

Lake Park Proposals
Cities Without Cars
Urban Design Commission
Madison, Wisconsin
March 12, 2008

The recent debacle at phase II of Metropolitan Place should serve as warning as the Bassett neighborhood embarks on another experiment in mediocre design courtesy of Lance McGrath and Co. Perhaps we should consider a moratorium on new construction until our volatile financial cartels and lending wizards can guarantee us that this new project will not sit half built and unoccupied for an indefinite period. At the very least we must insist that Mr. McGrath allow a complete financial review by the city attorney and an accountant. It is also clear that Mr. McGrath may decide to "go condo" with this project and we may be left with another debacle as the real estate bubble goes snap crackle & POP. Projects like Metropolitan Place and the ironically named Lucky Building have given our Isthmus the dubious distinction of being one of the most overbuilt and glutted real estate markets anywhere.

Cities Without cars has issued a report to Mayor Ciezlewicz calling for a Peak Oil Task Force. Many proposals in this report ask for a reworking of our building practices and rules. The current project before you today calls for the demolition of two perfectly functional apartment buildings at the corner of Bassett and Wilson Streets. These buildings will be replaced by one large building with 40 apartments and a two level parking garage with parking for 40 cars. There is no doubt that Madisonians love their cars. We question whether this lifestyle is really viable in the 21st Century. Perhaps it is time to offer alternative modes of living and transport.

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We are asking this committee to examine this project carefully. Our automobile culture has worked for some 60 years but with fuel becoming more costly by the day we are urging you to make this building an exemplar of a new and more frugal paradigm. Each automobile requires some 75 barrels of oil to produce. This fabrication process also includes an enormous quantity of fresh water that is required in the manufacture of these automobiles. This embedded energy is costly to our environment in terms of green house gases and also creates a need for more roads and more gasoline consumption. One way to reduce our consumption is to eliminate parking from all future development. We are requesting that the 40 parking stalls be eliminated and be replaced by a Community Car vehicle and 3 automobiles to be shared by the tenants in joint ownership. We must insist that our new neighbors show a willingness to curtail their profligate habits. Taxis, busses, and shared vehicles should replace the private auto. The need for car parks and garages must be eliminated.

There has been much discussion of bringing families into the downtown area. Families have special needs. We urge this commission to incorporate indoor and outdoor day care areas. This building must have a communal kitchen and recreational area if we are really serious about making a child friendly environment. This area should also be equipped with a masonry heating unit to provide some backup in the likely event of an interruption in electricity or natural gas. The outdoor play area should have a fence to separate it from the sidewalk. Thus one mother can supervise the entire building's quotient of youngsters in a pinch. This saves working mothers time and money.

We are requesting that a community room be integrated with the community kitchen and dining room. This community room should be adjacent to the child care area. We feel that it is only

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natural that residents should have a designated space to socialize, cook and look after the children. Our neighborhood consists of thousands of people yet we do not possess a cozy designated spot for political discussion, meetings, videos, etc.. The new paradigm requires more intimate communication between neighborhood residents. People are going to need to work together if we are to prosper in an era of scarcity. We need a spot where we can begin teach permaculture techniques, exchange ideas about food storage, saving energy, find someone to carpool with or watch the kids while we are at work.

Mayor Daley, of Chicago, has promoted the green roof concept with rain barrels. We also advocate the use of these sensible techniques here at Lake Park Apartments. We also feel that this complex should have additional gardens located on ground level. The footprint can be pulled back from the railroad tracks to accommodate this garden area. This will help to preserve the view for other residents on Bassett Street. We request the placement of solar panels to provide electric power. Also rain water can be used for the toilets and showers. Hot and cold water can be stored in a reservoir beneath the basement level. This water can be used to for heat in winter and cooling in winter. Thus chilled water is collected for summer and hot water is collected for winter. Grey water should be recycled and used in the various garden spaces.

The height of this structure should be one floor lower than the Dowling building to acknowledge its historical character and integrity. This allows adequate light to enter into the windows of the Dowling building and preserves the status quo for Dowling residents. Please see the attached photos for details of this relationship. We have noticed several tower elements in the neighborhood. We expect this corner structure to incorporate this

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form into the new building. An imitation of the Dowling building has been suggested. Alternatively we can request a building similar in scale and detail to the 1037 Williamson Street structure. If you look closely at Third Lake Ridge you will note that the design reminds us of our earlier neighborhoods. We are requesting that the McGrath Co. carry these notions even further to give us a building with high quality design features. Wooden window frames, traditional mullions, leaded glass, filigree, wooden hand railings, Victorian details, small windows, shingles style facing, porches, swings, wooden trellis, pergolas, earth tones, reds and yellows with green highlights.

If an imitation of the adjacent historic Dowling structure is chosen we do expect that the brickwork will be of the very highest quality. This treatment will be present on ALL exterior walls, not simply those that face the street. In the same spirit there should be no garage doors since the Dowling Building does not have any such doors. These doors are a blight. Fenestration and entry areas should be consistent with the Dowling structure. Thus they should be of the highest quality. It is our view that new residents should be carefully vetted for their commitment to maintain and develop Lake Park Apartments as an exemplar of communal and green living. Madison has become the envy of the nation for its high quality of urban amenities. We expect that these high standards will be maintained as the McGrath Company embarks on this new experiment in sound design and green building practices.

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