

November 4, 2018

To: Urban Design Commission

Re: Movin' Out development proposal for Acewood Boulevard and Cottage Grove Road location

As a resident of the Elvehjem neighborhood for nearly a quarter century, I am writing to express my opinion that the Movin' Out development proposal would not fit in well at the old Sentry location at the intersection of Acewood Boulevard and Cottage Grove Road. I do not think this development fits well with the heritage, character, style, or design of the neighborhoods at this location.

Though located in the city of Madison, these neighborhoods have a quiet, suburban character. The Elvehjem neighborhood, described in the recently released 50th anniversary documentary video as a "great place to raise a family," is a place where children ran out the door first thing in the morning, came home for lunch, then ran back out the door and played all day. The neighborhood is comprised of mostly single-story, comfortably spaced, ranch-style houses which allow for bright, open, sunny spaces, and create an environment conducive to pleasant family life and healthy outdoor living. There are well-maintained lawns, attractive trees, and neighborhood parks. The neighborhood as a whole seems reminiscent of a brighter era.

With many of the homes built in the 1960s, the neighborhood could be described as charming, vintage, or retro. The houses have an inviting, personal, walk-right-up-to-your-neighbor's-front-door approachability. Common architectural design elements include that the homes are modest in size and scale (i.e. the size of the buildings in relation to the size of the lot), the rooflines are angled, there are many large, bright windows, and many of the house exteriors feature light colors in cheerful hues of pale yellow, blues, and greens. The original houses were built with real wood and other natural materials. The homes and neighborhood appear to have been designed with time and care and exude a feeling of openness, warmth, and cheer. Yards are spacious, providing comfortable breathing room so that people are not literally living on top of one another.

In contrast, the proposed development appears very large in size and scale. It appears to contain none of the architectural design elements common during the time period in which the area neighborhood homes were built. It appears to have a much denser, more urban character and a contemporary style. Rather than a personal, home-like environment, this development appears impersonal, boxy and institutional. The colors appear to be primarily gray and brown, and the windows appear dark. Rather ^{than} open spacious lawns, in this development, the buildings themselves appear to take up most of the lot. The tall building height appears as though it would cast long, dark shadows and create a darker, colder, more closed-in environment. Instead of real wood and other natural materials, this development calls for "engineered" and other synthetic building products. Whereas the colors of the neighborhood homes appear lighter and brighter, the colors of this development appear darker.

In all, this development would be better suited to an area attractive to people who prefer to live in a more urban, concentrated setting with a more contemporary style where it would better fit the heritage, character, style and design of the surrounding neighborhoods and be less likely to detract from their appeal.

Sincerely,

Kim

Elvehjem neighborhood

10/15/10 Additional notes:

I do not think the scale, mass, & density create aesthetic in keeping with the neighborhood's character. It is too dense, too dark, and does not fit within the character of the neighborhood. It does not positively contribute to the setting of existing single family homes and it does not create a pleasing visual relationship to them.

CITY OF MADISON

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