

**To:** Urban Design Commission (March 9, 2016 meeting)

**From:** Friends of the Yahara River Parkway

**Date:** March 9, 2016

**Subject:** Campbell Capital Group (CCG) Proposal re. Marling Lumber Site (Item 40143)

Greetings,

East Washington Avenue is an important gateway to the city center. The numerous re-development projects along this corridor are a vote of confidence in the City of Madison's effort to promote the vitality of our urban core. These re-developments are occurring in part because Madison is such a livable city with vibrant neighborhoods and amenities.

This vibrancy is due in various measures to the planning and investments made by the City, the neighborhoods, individuals and other interests in our urban infrastructure. These investments date back many decades and the current proposals are and will be benefitting from these actions now and into the future. Your decisions regarding the CCG proposal are an important opportunity for the city review processes to implement the goals clearly identified in numerous city planning efforts (i.e., Madison Comprehensive Plan, East Washington Corridor Plan, neighborhood plans and the Yahara Parkway Master Plan).

The following comments by the Friends of the Yahara River Parkway (FYRP) are focused exclusively on the interface between the proposed development and the historic Yahara Parkway. The FYRP supports the following design elements:

- the setback (20-30 feet) from the lot line from E. Wash to the mid-block plaza,
- the mid-block plaza with potential amenities for the residents as well as the general public, and
- the proposed public walkway parallel to the Yahara Parkway.

The FYRP appreciates the dialog and efforts by CCG and city staff to include these elements.

However, the proximity of the proposed building between the mid-block plaza to East Main Street is inadequate and inconsistent with other developments along the Yahara Parkway. The current design has the building less than 12 feet from parkland near E. Main. This clearly treats the parkway as the front yard of these residences and intrudes on the character and intended benefit the historic parkway seeks to provide (See the attached CCG graphics).

Please consider the following:

1. Additional greenspace (buffers if you prefer) will be needed with increasing downtown density. This is especially true along established and noted parklands like Tenney Park and the Yahara Parkway. City plans clearly indicate the isthmus is parkland deficient and with increasing density this concern will only be exacerbated.
2. The proposed separation is significantly different than the lot line setbacks at the Rivers Edge Apartments (~35-85 feet), Yahara Landing (~40-45 feet) and the Commonwealth Riverview Apartments (~16-20 feet from the former Thornton Avenue ROW).
3. Unlike almost all other inner core redevelopments this property directly abuts parkland. This proposal offers the possibility of setting aside additional land for public benefit. With appropriate landscaping this land could provide a valuable buffer that enhances both the private and public spaces.

4. This is the first sizeable market rate residential development along the Yahara Parkway in decades. The question of precedence needs to be carefully considered. Allowing a development with an inadequate buffer so close to the public space would set a damaging precedent.

The FYRP will be formally requesting the City of Madison establish a buffer from E. Main to the mid-block plaza through the various decision making bodies (e.g., Madison Parks/Park Commission, Zoning).

Two additional issues of general interest to the FYRP include the following:

- the style and general design elements of the buildings. It is the understanding of the FYRP that improvements have been made based on staff and neighborhood input. The FYRP will generally defer to the input of the neighborhood associations in this regard.
- It is unclear what the outside lighting elements will be at the proposed development. Lighting at the development should meet the needs of the residences and businesses, but not intrude or interfere with the enjoyment of the public using the Yahara Parkway.

On behalf of the board of the Friends of the Yahara River Parkway (501c3), we appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Marling Lumber redevelopment proposal. If you have any questions about our comments please contact me.

Sincerely,



Ed Jepsen

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1 Aerial Perspective  
Scale: nts

Elevation

**Marling Lumber Property**

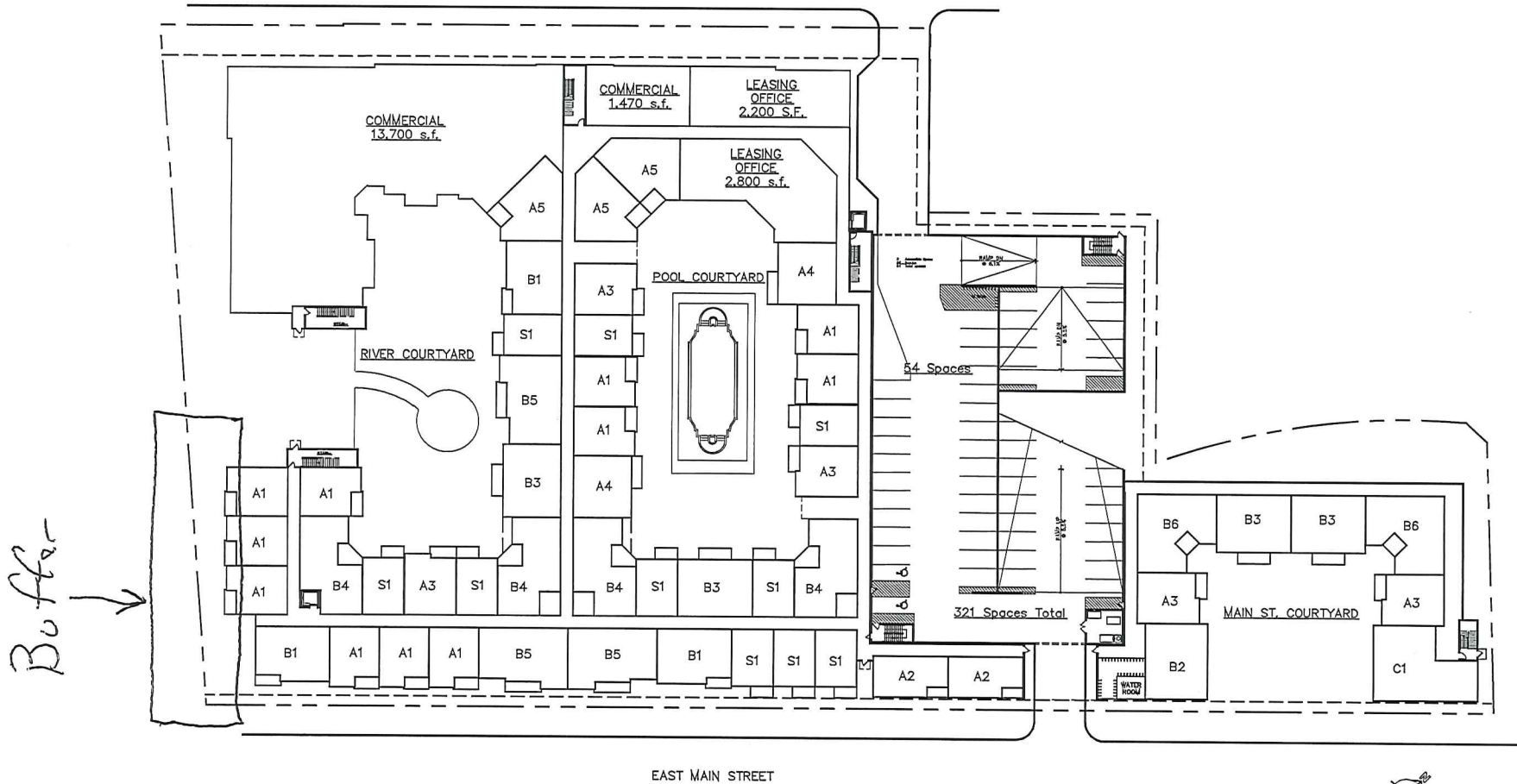
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November 20, 2015

1525.00



E. WASHINGTON AVE.



*Buffer*

1 Building Plan - Level 1  
Scale: 1" = 50'



Plan

