

Date January 18, 2021  
To: St. Paul City Council  
Email [ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
RE: Appeal of HPC approval construction of three townhouses at 542 Portland Avenue

Councilmember Dai Thao

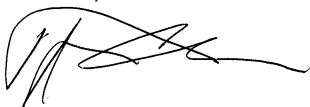
I am writing to urge support of the HPC decision to deny the project at 542 Portland Avenue. They were correct in their contention that the project should be revised to better fit our neighborhood. It is wrong for the City to accept an argument for a project where people certify that black is white and big is small. We should not make decisions based on false premises, not matter how cleverly disguised.

For the City of Saint Paul to accept that the proposed development at 542 Portland conforms to the HPC guidelines and Zoning Ordinance requires as many leaps of faith as it does to believe Donald Trump won the 2020 election. In addition to what is stated in the appeal I would note:

1. The proposal is too large with too many units. If it wasn't, it wouldn't need 6 variances to fit on the site if it wasn't.
2. The three townhouses, tower over and dominate the neighboring accessory buildings at the back of their lots. They are not appropriately scaled for their position on the lot as is required for new construction..
3. The Developer, HPC staff and commissioners have to pretend that the townhouse are connected more with Summit Avenue than they are with the Portland Avenue. This creates a false narrative that is a falsehood in the Historic District.
4. To make the non existence connection to Summit Avenue the developer makes the back door the front door. This is just silly. The historic district does not support Disney Land make believe, dressed up rear elevations. It should not now.
5. To reach the entry to the units at the rear of the buildings requires a 200 to 250 ft walk from the street. This is not in the common pattern of the historic district and out touch with the modern requirements of and access and delivery service.

I think it wrong to force this project, fit like a ship in a bottle into our Historic District. It is a curiosity on paper but should not be built. It will not strengthen our neighborhood or contribute to the historic district many of us have worked to make and preserve.

Sincerely



Peter Carlsen, AIA  
482 Dayton Avenue, St. Paul