



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Ave Development**

1 message

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**Emily Leister** <emilyleister@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 8, 2021 at 9:07 PM

To: "zlu@summithillassociation.org" &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

We received the postcard about the redevelopment of 695 Grand and love it!

The underground, off street parking is also a great addition to the neighborhood as well as more residential space. It's nice to see Great city planning after the lockdowns. It will help revitalize the area.

Thanks for the postcard.

Kenny and Emily Raway  
[1090 Saint Clair Ave](#)

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*Dr. Emily M. Raway, Au.D*  
[emilyleister@gmail.com](mailto:emilyleister@gmail.com)  
**Cell: 330-241-2276**



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Avenue**

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**Patricia Merwin** <pmkrezowski@icloud.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Tue, Mar 9, 2021 at 4:40 PM

Good afternoon,

Expressing my support of the project at 695 Grand Avenue! The avenue and area must embrace change and with it development. I am all in favor of housing with restaurants and shops on the street level. The avenue has experience a decline over the last few years while other areas of the city are changing and updating with the times. Yes, please, Grand Avenue needs development and improvements appealing to prospective residents in order to keep the avenue fresh and progressive.

Thank you so much,

Patricia Merwin  
785 Goodrich Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN. 55105



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Redevelopment

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**Jim Phillips** <jimphil66@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 9, 2021 at 6:39 PM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

I won't be able to attend the virtual meetings regarding the redevelopment of 695 Grand, but I just wanted to give my opinion that I think this project would be good for Grand Ave and neighboring Crocus Hill and Summithill communities. Other areas of St. Paul are seeing continued economic development, but Grand Ave seems to be slip,sliding away. So I just to want to convey my support for this redevelopment.

Sincerely,  
James Phillips  
785 Goodrich Ave



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Redevelopment

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**terry mcgrath** <tp.mcgrath@hotmail.com>

Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 10:09 AM

To: "zlu@summithillassociation.org" &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

I purchased my first of many homes in this neighborhood approximately 59 years ago. It is projects like this and 1060 Grand that have given most people my age who would like to continue to live here in this area but not own a home or climb two or three sets of stairs, to continue to enjoy living in this remarkable neighborhood. Please give these owners a chance at creating quality and very usable living and Dining space.

Yours Truly Terry McGrath

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## My comments about the 695 Grand Ave. redevelopment proposal

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**Betsy Turner** <btclip22@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 4:20 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

I have just about had it with variances being handed out, as if the rules that were sensibly set up by retired, city councilman Dave Thune and other concerned residents mean absolutely nothing ! This site tried to get the neighborhood to be in agreement, once before, to build a 5 story structure in a 3 story zoned limit. The **truly**oney. It's so short sighted to keep weighing on the side of business, when you, also, have obligations to precedent and to the residents who live here.

I was so disappointed to hear that the owner of Emmett's, Salut, & Dixies are, once again, trying to push their interests above the established requirement to stick to the **three story limit**. The **domino effect** has been discussed before, and believe you and me, if they get their variance, nothing will stop others from requesting the same 5 story variances. **Grand Ave. is unique in its character**, and we, for sure, don't want its tone to change, as it did in the Uptown area. The result has ruined that Calhoon area in Minneapolis and the same will happen here. You have an obligation to uphold the character of Grand Ave. and not to hand out variances, just because they are requested by opportunistic businesses. There have been far too many granted in recent years. Restrictions should mean something, and it is up to the City Council to be responsible to the neighborhood's tax paying residents. We have no desire for Grand Ave. to turn into a business strip.....it's so easy to ruin a one of a kind street that brings people here for its special look, and one that has been truly valued for over 60 years. Please don't allow this five story structure to be built.

Consider the future and what this detrimental change would mean going forward.

Thanks for your consideration, Betsy Turner ( Grand & Avon)



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Avenue**

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**Patricia Merwin** <pmkrezowski@icloud.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

Sun, Mar 14, 2021 at 4:23 PM

Good afternoon,

As I mentioned in my earlier email, I am in support of the new project.

Several thoughts for Grand Avenue development with this project and others would be more designated green spaces with stone benches/stone tables for quick take away meals and other foods, green spaces to encourage community gathering and green spaces for a healthier city. Such spaces would be a place to have public art such as for BLM, memorial to the deaths associated with Covid and the courageous workers.

We want to gather as one people, a united people in our community.

Kind regards,

Patricia Merwin  
[Quoted text hidden]



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand - Zoom Login for TONIGHT 3/18 at 7pm

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**Bob Lunning** <boblunning@gmail.com>  
To: Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>  
Cc: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

Thu, Mar 18, 2021 at 8:42 PM

To the Development Team:

I do not have a problem with density per se. This site is surrounded by multi-family residential buildings, 3-4 stories in height. However, any dwelling on this site will increase the site/neighborhood's residential density. There is no quality of life reason to maximize it. With that in mind, this location calls for a more complex building form and use pattern that responds to its unique context.

Our neighborhood does not have a lake or park... we have Grand Avenue. It's our amenity, therefore each change needs to be sensitive and thoughtful to make the whole avenue thrive. How about this: This block of St. Albans is a special place in Saint Paul deserving of an incomparable formal response that continues this pattern. Maybe a retail space with an identifiable form could hold and benefit from the corner location while adding vitality to the street. Grand Avenue is walkable because of the relationship between of views into and out of buildings. Bring the restaurant/retail space, mid-building, as close to the street as possible and the bang greatest building height closer to Grand creating a quieter back for residential use with a building form that doesn't spatial overpower and shade the neighboring townhouses.

A concept such as this would necessarily lead to a more varied building with dwellings of different sizes, lifestyles, and affordability levels that would fit with the cultural as well as the physical context of this wonderful site and the neighborhood we all love. Your words describe goals for the project that could make this a cherished, fitting addition to its locale. Now, break the mold and strive for a design that meets those goals.

Bob Lunning  
644 Summit Avenue

On Mar 18, 2021, at 3:22 PM, Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com> wrote:

Dear Neighbors,

This is a reminder about our first of two community meetings **TONIGHT at 7pm** to share and discuss 695 Grand.

[Quoted text hidden]



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Project

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**Marquita Oleson** <marquita.oleson@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Thu, Mar 18, 2021 at 8:47 AM

Hello,

My name is Marquita Oleson and I am a new neighbor in our ward as I recently purchased a condo in the 42 St Albans building across the street from the proposed 695 Grand Project. I am in my mid-thirties and work in the medical technology field. I live on the third floor of my community and adore my new neighborhood.

I am very concerned about the proposed project. Our neighborhood is walkable with safe streets and has very few buildings of the height proposed. If it were a project to build more brownstones or a proposal that was only 3 stories instead of nearly 5 that had a brick facade and fit the feel of the Grand/Dale and Cathedral Hill areas I would be supportive. This building would create busy, probably less safe streets directly surrounding my home. It would also stick out like a sore thumb in our historic area that deserves preservation. There is currently a shortage of housing for purchase, but the last thing our community needs is more overpriced rental units. It does not meet the needs of the market, and would generally have a very negative impact on the area.

I am also worried about the value of the new condo I purchased. This ugly rental project has the very real possibility of driving down my property value. As a young first time home buyer, this could have a very real and adverse impact on my financial future. St Albans would turn into a noisy and busy street and a parking nightmare, reducing the value of the property that I purchased. I had hoped to sell this property in 5 - 10 years and move into a larger, higher value single family home. This project has the very real possibility of making that dream impossible because I would lose money on my investment. If this project had started or if that building was already built when I was shopping for a condo, I would have moved elsewhere.

Thank you for carefully evaluating the impact of this project on our community and our neighbors. I am going to try to participate in tonight's meeting, but wanted to send a note over detailing how this project would impact me personally. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for any additional information.

Thank you,  
Marquita Oleson  
612-709-9731  
42 St Albans St S., #6B



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand - Zoom Login for TONIGHT 3/18 at 7pm**

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**grtodd@comcast.net** <grtodd@comcast.net>  
To: Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>  
Cc: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

Sat, Mar 20, 2021 at 9:30 PM

Ari,

Where is the best place to send feedback and questions? I didn't see anyplace identified on the Summit Hill Association website. I'd also like to review the slide deck from the presentation. I appreciate Peter's interest in getting feedback from the community. One idea, that my girlfriend came up with, was for you to offer to lease some limited number of parking spots to the St. Albans folks that may lose a couple of street spots. Of course you'd have to have the spots available but it would be an additional perk for those in the immediate neighborhood along with the new dining spaces. How many square feet is the current building? What is the proposed growth in square footage for Emmet's and Saji Ya?

Thanks.

GRT

Gary R. Todd

682 Summit Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

grtodd@comcast.net

651-470-4720 – cell

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**From:** Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 18, 2021 3:23 PM  
**To:** Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>  
**Cc:** ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

[Quoted text hidden]

3/22/2021

Summit Hill Association Mail - 695 Grand - Zoom Login for TONIGHT 3/18 at 7pm

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ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Re: 695 Grand details**

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**Lloyd Lentz** <lloyd@lloydlentz.com>  
To: Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>  
Cc: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

Sun, Mar 21, 2021 at 8:35 AM

Ari, thanks for coordinating the call the other day. Having lived immediately across the alley of 695 Grand for 46 years, I am excited at the idea of redevelopment and improving that space. I think there are elements of it that are architecturally lovely and thoughtful. There are, of course, a number of elements that are concerning.

I would like to review the recording from the other night, the organizers said many times that it would be made available. Can you provide that please?

Also, are you the best person to send questions to, if we are looking for any clarification on specifics? (I.e., I counted 72 parking spaces on the lower level and the Highland Villiager says the project is planned to have 81, mostly multiple occupancy, apartments) just looking for actual numbers and anything specific to have thoughts about, and share ideas and reflections with.

[sent from mobile]

On Thu, Mar 18, 2021, 3:22 PM Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com> wrote:

Dear Neighbors,

This is a reminder about our first of two community meetings **TONIGHT at 7pm** to share and discuss 695 Grand.

Here is the login info once again. We hope you can join us!

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Topic: 695 Grand Community Meeting

Time: Mar 18, 2021 07:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87534270780?pwd=ell0cFRLbTdoSTFMZ3NrMnhvU2l6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 875 3427 0780

Passcode: 160610

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,87534270780#,,,,\*160610#

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 875 3427 0780

Passcode: 160610

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**Please do not forward this email** – it's very helpful for us to have people sign up through [bit.ly/695grand](https://bit.ly/695grand).

Thank you again!

Regards,

Reuter Walton Development

Peter Kenefick and Family

The Summit Hill Association

ESG Architects





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## ZLU Public Comment

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**mary peters** <marypeters@usfamily.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Sun, Mar 21, 2021 at 8:25 PM

My husband and I live on Fairmount Ave, and are totally against any mixed use development at [695 Grand Ave](#), formerly Dixie's on Grand, Emmett's Public House and Saji-Ya restaurants. The avenue is already too congested, we have enough trouble finding a parking space when we choose to drive rather than walk. We understand there is a proposed underground parking lot for residents, but that doesn't account for family, friends, and visitors. We are also concerned about the height of the structure, which will be a blemish to Grand Ave and add to the visual clutter. We vote a resounding **NO!**



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## ZLU Public Comment

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**Lloyd Froelich** <lloydfroelich@icloud.com>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 10:06 AM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

I am commenting on 695 Grand Ave. The size of the building doesn't worry me. The parking requirements for tenants for 81 units and the people who will frequent the restaurants and whatever the corner space will hold does bother me. Even if there is parking available in side, there will be many people who will choose to park on residential streets. The residents need them. There isn't a way to stop the residential streets from being clogged by the residents of the 81 units or the users of the establishments.

The people who are invested in this project are thinking the new public space is good for the neighborhood. I completely disagree. I look at that space and see nothing but troubles. A big party place with a lot of noises and drunks fighting. When walking down Grand in the evening, I would not go past that space. It feels like a part of my home has been taken away.

All in all, I say NO to this development.



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## ZLU Public Comment

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**Patricia Litchy** <plitchy3@comcast.net>

Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 9:05 AM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Dear Summit Hill Association, Zoning and Land Use Committee,

I live at 24 Grotto Street South. My home is located behind the St Albans and Grotto Street alley.

I appreciate your hard work in assuring development in the Summit Hill neighborhood is reasonable and appropriate. I am aware of the proposed Grand Avenue projects in our immediate area (the proposed Byerlys, Dixie's on Grand, and Coulee Bank/restaurant projects) and welcome them all with one exception. I strongly oppose granting a variance allowing a restaurant drive through at the corner of Grand and Grotto Street and ask you to deny this request. If the restaurant refuses to accept the Summit Grotto space without a drive through, then another restaurant or store should take that space.

I believe the proposed changes to this part of Grand Avenue should be considered as a whole, especially relating to transportation. Everything must work together when all is done, and I cannot envision any way a busy restaurant drive through can work on the Grand-Grotto corner.

Consider:

1. Safety on the Corner. The corner of Summit and Grotto is currently very busy. It has two bus stops, a lot of foot traffic, and carries bicycles, cars, and large variety of delivery and utility vehicles. More, observing increased pedestrian traffic along Grotto and walking this portion of the street myself, I know it can be challenging to navigate the Grotto between Summit and Grand Avenue. Adding a restaurant drive through on this already busy corner unnecessarily increases traffic and pedestrian safety concerns.
2. The St. Albans-Grotto Alley. The busy alley between St. Albans and Grotto Street presents another safety challenge. My garage is on this much used alley, and increased alley use arising from the proposed Dixie's project is already concerning. However, adding a restaurant drive through would unreasonably multiply any challenges caused by increased traffic. The proposed restaurant drive through would result in two lanes of traffic (one of them carrying large service trucks) in close proximity to one another turning onto Grotto or crossing Grotto to continue on the alley. This could be hazardous for the vehicles and would endanger pedestrians walking on Grotto.
3. Character of the Neighborhood. There are no other restaurant drive throughs on Grand Avenue. This is appropriate insofar as restaurant drive-ins simply do not belong in busy city environments with lots of pedestrians. Granting this variance would be contrary to preserving the valued historic character of our neighborhood, and losing the character of our neighborhood in this way would by itself be a travesty.

Thank you,

Patricia J. Litchy  
24 Grotto Street South,  
St. Paul MN 55105  
(651) 503-5868



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## TRAFFIC FLOWS AND IMPACTMENT AT 733 GRAND AVE AND 695 GRAND AVE PROJECTS

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**Marlenek@autconst.com** <Marlenek@authconst.com>

Wed, Mar 24, 2021 at 1:58 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

As neighbors, we have concerns about the parking, pedestrian, and traffic issues with both the new drive-through project at 733 Grand Ave and the proposed redevelopment at 695 Grand Ave, since they are both on the same block. Rather than rush through both of these projects, we encourage the city and zoning committee to take a close look at how traffic will be impacted and how to keep citizens safe with respect to traffic flow and foot traffic and of course, parking congestion. It would be good to do some advance computer modeling on these flows, if not done already, and see if traffic lights or special curb cuts will be needed prior to approval and advancement of either project.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these issues.

Mike and Marlene Killa



ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**David Thompson** <davidt792@yahoo.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Mar 26, 2021 at 6:21 PM

Hello

I can't make the April 8th meeting, but I do have some feedback.

I love the idea of the redevelopment, and in 15 years or so, would be one of those ready to give up my beautiful home on Osceola and move into something more suitable in size to stay in my beloved neighborhood.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak up.  
David Thompson

Sent from my iPad



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand - Updated Presentation Recording and Link to Presentation Material

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**Ellen Brown** <ellen@thebrownpartners.com>  
To: Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com>  
Cc: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 9:08 AM

Ari,  
Thanks for the new link to the 695 presentation. I was about halfway through watching the first one when it stopped working.

It was good to talk to you before the event, since I couldn't be there. I am very impressed with what youall are proposing and think it can be a great contribution to the neighborhood. And also impressed with your commitment to hearing from the neighbors.

Here are a few suggestions based on the presentation.

1. Create an interesting street level facade on Grand. The current facade of Emmett's is so great. You seem to plan interest for the restaurant fronts. it would be great if the street level of the ends were also decorative in some way.
2. The St Albans block, as you know, is certainly one of the nicest of the north south streets in the area, design-wise. Is it outrageous to think of the east facade of your new building having some suggestive, compatible detail, which really wouldn't have to be copied on the other sides? I appreciated what the architect said about respecting historical integrity and think the east side is a key canvas for doing that. (As are the balcony and terrace details.)
3. The setback on the top floor is excellent. (I am ready to put down a deposit for a south-facing one. 😊) The massing on Grand would be helped, I think, by a small setback of floor two...just a couple of feet would make a big difference.
4. I think one of you said 10' ceilings, and that height is certainly great indoors. But dropping them to 8', or even to 9', could reduce the overall building height in a way that is responsive to the height critics and not a substantial loss to the units.
5. While listening to the discussion of underground parking in response to questions, and knowing the cost of building below ground is quite high, I had the idea of doing just, say, half of a second underground level that you could rent out, space by space, to neighbors to offset the cost. I think there would be a big demand in the area for that and it would be a generous gesture to those who live nearby and are challenged by not enough off street parking.
6. I'm glad to see more 2+ Brs than I had originally expected. You could even add three more by combining the 1 BR and the arcade in the inside corner.

I look forward to the meeting on the 8th.  
Best,  
Ellen Brown

Ellen T Brown  
874 Fairmount Avenue  
Saint Paul MN 55105  
651-226-3692

On Mar 29, 2021, at 11:53 AM, Ari Parritz <aparritz@reuterwalton.com> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Support for Proposed Development at 695 Grand Ave

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**Emma Burns** <emma.burnsmn@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 8:17 AM

To: INFO@summithillassociation.org, aparritz@reuterwalton.com, zlu@summithillassociation.org, director@summithillassociation.org, sherry@cultivatestrategy.com, TheFutureIsGrand@grandave.com

Cc: Trevor Burns 🚶❤ &lt;trevor.burnsmn@gmail.com&gt;

Good morning SHA staff, committee members, and other partners,

We're reaching out today to express our support for the proposed development at 695 Grand Avenue. As renters in the immediate vicinity - Summit & Dale - for more than four years we consider ourselves fortunate to call the neighborhood home. We have always prioritized living in vibrant, active communities and for us renting allows us to do so. The persistent narrative that renters are less committed or connected to their neighborhood continues to frustrate and disappoint us.

