

[DRAFT]

September 10, 2014

**REQUEST FOR HEIGHT MAP MODIFICATION**

HAND DELIVERED

CITY OF MADISON  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & PARCEL  
215 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD., RM. LL100  
MADISON, WI 53703  
ATTN: KEVIN FIRCHOW

Re: 202 E. Washington Avenue ("202 East") and 15 N. Webster ("15 North"), Madison, Wisconsin as shown on Exhibit A (together, the "Development Parcel")

Dear Kevin:

We submit this letter as a supplement to our request for rezoning of the Development Parcel to a Planned Development District. This letter summarizes our application for height in excess of the differing height standards currently prescribed for the Development Parcel as shown on the Downtown Height Map attached as Exhibit B (the "Height Map"). The Height Map currently provides a maximum height of 8-stories with an allowable 2-extra stories on 202 East and 6-stories on 15 North.<sup>1</sup> The Report of the Lamp House Block Ad Hoc Plan Committee (the "Lamp House Block Report"), which has been adopted as a supplement to the City's Downtown Plan, concurs with the Height Map with the caveat that any "height above 4 stories should require a shadow study to ensure meaningful sunlight reaches the Lamp House rooftop at the equinoxes." All of the recommendations of Lamp House Block Report, including the recommended building heights, are made with the larger goal of achieving a vision for the Lamp House Block resulting in "a thoughtful and vibrant built environment that...recognizes the potential economic value of heritage tourism for the Lamp House when accessible to the public."

As an alternative to the current Height Map, our application for excess height respectfully requests a modification to accommodate 10-stories on less than 4,500 square feet of the Development Parcel as shown on Exhibit C (the "Requested Standards"). In addition to allowing the development of an exceptionally-designed and higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories, we believe the Requested Standards result in a more compatible

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<sup>1</sup> A prior developer had proposed a hotel development located entirely on the 202 East Washington lot. That proposal was withdrawn due largely to traffic and other logistical concerns. Subsequently, a 6-story multi-family development located on North Webster Street has been approved (the "Rouse Project"). In order to address the logistical concerns presented by the original hotel development and avoid an "orphaned" property between the Rouse Project and this development, we were encouraged by the City to include 15 North Webster as part of the Development Parcel.

development with neighboring properties that facilitates the adopted goals of the Lamp House Block Report by promoting heritage tourism through the creation of the first publicly-accessible pedestrian path to the Lamp House and guestrooms overlooking the Lamp House while still ensuring meaningful sunlight reaches the Lamp House rooftop at the equinoxes. We would also be willing to establish a room package that would further promote and celebrate the Lamp House history and Frank Lloyd Wright influences on the block. To that end, it is our belief that the deviation from six to ten stories on 15 North is consistent with the report's vision and will allow us to proceed with a project honoring and respecting that vision.

In reviewing our application, please consider the following:

### Specific Standards for Review of Excess Height Applications under Planned District Developments

The City's Zoning Code specifically allows the Plan Commission to grant approval for applications of height in excess of the Height Map if it finds each of the following conditions present:

1. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces; and
2. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories. 28.098(2)(g)(1 & 2).<sup>2</sup>

Understanding the above standards should consider the recommendations made by adopted plans (discussed in more detail below), we believe our aggregate land-use submittal (including, contextual photos and renderings of our proposed building) provides ample support for a finding of compatibility between our proposed project and its surrounding built (and to be built) environment. Similarly, the second standard can be met by itemizing the multiple building enhancements included in this project. Namely, the architectural design, existence of underground parking, green build features (including the large green-roof canopy), omission of 'walpaks', incorporation of 15 North, 360-degree treatment of the exterior façade and high quality of interior fit and finishes are all demonstrative building qualities unachievable by a privately-financed development lacking the requested additional stories.

### General Plan Recommendations and Lamp House Block Vision

More generally, the Planned Development District standards include a requirement to "facilitate the development or redevelopment goals of the Comprehensive Plan and of adopted neighborhood, corridor or special area plans" 28.098(2)(b). While our project meets the goals of both the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan, this letter focuses on how the Requested Standards facilitate the recommended goals of the Lamp House Block Report. While the Lamp House Block Report does not focus specifically on 15 North or 202 East, (as neither is adjacent

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<sup>2</sup> Standards 3 & 4 are not listed as they are not applicable to this project.

to the Lamp House parcel), it does provide an overall four-point vision for the entire Lamp House block.

