



June 2, 2015

Josh Williams
Saint Paul CPED
25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am writing in regard to the residential development proposed by Shepard Development LLC for the former US Bank Site near Shepard Road and Davern Street.

Historic Fort Snelling, a National Historic Landmark site that is operated by the Minnesota Historical Society, is located directly across the Mississippi River from the proposed development. Nearly 100,000 people visit the Fort annually to learn about Minnesota history, walk the grounds and take in the beautiful vistas in many directions.

The Historic Fort's setting, at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, is what gives the site its historic significance today. Built in the early 1820s, Historic Fort Snelling is a great place to learn about military history from before the Civil War through World War II, fur trade history, slavery in Minnesota, the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and much more. Visitors to the Fort get a glimpse of what Minnesota looked like nearly 200 years ago, and taking in the vast landscape of forested bluffs is an important part of the visitor experience.

As site manager for the Historic Fort, I am writing today to support the appeal of the Shepard Davern variance for a 73.5-foot structure, and I urge the Saint Paul City Council to reverse the Planning Commission's decision to grant the height variance.

If the Shepard Davern development is permitted to be so tall, it will damage this highly significant cultural landscape by intersecting the view of bluff line from several overlooks at Fort Snelling, including the popular Round Tower. We are also concerned that one building at this height will set a precedent to allow more tall buildings along Shepard Road. The cumulatively impact of many tall buildings would do serious damage to this highly scenic area.

Historic Fort Snelling

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Historic Fort Snelling is a National Historic Landmark. The significance of this place and surrounding landscape demands sensitive development that does not diminish the vast views and sense of place while visiting the site. We are working to help create a new era for Historic Fort Snelling, where its many stories will be told in preserved historic buildings amid natural beauty. To maximize the experience and preserve the surrounding area, development must mimic the natural topography.

Saint Paul recognized the importance of limiting building height to protect scenic landscapes in the Mississippi River Corridor chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan, and views from Fort Snelling are specifically identified for protection. The height variance is clearly inconsistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and therefore it should be rescinded.

The City of Saint Paul clearly values the confluence area. Therefore, before granting a variance that will go against your own Comprehensive Plan, Historic Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Historical Society urge a visual impact study to be conducted from Historic Fort Snelling and the surrounding Fort Snelling State Park land to provide solid visual evidence to inform this variance decision. Unless the visual study demonstrates that the proposed development will not significantly alter the character of the surrounding river valley, the variance should be denied.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this variance request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Pfannenstiel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Pfannenstiel
Site Manager, Historic Fort Snelling