

TO: City Planning Commission

Re: Project 220401, proposed 55-unit apartment building for 2600 block of Hackett

From: Kay Wosewick, 2633 N Hackett Unit E

August 20, 2022

I have submitted a document to the CPC titled "Neighborhood Opposition Letter" endorsed by nearly 50 neighbors. But I have additional objections to the proposed apartment that deserve the CPC's attention. Like the prior document I prepared, my most important comment is backed by data. I have a couple other opinions to add as well.

I've examined the types of buildings that reside on neighborhood blocks. **A very clear pattern of complementary neighborhood structures offers factual evidence of the inappropriateness of a 55-unit, modern apartment building on the 2600 block of Hackett.**

The 2600 block of Hackett is within an easily identified, distinctive neighborhood that is unlike any other in Milwaukee. It contains residences, small condominium units and a couple of churches. Over 99% of the construction was completed in the late 1880s through the early 1900s. Only a couple new buildings have been erected in this neighborhood since the early 1900s; while they do not match the quality and historical feel of the rest of the neighborhood, they at least do not call attention to themselves, probably because they are sited on wide streets where larger buildings are more appropriate.

The neighborhood I am referring to is defined by the following boundaries: the north side of Belleview, the east side of Downer, the south side of Kenwood, and Lake Park to the east. It is a neighborhood of unparalleled consistency. A neighbor's or visitor's stroll through this neighborhood would immediately lose its historic coherence as soon as they arrived on the 2600 block of Hackett and were visually bombarded by an out-sized modern apartment building. **The historic experience would be lost just before they reached the heart of the Downer Avenue Business District at Café Hollander.** A 55-unit apartment building near the end of this historical neighborhood walk would ruin the neighborhood's historic feel. Forever. Be assured, many people walk down this block nearly every day of the year.

While I clearly oppose the proposed 55-unit building, **I am certainly open to the idea of new RM3 condominiums or rental units that visually blend with the neighborhood.** As suggested above, it is of utmost importance to maintain the historic feel of the neighborhood on this last block leading to the heart of the Downer Avenue Business District. **This means new construction would have to genuinely adhere to the Downer Avenue Historic District Guidelines for New Construction.** Pretending that those guidelines are nonexistent or no longer meaningful (as happened during the historic review of the new church addition and the 55-unit apartment building) is not acceptable.

The City of Milwaukee must cherish its last intact historic neighborhood; to deny that would set precedent for eliminating more quality housing stock in favor of quick and cheap buildings that will become new sites of decay in 20 to 30 years. Milwaukee already has a plethora of

shopping strips built not long ago that have been abandoned in favor of new strip malls. These sites can take down the neighborhood immediately around them. The city cannot afford to repeat these retail mistakes with poorly constructed and poorly maintained new housing. St Mark's circa 1950 addition is probably a great example of a poorly designed and constructed building with a short shelf-life. Milwaukee must develop strong policies that favor retention of quality construction. Fewer, better paid, better housed residents will be what adds real value to Milwaukee. Simple number growth alone is meaningless if it disintegrates in a generation. Quality, not quantity, should underly plans for Milwaukee's future.

Data supporting this above objection can be found at the end of this letter.

My second objection involves the color of the brick proposed for the 55-unit apartment. The visual impact of the proposed building is highly understated in the CPC Applicant Presentation document located on this project's Legistar site. It jumped out at me as I was scrolling through the slides and my fingers stopped halfway between slides 30 and 31. Slide 30 is a photo of several different color combination options for the proposed brick. Slide 31, and many before it, supposedly depicts the proposed apartment building, but the brick in all the mock-ups is a much, much lighter shade of red than the photo of the actual brick. **The much lighter color substantially reduces the visual impact of the huge 55-unit building**, making it appear far less domineering that it would be with the proposed brick. **A mock-up depicting the brick color accurately would very clearly demonstrate the inappropriateness of this building on the 2600 block of Hackett.**

Lastly, opinions which require absolutely nothing of the person giving them, e.g., no personal risk of ridicule or retribution, no risk of financial harm, no risk of rejection by family, friends, coworkers, or other associates they value, **are void of substantive (material) value. They are meaningless. They are not worthy of consideration.**

Only a very tiny number of supporters of this project live close enough to the proposed development to have their lives permanently altered. It requires no personal sacrifice for someone to give their full support to something that will have zero effect on their personal lives. They have nothing to lose by offering their generous support of a development that does not affect their daily lives. **All of these opinions should be stricken from the records.**

See below for data supporting the first opinion addressed in this complaint.

