



January 8, 2024

City of Madison Plan Commission & Urban Design Commission  
c/o City of Madison Planning Division  
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd - Suite 017  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701

**sent via e-mail only:**

Plan Commission: [PCApplications@cityofmadison.com](mailto:PCApplications@cityofmadison.com)

Re: Letter of Intent  
Plan Commission Land Use Application & Demolition Permit Final Approval  
Project: The Center For Black Excellence & Culture  
JLA Architects Project #W22-0106

City of Madison Plan Commission -

On behalf of our client and 'Applicant' – The Center For Black Excellence and Culture, Inc. – we are pleased to submit this application to the City of Madison Plan Commission for final approval of rezoning and land use for The Center of Black Excellence & Culture (The Center) – as well as the demolition of the existing structure associated with it.

Enclosed in the digital application submittal are the the submittal requirements that detail this Project. This 'Letter of Intent' serves to summarize the Project.

**PROJECT TEAM**

The Project Developer & Owner is The Center For Black Excellence & Culture, Inc. (The Center), of Madison. Reverend Dr. Alexander Gee, Jr., who leads 'The Center', is a lifelong resident of the Madison area with Madison 'family roots' going back decades. Dr. Gee is a highly respected community leader including his roles as pastor of Fountain of Life Church and the founder/CEO of the non-profit Nehemiah Center of Urban Leadership.

**Developer & Owner**

The Center For Black Excellence & Culture, Inc.  
725 East Johnson Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701  
Contact: Reverend Dr. Alexander Gee, Jr.  
Phone: 608.257.5433  
E-Mail: [agee@theblackcenter.org](mailto:agee@theblackcenter.org)

The Project's Design Team is made up of firms & individuals local to Madison and highly respected in the community.

**Architecture & Interior Design**

JLA Architects  
800 West Broadway – Suite 200  
Monona, Wisconsin 53713  
Contact: Joseph Lee, AIA  
Phone: 608.215.1495  
E-Mail: [jlee@jla-ap.com](mailto:jlee@jla-ap.com)

**Structural Engineering**

GRAEF, Inc.  
1010 East Washington Avenue - Suite 202  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
Contact: Uriah Wolfe, PE, SE  
Phone: 414.266.9083  
E-Mail: [uriah.wolfe@graef-usa.com](mailto:uriah.wolfe@graef-usa.com)

## **PROJECT TEAM (continued)**

### **Civil Engineering**

GRAEF, Inc.  
1010 East Washington Avenue - Suite 202  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
Contact: Amy Larson, PE  
Phone: 608.245.1962  
E-Mail: [amy.larson@graef-usa.com](mailto:amy.larson@graef-usa.com)

### **Landscape Design**

Saiki Design  
1110 South Park Street  
Madison, Wisconsin 53715  
Contact: Chris Sina  
Phone: 608.405.8162  
E-Mail: [csina@saiki.design](mailto:csina@saiki.design)

## **PROJECT SITE**

The Project is located on a two-parcel site including a 4.6-acre parcel at 655 West Badger Road (also includes 633 West Badger Road mailing address) and a 0.9-acre parcel at 711 West Badger Road - in Madison's 14th Aldermanic District (Isadore Know, Jr.). These parcels will be re-divided with a concurrent Certified Survey Map (CSM) process under a separate submittal package.

655 West Badger Road currently contains two structures – a multi-level religious facility with prominent visibility from the West Beltline (633 West Badger mailing address) and a smaller two-story commercial building on the western portion of the parcel. 711 West Badger Road is currently a vacant parcel.

The Project Site is within a TOD overlay zoning. 655 West Badger Road is currently zoned CC-T (Commercial Corridor Transitional) and 711 West Badger Road is currently zoned 'SRV2-Suburban Residential'. This application includes rezoning the resulting new project parcel (as defined by the concurrent CSM application) to CC-T (Commercial Corridor Transitional) zoning.

### **Demolition**

The Project site has one (1) existing structure that will be razed as part of the Project – the smaller two-story commercial building on the western portion of 655 Badger Road. This is illustrated on sheet C200 of the submittal documents – 'Demolition & Erosion Control' Plan. Photos of this existing structure are included at the end of this Letter of Intent.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The Project is a three-level commercial mixed-use project with approximately 45,000 gross square feet - as illustrated in the submitted design documents. In summary, the Project contains multi-functional space with areas for entertainment, arts, education, business, and social gathering with a focus on strengthening, promoting, & celebrating the black community & culture - locally & regionally. Please see the submitted floor plans for more detailed information.

The project is located in a TOD zoning overlay district. It will have 39 surface parking spaces on the immediate project site – with the opportunity for shared parking with the adjacent Fountain of Life Church (adjacent to the east) for 'over-flow' parking needs. The Fountain of Life surface parking lot will have 84 spaces.

The Center will have four (4) 'Electric Vehicle Ready' Spaces and one (1) 'Electric Vehicle Installed' Spaces – per MGO 28.141(8)(e).

In addition to vehicular parking, the project will have 38 short-term (exterior) bicycle parking spaces.

