

MINUTES OF THE ZONING COMMITTEE
Thursday, August 28, 2014 - 3:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

PRESENT: Edgerton, Merrigan, Nelson, Padilla, Reveal, and Wencil
EXCUSED: Makarios and Wickiser
STAFF: Samantha Langer, Jake Reilly, and Peter Warner

The meeting was chaired by Commissioner Nelson.

344 Summit Boutique Hotel - 14-316-432 - Conditional use permit for reuse of large structure for a hotel, 344 Summit Ave, between Western and Virginia

Jake Reilly presented a revised staff report with a recommendation of denial for the conditional use permit. He explained a memo that was distributed to the Zoning Committee that summarizes the changes to the staff report, provides information on comprehensive plan consistency, and offers potential changes to the staff report. He stated District 8 recommended approval with a condition, and there were two letters in support and six letters in opposition.

Upon questions from the Commissioners, Mr. Reilly explained the Zoning Code has no definition for a boutique hotel.

The applicant, John Rupp, 366 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, explained his extensive qualifications to undertake this project. He formed a business to restore and preserve historic buildings in Saint Paul and his objective is to reinvent historic buildings to be economically viable and major contributors to the neighborhoods they are in. He has many successful properties he has renovated. He currently owns hotels, and restaurant and catering businesses that are very highly rated. This property, at 344 Summit, has been on the market for many months, and there are substantial problems with the home that are expensive and complicated to fix. It is very unlikely that a single family home owner would purchase this home. Mr. Rupp explained that a boutique hotel isn't part of a chain, rather they are independent and site specific. They are designed to be very accommodating and usually priced at the top of the market. This particular project will be at the top of the market with rooms ranging from \$295 to \$800 per night. He said he sincerely believes that the neighborhood would benefit from unique hotels. The hotel would be great for neighbors to house their guests. His ambition is to create the finest boutique hotel in the state. He provided the history of the property. He has proposed ten rooms because it is a very high end project and the rooms need to be very spacious. The hotel use on this property is an economic platform to protect the home over time. He explained it will not be a catering venue. There will not be a dining room at the property. Mr. Rupp explained he owns the University Club and guests will have privileges to use their facilities. The guests will have breakfast delivered to their rooms, also provided by the University Club. He spent several months working with city staff before he proposed the project to the neighborhood. He has worked with neighbors and neighborhood groups for months to get as many concerns as possible incorporated into the project. He has met the petition requirements. Cathedral Hill has a great mix of uses, such as bars and restaurants, public parks, retail stores, churches, a variety of residential uses, and it would support this hotel very well.

Mr. Rupp referred to the opposition by some of the neighbors. He compared it to two other projects, the Commodore and the University Club, that both met with opposition at the time they were originally proposed. It was argued that those projects would hurt the residential character of the neighborhood and the critics were wrong, he said. He also referred to the staff report denial that states the project isn't in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan because of the definition of a hotel use being commercial. This is not a full-service hotel, it is a boutique hotel, and there is not a definition for that use, he said. This use is basically a 10-unit furnished apartment building with the following exceptions: it can be rented in increments of time shorter than a month and it has a reservation system. There is no commercial food service, no restaurant on site and they do not sell any products other than rooms. He noted that currently there are online websites renting properties that are not regulated, inspected, or licensed. These properties aren't required to have off-street parking either. Mr. Rupp explained the parking at the property. The garage on the property is not practical for use. The off-street parking spaces can be accommodated in the driveway and three can be in the street in front of the house. He stated that the width of the property allows for a number of cars to be parked in front of just the property at 344 Summit. There will be very limited deliveries in a small van or car for amenities for the guestrooms.

Michael Belaen, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, Director of Public Affairs and Legal Counsel, 401 Robert Street N, spoke in support. He submitted a letter (see attached).

Martin Lorenz-Meyer, 353 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, spoke in opposition. He submitted a letter (see attached).

Eric Lein, 361 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, spoke in opposition. He submitted a letter (see attached).

