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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Caroline Baum and I have lived on the 21-hundred block of Lincoln Avenue since 2005. It is interesting that I am writing this letter because I am a life-long University of St. Thomas student. I did Post-Secondary there in high-school, finished my undergraduate degrees there, also obtained my Master's and when I found out we were pregnant I signed up my son to be in the St. Thomas Child Development Center. St. Thomas has been a huge part of our lives and continues to be so.

I remember driving down here for the first time in 1995. What struck me the most about St. Thomas was the proximity to the residential homes in the Macalester-Groveland area. The thought of having neighbors so close made me feel cozy. Studies show that houses with detached garages and side-walks are safer because the neighbors all know each other and keep track of one another, like a family. I vowed to move to this neighborhood someday. In 2005, my dream to live in this neighborhood finally came true and I cannot see myself living anywhere else. My neighbors have become like family and if they left, I would too.

There is a pride involved when I say I live in Mac-Groveland and I want to keep it that way. I wasn't officially aware of the moratorium at first but when I found out, it made sense as to why my experience here has been so special. Fortunately, we haven't had many incidences with the St. Thomas students or at least as many as we had anticipated and I believe it is because of the moratorium. One fall we did have a student break into our front porch. He tried to kick down our front door because in his intoxicated state he firmly believed he really lived there. St. Paul police responded wonderfully and no one was hurt thankfully. There have also been scuffles in the alley behind Grand Avenue between neighbors and the students that rent the houses facing Grand Ave. We do what we can to get through their time there and eventually they move on. Even if we make a concerted effort to introduce ourselves and provide them with names and phone numbers they are still resistant to being considerate of the people that live and work here. They can sleep in, in the mornings, we have to get up and go to work and raise families! We also pay taxes here and tend to our properties to keep our neighborhood in high standing. So, I feel we have enough students as it currently is. By building this complex it would shift the residential dynamic to an unsupervised college student housing area.

It feels like a deliberate slap in the face from St. Thomas that they would like to build student housing so close to the residential areas. To think that this new student housing wouldn't have an impact on our property values is ridiculous, however my main concern is the potential alcohol related problems. The houses in the area that are rental properties pop up and disappear and there is comfort in knowing

that their lease will eventually end. We do what we can to get through their time here and then we hope the next group will be more respectful. This proposed structure will be permanent and I do not wish this building upon anyone, let alone my neighbors.

Please do not build this student housing. There are many other options for student living. Has St. Thomas considered building in downtown Minneapolis? They have such a great shuttle system between their campuses that they would be able to house more than 50 students in a complex in the downtown area. Please let our neighborhood continue to be a neighborhood that is conducive to working families and small businesses.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Caroline Baum  
651-278-5558

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"Travel light, live light, spread the light, be the light."

-Yogi Bhanjan

**From:** Rina cooper <ristopiceman@gmail.com>  
**To:** Tom Beach <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**CC:** Josh Williams <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, <marcmanderscheid@comcast...>  
**Date:** 4/23/2012 8:32 PM  
**Subject:** comment on 2124-2130 Grand site plan

April 23, 2012

Dear Mr. Beach,

I am writing to express my opposition to the development at 2124-2130 Grand as proposed.

I respectfully disagree with the Staff Report and feel the development is inconsistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and increases density too much.

The section of Grand involved is zoned RM2, but is also designated as a residential corridor under the Comprehensive Plan, which calls for densities of 4-30 units (Figure LU-K. Generalized 2030 Land Uses, Southwest Sector. Although the Land Use section of the Plan also says some portions "could support additional housing" and calls for increased density, the proposed development is not just some "additional housing," it is a 700% increase in density from existing use (12 renters to 80) and, at 48 units/acre, is 60% over the high-end density of 30 units. Even if one uses the lower 29 unit estimate, this is only ONE building on the block and should not be allowed to have as many units as are intended for an entire area. I believe this is inconsistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Because the zoning and land-use plans must be applied in concert and not in conflict (St. Paul City Code 61.402(c)(1); Minn. Stat. Sec. 473.858, subd. 1 and 473.865, subd. 2 (2011)) and the Comprehensive Plan rules where there is a conflict, the development should not be approved.

In addition, the Land Use Section of the Plan calls for the "City [to] maintain the character of Established Neighborhoods." (p. 9) The City Code says to consider "...uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected." 61.402(c)(5) The proposed development is across the alley from a vibrant street of predominantly single-family homes; in fact, it would be approximately 50 feet from the back yards. The development would drastically change the tenor of this street, as well as those nearby, by introducing substantially more traffic, noise, and a large building for student housing where now there is a mix of families and student and non-student rentals. At 80 student renters, the development would drastically skew the mix. The developer may respond that non-students could rent, but the site plan itself calls the development student housing; he has talked about having "resident assistants" like a dorm; and the layout of the apartments is geared to students, not families who rent.