In addition to the 'program' spaces described above, the Project will also contain ample service & support spaces such as a maintenance shop, storage rooms, mechanical spaces, and an interior refuse & recycling room.

*Please note that the areas listed above, on the application form, and in the submitted design documents are calculated per the 2021 IBC Building Area definition. Please see sheet G100 for more detail. The total for the actual interior floor areas would be approximately 35,000 – 36,000 square feet.*

### **DESIGN OVERVIEW**

The design of 'The Center' is heavily driven by the "Black Aesthetic". The Black Aesthetic is a set of design principles that incorporate elements of 'drama', 'will to adorn', asymmetry, angularity, color, pattern, and others. Specifically, a theme of resiliency & strength is reflected in both the exterior & interior design with the use of specific materials, volumes, and shapes. The richness and bold use of color, texture, and pattern found throughout the design are indicative of the Black Aesthetic. Collectively, these design elements foster openness, connection, and movement within the project – encompassing & celebrating Black Aesthetic. To the end, we've created a collective space where culture, history, and enrichment can live in an inspiring & dynamic space.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT**

The Project Team had officially notified Alder Isadore Knox, Jr. and the Bram's Neighborhood Association (Cheryl Roeben) on December 7, 2023, via e-mail correspondence. There have also been previous & subsequent discussions to obtain Alder feedback & guidance. There have been numerous 'outreach' efforts to keep the community informed of the project's progress and obtain input. The project team will continue to keep Alder Knox informed about the progress of the Project as it is refined & finalized.

### **PHASING & SCHEDULE**

The Project will be designed & constructed in a single phase. The anticipated project schedule is as follows:

- |                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Late March 2024         | Final Plan Review Submittal           |
| • April thru May 2024     | Plan Review & Departmental 'Sign-Off' |
| • June thru mid-July 2024 | Demolition of Existing Structure      |
| • Mid-July 2024           | Start of Construction                 |
| • Mid-November 2025       | Occupancy                             |

### **BUILDING OPERATIONS**

The overall operations of the facility will be provided by the staff of 'The Center For Black Excellence & Culture'. This staff is initially expected to consist of 17 full-time and 3 part-time positions that will be responsible for strategically planning, administering, and monitoring all events within the facility as well as the continual maintenance of the building & grounds.

'The Center' is conceived & designed to be a welcoming place for community building & gathering – with multiple activities occurring throughout the day and into the evening. That said, many portions of the building will be strategically scheduled for programs & events that may restrict general access to certain spaces at certain times.

It is anticipated that the normal 'business hours' - allowing general access to 'The Center' - would be seven days per week from 7:00am to 10:00pm. This will accommodate activities & programs from early morning to late evenings. It is also anticipated that some areas of 'The Center' may have periodic events that continue later into the night (after 10:00pm) such as performances, social/business gatherings, wedding receptions, cultural/holiday celebrations, etc. In addition, it is anticipated that individual users of the office spaces would have unlimited access to their office areas.

Refuse & recycling areas serving all uses in the building will be in an enclosed room on the lowest level of the building – accessed from the parking lot/driveway on the west side of the building. A private collection service will be utilized at a frequency appropriate for the required volume. Refuse/Recycling services as well as major deliveries will be restricted to the hours of 6am to 7pm.

If you have any questions regarding this submittal, please contact me at [jlee@jla-ap.com](mailto:jlee@jla-ap.com) or 608.215.1495.

Sincerely,



Joseph Lee & Associates, LLC  
By: Joseph M. Lee, AIA



**SITE CONTEXT & EXISTING BUILDING IMAGES**



Aerial Image #1





**Aerial Image #2**



**Aerial Image #3**





**Aerial Image #4**

Buildings of 633 & 655 Badger Road in the foreground with existing apartment buildings across Badger Road.



**655 West Badger Road**

Looking east down West Badger Road – Two story building to be demolished





**633 & 655 West Badger Road**

Looking south from Badger Road: Church on the left (to remain), two story building to be demolished on the right.



**633 West Badger Road**

Looking southwest on West Badger Road: Church's surface parking lot in foreground - Church behind (to remain).





