

GARY TIPLER & ASSOCIATES

Historic Preservation Consultants

807 Jenifer St., Madison, WI 53703

gtipler@tds.net 608-286-1844

May 5, 2010

Urban Design Commission
Al Martin
amartin@cityofmadison.com

Re: Winnebago-Merry Streets Development

Dear Commission members:

I write to ask that the Commission consider the historic preservation aspects of the site along Winnebago Street proposed for development in the current proposal by APEX.

The first is a call for the preservation of the land form, the rise of land reflecting the historic crossing at the Yahara River, which during settlement times was called the Catfish Creek. The rise permitted the crossing of the creek, dating back thousands of years, and was the route used and referenced in accounts of the retreat of Blackhawk in 1832, during the Blackhawk wars. The retreat and resulting demise of the Native American tribes, permitted the settlement of the Great Northwest and establishment of the Wisconsin Territory.

That location across the Yahara was also the fording spot for the early settlement and development of Madison beginning in April, 1836, and was maintained as the principle route for decades, until the arrival of rail in 1854. It was used for people arriving on foot, horseback and stagecoach during the Territorial and early Statehood years. It continued to be important location as for first local railroad bridge across the river to connect Madison with the East, for the street car routes and for the State highway routes. It continues to be an important arterial among city streets.

The ridges east and west of the river bear archeological evidence of their early Native American histories, as well.

The second important feature of the site along Winnebago is the turreted Victorian house, which was built by Dr. Willam Hurd in 1892. The turret of the house is oriented toward the river view to take advantage of the view down the Yahara particularly toward Lake Monona (see attached photo, c.1910 on page 3). Dr. Hurd was highly regarded as a pioneer dentist in Madison. In about 1908 he built his dental clinic with an apartment above on the river side of his lot. It is the other building, which remains on this site today.

The Dr. Hurd house is important, not as an example of architecture, rather as part of the historic development of the city and changing perceptions and desirability of living near water, which was previously thought to be unhealthy. However, with development in medical and related sciences in the late 1800s, these locations were reconsidered. The Hurd house preceded the development of the Yahara River Parkway by the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, which occurred

between 1903 and 1906, thus is perhaps the first house to be oriented to the river between Lakes Mendota and Monona.

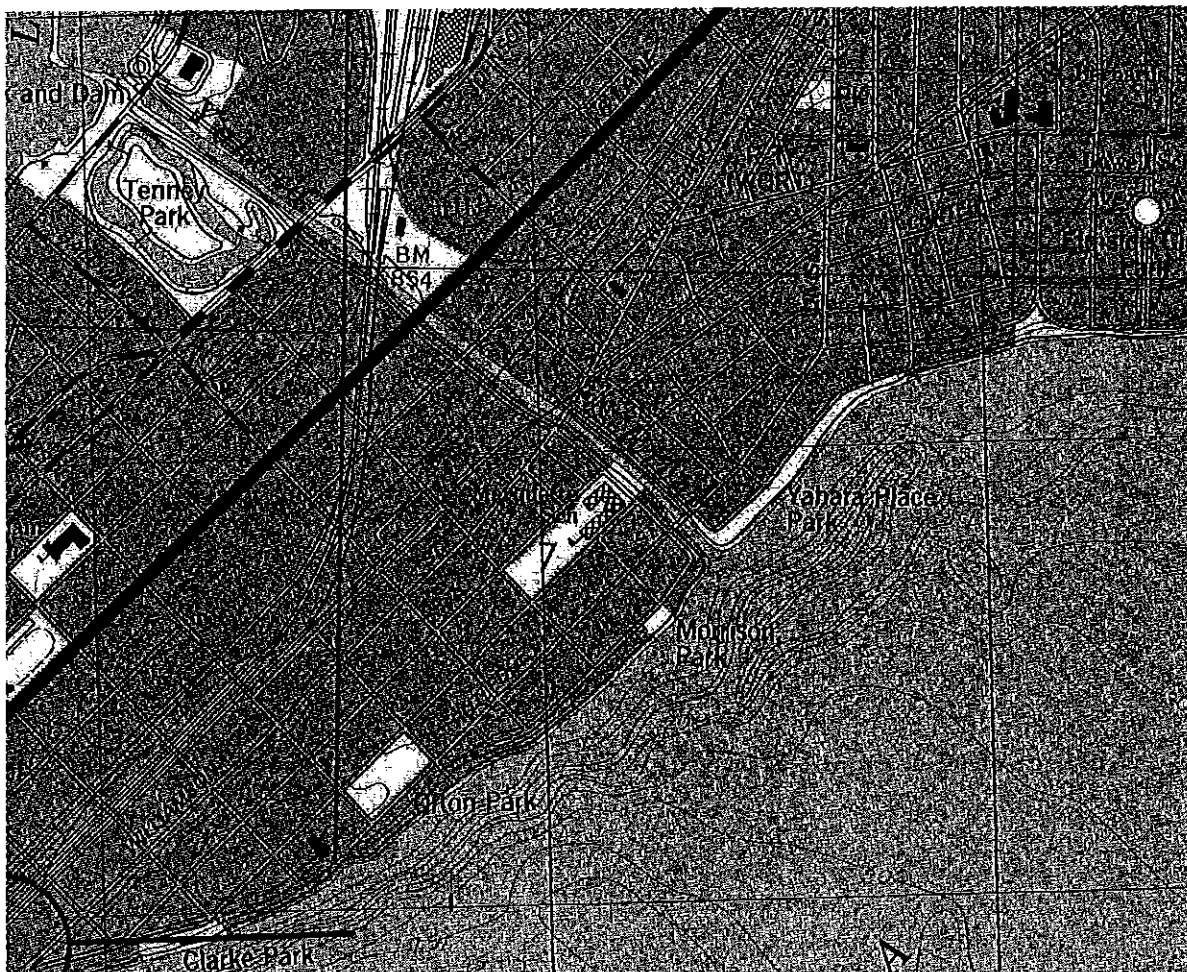
While the Hurd house isn't an architectural specimen, it is worthy of preservation. In spite of the recent years of poor alterations and lack of maintenance, it retains important character-defining features and materials, though some are hidden beneath siding. Details of porches can be created by any talented and discerning restoration-minded architect and contractor. Even the former clinic and apartment building could be renovated and restored if there was the will to do so.

Therefore, I recommend that the preservation of the original remaining geological land form of the site, its archeological heritage potential, and the Dr. Hurd House, as significant pieces of Madison's prehistoric and its development history.