During the recent community call about the project we heard a few people express very loud and passionate concerns about the impact this project could have on parking in the immediate area (among a couple other very loud and passionate concerns). We recognize that this project is not seeking any parking variances and has clearly laid out a vision that accommodates not only resident parking needs but also provides covered spaces for the retail onsite. Thanks to existing retail amenities within a half mile and the 63 bus route we have been able to be a one-car family since moving in. This wasn't a radical progressive choice, this was the result of living in a walkable neighborhood. It is not just our own lived experience that demonstrates that there will be fewer needs for parking spaces in the future, countless studies tell us the same thing. And while it may be true that there will be times when finding an on-street parking space takes longer than others (someone used a snow emergency as the ultimate example of this) that will simply always be the case in an urban environment.

Commercial corridors like Grand Ave thrive when there are strong residential populations to support them and our community needs more housing options at every price point. My hope is that we will continue to see the type of interest from investors and developers that we have in recent months and years for many more to come, but my fear is that our track record for denying these proposals will put a stop to that. This project is an opportunity to be forward thinking. To let short-sighted and unsubstantiated concerns like a perceived lack of parking, shadier backyards during the winter months for less than five homes, or the everpresent chorus of "if only it were one story shorter" from a minute population would be completely out of sync with the vision for the Saint Paul laid out in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and jeopardize our ability to support new and existing restaurants and retail along Grand Ave in the future. We hope that the volume of a few does not leave you with the impression that they speak for all of us.

Thank you for considering our perspective, we're happy to chat more any time.

All the best,  
Emma & Trevor Burns

610 Summit

## Neighborhood Feedback Regarding the Proposed 695 Grand Project

March 30, 2021

The neighbors think that this is a good site for revitalization of this portion of Grand Avenue. There is excitement around the potential to create a model project for St. Paul.

- The proposed project at 695 Grand Avenue however does not meet the needs of the neighborhood. It takes livability, property value and functionality from the neighbors. The impact of the current design would create undue hardship for neighboring residents and visitors.
  - Density of the block of St. Albans Street S between Summit and Grand is currently among the highest for residential blocks in St. Paul.
  - The project, as proposed, takes parking away from neighbors and visitors (current occupancy is 85 – 100%).
  - A five-story building that is not setback from the alley and St. Albans will result in the loss of sunlight, view and degrades the value of neighboring homes.
  - There will be a loss of vehicular access to owner-occupied homes due to increased alley traffic (both commercial deliveries and residential underground parking).
  - No other T3 zoning, as being requested, is in the East Grand Avenue Overlay District.
- The feedback from the neighborhood is that this project:
  - Should keep to the East Grand Avenue Overlay District design guidelines (Building size and height per TN2 design standards)
  - Should have a setback from the alley of 30+ feet as required elsewhere in St. Paul
  - Should also have a setback from St. Albans to provide more light and air to complement the eclectic nature of the avenue per the neighborhood plan

The scale of proposed project is not complementary, nor does it respect the historic character and nature of the neighborhood. The neighbors favor a revised plan that reduces the commercial spillover effects on their homes.

This feedback is from a group of neighbors in the blocks nearest to the 695 Grand Avenue project who have been meeting informally to share concerns about this development. The group welcomes the revitalization of Grand Avenue and look forward to working with Peter Kenefick and the development team.

*This document does not represent the consensus of the group. It is a representation of the frequently voiced concerns.*





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Concerns about 695 Grand

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**Kucera Marit Lee** <maritleekucera@comcast.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 3:42 PM

Dear SLU. I just discover your email.  
Here is the email that I just sent to info@  
I plan to attend the ZLU zoom tonight.  
Thank you. Marit Lee Kucera

Dear SHA,  
First, let me acknowledge my appreciation for your work, as volunteers, on the Summit Hill Association board and committees. Thank you.

I have lived at Saint Albans and Grand since 1974. I have seen many changes, evolutions, and re-creations of our great neighborhood. It has been an exciting 4½ decades. I've loved living here.

I am in favor of Grand continuing its growth, while preserving the historical charm and at the same time, leaving a legacy for the next generations to enjoy.

My immediate concern is the proposed 5-story building at 695 Grand. From its front on Grand, there will be small courtyard (patio space in warmer weather for the restaurants) to offset the building's massiveness.  
But on Saint Albans, it will be an imposing 5-story wall 56' high, that is half a block long.

I dare say, I will never see another sunset from my third-floor screened-in porch. From mid-spring to late-fall, I enjoy taking all my meals on this porch.

I invite all of you on the SHA board to visit Fillmore and Walter Homeowner's Association (FWHA) at 30 and 42 South Saint Albans, an owner-occupied condo since 1976. I invite everyone to stand on my wonderful third-floor porch, looking west, and imagine that in 18 months, my view will be the high east wall of a 56' (plus) tall Big Box.  
Three stories (38-40') would fit in nicely with the surrounding area, but not five stories of nearly 60'.

Saint Albans from Summit to Grand is a narrow one-way south-bound street; barely one lane wide with parking on both sides. I am concerned where my guests will park when they come to visit. Where will the guests of the 81 rental units will park? Where will those renters who do not get underground parking park? Where will the employees of the 3 business on the first floor park? Where will the majority of the 695 diners/shoppers park? Where will the employees of those other long-time businesses on Grand park, those who have been parking on Saint Albans all these years? FHWA has 12 units; we have 12 parking places behind our buildings, but we currently have at least 16 cars; where will they park? Will we get preferential residential parking?  
In winter, this block often has deep icy ruts; it is hard (downright scary!) to drive this street. The winter shadows of the existing buildings allow very little sunlight to get the chance to melt any of this ice, until the weather goes above freezing.

I am concerned about increased traffic on Saint Albans, on Grand, and on both the east and west alleys that cross Saint Albans.

Using the alley for 695 renters to enter/exit their underground parking will only add to the congestion.

We have families with children and grandchildren who love our alleys. They play and bike in our alleys, safely. Will this childhood experience now be denied?

This neighborhood has many people who enjoy walking, many with strollers, others with dogs. Will east Grand remain a safe and friendly walking street with the anticipated increased traffic?

It is great to propose that more people ride their bikes, but that doesn't work so well November through mid-March here in Minnesota.

With the new bike lanes on several nearby streets, including Summit, traffic is much slower, and often heavier, with only one lane in each direction.

It is great to use the bus (which I have done to attend events downtown Saint Paul), but many of the bus stops on Grand have been eliminated. Will we get more buses and the return of all the bus stops?

Increased density is good for a city, but this block of St. Albans/Summit/Dale/Grand is one of the densest blocks in Saint Paul, there is scarcely a building that does not house multiple units. St. Albans/Summit/Grotto/Grand also has a large number of residential units. We could add more, but not 80+. Please.

I will stop now. I plea with you to recognize that Grand is not University nor Marshall/Lake Avenues.

Please know that I am a concerned neighbor, resident, tax payer, and voter. I urge SHA to talk to those of us who will be immediately impacted by such a large edifice here on Saint Albans between Summit and Grand. My invitation is open to all of you to stand in my shoes. Other of my neighbors here at 30 and 42 South Saint Albans, and those north of the alley, also will be glad to lend you their shoes, if only for a few minutes.

Thank you all for serving as volunteers on the various SHA committees. Your work and the persistent work of your predecessors have made Summit Hill a great place to live. Again thank you!

With appreciation and looking forward,  
Marit Lee Kucera  
30 South Saint Albans  
651-222-2483



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Avenue Project - Recent Villager article**

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grtodd@comcast.net <grtodd@comcast.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Thu, Apr 1, 2021 at 9:54 AM

The recent article in the Villager about this project raised some additional concerns for me. I've lived in this neighborhood since June 2004. The site of 695 Grand Avenue is a good location for redevelopment. Grand Avenue is an excellent corridor for increased density due to the walkability. I'm excited to see how it could bring new life to this section of Grand Avenue.

Three years ago Peter Kenefick brought forth a proposal for redevelopment of 695 Grand Avenue which generated significant push back due to its size and eventually was abandoned. Now they are proposing an even larger building. The proposed design is not complementary to the nature of the neighborhood in size, in style and in how it fails to transition to the residential areas surrounding it. There was a comment in the article that seem to disregard the impact on a 'finite number of properties'. The question, I think, that everyone should ask is 'How would I feel about having a 50 foot tall wall that took up a half a block built across from my house?' as it would be along St. Albans St. or 'How would I feel about having a 50 foot tall wall that ran for 217 feet up against the alley behind my house?'. Would that enhance or detract from the feel of the neighborhood and your property values? This project, as proposed, will definitely degrade the value of the homes in the vicinity.

There was a comment in the article about the overlay district being 'very restrictive' in terms of zoning. Well, a significant amount of work went into defining the East Grand Avenue Overlay District and I think the limits were set purposefully to reduce the spillover effects of commercial development.

Thank you for your efforts to protect the character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

GRT

Gary R. Todd

[682 Summit Avenue](#)

4/7/2021

Summit Hill Association Mail - 695 Grand Avenue Project - Recent Villager article

St. Paul, MN 55105

[grtodd@comcast.net](mailto:grtodd@comcast.net)

651-470-4720 – cell

Summit Hills Association and Zoning & Land Use Committee:

I cannot support the 695 Grand Avenue redevelopment proposal in its current form and hope that you will not recommend the variances needed for it to proceed. While in favor of thoughtful residential development at this site, I do not believe this proposal represents a sincere attempt to address the needs for high density housing in the area.

High density developments should ideally seek to improve the livability of the surrounding community. Neighborhoods should be developed such that residents can meet more of their needs locally. One of the ways that this can be accomplished is through the encouragement of increased pedestrian activity and decreased vehicle traffic. When walking is safe and pleasant, people will choose more often to run errands on foot rather than always resorting to the car, even for short trips. But the massive size of the proposed structure does not support this ideal and, at 80-plus proposed residential units and an attempt to accommodate both a high number of residents and their cars, will cause traffic chaos at the expense of pedestrians. It also needs to be taken into account that the increased traffic will be just as much a burden to visitors to our neighborhood as it is to our residents. And this sort of frustration could definitely affect businesses at this end of Grand if visitors choose to take their patronage elsewhere.

The current iteration of the plan offers no green space to speak of on the street level, especially on the east and north sides of the structure. With straight five-story walls with minimal setbacks, it does very little to engage neighbors or pedestrians in a positive way. For neighbors, it will mean looking at an uninspired big box. For all pedestrians, it will create a more confined space for walking and a need to dodge an increased number of vehicles as they enter and exit this massive, out of scale structure, especially on St. Albans and the affected alley. It is also very possible that the size and proximity to the street of this structure will inhibit the dissipation of automobile exhaust and force pedestrians to walk through an ever-present cloud of it.

The areas directly surrounding 695 Grand, in particular St. Albans St. S. between Grand and Summit, contain only multi-family housing: we've been doing "high-density" for the past 100+ years. I believe the buildings here represent a scale of development that has withstood the test of time and is appropriate to the neighborhood. Many residents live in a relatively small area yet still have open space and without there being greatly increased congestion. This project, as much as possible, should try to conform to that ideal, not the pied piper of development trends. As is, the proposed project would set a precedent going forward that could decrease the livability of our neighborhood for years to come. After 100 years, the buildings on St. Albans indicated above still represent a desirable place for residents of all ages to live. Will it be possible to say the same about the proposed development even after 10 years?

I believe that with appropriate adjustments to the scale of this project that follow the current overlay plan it can be a model that others can emulate. Please support thoughtful development for this area of the city that attempts to make it livable and attractive for current residents and visitors as well as for those in generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

Sincerely,

Brenda Besser  
24 Saint Albans Street S. #2  
Saint Paul, MN 55105



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Avenue Development

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**Linda Makinen** <lamakinen2@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 4, 2021 at 12:07 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Reuter/Walton and Peter Kenefick development plan for the 695 Grand Avenue property.

I live on St. Albans Street and I'm very excited to see a new building with shops and housing at that site. This corner offers the rare opportunity to create a building that enhances the street and neighborhood, one that could set an example for future development along Grand Avenue.

But the proposed structure turns its back on its neighbors and on the spirit of the Summit Hill Neighborhood.

This proposal is a massive box that does not relate comfortably to its neighbors. It is a building that would tower over and dominate Grand Avenue and close properties in an unfriendly, un-neighborly way. It would cast deep shadows on surrounding residential buildings for much of the day. It has 'brick walls' with little or no setbacks or articulations on St. Albans and the Summit alley. This block of St. Albans is already one of the densest blocks in Summit Hill, the addition of 81 rental units will initiate a huge increase in traffic for St. Albans and the alley. The focus of the building is solely toward Grand and ignores St. Albans, one of the nicest streets in St. Paul. The interior floor plan for the residential floors, shown with its one double-loaded corridor of 160+ft. length, looks to be as unfriendly for the apartment residents as the exterior is to its street neighbors.

The massive structure challenges existing building guidelines and would require significant variances. If those are approved, it would certainly open the door to similar structures all along Grand Avenue. There is a possibility that it could lead to a rezoning of Grand Avenue to a T3 district, similar to what has been used along University Avenue. Should that designation happen, 1/2 block from the historic Summit Hill area, the spirit of the Summit Hill Neighborhood will suffer.

This project will set a precedent that, I believe, will negatively affect the entire Summit Hill Neighborhood. I do not support the proposal as it stands today.

Linda Makinen  
24 St. Albans St. So., Unit 1

April 6, 2021

Ari,

I am writing per your invitation to us to comment on what was in the 695 Grand project presentation in March. I greatly appreciate the opportunity, both as a close neighbor to the proposed building and someone with a long-time interest in the built urban environment and graduate education in American urban history, planning and sociology. I love this neighborhood and want only the best for it.

Despite my reservations from a 15-story development project across from my six-story condo in Portland's Pearl District before I moved back here in 2016, I have to say that your team's presentation dispelled nearly all concerns I had about the 695 Grand project. Your openness, professionalism and all the work you have done so far has left me feeling that this is probably the best possible development of that space, in no small part because of the project's stated (and I believe sincere) intent and concerns about preserving the character of this special historic neighborhood as much as possible when adding 81 new apartments and all that implies for the immediate area.

Having experienced the plan in Portland to put a building two and a half times the height of the one I was living in, I have no problems with the 56' height of your currently planned building. It is appropriate to the existing location, and your stated plans to have its overall look fit in with this historic neighborhood. Your attention to setbacks, street amenities and access to the building gives me confidence that the impact of this substantial addition will be as limited as can be expected.

Let me start with the so-called "dream space." I am assuming that under no circumstances would some kind of national chain operation be put in that space. They can easily come and go, driven by circumstances well beyond local control or local needs and preferences. It is simply in direct opposition to all the local affiliations you rightly and proudly profess. I strongly agree with the number of people who are urging you to work with the Neighborhood Development Center, which has a demonstrated track record in working with neighborhoods that are interested in building more inequitable neighborhoods and increasing businesses owned by people of color. I have been in their offices, and I am very impressed with both the people who work there and the outcomes of the work they do.

I would encourage the following **considerations be used to decide what goes in the remaining unfilled space** of the three you have available:

1. That a potential third restaurant or bar that stays open late not be a priority, for it could create a noise problem when the many residents nearby are trying to sleep.
2. That whatever is in there is worthy of being a destination, but is primarily a place for those in reasonable walking distance to attend.

3. That you try to find a place where people could hang out at various times of day that would add to the creation of more neighborhood connections that would spill over into other areas for building a strong neighborhood. One idea I had is to put something in there that would be a vibrant community resource for people to understand and embrace Saint Paul history and culture. It could be a consortium of arts, cultural and historical nonprofits that could have rotating exhibits, small presentations and a resource for all kinds of things that build community, pride in Saint Paul and connections to people and resources that help provide a better future for us all.
4. That you choose a business that adds something of significant value different from the impressive mix of businesses on Grand Avenue between Dale and Fairview. We have plenty of some things already. Think of what would enhance Grand Avenue overall.

As I am sure you know, **parking** around here is at a premium, to say the least. The many older apartment buildings on Grand and St. Albans that have little or no on-site parking have already stretched street parking to its limits. All of those apartment and condo residents have a large number of visitors that add to the pressure on the limited spaces. While it may be legal to have only 73 spaces for the 81 new units, it is highly likely that the combined residents of the new building will have far more than 73 cars or trucks. That will put more cars on the already crowded streets, frustrating both new and existing residents of the immediate area and owners of the nearby businesses as well. The residents at 695 Grand will also have many visitors who will have to find parking on the nearby streets or might take the surface spaces for the 695 businesses.

### **Unclogging St. Albans from Grand Avenue to Lincoln Avenue**

I have perhaps a unique view of this potential development because I live at 681 Lincoln, which is at the corner of St. Albans and Lincoln Avenue. The rear of my half of the duplex has a breakfast nook that faces Grand Avenue, so I have a direct half-block view of Grand and St. Albans. I am at the table in that nook a good time during the day. I eat at least two meals there daily, as well as using the table for other work during the day. Specifically, it faces the alley just south of Grand.

What I see often up St. Albans to Grand offers the potential for a fairly serious traffic mess once all the new traffic activity is added to the mix. The block that goes from Grand south to Lincoln already has a wide mix of traffic activity of small and large commercial vehicles, cars simply going north and south and people who use Grand to turn around for a number of reasons. Some turn around on Grand at the corner of St. Albans to go back east again. Most go slightly down St. Albans to turn around and back out all day long are going to St. Croix Cleaners on the corner, Penzey's Spices, or the tailoring or shoe repair places next door. Some are parking for the three apartment buildings in the block. It happens all day long, and I often see people turning from Grand to go south suddenly seeing someone back across the street from one side or the other in one of four places they can do so.

There is also a regular amount of illegal parking on the west side of St. Albans near Grand, from people running into the cleaners or the other shops at that corner on Grand. Most of the day there



are also cars parked too close to Grand on the east side, despite the sign clearly marking it as illegal.

I often look out my window and see one or more vehicles parked between Grand and the alley south of Grand on St. Albans, which is Snow Removal Route from Grand Avenue all the way to St. Clair Avenue. The drivers are either running into the shops previously mentioned or picking up or dropping off people at the three apartment buildings on both sides of St. Albans. At the same time, people are turning around on St. Albans to get back up to Grand either to park for the shops or simply return down Grand in an easterly direction. I am constantly amazed there are not regular accidents.

Most of what I have presented so far has been non-commercial passenger cars and the occasional small commercial vehicles that are around all day long. What makes all this much more complicated and potentially dangerous is the number of large commercial vehicles that are in this block much of the day. They include garbage and recycling trucks that serve commercial businesses and residences on opposite sides of the alleys. Some of the other trucks are very long tractor-trailer trucks from food and beverage deliveries to the longest ones that might be delivering pallets of garden materials to the Ace Hardware in the middle of the block east of 695 Grand. These are too large to negotiate the very busy alley east of St. Albans and would block the alley too long to unload those pallets. These pallet-laden trucks park on St. Albans and use their fork lifts to take their pallets the half-block east to the Ace parking lot on the alley.

