

Testimony to the City of Madison Urban Design Commission  
regarding the proposed 8Twenty Park Street  
Madison Wisconsin  
November 18, 2015

My name is Kitty Kocol.

My husband Barry Stoner and I live on the block adjacent to the proposed 8Twenty project bounded by Haywood, Brooks, Delaplaine and South Park Streets.

Our home is a dutch colonial revival cottage built in 1931. Over the past 17 years, we've restored it to better-than-original condition. It's eighty-five years old now and we hope to be living in it and doing equally well when we ourselves reach 85.

Because I was one of the neighbors who was very involved in the St. Mary's Hospital expansion project that began in 1999 and because I live so near Mr. JT Klein's proposed project, I asked to be appointed by our Alder to serve on the Steering Committee. I served with two other neighbors who also live on our block adjacent to the project.

In that capacity, we were to represent our neighborhood perspective to the Alder and Developer; and inversely, to keep our neighbors informed.

It was a bigger commitment than we expected.

**Over 10 weeks, the Developer presented five iterations of this project.** Each time we took his changes back to our group of Near Neighbors, gathered their responses and went back to the Developer with more questions and feedback. The Near Neighbors also met separately with the Alder, and with the Developer and the Architect.

After weeks of careful listening, questions, analysis and independent research, the Near Neighbor group (the people who live closest to the project) agreed unanimously that we would like to support an affordable housing development on the block *if it were developed in the scale and examples as those described in the Greenbush Revitalization Plan of 2010.* (Please see the "Preserve Madison's Arboretum Gateway" position paper.)

**We oppose this project and oppose re-zoning portions of the block, especially that portion of TR-1V that the developer proposes to rezone to TSS. The following facts combined to determine our position.**

- The Developer failed to purchase property on that block (832 and 834 South Park Street) that is already zoned TSS. Instead, contrary to the Greenbush Neighborhood Revitalization Plan of 2010, he purchased single-family residences with the expectation of incorporating the land into his development.
- Having made those mistakes, the Developer found himself in a position where he was forced to compact the project design — to fold it back on itself in a massed compound that, from its plan view, resembles square verison of the Pentagon with one corner missing.

- From years of living on Haywood Drive, I know that the residents of the short end of the Haywood building — those facing southeast — will get excellent sunlight. But many units in that building will see much sunlight.
- The design has almost no greenspace around it.
- in the final neighborhood meeting on November 5th, the Developer variably referred to his newest plan both as one building and as two buildings. He has still not made it clear whether he plans to build two buildings at the same time — or not.
- He has not made it clear whether the portion (or wing) of the Haywood Drive building would contain ANY affordable housing. In fact, if the Developer does not receive the tax credits he seeks, it is possible that NO affordable housing could result. In that case, if the Developer successfully rezones, he would be able to build luxury apartments.
- The density of this building, with 103 units (that contain 163 bedrooms) would have *at least* 5x the density of our adjacent block if all the bedrooms in the units were occupied by just one person. But they won't be, so density could be as high as 10x our adjacent block.
- The heights of these buildings (or of the wings of this one building) are 2.5 to 3.3x the heights of the our homes.
- The designs of these buildings nod to the St. Mary's Outpatient building and garage, but they have absolutely NO relationship to the residential architecture in our neighborhood. The Greenbush Neighborhood Plan Revision of 2010 says they should have an architectural relationship and scale down to the neighborhood.
- The Developer describes the building(s) as "mixed use." But the only "mix" in this otherwise residential compound is 1.75% office space that will not offer traditional shopping to the public. Again, 98.25% of this building is residential. Is a residential building with one private office objectively considered a "mixed use" building that merits a conditional use permission for a 33% greater density?
- Haywood Drive is the key access street to the Arboretum. It is the shortest street connecting lakes in this city and it goes straight in to the most natural area of the city. We do not see this building as an appropriate gateway to the Arboretum.

**A project that requires rezoning also demands a clear vision of why it is being erected and who it will serve. This proposals fails that test.**

- First, seniors were to be part of it. Then they were dropped.
- Veterans and people with disabilities were identified as important groups of residents, but we had to press to get the Developer to give parking space for visiting care givers. (There still isn't a place to unload people under a canopy.)
- Last year, there were 306, low-flying helicopter passes over the property (as the helipad for St. Mary's mediflights — which is 105' high—is less than a football field away). Veterans who have seen active duty might find this a very difficult place to live. (We long-time