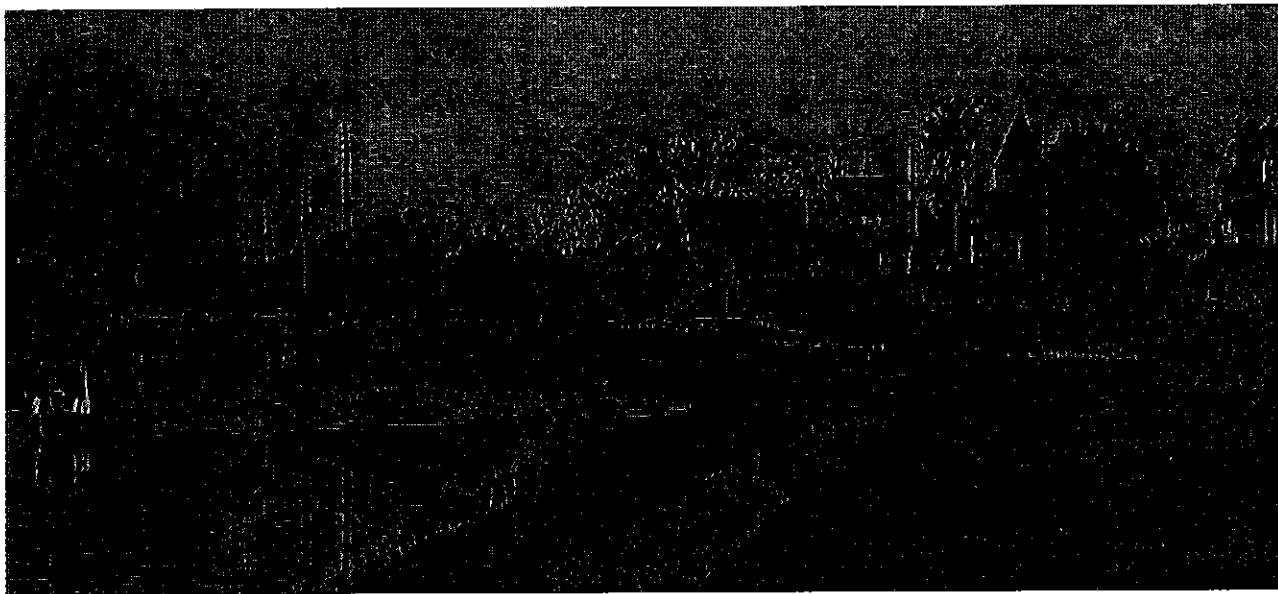
Sincerely,

Gary Tipler

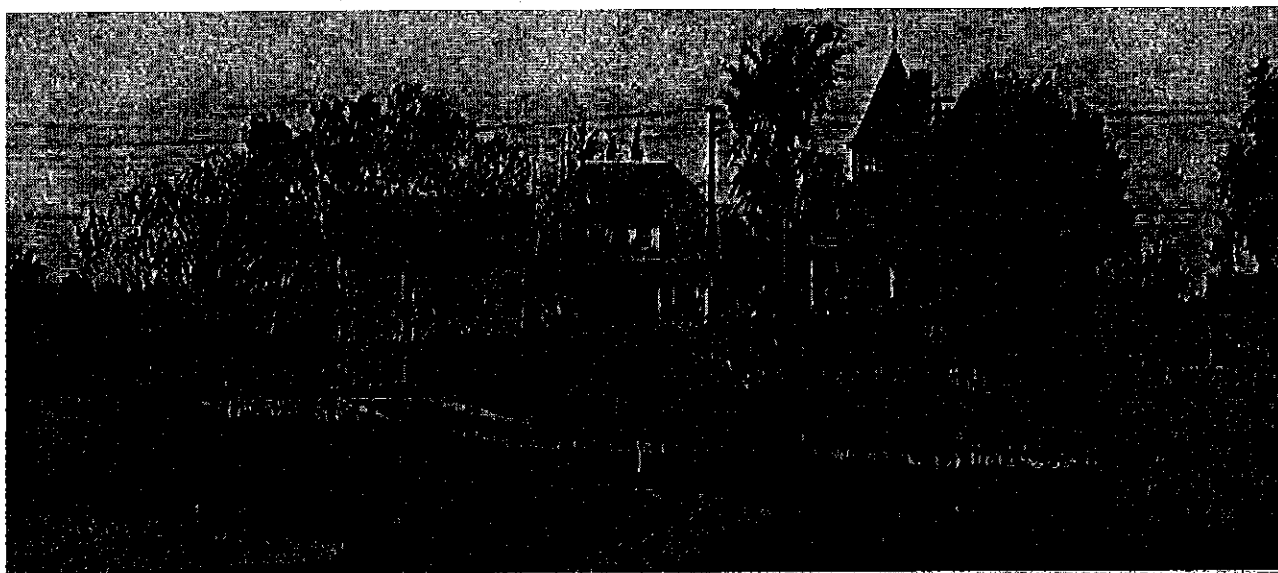
ILLUSTRATIONS



USGS Topography map indicating the land forms and ridges in the isthmus.



Dr. Hurd House and clinic, c. 1910, looking along Yahara River Parkway across Winnebago Street.
Photo: Wisconsin Historical Society, by Charles N. Brown, Image ID 3956.



Dr. Hurd House and clinic, c. 1910, looking along Yahara River Parkway across Winnebago St. Photo: Wisconsin Historical Society, Charles N. Brown, ID 3956.

(Further photos of the site and buildings may be easily seen on flickr.com, Search words: Hurd, Yahara. or Winnebago, Yahara.)

Date: May 5, 2010
From: Larry J. Chapman, 208 Merry Street, Apartment #3, Madison WI 53704
To: City of Madison, Urban Design Commission <amartin@cityofmadison.com>
<wfruhling@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Winnebago and Merry Street Multi-Unit Residential Development/Apex

This letter expresses my reservations about the 1628 Winnebago Street multi-unit residential development proposal scheduled to be presented on behalf of Apex Investment Group 8 at the Urban Design Commission's May 5th meeting. I am not convinced that this development will benefit the neighborhood, the larger community or the Yahara River environment.

The scale of the project is not appropriate to the scale of the nearby homes. The existing twenty-two unit apartment building at 222 Merry Street stands in contrast to the eighteen, largely single family detached residences along one-block long Merry Street and adjoining Ramsey Court. The current Apex plans include a new, second apartment building that will add another twenty-three units.

The plans don't appear to provide any new public space. They eliminate the traditional neighborhood sledding hill at the southwest corner of the apartment building's parking lot and reduce the space currently devoted to gardens and laundry drying lines below it.

The sites for this development complex are in an area where there are arguably too few porous surfaces that allow water to move into the soil layer. The plans look as though they will further reduce the open space available for soil infiltration of rainwater, storm flows, snow melt or floodwaters. The shoreline along Merry Street is particularly vulnerable because of the relatively high level of the street compared to the river.

I realize the importance of economic development to the city and its residents and I certainly agree that improving housing, in particular, is essential. For example, the existing apartment building at 222 Merry Street could benefit from renovating the apartments, maintaining them carefully, and having a building manager who lived on the site. But these plans to add another apartment building on Merry Street are not appropriate. There are other locations in the city better suited to a project of this style, scale and environmental impact.

