

HERITAGE RESEARCH, LTD.

23 February 2018

Mr. James A. Ladwig
Director, Global Community Affairs
S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.
1525 Howe Street, MS 47
Racine, WI 53403-2236



RE: WisDOT ID #2703-00-04
16th Street
STH 32 to Main Street
City of Racine
Racine County

Dear Mr. Ladwig,

Plans are presently being prepared to reconstruct 16th Street from STH 32 (Racine Street) to Main Street. The project passes the south side of the SC Johnson & Son, Inc., Administration Building and Research Tower, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as well as designated as National Historic Landmarks. Accordingly is this letter intended to solicit your thoughts about the project and its potential to affect the significance of the buildings.

The Administration Building and Research Tower were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 27 December 1974 and designated as National Historic Landmarks on 7 January 1976. The products of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Administration Building (1936-1939) is prominent for its unique mushroom columns. The Research Tower (1947-1950) is notable for the stairway, elevator and utilities carried by a hollow, center core, cantilevered from which are the tower's fourteen floors. Prominent architectural and technological historian Carl Condit has called "the Administration and Laboratory buildings the most original system of cantilever-slab construction ever built" (see Figures 1 & 2, Page 3).

The historic boundary for the buildings is a rectangle approximately 500 feet (north/south) by 255 feet (east/west) that is framed (as stated in the Nomination) by the north side of 16th Street on the south, the west side of Franklin Street on the east, the north side of 15th Street on the north and the east side of Howe Street on the west. Access to the buildings is by a sheltered plaza between the two that is located between 15th and 16th streets (see Figure 3, Page 4).

The current project is driven by several deficiencies associated with the present facility. First,

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the street was last constructed in the 1920s and overlaid with asphalt in the early 1990s. Pavement deterioration is apparent today with rutting, cracking and exposure of the roadway base all being evident. Rutting facilitates the ponding of water during rain events and snow melt. Alligator, longitudinal and transverse cracking is also apparent throughout the project length and suggests a deficient base or subgrade. Indeed, 80% of the project length is in poor condition or worse. Second, the vertical, corrugated pipes that carry storm water from the street to the sewer below are corroding, one having recently failed which caused a collapse and a sinkhole in the roadway. Third, the crash rate on the project segment included 53 accidents, 16 of which were mid-block with the remaining 39 located at 16th Street intersections. It far exceeds the statewide average. And finally, no accommodations for bicycles are currently found in the project corridor. They are recommended by the City of Racine's *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* as a Priority Bike Route.

In terms of what is specifically proposed on the south side of the SC Johnson property, 16th Street's current configuration includes a 40-foot, face-of-curb-to-face-of-curb roadway width, along with terraces and a 10-foot sidewalk on the S.C. Johnson side of the street. The project will *narrow* the street width to 32 feet (an 8-foot reduction in its current width – 4 feet from each side of the street), while the overall cross section will consist of a 6-foot sidewalk, 8-foot terrace, 5-foot bike lane, two 11-foot driving lanes, 5-foot bike lane, 8-foot terrace and 6-foot sidewalk (see Figures 4-7, Pages 5 & 6). In other words, although a grass terrace will be added to the setting, the street will be moved away from the Administration Building. Additionally, does the Administration Building have no windows that look out over 16th Street.

With the increase in setback from 16th Street, the location of the present south boundary being the curb and the new terrace both notwithstanding, we do not believe the work proposed will have an adverse effect on either Wright's Administration Building or Research Tower, or their National Register/National Historic Landmark status. We are, however, interested in YOUR thoughts. Please consider this letter and its illustrations. I will then try to call you a day or two after you receive this letter to secure your input.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter!

Yours truly,

John N. Vogel, Ph.D.

attachments

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Figure 1: SC Johnson & Son, Inc., National Register-listed, National Historic Landmark-designated Administration Building (left) and Research Tower (right). View to northwest.



