

# AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: February 18, 2009
TITLE: 425 West Washington Avenue – PUD(GDP-SIP) to Construct a Mixed-Use Development. 4 <sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (13147)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: William A. Fruhling, Acting Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: February 18, 2009	ID NUMBER:

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Members present were: Bruce Woods; Chair, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, Dawn Weber, Mark Smith, Jay Fern, Ald. Marsha Rummel and John Harrington.

## SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 18, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PUD(GDP-SIP) for a mixed-use development at 425 West Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were David Ferch, Erik Minton, and Bill White. Ferch stated that the neighborhood steering committee for this project has met since the last Commission meeting, but a bigger neighborhood meeting is scheduled for February 19. The revised plans include an updated landscaping plan, the removal of the balcony above the health club entry, and a study for treatment of the fifth floor sun screen. Ferch noted that he has not yet revisited the first floor windows on the south and east facades or the railing designs as requested by the Commission, but did look at locating more bicycle parking on the first floor and decided it wasn't necessary. White spoke to the neighborhood process, noting that they are requesting initial approval and that changes may be made based on comments from the neighborhood, staff, and others. Minton stated that he has already delayed the Plan Commission review and would like initial approval to allow the project to be reviewed at the next Plan Commission meeting.

Ald. Mike Verveer and Jonathan Cooper (representing the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee for this project) requested referral of the project to allow for a larger neighborhood meeting that is scheduled for the next day.

The Commission discussion focused on the following issues:

- Whether the scale and massing of the building comply with the recommendations of the adopted *Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan* and the *Comprehensive Plan*. A focus of this discussion was whether the fifth floor was consistent with these plans.
- Whether this request should be referred until the next meeting to allow for the scheduled meeting of the larger neighborhood.

Registering in support were: Tom Geier, Chet Droessler, Robert Bergeman, Aaron Abplanalo, Judy Karofsky, Rosemary Lee, and Sheridan Glen. Registering in opposition was: Peter Ostlind. Registering in neither support nor opposition was: Ledell Zellers.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Slayton, seconded by Smith, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED INITIAL APPROVAL** of a PUD(GDP-SIP) for a mixed-use development at 425 West Washington Avenue.

The motion passed on a vote of (4-3-1) with Rummel, Harrington and Ferm voting no, and Woods abstaining. (Wagner and Luskin were absent for this case.)

Note: Prior to the prevailing (substitute) motion, a motion was made by Rummel, seconded by Ferm, to refer the request.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 5, 6.5, 7, 7, 7, 7 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 425 West Washington Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	7	7	7	-	-	-	8	8
	-	7	-	-	-	-	7	7
	7	7	7	6	-	6	6	7
	-	7	7	-	-	5	8	7
	7	7	7	-	-	-	7	7
	6	6.5	5	6	6	6	7	6.5
	-	6.5	-	-	-	-	-	5

General Comments:

- The building fits the neighborhood character both in aesthetics and in use.
- Feel massing is within the spirit of the neighborhood plan.
- View developed.
- Public process needs to be respected. UDC has sent a message to neighborhood that their input is not important. It's unfortunate that a great project is marred by poor process.
- The funny hat on the corner is not needed. This is a fine infill building and will prove to be a real benefit and a positive for the Bassett neighborhood.
- This is a transitional street, with several historic buildings which forms the basis for the Bassett Plan and Comprehensive Plan recommendations, not what is on West Main Street or the 300 Block of West Washington, etc. Find a way to comply with four stories.

## AGENDA # 2

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: February 4, 2009
TITLE: 425 West Washington Avenue – PUD(GDP-SIP) to Construct a Mixed-Use Development. 4 <sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (13147)	REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: William A. Fruhling, Acting Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: February 4, 2009	ID NUMBER:

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Members present were: Bruce Woods; Chair, Todd Barnett, Richard Slayton, Ron Luskin, Dawn Weber, Mark Smith, Jay Fern and John Harrington.

### SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 4, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** a PUD(GDP-SIP) for a mixed-use development at 425 West Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were David Ferch, Erik Minton, and Bill White. Ferch reviewed the changes since the last presentation to the Commission, including: making the fifth floor more visible by increasing its size, reducing the stepback in some areas, changing the materials, and increasing the size of the sun screens to make them more of a design element. He also stated that the uses are better reflected with the materials as red brick is used where the residential uses are located, and cast stone where the commercial uses are. The width of the garage door was reduced by 2 feet, bicycle stalls were added outside, and the ones inside were moved up one level. He stated that the landscaping plan has evolved and that they will work with the adjoining property owner to the east on the planting in that area. Minton stated that he would be accepting of a short referral to convene a general neighborhood meeting on this proposal.

Fruhling stated that given the recommendations in the Bassett Neighborhood Plan and Comprehensive Plan, Planning Division staff is more supportive of the massing shown in the previous iteration, that had a smaller fifth floor with a greater stepback to reduce its visibility.

Registering in support were: Robert Bergeman, John Bonsett-Veal, Tom Geier, Rosemary Lee, Justin Harder, Derek Lalley, Chet Droessler, and Sheridan Glen. Registering in opposition was: Peter Ostlind. Registering in neither support nor opposition was: Jonathan Cooper (representing the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee for this project), stating that the Steering Committee had recently received the revised plans and has not met to discuss them.

The Commission discussion focused on the following issues and asked the applicants to further study some of the elements where noted below:

- The revisions to the scale and massing, including the revised fifth floor treatment are improvements.
- Study the first floor window patterns along the south and east elevations.
- Study the appropriateness of the second floor balcony above the health club entrance.

- Need a lighting plan—including how the fifth floor will be lit.
- Study whether more of the indoor bicycle parking can be moved to the first floor.
- Study options for how the fourth floor is terminated.
- Study how the building can be framed using Ginkgos.
- Study increasing the projection of the bay of windows above the garage entrance.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Harrington, seconded by Ferm, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** a PUD(GDP-SIP) for a mixed-use development at 425 West Washington Avenue to allow the applicant time to meet with the neighborhood.

The motion passed on a vote of (5-2-1) with Barnett and Luskin voting no, and Woods abstaining.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 6.5, 7, 7, 7 and 8.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 425 West Washington Avenue.

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
Member Ratings	7	7	-	-	-	6	9	8
	7	7	6	-	-	6	9	7
	8	7	7	6	-	6	8	7
	6	6.5	5	5	5.5	6	7	6.5
	-	7	-	-	-	-	7	7

General Comments:

- Neighborhood plan is an excellent guide to new building. In this case, the superior design mitigates the massing issues. Need more bike parking on ground level. Roof is excellent. Brings life to the outside of building. On such a prominent street, getting neighborhood input is important.
- The reiteration of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor is much more striking and powerful than the earlier version in spirit with the neighborhood plan.
- Excellent project.
- Continues to improve, like the new penthouse, it is very nice indeed – color of metal panels? Finish? Texture? How will building be lit on exterior? Need exterior lighting plan.

DRAFT

**AGENDA # 8**

City of Madison, Wisconsin

**REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION**

**PRESENTED:** January 7, 2009

**TITLE:** 425 West Washington Avenue –  
PUD(GDP-SIP) to Construct a Mixed-Use  
Development. 4<sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (13147)

**REFERRED:**

**REREFERRED:**

**REPORTED BACK:**

**AUTHOR:** Alan J. Martin, Secretary

**ADOPTED:**

**POF:**

**DATED:** January 7, 2009

**ID NUMBER:**

Members present were: Bruce Woods, Chair; Mark Smith, Dawn Weber, Richard Wagner, Richard Slayton, Jay Ferm, Marsha Rummel, Todd Barnett and John Harrington.

**SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of January 7, 2009, the Urban Design Commission **RECEIVED AN INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION** for a mixed-use development located at 425 West Washington Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Erik Minton, John Bonsett-Veal, David Ferch, representing Butler Plaza, and Rosemary Lee. Ferch provided a brief description of prior history of a failed development on the property a number of years ago for a 9-story residential/commercial health club building on the site. He noted that the current proposal provides for the development of a 4-story, with a stepback 5<sup>th</sup> story structure scaled down to address neighborhood concerns and consistency with the adopted neighborhood development plan. He further noted the adopted plan supports 2-4 story development. Ferch then provided a detailed review of the building elevations emphasizing the development of the first floor for commercial office purposes, the second floor for the health club and pool, with the upper stories dedicated for residential use including the development of a rooftop terrace. The project’s developer Erik Minton then spoke as to the neighborhood process and evolution of the building’s features. Bonsett-Veal, the property’s owner and partner in development spoke to the development opportunities the project provides. Following the presentation the Commission noted the following:

- Need a better landscape plan as a departure from the “garden center approach.”
- Eliminate red granite and the use of vinyl edging; consider the use of river washed stone.
- Provide a hedge screen for bike parking away from the front door.
- The landscape materials are inferior as proposed.