Cheryl Diaby
209 Merry St.
Madison, WI 53704

Mr. Al Martin
City of Madison

RE: Apex Development Proposal for corner of Winnebago & Merry St

Dear Mr Martin:

I find myself deeply concerned with the extravagant development Apex is proposing, and thereby strongly oppose it along with the other homeowners of Merry, Ramsey and Winnebago. There have been neighborhood meetings and discussions starting over a year ago, the first being for neighbors of a broader area and then with people living on Merry, Winnebago and Ramsey Ct. The plan from Apex started out on a large scale and to this day remains on a large scale even after all the discussions and concerns that were expressed. Again, the neighborhood is in strong opposition towards the Apex development proposal.

Merry Street is a very small and narrow dead end street with R3 single and two family units and is intended for low density housing. All the homes were built in the early 1900s or late 1890s. It has an old world charm and charisma that is very unique and appealing. On the corner of Winnebago and Merry, there exists a Victorian house that was built by Dr. Hurd, a pioneer dentist, who not only lived on Winnebago but built an office next to the house for his dental practice. Set up on the hill as such, the house is regal in appearance and critical to the historical element of our neighborhood and is the gateway to our street. We also have the Yahara River that runs parallel to Merry. Last but not least, many homes on Merry need the street for parking which is very limited.

The development that Apex is proposing is not appropriate in size for the corner of Winnebago and Merry and it does not fit into the character of our neighborhood. I ask that you and the committee visit Winnebago and Merry to familiarize yourselves with the area. We oppose the Victorian house being moved and oppose any leveling of the land which has historical significance.

The existing apartment building at 222 Merry St. built in the 1960s in no way conforms to the character of Merry Street and in my opinion was a huge mistake that should never have happened. The plan that Apex proposes would only be compounding that mistake. Again, we are intended for low density housing.

With limited parking on Merry St., there is already a huge problem of the existing Apex tenants parking on the street. No matter how many parking stalls that could be built to accommodate all the residents and visitors of the Apex property, the problem will continue to exist. I have seen it many times where the tenants or their visitors park on the

street even though there were open spaces in the parking lot. There are some homes on Merry that only have the street to rely on for parking. Traffic will be an issue as well as the bike path.

Protecting the Yahara River, its shoreline and the land in close proximity to it is also very important and I feel very strongly that we discontinue any further developments of that scale so close to it.

The corner of Winnebago and Merry is a very sensitive area and must be handled with great care and consideration. We need to protect what is left of this historical and charming neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Diaby

From: Martin, Al
To: Cleveland, Julie;
Subject: FW: For public input/comment --- Apex Proposal at Merry St & Winnebago
Date: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 1:55:39 PM

From: Rich Felsing [mailto:rich.felsing@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Martin, Al
Subject: For public input/comment --- Apex Proposal at Merry St & Winnebago

Dear Mr. Martin,

Some brief comments regarding the Apex proposal for Merry Street and Winnebago.

The Apex proposal violates the Comprehensive Plan, violates the Marquette Neighborhood Association Plan, violates the Yahara River Corridor Plan, and violates the letter and the spirit and letter of the zoning ordinances for Low-Density Residential districts.

I contributed extensively -- as did fellow residents -- to the Comp Plan, Neighborhood Plan & Yahara River Plan precisely to prevent this 'misinterpretation' of ordinances & plans.

I did so specifically to preclude any future 'confusion' about development opportunities in the Merry Street area (bounded by Yahara River/Winnebago/RRtracks/First Street).

The MNA Neighborhood Plan EXPLICITLY defines other areas --- "industrial lands to the west of Thornton Avenue would provide THE opportunity to construct higher density residential buildings that would have the nearby amenities of the Yahara River and ... bike path." The Merry Street neighborhood is *not* identified as a suitable receiving area for dense apartment buildings---and the Comp Plan and Low-Density Residential District designation of the Winnebago/First Street/Yahara River/Railroad Tracks area makes this explicit.

I remind Michael Waidelich & the City that this language was included precisely to prevent any confusion about where higher density residential would be permitted---and that such density would not be permitted on the Merry Street side of the Yahara River. In fact, this language was repeated 3 times, to ensure no one could read any ambiguity into the Plan, or pretend it was a single-instance after-thought: rather, that aspect was the main point of this text. And both I, our alder and Mr. Waidelich, were in the room for multiple meetings at which this was point was made, agreed to by the City, and made explicit in the MNA Neighborhood Plan.

In addition, there are deed restrictions &/or past development agreements prohibiting the development of one of the parcels included in the Apex site. (This is the so-called 'vacant' strip to the east of 222 Merry.)

The zoning change from R-3 to R-5 is not consistent with, and violates, the LD-R District Comp Plan designation. We question whether that rezoning was conducted in accordance with defensible methods.

Further, the Comprehensive Plan states explicitly that pre-existing multi-family buildings may NOT be used to rationalize additional high-density buildings in Low-Density Residential Districts. Therefore, the presence of the 222 Merry Street apartment building MAY NOT be used to 'justify' an overly-dense proposal, such as the Apex project. The Low-Density District designation, and the zoning that protects & implements the Comp Plan holds sway.

Note well that the context and character of the Williamson-to-Winnebago stretch is residential, w/o multi-family apartment buildings. The context and character of the Riverside-to-Merry Street stretch is residential, without multi-family apartment buildings. In both directions---across Winnebago parallel to the River, and across the River up Williamson & Winnebago, existing context dictates that dense development proposed by Apex is not consistent with the neighborhood, nor with the Plans defining what buildings are permitted by law.

The MNA Neighborhood Plan clearly states:

"The top five housing recommendations are highlighted in bold:"

"5. New construction should be compatible with the surrounding environment in terms of bulk, scale, and style of nearby buildings to ensure that the architectural and historical character of the neighborhoods is retained."

The Apex proposal fails to fit into "the surrounding environment," and breaks with neighborhood character (in terms of bulk, scale & style), damaging legally applicable Plans on several levels. The Winnebago/Merry/Yahara is a micro-site, but it is a keystone parcel that will damage the integrity of residential areas across the River/across Williamson, across Winnebago, in addition to the Merry/Buell area.

All that doesn't even touch on the 80 cars entering at the convergence of the bike path & bus stop the project would bring--the auto traffic & driving behavior is dangerous & unpredictable in and of itself right there. Ped & bike travel patterns have already created problems: though the Mayor vowed publicly only yesterday to make it safer for bikes, this project would do the opposite.

We intend to hold the City, and the process, to the requirements of the process and the legal designations of the Comprehensive Plan, the MNA Neighborhood Plan, and the Yahara River Corridor Plan.

Correspondence between Archie Nicolette and Si Widstrand document the intention of City staff, during the Yahara River Corridor Plan process, to maintain the existing land uses and character on the Merry Street side of the Yahara River, explicitly stating that "Existing or proposed developments along the river should be designed and landscaped to minimize their visual impact on the natural character of the corridor." The elevations Apex provided for this project are 4 stories tall, and entirely out of scale with the size and character of the site. No attempt was made to mitigate the impact on the Yahara River Corridor.