**655 West Badger Road**

Looking southwest down West Badger Road – Two story building to be demolished



**711 West Badger Road**

Looking southwest down West Badger Road – Vacant Parcel





**655 West Badger Road**  
East side of two-story building to be demolished.



**655 West Badger Road**  
North side (and east side) of two-story building to be demolished.





**655 West Badger Road**  
West side of two-story building to be demolished.



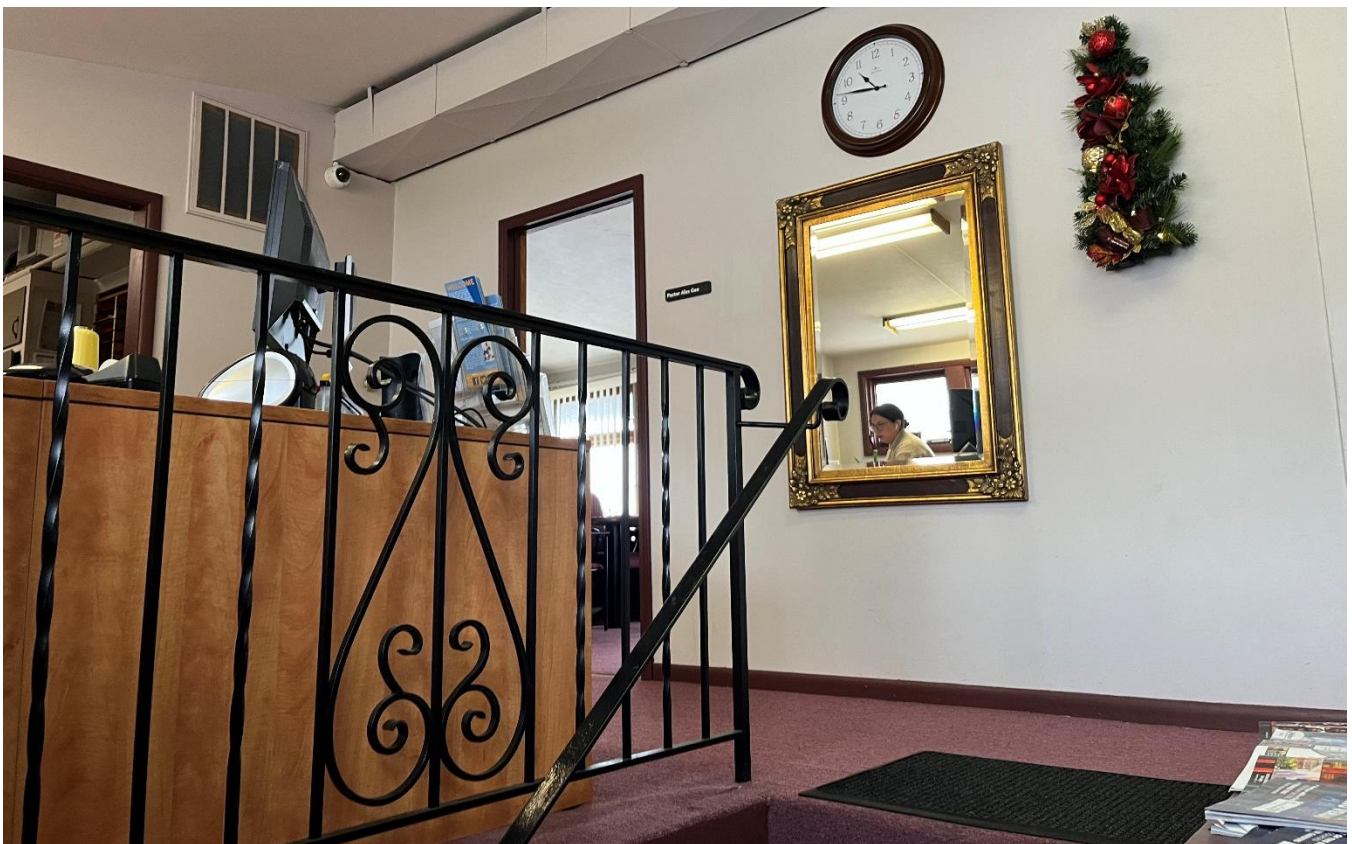
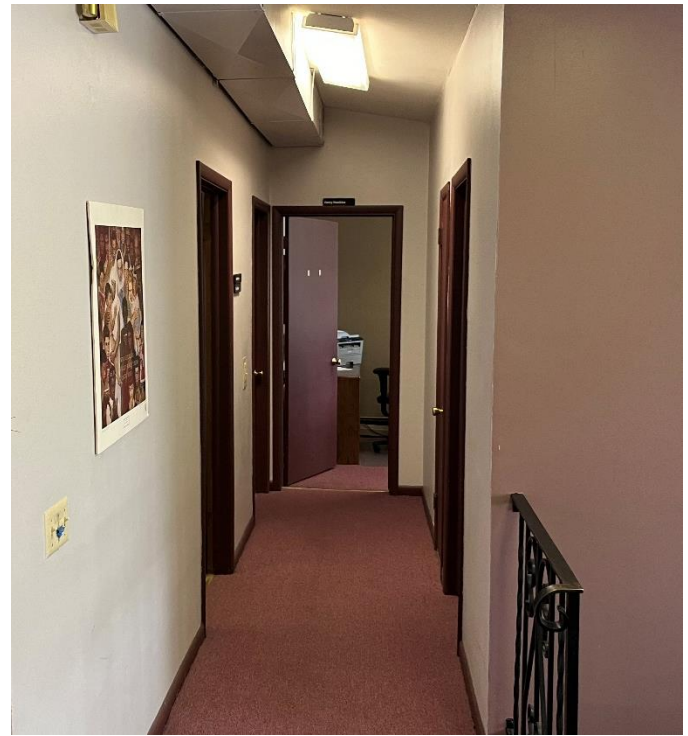
**655 West Badger Road**  
South side of two-story building to be demolished.





**655 West Badger Road**  
Interior photos of the two-story building to be demolished.





**655 West Badger Road**  
Interior photos of the two-story building to be demolished.





**655 West Badger Road**  
Interior photo of the two-story building to be demolished.