



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 54 Merlham Drive (District 11 – Ald. Martin)  
**Application Type:** Demolition Permit  
**Legistar File ID #** [55170](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chris Wells, Planning Division  
Report Includes Comments from other City Agencies, as noted  
**Reviewed By:** Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

## Summary

**Applicant/Contact:** Brandon Grosse; Accord Realty; 119 W. Washington Avenue; Madison, WI 53703

**Owner:** Thomas J. Geier; 802 Cabot Lane; Madison, WI 53717

**Requested Action:** The applicant requests approval of a demolition permit to demolish an existing single-family house and construct a new single-family residence in the TR-C1 (Traditional Residential – Consistent 1) zoning district at 54 Merlham Drive.

**Proposal Summary:** The applicant proposes to demolish an existing one-story, three-bedroom, single-family residence and construct a new two-story, three-bedroom, single-family residence.

**Applicable Regulations & Standards:** This proposal is subject to the standards for Demolition and Removal Permits [M.G.O. §28.185(7)].

**Review Required By:** Plan Commission

**Summary Recommendation:** The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the standards for demolition and removal are met and **approve** the request to demolish a single-family residence and construct a new single-family residence in the TR-C1 (Traditional Residential – Consistent 1) zoning district at 54 Merlham Drive. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the reviewing agencies.

## Background Information

**Parcel Location:** The 8,375-square-foot (approximately 0.19-acre) subject property is located on the west side of Merlham Drive between Christopher Court and Hillcrest Drive. The site is within Aldermanic District 13 (Ald. Martin) and the Madison Metropolitan School District.

**Existing Conditions and Land Use:** The subject site includes an existing one-story, roughly 1,175-square-foot, three-bedroom, one-bathroom, single-family house with no garage. According to City Assessor records, it was constructed in 1951.

**Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:**

North: Single-family residences, zoned TR-C1 (Traditional Residential – Consistent 1);

South: Single-family residences, zoned TR-C1;

East: Across Merlham Drive are single-family residences, zoned TR-C1; and

West: Single-family residences, zoned SR-C1 (Suburban Residential – Consistent 1).

**Adopted Land Use Plan:** The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2018), [University Hill Farms Neighborhood Plan](#) (2015) and [Hoyt Park Area Neighborhood Plan](#) (2014) all recommend Low Residential/Low Density Residential uses for the subject parcel. While the Comprehensive and University Hill Farm plans both define Low Residential/Low Density Residential as up to 15 dwelling units per acre, the Hoyt Park Plan defines it as up to eight dwelling units per acre.

**Zoning Summary:** The property is zoned TR-C1 (Traditional Residential-Consistent 1).

Requirements	Required	Proposed
Lot Area (sq. ft.)	6,000	8,375
Lot Width	50 ft.	62.5 ft.
Front Yard Setback	20 ft.	30 ft.
Max. Front Yard Setback	30 ft.	30 ft.
Side Yard Setback	7 ft.	7 ft. 2 in, 7 ft. 3 in
Rear Yard Setback	35 ft.	62.5 ft.
Usable Open Space	1,000 sq. ft.	1,300 sq. ft.
Maximum Lot Coverage	50%	31%
Maximum Building Height	2 stories/35 ft.	2 stories/23 ft.

<b>Other Critical Zoning Items</b>	Utility Easements
------------------------------------	-------------------

*Tables Prepared by Jacob Moskowitz, Assistant Zoning Administrator*

**Environmental Corridor Status:** The property is not located in a mapped environmental corridor.

**Public Utilities and Services:** This property is served by a full range of urban services.

**Project Description, Analysis, and Conclusion**

The applicant is seeking Plan Commission approval for a demolition and removal permit. The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing single-family residence at 54 Merlham Drive and replace it with a new single-family residence. The existing structure is a one-story, roughly 1,175-square-foot, single-family house, which according to City Assessor records, was constructed in 1951. It contains three bedrooms, one bathroom, and no garage. The applicant provided [photos](#) (a copy of which are located in the Plan Commission’s packet of materials), which appear to show weathered exterior clapboard siding and an interior suffering from mold and mildew issues. Further information on the building condition is provided in the applicant’s letter of intent.