I add a few other facts in as to why I believe the development is contrary to City policy and the Comprehensive Plan:

- The mass of the building is inconsistent with the entire block of Grand from Cretin to Dale (only one other apartment is over 4 stories)
- 63.343 (b)(2)Transitions to lower-density neighborhoods.

"Transitions in density or intensity shall be managed through careful attention to building height, scale, massing and solar exposure."

There is no transition here. The neighborhood will go from a 50 foot building to single-family homes within a few dozen feet.

o It should be noted that the City's own 2004 CUP limited St. Thomas residential buildings to 40 feet (10 feet lower than this development) and justified this to limit the effect on the character of the single-family neighborhood and give a transition from large buildings to residential areas. This development should be similarly restricted.

- City Code sec. 66.331, note (f) states that a maximum of 45 feet may be allowed within 600 feet of an existing transit stop with a conditional use permit. This development has a bus stop directly in front of it.

- The CUP was an agreement with the neighborhood that the campus boundary would not go further than the north side of Grand; this development puts a building with the character of a university dorm on the south side

Finally, I ask the City to consider the Macalester-Groveland Community Plan, which recommends developments buildings lower than 5 stories and advocates retaining the single-family character of the district. While new apartment buildings can fit in single-family areas, this one will not.

I urge the Commission to look to the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and find the proposed development increases density too much and is too large.

In addition, the development will cause parking issues in an area that already has these:

- The proposed building will have 40 spots for 80 renters. By his own statement at the Mac-Groveland Land Use Committee Hearing, the developer projects 20 renters would be without a spot.
- The City allows each renter a parking permit for their car. Each of the 20 units would be allowed 2 guests permits. This allows for a total of 120 permits, whereas there are about 18 permits allowed today for the 2 houses.
- The developer supports limiting the parking permits. Although it would be an unusual step, I ask the City to consider limiting the parking permits for this building as part of the site plan.

The development will also cause traffic issues:

#### Vehicular

- The developer assumes at least 60 cars, although in my opinion it will be 80.
  - There will also be visitors
  - The development will add traffic at non-peak times, as students go and come outside of peak hours, late at night, etc. This will increase noise and traffic in the neighborhood
  - The City's own plans project 20% increase from Grand to Cleveland (from 5430 to 6500) by 2030; and 20% for Cleveland and Cretin nearby also even without this increase in population density (see Figure T-M, 2008 Average Daily Traffic Volume and 2030 Projected Average Daily Traffic Volume, West Sector)
- <http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=11885>. Previous studies

for UST buildings have found barely passing levels of service, especially for left turns from Cretin to Grand – exactly what I project will be a primary path for the new renters – and had to adjust traffic signals and put in turn lanes to ameliorate that. Now factor in 7 times more vehicles.

- I appreciate that the City has asked for a traffic evaluation to gauge the impact of the development, but again I stress that this is too much to expect the neighborhood to absorb.

#### Pedestrian

- Previous studies in 2004 as part of the CUP and evaluation of a residential village assumed 1.5 trips/renter/day northbound (across Summit to UST) and 1.5 trips/renter/day southbound (see attachment C, table 1 of the Revised EAW, 10/13/2003). This apartment is similar to the one studied before (96 renters) and should be expected to generate this amount per day for students going to UST. For 80 renters, this would add up to 240 trips/day. There are already issues in crossing Summit and Grand – in fact, this has consistently been a concern in the neighborhood as UST expanded.

- I believe first and foremost that the development is too large; however, if it is approved, I feel there is a need for good management and evaluation of how to make crossing Grand safe (e.g., should the City put in a stop sign?).

In closing, I mention that there has been talk that this type of thing was recommended by the Louis Smith Study and in the new Housing Ordinance study. Both of those intended a PLANNED evaluation to find the right spot for high-density housing. It would have included planning with neighbors and plans to manage parking, etc. This development is not being done with that type of foresight and should not be approved as currently envisioned.

Sincerely,  
Rina Cooper  
2129 Lincoln  
St. Paul, MN 55105

**From:** Paul McCormick <st.paulmc@gmail.com>  
**To:** <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Date:** 4/23/2012 11:41 PM  
**Subject:** Public Comment Proposed Apartment Building 2124 /2130 Grand Ave

Dear Mr Beach

I am writing to also express concern over the proposed Apartment complex at 2124 and 2130 Grand Ave.

