



UNIVERSITY HILL FARMS ASSOCIATION

June 13, 2012

Mayor Paul Soglin
City-County Building
Madison, WI 53709

RE: National Register of Historic Places proposal

Dear Mayor Paul Soglin:

This renews our request on behalf of the University Hill Farms Association that you direct City staff to apply to the Wisconsin Historical Society for \$10,000 for a Certified Local Government Grant for the preparation of a National Register Nomination for the University Hill Farm neighborhood as an Historic District. Letters of intent must be postmarked by September 14th with the final application due by November 9th. We already have undertaken two neighborhood meetings to present this proposal. More information on the grant program and the application process may be found on the Society's website: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/grants/>.

It is our understanding that designating the neighborhood as a National Register historic district would permit property owners to apply for tax credits for home rehabilitation work on their property. If so designated, it would be optional for the property owner to request tax credits or not.

The Hill Farms neighborhood is distinguished in the city of Madison by its history as a fully planned community, whose development was a joint venture of the University of Wisconsin and the City of Madison. In addition, the neighborhood contains not only homes designed by Madison architects and builders as their own homes, but is also the location of four Parade of Homes sites in the late 1950's. The fulfillment of the community master plan and the relative short period of development lend the community a cohesiveness that distinguishes it from other city developments from the same period. The Vernacular Architecture Forum included a tour of some 1959 Parade of Homes houses in the neighborhood recently. (see attached summary).

This Neighborhood Association support for pursuing neighborhood designation as a historic district is not meant to include any City landmark designation within the neighborhood. Any such City landmark designation proposal would need to be further reviewed by the Neighborhood Association.

The designation of the neighborhood as a National Register historic district would recognize these unique aspects of the neighborhood's history and would allow property owners to take advantage of rehabilitation income tax credits for approved work on their homes. Neighborhood residents are available to assist in the preparation of the final application due November 9, 2012, if desired, or to respond to questions.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Lawton, President
University Hill Farms Neighborhood Association

Cc. Alderman Chris Schmidt, District 11
Aldermen Mark Clear, District 19
Steve Cover, Director, Madison Dept. of Planning & Community & Economic Development
← Amy Scanlon, Madison Landmark Commission staff
Brad Murphy, Madison Dept. of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Jule Stroick, Madison Dept. of Planning & Community & Economic Development



INTERNATIONAL BANKING CORPORATION

NEW YORK

London, England
New York, N.Y.
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sirs:

Reference is made to your letter of the 15th inst.

concerning the proposed acquisition of the shares of the
Company by the Bank. The Board of Directors of the
Company has considered your proposal and has advised
that it is not in a position to recommend the
acquisition of the shares of the Company by the Bank.

The Board of Directors of the Company has also advised
that it is not in a position to recommend the
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acquisition of the shares of the Company by the Bank.

Very truly yours,
[Signature]



Very truly yours,
[Signature]
[Name]
[Title]

University Hill Farms

BRENDON GEORGE AND ALEXANDRA SCHULTZ

In 1955 the University of Wisconsin began the process of converting part of the College of Agriculture's farmland into a new residential subdivision. Located on Madison's west side, University Hill Farms was envisioned as a new kind of community that incorporated both the national post-war demand for housing, especially single-family homes, and also much-desired community resources, such as parks, a school, office and professional buildings, and a shopping center. To the Board of Regents and others involved in the development of the neighborhood, building a self-sufficient community was central to the planning, advertising, and public image of University Hill Farms.

