

Water Tower Landmark Trust Objectives and Plans

1.0 Goal

According to the articles of incorporation, the Water Tower Landmark Trust (WTLT) was formed in 1973 to promote issues that specifically include “the preservation and enhancement of the unique residential character of the neighborhood.” Therefore, WTLT activity has primarily focused on historic preservation issues.

2.0 Area Description and Historical Use

The Water Tower area is bounded by Edgewood to the north, Lincoln Memorial Drive to the east, Lafayette to the south, and Summit/Downer to the west. This area comprises the largest collection of historic homes in Wisconsin. As a result, most of the service area has received local and/or federal historic designations.

3.0 Past Involvement & Recommendations

WTLT has been and continues to be involved with the following key issues:

- 1970s boundary agreement with St. Mary’s Hospital
- Installation of harp lights on the East Side
- City and federal historic designations of East Side neighborhoods and buildings
- Preservation of harp lights on Lincoln Memorial Drive and the Bradford Beach House preservation bridge
- Maintenance and upkeep of Lake Park, including preservation of and uses for the light house
- UWM parking and student housing, including the Kenilworth Project
- Columbia St. Mary’s expansion
- Historic designations and enforcement
- Zoning changes for specific properties and zoning code changes in general
- New developments, including the Lafayette condo towers
- Public safety
- Traffic and parking
- Quality of life, including the maintenance of parks
- Support of Downer Avenue and E North Avenue retail areas

While WTLT weighs in on the side of preservation, the group is open to and pragmatic about development and believes that redevelopment can, and must, fit into the context of a historic district and the existing urban environment. WTLT is concerned about issues such as placement of parking, transparency of building walls, choice of materials, project scale, maintaining urban edges, incompatible uses, traffic patterns, and density – this applies to the neighborhood and the East Side in general.