

Letters in favor of granting appeal of Tammy and Mike Thomas

Russ Stark and all St. Paul City Council Members:

I am writing to ask your support in opposing development of a private, five-story dorm on the corner of Grand and Finn in St. Paul. Our neighborhood has been working hard to preserve a healthy balance of home owners and renters and preserve our quality of life. It seems quite clear that St. Thomas needs new dormitories to house its younger students, but these belong on campus where the university can provide the required parking, and, most importantly, supervision. This "apartment" will add congestion to our streets, late-night noise to our neighborhood, and place us -- the homeowners -- in the unattractive position of unpaid residence hall advisors.

Please, please, do your best to oppose development of this private dorm in our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Jerry Smith
1906 Laurel Avenue

--

Jerry W. Smith
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
214 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

June 11, 2012

Council Member Stark:

The work you have put in to date is very much appreciated by the Macalester Groveland neighborhood. The moratorium was a brilliant idea and it is working. Houses on our block (2100 block of Lincoln Avenue) have been for sale this past year and have been purchased by owners who intend to occupy the home. Having a year off from the rush to purchase rental properties has given our neighborhood a reprieve that we badly needed. It gave us the time to really understand the impact of student rentals in the neighborhood and how much is at stake. You have been open to listening to our complaints about students so I will not be redundant here and restate them.

The main point that I want to make is that the vibrant neighborhoods of Macalester Groveland and Merriam Park cannot be the solution St. Thomas seeks to address their lack of available student housing. Freshman and Sophomores should be required to live on campus and St. Thomas needs to provide the housing necessary for their expanded student body. The private dorm being proposed for the corner of Finn and Grand is not a solution but will only exacerbate the issues in our neighborhood. Unsupervised 18 and 19 year olds do not do well in a diverse

neighborhood of families, elderly people and working adults.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to collect signatures on a petition opposing the apartment building at Grand and Finn. I talked with neighbors who have lived in the neighborhood for over 40 years. They reminisced about how great the neighborhood was before student rentals were the norm. They recalled their pride in raising their children in such a wonderful place. Every person I talked to signed the petition without reservation.

On June 20 please remember that we are your constituents. Our neighborhood is healthy and thriving, please help us maintain all the work we have put into making Macalester Groveland a great place to live.

Sincerely,

Flannery Delaney
2126 Lincoln Avenue

6/12/12

Nancy Walsh, 2031 Lincoln, , contacted Ward 4 to express her opposition to the development at Grand & Finn. She said, "Our family has been in this house since 1933 and I'm the last of the family. I've observed all of the changes that have taken place. I'm calling about 2124 Grand.

I think it would be a very, very big mistake to allow that thing, as described, to be built. I think it would be very tall. It's taller than St. Thomas allows. It will create more traffic problems and parking problems and we already have those. I have to have permit parking to carry my groceries into my house.

It's just to the point where we're still okay, but something like this is going to tip us over. I don't want to see this area turned into a shabby area around the college the way they were at the University when I attended there. I am very much opposed to it!

These are all of the reasons not to have it. I appreciate Mr. Stark's noticing this. Thank you.

Hello Mr. Stark,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed dorm/apartment going up at 2124 Grand Ave. This project DOES NOT fit the neighborhood and would negatively impact those residents that live near by. In short, the large size and large scale is out of proportion to all the other buildings (residential, apartments, retail and college) near by. At the very most, I believe that this building if allowed to go up, should be limited to 2 stories. I can tell you for a fact, had I known that this would be allowed into our neighborhood in the first place, it would have impacted my decision to move here. If the goal is to drive out the tax paying residents that improve their homes and neighborhood, please be perfectly clear with your vote on this issue. It would be nice to know where we (this neighborhood) stand with each council member and the city when we dig in to

protect our neighborhood from ridiculous projects like the one proposed at 2124 Grand. Thank you for your attention to this matter and please DO NOT allow the project at 2124 Grand Avenue to proceed.

Regards,
Mark and Tonya Dunham
2105 Goodrich Ave

Russ,
I have appreciated your leadership for our area. I'm writing to ask for your continued support in preserving neighborhood balance, specifically the "private dorm" being proposed for 2124 Grand.

I know you have heard from others the array of concerns

- At 5 stories, it would be one of only 2 apartment buildings that tall on the entire length of Grand Avenue. It is taller than St. Thomas' current agreement in terms of building heights. •
- It would house 80 renters, and that density would significantly increase traffic and parking issues in an area that already has documented problems.
- It pulls the neighborhood out of balance - mixed rental/single homeowner is a good idea, and this puts too many renters in a very small area.

Ι ηοπε ψου ωιλλ υργε τηε Χιτψ χουνχιλ το ποτε νο – ανδ τηατ ψου ωιλλ ποτε νο. Λετ'ς λοοκ ατ σομετηινγ σμαλλερ τηατ προωιδεσ φορ σομε ρενταλ , βυτ νοτ σομετηινγ τηις λαργε. □

Τηανκς φορ ψουρ αττεντιον.

Ανν Γαρϋεψ

2006 Φαιρμουντ Αϋενυε

Im writing to communicate my concern for the well being of our community and the financial investment I've made in my neighborhood. The Saint Paul planning commission's approval to permit a 80 Unit apartment building to be erected on the corner of Lincoln and Finn is a threat to the neighborhood stability and appeal. My hope is that the Saint Paul City Council will overturn the planning commission's decision and deny any further expansion of multi-residence building in our neighborhood and extend the Student Ordinance limiting the number of student occupied houses.

Our neighborhood is already plagued with poor behavior exhibited by undisciplined young adults experiencing their first taste of freedom. Attempts to police this behavior has been unsuccessful. When I called to report my Gasebo (stolen in the middle of the day), I was told by the policeman that answered to contact my councilman as they simply were not staffed to handle the amount of calls we get in our neighborhood. I simply cannot count all of instances of drunken and roaming packs of college students that have stumbled into my yard throughout the years.

Parking in our neighborhood is already a premium . Adding 80 units with insufficient parking will exacerbates an already difficult traffic issue.

I am one of the many St Thomas neighbors who support the proposed student rental ordinance accept that we live near a university and that in this day and age, there will be some student rentals in our neighborhoods.

When you vote, please vote with a conscience!

Represent your constituency responsibly and help us conserve neighborhood stability, protect property values and make this a place where all generations have fair access to a neighborhood that has so much to offer -- it's about preserving access for everyone and giving more people a reason to want to call this home.

Thank You,

Michael Hepp
2122 Lincoln

The below article offers one perspective on why I support the Student Rental Ordinance, and oppose a Grand Avenue private dorm, designed to exclusively house 80 undergraduate residents. We need a balanced mixed of neighbors in this area south of Grand. Without it, I am convinced we lose social connectedness and that undermines why I live here and chose to raise my family here. How do I know that an increase in student rental units threatens social connectedness? Direct experience. Each year in August, for the past 12 years, my family has organized National Night Out for our block. We flyer each and every house on and around our block weeks in advance, announcing the gathering and inviting everyone to come, but once and only once has a student rental resident attended. My daughter still speaks of the time that "Tyler brought cupcakes" and we lament that students never choose to attend.

Please help us keep the neighborhoods around UST strong. Vote in favor of the Student Rental Ordinance and against the private dorm on Grand Avenue.

Thank you.

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June 13, 2012

Dear Councilman Stark,

We are writing in support of the neighbors' appeal of the St. Paul Planning Commission's May 18, 2012 approval of the site plan application for construction of a student apartment at the corner of Grand and Finn, #12-0370-383 and in support of the ordinance to limit student rentals in our neighborhood. We feel that both of these actions are necessary to preserve neighborhood balance and livability.

We have lived in our Lincoln Avenue home for over 30 years. We raised our family here. We have always recognized and appreciated our neighborhood's wonderful qualities and, in return, have been good neighbors and good citizens. Our close proximity to the University of St. Thomas has provided a continual source of tension with potential for conflict, but until recently, we have felt that the positive aspects of our neighborhood outweighed any drawbacks. Recent events and trends, however, have us second-guessing our decision to live and invest in the city of St. Paul. Also, it would appear that we value St. Paul more than St. Paul values residents like us; at the May 18 Planning Commission meeting, commissioners expressed sympathy for the neighbors yet were unwilling to support action to protect our neighborhood.

We object to the proposed building on the corner of Grand and Finn due to issues of size, height, setback, parking, and occupant use and density. By design and intent, this building will function as a St. Thomas dorm. By creating highly concentrated student residences, this building will increase density but not diversity in our neighborhood. The developer has indicated that this building will address the problem of single-family homes becoming student rentals. We do not believe that students will choose to live in mean, cramped, closet-less dorm rooms where they are not allowed to be in the yard (because it is the roof of the underground parking structure) if they can live in a house with more square footage and outdoor space. Students will continue to seek single-family neighborhood homes to rent and the dorm will bring an even higher concentration of students into our neighborhood.