Madison's population grew thirty percent during the 1940s, creating a huge demand for housing. University Hill Farms was part of an effort to provide single-family homes for the professional and middle-class population of Madison, although garden apartments partially geared towards young families were included, as were apartments intended for the public employees who would work at the new state office complex located in the community. In early 1953 the Wisconsin State Legislature authorized the Board of Regents to sell the 606-acre site and use the proceeds for the purchase of new land to expand its agricultural research operations. In order to sell the land, the Board created a special Committee on Agricultural Lands and

appointed former Wisconsin Governor Oscar C. Rennebohm as chair. The Board initially instructed the committee to sell the land at market value.¹ The Committee, however, considered how it could maximize its financial return and decided to develop the land itself rather than sell the entire acreage to a developer. Considerable public concern was initially voiced over the university's involvement in development, particularly the proposed shopping center; nevertheless, the university forged ahead with its project.²

The original plan, presented by Madison's planning engineer, Walter Johnson, to the university in January 1954, was influenced by Garden City ideals and included many culs-de-sac. In March of 1955 the Committee hired Carl L. Gardner and Associates of Chicago to create a master plan for the community. Gardner worked closely with Richard U. Ratcliff, a land development specialist in the university's School of Commerce, Walter Johnson, and the Wisconsin State Planning Division.³ The final 1956 layout replaced a majority of the culs-de-sac in Johnson's plan with through streets, but preserved the basic land-use scheme, including the location of the apartments and shopping center on the periphery. The 606 acres were allocated in the following manner: 28 acres for a shopping center, 26 acres for garden apartments, 62 acres for a public park, 26 acres for a school, 12 acres

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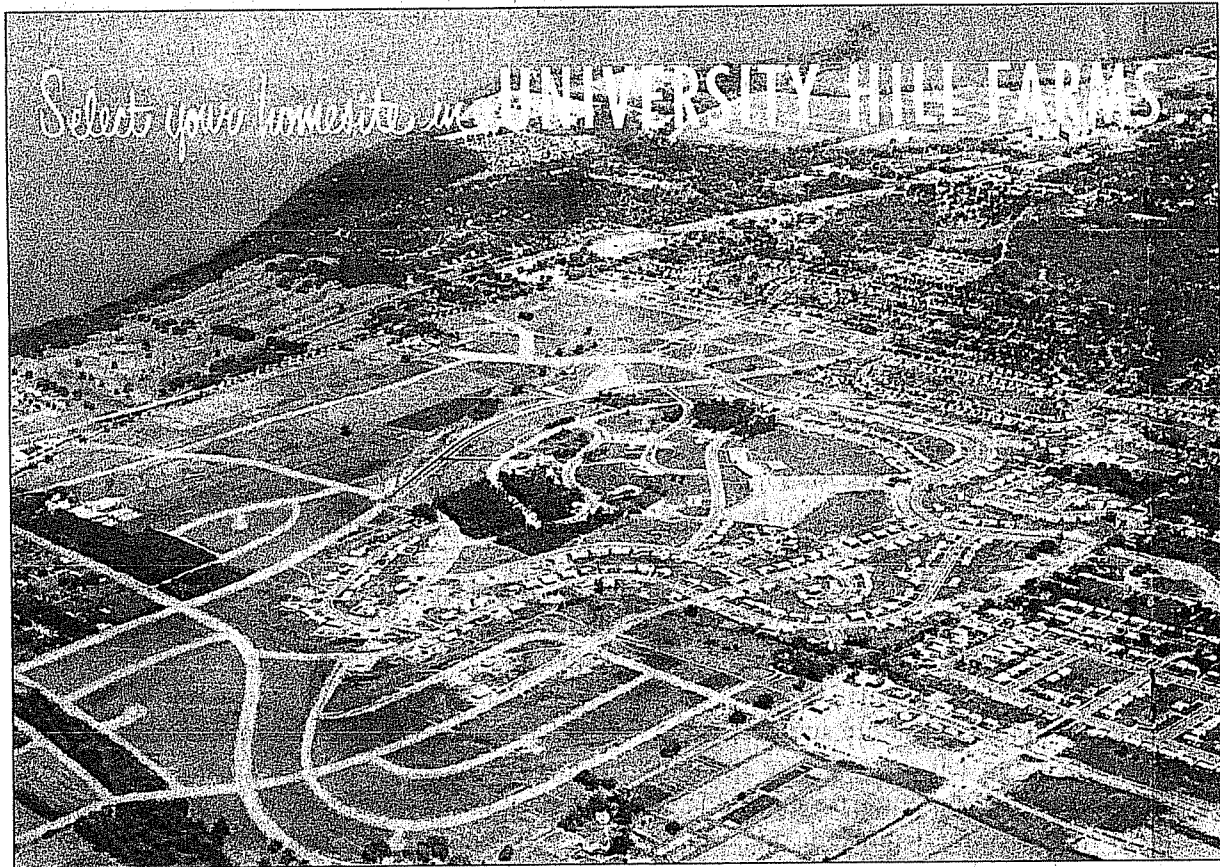
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for churches, 416 acres for home sites, and the remaining 88 acres held in reserve.⁴ In addition, in 1955 the State Legislature also required the university to reserve thirty acres for state office building development, which the state agreed to purchase at the price of \$2,750 per acre; the 1956 plan reflects this change.⁵