Regards,
Kay Wosewick

NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

- Using Milwaukee's GIS maps, I have reviewed the composition of the neighborhood in which the proposal resides. The data is largely hand-written and not easily translated to a computer, so I have summarized it below.
- **The neighborhood I am referring to is defined by the following boundaries: the north side of Belleview, the east side of Downer, the south side of Kenwood, and Lake Park to the east.** I've counted the following (numbers could be off by a small amount)
 - 394 houses built in the late 1800s and early 1900s
 - 51 duplexes built in the early 1900s
 - 6 triplexes built in the early 1900s
 - 1 five-plex built in the early 1900s
 - one rental building with 4 to 6 units built in 1906 on the 2700 block of Shepard
 - 18 condominium buildings: the largest is Stonehenge, on 2600 Hackett; only one condo building has been built since the early 1900s: a 4-unit on Park and Downer
 - 2 "townhouses" for which I cannot ascertain the # of units they contain: a 1922 townhouse on Downer and Kenwood, and a 1946 townhouse on Downer and Locust
 - up to 4 rooming houses, none of which were built later than 1922.
- **Notably, as soon as Downer and Belleview are crossed, a very different picture emerges.**
- **First, south of Belleview**
 - The south side of Belleview from Downer to Terrace contains
 - 7 single family homes
 - 2 4-unit condos
 - 3 7-11 unit apartment buildings
 - The northwest side of Lake from Belleview to Downer has
 - 2 single family homes
 - 1 triplex
 - 2 condo buildings: one with 22 units, one with 2 units
 - 1 4-6 unit apartment building
 - 2 7-11 unit apartment buildings
 - 1 21+ unit apartment building
 - The southeast side of Lake from Belleview to Downer has
 - 7 single family homes
 - 2 4-unit condos
 - 3 7-11 unit apartment buildings

- **Heading west across Downer, below are profiles of the 3 nearest blocks**
 - On Stowell between Park and Belleview, on the east side of the street
 - 1 single family home
 - 1 duplex
 - 1 4-6 unit apartment building
 - 1 7-11 unit apartment building
 - 1 12-20 unit apartment building
 - 1 21+ unit apartment building
 - On Stowell between Park and Belleview, on the west side of the street
 - 1 church
 - 3 single family homes
 - 1 triplex
 - 1 2-unit condo building
 - 1 7-11 unit apartment building
 - On Stowell between Belleview and Webster, on the east side of the street
 - 1 21-unit apartment building
 - 1 large empty lot
 - On Stowell between Belleview and Webster, on the west side of the street
 - 1 7-11 unit apartment building
 - 2 12-20 unit apartment buildings
 - 1 21+ unit apartment building

- **Net, the neighborhood bounded by Downer, Kenmore, Lake Park and Belleview have been 99%+ unchanged in the over 100 years, containing a large swath of single-family homes sprinkled with some duplexes and small condominium buildings.** A single apartment building, constructed in 1906 and containing only 4 units, visually mixes with the neighborhood. Two newer townhouses and one condo unit have been built since the 1940s, but none stand out as radically inappropriate structures for the neighborhood.

- **The areas immediately outside of the solid neighborhood described above has a wide mix of housing options, and thus DOES NOT have the feel of an intact, historic district with varied housing that meld together. The neighborhood is dominated by apartment buildings of various sizes,** sprinkled with single family homes and a handful of duplexes and small condominiums. The large empty lot on the corner of Webster and Stowell would be a more appropriate location for a higher-density apartment building, though perhaps not as large as the one currently proposed for Hackett.

- The Downer Business District is unique to Milwaukee in that it is adjacent to an untouched historic neighborhood filled with beautiful architecture. The idea of destroying this intact neighborhood with an over-sized modern apartment building is abhorrent. **New construction would be welcomed if it was both scaled appropriately and designed with style and materials that align with neighboring buildings.**