Mark Voerding, 113 Farrington Street, Saint Paul, spoke in opposition. Mr. Voerding stated that in 2008 the American Planning Association (APA) recognized Saint Paul for its efforts to retain the historic character and residential nature of Summit Avenue. It identified the neighborhoods' and Planning Commission's efforts to develop and implement the Summit Avenue Plan. In accepting the award, Mayor Coleman said, "Its designation by the APA is an affirmation of my claim that Saint Paul is the most livable City in America." Mr. Voerding stated that Saint Paul is this way because we lead and do not try to become what other cities are. As he sees it the application before you presents two options for the City; first, if this proposed business use is approved then we need to send the award back to the APA, or second, we keep the award and the recognition that it stands for and continue forward with the earlier efforts to protect Summit Avenue and all of the city's residential zones from intruding businesses. Mr. Voerding stated he disagrees with the staff interpretation of standard 4a. There has been no evidence that suggests that three or four condo units would not be marketable. The applicant has not demonstrated that the property cannot be used or sold for other uses that would be permitted in this district. Finding 4c suggests that the business use is compatible with surrounding residential uses because it is less intrusive than the College of Visual Arts. Schools and churches are always more intrusive than residential uses and that is why they receive special treatment under the zoning code. To apply that special treatment in this case is simply wrong. In the end it comes down to what the zoning code will permit. This property is located in a RT2 zone, and the intent of the zone is to provide for a variety of housing needs and to serve as

zones as transition between one- and two-family residential districts. This district is not intended for more intensive uses such as small conference centers, private retreat centers, and reception houses. A hotel is first permitted in a T2 zone or intensive B3 zones. A hotel is not a permitted use in any residential zone. He urges the Committee to deny the application.

John Rupp responded to testimony. He stated he basically agrees with the neighbors. He does not want to see any business uses either. This is semantics. If he asked for permission to have ten apartment units and permission to rent them more than once a month there wouldn't be a debate. There is a lot of weight just on using the word hotel that is unnecessary. If you are willing to support this proposal add any conditions you need to protect the renters.

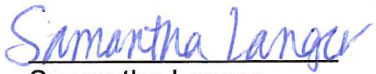
The public hearing was closed.

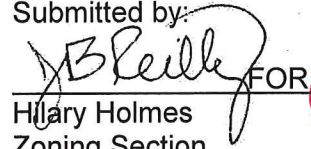
Commissioner Julie Padilla stated she does acknowledge that this is a commercial use, but it is allowed by a conditional use permit in this instance. She noted to the people who testified, that what they might not have seen, is an alternative that was presented to the Committee with specific conditions that could be added that would address a number of the concerns that were raised during testimony.

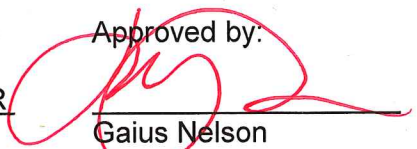
Commissioner Padilla moved approval of the conditional use permit, subject to amending findings 4(b) and 5(a) to be consistent with the comprehensive plan, on the basis of the two Heritage Preservation Chapter strategies outlined and on the basis of the proposed use being similar to permitted residential uses in character. She also recommended amending findings 4(d) and 5(b), to be met, subject to meeting conditions as follows: 1) A minimum of three off-street parking spaces must be provided on the property, subject to approval by the Heritage Preservation Commission. 2) The property will not be used as a reception hall, banquet facility, or assembly hall. 3) The applicant will acquire all necessary and appropriate licenses and permits prior to establishing the use. 4) All exterior alterations to the structures and site must be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission. 5) No food or beverage service is to be offered to the general public. 6) Changes to the driveway to provide for all non-commercial vehicles to exit forward onto Summit Avenue. 7) All commercial vehicles providing delivery or services must be accommodated on site, without blocking travel, parking or bicycle lanes, or the public sidewalk. 8) All site work to accommodate conditions for this use must be approved by the appropriate entities and completed before the use is established. Commissioner Barbara Wencil seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 4-1-0.