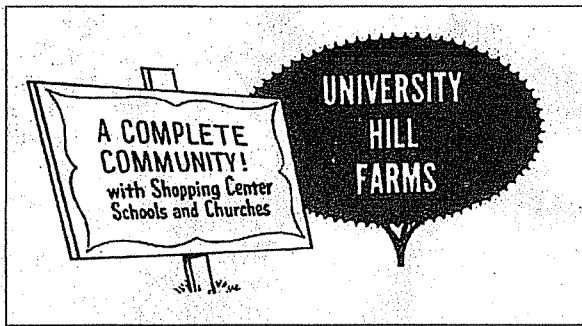
One of the more visible marks of the university's involvement in the creation of Hill Farms is Hilldale Shopping Center, located on the southwestern corner of the development at the intersection of University Avenue and Midvale Boulevard. While a shopping center was an integral part of the plan, the university also was motivated by the financial benefit of having a regional shopping center located on its land. After the university identified a location for the center, it created a non-profit, friends-of-the-university corporation to take the land title. The Board of Regents chose to fund this purchase,

in part, through a gift of \$240,000 from an unrestricted trust fund. In addition, a development corporation was also created to lease the land and finance, construct, and operate the shopping center. As part of the agreement, the university collected a substantial annual tax-free income from the ground rent for twenty-five years. In addition to the financial benefit provided by the shopping center, a second impetus came from the potential research use of the site. Because the modern shopping center was a relatively recent development during the 1950s, the university recognized that students and faculty in the School of Commerce, as well as other campus units, could use the site as a research laboratory relating to real-estate development, marketing, community planning, urban land economics, and economic geography.⁶

From the outset, the university intended Hill Farms to be a community. In a 1954 report on



Aerial of Hill Farms subdivision, late 1950s. From Madison's Ninth Annual Parade of Homes, 1959 Plan Book. Courtesy of Madison Area Builder's Association.



Advertisement, 1957. From Madison's Seventh Annual Parade of Homes, 1957 Plan Book. Courtesy of Madison Area Builder's Association.

the development, it was stated that University Hill Farms "should not be developed just in the usual pattern of a bedroom suburb, but should include whatever variety of uses might be needed to make it a neighborhood of lasting values."⁷ The community image was emphasized through planning correspondence and during Madison City Plan Commission committee meetings, as well as through advertising materials, such as brochures and Parade of Homes plan books. Very early in the planning process, the university allotted money for advertising, noting the Parade of Homes as a particularly useful venue for promoting the development.⁸ Selling points emphasized in the brochures included its convenient location near downtown, public parks and schools, a shopping center, and space set aside for churches. In 1956, the Board of Regents hired John Haley and Sons to act as brokers in selling the lots. While some of the parcels were sold to individual buyers, builders purchased most of the available lots. However, builders tended to buy plots scattered throughout the neighborhood rather than in chunks, and while most of the houses are examples of the ranch house, this approach encouraged diversity in size, materials, and appearance.⁹

