



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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May 28, 2015

Renaissance Property Group, LLC

Attn: Michael Matty

2132 Fordem Ave., Suite 1000

Madison, WI 53704

Dear Mr. Matty:

City staff appreciates the investments by Renaissance Property Group in the City of Madison. Staff has been working with you in the early stages of your exploration of possibilities for the 200 block of North Blount Street and 700 block of East Johnson Street. As you have presented to staff and the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood, the proposal would involve the demolition of six homes on Blount and Johnson Streets for the construction of three-story structures with approximately 70 dwelling units and underground parking for many of the units.

The main strength of the proposal is its mix of housing types, and while we have not seen design details at this point, we appreciate seeing some of the projects you have drawn inspiration from. However the proposal is inconsistent with several recommendations in the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan (Plan) as adopted in 2008 and amended in 2012, and staff does not support amendments to the Plan to support the proposal.

- First, the demolition of four contiguous homes along Blount Street is particularly problematic, and inconsistent with Plan recommendations for this area. There are many infill sites within the broader neighborhood that might involve more selective demolition of structures in poor condition, but staff believes that this group of buildings could instead be invested in over time, perhaps with assistance from the City's Small Cap TIF program.
- Second, the proposal exceeds the recommended residential density in the Plan more than three-fold. This part of the City is changing and growing rapidly with major developments occurring on and closer to East Washington Avenue. Staff expects that trend to continue in the years to come, but without significant changes to the Plan, redevelopment of full, intact blocks further away from East Washington is less likely to be supported.
- Third, the minimal building setbacks and lack of usable open space shown in early versions of the plan are not supportable, nor is there a zoning district that could allow for them.

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We thank you for your efforts to redevelop on the Isthmus. However, absent a significant change to the proposal that would maintain the houses along Blount Street and that could be supported by a conventional zoning district consistent with the Plan, we discourage you from continued efforts and expenditures on the proposal at this time. We hope to hear from you in the near future as you evaluate how best to move forward.

Sincerely,

Katherine Cornwell, Director
City of Madison Planning Division

Cc (via E-mail only):

Ledell Zellers, District 2 Alder
Natalie Erdman, Interim Director, DPCED
Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator
Jay Wendt, Principal Planner
Heather Stouder, Planner