Figure 2: SC Johnson & Son, Inc., National Register-listed, National Historic Landmark-designated Administration Building (right) and Research Tower (left). View to northeast. 16th Street is in the foreground.

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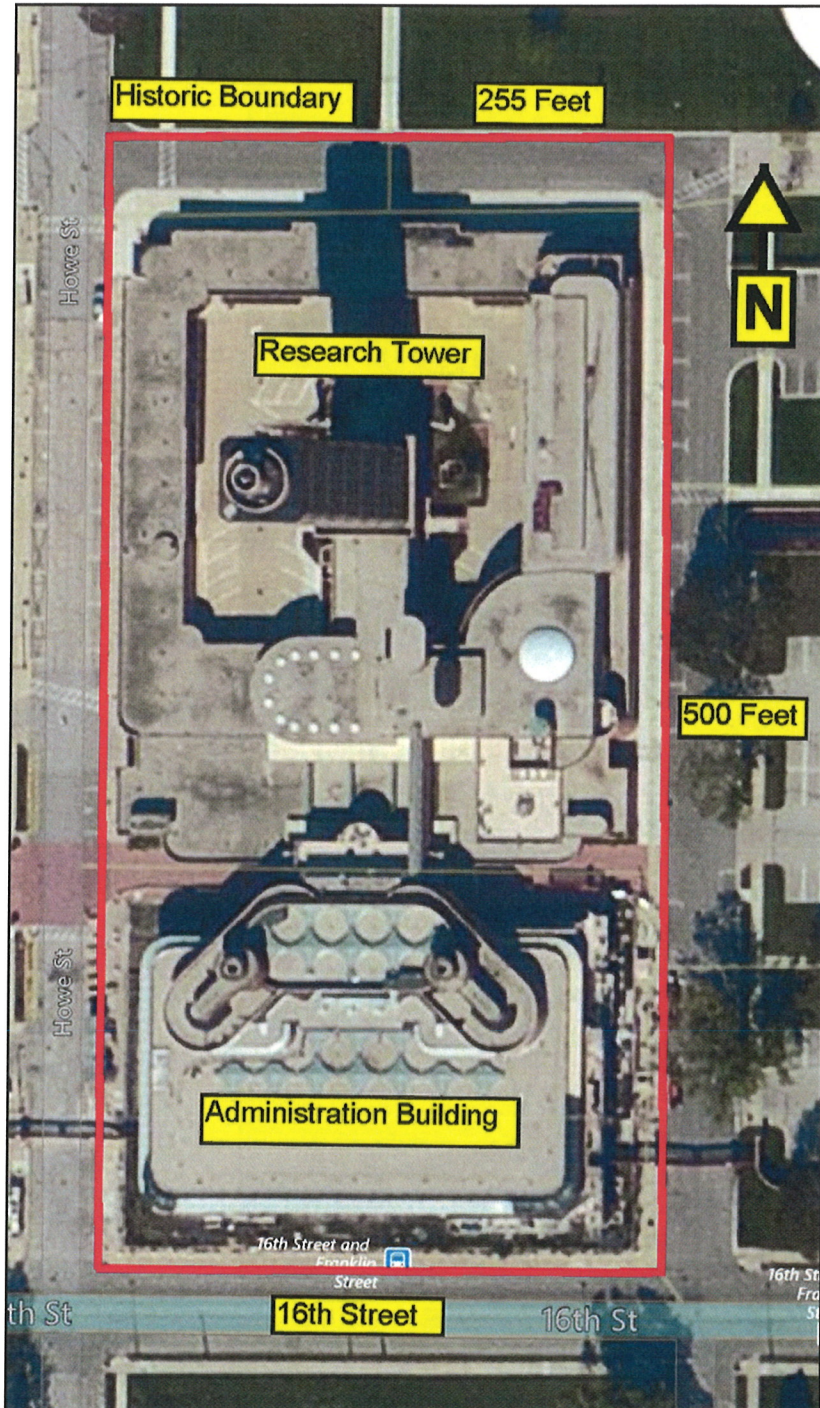


Figure 3: Photographic illustration of the Historic Boundary for the National Register-listed SC Johnson and Son, Inc. Administration Building and Research Tower (illustration adapted from a bing.com aerial image). This is also a National Historic Landmark.

