

From: [Planning](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Objection to Development at Birrenkott Appliance and 232 S. Fair Oaks
Date: Monday, September 15, 2025 2:24:54 PM

From: Patricia Ladwig <pladwig19@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2025 12:11 PM
To: Planning <planning@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Objection to Development at Birrenkott Appliance and 232 S. Fair Oaks

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of a four-story, 33-unit apartment building at 232 S. Fair Oaks and the Birrenkott Appliance Store adjacent to my home at 226 Dixon St.

As a long-term resident of this neighborhood (26 years in my home), I am deeply concerned about the impact this project will have - not only on my quality of life and property - but also on the broader community. While I support thoughtful growth and housing solutions, this project, as currently planned, raises serious concerns in terms of scale, character, infrastructure stress, and community well-being.

Key Concerns:

1. Shadowing and Loss of Natural Light

The proposed structure will cast significant shadows over my property for much of the day. This will reduce natural sunlight in my home and yard, affecting not only my living conditions but also my garden. This reduction in natural sunlight will not only affect the comfort and livability of my home but is also likely to lead to a notable increase in my heating bills. During the winter, I rely heavily on passive solar gain to maintain a reasonable indoor temperature. With decreased sunlight due to the shadow cast by the proposed apartment, my energy consumption will increase, resulting in higher utility costs and a greater environmental impact.

2. Possible Structural Damage to my Foundation

My home currently has preexisting structural cracks in the foundation, which have been stable for many years. I am concerned that any nearby heavy construction, particularly demolition of the existing buildings and the excavation and piling required for a multi-story building - could aggravate the cracks or cause further damage to the integrity of my home.

3. Noise Pollution

An apartment complex of this size will inevitably bring increased noise from tenants,

vehicles, visitors, and building operations. The proximity of this noise source to my home will disrupt my peace and quiet. As someone who does not have central air conditioning in my home, I rely heavily on open windows for ventilation during warm months. This means that any increase in ambient noise from nearby construction or future occupancy of the new apartment complex will have a direct and significant impact on my quality of life. Unlike homes with air conditioning, I do not have the option to close my windows and still maintain a livable indoor temperature.

The current plans show the apartment transformer along my property line very near my house. Transformers, especially those serving large residential buildings, can generate persistent low-frequency noise and vibrations. These emissions have the potential to cause serious disturbances to neighboring residents.

4. Loss of Privacy

A four-story building directly next to my home will drastically compromise the privacy I currently enjoy. Windows and balconies overlooking my property will result in a constant lack of personal space, turning what was once a private, peaceful environment into one of exposure and discomfort.

5. Traffic Issues

This intersection (Atwood-S. Fair Oaks-Dixon) has long been a safety hazard. I am deeply concerned about the safety implications of this development-particularly as it relates to the already dangerous intersection, which is used daily by children attending Lowell elementary school. I have witnessed numerous accidents, near-misses, and traffic violations at this location. Increased congestion from a multi-unit building-especially one of this size, will only worsen the situation. The influx of new vehicles, delivery trucks, garbage and recycling trucks and visitor traffic will put pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers at even greater risk. Amazon trucks already routinely block the exit from Dixon St to S. Fair Oaks - with 33 apartments plus retail space added that will only increase.

6. Insufficient Parking

The current plan proposes 18 parking spaces for 33 residential units and retail space. This is drastically below a reasonable parking-to-unit ratio and will likely result in significant overflow of parking on nearby residential streets. Our neighborhood already struggles with limited street parking, and this development will exacerbate the issue, negatively impacting residents, visitors, and emergency vehicle access.

7. Light Pollution

Exterior lighting from parking areas, hallways, balconies, and security fixtures will introduce unwelcome artificial light into my home during nighttime hours. This is a serious concern for my sleep quality and overall health. Also, as an astronomy hobbyist and night sky photographer, I have spent countless hours observing and capturing the beauty of the night sky from my backyard. Besides the extra light pollution, the extra height of the proposed building will block out the night sky I formally enjoyed.

8. Decreased Property Value

The scale and density of this project are incompatible with the existing residential character of our neighborhood. This mismatch is likely to negatively affect the value of surrounding properties, including mine. The perception of overcrowding and reduced livability is a major deterrent to potential future buyers.

9. Character of Historic Intersection

The proposed development not only involves the demolition of a historic structure but also introduces a modern design that is starkly out of scale and character with the existing neighborhood.

10. Impact on Mental Health and Quality of Life

The cumulative effect of reduced privacy, constant noise and light, increased traffic, and environmental changes is likely to create a prolonged and harmful impact on my mental well-being. My home is supposed to be a sanctuary, and this development threatens to undermine that entirely.

Our neighborhood welcomes responsible development that fits the needs and scale of the community. However, this proposal, as currently designed, poses a threat to the quality of life and safety of its immediate neighbors.

Request

I urge you to **reconsider or require significant modifications** to this project. At a minimum, I request that the following be considered:

- **Reducing the height and scale** to align with neighborhood norms.
- **Increasing setbacks** and adding landscaping buffers to reduce direct impact on adjacent homes.
- **A structural impact assessment be conducted** to evaluate risks to my foundation (and steps taken to ensure monitoring during any construction).
- **Ensuring sufficient off-street parking** for all proposed units.
- **Requiring a thorough traffic and infrastructure impact assessment.**

Development should enhance, not overwhelm, a neighborhood. This project, as currently proposed, threatens to do the latter.

Thank you for your attention and for considering the voice of local residents. I hope to see a more balanced plan that respects both the need for growth and the integrity of our community. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Patricia Ladwig

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