That is why we feel that both the rental ordinance and the revocation of the approval for the proposed dorm are needed.

We support the contention of the neighbors' appeal that the proposed building does not meet parking requirements. Even if the building did provide 40 appropriately sized parking spaces, parking would still be a major concern for us. We fully expect that the developer's charge for parking will far exceed the \$10/year cost of a neighborhood parking permit. If parking permits are available to dorm residents, many would choose to get permits rather than park in the building. This building would increase the density on the land it occupies from 12 residents to 80 residents. The developer should be required to provide supports to accommodate this drastic increase in density; after all, his interest in creating such a high-density building is to increase his personal profit. We feel he should be required to provide parking in excess of the bare minimum required by current zoning so that the livability of the neighborhood is protected as he seeks to maximize his profit. His current plan is to use the street in front of our house as his parking lot.

We hope that the council will overturn the Planning Commission's approval for the dorm on the corner of Grand and Finn. But if the project is allowed to occur as planned, we hope that zoning requirements will be strictly enforced and no variances will be granted before, during, or after construction. Although, we feel that the current zoning requirements are inappropriate and inadequate for our neighborhood and that this project should further meet the requirements of the St. Thomas CUP because it will function as a dorm, the current zoning requirements are what we have to protect our neighborhood right now. This project is very tightly designed to meet zoning requirements; situations may arise during construction that would cause the developer to seek variances, using his investment and partially built structure to bully the city into granting such variances. We understand that no one can be prevented from applying for variances. But it would seem most fair to make it clear to the developer that, in all likelihood, he will not receive variances and that the responsibility for completing his project within zoning requirements rests squarely on his shoulders, so that he can plan accordingly.

Finally, it was stated at a Planning Commission meeting that the neighbors could not have it both ways—that it was unreasonable to expect to limit the development of large high-density student buildings while limiting student rental of single-family homes; the students have to live somewhere. We are not seeking to ban students from our neighborhood, only to preserve balance and diversity. There are currently 1,700 students living in the neighborhoods within a 1-mile radius of St. Thomas. We would hope that all residents, student and non-student alike, behave as responsible citizens and treat each other respectfully. We feel that a tipping point has been reached, however, and that an increase in student concentration and rental houses would have a negative impact on our neighborhood. We feel that the most appropriate place for students to live is on-campus. The 2004 St. Thomas CUP indicated that a residential village would be built on the blocks between Summit, Cleveland, Grand, and Cretin. St Thomas has stated that it is not fiscally able to build student housing at this time. In recent years, however, they have completed major projects such as a science building, an athletic center, and a student center; they have set their priorities and made their choices. It would seem that they are content to let the surrounding neighborhoods provide student housing so that they can use their land and money for other purposes. The neighborhoods should not bear sole responsibility for solving St. Thomas housing needs.

Sincerely,

Anthony and Nancy Wacker

2153 Lincoln Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Councilmember Stark,

We are writing to voice our concerns on the five story apartment building proposed for the corner of Grand and Finn (2124 Grand). We think that a building of this size with so many units is totally out of character for the site and will have a negative effect on the surrounding residential neighborhood. In fact, we're almost in disbelief that a building this size is even being proposed!

We've lived in our house on Goodrich Avenue since 1986, and the main problem with our neighborhood is the increasing population of students who could care less that Mac-Groveland is our home. Adding another +_80 student occupants right next door to residential property is going to make the problem much worse.

Furthermore, It is pretty clear by now the the Planning Commission members have an obvious bias against the Mac- Groveland neighborhood. They rarely rule in our favor and are always telling us how fortunate we are to not have the crime and property value problems that the East Side has. The tone of their comments, as reported in the papers, is very revealing. Maybe they'll be happy when the whole City is run-down and neglected and there aren't any decent neighborhoods left! We sometimes wonder exactly who the Commission members represent. They certainly don't seem to be advocating for property owners.

You have to wonder at what point residents will just throw in the towel and move to the suburbs like they did in the 80's. When we look at our tax bill and the amount recently assessed for street and utility work, and then consider the level of service provided by the City and amount of grief that we put up with, mainly from the St. Thomas students (traffic, litter, parties, rental properties), we really begin to wonder if we could get a better deal for our investment elsewhere.

Enough said.

Respectfully,

Dorothy Slegman and Jim Brewer
1987 Goodrich Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear St Paul City Council,

I live at and am a property owner at 2163 Goodrich Avenue and I am protesting the building of the apartment building at 2124 Grand and Finn. as far as I can see it will cater to students primarily from St Thomas and by proxy extend the St Thomas campus further into our community. The neighborhood is already under siege from UST expansion and this changes the fundamental nature of our community. I enjoy being part of a university community but the expansion has gone far enough!

Jennifer Semmens

Dear Council Member Stark,

We wish to communicate our support for approval of the student-rental restrictions near UST and our concerns about the proposed 80-student housing development on Grand Avenue at Finn. As seven-year residents of the neighborhood, we have grown to accept the tradeoffs inherent in living close to a university. We are part of a wonderful community with great neighbors and older housing that has been nicely maintained. There are a number rental homes and duplexes on our street. Most are inhabited by St. Thomas students. A few present continual problems (noise, litter, vandalism, etc). We wish that wasn't the case, but understand that it comes with the territory.

What concerns us is the drift we've seen toward more and more student occupied housing. In this regard, we strongly support the student-rental limitations in Mac-Groveland and surrounding neighborhoods. With each owner-occupied conversion to student rental the chances of our neighborhood maintaining a balance between families, single professionals and students diminishes. Buyers are wary of moving into our neighborhood for fear that it will become a "Party Block." Current residents are anxious to leave for exactly the same reason. Unfortunately these responses produce exactly the result we fear--more rentals, lower property values, more noisy parties, more vandalism and more properties falling into disrepair. To those who claim that this is not a student-rental problem, but more broadly a rental problem, we beg to differ. Student rentals turn over faster. Residents are less likely to treat the rental with respect if they don't plan to stay there past a year or two. And, let's be honest, college students don't typically show the same respect to their neighbors that older and more mature renters do. In small numbers, student rentals are part of a balanced neighborhood, but when they dot streets in large numbers, the balance is lost. What might be the occasional loud party becomes streams of drunken students wandering from house to house several nights a week.

We have heard that the problems related to student rentals are issues for UST and the police. Believe us, we've used those resources. When polite requests to take the party inside at 2 am are ignored, we have called the police. What follows is that a police car shows up, the party quiets down for 10 or 20 minutes and then erupts anew. Reports to UST elicit no obvious response. And there are few things more frustrating than having Doug Hennes (Director of Neighborhood Relations at UST) remind us that "college students will be college students." Such trite tautology does nothing to help the situation.

We have also heard that limiting rentals near UST will only "push the problem to other neighborhoods." This argument makes no sense. Unless UST expands its student numbers, there is no need for new rentals. What we are seeing is a transition from a broad geographic distribution of rentals serving students to a much denser packing of student rentals around the campus. Limiting rentals near UST won't force students out, it will only reduce the numbers moving in.

Lastly, we've been told that an ordinance limiting student rentals is unenforceable and potential unconstitutional. I'm not a lawyer and don't know the details, but it seems to me that limiting rentals is no different than any other zoning restriction. Identifying the

renters as students is on par with limiting the number of unrelated residents in any other rental.

Please help us maintain balance in one of St Paul's great neighborhoods. Please vote yes to restrict new student rentals and lobby your fellow Council members to do the same.

A related issue also on the agenda of the June 20 Council meeting is the de-facto private dormitory project on the corner of Grand and Finn. Many aspects of this proposal are concerning. At five stories, it would be the largest structure in the neighborhood--larger than any of St. Thomas' street-front buildings (limited by agreement to four stories)--and the tallest building on Grand Avenue for several miles. It would tower over the two story houses around. And it completely ignores Planning Commission goals of establishing transitions of architectural style and dimension into residential neighborhoods.

The developer correctly states that the structure meets zoning restrictions and Planning Commission goals of higher-density housing on transit corridors. We can't argue that. But it seems to us that a three-story structure, like the five other apartment buildings less than a block away, offers sufficient density. We also wonder how important proximity to public transit is in this case. As you know, the developer is appealing Planning Commission limits on street-parking permits, asking that the development receive up to 120 permits. You can't fit 120 cars on the section of Grand between Cretin and Cleveland. So where will they go? Onto surrounding streets. We recognize that owning a house doesn't give you ownership of on-street parking spots, but we already see a steady stream of campus commuters parking on our street (most with permits purchased from friends living in the apartments on Grand). Adding 120 more permits would only exacerbate an already serious problem.