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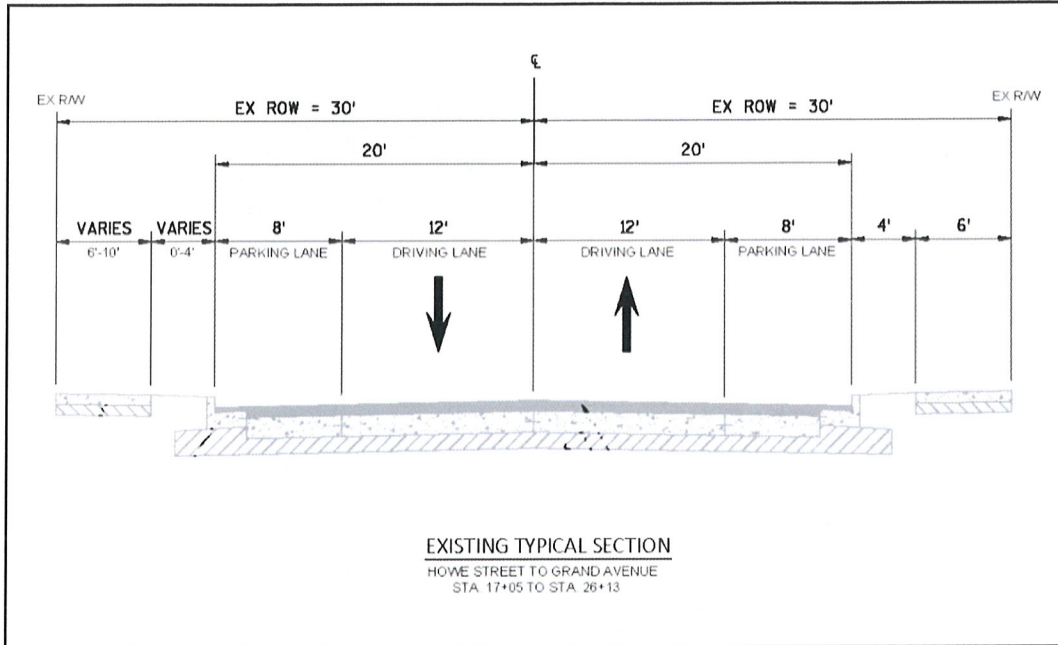


Figure 4: Pictured in this illustration is the current cross-section that is adjacent to the Register-listed S.C. Johnson property.

