

May 13, 2024

Mr. Bill Fruhling  
Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Madison Municipal Building, Suite 017  
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703



Re: Letter of Intent  
Porchlight Redevelopment  
521 East Washington Ave.  
KBA Project # 2379

Mr. Bill Fruhling:

The following is submitted together with the plans and application for the staff and Plan Commission's consideration of approval.

**Organizational structure:**

Owner:	LZ Ventures c/o Angie Black Carlson Black O'Callaghan & Battenberg 222 W. Washington Ave., Suite 705 Madison, WI 53703 <a href="mailto:angie.black@carlsonblack.com">angie.black@carlsonblack.com</a>	Architect:	Knothe & Bruce Architects, LLC 8401 Greenway Blvd. Ste 900 Middleton, WI 53562 608-836-3690 Contact: Duane Johnson <a href="mailto:djohnson@knothebruce.com">djohnson@knothebruce.com</a>
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Engineer:	Wyser Engineering 300 E Front Street Mt. Horeb, WI 53572 (608) 437-1862 Contact: Wade Wyse <a href="mailto:Wade.wyse@wyserengineering.com">Wade.wyse@wyserengineering.com</a>	Landscape Design:	Figure-Ground LLC Middleton, WI 53562 (608) 345-5101 Contact: Joe Porter <a href="mailto:jporter@figureground-design.com">jporter@figureground-design.com</a>
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**Introduction:**

This proposed project involves the redevelopment of the current site at 521 E Washington Avenue which has a two-level commercial office building, located on the southern corner of S Blair Street and E Washington Avenue. The proposed redevelopment would consist of a new 8-story building with administrative offices on the first floor and partial basement and 70 residential units on floors 2 through 8. There will be 8 surface parking stalls accessed off Blair St. The facility would be utilized by Porchlight for their administrative headquarters as well as long-term stable affordable housing, this would replace their current facility located on Brooks Street.

Porchlight and LZ Ventures have fostered a mutual respect and great working relationship which has developed over the past 15 years sharing the same block with Porchlights current facility on Brooks St and LZ's Grand Central and X-01 student housing facilities. This is an incredible opportunity for Porchlight to substantially improve its housing and services and therefore ultimately fulfill its mission of reducing

homelessness and providing affordable housing, and LZ ventures is excited to be a part of the solution. The proposed facility would have studio apartments, instead of the current (single room occupancy) SRO's which are at Brooks St. location. This would be life changing for the residents and greatly reduce Porchlights operational and maintenance commitments, freeing up funds to be used elsewhere. In addition, this central location will provide residents with more convenient accessibility to transportation, including the new Bus Rapid Transit line, city services, employment opportunities and living needs. Due to the generosity of LZ Ventures, this project requires no financial assistance from the city or state. This project will be a much-needed upgrade for the Porchlight non-profit organization to help with home and job placement, improving the lives of Madison citizens.

The site is located on the south corner of E. Washington Avenue and S Blair St. It is composed of one parcel in a UMX zoning district, the site is approximately 0.24 acres in area.

This application requests demolition of the existing structure and conditional use approval to allow greater than 8 dwelling units for the development of the new Porchlight facility. An application for a Certified Survey Map is being submitted contemporaneously to remove the underlying lot lines to complete the building parcel.

#### **Downtown Plan & Urban Design District**

The property is within the boundaries of the City of Madison Downtown Plan adopted in July 2012. The Plan was the product of 4 plus years of work including 125 group meetings with neighborhood and community groups, City Boards and Commissions, business owners and many other interested parties.

The Plan places the site within the Downtown Core which is recommended for the highest intensity of development within the city. One of the Plan's key recommendations is to accommodate future growth within the downtown. The Plan's Parcel Analysis Map identifies the site as an "underutilized site and/or obsolete building" and one of the sites for potential redevelopment to accommodate the City's growth for a 20-year horizon. The parcel analysis considered among other factors; parcel size, existing use, building condition, architectural character, and land valuation.

The Downtown Plan also provides guidelines for building height and designates this site as having a maximum building height of 8 stories.

The property is also located within Urban Design District #4 (UDD 4), which establishes the purpose of improving the appearance of those major transportation corridors east of the Capitol Square. UDD 4 has limited scope for building design. It does speak to general compatibility of building designs and for building materials to be low maintenance and harmonious with others in the area and to avoid large unbroken exterior facades.

#### **Existing Structures and Proposed Deconstruction**

The site is currently occupied by a two-level, 5,013 SF office building located at 521 E Washington Ave. The building, constructed in 1958, was originally a gas station but was converted to an office space in 1981, with an addition constructed in 1989. The building most recently was the home of Monarch Health and has been listed for sale since April 2023.

Given that the building is not historically or architecturally significant and that the Downtown Plan recommends the properties for redevelopment, and that the proposed redevelopment is consistent with

the underlying zoning and City plans, it is our opinion that the that the standards for demolition can be met and a Re-use and Recycling Plan will be submitted prior to the deconstruction of the existing structure. This building would not be a good prospect for relocation.

**Project Description:**

The proposed development is an 8-story residential building with 70 studio apartments, administrative offices and 8 surface parking stalls. The apartments are designed to help lower income residents. Employee parking is provided on-site, and the proposed redevelopment will not be requesting residential parking permits.

The project is well located to take advantage of public transportation as well as bike paths and is within walking distance of a grocery store as well as restaurants. There is also an abundance of streets with dedicated bike lanes within the area.

The proposed design of this building will incorporate simple balanced massing and a thoughtful use of materials. Sitting at the intersection of East Washington & Blair Streets; The most prominent architectural feature occurs at this important intersection. A proud massing announces the presence of the building as well as the main entry into this facility, with neat and orderly metal composite wall panels punched with windows. A durable masonry base anchors the building, balanced by open aluminum storefront windows which bathe the interior administrative spaces with natural light. The projecting masses above contrast the lighter colored masonry with a dark metal skin. This low maintenance material will best serve the tenants functional needs and create visual interest as wraps around the building. Recessed reliefs in the volume of the building adds an embellishment of color to the elevations in addition to identifying entry & vertical circulation. Window louvers add a textural change to the planar form of the otherwise clean metal wall cladding.

**Site Development Data:**

Densities:

Gross Lot Area	10,527 sf or .24 acres
Dwelling Units	70 DU
Lot Area / D.U.	150 sf / Unit

Building Height	8 stories
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Lot Coverage	8,290 sf (78.7%)
Usable Open Space	740 sf (10.6 SF / Unit)

Dwelling Unit Mix:

<u>Efficiency</u>	<u>70</u>
Total Dwelling Units	70

Vehicle Parking:

<u>Surface</u>	<u>8 stalls (including 1 EV ready)</u>
Total	8 stalls

Bicycle Parking:

Garage – Residential	64 stalls
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Surface – Residential	6 stalls
<u>Surface – Commercial / Guests</u>	<u>8 stalls</u>
Total	78 stalls

**Project Schedule:**

It is anticipated that the construction will begin in January 2025 with a final completion in November 2025.

Thank you for your time reviewing our proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Johnson".

Duane Johnson, AIA, Partner