We don't wish to come across as NIMBYs. We moved into our house fully aware that St. Thomas was a block away, that Grand is mostly apartment buildings and that many students live nearby (including four in the rental next to us). But we love our house, our neighbors and the physical beauty of living close to the river. We have no plans of moving regardless of what happens with this particular development or any later ones. What we want is for the city to recognize that neighborhoods are not developed by developers. That simply abiding by zoning laws isn't always enough. That what makes St. Paul's many campuses attractive is that they are part of their communities. And that if the adjoining communities are allowed to become extensions of a campus, they won't be communities any longer. Allowing this development to move forth would send the message that Mac-Groveland is the new Dinkytown, that it's time to buy, demolish, and build. Who cares if each new development doubles the number of people living on the block and more than doubles the number of cars without garages? Who cares if all sense of community is lost? We do. And we hope you do too.

We end this letter with a bit of irony. Each year or two when a new crop of students moves into the rental next to our house we have the opportunity to briefly chat with their parents. Almost to a one they have commented on what a nice neighborhood their child is moving into. They're right, but without Council help it won't stay that way. Please

help us preserve the balance of housing; please vote to restrict student rentals and to substantially reduce the scale of the private dormitory proposal.

Sincerely Yours,

Justin, Kelly, Emma (age 9) and Silas (age 6)

Mr. Stark,

Before any of the council members vote to allow this monster to be built, I would ask that they postpone approval until they've had a chance to walk through the neighborhoods around UST on Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday mornings. The loud parties, the endless trash on the boulevards, the noise, would give them a new perspective on just what it means to a neighborhood to be turned into a student ghetto.

We fight a constant battle in our neighborhood to keep the problems to a -- barely -- acceptable level, with moderate success. So far.

Make no mistake about it, the proposed "apartment" would make things far, far worse, and there would be no way the result would be anything but unacceptable. It would speed the flight of all who can afford to leave, and produce a "race to the bottom". I've already seriously considered selling. If this is approved, we'll likely move.

Sincerely,

Charles Rennolet (2050 Lincoln Avenue).

I am writing to express my dismay over the 5-story apartment building being proposed on the corner of Grand and Finn (2124 Grand). What I find most offensive is the sneaky way that this project has come about. A builder is proposing a 5 story "apartment" building for 80 renters. The "apartments", however, are set up like dorm pods. The intent is clear. UST is attempting to build a dorm through a 3rd party that they would not be allowed to build themselves! That is the bottom line.

The height of the building exceeds that allowed for the St. Thomas campus. Parking is not accounted for. The planned structure is not in compliance with the City's zoning codes, the City's Comprehensive plan or the Macalester-Groveland Community Plan. The City Zoning Committee denied the proposal but the City Planning Commission has since approved the project and rejected the findings of the zoning committee. Where is the logic in this?

This is a serious encroachment on our neighborhood. These issues have come up again and again and each time we neighbors have been assured by the city and UST that it will not continue.

I am a 1987 graduate of UST, which was then known as the College of St. Thomas. At that time CST offered a high-quality, small college experience in a big city. Since then I have been approached for donations for a seemingly endless number of expansion projects. Changing the charter to a "University". Adding a business school.

Adding a law school. New buildings. More housing... At what point does UST stop being the gem that it is and become a top-heavy burden on itself and the neighborhood? Are they trying to compete with the U of M? They have never been lacking in enrollments. It mystifies me. Bigger isn't better. As an alum it saddens and disappoints me. As a neighbor it angers and frustrates me.

I can no longer park my car on parts of my block due to student parking. The west end of our block requires a parking sticker so the cars have shifted east. I'm 2 houses away from the sticker zone so I compete for a spot. When our neighbor died, a UST teacher bought the house telling us that he was going to live there during the week so he didn't have to commute from Scandia. He never occupied that house and it has had students living there ever since.

We are not just unruly neighbors that don't like change. We live here. UST is growing and changing at the expense of our quality of life. We are impacted in very real and direct ways. How do you think it has changed our property value when our house is next to a rental for college kids with a lawn that is occasionally mowed?

UST is wielding their power, their money, and their alumni as a lobbying force. UST is focused on growth and has lost its way. The City of St. Paul is being manipulated. The people that live in the neighborhood are suffering. Please do something about it! Stopping this project would be a great start.

Todd Bosch
1997 Goodrich Av.
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Russ,

I live in your ward and want you to know how much I object to increasing the number of rental units by 80 in our neighborhood in the Finn and Grand apt building project. My main objection relates to safety. The increase in cars and traffic with the extra number of personal auto's is unsafe and will add to congestion. It is already difficult to see around corners and to navigate our neighborhood due to the number of cars and the parking problems. Many days I wait for a long time at my alley to pull onto Grand Ave due to congestion.

If students reside in this building, I also worry about my personal safety driving and crossing the street by foot. I have witnessed disregard of traffic signals and stop signs when school is in session.

The building will change the balance we have between rental units and home owners, between student housing and the community. An increase like this, which, frankly looks like a dorm under the guise of development, does not seem like an open, or ethical way for the university to work with its neighbors.

The style of the building is out of synch with the neighborhood, it is too tall. Tall buildings create a change in the skyline and in the amount of light and wind.

Please oppose this! It means a lot to me.

Jane Taylor, Ed.D.
2031 Goodrich Ave
St. Paul MN 55105

Dear Mr. Stark,

Please note my opposition to the proposed residential building on the SW corner of Grand Avenue and Finn Street. My stance is in line with the City Zoning Committee's recommendation, and is based on a desire to preserve the historic character and balanced demographic appeal of the neighborhood.

My wife and I moved into this neighborhood in 2011, recognizing homeowners' care for century-old homes and a family-friendly environment. I value the level of car traffic, safety for child pedestrians, and preservation of the area's historic look.

I have noted that the proposed building contrasts with zoning ordinances along historic Grand Avenue (such as Resolution 06-166 adopted on February 15, 2006 regarding Chapter 67 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code) which limits residential buildings to 3 stories and 36 feet in height. Furthermore, marketing the building to college student tenants would increase the noise and traffic level, abruptly distort the demographic mix, and begin a trend of further change from the current balance of families, students, renters, and homeowners. Any doubt to the validity of these claims must be supported by current and unbiased study data, as the trend is irreversible once started.

Allowing the proposed building to proceed would bring unexpected and unwelcome changes to my neighborhood, and to others who wish to raise a family in the existing environment of diverse residents and surrounding schools and commercial establishments. Ours is a micro-economy worth preserving.

When a building such as the proposed would benefit the interests of a private university and short-term residents and negatively impacting the lives of mixed long-term residents, it is fair and sensible to reject the proposed building and preserve the historic value of this neighborhood.

Thank you kindly,

Alan Gardiner
2123 Goodrich Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55105

I would like to state my support for the neighbor appeal of the Planning commission approval of the site plan for a new 5-story, 20-unit apartment building proposed at the southwest corner of Grand and Finn.

I am not opposed to any development of the site, but feel that the proposed student housing building is too big. I own and live in the home directly behind 2124 Grand. If you allow this building to be built according to the currently approved plan, I believe it will decrease the value of my home and negatively affect the livability of the neighborhood.

Thank you.

Tom Holm
2123 Lincoln Ave.

Mr. Stark:

I reside at 2150 Goodrich Avenue, 2 blocks from the apartment building which is under consideration for our neighborhood. I am writing to express my strong opposition to these plans and to urge you to vote “no” to them.

As you may be aware, the immediate neighborhood surrounding the University of St. Thomas has been contending with the rapid growth of the institution for a number of years now. This has been reflected in a number of problems, among them increased traffic, a drastic increase in rental property occupied by students which in many cases is not well-maintained or managed, and noise, congestion, and other quality of life issues. I wish to state clearly that I have nothing against St. Thomas — I am, in fact, an alum and have worked as an instructor there. I believe that the university has, in good faith, tried to address some of these issues, but the fact remains that the neighborhoods have been paying the price for their rapid expansion without careful and thoughtful long range planning on their part for far too long. This dormitory, masquerading as an “apartment” building, is just another example of that. The university has simply run out of space for on-campus housing and this project presents an opportunity for them to do an end run around this problem. Yes, I realize that a private developer is behind these plans, but what matters is the end result and the negative impact this will have, no matter who’s doing the building. In the interests of maintaining (and in some cases re-establishing) the quality of the neighborhood, this project should not be allowed to go forward. Enough is enough.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer input on this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Peter
2150 Goodrich Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

Councilman Stark and Mr. Beach:

We live at 2144 Fairmount. We are lifetime residents of the Highland Park and Macalester Groveland neighborhoods. We have three small children. We fully support the construction of the apartment building at Grand and Finn. Our house is between Cretin and Finn. We think such a building is part of the solution to the ongoing problem of student housing in the neighborhoods around St. Thomas. In the past year, two houses on our block converted to student rentals. So far, they've been fine, but the trend is concerning. The building appears to be attractive. It is a positive sign that a developer wants to build in St. Paul. That section of Grand includes several other apartment buildings.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

Patrick Summers and Alison Cook

Councilmen Stark and Tolbert, and Legislative Aides Henningson and Wittig-Geske:

I oppose the construction of the student housing building on the southwest corner of Finn and Grand Avenues because the dorm constitutes a de facto expansion of the UST campus, in violation of City law and policy, as reflected in the 2004 Conditional Use Permit issued to the University of St. Thomas (UST). Moreover, private developers should not be allowed to aggressively buy up homes on Grand Avenue for construction of large scale housing complexes. Instead, UST should first be required to address any perceived demand (demand, not need), by building new student housing on its own campus. The burden of student housing issues should not be foisted onto the neighborhood.