Those elevations of the latest Apex proposal were not shown to the neighborhood during any meeting. Rather they were emailed to residents last Saturday by Alder Rummel. Despite PR statements by Mr. Yoder that Apex "is working with the neighborhood" this is not accurate: residents stated the proposal was too big for the site, which is a micro-site, in a very

urban micro-neighborhood that happens to have a lots of vegetation. Mr. Yoder's references to the "Bohemian feel" of Merry Street comes across as a somewhat or nearly derogatory approach: we are homeowners, business owners, blue-collar workers and professionals. We are diverse, and we benefit from a highly urban setting, and a highly urban level of social cohesion: we know each other, and we look out for each other. Some of us have lived on Merry Street for generations.

Most importantly, we have invested our time, labor and money to create exactly the kind of dense, sustainable, socially inclusive and livable neighborhood that the rest of Madison (& much of the country) has begun to aspire to in recent years. This occurred while the City allowed the infrastructure across the River to deteriorate into an at-best blighted condition (prior to Thornton St reconstruct & adjacent Commonwealth devt).

My suggestion is that the City of Madison honor and capitalize on the neighborhood strengths and quality of life created by Merry Street residents in recent decades. Homeowners and renters alike have labored to to create an unmatched and sustainable quality of life.

Please note: I volunteered for the East Washington BUILD process --- I went to every meeting. Residents went on record as *staunch proponents of density* in the main corridors where such density is appropriate. Our response to the Apex proposal cannot be labeled a NIMBY-esque reaction. Our position is strongly reinforced by existing, legally enforceable City of Madison plans, ordinances and related documents. Where Apex's projects meet with code, they'll encounter no resistance.

We trust you'll understand that our confidence in the planning process has not been misplaced. This letter should clarify why that faith is justify, and that we understand what steps must be taken to ensure the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan, the MNA Neighborhood Plan, and the Yahara River Corridor Plan.

In addition, we write to support the work of City Planning staff --- who spent many long hours to craft these plans, and to implement them. That work and dedication is undermined if Apex wins approval at Merry & Winnebago

From: David Koene [mailto:konkal@charter.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Martin, Al
Subject: Apex project

Dear Sir:

I would have attended tonight's Urban Design Commission meeting to discuss the proposed Apex project at the corner of Merry and Winnebago streets if more notice had been given. As a resident of the neighborhood – I live at 1714 Winnebago Street – I am opposed to the proposed development. I am NOT opposed to ALL development; a project which respects the environment and the neighborhood would be welcome, but I oppose the Apex proposal for several reasons:

I. Zoning exists for a reason.

The proposed site was never intended for high density housing. The previous owners already received a variance in the '60's to build the existing apartment building off-center toward the northern end of the lot. Though there is very little lawn on the building's northern side, at least there is a fair amount of open space on the rest of the lot. Should the city now grant another variance to this site and allow Apex to fill in the whole lot with more buildings? Why have zoning laws if every developer that requests an exception is granted a variance?

II. The project would be harmful to the Yahara River.

The southern bank of the Yahara is a flood plain with highly erodable land. In the past fifty years the shoreline has receded noticeably. If the city allows Apex to rip up valuable green space along the river's edge and replace it with an acre of parking lots and roofs that drain into the Yahara, this erosion will be accelerated. The city has spent millions renovating and beautifying the shoreline of the Yahara river. Why jeopardize this investment – not to mention the ecology of Madison's most significant river way – by allowing Apex to erect an eyesore on the river's edge?

III. High density housing has not succeeded in Madison.

Most of the high-rise condos built in Madison during the last decade are only half full. Cliff Fischer, developer of the 338-unit Metropolitan Place, has gone bankrupt. Condominiums planned for the Hilldale neighborhood have been scrapped. Just up the block from the proposed Apex site, numerous "for sale" signs are posted in front of Kennedy Point. The condo craze in downtown Madison has not stopped urban sprawl. Nor will a host of new apartments. Families looking for a house with a yard continue to build in Sun Prairie and Verona, regardless how many condos and apartments are available on the isthmus.

IV. The project would be harmful for the neighborhood.

No matter who the new occupants happen to be, we can assume they will have cars. Many apartments will be occupied by several car owners. The project Apex is proposing will probably add a hundred or more additional cars to a neighborhood where parking is already scarce. Winnebago Street is a major thoroughfare. Dozens of additional vehicles entering and exiting from Merry Street could constitute a traffic hazard. At the very least they would slow down traffic at rush hour.

V. Apex Sucks.

Apex has a poor reputation as landlords. The existing building has suffered recurrent floods with several inches of standing water in the basement. On numerous occasions garbage has been allowed to pile up next to and on top of the site's dumpsters. Moreover, Apex has done a poor job screening potential occupants. The building has developed an infamous reputation as a result of a several unsavory incidents. The police department has also complained about the unusually high number of calls associated with the location. Until Apex improves its reputation and comes up with a better plan for using the site, their request for a variance should be denied.

From: Chris Lukas [mailto:lukas@luhala.com]

Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2010 3:27 PM

To: Martin, Al

Subject: Comment on item for Urban Design Commission meeting this evening (5/5)

Dear Mr. Martin,

This is a comment for today's Urban Design Commission meeting regarding the proposed Apex development at Merry & Winnebago streets.

As a nearby resident, I am strongly against the proposed development. The primary reason is that the proposal is too dense and does not fit into the character of the surrounding area.

The area is entirely single family, 2- and 3-flats with the sole exception of an apartment building Apex already owns. The 23-30 additional units proposed by Apex on 3 regular lots is the equivalent of a 7-10 unit building on each lot which is way out of proportion to the other lots.

Not only that but the feel of the area is not high density. It's park-like and has gently sloping lawns down to the river. This area is not some desolate, trash-strewn urban hardscape. On the contrary the lots as they are pretty and well-proportioned for small-scale housing.

I am not against redevelopment of the 2 lots that do not include the Hurd house. If the developer wants to tear down the existing 2-flat and build a new one and a 3-flat on the currently empty lot, that's great. However, there are acres of land in our neighborhood that are ready for large-scale development and are identified as such in the comprehensive plan. If Apex wants a large apartment or condo building, they should choose one of the numerous existing alternative locations.

I urge the UDC to reject the project's scale in favor of designs that reflect the character and density of the neighborhood.

Thank you.

Chris Lukas
321 Riverside Dr.



LETUZZE
KOE
KOE

WM
WASTE MANAGEMENT
DAKE COUNTY: 273-2500
877-WMWASTE
www.wm.com

SINGLE SORT RECYCLING
ACCEPTED MATERIALS:
ALUMINUM, PLASTIC (1 - 7),
GLASS, MIXED PAPER AND
MAGAZINES
NO GARBAGE!

