

**From:** [Bronwyn Shiffer](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** 3/13 Plan Commission meeting written submissions  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 4:45:55 PM

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Good afternoon,

I am a resident of Sherman Terrace and have registered my opposition to items 75711, 76309, and 75712. Below are my comments regarding this opposition.

75711: I oppose the demolition of the Filine House due both to the Landmark Commission's unanimous recommendation to designate this as a historic landmark. In addition, I support detailed exploration of environmental costs and benefits of retrofitting the existing building. It is not only historically significant but also allows for the public to enjoy a tree-lined Sherman Ave leading up to Tenney Park and across from Filene Park.

76309: The 2016 Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara River Neighborhood Plan recommends medium density housing; the proposed plan exceeds this by over 100 units. It also exceeds it in the number of stories proposed - nearby housing is three stories and the proposed buildings are five stories. The plan notes: "New residential construction should create housing types and densities that are consistent with the existing housing adjacent to each redevelopment site. Each housing development should have an affordable housing component." I support an affordable housing component, which is also a key priority for the city of Madison, but not reflected in this proposal.

75712: I do not support removal of existing trees and replacement by landscaping and fencing simply for the sake of "less maintenance and better aesthetics." There are numerous existing wildlife in these woodlots (I have even seen a bald eagle twice from my window) and I support detailed and careful consideration of the entire ecosystem and preservation and replacement of trees in order to support coexistence within that ecosystem. Madison has a rich history of supporting urban ecosystems, and this space, however small, should be included in that precedent.

Thank you for your work of evaluating this proposal and the associated concerns.

Best,  
Bronwyn Shiffer

**From:** [Espenshade Jean](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns re development proposal for property at 1617 Sherman Ave  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 4:46:36 PM

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The current development proposal for the property at 1617 Sherman Ave has been revised in ways that begin to address the concerns expressed by the Urban Design Commission members, the Landmark Commission members, and the property owners and residents living in the neighborhood.

From my attendance at meetings related to the proposed development and my review of the most recent public documents, I remain opposed to the current proposal *in its current form*.

I appreciate both the need for additional housing, and the developer's plan modifications to date. However, there are significant issues remaining that must be addressed before we lose the chance to do so. Slowing down the approval process may help neighborhood residents, City staff, the developer and knowledgeable experts further modify the proposal in ways that result in high-quality affordable housing, minimize negative environmental impacts, and create a better fit with the neighborhood.

**Concerns that remain and continue to trouble us include:**

The **scale** of the proposed development for the neighborhood. The size of the five story buildings, both in building mass and number of housing units per acre, **does not fit on that property**. This results in **adverse visual intrusiveness of the proposed buildings** on the Yahara Parkway, Tenney Park, Filene Park, and the residents on Sherman and Marston Avenues. The proposed buildings are squeezed between and tower over the Sherman Terrace Condominiums on one side and the Yahara Parkway and Tenney Park on the other side, reducing green space and lacking fit with the other residential properties in the neighborhood. The proposed number of units/acre exceeds the Medium Residential Density of 16-40 units/acre recommended in the Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara Neighborhood Plan approved by the Common Council in 2016.

**The increased volume of traffic and parking problems associated with the proposed development on neighborhood residents, park users, foot traffic and bikers.**

Sherman Ave is a two lane street with considerable pedestrian traffic, multiple street crossings to the park, bike lanes, park and boat ramp entrances, and traffic calming devices. The closest BRT will be on East Washington Ave, and the bus service on Sherman Ave is being cut back significantly, further increasing the use of cars to access services such as grocery stores that are not within easy walking distance. The public street in the development proposal dead ends at the back of the property, with buildings and parking areas between the dead end and Fordem Ave, and no current plans to extend it to Fordem Avenue. The only egress for the 1617 property is via Sherman Ave.

**Given the unique aspects of this property**, especially it's proximity to Lake Mendota, the Yahara River, Tenney and Filene Parks, **it is particularly unfortunate that none of the proposed housing includes affordable owner-occupied units**, allowing not only for

accumulation of generational wealth, but also for a mix of younger residents wanting to raise families with older residents wanting to downsize from larger single family dwellings. This is one property where these aspects of Madison's housing market might be effectively addressed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jean Espenshade  
1640 Sherman Ave  
Madison, WI 53704

March 9th, 2023

City of Madison:

I'd like to say a few words here in anticipation of March 13th's Plan Commission and March 21st's Common Council public hearings regarding Vermilion Development's proposal for 1601-1617 Sherman Avenue. In short: it's a travesty. I recognize the need for continued expansion and development to address Madison's current housing crisis, but luxury-priced high-rises catering exclusively to fly-by-nighters in the upper-income brackets will do little to solve that pressing problem, and may instead actively exacerbate it.

The name of this group of out-of-town, shark-suit investors, "Vermilion", seems unusually appropriate in that the potential violence to nearby residents' housing situations may be not unlike hurling an economic Molotov cocktail into the area. Rather than bending over for every slick-looking investment group with a fast buck, the City Planning Division and Mayor's Office should look for ways to make housing affordable in this city by encouraging modest, sustainable, and responsible development, and discouraging sharp-teeth profiteers like Vermilion hiding a rent-jacking razor in their shoe. True to their name, Vermilion's quick-money aim is to draw real estate blood before gathering their ill-gotten gains and vamoosing; leaving today's fancy housing to become tomorrow's slums. Like it says in the song:

*When the shark bites,  
With its teeth here,  
Scarlet billows start to spread;  
Fancy gloves wears Old MacHeath, dear,  
So there's not a trace of red.*

One hopes the property's history of flooding which Vermilion's original plan failed to take note of – obviously showing the level of care, forethought, and responsibility that went into the group's proposal; being blithely unaware that a massive construction project between a lake isthmus and a river might prove ill-advised, in particular – could solve everyone's problem here simultaneously with the very real possibility of nearby Tenney Park being underwater by the end of the year. The city will be saved from a sinking eyesore, the immediate area will remain sustainable and affordable, and Vermilion can spend their hot-end of the color spectrum's deep pockets on more solid ground.

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