From:	Gary Rosenberg
To:	Bauman, Robert; Historic Preservation Commission; Mayor Tom Barrett; planadmin
Subject:	March 9, 2016 Goll Mansion Redevelopment Hearing at 1522 N. Prospect Ave.
Date:	Sunday, March 13, 2016 11:45:44 PM

An Open Letter to Alderman Bauman

DATE: March 13, 2016

RE: Goll Mansion Redevelopment Project
Hearing of March 9, 2016

FROM: Gary D. Rosenberg
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Milwaukee, WI 53202

CC: Department of City Development: City Plan Commission
Historical Preservation Commission
Mayor Tom Barrett

My overwhelming impression of your hearing on the Goll Mansion project last Wednesday evening, March 9, is that the architect was not prepared for it: how vague, equivocating, and confusing most of his answers to reasonable questions were. Even the responses that he presented with some clarity had deeply troubling implications—not least for your vision for development of the Prospect corridor and greater Prospect neighborhood whose potential is put in some jeopardy by the project's shortcomings.

First, the architect was not a representative of the developer's company; the developer's absence and his failure to send an agent who could speak with clarity to company plans, policies, procedures, and goals was either his thoughtless omission or his strategic blunder.

Whatever, the consequence is that at the very least the meeting was woefully premature.

Vague answers to the effect that the developer is working with the City to answer calls for revisions or for more information on any number of questions—for example, fire protection in the completed building as it affects neighboring property.

Vague answers to how semi trucks serving a potential of 579-some renters would manage ingress and egress into the building, let alone their impact on traffic flow along Prospect, especially during rush hours, as well as to ambulances that frequently transport patients to hospitals from the Jewish Home, not to mention to your proposed trolley (which I assume will be not a small boutique, tourist trolley but a large multi-car commuter transport of the type proven effective in Europe and progressive American cities).

Vague answers regarding the extension of the building eastward over the bluff—the dimensions and crucial issues of structural integration with and impact on the public Oak Leaf Trail below are apparently still up for modification (an extension equaling 30% or more of the total length of the building, whether to build bike and pedestrian access down the bluff to the Oak Leaf Trail and what it will look like, etc.).

Admission that the proposed 230,000 square feet of residential units with a potential of up to 579 renters exceeds by a factor of two the 110,000 square feet and by many times the 35 owners of the 35-story condo approved for the site by rezoning several years ago—but little awareness or consideration of the consequences of the greater impact on transit and parking in the neighborhood.

And here, I must express some concern for your statement that impact on neighborhood parking is not an issue because your sources tell you that millennials, whom the building is meant to attract, are abandoning cars in favor of mass transit.

Well, maybe. Maybe the article, "Millennials arriving in car market," in today, Sunday's MJS (Business Section, March 13, p. 5D) is wrong. Maybe Steven Szakaly, chief economist for the National Automobile Dealers Association, is wrong when he is quoted in the article as saying, "The whole idea that they [millennials] are not going to need cars is absolutely ridiculous." Maybe he is wrong to claim that millennials have only waited a while longer than usual to buy cars for various economic reasons and that they are doing so now.

And yet if the article is correct, then maybe the City will facilitate a renaissance of the Grand Avenue Mall and the rest of Wisconsin Avenue with uncharacteristic speed and on a scale grand enough to satiate millennials' urges to drive to Nordstrom's out west, find physicians and dentists beyond the reach of proposed mass transit, sit in mega movie complexes miles away, and dine and drink in restaurants and pubs back in the burbs with mom and dad.

Or maybe prudence demands that zoning should at the very least allow for the possibility that millennials may indeed start buying cars in numbers that put pressure on parking and traffic flow in the Prospect neighborhood.

I must laud your public support of historic preservation. But under this proposal, the mansion becomes nothing more than a façade, an empty shell that has vacated the history of one of our City founders who made Milwaukee famous. According to the fumbling architect Wednesday, maybe the interior will become an administrative and maintenance office for the apartment building, maybe for other professional offices, maybe lots of things. But no trace of the original owner of that building could ever be found in the midst of all that irrelevance.

Finally, I must strongly react to the architect's waffling on monitoring and indemnifying nearby residents' property—my property and that of other owners at 1522 and nearby--for damage due to construction. I am a retired geology prof, educated at UWM and UW-Madison, who moved back here 3 ½ years ago after teaching and researching some 35 years outside Wisconsin. A colleague at UWM who is a State Certified Professional Geologist with many years' employment in a national consulting firm, informed me that such developers routinely work with nearby property owners to provide for monitoring and indemnifying their property for problems arising due to construction problems.

Why, he even told me that the City of Milwaukee provided such indemnification during the Big Tunnel Project, which did in fact cause damage due not only to vibrations but also to withdrawal of groundwater during construction. And here along Prospect we have

something like 150 feet of soft soil overlying soft bedrock into which the developer's construction company plans to pound pilings until the pilings no longer sink deeper. Sound waves are seismic waves, and the disturbance is almost guaranteed to crack plaster and do other damage at 1522 and other nearby buildings. My insurance agent told me that his company most certainly does not insure against such risks unless, for example, a crane falls on my property or the construction crew blows the circuits in my condo. So, I can only hope for a catastrophic loss.

I repeat, the March 9 hearing at 1522 N. Prospect was at the very least grossly premature, the developer's failure to show inexcusable, his architect's presentation ranged from ambiguous to disturbing, and it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed Goll Mansion redevelopment project would be a disruption to the Prospect Avenue neighborhood.

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