The proposed new residence is a two-story house with a total footprint, including the two-stall attached garage and screened porch, of roughly 1,600 square-feet. The garage will be street-facing and will be accessed from Merlham Drive via a new proposed driveway. Also located on the residence’s lower level will be a recreation room, bedroom, full bathroom, and mechanical room. The second floor will contain a master bedroom with private bathroom; a second bedroom with shared full bathroom; laundry room; living room; dining room; and kitchen. It will also provide access to a three-season porch, which will be located on the western side of the house and

accessed via the dining room. Lacking a foundation, the porch will project from the house at the second story level to rest on pilings at two of its corners. However, as a result of the regrading that is proposed on the site which will increase the level of grade at the middle of the site roughly three feet higher than currently exists, the porch will end up only five feet above grade.

For materials, grey, composite, horizontal, lap siding is proposed up to the level of the second floor windows, while white, vertical, board & batten siding is proposed up to the roof. The trim will be white cement board, the roof shingles will be asphalt, and the windows will be vinyl.

Regarding site improvements, in addition to the addition of the aforementioned driveway, the existing concrete steps and retaining wall located along the sidewalk will be removed and replaced with a new concrete walkway which will lead to the front door. As for the landscaping, all of the site's existing trees and shrubbery will be removed save for the large, 32-inch-in-diameter tree located at the rear of the site, along the southern property line.

The proposed regrading will also create two raingardens, each roughly 100 square-feet in size – one at the rear of the site, and the other to the north of the proposed driveway.

The applicant plans to begin demolition in spring of 2019, with construction completion scheduled for late fall of the same year.

This request is subject to the standards for demolition permits. In order to approve a demolition request, M.G.O §28.185(7) requires that the Plan Commission must find that the requested demolition and proposed use are compatible with the purpose of the demolition section and the intent and purpose of the Traditional Residential-Consistent (TR-C) zoning districts. The statement of purpose for TR-C districts says, in part:

*The TR-C Districts are established to stabilize, protect and encourage throughout the City the essential characteristics of the residential areas typically located on the Isthmus, near East and near West portions of the City, and to promote and encourage a suitable environment for family life while accommodating a full range of life-cycle housing. The districts are also intended to:*

- (a) Promote the preservation, development and redevelopment of traditional residential neighborhoods in a manner consistent with their distinct form and residential character.*
- (b) Ensure that new buildings and additions to existing buildings are designed with sensitivity to their context in terms of building placement, facade width, height and proportions, garage and driveway placement, landscaping, and similar design features.*
- (c) Maintain and improve the viability of existing housing of all types, while providing for updating of older housing in a context-sensitive manner.*

The demolition standards further state that the Plan Commission shall consider and may give decisive weight to any relevant facts including impacts on the normal and orderly development of surrounding properties and the reasonableness of efforts to relocate the building. Furthermore, the proposal should be compatible with adopted plans. Finally, the demolition standards state that the Plan Commission shall consider the report of the City's Historic Preservation Planner regarding the historic value of the property as well as any report submitted by the Landmarks Commission.

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2018), [University Hill Farms Neighborhood Plan](#) (2015) and [Hoyt Park Area Neighborhood Plan](#) (2014) all recommend Low Residential/Low Density Residential uses for the subject parcel. While the Comprehensive and University Hill Farm plans both define low density residential as up to 15 dwelling units per acre, the Hoyt Park Plan defines it as up to eight dwelling units per acre. Staff believe that the proposal is compatible with the adopted plans.

The Landmarks Commission considered the demolition of the existing house at 54 Merlham Drive at its March 11, 2019 meeting and found that the existing building had no known historic value.

Because of the condition of the existing house and scale of the approved house within the context of the neighborhood, the Planning Division believes that the applicable demolition approval standards can be found to met with the recommended conditions.

At the time of report writing, Staff was not aware of public comment regarding this proposal.

## Recommendation

### **Planning Division Recommendation** (Contact Chris Wells, (608) 261-9135)

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the standards for demolition and removal are met and **approve** the request to demolish a single-family residence and construct a new single-family residence in the TR-C1 (Traditional Residential – Consistent 1) zoning district at 54 Merlham Drive. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the reviewing agencies.

### **Recommended Conditions of Approval**

Major/Non-Standard Conditions are Shaded

### **Planning Division** (Contact Chris Wells, (608) 261-9135)

1. Label materials, colors, and heights on building elevations.
2. Label finished grade elevation at building corners on site plan.

