

From: Evelyn Atkinson < >
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2018 11:07 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin; Zellers, Ledell
Subject: comments on 700 block E. Johnson Proposal

Dear Commissioners,

I'm writing to offer my thoughts on the Houden proposal to develop the 700 block of E. Johnson St. I live two blocks away from the proposed development site and served on the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association's Steering Committee to review the Houden proposal.

As a young working professional who recently bought a home in Tenney-Lapham, I am in favor of creating more commercial spaces along Johnson St., which would enliven our neighborhood and provide more local spots for recreation, shopping, and dining. I am also in favor of promoting more medium-density housing in the neighborhood in designated areas. Unfortunately, our neighborhood has a number of run-down houses that landlords do not keep in good shape, and so I am also in favor of projects that restore old homes or build new ones that are in keeping with the neighborhood style.

For these reasons, there are aspects of the proposed development that I support: the commercial space, the density, the restoration of three of the houses, and the new construction.

However, there are also aspects I dislike. Firstly, the footprint of the development is too big. The developer insists that the buildings are 3 stories with a "loft", but they are clearly 4 stories. This is too high, and will cast too long of a shadow over surrounding buildings and loom over Johnson St. and the immediate vicinity.

My second concern is the design of the proposed development. During the course of Development Committee meetings, the Committee expressed concern that the building design deviated too strongly from the Queen Anne style of the neighborhood. In response, Mr. Houden and his architects slapped some pointed roofs on what otherwise remained a large block building. The design still looks much too similar to the huge apartment complexes going up on East Washington St., which is out of character with our neighborhood. I would much prefer to see something in line with the style of the City Row Apartments, which mimics the architecture of the other homes on the street.

Thirdly, I would like to have a formal, legally-binding commitment from the developer to guarantee at least 10% of the units be affordable housing.

I would also like to note that I am not in favor of the part of the proposal to move two of the houses from the 700 block to Gorham St. These two houses are in terrible shape. My house faces the empty lot where these houses would go, and I would rather have a new home that matches the neighborhood style built there than two decrepit old houses jammed into one lot. I understand that this was a compromise Mr. Houden made in response to the Steering Committee's concerns about tearing down so many houses, but to be frank in my opinion most of the houses on the 700 block of Johnson are not worth saving.

In sum, I support the development in theory, but there are some important aspects of the plan I would like to see changed before I can fully support it - the footprint of the buildings, the design, and the affordable housing component.

I would also like to note that there seems to be a very stark demographic divide among neighborhood residents in terms of their feelings about the proposal. From my participation on the Steering Committee and my conversations with neighbors, it is clear that the younger demographic (working professionals in their 30s-40s) by and large favor the idea of a mixed used commercial-residential development on Johnson St. They/we would love to see Johnson St. become more of a recreation and dining destination for both residents and non-residents of Tenney-Lapham.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Evelyn Atkinson
■ Washburn Pl.

From: Cameron Field
Sent: Thursday, April 05, 2018 1:06 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: katie@urbanassetsconsulting.com
Subject: 700 East Johnson

Hi Kevin,

This is just a quick email to voice my support for the redevelopment of the 700 block of East Johnson St. as a resident of the neighborhood. I live around the corner with my wife in our house at [REDACTED] at East Dayton St.

I serve on the neighborhood council and found that the opposition to the project was largely based on the fact that the project did not guarantee affordable housing units and removed older homes from the neighborhood. As an individual, I think the council was off base and failed to understand the economic impact of more high quality housing in the neighborhood. I have friends who live nearby and commented when a newer development was constructed down the block from them last year, their rent didn't increase for the first time in many years because of the increase in dwelling units and competition. The project, by adding significant amounts of housing, will help increase vacancy rates, which lower rent on a macro-scale. This project will also remove eye sore properties and bring increased density and street-level vitality to this block. Moreover, the neighborhood plan calls for converting to mixed use in the future.

I can't speak for the council, because we have already voted on the matter, but I think a lot of the neighborhood has hopes that rental homes will be renovated into single family homes, and the fact that the market demand for those renovations has been sluggish, to say the least, is disappointing to many residents, but I do not feel it is a reason to oppose what the market is demanding—mixed use commercial/residential spaces such as the Houden proposal.

The developers have done a great job of scaling the proposal and implementing a nice aesthetic to the block. I am thankful such a proposal exists and I encourage you to support it.

Best,

Cameron

November 28th, 2017

Dear Plan Commission Members and Alders,

It's rare of late that I formally dip my toe directly into pressing city affairs (retirement has its perks!), however, as a former resident of the 700 block of E Johnson Street, and as a current resident of the neighborhood, I would like to register my polite, respectful opposition to the Houden proposal for 717 to 753 E. Johnson Street, even in its revised form.

Certainly, during my time as District 2 Alder, I was a frequent proponent of thoughtful redevelopment. However, I believe that the properties in question as they currently exist provide several important values to the neighborhood. (1) The properties provide relatively spacious housing options at an affordable price, given the market. (2) The unique building fronts, with similar but distinct built forms provide an important cadence to the street and its residents both day and night. (3) The properties have a great potential for viable and profitable renovation, especially if the council chooses to reintroduce a home-ownership renovation assistance program similar to the area's Small Cap TIF program that I sponsored as Alder.

The Houdens have provided high value projects to the city in the past. Even with its controversy at the time, I believe their Henry Street project off of Langdon Street has on the whole improved the neighborhood, compared to what existed previously. With true respect for them, I must disagree with their proposal for this block. The 700 block is a transition block in both the building forms, ownership structures, and tenant patterns underlying the neighborhood.

With the ongoing redevelopment at the other end of the block that Michael Matty has pursued, and given the thorough conversations I was a part of for the comprehensive rewriting of the City's zoning code and remapping of the neighborhood, I cannot at this juncture support their proposed concept. On the whole, in my opinion, the block is not well suited to increased development, especially first floor retail, due to parking considerations and the traffic patterns and speed of traffic. Additionally, it has been a struggle at times to fill the storefronts the street does have, with cheap rents one of the few motivating factors for commercial tenants. I cannot imagine that with new construction, this project could match or rival existing building rents on the 800 and 900 blocks.

There has been hundreds of market rate units in a variety of forms added to the neighborhood over the last 5+ years. (Hooray!) I am excited to see more investments continue to be introduced to the neighborhood in a way that balances rent and market dynamics. I believe that this site is better served in a form nearly identical to its existing design (backyards and sideyards to structures, especially) than under what's proposed. Also, the new large-scale housing units that have been constructed in the vicinity of this site had my support because they have largely occurred on vacant or underutilized commercial lots that were in need of repositioning.

I have found on the whole, the members of the Tenney Lapham Neighborhood Association Council to be thoughtful, reasonable individuals who have been balanced and productive representatives of the neighborhood's opinions and interests. The fact that they have chosen not to support the project, is something I hope you'll respect and put great weight in. I certainly do.

Cheers!

