

Remarks on the Edgewater Hotel
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The Edgewater Hotel is surrounded by a R6 residentially zoned neighborhood. It is Wisconsin's and Madison's first historic district, and arguably, its most important one and depends on livability for its success. Like other famous historic districts such as Georgetown in Washington D.C. or the historic districts in Charleston, Savannah or Chicago, our historic districts depend on attracting and rewarding owners and residents who will undertake and support the rehabilitation and maintenance of their properties. To be successful, historic districts need to be able to attract and deliver to residents who are sympathetic with the goals of the historic district. Part of this is to provide an environment that is as peaceful and quiet as is reasonably achievable. The key to this is to not play music or make sounds that can be heard outside of one's own residence.

It is true that there is traffic noise and that there can be noise from the radios in passing cars, but for the most part, the expectations of Mansion Hill residents have been successfully met, at least that was until the Edgewater started to produce musical events on their terrace that last for hours.

During the debate, we were continually told by Bob Dunn and the Edgewater advocates that both Bob Dunn and his family and Jerry and Pleasant Frautchi would be living in the upper floors of the hotel and that we should be assured they would not tolerate unacceptable noise from the terrace. Years have gone by and neither has moved in and the other few occupants of the condominiums are only part-time residents with primary residence elsewhere. Seriously, can you imagine Pleasant Frautchi, one of Madison's most tasteful and sophisticated people, putting up with all of that racket?

But no, the logic that the hotel guests would not put up with the music should be persuasive but somehow it is not. Let me read part of an email I received from Carl Holstrom, an alumni, whose son is in graduate school here and stayed one night at the Edgewater. "To my great annoyance, I was assigned a room over the terrace and was not advised that there would be a very noisy event under my window on Saturday evening. When I returned to my room on Saturday evening after having dinner with my son, the noise was unbearable. I called the front desk and complained and they offered to change my room which they did about thirty minutes later... In short the hotel, is not a credit to the Madison downtown community which its predecessor clearly was. It makes me sad."

How can all of the other hotels in Madison be quiet and not need to do something like this? Certainly a hotel that satisfies its guests, both in its accommodations and in preparation in service of food, should be what the owners are looking for, just like all of the other hotels both here in Madison and elsewhere.

And as for the Wisconsin State Journal editorial, Wednesday, September 13th, it says, "Now the complaint seems to be the hotel is providing too much access to the public, creating a nuisance. That's unreasonable. This is downtown Madison after all, not a quiet residential neighborhood." No, the complaint is not that "the hotel is providing too much access to the public ..." the complaint is that the hotel is making too much noise. As to whether or not the Mansion Hill is "not a quiet residential neighborhood" the possibility that a motorcycle will come by with a loud muffler or the passerby might talk loudly is much more bearable and of shorter duration than a whole evening of loud amplified music.

The hotel does not need to make disturbing music to in order to succeed, but the Mansion Hill neighborhood needs to fight to keep the neighborhood as quiet as possible in order to be the success that Madison and the State of Wisconsin are proud of.