

To: Madison Urban Design Commission

From: Ledell Zellers

Re: Agenda Item 4 – 145 Iota Court and 619 & 625 Henry Street

Date: September 5, 2012

I'm sorry I could not be at the meeting where the 145 Iota Court and 619 & 625 Henry Street is to be presented. This is a project that is not an appropriate project for this area. The height map in the Downtown Plan for the Langdon Street area is shown in the application material. The map referenced by the applicant has a descriptive paragraph that precedes it. That paragraph is noteworthy: "During the planning process, several areas were identified with special characteristics that make it reasonable to allow the potential to consider buildings slightly taller than the recommended base height under certain circumstances. These tend to be transition areas...which include existing older structures whose long-term preservation should be encouraged, but may be threatened by the potential for high-density redevelopment. To recognize and accommodate these situations, the Maximum Building Heights Map in this Downtown Plan defines eight areas where buildings may be allowed up to two additional...stories if they meet specific criteria that reflect the unique context of the site and its surroundings, and help to advance the planning recommendations for that area." Following are two of the four planning recommendations for the Langdon area which encompasses the area of this proposed project. These provisions should be considered in reviewing the Iota Court proposal.

Recommendation 77: Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of contributing historic buildings.

Recommendation 78: Encourage relatively higher density infill and redevelopment that is compatible with the historic context in scale and design on non landmark locations and sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District.

The Urban Design Commission is charged with assuring that buildings in a planned unit development district "shall be of a visual and operational character which: a. Are compatible with the physical nature of the site or area." The Downtown Plan in the above recommendations speaks to the visual character which is intended to be present in the area targeted by this development. It includes both a provision related to scale and design and a provision that indicates that developments which do occur should be on sites that are not identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District. All three of the buildings proposed for demolition are identified as contributing to the National Register Historic District. Demolishing these buildings and constructing the extremely large footprint building which is proposed does not retain nor does it create an urban streetscape that is recommended for this area in the Downtown Plan.

In addition the PUD zoning code requires under 28.07(6)(f)4: "In a planned unit development district adequate provision for the improvement and continuing preservation and maintenance of attractive open space shall be made." It does not appear that "attractive open space" has been considered in this proposal.

Since the applicant does not appear to have provided in their informational materials photographs of the buildings which are targeted for demolition and which due to their designation as contributing

buildings in the National Register Historic District, have been specifically called out in the Downtown Plan to be preserved and rehabilitated, I have included photos of those buildings. I have also attached a photo of the building directly across the street on Iota Court from the proposed development which I did not find in the material provided to you.

Buildings Proposed for Demolition in the Langdon Street National Historic District and Context



625-31 N. Henry (building on right) – proposed for demolition & 150 Iota Court



Another photograph of 625-31 N. Henry – proposed for demolition



619 N. Henry – proposed for demolition



145 Iota Court – proposed for demolition



Front entrance of 145 Iota Court – proposed for demolition



146 Iota Court – scale and character of most buildings in area



150 Iota Court – directly across the street from 145 Iota Court