

The steering committee is grateful to the UDC for providing more time to develop their report. While there was no consensus about 3/4 of the committee members are opposed to the proposal. There are some comments from supporters not found already in letters to the UDC at the end of this report. Those in support refer to Madison's need for housing and the opportunity for a high-visibility landmark on one of Madison's gateways.

Overall, the committee recognizes that the site is ripe for improvement. Many members felt that a smaller building that steps down to meet the height of existing structures in the rear would fit better on E Washington Avenue and with the neighborhood. A majority of the committee feel this version of the proposal is wrong for the James Madison Park neighborhood. The committee reports here what particular features of the submitted proposal they generally feel do not meet Madison's zoning plans and ordinances. Hopefully in the future, the steering committee and UDC will have the opportunity to review a proposal that respects all of Madison's ordinances.

The majority of the committee expressed:

- The 11 ½ story tall proposed building will cast an unacceptable shadow on neighboring homes. The winter darkness will affect the livability of adjacent properties.
- The proposal does not integrate with the James Madison Park neighborhood, it does not meet the requirement of MGO 33.24(11)(d)4.b.i
- The design does not require the excess 3 ½ stories height. The excess height should be denied.
- The residential homes in the James Madison Park neighborhood are not "dominoes waiting to fall" to further development

Building Design, Mass

Some members of the steering committee were impressed with the grandeur and size of the proposed development. Some members felt that a large development was appropriate for E Washington Ave. One committee member stated that a 20% smaller building doesn't make a 20% better building and that the quality of design is most important for this site.

However, most committee members felt that mass of the proposed building doesn't fit with the James Madison Park neighborhood and sticks out in an egregious way. The building is far too massive and is an inappropriate scale to have any meaningful relationship with the neighborhood in which it would be built.

Relationship with the surrounding neighborhood

The proposal has too little association and interaction with street life in this dynamic neighborhood on each block front, with broad garage entrance and exit doors near houses. The building would cast an alarmingly large winter shadow to make many of the nearby homes undesirable for living. Of greater concern to most steering committee members is how abrupt the proposal's height is next to adjacent buildings in the James Madison Park neighborhood. Furthermore there is nothing in the design that reflects the mostly 19th and early 20th century historic residential character of the downtown James Madison Park neighborhood. The

steering committee asks the UDC to consider these issues with respect to UDD4, the Downtown Plan and Conditional Use Standard 14.

Lastly, the proposal does not contribute any amenities to the James Madison Park neighborhood and has a deleterious impact. There is no proposed meeting space, no community center, no access to fitness facilities, no public vehicle parking. Some committee members felt there should be consideration for the removal of units of affordable housing, blocking sunlight for most of the winter, and adding traffic and parking burden to the neighborhood's already congested streets.

Urban Design District 4

The Urban Design Commission is required by MGO to follow the design requirements of the UDD4. *MGO 33.24(11)(d) "The development shall meet the requirements and conform as much as possible to the guidelines."* In particular, *MGO 33.24(11)(d)4.b.i "Structures should be designed to be compatible with the structures that are adjacent to them"*. A majority of the steering committee feel that the placement of even an 8-story building next to 2- and 3-story buildings is not compatible with the neighborhood. **The developer is proposing an 11 ½ story tall building that does not integrate with the neighboring properties on E Washington Avenue and on N Hancock and N Franklin Streets.**

A majority of the steering committee also felt that the presentation of the developer's proposal with 8-story and 6-story building placeholders surrounding it was disingenuous. One commissioner commented at the last UDC meeting that it is conceivable that the surrounding 2-story houses may continue to be residential for the next 20 years. **The commissioners are required to restrict their decision making to the MGO 33.24(11)(d)4.b.i and evaluate the proposal with respect to integration with the existing neighborhood**, not to perceive James Madison Park neighborhood residents' homes as dominoes waiting to fall to further development. Steering committee members asserted that the adjacent area is not blighted or vacant and that the proposal threatens a vibrant residential community.

MGO 33.24(11)(d)4.b.iii "All building elevations are of importance and should be carefully designed. When visible from roadways or adjoining properties, roof surfaces should be considered as part of the overall design." The steering committee appreciates that the developer carefully conceals the mechanical features of the proposal on the rooftop with a gable roof. However this design adds an additional 1 ½ story height making the excess height request equivalent to 3 ½ stories. **The gable roof design exacerbates shading of residences well into the James Madison Park neighborhood and exceeds the UDD4 zoning limit of 8+2 stories by 1 ½ stories.**

Downtown Plan

Under Key 4, Maintain Strong Neighborhoods and Districts

Objective 4.11 The James Madison Park neighborhood should accommodate a mix of dwelling units. . . . The renovation of existing houses coupled with selective development that generally reflects the scale and rhythm of the existing structures. . . .