It is important to know that the blocks immediately south of Grand on St. Albans have no parking on the west side of the street, and it is likely impossible to get the City to add parking on the east side of St. Albans to make up for the increased parking needs created by the 695 Grand project. St. Albans is a snow removal route, and the large semis and garbage trucks need the west side clear to go in and out of the alley immediately south of Grand Avenue. St. Albans heading south is an easy way to get to St. Clair Avenue, which is a common way to connect with 35E heading north or W. 7th going either way. Another key consideration is that one cannot drive north on St. Albans from the important St. Clair Avenue connection to Grand, since St. Albans is one-way only heading away from Grand at St. Clair. To come north back to Grand from St. Clair, one must go two blocks west to Avon.

To summarize, traffic activity on St. Albans from Grand to Lincoln and the alleys in between the two avenues is already quite dicey as it stands now, but the added pressure on it not only could easily produce accidents, frustrations and more slowdowns on Grand itself. Therefore, I have **three proposals** that I think would take care of much of the existing problems in this block of St. Albans from Grand to Lincoln and on Grand Avenue itself at the intersection of Grand and St. Albans.

## **PROPOSAL ONE**

**Change the traffic on St. Albans from two-way to one-way southbound for the *one* block from Grand south to Lincoln *only*.**

Doing this on the St. Albans Snow Route eliminates the chaotic turn-arounds all day long, ends the northbound traffic altogether and extends the one-way southbound traffic one block only from Summit Avenue to Grand Avenue. It reduces the number of cars regularly backed up at Grand stopped headed north and south, thereby reducing the possibility of back-ups on Grand Avenue eastbound. Dale Avenue one block to the east provides direct access to I-94 and 35E both ways.

## **PROPOSAL TWO**

**Make u-turns illegal at the intersection of St. Albans and Grand Avenues.**

This simply cuts down the chaos at the intersection caused by the frequent u-turns all day long. The number of additional cars the 695 Grand re-development will bring to the intersection is only going to make it worse.

## **PROPOSAL THREE**

**Put some poles on the corner next to St. Croix Cleaners to make it impossible for vehicles to park closer to Grand than the law allows.**

Otherwise, it will continue to be ignored, and pedestrians will continue to be endangered. In the current two-way configuration, cars parking illegally at the corner block traffic as they park. In a new southbound one-way only, it would still give drivers coming from Grand in a hurry a little more time to stop for either pedestrians or cars pulling out from a space a little further away from Grand than right at the stop sign.

I look forward to the second meeting on this Thursday.

Sincerely,

Don Drake  
681 Lincoln Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105  
(503) 551-8849  
dondrake42@comcast.net



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand**

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**Rosalyn Goldberg** <blueskater3@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>

Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 12:12 PM

*I am adamantly opposed to the project at 695 Grand. TOO BIG, TOO TALL, TOO MUCH MASS!! This project is like a bad penny that keeps returning. We have zoning rules for a reason, so we don't turn a historic, unique, quaint neighborhood into Uptown or University Ave. If you want to see what a huge five story building of this type looks like, go to University and Snelling. They are building two of them now. That area is predominately commercial. We are predominately residential.*

*I recently walked through the Macalester College campus. The tallest buildings there are three or four stories. Do we want a building on Grand Ave that is bigger than what you would find on a college campus ?!*

*Grand Ave is not a "traditional" neighborhood, and should not be classified as such. It is historic, quaint and interesting. There is only one Cafe Latte'.*

*Having all these massive projects (Dixie's, Lund's, Panera..) just blocks from each other will change the character and integrity of the neighborhood. In addition, there will be unmanageable traffic, accidents, and pedestrian injuries.*

*This is not a new fight. Had the neighborhood not gotten involved, Victoria Crossing, and Grand and Oxford would have been much worse. The Kenefick family has been in this neighborhood long enough to know better. Shame on you. The only "legacy" will be for the Kenefick family. This is not a "legacy" or in the best interest of Summit Hill.*

*The developers are trying to use semantics to cover up what they know is wrong. ie four and a half stories, not five, houses on a hill are taller... Seriously, how stupid do you think we are ? If it quacks... It is too big !*

*When asked about the rent in the units, they hemmed and hawed. Finally, in a low, fast voice they said Alcoves (studio, efficiency..) would start*

*at \$1400. In other words, the employees of the restaurants below would not be able to live there. In our last neighborhood plan it was made clear that Summit Hill would welcome all income levels. Affordable housing doesn't mean Section 8. It means that the bartenders, servers, retail clerks can live where they work.*

*Developers get on "jags". First it was shopping centers, many of which now are shuttered. Now it is massive mixed use complexes. The developers are like used car salesmen, or politicians. They will say what they think you want to hear. We had plenty of fights in the past over promises not kept. Developers have their own interests at heart. Developers are the ones constantly pushing underground parking. Ka Ching ! By the way, underground parking gets broken into all the time.*

*We have overlay plans for a reason, to protect the integrity of our neighborhood. Last time around the variances were flying off the shelf before the ink was dry on the last neighborhood plan. Do not be afraid to stand up to people who do not have our best interests at heart. They*

*challenge us, because they know we will cower. For once, stand for the integrity of our neighborhood.*

*For those of us who have been around for a while, "Don't kill the goose that laid the golden egg. " For the newbies, I reference a Schitt's Creek analogy. Alexis was attracted to Mutt because of his beard. When he shaved his beard, she was no longer attracted to him. We are known for house tours, history, and architecture. As I have been walking the neighborhood during this pandemic, I have found much joy in the houses, big and small, the gardens, and landscapes. We are a friendly and walkable neighborhood. Don't turn us into NY !*

*This project does not fit the neighborhood. Once you start, there is no turning back. This sets a dangerous precedence. Don't turn Grand Ave into Greed Ave ! Don't open this can of worms.*

*Bottom line: TOO BIG, PERIOD! NO ZONING CHANGES!*



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand**

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**Annie Halland** <anniehalland@gmail.com>

Wed, Apr 7, 2021 at 1:41 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Cc: aparritz@reuterwalton.com

Summit Hill Association and Zoning & Land Use Committee:

We do not support the current proposal for 695 Grand Ave redevelopment. The proposal exceeds height and space limitations in the East Grand Overlay and will lead to excessive increased traffic in the alley, on St. Albans, and on Grand Ave.

We are supporters of density in our city when designed with health, safety, and affordability in mind. The current design maximizes negative effects to neighbors to the north of the development and anyone that currently uses the alley and St. Albans street as a pedestrian, biker, or driver.

Please recommend the developer reduce height to what is allowed by the current overlay, provide at least a 20 foot setback from the alley, and place the resident and restaurant parking entrance on Grand Avenue. We are certain the developers can make the appropriate adjustments to achieve the stated goal of leaving a positive legacy for the community to enjoy.

Thank you,

Annie Halland  
720 Summit Ave



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Concerns

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**Kucera Marit Lee** <maritleekucera@comcast.net>

Wed, Apr 7, 2021 at 5:33 PM

To: aparritz@reuterwalton.com, peter.kenefick@ubs.com

Cc: ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us, ZLU@summithillassociation.org, info@summithillassociation.org

April 7, 2021

Dear Mr. Kenefick and the RW 695 Grand team:

First, I would like to acknowledge my appreciation for the two Zoom meetings, which you have arranged to have dialogue with the neighborhood. I want to take this opportunity to let you know the great pride I have in living at St. Albans and Grand. While I look forward to sharing my joys with new neighbors, I have concerns about the immensity of the 695 Grand project.

Our immediate neighborhood, as well as the greater Summit Hill area, has much to offer to insure the success of your development, we also need to be assured that you are offering us benefits as well. Your residential tenants also deserve to know they have made the right choice to rent from you, that they will be able to enjoy the same neighborhood quality of life for which this neighborhood is so well known.

I have lived at Saint Albans and Grand since 1974. I have seen many changes, evolutions, and re-creations on this eastern end of Grand Avenue. It has been an exciting 4½ decades for me. I've loved living here and hope the same for the next many years.

I am all in favor of Grand continuing its growth, while preserving its historical character and charm and, at the same time, leaving a legacy for the next generations to enjoy.

My immediate concern is the proposed 5-story building at 695 Grand. The front on Grand will have a small courtyard (patio space in warmer weather for the restaurants) and set-backs to offset the building's massiveness. But on Saint Albans, it will be an imposing 5-story wall 56' high, that is half a block long, with a narrow sidewalk and even-narrower boulevard green space.

I invite you and all on the 695 development team to visit Fillmore and Walter Homeowner's Association (FWHA) at 30 and 42 South Saint Albans, an owner-occupied condominium association since 1976. I invite you to stand on my west-facing third-floor porch and to imagine in 18 months my view will be the high east wall of a 56' tall Big Box. I dare say, I will never see another sunset. My new neighbors at 695 will be able to see what is on my dinner plate across narrow St. Albans Street when I take my meals on my porch in summer.

This 695 east wall also needs some setbacks. I am sure you realize that Grand is not the only street "face" of this development. Three stories (38-40') would fit in nicely with the surrounding area, but not five stories of nearly 60'.

Saint Albans from Summit to Grand is a narrow one-way south-bound street; barely one lane wide with parking on both sides. I am concerned where my guests will park when they come to visit. Where will the guests of the proposed 81 rental units park? Where will those renters who do not get underground parking park? Where will the employees of the three businesses on the first floor park? Where will the majority of the 695 diners/shoppers park? Where will the employees of those long-time businesses on Grand park, those who have been parking on Saint Albans all these years? FHWA has 12 units; we have 12 parking places behind our two buildings, but we currently have at least 16 cars; where will these cars park? Will we get preferential residential parking?

In winter, this block and the adjacent alleys often have deep icy ruts; it is hard (downright scary!) to drive down St. Albans or the alleys to access private parking places. The winter shadows of the existing buildings allow very little sunlight to get the chance to melt any of this ice on the street or alleys, until the weather goes above freezing.



I am concerned about increased traffic on Saint Albans, on Grand, and on both the east and west alleys that cross St. Albans. Using the alley for 695's renters to enter/exit their underground parking will add considerable congestion. We have families with children and grandchildren who love our alleys. They play and bike in our alleys, safely. Will this childhood experience now be denied?

This neighborhood has many people who enjoy walking, many with strollers, others with dogs. Will east Grand remain a safe and friendly walking street with the anticipated increased density and traffic?

It is great to propose that more people ride their bikes, but that doesn't work so well November through mid-March here in Minnesota.

With the new bike (hurrah for bikes!) lanes and one-lane-in-each-direction on Summit, getting to-and-from this area is more difficult already. Upwards of 150 additional people in 81 units will certainly add considerably more congestion.

It is great to use the bus (which I have done many times), but several of the bus stops on Grand have been eliminated. Will we get the return of these bus stops, plus more frequent buses?

Increased density is good for a city, but this block of St.Albans/Summit/Dale/Grand is one of the densest blocks in Saint Paul, there is scarcely a building that does not house multiple units. St.Albans/Summit/Grotto/Grand also has a large number of residential units. Certainly, we could add more residences, but not 80+. Please! According to recent newspaper articles, there is already a glut of rental apartments all over Saint Paul.

I have many more concerns, from decreased property values to construction collateral damage to neighbor buildings to short-term B&B rentals vs year leases to affordable housing, which are being addressed by my St. Albans neighbors. I do not need to repeat, but I want you to know they are on my mind.

I plead with you to recognize that Grand is not University, Snelling, or Marshall/Lake Avenues. Grand is not a major thoroughfare, but our neighborhood's "Main Street" with a healthy mix of businesses and residents, known for its walkability and great place to dine, shop, and live.

Please know that I am a concerned neighbor, resident, tax payer, and voter. I urge you to listen more carefully, seriously, and respectfully to those of us who will be both immediately and long-term impacted by such a large edifice here on Saint Albans between Summit and Grand.

My invitation is open to all of you to stand in my shoes. I know that others here at 30 and 42 South Saint Albans, as well as those north of the alley, would also be glad to lend you their shoes, if only for a few minutes. I hope to see you soon.

With appreciation and looking forward to truly making Grand *Grand* for current and future residents and businesses,

Marit Lee Kucera

30 South Saint Albans

651-222-2483



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## A neighbors thoughts on the 695 Grand Project.

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Lloyd Lentz &lt;lloyd@lloydlentz.com&gt;

Wed, Apr 7, 2021 at 12:09 PM

To: Ari Parritz &lt;aparritz@reuterwalton.com&gt;, ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Cc: Tedlentz@tedlentz.com

Dear Peter, et. all,

My family has loved living across the alley from 695 grand since 1973. I feel fortunate to have purchased our home at 692 Summit from my parents a few years ago as my wife and I continue a new generation of family in this wonderful neighborhood. Peter began the presentation on March 18th with a prolonged explanation (~25 minutes of the planned hour) of how deep his St. Paul roots go, and why he truly cares about the neighborhood and not just a "Cash Grab" (his words). I intend to take him at his word. I have lived his dedication to making the neighbors of his business's lives better, and take proactive improvements.

I can recall the days when Grand Old Days was a dreadful experience to try and live next to. One of Peter's first words when greeting neighbors is often "How are things, is there anything that can be improved".

I am thrilled by the idea of the idea of redeveloping the land at 695 Grand. I have heard many great ideas, goals and pursuits. From promoting a space for public art, to having eyes on the street, to being thoughtful about how the new building fits the space, feel and ideals of our unique neighborhood in the capital city.

I also have, and have heard many concerns. Among them, the **size**, the **footprint**, the **setbacks**, the **traffic** impacts and the **parking** impacts. I have been mulling over them in order... let me see if they fit with your understandings:

### Parking

**Observations:** Currently there are 45 parking spots, plus 9 for employees. (54 total) The proposed building will have 82 residential units, many of the multiple occupancy. Easily 90+ adults expected. The plans show 72 below ground, and 36 at ground level parking. (108 total)

**Concerns:** By my math that is a net LOSS of 18 parking spots for the restaurants, and 38 residents with no place to park. Or the need for the immediate neighborhood to park 50+ cars.

**Advocating for the plan:** In your presentation, you breezed by it, but you did have a slide, which showed the Unit Matrix (at the 1hr 06m 17s mark of the presentation <https://youtu.be/hYwDAaAA-l8?t=3977>) which shows that you are in compliance with the parking needs for the residential.

**Conclusion:** You are aware of regulations, and are able to provide a plan that meets the requirements. THANK YOU.

### Traffic

**Observations:** With the addition of 100+ adults living on this property, in addition to the 100-300 cars traveling on St. Albans a day there will be double or triple the volume of cars, making a turn onto Grand, next to a bus stop. St. Albans is already one of the more narrow streets in St. Paul, at 30' wide, is considerably less wide than Dale at 40'. Peter has promised(?) there would be a plan put in place for the alley to be maintained with the snow and ice that becomes treacherous from the 18-wheelers that drive the alley year round. I will also observe that John Wolfe, and Peter already pay to have the alley maintained,

and ask the neighbors for contributions to that cause. We have gladly chipped in when asked. I know it can be a bother coordinating neighbors for alley care. Again, THANK YOU, for being a considerate neighbor.

**Concerns:** St. Albans was converted to a one way street years ago in order to mitigate the severe car crashes, injuries and death that occurred as cars tried to turn onto Summit ave heading north on St. Albans. I worry Grand and St Albans will become a dangerous intersection. Also, I do not see any difference between "We will make a plan for the alley" and what has been in place for years.

**Advocating for the plan:** City streets are designed to handle more traffic than they currently have.

**Conclusion:** Traffic from the alley to Grand on St. Albans will be rough.

## Size

**Observations:** There is no way around it. This is a HUGE building. As one walks down Grand, the building at 682 Grand is one of the biggest in sight. Your own slide points this out (at the 57min 40s mark <https://youtu.be/hYwDAaAA-l8?t=3460>) you call out the large, imposing buildings in the area. The three apartments in the middle of the next block of the North side of Grand. And this proposal is 40% again taller, and 500% wider. It LITERALLY dwarfs the surrounding neighborhood.

**Concerns:** The design, as proposed, is nothing short of maximizing the space available without allowance for keeping our neighborhood human in scale.

**Advocating for the plan:** It is clear that the voices advocating for "softening" the visual impact of Grand Avenue have been heard. When comparing the audacity of the "Massing" Slides ( at the 51min 00s mark <https://youtu.be/hYwDAaAA-l8?t=3060>), one cannot but gasp at the absurdity of option 'A'. IN comparison, option 'D' is far more considerate of a residential area.

**SHADOW.** The neighborhood plan presentation conveniently left out the difference in shadow that the proposed building would take, compared to if it were built within zoning heights. I can do simple math. The difference between a 36' building and a 56' building is 20'. In winter, the sun only rises to 21degrees off the horizon, casting a shadow 146' long. Compared to a 36' tall building, with a 93' long shadow. Those extra 50' of permanent shadow on my property is the difference between part of my yard being in days of dark, to part of my hose and windows of my home being in permanent dark during the darkest days of our Minnesota winter,

**Advocating for the plan:** 80+ new dwelling units would provide housing in a desirable neighborhood. It would also provide sustained income for Peter's family and investors

**Conclusion:** In order to fit the size of the proposed building, a multitude of variances are needed, most noticeably for setback and height. The only need for more girth, and more height is for more size. In short, Peter is personally asking for exceptions from the neighbors and current zoning, and building regulations so that he can fit more dwelling units in the space at play.

## Setbacks

**Observations:** This property is setback from the sidewalk on Grand by 3', on the sidewalk on St. Albans by 3', on the alley by 8'. Dixies & Emmetts are currently set back by 3' on Grand. Some neighbors:

- 42 St. Albans; set back 0' from St. Albans sidewalk, and 20' from Grand sidewalk
- 669, 661, 657 Grand, set back 20' from Grand Sidewalk
- 707, 711, 715 Grand, set back 20' from Grand Sidewalk
- 21, 24 St. Albans, set back 6-16' from St. Albans Sidewalk (porticos & turrets vary distance)
- Dixies & SajiYa are set back from the Alley 20'

Some St. Paul observations: Since the proposal on the 18th I have been scouring the city, trying to find another development of this size, in a similar neighborhood that is developed to the absolute edge of the lot



lines.

- Oxford Place, has a driveway plus parking spots on the alley side, buffering the 4 story building from the neighbors.
- The new Grand & Syndicate Apartments, have no residential to the north, are setback from both Grand and Syndicate but 10'. Also match the height of the tall apartments to the west.
- The Grove; Snelling & St. Claire. No single family, or residential on either side. ALSO on a state highway. Where it does face a residents's backyard, across the alley the building is a full story shorter, with floor 2-4 set back an additional 12' from the first story on the alley side.



