

From: Theresa Miller [mailto:tmmiller99901@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2017 1:21 PM
To: planadmin
Subject: 1550 N Prospect

To the City Planning Commission,

We oppose the zoning change for 1550 N. Prospect Ave. The lot is zoned to accommodate a high rise already; the proposal asks you to endorse a high-density housing project instead. Our opposition falls into three categories, all under the heading of “too much”: Too much for the site; too much for the Goll House; too much for the bluff.

First: We are next-door neighbors. Please note: Our names are not in a single record opposing any development at 1550, before Mr. Houden visited town with this one — though we bought our home while a different proposal was being considered. We oppose this, specifically.

Development, with reasonable conditions, surely has a future on this site. A high rise well suited to the area, in the city’s comprehensive plan for the Prospect Avenue Corridor, will have “the combination of a more massive base with a taller more slender tower to allow greater space, i.e., view corridors, between the tower to the lake.” Look at that description, then look at this border-to-border behemoth.

The Madison developer’s drawings refer to “2008 zoning,” implying that his proposal is more modest than what he could do without special permission. His wants 192 small (mostly studio and one-bedroom) apartments. The zoning in place allows 35 condominium units. He knocks a few feet off each (non-neighbor) end of his building, builds it not quite as tall as currently allowed— and increases the housing units by roughly 450 percent. This is not a modest increase. Are there other tall buildings on Prospect? Of course (a lot of them are crying out for renters at the moment). But they aren’t shoehorned onto their lots. The developments suit the lots — and the developers were required to make certain they were protecting the integrity of the bluff, *before* any piles were driven.

The 120-year-old historic Goll House is unlikely to tolerate being moved twice, as proposed. The owner’s lack of attention has done little to improve the chances of its survival, but under optimum circumstances, preservationists tell us that the success rate of such moves is 50 percent. Even non-statisticians know that moving a fragile treasure twice lowers that rate. City officials who are interested in historic preservation can’t seriously consider this a viable preservation technique. The developer is virtually winking as he suggests it is; please don’t wink back.

Concern about the stability of the bluff is overriding. The developer, claiming to have taken neighborhood concerns into account (not yet having met with neighbors — and remember when he tried to sneak this proposal through the back door without any public notice just a few months ago?), now has magnified these worries by extending the building far over the bluff. Normally, engineering studies come before changing zoning to enable more stress.

Please require these studies before giving this visiting developer the go-ahead for a plan that affects more than just the neighboring private properties. The Oak Leaf trail, for instance, will be directly under this housing project. It’s possible, at this point, to ensure that things are done right. Please do. Thank you.

Theresa Miller and James Huston
1522 N. Prospect Ave.