

September 29, 2009

I live at 2111 Van Hise Ave. I am disturbed by the proposal for a substantial addition to the Sellers house at 2021 Van Hise Ave. It proposes a major, and in my view unattractive, change to what is possibly the most significant house on what is possibly the most attractive block of houses in Madison. This house is at the heart of the University Heights historical district, diagonal to the Louis Sullivan landmark on Prospect and Van Hise.

I met briefly with architect Colin Gooding who kindly came to my house for the meeting. An argument Gooding frequently made about a few modifications I proposed was "But the family needs X," or "They have children aged 3 and 5.." which was raised in response to a proposal to move the addition to the rear of the house and possibly to drop it a level or a half level.

In my view, the new owners should not have bought the house until they were sure the proposed changes would be acceptable to the Commission. The owners have not yet occupied the house and their needs can easily be met by many other houses in Madison. If the Commission disapproves the suggested changes, then the family could move elsewhere. To claim, "Because we've already bought the house, the changes must be made" is not a valid argument in a petition to modify an historic house. If the landmark and the potential family are not suited to each other, it is not the landmark that needs to be changed. Think of the changes that could be proposed to other landmarks on this basis.

Donald Nichols

September 30, 2009

This morning I noticed the large historic house for sale at 1711 Kendall, in the Heights historical district. It was built before 1910. I know this house. It has many bedrooms and a large modern kitchen. It would seem to be well suited to the family that is asking to expand the Sellery house at 2021 Van Hise. No external changes would need to be made to the house on Kendall.

Don Nichols

## Cnare, Rebecca

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**From:** Robert Bless [bless@astro.wisc.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 02, 2009 10:51 AM  
**To:** Cnare, Rebecca  
**Cc:** Robert Bless; Bidar-Sielaff, Shiva; sjosborne@ozeng.com; fjosborne@ozeng.com  
**Subject:** meeting re Sellery house

Dear Ms Cnare,

We are writing to thank you for participating in a neighborhood listening session on the proposed addition to the home at 2021 Van Hise Avenue. We came to the meeting prepared to raise objections to the first version of the project that we feel would have had a negative impact on the Sellery house and its surroundings. However, we left the meeting favorably impressed by the revised plans which to us answer the objections surrounding the earlier plans. In our opinion, the smaller footprint of the addition and its setback along with its smaller roof overhang, result in a structure that clearly shows the original house, its symmetry and style. It also preserves most of the original views from three sides as well as the oak trees and green spaces. Overall, it appears to us that the new house would be quite attractive.

Various comments concerning the size of the resulting home seem to us to be irrelevant given the large size of the houses on the same corner as the Sellery house, as well as the numerous large homes in the Heights.

We look forward to welcoming the Osborne family to the neighborhood in a home that fits their needs. We urge the Landmarks Committee to approve the revised plans.

Sincerely,  
Bob and Diane Bless  
101 Ely place