I participated as a neighborhood representative in the many negotiations that eventually resulted in UST's Conditional Use Permit, put into place in 2004. See attached. At that time, neighbors reached an agreement with UST that allowed UST to expand its boundaries by incorporating into its campus the two blocks south of Summit Avenue. The west block (bordered by Finn, Grand, Cretin and Summit Avenues) was specifically designated in the CUP as a site for future student housing, with strict 40-foot height and 25-foot set back requirements imposed. I refer you to the attached CUP, paragraphs 1, 2 and 8. These requirements as to siting and scale were placed in the CUP in order to create a buffer and a transition zone between the taller academic buildings and higher density land uses on the main campus blocks and the residential neighborhood south of Grand. If the City were to now allow a private housing developer to come in and build the first of several dormitories he apparently has planned for south of Grand, the City would be acting in violation of the letter, spirit and intent of the CUP by permitting a de facto expansion of UST's campus. Ironically, if UST were to try to build a housing unit of this scale on its campus, it would not be permitted to under the CUP. Why, then, should such a structure be permitted a mere 30 feet across the street from the campus boundary?

Additionally, please note that when the site plan for UST's new business school was approved in 2005, a condition was imposed by the City that required UST to vacate the temporary parking lot on the corner of Cleveland and Grand by 2014 in favor of construction of a residential building. I refer you to the attached Planning Commission Resolution from March 2005, paragraph 1, Surface Parking. ("The CUP calls for this area to be used for housing and St. Thomas has said it intends to build housing here but construction may not start for few years (sic), until some of the other buildings in the two block area south of Summit are completed. A permanent parking lot is not consistent with the CUP. However, a parking lot that is well landscaped and screened is acceptable as an interim use for up to 10 years if no building is constructed during that time.")

Clearly, in 2004-05, City officials contemplated that UST would shoulder increasing responsibility for housing students on its campus. At the recent Planning Commission hearing on the student rental ordinance, we heard from a Macalester College representative (Tom Welna) that Macalester College requires its sophomores to live on campus. UST has no answer as to why it does not do the same, other than to suggest that it currently lacks money to do so. That UST has first constructed a business school, parking garage, student center and athletic complex is UST's choice, but IF there exists a

desire (not a need, but a desire) by students to live closer to campus, the next step should be for UST to either commence on its own to build desirable housing on campus, or to start working jointly with private developers to build new housing on the campus but "off its books."

To be frank, I spent hundreds of hours of personal time working with fellow neighbors, UST and City officials on the campus expansion issue in order to preserve a strong residential neighborhood surrounding UST, and It infuriates me that UST would be permitted to now sit back and let our south of Grand neighborhood be destroyed by the Commission's lack of enforcement of City law and policy around these housing issues.

I urge you to reject the construction of a five story 80 student private dormitory on the southwest corner of Grand and Finn. Thank you.

Alyssa Rebensdorf
2096 Lincoln Avenue

To whom it may concern,

My name is Maddy Thomas, and I live at 2135 Lincoln, directly behind the proposed dorm structure. I think it is unfair and unrealistic to consider putting 80 college students on the corner of a residential neighborhood. It is hard enough to park at my own house, I can't imagine having 100+ more permits for the area. Seeing how much time, money, and TLC my parents have put into our renovated home, backyard, and landscape- I would be devastated to see this structure go up and their property value decline. Being a college student myself and having lived in college dorms as well as apartments, I have experienced these living spaces first hand. You put eighty college students in a two home space and any family surrounding them will undoubtedly seek to relocate. Who would want to buy a beautiful family home with a giant dormitory 50 feet from it? I know I wouldn't, and I think its safe to assume you wouldn't either.

Thank you for your consideration,

Maddy Thomas

Russ,

I am opposed to the 5 story building proposed for the corner of Grand & Finn. I am concerned about the height of the building (3 stories maximum would be a better fit for the neighborhood) and the lack of parking spaces (which will push more cars into a neighborhood already struggling with parking issues).

I previously sent you a letter in favor of the student rental ordinance.

Thank You,

Clarence Chaplin

1921 Lincoln Ave

I am a home owner at 2114 Fairmount Ave, and would like to request that you support the appeal before the City Council, regarding the construction of the 5-story apartment building on the intersection of Grand Ave and Finn. This high density building would have a very negative effect to the neighborhood, already struggling with the balance of students/renters and homeowners. Parking is already a documented problem for our neighborhood and this project would significantly increase traffic and parking issues. The proposed size of the unit does NOT fit the neighborhood, and definitely does not fit with the Mac/Groveland Community plan and the spirit of the city's zoning code- as already expressed by the St. Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee recommendation to reject the proposal.

Lauralie Millikan
2114 Fairmount Ave

Hello, name is Sally Menn. I live in Russ Stark's district. I'm just calling to say that I'm not in favor of the new building that's proposed for 2124 Grand Avenue. My reasons are not only does it seem out of scale, but if it's going to be a dorm for St. Thomas students, that just doesn't make me happy because I think we just so encroached by St. Thomas already. So, anyway, just calling to state my opposition to that building. Thank you.

She then called back, immediately, left 2nd v.m.

I didn't provide my address. I live at 2022 Lincoln Avenue. You don't need to return my call, but my # is

.

Thank you.

June 18, 2012

Dear Councilmembers Bostrom and Stark

I am writing to you, because I am opposed to the building, which can only be referred to as a proposed dorm (as each unit will have only a kitchen, a dining area and four small bedrooms without closets), at the corner of Grand and Finn.

This building is proposed to be a 50 foot high (5-story) building that houses 80 renters in 20 units. Introducing such a large, heavily student populated building into an established neighborhood of older and historic homes will irrevocably change the character of this neighborhood. Not only will this proposal introduce 80 new residents into a space that is currently occupied by two family homes, it will bring heavier traffic and tighter parking conditions to an area already overburdened by traffic issues. The building will stand out as a sore thumb, as one of only two five story buildings on Grand Avenue. In fact, other landowners, such as the University of Saint Thomas are restricted from any

buildings to that same height. Due to these irrevocable changes to the neighborhood, the erection of this proposed structure will ultimately decrease the property values of the surrounding homes and change the neighborhood into a student housing district.

Please vote against the proposed building and show your support for preserving not only this treasured and historic section of St Paul, but the historic character of Saint Paul as a whole.

Sincerely,
Rhonda Troutman

1582 Nebraska Ave E
Saint Paul, MN 55106.

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed Grand and Finn apartment building that will be considered on appeal before the St. Paul City Council on Tuesday June 20.

My concerns are the following:

Scale. A five story apartment building on that block seems out of proportion with the rest of the neighborhood. The other buildings on that part of Grand do not approach the height that this structure does, and I cannot imagine living next to such a place. Coupled with the fact that 80 college students will live there will increase the feeling that the neighborhood is less than residential.

Valuation. I also cannot imagine what this will do to the property values for the neighboring residences (I imagine the values will go down). Assuming that the property values do go down, you will be faced with a declining tax base, and, presumably, degraded residences that will turn into additional college student houses. Taking this to its logical conclusion, I can see the city, in an act of desperation to "stabilize" the tax base, will allow yet another developer to build yet another five story building for 80, 100, or more students, then another, and another.

Residential environment. I live approximately three-quarters of a mile south of UST.

Whenever a home goes up for sale in our neighborhood we (and I literally me all of us around any home that goes up for sale) worry about it being turned into a student rental.

With the real possibility of degrading home values to our north due to students living off campus in rented homes, I can see a day when the declining residential values will make its way to my neighborhood. Not this year. Not next year. In five to ten years I can see how the quiet, residential living in our neighborhood will no longer exist.

I respectfully ask that the City Council overturn the Planning Commission's decision on this matter.

Regards,

Richard Baum
2154 Jefferson Avenue
Saint Paul, MN

Dear Councilman Stark:

My wife and I have lived at 1947 Goodrich, the corner of Goodrich and Prior avenues, for forty-one years. Over those decades we have witnessed a number of changes in and around the west end of Grand and Summit avenues, and have watched those changes affect the quality of life in Mac-Groveland as far east as Fairview and as far south as St Clair; principal among those changes have been the increase in north-south traffic on Cretin, Cleveland and even Fairview, as well as much greater traffic along the major east-west streets.

