



February 20, 2024

Ms. Linda K. Scott, Chair
Miffland District, CNI
333 West Mifflin Street
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Ms. Scott:

I am writing to follow-up on the comments offered by the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) at the Miffland District meeting on February 4th and the CNI “postcard” meeting on February 19th regarding the Hovde Properties Demolition Permit application for the buildings at 117 – 125 West Mifflin Street.

Following your review and the City’s approval of the Wisconsin History Center project in August 2023, our project planners and architects began working out the logistics to stage construction for the new History Center. As part of its approval, the City approved the use of the Mifflin Plaza area north of the cul-de-sac to be used as a construction staging area. A key assumption of that plan was that the shared private alley between the WHS and Hovde Properties would also be available for construction staging.

The 12-foot-wide private alley, governed by a private easement agreement executed in 1900, serves the adjacent Churchill Building at 18 North Carroll Street and the 15 North Fairchild Street property, both owned by Hovde Properties. WHS and Hovde Properties have worked together for the past seven months to try to find a way to build the History Center and keep the alley open for pedestrians, deliveries, and automobile passage in a safe manner. Closing the alley was an unacceptable option for Hovde Properties given the impact that would have on their properties and tenants.

WHS and Hovde Properties separately sought the advice from construction experts on best practices to maintain a safe environment in the alley while keeping it open. Based on the advice received, in the end, we mutually determined that keeping the alley open and constructing the building at the zero line were incompatible. Recognizing the need for cooperation to support construction of the new History Center, Hovde Properties offered the alternative before you to address the identified issues and create a safe construction site and surrounding environment for all parties.

Hovde Properties intends to redevelop the site for a new mixed-use development in conformance with the adopted 2018 Comprehensive Plan and 2012 Downtown Plan designations of Downtown Core for the site. Prior

to constructing that project, however, Hovde Properties has agreed to lease a portion of the property to the WHS for a construction staging area for the new History Center.

At the request of Alder Verveer, History Center planners re-reviewed the Mifflin Plaza and determined that with the additional space on the Hovde Properties site, we could reduce the construction footprint in the Mifflin Plaza and increase with width of the pedestrian/bicycle pass through on the west side of the plaza and save the four western-most existing trees in the plaza. If the demolition permit is issued, we will plan to make those changes to the Mifflin Plaza staging area.

In deciding to work together on this construction staging plan, WHS took into careful consideration the status of the West Mifflin Street Arcade building (177-125 West Mifflin Street). The Arcade is not designated under the City of Madison's historic preservation ordinance, nor is it a part of any listed historic district. Although it was determined to be a contributing building to the eligible (but not listed) State Street historic District, its integrity is not strong enough to make it individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Even if it were, there are better examples in Madison of the arcade property type that was popular at the time.

Given the City's vision for the site as a new, higher density mixed-use development, and the importance of the property to achieve a safer construction site for the Wisconsin History Center over the next three years, WHS believes it is an appropriate bridge between today's existing condition and the ultimate future development to follow from Hovde Properties.

We appreciate your careful review of the request before you and encourage CNI's support of the application.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Wes Mosman Block
Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer
Wisconsin Historical Society

c. Alder Michael Verveer, 4th District
City of Madison Planning Commission

c. Colin Punt
City of Madison Planning Division