- Project is stuck on the garage door in front.
- Like building in general but the gym façade looks like an apartment. Make architecture reflect what's inside.
- Consider reducing the width of garage door drive aisle.
- Fiber cement siding on penthouse not the answer, go to a metal panel.
- Pull 5<sup>th</sup> story to the street and west over the garage entry, make the rest of the 5<sup>th</sup> level open space.
- Make the penthouse the same material as the rest of the building.
- Like project, need to provide daily use residential bike parking stalls on the outside of the building.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> story is OK, will support if Ald. Verveer supports.
- The health club portion of the building should look like a health club.
- Find right way past vertical elements through to the upper floors to make appearance of the commercial/health club levels.
- Resolve garage door issue graphically and push back.

**ACTION:**

Since this was an **INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION**, no formal action was taken by the Commission.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 6 and 7.



URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 425 West Washington Avenue

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	6	6	2	-	-	5	7	6
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
	5	5	3	-	-	4	5	-
	6	7	4	-	-	-	6	6

General Comments:

- Address garage entry. Setback 5<sup>th</sup> floor OK. Architecture should reflect mix of uses. Good start.
- Good project. Needs more bike parking for residents who bike every day. Bottom level bike area is only suitable for long-term storage.
- Good direction; landscape needs great improvement to reflect the quality of the architecture.
- I'm OK with 5<sup>th</sup> floor/penthouse. Landscape needs development. Will it really be red and green like Christmas? Good redevelopment idea.
- Planting plan must be in the style of the architecture.

**Parks, Timothy****Subject:** RE: re. proposed rezoning of 425 W. Washington Ave.

**From:** S. Moritz [mailto:wisstef@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 11, 2009 3:09 PM  
**To:** Peter Ostlind; Verveer, Mike; Parks, Timothy  
**Subject:** re. proposed rezoning of 425 W. Washington Ave.



These remarks are intended for the public record concerning the 425 W. Washington Ave. proposal and may be shared with appropriate City commissions and neighborhood groups.

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I am a Bassett District resident and have been following the plans for redevelopment of the site at 425 West Washington Avenue; currently a one-story optometrists office. It wasn't that many years ago that the neighborhood reviewed a different proposal for this site, a proposal that was rejected by many in the neighborhood and by City staff and commissions as being very out of scale and inappropriate for the location. When I heard that the new proposal was for a building with less height and mass I was cautiously optimistic that we might finally have something the neighborhood could get behind and support, since everyone agrees that the site is underdeveloped.

Having reviewed the elevations for the current proposal, I am disappointed that once again the developer has proposed a building that is massively out of scale with other buildings on the 400 block of West Washington. (The one exception is the building next door, known as the AAA building, which is an aberration both in terms of height and mass and in architectural style, a past mistake which hopefully we can avoid this time around).

The same arguments that shot down the 2005 proposal apply to the current one, namely that it has not met the guidelines of the Madison Comprehensive Plan or the Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan. The latter plan in particular is very specific in discussing the character of West Washington Avenue, a gracious and attractive entrance to the State Capitol and the Bassett Neighborhood. This corridor is distinctive with its mix of commercial and residential uses, the historic scale and character of existing buildings, broad terraces and large canopy trees. Preservation and enhancement of West Washington Avenue is important to the character of the Bassett Neighborhood and the downtown. (p.31) As the Plan points out on p. 32, The area between S. Bedford Street and Broom Street has a strong residential character with 2-3 story buildings set back from the street. *The character and scale of the existing residential street frontage should be preserved to maintain the integrity of the residential neighborhoods that occur on both sides of West Washington Avenue. Building rehabilitation of existing structures should be encouraged. While selective demolition and infill may be appropriate, new buildings should be designed with a character and scale that compliments the existing block face.* (italics mine)