Bridget Maniaci
District 2 Alder, 2009-2013

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 10, 2018 11:26 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: support for 700 east johnson st development

Hi, joe davis here [Joseph L. Davis, [REDACTED] Sidney Street -- [REDACTED]

My wife, Connie, and I have lived in the 2nd District for nearly 50 years -- we have waited, all that time, for the surrounding area to reach its potential and become a vibrant and exciting center for jobs and energy --

We have seen the bad past: and were part of the group that secured the reopening of Lapham School (which I daughter attended) . . .

I want to make it clear that the opposition to the the much needed development of the 700 block was and is the product a a tiny group of people, with a stranglehold on the Neighborhood Association -- really 8
- 10 people who have consistently opposed ANY AND ALL deveopmneet in the nighborhood -- their arguments about Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing are duplicitous --

Indeed, two of the active opponents are landlords in the neighborhood, who got their properties by taking advantage of city programs to promote single family housing; two others run a local Bed & Breakfast [which was intended to be turned into a single family dwelling] --

The area near the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood has the potential for become a job-generating center of Madison in the coming years and the parochial views of a handful of naysayers ought not be allowed to stifle the City's last and best chance for ensuring a stable economy for the future.

From: Madeline Stone Kutis [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2018 2:56 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>; Stouder, Heather <HStouder@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Mitchell Kutis [REDACTED]; gregg@urbanassetsconsulting.com; katie@urbanassetsconsulting.com
Subject: Support for 700 East Johnson project

Hello Kevin & Heather,

My husband and I are proud residents of the growing Cap East neighborhood and would like to share our support of the 700 E Johnson project proposal. The project keeps the spirit of the neighborhood at the forefront without sacrificing progressive and community-focused design, and that's the sort of project I'd like to see more of. It's very important that the housing stock in Madison is continually increased to meet growing need, and I love that this project does that while respecting the feel of the current neighborhood.

On another note -- one of my favorite parts of my neighborhood is the lovely walkability. We spend whole weekends without taking the car out -- in fact, we moved to the area because we were able to downsize to just one household car. It's so important that we foster spaces and projects that allow neighborhood businesses to enter and grow alongside residential spaces, because those shops and restaurants and services grow a strong and vibrant community. I can easily see myself walking over to this area and enjoying the businesses that join the neighborhood.

We're also in strong support of the proposed BRT line on East Washington. Madison's public transportation needs a great deal of love and expansion to better serve the rapidly growing East Cap area and allow more folks the chance to get around to work and play without needing to own a vehicle. This project would mesh very well with those plans as well.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We won't be able to attend the open house on the 12th, but please know that we are in full support of the project and can't wait to see it develop.

Thanks,

Madeline Stone Kutis & Mitchell Kutis
[REDACTED] E. Washington Ave

From: Andrew Stern [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2018 3:00 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>; gregg@urbanassetsconsulting.com
Subject: Fw: Voice your support for 700 East Johnson - Open House Tomorrow

Hello Kevin,

I DO NOT support this demolition and redevelopment of the 700 block of East Johnson. The properties on the 700 block are not beyond rehabilitation. The East Johnson corridor does not need more terrible cookie-cutter apartments like those being proposed or the terrible City Row development. These types of developments are eroding the historic character and charm of the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood and introducing buildings that are out of scale and design with the existing building stock. I urge the City to deny the destruction and redevelopment of an entire block of East Johnson.

Thank you,

Andrew Stern
[REDACTED] S. Hancock Street
Madison, WI 53703

From: Kevin Luecke [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 3:57 PM
To: Zellers, Ledell; Firchow, Kevin
Cc: Patty Prime; Patrick Heck
Subject: 700 Block East Johnson Proposal

Mr. Firchow & Alder Zellers:

I am writing in strong support of the proposal for new housing in the 700 block of East Johnson Avenue. The City of Madison needs to be doing everything it can to develop and grow in a more sustainable manner - this means pushing for denser development in areas of the city that are already good places to walk, bike, and use transit, and are proximate to employment areas. The Tenney-Lapham, Marquette, Regent Street, Dudgeon-Monroe, and Midvale neighborhoods are the prime examples of where new development should be occurring, and this project is a good example of positive change.

It is disappointing to me that TLNA, on which I previously served, has pushed back against this proposal, and that the push back has resulted in a smaller development proposal. I do not believe TLNA is representative of the neighborhood as a whole when it comes to this project. Based on discussions with neighbors, most are either indifferent to this proposal, or are supportive of denser development in the neighborhood, even when it means demolishing older structures. Very few oppose this project, but as with all "controversial" projects, those are likely the folks you will hear from.

While the neighborhood association has been largely supportive of the development in the neighborhood that occurred on vacant or blighted lots along East Washington Avenue, they have fought nearly every proposal for development on currently occupied sites to the detriment of the city. The only legitimate concern the neighborhood association raises, is the potential loss of affordable housing in the neighborhood, which is a significant concern for the neighborhood, if not this project specifically. However, TLNA only raises this concern when it involves the replacement of existing structures with new buildings; this concern wasn't raised when Ray Peterson's properties were being flipped for outrageous amounts (I live next door to two, and at least two of the former residents are now homeless).

Could this development proposal be better? Yes. It could include defined affordable units for rent and it could be larger and denser. Despite these shortfalls, the project is good for Madison, and I urge the Plan Commission to support it.

Thank you,
Kevin Luecke
[REDACTED] N Ingersoll St

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Kevin Luecke
Sent from my phone, please excuse any typos

From: Jacobs Cooperage [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 6:46 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: 700 East Johnson Project

Hi Kevin

I am the property owner at [REDACTED] East Johnson Street and I just wanted to send an email in support of the 700 block development project. I was able to view the plans and site mock up at an open house hosted by Urban Assets last week and I think the finished project would be a great addition to the East Johnson neighborhood.

Thank You,

Eric Jacobs
Jacobs Cooperage, LLC

From: Elizabeth Avenius [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 18, 2018 8:29 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: 700 East Johnson

Hello,
I am a Tenney-Lapham resident and have been an active participant on the steering committee for the 700 Block Mixed Use development. I feel that I am well informed on the current situation of the site, the proposed project, and how the current proposal has evolved through neighborhood discussions. I am writing to show my support for the 700 Block development on East Johnson.

Through the steering committee process, there were multiple meetings where the developer's team presented the project and then there would be an open discussion. Each meeting the project evolved and responded to many of the important concerns expressed by the neighbors. Some of these concerns resulted in the developers pushing to save more of the existing houses, they helped set the current height and look of the project, and they influenced the ratio of housing and commercial spaces. The developer listened to the neighborhood and worked hard to make sure this project fit into people's vision for the future.

One of the most convincing aspects of this process, for me, was to go and see the existing housing that is currently located on the 700 block of East Johnson. Of the houses on the site, only two will actually be demolished the others will be saved or relocated. A walk through of these two specific houses unfortunately showed be that they were basically unsalvageable. There were foundation issues, significant settling, and updates needed to be made the MEP systems. The houses had many added walls that were made to create the maximum amount of apartments, and as a result it has eliminated all of the houses original character. The other houses I feel are salvageable and still possess elements of their original character but these houses will be saved and have a future within the neighborhood.

