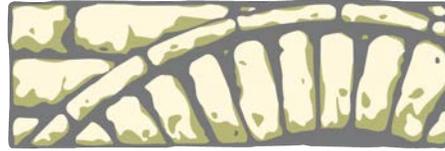


MADISON TRUST



for Historic Preservation

Advocacy News

November 2023

What's Coming Down Downtown? And What's Going Up?

13 Structures would be demolished for "Johnson and Broom" Project

By Kurt Stege

Advocacy Committee¹ Co-chair



318 N. Broom St., 1875

Upon returning to Madison after an absence of six months or more, recent visitors will often comment on the number of relatively massive residential building projects that have appeared on East Washington Avenue and in the UW campus area. The single word justifying these changes is “density.” Once completed, these projects may make it difficult for us to remember what they replaced. The former structures are sometimes referred to as “naturally occurring affordable housing.”

Application materials for another large project have been filed with the City of Madison. It is the sixth project being advanced by [Core Spaces](#), a Chicago-based developer that focuses on market-rate student housing in college towns throughout the country.

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¹ The Charter for the Trust's Advocacy Committee includes the following statement of Purpose:

Formulate and assert positions that further the protection of Madison's historic resources. Engage in related activities that advance that protection. Monitor relevant City boards, commissions, and committees for significant preservation matters.

Only one of the six has failed to obtain the necessary municipal approvals. That project, in the middle of Langdon Street, would have dominated much of the Langdon Street National Register Historic District.²

Core Space’s most recent proposal in the campus area (the “Johnson and Broom” project) would fill a gap in the high-rises that already line the West Gorham and West Johnson Street corridor near the base of University Avenue. Here are the 13 structures that already sit in that gap and would be demolished, along with their year of construction:



407 W. Gorham St., 1894

304 N. Broom St.	1870	408 W. Johnson St.	1899
308 N. Broom St.	1885	412 W. Johnson St.	1990
312 N. Broom St.	1898	414 W. Johnson St.	1899
314 N. Broom St.	1904	416 W. Johnson St.	1914
318 N. Broom St.	1875	422 W. Johnson St.	1973
407 W. Gorham St.	1894	430 W. Johnson St.	1973
431 W. Gorham St.	1990		

(Continued)

² Core Spaces has completed construction of two massive campus-area projects in Madison:

- The Hub at the corner of State Street and North Frances, with 963 beds and 500,000 square feet.
- The James at the corner of West Gorham and University Avenue, now owned and operated by American Campus.

The development firm has a third project under construction:

- oLiv, covering most of the block bounded by State Street, West Johnson Street, West Gorham Street and North Broom Street, with 1051 beds and 563,000 square feet.

The firm has also obtained the necessary approvals for constructing a fourth campus area project:

- Johnson & Bassett Project covering much of the southwest half of the block bounded by West Johnson, West Dayton, North Broom and North Bassett Streets, with 717 beds and 378,000 square feet.



Block of Broom Street where you can see from left to right 304 N. Broom St. (1870), 308 N. Broom St. (1885) and 312 N. Broom St. (1898)

Additional photographs of the 13 properties are available in the Letter of Intent of the Core Madison Broom Project document [here](#).

And what's being proposed to replace them? Two different iterations of the project have already been the subject of Informational Presentations to the Urban Design Commission (UDC). All of the written submissions to the UDC are available [here](#).

The Urban Design Commission will hold another public hearing on November 1st to consider whether the most recent design conforms to design standards and to the [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#).

(Continued)

Building Height Change in First Settlement Neighborhood

By Bob Klebba
Advocacy Committee Co-chair

As Kurt Stege mentioned in his article about the proposed student housing development between West Johnson Street and West Dayton Street, **zoning plays a very important role in historic preservation.** The Downtown Plan was adopted in 2012 and defines land use and maximum building heights for all areas in downtown Madison. More than 10 years ago, the City of Madison defined the area along West Johnson Street between State Street and campus for much denser development with up to 12 story building heights. Of course, the adoption of this zoning doomed the preservation of the remaining vernacular 19th century buildings in this area.

The Brayton Lot, former Block 113, is the location of the demolished Turner Hall on the 300 block of East Washington Avenue. It has long been used as a surface parking lot and is now owned by the City. Its current use as a staging area for the Bus Rapid Transit construction project provided federal funding and will also restrict what can be developed on the property. The City is looking at promoting a mixed-use development that will include affordable housing. A description of the redevelopment plan can be found [here](#) or by searching “Brayton Lot” in your search engine.

The Brayton Lot is currently zoned for 10 stories dropping down to 4 stories on South Hancock and East Main Streets where it shares a border with the First Settlement Local Historic District. This is a traditional way to step down building heights in order to integrate large buildings with existing buildings and to provide a more comfortable pedestrian experience. A good example is the Oliv development elevation facing State Street at West Gorham Street. Here a 12-story building steps down to 3 stories at that intersection.

The City is currently reviewing a resolution that would eliminate the 4-story requirement where the Brayton Lot borders the First Settlement Local Historic District. Some argue that this prime downtown location needs to be made more attractive to developers. Others argue that the greater massing of a proposed development would allow for more affordable housing. The Madison Trust Advocacy Committee is concerned that a 10-story, block-large building would significantly detract from an important downtown Madison historic district.

The Advocacy Committee feels that the building height step-down facing the historic district was a prescient and important way to preserve the First Settlement Historic District.

(Continued)

We invite you to weigh in by attending a hybrid, in-person/virtual neighborhood meeting about the proposed Brayton Lot map amendment on **November 6 at 6:30p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, Gathering Center, 322 E. Washington Ave.** Here is the project website with links to the public meetings, height maps and plans, and an option to sign up for email alerts [Brayton Lot \(Block 113\)](#). You can also contact your alder directly about Resolution 80307. You can find your alder [here](#).

Zoning can be very tedious and boring, but it has long-term implications for development and historic preservation. Paying attention to zoning changes is one way we can prevent further loss of our city's historic resources.



In case you are not aware of it, the Advocacy Committee occasionally issues an “**Advocacy Alert**” to those subscribers who sign up for this service. The alerts are often sent just a few days before an important meeting of one of the Madison commissions noted above and they explain the different ways to participate at the meeting. If you wish to receive the alerts but are not already on our distribution list, [head over to our website](#) to sign up!