

O. Richard Bundy, III
President and CEO
UVM Foundation
411 Main Street
Burlington, VT 05401

January 22, 2016

cc.
Alan Ryea
Howard Lincoln
Penrose Z Jackson
J. Brooks Buxton
Mildred A. Reardon
Karen Nystrom Meyer
Brian Boardman

Dear Mr. Bundy,

We the undersigned are a group of immediate neighbors, members of the community, landscape architects and design professionals who are concerned about the proposed planting plan to be installed at the site of the Alumnae House.

It was a very positive step for the Alumnae Board to purchase the historic Edward Wells building that had been so long neglected as a fraternity house. We applaud the efforts of the Alumnae Board to restore the building and bring it back to its historic authenticity, detailing and remarkable features of historic architecture. Your work brings that original architectural value back to the university and the broader Burlington and regional community.

In completing the restoration we note that the Board employed the services of experienced and noted professionals such as Millbrook Building and Remodeling, Liszt Historical Restoration, and Lawrence Ribbecke Studios, among others. Their professional skills were essential to complete the restoration successfully.

But what about the landscape that serves as the setting and companion to this important building positioned at the prominent corner site of Summit and Maple Street? The building restoration started with a wholesale removal of plantings, which was a shock to many. Neighbors and interested people were assured when told that a landscape plan would be prepared that would be an improvement over the aging, dying and invasive trees and plants that had been removed.

The proposed planting plan, which we have been told was developed as a student endeavor, is well meaning but unsuitable. This approach fails to match the care taken with the building and fails to bring the needed professional skills to the landscape. The historic landscape could be researched, documented and brought forward with effective consideration of current and future needs, including ongoing maintenance.

Many in the neighborhood believed, as has been the UVM's practice in the past, when new buildings are built, a professional design firm would be hired to create a well designed planting plan that would complement the historic building, using the right selection of plants, appropriate for an historic site. We trusted that a professional would address the need to effectively screen homes of adjoining neighbors, screen parking from pedestrian and street traffic, plant for storm water infiltration and most importantly create a landscape that reflects the high standard

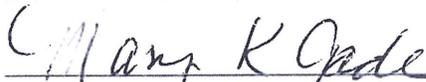
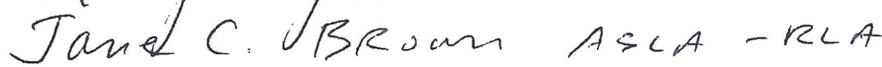
set with the renovation of the building and one that visiting alumnae would be proud of and others using the property would admire.

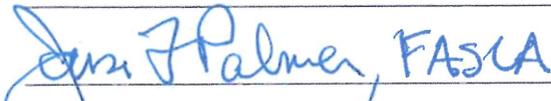
While we believe it is admirable to support UVM students in the plant sciences, the skills of undergraduates, with minimal horticultural knowledge or landscape design training and experience is not sufficient for this important project. The setting of Alumnae House, the building in which the Board has invested so much time, effort and expertise deserves an equal level of professional thought and design. The proposed planting plan will not complement but distract from the restored Edward Wells House. As well as the issues listed on the following page, concerns include the lack of any relationship to the spaces, views and character of the historic building and its early landscape, the choice and density of plantings and the maintenance burden of installing the proposed design.

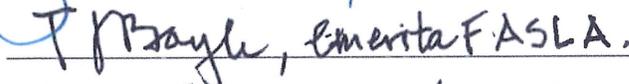
We urge the Alumnae Board to reconsider the planting plan of the Alumnae House. Representatives of the undersigned would be pleased to meet with representatives of the Alumnae Board to discuss this topic further.

Sincerely

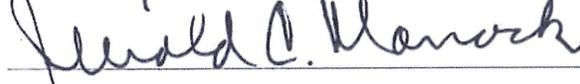

Kathleen Ryan kr.la@burlingtontelecom.net 802 863 4091

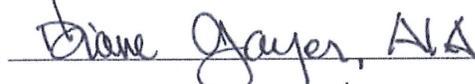

Mary K Gade

Jane C. Brown ASLA - RLA

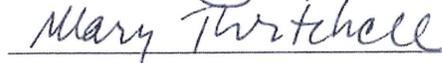

Jan Palmer, FASLA


T. Payne, Emerita FASLA.


Mary Ellen Manock


Gerald C. Manock


Diane Gayer, AIA


Mary Twitchell

Some specific issues with the plan are:

- Research needs to be undertaken, seeking early images of the building and identifying the historic landscape treatment. Such a study would inform an appropriate landscape design that supports the integrity of the restored historic building
- Many plants specified on the plan are not appropriate due to the:
 - Vermont climate and plant hardiness.
 - Plant's requirements for sun and shade
 - Mature size of the plant and space provided
 - Historic landscape of the site and the surrounding neighborhood.
 - High maintenance requirements
- The row of closely spaced pear trees on Summit Street will block the Alumnae House from view rather than frame the view of that facade.
- Although many large shade trees were cut down from the property (see graphic below) only two new shade trees are indicated; American elm, a disease prone tree (no disease resistant variety is indicated). The two elm trees are arbitrarily located, together, on one side of an entry drive.
- The four large evergreens, screening the neighboring properties, are planted too closely and will lose lower branches as they mature and no longer creating an effective screen. Poor choice of screening vegetation.
- No pedestrian level screening is provided for the enlarged parking area on the Maple Street side of the property.
- The many small perennial plants indicated as ground cover will require extensive maintenance or will need to be replaced.
- 237 Hydrangeas shown on the plant list as perennials are shrubs growing 3 ft. wide x 3 ft high, which will cover approximately 2,637 square feet. It appears this amount of growing space has not been provided.
- Many of these hydrangea plants dieback in the fall and will be difficult to maintain.
- Many of the less hardy plants indicated will not survive in the long run and need to be replaced.
- Many symbols indicating proposed trees are not labeled or shown on the plant list.
- Many plants on plant list indicate plant species but not variety, which is essential to indicate size and hardiness.

In summary, the plan is not reflective of professional level work in all ways but most importantly in the level of design needed for such an important site.



Trees and large shrubs that were removed from Alumnae House Site