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**To:** [Scanlon, Amy](#); [Zellers, Ledell](#); [Stu Levitan](#); [davidw \[REDACTED\]](#); [jasor \[REDACTED\]](#); [michael \[REDACTED\]](#); [Christina Slattery](#); [Erica Gehrig](#); [Rummel, Marsha](#); [Joanna Rouse](#)  
**Subject:** Landmarks Commission, North Webster Street Considerations.  
**Date:** Monday, March 03, 2014 11:59:27 AM

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Re: North Webster Street proposed development

Dear Landmarks Commissioners.

While my first preference is for the renovation and restoration of this group of residences at 17-23 North Webster, into high-end uses, I realize that the imprudent decision to allow encourage bigger replacement buildings was encouraged in the rezoning, the relatively recent change in ownership of North Webster Street properties took place, and plans have been developed.

I attended most of the neighborhood review committee that had worked with the Rouse group on this proposal and some of these recommendations that I name below were considered for incorporating into the plan, to the credit of the Rouses. The recommendations were made in order to minimize the impact that the development would have on the setting and backdrop and shadowing of the Lamp House. The neighborhood review committee hasn't met since the formation of the Lamp House Block Study, so some recommendations below are newer than those that the committee has discussed.

As for the existing buildings, they're quite capable of being renovated and given new life, though the change in ownership and development of plans for a new building would preclude that.

In consideration for clearing the site, should that be the case, buildings would ideally be moved. In particular, I believe that the August Jonas house at 17 N. Webster is worthy of preservation and should the property be redeveloped, it should definitely be moved. It is a rare Mid-Nineteenth Century unpainted cream brick Classically-styled house, of which there are only a few remaining in Madison. Note that it would have been built with a hipped roof originally, though the 1890s alteration is a part of its history and makes it functionally more viable. When moved, it should be placed among other houses of similar range of dates as the existing ones for context.

A photo of this and other houses on Webster Street, can quickly be found on this web page:  
<http://brendakonkel.blogspot.com/2009/09/demolish-houses-on-200-e-mifflin.html>

Another consideration for new construction that would affect the preservation and life-span of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Lamp House on the adjoining lot would be the use of low-impact excavation and footing installation engineering in order to prevent the jarring damage of pile-driving equipment and vibrational equipment that is typically used to compact gravel for footings for new construction. I'm aware that many of my neighbors complained of cracks opening up anew when such equipment was used recently in construction in my neighborhood.

Considerations for the design of the rear of a new building on Webster, should take into account the potential for visual distraction from the Lamp House as viewed from the public right of way of North Butler Street. In her comments on such design

topics in the recent Lamp House Block Study, Alder Denise DeMarb suggested that a building material should be dark, so to contrast against the Lamp House. This is a good idea.

In addition, other visual distractions to a backdrop for the Lamp House that may be considered include avoiding the installation of wall-hung steel balconies or open balconies that face the building. Perhaps a zig-zag back side of a new building could be oriented toward the lake view instead. Another feature that would be worthy of consideration is the reflective quality of windows -- that may work to the advantage of the Lamp House, particularly toward the top where sky reflection may minimize the appearance of a tall building as a backdrop.

Another important consideration is the amount of direct sunlight reaching the Lamp House, particularly during summer months, when there is the greatest number of potential viewers, even as the house is viewed from Mifflin Street. A stepped setback for the top of the new building would permit more sunlight to reach the Lamp House, particularly the Mifflin Street Side of it, which would affect afternoon sunlight in the late spring, summer and early autumn months.

The setbacks of the proposed building from the Mifflin Street and the adjoining side yard, should be placed permit a similar view as existing. I think the existing proposal is somewhat more compromising of that view.

Lastly, an important component of the site plan should be the planned installation of deep, if not raised planters to accommodate tall trees to provide a filtered view of a new building and partial backdrop and visual separation or screening to the advantage of viewing the Lamp House.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gary Tipler