

From: STEVEN ROBERT MYERS <smyers@chem.wisc.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 6:43 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: support of agenda item #62598

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As an employee of the Chemistry Department I work with members and alumni of Alpha Chi Sigma, and have seen the buildings in question. If anyone can appreciate the historical significance of the 619-621 Lake Street houses, it would be the fraternity that has resided there for so long. And yet, they are acknowledging the reality that these buildings are failing and there is no viable path to restoring and maintaining them. Please vote to approve this project and allow this excellent organization to thrive in their historic location.

Sincerely,

Steve Myers

Steve Myers
Department of Chemistry
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1101 University Ave
Madison, WI 53706

From: Judith Burstyn <jburstyn@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 6:08 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: planning item 62598

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62598: 619-621 N Lake Street; 8th Ald. Dist.: Consideration of a demolition permit to allow two fraternity houses to be demolished; consideration of conditional use in the Downtown Residential 2 (DR2) District for a multi-family dwelling with greater than eight (8) dwelling units; and consideration of a conditional use in the DR2 District for a fraternity, to allow construction of an eight-story residential building containing 20 apartments and a fraternity.

Dear Planning Commission,

I am a chemist and chair of the Department of Chemistry at UW-Madison. Alpha Chi Sigma, the professional chemistry fraternity, was founded at UW-Madison and its Alpha chapter resides in two old houses on Lake Street. These buildings are in poor condition, and the chapter is requesting planning commission approval to demolish these buildings and replace them with a multi-story residential fraternity building.

Chemists, chemical engineers and biochemists across the US value the role that Alpha Chi Sigma plays in our professional disciplines. Many students at UW-Madison benefit from the programs that the Alpha chapter provides, including free tutoring for the thousands of students who take chemistry every year. The chapter offers a unique living-learning opportunity for its members, and they would greatly benefit from modern living facilities to support their programs.

I and my UW-Madison department urge you to grant permission for the Alpha chapter of our professional fraternity, Alpha Chi Sigma, to upgrade their facilities on Lake Street.

Sincerely,

Judith N. Burstyn

Judith Burstyn
830 Ottawa Trail
Madison, WI 53711
jburstyn@me.com

From: Gary Tipler <garytip8778@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 5:59 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Plan Comm Item 17. Opposing Demolition of Lake St Properties

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Dear Plan Commissioners,

I oppose the demolition of these buildings, contributing buildings in the Langdon Street Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They meet the high standards of Contributors to the district and are worthy of renovation for an extended and renewed life.

The sense of place has been eroding in that area with the construction of some ill-fitting buildings that replaced historic buildings in the past few years. It's time to do a better job of maintaining the character, preserving buildings and permitting attractive buildings in scale with and in harmony with their setting to be built -- but don't replace the historic buildings. Integrate new ones into these unique urban environments.

The character of this neighborhood is essential to the identity of downtown Madison and its interface with the campus.

Please do the right thing.

Thank you.

Gary Tipler
807 Jenifer Street, Madison

From: Julia Matthews <juliamatthews4@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 4:52 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Please Approve Agenda Item 17 tonight.

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Dear Plan Commission,

My name is Julia Matthews and I am urging you to approve agenda item 17 (Demolition & Conditional Use - 619-621 N Lake St) at tonight's meeting.

I am a lifelong Madison resident, and was a resident of 621 N Lake St from fall 2011 to fall 2014. I have grown up around the beautiful, historic Madison buildings and neighborhoods and have always felt a deep connection to this place and the culture it embodies. 619 and 621 were a home to me both before I was officially a resident and long after, and up until spring 2019, I knew it was a place where I would always be welcome. The vast majority of my undergrad memories occurred in those two houses as have countless memories since graduation. Most of those memories are positive and all have shaped the person I am today, but some were centered more on the rough condition of the houses themselves.

One of the rooms I lived in was a converted 3 season porch that while huge, had old wooden flooring, could only be accessed by walking through the co-ed bathroom and showers, and had wall to wall, floor to ceiling windows on the 3 external walls. You can imagine this made for an interesting living experience when surrounded by other (same height or greater) apartments with windows.

The other room was on the N. Lake St side external wall and had a (lake facing) door out to the newly renovated outdoor balcony area. Even with multiple heaters, colder days of winter made it so the lower ~3 feet of the room were cold enough that I could leave drinks on the ground and they would be as cold as if I had pulled them from the refrigerator downstairs. When it was especially windy, the door to the balcony would fly open with enough force to slam against the wall if it wasn't deadbolted shut. The first time this happened was at 3am, and it would happen again in the middle of the night a few more times before I remembered to make sure it was always deadbolted and seemingly every time I forgot. Also you should know this room was considered one of the most desirable of 621. Lastly, I still remember the feeling of ensuring I was extra careful walking up and down the stairs every single time so I didn't slip. Each house has a full 3 stories worth of internal staircases and an outer staircase for the main entryways. As a mostly able-bodied person, I did fall down each of the main staircases at least once while living in the houses. To be able to have a space that is ADA accessible would mean so much for our organization both for those who are current collegiate members and for the possibility of making our organization more accessible to future members and our aging alumni base.

Tonight you will likely hear many people refer to both the houses as 'our' houses and the proposed demolition and conditional use as 'our' plan. I want to point out the reason for that terminology. Though the houses are technically owned by our housing corporation Alpha Corp,

the organization and all its board members is staffed through alumni of Alpha Chi Sigma. All collegiate members become members of Alpha Corp upon graduation and all participation and board membership is a strictly volunteer basis for which there is no compensation. Additionally the houses are run with a co-op structure, and collegiate members hold elected housing related positions to the effect of property management. There is a treasurer, head of each house, and overall 'landlord'. Additionally all active members are expected to put in hours throughout the semester for housing maintenance and improvement projects. This structure gives the collegiate members a great sense of ownership over the houses, and while the more property management heavy positions were tough and thankless, those people worked extremely hard and were always quick to address all maintenance needs.

The physical location of 619 and 621 N Lake St is a wildly desirable place to live for students and young adults in the downtown area. It is extremely close to businesses, restaurants, bars, grocery stores, buslines, and most of campus-more so than any other street in the Langdon neighborhood. I was able to work multiple jobs all around the Madison area and campus from Middleton to Warner Beach to the Natatorium while living in this home due to the bus access and walkability. This ability to work in many locations, along with the frat subsidized rent, is the only way I financially survived school. I would have had to take out at least double the student loans I currently have if not for these factors, and that entire amount would have been private. I was also able to be just hundreds of feet from the memorial union terrace, library mall, and the 80 bus stop.

These incredible positives should be available to more students than just those who can afford to live in the luxury high rises and other higher end apartment buildings in the lower State St area and other more campus central locations. The market rent in our proposed building would be at the lower end, and much more affordable than most other apartment buildings constructed in recent years.

With the mention of affordability, I want to refer back to the November 9th Plan Commission meeting and the approval of legistar number 62096. With the exception of Alder Rummel, every plan commission member voted to approve this proposal even though it is a luxury apartment building and is sacrificing affordable units and displacing families during the ongoing housing crisis and pandemic. There was a lengthy discussion at this meeting on being more open to affordable housing proposals as they arise. Our proposal does have some below market rate units in the fraternity subsidized housing, but even the market rate units will go for almost half the rent per room of the proposed luxury apartment approved on November 9. Please don't vote against this plan that will add much needed affordable density to the downtown area.

Finally, I would like to address the main obstacle of our plan: Historic Preservation. Alpha Chi Sigma has inhabited this corner of N Lake St for almost 100 years. Both houses were originally built for use by fraternities and we had continued that historic use up until spring 2019 when both houses were vacated due to safety and other constraints. Also Alpha Chi Sigma was founded at UW-Madison, giving even more significance to our historic involvement in the very culture that created the Langdon historic district.

While the architectural facade is different and the plan comes with the additional floors (though these are bringing much needed affordable housing and additional access to this great transit hub neighborhood), the historic functions of the 'historic' properties will be preserved and built upon

with our proposal. This new development will give stability to our organization that we have not known in at least the 10 years I have been involved, and truly could set us up to continue and expand the historic fraternal community and culture for the next 100 years.

All of this is to try to explain and justify that our organization has helped build this neighborhood culture and it is an essential part of the history and that the human aspect of this history should be at least as important as the architecture of an empty building. This development proposal is unique because the owners of the houses aren't just some high rolling developers or property owners who have leased the building to students and now want to cash in. It's unique because the model of our housing has never been for profit and always prioritized giving student members the lowest rent possible to keep access as open as possible. It is unique because this is the last potential avenue for our organization to stay in its historic home on N Lake St and continue to contribute to this neighborhood and community of which it has been a member (and seen 1000's of residents and fraternal members) for the last 100 years. Without this proposal and development partnership we will be forced out of this place. I mention above that a significant portion of my memories over the last 10 years were made in these 2 existing houses, and to think that they are sitting empty now when they were so full of life is already extremely hard. To think that they will have to be demolished for our plan is truly heartbreaking, and I think you will hear that from other members and alumni tonight. However, none of the memories would be possible without the people and the organization, and the plan we are putting forward fills me with hope for the future of Alpha Chi Sigma and the future home it will become for current members, prospective members, and alumni like myself. Please approve this plan so that we can continue to call N Lake Street home!

Thank you,

Julia Matthews
1121 Rutledge St, Unit 3b
Madison, WI 53703

From: bertstitt <bertstitt@tds.net>

Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 4:15 PM

To: Plan Commission Comments <pccomments@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Bob Klebba <bob.klebba@gmail.com>; Benjamin Pierce <benjamin.pierce@gmail.com>; Bert Stitt <bertstitt@tds.net>; Mullins, Bradley <brad@mullinsgroup.com>; Chi Omega House Mother <chiomeganu.housemother@gmail.com>; coordinatingofficer@madisoncommunity.coop; dgghousemom103@gmail.com; diego.lemahernandez <diego.lemahernandez@wisc.edu>; Heck, Patrick <district2@cityofmadison.com>; Prestigiacom, Max <district8@cityofmadison.com>; David Mollenhoff <dmollenhoff@charter.net>; Eli Judge <elijudge1@gmail.com>; Franny Ingebritson <fingebritson@gmail.com>; Gary Tipler <garytip8778@gmail.com>; Kris Sonnentag <kasonnentag@charter.net>; Yonden Dorje <kennedymanor1@yahoo.com>; Ledell Zellers <ledell.zellers@gmail.com>; machacoop@gmail.com; Dan Mccammon <mccammon@physics.wisc.edu>; James McFadden <mcfadden@mailbag.com>; Mike Stengl <michaelstengl@gmail.com>; Mitnick, Matt <mmitnick@wisc.edu>; Nicholas Garton <ngarton@madison.com>; Peter Ostlind <postlind@chartermi.net>; ALEXIS MARIE PREEDGE <preedge@wisc.edu>; Eli Judge, CNI President <president@capitolneighborhoods.org>; rivendell.coop@gmail.com; Sally Rohrer <sallyarohrer@gmail.com>; Christine Hughes <theimagingadvocate@gmail.com>; Barb Garrity <treasurebox3596@gmail.com>; Bill Lizdas <wlizdas@gmail.com>; Amol Goyal <agoyal8@wisc.edu>; Adrian Philip Lampron <lampron@wisc.edu>; SAMUEL ANTHONY JORUDD <jorudd@wisc.edu>; JULIAN LUKE NAZARETH <jnazareth@wisc.edu>; Lennox Owino Ochieng <lowino@wisc.edu>; Elena Haasl <eahaasl@wisc.edu>; EMMA R AXELROD <eaxelrod@wisc.edu>; Linda Lehnertz <lehnertz.l@att.net>; Kurt Stege <kurt.stege@gmail.com>; Alex Saloutos <asaloutos@tds.net>; Madeline Norton <madeline.norton@gmail.com>

Subject: 619-621 N. Lake Street

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Honorable Plan Commission Members

I write today to express my opposition to the proposed demolition of historic properties at 619-621N. Lake Street.

While in an 'intentional' state of disrepair these properties are precious to the integrity of our community and its future as a dignified community for the University of Wisconsin Campus as well as the integrity of the historic neighborhood/district within which they stand.

I hope the plan commission will exercise great caution in consideration of this 'desecration' of the 'Langdon Street' neighborhood.

Regards

bert stitt

Plan Commission
Meeting of November 23, 2020
Agenda #17, Legistar #62598, 619 and 621 N. Lake

The 600 block of North Lake Street is the gateway from campus to the Langdon Street Historic District. The 600 block, between Langdon and Mendota Court, is one of two intact block faces remaining. (The north 200 Langdon block is intact except for the corner property which is located at a bend in the street and therefore visually separated.)

600 Block N. Lake



Wisconsin Historical Society

In order to approve demolition, the Plan Commission needs to find that the requested demolition is "compatible with the purpose of" MGO 28.185, *Approval of Demolition (Razing, Wrecking) and Removal*. The ordinance's statement of purpose says:

"The purpose of this section is to *aid in the implementation of adopted City plans, protect neighborhood character, preserve historic buildings*, encourage the reuse and/or relocation of existing buildings, discourage buildings falling into a state of severe disrepair from lack of maintenance by the owner, encourage compliance with building and minimum housing codes, and allow the property owner to have a decision on approval or disapproval of the proposed use of the property before he or she takes the irrevocable step of demolishing or moving his or her existing building or buildings."

Demolition of 619 and 621 N Lake is not compatible with the purpose of MGO 28.185. Demolition would not "aid in the implementation of adopted City plans" nor "preserve historic buildings" nor "protect neighborhood character."

History of preservation of Langdon area historic resources

The *Langdon Street Historic District* ("District") was listed on the National Register in 1986. This designation, of course, did not provide any protection to the District either in terms of demolition or compatibility of new construction with historic resources. However, a measure of protection has been provided since that time, and the Common Council has manifested a clear intent to preserve the District.

The *Downtown Plan* was adopted by the Council in 2012. This Plan contains several recommendations for the Langdon neighborhood, including:

- Recommendation 94: Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of contributing historic buildings.
- Recommendation 95: Encourage relatively higher-density infill and redevelopment that is compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non-landmark locations and sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District.

In 2017, the Council approved funding for a character study of the Langdon neighborhood. The study, the *Langdon Neighborhood Character Study, 2018 survey report*, is dated November 30, 2018. Under the "General Recommendations" section, the report states:

"This study confirms that the essential historic character that initially warranted designation of the Langdon Street and Mansion Hill districts remains. Preservation of this character is beneficial to the neighborhood in that it:

1. Preserves essential City of Madison historic character that is unique from any other neighborhood
2. Provides a very necessary mixed-scale district that transitions taller and larger university and State Street buildings to the residential neighborhoods beyond, such as Mansion Hill
3. Provides a walkable residential-scale streetscape
4. Provides access and vistas to Lake Mendota
5. Conveys the deep history of university growth and its long-term community impact"

https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Langdon%20Neighborhood%20Character%20Study_11-30-18.pdf

The *Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 2018, identified areas for infill and recognized the importance of context-sensitive design.

