

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Concern that mixed-use project will adversely affect local historic landmark and nationally recognized Arbor House Inn

Madison Landmarks Commission to review proposed project today and provide advisory opinion to the Plan Commission

MADISON – A proposed new mixed-use project to be located at 3414 Monroe Street is raising concerns about how application of the new TSS zoning code may adversely affect a nationally recognized landmark. Located adjacent to the proposed redevelopment, the Arbor House (www.arbor-house.com) property features The Plough Inn, a registered national historic landmark built in 1853. The historic property includes a national award-winning and sustainably designed annex with private residence surrounded by natural open space including a diversity of native landscaping and mature trees featuring prairie, woodland and butterfly garden species to complement the inn's location across from the UW Arboretum with its fresh water springs, Oak Savanna and other natural features.

"The proposed mixed-use project shows a building with massive gross volume and overall scale that is visually incompatible with the landmark property," said John Imes, co-owner of the Arbor House with his wife Cathie. "We encourage the Landmarks Commission to reject the proposed project and advise the Plan Commission to work with the developer to create a development that respects the historic landmark setting and residential character of the site."

Among specific concerns and suggested improvements Imes plans to raise at [today's Landmarks Commission meeting](#) that begins at 4:45pm, include:

At an estimated 22,000 square feet (not including uncounted space for covered ground level parking and driveway area) the proposed building is over seven times the size of the historic landmark Plough Inn not to mention the adjoining annex and family residence on site.

The proposed 3-story, up to 40 foot tall building is poorly articulated and positioned only six feet from the landmark property, similar to a row of establishments along a commercial district.

(over, please)

Under TSS zoning, the developer is "encouraged to create appropriate transitions between higher-intensity uses and adjacent lower-density residential districts." The adjoining landmark property includes an annex with a private residence and planned unit development (PUD) zoning that complies with the written general regulations of a R4 residential district. Under a recent zoning text amendment, the developer should be required to step-back the side yard and transition the height of the building adjacent to the residential use. This would also reduce the overall scale and protect the historic and residential character and integrity of the adjoining landmark site.

Under TSS zoning, the proposed development must also be "consistent with the adopted goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood plans." Recommendations provided under the city's adopted Monroe Street Commercial District Plan, include:

- *All buildings need to be compatible with buildings that are near them, both on Monroe St. and on streets that are behind any proposed redevelopment;
- *The building mass should respect the overall pattern of the street;
- *Keep what makes Monroe Street special by preserving buildings with historic value in the community;
- *Promote greening of Monroe Street by enhancing connections and relationships to nature features.

"Twenty years ago, we exceeded zoning parameters to construct a 3,600 square foot annex and family home with intense scrutiny, but always with a spirit of cooperation and negotiation with the city and our neighbors," said Cathie Imes. "Now with the TSS zoning, just in its infancy, we are experiencing first-hand the shortcomings of a stream-lined, not so neighborhood friendly process."

"We encourage the Landmarks Commission and other city agencies to work with the developer to meet the high standards of our historic and natural setting in a great neighborhood - and preserve this historic landmark property for generations to come."

*For more information on the proposed project please visit: <http://www.dmn.org/3414monroestreetupdates>

*For more on Arbor House including highlights over the last 20 years, please visit: <http://www.greenlodgingnews.com/arbor-house-celebrating-20-years-of-sustainability>

*[Landmarks Commission](#) - Please send comments to ascanlon@cityofmadison.com

*[Plan Commission](#) - Please send comments to kcornwell@cityofmadison.com