Adopted Yeas - 4 Nays - 1 (Nelson) Abstained - 0

Drafted by:

Samantha Langer
Recording Secretary

Submitted by:

FOR
Hilary Holmes
Zoning Section

Approved by:

Gaius Nelson
Chair

ZFH 14-316-432
344 Summit



August 27, 2014

Zoning Committee
City of Saint Paul
375 Jackson Street, Suite 220
Saint Paul, MN 55101

VIA EMAIL

Re: Zoning Application of 344 Summit Avenue

Dear Members of the Zoning Committee:

As the State's largest local chamber and a strong supporter of expanding the tax base through private investment, the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce (SPACC) supports the proposed use of 344 Summit Avenue as a boutique hotel. Accordingly, we urge members of the zoning committee to approve the conditional use permit(s) (CUP) requested by the property owner.

For over 50 years, the property functioned as the Saint Paul College of Visual Arts (COVA). However, in 2013, COVA closed its doors leaving the property vacant. The property owner is proposing to invest in the property, converting the vacant building into a low-intensity, high-value use that will expand the local tax base. SPACC believes the boutique hotel would enhance the community while preserving the historic nature of the neighborhood.

As discussed in greater detail below, SPACC believes the proposed use satisfies the applicable general CUP-standards enumerated in Saint Paul Legislative Code § 61.501.

1. The extent, location, and intensity of the proposed use are in substantial compliance with Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed use is consistent with Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the proposed use is consistent with the Established Neighborhoods description in the Land Use Chapter. Established Neighborhoods are described as, "predominately residential areas with a range of housing types with smaller scale scattered multi-family housing *and scattered neighborhood-serving commercial, service and institutional uses*" (emphasis added).¹ The boutique hotel will undoubtedly serve the neighborhood by offering a unique getaway experience.

Presently, the area where the proposed use is located contains a number of large houses that serve a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and institutional activities. The proposed use is

¹ Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Chapter LU 4 (2010).

less intensive than many of the multi-family dwellings located in the established neighborhood, residential uses that have always been consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, the boutique hotel is certainly less intensive than the previous use of the property as a college serving more than 300 students.

Additionally, the boutique hotel will also serve to further bolster several critically important trends identified in the Comprehensive Plan: (1) an evolving downtown and (2) expanding the tax base to pay for city services.² The proposed use will offer downtown visitors a one-of-a-kind place to stay in Saint Paul. The boutique hotel will be located in one of the most beautiful neighborhoods in the world, only blocks away from downtown. Moreover, as funds for public services become harder to find, it is important to identify new ways to expand the tax base, particularly in a city that is fully developed. This project provides the city with that opportunity by converting a property that was previously exempt from *ad valorem* taxes into one that pays annual property taxes.

Finally, the proposed use is consistent with Historic Preservation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. The boutique hotel will restore a historic resource compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. It will also rely on historic preservation to further economic development and sustainability of our community.

2. The proposed use will minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

The proposed use provides adequate ingress and egress and will minimize traffic congestion in the public streets. The boutique hotel will provide a significant improvement in congestion on public streets and walkways as compared to the COVA. With over 300 students at its peak, the COVA brought significant traffic to the neighborhood. The property owner has agreed to refrain from hosting any banquets or weddings that would bring additional traffic to the location. The COVA operated for years with significantly higher parking and traffic demands on the neighborhood without issue. A 10-room boutique hotel, featuring no weddings or banquets, will cause traffic congestion to drop to levels not experienced for more than 50 years. And because of easy pedestrian and transit access in the area, it is reasonable to believe many guests will arrive without cars.

3. The proposed use is not detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood and does not endanger the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

The boutique hotel will complement the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood while maintaining the historic nature of the district. Currently, there are a number of large, historic house being used for multi-family and commercial uses in the area. A boutique hotel is consistent with the existing uses. The proposed use offers an alternative dwelling type that will benefit the neighborhood as a whole.

² Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Chapter LU 5-6 (2010).

Pursuant to Saint Paul Legislative Code § 66.214, the intent of an RT2 district is "to provide for a variety of housing needs and to serve as zones of transition between one- and two-family residential districts and multi-family residential districts and business districts." The boutique hotel will accomplish both of these goals by offering a housing need not currently met in the neighborhood and providing an alternative lodging option for visitors frequenting the nearby business districts of Grand Avenue and downtown Saint Paul.