Those four points are aimed at achieving "a thoughtful and vibrant built environment that:

1. Balances historic preservation and economic development values by encouraging appropriate development around the Lamp House; and
2. Recognizes the potential economic value of heritage tourism for the Lamp House when accessible to the public; and
3. Preserves the residential character of the area immediately around the Lamp House by retaining the compatible residential scale and feel of surrounding buildings; and
4. Protects Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Lamp House on its original site, including associated views to the house from the street and from the house to Lake Mendota, as well as the "outdoor room" created around the house by its distance from the surrounding buildings."

With the foregoing vision in mind, the Lamp House Block Report recommends no changes to the Height Map (for the area that includes the Development Parcel) but provides that any buildings with a "height above 4 stories should require a shadow study to ensure meaningful sunlight reaches the Lamp House rooftop at the equinoxes." As shown by the shadow studies attached as Exhibit D, the Requested Standards allow meaningful sunlight to reach the Lamp House rooftop. As a point of fact, approval of the Requested Standards will create additional shadowing upon the rooftop an average of 1.5 additional hours (between the hours of 10:15 a.m. and 11:45 p.m.) during the equinoxes. The proposed building also provides significant setbacks along the back portion of 15 North as recommended by the Lamp House Block Report (See Exhibit C).

While the shadow impact is minimal, our proposed project's positive impact in facilitating the larger vision of the Lamp House Block Report cannot be understated, namely, our unique combination of promoting heritage tourism through Lamp House themed room packages and creating opportunities to experience currently unavailable views of the Lamp House. Our project as proposed will create new views to the Lamp House from the first publicly-accessible pedestrian path as well as guestrooms overlooking the Lamp House. The guestrooms will also provide hotel guests the opportunity to have the same type of view sheds envisioned by Frank Lloyd Wright when he designed the Lamp House.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to review our request. We are available at your convenience to more fully discuss this request and our development plans.