In conclusion, the developer has worked hard to preserve the existing housing and character of the neighborhood while simultaneously developing a project that will help the future of our neighborhood thrive. I support the 700 Block development on East Johnson and hope that it will become a precedent for future.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Avenius
[REDACTED] E. Johnson St. apt. [REDACTED]
Madison, WI 53703

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 11:18 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: Feedback Re: 700 Johnson Street Proposal

Dear Mr. Firchow:

I am writing in support of the 700 E. Johnson Street development. I am a homeowner in the neighborhood, and I have planted roots here to raise my family. My wife and I purchased a house on Washburn Place last spring, and our first child was born in our home in the fall. I also work in the neighborhood, as an attorney at Foley & Lardner, in Verex Plaza, an eight-minute walk from home.

I am committed to the continued prosperity and success of our local community, and I believe that the type of mixed-use development proposed for Johnson Street strikes the right balance between keeping the historical character of the neighborhood (a strong part of why we purchased our particular home), and also embracing the healthy trend of urban revitalization and densification, which will help ensure the neighborhood remains a vibrant and livable place for decades to come.

My only criticism relates to the proposed relocation of two of the Johnson Street properties (725 & 737 Johnson Street) to 827 East Gorham Street. I am strongly opposed to that relocation. Those two properties are in an irreparable state of decay, as passersby can observe from the outside, and as my wife can attest about the inside. (She has been a regular participant on the neighborhood planning committee for the project and seen the houses' interiors.) It would be shameful to simply kick this problem down the road, both figuratively and literally.

The lot at 827 East Gorham Street occupies a prime location at the base of the hill up which Washburn Place extends. It could be put to much better use that would enhance the community than being a junkyard for dilapidated buildings being shuffled off of Johnson Street. For example, new houses could be built upon it, in the historic style of the neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter. If you have any questions for me or if I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to email or call.

Regards,
Joe

Joseph S. Harper
Foley & Lardner LLP
Suite 5000 | 150 East Gilman Street
Madison, WI 53703-1482
P 608.258.4310

Visit Foley.com

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From: Patrick Heck [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:33 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Cc: Zellers, Ledell
Subject: Fwd: 700 block of E. Johnson St.

Hi Kevin,

Here's the email to you from Sandy Ward that bounced - she ask that I forward it to you since it bounced a second time. Who knows why - perhaps something on her end?

Ledell - wasn't sure if you got it originally, so I'm including you.

Thanks,

Patrick

----- Forwarded message -----

From: SANDRA E WARD [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, Apr 16, 2018 at 9:00 AM
Subject: 700 block of E. Johnson St.
To: "KFirchow@cityofmadison.com" <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>, "Zellers, Ledell" <district2@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Patrick Heck [REDACTED]

Dear City of Madison leaders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the plan for a building on the 700 block of E. Johnson St. I am in full agreement with the concerns raised by the Tenney Lapham Neighborhood Association (TLNA) regarding this project and sincerely hope that the city will respect the position of that body. In particular I am concerned about the scale of the proposed buildings; they are simply too large compared to the homes that are adjacent to the proposed site. The proposed buildings are also too tall and conform neither to the TLNA Neighborhood Plan nor to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sandra Ward
[REDACTED] N. Paterson St

From: Jason Batton [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 4:33 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: Houden Project: 700 E Johnson Block

Hi Kevin -

I am writing to express my personal and total support for the Houden project on East Johnson.

For many decades, the Palisade team has demonstrated an unrelenting support for development in downtown Madison and a willingness to remain personally/locally involved in the long-term management, success and accountability of said properties. I am certain that this project will be no exception.

Best,

Jason Batton
Sheridan Dr
Madison, WI

From: WILLIAM SAMUEL DEAN [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 10:10 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: In support of Urban Assets' 700 East Johnson Project

Hi Kevin,

I am reaching out to your office because I would like to see the City of Madison approve the 700 E Johnson project proposed by Urban Assets. The proposed project satisfies numerous criteria for sustainability, smart growth and improved density. The proposed development will be consistent with the neighborhood character while preserving and/or renovating older homes to improve the area both aesthetically and functionally.

Thank you for your time.

All the best,

William S. Dean
M.S. Candidate, Urban and Regional Planning
Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture
University of Wisconsin- Madison
[REDACTED]

4/11/2018

Memorandum

TO: Plan Commission
Common Council

I am writing this memorandum in support of the proposed mixed-use development on the 700 block of East Johnson Street.

I see this as a very straightforward issue – balancing the needs of an entire city against the parochial interests of a small group of individuals trying to block a project which is of a piece with long overdue economic development for the near eastside. The small group of opponents (which claims to represent the will of the neighborhood) has consistently opposed any and all development in and around Tenney-Lapham: for instance, the now lauded City Row project, the first iteration of the Sylvie Building, the T Wall project on East Mifflin Street, the expanded use of Breese Stevens Field and on and on.

My wife and I have lived in the neighborhood nearly 50 years and the key issue at stake (on what otherwise would seem to be a stand-alone housing project) has major implications for Madison's future – recent development along the East Washington corridor (abutting the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood), not only has breathed new life into a long ignored area – it is, more significantly, the first step in building a new city-within-a-city; a vibrant economic and entertainment hub ensuring the city's economic health, its jobs, its tax-base, the quality of its schools and its overall livability.

My wife and I lived here when we had no neighborhood school – our daughter was in the first class to enter the newly reopened Lapham School – I do not want to see a return to a collapsing central city and a shrinking tax base.

The stakes could not be clearer: writing about a major new Philadelphia neighborhood revitalization, the author [who could be writing about Madison] talks about the need “to create a livable neighborhood that will attract an educated work force, one that increasingly demands walkable access to offices, shops and homes in a dense urban environment. . . you create a place where people want to be.” [NYT, Philadelphia's First Step to a Platform of Innovation, Square Feet -- By JON HURDLE FEB. 20, 2018]. Our neighborhood already has that – we just need to accommodate growth and change.

In a similar vein, the Wisconsin State Journal got it right (writing about the effect of a newly active Breese Stevens Field on the city's economic viability) noting that “Some neighbors in the busy, urban area along East Washington Avenue . . . are understandably concerned about more noise, traffic and limited parking . . . But the positive benefits Madison and the region will reap from a more vibrant Breese Stevens far outweigh the less compelling and narrow interests of nearby residents . . . [by] attracting many of the young professionals our city and state need more of.” [Wisconsin State Journal, editorial board, Jan 26, 2018]

Arrayed against that reality we see the same myopic parochialism at play as in the 700 block opposition: – as one of my neighbors said “It just bugs me that a company can take away your peace of mind for

profit.” That’s the way to put others’ interests before your own. [DEAN MOSIMAN and LOGAN WROGE Wisconsin State Journal Jan 25, 2018]

SOME KEY POINTS:

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPOSITION

The notion of widespread neighborhood opposition to the 700 block project is a myth – as soon as a Steering Committee got picked to ‘oversee’ neighborhood review, the outcome was clear. The chair of that committee [Patrick Heck] consistently operated in such a way as to mute support, including intimidating and yelling at regular folks who had audacity to ignore the party line. And, on March 10 this former ‘impartial’ chair of the Steering Committee sent out a memo to the neighborhood Listserv trying to marshal the forces opposing the project:

He began the memo with this: “The city is beginning its consideration of the Houden proposal for the 11 properties at 717 through 751/753 E. Johnson Street. The developer is pursuing this proposal **despite the opposition of TLNA Council.**” [Heck added the bold text for emphasis] – the audacity of the city!