How does a proposed building with a footprint that measures 89 wide by 142 deep, with a height of 65, match the existing scale of 2- to 3-story Victorian era residences which line both sides of the block? The answer, of course, is that it doesn't. If built, it would be one more nail in the coffin for the preservation of this fragile part of the Bassett neighborhood. In 2005, I stated publicly that Bassett deserved a better project for this prominent location, a project that would take into account the Master Plans principles from the very start. I stand behind that statement in 2009 and cannot support this reincarnation.

Sincerely,  
 Stefanie Moritz  
 533 W Main St. #202  
 Madison, WI 53703

Re: 425 W. Washington proposal

Let me start by saying that I support redevelopment of this site and the type of uses included in the proposal. I also support using adopted plans to guide our decisions how redevelopment should occur.

Plans provide expectations that residents should be able to rely on. Plans provide guidance for property owners and others considering new development. Plans are also a means of fulfilling our visions of the future. Creating a plan is a deliberative process that considers the entire complex of an area and reflects the views and aspirations of a community for how change will occur. Plans look at contextual areas so that when individual proposals are brought forward they can be evaluated within this broader context.

Changes to plans should be made deliberately in the same manner in which they were established. Changes to plans should not on a piecemeal basis one proposal at a time.

One criteria for approval of a PUD is whether it is consistent with adopted plans.

In the Madison Comprehensive Plan this proposal is located within the *Mifflin-Bassett* residential sub district. The building height provision is 2 to 4 stories. The plan notes "A key issue in this sub-district is redevelopment and whether it is consistent with the predominant scale of the buildings in the area." (p. 2-112)

The Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan has been a sound and useful guide for redevelopment in the Bassett area with positive results. Over the past decade the plan has provided both residents and developers with guidance and expectations for the redevelopment which has occurred.

The Bassett plan does support redevelopment along W. Washington and also supports commercial uses in this area. One of the goals of the plan which is reiterated throughout the document is the infill and redevelopment should enhance and maintain the historic residential scale and character of the neighborhood.

Within the Bassett Plan there are a number of specific references to the 400 & 500 blocks of W. Washington. Each of these speaks to maintaining the character of the 2-3 story residential buildings. The specific references to this portion of W. Washington are noted below.

In the Master Plan Recommendations:

- Bassett Residential District: 'new infill development should be in scale with the existing neighborhood' (p. 20)
- Recommended Design Guidelines: 'W. Washington Ave. offers a gracious and attractive entrance ... preservation and enhancement of W. Washington Ave. is important to the character of the neighborhood and downtown.' (p. 31)
- Recommended Design Guidelines: 'The area between S. Bedford Street and Broom Street has a strong residential character with 2-3 story buildings set back from the street. The character and scale of the existing residential street frontage should be preserved to maintain the integrity of the residential neighborhoods which occur on both sides of West Washington Avenue. ... While selective demolition and infill may be appropriate, new buildings should be designed with a character and scale that complements the existing block face.' (p. 32)

In the Master Plan Specific Recommendations:

- 'Preservation and enhancement of the scale and character of the area to maintain the physical and visual connection between the residential districts on both sides of W. Washington Ave.' (p. 38)

In the Master Plan Implementation Priorities:

- 'The character of the W. Washington Ave. approach to the State Capitol is unique. This character should not be allowed to take the form of E. Washington Ave.' (p. 45)

References to the important character of W. Washington Ave. are not made in a single passing remark but rather are reiterated in each section of the plan. This reflects the importance of these blocks to the community and the larger neighborhood.

The Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan also calls for the creation of design and development guidelines as part of the implementation priorities. The stated goal of these guidelines is:

- 'Design and development guidelines will allow for a clear set of rules to be established "up front" to orient property owners, developers and designers to neighborhood expectations for architecture, site use, landscape architecture, and overall character of a project.'

The Bassett Neighborhood Design Guidelines were completed and published in 2006. Section IV-A speaks specifically to the scale of new construction and infill. The scale recommendations state:

- 'New construction should be designed to scale compatible with the existing built environment. This does not necessarily mean that the scale of a new development must exactly match existing adjacent structures. However, it is recommended that new projects be planned not to detract dramatically from the general scale of the neighborhood.'

