

From: [Scanlon, Amy](#)
To: [Scanlon, Amy](#)
Subject: FW: St. Francis House Development
Date: Friday, August 19, 2011 2:59:46 PM

From: gtipler tds.net [mailto:gtipler@tds.net]
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2011 2:25 PM
To: Scanlon, Amy
Subject: St. Francis House Development

Dear Commissioners,

We are at a crossroads on development in this vital urban area of Madison. We may be wondering how we got here -- with uncertainties of new buildings to be built among old neighbors. Some historical perspective may be helpful to recall.

Prior to the development of zoning that now addresses the massing, setbacks, and appearances of buildings, the planning and design of new buildings was part of a greater social contract, not only in most areas of Madison, but also in other cities of any size and sophistication.

It was an unstated way of planning that often governed the design of new buildings to fit within the context of the location, with regard to the use, height, setback, and exterior detailing of new buildings. It was employed to attain some level of compatibility and to enhance the immediate environment with architectural amenities.

New buildings were often built with regard for setback and sightlines. Exceptions to these considerations have never been well received.

During the era of World War II, new technology and new ways of thinking came into play. Disposable architecture and new prospects for rebuilding the city became a dream for many. The considerations of a new building's impact on its surroundings and its aesthetics became secondary.

Over the following two-plus decades, the respect for the environment surrounding older buildings waned and the social contract was often set aside, as increasingly introspective and self-serving approaches to new construction in the urban environment developed.

The ensuing erosion of formerly-well-cared-for parts of Madison and other places led to a popular outcry to protect the rapidly disappearing historic qualities of places and building, and the City adopted its historic preservation zoning ordinance.

With regard to this evolution of urban development, Luther Memorial Church was a landmark, in the old sense of the word, from the time of its construction. Its soaring structure, articulated with stained art glass windows framed in Gothic stone tracery, its open tower has been a grand icon for the community and parishioners, alike. The building

architecture and its congregation's community education and public service over the decades earned widespread respect.

I hope that the City commissions' understanding and respect for the church's long-standing physical requirements for morning light and peacefulness and the congregation's desire for a well-lit and contemplative space will be regarded in the approval of a building that allows just that. It isn't in the present plan being proposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gary Tipler
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