The volume of traffic has been accompanied by an increase in parking by non-residents on Prior avenue and beyond; the residents of Lincoln avenue have been particularly affected and have repeatedly sought relief from the city....we live one block south and experience some of the same problems already. These are issues with which I am sure you are familiar.

While there are perhaps other contributing factors, the relentless expansion of the University of St Thomas is clearly the principle cause of these changes. Each time an accommodation is reached yet another issue arises which, at its core, has the consequence of more traffic, more parking on neighborhood streets, more disruptive behavior and, sadly, a further deterioration of the overall quality of life in the neighborhood.

Ten years ago or more the Metropolitan Council issued two related reports on housing in the Twin Cities and its neighborhoods. One of the neighborhoods highlighted as exemplary places to live was the Mac-Groveland neighborhood. It was cited for its good schools, low crime rate, and, importantly, for its primarily single-family home composition with limited, I repeat limited incidence of multi-family buildings. These factors, in turn, resulted in high property values and a solid tax base for local taxing entities. Significantly, the report argued that a deterioration or change in any one of the listed factors could and would lead to a decline in the desirability of the neighborhood, a decline in prices and therefore in the tax base for the city, county and school district.

Let me be plain: Decisions such as these approving the erection of a private dormitory that carries too many residents, too many cars, too much disruption and which serves as a precedent for more of the same going east on Grand avenue is exactly the kind of decision the Met Council's report cautioned against. Private dormitories have sprung up

around the University of Minnesota and have proven disruptive to neighborhoods there. They should not be allowed here and I sincerely hope you and your fellow council members will reject this proposal. Ten years from now I know all of you would be chagrined to discover that you had approved a project which accelerated the decline of one of the Twin Cities' finest and most desirable neighborhoods.

Respectfully,

John & Cynthia Ebner
1947 Goodrich Avenue
Saint Paul MN

Rcvd.
US mail
6/18/2012

2123 Goodrich Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55105

310-D City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

June 15, 2012

Dear Mr. Stark,

Please note my opposition to the proposed residential building on the SW corner of Grand Avenue and Finn Street. My stance is in line with the City Zoning Committee's recommendation, and is based on a desire to preserve the historic character and balanced demographic appeal of the neighborhood.

My wife and I moved into this neighborhood in 2011, recognizing homeowners' care for century-old homes and a family-friendly environment. I value the level of car traffic, safety for child pedestrians, and preservation of the area's historic look.

I have noted that the proposed building contrasts with zoning ordinances along historic Grand Avenue (such as Resolution 06-166 adopted on February 15, 2006 regarding Chapter 67 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code) which limits residential buildings to 3 stories and 36 feet in height. Furthermore, marketing the building to college student tenants would increase the noise and traffic level, abruptly distort the demographic mix, and begin a trend of further change from the current balance of families, students, renters, and homeowners. Any doubt to the validity of these claims must be supported by current and unbiased study data, as the trend is irreversible once started.

Allowing the proposed building to proceed would bring unexpected and unwelcome changes to my neighborhood, and to others who wish to raise a family in the existing environment of diverse residents and surrounding schools and commercial establishments. Ours is a micro-economy worth preserving.

When a building such as the proposed would benefit the interests of a private university and short-term residents, while negatively impacting the lives of mixed long-term residents, it is fair and sensible to reject the proposed building and preserve the historic value of this neighborhood.

Thank you kindly.

Sincerely,



Alan Gardiner
2123 Goodrich Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55105

"It is better to recycle what exists, to avoid mortgaging a workable past to a non-existent future, and to think small. In the life of cities, only conservation is sanity."

-historic preservationist Robert Hughes

Dear Councilman Stark,

I have been a resident of the Mac Groveland neighborhood since 1966. The neighborhood has been a wonderful place to live and raise a family. The growth of the University of St Thomas in recent years threatens all that is good about this neighborhood. I am especially distressed about the proposal to construct a 5-story dormitory at the corner of Grand and Finn. The student residents of the proposed

building will greatly increase the traffic and parking issues that are already of concern to neighbors and to those who pass through the area. Additional students in the area also impact the demand for trash, street cleaning and plowing, and other services. More students also change the demographics of the neighborhood, so I would expect different advertising, voting trends, etc than those of the past. This is a neighborhood of mixed generations, beautiful old trees, well-groomed yards, and friendly people. I urge you to take into consideration the concerns of the residents in making a ruling on this and future expansion plans of UST. Please do not approve the proposed construction on Grand and Finn. Thank you.

Cathy Wick
161 South Finn Street
St Paul, MN 55105

Dear Russ and City Council Members,

At the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC) board meeting on Tuesday, June 12, 2012, the board passed the following motion for inclusion at the City Council public hearing on June 20, 2012 re: the Graham Merry appeal of the Planning Commission's suggested parking restrictions on his student apartment building at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue.

- **A Matross/Redmond motion to support the Planning Commission's suggested parking restrictions, permit and other parking requirements for the proposed apartment complex at 2124-30 Grand Avenue passed 5-0 with 3 abstentions.**

At the WSNAC board meeting on Tuesday, June 12, 2012 the board passed the following motion for inclusion at the City Council public hearing on the June 20, 2012 re: the Graham Merru proposed apartment complex at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue.

- **A Cooper/Westermeyer motion that the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee strongly recommends the city conduct a 40-acre zoning study in the neighborhood near the proposed apartment complex at 2124-30 Grand Avenue and within the proposed student rental ordinance area to consider development issues, standards and expressed concerns such as were raised during the discussion of the 2124-30 Grand Avenue project passed by unanimous approval.**

These motions were extracted from the **June 12, 2012 West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee Minutes under the Housing Subcommittee report.**

We thank you for your continuing support for our neighborhood.

Sincerely yours,

Rachel M. Westermeyer
WSNAC co-chair

Dear Council Members:

Our family has lived at 2165 Lincoln Ave for almost 10 years. Prior to our family purchasing this home, my grandparents lived here for over 60 years and owned a grocery store on the corner of Grand and Cretin. I have always been proud of this neighborhood and have witnessed many changes over the years since my childhood.

We oppose the dorm that is being proposed on the corner of Grand and Finn Aves. It strikes me as unbelievable that I am writing the words *dorm* and *Grand and Finn Ave* in the same sentence and I would hope that those combinations of words would also give you, at the very least, a moment of pause.

We have endured parking hardships on our block ranging from parking half way down the street from our house in the winter (shuffling three small children and groceries) because of the lack of available parking. We have also put up a fence so that when the renters in the Grand Ave apartment building park their cars in front of our house they do not cut through our yard. It is common in the spring time for softball game spectators (and even umpires) to park on our block instead of using the UST ramp that is intended for them. On occasion we call in to report a parking offender to parking enforcement but response times can be so long that a ticket is not often issued.

Building such a massive dorm could also lead to more students in a neighborhood intended for families. We currently live next door to 6 students, and while their presence is relatively uneventful, it lacks the true friendship and neighborhood camaraderie that I have with other "owner occupied" neighbors on our block. Adding more students to an area that is already becoming saturated will test the patience of most families involved, including ours.

I am asking the city to abandon this project. However, if there is no other option and the city wants to move forward with an apartment building, why not build a 2-3 story building intended for a mix of students, families, and single professionals that fits with the character of Grand Ave (just like the rest of the apartments on the street)?

Sincerely,

Jeff and Christine Johnson
2165 Lincoln Ave



I have also enclosed a picture of our street that I took on a typical weekday morning (while UST is in session) of what parking looks like on Lincoln Ave between Cretin and Finn. Where are up to 120 more parking permitted cars going to fit on this street?

To whom it may concern

Some neighbors received a flier stating that there is a proposal to place a five story dorm, privately owned on the corner of Finn and Grand. Living on Goodrich and Kenneth- why did we not receive the flyer? Do we not do enough already for students? Recently I had a drunk student who tried to break into our house via the back door. I have concerns for public safety if more UST students are encouraged to live together in off-campus housing. We deal with them littering, making noise, urinating in our neighborhoods and other nonsense. Recently I had a drunk student who tried to break into our house via the back door. I have concerns for public safety if more UST students are encouraged to live together in off-campus housing. I am strictly opposed to such a dwelling being built in our neighborhood.

Lisa Polachek RN, BC, MBA
1974 Goodrich Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105

June 19, 2012

Mr. Russ Stark
310 City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Tammy and Mike Thomas Appeal regarding 2124-2130 Grand Avenue

Dear Russ and other Council Members,

I am writing you in support of the Tammy and Mike Thomas appeal regarding the student apartment/dorm at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue.