Specific Concerns:

5 story Height

Increase in Population Density from 12 to 40 and impact on livability of adjacent community.

Parking garage Entrance on Finn and impact on traffic density to adjacent streets including Lincoln Ave, Grand Ave and Cretin Ave

Thank You for your consideration  
Paul McCormick  
2126 Lincoln Ave

Mr. Tom Beach  
City of St. Paul - DSI  
375 Jackson Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

April 23, 2012

Re: 2124-2130 Grand Avenue Apartment Building Site Review – Zoning Concerns

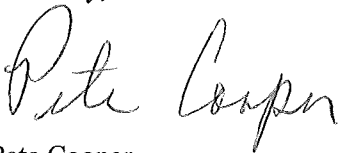
I am opposed to the development of the properties at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue as proposed (5 stories, 50 ft, 20 units). Such a project will have a dramatic, negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood in terms of traffic, noise, parking problems, neighborhood privacy, and general livability of the area. I consider the proposal as an “opportunistic action” to 1) the University of St. Thomas’ failure to provide the on-campus housing described in the 2004 CUP on the block north of Grand Avenue and 2) the current moratorium on conversion of existing homes to student rental. I agree that student housing alternatives are needed. However, this level of development, and others that will likely follow, requires comprehensive and thoughtful planning. This project was unexpected by the community by both its size and location and is not an appropriate solution to UST student housing issues.

Specifically, I have strong disagreements with 4/17/2012 Zoning Committee Staff Report Section H. Findings, Item 5. “The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected”. The report claims “The site plan meets this finding”. I am curious how this finding was arrived at in light of:

- 1) Population density will increase by 7 fold at a minimum (current density of 12 persons for both 2124 and 2130 to a minimum of 80 persons with the project). Obviously the potential noise, parking, traffic, and other issues relating to enjoyment of our property will be affected. To state otherwise ignores the obvious.
- 2) A fifty foot high, five story building greatly reduces the privacy of using our backyards and the back rooms of our home as we currently do. Currently, our garage and some hedging allow us to have a reasonable level of privacy. I did some quick calculations, assuming the apartment building’s 32 ft setback from the alley and a fifth floor window at 40 feet above the ground, I would need a fence a minimum of 20 feet tall to restrict a renter’s view into our kitchen dining area. Keeping blinds closed 24-hrs a day is not something to look forward to.

The City’s findings seriously downplay the devastating impact this project will have on adjacent properties. Use of “evergreen shrubs” and “relocating windows” don’t do it. One simply needs to look at the mass of this proposal compared to adjacent properties to conclude that blending in with neighborhood is not of any consequence. The only obvious motivation here is maximizing the number of people that can “legally” be housed on these lots within current zoning regulations. Further, it is distressing to see in the Zoning Committee Staff Report Findings the use of the underground parking “bonus” and use of public alley right-of-way to fit (wedge?) the proposed project’s density within the City’s Comprehensive Plan requirements. Considering the history of student rental/owner occupied conflicts in this neighborhood, I would think the City would conduct the proposal’s site review process with more scrutiny. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and providing access to site plans and other public documents.

Sincerely,



Pete Cooper  
2129 Lincoln Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105

cc: Mr. Russ Stark, City Councilmember - Ward 4, City of St. Paul

**From:** Paul McCormick <st.paulmc@gmail.com>  
**To:** <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Date:** 4/23/2012 11:41 PM  
**Subject:** Public Comment Proposed Apartment Building 2124 /2130 Grand Ave

Dear Mr Beach

I am writing to also express concern over the proposed Apartment complex at 2124 and 2130 Grand Ave.

Specific Concerns:

5 story Height

Increase in Population Density from 12 to 40 and impact on livability of adjacent community.

Parking garage Entrance on Finn and impact on traffic density to adjacent streets including Lincoln Ave, Grand Ave and Cretin Ave

Thank You for your consideration

Paul McCormick  
2126 Lincoln Ave



## Tom Beach - Grand & Finn

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**From:** <nicholas.gardner@thomsonreuters.com>  
**To:** <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Date:** 4/23/2012 12:25 PM  
**Subject:** Grand & Finn

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Hello Tom,

I am a long-time St. Paul resident, and recognize the distinct and unique character of Grand Avenue. I strongly oppose the proposed over-sized development at Finn St.

Aside from its size, what is being proposed is essentially a dormitory. I feel that dormitories belong on campus, not in neighborhoods.