- "Madison will need to balance encouraging redevelopment and infill with protecting the qualities that made existing neighborhoods appealing to begin with. Redeveloping existing auto-oriented commercial centers and other areas identified in the Growth Priority Areas Map, Generalized Future Land Use Map, and sub-area plans will help accommodate needed growth *while respecting the historic character of older neighborhoods.*" (emphasis added)
- "Context-sensitive design is particularly important in neighborhoods with an established character and where redevelopment or infill is occurring in close proximity to buildings of historic or architectural value. *Restoration of historic assets can be an important part of context-sensitive design.*" (emphasis added)

The *Historic Preservation Plan* was adopted by the Council in 2020.

- The Historic Preservation Plan introduction finds:
“Three fundamental functions of historic preservation include: ... 3) preserving undesigned areas with unique architectural, urban and spatial characteristics that enhance the character of the built environment, such as properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places that do not possess the protections provided by local designation.”
- One of the Historic Preservation Plan’s priority strategies is: “Consider properties with existing National Register of Historic Places designation and those identified through future survey work for local designation.”

The Landmarks Commission found that the “buildings at 619 N Lake Street and 621 N Lake Street have very significant historic value based on architectural and historic significance as noted in the 2018 Langdon Neighborhood Character Study and property files at the State Historic Preservation Office, the significant integrity they retain, their status as contributing structures in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District, and their serving as a gateway to the Langdon Street National Register Historic District and therefore having prominence in the overall district.”

North Frances to North Lake section of the District

The applicant hired a consultant to opine on historic integrity after the date the Landmarks Commission issued its decision (document #13 of the Legistar record). The report from Legacy Architecture makes conclusions:

- “This serious lack of integrity [12 non-contributing, 11 contributing buildings] calls into question the continuation of protections in the name of historic preservation west of North Frances Street.”
- “While much of the historic district maintains its integrity, the western end, along North Lake Street and North Frances Street, does not as a majority of the properties in the area have lost their integrity and would no longer be considered contributing to a historic district.”
- “Individually, the houses are in poor to fair condition and lack architectural integrity to a degree that would disqualify them as historically significant examples of their style.”

Unlike the opinion obtained by the applicant, the City’s *Langdon Neighborhood Character Study* found that both 619 and 621 retained high or moderate integrity (both buildings were listed as contributing, and contributing buildings had to have high or moderate integrity). The study confirmed “that the essential historic character that initially warranted designation of the Langdon Street and Mansion Hill districts remains.” The study did not even suggest that the most westerly block of the District should be deemed to be no longer contributing to the District.

As to the consultant’s opinion neither building would qualify as a historically significant example of their style, this is irrelevant. A building can be designated a landmark if it “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable as representative of a ... style ...” (MGO 41.07(2)(d), substantially similar to federal landmark language). Whether or not the buildings would qualify for landmark status, they do contribute to the District.

The question may be one of what happens to the District if two more contributing resources are demolished. Would this loss place the most westerly block at risk of losing its National Register designation? If this block is lost, would the loss negate the entire National Register designation?

[Attachment A](#) is a map of the most westerly block of the District. It shows: the status of the buildings (contributing to the District or non-contributing); the year a new building replaced a contributing building; and how demolition of 619 and 621 would isolate the remaining historic resources.

[Attachment B](#) is a historic comparison of contributing buildings. Of particular note:

- 75% of the buildings were historic resources in 1986. That has dropped to 48% and would drop to 41% if the demolitions are approved. (If 627 Mendota Court is deemed a historic resource, which it was in 1986, then historic resources would currently account for 52% of the buildings.)
- 56% of the land mass contained historic resources in 1986. That has dropped to 34% and would drop to 31% if the demolitions are approved.

Applicant's consultant also is critical of 619's front porch and questions whether "this visually obtrusive addition" should make 619 a non-contributing building. This new porch (which the consultant called the "[m]ost damning for the building's architectural integrity") may well have been constructed after the survey was made in 1985-86 for national register designation. However, as can be seen in old photos ([Attachment E](#)), the old porch was also, as described by the consultant, "a large, brick porch ... across the entire front façade of the building." Plus, the City's expert believes 619 is a contributing resource as reflected in the *Langdon Neighborhood Character Study*. (Had the City's expert deemed the front porch a visually obtrusive addition, it could have recommended non-contributing status despite the original designation, as it did with 627 Mendota Court.)

District demolitions since adoption of the Downtown Plan

Except for one planned development, the Waterfront, no demolition of historic resources has been approved since adoption of the Downtown Plan.

[Note: 210 Langdon was demolished in 2013. The original contributing building added a large front chalet-style addition in 1964 that hid the original structure from the street view, and that addition was deemed non-contributing.]

The demolition of three contributing properties in connection with the Waterfront planned development was approved by a vote of 5-3 (with 3 non-voting and 1 excused) after the Plan Commission twice referred the project and after significant changes to the design of the proposed structure. The three properties were: 619 N. Henry (Spooner Apartments), 625 N. Henry (Sigma Nu Fraternity House) and 145 Iota Court (Batchelor Apartments).

The staff report addendum prepared for the final Plan Commission meeting stated:

“The demolition of the 3 existing buildings, which are contributing structures within the Langdon Street National Register Historic District, and the scale and mass of the new apartment building continue to be inconsistent with key recommendations of the Downtown Plan. Therefore, staff cannot recommend that the revised planned unit development and demolition permit meet the applicable standards and criteria for approval.

Preservation and compatibility with existing character are key themes in the Downtown Plan (“the Plan”) for the Langdon District, most of which is located in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District. As stated in the earlier staff report, national register districts are not locally regulated. However, preserving contributing buildings is a goal of the Plan, and new development in the Langdon District is recommended to preserve the historic and architectural heritage of the area and enhance the essential character of the neighborhood. Infill redevelopment compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non-landmark locations and sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Historic District is recommended. The demolition of 3 buildings determined to be contributing structures in Langdon Street National Register Historic District is inconsistent with these recommendations. ...”

The reason for the Plan Commission finding “the standards met to grant approval of the demolition permit” is not clear from the written record. However, the Waterfront project did advance the Downtown Plan in two respects: (1) renovation of 150 Langdon, a contributing structure, for which the renovation building permit reflects a cost of \$250,000; and, (2) dedication of a permanent public easement for the lakefront pedestrian/bicycle path along the northern edge of 140 Iota Court adjacent to Lake Mendota as recommended in the Downtown Plan. (Also, Iota Court was extended, allowing for a connection to the mid-block drive easement, creating easier access which was supported by the police department.)

Argument for demolition

The letter of intent claims that AXS has “exhausted their financial reserves.”

- 619 is owned by Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity, Building Corporation, Inc. (“AXSBC”), the entity which also owned 621 until this past July.
- The most recent tax forms available for AXSBC, fiscal years ending 6/30/18 (FY 2017) and 6/30/17 (FY 2016), show a financial reserve. The FY 2017 had cash, savings and temporary cash investments of \$69,374 (after reduction for accounts payable and accrued expenses). The mortgage balance was \$162,273.
- AXSBC’s only income was rent (other than \$9-14 in investment income), \$114,610 for FY 2017 and \$51,283 in FY 2016. Assuming 21 tenants (the number of rooms reflected in the assessor’ commercial property record) and 9 months of rent, rents increased from about \$271/month to about \$606/month.
- The spring 2019 AXS newsletter said ([Attachment C](#)): “That said [discussed letter of intent], we still need help from our brothers. The current incarnation of our home may be disappearing, but the fundamental challenges of property ownership will remain. Our new space will need funding to provide building finishes, furniture, and other improvements to turn the bare walls into a new home.”
 - Applicant states (document #10) that their 2014 feasibility study for a capital campaign gave dismal results on prospective fundraising. Yet in FY 2016 \$6,306 was

spent on professional fundraising, and \$8,515 in FY 2017. (True, neither effort raised any money in those two fiscal years, or at least not for AXSBC.)

- How much will the new joint venture cost AXS/AXSBC? AXS/AXSBC would own the first two floors of the proposed building. 621 sold in July for \$470,000 (assessed at \$515,000) and 619 is assessed at \$470,000. Is \$940,000 enough to pay for the first two floors? Or will a larger mortgage and more fundraising be needed than would be needed for renovation?

The letter of intent claims 621 was “deemed structurally unsound,” that a “portion of the first and second floors was found to be supported on temporary shoring due to bowing and leaning walls.”

- AXS/AXSBC **knew about structural issues back in 2014**, per the spring 2019 newsletter ([Attachment C](#)): “In 2014, we discovered that 621 had significant structural issues including a crumbling foundation underneath the north wall (nearest the lake). Alpha Corp managed to secure temporary relief through construction of a shoring wall, but this fix only bought a few years’ time for our organization to find a sustainable long-term solution.” (See also, document #10 to Legistar #62598.)
 - The demolition photos for 621 (photos 2, 3, 5) show one section of the north side with shoring and one corresponding basement photo (15) with supports. Is one wall enough to condemn a contributing historic resource?
 - The area with shoring is where a downspout came down and terminated at the edge of the building (2007 Google street view) which had a downspout extension by the next Google street view in 2018, with the extension up against the house by the 2019 Google street view. ([Attachment D](#)) The applicant’s structural engineer also notes “a downspout in the area with no horizontal leader on it.” (Document #10) Perhaps the crumbling foundation could originally have been avoided with proper drainage, and further damage could have been mitigated through consistent use of a horizontal leader.
- Many photos just show a mess (6, 9, 14), drywall damage (4, 5, 7), or fallen false ceiling tiles (10, 14). Such photos do not support demolition.

The letter of intent states that 619 “has wall and ceiling cracking, deforming structural system, failing foundations and several other signs of critical decline.”

- Wall and ceiling cracking is not a reason to tear down a contributing historic resource (if it was, the vast majority of historic resources would be subject to demolition).
- “Failing foundations” are not among the 619 demolition photos, though a spalling step is shown (exterior photo 4).
- The “deforming structural system” is not clear from the photos.
- A bowed plexiglas window (4), a mess (6, 7, 8), plaster detaching from the ceiling (7), an inexplicable door replacing a window on the north second floor which leads nowhere (9), fallen ceiling tiles (10), what appears to be a removed window seat (11), or water damaged ceiling tile (14) , do not support demolition.

The letter of intent states both houses received "regular maintenance."

- A stated purpose of MGO 28.185, Approval of Demolition, is to "discourage buildings falling into a state of severe disrepair from lack of maintenance by the owner."
- The letter of intent states that the "placement of shoring is not enough to keep the system stable and therefore not currently occupied." Yet a subsequent submission, document #10, states the building is not occupied due to "expiration of the shoring wall warranty period." An expired warranty does not necessarily mean the system is unstable. If there has been further deterioration resulting in safety issues, that could be argued as reflecting a lack of maintenance.
- When "regular maintenance" is claimed, that maintenance schedule is worthy of exploration. For example, could the water stains at 619 (photo 15) be due to a leaking roof (building permit records show building permits dating back to 1995, but none for a new roof)?
- Building permits for 621 show the following expenditures:
 - 2015: replace front porch. Total value \$11,000
[Note: This was a replacement of the second-story sitting porch.]
 - 2014: replace water heater
 - 2013: 12 electrical openings added/removed and 2 sinks added in connection with a kitchen remodel (demolition photos do not show 621's kitchen)
 - 2006: reshingle. Total value \$15,750
 - 2003: replace HVAC
 - 2003: drywall repair. Total value \$2,000.
 - 2001: stucco replacement and patch. Total value \$6,000
Plus miscellaneous electrical repair/replacement (2000-2004), door replacement, and one plumbing repair/replacement.
- Building permits for 619 show the following expenditures:
 - 2013: add/move 26 electrical circuits
 - 2008: kitchen remodel, replace kitchen windows with no changes to existing floor plan or structure. Total value \$9,000.
 - 2005: bathroom upgrade –remove plaster, install drywall, tile, replace window with the same size. Total value \$15,000.
 - 2004: repair 2 story porch. Total value \$5,000
 - 2001: replace stucco and flashing. Total value \$6,000
Plus miscellaneous electrical repair/replacement (from 1995-2006), and one repair/replace plumbing.
- The building permits do not mesh with the maintenance/repair/remodeling claimed by the applicant in document #10. No building permits were issued after 2015, yet the maintenance/repair/remodeling expenditures for 2016-2019 total \$69,240. (True, not every maintenance/repair/remodeling expenditure requires a building permit.)
- "It has long been a dream of many brothers to tear down the houses and rebuild one large structure in their place." ([Attachment C.](#))

The letter of intent states the "overall living conditions and amenities offered in these two buildings is well below that of contemporary housing for a similar tenant base in Madison."

- True, older housing does not have all the amenities of new construction. But it also does not have the cost. Take, for example, the Waterfront planned development. A one bedroom at the Waterfront starts at \$1,725/month and a one bedroom at 150 Langdon (renovated historic building, part of the Waterfront planned development) starts at \$985/month. (Palisade Property website, 10/26/20.)

<https://www.palisadeproperty.com/availability-pricing>) The increase in “overall living conditions and amenities” results in a 75% rent increase.

- The demolition ordinance, MGO 28.185, declares that the “preservation of safe and sanitary housing available at reasonable prices” is a matter of public policy.
- The photos do not give a full picture of the two buildings. For example: 621 has 3 full baths per the assessor’s commercial property record, yet one is shown; 621’s 2013 kitchen remodel is not shown; and, 619 has 2 full baths, only one is shown.

New construction

Unlike the 126 Langdon proposal, the footprint of the proposed structure is not grossly out of line with nearby historic resources. However, height is an issue.

MGO 28.071, General Provisions for Downtown and Urban Districts, includes within the statement of purpose: recognize the architectural heritage and cultural resources of Downtown neighborhoods; and, facilitate context-sensitive development. Does an 8-story replacement building further these purposes, particularly when it would be placed on a very visible site?

There are several historic resources at about 60 feet in height: 633 Langdon is a 5-story building; and, 627 N Lake was a historic resource of 3 stories to which an additional 3 stories were added (the *Langdon Neighborhood Character Study* deems this a non-contributing structure). The other contributing resources on Mendota Court are 3-4 stories, and neighbors on 600 N Lake are 2½ stories.