There is no neighborhood consensus opposing the proposed development – no plebiscite occurred – most residents surely don’t even know what transpired. What passed for a neighborhood process produced a Steering Committee heavily skewed towards opponents of development (including two neighborhood landlords with axes to grind – who have used City programs – ideally designed to promote transition to single family homes – to purchase structures used for rentals.) Moreover, the Steering Committee’s specific concerns and points of opposition kept changing over the committee’s life.

THE STRAWMAN OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In his summary of the Steering Committee report Heck attacks the proposal as conflicting with the Neighborhood Plan’s “many Calls for preservation of existing housing stock and neighborhood fabric in the established portions of the neighborhood.” Moreover, as the press reported at the time: “opponents of the project have consistently touted ‘historic preservation,’ and support for single family homes in objecting to new apartment buildings.” Well, these ideas have a problematic history:

“as whites adopted biased policies like economic zoning that banned apartment buildings in areas designated for single family homes” expressly to exclude Blacks -- “economic zoning was in effect exclusionary, accomplishing much of the same results as racial zoning.” [The Walls We Won’t tear Down, NYT, 8/6/17]

Economic, social and racial diversity require housing density – and, in a world of shrinking natural resources, this is also the only way to minimize the impact of people in an urban setting. To claim THAT Tenney-Lapham is an ‘affordable’ area is patently absurd!

MISUSE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

It is curious that there is now citywide acclaim for the City Row apartments which the same people opposing the 700 block development opposed some years ago, for the very same reasons. This is not the story of an avaricious developer looking to cash in – the houses to be replaced are marginal at best and in no way ought to be considered historically significant; despite vacuous claims to the contrary. Heck’s

memo argues that “The potential demolition of 4 homes and moving of 3 others (2 offsite and 1 onsite) contribute to the loss of historical context in an established portion of Tenney-Lapham.” That portion of the neighborhood already has retail.

No one on the steering committee, nor anyone opposing the project, has any background in historic preservation – when I pointed this out to the Alder, she referred me to an individual upon whom she relied – she informed me that that person had expertise in the field and, as justification, that she worked for the Historical Society. Untrue on both counts: the person in question has a design master’s (not a history degree dealing with the essence of what should be preserved) and works not for the Society, but for its fundraising arm. And, despite the Alder’s long acknowledged avocational interest, she has no expertise in Historic Preservation, or the history profession. I do.

The loss of some of the buildings along the 700 block would be minimal – with a few of the houses retained and others made available for purchase and movement to another area – and, most importantly the overwhelming majority area of the neighborhood would remain as it is. We are talking about a block already containing commercial property and designated as a natural site for further mixed-use construction.

THE CITY VERSUS A NEIGHBORHOOD

Over the past decade plus, Madison has lost job generators to surrounding communities; think EPIC and others – while it’s true that Madison has benefitted from Epic’s growth, Verona recently passed the largest school referendum in state history – isn’t it obvious that Verona wants Epic employees to live close by – to have families – to build on the economic growth? In the years to come Madison will have to battle other cities for economic viability – think Portland, Denver, Austin, Oakland, Boston, downtown Brooklyn and on and on.

Tenney -Lapham is a downtown neighborhood and needs to act in the overall City’s best interests. The project’s opponents are oblivious to the big picture —housing density is the only way to promote economic, social and racial diversity and attract new jobs and cut down on sprawl and commuting. If, Madison is to grow jobs and attract individuals to fill those jobs [think of the unlimited promise of the Oscar Mayer 50+ acres near an airport, a rail line and the interstate] it needs for Isthmus-centered neighborhoods to step up and help Madison meet its potential.

Joseph L. Davis

■ Sidney Street

■

From: Max Coleman [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 15, 2018 5:58 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Cc: Zellers, Ledell
Subject: Opposition to 700 Block E. Johnson Proposal

Dear Mr. Firchnow,

I wanted to let you know of my opposition to the development proposal on the 700s block of E. Johnson St. I believe the proposal is harmful for several reasons:

* It would further erode the character of Johnson Street, one of the few streets on the isthmus that have not yet been radically altered by cookie-cutter glass buildings designed mostly for Epic residents

* It would not provide affordable housing and would in fact increase the cost of housing on Johnson Street in general (something that, as a graduate student making about \$15,000/year, I already struggle with)

* It would reward companies like Palisade Property for unethical landlord behavior (I was forced to leave my apartment at 727 E Johnson, despite being given a signed statement that I could stay, because the company claimed the development was moving forward and there was nothing anyone could do).

* The significant costs of this proposal, both financial and cultural, would not be outweighed by the benefits

Best,

Max Coleman
Graduate student, UW-Madison

From: Jessica Becker [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2018 10:01 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin; Zellers, Ledell; Ledell Zellers; Patrick Heck
Cc: Mark Scalf
Subject: Opposition to Development Proposal on 700 block of East Johnson

Dear Kevin,

I am a neighbor in the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood. I would like to express my opposition to the development being proposed for the 700 block of East Johnson Street. The neighborhood association takes these proposals very seriously, weighs the costs and benefits to the neighborhood, and strives to work well with the city and developers. In this case, the TLNA board does not support the proposal and I agree with their sound wisdom.

The proposal:

- does not follow many aspects of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan related to protecting and enhancing the built portions of the neighborhood. The potential demolition of 4 homes and moving of 3 others (2 offsite and 1 onsite) contributes to the loss of historical context in an established portion of Tenney-Lapham. The scale of the proposed 2 new buildings is too large compared to the adjacent homes and other structures and their depths are nearly double the depth of any other building on that block. Neighbors have welcomed more than 1,000 new luxury apartments in recent years and shouldn't sacrifice existing housing for more.
- lacks an affordable housing component and therefore further contradicts TLNA's 2016 statement on affordable housing in new apartment buildings. Note that in 2009, City Row on E. Johnson was supported by TLNA Council despite the demolition of 11 older rental houses due primarily to it being a 100% affordable housing development.
- contributes to the inflation of neighborhood land values. If teardowns proliferate, this will further negatively impact the fabric of the neighborhood.

Thank you for taking these concerns seriously.

Jessica Becker
[REDACTED] E. Dayton St.
[REDACTED]

From: Eric Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2018 7:43 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Stouder, Heather <HStouder@cityofmadison.com>; Zellers, Ledell <district2@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: 700 East Johnson project

Good morning. While I am not a resident of Madison, I am a lifelong resident of Dane County. I have lived in Madison, Monona, Middleton and Waunakee. I have witnessed lots of redevelopment. The redevelopment project proposed in the 700 block of East Johnson seems to be a very practical project and certainly within the spirit of the neighborhood. I support the project as I think it will continue to enhance the neighborhood and improve the quality of housing in the Isthmus.

