

January 23, 2026

Lisa McNabola, Planner
Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
City of Madison
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI 53701

RE: Letter of Intent for 121 North Butler Street – The Bella Apartments

Dear Ms. McNabola and Members of the Plan Commission:

Major Alteration review requested to use metal siding at ground level at east and west (side) elevations and the north (rear) elevation as permissible by the Zoning Ordinance in lieu of the wood siding. Staff report item 1.f. that requested the same façade material on all sides at the ground floor. Brick masonry is desired on south street facade and metal siding at the sides and rear facades is permitted by the ordinance. Using brick on the sides and rear would increase construction costs which adversely impacts the intended rent affordability this development is trying to achieve.

Thank you for taking the time to review the proposed project for 121 North Butler Street. Madison has a need to provide affordable, work-force housing downtown and this project is intended to help satisfy that need.

Development Team

Land Developer:	Cliff Fisher Fisher Apartments 380 West Washington Avenue Madison, WI 53703
Architect:	Ray White Dimension IV – Madison Design Group 6515 Grand Teton Plaza, Suite 120 Madison, WI 53719
Civil Engineer:	Peter Fortlage, P.E. Burse Surveying and Engineering, Inc. 2801 International Lane, Suite 101 Madison, WI 53704
Landscape:	Paul Skidmore 13 Red Maple Trail Madison, WI 53717

Existing Conditions

The project site is located on the northeast side of North Butler Street, across from the municipal parking garage. There are three existing apartment houses at 117, 123 and 125 North Butler that will be razed. One structure was previously moved to a nearby property and restored.

Project Description

The project consists of 72 apartment units, a mix of studio and 1 and 2-bedroom units within a 5-story building. The project will have 14 basement parking spaces and a total of 80 bicycle parking spaces.

8 units (approximately 4,000 square feet) will be income (60% AMI) and rent-restricted to allow for the building to exceed the 4-story limit. The intent of the developer is that the remainder of the apartment units will be priced to target Madison's work force.

A previous building design and redevelopment of this property was submitted for plan commission review in 2022 and for building inspection permitting in 2023. That project was not economically feasible and construction did not commence.

The properties will be combined into a single lot via a certified survey map that has been previously approved and will be recorded prior to the issuance of an early-start or building permit.

A demolition permit has previously been approved for the existing structures with the intent to start demolition no later than October 2025.

Lot Size

15,368 SF/0.35 acres

Lot Coverage

Building footprint: 8,949 SF

Impervious area: 10,542 SF

Pervious area: 4,826 SF

Total Lot area: 15,368 SF

Useable Open Space

Useable open area required: None

Stormwater Management

The project must comply with the redevelopment performance goals as outlined in Chapter 37 of the City of Madison's Ordinance. The project is required to reduce peak runoff rates from the site by 15% compared to existing conditions during a 10-year design storm and reduce runoff volumes from the site by 5% compared to existing conditions during a 10-year design storm. The required rate and volume reductions shall be completed, using green infrastructure that captures at least the first ½ inch of rainfall over the total site impervious area, which will be accomplished by the implementation of a bioretention basin in the rear of the lot. Since the site will not have new exposed parking, this site is considered exempt from the Total Suspended Solids removal requirement.

Total Construction Cost

Approximately \$8,000,000

Public Subsidy

None

Sustainability

This project includes a variety of sustainable features, including:

- Compact residential redevelopment adjacent to the Central Business District
- Sustainable native plantings
- Multiple transit options
- Ample bicycle parking for visitors and residents
- No surface parking lot
- Stormwater bioinfiltration basin
- Recycling for residents
- Construction recycling program
- Energy Star appliances
- High efficiency, heat pump (all electric) HVAC system
- Low-flow plumbing fixtures and high-efficiency central hot water heaters
- Efficient LED lighting systems
- Low-E glazing
- Rooftop solar-ready and white membrane roofing for reduced solar-heat gain.

Pre-Application Meetings

The developer has revised the Major Alteration to use brick veneer at the ground floor on the street/south elevations and to use metal siding at the ground level on the sides and rear elevations.

The project has been presented to the Capital Neighborhood, Downtown Madison Inc., and the current and previous Alders representing the district. Notification of this land use application were made to all three in May 2025.

The following pre-application meetings have been attended for present and discuss the project scope and design:

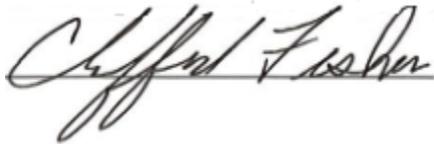
- May 7, 2025 – The developer and architect met with Kevin Firchow and Lisa McNabola of the Planning Department to discuss the project design.
- May 15, 2025 – The developer and architect attended the city staff DAT meeting
- May 30, 2025 – The developer and architect attended a pre-application meeting with Lisa McNabola, Planner, Jenny Kirchgatter, Zoning Administrator, and Linette Rhodes, Community Development

Property Management and Maintenance

The project will be professionally managed by Fisher Apartments. Fisher Apartments proudly owns and operates over 150 rental dwelling units and multiple commercial and historic properties in and around downtown Madison. The Owners of Fisher Apartments are a life-long residents of Madison and have been rental property owners and managers since 1978. In addition, Cliff Fisher was the developer for both phases of Metropolitan Place condominiums on West Washington Avenue and West Mifflin Street.

We look forward to working with City staff and Plan Commission members on the review and approval of this important project.

Sincerely,



Cliff Fisher

Location Map:

