

Urban Design Commission
City of Madison WI

February 26, 2019

Tess Camacho
102 N. 2d St
Madison WI. 53704

Dear Commission Members,

I am writing to state my opposition to the proposed development at 1954 East Washington Avenue by Madison Development Corporation. I have lived across the street from Graaskamp Park and the proposed development site for 13 years and previously lived on the 2100 block of East Dayton. I am not opposed to affordable housing in my neighborhood but I am opposed to the massive scale of the proposed 4 story building. MDC has repeatedly rushed the process and not provided information in a timely manner that would allow for feedback from the neighbors. As a resident across the street from the property, I feel that my input should be taken seriously. The developers construction schedule should not be at the expense of the neighborhood. I would like to see a design that benefits the neighborhood and MDC residents and not just the ambitions of a development corporation who does not live in the neighborhood.

- 1) As with previous proposed designs, I still feel that the developer is trying to squeeze in a building that is too large for the space. The building is massively larger in scale to all other structures between 1st and 4th streets. While the East Washington Corridor has gained large scale developments, these have been in areas that were once commercial lots. Our neighborhood between 1st and 4th is comprised of smaller homes and only 1 or 2 small scale 2 story buildings. As a comparison, the largest building in the area is East High. The first story of East High on the front side is actually sunk into the ground so that it is not even a full 4 stories. Also, the significant setback diminishes the appearance. I feel a more appropriate scale for 1954 would be a 3 story building with a 3rd story setback. The proposed design on the backside is a full 4 stories on the Mifflin St side with no setback. A 4 story on the top of a hill with a 10' elevation drop to the street will make the building look even more imposing and out of character on Mifflin St. This 4 story height will surely cast shade onto the park and possibly reach the other side of the street to my house as well as the other buildings on the property. In the winter especially, I highly value my sunshine for passive solar warmth not to mention my happiness and I think most people would agree. I would like to know the results of any shade studies, who conducted the study, how it was done.
- 2) The driveway to the underground parking is ill placed and cumbersome. The over all design seems to attempt to unify the 2 buildings with matching brick but ultimately it fails. The driveway placement in the middle is a huge divider and acts like a moat between the 2 buildings. The division is further enhanced by the downward grade with retaining wall and a guard rail which is placed in the middle of the property. It seems that the 2

buildings could be better integrated if the proposed building was a smaller scale allowing for more landscaping and pedestrian areas in between.

- 3) The landscape plan seems incomplete. There should be more screening between the MDC property and neighbors on the southwest side in the form of either a fence or shrubbery that would provide a buffer to noise and add privacy from patios. Also, there is no clear path to the park directly behind the building especially due to the driveway that wraps along the northeast side of the building.
- 4) With this proposed design and scale we are going to lose very large trees that provide shade and animal habitat in the neighborhood. When all of the ash trees were removed on Mifflin Street it became noticeably warmer in the summer. There were 3-4 trees removed from MDC's terrace along Mifflin Street that were not replaced. I don't know why MDC didn't prompt the city for the replacement trees on the terrace and I question their commitment to the landscaping of the property. I believe that with a smaller scale building less trees will be in jeopardy.
- 5) Another concern is the indefinite occupation of the Options building and the future plans for the demolition or rather lack of plan. I am not comfortable with this open ended situation. I would like to see a concrete plan with renderings for the landscaping of this area in the future.

I would like the developer to realize the limitations of this property and the scope of what will actually fit into this space. This should be an opportunity for improvement to the neighborhood. I feel that this overscale design would be a decline to the overall quality of the immediate neighborhood as well as MDC's own property.

Thank you considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

Tess Camacho

Urban Design Commission
City of Madison
126 S. Hamilton St
Madison, WI 53703

RE: The Avenue 1954 E. Washington Development Proposal - 52598

February 24, 2019

Dear Urban Design Commission:

In advance of the Urban Design Commission Meeting scheduled for February 27th, 2019, we, a collective of 21 nearby residents, would like to provide formal written comment for your consideration on The Avenue 1954 E. Washington Development Proposal.

Enclosed/attached with this letter is a document outlining a number of shared concerns with the most recent proposal which was presented to neighbors on January 9th, 2019. Throughout multiple iterations of this development, the neighbors and residents listed below have engaged in the process and expressed concerns, ideas, and recommendations during available forums with the developer, Madison Development Corp.

We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate and provide feedback in this process. We appreciate the efforts of the architects, Knothe and Bruce, to try to address design concerns. Unfortunately, we still have significant concerns. Some concerns are new, a result of the significant redesign of the latest iteration, yet some concerns have remained consistent throughout our engagement. Since this new proposal was moved forward by the developer despite our concerns, we present the attached for the independent consideration of the UDC.

We acknowledge that not every issue or recommendation listed may be in scope or actionable by the UDC; regardless, we prefer to provide this feedback at this time for formal public record. As subject matter experts of the neighborhood and site, it is our duty to provide our qualitative perspective to ensure the committee has the information required to ensure decisions are evidence based and support the long term success of the city and its hallmark neighborhoods.

Lastly, as neighbors, we seek transparency, communication, collaboration, and empathetic consideration. Going forward, if these principles are valued, we are optimistic we can come to a solution that is a win-win for the neighborhood and the developer.

Sincerely,

Chris Sell on behalf of a collective of 21 concerned neighbors (listed on Page 2)

Neighbor	Address	Email
<i>Christopher Sell</i>	1934 E. Washington Ave.	sellfactor@gmail.com
<i>Natasha Fahey-Flynn</i>	1934 E. Washington Ave.	natashacff@gmail.com
<i>Sheri Rein</i>	21 N. Second St.	szrein@gmail.com
<i>Charlie Rein</i>	21 N. Second St.	Crein42@gmail.com
<i>Tess Camacho</i>	102 N. Second St.	tesscamacho@rocketmail.com
<i>Dawn Sabin</i>	1930 E. Washington Ave	dawnwalkersemail@yahoo.com
<i>Ben Sabin</i>	1930 E. Washington Ave.	Benjamin3137@hotmail.com
<i>Abby Bailey</i>	29 N. Second St.	Mabbyb32@yahoo.com
<i>Rich Zietko</i>	1944 E. Washington Ave.	rzietko@yahoo.com
<i>Andrea Zietko</i>	1944 E. Washington Ave.	avzietko@yahoo.com
<i>Katie Kane</i>	1938 E. Washington Ave.	katiekanep@gmail.com
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<i>Suzy Grindrod</i>	2030 Carey Ct.	sjgrindrod@icloud.com
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<i>Dario Tesmer</i>	1934 E. Mifflin St.	dtesmer@hotmail.com
<i>Jenny and Joe Sweeney</i>	2024 E. Mifflin St.	jennylmsweeney@gmail.com
<i>Sara Hinkel</i>	2026 E. Mifflin St.	sarahinkel@sbcglobal.net

The Avenue Project - Stakeholder Concerns and Recommendations

ISSUE #1: Size and Height of the Proposed Building

The neighbors feel strongly that a 4 story building in the Emerson East neighborhood does not fit with the character of the neighborhood or this section of the East Washington Corridor. This feedback has been consistently shared with the developer through various iterations of this project, yet the latest design calls for an even larger 4 story building than the previous designs.

The only building in Emerson East, the adjacent neighborhoods, and this portion of the East Washington Corridor that is comparable in size/height is East High School, and that building has at least double the setback from the street. The majority of the homes within Emerson East and adjacent to the proposed development have a very small footprint with an average square footage of 1100 sq ft and an average height of 22 feet.

The fourth story along with the new design and the significantly larger footprint towards the back of the lot eliminates the privacy of the east Washington neighbors and their backyards, which offer the only true privacy of living on East Washington. There are proposed walk-out patios that with no planned buffer or barrier to the East Washington residents' backyards. The second, third, and fourth stories all have outdoor patios with site lines that will directly overlook these once private backyards. The larger buildings nearer to downtown that exceed 4 stories are also at a much lower elevation than 1954 E. Washington further exaggerating the size and scale of the 44 unit 4 story building.

Recommendation 1.1: We recommend that the building be reduced by one story equating to a 3 story building with the 3rd story setback.

Recommendation 1.2 We have recently learned that the developer may have completed a shade study, and we would request additional time to review the results of that study and anticipate impacts to our properties and the neighborhood.

Recommendation 1.3 We recommend the developer address the significant, newly created privacy concerns resulting from the new proposal.

ISSUE #2: Parking

In MDC's Home Funds grant application and confirmed by MDC representatives, the developer indicates they will charge anywhere from \$20 to \$120 for their parking spots. Street parking is already very competitive because many of the smaller homes in Emerson East do not have garages and only enough driveway for one vehicle. We feel that many future Avenue tenants who would qualify to live in the affordable housing development would choose save money and not purchase a parking spot which could potentially add up 50-100 cars parking on the adjacent streets. These concerns are exacerbated by the Options for Independence site whose employees park on the street Monday through Friday

7:30am to 5:00pm. If MDC's claim that very few of their tenants will have cars is true, then will the un-rented parking spots be "sold" to non-tenants? This would be of concern to the neighbors. Lastly, we believe there should be designated onsite visitor parking when tenants inevitably have visitors. We'd prefer an independent entity verify or determine the adequate amount of visitor parking for a building of this size.

Recommendation 2.1: *Parking be offered to tenants as part of their rent*

Recommendation 2.2: *Provide the neighbors the time to review a parking study*

The neighbors are also very supportive of ensuring Madison is accessible by all individuals including persons with disabilities. This includes having a designated pickup/drop-off area that is protected by inclement weather. We want to ensure that the developer has completed an accessibility study and that the plan is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Recommendation 2.3: *An accessibility analysis be completed and allow the neighbors and opportunity to review*

ISSUE #3: Traffic

We recognize that East Washington Street is heavily studied by the city and the isthmus presents significant and unique challenges regarding traffic flow. Qualitatively, the neighborhood is aware that there is a traffic congestion problem on the parallel streets especially on Mifflin St, from First to Fourth. Because it is difficult and unsafe for cars entering East Washington at Second St to head eastbound, many current Avenue residents drive down Second St. and head down Mifflin St. to Fourth Street where there is a light to more easily turn left and head east. The same situation occurs for traffic entering east Washington between Second and First Street, where traffic will turn right on First St and the Mifflin to Fourth. The congestion is further compounded by East High School and the need for student pickup/drop-off on Fourth St and the daily parking of East High School students. It will be very difficult and unsafe for any Avenue residents exiting on East Washington to cross 3 lanes of traffic in less than 1 block in an effort to take a left at First Street (no U-turn allowed). Mifflin Street is narrow and allows parking on both sides of the street on evenings and weekends, and when cars are parked on both sides, only one car can fit through the street. We believe it is fair to consider if the additional density will continue to stress the adjacent streets and create a level of congestion that could result in significant safety issues especially around East High School.

Recommendation 3.1: *A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) and traffic counts on Mifflin St. from First to Fourth Street be shared with the neighbors and allowed time to review and comment. We ask the city to supplement this study with qualitative data such as focus groups or surveys with residents in this area. Engaging the stakeholders would create good faith with the neighborhood and may result in creative solutions.*

ISSUE #4: Pedestrian Safety

Overall, the neighbors are open to some additional density if it is done thoughtfully and “smart.” We acknowledge that a reason this site is attractive for increased density is due to it being on/near bus lines. Unfortunately, only west bound bus lines are easily and safely accessible. All residents heading east need to cross one of the most dangerous sections of East Washington to access the east bound bus lines. With the developer adding potentially 120 new neighbors, it should be their duty to ensure that access to public transportation is safe especially if this is quoted as a reason for approving a zoning change allowing additional density. The pedestrian traffic is has also increased with the revitalization of Schenks’ Corners which will inevitably be accessed by Avenue’s tenants. Safety is a driver of property values and economic stability. We want to ensure that Madison is a safe place to live and access. As regular and experienced pedestrians, we feel it would be irresponsible of the developer to ignore potential risk mitigation strategies or at minimum consider the known and unknown safety risks that could be exaggerated by this proposed development and added density.

Recommendation 4.1: We recommend a safety analysis be completed and shared with neighbors to review options to allow pedestrians to safely cross at Second St. and E. Washington Ave.

Recommendation 4.2: MDC and the neighbors partner to identify long term risk mitigation strategies. For example, the addition of a traffic light or pedestrian bridge would be large scale strategies that we realize would not be responsibility of the developer, so we, as neighbors, would welcome the opportunity to partner with MDC in lobbying the city to implement large scale safety measures.

ISSUE #5 – Market Instability & Property Values

We openly admit that we do not know what the economic impact of this development would have on the surrounding neighborhood. We do know that this is a significant development for our neighborhood highlighted by the 10% increase Emerson East residents. Although Madison’s housing market has been strong, the neighbors do have some anxiety about the unknown impact of this development on the local market and property values. The near east side is already one of the more affordable housing markets in Madison and the variability of home prices within different areas of the city are a concern.

It is no secret that a housing market driver for the young family demographic is the quality of schools. Unfortunately, east side school districts do not score as well as West Madison, Middleton, Sun Prairie, and Monona. To counteract that tendency, it is important that the near east side and Emerson East neighborhood remain attractive to young families. Otherwise, these quaint homes may become the affordable short term residential solutions for young professionals. This could create market instability with additional turnover and quicker degradation of the historic bungalows. Because of these factors and underlying anxieties, we seek a better understanding of what impact, if any, this development will have on our property values and the housing/rental market.

Recommendation 5.1: *A Housing and Rental Market impact study completed to provide the neighbors with information on the economic impact this development will have on the neighborhood and property/rental values. Other developers have engaged research firms like Pitney Bowes to provide market impact analyses. We feel it would ease anxieties of neighbors concerned about the impact to property values.*

ISSUE #6 – Stormwater management

Although this property is not considered within a floodplain, a number of neighbors experience flooding issues within 1-3 blocks of the proposed development. MDC has indicated that they have a stormwater management plan, but we would like the city, or an independent entity, complete a study or verify the proposed stormwater management plan.

Recommendation 6.1: *A stormwater management study be completed and validated by an independent party to re-assure neighbors that this development won't exaggerate current flooding issues.*

ISSUE #7 – Neighborhood Plan & Planning Process

This site is not included as a focus area in the neighborhood plan, because it was not seen as a plot that needed development. Focus areas are plots that are seen to have potential for development and more importantly need attention. While city project future density increases, this site is at a density level that meets the criteria of our most recent neighborhood plan.

Neighbors, specifically ones that contributed, are concerned that the neighborhood planning process is being circumvented. Even if that perception exists it could devalue the neighborhood planning process which allows for democratic representation in city planning. The residents that make up the neighborhood are the subject matter experts and provide critical qualitative data to assist decision makers. Not valuing this process and input could have profound impacts on the city's ability to make evidence based decisions. In addition, many of the neighbors who have learned of this project have been very active, but have found it to be difficult and stressful to keep up with MDC's aggressive schedule and significant design changes.

The neighbors along with the city agree that the environment is a priority. Most new buildings across the county meet basic Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building requirements. We want to make sure that Madison remains progressive in the areas of energy efficiency and green building.

Recommendation 7.1: *Provide an environmental analysis of the building and/or seek to obtain a LEED green building certification*

ISSUE #8 - Displacement and Relocation of Current Tenants

The new proposed design requires the demolition of a building currently occupied by MDC tenants. This will require tenants to be relocated. The residents of the Avenue and the building being demolished are our neighbors and we want to make sure that they are treated respectfully, humanely, and do not suffer an undue financial burden as they are forced to relocate. We feel it is only right for the developer to provide a detailed transition plan in advance of approving this design.

