

Date February 13, 2008  
To Zoning & Neighborhood Development Committee  
From Andy & Elaine Schwartz, 2585 North Summit Avenue  
Subject Special ZND Meeting  
Council File No. 071365  
2574-90 North Downer Avenue

**Position Clarification**

We were informed by our neighbors that at the January 28<sup>th</sup> HPC meeting, DCD reported that the "neighbors" – i.e. Elaine Miller Schwartz – approved the design of the rear elevation of the Downer Garage. We just found out that this approval was a requirement of the HPC Subcommittee directed to consider the rear elevation for the COA.

Please be advised that Elaine Miller Schwartz did not approve – for herself or on behalf of the neighbors – the current design when approached by Bob Greenstreet in August 2007. We think that belief arose after a brief on-the-spot encounter at DCD between Mr. Greenstreet and Ms. Miller Schwartz. Possibly in response to an email from Andy Schwartz to Mayor Barrett, Bob directed Elaine to "stay here" and that he had something to show her. Elaine was presented with a large, black and white drawing of the rear elevation. Her initial "personal" reaction – and not that of any neighbors – was that the revised design might work. The new design – consistent with the facades – was simplified from earlier versions and looked like it might have texture and color variations. **HOWEVER**, her response was "show this in color and get me some color renderings that I can take to the neighbors."

Is that the "approval" envisioned by the HPC subcommittee? We do not think so. Plus, why would DCD rely on the initial reaction of just one party when four or five other households are impacted?

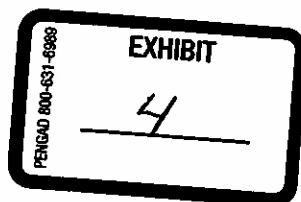
Ms. Miller-Schwartz's involvement was initiated by DCD and she made clear from the start that she would consult with neighbors. Ms. Miller Schwartz believed she was DCD's liaison to the neighbors. To place her in the position as sole arbitrator is unfair and hurtful to her and the neighbors.

**What can the Council do?**

We request that you direct this design and file back to HPC. We request that Paul Jakobovich of HPC meet with the four or five neighbors that are critically affected by this design. He can then relay the information to the HPC Subcommittee. We will convene quickly to prevent delay to the developer.

The rear/East elevation needs to be corrected. Don't confine your review to black & white drawings. The wall is a huge, dark grey mass.

Of the neighbors, we likely have the great impact given the width and placement of our house. We see it every time we walk up and down our stairs, exit the back door and drive up the driveway. We see it from our living room, office and daughter's bedroom. We're not even safe in the bathroom. How is this sensitive to a historic district and residential neighborhood?





Driveway

Back door

Yard View



Going up the Stairs



Going Down the Stairs



Bathroom



Living Room

Office view

Bedroom View

Some design suggestions:

- ◆ Lighter color is critical. The concrete may be stamped, but it can be painted or a lighter colored material attached. The front spancrete is much lighter in color. Why?
- ◆ Add landscaping – climbing vines (like at the Kenilworth building) or very tall, but thin evergreens
- ◆ A mural? Maybe one like the building on Wisconsin Avenue – a ghostly image of Downer?

Images of Bellevue Facades –



As a reminder, we on record at this committee as not totally opposing to the garage. We objected to the excessive height, mass and lack of sensitivity to adjacent properties and North Point District.

We bought our house with full knowledge that we were moving into a historic district. We have played by the rules as have our neighbors. Many go above and beyond "appropriate" efforts to accurate and expensive restoration. We take district stewardship seriously and believe everyone benefits – us personally, our immediate neighbors, the district and the City. The developer should do the same.

We ask that the Council "do no harm" and direct the HPC Subcommittee to reconsider the rear design to be appropriate for the North Point District.

Sincerely,

Andy Schwartz

Elaine Miller Schwartz