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**Sent:** Monday, December 03, 2012 3:36 PM

**To:** Martin, Al

**Subject:** Henry Street and Iota Court

To the Urban Design Commission:

This weekend I made a photo expedition through the Langdon Street Historic District between Lake Street and Iota Court, dodging garbage, broken glass and mud from ill-kept parking lots, strategically aiming my camera to exclude more garbage and dumped furniture.

The problem with this area is not, as developers claim, 'hundred year old buildings that have outlived their usefulness.' By developers' standards the Louvre, the Pyramids, and the Taj Mahal qualify as landfill.

If you accept the developers' version of reality, we will throw away great buildings and replace them with throw-away buildings, to be replaced in turn after thirty years, without comment or opposition, as they had no design value in the first place. The developers' triumph will be complete. Notice also that contemporary buildings miss the century mark by sixty-six percent. This is progress?

The area in question has been subjected to the death of a thousand cuts starting with the round house in the 1960s and followed by a series of overscaled vertical sardine cans surrounded by concrete, all an affront to the existing built environment, not to mention the natural environment. The proposed current project is a slap in the face to Chi Psi, directly across Iota Court. I darkly suspect the developers hope to destabilize Chi Psi's foundation, forcing it to be demolished, making a plum property on the lake available to them dirt cheap (pun intended).

Low-cost loans promoting architecturally compatible rehab and urban street-keeping aren't as sexy as high finance and the phantasmagorical prospect of a thirty-five million dollar tax base. But consider Sterling Court, very similar to the historic district in question. It was replaced by that Monty Python sixteen-ton weight, the Inhumanities Building, a functional and aesthetic disaster and endless embarrassment. Everyone agrees it should be demolished. This is the future of the Langdon Street Historic District, piece by piece by piece, if this and future design-deficient projects are allowed to be built. Grow a backbone. Just say no.

Margaret Marriott  
Madison, WI