CAUTION

222 MERRY ST

SECOND FLOOR

22 SKE TO

21

20 R F — SCH ER

19 SMITH

18 KLINE — COLLINS

17 AN Z R VIC

16 KAY — WORKMAN

15

FIRST FLOOR

14 RODE

Date: May 5, 2010
To: UDC members
From: Board of the Friends of the Yahara River Parkway (FYRP)
Subject: Apex Development Proposal (Merry and Winnebago Street)

Dear UDC,

The mission of the Friends of the Yahara River Parkway (501(c) 3 group) has been to advocate for the enhancement and protection of the Yahara River Parkway and adjacent parks since the late 1990's.

The FYRP board has the following concerns about the proposed Apex development.

1. The height and massing of the proposed structures along the parkway are too tall in relationship to the parkway. We do not believe the proposal is consistent with the Yahara Parkway Master plan nor correspondence between relevant city staff (Si Widstrand (Parks) memo to Archie Nicoletti (Planning) dated October 10, 1996).
2. We are concerned about the volume and quality of stormwater that such a densely developed site could generate. We appreciate the addition of rain gardens, but are concerned an appropriately sized raingarden would exceed the space available on Apex property. A second aspect is a feature may look good on a conceptual plan, but if the construction is compromised or not maintained properly it's usefulness is negated.
3. The Yahara River Parkway is on the National Register of Historic Places as being locally significant. The plan has no meaningful detail on how the proposed private landscape would mesh with the historic landscape plan.
4. We are concerned the PUD applicants will seek a reduced setback to accommodate the density of their development. This will place a large building too close to the parkway and provide inadequate space for appropriate complementary landscaping. It would also create a sense of the public space being the front yard of the buildings rather than a complement to it. We do not believe this is consistent with the historic landscape design or the approved master plan.
5. Details of land purchases and park dedication are in flux and could bear on the space available for development.

We appreciate this opportunity to speak in this forum and the Apex staff in providing this material prior to this evening's meeting.

Sincerely,



Ed Jepsen
On behalf of the FYRP board

Passports UDC 5-5-10 No-5



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Planning Division

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PH 608 266-4635

May 3, 2010

Mr. Steve Yoder
Apex Enterprises, Inc.
1741 Commercial Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53704

Dear Steve,

Brad Murphy asked me to send you a letter clarifying some information that was included in your March 18, 2010 letter to Scott Thornton regarding the land use recommendations for the Merry Street area in adopted City plans.

It is true that a map on page 32 of the 1994 *Marquette-Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood Plan* shows the Merry Street area east of the Yahara River and north of Winnebago Street as designated for Medium-High Density Residential uses. However, this is a background information map from the 1988 *Madison Land Use Plan* (first adopted in 1977), and it wouldn't be accurate to consider this a recommendation of the neighborhood plan. As far as I can tell, the neighborhood plan doesn't make a specific land use recommendation for the Merry Street area. But implementation activities initiated as part of this planning process included a review of the existing land uses and zoning in several neighborhood residential areas which resulted in rezoning several areas in 1995 to better protect and enhance the established uses---including the Merry Street area.

The 2006 *City of Madison Comprehensive Plan* includes the Merry Street area within a large area east of the river recommended for Low Density Residential uses, not Medium-Density uses as suggested by your letter. This LDR district extends from south of the lumber yard on East Washington Avenue to Lake Monona, and primarily reflects the R3 District zoning now applied to most of this area (except for the Apex properties, which as you note, are zoned R5).

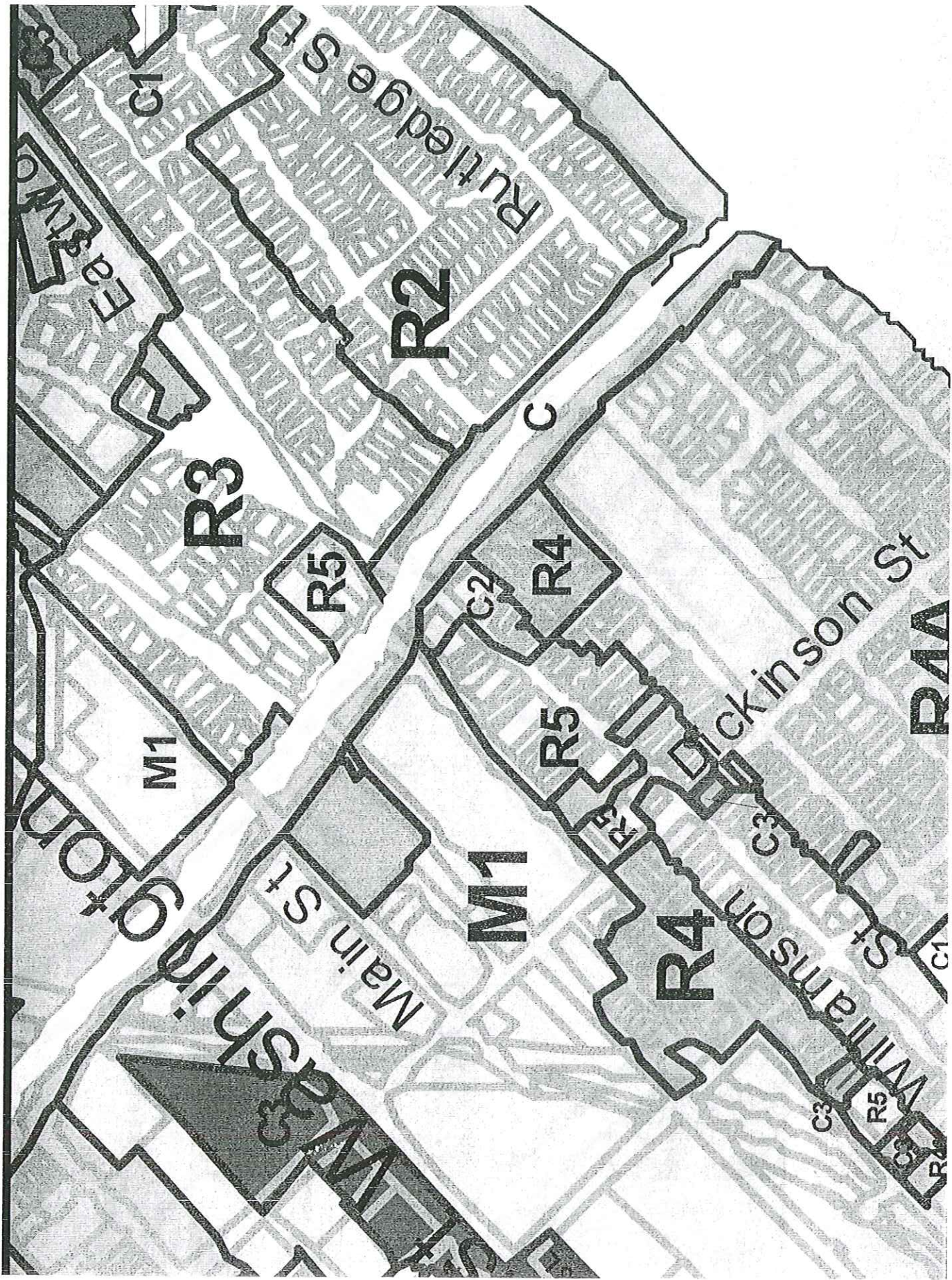
I hope this helps to clarify the planning context. If you have any questions about this information, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

