing agencies.

Recommended Conditions of Approval Major/Non-Standard Conditions are Shaded

Planning Division (Contact Chris Wells, (608) 261-9135)

1. The applicant shall gain any necessary approvals from the Landmarks Commission or Historic Preservation Planner for any exterior changes to the building prior to final signoff.

City Eng. Review Mapping (Contact Jeffrey Quamme, (608) 266-4097)

2. The site plan shall be complete and shall include all lot/ownership lines (with dimensions), existing building locations, parking stalls, driveways, sidewalks (public and/or private), existing and proposed signage.
3. Submit a PDF of all floor plans to zenchenko@cityofmadison.com so that an interior addressing plan can be developed prior to plans being submitted for permit review. Include all floors and label the current room numbers for existing rooms.

If there are any changes pertaining to the location of a unit, the deletion or addition of a unit, or to the location of the entrance into any unit, (before, during, or after construction) the addresses may need to be changed. The interior address plan is subject to the review and approval of the Fire Marshal

Traffic Engineering Review (Contact Eric Halvorson, 608-266-6527)

4. The applicant shall submit one contiguous plan showing proposed conditions and one contiguous plan showing existing conditions for approval. The plan drawings shall be scaled to 1" = 20' and include the following, when applicable: existing and proposed property lines; parcel addresses; all easements; pavement markings; signing; building placement; items in the terrace such as signs, street light poles, hydrants; surface types such as asphalt, concrete, grass, sidewalk; driveway approaches, including those adjacent to and across street from the project lot location; parking stall dimensions, including two (2) feet of vehicle overhang; drive aisle dimensions; semitrailer movement and vehicle routes; dimensions of radii; and percent of slope.
5. All parking facility design shall conform to MGO standards, as set in section 10.08(6).

Zoning Review (Contact Jenny Kirchgatter, 608-266-4429)

6. Bicycle parking shall comply with the requirements of Sections 28.141(4)(g) and 28.141(11). Provide a minimum of one (1) bicycle stall per bedroom plus one (1) guest space per four (4) bedrooms for the proposed 4th floor renovation. Provide five (5) additional bicycle stalls for a total of 11 bicycle stalls (6 existing stalls plus 5 additional stalls for the increased number of bedrooms). Show the locations of the existing and proposed bicycle stalls on the plans. Note: A bicycle stall is a minimum of two (2) feet by six (6) feet with a five (5) foot wide access area. Provide a detail of the proposed bike rack.
7. Include the approved landscape plan with the plan sets for final staff review and sign-off.
8. Submit a detail of the trash enclosure. The trash enclosure shall be screened on four (4) sides (including a gate for access) by a solid, commercial-grade wood fence, wall, or equivalent material with a minimum height of six (6) feet and not greater than eight (8) feet.
9. Provide floor plans for the existing basement, first, and second floors.
10. Submit a management plan for the sorority.
11. Per Section 28.186(4)(b), the property owner or operator is required to bring the property into compliance with all elements of the approved site plans by the date established by the Zoning Administrator as part of the site and building plan approval. Work with Zoning staff to establish a final site compliance date.

Fire Review (Contact William Sullivan, (608) 261-9658)

12. Madison Fire does not object provided the project complies with all applicable building codes and Madison General Ordinances. The conversion of the attic space to living quarters may trigger compliance with current building and fire codes. Additional comments may be warranted.

Parks/Forestry Review (Contact Janet Schmidt, (608) 261-9688)

13. The existing sorority house currently is approved for 15 bedrooms. The applicant shall add a note to the plans that clearly specifies the number of bedrooms that will be available after the building is remodeled to determine if any Park Impact Fees will be due for the Group Living Quarters.