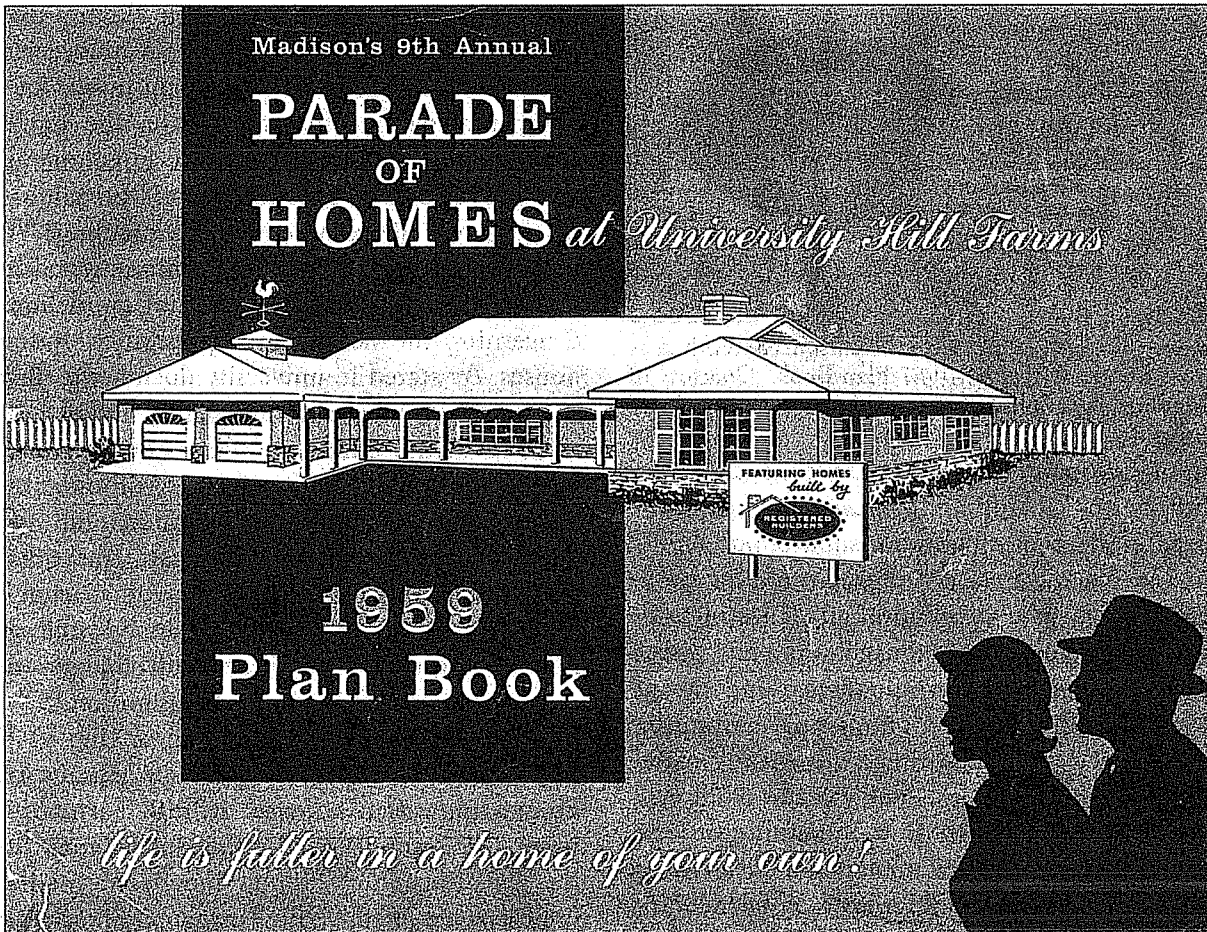
The community image is also reflected in the street names used at Hill Farms. The initial plan called for streets named after prominent University of Wisconsin faculty members, but several people, including Rudolph K. Froker, Dean and Director of the College of Agriculture and Agricultural Experiment Station re-

spectively, demurred. Because the Committee intended Hill Farms to benefit the university and, by extension, all of Wisconsin, it was believed that naming the streets after the state's counties would "have much more to commend it to the state as a whole than would the choosing of names of prominent faculty members."¹⁰