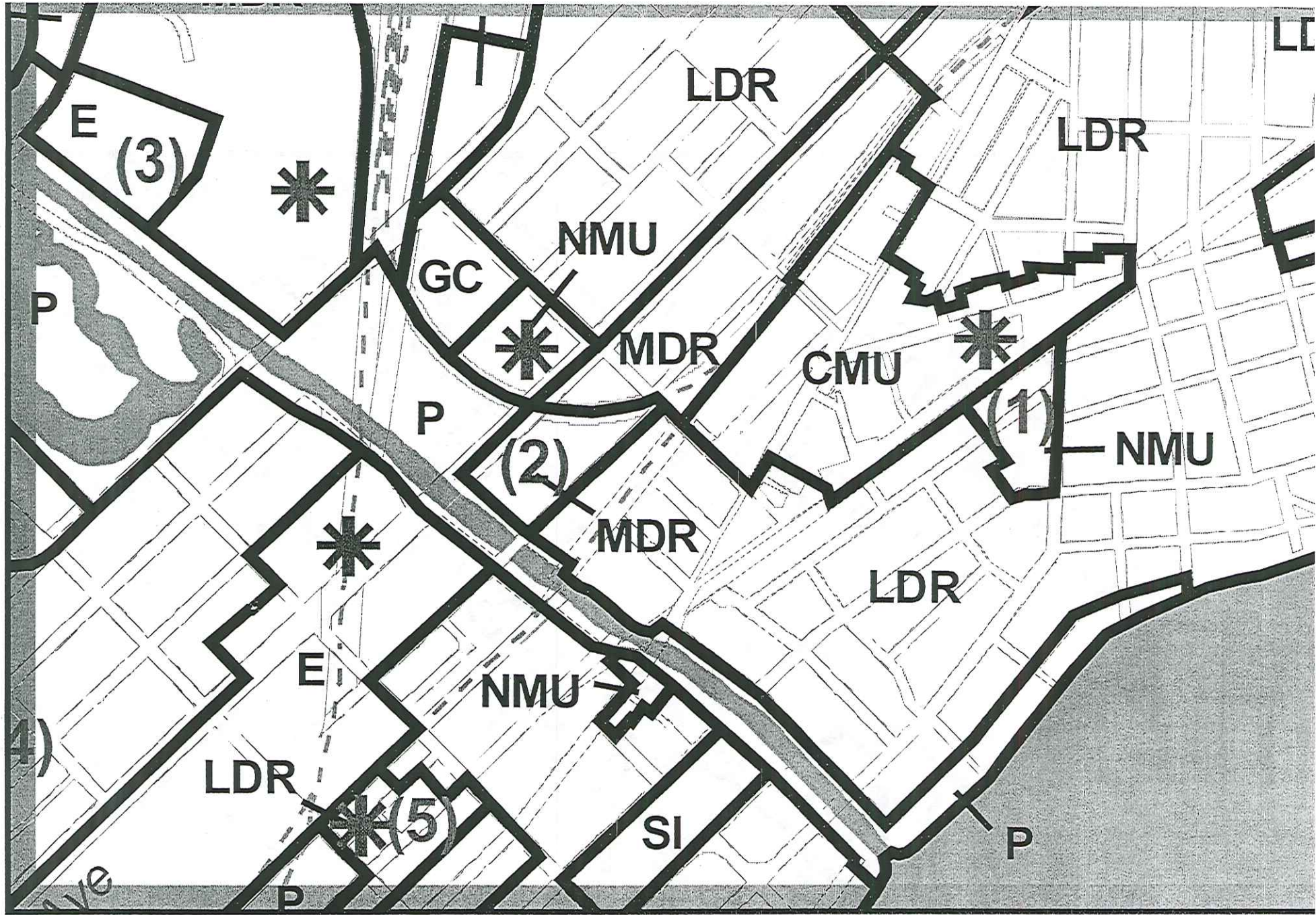
Michael Waidelich
Principal Planner

- c. Scott Thornton, MNA President
Ald. Marsha Rummel, District 6

Present Zoning



Project



Comprehensive plan



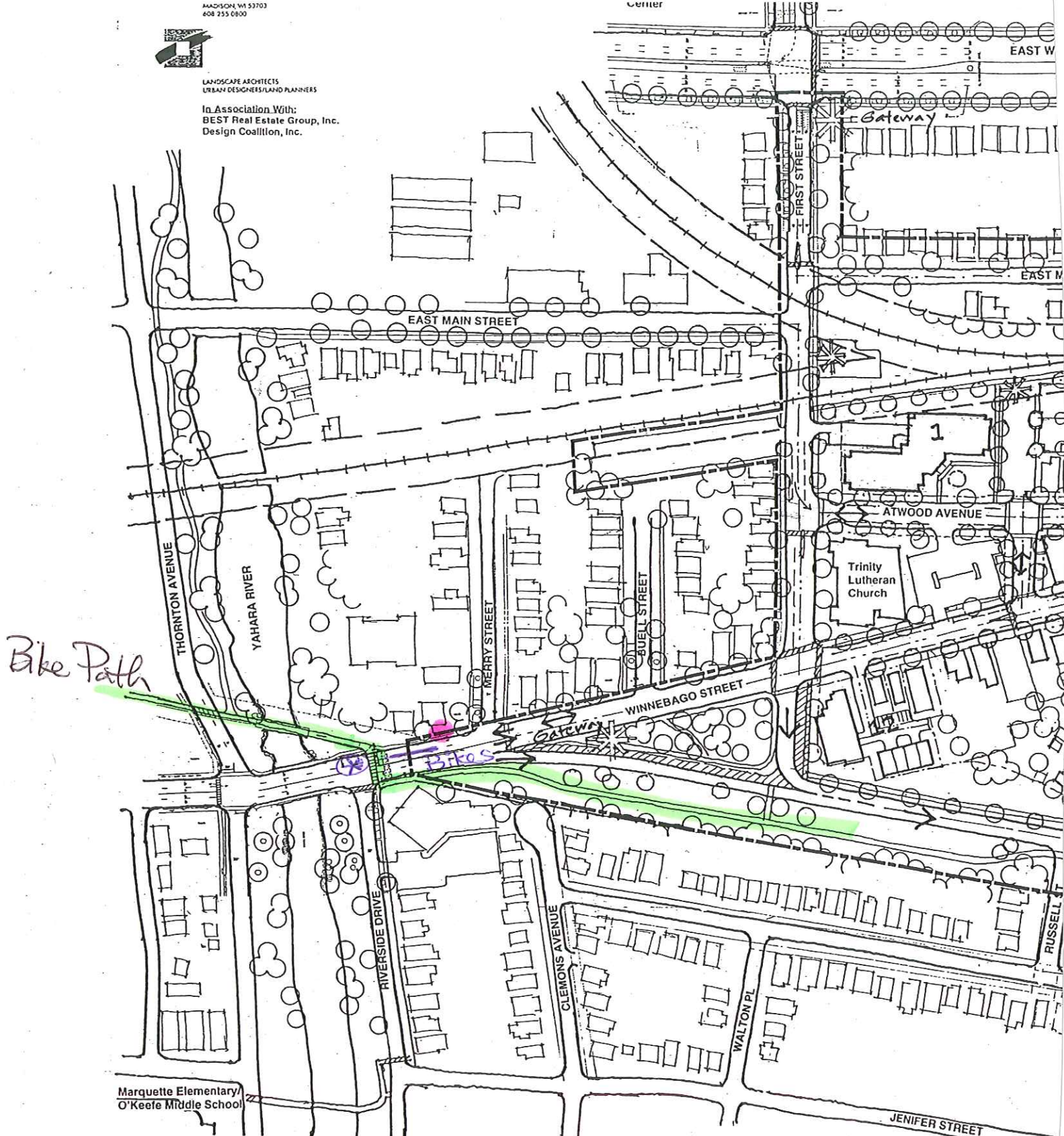
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
URBAN DESIGNERS/LAND PLANNERS