- On the East Side, there is a large, new development on E. 7th Ave & Bates, by Normendale. This building also is on the South side of the busy street (Similar to Oxford Place), with the graceful “massing” favoring the single family homes on the south of the alley



- None of the setbacks meet the published [Street Design Manual - City of Saint Paul](#).

**Concerns:** The overstepping of any given setbacks makes the size and girth of the building much more imposing in the neighborhood and the immediate neighbors

**Advocating for the plan:** In order to get the size of the building the plan need to ask for exceptions.

**Conclusion:** the only reason for overstepping norms, standards, St. Paul's own published best idea, is to get more square footage on the market.

All in all, I will continue to take Peter at his word and promise to the community and the city of St. Paul that he wants to leave a positive legacy and be a good neighbor. One that is considerate, forward

4/7/2021

Summit Hill Association Mail - A neighbors thoughts on the 695 Grand Project.

thinking, and embracing of this opportunity to make our slice of Grand Avenue an excellent model of how a developer and investor can work with the neighbors and decades of land use planning to really come up with a great plan and development.

Lloyd Lentz  
c. 651-321-2347  
692 Summit Ave



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Concerns

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**Hillary Parsons** <hparsons@caplanlaw.com>

Wed, Apr 7, 2021 at 5:51 PM

To: Kucera Marit Lee &lt;maritleekucera@comcast.net&gt;

Cc: "aparritz@reuterwalton.com" &lt;aparritz@reuterwalton.com&gt;, "peter.kenefick@ubs.com" &lt;peter.kenefick@ubs.com&gt;, "ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us" &lt;ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us&gt;, "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;, "info@summithillassociation.org" &lt;info@summithillassociation.org&gt;

My partner and I echo both these concerns and the invite to our porch for a summer sunset.

If this project is built as is, our first floor unit will never get sun again from the east. My property will be extremely devalued. And that is before potential damage from the construction itself.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 7, 2021, at 5:33 PM, Kucera Marit Lee <maritleekucera@comcast.net> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "StAlbansGrandGrottoSummit" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to [saggs+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:saggs+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com).

To view this discussion on the web visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/saggs/7169FB53-BA55-4978-977F-3B46303F0FB4%40comcast.net>.

For more options, visit <https://groups.google.com/d/optout>.



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Dixie's Building Replacement on Grand

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**Tommy** <tommy.fitzgerald@gmail.com>  
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Thu, Apr 8, 2021 at 9:31 PM

Hello,

I'm a resident of the neighborhood. Pam, my partner, and I moved here in June of 2019 though we've been residents of the twin cities for much of our lives. After attending the SHA community meeting in December of 2019 - the one where Melvin Carter made an appearance alongside Rebecca Noecker, we anticipated being regular participants in discussions on changes to the community.

We moved here from Seattle, where we had lived for 9 years. We came back to the same Grand Ave that we left, only there seems to be fewer people walking around than we remembered even with the obvious Covid effect. In addition to that, we've also noted that St. Paul and the Twin Cities in general, are on a similar trajectory as Seattle in terms of housing supply and increasing cost of living. After watching Seattle's inaction and the results thereof, we were hoping to help provide input that would help MSP avoid the same mistakes or would have happily watched from afar if these mistakes were being obviously avoided as Seattle's difficulties are not a secret.

Anyways, after watching the STP City Council vote down the Lexington/University development this week, I am particularly engaged on ensuring the success of the Dixie's building replacement. I've seen the designs and the building renderings were more aesthetically pleasing than I expected. I personally would love to walk by the building that's currently being proposed as of the community meeting today 4/8/2021. Grand Avenue needs a boost, and we can't be afraid to push forward even if there are loud voices telling us they like it the way it is. The businesses along Grand Ave need more foot traffic and the city needs more housing supply. Grand Ave should not be a thoroughfare used to get across the city (Summit shouldn't either for that matter). It should be a highly walkable, bikeable and enjoyable area for all, even if that comes at the expense of fast moving vehicle traffic.

In my mind that means better access to transit. More speed calming features or an outright ban on cars using Grand Ave - this has been done in historic districts in other cities around the world to great effect. It also means more housing, more people looking in the windows to the shops that are still here. Grand should be an attractive place to visit, but it should also be an attractive place to live. To both of those ends, facilitating new business and development in a responsible way should be the goal. Stagnation is the same as dying, and Grand Ave definitely isn't growing.

--

Tommy Fitzgerald

# Selected Examples

## Recent Developments at “Missing Middle” Scale

Tag line: responsible development to  
increase residential density *AND*  
support neighborhood business *AND*  
neighborhood scale & character





# Thesis:

Density and walkability are possible at the traditional, historic scale that has been been dubbed the “**missing middle.**” Zoning limited this scale for decades, and there are forces against it still. But. We need to study it, learn from it, **emulate the best parts** and **adapt the parts that need to be adapted to 2021 realities.** It is possible. We can strike the balance between bulk and height, accommodate the multi modes of transportation—pedestrians, bikes, and, yes, cars and parking—while providing greater density for people to live and businesses to thrive, and even beauty and sunlight in the public realm. It is possible.

Grand Ave and adjacent side streets have a lot existing missing middle, most of it built at least a century ago. The challenge: can we build to complement it? Can we keep sunlight and beauty and add more people and businesses? Yes, yes we can.



Grand at Avon: 19th century missing middle

One of the features of 19th century missing middle is it doesn't feel big, it feels *middle*. This is achieved by an overall limit on bulk. Facades are broken between building. Walls are rarely longer than 100 feet. Footprints are often further limited in scale with a 2:1 rectangular proportion (most commonly). Facades are often articulated to create shadow and solar pockets. In the few cases where 20th c. “missing middle” has been built, it maintains these breaks in scale.



Grotto, at alley shared w. Grand: 20th century missing middle



Grand Ave, near Milton: 19th century missing middle

# “Missing” Middle Scale

Recent examples around Minneapolis and St Paul

# Neighborhood Example: Selby @ Victoria & @ Milton

There is a recent mixed use development on Selby with streetcar corridor scale site planning.

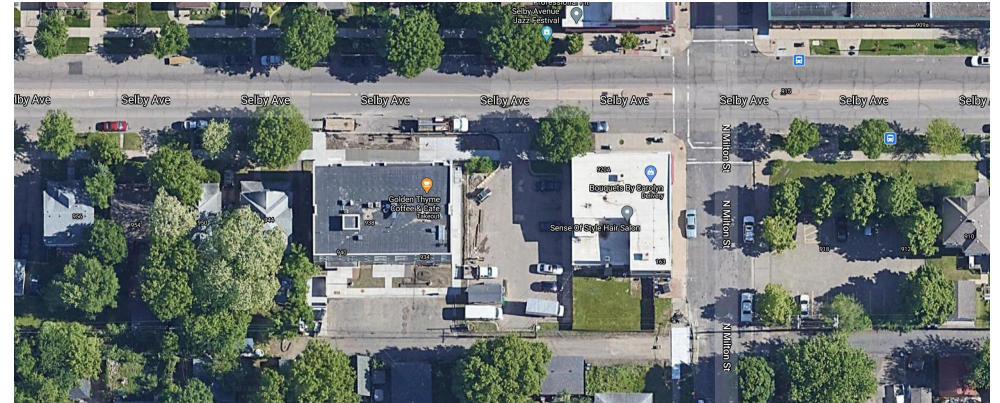
## What's to like?

Heights are stepped back and walls are set back from residential neighbors

Selby (& Victoria) have dynamic street presence at pedestrian scale

Parking access from arterial streets

Facade articulation



Note: this is great urban planning example. This is not an architectural style example.

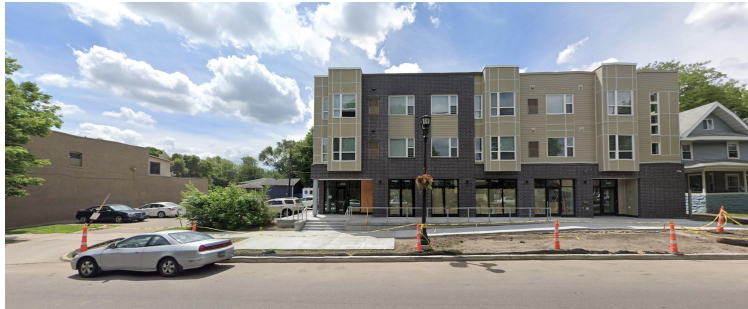


# Selby Mixed Use

Heights are similar to adjacent structures.  
Corner treated differently, transition to residential.  
Articulation in facade.  
Landscaping adds to sidewalk experience and creates transition to residential portion of mixed use building.



Facades are articulated. Footprints are long along the commercial corridor, but still transition to residential to East. Nice use of landscaping.



Golden Thyme Building. Scale. Articulation.  
Separation of res entry from commercial entry.  
Grade change & accessibility



Victoria Experience: there is now public art on wall (instead of OSB panel). Facade articulation. Landscaping & setbacks from residential

# Great Site Planning: Lake & River, Mpls

There is a recent mixed use development at Lake Street and the river: the architecture not the appropriate style for a historic district, but site planning on the Lake Street and River Road is impressive.

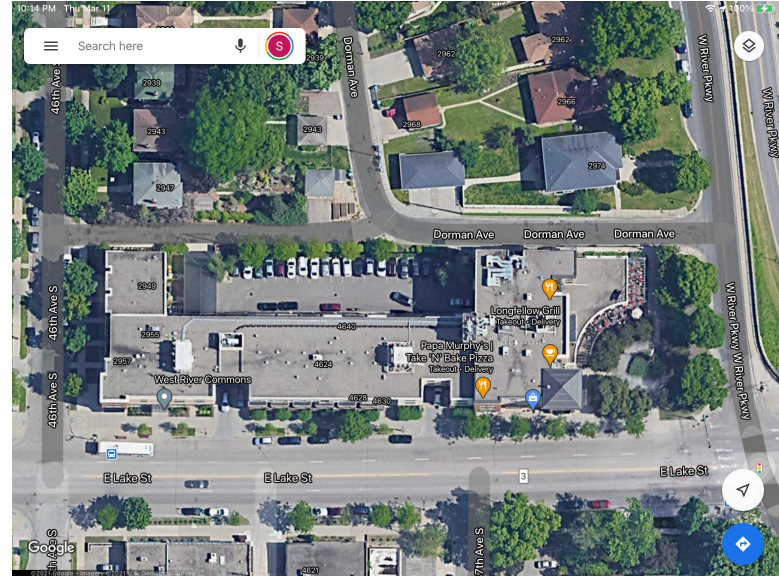
## What's to like?

Solar orientation, Articulation in facade

Heights are stepped back and walls are set back from residential neighbors; 46th street has dynamic street presence at lower scale

Great public amenity (public park space) + restaurant patio at corner

Utilized surface parking at rear (to keep costs down and buffer between res & Lake Street corridor)



Note: this is great urban planning example. This is not an architectural style example.



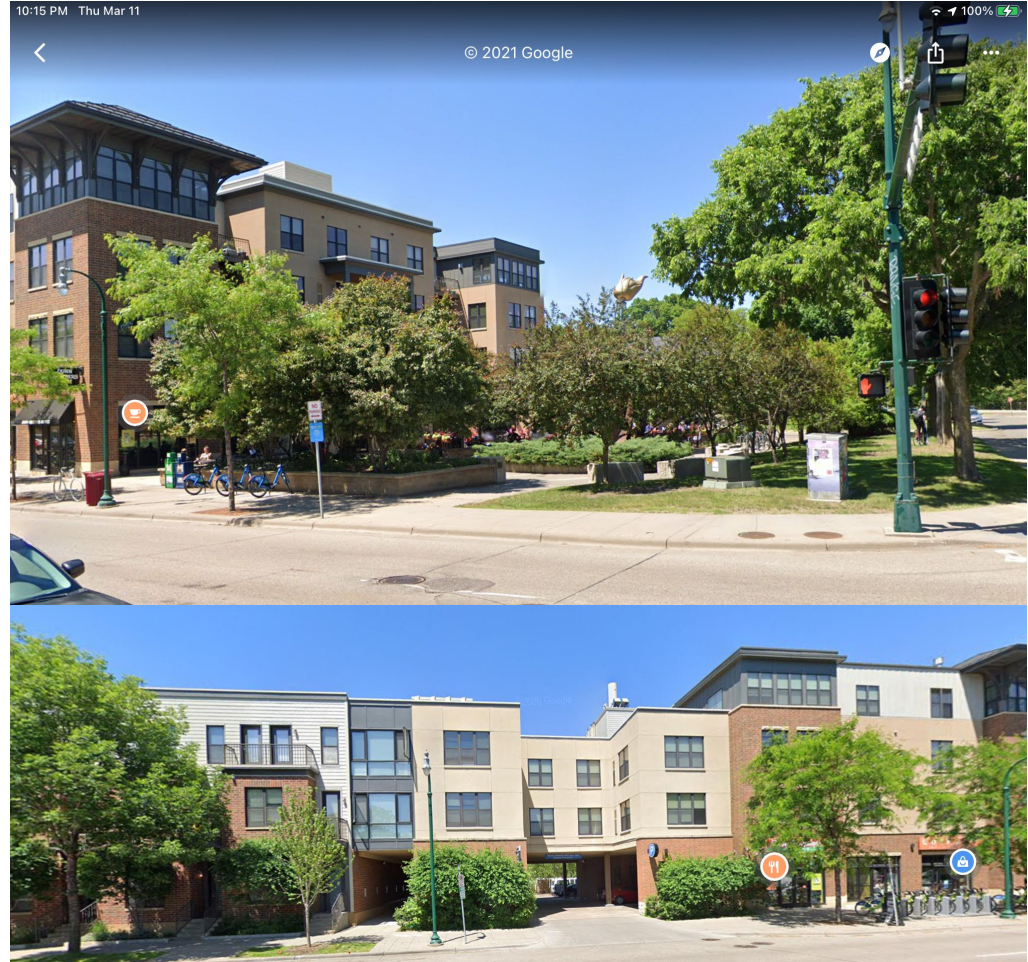
# Lake & River

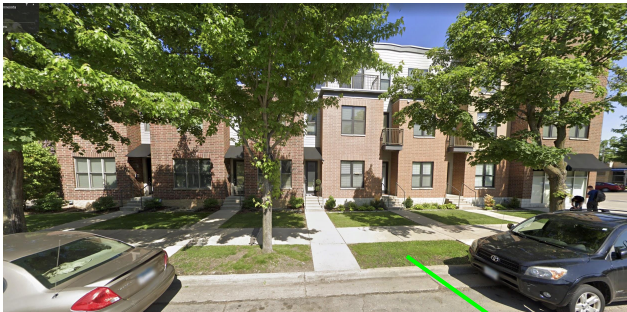
Large open space at River and Lake Street. Public and private. Park and restaurant patio.

Heights are varied, stepped down from corner, along Lake and toward residential.

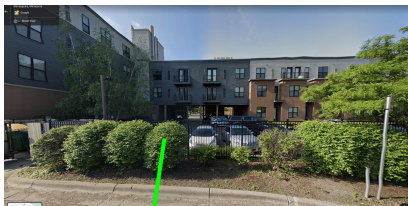
Facades are articulated. Footprints are long along the commercial corridor, but length is balanced and countered by shallow depth of footprint. Traded.

Balance between modes of access: peds, bikes, and car realm. Parking for cars provided in rear, accessed from corridor. Minimized view & crossings from sidewalk.





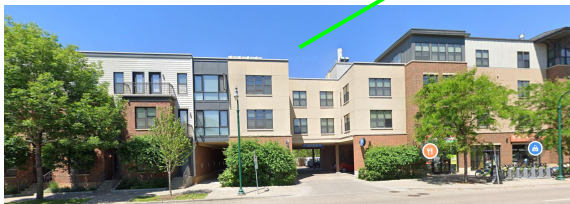
46th St (side street) building scale transitions from Lake St to neighborhood



Parking screened w/ plantings & fencing



Commercial access from Lake Street



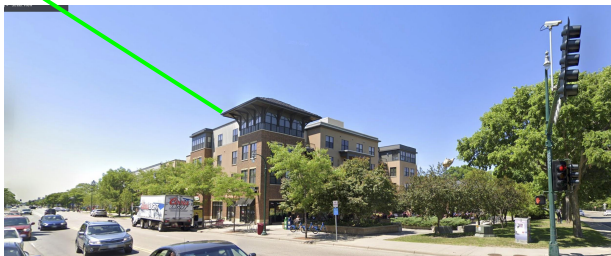
Heights “step down” away from corner; space for landscaping

Res garage from low demand alley-like side street. (This was great opportunity for this site, but not an analogous comparison. St Albans & alley are both “in-demand”)



Public park space w/ Trees, benches & public art

Tallest heights away from residential



# opportunity for improvement

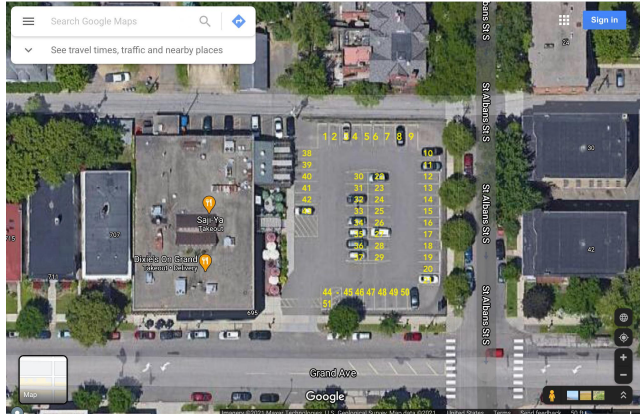
There are existing problems that should be improved



# Enhance residential character of St Albans

St Albans is unique and beautiful residential street that attracts architectural sightseers. It is home to over 40 households, all in Middle Density multifamily housing. Other than 695 Grand, all the buildings are from the period of significance for state and national historic districts; buildings north of the alley are in the local Historic Hill District.

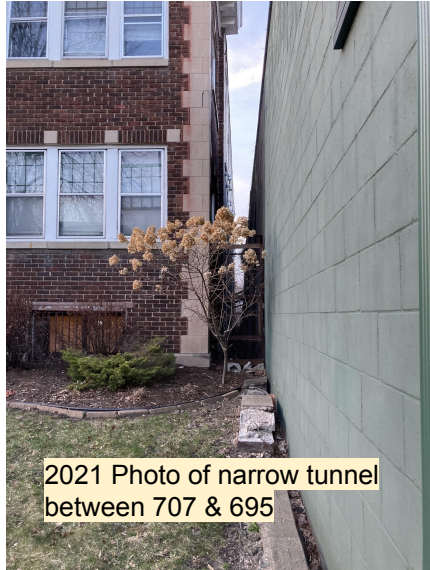
The photo on the right shows what used to be on current Dixie's Parking lot. The extant multifamily houses at 21-27 St Albans and 9 St Albans are visible in the background. The houses in the foreground have long been razed. Schiller's grocery was constructed in the late 60s, with massing and site planning that are out of scale with the *Historic Middle* scale. Dixie's is in the grocery building. The large parking lot alleviates parking congestion, but is un-screened and is too close to both Grand and St Albans.