Regards, Eric

Eric A. Johnson
Johnson Bank
[REDACTED]

From: Tyler Lark [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2018 4:25 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: New comments about Houden 700 Block E Johnson redevelopment

Dear Planning commission,

I'd like to offer my comments on the proposed development for the 700 Block of E Johnson by Houden properties. I live about 1 block away ([REDACTED] E Dayton) and am on the TLNA council so have been following the development throughout its iterations and processes over the last 2 years. I haven't previously sent any comments to the planning commission. I don't have any connections to the developers, competing properties, or other potential conflicts of interests that I am aware of.

I generally like the direction of the proposed changes, and remain relatively neutral or slightly in favor of the project overall. However, one major remaining shortcoming I'd like to highlight (that isn't prominently featured elsewhere) is that I see a dearth of commercial / retail space, which is a key part of the TLNP vision for this block's future and a key part of the developers' argument for their project. If the design team is unable or unwilling to accommodate more commercial space within the new building, they could convert at least one or more of the ground level floors of the houses remaining on site into commercial space. In their original proposal long ago, they called for converting the house on the corner of Livingston to commercial. That component (as well as additional commercial in what was going to be the 3rd new building) is now gone.

That type of small-scale remodeling and forced improvement of the existing deteriorating buildings seems:

- 1.) Much more in line with our neighborhood plan (compared to the tear-down and build new approach)
- 2.) Would help add more features and services to the neighborhood, and
- 3.) Would also provide some---how did they phrase it..."de-facto affordable"--or lower cost commercial space, rather than only brand new and expensive commercial space, which makes it extremely hard to attract the type of smaller Mom & Pop or burgeoning businesses many hope for in that area.

Thanks for considering this key component about commercial space, and any opportunities to ask or advocate for more. I think it's a chance to improve this controversial proposal, and make the project more tolerable and adaptable to the neighborhood in the long-run.

Thanks for your time,

Tyler Lark

[REDACTED] E Dayton St

On Mon, May 7, 2018 at 10:55 AM, Patrick Heck pwheck@gmail.com [tlna] <tlna-noreply@yahoogroups.com> wrote:

[Attachment(s) from Patrick Heck included below]

To: Interested Neighbors, TLNA Steering Committee, etc.

From: Patrick Heck, TLNA Development Chair

The Houden development team for the 700 block of E. Johnson has submitted another proposal revision to the city. Due to large file sizes I've attached a subset of their slides, but the full set can be obtained here:

From: Evelyn Atkinson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2018 9:26 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>; Zellers, Ledell <district2@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Houden Proposal

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing to voice my general support for the Houden proposal, with several caveats. I am a homeowner on Washburn Place, two blocks away from the 700 block of Johnson, and I served on the Steering Committee for the Tenney Lapham Neighborhood Association that considered the Houden proposal.

As a young working professional who recently bought a home in Tenney-Lapham, I am in favor of creating more commercial spaces along Johnson St., which would enliven our neighborhood and provide more local spots for recreation, shopping, and dining. I am also in favor of promoting more medium-density housing in the neighborhood in designated areas. Unfortunately, our neighborhood has a number of run-down houses that landlords do not keep in good shape, and so I am also in favor of projects that restore old homes or build new ones that are in keeping with the neighborhood style.

For these reasons, there are aspects of the proposed development that I support: the commercial space, the density, the restoration of three of the houses, and the new construction.

My primary concern is with the size and design of the proposed development. I had previously expressed concerns about the height of the proposed development, and I am very glad to hear that the developers have reduced the height from 4 to 3 stories. However, the design of the building is still far too modern for the neighborhood. The Tenney Lapham Neighborhood Plan emphasizes that new construction should echo the existing architecture of the neighborhood, namely the Queen Anne style but also old brick storefronts. The Houden proposal in no way matches the rest of the neighborhood, and the design materials are representative of a modern fad that will certainly go out of fashion within the next decade. (My husband calls this "Chipotle architecture" because it looks like the interior of a Chipotle shop.) Any new construction should blend with the neighborhood and this one will absolutely not. I also dislike the glass walkways that join the buildings together in the new design - they will make the building look even more like one big monolithic structure, not to mention that they also don't fit the style of the neighborhood one iota. I would much prefer to see something in line with the style of the City Row Apartments, which mimics the architecture of the other homes on the street, or an old-fashioned brick townhouse-style building with storefronts, which would echo the building Forequarter is in across the street.

Secondly, I would like to have a formal, legally-binding commitment from the developer to guarantee that at least 10% of the units be affordable housing. This is a concern that many on the Steering Committee voiced and I believe is covered in the TLNA letter opposing the development.

I am also concerned about the part of the proposal to relocate two of the houses from the 700 block to Gorham St. These two houses are in terrible shape. (I am attaching photos to this email for your reference.) My house faces the empty lot where these

houses would go, and although the proposal promises to "restore" the houses, I am concerned that they are beyond saving and that any "restorations" Mr. Houden would perform would be minimal at best. The lot on which he proposes to locate them is also not large, so the houses would have to be jammed together in a very unattractive way to fit. I understand that this was a compromise Mr. Houden made in response to the Steering Committee's concerns about tearing down so many houses, but I would want a detailed explanation from Mr. Houden of what he plans to do to "restore" these two houses as well as a diagram of how he proposes to fit both of them into one lot before I could support this relocation. (A detailed plan for restoration for the other homes he plans to keep on Johnson St would also be a good idea.)

In sum, I support the general idea of the development , but there are some important aspects of the plan I would like to see changed before I can fully support it - the design, the affordable housing component, and the proposed relocation of the two houses.

I would also like to note that there seems to be a very stark demographic divide among neighborhood residents in terms of their feelings about the proposal. From my participation on the Steering Committee and my conversations with neighbors, it is clear that the younger demographic (working professionals in their 30s-40s) by and large favor the idea of a mixed used commercial-residential development on Johnson St. They/we would love to see Johnson St. become more of a recreation and dining destination for both residents and non-residents of Tenney-Lapham.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this input.
Sincerely,

Evelyn Atkinson
[REDACTED] Washburn Pl.





From: Wittenwyler, Mike [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2018 3:25 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Support for 700 East Johnson Houden Development

As a member of TLNA and property owner in the 900 block of East Mifflin, I strongly support the proposed redevelopment of the 700 block of East Johnson as proposed by Palisade Properties. Unfortunately, I will be out of town and cannot attend either the Plan Commission or Common Council meeting next week.

Development and investment in the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood needs to be embraced and channeled into maintaining the area's existing character. The proposed mixed-use development by Palisade Properties does exactly that. The new buildings are limited to three-stories and several existing homes will be rehabbed and preserved. It will further add to the density of a downtown neighborhood in an extremely positive manner, limiting urban sprawl and development. That density leads to more amenities and less problems with the chronic inebriants. This is also a locally-owned and developed project that will be done without utilizing any TIF. It is the perfect complement to the Stone House project in the 600 block. And, most importantly, it will continue the growth of Madison's urban core along East Johnson – exactly where growth should be occurring in an urban plan.