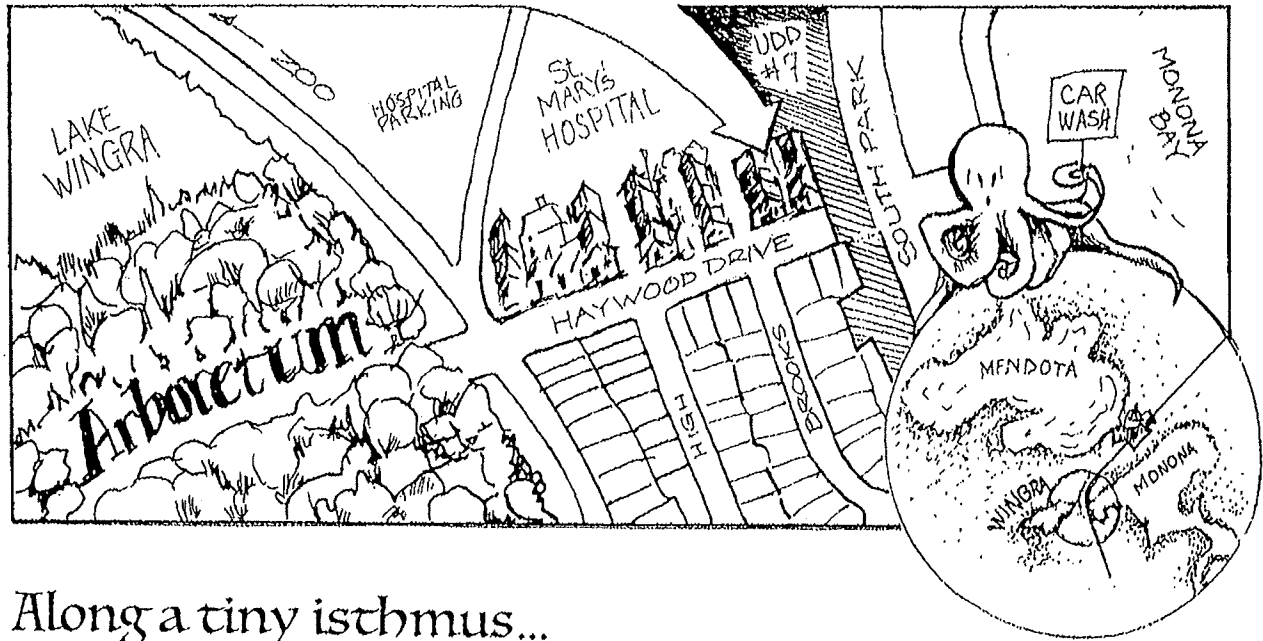
residents sometimes find these flights unnervingly close and loud, but we understand they are part of the price of living here.) From email correspondence with the referral agency, it seems the Developer had not informed the veteran-referring agency of this condition at the time he sought an MOU for veteran referrals to the project.

- The Developer has asserted that the people who live here won't drive as much as the rest of us do. We see no objective basis for that assumption. The Developer's resident parking ratio (without the visitor stalls included) is about 0.8 stalls per unit.

In closing, the primary function of a building is to serve its inhabitants. This project has had a shape-shifting identity crisis with respect to its inhabitants and its neighbors. Madison should not "end up" with the state of a design that simply stopped its necessary evolution because the Developer ran his clock out of necessary planning time. Considering the Developer purchased his first property in April of 2011, there is no reason for haste at this time.

On behalf of our neighborhood, I urge the Urban Design Commission to recommend that the Developer go back to the drawing board and work with the neighborhood on a plan that the neighbors can support. We should take the time to get this right.

# Preserve Madison's Arboretum Gateway



## Along a tiny isthmus...

just south of Madison's Downtown, our three blocks of homes line the corridor, connecting Lake Wingra to Monona Bay. We form the eastern gateway from Park Street to the Arboretum, Zoo and Vilas Park. Our homes are cottages; many were built in the 1930s. We've made considerable investments to conserve and improve them; their character and scale is a fitting transition from the urbanity of Park Street to the natural landscapes of the Arboretum.

## Our presence is an anchor.

We are resident sentinels and caretakers who stabilize this gateway. We observe the daily passage of bicyclists, Badger fans, moms with strollers, picnic packers, joggers, solitary fishermen and naturalists who use the Arboretum Isthmus. We pick up trash, give directions and maintain the quiet when needed. Though we are the south boundary of Greenbush, St. Mary's Hospital isolates us from Greenbush to the north. We face Bay Creek, where our neighbors are mostly tenants in two and four-units. Many change yearly. So we are the last resident homeowners. Our continued presence helps preserve a safe and stable environment for everyone who seeks the restorative power of the lakes, Wingra Creek, and the effigy mounds, paths, trees, and springs.

## We urge the City of Madison to...

preserve our Arboretum gateway and support its resident homeowners through wise choices for development. We urge City planners, commissioners, alders and the mayor to maintain the best of the past and carry it forward as we develop land to serve future generations. Please see the reverse for our neighborhood consensus position on the proposed development for the block bounded by Park Street, Delaplaine, Haywood Drive and Brooks Street.