

First Settlement District Comment

File 55514 (East End) Request for Certificate of Appropriateness

STANDARDS FOR GRANTING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS: 41.18(4) LAND DIVISIONS AND COMBINATIONS – *“The Commission shall approve a certificate of appropriateness for land... combinations... of landmark sites and properties in historic districts unless it finds the proposed lot sizes...are incompatible with adjacent lot sizes, or fail to maintain the general lot size pattern of the historic district.”*

First Settlement district submits that the proposed lot combination for the East End development is incompatible with adjacent lot sizes and the general lot size pattern of the historic district.

The Planning Staff report similarly notes that “Expanding the size of the parcel, could encourage development that is out of scale with the resources of the district. The new parcel is not generally compatible with the adjacent lot sizes and would also fail to maintain the general lot size pattern of the historic district.”

The First Settlement *Preliminary Analysis of the “East End” Proposal* describes analysis of adjacent lots and the pattern of historic district lots (see Figures 2 and 3) within the First Settlement Historic District. The analysis shows that the total proposed lot will be:

- about **10 times** larger in size than the average size of adjacent lots (Figure 2).
- about **10 times** larger than the average size of all lots within the historic district (Figure 3).
- nearly **13 times** larger than lots with pre-1930 construction.

Looking at the portion within the First Settlement Historic District boundary, analysis shows the proposed will be (orange bar in Figures 2 and 3):

- nearly 8 times larger than the average of all historic district lots.
- just under 10 times larger than lots with pre-1930 construction.

We do not see how any interpretation of this ordinance can conclude it was intended to allow aggregation of lots for large developments or to take an already large lot at 134 S Blair St and make it even larger.

Our analysis shows that the proposed lot size is clearly incompatible with the adjacent lot sizes. Our analysis also shows that the proposed lot size clearly fails to maintain the general lot size pattern of the First Settlement Historic District. Thus, we conclude that the proposed lot does not meet the standard specified in 41.18(4) for land divisions and combinations, consistent with the Planning Staff conclusion that the proposal does not meet standards for a land combination in a historic district. To conclude otherwise would be to simply ignore this standard. It would set a dangerous precedent for all of Madison’s Historic Districts.

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File 55514 (East End) Standards for Review of New Principal Structures

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW OF NEW PRINCIPAL STRUCTURES: 41.26(4)(A) STRUCTURE HEIGHT, SCALE, PROPORTION, AND RHYTHM: *“New principal structures shall be similar in height ... If the structures directly adjacent to each side are different in height, the new structure shall be of a height compatible with the structures within two hundred (200) feet of the proposed structure. New principle structures shall be compatible with the scale, proportion, and rhythm of masses and spaces of structures within 200 hundred (200) feet of the proposed structure.”*

The First Settlement *Preliminary Analysis of the “East End” Proposal* summarizes the following points, and refers to Figures 4 (Height Lines of Adjacent Structures), 5 (Scale of Structure Footprints), and 6 (Depth Analysis of Blair St Block Face).

Height: Height compatibility of new structures should consider heights of all structures within the 200 feet, not just the tallest ones. Figure 4 shows yellow height lines of adjacent structures of the S. Blair St. façade, corresponding to Hotel Ruby Marie and the Chicago & Northwestern Depot across Blair St. The lower yellow line corresponds to the eaves of the 1884 home at 120 S Blair St.

Scale, Proportion, and Rhythm of Masses and Spaces: It is important to consider all structures within the 200 feet, not just the largest structures.

Figure 5 shows footprints of residential (grey) and commercial (red, green) uses, providing a perspective of volumes and spaces within 200 feet. The surface lot at 134 S Blair St is treated as a single lot however the Certified Survey Map required may assist resolving any underlying lots.

Variations in a structures height, including setbacks and stepbacks, as well as spaces between structures should also be considered. Figure 6 uses gray shades to illustrate the approximate depth of structures and their major components from the sidewalk. White indicates structure at the sidewalk along Blair St. Grays become darker the farther the structures are from the Blair St sidewalk.

Our analysis clearly shows that the height and scale of the proposed building dominates the neighboring historic buildings. Our analysis also shows that the pattern and rhythm of the proposed structure does not correspond to the pattern of the surrounding structures. Thus, we conclude that the proposed structure does not meet the standard specified in 41.26(4)(a) for height, scale, proportion, and rhythm for new principle structures within our historic district.