1902 Photo of current Dixie's Parking lot on St Albans. "St. Albans South between Summit and Grand, St. Paul; left to right: Benjamin L. Goodkind, 45 South St. Albans; William L. Goodkind, 43 South St. Albans; rowhouse at 21-27 South St. Albans" MNHS photo

# Eliminate Non-conforming detriments

695 Grand was built c.1970 as a grocery store. That structure was not compatible in scale or site planning with the neighborhood.



2021 Photo of narrow tunnel between 707 & 695

The grocery put a blank, tall wall next to 707 Grand, with a zero foot setback. Current code requires 6 feet minimum between mixed use and residential, but a more neighborly approach would create a larger buffer with the NOAH building to the west.



1966 Photo of 707 Grand, before the construction of 695 Grand, before the grocery was constructed. Look at the windows on the east wall!

# Keep St Albans as a One-Way + Add Traffic Calming

Use a “bump out” “choker” to stop wrong way cars, add to sidewalk realm



Bump outs with raised crosswalks



Traffic “chokers”



St Albans was made a one-way (c.1990s) in response to the high crash rate at the intersection with Summit. Its one-way status functions as a traffic calming feature. It makes a safer interaction with the Summit park and bikeway, provides parking on both sides, as well as prevent commercial traffic “fly skimming” from Grand. However, it is not well labeled and wrong way traffic is a safety hazard.



# Eliminate Non-conforming detriments

695 Grand was built c.1970 as a grocery store. That structure was not compatible in scale or site planning with the neighborhood.

The grocery built a loading dock for semi trailer trucks flush on the residential alley. This creates maintenance and traffic problems in the alley. Access to residential garages are blocked daily, for 20-40 minutes. Ice ruts and potholes from heavy trucks are common. Multiple provisions in current zoning code would prevent this type of construction today. Both these errors of the past should be corrected.



Most businesses on East Grand load from Grand during off-peak hours (morning), either from the turn lane or timed “commercial only” parking. (Above) Loading from Grand at Oxford Hill; (Left) Loading from arterial Victoria at Cafe Latte

# Make the alley safer & better

“As it happens, park-poor neighborhoods tend to be “alley-rich”; the study found that one community in South Los Angeles had 2,593 people per park acre. But it had an alley density almost eight times the city average, and converting those alleys into green spaces would reduce the park “pressure” to about 528 people per park acre” --<https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/alley-makeover-green-alleys-los-angeles>



Alleys safe for all modes, but especially kids & peds. Slow speeds



Speed bumps, landscaping  
-- full community --  
neighbor & 695  
partnership?



# Pocket Neighborhood Characteristics

A close examination of the immediate area around 695 Grand

# Residential Side Street: St Albans Street South

The area immediately around 695 Grand is among the most dense clusters of housing along eastern Grand. Adding more housing here makes sense, but also needs thoughtful design. The housing portions of the mixed use development should embrace a St Albans identity.

## Urban Design Features

Residential neighbors have **landscaping** to create transitions and liven pedestrian experience.

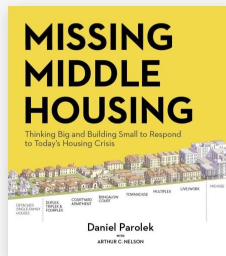
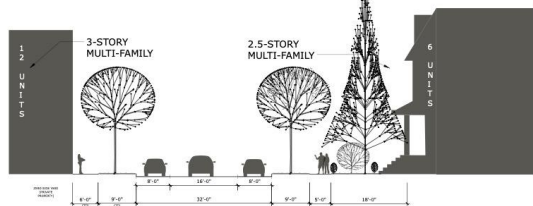
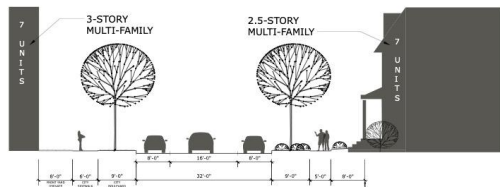
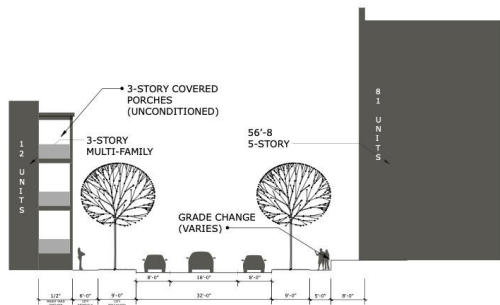
**Middle scale building bulk.** Building wall length is limited to less than 100 feet max. Most are rectangular in plan, lessening solar impact. Heights are often angled and stepped back, and shadow walls are set back from residential neighbors. Porches and landscaping create transitions. Facade articulation & variation.



**Street parking** is heavily utilized by both St Albans and Grand residences, with occupancy near 100% every night. Daytime occupancy is around 85%. Daytime parking is often Grand customers, visitors & employees. Right now, parking is well shared, but plowing & street maintenance are hampered.





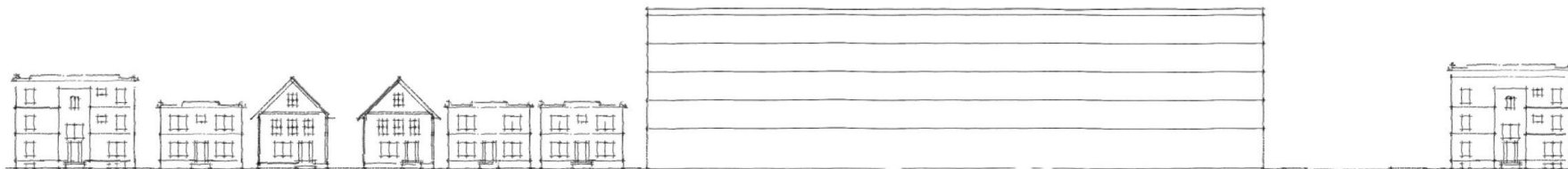


Thinking Big and Building Small to  
Respond to Today's Housing Crisis

**695 Proposal is massively  
out of scale in comparison to  
“Missing Middle” context**



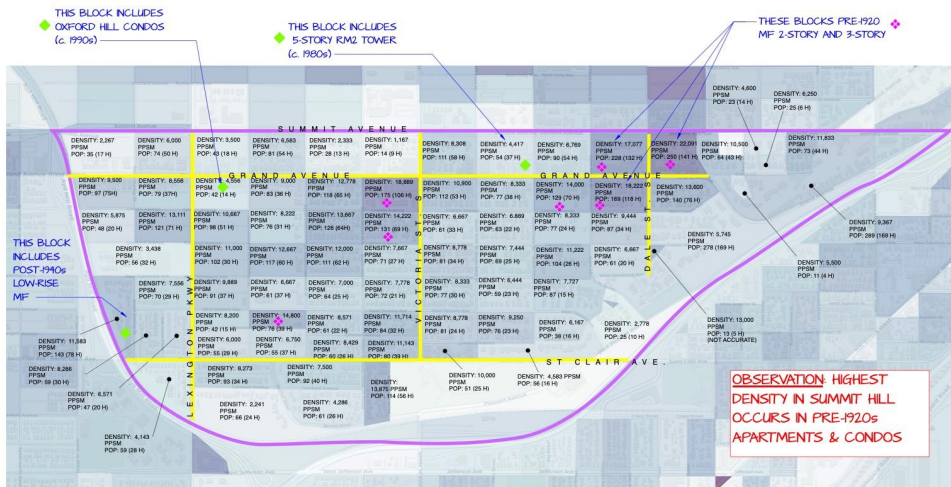
**Missing Middle Housing** is  
a range of house-scale  
buildings with multiple  
units—compatible in scale  
and form with detached  
single-family homes—  
located in a walkable  
neighborhood.





# Residential Side Street: St Albans Street South

The area immediately around 695 Grand is among the most dense clusters of housing along eastern Grand. It is part of the “node” centered on Grand & Dale, and extending to St Albans and Oakland, and then Lincoln to Summit. It is also has significant commercial uses on Grand. Adding more housing here makes sense, but also needs thoughtful design. Housing portions of the mixed use development should embrace a St Albans identity.



## HISTORIC MODELS OF DENSITY: GRANDENDALE NODE

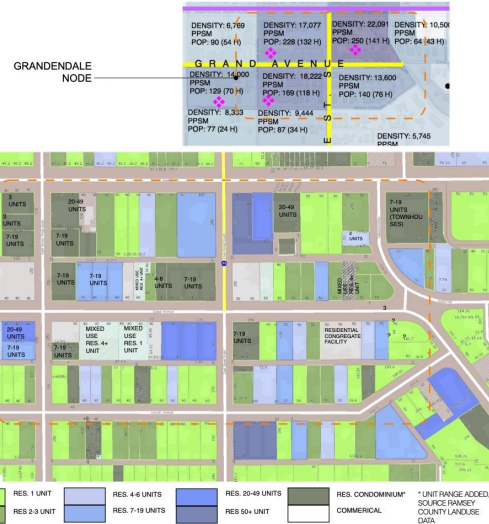
**SUMMIT HILL'S Highest Density** block is not a block, but rather a node, centered at the corner of Grand Avenue and Dale Street, and extending to St Albans to the west and Oakland to the East; and to Lincoln and Summit to the south and north. The manner of presenting residential density by “block” rather than street frontage does not convey the street experience of the “node” aspect.

Within this node, there are a wide variety of housing types: multifamily complexes of 3-stories (sometimes with a garden level units or walk out, creating the feeling of a 3+ stories), converted mansion multi-family, mixed use, townhouses as well as 4-plex, triplex and duplexes. This level of density is accomplished in a scale and manner that has lower low-rise heights and medium to small footprints, a scale that has been described as “Missing Middle” and is compatible with single-family housing.

This level of density has shown flexibility in adapting reasonably well to changes in transportation, from horses and carts to personal cars and delivery trucks, as well as from streetcar to city bus. Existing sidewalk infrastructure continues to be well used, and the Summit Avenue parkway adapted to modern transportation by adding dedicated bike lanes.

Proposed Development  
@ 695 Grand  
240 x 150 parcel

Adding residential density  
at this location should be  
thoughtfully integrated  
with the existing res.  
density



RM ZONING STUDY DRAFT REPORT FOR DISTRICT 16: SUMMIT HILL ASSOCIATION. Prepared by SONIA MASON

DATE: March 31, 2020, UPDATED: April 8, 2021 PAGE: 13

St Albans St South exists in context with the “Grandendale Node”—the densest pocket of residential in Summit Hill. This level of density is achieved with middle scale buildings that help create the character of Summit Hill. The west side of St Albans has on a block with a population density of 17,077 PPSM; this is a density level commonly occurring in cities like Brooklyn and Boston. The parking lot at 695 GGrand is not contributing to the missing middle scale. A mixed use development at a *similar scale* to the neighbors would be a great addition to Summit Hill and Grand Avenue.

DENSITY 1,000-2,500	DENSITY 5,501-6,500	DENSITY 9,501-10,500	DENSITY 13,501-14,500	DENSITY 17,501-18,500
DENSITY 2,501-3,500	DENSITY 6,501-7,500	DENSITY 10,501-11,500	DENSITY 14,501-15,500	DENSITY 18,501-19,500
DENSITY 3,501-4,500	DENSITY 7,501-8,500	DENSITY 11,501-12,500	DENSITY 15,501-16,500	
DENSITY 4,501-5,500	DENSITY 8,501-9,500	DENSITY 12,501-13,500	DENSITY 16,501-17,500	DENSITY 21,501-22,500

**DATA SOURCE:**  
CITY-DATA.COM  
ACCESSSED MARCH 6, 2020  
\*Based on 2000-2016 data  
Displaying: blocks. Zoom out  
and pan to view other areas  
Read more: <https://www.city-data.com/city/St-Paul-Minnesota.html>

# Higher Density Neighborhood Characteristics

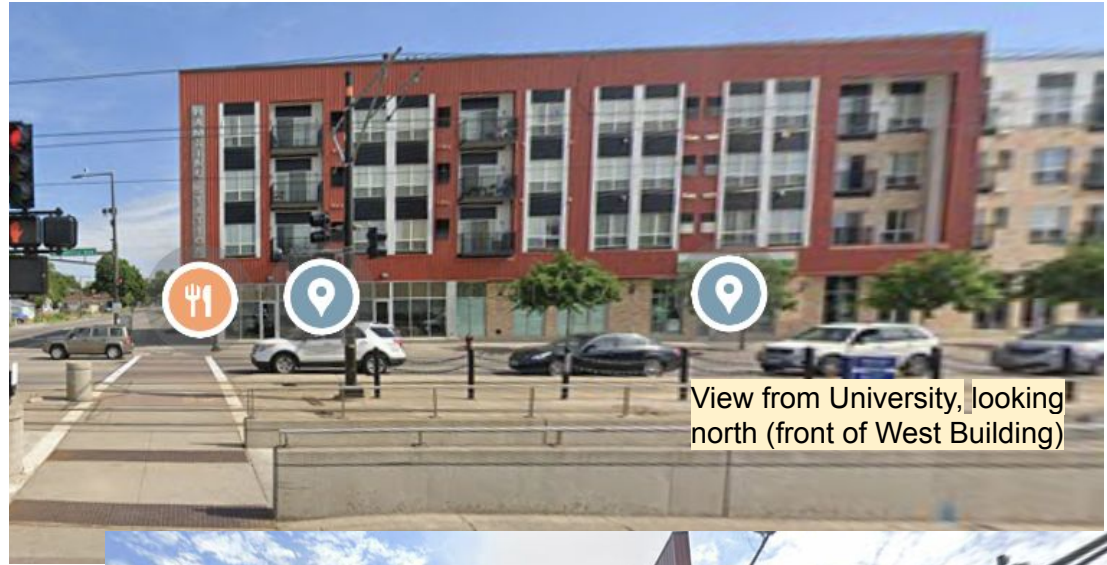
A closer examination of T3 & Greenline (High Frequency Transit) Scale

The City, State and federal governments have invested greatly in establishing HFT: The Greenline, The A-line, and (coming soon) the W 7th corridor. The zoning code should guide dense development to occur where we as a society have invested so deeply. This is an area where T3 level of bulk and height is more appropriate.

# Hamline Station

This is where we as a city should be encouraging high density, transit oriented development (TOD) projects. But this project is lower density than 695 Grand proposal (relative to lot size)

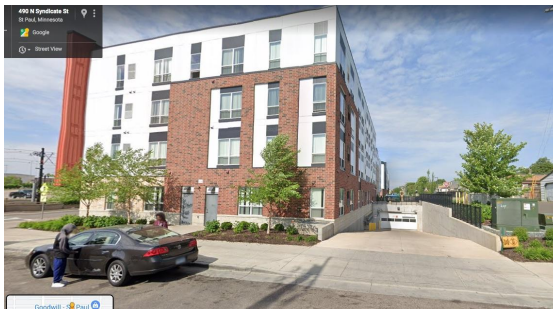
- 4stories (and with shorter floor-to-floors)
- Held back from residential to the N, keeps shadows largely on own property
- Underground (UG) parking & surface parking
- Wider Arterial A street + Greenline high frequency transit (HFT) route
- ½ block depth site on S side of corridor



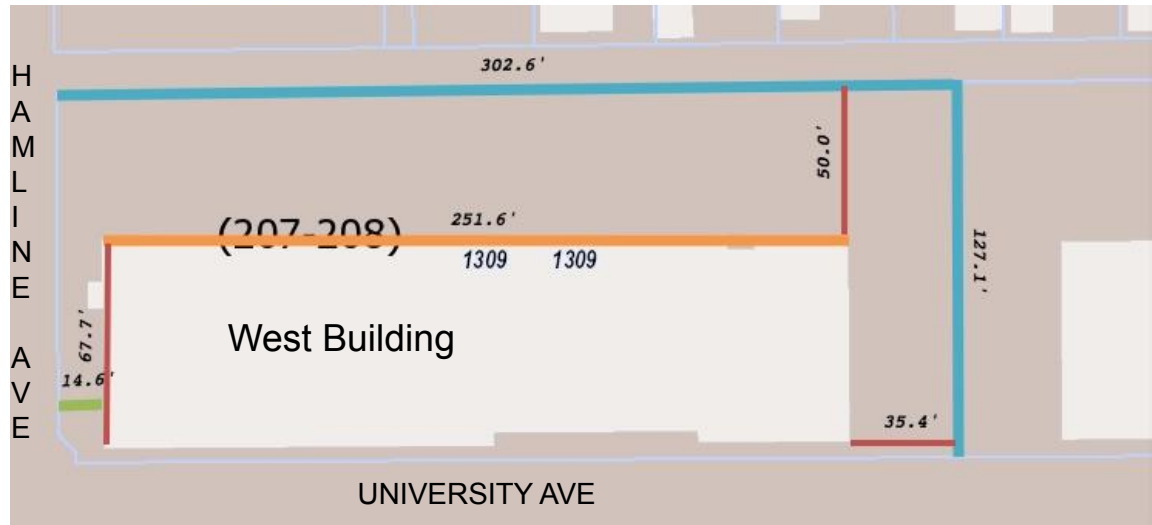
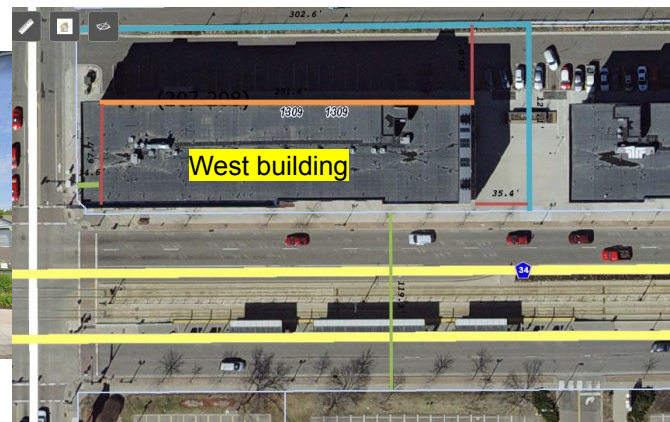
# Hamline Station

Along HFT lines is where we as a city should be encouraging high density, TOD projects. But this project, an an example, is lower density than the 695 Grand proposal.