Thank you for reading

Nick Gardner

**Nick Gardner, Esq.**  
**Web Editor, Thomson Reuters News & Insight**  
**<http://newsandinsight.thomsonreuters.com/Legal/>**  
**Eagan, MN**  
**651.848.9524**

## Tom Beach - proposed building at Finn and Grand

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**From:** Jeremy Exley <jeremy.exley@gmail.com>  
**To:** <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Date:** 4/22/2012 8:17 AM  
**Subject:** proposed building at Finn and Grand

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Hi Tom,

My name is Jeremy Exley. I am the owner of 2132/ 34 grand avenue, right next to the proposed site. My concerns for this building/ property are the following:

1. Parking garage treated as an underground building with different set backs. It will be 4 feet from property line (7 feet from my house) and then comes 2 feet out of the ground with a 4 foot fence on top, doesn't seem right and I think it will look terrible. Also, what happens if my house/ foundation is damaged during excavation?
2. Going from 3 residential units (a duplex and a single family home) to 20 seems very aggressive
3. I understand the benefits of not having outdoor space for the renters as far as noise, but am also worried about them not having space... where will they go?
4. How is the rain water going to be handled since there will be no real ground left?
5. Construction hours during build? When will they be allowed to start working during the construction? This will be a major disturbance to my home.
6. How will they ensure the alley, streets, sidewalks remain usable during construction if they are using the whole lot for the building? Where will equipment be stored?
7. Quality of construction - the private party is obviously focused on making money so how "cheap" will the building look (versus if UST built it which we know would be high quality)?
8. The property owner (Graham Merry) has not followed the rental rules in the past (7 adults living in 2138 house versus max allowed of 4) how do we know he will follow the rules on this new/ much larger rental?
9. The height and proximity of this building will eliminate any morning sun on my property (which I happen to like) and shade my whole home/ lawn until at least noon every day.

Let me know if you have any questions and thanks for taking into account my concerns,

Thanks,  
Jeremy Exley  
952-484-2776

## Tom Beach - Grand and Finn Apartments

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**From:** Stacey Supina <ssupina@lrci.com>  
**To:** <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Date:** 4/19/2012 1:40 PM  
**Subject:** Grand and Finn Apartments

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Good afternoon. I am writing to express my opinion of the proposed development on Grand Ave. of an apartment complex.

While I appreciate that this proposal is within zoning rules, I am concerned about the change to the essential character of the neighborhood. The Summit/Grand corridors are unique and attractive, although already compromised by pre-existing out-of-place developments. Surely St Thomas students are well-served by these existing properties, as well as rental houses more in keeping with the neighborhood. The city should consider the needs of existing, long-term, property-taxed owners in the area, rather than effectively courting temporary residents with no long-term neighborhood interests.

Thank you for reading.

S. Supina

## Tom Beach - Comments - Public hearing for Grand and Finn Apartments

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**From:** "Holm, Thomas H" <Thomas.Holm@UNISYS.com>  
**To:** "tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us" <tom.beach@ci.stpaul.mn.us>  
**Date:** 4/16/2012 4:08 PM  
**Subject:** Comments - Public hearing for Grand and Finn Apartments

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Dear Mr. Beach,

I would like to submit comments for the proposed Grand and Finn Apartments at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue.

My name is Tom Holm. I own and live in the house at 2123 Lincoln Avenue, which is directly behind the proposed new apartment building. I have 2 concerns.

My first concern is the height of the new building. It will be 5 stories high. There is no other building in the immediate area more than 3 stories high.

My second concern is the big population change and the impact it will have on traffic, parking, and noise in the surrounding neighborhood. The proposal replaces 3 rental units with a total of 12 people with 20 rental units with a total of 80 people.

Thank you.



320 South Griggs Street  
St. Paul, MN 55105  
[www.macgrove.org](http://www.macgrove.org)

Phone: 651-695-4000  
Fax: 651-695-4004  
E-mail: [mgcc@macgrove.org](mailto:mgcc@macgrove.org)

March 29, 2012

Tom Beach  
Department of Safety & Inspections  
375 Jackson Street  
Suite 220  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1806

Re: 2124 & 2130 Grand Avenue Site Plan Review

Dear Tom:

The Housing & Land Use Committee of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council met in response to the proposed development at 2124 and 2130 Grand Avenue, on Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. The Committee passed the following resolution:

*In the interest of constructive discourse, the Macalester-Groveland Community Council recommends that the Department of Safety and Inspections hold a public hearing in the site plan review process of the proposed development at 2124 and 2130 Grand Avenue.*

Residents in attendance at the Housing & Land Use public meeting expressed concern regarding parking congestion, the large scale/density of the proposed building, landscaping, and on-site management.

Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation. Please contact me with any questions at 651-695-4000.

Sincerely,

Afton Martens  
Executive Director

cc: Merry Graham