For several decades the building located at 433 W. Washington Ave., commonly referred to as the AAA building, has been the anomaly on the 400 & 500 blocks of W. Washington. I have never heard a comment that this building fits into the scale and mass of the existing buildings. Quite to the contrary the building has been the poster child of the type of development the neighborhood plan is intended to preclude.

The AAA building is 72' high and 82' wide. The 425 proposal is 65' high and 89' wide on a narrower lot. If the AAA building is out scale and character for these blocks it is hard to fathom the rationale that the new proposal is somehow in scale and character with the 2-3 story residential buildings that dominate these blocks.

The mass of the new proposal is significantly increased since at 142' in depth it largely fills the lot. The AAA building by comparison is only 53' in depth.

As an example of the redevelopment that does fit into these blocks look at the Wisconsin Dairyman's building at 448 W. Washington. (now known as the Keller Building) The building has a different architectural style than the adjacent residential structures but blends in nicely to the scale and mass of these buildings.

I urge you to respect the Comprehensive Plan and the Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan by rejecting this proposal which is significantly out of scale and character with the adjacent structures.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Ostlind

## RESIDENT COMMENTS ON 425 W. WASHINGTON PROPOSAL

As a Bassett Neighborhood resident since 2001, I want to provide comments to the UDC regarding the 425 W. Washington project. First, I strongly support the position expressed by Mr. Pete Ostlind in his 3-page memo to the Commission. His thorough research and analysis of the Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan (BNMP) are reason enough to deny a 5-story building in this location.

This discussion is eerily reminiscent of the previous battles over deliberate violations of the letter and spirit of the BNMP. For whatever reasons, some UDC members seem inclined to support the demands of developers regardless of the existence of an approved neighborhood plan. The existing height provision is crucial to maintaining the fabric of this neighborhood and its welcoming residential character. The sub-district calls for a 2-4 story limit, and neighborhood groups have repeatedly acquiesced to the 4-story (high) end of this range over the last 8 years. This is not "antidevelopment" sentiment, just good long range planning. Existing edifices like 433 W. Washington should warn the UDC of blunders they should not repeat in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

During the massive review and debate over Capitol West's PUD, crucial agreements were hammered out between the City, the developer, and resident groups. Many tall, bulky structures were approved in the 300 block of W. Washington. However, the final piece of the puzzle was an agreement to limit the new buildings along Broom Street to a maximum of 4 stories, protecting the transition to the existing 2-3 story frame residences in the 400 and 500 blocks of W. Washington and along Broom Street itself. After three difficult years, we were able to reassert the basic goals of the Bassett Plan and sustain the character of the current commercial and residential improvements along W. Washington.

Any UDC project approval that increases the building height over 4 stories triggers an old familiar scenario. First, developer A gets a 5-story project okayed, since it is "only" one story taller. Three months later, developer B receives a 6-story approval, since it is "only" one story taller. Two months later, . . . well you get the picture. Recognition of this cascade effect should be automatic for individuals astute enough to serve on the UDC. However, if the UDC's institutional amnesia quotient is on the rise, let this memo serve as a wake-up call before a major abdication of its civic duty occurs in the case of 425 W. Washington. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

MICHAEL D. MAY  
533 W. MAIN ST.  
MADISON, WI 53703

Cc: Ald. Verveer

18.FEB.09

PROPOSED 425 WEST WASHINGTON PROJECT

Dear Commissioners,

I am one of several Bassett Neighborhood members of Capitol Neighborhoods that are serving on the steering committee for this project. At the last meeting the majority present were in favor of this proposal. Some opposed are stating that it goes against the Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan. None of the private citizens in opposition helped to formulate the Master Plan and did not live in Bassett Neighborhood at the time it was filed and accepted by the City.