In Association With:
BEST Real Estate Group, Inc.
Design Coalition, Inc.

Bike Path

Bikes

Marquette Elementary/
O'Keefe Middle School



Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood Business District Master Plan

Concepts for Review and Discussion Purposes Only

Bikes use sidewalk also

⊗ poss. addition of bikes here w/ Winnebago re do

UDC meeting, 5/5/2010 The Apex project: What does the City want?

While zoning may be less of an issue here since the developers have applied to operate as a PUD, and while the available data is far from complete, we feel it is instructive to look at the history of zoning and land use planning for the Merry-Buell area, and in particular for the properties involved in the Apex proposal, as an indication of the City's intention for their development.

In the middle 60's, at the time the 22-unit apartment building at 222 Merry Street was constructed, a zoning map was in effect that assigned the category RM-H, signifying "high to medium density housing" to the entire area north of Eastwood Drive to East Washington Avenue and extending from the Yahara River to First Street. This zoning assignment was done in spite of the fact that the entire Winnebago-Merry-Buell Street area consisted largely of single-family sized houses. The area south of Eastwood Drive, with similar housing, was designated RLM-S, or single family residential. At the time a land use plan was developed for the area that reflected these zoning categories.

In 1964, consistent with the RM-H zoning, the 22-unit building was constructed on Merry Street, apparently against strong neighborhood opposition. After the zoning code was rewritten in 1966, the area above Eastwood became R5, while the area below became R-4a and R-2, more or less preserving the densities of the old code in this area. Significantly, from then to 1995 no other large scale multi-unit residential building was constructed. In the early 90's the owner of the 222 Merry property considered expanding the existing building, but gave up the project after the neighbors expressed strong opposition.

In 1995 the entire Merry-Buell area, with the exception of the 3 parcels currently owned by Apex, was downzoned to R-3, finally reflecting the actual use of the area and its similarity to the area south of Eastwood Drive. We could find no details about this rezoning, so why the 3 parcels now being considered for further development were not also rezoned is not clear. The most likely explanation for the 222 Merry parcel is that the owner did not want his property to become nonconforming, thus limiting its future use and possible expansion.

But why did the zoning of the 2 properties at 1626 and 1628 Winnebago, the ones that contain the smaller buildings that Apex now wants to move and demolish, remain unchanged? While we don't know the exact answer to this question, we can deduce that it was not related to the City's desire to increase housing density on Winnebago Street because the 4 houses on Winnebago between Merry and Buell were rezoned to R3 with the rest of the area. But after a fairly extensive search of City resources we could find no indication that the City either anticipated or desired higher density development at these 2 sites.

As part of our effort to evaluate the City's attitude toward development here we also examined the City Comprehensive Plan, and can find no indication of the need or desire for higher density housing in the Merry-Buell area, including the Apex sites. The Plan designates the entire area as Low Density Housing.

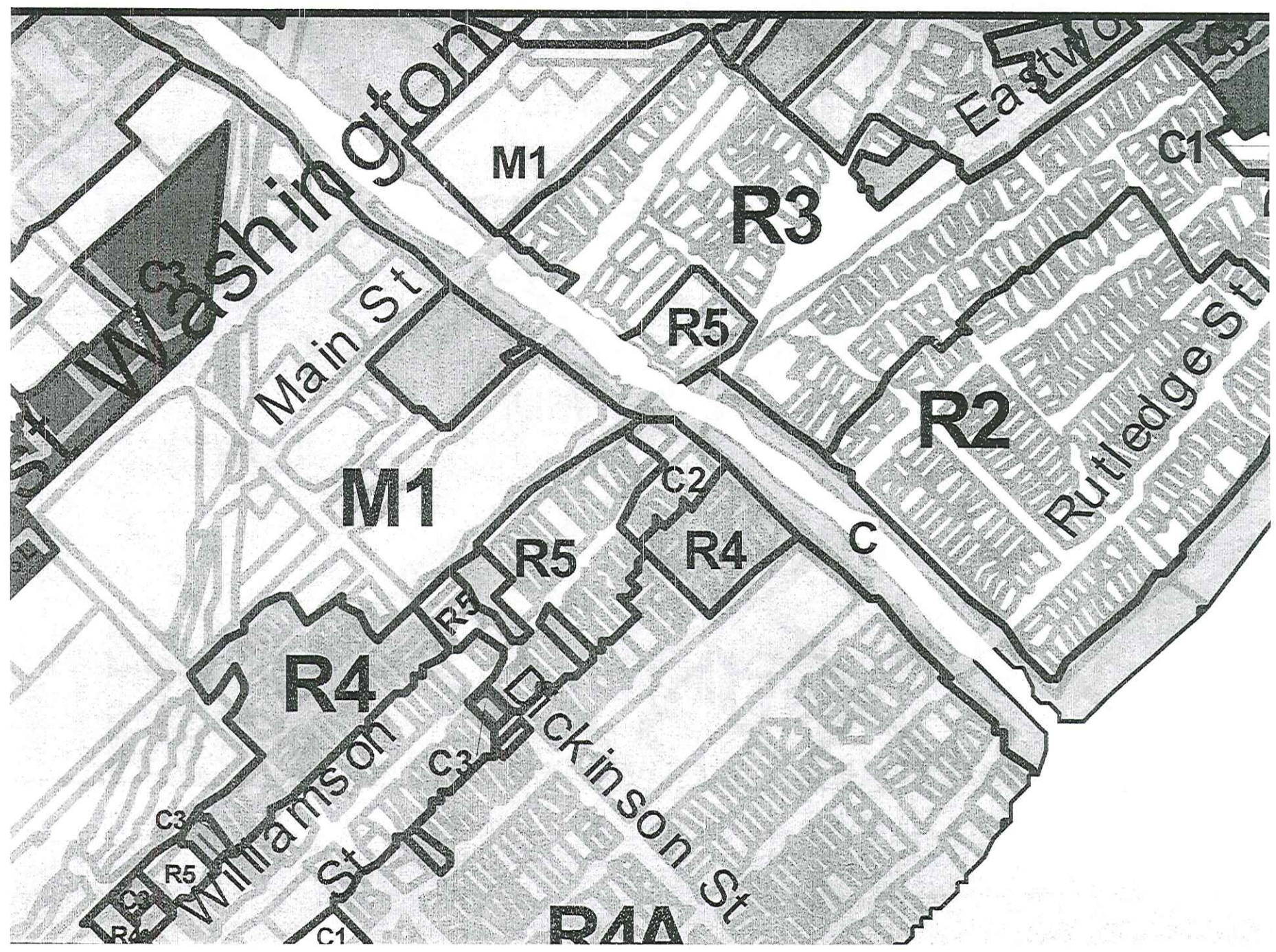
Last, but hopefully not least, there is nothing in the detailed neighborhood plans from the Marquette neighborhood or, we believe, from the Shenko-Atwood neighborhood, that call for higher density housing in this area. While the Marquette neighborhood, most of which is designated as historic districts, is understandably concerned with preservation of its buildings, we also have been concerned for a long time with increasing the housing stock in the neighborhood. As you probably know, in recent years we have supported and contributed a great deal of effort to the construction of high-density housing on Williamson Street, Wilson Street and Thornton Avenue, and to several smaller projects as well. Other projects are presently under construction or planned.