There is a good book that came out a couple of years ago on real estate development that was written by a professor at U. of Minnesota. One take-away from it is that neighborhoods need to learn to stop saying “no” and get to “Yes, but...” With the Palisade Properties proposed redevelopment, the developer has taken the neighborhood concerns into account and arrived at a project that meets the “yes, but...” category. For those reasons, would urge the TLNA and City to support this timely and worthwhile investment in our community.

Mike Wittenwyler
[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Ken Mehlberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2018 2:51 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: 700 Block E Johnson Street project

Hi Kevin,

I'm writing in support of the project to re-vitalize the 700 block of East Johnson Street. It's a dark, relatively unsafe corridor in our city that needs attention. As long as the developer continues working with the city to find a workable design, I believe it is the right time for this project to move forward.

Thank you,

Ken Mehlberg
[REDACTED] Iota Court
Madison Wi 53703
[REDACTED]

From: Jack Gugger [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2018 9:20 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: 700 E Johnson St project

Kevin,

As a longtime owner of the buildings 744 through 748 E Johnson St I'm in favor of the proposed development in the 700 block of E Johnson St.

Jack Gugger | President



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From: Saul Glazer [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2018 9:49 AM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: 700 East Johnson

Kevin,

I write this in complete support of the 700 East Johnson project. On June 4, I have to be at Take The Stage which is the annual Overture Fundraiser. I will be at the City Council Meeting.

I have lived in Madison since 1981. I own a home at [REDACTED] Sidney Street, near Tenney Park (purchased in 2000). I lived on the Near East Side, by the Avenue Bar from 1990-2000. I drove a cab for three years, and know every square inch of Madison. I am a bike rider and a bus rider.

My day job is a construction attorney. I also do some tax assessment work. I have been involved in many of the major Madison projects over the last few years, such as The Ovation, The Hub, The James, the Park Hotel remodel, Marina Place, 100 Wisconsin, and 2550 University. I have no interest in this project, nor I am representing the developer in this project.

By chance, one of my close friends lived in one of the buildings to be torn down, back in the early 1980s. He lived there because he was a college student with a dog. Very few rentals allowed dogs. This building allowed dogs because it was in horrible shape in the early 1980s. I am familiar with all the buildings in the proposed project site. Almost all are in terrible shape and beyond repair. The developer was not responsible for the dilapidated state of these buildings. They have been like this for years. There is nothing about these buildings of any historic value (and I love historic buildings—and if anyone were worth saving, I would want it to be moved).

The site is on a main road. It is not in the middle of a single family residential neighborhood. The site is perfect for someone who wants to bike, and not own a car. You don't need a car to live there. It is in Madison's prime bus routes, and so you can take the bus when bike riding is impractical for the faint of heart (like six months out of the year).

This is the perfect spot for this project, and will continue the incredible and amazing transformation of the Near East Side. Having spent the better part of my adult life on the Near East Side, it is heart-warming to see such a vibrant pedestrian and bike friendly area, with amazing local restaurants and shops. You owe it to these businesses to allow for continued infill higher density housing. This is the highest best use for this property, and will add much needed property tax dollars to the City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Saul Glazer
[REDACTED]

On Mon, Jun 4, 2018 at 1:18 AM, Michael D. Barrett [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Plan Commissioners,

We oppose the mowing down of our classic vernacular neighborhoods. The proposed destruction of the 700 block of East Johnson (June 4, 2018 Plan Commission Agenda Items 8-10) is an abomination and we oppose it in the strongest terms. This city has a very bad record of destroying the very neighborhoods that we cherish, starting with what it did to the Greenbush Neighborhood lo those many decades ago. It doesn't matter that you weren't responsible for it. It doesn't matter that it was long ago. The same process is in play here. Indeed, the destruction has continued unabated with the current destruction of Miffland and other cherished places. You've long tried to rip up Marquette, including in the latest Comp Plan update. Fortunately they pushed back hard. It remains to be seen if you will be successful against Atwood and Tenney-Lapham. To approve this travesty--in the heart of the isthmus--will set in motion a wave of destruction against the very places that have added so much value to our city. And not just monetary. Mostly, it is about our collective (re-)gained wisdom in how to live convivially in an urban neighborhood. It was an art lost in those decades after WW II. Our re-discovered capacity to live together is just now coming to fruition. What you have before you is the complete opposite of our newfound conviviality. Indeed, it's just Fitchburg shoe-horned into our beloved isthmus. And yes, if this is approved, the rest of East Johnson will be bulldozed as well. Adjoining streets will become increasingly isolated and vestigial until it becomes "obvious" that they, too, must succumb to the same fate. Having once been on the Urban Design Commission, I know that once one developer is allowed to do something, the rest come rushing in to demand the same. So anyone reading this in the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood should expect that this will be just the beginning of a trend that eventually will reach your backyard, and then, yes, your very house (yes, I'm talking to you if you live on Gorham, Dayton, or Jean, or Sydney or other nearby streets; i.e., this is NOT just an issue for E. Johnson).

To give an idea of where we are coming from, consider this: We have owned rental property just two blocks down, on the 900 block of East Johnson, since 1991. We stand to gain monetarily--and significantly--if this proposal goes through. But we aren't in this primarily for the money.

When we bought, the isthmus was considered to be a throw-away neighborhood. City policy was in on the destruction. At the time the city was pushing to knock down half of the 800 block for parking. The city was so excited to get the bulldozers rolling that they were even going to pay for it. The old timers were good with it, too. How better to compete with the malls than to provide lots of free parking, right? But we fought it and won. With the specter of tear-downs lifted, we went about building a cool neighborhood--parking be damned because "plenty of parking" damns a place--along with others with the same ideas.

The 80s & early-90s market signaled rust belt wreck as well; houses like ours sold for *less* than they went for a decade before. Real estate agents wouldn't even show us houses in Tenney-Lapham. But those of us who resisted the conventional wisdom had an idea of creating a more sustainable community, starting with embracing the human-scale of classic old neighborhoods like Tenney-Lapham. There is nothing more sustainable than preserving old houses. (Did you know that the #1 source of landfill waste is construction waste, much of that from tear downs?) In our case, through a lot of sweat equity and investment of life savings, we turned the slumlord

special into a very comfy/cozy and beloved home that we lived in for several years, then successfully managed it for the enjoyment of excellent & responsible tenants for the decades to come. Sustainability is when the same abode serves as shelter for many generations; ours has served five generations. Because we keep a good roof and siding on it, it surely will serve another ten generations. Or more. On the topic of sustainability, when proposals like this come before you, we usually hear about how much more efficient the new apartments will be compared with old houses. That is just straight up BS. It is only the case when neglectful slumlords make no energy efficiency upgrades at all. Even then it takes 65 years to recoup the energy expended tearing down the embodied energy of the old structure and building the new. Yes, SIXTY FIVE YEARS! Contrary to the Madison slumlord conventional wisdom, we upgraded the insulation and mechanicals to our old house to the point that it now *exceeds* the energy performance of the shiny new cardboard apartments that you keep approving. Their minimal insulation and contractor-grade mechanicals (read: bottom-feeder efficiency) result in drafty, moldy 35-year tear-downs. Thus, new is *not* greener. They just get torn down quicker. Old houses and their strong bones can easily be retrofitted for generations of healthy, comfortable living. If you approve this, you cast a pall over every property in the area: Why bother upgrading/maintaining an old house it is just going to get torn down in a few years?