An architectural control committee was also established to enumerate rules and guidelines concerning the design and appearance of the houses. As stated in university documents, this committee would assure the quality and attractiveness of the buildings.¹¹ The now renamed Architectural Review Committee still operates today, enforcing the deed restrictions and approving exterior work to the houses. The committee was formed in 1999, following a neighborhood vote, to assume the university's role of reviewing proposed additions and changes to properties in the Hill Farms Neighborhood.

The homes that will be visited on the VAF tour were included in one of four Parade of Homes tours that occurred in Hill Farms between 1957 and 1960. The houses included in the 1959 Parade of Homes show some of the typical styles of the Hill Farms neighborhood and are consistent with many national post-war housing trends. Popular types include the one-story ranch or "rambler," the split or bi-level, and the L-shaped ranch. Specific plans varied, but the majority of homes conform to popular national types. They are generally single story with three or more bedrooms, a living room and kitchen connected to a dining or family room area, and an attached one- or two-car garage. University Hill Farms also includes examples of modular and prefabricated housing (see entries). The most notable of these is the Rudin House, a prefab designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built by Marshall Erdman.

University Hill Farms was planned and advertised as a complete community that both integrated and challenged national models. The inclusion of a shopping center, recreation, and other conveniences close by was meant to remedy some of the problems of large post-war sub-



Cover of Madison's Ninth Annual Parade of Homes Plan Book, 1959. Courtesy of Madison Area Builder's Association.

urban developments as well as provide the university with an interesting venue for research. The involvement of the university is one of the key differences between Hill Farms and other developments. In addition to functioning as an educational laboratory, the policies pursued by the special committee allowed the university to exercise control over the development and to guarantee that the master plan would be carried out. This "city within a city" challenges the idea that all post-war suburban developments are the same and were built primarily to provide housing without considering other aspects of daily life.