### **Engineering Division** (Contact Tim Troester, (608) 267-1995)

3. Prior to approval, the owner or owner's representative shall obtain a permit to plug each existing sanitary sewer lateral that serves a building which is proposed for demolition. For each lateral to be plugged the owner shall complete a sewer lateral plugging application and pay the applicable permit fees. The permit application is available on line at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/permits.cfm>. (MGO CH 35.02(14))
4. The Applicant's project requires the minor restoration of the street and sidewalk. The Applicant shall obtain a Street Excavation Permit for the street restoration work, which is available from the City Engineering Division. The applicant shall pay all fees associated with the permit including inspection fees. (MGO 16.23(9)(d)(6)) This permit application is available on line at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/permits.cfm>.

### **Engineering Division - Mapping** (Contact Jeffrey Quamme, (608) 266-4097)

The agency reviewed this request and has recommended no conditions of approval.

**Traffic Engineering** (Contact Sean Malloy, (608) 266-5987)

The agency reviewed this request and has recommended no conditions of approval.

**Zoning Administrator** (Contact Jacob Moskowitz, (608) 266-4560)

5. Section 28.185(7)(a)5. requires that if a demolition or removal permit is approved, it shall not be issued until the reuse and recycling plan is approved by the Recycling Coordinator, Bryan Johnson (608-266-4682).
6. Section 28.185(9)(a) A demolition or removal permit is valid for one (1) year from the date of the Plan Commission
7. Section 28.185(10) Every person who is required to submit a reuse and recycling plan pursuant to Section 28.185(7)(a)5. shall submit documents showing compliance with the plan within sixty (60) days of completion of demolition.

**Fire Department** (Contact Bill Sullivan, (608) 261-9658)

8. Madison Fire Department recommends the installation of a residential fire sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA 13D. Additional information is available at the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition website: <https://homefiresprinkler.org/building-with-fire-sprinklers/>
9. Please consider allowing Madison Fire Dept. to conduct training sequences prior to demolition. Contact MFD Training Division to discuss possibilities: Division Chief Tracy Burrus at [tburrus@cityofmadison.com](mailto:tburrus@cityofmadison.com) or (608)266-5959.

**Parks Review** (Contact Sarah Lerner, (608) 261-4281)

The agency reviewed this request and has recommended no conditions of approval.

**Forestry Division** (Contact Brad Hofmann, (608) 267-4908)

10. Additional street trees are needed for this project. All street tree planting locations and trees species within the right of way shall be determined by City Forestry. Please submit a site plan (in PDF format) to Brad Hofmann – [bhofmann@cityofmadison.com](mailto:bhofmann@cityofmadison.com) or 266-4816. Tree planting specifications can be found in section 209 of City of Madison Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction -
11. Contractor shall contact City Forestry Brad Hofmann [bhofmann@cityofmadison.com](mailto:bhofmann@cityofmadison.com) or 266-4816 at least one week prior to planting to schedule inspecting the nursery stock and review planting specifications with the landscaper.

**Water Utility** (Contact Adam Wiederhoeft, (608) 266-9121)

12. The Madison Water Utility shall be notified to remove the water meter at least two working days prior to demolition. Contact the Water Utility Meter Department at (608) 266-4765 to schedule the meter removal appointment.

13. A Water Meter Application Form and fees must be submitted before connecting to the existing water lateral. Provide at least two working days notice between the application submittal and the scheduled lateral connection/extension. Application materials are available on the Water Utility's Plumbers & Contractors website (<http://www.cityofmadison.com/water/plumberscontractors>), otherwise they may be obtained from the Water Utility Main Office at 119 E Olin Ave. A licensed plumber signature is required on all water service applications. For new or replacement services, the property owner or authorized agent is also required to sign the application. If you have questions regarding water service applications, please contact Madison Water Utility at (608) 266-4646.
14. Note that the site plan does not indicate existing or proposed water lateral dimensions - the existing lateral is a 0.75-IN diameter copper lateral. New lateral connection shall not increase size unless a new connection at the main is proposed.

**Metro Transit** (Contact Timothy Sobota, (608) 261-4289)

The agency reviewed this request and has recommended no conditions of approval.