

Langdon Recommendations

Objective 4.9: *The Langdon neighborhood should build on its history as a traditional student neighborhood, including a concentration of fraternities and sororities. It should continue to accommodate a limited amount of higher-density residential redevelopment on selected sites while maintaining the area's historic and architectural integrity. Preserving and enhancing Langdon Street as the spine of the district will be key. The pedestrian walkway between the lake and Langdon Street should be formalized to enhance its aesthetics and safety and to make stronger connections to the lakefront path.*

Recommendation 94: *Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of contributing historic buildings.* 🍃

Recommendation 95: *Encourage relatively higher-density infill and redevelopment that is compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non-landmark locations and sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District.* 🍃

Recommendation 96: *Update the Downtown Design Zone standards for the Langdon Street area and incorporate them into the Zoning Ordinance.*

Recommendation 97: *Explore financial incentives (such as small cap Tax Increment Finance loans or grants) to rehabilitate landmarks, potential landmarks, and contributing buildings within existing TIF districts, including for rental properties.*

■ Langdon

The Langdon neighborhood is a traditional student-oriented neighborhood, including a concentration of fraternities and sororities and multi-family rental structures. The vast majority of residents are college students. It is located adjacent to the UW campus, between Lake Mendota and State Street. The majority of the area is in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District and it contains many contributing buildings and several local landmarks. The eastern portion of the area is in the Mansion Hill local and National Register Historic Districts. Because much of the neighborhood is already in a National Register Historic District, but not in a local historic district, there can sometimes be confusion about the applicable regulations when new development is proposed. Many of the highest quality buildings from an historic architectural perspective, have been converted to apartments resulting in inefficient internal layouts. Langdon Street is also the center of “Greek Row”, a number of co-ops, and other student housing. Fraternities and sororities as a whole have done a particularly good job of maintaining their houses over time. Although other buildings have suffered from years of neglect as student rental properties, they collectively establish a clear identity for the area. The area is in need of some revitalization, but it has a well grounded character that still makes it a very popular place to live.

The Langdon neighborhood is well situated to continue as a predominately student neighborhood. It is one of the most densely developed areas of the city, but can accommodate a limited amount of higher-density residential redevelopment on selected sites while preserving the historic and architectural heritage of the area. New development must enhance the essential character of the neighborhood and not diminish views of the lake.

This plan recommends that a local historic district be considered to support the National Register designation and clarify the desire to preserve the historic character. Wholesale redevelopment is not the goal, but a limited amount of new development to replace non-contributing, blighted housing will benefit the area.

Lake access should be enhanced through implementation of the recommended lakefront path and the development of street ends to become viable public spaces. The pedestrian walkway between the lake and Langdon Street should be formalized to enhance its aesthetics and safety and to make stronger connections to the proposed lakefront path. Opportunities for implementing these amenities should be pursued in conjunction with new development that occurs adjacent to these corridors, but that potential should not be justification for approving new development that is otherwise inconsistent with the recommendations of this plan.



Scenes from Langdon