

MPA

MILWAUKEE
PRESERVATION
ALLIANCE

Honorable Members of the Milwaukee Common Council
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

September 13, 20107

Re: File #170406 – Proposed DPD at 1550 N. Prospect Avenue

Dear Council Members:

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance (MPA) was founded in 2003 and grew out of citizen concern regarding an inappropriate commercial development planned for a historic boulevard. MPA successfully worked to inform and connect people interested in saving the rich heritage of the neighborhood. Our mission is not simply to protect the past; it is also to build public awareness, appreciation and support for the distinctive historic character of the city of Milwaukee in order to nurture more livable communities.

We appreciate this opportunity to offer the historic preservation perspective on the proposal to move the historic Goll House and to build an inappropriately massive apartment tower directly behind it. For the reasons below, we urge you to reject the proposed Detailed Plan Development.

First, there has been almost no historic preservation input into the project. The previous DPD, approved about nine years ago, was approved after the developers contacted and asked to meet with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and MPA. There were a series of presentations and frank discussions about further developing the site while restoring and preserving the Goll House. The developers committed to restoring the Goll House in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation governing exterior and interior spaces. A Memorandum of Understanding was drafted and signed. The current developer has done none of this, to the best of our knowledge. Nor are we aware of any effort by the City administration to ensure that the Goll House is appropriately preserved.

Second, there appears to be a misconception that the Historic Preservation Commission approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to allow the Goll House to be moved is an endorsement of the proposed building and zoning change. It is not. Alderman Bauman made it clear that he supported the COA while opposing the proposed tower. Similarly, MPA supported the COA to move the mansion (on the condition that it was the only means to keep the Goll

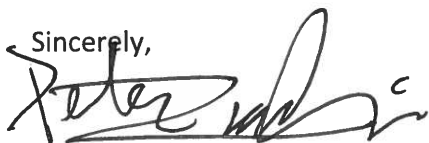
Mansion from being demolished). MPA however, did not support the new proposed development or zoning change.

Third, on the merits, the current proposal treats the Goll House like an afterthought. The proposal requires the fragile mansion to be moved twice. The massing and position of the #170406 proposal will destroy the aesthetics of the Goll House. In 2008, the tower emerging from behind the Goll was stepped back and designed with a narrow silhouette so as to increase openness between adjoining buildings and increase the backdrop of sky and light falling between neighboring buildings and Prospect Avenue. By contrast, the current proposal appears to allow for very little if any daylight. It is large (93 feet wide on a 100 foot lot) and directly behind the Goll House, dwarfing the historic building and making it appear as though the mansion was plopped down in front of the new building. In short, none of the care for historic preservation of the Goll House that went into the previously approved plan seems to have gone into this one.

While we oppose this project, we do wish to express our support for legislative File #170817, in which Ald. Bauman proposes to make some of the developer's promises enforceable. As it relates to the preservation of the Goll House, this resolution would require the developer to post a bond to ensure the safe movement of the house. This is necessary to provide an adequate incentive for the developer to move the house carefully. We believe that such an assurance is especially appropriate since there is no indication that the developer has done anything to protect and preserve the mansion during the yearlong period that he has owned it. The mansion continues to be neglected. I ask you to take this modest step to ensure that the mansion is not destroyed while it is being moved.

For these reasons, we believe that sound historic preservation concerns mandate that the proposed DPD be rejected. If the developer wishes to pursue appropriate means of historic preservation, we are prepared to engage with him. Further, if the proposal is defeated, we are prepared to work with the City and with the neighbors to identify potential uses of the Goll House site that would preserve the mansion properly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Zanghi", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Zanghi

President

Milwaukee Preservation Alliance