

November 18, 2015

Madison Common Council  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Room 417  
Madison, WI 53703

Madison Plan Commission  
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite LL100  
Madison, WI 53703

Madison Urban Design Commission  
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite LL100  
Madison, WI 53703

Re: 7933 Tree Lane Project

Dear Sirs and Madams:

This firm has been retained to represent Greenbriar Village Apartments. I am writing with regard to the proposed development for the property located at 7933 Tree Lane (hereinafter referred to as the "Property"). I would like to highlight some concerns regarding the location of the proposed development, specifically relating to the suitability of the Property for a permanent supportive housing development. It is our position that the City should identify and consider other parcels which may be more suitable for a permanent supportive housing development. The Property lacks sufficient public transportation and space for parking, lacks sufficient green space and common space to support its residents and their children, attempts to house a large population of residents in very tight quarters, and the proposed development does not aesthetically fit in to the character of the surrounding neighborhood. For those reasons, I urge the City to find an alternate location for the proposed development.

First, the Property is located near very limited public transportation stops, making transportation for the future tenants difficult. The bus stops located on Mineral Point Road only service one route, the 15 bus, which only operates during peak hours. To travel, for example, to the Capitol Square during non-peak hours, a resident would need to walk along Mineral Point Road, underneath the Beltline Highway, to reach additional stops more than a half mile away on Junction Road. Given the amount of traffic every day along Mineral Point Road, this walk is not ideal, nor safe, especially for families with young children. If the proposed development were located closer to a bus route that operated with all day service, this safety issue would be moot. Therefore, alternate properties located along bus routes with all-day service would be more ideal for this type of housing, especially when so many tenants are expected to rely upon public transportation.

Second, the Property is oddly shaped and the proposed building leaves tenants with very limited green space with which to enjoy their new home. From the renderings developed by Heartland Housing, there appears to be very limited outdoor space for tenants and their children. While Heartland's October 6, 2015 Letter of Intent does note that much of the Property is preserved as open space, the renderings demonstrate that much of the open space is dedicated to tree and brush areas to the northwest of the building, which is inaccessible to tenants and their children and thus, unusable space. The lack of usable greenspace for tenants poses a safety concern for the children who would live in the proposed development. Also, the proposed development is squeezed between previously developed residential properties and commercial properties located along a busy, six-lane road in Madison. Other proposed properties with more accessible and open space for tenants would provide additional space for parking as well as alleviate the dangers posed by operating sustainable housing near heavily trafficked areas by providing other areas for tenants' children to play and spend their time.

Third, parking space would appear to be inadequate as the development site permits space for only twenty-seven parking spaces for a building intended to house permanent offices for social services, property management, other services, and forty-six residential units. Such limited parking space may force property staff, program and service providers, tenants and visitors to park in neighboring parking lots of other businesses and/or residential properties. A larger, alternative building site could provide adequate parking space for tenants and staff, thus avoiding parking frustration, traffic congestion and unauthorized neighborhood parking.

Fourth, the proposed development seeks to house a large number of residents and their families in very small units, further stressing the need for more open and common space for the families to utilize. The 2, 3 and 4-bedroom units are anticipated to be 750 SF, 1,000 SF and 1,200 SF, respectively. Heartland Housing took the position at the October 27<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing that any fewer units would not be economically feasible for the developer. However, Heartland's desire to condense the requisite number of units to remain economically viable into a small space should not trump the City's desire to address the wellbeing of future tenants. Another location with more available space to expand would allow for the project to maintain the required number of units without packing the tenants into unreasonably small units.

Finally, the proposed development does not match the aesthetic character of the surrounding properties and will clash with the look and feel of the neighborhood. The development is proposed to be four stories tall, with a commercial warehouse type look to it. Neighboring commercial properties to the south are limited to two or three stories, and tend to be built of more neutral-looking materials, such as brick or concrete. The building will clash with the neighboring residential properties to the northeast, north, northwest, and west and the one- and two-story residential buildings will be dwarfed in size by the height of the four-story development. As discussed at the October 27<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing, Heartland Housing noted that it was not economically feasible to maintain the project with fewer units, and they were forced to merely build upwards and attempt to maximize the space provided. If a larger, more open parcel was chosen for this development, more care could be given to the look and design of the structure and its surrounding neighborhood. Further, a larger parcel with more space would mean that the building could expand horizontally to blend in more with neighboring properties, rather than being forced to vertically tower over other properties.

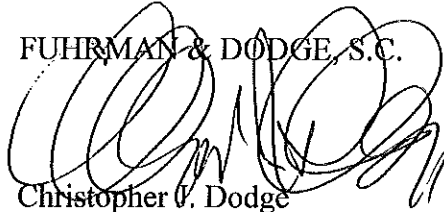
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While the idea of supportive housing for Madison may be an appropriate response to the rise in Madison's homeless population, it appears as if Heartland Housing is attempting to cram an industrial-looking sustainable housing development into this oddly-shaped, small parcel of land, far from adequate public transportation to serve its low-income tenants. The parties involved do not appear to be addressing safety concerns that may affect the development's tenants, nor do the parties appear to be concerned with maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the current neighborhood. We would request that the City and the involved developers contemplate these concerns when considering whether to move forward with the project, and ask that the City ultimately relocate this project to an alternative property.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Very Truly Yours,

FUHRMAN & DODGE, S.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher V. Dodge", is written over the typed name and firm name.

Christopher V. Dodge  
*Attorney at Law*

cc: Greenbriar Village Apartments