The proposed use is not detrimental to the neighborhood. In fact, as noted several times above, it is significantly less intensive than the previous use, which was not considered detrimental to the neighborhood. As referenced in the zoning committee staff report, dated August 21, 2014, the RT2 zoning district is not intended for use by "small conference centers, private retreat centers, and reception houses." The boutique hotel, however, will not provide a conference center, offer a private retreat center, or serve as a reception house. The property owner has agreed to refrain from these activities.

4. The proposed use does not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties for uses permitted in the district.

The boutique hotel does not impede the development and improvement of surrounding properties. The proposal does not call for any exterior changes to the property and is significantly less intensive than the previous use by the COVA. By taking a use that was not an impediment and making it significantly less intensive than the previous use, it cannot be said the new use will impede development or improvement of surrounding properties. Moreover, as detailed above, the proposed use cannot be considered a small conference center, private retreat center, or reception house based on conditions set out by the owner.

Conclusion

In summary, SPACC supports the CUP application for 344 Summit Avenue. By approving the permits needed for the proposed use, the City of Saint Paul will expand its tax base through economic development premised on historic preservation, offer a unique one-of-a-kind place to stay for visitors, and improve the historic character of the neighborhood. It should also be noted that surrounding property owners overwhelmingly support the proposed use. Accordingly, SPACC urges members of the zoning committee to support this project.

With kind regards,



Michael J. Belaen
Director of Public Affairs and Legal Counsel

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2014 3:56 PM
To: Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)
Subject: RE: 344 Summit

From: Martin Lorenz-Meyer [mailto:martinlorenzmeyer@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2014 3:26 PM
To: Holmes, Hilary (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Re: 344 Summit

Hilary,

as you suggested I am submitting the below letter as an official comment concerning the application for a conditional use permit for 344 Summit Avenue. The earlier note written by Ted Lenz to John Rupp is also attached for your reference.

I believe this letter to be of interest to the committee since this communication speaks to the larger issues which this application raises, in particular if a commercial business should be allowed in the residential neighborhood of Summit Avenue and what such decision would mean for the future of Summit Avenue as a whole.

The comment has been cosigned by Steve Balej of 312 Summit.

Thank you very much.

Martin Lorenz-Meyer

Ted,

a few weeks ago you sent an extensively distributed message in which you expressed strong support for John Rupp's application to use the residence at 344 Summit as a hotel.

You offered an elegant discussion of the topic, yet unfortunately neglected and ignored many of the major and minor, more inconvenient concerns which result from the above proposal. Many of those are outlined at this website <http://www.344summit.mn.cx> which I urge you to review.

Let me discuss some of your major arguments in more detail:

You point, firstly, to the "unique residential character of Summit Avenue" and its value as a historical showcase. In that connection you mention Disney World and Colonial Williamsburg as other such examples and state that the increase of hotel capacities at those locations has led to higher levels of "public participation." As you know both of those parks are purely commercial ventures whose goal is to attract visitors while presenting a certain version of history. The "recent

expansions of lodging options" are intended to further that commercial mission to bring in more tourists or "active participants" as you vaguely coin them. I am not certain how those two ventures compare to the case under discussion here but I would question whether the future of Summit Avenue lies in turning it into a historical park with increased lodging to bring in tourists.

You find that a hotel will not alter the "residential look and feel of the street," yet consider this point only in connection with any additional buildings which might be erected. However, even without new buildings, a hotel is a very different operation from a private residence and will therefore have great implications for any residential neighborhood. Parking in the area, an issue which you pointingly ignore, will not improve by having many cars vying for a spot. The constant delivery of supplies by truck, the permanent coming and going of guests day and night, etc., are not residential in character either. Signage, in comparison, appears to be a minor issue, but is the only one you elect to mention.

You argue that "Summit Avenue today appears stronger than at any time in the past 170+ years." That is very true and shows the great success St. Paul and everybody concerned with the fate of Summit has had in preserving and improving Summit Avenue. Apparently a successful formula thus currently exists. However, you then inconsistently argue that now we have to try something new, making a mockery of those good past efforts. It is a logic which is frankly not supported by the development so far.