The proposed 8-story building is within the maximum height allowed under MGO 28.071, but a developer is not *entitled* to 8 stories. A developer is entitled to build a multi-family dwelling of 8 units. Conceivably, a developer could build an 8-story building with one unit per floor - but that is not what is being requested.

Also worth noting is that the relatively large nearby historic resources have architectural details. 633 Langdon has a distinctive entry, two courses of bands, parapet details, a keystone detail above each window, and brick with different shades. 66 Mendota Court has 7 dormers, stones of different sizes/shapes, a different window pattern for each story, and a prominent entrance. In contrast, the proposed building on the Mendota Court side is 7 stories of a relatively monochromatic brick, with window ledges of a similar shade, as is the northerly 65 feet of the N Lake frontage.

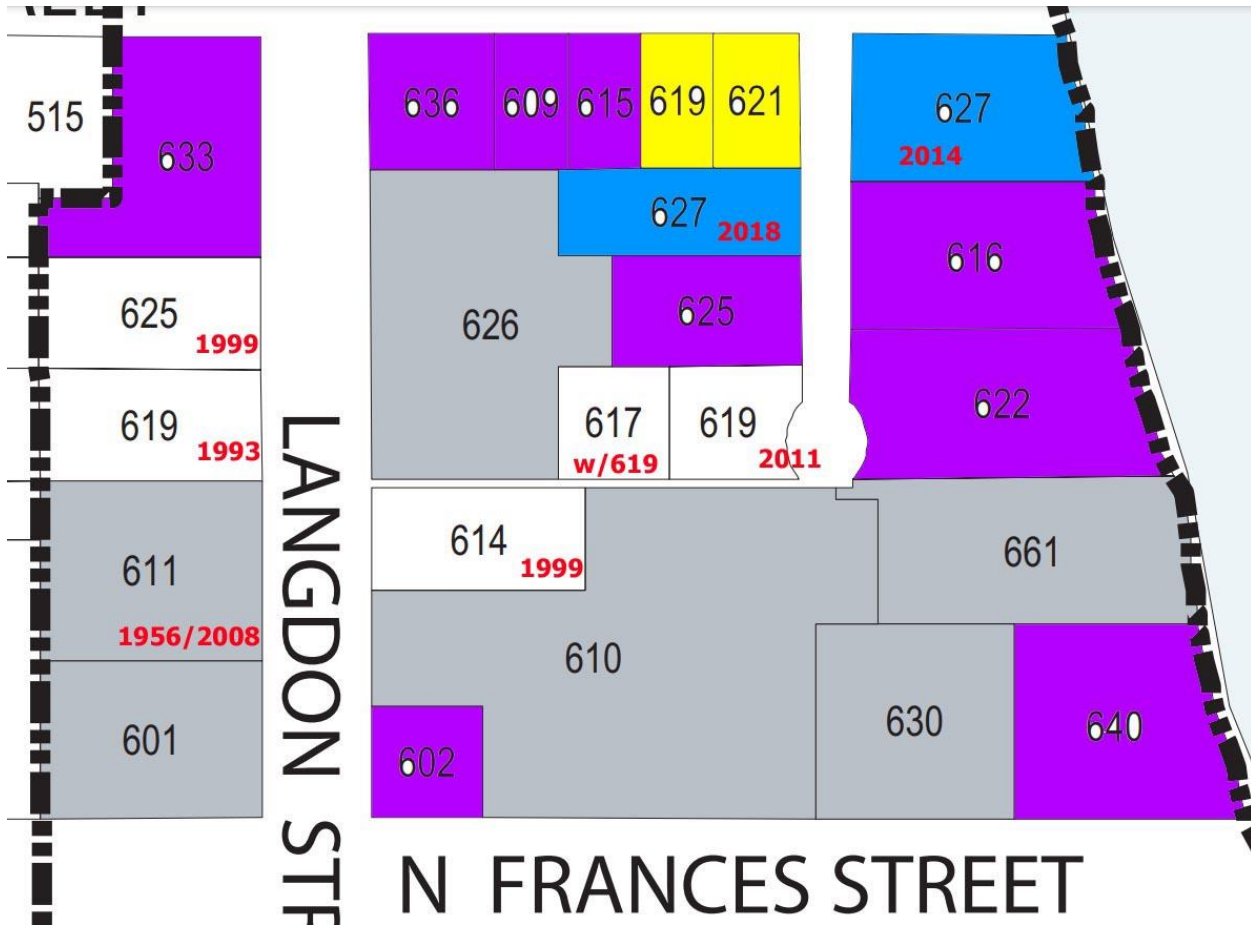
Closing

It is understandable that AXS/AXSBC wants to remain in its current location. ([Attachment C](#): “Neither could we part with our cozy little corner of Lake Street and relocate elsewhere in the downtown/campus area of Madison.”) However, the desire of a property owner does not control a demolition decision, particularly when the preservation/rehabilitation of historic buildings is a City objective. In addition, one purpose of the demolition ordinance is to “encourage the reuse ... of existing buildings.” Reuse of 619 and 621 appear feasible, whether or not they are used by AXS/AXSBC.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Lehnertz

ATTACHMENT A
 Map of Langdon Street Historic District, N. Frances to N. Lake

[<Return to text>](#)



Color Key:

Purple: Contributing resources

Yellow: Proposed demolition of contributing resources

Blue: Remodels that the *Langdon Neighborhood Character Study* classifies as non-contributing, but in which the original structure remains.

Grey: Non-contributing in 1986*

White: Became non-contributing after 1986*

*The *Langdon Street Historic District* was listed on the National Register in 1986.

ATTACHMENT B
Historic Comparison of Contributing Buildings

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	1986	2018 Study	demo of 619 and 621
# Contributing	18	11	9
# Non-Contributing	6	12	13
Total	24	23	22
% Contributing	75%	48%	41%
Acres Contributing	3.4	2.03	1.84
Acres Non-Contributing	2.62	3.99	4.18
	6.02	6.02	6.02
% Contributing	56%	34%	31%
Non-C year of construction			
1960s		4	
1970s*		1	
1990s		3	
2008**		1	
2011		1	
2014 (remodel)***		1	
2018 (Study change)****		1	
		12	

*The Roundhouse apartments, built in 1970, added an addition in 2014.

**611 Langdon was constructed in 2008, replacing a building constructed in 1956.

***627 Mendota Court added 3 stories to a 3-story building.

**** The Langdon Neighborhood Character Study reclassified 627 Mendota Court as non-contributing (the front façade existed at the time of the 1986 nomination).

ATTACHMENT C
Text of Alpha Chapter's Spring 2019 newsletter
<https://alphachisigmauw.com/storage/media/alpha-particle-spring-2019.pdf>
Highlights are the portions quoted in the text.

Alpha Chapter Houses: The Path Forward

To my brothers in Alpha Chi Sigma,

I come to you with bittersweet, yet hopeful, news about the Alpha Chapter Houses. Earlier this month, the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma, Building Corporation, Inc. (Alpha Corp) signed a letter of intent with a local developer to pursue an ambitious new construction project on the land currently occupied by the chapter houses. This marks a significant turning point in Alpha Chapter and fraternity history.

As many of you are aware, the chapter houses—located at 621 and 619 North Lake Street—have been deteriorating with age, well beyond the ability of regular maintenance and upkeep. In 2014, we discovered that 621 had significant structural issues including a crumbling foundation underneath the north wall (nearest the lake). Alpha Corp managed to secure temporary relief through construction of a shoring wall, but this fix only bought a few years' time for our organization to find a sustainable long-term solution. The situation was further complicated due to financial challenges. While Alpha Corp has been able to maintain a stable operating budget, cashflow, and emergency savings, our organization did not have a capital reserve in place for major rehabilitation or reconstruction of the properties. With the clock ticking down, the board faced a challenge unlike any other and needed to take decisive action. As the custodians of the Alpha Chapter houses—the first of the fraternity—we needed to ensure the security of our home for generations to come, just as our predecessors had.

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As such, we have explored numerous strategies for the chapter. We reached out to our alumni for professional expertise. We engaged outside consultants to assess the viability of a capital campaign to establish principal funding for new construction. We contracted with property management companies to stabilize ongoing maintenance/ operations and simultaneously leverage their professional relationships with construction companies, architects, and real estate developers. We connected with all kinds of lenders, from private banks to public bonds to special financing programs for historical rehabilitation. We considered every option, up to and including an outright public listing and sale of the properties. Many of the least desirable options were also the easiest and least risky to execute, and they would have ensured long-term financial stability.

The choice was not easy. As brothers, we all have fond memories of our collegiate years, and for Alpha Chapter alumni, many of these memories were made in these two houses. The activities they have hosted are too numerous to count, from chapter meetings, tutoring, dinners, parties, celebrations and impromptu gatherings, to deep conversations, solemn remembrances, and the initiation rites of hundreds of Alpha brothers—the houses are truly a special part of the Alpha Chapter. Every brother with whom I have spoken, no matter how many years have passed since their days as collegiate, can point to a space in the houses and recall a memorable moment that took place there. The sentiment of “if these walls could talk” is truly real for 621 and 619.

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As a board, we could not resign ourselves to the easy way out. Divestiture of even one house felt wrong, as though we would be selling off one family member to save the remainder. Neither could we part with our cozy little corner of Lake Street and relocate elsewhere in the downtown/ campus area of Madison. Yet, we could not deny the reality of the situation before us, and it was in these values and decisions that we came to our chosen path forward. It has long been a dream of many brothers to tear down the houses and rebuild one large structure in their place. That dream will soon become a reality, but perhaps in a

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different sense than originally envisioned. Due to financial constraints, funding new construction would be impossible for Alpha Corp on its own—an outside source of cash was a necessity. As the prospects of a successful donor-funded capital campaign were slim at best, we reached out to real estate developers (both local and regional / national) with the offer of a joint venture on the existing footprint. In many ways, a joint venture is the ideal solution for our organization. We would provide land in a highly desirable location, and our partner would provide capital and development expertise. Together, we would pursue an eight-story development on the existing footprint. We thus defined our high-level future vision: the ground floor would be shared space for the building tenants. Two stories would be allocated to the fraternity: one as common space for all brothers, and the other as apartment-style residences rented out to brothers. Our developer partner would retain the remaining five floors as rental apartments.

Such a project carries numerous risks beyond those typical of new construction. Joint ventures, much like marriages, are fraught with potential issues, but the key to success lies in finding the right partner. Through a rigorous search and vetting process, we, the Alpha Corp board, believe we have found such a person and company: Patrick Corcoran, owner of Patrick Properties in Madison, WI. In many ways, Patrick is an ideal fit for our vision. He completed a similar development a few years ago just around the corner from our houses: 621 Mendota Court. The eight-story apartment building sits on a plot formerly occupied by two discrete rental houses. Patrick worked with the City of Madison to obtain all the necessary permits and approvals in addition to partnering with architects and a general contractor to complete the construction. He has navigated the process from concept to completion before.

The most critical factor in any relationship, especially one as permanent as this, is trust. As a board, we have done an extensive amount of due diligence, from background checks to professional references to a full-blown RFP process to vet Patrick. In all aspects, he has passed with flying colors. Throughout numerous conversations, both formal and informal, he has conducted himself with the utmost professionalism, integrity, and candor. I have no doubts that he is the right partner for Alpha Corp to execute on this vision.

And thus, we come to the present day. Our two organizations have signed a letter of intent, but this is merely the start of the long and arduous process to replace the existing structures. Patrick and Alpha Corp are working towards an ambitious goal, which includes the aim of beginning construction as early as summer this year. However, there are a lot of unknowns and variables to consider, and even the timeline itself may change. Despite the ambiguities, we are in good hands for successfully executing this project. We are fortunate to have the assistance of alumni with extensive professional experience in mergers & acquisitions who are helping guide this effort.

That said, we still need help from our brothers. The current incarnation of our home may be disappearing, but the fundamental challenges of property ownership will remain. Our new space will need funding to provide building finishes, furniture, and other improvements to turn the bare walls into a new home. There are many ways to get involved and contribute to the future home of the Alpha Chapter, and especially to leave a legacy behind for generations of brothers to come.

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And lastly – please rest assured that we will have the opportunity to properly say goodbye to the houses. Change can be hard, but the fabric of our brotherhood is fundamentally built upon the study of change. And though we must continue to strive for progress, we cannot forget the ties that bind us together. These houses have sheltered us in innumerable ways for decades, and it is only fitting that we send them off with same love and warmth they have provided us for so long.

We will continue to provide updates and communication on our progress and ways to help the housing effort. Recognizing the early stage of this development, I ask that this news not be broadcast outside of the

fraternity at this time, as we do have certain public disclosures of which to be mindful. At any time, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Yours in the double bond,
Jay Sekhon, A'07
Vice President
Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma, Building Corporation, Inc.

ATTACHMENT D

[<Return to text>](#)



Google Street View July, 2007



Google Street View August, 2018



Google Street View July, 2019



Google Street View July, 2019

ATTACHMENT E
619 N Lake's old front porch

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Wisconsin Historical Society

I am writing I regards to the proposed demolition at 619 and 621 Lake Street, as forwarded by Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity, the traditional occupants, and Patrick Properties, their proposed partner for this development.

I had some doubts about this project from the beginning and did my best to express them. I can say that the neighborhood committee report, as an aggregate, fairly represents my contribution to the total result. That said, I have, upon careful consideration, enough discontent with the project itself that I wish to stand apart, as an individual from that total statement to speak against permitting this demolition.

A presentation by the architect at the Monday November 16th meeting negatively impressed me to a strong degree, eroding much of the resignation I had built up towards saying nothing. Much of the discussion spoke of preserving “tradition” while admitting that the two new buildings, one in particular, are boxes with some articulation—I think of them as boxes with pretenses. The reality is that Bauhaus-derived boxes are where the traditions that once informed finer architecture ended. Industrially-informed architecture may claim a duration, even a history, but it can never claim tradition, not even when a thousand more years have passed. Tradition demands meaning and content beyond function and economy, and boxes will never have what it takes.

If we were talking about actually historical buildings, at the gateway to an actual historical district, this might be a purely theoretical point. The many references to architectural tradition made were disingenuous and rhetorical, aimed at hiding the fact that genuinely traditional buildings stand to be demolished for the sake of modern people-boxes—and in a neighborhood where the protections that do exist may well be eroded later by this latest exception.

This rhetorical strategy is symptomatic of a deeper issue: Had the historic district extended a short way further West, had these buildings been made a little to the East—and I mean less distance than one would take to walk from these buildings to most of Campus—this demolition, on many grounds, would never be allowed, and perhaps the initial indications from the City and the neighborhood would be such that this discussion would not no be taking place at all.

