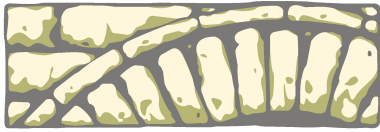


MADISON TRUST



for **Historic Preservation**



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1 July 2013

Steve Brown Apartments
202 W. Gorham St.
Madison, WI 53703

RE: proposed redevelopment of 115,123,127 W. Gilman St.

Mr. Brown-

We understand that Steve Brown Apartments has begun a conversation with neighbors and residents of the Mansion Hill Historic District regarding the proposed redevelopment of three buildings on W. Gilman St. We have been provided a copy of initial drawings your firm produced for this proposal.

While we generally support development and densification in the downtown area, and while we recognize that there are many parcels where more dense development is appropriate, our mission is to advocate for the long-term viability of properties and districts that are historic and cultural resources – properties that cultivate a cultural identity and sense of place in our city – properties that can be rehabilitated and serve a contemporary use while retaining their historic character. The Mansion Hill Historic District (MHHD), designated under the criteria for both the federal and local historic preservation programs, is a district that is very important in this regard. For that reason we would oppose this project as drawn.

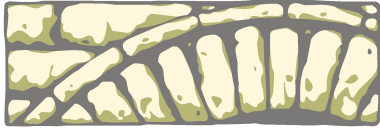
Demolitions

The building at 115 W. Gilman St. (The Highlander) is an aberration that was designed in stark contrast to the character of the district. There was opposition to this type of intrusion in the Mansion Hill / Langdon St. area in the 1970s that led to the passage of the city's landmarks ordinance and the creation of the State-Langdon Neighborhood Association. It is still an anomaly in a residential district that is loved by its residents for its traditional neighborhood character and unique, high-quality architecture. We are not opposed to its demolition. An appropriate replacement is a matter of further discussion.

The houses at 123 and 127 W. Gilman St. are contributing buildings in the MHHD. They are not significant in their own right as architectural specimens, but they contribute to the

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traditional scale of the district, and they conform to the consistency of mass and scale throughout the district. We believe these houses are not beyond rehabilitation. We understand that your firm has been the owner of these houses for twelve years and twenty years respectively.

Proposed new construction

The multi-family construction proposed for these DR-1-zoned parcels would require conditional use permitting because it would violate several zoning ordinances intended to maintain a certain character in the MHHD, including:

- the maximum width standard for buildings fronting the primary abutting street (60 ft.)
- the maximum height of new construction in the design guidelines for the MHHD (50 ft).
- the “gross volume” standard in the design guidelines for the MHHD.
- Recommendation 81 of the Downtown Plan – “Rehabilitate existing housing while encouraging selective residential infill.”
- Recommendation 82 of the Downtown Plan – “Preserve the character of the Mansion Hill Historic District and ensure that new development is compatible with the historic district context in scale and design.”

The massing of the project shown in the drawings is a fundamentally different approach to massing and street frontage in the MHHD. It would introduce a much courser grain of development in the district that, if allowed on a regular basis, would considerably alter the character of the district. The intent of the standards for DR-1 parcels, the Downtown Plan’s recommendations for the Mansion Hill neighborhood, and the MHHD design guidelines are to maintain Mansion Hill as a downtown historic district that contributes to Madison’s unique history and heritage. Based on these standards we would actively oppose this proposal as drawn.

Jason Tish
Executive Director, Madison Trust for Historic Preservation

cc: Ledell Zellers
Bill Fruhling
Al Martin
Amy Scanlon

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