Among the drafters were citizens firmly committed to the betterment of the Bassett Neighborhood: Victor Villacrez, Paul Hees, Todd McGrath, Robert Keller, David Keller and Ed Linville. Some of the other participants included Downtown Madison Inc., Associated Bank, J.H. Findorff & Son, Inc., WHEDA, Delta Storage and Block 49 Joint Venture. I have spoken with several of the drafters. They all agree that this document was meant to be a framework for the physical redevelopment of the Bassett Neighbor - not cast in concrete. Refer to page 2, Introduction, of the plan for this reference. The main priority was to preserve existing houses, NOT to discourage density or urban infill beneficial to the district.

I am in full support of this project in my neighborhood. Mr. Minton's proposal is an excellent example of urban infill. It will bring an attractive, well landscaped new building with a gym, retail, an allied health care facility and most importantly quality housing for those not yet ready to own their home who chose to live in our downtown. It will create jobs during construction and afterwards and will add many dollars to the property tax roles. It will be a strong driver of improved economic vitality to Bassett Neighborhood and all of downtown.

The development team has been very responsive to the steering committee's suggestions and it is my opinion that the building has greatly improved from the first rendition.

I urge your unanimous support for this project. Please grant the requested approval tonight so that this project can move forward in a timely manner.

Thank you for reviewing this message.

Sincerely,  
Rosemary Lee  
111 W. Wilson Street  
Madison

Mr. Brad Murphy  
City of Madison  
Planning Department  
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

February 19, 2009

Re: 425 W. Washington proposal  
Comments for the Plan Commission

Dear Mr. Murphy,

Let me start by saying that I support redevelopment of this site and the type of uses included in the proposal. I also support using adopted plans to guide our decisions how redevelopment should occur.

Plans provide expectations that residents should be able to rely on. Plans provide guidance for property owners and others considering new development. Plans are also a means of fulfilling our visions of the future. Creating a plan is a deliberative process that considers the entire complex of an area and reflects the views and aspirations of a community for how change will occur. Plans look at contextual areas so that when individual proposals are brought forward they can be evaluated within this broader context.

Changes to plans should be made deliberately in the same manner in which they were established. Changes to plans should not be made on a piecemeal basis one proposal at a time.

One criteria for approval of a PUD is whether it is consistent with adopted plans.

In the Madison Comprehensive Plan this proposal is located within the *Mifflin-Bassett* residential sub district. The building height provision is 2 to 4 stories. The plan notes "A key issue in this sub-district is redevelopment and whether it is consistent with the predominant scale of the buildings in the area." (p. 2-112)

The Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan has been a sound and useful guide for redevelopment in the Bassett area with positive results. Over the past decade the plan has provided both residents and developers with guidance and expectations for the redevelopment which has occurred.

The Bassett plan does support redevelopment along W. Washington and also supports commercial uses in this area. One of the goals of the plan which is reiterated throughout the document is that infill and redevelopment should enhance and maintain the historic residential scale and character of the neighborhood.



Within the Bassett Plan there are a number of specific references to the 400 & 500 blocks of W. Washington. Each of these speaks to maintaining the character of the 2-3 story residential buildings. The specific references to this portion of W. Washington are noted below.

In the Master Plan Recommendations:

- Bassett Residential District: 'new infill development should be in scale with the existing neighborhood' (p. 20)
- Recommended Design Guidelines: 'W. Washington Ave. offers a gracious and attractive entrance ... preservation and enhancement of W. Washington Ave. is important to the character of the neighborhood and downtown.' (p. 31)
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References to the important character of W. Washington Ave. are not made in a single passing remark but rather are reiterated in each section of the plan. This reflects the importance of these blocks to the community and the larger neighborhood.

The Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan also calls for the creation of design and development guidelines as part of the implementation priorities. The stated goal of these guidelines is:

- 'Design and development guidelines will allow for a clear set of rules to be established "up front" to orient property owners, developers and designers to neighborhood expectations for architecture, site use, landscape architecture, and overall character of a project.'

The Bassett Neighborhood Design Guidelines were completed and published in 2006. Section IV-A speaks specifically to the scale of new construction and infill. The scale recommendations state:

- 'New construction should be designed to scale compatible with the existing built environment. This does not necessarily mean that the scale of a new development must exactly match existing adjacent structures. However, it is recommended that new projects be planned not to detract dramatically from the general scale of the neighborhood.'

