

October 21, 2020

Board of Zoning Appeals
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101
Attn: Matthew Graybar

Dear Members of the Board,

This letter is in support of the appeal of the October 5, 2020 Board of Zoning approval of six variances at 540/542 Portland Avenue in St. Paul. As property owners and an architect with 37 years of experience living approximately 80 feet from the proposed structure, my wife and I have the following concerns:

1. As an architect I have been involved with making many requests for variances throughout the Twin Cities. I have always worked with the zoning departments to minimize the requests since city ordinances create order in the city and are the law. On any project I have never requested more than one or two variances because the need for more I believe indicates that the project is not suited for the site. I firmly believe that the request for six variances on this small city slot clearly shows that this project is too large for the property based the following:
 - a. Required 2,500 square feet of lot size per unit. This proposal is under the required square footage by 2,507 square feet or by one unit. This is a variance of 17%.
 - b. The primary entrance is required to be within the front third of the property. The proposed project entrances are in the far rear of the site and face Summit Avenue to which the proposal has no access. From the street address, the proposed entrances can't be seen at all as you enter the site. Again, not meeting the requirements of the law.
 - c. 10 off street parking spaces are required – the proposal when a handicap stall is designed will only provide six spaces legal spaces. The developer is proposing to provide vehicle lifts within the garages for three additional spaces which will likely rarely be used due to their complex operation. This is a variance of 40%. And, due to two large apartment buildings less than a third of a block away which have no parking, parking is difficult in the area.
 - d. Minimum lot width is 20' per unit as required in this zoning district. Six units – three existing and three new require 120'. The existing lot width is 46.08' for a variance of 73.92'. The proposal is providing only 38% of the required width by law.
 - e. The minimum rear setback (which faces Summit) is 25'. The proposal provides 15' which is a variance request of 40%.
2. As indicated above, the variances requested clearly show that this proposed project is too large for this site. We believe a project is possible on this lot but much smaller than the one proposed.

We hope you will consider the appeal and we hope changes can be made to the proposal so that it becomes a benefit to the neighborhood.

Sincerely
Nick Marcucci, Ann Schroder
552 Portland Ave.

CC: Gar Hargens, Missy Thompson