I take quite seriously Bob Klebba’s experience-and-success oriented testimony regarding the probable neglect, and the ready solutions that could have been taken, currently accounting for the building’s unusable state at last if they are left as they are now. I once regarded demolition as regrettable but inevitable. I take seriously the earnest desire of the intentional community, AXS, to continue residing there as they have so long done. I am in serious doubt as to whether they have been manipulated by they developer, perhaps in cahoots with the Building foundation or other potentially interested parties within the set of organizations (Local, National, Building Foundation, etc), which may include individuals who could have particular incentives to be gained—that is not pleasant to say, but the reality is that when there is money involved at this scale, such a possibility must be kept under consideration.

Given that these buildings might have been maintained, and given that there have, from the description given by AXS itself, relatively few individuals have spearheaded the efforts that might have seen these buildings come to a happier present, I have to question whether the earnest and honest and devoted average member of this community may not have been purposefully misguided.

I have lived in Madison Co-operatives since 1989. My current residence, Nottingham Co-op, is went up not much later and in the same era as these buildings. I am familiar with the history of how we have maintained our buildings, sometimes given quite serious setbacks, the 2013 fire at Lothlorien perhaps topping that list. The results have been uniformly better than the state of affairs AXS lays before us now—yet they claim to have used “the co-operative model” in getting to where they are now.

I can tell you that the model I have lived in these three decades may well have people spearheading large maintenance projects—but with ongoing and detailed accounting to—and, I must say, ongoing and committed attention by—the general membership. The discussion of a large maintenance project can be boring, divisive, challenging, and at times with only sub-optimal solutions to be had. Indeed, not all contractors can be taken at their word—many bids must be sought, credentials must be checked, agreements may have to be renegotiated, perhaps redress and correction must be required. Yet everyone, at the end, knows how we got where we got and can give an account of it without having been at the spearhead.

I do not see the material success and I do not see the signs of an ongoing, informative, collectively-involved, accountable discussion.

This is a statement that I cannot square with my experience, anymore than I can find a way to square their claims with Bob Klebba's testimony.

Necessarily, when the membership of AXS plead the case that their presence in that location is a part of the tradition, I find myself with real doubts about their leadership, and I find an intentional community willing to throw some of it's traditions under the bus, sacrificing irreplaceable physical assets and their former sovereign ownership to maintain usufruct in place of what had been direct possession. Like the architects' presentation, when I square the rhetoric against first the actual down-and-dirty facts, and next, against the actual principles that should be used to order and evaluate any set of circumstances in which this community finds itself—I find a facade put over a state of affairs that does not examine closer examination.

Since this is happening in site of the actually-protected district, I cannot ignore the later possibilities that can follow—I see the same negligence and short-sightedness applied to the Historic District as a whole, that has been applied to the buildings under question, and I must urge the Planning Commission to deny this demolition—let AXS find a better way if they have the dedication they claim, assuming that other kinds of incentive may have been withdrawn.

From: Susan Millar <sbmillar@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, November 22, 2020 4:06 PM

To: Planning <planning@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Maddie Loeffler <Madelyn0312@gmail.com>; Kate Sandretto <kate.sandretto@gmail.com>; Susan Millar <sbmillar@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Alchemy Apartments proposal - No. Lake St, Legistar File ID#s 62598, 11/23/2020 Agenda item #17

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

Re: Alchemy Apartments proposal - No. Lake St, Legistar File ID#s 62598, Agenda item #17

November 22, 2020

Dear Members of the Plan Commission:

We present two comments about the proposal presented by Patrick Properties et al (on behalf of the Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity) to build an apartment complex (Alchemy Apartments) at 619-621 North Lake Street. In short, this proposed building has high potential for improving our built environment.

1. The apartment building proposed for this site would provide four times as many bedrooms - 81 bedrooms within 20 different dwelling units, compared to the 21 total bedrooms in the current dilapidated fraternity buildings. This increase in housing density is a key element of Madison's *Comprehensive Plan*, and this location is zoned for this level of density. Moreover, the proposed building provides 55 bicycle parking stalls and NO car parking, which is a stunning example of how Madison can move toward its low-carbon transportation goals. And, the building is amply served by public transportation. Again, this feature of this proposal strongly supports the goals expressed in the *Comprehensive Plan*, as well as in the *100% Renewable Madison* document. These two features of this proposal are so positive that, in our opinion, the Plan Commission should find a way to address the demolition concerns expressed by the Planning Department - especially in light of AXS' extensive, although ultimately unsuccessful, efforts to find a way to preserve the two existing dilapidated buildings.

2. Aside from the housing density and "no- car parking stalls" features of this proposal, we could find no information about ways in which this proposed new building would move Madison toward the net-zero building standards to which our city aspires. All we learn about the building construction is whether the color of the exterior brick will suit the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Here we are, in November 2020, considering a building that will last at least 50 years, and potentially emit tons and tons of carbon that easily can be avoided with thoughtful, and not particularly more expensive, building design and construction. Lack of attention to this extremely important feature of our built environment is not acceptable. We note that this view is supported by the Campus Area Neighborhood Association's statement about this proposal: "Everyone agreed that sustainability should be a priority..."

Along with our other 350 Madison Plan Commission Climate Corps colleagues, we therefore ask the developer group (assuming this proposal goes forward) to provide a Climate Mitigation Strategies document describing how this proposed building will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, among other low-environmental impact strategies. This document should address, among other things:

- Described in this proposal but not presented as sustainability features:
 - Housing density
 - Low emissions transportation strategies
 - Low-emission practices for demolition and construction

- Not addressed in this proposal:
 - Inclusion of affordable and accessible housing units
 - Building design elements that will greatly reduce energy use once the building is occupied
 - Use of onsite solar energy
 - Etc.

Thank you for considering these comments. We continue to appreciate all your hard work!

Susan Millar, 2233 Rowley Ave., Madison, 53726
Member, 350 Madison, retired and concerned about future generations

Kate Sandretto, 2130 E Dayton St., Madison, 53704
Member, 350 Madison, inspired to create a better world for my school aged children

Maddie Loeffler, 1233 S Dewey St., Eau Claire, 54701
Member, 350 Madison, college student with hope for a brighter future

Comments on 619-621 N Lake Street

Bob Klebba
23 November 2020

Demolition Permit

The loss of contributing buildings in the Langdon Street Historic District is a perennial issue at Plan Commission. However, in this case **we must pay attention to the preservation of the gateway to the historic district on N Lake St.** 636 Langdon, 609, 615, 619 and 621 N Lake are still contributing buildings to the district. This means that for people travelling from campus to the historically collegiate Langdon Street neighborhood, what they initially see is what has existed for over 100 years. It is vital that we continue to preserve this first impression to the historic district.

The applicant has provided documentation for the condition of the buildings. However from the documentation provided by the applicant, it obvious that the problems with the buildings are a result of deferred maintenance and neglect. For example the engineering report for 621 documents a missing downspout on the north wall which likely contributed to the failure of foundation. Ignoring the foundation failure caused subsequent structural issues, which were addressed. The report also documented a straightforward procedure for repairing the 15' of foundation. Both the foundation and the structural issues are common problems in older buildings. Many contractors are capable of undertaking this repair work. **The applicant's documentation shows that 621 not beyond rehabilitation. Its condition does not justify its demolition.**

The photographic documentation of issues that resulted from neglect and deferred maintenance purposely shows the buildings at their worst. From the applicant's letter of intent, "*AXS reached out to Patrick Properties, and Camilla A Corcoran once 621 N Lake Street was deemed structurally unsound for continued residential use, exhausted their financial reserves and risked foreclosure on the property.*" The applicant appears to state that the owner gave up any attempt to do minimal rehabilitation on their buildings as soon as a plan to redevelop the site was started. **This story documents too clearly how demolition by neglect occurs.**

During a virtual tour of the buildings by the steering committee on 14 November we saw late 19th-early 20th century buildings with lovely contemporaneous exterior and interior architectural details. The condition of the buildings was good and certainly not as bad as what the applicant has emphasized. Furthermore, it must be noted that even though the historic survey of the buildings lists their condition as poor to fair, that condition information was provided by the applicant. **There has been no condition report supplied by a qualified professional in this application.**

The current maintenance of the buildings is a function of the owners' desire to have them demolished. The heat was turned off in 621 last year without draining the plumbing (621 N Lake St – Interior No. 11). Of course **the owners' neglect has resulted in many other problems that are documented in the application.** During the virtual tour, it was obvious that even simple maintenance issues had not been addressed in the last few years.

The list of artifacts from 619 and 621 that the applicant wishes to reuse show the emotional ties that the fraternity has to these buildings. It is extraordinary to imagine that these artifacts could create the same sense of place in a 21st century building. Nevertheless, the desired effort to preserve these architectural tokens cannot justify the demolition of these buildings.

The historic survey has an exceptionally limited scope and seems to focus less on 619 and 621 and more on the Langdon Street Historic District. The condition of the exterior of the buildings details the changes that have been made since the period of significance and their lack of maintenance. The exteriors of most contributing buildings in the historic district have been changed. They show how these buildings accommodate newer styles and uses. **Documenting changes to the exterior is important but cannot permit their demolition.**

Furthermore it is argued in the historic survey that the loss of contributing buildings since registration of the historic district justifies the demolition of 619 and 621 N Lake St. **The Langdon Street National Historic District defines the context in which the Plan Commission must evaluate the demolition request.** They are contributing buildings to the whole district and more significantly to the gateway of the historic district. This was a significant part of the reasoning for the unanimous decision at Landmarks Commission and the unqualified Planning Division recommendation to deny the request for demolition. **I too strongly encourage the Plan Commission to deny the applicant's request.**

Conditional Use

Approval Stanard 4

The Downtown Plan recommends that the historically collegiate Langdon Street Neighborhood of fraternities and sororities and other residential buildings be preserved. While the applicant will remain as a fraternity on the same site, the proposal would radically change the site's use. The identity of the proposed building will not be that of the current fraternity since it will occupy only a fraction of the proposed space. It will be seen as a student, market-rate apartment building close to campus, losing its relationship with Greek life in this area. This radical change in the use of the site will change the way other fraternity and sorority properties perceive their potential for redevelopment. **Approving this conditional use will change the "normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property", contradicting approval standard 4.**

The Downtown Plan also states that that some new development in the Langdon Street Neighborhood can occur where it replaces non-contributing buildings. This application proposes replacing 2 contributing buildings. Furthermore, the precedent set with contradicting approval standard 4 in this application, would encourage the further demolition of contributing buildings farther south on N Lake St. The Plan Commission will decide with this application whether 619 and 621 are the first dominoes to fall in the series of 5 contributing buildings in this significant part of the historic district. **Starting this chain reaction goes against approval standard 4.**

Approval Standard 9

According to approval standard 9, the proposed building should "[create] an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended character of the area. . . ." The Plan Commission should recognize that façades along N Lake St from Landon St to Mendota Ct define the gateway to the Langdon Street National Historic District. Replacing 2 of the 5 contributing buildings with an 8-story box would create a jarring discontinuity with the architectural rhythm and flow of west face of the historic district. The design of the proposed building has no relationship to the architecture of the adjacent historic buildings. **The lack of compatible sustained aesthetic desirability contradicts the goals of approval standard 9.**

As far as the larger area goes, there is nothing about the proposed building design that reflects the architectural diversity of the historic Langdon Street Neighborhood. The Langdon Neighborhood

Character Study

https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Langdon%20Neighborhood%20Character%20Study_11-30-18.pdf documents the exceptional richness of the over 100 buildings that contribute and mix in with Madison's historic fabric in this area. **The proposed replacement of 2 of the contributing buildings with one that is sorely out of place in this historically collegiate neighborhood does not meet approval standard 9.**

If the Plan Commission approves demolition, **I strongly encourage the commissioners to deny the application for conditional use based on approval standards 4 and 9.** Nevertheless, if the commissioners are hesitant to deny conditional use, it should be incumbent on them at least to refer the application to the Urban Design Commission for a more thorough review of the proposed building design.

Overall, I hope the commissioners agree that application does not merit demolition of two historic buildings, that the proposed use will affect neighboring development and improvement in a deleterious way, and that the proposed design does not fit in the neighborhood.

Punt, Colin

From: Bob Klebba <bob.klebba@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2020 9:25 AM
To: aephisigma.housedirector@gmail.com; ambrosia@madisoncommunity.coop; audrelordecoop@gmail.com; Benjamin Pierce; BERT STITT2; Mullins, Bradley; Chi Omega House Mother; coordinatingofficer@madisoncommunity.coop; Punt, Colin; dghousemom103@gmail.com; diego.lemahernandez; Heck, Patrick; Prestigiacom, Max; Dave Mollenhoff; Mark and Tammy Ehrmann; Eli Judge; Franny Ingebritson; Fred Mohs; glyphia.xo@gmail.com; Greggar Isaksen; Gary Tipler; internationalcoop@gmail.com; Kris Sonnentag; Yonden Dorje; Ledell Zellers; machacoop@gmail.com; Dan Mccammon; James McFadden; Mike Stengl; Mitnick, Matt; Nicholas Garton; Peter Ostlind; preedge@wisc.edu; Eli Judge, CNI President; rivendell.coop@gmail.com; Sally Rohrer; Christine Hughes; Barb Garrity; Bill Lizdas; Amol Goyal; lampron@wisc.edu; jorudd@wisc.edu; JULIAN LUKE NAZARETH; lowino@wisc.edu; eahaasl@wisc.edu; eaxelrod@wisc.edu; Campus Area Neighborhood Association; Linda Lehnertz; Kurt Stege; Alex Saloutos; Madeline Norton
Subject: 619-621 N Lake St meeting 5:00 pm Monday 26 October

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

Hi All,

Alder Prestigiacom's neighborhood meeting is scheduled for this afternoon at 5:00 pm. Information and zoom invitation are here: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district8/blog/>

It is important for anyone who is interested in the preservation of the historic fabric of Madison be involved! If you are uncomfortable with Core Spaces' proposal for 126 Langdon St, you may find this proposal even more inappropriate.

We should be concerned about this application for development for several reasons:

- proposed demolition of contributing buildings in an historic district
- significant proposed destruction of the interface of the historic district with campus
- proposed replacement of affordable housing with luxury apartments
- allowing a property owner to use "demolition by neglect" as a reason to redevelop

Personally, I have some other issues

- The fraternity building corporation is proposing a development much larger than what the fraternity needs to house its members so that it can pay for the demolition and redevelopment.
- The fraternity argues it needs to house all its members in one location, even though very few greek life residences do so.
- The Campus Area Neighborhood Association is hosting the meeting tonight even though one of the board members is a member of the fraternity and is a strong proponent of the demolition and redevelopment.