- Facade length 252 feet (20 longer than 695)
- Bldg depth 68 feet (half the depth of 695, 139 longest depth)
- Bldg height 4 stories (1 story less than 695)
- Hamline setbacks (arterial A Minor or B Major) 14 ft vs 695 3 feet
- Interior setbacks 35 + feet
- Syndicate setbacks 10-14 feet with landscaping



Hamline Station has customer surface parking behind, accessed from Hamline; and UG parking for residents, accessed from the East building.



# 695 Grand Statistics

From plans, elevations, and sections by developer



FAR 3.27

695 Grand proposal has greater lot coverage, higher walls, and is closer to residential, than Hamline Station



<b>BUILDING AREA</b>	
MAIN Floor	<b>30,475 SF<sup>Δ</sup></b>
2ND-4TH Floors	<b>24,550 SF*</b>
5TH Floor	<b>21,250 SF</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>125,375 SF<sup>Δ</sup></b>

\* may vary slightly between floors  
<sup>Δ</sup> requires variance, 25,000 MAX PER FLOOR, 75,000 MAX ALL FLOORS

<b>FAR FLOOR AREA RATIO</b>	
125,675/38,400 (LOT SIZE+ ½ alley) =	<b>3.27<sup>Δ</sup></b>
<sup>Δ</sup> requires variance, 3.0 MAX FOR T2 W/ STRUCTURED PARKING	

<b>BUILDING LENGTHS</b>	
Longest length (main floor)	<b>232 feet</b>
Alley wall length (main floor)	<b>217.5 ft</b>

<b>BUILDING DEPTHS</b>	
Longest depth (main floor)	<b>139 feet</b>
Depth at center (main floor)	<b>124 feet</b>

<b>SETBACKS</b>	
NORTH (alley)	<b>8.0 feet<sup>Δ</sup></b>
SOUTH (Grand)	<b>10.0 ft</b>
EAST (St Albans)	<b>3.0 feet<sup>Δ</sup></b>
WEST (interior)	<b>6.0 feet<sup>Δ</sup></b>
<sup>Δ</sup> may require variance or agreement, depends on rezoning, based on T2	

<b>BUILDING HEIGHTS</b>	
Parapet Wall (5 <sup>th</sup> story)	<b>59.7 feet* (59'-8")</b>
Roof Surface (5 <sup>th</sup> story)	<b>56.7 feet<sup>Δ</sup></b>
*not part of defined bldg. height in zoning code	
<sup>Δ</sup> requires variance, 36 ft limit EGAO, 35 feet limit T2, + alley & res transition limits	

Parapet Wall (4 <sup>th</sup> story)	<b>49.7 feet * (49'-8")</b>
Roof Surface (5 <sup>th</sup> story)	<b>46 feet<sup>Δ</sup></b>
<sup>Δ</sup> requires variance, 36 ft limit EGAO, 35 feet limit T2, + alley & res transition limits	

<b>BUILDING ARTICULATION</b>	
Articulation = Variation in the horizontal wall plane	
NORTH (alley)	<b>NONE<sup>Δ</sup></b>
SOUTH (Grand)	<b>MINIMAL</b>
EAST (St Albans)	<b>NONE/MINIMAL*</b>
WEST	<b>MINIMAL</b>
*alley has no articulation at ground, minimal for upper stories	

<b>RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION</b>	
Transition = Reduction in bldg. size to lower scale	
NORTH (alley)	<b>REQ. NONE<sup>Δ</sup></b>
SOUTH (Grand)	<b>NOT REQ.</b>
<b>MINIMAL*</b>	
EAST (St Albans)	<b>REQ. NONE</b>
WEST (interior)	<b>REQ. MINIMAL**</b>
*Bldg main steps back feature is in center only, not near residential neighbors; only small step back at 5 <sup>th</sup> on sides near residential	
**Setback increase for upper stories, but no reduction in height	

Calculations computed by CAD software with data from ESG/RW plan set (undated), some minor dimensions that were not provided on plans and were scaled. Heights as given. Accuracy estimated within 1-2% due to missing dimensions.

Note on FAR. The full main floor footprint (30,475 SF) is used even though it includes structured parking (18,069 SF), as it contributes to the building bulk. Underground parking is not included. T2 has a max FAR of 2.0 with surface parking.

## 695 Proposal is massively out of scale in comparison to “Missing Middle” context



Existing tree canopy, gardens, yards and open spaces are abundant and inviting within the surrounding neighborhood context. The new massive structure will not provide open space

Light and air is shared between existing properties due to varied roof shape, porches, bays and setbacks, as well as the gaps between structures and a “middle” size building bulk

These diagram represents 5 months of the year - Oct - Nov - Dec - Jan- Feb

## Midday Shadows



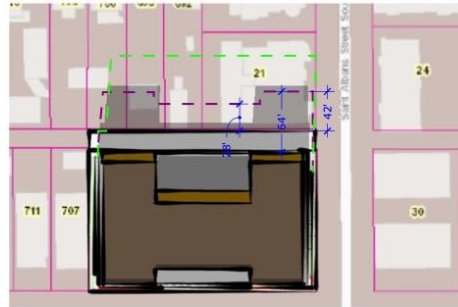
Oct 21 / Feb 21



Nov 21 / Jan 21



Dec 21 /



comparison between code-compliant setbacks and heights + transitions  
with proposed design



These diagram represents 5 months of the year: Oct - Nov - Dec - Jan- Feb

## Midday Shadows



Oct 21 / Feb 21



Nov 21 / Jan 21



Dec 21 /

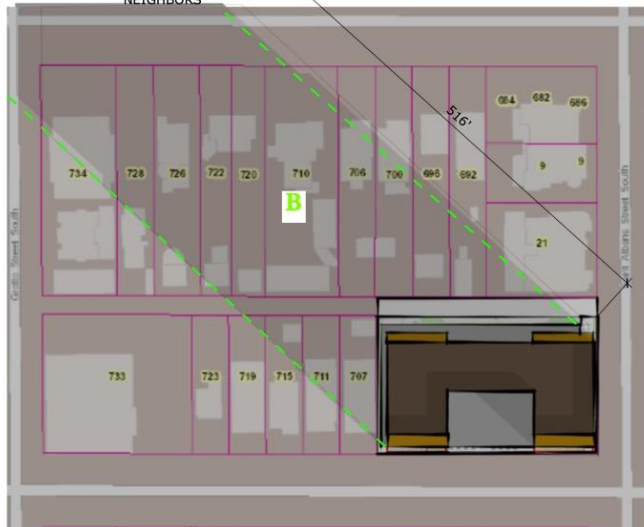


comparison between code-compliant setbacks and heights + transitions + Solar orientation & Grand Ave  
with proposed design

These shadows represent when many people will be coming or going from home

# SUN HOG DESIGN

PLACES TALLEST SOLID VERTICAL WALL CLOSEST TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORS



DECEMBER 21ST SHADOWS @8:15 AM



DECEMBER 21ST SHADOWS @3:45 PM



PROPOSED DESIGN HAD A MONOLITHIC VERTICAL WALL ALONG NORTH PROPERTY LINE, LOCATED TO BLOCK SOLAR ACCESS IN THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE MANNER ACROSS ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

SIMILARLY, EAST AND WEST SIDE YARD APPAR TO BE CLOSE TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUMS, ONCE AGAIN CASTING MAXIMUM SHADOWS ON ADJACENT PROPERTIES

DESIGN FEATURES "STEPPED BACK" ELEMENTS THAT MAXIMUM SOLAR GAIN FOR PROPOSED PROPERTY, WHILE CASTING NEARLY 100% OF ITS SHADOW ON NEIGHBORS

diagram based on data from schematic plans from ERG.

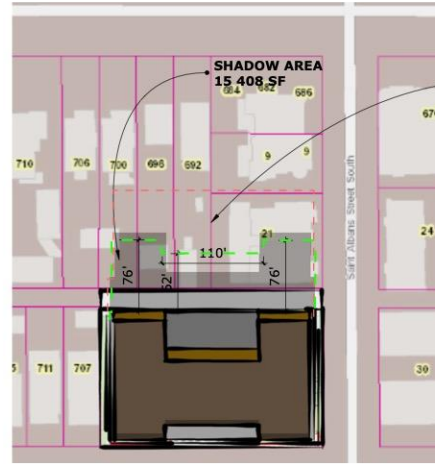
PLACES TALLEST  
SOLID VERTICAL  
WALL CLOSEST  
TO RESIDENTIAL  
NEIGHBORS



PROPOSED STEPPED  
BACK AREA ON  
SOUTH

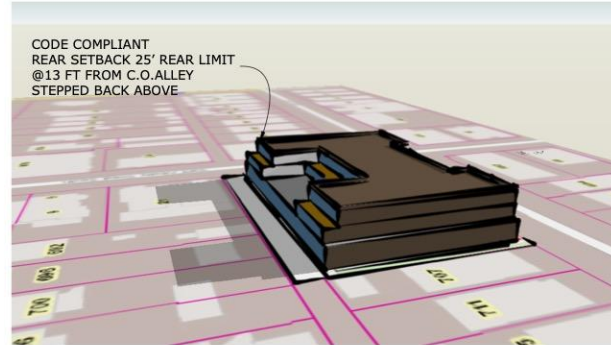
diagram with code compliant heights & planned transitions

SHADOW IS MUCH  
SMALLER WHEN  
CODE-COMPLIANT  
FOR HEIGHTS AND SETBACKS  
+ ORIENTED TOWARD  
MIXED USE  
CORRIDOR



**SUN HOG  
DESIGN**

PLACES TALLEST  
SOLID VERTICAL  
WALL CLOSEST  
TO RESIDENTIAL  
NEIGHBORS



DECEMBER 21ST SHADOWS @ 11:45 AM

\*\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS OF 695 GRAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN || PRINT  
April 6, 2021

[WINTER SOLSTICE SHADOWS] 16

# all-day shadows

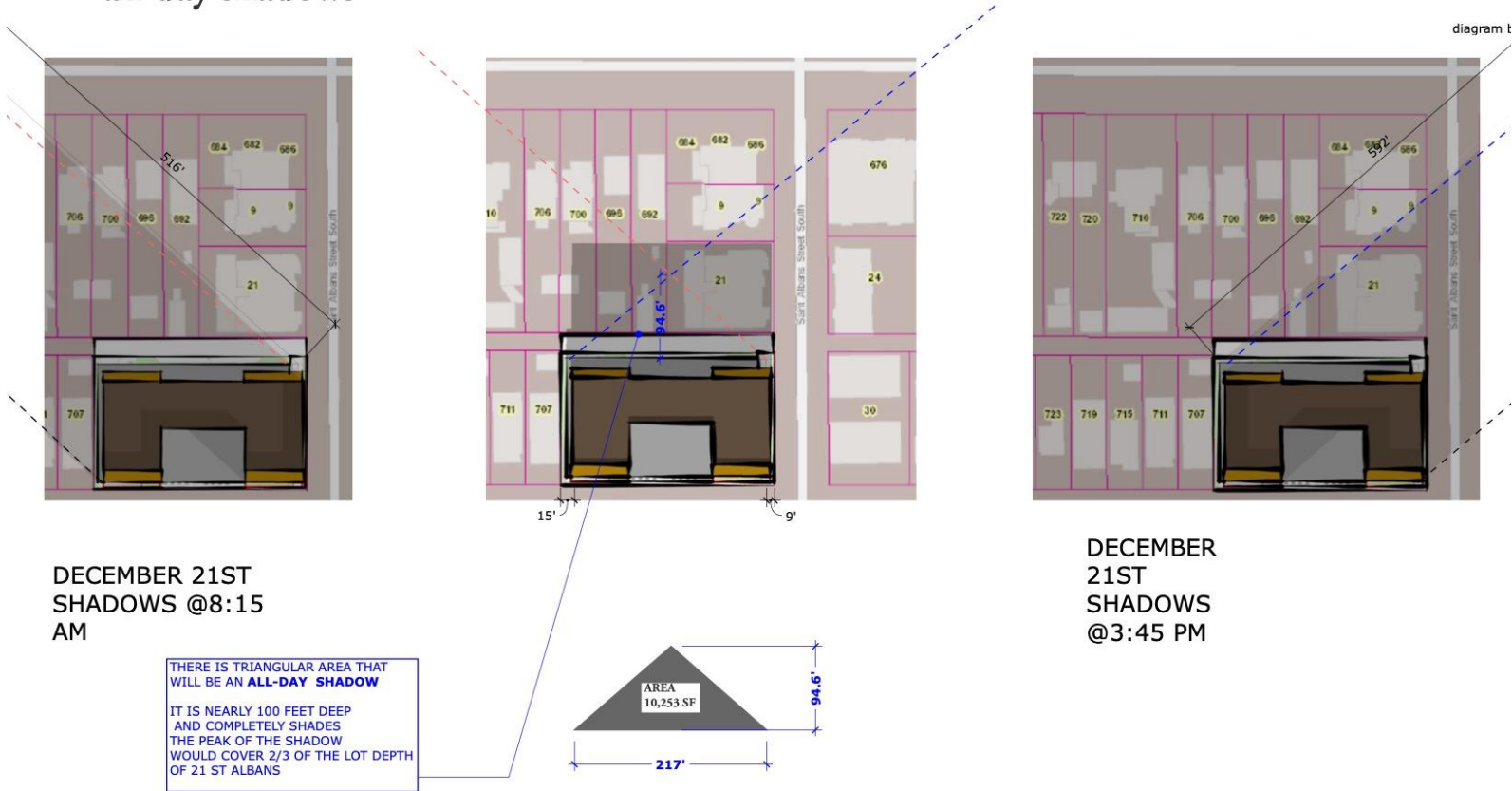
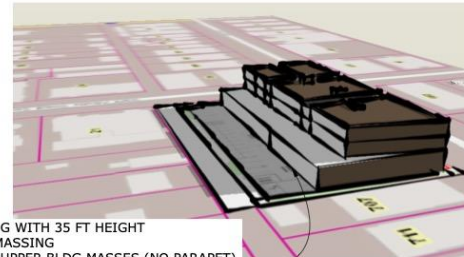
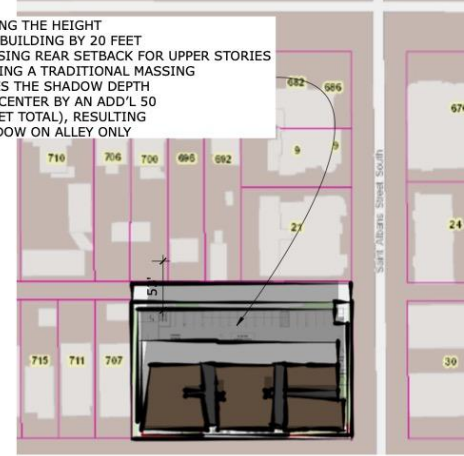
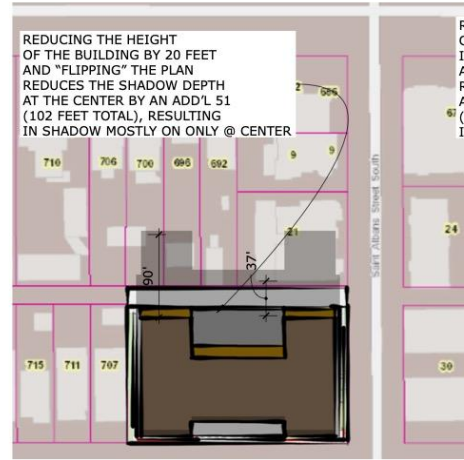
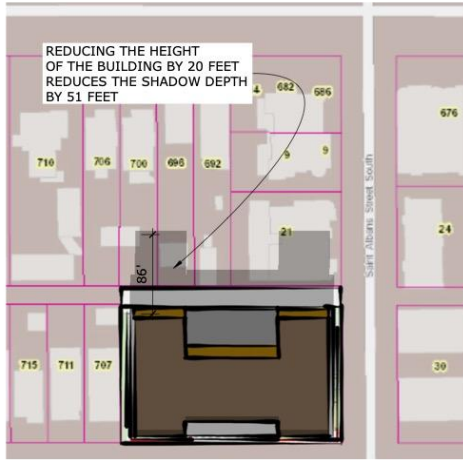




DIAGRAM HAS **35 FT HEIGHT** (T2 MAX) WITH 9 FOOT REAR SETBACKS .



## DECEMBER 21ST SHADOWS @ NOON

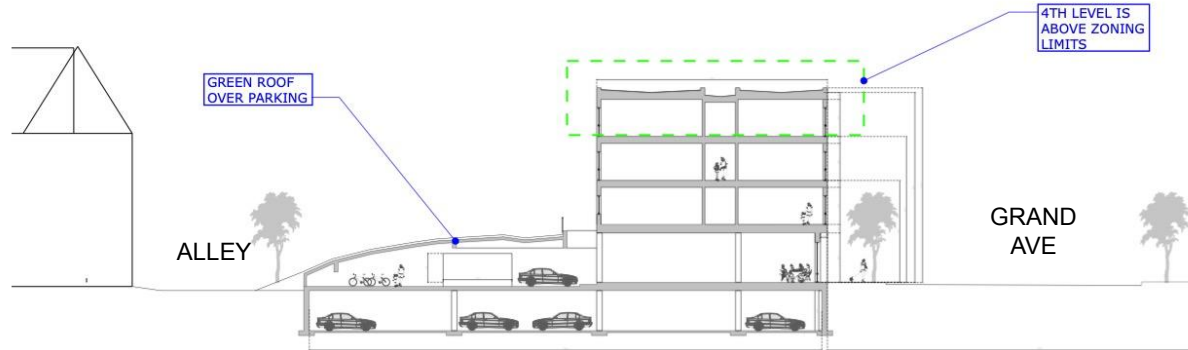
\*\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS OF 695 GRAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN || PRINT  
April 6, 2021

# Schematic alternative concept at *Missing Middle* scale

**PLAN VIEW**  
12-16 UNITS PER  
FLOOR



**SECTION CUT**  
NORTH-SOUTH CUT



A significant alley and shadow setbacks would not cast shadows on residential neighbors and create “residential transitions”; even with a hypothetical 4th level



# CONCEPT



\*\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\*\* ANALYSIS OF 695 GRAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN || PRINT  
April 6, 2021

Schematic alternative concept  
at *Missing Middle* scale

## St Albans Grotto Grand Summit Block Club

To: Peter Kenefick  
VIA EMAIL  
cc Summit Hill Association, Ari Parritz

RE: 695 Grand Proposal

We are writing to express our appreciation that you have reached out and asked for our input. Thank you for that. We truly hope that our feedback will help shape a revised design. We welcome a mixed use development that would enhance Grand Avenue and Summit Hill.