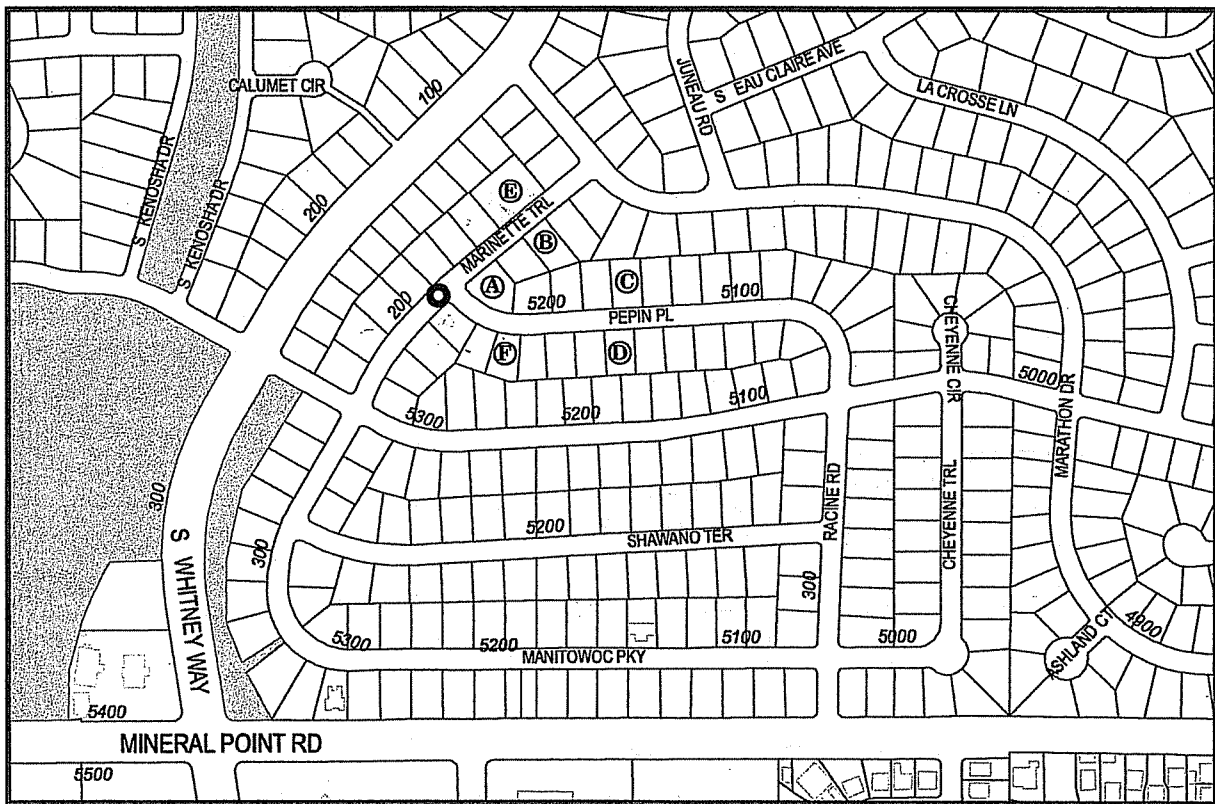
Endnotes

1 Board of Regents, University Hill Farms Community Report #1, University of

Wisconsin-Madison, (n.d.), University Hill Farms Clipping Folder, UW-Madison Archives.

- 2 Chairman Oscar Rennebohm to the Regents, June 1, 1955. Campus Development (Agriculture) Collection, Box 176, UW-Madison Archives (hereafter cited as Campus Development Collection).
- 3 Daina Penkiunas, "University Hill Farms: A Project for Modern Living," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 89 (Autumn, 2005): 19.
- 4 Chairman Oscar Rennebohm to the Board of Regents, June 1, 1955.
- 5 Board of Regents, "Progress Report, University Hill Farms Development," May 1, 1956, Campus Development Collection,

- Box 176; State of Wisconsin, Senate Bill, Substitute Amendment no. 1, S., to Bill No. 826, A. October 12, 1955—Offered by Senator Rogan, Campus Development Collection, Box 176, UW-Madison Archives.
- 6 University Hill Farms Business District, Presentation to Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, Sept. 1955, 2, University Hill Farms Clipping Folder, UW-Madison Archives.
 - 7 "Report on the Plan for Development of University Hill Farms," City Plan Division, Madison, January 1954, Campus Development Collection, Box 176, UW-Madison Archives.
 - 8 Progress Report, University Hill Farms Project, June 14, 1956, Campus Development Collection, Box 176, UW-Madison Archives.
 - 9 Penkiunas, "University Hill Farms," 20.
 - 10 Rudolph F. Kroker to University President E. B. Fred, Campus Development Collection, Box 176, UW-Madison Archives.
 - 11 Penkiunas, "University Hill Farms," 21.



University Hill Farms

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ⓐ Edwin and Harriet Boldon House
5222 Pepin Place (1959) | Ⓒ Joseph and Violette Moore House
5142 Pepin Place (1959) | Ⓔ Walter and Mary Ellen Rudin House
110 Marquette Trail (1959) | ● Pick-up and drop-off point |
| Ⓑ Gladys Kalal House
111 Marquette Trail (1959) | Ⓓ Gustoff and Bessie Peterson House
5201 Pepin Place (1959) | Ⓕ Robert and Betty Skilton House
5217 Pepin Place (1959) | |

University Hill Farms tour map. Created by Margaret Raimann, based on mapping from the Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development, City of Madison.