Please register for the meeting today and make sure your voice is heard.

best, Bob

--

Bob Klebba he him his
704 E Gorham St
Madison WI 53703-1522
608-209-8100

www.governorsmansioninn.com

www.mendotalakehouse.com

www.canterburymadison.com

From: [Arielle Martin](#)
To: [Albouras, Christian](#)
Cc: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Please Support Plan for 619 and 621 N Lake St
Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020 7:44:10 PM

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Dear Alder Albouras,

My name is Arielle, and I live in District 20. I am an alum of UW-Madison and Alpha Chi Sigma and am writing to ask you to support the Demolition and Conditional Use Permits for 619 and 621 N Lake St. at the Plan Commission meeting on Monday, November 23rd. Our organization, founded here in Madison in 1902, purchased 621 N Lake St in the 1920s and 619 N Lake St in the 1950s, and has utilized these properties for almost 100 years to foster the growth, development, and brotherhood of students and future scientists at UW-Madison.

Over decades of use as affordable housing for university students, the houses had been owned, occupied, and maintained by the primarily undergraduate membership of the fraternity. Sadly, in June 2019, our members were required to vacate the houses due to failing structural integrity, diminishing function, and other health & safety issues. In the few years before this, we explored ways to improve the houses, including extensive outreach to our alumni base, as well as working with consultants to assess the fundraising potential to finance complete rehabilitation of the houses on our own. These efforts uncovered two main takeaways. First, our alumni have countless memories and stories of their time at the houses, and the physical space was an integral part of their involvement in the organization. Second, the fundraising prospects fell far below what would be necessary to fully rehabilitate these houses in a viable way without compromising the affordability or financial sustainability we value dearly.

Our organization has put countless hours into pursuing alternatives to this redevelopment that would keep the houses more or less as they are and it is devastating for our members that we were unsuccessful. Even so, this development plan is extremely well thought out, capturing years of research and preparation to incorporate as many of our members' ideas as possible, with the main focus of the redevelopment always being the needs of the chapter as a whole.

The proposed space would preserve the sense of home we have built on this corner for nearly 100 years. In many ways, it would give us more room and versatility to conduct chapter activities and hold alumni and faculty events. Most importantly, it preserves the ability to provide affordable housing for our membership. Even the units not owned by the fraternity will bring much-needed and reasonably-priced housing to a highly desirable part of the city; a location which is essentially on the UW-Madison campus and within walking distance of restaurants, grocery stores, and many bus lines. With this development, we would be able to build upon the functional use of the current properties, while still preserving our organization's history, cultural presence, and ability to thrive in the neighborhood.

I joined Alpha Chi Sigma during my junior year in 2013 and lived in 619 my senior year. 619 and 621 North Lake Street were where I bonded with my pledge class, then with my fellow brothers after we initiated. It is where we have welcomed countless new pledges who eventually turned into members. After graduating I have stayed in contact with many of them and visited them in places around the country (pre-pandemic) and hope to do so again when it is safe. Our houses are where we first created our bonds of friendship, but those bonds are not tied to the physical houses.

Without the proposed redevelopment, the harsh reality is that the decay of these two houses will continue, despite the resistance and attempts at mitigation by our organization over the years. We have exhausted our resources trying to extend the lives of the houses. To leave them unchanged in an appeal to keep the historic visual landscape would be reckless land management,

especially when faced with the current and future housing and density problems our city is facing. Forcing out our organization in this manner would be a devastating loss of culture and history for the neighborhood, the university, and the broader community. I humbly ask for your support of this redevelopment and thank you for your consideration and service to the City of Madison.

Sincerely,

Arielle Martin

Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity

Professional in the Chemical Sciences

Office of the

SUPREME
COUNCIL



6296 Rucker Road, Suite B
Indianapolis, IN 46220
317-672-3898
sc@alphachisigma.org
www.alphachisigma.org

November 7, 2020

To whom it may concern

The Alpha Chi Sigma (National) Fraternity is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation that is not allowed to own rental property due to its not for profit status. In instances where individual chapters have a house, separate corporations are established to own or manage the property. As such the Alpha Chapter of the Alpha Chi Sigma Building Corporation operates as a separate corporation from the Alpha Chi Sigma (National) Fraternity. Although both corporations are separate entities, with completely separate boards, both corporations serve the members of the Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity.

The Supreme Council of the Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity (National) has no objections to the efforts of the Alpha Chapter of the Alpha Chi Sigma Building Corporation in their efforts to provide housing for members of Alpha Chi Sigma at the University of Wisconsin. The Supreme Council understands that the current houses are too expensive to maintain and that the best option for housing of our Fraternity members in Madison is to tear down both structures (619 Lake Street and 621 Lake Street) and replace them with a shared building space. The Supreme Council believes that the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma Building Corporation has done their due diligence and has made their decisions on the best interests of the chapter members, and that this path forward will be one that will be financially viable for the Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma Building Corporation so that they can provide housing for chapter members in the years to come.

Regards,

The Supreme Council of Alpha Chi Sigma Fraternity



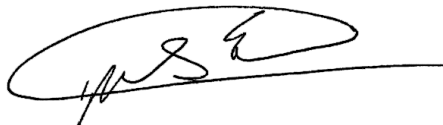
Dr. Kip Nalley
Grand Master Alchemist



Dr. Sean Pawlowski
Grand Professional Alchemist



Dr. Merryn Cole
Grand Collegiate Alchemist



Dr. Jason Ellis
Grand Master of Ceremonies

November 20, 2020

Dear City of Madison Plan Commission,

My name is Dr. Kirstie K. Danielson, and I have called the City of Madison my home for over 28 years, 20 of those years specifically at my residence in District 6 which Alder Marsha Rummel currently represents. I am an alum of UW-Madison (BS 1996, PhD 2007), and relevant to this letter, an alum of the UW's professional chemistry fraternity Alpha Chi Sigma (initiated fall 1993). After deep reflection, I am writing to ask that the City support the Demolition and Conditional Use Permits for both properties standing on 619 and 621 N. Lake Street at the Plan Commission meeting on Monday, November 23rd. One of the most significant points I want to express in this letter, is that Alpha Chi Sigma is not just another UW fraternity. It has deep seeded social and professional roots in the University and Madison communities. A notable factor regarding the Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity, is that it was founded in Madison by students of UW in 1902, and our Madison Chapter has the prominent status of being the Alpha Chapter in what is now a thriving national organization. Over the century, the UW students coming through the fraternity's "doors" on Lake Street have been instilled with and inspired by values of science as a means to improve humanity and to support each other's professional scientific ambitions for the common good. But in my opinion, most importantly, Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity instills the values of aiding each other in times of need, forming true and lasting friendships, and conducting ourselves ethically and honorably throughout our mortal lives.

The current house located at 621 N. Lake Street was purchased by the fraternity in the 1920s, and the house located at 619 N. Lake Street was purchased by the fraternity in the 1950s. When I was advancing into my senior year as an undergraduate at UW, I moved into room #7 at the 621 N. Lake Street home. At that time, I would have never imagined that a fellow fraternity "brother" named Andrew Wallen, who lived in room #8 in the 619 N. Lake Street home, would become my husband in 1999. But in retrospect, the safe spaces that the fraternity provided then and still does today, those of being accepting of all people with diverse ideas, opinions, and cultures, made it all possible. For almost 100 years, the Alpha Chi Sigma fraternity has utilized and cared for these properties to the best of their ability, to foster the growth, development, and brotherhood of students and future scientists at UW-Madison. And my story of life-long friendships and partnership is just one of a thousand similar stories that were literally formed and grounded in the intersection of Lake Street and Mendota Court.

As you consider the proposal before you, there are important details and background that must be factored into your decision. Over the last several decades, as the cost of higher education has escalated, both houses on Lake Street have provided opportunities for affordable housing for fraternity members and UW students needing to make tuition payments, support their families, and maintain their course load. Besides studying for their own courses, tutoring other students in chemistry and the sciences from the house library, these students also, with oversight of the housing Board, primarily conducted the general maintenance of both properties for the fraternity. This arrangement worked beautifully for decades, as I can attest to after living there for almost two years from 1995-96, where on a regular basis I personally helped clean, mop, spackle, paint, and weatherproof. And these investments of time and money continued over the years as I visited the houses regularly thereafter. My now late-husband Andrew also served on the housing Board for several years after I graduated, and he intimately knew the ins and outs of both houses and personally help repair and hire contractors to repair the house as was needed.

Sadly, in June 2019, fraternity members were required to vacate both houses due to failing structural integrity, much of which was caused by historic flooding and questionable street repair grading. In retrospect, when I stop and consider the state of the houses in reality and not nostalgically, this wasn't a surprise, considering a century of bustling student life and the physics of aging homes - particularly near a major lake. During the previous several years, the fraternity had explored options for the future, including extensive outreach to the alumni base, as well as working with consultants to assess the fundraising potential to finance a complete rehabilitation of both houses. Unfortunately, those fundraising prospects could not match what would be necessary to fully rehabilitate the two houses. In the end, the fraternity put countless hours pursuing options to maintain and update the houses more or less as they are, and it is devastating to myself and other members that the campaign was unsuccessful.

Moving forward, the objective of the fraternity is now seeking approval for and implementing what we argue is the best way to preserve and simultaneously advance Alpha Chi Sigma's sense of "home," its brotherhood, and core

values, which include service to the community through science. The current development plan has been critically analyzed and assessed, capturing years of research and preparation to incorporate as many of the fraternity members' ideas as possible. It will ultimately provide the fraternity and its members with more functional space and versatility to conduct Chapter activities, continue tutoring UW students, and hold alumni and faculty events. Critically important, it also preserves the ability to provide affordable housing to a diverse group of fraternity members. Of note, even the units not owned by the fraternity will bring much-needed and reasonably-priced housing to a highly desirable part of the city; a location which is essentially on the UW-Madison campus and within walking distance of restaurants, grocery stores, and many bus lines. With this development, the fraternity would be able to improve upon the functional use of the two current properties, while still preserving our organization's history, cultural presence, and ability to serve and thrive in the neighborhood.

As the daughter of a long-term mayor of a Wisconsin city (Black River Falls), I am highly cognizant of the factors and decisions that go into a process such as this at the city-level. The proposed redevelopment is the best-case scenario both for the fraternity and the neighborhood it serves. The reality is that the state of these two houses has deteriorated beyond the point of rehabilitation, despite good faith attempts at mitigation by the fraternity over the years. Based on my knowledge of the situation, I can firmly attest that the fraternity has exhausted all resources and alternative options in trying to extend the structural lives of these two houses. As is the norm in these decision-making processes, there are competing opinions, some of which advocate leaving the houses unchanged for a historic visual landscape. While I am actually empathetic to these points of view, being a long-time Madison resident, I argue that this course of action is too late in coming, and ignores a responsible proposal based on sound urban management. Most importantly, should you reject the proposed plan, you would be summarily forcing our professional service organization of scientists out of the neighborhood it has been a critical part of for a century. Objectively, this would be a devastating loss of culture and history for the neighborhood, the university, and the broader community.

The friendships and life values that have been created at the corner of Lake Street and Mendota Court by the hundreds and hundreds of students over the years, have been paid FORWARD in service through science, and the positive impact of members and alumni on their local, national, and global communities. The fraternity founded at UW-Madison has provided a responsible plan in the hope of reaching the best solution with the City of Madison, so it can serve the University and City another 100 years.

I personally ask for your support of this redevelopment and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirstie K. Danielson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kirstie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Danielson".

Kirstie K. Danielson, Ph.D.

101 N. Marquette Street, Madison (home, and residence for taxes and voting, since March 2000)

Associate Professor of Endocrinology and Epidemiology, University of Illinois Chicago (work during the week)

Chair, Andrew T. Wallen Memorial Education Foundation, a Wisconsin 501(c)3 organization (in honor of my late-husband who I met at 619 N. Lake Street back in 1993)

Plan Commission
Meeting of November 23, 2020
Agenda #17, Legistar #62598, 619 and 621 N. Lake

I am writing to comment on former Alder Bridget Maniaci's submission. When I started reading this, I did not focus on the headings and thought, aw, gee, how nice a former Alder wishes to comment. Then I saw that Ms. Maniaci's comments are submitted as a consultant to Patrick Properties & Alpha Chi Sigma, Alpha Corp, and was informed she has registered as a lobbyist with the City.

Ms. Maniaci's first paragraph states she has seen that "... necessary infill development [can] meet the needs of the campus neighborhood in the face of naturally occurring building decay..." Allowing improper drainage that degrades the foundation, and which is allowed to at least periodically to continue, is not "naturally occurring building decay." Similarly, holes punched in walls and damage due to a leaking roof would not be "naturally occurring building decay."

Ms. Maniaci then discusses the two developments in the Langdon historic district that have occurred since the adoption of the Downtown Plan. I addressed both of these properties in my original comment letter.

- Legistar #28485 is 210 Langdon, with a large front addition. The Landmarks Commission staff report noted: "The noncontributing addition that was added to the front elevation in the 1960s masks the contributing structure from the streetscape. A concrete block stair tower was constructed on the rear elevation presumably in the 1960s which obscures the rear of the original building. The 1927 alteration and the subsequent additions diminish the architectural integrity of the structure and its relationship with the historic context."



Unlike 210 Langdon, 619 and 621 retain a relationship with the historic context.

- Legistar 28414 is the Waterfront planned development. That project, as I stated in my original comment letter, advanced two aspects of the Downtown Plan. The Waterfront was approved by the Plan Commission on a vote of 5-3 (with 3 non-voting and 1 excused) after the Plan Commission twice referred the project and after significant changes to the design of the proposed structure. The fact that the Council approved the development of a vote of 15-3 is not "of note." The Council,

except in extraordinary circumstances, supports the Plan Commission vote since the Plan Commission is deemed the expert and has spent significant time on the details.

Next there is a paragraph addressing the difference between local historic districts and national historic districts. No one, to my knowledge, has suggested that local historic district requirements be applied to the proposed demolition. Rather, the argument against demolition is that it would contravene City intent as expressed in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Plan, and the Historic Preservation Plan.

Ms. Maniaci then quotes the report by the project's historic consultant. As I stated in my original comment letter, this conflicts with the City's expert.