1. This building, even though within the height guidelines, is out of scale for the neighborhood. It offers no transition to the neighboring houses, casting them in its shadow, cutting off air, light and view. It is not in synch with the 2004 CUP which

directs that the University of St. Thomas must comply with transition to the neighborhood with building heights of only 40 feet.

2. At the present time in this permitted parking area there is a paucity of space on the street for a potential increase of 40-80 more cars that the tenants of this building may bring to this area.
3. This building by its very design is not a true apartment building with space within the unit for visiting, (no lounging space), cooking/eating (has an eating bar and minimal cabinets), and storing personal items (two small closets per unit). Each of the four bedrooms per unit comfortably accommodate only a single bed. This building would not have a normal mix of tenants due to its austere design both inside and out. This is definitely a student dorm building. It is even so stated on the architect's drawing.
4. There is essentially no green space outside surrounding the building.

HOWEVER,

my biggest concern about this building is that it is setting the scene for what may be next in store. At the present time on this block there are three long term apartment buildings, three rental homes and one rented duplex. There is only one home left that is owner occupied. It is believed that this homeowner has been approached to sell. Of the homes that are rented, one is known to have a purchase agreement with Mr. Merry. It is not known, but is heavily speculated, that some of the other homeowners have been approached to sell. Thus, there is the potential for this entire block to shortly become a scene for greater development.

In my mind, it would be best, prior to any construction for any building, including this proposed building at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue, that an overall plan for this entire block and its parking issues be developed. I am aware that the City has an overall plan to develop density along this and other residential corridors, but, in my opinion, this density needs to be further planned and acceptable within the limits imposed by an area already densely populated by students and their cars.

In closing, I am very much in support of this appeal by Tammy and Mike Thomas to preserve the neighborhood while exploring ways to incorporate more neighborhood-friendly density.

Sincerely,

Rachel M. Westermeyer

Rachel M. Westermeyer
1935 Summit Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

Russ Stark,

In the past you have attempted to help with a problem I had with the city of St. Paul water vs. sewer departments. I gotta say I was less than impressed I hope you can provide something more than the newbie card for this request.

Our neighborhood group is in a protracted debate/dispute with the University of St. Thomas and in this case a young alumni from the school. Our neighborhood has worked very hard in its' attempts to curtail the overwhelming expansion programs (direct or implicit) with this fine school.

I have to say it is a great place to study; I graduated from St. Thomas in 1984 and have lived next to campus for 30 years.

The school itself helped set up a program to purchase and sell homes in close proximity to single family occupancy. This was a response to them requesting and receiving a permit to expand campus. Now all this effort is being undermined by a friend of the school through a loophole. A private dorm, are you kidding me!

This building is going to be a nuisance property with this many young people living in an uncontrolled environment. I hate to imagine the problems that will arise at bar time. I have seen this less than appropriate behavior over the many years I have lived on Finn Street two short blocks from campus.

Our tight knit neighborhood is very disappointed with the current direction of the counsel on this matter. We understand Grand Avenue is zoned for apartment buildings but this is ridiculous in size scope and understanding of the usage afforded this permit. I beg you to reconsider this permit and tell this young man to reduce the size, scope and dormitory status of this building.

Joe Haub

Honsa-Binder Printing
320 Spruce Street
St. Paul, MN 55101-2445

To the Saint Paul City Council, June 19, 2012

This letter is offered in comment regarding the proposed construction of a 20-unit apartment building at 2124 Grand Avenue.

Currently the site plan approved by the Planning Commission is under appeal in agenda item APC 12-2 before the City Council.

I would urge the City Council to **delay approval** of this construction while additional issues are taken into consideration. These issues consider both the need and desire to accommodate student residents at the University of St. Thomas and to properly plan for a desirable long run character of this neighborhood. Approval of an alternative construction might be granted after a careful consideration of all factors, especially considering the present and future character of the entire surrounding neighborhood.

In the event this proposed construction is approved, I would urge you also to direct further study of the nature of development in the larger area.

The points are as follows:

1. There is a legitimate and supportable business and public purpose to supplying student

residential facilities near the campus of the University of Saint Thomas. It is to the advantage of the neighborhood, the students, and the University to be served by appropriate housing near places of education.

2. It is appropriate to site such facilities along density corridors such as Grand Avenue.

3. It is appropriate to support both business and residential development in St. Paul.

However,

3. The proposed building is of excessive height, excessive density of occupancy, and does not supply adequate parking facilities for the building type and occupant characteristics.

4. This building, if allowed, will set a precedent for further development in that block that should be studied and more carefully considered before proceeding willy-nilly.

5. The present allowance of such a building within RM-2 zoning may be technically correct, but the question whether this sort of structure, effectively a maximum height student dormitory, should be accommodated without more detailed long-range planning is open.

6. The immediate impact on nearby residents must be considered as required by proper procedure regardless of technical compliance.

7. The University of St. Thomas has a long-range opportunity to accommodate additional student housing in blocks already within the UST boundaries, to wit the blocks bounded by Cretin, Summit, Cleveland, and Grand Avenues. It would be appropriate for the City, the University, and developers to devise means to accommodate student housing needs in this area while meeting capital planning needs of the University and meeting conditions of the 2004 Conditional Use Permit of the University.

David Redmond
2035 Lincoln Avenue

Dear City Council Representatives,

As a resident of Merriam Park, I am writing to urge you to oppose the private "dorm" planned for Grand and Finn. This proposal is worse than a dorm. A n official University of St. Thomas dormitory would have residence hall staff in charge of the students, this is clearly student housing, but without the accountability of a "real" dorm. There are other serious problems with this proposed building: an increase in traffic and parking problems, an increase in student density, no supervision or oversight of the young people who will live there. It will no doubt become a party building as have many of the houses in our neighborhoods.

As I testified in the May hearing on the housing ordinance I think the key issue is that the University of St. Thomas does not provide adequate housing for it's undergraduates. The idea that 18, 19 and 20 year olds will behave well and respond to behavioral interventions is not reasonable based on the science we know about the adolescent brain. I served for several years as the Assistant Medical Director for Boynton Student Health Center at the University of Minnesota; there is a reason that college dormitories have trained residence hall staff and don't let a building full of undergraduates do as they please.

I applaud the measures suggested in the planning study including creating more on campus housing; this private building is not the solution. UST's desire to increase enrollment without thoughtful planning about housing its students is a travesty and irresponsible.

We are at a crossroads as a neighborhood; I strongly urge the city council to oppose this ordinance so that we can continue to have thriving neighborhoods that preserve the character of predominantly one and two family dwellings.

Thank you
Sofia Ali, MD, MPH

> Dear City Council Representatives,

> As a resident of Merriam Park, i am writing to urge you to pass the
> proposed ordinance that resulted from the Student Housing Zoning
> Study. As I testified in the May hearing on this matter, I think the
> key issue is that the University of St. Thomas does not provide
> adequate housing for it's undergraduates. The idea that 18, 19 and
> 20 year olds will behave well and respond to behavioral interventions
> is not reasonable based on the science we know about the adolescent
> brain. I served for several years as the Assistant Medical Director
> for Boynton Student Health Center at the University of Minnesota;
> there is a reason that college dormitories have trained residence hall
> staff and don't let a building full of undergraduates do as they
> please.

> At the May hearing, a Vice President from UST was asked if UST would
> build more dorms or ever consider requiring freshmen and sophmores to
> live on campus as Macalaster does. He replied that UST could not
> consider obtaining a bond to build a new building. This past
> weekend I attended an outside event that was held at St. Thomas; it
> was impossible not to see the millions of dollars that were spent n
> the new Anderson Student Center and the new Anderson Athletic
> Complex. I was disheartened that the same vision isn't applied to
> providing appropriate student housing.

> As a result of UST not providing adequate housing, the spill over goes
> into our neighborhoods and changes the character of the neighborhoods
> and the livability.