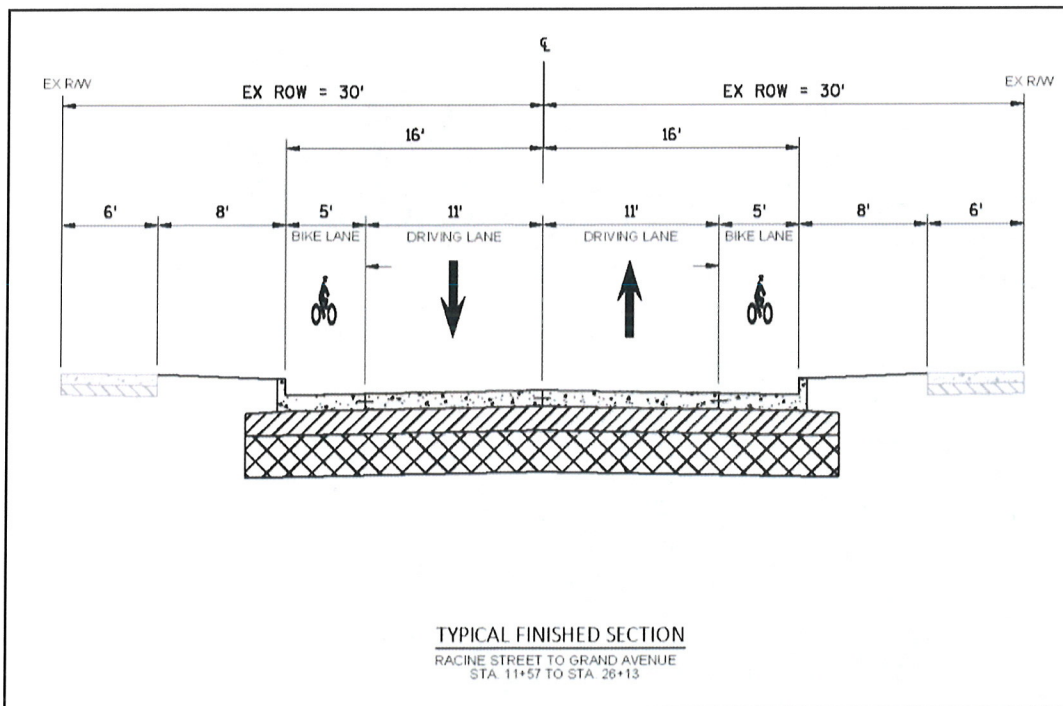


Figure 5: This image shows the proposed, narrowed roadway and new terrace that will be located south of the S.C. Johnson property.

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Figure 6: 16th Street currently adjacent to the south of the Administration Building. The existing sidewalk is 10 feet wide.

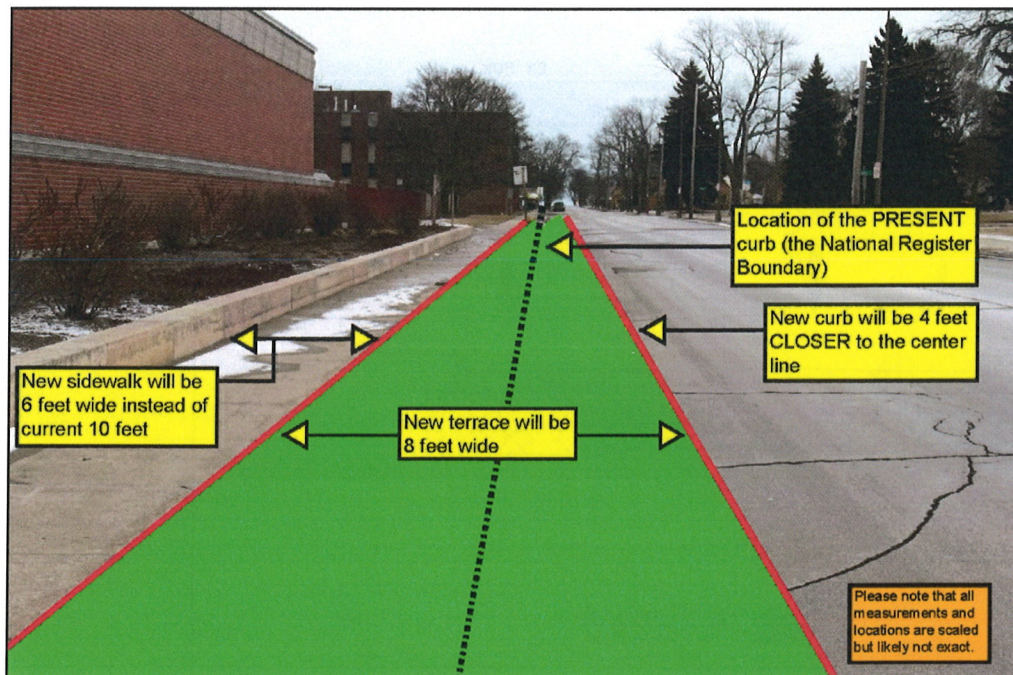


Figure 7: Under the proposed plan, the roadway will be moved AWAY from the Wright buildings, thus increasing by 4 feet the buffer between the new roadway and the historically significant resources. The sidewalk has no historical association with Wright or the Administration Building.