Recommendation 8.1: *We request that MDC provide a relocation and transition plan for the impacted tenants with details including but not limited to: the amount of notification, where they would be moved, and who will incur the moving expenses.*

Additional recommendations:

A landscaping plan which encompasses the entire property edge to edge with special focus on landscaping which contributes to the privacy of both property residents and the adjacent neighborhood. With the site being a historical site, there are many “heritage trees” that are invaluable to the neighborhood. We ask that the developer maintain these trees.

A privacy fence between the walkout patio units adjacent to the backyards of East Washington residents

The community room and adjoining outdoor space be moved to an area of the building not directly adjacent to the east Washington residents’ private backyards. The current location of the community space will create noise and privacy concerns being adjacent to the east Washington neighbors’ backyards.

Alternative Idea for Consideration by MDC and the city

If the city and common council believe the proposed project is in the best interest of the neighborhood, we offer a creative alternative solution. Since the residential units would be at the maximum allowed per zoning code, once the Options for Independence Site is demolished, we would ask the developer to consider expanding the current Grasskamp park to Second Street and sell/donate that greenspace to the city and made an official public city park. This would allow a compromise with the neighborhood while allowing the 120+ new tenants adequate green space to better support the added density. This would help the city meet its goal of increasing greenspace and parkland while allowing MDC to reduce maintenance resources needed for upkeep of the current private park.

From: Jax Broom <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 8:18 AM
To: Glaeser, Janine
Subject: Proposed 44-unit

Hello! Good! Morning my name is jeff b. 1954 East Washington ave #15 I've lived in my apartment a little over a year now it has been really great! However when i heard of the new 44 unit it just made my day! something like this would be a welcome in my eyes it's a facelift for the neighborhood being that a lot of new business and buildings are being built it brings something fresh to Madison!

From: Rich Zietko <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 7:05 AM
To: Glaeser, Janine
Subject: Proposed 1954 E. Wash development

Dear UDC:

"Buildings have a substantial impact on the health and wellbeing of people and the planet. They use resources, generate waste and are costly to maintain and operate. Green building is the practice of designing, constructing and operating buildings to maximize occupant health and productivity, use fewer resources, reduce waste and negative environmental impacts, and decrease life cycle costs." This quote is from the US Green Building Council and I believe it captures my thoughts on the proposed development for 1954 E. Washington Ave.

The fact that MDC proposes to demolish an existing housing complex that only dates from the 1980s seems contrary to this as well as is reflective of a poor commitment to maintain their current buildings - how will this new "monstrosity" be cared for.

And yes, the 4 story proposal is just that: a giant monster invading a small neighborhood!

A smaller development, say two stories, will allow for a gradual integration of new residents thus fostering a greater sense of entering into an already existing neighborhood and allowing one to get to know one another and create a healthy city.

I can't help think of Cabrini Green in Chicago or the Greenbush development of Madison that did not create an inclusive neighborhood but rather the focus on density created areas of extreme poverty. Rather than enhancing a neighborhood, it just created isolation.

Neighborhood design is not limited to a building but is of the many interacting parts. Traffic flows - both vehicular and pedestrian - need to be considered. Environmental impacts of soil compaction upon water and plant management, shade concerns for plants and passive heating from the sun, and noise pollution need to be considered.

As I live at 1944 and this proposal will be a mere 16.5 feet from my residence of 12 years, I am greatly troubled by the prospect of the potential for fire to spread to my building that was built in the 1890s.

(How is that for durability?)

So if any building were to be built, please keep it in tune w/ the character and size of the neighborhood and insist upon LEED Standards.

As this is now a design issue, I have not included other concerns that this project will have on increasing property taxes and rents as well as more social factors. I look forward to seeing you on the 27th to present my humble opinion to the UDC.

Sincerely,

Rich Zietko