

**From:** [Scanlon, Amy](mailto:Scanlon.Amy)  
**To:** [Scanlon, Amy](mailto:Scanlon.Amy)  
**Subject:** FW: 3414 Monroe St. - DMNA Zoning Committee Comments  
**Date:** Monday, March 02, 2015 12:26:15 PM

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**From:** Perry Sandstrom [mailto:perry.sandstrom@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 02, 2015 12:15 PM  
**To:** Lynn Pitman; Dailey, Lucas; Julia Cattani Billingham; Zachary Madden; Subeck, Lisa; jimesother@gmail.com; [REDACTED]; Scanlon, Amy; [REDACTED]; christina.slattery@meadhunt.com; Rummel, Marsha; jason@c21affiliated.com; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] Coon, Scott F.; Brian Schneider; Holly Gibbs; Schmidt, Christopher; Perry Sandstrom  
**Subject:** Re: 3414 Monroe St. - DMNA Zoning Committee Comments

Hi Lynn, Lucas, Landmarks Commission.

Lynn and DMNA zoning people, thanks for all your hard work on this; The spreadsheet is an eye-opener, although I have only looked at it briefly.

I have some comments about the setting of the proposed building compared to the settings of the "comparable" developments, for what it's worth. Only a walking visit can do the adjacent neighborhood justice, but here's some points to consider:

The neighborhood of the proposed 3414 Monroe development has quite different characteristics than the Lower Monroe neighborhood where the Empire Building is situated. These are not subtle differences, but they are also not at all obvious unless you spend some time looking around and thinking about it. The streets surrounding 3414 are an island of remnant oak savannah with houses built amongst ancient trees (many 150 years and older) with no sidewalks or curbs. There are a total of three buildings in the so-called "commercial" zone adjacent to 3414 Monroe. In contrast, the Lower Monroe neighborhood is part of a contiguous urban commercial district that effectively extends all the way to downtown. Lower Monroe has alleys and sidewalks and was almost completely denuded of trees by the turn of the last century, while the area around 3414 was apparently left as a wood lot with many trees retained during subsequent residential development in the last century. The neighborhood around 3414 borders on the Arboretum, lake Wingra and the SW Path Greenspace, while the Lower Monroe commercial district borders on a Big-10 campus, the Regent St. commercial district, and more neighborhoods. Many people live in the lower Monroe area without owning a vehicle, while virtually nobody currently lives (or visits) the neighborhoods surrounding 3414 that doesn't have a car.

These important differences should be considered when trying to compare developments in these locations. For zoning and impact considerations, the setting may be at least as important as the architecture due to the requirement that new building's "fit into" their surroundings. This "consistency" standard should warrant even more scrutiny since the recent relaxation of the zoning-height restrictions. The fact remains that the proposed development at 3414 would break the long-established setback of all the other buildings on that side of Monroe and Glenway for many blocks (until one reaches the LSM chiropractic clinic, about a half-mile away). The previous architect/builders at that site (Kaiser and Erdman) respected the natural setting by retaining an even larger setback from Monroe that

allowed trees to thrive on both the 3414 and Arbor house properties.

The proposed "up to the sidewalk" construction is not a requirement for functionality or profitability. It not only dooms the three huge maple trees that are currently there (as well as a bur oak and other trees on the Arbor house property) but eliminates the possibility of any trees ever growing along Monroe on that corner again. Ever.

Despite wishful thinking, a defacto parking lot on the adjoining streets would result from cramming 30+ new residents and multiple businesses into a small corner lot in an already dense neighborhood. I was disturbed by one of the architect's blithe suggestions that we could just add sidewalks on the adjoining streets to help accomodate this. To me, this demonstrated a lack of appreciation or understanding of the unique surrounding built environment. Adding sidewalks would be a reckless act of homogenization that would virtually destroy the amazing canopy of ancient trees and habitat that makes this tiny neighborhood so special. This sidewalk-free old-growth neighborhood actually comprises most of the streets below Gregory between Odana and Western. It is a rare and remarkable example of the possibilities of shared human and natural habitat.

As I recall, the architects never showed any renderings as viewed from Glenway. This was Aldo Leopold's walking route to work every day. For those that regularly travel down Wiota or the curvy slope of Glenway, the replacement of the beloved arboretum vista with a view of a huge building and its HVAC system would take something small but priceless away from thousands of people each day. With the historic property and gardens next door, if there is any place in Madison where height of a new building should be reined in and a bigger street setback insisted on, this is it.

Lucas, you stated in a previous mail that you thought this building would be an OK addition to "our" neighborhood. I note that you live in the Monroe-Regent neighborhood, which is quite different in many important ways from the neighborhood of the proposed development as noted above. You effectively endorsed this project at the beginning of the last Dudgeon School meeting (or at least pre-empted discussion) by asserting your speculation that the earlier submission rejected by the landmarks commission "would have passed anyway".

I suspect our differing perspectives on this matter may, in part, be due to your projection of ideas about what would be appropriate in your neighborhood onto my neighborhood. I realize that you don't have much time to spend on issues like this, but please listen to your constituents who reside near 3414 Monroe and appreciate this special area because they live there (or four blocks away, in my case). Incidentally, the four 20-something pro-development shills sitting in the front row of the last meeting were probably not actual residents of the neighborhood, in case you couldn't tell.

Please take the time to visit the Arbor house property. Please also take the time to go for a walk down the slopes of both Copeland and Glenway streets from Gregory to Monroe. If you spend a little time there, you will notice some profound differences from the more urbanized neighborhood that you live in. You may even come to agree that some of these differences are worth protecting in a way that is compatible with responsible, respectful and attractive development.

Thanks for reading.

-Perry

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