In the early 90s, we also helped lead the rejuvenation of the neighborhood association and other local organizations. We helped turn a neighborhood sliding toward rustbelt tragedy into something that is now cherished by tenants, homeowners and visitors alike (have you ever read the Airbnb reviews of old places in the area?).

Why do you want to tear it down?

There has always been this bias against old houses and old neighborhoods among The Very Important of Madison. We suspect that a lot of it has to do with the very fact that our isthmus neighborhoods keep proving to be strong enough--pesky enough--to push back against you and your developer friends. Mow down the classic, human-scaled, and you drive those politically pesky (but caring & considerate) eastsiders away into diaspora, much as your predecessors did to the Italians and others they viewed as undesirable in the 'Bush. With the eastsiders gone, Fitchburgers newly resident, the bulldozers can roam free across the isthmus unimpeded by any neighborhood political pushback.

We've always had to fight you from a defensive crouch. At some point, don't you think you should stop attacking us? Instead, why don't you embrace the very neighborhoods that have made Madison Madison and not Des Moines. Have you ever seen the wrecked neighborhoods of similar era in Des Moines? Or Peoria? Or Milwaukee? Or Kansas City? Or Rockford? Or any other formerly-dignified & livable Midwestern tragedy? Most of the cool neighborhoods are gone. The vestiges that remain are wrecks. "Obvious" tear downs. Why do you continue to inflict this Midwestern narrow-minded prejudice against the old upon Madison? Why are you so against cohesive, community-oriented neighborhoods? And yes, the neighborhood scale and architectural vernacular--*sizeable* porches! *sizeable* balconies, *real* yards!--of our older neighborhoods are what allow community to thrive. You obviously prefer anonymous pod-living: from anonymous apartment to anonymous elevator to anonymous subterranean parking to anonymous ramp to anonymous highway, to anonymous office park, never once having occasion

to interact with neighbors. Fine. That's why we have Fitchburg. Go there. But the life of an atomic particle zipping from pod to pod is not what we want. We want community.

There is plenty of already-wrecked and underutilized space along East Washington, Packers Ave, Cottage Grove Road, University Ave, & beyond that is ripe for putting up this sort of development. Hundreds of sites across Madison with acres of parking surrounding a cinder block hut, just *begging* to be re-developed. Indeed, we participated in the early-90s Tenney-Lapham plan that envisioned the revitalization of East Washington (and ridding ourselves of it's hideous car lots) that we are now seeing & enjoying. With that opportunity still abundant--and with neighborhood support--why rip at the fabric of a successful, human-scaled neighborhood? Do you even realize that the residents of those E. Wash towers really, REALLY like to stroll nearby old-school streets like East Johnson? You didn't, did you? East Johnson, as it is, right now, is an asset that accrues to the new development on East Wash. Believe me, we know, we're in the biz.

Keep Fitchburg in Fitchburg! SAVE THE HEART OF MADISON!

Sincerely,
Michael D. Barrett and Pamela S. Barrett
[REDACTED] Sommers Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

-----Original Message-----

From: Kirstin Pires [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 04, 2018 12:46 PM

To: Michael D. Barrett [REDACTED]

Cc: Mayor [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: [tlna] Plan Comm. Agenda Items 8-10: Oppose the Mowdown of 700 block East Johnson!

What Mr. Barrett said!

From: Bootsy Christine Harden [REDACTED]
Date: 6/4/18 11:18 AM (GMT-06:00)

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: "Michael D. Barrett" [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Plan Comm. Agenda Items 8-10: Oppose the Mowdown of 700 block East Johnson!

Dear All to Whom Mike & Pam's Letter Was Addressed (or cc'ed):

As a resident of this neighborhood, I could not agree more with this letter. I count on my fellow citizens to promote cultivation, rather than obliteration, of the delightfully funky elements of neighborhoods like the 700 block of East Johnson in my lovely adopted hometown.

Sincerely,

Bootsy

Christine "Bootsy" Harden
[REDACTED] Castle Place, [REDACTED]
Madison, WI 53703

From: Martin Lopez [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 4, 2018 1:11 PM

To: Mayor [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cc: Monks, Anne [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: 700 Block of East Johnson St.

Dear Plan Commissioners,

I'm forwarding a letter that I strongly agree with -- that the development project of the 700 block of E. Johnson should be denied.

Thanks for taking my message.

Sincerely,

Martin Lopez

Martin Lopez
[REDACTED] Castle Place, [REDACTED]
Madison, WI 53703

June 3rd, 2018

Dear Plan Commissioners and Alders,

I'd like to send a further letter discussing the housing proposal being proposed by the Houden team for the 700 block of East Johnson Street that update my thoughts on the matter since my original letter on November 28, 2017.

My understanding is that through the project's refinement and adjustments in the last 6 months or so, the project has gained the support of a number of immediately adjacent homeowners and residents and has the support of city staff after a lengthy neighborhood-driven redesign. I am especially pleased at the retention of 4 houses to be located within the immediate and surrounding neighborhood. The vacant parcel on Gorham Street in particular has been an eyesore and has proven resistant to natural market redevelopment. Positioning two vintage, appropriate properties on the site is the most optimal outcome I could imagine for that site, having sat without residents and eventually becoming vacant for a number of years now.

I have reached out directly to the development team and was able to tour the properties that are proposed for demolition, in addition to reviewing the full and complete project submittal in detail. Having also toured the properties that were demolished for the City Row project in 2009 on the preceding block of E Johnson Street, I would like to register that I found these parcels on the 700 block in worse condition and with fewer redevelopment options than the City Row properties had. After seeing the properties and their decades of neglect and having been long ago subdivided, I have no objection to their demolition. In the balance of saving nine properties (keeping five in situ, moving four properties), and by assisting other vacant sites within the neighborhood that have failed to see housing built under other conditions, and to have viable and comparable rent levels to what currently is occupied by the structures within these parcels, I cannot imagine a likely subsequent option that would solve as many issues on these other vacant sites, and addresses the need to build vibrant, mixed income neighborhoods.

(I love that within this neighborhood and equidistant to this site within about two blocks you have each the home of the heir to the Kimberly Clark fortune and the women and children's shelter of Salvation Army. This is truly a neighborhood where residents of every income and background have a home.)

The massing for the main project as it's currently proposed, and reduced from the initial iteration, fits with the spirit and intent of the neighborhood's past plans and conversations around the zoning code rewrite in my experience, regardless of what some resident may now be currently trying to lead you to believe. There are some elements to the design that I'm less than enthusiastic about (the rooflines, the mid-block commercial spaces), but considering that that was the direction the development team was led down by the alder and neighborhood stakeholders, as well as it having received approvals from the urban design commission, at this point it is a non-essential quibble, and I need to respect the design decisions they made and directed the development team to pursue. Would I have pushed for a different aesthetic design, certainly, but that's me.

