

Dear City Council Members,

Please support the appeal of the proposed Dominion apartments at 720 East Seventh and help us convince the developers to modify their project. I hope you will consider the following three points that support our community's position.

1. The Dominion people always say that the size of their proposal is all right because the Historic Preservation Commission gave it the okay. In fact, the staff report clearly said that the mass and scale of the proposed building was too large for the surrounding area. The majority of the H. P. C. decided to mitigate the obvious problem by suggesting some minor changes of color, roofline and such and then approved the proposal of Dominion on a split vote. Three of the Commission members, and the two who lived in the area—including myself-- were against approving the proposal. Even though the proposal was passed with conditions the fact remains that the scale and massing is far too great and the size clearly clashes with its surrounding structures.

2. The Dominion representatives have often said that their proposal fits with the land-use plans of the neighborhood. They point to a red place on a map that calls for mixed use on the East Seventh Street and argue that the Mississippi Market provides retail and the Dominion proposal is housing so the land as a whole is mixed use. This is not what the Near East Seventh Planning Group asked for. I know, because I spent over a year attending the meetings as part of the group. The goal was to strengthen the retail presence on East Seventh. When we evaluated this site we wanted retail or housing with retail on the first floor. Dominion always says they can't have retail on the street level, but others have done it on Rice Street, University Avenue and in Minneapolis as well.

3. The Dominion group always says that they have included the community in their planning. This is not true. They have made some presentations, but only to let people know what they had already decided. No community people were involved in the planning and an advisory committee was never established. There was one recent meeting where several community members met with Dominion, but their representative was not willing to budge on either the height of the building or first level retail. He said he would present our position to his group, but we never heard from him again. When I once personally spoke to a Dominion planner and suggested changes, he said, "this our project, take it or leave it." I hope you will agree to leave it as it now stands and support our appeal.

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