Indeed, we have currently on Summit a number of projects which continue along the path laid out in the past. A number of very large houses on Summit have recently been sold, are being renovated and used as single-family houses. This is true for two houses right in the close neighborhood of the proposed hotel which allegedly cannot be used as a single family house. Aside from single family use, zoning on Summit is flexible enough to allow the building of condos at 344 Summit, leaving enough leeway for residential purposes without turning it into a hotel.

Another issue is that the current zoning does not allow for a hotel on Summit Avenue, in comparison to the former College of Visual Arts which was permitted as a school. A hotel would compromise the residential zoning designation of Summit Avenue, for now and the future. What does such a decision mean for the validity of zoning laws in the city? For example, why should there not be more hotels along the Avenue or maybe a conference center?

To allow a hotel is a very consequential decision for the future of Summit Avenue in its entirety. As much as you are eager to make this decision for the Avenue, I wonder if other residents agree with the potential consequences. On the other hand, such a future would go nicely with your vision to turn Summit Avenue into a historical park with lodging.

You write that in the 1950s and 1960s "many large mansions had been divided into small apartments" which were rented at low rates. The plans as submitted for 344 Summit call for ten units, each with small kitchens. I fail to see how those current plans differ from that use of the past which supposedly we have left behind.

Any good and functioning business will try to expand its operations in the future. The project might begin as a small hotel with certain restrictions. However, as you are certainly aware the building

and the views are very nice (if not to say spectacular) and I fail to see how the aim would not be to make this property the premier wedding destination in St. Paul. Within his realm, John Rupp hosts over 140 weddings per year and those events are the more profitable the larger they become. To rent out the building for outside events, banquets, and overnight stays for whole parties, etc., is, from a business standpoint, a very good plan. You express great trust into the capabilities of the city to regulate and control the future operations of 344 Summit. However, any such task will put more enforcement burden on the city and the neighbors, even presenting the prospect of future litigation, a cost which surely is undesirable.

As the above discussion demonstrated, turning 344 Summit into a hotel raises major concerns for the future of Summit Avenue as a whole. These need to be addressed and discussed, especially by the neighbors which will feel its immediate consequences, before such step is taken.

Martin Lorenz-Meyer, Ph.D.
Historian
353 Summit Avenue
(which is directly across from 344 Summit Avenue)

Steve Balej
312 Summit Avenue

Note to John Rupp
John -

I strongly support your proposal for a apartment/boutique hotel at 344 Summit. I believe that the proposed reuse of the 1915 W. P. Davidson House will strengthen Summit Avenue as a residential street of unique architectural merit and quality.

Some personal observations that led to this statement of support:

1. Adaptive reuse of 344 Summit to an apartment/boutique hotel will permit new, desirable levels of participation in Summit Avenue. By providing 344 Summit as a place to gracefully stay overnight on Summit Avenue, some of the thousands of Summit Avenue's yearly visitors can participate more fully in the unique residential character of Summit Avenue. The possibility of becoming a resident for a few days satisfies that desire many people feel when visiting historic sites to live, even briefly, within the celebrated community. To walk the streets of F.Scott Fitzgerald, James J. Hill, Frank B. Kellogg, Warren Burger, Garrison Keillor and meander back to your room for the night will have value for 344 Summit's guests. An audience exists of people wishing to have all of the delight of living in a great mansion without requiring a Bed and Breakfast experience.

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia and Disney World, Florida are two locations where the expansion of lodging options within the district have become important features to increase public participation.

2. This proposed reuse of the 344 Summit provides an alternative that expands the potential uses of Summit Avenue without altering the residential look and feel of the street. Any use or addition that would be offensive to the community will not be acceptable to investors. The value of 344 Summit apartment/boutique hotel lies with integration and support of the existing historic and architectural character. Any physical additions at 344 Summit that would diminish the look and feel of the Summit Avenue streetscape would substantially reduce 344 Summit's attraction, rental rates and potential for success.