> When I first moved into the Merriam Park neighborhood in 1999, there
> was a much lower percentage of student rental housing. The character
> of the neighborhood was definitely one of single family homes,
> apartments and rentals peppered with some student occupied properties.
> Over the last 13 years, I have seen many homes flip from single family
> homes to student rentals. In fact, a study by WSNAC showed a 30%
> higher rate of flipping to rental than the city average.
>

> I am not against rental properties. In this tight rental market,
> landlords would still be able to find tenants despite passage of this
> ordinance limiting student rentals. The ordinance does not preclude
> anyone from renting their property, simply limits the density of
> student rentals.
>
> The proposals in the ordinance are clear and take a systematic
> approach to the problem. I urge the city council to adopt the
> ordinance as soon as possible.
>
> Some argue that we should work with the University near us; our
> neighborhood has taken several measures to do this, but in the end,
> the problems continue.
>
> The increased density of rentals to mostly undergraduate students has
> resulted in several factors that directly impact the quality of life
> in our neighborhood. These include, but are not limited to, poorly
> maintained properties (not shoveled well and icy in the winter,
> raggedy in the summer), loud parties (broken up by the police on
> several occasions), groups of loud, inebriated students walking from
> party to party late at night on weekends, and vandalism.
>
> With the ordinance in effect, there will be fewer homes flipping to
> student rental and there will be a decreased density of student
> housing thereby maintaining the character of the neighborhood.
>
> I applaud the other measures suggested in the study including creating
> more on campus housing, promoting buy-back programs to convert current
> student rental properties back to single family homes and creating
> alternate housing density areas connected by transit.
>
> We are at a crossroads as a neighborhood; I strongly urge the city
> council to approve this ordinance so that we can continue to have
> thriving neighborhoods that preserve the character of predominantly
> one and two family dwellings.
>
> Thank you
> Sofia Ali, MD, MPH
>
>

From: Jim Toscano

Sent: Tuesday, June 19, 2012 9:36 PM

To: Stark, Russ (CI-StPaul); Henningson, Samantha (CI-StPaul); Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul); Wittig-Geske, Nicole (CI-StPaul)

Subject: Opposition to de facto dormitory at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue

I am in total agreement with Alyssa, as is a preponderance of this area. Witness the number of lawn signs as an indicator of sentiment.

As she points out, the irresponsibility of the University of Saint Thomas in not building enough dorms as it grew has opened up the de facto possibility of a virtual campus outside of the agreed upon campus boundaries.

The initial decision of the council tomorrow should be to turn down the permit to build, then to appoint a study commission made up of the major stakeholders to review all of the factors, including what would be a reasonable responsibility of the University.

If it is not done this way, we will have a steady stream of such actions, a deterioration of this fine neighborhood, and a loss of faith in government as a rational arbiter of public interest.

With my deepest thanks for your continuing, serious consideration of this issue. jim

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Alyssa Rebensdorf** >

Date: Mon, Jun 18, 2012 at 12:24 AM

Subject: Opposition to de facto dormitory at 2124-2130 Grand Avenue

To: Russ Stark <Russ.Stark@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, Samantha Henningson

<Samantha.Henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, Chris Tolbert

<Chris.tolbert@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, Nicole Wittig-Geske <nicole.wittig-geske@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Councilmen Stark and Tolbert, and Legislative Aides Henningson and Wittig-Geske:

I oppose the construction of the student housing building on the southwest corner of Finn and Grand Avenues because the dorm constitutes a de facto expansion of the UST campus, in violation of City law and policy, as reflected in the 2004 Conditional Use Permit issued to the University of St. Thomas (UST). Moreover, private developers should not be allowed to aggressively buy up homes on Grand Avenue for construction of large scale housing complexes. Instead, UST should first be required to address any perceived demand (demand, not need), by building new student housing on its own campus. The burden of student housing issues should not be foisted onto the neighborhood.

I participated as a neighborhood representative in the many negotiations that eventually resulted in UST's Conditional Use Permit, put into place in 2004. See attached. At that time, neighbors reached an agreement with UST that allowed UST to expand its boundaries by incorporating into its campus the two blocks south of Summit Avenue. The west block (bordered by Finn, Grand, Cretin and Summit Avenues) was specifically designated in the CUP as a site for future student housing, with strict 40-foot height and 25-foot set back requirements imposed. I refer you to the attached CUP, paragraphs 1, 2 and 8. These requirements as to siting and scale were placed in the CUP in order to

create a buffer and a transition zone between the taller academic buildings and higher density land uses on the main campus blocks and the residential neighborhood south of Grand. If the City were to now allow a private housing developer to come in and build the first of several dormitories he apparently has planned for south of Grand, the City would be acting in violation of the letter, spirit and intent of the CUP by permitting a de facto expansion of UST's campus. Ironically, if UST were to try to build a housing unit of this scale on its campus, it would not be permitted to under the CUP. Why, then, should such a structure be permitted a mere 30 feet across the street from the campus boundary?

Additionally, please note that when the site plan for UST's new business school was approved in 2005, a condition was imposed by the City that required UST to vacate the temporary parking lot on the corner of Cleveland and Grand by 2014 in favor of construction of a residential building. I refer you to the attached Planning Commission Resolution from March 2005, paragraph 1, Surface Parking. ("The CUP calls for this area to be used for housing and St. Thomas has said it intends to build housing here but construction may not start for few years (sic), until some of the other buildings in the two block area south of Summit are completed. A permanent parking lot is not consistent with the CUP. However, a parking lot that is well landscaped and screened is acceptable as an interim use for up to 10 years if no building is constructed during that time.")

Clearly, in 2004-05, City officials contemplated that UST would shoulder increasing responsibility for housing students on its campus. At the recent Planning Commission hearing on the student rental ordinance, we heard from a Macalester College representative (Tom Welna) that Macalester College requires its sophomores to live on campus. UST has no answer as to why it does not do the same, other than to suggest that it currently lacks money to do so. That UST has first constructed a business school, parking garage, student center and athletic complex is UST's choice, but IF there exists a desire (not a need, but a desire) by students to live closer to campus, the next step should be for UST to either commence on its own to build desirable housing on campus, or to start working jointly with private developers to build new housing on the campus but "off its books."

To be frank, I spent hundreds of hours of personal time working with fellow neighbors, UST and City officials on the campus expansion issue in order to preserve a strong residential neighborhood surrounding UST, and It infuriates me that UST would be permitted to now sit back and let our south of Grand neighborhood be destroyed by the Commission's lack of enforcement of City law and policy around these housing issues.

I urge you to reject the construction of a five story 80 student private dormitory on the southwest corner of Grand and Finn. Thank you.

Alyssa Rebensdorf
2096 Lincoln Avenue

I am writing to voice my steadfast opposition to the construction of a private dormitory on Grand and Finn. Once again, my neighborhood is facing the sustaining problem of outside interests seeking to line their pockets at my, and my neighbor's, expense. A five-story dormitory on this corner will bring even more direct negative impact to the neighborhood. We are already **saturated** with student rentals. Enough of this!

Thomas Gluesing
2150 Goodrich Avenue

Dear Mr. Beach,

I have been a resident of the Mac Groveland neighborhood since 1966. The neighborhood has been a wonderful place to live and raise a family. The growth of the University of St Thomas in recent years threatens all that is good about this neighborhood. I am especially distressed about the proposal to construct a 5-story dormitory at the corner of Grand and Finn. The student residents of the proposed building will greatly increase the traffic and parking issues that are already of concern to neighbors and to those who pass through the area. Additional students in the area also impact the demand for trash, street cleaning and plowing, and other services. More students also change the demographics of the neighborhood, so I would expect different advertising, voting trends, etc than those of the past. This is a neighborhood of mixed generations, beautiful old trees, well-groomed yards, and friendly people. I urge you to take into consideration the concerns of the residents in making a ruling on this and future expansion plans of UST. Please do not approve the proposed construction on Grand and Finn. Thank you.

Cathy Wick
161 South Finn Street
St Paul, MN 55105

I am a home owner at 2114 Fairmount Ave, and would like to request that you support the appeal before the City Council, regarding the construction of the 5-story apartment building on the intersection of Grand Ave and Finn. This high density building would have a very negative effect to the neighborhood, already struggling with the balance of students/renters and homeowners. Parking is already a documented problem for our neighborhood and this project would significantly increase traffic and parking issues. The proposed size of the unit does NOT fit the neighborhood, and definitely would not fit with the Mac/Groveland Community plan and the spirit of the city's zoning code- as already expressed by the St. Paul Planning Commission's Zoning Committee recommendation to reject the proposal.

Lauralie Millikan
2114 Fairmount Ave

Mr. Beach:

I reside at 2150 Goodrich Avenue, 2 blocks from the apartment building which is under consideration for our neighborhood. I am writing to express my strong opposition to these plans and to urge you to vote "no" to them.

As you may be aware, the immediate neighborhoods surrounding the University of St. Thomas has been contending with the rapid growth of the institution for a number of years now. This

has been reflected in a number of problems, among them increased traffic, a drastic increase in rental property occupied by students which in many cases is not well-maintained or managed, and noise, congestion, and other quality of life issues. I wish to state clearly that I have nothing against St. Thomas — I am, in fact, an alum and have worked as an instructor there. I believe that the university has, in good faith, tried to address some of these issues, but the fact remains that the neighborhoods have been paying the price for their rapid expansion without careful and thoughtful long range planning on their part for far too long. This dormitory, masquerading as an “apartment” building, is just another example of that. The university has simply run out of space for on-campus housing and this project presents an opportunity for them to do an end run around this problem. Yes, I realize that a private developer is behind these plans, but what matters is the end result and the negative impact this will have, no matter who’s doing the building. In the interests of maintaining (and in some cases re-establishing) the quality of the neighborhood, this project should not be allowed to go forward. Enough is enough.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer input on this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Peter
2150 Goodrich Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Mr. Beach,

Please note my opposition to the proposed residential building on the SW corner of Grand Avenue and Finn Street. My stance is in line with the City Zoning Committee's recommendation, and is based on a desire to preserve the historic character and balanced demographic appeal of the neighborhood.