Then there is a section on mitigation, in which the Plan Commission is exhorted to remember the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. And on page 3, Ms. Maniaci says that not considering the 2006 plan is "is an incomplete approach to understanding the purpose and role of these documents relative to staff comments." What the 2006 Comprehensive Plan said is irrelevant for two reasons.

1. The Downtown Plan took the 2006 Comprehensive Plan into account. It was not just a wraparound document, but a document to implement the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. "Prior to the kickoff of the *Downtown Plan's* planning process in 2008, the Downtown Advisory Report (2004) and Comprehensive Plan (2006) provided the general vision and initial direction for this present effort. **Building on those documents**, this planning process began by exploring "the possibilities" for the future of Downtown. Multiple iterations of general approaches and concepts to achieve the desired future were created, analyzed, and refined. This was followed by the development of a comprehensive set of draft recommendations to implement the plan's goals and objectives." (Downtown Plan, pages 7-8, emphasis added)

The Downtown Plan was thoroughly vetted -- the plan was reviewed and approved by 13 boards, commissions, and committees before proceeding to the Plan Commission and Council. (The recently adopted Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan was referred, in contrast, to just four other bodies.)

In addition, the Downtown Plan adopting resolution stated: "WHEREAS the process to prepare the new plan included an extensive participation process which started with the **review and affirmation of the Downtown Advisory Report prepared in 2004, as well as recommendations for the downtown contained in the City's 2006 Comprehensive Plan.**" (emphasis added)

2. The 2018 Comprehensive Plan recognizes the role of sub-area plans. (The Downtown Plan is listed as a sub-area plan on page 126.). Sub-area plans "should be referred to in addition to this Plan." (page 17) Sub-area plans adopted as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan "reflect their function and status in providing more detailed planning recommendations than are often needed to effectively implement the Plan." (page 124) "If an inconsistency is identified between this Plan and a reasonably contemporary sub-area plan, substantial weight should be given to the sub-area plan." (page 125)

Thus, what the 2006 Comprehensive Plan had to say is essentially irrelevant with respect to this proposal. However, should the Plan Commission deem the 2006 Comprehensive Plan relevant, Attachment A includes sections omitted from Ms. Maniaci's addendum. And included in Ms. Maniaci's addendum is Objective 6:

"Work with downtown neighborhoods in identifying vacant sites and **buildings that do not contribute to the historic character of the downtown** and therefore may be candidates for potential redevelopment." (emphasis added)

Next Ms. Maniaci states: "the intent of the language in the 2012 Downtown Plan for the Langdon Street neighborhood was never to limit development carte blanche in the Langdon district as it related to existing structures and the built environment." I agree – existing structures that are non-contributing are encouraged for higher density infill.

Downtown Plan Recommendation 95: "Encourage relatively higher-density infill and redevelopment that is compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non-landmark locations and **sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District.**" (emphasis added)

Next Ms. Maniaci states the properties are identified as high density residential on the GFLU map. That is the designation, and high residential has a general density range of 70+ dwelling units/acre. 619 and 621 have a combined area of 8,268 square feet, or .19 acre. A bedroom counts as a dwelling unit (see, e.g., Legistar 28708), so at 21 bedrooms on .19 acre the existing density is about 547 du/acre.

Ms. Maniaci then discusses the Campus Master Plan, and includes a two-page addendum. This is not relevant as 619 and 621 are covered by the Downtown Plan, not the Campus Master Plan.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Lehnertz

ATTACHMENT A
2006 Comprehensive Plan (emphasis added)

Page 2-107

The Comprehensive Plan's mapped land use recommendations for the Downtown reflect these sub-areas, and provide recommendations for ten defined sub-districts within the Downtown area designed to enhance the downtown as a highly-interconnected community of specialized and general activity districts and neighborhoods, **each with individual character and identity.**

Page 2-114

Langdon (h)

This sub-district is developed with student housing including fraternities and sororities. Some nonresidential uses such as the Edgewater Hotel are also located in this sub-district. **Historic preservation and neighborhood conservation are issues that need to be addressed** as properties in this sub-district are redeveloped.

Recommended Land Uses

- Mixed-use buildings with first floor retail, service, dining, entertainment, offices, and upper floor residential.
- Small-scale neighborhood commercial uses.
- Multi-unit residential (16 to 60+ dwelling units per net acre) with dwelling unit types and densities defined in City-adopted detailed neighborhood or special area plans.
- **Historic preservation areas** and neighborhood conservation areas in strategic locations **as defined in City-adopted detailed neighborhood development plans and/or special area plans.**
- Public and private open space.

Building Height

- Two to 8 stories, **with the tallest buildings in State Street transition area.**

Pages 8-1 to 8-2

RETENTION OF HISTORIC CHARACTER IN THE DOWNTOWN AND OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS

According to the Downtown Historic Preservation Plan (1998) the primary issue for Madison regarding its downtown is to define exactly what the downtown's character and nature should be. **Madison's historic buildings and neighborhoods are highly valued.** The desirability of houses and other buildings in historic neighborhoods is evident by the premium prices buyers are willing to pay for them. A recent poll of citizens found that the preservation of downtown buildings is the most important way to protect and enhance its vitality.

PRESERVATION AND REDEVELOPMENT

One of the greatest challenges for the City regarding historic and cultural resource preservation is balancing these goals with those of redevelopment. Not since the 1960s has there been such pressure on older structures as potential redevelopment sites. Many older downtown buildings have been rented to students for a long time and the condition of these buildings has greatly deteriorated. While there is a general consensus that increasing density is desirable in some areas, the community is trying to find the balance between encouraging new development while protecting the qualities that have made these neighborhoods appealing to begin with. There is consensus that the best of the old should be preserved while offering opportunities for redevelopment, but current City policies do not adequately address how this should be accomplished.

From: [Bridget Maniaci](#)
To: [bacantrell@charter.net](#); [erics@cows.org](#); [ishagenow@yahoo.com](#); Kathleen Spencer; [Ledell Gmail](#); [Lemmer, Lindsay](#); [Rummel, Marsha](#); [nicole.solheim@gmail.com](#); [Heck, Patrick](#)
Cc: [ajstatz2@madison.k12.wi.us](#); [Prestigiacomo, Max](#); [Punt, Colin](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#); [William White](#)
Subject: Re: Applicant Memos for Demo/Conditional Use of 619/621 N Lake St
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 11:05:01 AM
Attachments: [2006 Comprehensive Plan excerpts.pdf](#)

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

Hello all,

I noticed that the footnote links in my memo (item #17) for the 2006 Comprehensive Plan aren't working properly in the pdf document. Attached you'll find an excerpt of the pages I referenced. Also, here's the links to the full documents directly. [Section 1 Introduction](#), [Section 2: Land Use](#)

I certainly was dismayed to see how little prescriptive language regarding downtown land use goals and neighborhoods was included in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, in comparison the 2006 Comp Plan that was in place at the time the Downtown Plan was written. I certainly think you need to build in consideration for the values of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan that was in place when considering the language and implications for how and what was included in the Downtown Plan written in 2012.

Looking forward to speaking with you this evening.
Bridget Maniaci

On Sat, Nov 21, 2020 at 5:12 PM Bridget Maniaci <brmaniaci@gmail.com> wrote:

Happy Saturday all!

I wanted to forward you my memo regarding Plan Commission agenda item 17 (Alpha Chi Sigma - Alchemy project) that was submitted at COB yesterday. Not sure if it was uploaded to the city site to share with you over the weekend as you dig into your Plan Commission (digital) packets.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions. I'm available this evening and Sunday for any discussion.

Kind Regards,

Bridget Maniaci
Principal, UX Community Consulting
(608) 516-3488

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bridget Maniaci** <brmaniaci@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Nov 20, 2020 at 5:00 PM

Subject: Re: Applicant Memos for Demo/Conditional Use of 619/621 N Lake St

To: Punt, Colin <CPunt@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Jay <bhangraj@gmail.com>, patrickproperties tds.net <patrickproperties@tds.net>, Josh

Wilcox <josh.wilcox@garybrink.com>, Jennifer L. Lehrke, AIA <jlehrke@legacy-architecture.com>

Good afternoon Colin,

Please see my attached memo to be distributed to Plan Commission members. Let me know when you've received it.

Thank you!

Bridget Maniaci
UX Community Consulting

Downtown

The Downtown district recognizes the unique functions, mix of uses, and much greater intensity of use that are characteristic of urban downtowns. The diversity of the Downtown is reflected in the pattern of downtown land uses, which include a wide variety of activities found nowhere else in the community. Densities in the downtown also vary widely, with residential densities at some locations exceeding 300 dwelling units per acre. Some parts of the Downtown are undergoing extensive infill and redevelopment; while relatively modest changes are occurring in other parts of Downtown. The recent increased pace of redevelopment has created a corresponding interest in historic preservation and neighborhood conservation in at least portions of Madison’s oldest neighborhoods, such as Bassett, Mansion Hill, Old Market Place and First Settlement.



Kites on Ice Festival in front of the Monona Terrace

The Comprehensive Plan includes goals, objectives and policies to begin to address the unique planning challenges and opportunities in the Downtown area. Broad land use recommendations for the Downtown are made in the context of ten defined sub-districts that share important characteristics related to function, predominant land uses, scale, density, and urban design. Each sub-district has its own development recommendations and standards. These recommendations are partly based on existing plans that cover portions of the Downtown area, and on the analyses and recommendations included in the 2004 Downtown Advisory Report prepared as part of the Comprehensive Planning process. The Comprehensive Plan also recommends preparation of one or more updated special area and/or neighborhood plans for the Downtown area as a high priority; and the land use recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan should be considered preliminary until more-detailed plans for the Downtown area are developed and adopted. These plans should, at a minimum, address recommended land uses, development density and intensity, building height, and building and site design standards; and should establish Downtown as the focal point of the city. More-detailed planning may also revise the recommendations for, or boundaries of, the Downtown sub-districts included in the Comprehensive Plan.



Block 89 Office Development



Desirable Downtown Characteristics

- Very high-quality urban architecture, site design and urban design. All development should comply with the Comprehensive Plan, City-adopted detailed neighborhood development plans, special area plans and urban design guidelines for the Downtown area and its sub-districts.
- Buildings should be spaced close together and placed close to the street. Stepbacks are recommended when needed to provide additional space between the upper floors of taller buildings to prevent a “walled in” look, or to maintain adequate access to sunlight along public sidewalks.
- Very high-quality pedestrian, bicycle and streetscape amenities.
- Very high-quality public open spaces, including smaller squares and plazas maintained on private property.
- Emphasis on historic preservation and neighborhood conservation as defined in City-adopted neighborhood, special area, and other special plans, such as historic preservation plans, and/or City zoning regulations and historic and urban design guidelines.
- Land use intensity should decrease as distance from the Downtown center increases, establishing a transition between intensive urban uses and adjacent lower-intensity development.
- Compact, highly interconnected pattern of relatively short, intensively developed blocks.
- Emphasis on multi-modal travel, especially for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.
- Well-served by arterial, collector and local streets.
- Excellent access to high frequency mass transit.
- Should be developed using Transit-Oriented Development standards.
- On street, structured and underground parking encouraged.
- Avoid large surface parking lots.
- 24-hour regional activity center focal point.
- Mixed-use, multi-story buildings encouraged at locations defined in sub-districts



Crazylegs Annual Run



Bassett Street Neighborhood



Recommendations for Downtown Sub-Districts (a through j)

Major land uses recommended at various locations within the Downtown district include: high-density office and employment uses; retail and service uses serving regional, community and local residents and businesses; residential uses over a broad range of densities, educational and cultural activities; government, civic and institutional uses, entertainment and recreation; restaurants and taverns; structured parking; and open space, including squares and plazas. Although the range of uses and densities within the Downtown as a whole is very wide, it is made up of numerous relatively-compact sub-areas characterized by shared predominant land uses; development density; building height, scale and urban design; special amenity features; historic character; or other distinguishing attributes. The Comprehensive Plan's mapped land use recommendations for the Downtown reflect these sub-areas, and provide recommendations for ten defined sub-districts within the Downtown area designed to enhance the downtown as a highly-interconnected community of specialized and general activity districts and neighborhoods, each with individual character and identity.

The ten mapped sub-districts within the Downtown district include four districts primarily recommended for mixed-use development with substantial amounts of both non-residential and residential use, and six districts primarily recommended for residential development, although they may also contain some non-residential uses:

Mixed-Use Sub-Districts

- Downtown Core (a)
- State Street (b)
- Findorff Yards (e)
- City Station (f)

Residential Sub-Districts

- Broom Street (c)
- Mifflin-Bassett (d)
- Student High-Rise (g)
- Langdon (h)
- Mansion Hill (i)
- First Settlement-Old Market Place (j)

Refinements of these sub-districts may occur as City-adopted detailed neighborhood development plans or special area plans are prepared for the Downtown area. Recommended land uses and development standards for the 10 Downtown sub-districts are described below.



Downtown Residential Sub-Districts

Langdon (h)

This sub-district is developed with student housing including fraternities and sororities. Some nonresidential uses such as the Edgewater Hotel are also located in this sub-district. Historic preservation and neighborhood conservation are issues that need to be addressed as properties in this sub-district are redeveloped.

Recommended Land Uses

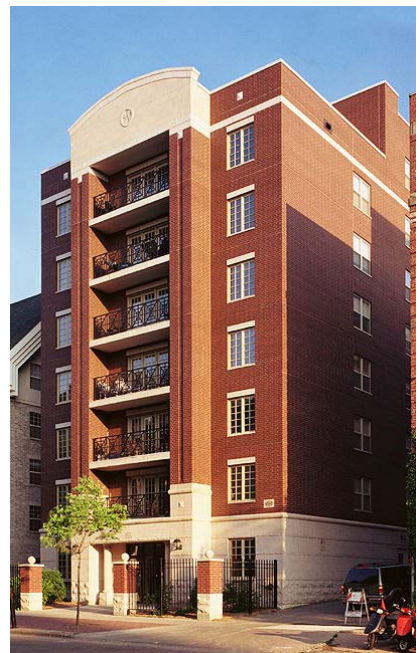
- Mixed-use buildings with first floor retail, service, dining, entertainment, offices, and upper floor residential.
- Small-scale neighborhood commercial uses.
- Multi-unit residential (16 to 60+ dwelling units per net acre) with dwelling unit types and densities defined in City-adopted detailed neighborhood or special area plans.
- Historic preservation areas and neighborhood conservation areas in strategic locations as defined in City-adopted detailed neighborhood development plans and/or special area plans.
- Public and private open space.

Building Height

- Two to 8 stories, with the tallest buildings in State Street transition area.



