

From: Stephen Steinhoff [mailto:stevesc@tds.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 04, 2010 10:21 AM
To: Martin, Al
Subject: Apex Winnebago & Merry Street proposal

Mr. Martin:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the size of the development proposed by Apex for consideration at the May 5 UDC meeting. The scale and massing of the proposed new building is highly inappropriate for Winnebago and Merry Streets for urban context, environmental and historic reasons:

Urban context - As you can see from the attached bird's eye photo, the historic urban fabric of the residential area between Winnebago and the railroad tracks, and the Yahara River and First Street, is single-family detached buildings. Only the more recent addition of the large building currently managed by Apex interrupts this fabric - much to the detriment of the area. Doubling the volume of large buildings and units would further violate the integrity of the urban context. That is presumably why the City's comprehensive plan designates this property for low density residential.

Environmental context - The property borders the Yahara River Parkway, designated by the City as a vital public greenspace corridor. No where else along the Yahara River does a building of such scale and massing encroach anywhere near as close as Apex proposes with their new building. The riverfront greenspace has long been intended for public enjoyment. The proximity of a large four-story building will dramatically overshadow the the riverfront and significantly detract from public enjoyment. Citizens using the riverfront or river will feel more like they are encroaching in a private courtyard instead of a public space.

Historic context - The corner of Winnebago and Merry is an important historic location as the crossing of the Yahara for both Native Americans and European settlers. The high point at the corner served as the high point of the ridge along the historic pathway that was first a Native American trail and later became Winnebago. There could very well be archeological findings at the site. In addition, the Hurd house on the corner has historic significance. Apex's plan to relocate the Hurd house and flatten the rise would permanently remove this historic site and an important reminder of our past and from where we came.

There are places, such as along commercial corridors or former industrial areas, where higher density uses are appropriate and consistent with the urban fabric. However, Winnebago and Merry Street is not one of them.

Sincerely,

Steve Steinhoff

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