For several decades the building located at 433 W. Washington Ave., commonly referred to as the AAA building, has been the anomaly on the 400 & 500 blocks of W. Washington. I have never heard a comment that this building fits into the scale and mass of the existing buildings. Quite to the contrary the building has been the poster child of the type of development the neighborhood plan is intended to preclude.

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The mass of the new proposal is significantly increased since at 142' in depth it largely fills the lot. The AAA building by comparison is only 53' in depth.

As an example of the redevelopment that does fit into these blocks look at the Wisconsin Dairyman's building at 448 W. Washington. (now known as the Keller Building and proposed for City Landmark status) The building has a different architectural style than the adjacent residential structures but blends in nicely to the scale and mass of these buildings.

I urge you to respect the Comprehensive Plan and the Bassett Neighborhood Master Plan by rejecting this proposal which is significantly out of scale and character with the adjacent structures.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Ostlind

# MICHAEL BEST

& FRIEDRICH LLP

**Michael Best & Friedrich LLP**

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February 19, 2009

City of Madison Plan Commission  
c/o City of Madison Department of Planning  
& Development  
Room LL-100  
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53709

Re: 425 W. Washington Avenue Rezoning

Dear Friends:

This letter is sent on behalf of Dr. John Bonsett-Veal and Erik Minton, the co-developers of a proposed mixed-use project to be relocated at 425 W. Washington Avenue. The project will come before the Plan Commission for approval of a GDP/SIP on Monday evening, February 23, 2009. We would ask for approval at that time.

The project consists of Dr. John Bonsett-Veal's optometric offices and retail uses at the ground floor with Capital Fitness and its line of athletic services (including a swimming pool) on the second floor. Above that will be 42 units of market-rate apartments on the following three floors. The project will be sited where Dr. Bonsett-Veal's office is currently located which is an under-utilized single-story office structure.

The project itself has undergone three reviews by the Urban Design Commission (initial approval was granted on February 18, 2009), seven Capital Neighborhood, Inc. Steering Committee meetings and two Bassett Neighborhood meetings, the last of which occurred on February 19, 2009. The Steering Committee favored the four-story presentation with the stepped-back fifth story. The project has undergone quite a bit of modification and scrutiny and, we believe, conforms not only to the various desires of the constituencies to whom the project has been presented, but also to the Bassett Neighborhood Plan and the Downtown Comprehensive Plan.

While there is substantial neighborhood support for the project as configured, there are members of the Neighborhood who believe that the project, with its stepped-back fifth story is not in keeping with the Bassett Neighborhood Plan or the Comprehensive Plan. We respectfully believe that the design enhancements suggested by the Urban Design Commission have alleviated any concerns that the massing and height are out of character with the rest of the street. It is a clearly superior architectural statement to the "AAA Building" immediately to the west. It also provides an intermediate step down in height to the three-story buildings to the east of the project site. The high quality of the architectural details and the excellent

# MICHAEL BEST

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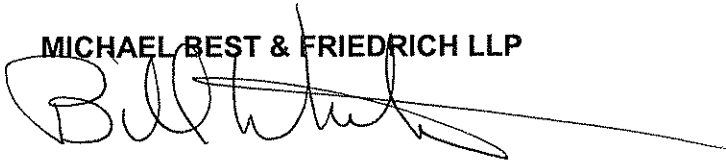
suggestions of the Urban Design Commission have made this a project which conforms to the intent and spirit of the Bassett Neighborhood Plan as well as the Comprehensive Plan.

As many members of the Plan Commission may recall, this project has undergone a great deal of transformation beginning several years ago with a nine-story project to its current four stories with a stepped-back fifth story. We recognize and applaud the efforts and suggestions of many folks, including those in the Neighborhood, and look forward to the successful approval of the project on Monday evening.

If there are any questions about the project in advance, please do not hesitate to contact either Erik Minton at 345-3456 or me at 695-4946. We look forward to seeing you on Monday evening.

Sincerely,

**MICHAEL BEST & FRIEDRICH LLP**



William F. White

WFW:cmm

cc: Erik Minton  
Dr. John Bonsett-Veal  
Jonathan Cooper, Chair, Neighborhood Steering Committee  
Bob Holloway, President, CNI  
Bradley A. Murphy  
Tim Parks  
Bill Fruhling

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