

From: [Leon Maurer](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Demo Permit - 2121 Jefferson St & 1007 Edgewood Ave (File# 86419)
Date: Monday, January 6, 2025 11:45:52 AM

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I am writing to strongly support the demolition application for 2121 Jefferson St. and 1007 Edgewood Ave. because the wellbeing of a house's residents should be your top priority.

I live in the Vilas neighborhood and understand its historic character. My house is over 100 years old, and while I appreciate its craftsmanship and many design features, old houses have major downsides --- including significant health hazards such as lead, asbestos, and radon. After my daughter's blood test showed significant lead levels, I've been on a multi-year lead mitigation project --- in addition to asbestos and radon mitigation projects (not to mention a project to replace unsafe knob-and-tube wiring). The fact is that, to truly remove all the hazards in old houses, you must tear them down to the studs --- both inside and out --- at which point the "historic character" is discarded along with the lead-paint-covered siding.

This is on top of more minor problems like making an old house energy efficient. While it's possible to improve insulation and air sealing to a degree (a project I have also spent much time on), it's virtually impossible to bring an old house up to modern standards. The wall cavities simply aren't deep enough to provide the same level of insulation as modern houses.

New houses do not have these problems. They are built without lead. They are built without asbestos. They are built with passive radon mitigation systems and better sealed basements. They are built with safe wiring. They are built with a level of energy efficiency that old houses could only dream about --- an important consideration for anyone concerned about the environment.

Technology marches on. No one would insist that residents of Vilas drive 100-year-old cars, and no one should insist that residents of Vilas live in 100-year-old houses.

The Plan Commission should prioritize the wellbeing of a house's inhabitants over the whims of meddling antiquarians and their nebulous concerns about "neighborhood character". Please approve this demolition permit.

Sincerely,

Leon Maurer
1611 Madison St.