Delta Gamma Sorority



Langdon Street includes old houses converted into student housing and fraternities or sororities, as well as new apartment buildings with a more varied mix of residents.



Objectives and Policies for Economic Development in the Downtown/Campus Area

Objective 76: Maintain and strengthen downtown Madison as a major employment, service and shopping center serving neighborhood, regional, and national and international markets.

Policy 1: Develop strategies to provide suitable business locations and facilities downtown for expanding existing businesses and employers and to attract and accommodate potential new businesses identified in coordination with the City’s economic development strategy.

Policy 2: Use the economic, educational, social, and cultural resources provided by the University of Wisconsin, Edgewood College, Madison Area Technical College and other institutions of higher education as one potential source of future employment growth in the downtown/campus area, as well as elsewhere in the community.

Objective 77: Maintain downtown Madison as the government center for the State and the region.

Objective 78: Concentrate most major civic, institutional, cultural, and entertainment uses in the downtown/campus area.

Policy 1: The City should work with downtown businesses and business organizations to coordinate economic development planning with arts, cultural and entertainment events and facilities.

Policy 2: Sustain and promote downtown Madison as a state, regional and national tourist destination and convention center.



Pub on the Capitol Square

Objectives and Policies for Housing in the Downtown/Campus Area

Objective 79: Increase the amount of housing in the downtown/campus area and provide a variety of housing choices for different household types, sizes, and incomes, including families and lower/middle-income households.

Policy 1: Develop downtown housing as part of vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods that include a range of neighborhood-serving retail, service and recreational activities.



Downtown retirement housing creates additional housing choices.

Objectives and Policies for Housing in the Downtown/Campus Area, continued

Policy 2: Identify and guide new housing to appropriate residential and mixed-use development locations in downtown neighborhoods, in the East and South Campus areas, and in the near east, west and south Isthmus neighborhoods that provide significant housing opportunities convenient to the downtown.

Note: Detailed downtown plans and Isthmus area neighborhood plans will identify more specific locations for housing development in the downtown/Isthmus area.

Policy 3: Develop and implement strategies to encourage owner-occupied or long-term rental/lease residential properties in established neighborhoods.

Policy 4: Locate a large proportion of housing for University students within walking distance of campus.

Policy 5: Efforts to build additional housing in the downtown/Isthmus area should not result in extensive demolition of quality, existing housing that is perceived by the community to be valuable to the neighborhood.

Policy 6: As housing markets change, foster the rehabilitation and redevelopment needed to ensure a quality-housing environment for all people.

Policy 7: Explore the creation of City programs to rehabilitate historic downtown residential properties.

Objectives and Policies for Open Space and Recreation in the Downtown/Campus Area

Objective 80: Create and maintain an integrated system of readily accessible, linked parks and open spaces to provide recreational opportunities for downtown residents, users and visitors.

Policy 1: Balance the desire and need for parks and recreational facilities to serve an increasing downtown population with other land use needs in the relatively constrained downtown/campus area.

Policy 2: Identify opportunities to increase and improve public access to the Lake Monona and Lake Mendota waterfronts.

Policy 3: Expand safe, attractive pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to and linkages between downtown and regional parks and open spaces.



Bike race around Lake Monona

Policy 4: Take advantage of opportunities to create small, passive open spaces within the downtown area.

High Density Residential (HDR)

High Density Residential districts are multiple-family housing areas where relatively larger and taller apartment buildings are the predominant recommended building type.

Net Density Range

An average of 41 to 60 units per net acre for the High Density Residential district as a whole. Most developments within the area should fall within or below this range, although smaller areas of higher density may be included.

Location and Design Characteristics

High Density Residential districts typically are relatively compact areas located adjacent to or very close to larger Mixed-Use, Commercial and Employment districts, the Downtown and Campus districts, and other intensively developed lands. Isolated High Density Residential areas might be recommended at specified locations within a larger surrounding Medium or Low Density Residential area, but it is generally recommended that higher-density uses be located close to other activity centers.

Housing Types in High Density Residential Districts

- Apartment buildings, with no specific size limitation if compatible in scale and character with other neighborhood buildings and the recommendations of applicable plans.
- Townhouses or rowhouses.

In larger High Density districts, smaller scale and lower-density housing types may also be present, primarily reflecting the mixing of new with older and historic buildings. In general, however, the expectation is that most buildings will be relatively dense multi-family types.

Other Uses within the District

Generally, the same types of supporting uses as in Medium Density Residential districts, except that retail or service nodes could include larger establishments and are more likely to be within a mixed-use building.

Specific locations for non-residential support uses within High Density Residential districts, as well as more-detailed planning or design standards, should be identified in adopted neighborhood or special area plans.



Student Apartments on Old University Avenue

From: [Mark D Ediger](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: item 62598
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 11:55:36 AM

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Hi planning commission

I support the redevelopment proposal for the Alpha Chi Sigma houses. These houses are an important part of the Chemistry Department in that they provide a community (and living space) for many of our majors. The current houses are falling apart. The redevelopment proposal is carefully considered and really the only reasonable path forward. Please approve this project.

Mark Ediger

Professor of Chemistry

Madison resident - 2731 Mason Street, Madison, WI 53705

From: [EMAIL UPDATE](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); chatsbaby@hotmail.com
Subject: 619-621 N Lake Street; 8th Ald. Dist.: Consideration of a demolition permit
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 11:55:11 AM

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City of Madison Plan Commission
Agenda Item 17 62598

To all members:

I would like due consideration given to the following:

1. Any impacts from the proposed demolition would have a deleterious effect on the surrounding area and neighborhood, in that, historical values would be subjugated without any accompanying landmark character benefit.
2. What safety protocol(s) would be implemented to lessen the effect that added fraternity members and new apartment residents would have on an area already beset by rising crime – including racial incidents, diversity affects, gunshots at fraternity sponsored parties, sexual assaults and drug activity? The Lake Street to Lake Mendota cul-de-sac would need a new police substation within or next to the proposed new spaces.
3. With Covid-19 still an ongoing health concern, will there be any rethinking of the “fraternity model” in the future to anticipate and prepare against future would outbreaks and quarantines, already occurring with frequency at fraternities and sororities further up Langdon Street?
4. What liability protections would there be for the many students, teachers, visitors, families, children, the elderly and members of the general public that travel down Lake Street in great numbers, past those magnificent buildings, on their way to Lake Mendota and the Memorial union Terrace?
5. What would the timetable of such proposed demolition and how might it affect the those who work at the nearby Pyle Center and Alumni Association and Visitor Center?
6. How might Police, Fire Department and other law enforcement agencies be affected by temporary closures of Lake Street – including emergency rescue training for lake rescue and recovery efforts?
7. In what ways will the proposed demolition lead to a diminution in value of the historic value “snapshot-in-time” character of the UW-Madison campus, and surrounding building and structures?

The Lake Street-Langdon-Mendota Court triplex is in a absolute non-severable landmark district that is enjoyed by more people of the City of Madison than any other; thereby, every avenue should be exhausted, gain and again, before permanently altering this gateway district.

Thank you,

Wilkins King, Jr.
Area Resident

(608) 279-1724

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Bob Klebba](#)
To: bacantrell@charter.net; erics@cows.org; ishagenow@yahoo.com; Kathleen Spencer; [Ledell Zellers](#); [Lemmer, Lindsay](#); [Rummel, Marsha](#); nicole.solheim@gmail.com; [Heck, Patrick](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: 619-621 N Lake St. Response to Maniaci's letter
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 1:36:03 PM
Attachments: [Comment on Ms Maniaci.pdf](#)

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

Since some documents are slow to get uploaded to Legistar, please find my response to Ms Maniaci's letter on behalf of the applicant.

best, Bob

--

Bob Klebba he him his
704 E Gorham St
Madison WI 53703-1522
608-209-8100
www.governorsmansioninn.com
www.mendotalakehouse.com
www.canterburymadison.com

Comment on Ms Maniaci's letter to the Plan Commission

Bob Klebba

23 November 2020

Ms Maniaci writes a letter of support without much basis to her arguments. Most of the city plans she cites either do not apply or contradict her intentions. She does cite some controversial precedents which Ms Lehnertz responds to in detail.

I would like here to go over my reading of the city plans. These are the same plans that Planning Division staff used to recommend against demolition and the construction of a new building.

Downtown Plan

Object 7.1: Preserve historic buildings and groupings of buildings that contribute to the essential character of Downtown and its neighborhoods. Recommendations 182 through 192 all apply directly or indirectly to the preservation of the buildings at 619 and 621. **Ms Maniaci's letter does not cite much from the Downtown Plan, because it does not support the applicant's request for demolition.**

The applicant's lobbyist infers that as alder during the adoption of the Downtown Plan's adoption, that she can define the intent of the language in the 2012 Downtown Plan for the Langdon Street neighborhood. Please let me remind the Commission that Planning Division staff and ultimately the Plan Commission define the intent of the Downtown Plan.

Furthermore, while citing the Downtown Plan, Ms. Maniaci infers that 619 and 621 have "seen decades of hard wear and natural decay." Interestingly, at the end of Ms. Maniaci's letter, you will see a building code violation for a simple stucco repair that required 4 years and an additional \$3,841 city fine. Clearly any building that is not properly maintained will suffer from decay.

Campus Master Plan

It is not obvious that the Campus Master Plan bears any significance in this application.

Comprehensive Plan

Upon reading the recommendations cited in the applicant's lobbyist's comments, most do apply to the demolition and conditional use application. In fact, some actually strongly argue for the preservation of 619 and 621. For example:

Objective 40: Protect Madison's historic structures, districts and neighborhoods and encourage the preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance and adaptive reuse of high-quality older buildings.

- *Policy 1: Continue to enforce existing City regulations, policies and programs that protect Madison's historic structures, districts and neighborhoods and foster the preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of existing buildings.*

I argued in my comments to the Commission that since the buildings appear to be in good shape that they should be preserved. (No engineering report documenting the condition of the buildings was provided.) Ms Maniaci points out the City has failed in their lack of comprehensive enforcement of the lack of maintenance and neglect. However neglect must not be a reason to grant the applicant's request for demolition.

Objective 42: Ensure that new development is compatible with the existing and planned design and development characteristics of the neighborhood and minimize land use conflicts between infill or redevelopment projects and existing neighborhood development. The Planning Division Staff Report and my comments argue why the proposed building does not meet standard of approval 4.

Objective 51: Protect and enhance features and places within the community that are of architectural and historical significance. There has been no historic and architectural survey that documents the significance of 619 and 621. The principal consultant hired by the applicant for this report told me that Legacy's "narrow focus" was two-fold: define the architectural changes since the period of significance and how the buildings fit in the historic district. Since 619 and 621 have significance as contributing buildings in an historic district, the applicant's lobbyist's citing this objective contradicts her argument that the buildings should be demolished.

Objective 82: Create a high-quality physical and design environment downtown that is inspiring, creative, diverse and complementary of historic and natural resources.

- *Policy 1: Ensure that downtown buildings are of the highest quality design and make positive and lasting contributions to the City's rich architectural and design heritage. Note: Additional urban design goals, objectives and policies are found in the Urban Design section of the Land Use chapter.*
- *Policy 2: Preserve and enhance through complementary infill development, the character of downtown's unique places and established neighborhoods.*
- *Policy 3: Preserve and protect historically and architecturally significant older buildings in the downtown area.*
- *Policy 4: Promote the adaptive re-use of older buildings that contribute to the overall design and character of downtown.*

This objective is clearly an argument for the rehabilitation of 619-621. The proposed building for this site contradicts this objective and approval standard 9

Chapter 8, Volume II:

Objective 3: The City has completed a survey of the Langdon Street Neighborhood and has documented all buildings, contributing and not. The preservation of 619-621 is encouraged in this objective.

Objective 5: The City has not followed well enough this objective and has allowed the owner to neglect the buildings' maintenance through building code violations.

Objective 6: Preserving the historic character of downtown neighborhoods requires that we not demolish 619 and 621. This objective encourages seeking vacant sites and non-contributing buildings for redevelopment.

Overall, Ms Maniaci's arguments for demolition of the applicant's properties are very poorly justified by the Downtown Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and the Campus Master Plan. If anything the Downtown and Comprehensive Plan argue for the preservation and rehabilitation of these buildings, as shown in the lobbyist's letter.

From: [Julia Matthews](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Please Approve Agenda Item 17 tonight.
Date: Monday, November 23, 2020 4:51:51 PM

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

Dear Plan Commission,

My name is Julia Matthews and I am urging you to approve agenda item 17 (Demolition & Conditional Use - 619-621 N Lake St) at tonight's meeting.

I am a lifelong Madison resident, and was a resident of 621 N Lake St from fall 2011 to fall 2014. I have grown up around the beautiful, historic Madison buildings and neighborhoods and have always felt a deep connection to this place and the culture it embodies. 619 and 621 were a home to me both before I was officially a resident and long after, and up until spring 2019, I knew it was a place where I would always be welcome. The vast majority of my undergrad memories occurred in those two houses as have countless memories since graduation. Most of those memories are positive and all have shaped the person I am today, but some were centered more on the rough condition of the houses themselves.

One of the rooms I lived in was a converted 3 season porch that while huge, had old wooden flooring, could only be accessed by walking through the co-ed bathroom and showers, and had wall to wall, floor to ceiling windows on the 3 external walls. You can imagine this made for an interesting living experience when surrounded by other (same height or greater) apartments with windows.

The other room was on the N. Lake St side external wall and had a (lake facing) door out to the newly renovated outdoor balcony area. Even with multiple heaters, colder days of winter made it so the lower ~3 feet of the room were cold enough that I could leave drinks on the ground and they would be as cold as if I had pulled them from the refrigerator downstairs. When it was especially windy, the door to the balcony would fly open with enough force to slam against the wall if it wasn't deadbolted shut. The first time this happened was at 3am, and it would happen again in the middle of the night a few more times before I remembered to make sure it was always deadbolted and seemingly every time I forgot. Also you should know this room was considered one of the most desirable of 621. Lastly, I still remember the feeling of ensuring I was extra careful walking up and down the stairs every single time so I didn't slip. Each house has a full 3 stories worth of internal staircases and an outer staircase for the main entryways. As a mostly able-bodied person, I did fall down each of the main staircases at least once while living in the houses. To be able to have a space that is ADA accessible would mean so much for our organization both for those who are current collegiate members and for the possibility of making our organization more accessible to future members and our aging alumni base.