I had lengthy conversations with the development team about landscaping and resident amenities I'd like to see incorporated to create a well-functioning, cohesive experience for both their tenants, and abutting residents, having previously been a resident across the street from their site proposal and having been a resident on a very similar parcel located on the 600 block of E Johnson Street.

Additionally, it is important to recognize that the Michael Matty project currently under construction is shifting how the 700 block relates to the streetscape. I appreciate the way that the Houdens' proposal integrates and transitions the new face of the 700 block that Matty's project has created, with the established face the block ends with at Livingston Street.

In four years of serving as alder of this neighborhood facing a variety of unique urban redevelopment situations, I believe that this project as it is currently proposed merits your approval.

I would of course wish that there were an unlimited supply of low income housing tax credits that WHEDA would provide to Madison so that every project has affordable housing set asides. The LIHTC units were a major factor of my support of City Row in 2009. For this project, the retention of the number of units and corresponding rents in existing and relocated homes, especially onto vacant lots, is a valuable consideration for me to support the proposal. The redesign and reduction of height, massing and density is also sufficient to gain my support from the original concept.

At the end of the day, the questions to be answered are does the project meet the city's standards for approval (city staff believes it does)¹ and does the plan improve the condition of the property and the neighborhood; I believe it does, and I hope you'll support this project for approval.

Sincerely,

Bridget Maniaci
District 2 Alderperson, 2009-2013

¹ "As discussed in this report, staff believes that this proposal is largely consistent with the underlying longer-term recommendation, acknowledging however, that the development is much larger in size compared to surrounding structures. Other than height, the neighborhood plan does not have prescriptive bulk recommendations and there is no fixed maximum number of dwelling units, provided the building's scale could be determined to be appropriate. However, the plan's definition of neighborhood mixed use states that the scale of mixed-use buildings should generally be small when adjacent to low or medium density areas. Staff notes that the reduction of the fourth-story mass, proposed in the current plans, improves plan consistency regarding height. However, the applicant's corresponding alteration to connect the previously separate above-grade buildings adds to the mass and size of the building when compared to earlier versions. In reviewing the specific approval standards, staff believes the standards may be met, subject to the recommended conditions." Planning Division Staff Report, June 4, 2018 <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6280769&GUID=0259EA4D-34C6-4DC2-B613-CB641016E368>

From: Barb Irvin [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 4, 2018 2:39 PM

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Zellers, Ledell
[REDACTED] Rewey, mike [REDACTED]; Carter, Sheri [REDACTED]; King, J Steven

Cc: Stouder, Heather [REDACTED]; Mayor [REDACTED]; Erdman, Natalie [REDACTED] Eskrich, Sara [REDACTED]

Subject: Opposition to demolitions in 700 block of East Johnson

Dear Plan Commission members -

I am writing to oppose the proposed demolition permit for the buildings in the 700 block of East Johnson St. Such wide-scale destruction is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. The block has already lost several houses recently. Our inner city neighborhoods are looking less and less like Madison and more like anywhere USA. I currently live in the Greenbush neighborhood, which is undergoing a similar transition from traditional housing and scale to faceless large apartments. And, as a former resident of E. Johnson, I would like to say that this large an increase in the density is not wise until we have a transit system that is good enough that more residents give up cars. The streets on the Isthmus are terribly clogged and are becoming less safe for cyclists and pedestrians as a result.

Please oppose the proposed demolition and development in the 700 block of East Johnson.

Thank you,

Barbara Irvin
[REDACTED] Drake St

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2018 3:45 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: 'marcus@urbanassetsconsulting.com' <marcus@urbanassetsconsulting.com>
Subject: 700-block East Johnson Street Feedback

Dear Mr. Firchow:

I am writing in regard to the proposed development plan for 717-753 East Johnson Street. As a homeowner on Washburn Place, I have written before on this matter, and I am planning to attend the meeting on June 19. However, I cannot attend tonight's meeting, and it was unclear after the several scheduling changes what agenda items will still be discussed tonight. (Hence my email now.)

The bottom line is that I am strongly opposed to the relocation of any houses onto 827 E. Gorham Street (this appears to be agenda item number 10 for tonight's meeting, file #50431).

Although I generally support the Johnson Street project, I do not support it at the expense of polluting other parts of the neighborhood with unwanted houses that are scheduled to be removed to make the project possible. I am much more opposed to the relocation of houses onto Gorham than I am in favor of the development. The lots on Gorham street would be put to much better use being developed with new homes in the historical style of the neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if I can assist you with any questions.

Regards,
Joe

Joseph S. Harper
Associate
Foley & Lardner LLP
Suite 5000 | 150 East Gilman Street
Madison, WI 53703-1482
P 608.258.4310

From: Evelyn Atkinson [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 04, 2018 4:31 PM
To: Zellers, Ledell <district2@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Joe Harper [REDACTED]; URBAN ASSETS LLC <melissa@urbanassetsconsulting.com>;
Firchow, Kevin <KFirchow@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: comments on Johnson St. development

Hi Ledell,

I hope you're doing well. I'm writing because unfortunately my husband and I won't be able to be at the Plan Commission meeting tonight when they hear the 700 Johnson St. proposal (with all the rescheduling we got confused and thought the meeting had been moved to June 19th, but then we realized that was the Common Council meeting). We wanted to emphasize to you, however, that we are in support of the proposal generally with two major caveats.

First, we don't support the design of the building, as it's too modern and out of character with the neighborhood. This is a concern we share with the Neighborhood Association. However, I believe this aspect of the development plan is easily fixed.

Second, unlike TLNA, we also strongly oppose the relocation of the two houses to Gorham St. The two houses are dilapidated and ugly, and since the developer has let them fall into even further disrepair since he purchased them we don't believe he will adequately restore them after he moves them. We live on Washburn Place facing the empty lot where the houses are proposed to be moved, and we are concerned that cramming two falling-down houses into that small lot will decrease the property values of the neighborhood. I know that TLNA was concerned about the destruction of the houses on 700 Johnson, but frankly I don't believe these two houses are worth saving.

Finally, as I'm sure you are aware from attending the Steering Committee meetings, we wanted to stress that there is a significant demographic divide on the question of developing Johnson St. Young working professionals who have recently bought homes in the neighborhood, like ourselves, are largely in favor of the development. Unfortunately, most young homeowners in the neighborhood have jobs that prevent them from attending neighborhood association meetings, and so our voice is underrepresented. I was fortunate enough to be able to serve on the Steering Committee, but found that my voice was usually drowned out by a vociferous "old guard." We moved to Tenney Lapham because of the great mix of lively commercial and quiet residential spaces here, and would love to see the neighborhood continue to flourish and grow through targeted development that keeps with the neighborhood plan but also injects new life into the community.

I hope that you will represent our concerns to the Plan Commission. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Evelyn Atkinson & Joe Harper
[REDACTED] Washburn Pl.