
From: christine mlot [mailto:cmlot@nasw.org]
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2008 10:51 AM
To: Rankin, Katherine
Cc: Martin, Al; Verveer, Mike; Parks, Timothy
Subject: proposed development, Bassett and Wilson

To the Landmarks and Urban Design commissions:

As a resident of the Dowling Apartments, I would like to register my opposition to the proposed apartment development at Bassett and West Wilson. I will not be able to attend the meetings next week, so ask that these comments be considered part of the official minutes of the meetings instead.

I oppose the development for the following reasons:

1. **Stormwater runoff.** Turning those lots with their lawns and large old trees into one big impervious surface will create problems. The Dowling had moisture in the basement after the deluges of last summer, and I'm concerned we'll have more serious water problems if the trees are removed (doubtful that any of the big trees with their extensive root systems would survive the digging of the underground parking). The loss of anymore green space and trees on the isthmus should be a concern for the city given the extensive flooding and lake impacts in recent years.

2. **Other Dowling impacts.** The historic Dowling with the large old trees framing it is currently the largest and most striking building on the block. It would be literally overshadowed by the massive proposed shoebox-like structure. Views of the landmark along Bassett would be lost, and the projecting balconies and shade would mar the look from Wilson. The loss of the two large old trees on the property line would not be trivial. They provide natural cooling to the Dowling in summer and warming in winter that will entail increased energy consumption if the trees are removed. Big old trees like those help make the downtown liveable for many, with the beauty, shade, and birds they provide.

I'm also concerned that students will end up renting in the new building, given the projected time of year (Aug.) the developers intend to start renting, and we'll have parties on the balconies outside the Dowling windows at bartime.

3. **Traffic.** Bassett is a narrow, dead-end street. Apart from the increased congestion on that street, cars from the 40+ units would have to turn right or left onto Wilson. The increased traffic at that dangerous curve means there would be an increase in the number of crashes there, with the likelihood that another car will get hit rather than just the trees and structures on Wilson. (There were at least three crashes in front of the Dowling last year, including a crash into a gas meter that required residents to evacuate several buildings.)

4. **Overbuilding in downtown Madison.** I ask that the city carefully weigh the need for such a new development. When the neighbors questioned the developers about it, we were told in effect "we know what we're doing," and that market questions shouldn't be our concern. But

given the economy and the current glut of housing in downtown Madison, a market study or other current authoritative analysis is warranted. With other large apt. projects already going up nearby on the isthmus, and other new residential buildings in foreclosure or being converted to hotels, it seems the city planners should take notice, along with all the other vacancy signs downtown, and act to preserve the viability and aesthetics of unique properties like the Dowling.

In short, the project is too big for the site and the block. It would require an inappropriate change in zoning and a higher density than the neighborhood master plan calls for. It would have negative aesthetic and environmental impacts on the historic Dowling as well as the neighborhood. I ask that the city take a hard look at the need for such a development.

Sincerely, Christine Mlot, 445 W. Wilson Street, Madison 53703