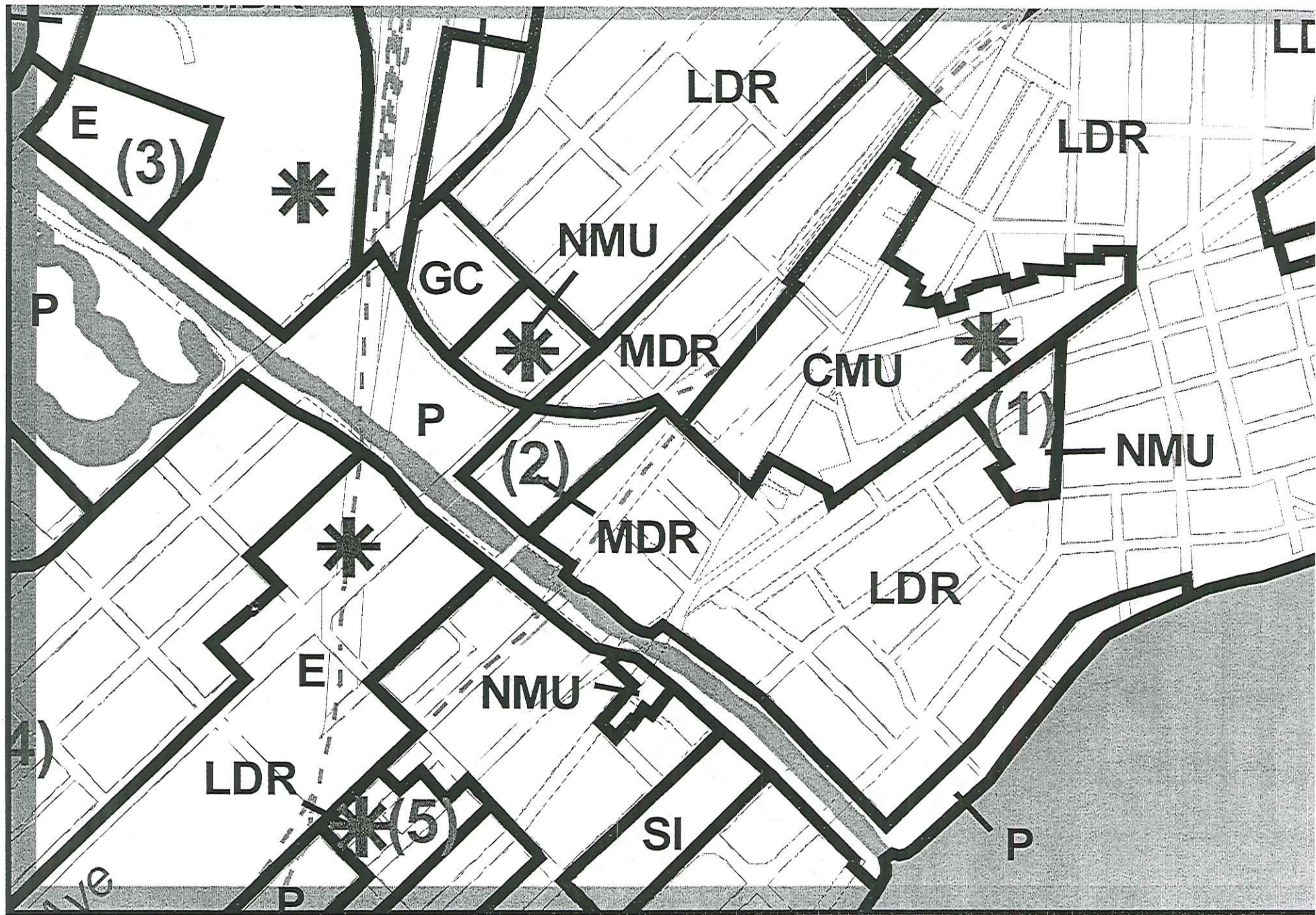
However, we have never considered large-scale housing development in the Merry-Buell area. Quite the opposite, because of the beauty, character and historic richness of this small area defined by Merry, Buell and Winnebago, those of us who are familiar with it generally regard 222 Merry among a thankfully small number of unfortunate mistakes made over the years that have had a negative effect on the quality of the neighborhood. There is a strong consensus among the neighbors, the Marquette Neighborhood Association and others familiar with the present Apex proposal that this project, far from ameliorating this mistake as the developers have claimed, would compound it immeasurably.

Thank you, Peter Wolff, MNA Preservation/Development Committee

Project

Present zoning





Comprehensive plan



Dr. Hurd House and clinic, c. 1910, looking along Yahara River Parkway across Winnebago Street. Photo: Wisconsin Historical Society, by Charles N. Brown, Image ID 3956.



Dr. Hurd House and clinic, c. 1910, looking along Yahara River Parkway across Winnebago St. Photo: Wisconsin Historical Society, Charles N. Brown, ID 3956.

(Further photos of the site and buildings may be easily seen on flickr.com, Search words: Hurd, Yahara. or Winnebago, Yahara.)