Tonight you will likely hear many people refer to both the houses as 'our' houses and the proposed demolition and conditional use as 'our' plan. I want to point out the reason for that terminology. Though the houses are technically owned by our housing corporation Alpha Corp, the organization and all its board members is staffed through alumni of Alpha Chi Sigma. All collegiate members become members of Alpha Corp upon graduation and all participation and board membership is a strictly volunteer basis for which there is no compensation. Additionally the houses are run with a co-op structure, and collegiate members

hold elected housing related positions to the effect of property management. There is a treasurer, head of each house, and overall 'landlord'. Additionally all active members are expected to put in hours throughout the semester for housing maintenance and improvement projects. This structure gives the collegiate members a great sense of ownership over the houses, and while the more property management heavy positions were tough and thankless, those people worked extremely hard and were always quick to address all maintenance needs.

The physical location of 619 and 621 N Lake St is a wildly desirable place to live for students and young adults in the downtown area. It is extremely close to businesses, restaurants, bars, grocery stores, buslines, and most of campus-more so than any other street in the Langdon neighborhood. I was able to work multiple jobs all around the Madison area and campus from Middleton to Warner Beach to the Natatorium while living in this home due to the bus access and walkability. This ability to work in many locations, along with the frat subsidized rent, is the only way I financially survived school. I would have had to take out at least double the student loans I currently have if not for these factors, and that entire amount would have been private. I was also able to be just hundreds of feet from the memorial union terrace, library mall, and the 80 bus stop.

These incredible positives should be available to more students than just those who can afford to live in the luxury high rises and other higher end apartment buildings in the lower State St area and other more campus central locations. The market rent in our proposed building would be at the lower end, and much more affordable than most other apartment buildings constructed in recent years.

With the mention of affordability, I want to refer back to the November 9th Plan Commission meeting and the approval of legistar number 62096. With the exception of Alder Rummel, every plan commission member voted to approve this proposal even though it is a luxury apartment building and is sacrificing affordable units and displacing families during the ongoing housing crisis and pandemic. There was a lengthy discussion at this meeting on being more open to affordable housing proposals as they arise. Our proposal does have some below market rate units in the fraternity subsidized housing, but even the market rate units will go for almost half the rent per room of the proposed luxury apartment approved on November 9. Please don't vote against this plan that will add much needed affordable density to the downtown area.

Finally, I would like to address the main obstacle of our plan: Historic Preservation. Alpha Chi Sigma has inhabited this corner of N Lake St for almost 100 years. Both houses were originally built for use by fraternities and we had continued that historic use up until spring 2019 when both houses were vacated due to safety and other constraints. Also Alpha Chi Sigma was founded at UW-Madison, giving even more significance to our historic involvement in the very culture that created the Langdon historic district.

While the architectural facade is different and the plan comes with the additional floors (though these are bringing much needed affordable housing and additional access to this great transit hub neighborhood), the historic functions of the 'historic' properties will be preserved and built upon with our proposal. This new development will give stability to our organization that we have not known in at least the 10 years I have been involved, and truly could set us up to continue and expand the historic fraternal community and culture for the next 100 years.

All of this is to try to explain and justify that our organization has helped build this neighborhood culture and it is an essential part of the history and that the human aspect of this history should be at least as important as the architecture of an empty building. This

development proposal is unique because the owners of the houses aren't just some high rolling developers or property owners who have leased the building to students and now want to cash in. It's unique because the model of our housing has never been for profit and always prioritized giving student members the lowest rent possible to keep access as open as possible. It is unique because this is the last potential avenue for our organization to stay in its historic home on N Lake St and continue to contribute to this neighborhood and community of which it has been a member (and seen 1000's of residents and fraternal members) for the last 100 years. Without this proposal and development partnership we will be forced out of this place. I mention above that a significant portion of my memories over the last 10 years were made in these 2 existing houses, and to think that they are sitting empty now when they were so full of life is already extremely hard. To think that they will have to be demolished for our plan is truly heartbreaking, and I think you will hear that from other members and alumni tonight. However, none of the memories would be possible without the people and the organization, and the plan we are putting forward fills me with hope for the future of Alpha Chi Sigma and the future home it will become for current members, prospective members, and alumni like myself. Please approve this plan so that we can continue to call N Lake Street home!

Thank you,

Julia Matthews
1121 Rutledge St, Unit 3b
Madison, WI 53703

To the members of the Plan Commission,

We, the below signed, are in support of the demolition and conditional use permit request for the Alpha Chi Sigma chapter houses at 621/619 North Lake Street. We all joined Alpha Chi Sigma at various points throughout the fraternity's long history at UW-Madison since its founding there in 1902. It is safe to say that all of us--whether through living in the houses or spending time there for meetings and events--could speak to the rapid decay of their structural integrity and function. To name a few issues we have addressed in the last decade:

- One summer, the second floor porch of 621 North Lake Street (which overlooks Lake Mendota) was off-limits due to deteriorating floorboards
- During one of the many polar vortices Madison experienced in recent years, the heating broke multiple times--in 619 North Lake Street, a burst pipe in the wall led fecal matter to flow from the second floor and flood in the basement
- Some of us lived in the houses in 2014 when support beams had to be installed in the living room of 621 North Lake Street, after we noticed a gap forming between the floor and exterior wall and quickly learned that the foundation was beginning to crumble
- When the shoring wall was installed, one of the workers told us that one big storm could have caused the entire house to collapse

The houses are beautiful and historic at first glance, but with their centuries-old-charm comes tangible and costly concerns like these. For the fraternity, the true history of the houses lies within its walls. It is where we congregate for meetings and meals, initiate our new members, and provide opportunities for learning and growing. It is where we make lifelong bonds and where some meet their future spouses. It is where we celebrate each other's successes and gather to mourn brothers lost too soon. For those of us that still live nearby, the houses provide a space to participate in events and reunite with other alumni. We believe we speak for most members when we say tearing down 621 and 619 is heartbreaking. We love to stop by them when we visit downtown, smiling while pointing them out to friends and family. We tell stories about nights on the porch, early mornings watching the sun rise over the lake, and procrastinating in the front library while attempting to finish our organic chemistry homework. The houses hold decades of memories like ours. More than anything, we want to ensure that future generations of brothers have the ability to gather and live in a space that is theirs, where they can make their own memories and carry out their fraternal obligations. That is no longer possible in the houses as they stand. The new design has been thoughtfully and carefully planned out and is the best option for our fraternity. Though the home of Alpha Chi Sigma – Alpha Chapter will look different from the outside, we sincerely hope it always remains at the corner of Lake and Mendota.

Sincerely,

Laura Linde, UW-Madison Class of 2014, AXS Class of Spring 2012

Kayla Phelps, UW-Madison Class of 2012, AXS Class of Fall 2008

Cynthia Koffman, UW-Madison Class of 1982, AXS Class of Spring 1979

Brittany Warwick, UW-Madison Class of 2010, AXS Class of Fall 2009

Jayd Phelps, UW-Madison Class of 2012, AXS Class of Fall 2007

Somer Beaudoin, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Fall 2015
Sydneh Graham, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2014
Nathan Haag, UW-Madison Class of 2016, AXS Class of Spring 2014
Megan Hazen, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Spring 2017
Josephine O'Donnell, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Spring 2018
Aleeza Roth, UW-Madison Class of 2008, AXS Class of Fall 2004
Cole Harder, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Spring 2016
Lillie Talon, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Fall 2017
Thomas Moriearty, UW-Madison Class of 1992, AXS Class of Fall 1987
Rachel Egger, UW-Madison Class of 2010, AXS Class of Spring 2007
Dana Emery, UW-Madison Class of 1992, AXS Class of Fall 1988
Danielle Golner, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Fall 2017
Drew Wiesman, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2013
Lisa Payne, UW-Madison Class of 2001, AXS Class of Spring 1998
Katrina Gonzales, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2013
Ethan Coloma, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Spring 2016
Jason Hooyman, UW-Madison Class of 2008, AXS Class of Fall 2006
Sophie Blankenheim , UW-Madison Class of 2021, AXS Class of Spring 2017
Patrick Brady, UW-Madison Class of 2013, AXS Class of Fall 2010
Emma Meyer, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Fall 2015
Paige Pistono, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Spring 2016
Brian Ferrer, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Spring 2014
Jacquelyn DeBoth, UW-Madison Class of 2014, AXS Class of Spring 2010
Timothy Biewer-Heisler, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Spring 2017
Andrea Zuckerman, UW-Madison Class of 2007, AXS Class of Spring 2002
Wendy Istvanick, UW-Madison Class of 1988, AXS Class of Fall 1987
Robert Nightingale, UW-Madison Class of 1987; 1989; 1996, AXS Class of Spring 1986
Sandra DePorter, UW-Madison Class of 2009, AXS Class of Fall 2006
Michael Kuehne, UW-Madison Class of 2021, AXS Class of Fall 2017
Emily Ertl, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Spring 2013

David Mayer, UW-Madison Class of 2013, AXS Class of Fall 2009

Sarah Hall-MacKenzie, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2015

Stephanie Severa, UW-Madison Class of 2008, AXS Class of Fall 2007

Laura Burns, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Spring 2012

Dan Cappabianca, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Spring 2016

Jacky Lor, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2016

Courtney Bowman, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2014

Carolyn Rosewall, UW-Madison Class of 2006, AXS Class of Fall 2004

Katherine Koets, UW-Madison Class of 2022, AXS Class of Fall 2018

Susan Hendrix, UW-Madison Class of 1996, AXS Class of Fall 1994

Anna Jankus, UW-Madison Class of 2013, AXS Class of Spring 2010

Rebecca Dahmer, UW-Madison Class of 2005, AXS Class of Fall 2003

Sean Zuckerman, UW-Madison Class of 2008, AXS Class of Fall 2000

Emanuel Burgos, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Spring 2019

Alexandra Tamerius, UW-Madison Class of 2016, AXS Class of Fall 2012

Megan Duffey, UW-Madison Class of 2013, AXS Class of Spring 2010

Parker Johnson, UW-Madison Class of 2016, AXS Class of Spring 2013

Jessica Funk, UW-Madison Class of 2000, AXS Class of Spring 1997

Lina Haag, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011

Andrew Barragry, UW-Madison Class of 2009, AXS Class of Fall 2002

Aurora Lybeck, UW-Madison Class of 2006, AXS Class of Fall 2002

Eric Jacobson, UW-Madison Class of 1999, AXS Class of Spring 1994

Rick Arts, UW-Madison Class of 2004, AXS Class of Fall 2002

Eric Lang, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Spring 2015

Erica Jacobsen, UW-Madison Class of 1995, AXS Class of Fall 1993

Srikar Adibhatla, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Spring 2015

William Ehrhardt, UW-Madison Class of 1980, AXS Class of Spring 1969

Luke Viall, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011

Anne Burkholder, UW-Madison Class of 1979, AXS Class of Spring 1977

Alexander Koo, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2014

Charlotte Tamason, UW-Madison Class of 2006, AXS Class of Spring 2004

Caitlin Pavelec, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2015

Lyndsey Bergman, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Spring 2014

Elizabeth Chapman, UW-Madison Class of 2004; 2008, AXS Class of Fall 2001

Kelly Allen, UW-Madison Class of 2013, AXS Class of Fall 2010

Michelle Bernards, UW-Madison Class of 2004, AXS Class of Fall 2002

John Moore, AXS Class of Spring 2010

Christiana Kmecheck, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2016

Monica Samsin, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Spring 2016

Melissa Wegenka-Moretti, UW-Madison Class of 2002, AXS Class of Spring 1999

Lauren Melidosian, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Spring 2017

Timothy Rhorer, UW-Madison Class of 2009, AXS Class of Fall 2006

Sofia Carlson, UW-Madison Class of 2016, AXS Class of Fall 2013

Caitlin Gilly, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Fall 2018

Alyssa Perez, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2017

Kirstie Danielson, UW-Madison Class of 1996; 2007, AXS Class of Fall 1993

Nicholas Rettko, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011

Jessica Mayer, UW-Madison Class of 2009, AXS Class of Fall 2004

Gregory Dado, UW-Madison Class of 1993, AXS Class of Spring 1994

Megan O'Malley, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011

Nathan Young, UW-Madison Class of 2006, AXS Class of Fall 2003

Kelly Wallin, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011

Jacob Henrichs, UW-Madison Class of 2008, AXS Class of Fall 2004

Amanda Baum-Wagner, UW-Madison Class of 2011, AXS Class of Spring 2009

Colin Tingo, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011

Jordan Kreitinger, UW-Madison Class of 2012, AXS Class of Fall 2009

Annie Novak, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2014

Brooke Nowak, UW-Madison Class of 2021, AXS Class of Fall 2017

Chris Massey, UW-Madison Class of 2021, AXS Class of Fall 2018

Alexandra Steinberg, UW-Madison Class of 2022, AXS Class of Fall 2018

Arielle Martin, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2013
Anna Pearson, UW-Madison Class of 2021, AXS Class of Fall 2018
Sage Keyes, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Fall 2015
Julia Matthews, UW-Madison Class of 2014, AXS Class of Spring 2011
Chaitra Kotha, UW-Madison Class of 2014, AXS Class of Fall 2012
Katy Stankevitz, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Spring 2012
Claire Melidosian, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2016
Brenna Bomkamp, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Spring 2016
McKenna Mahnke, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Fall
Quinn Heck, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011
Elizabeth Feltman, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Fall 2013
David Rusch, UW-Madison Class of 1965, AXS Class of Fall 1964
Brandon Nikolai, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2016
Sarah Nabong, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2016
Andrew Au, UW-Madison Class of 2006, AXS Class of Spring 2003
Michael Chemello, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Fall 2014
Julie Wesssl, UW-Madison Class of 2020, AXS Class of Fall 2017
Jack Lindblom, UW-Madison Class of 2016, AXS Class of Spring 2013
Christopher Gran, UW-Madison Class of 1994, AXS Class of Fall 1992
James Maynard, UW-Madison Class of 2000, AXS Class of spring 2006
Alexandra Goetsch, UW-Madison Class of 2016, AXS Class of Fall 2013
Clare Cimperman, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Spring 2014
John Wright, AXS Class of Spring 2002
Jacob Zasada, UW-Madison Class of 2017, AXS Class of Spring 2015
Christopher Webster, UW-Madison Class of 2015, AXS Class of Fall 2011
Lilly Koch, UW-Madison Class of 2018, AXS Class of Spring 2014
Kirk Hutjens, UW-Madison Class of 1987; 1991, AXS Class of Fall 1984
Herbert Sipe, UW-Madison Class of 1969, AXS Class of Fall 1962
Lucas Dinh, UW-Madison Class of 2019, AXS Class of Fall 2017
Joel Thomas, UW-Madison Class of 2008, AXS Class of Spring 2006