It also needs to be stated that there were deep levels of concern and opposition to the development proposal for 695 Grand *as presented* at the March 18th, 2021 meeting.

### Who are we?

We are a group of neighbors who have met and had many discussions in these three weeks since the first meeting. We represent our “Block Club” –households with frontage on the one way stretch of St Albans (both sides) as well as on the “shared alley” block bounded by Grotto-St Albans-Summit-Grand. It’s a “one and a half block” sized block club. Our block club has had input from homeowner, renter, multi-generational, and co-housing households. Our block club includes varied household types: traditional 2-story and 3-story multifamily flats, a modern 4-unit multifamily with an elevator, converted mansion multifamily, townhouse, carriage house (with windows right on the alley), single

family, duplex. The dominant form is multifamily. We have had three meetings: two outdoor socially distant meetings and a zoom meeting to increase our reach. We have had robust discussions on the sidewalk and in the already overused alley, as well as on the computer via shared online tools and polls.

We can’t in this letter fully summarize all the issues expressed. But we can convey the dominant themes.

The biggest concern and criticism of this proposed design center on four areas: building bulk and form, negative impacts on the neighborhood, lack of compliance with existing zoning rules and regulations, and market concerns.

Among those, the underlying, most repeated concern is the building size and form. And, it bears emphasizing that **the too-large scale** (extra tall height combined with near complete lot coverage) **creates or contributes to all the other problems.**

If there can be one overarching recommendation it is this: **the project should be scaled to match the neighborhood**, within the zoning requirements including the East Grand Avenue Overlay district requirements.

Thank you for time and consideration

**SAGGS Block Club**

### Biggest shared concern: “Super Size” Scale of Project

#### BUILDING BULK AND SITE PLANNING

- too tall/ too big / out of scale
- too dense
- too close to alley
- height in wrong places / maximum shadows
- anti-social / double loaded corridor / fishbowl

#### NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON NEIGHBORHOOD

- traffic, parking and safety
- loss of neighborhood character/ historic value / property values
- construction impacts, physical damage to neighboring structures

#### EXISTING LAWS / ZONING CODE

- Support design that would conform to zoning (no variances,
- Support T2 as appropriate rezoning, Oppose T3
- Support East Grand Ave Overlay height limits & design standards

#### MARKET CONCERNS

- Condo vs rental/ Short Term Rental/ high vacancy rate of rental /

# SAINT ALBANS ROW CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

21-27 SAINT ALBANS STREET SOUTH | SAINT PAUL MINNESOTA 55105

4/8/2021

Peter Kenefick  
VIA EMAIL  
cc Summit Hill Association, Ari Parritz

RE: 695 Grand Proposal

Dear Mr. Kenefick:

We are the owners of the seven condominium units that make up the St. Albans Row Condominium Association. These condos are located at 21-27 St. Albans Street South. They are on the west side of St. Albans directly north of the narrow alley that separates them from the parking lot at 695 Grand Avenue. This historic building was built in 1892. It was designed by famed architect Clarence Johnston and has been featured in many publications and a PBS special on Johnston because of its beautiful and unique features. We have worked hard over the years at significant cost to preserve and maintain this building not only for our use but also for the next generation.

We write because we are concerned that the proposed development plans for the “Dixie’s” site will damage the look and feel of our beautiful neighborhood. We recognize that 695 Grand has favorable potential for development and we do not want to stand in the way of projects that may benefit our neighborhood. Our concerns center on three main issues: height and massing, proximity to the alley, and parking/traffic flow.

The present proposal is for a five story building that would come within 8 feet of the alley and would completely fill the lot except for a patio on Grand. As proposed, this structure would be significantly higher and larger than anything else in the neighborhood, block sunlight, reduce our property values, and create unsolvable traffic and parking problems. It would also violate existing zoning requirements that limit height to three stories and require distance between the back of a building and the alley. The proposed structure is too high and the footprint is too large. The St. Albans block between Summit and Grand already has one of the highest densities in the city. The scale of the proposed project would destroy much of the beauty and charm of this street that so many people enjoy. We urge all who will have a role in making decisions regarding this project to not allow the present push for development to destroy the efforts of all of those before us to preserve this unique and beautiful neighborhood. Thoughtful and careful development that respects the present character of the neighborhood is welcome. We firmly request that a revised design proposal be developed that would conform with existing zoning code requirements.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors  
SARCA



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Support for 695 Grand Avenue Development

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**Dan Marshall** <dan@marshallwords.com>

Fri, Apr 9, 2021 at 3:43 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Cc: "Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul)" &lt;Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us&gt;, millie adelsheim &lt;milliemathea@gmail.com&gt;, Abigail Adelsheim-Marshall &lt;abby@mischieftoy.com&gt;

To our neighbors on the Summit Hill Community Council,

Our family business would like to express our enthusiastic support for Dixie's proposed multifamily development at [695 Grand Avenue](#). This is exactly the type of investment Grand Avenue needs in order to remain vibrant and relevant.

As you know, the property requires rezoning to allow this development because of the East Grand Avenue Overlay, which we view to be harmful and inequitable public policy. Our city faces a growing budget shortfall due to insufficient tax base and a housing crisis leading to record homelessness. And our planet faces accelerating climate change. All three of these problems can be addressed by dramatically increasing urban residential density. We therefore believe we have a moral obligation to build density everywhere in the city, especially on commercial transit corridors like Grand Avenue.

Additionally, our city and nation are in the midst of a vast contraction of brick and mortar retail. We've been selling toys in Saint Paul for 23 years; when we first opened, we were one of 5 toy stores in the city. Now, we're the only toy store. Grand Avenue retail in general has also contracted dramatically and we now have many empty storefronts creating a sense of blight.

Building urban density helps address this problem as well. This project alone would bring 79 new families to Grand Avenue, all of whom would be within walking distance of our store and all the other shops and restaurants Grand Avenue has to offer.

We'd also like to commend the architects and owners of the Dixies property for designing a building that elegantly complements the character and scale of Grand Avenue. We believe this project will be one of the signature buildings in the neighborhood.

We urge you to support this project by granting it any zoning changes or variances it may require. We also urge you to repeal the East Grand Avenue Overlay so that Grand Avenue can turn a corner and build a brighter future.

Thank you,

Abigail Adelsheim-Marshall, Millie Adelsheim, and Dan Marshall,  
owners of Mischief Toy Store  
[818 Grand Avenue](#)

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email me @ [dan@mischieftoy.com](mailto:dan@mischieftoy.com) or [dan@marshallwords.com](mailto:dan@marshallwords.com)



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Re: Shades of Uptown**

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**Kucera Marit Lee** <maritleekucera@comcast.net>

Sun, Apr 11, 2021 at 8:39 PM

To: Susan Weberg &lt;ingaweberg@outlook.com&gt;, ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Cc: Barb Brown &lt;wishboneandbarb@hotmail.com&gt;, Hillary Parsons &lt;HParsons@caplanlaw.com&gt;

Send this to SAGGS [saggs@googlegroups.com](mailto:saggs@googlegroups.com)

Send this to Ari with the 695 team

Send this to SHA: ZLU@SummitHillAssociation.org

> On Apr 11, 2021, at 8:37 PM, Susan Weberg <[ingaweberg@outlook.com](mailto:ingaweberg@outlook.com)> wrote:

&gt;

&gt; I lived in Uptown for many years. At some point, my friends couldn't visit me anymore because there was no place to park.

&gt; I lived in Lowertown on Mears at the Cosmo for many years. At some point, my friends couldn't visit me anymore because there was no place to park.

&gt; In a year or two, if this development happens, we can kiss friends and family visitors goodbye, not to mention snow emergency parking. Think: Snelling/Selby. Oy.

&gt;

&gt;

&gt;

&gt;

&gt; Inga

&gt;

Having been occupied elsewhere, I am coming late to this discussion, but am glad to hear that the neighborhood continues to be actively involved in preservation concerns. Thank you for the zoom meetings. I have lived here since the early 70's, drawn by the ambiance of these homes and gardens and by the spirit of authentic restoration among several generations actively working to 'save' this historic neighborhood. Young then, we tackled an elegant old house in need of rescue. Now, as I visit with younger, newer neighbors, they express surprise that it took so many years and so much work to restore many buildings to a state of repair and to create the Grand Avenue that we have come to take for granted in the past 45 years.

Over those years, hours and hours and hours of volunteer time were spent in putting together standards to preserve the special buildings and surroundings that are unique to their time and place, buildings that cannot be replaced. Architects, designers and preservationists living among us have not all agreed on every detail, but major areas of agreement have emerged. The importance of scale in new additions and projects has been a primary area of agreement year after year. It remains a major concern. Recently in Saint Paul we have seen houses and buildings added, so out of scale that it doesn't take an educated eye to see how negatively they change the nature of their surroundings. Long term residents are right to be concerned with the abandonment of some of those hard won standards. The design challenge is to find ways to work creatively within those regulations. There is plenty of room for invention.

In a time when so many seem to form fierce opinions without gathering enough background to be truly informed, it is appropriate for residents to object to easy dismissal of the careful efforts of those who have tirelessly worked to maintain the uniqueness of our area. Those efforts have produced the inviting atmosphere that makes so many people want to live here. Adding scale in plan and height can completely change and block the views and the available light to the homes, trees and gardens of our neighbors. We LIVE here. We are truly grateful for the special restaurants and shops among us and appreciate the intent to give them new life. The plans show extensive thought and planning and reflect some attention to neighborhood concerns. With reference to scale, height is the element most frequently addressed. The scale of mass may be even more significant.

In this project the plan makes maximum use of the site. A sensibility, the grace of scale in our particular neighborhood is missing. The 'map' of building heights in the neighborhood gives some relativity but doesn't show the differences between widths of streets and parking/boulevards relative to heights of buildings. If that width can accommodate the growth of sizable trees on both sides of a street, there is less of a sense of being 'walled in'. Trees in the city need light and space to survive and grow tall. Humans who look out on trees benefit immeasurably from the same light and space. The beautiful buildings along this block of St. Albans are being crowded. Good cooks strive to provide meals that leave diners satisfied but not bloated. This plate is still too full.

The whole quality of our daily lives and environment needs to be respected. Please honor the scale. Honor what has been protected. Honor your neighbors by avoiding minor incremental 'adjustments' to plans. If those proposing change can't work within the adopted standards they haven't completely grasped the nature of the neighborhood yet and possibly are unaware of the amount of work it has taken to keep the feeling of 'neighborhood' in the inner city. The residential charm and historic feel of our Summit Hill community is what drew the businesses to Grand Avenue as well as the people who support those businesses. Please keep working to make your plan healthier.

Early in my time here an old Saint Paul hand spoke up in a debate about change. "If a change offers a significant improvement, adapt. If it does not, don't." Good advice.





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Community Meeting #2 - Link for this Thursday April 8 at 7pm**

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**Marquita Oleson** <marquita.oleson@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>  
Cc: aparritz@reuterwalton.com

Mon, Apr 12, 2021 at 12:43 PM

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in last week's meeting. After hearing the discussion last week, I am concerned about the safety and broad impact of this project. The number of tenants the building is built to support and the very tight entry and exit pathways not only for deliveries but even just for their residents to come in and out of their parking area has the potential to generate additional accidents, particularly pedestrian vs. vehicle on my block. Turning onto St Albans or Grand from that area is already blind in many places but luckily doesn't have a lot of traffic as it stands now. Their plan doesn't support the additional number of cars this would add safely. I think this proposal has a lot of potential to create significantly more accidents on a bad day and congestion and frustration on a good day.

The developer only reduced their initial proposal by 2 units, which felt like a very minor and even negligible change based on feedback. It was difficult given the format of the meeting to know how my neighbors largely feel about this change, and to ensure positive comments were truly from residents of our area. I have talked to all my neighbors in my FWHA association and there seems to be almost universal opposition to this project for a variety of reasons. There are buildings of this type all over the twin cities with many empty units in highly desirable neighborhoods. However, because developers' first priority is a financially profitable site/proposal, they continue to put forward massive and "cookie cutter" rental projects throughout the twin cities that squeeze the most units, at the lowest cost, and therefore highest profit margin potential into their projects. While it is understandable that profit margin is their main objective, it is imperative that land use committees and city planners balance the profitability desires by a development company with the true needs and impact on the community. After reviewing the proposal and participating in the meeting and listening to the previous meeting that I missed, I am even more certain that this project would adversely impact safety for pedestrians and drivers on St Albans and Grand, traffic, parking, the historical aesthetic of our area, and would not solve the needs for affordable housing, particularly for purchase, in our community and surrounding areas.

The presentation from the developers felt pretty dismissive of the valid concerns of the neighborhood. They were unwilling to reduce the number of units by anything meaningful, and the various entry/exit proposals all had very real safety and traffic issues. If this project were revised to be 3 stories, 25 - 30 units, with the brick aesthetic changes that they adopted in this second draft, I would be in full support. The alley, the site, and this block cannot safely support this project as proposed without major disruption and adverse impact on this area. Thank you for all you do to carefully evaluate the impact of a project like this, and gather input from the constituents you support. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me for further comment or clarification as needed.

Thank you,  
Marquita Oleson  
42 St Albans St., #6  
612-709-9731

[Quoted text hidden]



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Development at 695 Grand**

1 message

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**Jim and Laura Rubin** <LJRubin@msn.com>

Thu, Apr 15, 2021 at 12:17 PM

To: "zlu@summithillassociation.org" &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the owner of the two apartment buildings located at 707 and [711 Grand Avenue](#) in St. Paul. I am aware of the new development proposal at 695 Grand, which is right next door to my properties. I have talked with the development/planning team multiple times and reviewed their plans and presentations. Any question I have asked has been answered sufficiently.

I want to clearly state my full support for the project. They are working to preserve local businesses while adding badly needed housing units. Their design takes into account the feel of the neighborhood and they addressed my concerns regarding spacing and design. Also, I support their proposed height as I understand that their proposed number of floors is required to make the project work.

Please approve their project because, as their neighbor, I believe it will improve the neighborhood.

Thank You,  
Jim Rubin  
Mint Properties LLC  
cell 651-210-8878



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Question for Wednesday, May 5, 2021**

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**Hillary Parsons** <hparsons@caplanlaw.com>

Mon, May 3, 2021 at 12:31 PM

To: "zlu@summithillassociation.org" &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Cc: "saag@googlegroups.com" &lt;saag@googlegroups.com&gt;

Today, May 3, 2021, Braun Intertech came out and used heavy equipment to drill holes in your property. There was no notification in advance. Braun Intertech did not have any vibration monitors in use. Vibrations were felt in several neighboring properties, including mine. This has led to the following questions:

1. What is your commitment to preventing damage to the neighboring properties—historic, masonry-bearing wall buildings in the immediate vicinity?
2. Will you commit to providing notice and properly monitoring for vibrations?
3. Will you commit to ensuring that drilling/construction stay well below recommended limits for historic masonry structures?
4. How are you planning on recompensing neighbors for any damage? Per my previous experience with the installation of a sewer pipe in the street, it's not a question of IF there will be significant damage, it's a question about what will YOU be doing to minimize damage and ensuring that neighboring buildings aren't financially compromised by the construction.

Yours,

Hillary – Specifically Question 4; and

SAAG – Questions 1-3

May 4, 2021

To: SHA Zoning & Land Use Committee

From: Marilyn Bach, South Saint Albans

Please consider this letter to the Summit Hill Association Zoning & Land Use Committee as submission of my concerns to be considered regarding the development proposal for 695 Grand Avenue.

As a resident living in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project, I have multiple concerns. Additional concerns of many Summit Hill residents are well represented in the April 28, 2021 issue of the Villager. Links to those letters are included at the end of this letter.

The 695 Grand Avenue development requires rezoning to T2/T3 and several major variances from the East Grand Avenue Overlay District, including height and setbacks.

### **Saint Paul Zoning Code Requirements**

According to **Sec. 61.601 of the** Zoning Code, the Board of Zoning Appeals must make the following findings before they can grant a variance:

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.
2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
3. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
4. The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.
5. The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.

Clearly, the requested variance(s) **does not meet any of the five findings required** in order to be granted by the BZA.

One of the stated core responsibilities of the Summit Hill Association Zoning & Land Use Committee is to listen to community input in order to make a decision that reflects the views of our neighborhood as a whole. I trust that the Zoning & Land Use Committee will deny the development proposal for 695 Grand Avenue, and encourage the developers to submit a proposal that meets all five of Sec. 61.601 of the Saint Paul Zoning Code.

Best Regards,  
Marilyn L. Bach, PhD  
[bachx001@umn.edu](mailto:bachx001@umn.edu)  
h: 651-290-2604  
c: 612-423-2154

Links to letters of concern:

<https://myvillager.com/category/viewpoint/editorials/>

<https://myvillager.com/2021/04/28/letters-to-the-editor-april-28-2121/>



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Avenue -- questions for May 5 Public Meeting

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**Brenda Besser** <bbesser@gmail.com>

Wed, May 5, 2021 at 3:30 PM

To: ZLU Committee &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;, Ari Parritz &lt;aparritz@reuterwalton.com&gt;

Questions for the Developers/Mr. Kenefick:

- Will a traffic and environmental study of the area be required for this project?
- If the buildings immediately surrounding 695 Grand Avenue wish to pursue solar power in the future, how might the shadows cast from the current design iteration negatively affect this?
- Why are the tallest walls of the project closest to residential neighbors?
- I've heard the term "public space" used to refer to the outdoor space in the front of the building. That implies to me that anyone who wanders by can use it, without patronizing the restaurants. Can you clarify what this means exactly? Is this referring to the restaurant patio space, a separate extension of it, or merely a bench or 2 near the boulevard?
- Please explain why a legacy project (a legacy for those who don't actually live in the neighborhood?) should not equally value the livability of the residents most affected? This just seems wrong.

Observations/questions for ZLU Committee:

From [Reuter Walton's website](#), I notice that there are fine examples in their portfolio that are more to scale with what our neighborhood overlay plan supports and that would be less likely to diminish the livability of surrounding residents. A couple of these are Hotel Crosby in Stillwater and Local15 Apartments in the Como neighborhood of Minneapolis. The Local15 is described as a Green Oasis, interesting as the 695 plan is the antithesis of "green".

- Why are those projects viable in those locations but the only option here is to propose something that egregiously and arrogantly flouts the overlay plan (which many in our neighborhood still seem to want to retain) and seeks to change zoning for the entire area?

We are all in favor of development at this location, but please lend your support to something that is both compatible in scale and environmentally mindful.

Respectfully,

Brenda Besser  
24 St. Albans St. S.



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Strib article**

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**Linda Makinen** <lamakinen2@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Wed, May 5, 2021 at 10:57 AM

Bigger does not equal better.