Recommendation 105: Allow infill and redevelopment along Hancock, Franklin and Blair Streets generally compatible in scale and design with the predominantly “house like” neighborhood character.

Also in Appendix C of the Downtown Plan:

- Appendix C of the Downtown Plan: :” ... Where additional stories are available, it is not intended that they be earned merely by complying with standards and criteria that would be required and expected in any case, such as underlying zoning regulations, good design, or sensitivity to the adjacent historic landmark. The intent is not simply to allow a taller building, and additional stories show not be considered “by right” heights. Rather, additional stories are to be used as a tool to encourage and rewarded buildings of truly exceptional design that respond to the specific context of their location and accomplish specific objectives defined for the area.”

The majority of the steering committee want the UDC to consider the impact of the proposal with respect to the James Madison Park neighborhood. **The steering committee feel in general that the proposed development does not deserve the excess 3 ½ story height because of the lack of “truly exceptional design” and its lack of integration with the neighborhood along E Washington Avenue and N Hancock and N Franklin Streets.**

Excess Height: Conditional Use Standard 14

When applying the above standards to an application for height in excess of that allowed by Section 28.071(2)(a) Downtown Height Map for a development located within the Additional Height Areas identified in Section 28.071(2)(b), the Plan Commission shall consider the recommendations in adopted plans, and no application for excess height shall be granted by the Plan Commission unless it finds that all of the following conditions are present:

- a. The excess height is compatible with the existing or planned (if the recommendations in the Downtown Plan call for changes) character of the surrounding area, including but not limited to the scale, mass, rhythm, and setbacks of buildings and relationships to street frontages and public spaces.*
- b. The excess height allows for a demonstrated higher quality building than could be achieved without the additional stories.*
- c. The scale, massing and design of new buildings complement and positively contribute to the setting of any landmark buildings within or adjacent to the projects and create a pleasing visual relationship with them.*

d. For projects proposed in priority viewsheds and other views and vistas identified on the Views and Vistas Map in the City of Madison Downtown Plan, there are no negative impacts on the viewshed as demonstrated by viewshed studies prepared by the applicant.

The steering committee found that the excess height does not relate to the neighborhood. The proposed 11 ½ story height steps down to 6 and then 2 and 3 stories at the adjacent properties. There is great concern from the adjacent neighbors for the deep shade that the proposed development would generate. **Based on standard 14.a., a majority of the steering committee feel that the excess height must be denied.**

The steering committee's review of standard 14.b. determines that the excess height is not required to construct a building of higher quality than could be achieved without the additional 2 stories. A design with 6 stories at the façade and 4 stories in the rear could easily be a grand and very high quality building. Such a design would not require the excess height approval and would transition better in the James Madison Park neighborhood.

Some committee members were concerned about Standard 14.d. Ironically, the building meets the Capitol View Preservation guidelines while it would literally block the view of the Capitol from hundreds of existing homes and apartments north/northeast of the Capitol.

Images from the block of the proposed development



Image of proposal



Other comments from the Steering Committee

Comments from Zoom chat from 21 May, some comments from review of this document.

Neighbors expect a traffic study to assess current and forecasted impact of additional vehicles on the neighborhood traffic flow.

My points: 1. Save 402-08 Wash - a must;
2. loss of existing affordable housing plus the lack of affordable units in the proposal;
3. wholly out of proportion with existing residential surrounding neighborhood and it will dwarf St. John;
4. NO to the "bonus" stories to further dwarf existing surroundings;
5. Braxton Lot across the street is a surface lot that is far more appropriate for such a massive development - use a surface lot before we consider ripping up long-established existing residential neighborhoods.

- I'm pro building 8 or 10 stories along east wash. It fits in on east wash because the road is so wide/busy, and given AC hotel and festival area already have tall profiles. We are only a few blocks from the capitol and I think it's our responsibility to allow for more density given the scarcity of land and housing shortage. Its also more environmentally friendly to live denser near work and good public transit.

- I'd say, however, we are not a "rooftop pool" neighborhood. (not sure if this is UDC relevant)

parking, traffic impact. I know they have enough parking spots for the building but there will be more traffic because of restaurant / retail. I agree, That is a large concern for me, too. Especially since it reduces street parking on the block in a neighborhood already difficult to find parking in. More parking would help the commercial tenants, too. Like parking for the employees.

