

From: [William Perkins](#)
To: [Scanlon, Amy](#)
Subject: 3414 Monroe Street
Date: Monday, October 06, 2014 12:48:56 PM

Dear Amy:

I am writing to express my very serious concern about the design of the building proposed for 3414 Monroe Street, next door to the Plough Inn and Arbor House. I hope you will pass on my concerns to the Landmark Commission.

My wife and I live around the corner from the proposed building and basically across the street from the Plough Inn. I am also a city planner, and have been involved for more than 40 years with affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization in Madison, across Wisconsin and nationally.

As Cathie Imes, co-owner of Arbor House and the Plough Inn has said, their property was developed 20 years ago with intense scrutiny from the City and the neighborhood, but in a spirit of cooperation. My wife and I supported the construction of a 3,500 annex and family residence on the grounds of the Plough Inn because we wanted very much for that historic building not just to be preserved, but to thrive. We had watched two different previous owners struggle with the economics of preserving an historic inn. Changing the financial dynamics was essential, without relying on the ability and willingness of a wealthy individual or institution to preserve the Plough Inn regardless of the cost. I believe that building the annex and family residence was a creative way to solve that problem. Even though it increased the density on the site, we were convinced that the only realistic way to support preservation of the historic inn was to increase the scale of the space on the site so that income from the annex would be available. That decision was not without controversy in the neighborhood, but we believe that preservation of the Plough Inn was important to the neighborhood. I still believe that.

I am also a proponent of reinvestment and higher density on urban infill sites, as an alternative to urban sprawl. My wife and I were early supporters of Parman Place, across the street from 3414 Monroe Street, and I am proud that we were. I believe that sites on Monroe Street are capable of supporting higher density, especially across the street from the UW Arboretum. At the same time, I do not want to see Monroe Street turn into a high-speed traffic corridor heavily used by commuters from outlying areas. I believe that redevelopment of under-built parcels along Monroe Street can help prevent that unwanted outcome.

Notwithstanding my support for high-density redevelopment along Monroe Street, I believe that 3414 Monroe Street is in a unique situation. The proposed building is too large for its site, and would be only six feet from the Arbor House. I believe that jeopardizing the viability of the annex threatens the Plough Inn, and I think that redevelopment of 3414 Monroe Street—if it is allowed at all, and if the City is convinced that redevelopment is in the best interests of the neighborhood and the city as a whole—must respect the important role that the Arbor House and the Plough Inn play in our neighborhood. I don't believe that redevelopment of 3414 Monroe Street can be justified simply because it maximizes the value of the property.

If 3414 Monroe Street is to be redeveloped, I believe it should be carried out with an appropriate transition between a higher-intensity use and the adjacent lower-density residential areas. It should also incorporate a "step-back" on the building at the the side yard the adjoins the Arbor House, and transitions the height of the building adjacent to the residential use. I also believe the redevelopment,if it is to take place, must also be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, the neighborhood plan and the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan.

This issue should not be seen as a choice between the financial interests of Cathie and John Imes and the owner of 3414 Monroe Street. It should be decided in the best interests of the neighborhood and the city. I believe those interests are intimately connected with the preservation of the Plough Inn and the ability of the rest of the Arbor House property to support that objective.

Bill Perkins

The logo consists of the lowercase letters 'b' and 'p' in a red, sans-serif font.

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