Respectfully submitted,

Exhibit A  
Development Parcel

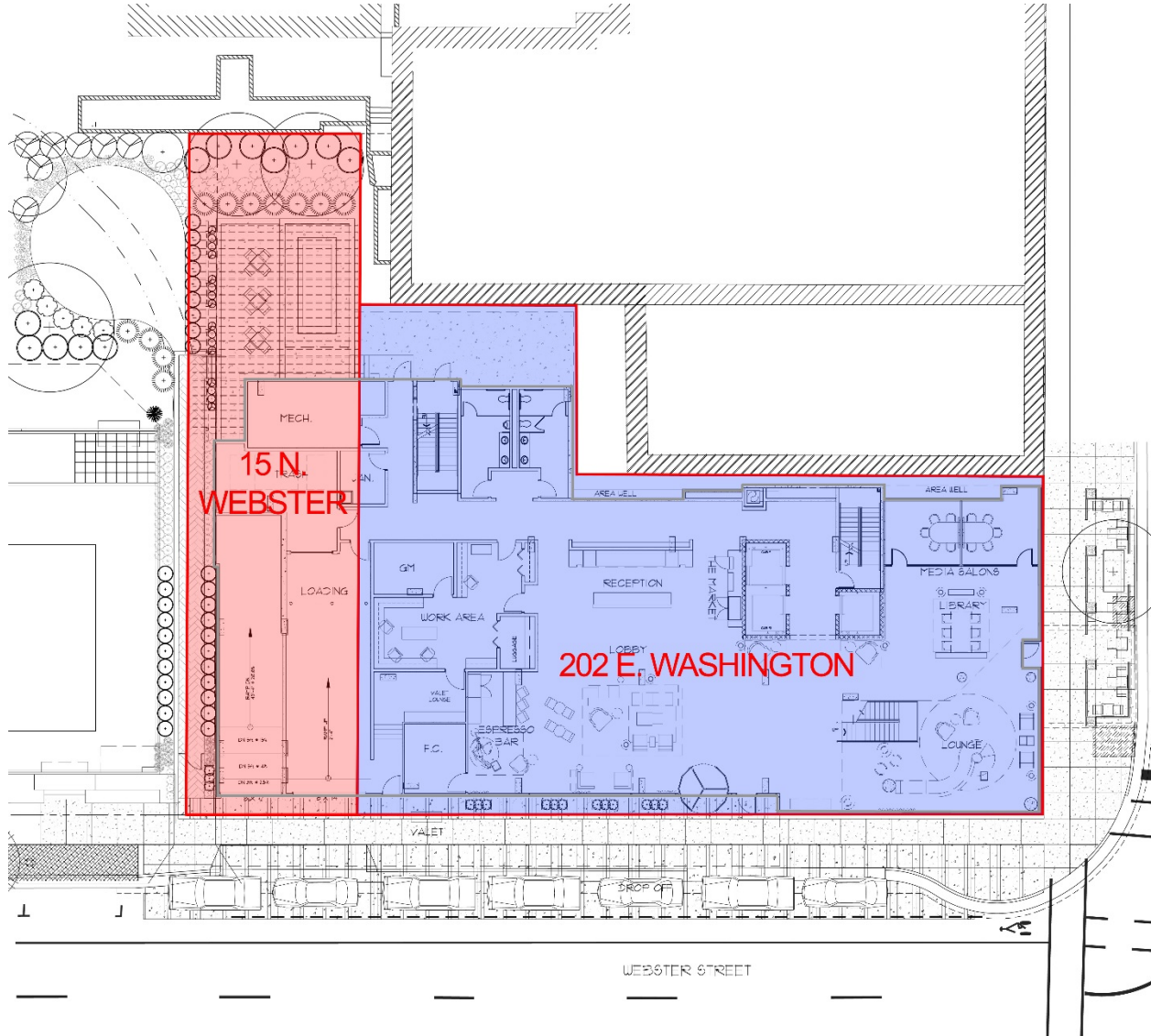
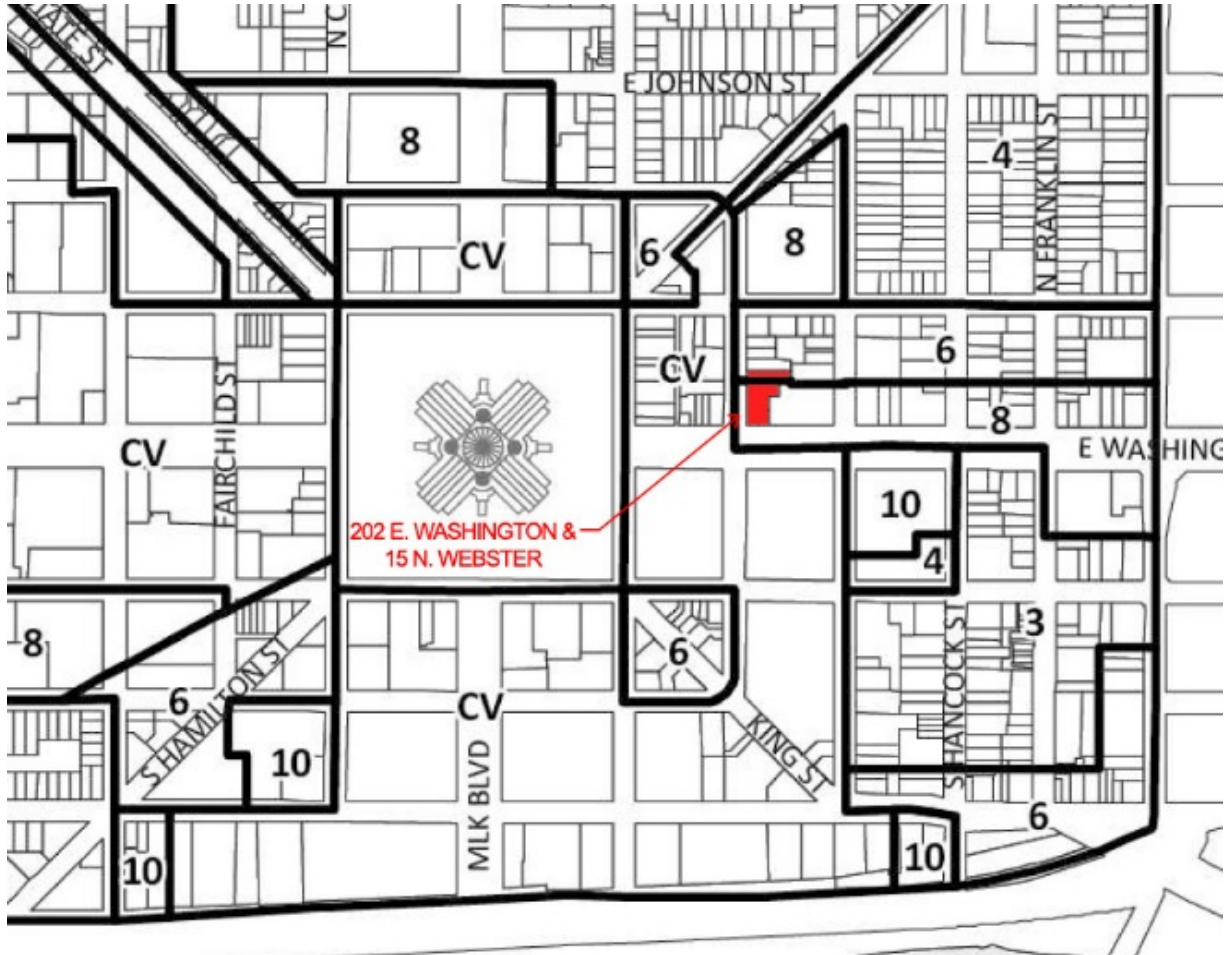