My employer has had to turn down potential office spaces due to lack of parking (one building had a single parking spot)

honestly, the developers are being long winded about saying they don't care about affordability I mean seriously look at the rest of the neighborhood, you think they want a homeless shelter next to the fancy apartments? it's my belief that the whole neighborhood will be developed in the near future and they're just trying to bs their way around our concerns about that.

like I think the extra stories are out, they need to scale it back I'm in the house next door and will literally get no sunlight in my house

Overnight guests of tenants of the proposed building could take the street parking, though.

a place for potential 8 stories could be Brayton lot on other side of E Wash, which has been part of a previous plan. This is adjacent to neighborhoods, without overpowering nearby residential, historic aspects.

also, there are people on this block that are still unaware of any of this. I met a neighbor yesterday who just heard about it and has desperately and unsuccessfully trying to get in touch with someone about these meetings

When these major projects are approved during a time such as this pandemic, it really feels like the developer and powers that be are taking advantage of this time. I suggest getting press about how

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opposed the neighborhood is to this project. There are people citywide who are concerned about the drastic change to this neighborhood. please send info to other neighborhood associations for anyone who wants to write in support of the current residents who do not want these drastic changes.

That is actually one of the best things about this neighborhood. The diversity of people that live, work, eat, drink, contribute to the fabric of our community is one of the reasons I love living here.

1. They need to slow this proposal way way down. I'm a developer and know exactly what they are doing. They are TOTALLY taking advantage of this pandemic. The developers want to SNEAK IN under the radar while having inadequate "VIRTUAL MEETINGS" They need to wait until we can have REAL UDC and Plan commission meetings.
2. Those houses at 402 East Washington and 410 East Washington need to be saved. I remember in 1985 I tried to buy 402 East Washington Avenue. I ultimately did buy it BUT I remember the owner telling me that a past President from the early 1900's lived in the property. Very interesting stuff. They cannot demolish those buildings
3. I've been an acquaintance of the developers for many years. Their game is to build the building, fill it up and then sell it to an out of State REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST.. They never hold on to any buildings. PACKAGES THEM AND THEN FLIP THEM FOR BIG PROFIT. Examples in Madison are Grand central and a building called XO all on UW Madison Campus THESE GUYS DO NOT GIVE A CRAP ABOUT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. They want to walk make as much money as they can and then walk out (Sell to an Out of State REIT)

The building is not compatible with and indeed invades the surrounding neighborhood, so the "bonus" stories would make it even more incompatible.

I agree, this trend is the antithesis of what Madison has meant to me since childhood

Mike Metzger I am supportive of the project.

- It will strengthen the First Settlement Historic District as a historical resource.
- The parking design will minimize traffic impacts on the surrounding streets.
- The step down to the neighborhood is appropriate given the future land use plan.
- It fits within zoning and the comprehensive plan.
- The design has improved significantly and is a high-quality building.
- Activated commercial spaces at both corners will be a dramatic improvement to the current street-level experience.
- The removal of the Klinke Cleaners (the contamination and the physical building) is a big positive.

Cory Fish

I support the construction of the building as it will continue the long process of rehabilitating one of the gateways to our city, increase the vacancy rates, and provide more tax revenue (once the TIF closes).

The Tenney-Lapham neighborhood, being partially situated on East Washington Avenue is one of the gateways to our city. That corridor into the heart of Madison should convey a positive image of the City.

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This new development will help convey a modern image for our city - instead of dilapidated homes and a commercial business - while also bringing with it practical positive benefits.

The first benefit is that it will help Madison's housing stock increase with our increasing population. MG&E's fourth quarter 2019 rental vacancy data for the 53703 zip code shows a 4.23% vacancy rate. Economists and urban planners often view 5% as "full" occupancy. It is considered unhealthy for a rental real estate market to have such a low vacancy rate percentage, yet 53703 has hovered at just over or under that rate for years. We need more housing stock, which this development will accomplish.

The second benefit is tax revenue. Initially the revenue from the development will help the Capitol Corridor TIF close at a reasonable date. This additional tax revenue can then be used for a variety of meritorious city services/projects.

The third benefit is that if the city continues to approve projects like this, eventually building enough new market rate housing, then the downward pressure the current lack of enough new market rate housing creates on other rental housing will subside. This should lower market rent across the board, not just in new developments, which is good for all socio-economic classes of renters.

As Madison continues to grow, we will continue to need new housing stock. As more suburban communities that surround Madison attempt to combat sprawl we cannot rely on them to continue to build adequate rental housing stock to accommodate our needs. I hope that our city government continues to work on our housing stock issue by approving new - denser - development in areas downtown where it makes sense so we do not end up facing crises like we see in on the west coast and elsewhere.