My wife and I moved into this neighborhood in 2011, recognizing homeowners' care for century-old homes and a family-friendly environment. I value the level of car traffic, safety for child pedestrians, and preservation of the area’s historic look.

I have noted that the proposed building contrasts with zoning ordinances along historic Grand Avenue (such as Resolution 06-166 adopted on February 15, 2006 regarding Chapter 67 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code) which limits residential buildings to 3 stories and 36 feet in height. Furthermore, marketing the building to college student tenants would increase the noise and traffic level, abruptly distort the demographic mix, and begin a trend of further change from the current balance of families, students, renters, and homeowners. Any doubt to the validity of these claims must be supported by current and unbiased study data, as the trend is irreversible once started.

Allowing the proposed building to proceed would bring unexpected and unwelcome changes to my neighborhood, and to others who wish to raise a family in the existing environment of diverse residents and surrounding schools and commercial establishments. Ours is a micro-economy worth preserving.

When a building such as the proposed would benefit the interests of a private university and short-term residents and negatively impacting the lives of mixed long-term residents, it is fair and sensible to reject the proposed building and preserve the historic value of this neighborhood.

Thank you kindly,

Alan Gardiner
2123 Goodrich Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Mr. Beach:

I am a resident of Merriam Park and have lived in this neighborhood for 11 years with my husband and two daughters. We moved here because we wanted to be part of a diverse community which includes college students.

Over the past five or six years, the community has changed with the increase of students living in the neighborhood. We have watched as single-family homes have been converted to student rental (a 50% increase over the past year within a two block range of our home) and how that has negatively altered the community what we once knew. Adding an apartment building with more unsupervised students off campus is not the answer. We oppose the approval of this building.

Thank you for taking the time to review our opinion on this matter. We are confident that the City Council will make the right choice to protect this lovely neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Sarah Smith
1906 Laurel Avenue

From: **Jenny Semmens**
Date: Wed, Jun 13, 2012 at 12:05 PM
Subject: Apartment building proposal at 2124 Grand avenue
To: ward1-7@stpaul.gov

Dear St Paul City Council,

I live at and am a property owner at 2163 Goodrich Avenue and I am protesting the building of the apartment building at 2124 Grand and Finn. as far as I

can see it will cater to students primarily from St Thomas and by proxy extend the St Thomas campus further into our community. The neighborhood is already under siege from UST expansion and this changes the fundamental nature of our community. I enjoy being part of a university community but the expansion has gone far enough!

Jennifer Semmens

June 13, 2012

Dear Mr. Beach,

We are writing in support of the neighbors' appeal of the St. Paul Planning Commission's May 18, 2012 approval of the site plan application for construction of a student apartment at the corner of Grand and Finn, #12-0370-383 and in support of the ordinance to limit student rentals in our neighborhood. We feel that both of these actions are necessary to preserve neighborhood balance and livability.

We have lived in our Lincoln Avenue home for over 30 years. We raised our family here. We have always recognized and appreciated our neighborhood's wonderful qualities and, in return, have been good neighbors and good citizens. Our close proximity to the University of St. Thomas has provided a continual source of tension with potential for conflict, but until recently, we have felt that the positive aspects of our neighborhood outweighed any drawbacks. Recent events and trends, however, have us second-guessing our decision to live and invest in the city of St. Paul. Also, it would appear that we value St. Paul more than St. Paul values residents like us; at the May 18 Planning Commission meeting, commissioners expressed sympathy for the neighbors yet were unwilling to support action to protect our neighborhood.

We object to the proposed building on the corner of Grand and Finn due to issues of size, height, setback, parking, and occupant use and density. By design and intent, this building will function as a St. Thomas dorm. By creating highly concentrated student residences, this building will increase density but not diversity in our neighborhood. The developer has indicated that this building will address the problem of single-family homes becoming student rentals. We do not believe that students will choose to live in mean, cramped, closet-less dorm rooms where they are not allowed to be in the yard (because it is the roof of the underground parking structure) if they can live in a house

with more square footage and outdoor space. Students will continue to seek single-family neighborhood homes to rent and the dorm will bring an even higher concentration of students into our neighborhood.

That is why we feel that both the rental ordinance and the revocation of the approval for the proposed dorm are needed.

We support the contention of the neighbors' appeal that the proposed building does not meet parking requirements. Even if the building did provide 40 appropriately sized parking spaces, parking would still be a major concern for us. We fully expect that the developer's charge for parking will far exceed the \$10/year cost of a neighborhood parking permit. If parking permits are available to dorm residents, many would choose to get permits rather than park in the building. This building would increase the density on the land it occupies from 12 residents to 80 residents. The developer should be required to provide supports to accommodate this drastic increase in density; after all, his interest in creating such a high-density building is to increase his personal profit. We feel he should be required to provide parking in excess of the bare minimum required by current zoning so that the livability of the neighborhood is protected as he seeks to maximize his profit. His current plan is to use the street in front of our house as his parking lot.

We hope that the council will overturn the Planning Commission's approval for the dorm on the corner of Grand and Finn. But if the project is allowed to occur as planned, we hope that zoning requirements will be strictly enforced and no variances will be granted before, during, or after construction. Although, we feel that the current zoning requirements are inappropriate and inadequate for our neighborhood and that this project should further meet the requirements of the St. Thomas CUP because it will function as a dorm, the current zoning requirements are what we have to protect our neighborhood right now. This project is very tightly designed to meet zoning requirements; situations may arise during construction that would cause the developer to seek variances, using his investment and partially built structure to bully the city into granting such variances. We understand that no one can be prevented from applying for variances. But it would seem most fair to make it clear to the developer that, in all likelihood, he will not receive variances and that the responsibility for completing his project within zoning requirements rests squarely on his shoulders, so that he can plan accordingly.

Finally, it was stated at a Planning Commission meeting that the neighbors could not have it both ways—that it was unreasonable to expect to limit the development of large high-density student buildings while limiting student rental of single-family homes; the students have to live somewhere. We are not seeking to ban students from our neighborhood, only to preserve balance and diversity. There are currently 1,700 students

living in the neighborhoods within a 1-mile radius of St. Thomas. We would hope that all residents, student and non-student alike, behave as responsible citizens and treat each other respectfully. We feel that a tipping point has been reached, however, and that an increase in student concentration and rental houses would have a negative impact on our neighborhood. We feel that the most appropriate place for students to live is on-campus. The 2004 St. Thomas CUP indicated that a residential village would be built on the blocks between Summit, Cleveland, Grand, and Cretin. St Thomas has stated that it is not fiscally able to build student housing at this time. In recent years, however, they have completed major projects such as a science building, an athletic center, and a student center; they have set their priorities and made their choices. It would seem that they are content to let the surrounding neighborhoods provide student housing so that they can use their land and money for other purposes. The neighborhoods should not bear sole responsibility for solving St. Thomas housing needs.

Anthony and Nancy Wacker

2153 Lincoln Avenue

St Paul, MN 55105

Hello Mr. Beach,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed dorm/apartment going up at 2124 Grand Ave. This project DOES NOT fit the neighborhood and would negatively impact those residents that live near by. In short, the large size and large scale is out of proportion to all the other buildings (residential, apartments, retail and college) near by. At the very most, I believe that this building if allowed to go up, should be limited to 2 stories. I can tell you for a fact, had I known that this would be allowed into our neighborhood in the first place, it would have impacted my decision to move here. If the goal is to drive out the tax paying residents that improve their homes and neighborhood, please be perfectly clear with your vote on this issue. It would be nice to know where we (this neighborhood) stand with each council member and the city when we dig in to protect our neighborhood from ridiculous projects like the one proposed at 2124 Grand. Thank you for your attention to this matter and please DO NOT allow the project at 2124 Grand Avenue to proceed.

Regards,

Mark and Tonya Dunham
2105 Goodrich Ave

Tom Beach:

I strongly opposed to the building of a 5 story 20 unit apartment at Grand and Finn. This is in direct opposition to proposals to limit student housing in the area. The proposal is for 4 bedrooms in each unit, that will obviously be used for student housing. The plan only calls for 40 off-street parking spots, when 80 would be required for all the students' cars. In addition, if the students are

able to get visitor parking permits, they could easily sell them to friends. I live at 2111 Lincoln, and already it is difficult to find a place to park on the street. Also, at 5 stories high, it will be the tallest structure on Grand Ave west of Dale street. I can't believe that the Planning Commission could have approved this site plan. Aren't they aware of the issues concerning increased off-campus student housing in this area?

Jim Lendway