For example a cited fear of inappropriate signage on the building while probably addressed by the City of St. Paul signage regulations could not occur in a manner that would diminish the sense of building quality.

3. The proposed conversion of 344 Summit expands the capacity of Summit Avenue to remain strong which supports the ongoing investment and continued physical upgrading of the Historic Hill District.

While the past forty year process of stabilizing and securing the health of Summit Avenue has worked well so far, additional options are needed to retain Summit Avenue's value as a community resource.

4. Minimal downside risk. Summit Avenue has had decades where many buildings were used in less desirable ways but often those short term uses such as multiple apartments units or religious order houses helped to preserve unique assets that have been lost in virtually other city in the United States.

During the period from 1920's through the 1970's Summit Avenue benefitted from unusual uses that permitted retention of sufficient numbers of structures to provide a foundation for the last 40 + years of rediscovery and reuse. (note - A few of these events are elaborated in a paragraph at the end of this note)

While Summit Avenue today appears stronger than at any time in the past 170+ years, as we enter the next phase of expansion of the public uses, the Summit community must find options that open new opportunities. An apartment/boutique hotel appears to be a good choice to pursue at this time.

5. The 344 Summit proposal opens Summit Avenue to a new use and new uses are risky. That risk is one I believe we as a community should support. If it works because of popular demand, well delivered we all succeed. If there are additions to this development that undermine the character of the street the business will fail. We have some controls within the City of St. Paul that can be utilized but most importantly we have a street that is so public and city residents that are so vocal that a visibly disruptive use will cause the business to fail. A hotel use that depends so heavily on the quality and character of a residential

environment unique in the United States cannot permit itself to become a bad neighbor.

Summary -

I am reassured by the projects as described in the written and drawn documents. I support this inventive adaptive reuse of one of the great homes on Summit Avenue and believe that this proposed use of 344 Summit, the 1915, W.P. Davidson House, designed by architect Thomas Holyoke deserves community support.

Ted Lentz, AIA
692 Summit Avenue
651-468-8946

Some personal observations of Historic preservation events in the Historic Hill-

When the St. Paul's Historic Hill District was recognized as a National Historic District by the U.S. Department of the Interior in the mid 1970's, Summit Avenue's many mansions and distinguished structures served as an anchor for the much larger Historic Hill District. Summit Avenue's well known and highly visible level of architectural quality and imagination supported the many efforts to capture some of that magic to the streets and neighborhoods adjacent to Summit.

Appearances were deceiving. At that time nine of the largest mansions on Summit Avenue, including the James J.Hill mansion, were owned and maintained by the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Without the efforts of the Archdiocese and the resident priests, brothers or sisters over a 40-60 year period these homes would have been lost or consumed by over use. As the neighborhood became more popular in the 1970's the Archdiocese sold these properties to purchasers who usually substantially enhanced their buildings either for single family use or in the first efforts to create large, prestigious condominiums.

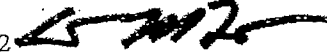
At the same time many large mansions had been divided into small apartments, often one room apartments-with a bathroom down the hall, many that rented for \$50 to \$85 per month. Other American cities that legislated to save their "Mansion Row" by forbidding any use other than single family homes lost all their mansions by the 1950's. St. Paul's zoning and building officials' benign neglect of these non-conforming uses permitted many of those mansions to remain available for reuse and renovation once the period of reinvestment began in the 1970's.

The residents of Summit Avenue, St. Paul and the entire Twin Cities benefit from those decisions of the past century, decisions that while often accidental now seem strategically brilliant.

Brief bio for Ted Lentz: My wife, Ona, and I have owned our home at 692 Summit Avenue since 1974. I am a registered architect. In the 1970's I worked with Old Town Restorations as a volunteer and staff. I am currently President of the Cass Gilbert Society and serve on the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Board

(SARPA). The opinions in this list of observations are personal and not official positions of those boards or associations.

2F # 14-316-432
344 Summit

Date: August 24, 2014
From: Eric Lein, 361 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102 
To: Hilary Holmes, City of St. Paul PED, 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th Street, St. Paul, MN 55102

344 SUMMIT, File #14-316-432: I respectfully request that the St. Paul Planning Commission and its Zoning Committee deny the conditional use permit for reuse of large structure for a boutique hotel and deny the modification of standard §65.132(d).