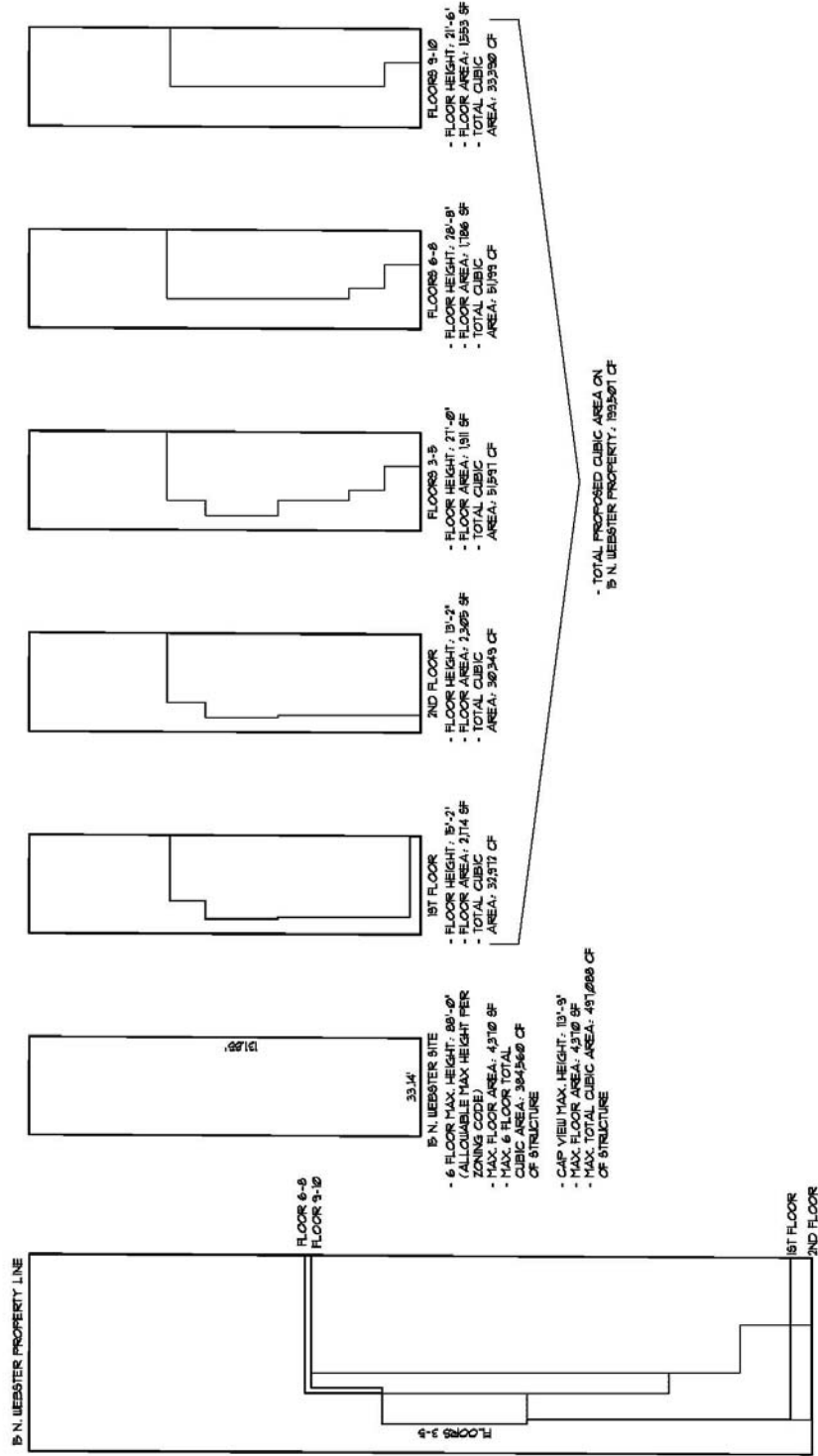
Exhibit B

Current Height Map



# Exhibit C

## Requested Standards



# Exhibit D

## Shadow Studies