Since 1992 my wife and I have owned and lived at 361 Summit. My grandmother bought the home in 1962, my parents moved here in 1973, and we look out our front windows directly at 344 Summit. Unfortunately (for us) we are just 18 feet too far away to fall within the Boutique Hotel's 100-foot radius for required solicitation of petition signatures.

I OPPOSE the granting of a conditional use permit for a "**Luxury Boutique Hotel**" at 344 Summit that would:

- (1) dismiss the concerns of neighbors who live almost directly across the street;
 - (2) allow non-residential (commercial) "hotel activities" in our RT2 residential neighborhood;
 - (3) waive requirements for off-street parking; or
 - (4) disregard the fact that the site provides almost zero ingress/egress for the hotel's traffic.
- **Zoning Code Section 66.214. Intent, RT2 townhouse residential district.** "...Because of its residential nature, this district is not intended for more intensive uses such as small conference centers, private retreat centers and reception houses."
 - **EVENTS.** Our supposedly-residential RT2 neighborhood already has four "party-venues" located within two blocks of 344 Summit [275 Summit + 301 Summit + 420 Summit + 79 Western Ave N]. In my opinion, we do not need one more.
 - **PARKING.** "...off-street parking spaces shall not be within a required front or side yard and shall be a minimum of four (4) feet from any lot line." (Sec. 63.312, Setback.) Off-street parking can reasonably be provided on site at 344 Summit and existing requirements should not be waived. Long ago, today's overall site had two houses and two sets of gardens, not just one. This very large double lot has more than enough space for lovely gardens and the required off-street parking. Experienced owners and developers of luxurious hillside property anticipate complicated construction and above-average costs, and they adjust purchase and/or sale prices accordingly.
 - **INGRESS/EGRESS.** Although the CUP application is silent on this topic, developer John Rupp stated (verbally to the SUPC District 8 board on 07/22/2014) that he will continue to seek a liquor license for his luxury hotel. Along with up to ten rooms filled with overnight sleepers and their three cars, a hotel with a liquor license will bring events, events will bring employees and service workers and traffic, and traffic means lots of cars...plus plenty of trucks...including demands by commercial users for vehicle ingress and egress – all trying to enter, exit and park at the property via the single narrow driveway on frequently-busy Summit Avenue. **Bottom line?** Large and small delivery and service trucks will be forced to back into traffic, or truck drivers will simply choose to legally double-park and block traffic whenever curbside spaces are occupied (see City code Sec. 157.09, Double parking).
 - **MIND THE GAP.** The City of St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan highlights a report by the Brookings Institution, "Mind the Gap." The Gap widens when Cities hand out special favors that, almost exclusively, are for the benefit of very-high-end clientele (in this case, by waiving requirements for residential zoning, off-street parking, and adequate ingress/egress). Yes, the previous users of 344 Summit filled our neighborhood with their cars and eclectic ways. And, yes! I appreciate walking out my front door, along Summit, and throughout my neighborhood knowing that the City has handed opportunities to public education, to residential treatment centers and to sober houses filled with a diverse mix of adults who need relief so that good people can create new directions in their lives.

Although not part of the current discussion, if community conversations continue regarding reuse of this large structure, I want to acknowledge that I will support purely residential uses for more than four units at 344 Summit if conditions are attached that ensure long-term follow-through by current and future property owners, that clearly and permanently:

- prohibit commercial activities (i.e. receptions, retreats, conferences, banquets, etc., etc., etc.);
- prohibit the temporary use or permanent transfer of a liquor license for use at the property;
- require all delivery & service trucks, limousines & busses to park & load/unload on the property (not in the street; not blocking the city sidewalk; etc., etc.);
- require current and future owners to create and at all times maintain access to sufficient off-street parking (on-site; not stacked; without modification of standard §65.132(d)); and
- address the concerns of other nearby and across-the-street neighbors.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion. Please contact me if you need clarification or have concerns.