This building seems to be driving the changes to established zoning codes. Based on what I've heard in meetings and read in the letters to ZLU, and what I understand of the survey responses, the majority of voices want to keep the East Grand Overlay. The next biggest group of the survey would like to see "some change". What is the scope of that change? Do we get to voice an opinion about the direction of that change in another neighborhood survey? Or do we simply assume that "some change" is defined by this project? The Avenue will be made up of a series of developer designed buildings ("Plan 81", pulled out of a file drawer, and squished onto the site) that will be indistinguishable from one another. As one of the developer/architects dubbed it, "the 2021 look".

Linda Makinen  
Summit Hill





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Opposition to the proposed development at 605 Grand Avenue

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Susan St John <privateartmn@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Wed, May 5, 2021 at 10:18 AM

Dear Zoning Board Members,

While today, there are currently only a handful of architecturally significant buildings on Grand Ave, the historic hill area is unique --- nationally famous with residential and community structures of the 1800s, the Hill district has wonderful history, lasting beauty and important architectural significance in the lexicon of American architecture.

This is a unique time for subsidized development throughout the Twin Cities and the State. We see the same designs -- dubbed "accountant designed" -- as block residential housing going up all over the suburbs. These "copy-cat structures" are repeating themselves endlessly, defying zoning codes and other building restrictions ---providing no architectural significance - and certainly no visual beauty. They are soulless.

Today we have a rare opportunity which should not be squandered or fall into the same trap as all the other new, soulless developments seen down the Avenue and throughout the suburbs. With the increasing number of proposed residential and commercial buildings for Grand Avenue, it's even more critical to strictly conform to existing zoning and building requirements.

The proposed development at [695 Grand](#) does not do this. It is certainly NOT architecturally significant ---it is a "copy- cat accountant box design" that squanders architectural significance and visual beauty. It will, in fact, deface the superb 1890's stone architecture so valued along Saint Albans Street South.

This is a rare opportunity for you as advisors to monitor and protect all new developments from ruining Grand Avenue. Ultimately, it is an opportunity which should block residential developers' efforts to easily increase their coffers and save the soul of our unique neighborhoods and St Paul's future.

I would feel very different if this project were to conform to the zoning requirements and would visually enhance its surroundings -- or even stand out due to its architectural excellence.

Unlike news reporting from the Summit Hill Board chair, the Kenefick proposal for 695 Grand does none of this. The developers have not in any way changed their existing plan for its five story "accountant" designed proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan St John  
Longtime resident of Summit Hill and Crocus Hill neighborhoods  
Unit owner - Saint Albans Street South  
Private Art | Susan St. John  
[25 St. Albans St. South](#)  
[Saint Paul, MN 55105](#)  
T: 651-227-1449  
M: 651-491-4431  
[privateartmn@gmail.com](mailto:privateartmn@gmail.com)

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Private Art | Susan St. John  
[25 St. Albans St. South](#)

5/5/2021

Summit Hill Association Mail - Opposition to the proposed development at 605 Grand Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55105

T: 651-227-1449

M: 651-491-4431

[privateartmn@gmail.com](mailto:privateartmn@gmail.com)



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand**

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**Ellen T Brown** <ellen@thebrownpartners.com>

Thu, May 6, 2021 at 10:00 AM

To: ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Cc: Ari Parritz &lt;aparritz@reuterwalton.com&gt;, Rebecca Noecker &lt;rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us&gt;

Thanks to all of you for another excellent meeting last night. Frankly, I am amazed by the willingness of the development team to accommodate neighborhood concerns and wowed by the patience that Bob and Ari show in explaining things and answering questions. Would like to have a bit of that patience rub off on me in some of my interactions! 😊

The care taken with the parking flow options alone is remarkable. Personally the one that seems to be the preference at the moment is not my favorite as it intermingles the residential and commercial traffic. But I understand the safety issues re cars exiting on Grand so will stifle my objection.

I totally understand the opposition of those who live on St Albans as they will certainly bear the most negative impact of the building and the traffic generated. I wish that we could see the addresses...or at least 8xx Fairmount, for example... of those who are commenting on and challenging the proposal. That would give us all a better sense of the geographic breadth of the opposition. As I talk to my neighbors, they seem very open to the proposal if not yet fully supporting as I am.

It is disappointing that the basic understanding of the finances of development seem little understood; that some people think a 3-story building would work financially, for example; or that Peter Kenefick and Reuter Walton stand to make a boatload of money by building taller. As I said in the chat last night, I am pretty certain that the developments on Selby that were referred to are not of equal quality in either construction or finishing details. And of course, as Ari or Bob mentioned, the value of the land (and taxes on it) are surely markedly different. I believe at least some of the Selby developments have some public money too.

The overall benefits to Grand Avenue's commercial health by adding 79+ new residents to the area must not be minimized. And the value to neighbors...especially empty nesters who want to stay in Summit Hill but have few options beyond continuing to live in houses oversized for two people...is huge.

Thanks for the good and careful work everyone is doing to make 695 Grand a real plus for Summit Hill.

Best,

Ellen Brown

Ellen T Brown  
874 Fairmount Avenue  
Saint Paul MN 55105  
651-226-3692



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Comment on Grand/St. Albans Development

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**Rob Spence** <rspence@gmail.com>

Sun, May 16, 2021 at 11:14 AM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

For the record, my thoughts on the project:

As a Summit Hill neighbor, I am support of this project.

To be honest,I don't think it's tall enough. More neighbors will bring life and \$\$\$ to Grand Ave.

The owners/developers plans are thoughtful and blend well with the area - frankly, they are investing more time and \$\$\$ than is necessary to appease the neighbors.

This project represents progress for Summit Hill.

Rob Spence

893 Goodrich Ave.

An Open Letter to the Summit Hill Association Board –  
May 18, 2021

In the April Zoom meeting about the 695 Grand Avenue development, the SHA Zoning Chair cited the Blair House at Selby and Western Avenue as a terrific example of what the 695 Grand Avenue project could become. I agree with that statement. The Blair House at Selby and Western provides an example of economic costs and impact on a community of a development similar to the excesses proposed for 695 Grand Avenue.

This note repeats and expands upon my comments in the April Zoom meeting.

The full Blair House story supports the community opposition to the 695 Grand proposal. 695 Grand replicates Blair House's overbuilding with four floors of apartments over commercial space from lot line to lot line with limited parking. The fundamental character of both buildings is similar.

The Blair House, from its construction in 1888 through the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, bankrupted multiple investors & owners. Even after millions of dollars of direct investment by the City of St. Paul in the 1980's, Blair House generated massive dollar losses for developers, and the first twenty years of condo purchasers. Like 695 Grand, the Blair House did not fit in its neighborhood and did not work as promoted. Blair House, a monument to poor initial decisions on a large scale has proved very costly for the community, users and for 100 + years of investors.

Some Blair House Facts

- 1888- Blair House constructed in 1888 for \$150,000 with four floors of rental apartments and one floor of commercial space.
- 1900 Blair House bankrupts its owner and is sold for much less than construction cost.
- 1900-1940's – Succession of owners each resell at a loss. Building abandoned.
- 1970's - With condo conversions sales booming in the Historic Hill District a wealthy neighborhood entrepreneur purchases the Blair House for \$150,000. The Blair House finally sells for its 1880's construction price.
- 1970's - After investing an additional \$150,000 and more to stabilize structure and building systems the local entrepreneur takes a loss & sells the Blair House for \$150,000.
- 1980's –A succession of new developers, after years of struggle convinces the City of St. Paul to "Save the Blair House". The City of St. Paul makes a multi-million dollar public investment to purchase the rest of the block west of Blair House,, closes Arundel Street and purchases the first four lots of the next block. The acquired land is converted to a 100+ car surface parking lot, underground parking and a public/private development of new apartment building with first floor commercial tied to Blair House commercial space to enable make the Blair House to become a success. This does not happen.
- 1990's – Blair House condo units sell slowly. Resales often require sellers to accept a loss. Commercial spaces have difficulty maintaining occupancy rates after initial retail tenants leave. Multiple tenants come and go.

- 2000's During the first or second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century some Condo units sell at prices equal to or greater than purchase price.
- 2021.- Blair House, after 123 years of creating economic hardship and bankruptcies for multiple investors over 100+ years finally provides some economic stability for condo investors.
- Commercial rental spaces remain largely empty with high turnover.
- Surface parking is now controlled by a gate. This publicly created parking is no longer shared with the rest of Selby-Western district, including the closed section of Arundel and former right-of way.

Blair House provides a cautionary example for those seeking to repeat this type of folly. The development at 695 Grand Avenue will not be as lucky.

If built as proposed it will degrade the community with issues similar to those the Blair House has imposed on the Ramsey Hill neighborhood. At Blair House, the losses to the investors were economic - private and public dollars. The cost to the community of alternating decades of limited use, bankruptcy & then vacant building cannot be easily measured. The Blair House did help keep neighbor's property taxes lower but only because for over 100 years it continued to depress the value of nearby homes and commercial properties.

Similar experiences in Summit Hill could be our fate if the 695 program goes forward as proposed.

Ted Lentz, AIA

SHA Board Member 1975-1979

692 Summit Avenue Home Owner 1973-2019





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**Scott Willman** <scott.willman@me.com>

Sun, Jun 6, 2021 at 3:52 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Thank you for taking an active role in the review of the proposed 695 Grand development. As a neighbor (601 Goodrich) I walk by the site frequently and cannot imagine such a large building with no setback in that space. Why does the city have rules about building height and setbacks if they don't enforce them? It seems that every time a developer proposes a project they request a variance to eliminate the guidelines the city put in place. Approving this project would benefit the building owner and the developer, but certainly not the neighbors near the site or in surrounding areas that use Grand Ave. I suggest we stand firm and require the developer to follow the rules that are in place. A smaller building with more space around the neighbors would seem to make a lot of sense.

Scott Willman

Sent from my iPad



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave proposal

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**Roxann Brennan** <rbrennan153@comcast.net>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 9:14 AM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Summit Hill Association/Zoning

I have lived at [30 St. Albans St S, #1](#), since May of 1989.

St. Albans Street has always been congested and the proposal to build an 80 unit apartment building at the 695 Grand will render

this block, this area, almost completely impassable.

I can't believe the City of St. Paul would allow a complex of this size to be built on such a small lot.

How much more density is needed in this neighborhood?

The construction alone will damage the neighborhood.

St. Paul has plenty of high end rental property with more on the way.

Peter Kenefick has indicated he wants this project to be part of his legacy. I submit that destroying this neighborhood

for the longtime residents and visitors should not be an option for him to achieve this goal.

I am against this project. I am a long time tax payor and a voter.

Thank You.

Roxann Brennan

[30 St. Albans St., S # 1](#)

[St. Paul, MN 55105](#)



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Project Comments

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Donald Drake <drake.dondrake@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 10:57 PM

First, let me express how disappointed I am that your online and postcard meeting notices for the June 8th Zoom meeting both arrived on June 7. A meeting of this importance should have had a much longer lead time, if you really expect to get neighborhood participation broader than the usual list of players. We should be able to expect at least a one-week minimum advance warning and preferably longer.

I write to encourage you to approve the development of the five-story retail/residential project at 695 Grand Avenue now being considered. As someone who lives less than a block south of the proposed construction, I wholeheartedly welcome it for the overall positive impact it will have on the neighborhood, Grand Avenue and Saint Paul in general. I am aware of the concerns of those who live immediately behind and across from the project on St. Albans, but their legitimate concerns are far outweighed by the overall good it will bring.

I live right behind an older 50' building on the alley at St. Albans just south of Grand, and I am oblivious to its height on a daily basis. Much is made of the 56' height of the proposed project, but it is appropriate to our time, place and current economic realities. The block of St. Albans adjacent to 695 Grand has large, old trees and very little direct sunlight now, so not much will change for other than a very few people. Your responsibility is to the greater Summit Hill neighborhood, not just to the immediate neighbors. Also, there have been three restaurants on the property for many years now, so this would hardly be a sea change by any stretch of the imagination. The possibility of one less restaurant is likely to cut down on the noise and traffic, depending upon what goes into what the developers are calling the "dream space." Two established and popular *locally-owned* restaurants will continue in new spaces. Over 70 *underground* parking spaces will hold most of the residents' cars. What will be gone is a street-visible parking lot that is empty as often as it has cars. This would a huge improvement visually when the ground level parking no longer dominates the corner.

I have attended the public Zoom meetings on this project, and I am convinced that what is proposed will end up fitting in very well with the historic character and charm of this special Summit Hill neighborhood. I have spent some time lately looking at the other retail/residential buildings of recent years that have gone up on Grand and Snelling, and none of them come close to the thoughtful and community-sensitive design of this project that is constantly being modified via community input. The developers have, in my opinion as someone who highly values the history of this area and good urban design, been extremely receptive to the concerns they have openly encouraged from the neighborhood.

I and others will be somewhat inconvenienced during the construction of this project and once it is built, but that is minor compared to what this completed project would bring to us all: new tax revenue, new customers for the many fine local and national businesses on Grand that make it special, urban density in a building that will consciously refer to the aesthetic of its immediate surroundings, housing for those downsizing from old, large homes without leaving the neighborhood, more of what urban sociologists call "eyes on the street" that increase safety and a place for people to gather both formally and informally around the artistic and green elements that are part of the design. I understand that this building as it is now planned would need some variances, but variances are in our laws to take advantage of new opportunities and challenges in our changing city. This is a rare opportunity to use that variance power for the overall good of the neighborhood and our community at large.

While it is beyond the purview of the project developers, I hope that the City of Saint Paul will make a couple minor changes to alleviate the current traffic circus I see from my kitchen table looking north on St. Albans all day long. I strongly suggest that the City extend the one-way southbound traffic from Summit to Grand on St. Albans for one additional block from Grand to Lincoln *only*. Having no northbound traffic in my block of St. Albans would eliminate a lot of turnarounds on Grand and on St. Albans. It would substantially reduce a large amount of traffic turning left and right onto Grand from St. Albans, thus reducing the congestion on the corner of Grand and St. Albans that could cause periodic jams.

Thanks for your consideration of my position.

Sincerely,

Don Drake

**Black lives matter!**

Don Drake  
681 Lincoln Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Grand Ave**

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**Diane Ferreira** <dferreira3502@comcast.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 6:13 AM

Subject: **695 Grand Avenue** Development Proposal

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's/Emmetts/Saji Ya location as proposed.

I want to:

- **Strengthen and add to existing density and housing options at a compatible scale**
  - Add housing density to grow and revitalize Grand Avenue
- **Strengthen and add to economic diversity of housing options Summit Hill**
  - Support a mix of multifamily housing choices
- **Strengthen and add to economic vitality of Grand Ave, Summit Hill and Saint Paul**
  - Support small businesses

I oppose:

- **New construction that fails to transition to existing areas of the neighborhood**
  - Oversize structures that do not follow existing zoning codes undermine value of existing residences
- **New development that will alter the essential character of the neighborhood**
  - Bringing in a building design better suited for suburban areas detracts from the unique character of the neighborhood
- **Establishing a precedent that leads to further projects that degrades the area's charm**
  - Developments need to complement the eclectic nature of the area

The plans fail to protect the character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Please vote against the Dixie's/695 Project's requests to be given exceptions from existing zoning codes.

I want balanced development that respects the historic nature and character of the neighborhood.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone





ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

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## In Regards to the Zoning Vote

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**Jack Gross** <jackleighgross@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 11:27 AM

Hello,

I am a resident of the Summit Hill neighborhood. I am urging you to vote to reject the requested zoning variances for the Grand/Dixie development. Please protect the East Grand Avenue Overlay District and preserve our neighborhood's charm and history.

Thank you,  
Jack Gross



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Avenue**

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**Jeanne Kruchowski** <jwskski@hotmail.com>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 9:04 PM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Dear Sirs,

I am writing regarding the development proposed for 695 Grand Avenue and to urge the Summit Hill Association to reject the zoning variances and conditional use permits requested by the developers of that property. Grand Avenue enjoys a reputation as a distinctive commercial location in great part due its traditional 'small town' feeling, which results from the modest scale of the buildings lining the avenue, the variety of relatively small facades, and the human-sized footprints of the buildings. There are not many other locations in the Twin Cities that enjoy the same cachet.

An oversized development such as that proposed by the developers for the 695 Grand Avenue location would violate the historic scale, pattern, and aesthetic of the street.

Residents living near Grand Avenue will probably continue to patronize the businesses along there in any case, but if Grand Avenue ends up looking like every other commercial area in the Twin Cities, if the charm is destroyed, if Grand Avenue is no longer a unique destination, what would be the appeal for potential shoppers from outside the neighborhood? A shopping "experience" extends far beyond the financial transaction. You can purchase eyeglasses, ice cream, wine, books, toys, hardware, Christmas trees, wedding dresses, bicycles, etc. in many other commercial locations – Grand Avenue does not have a monopoly on any of that merchandise. What it currently can and does offer is a unique 'small town' environment in which to browse and make all those purchases. It would be shortsighted to destroy the ambiance of Grand Avenue by instituting rezoning, granting variances, or permitting deviation from the EGAOD to enable construction that is out of scale and keeping with the neighborhood and that would be to the benefit of the developers of the proposed oversized complex...but kill the goose that laid the golden egg. I would welcome new development along Grand Avenue, but it must be more sensitive development that takes its cues from and respects the architecture and scale that make Grand Avenue unique.

Grand Avenue urbanized originally with buildings on small parcels of land, which contributes greatly to its scale and charm. The developers of 695 Grand Avenue have repeatedly said that a smaller scale building "won't work", but the existing success and popularity of Grand Avenue clearly proves that assertion to be incorrect. It will, however, require a different type of thinking to design an appropriate, custom solution for the location, instead of what is now being proposed - a monolithic "earth tones and rectangles with balconies" building that one can find going up with minor decorative tweaks all over the country. Maintaining and enforcing the existing zoning and ordinances can help ensure Grand Avenue's long-term success for the entire neighborhood and for all the visitors who enjoy the avenue because it offers an experience they cannot find elsewhere.

Respectfully,

Jeanne Kruchowski  
722 Summit Avenue  
Homeowner



ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

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## Dixies proposal

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**Lori Kustritz** <lorikustritz@mac.com>  
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 7:09 PM

Please vote to reject the requested zoning variances.  
Please defend the E. Grand Ave. overly district.

Lori Kustritz  
821 Summit ave  
[Lorikustritz@mac.com](mailto:Lorikustritz@mac.com)



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Zoning variances

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**Jan Painter** <janpaint@hotmail.com>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 1:26 PM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

As a long time resident of Crocus Hill, 36 years, My husband and I are writing to urge you to reject the requested zoning variances which the developer of 695 Grand Ave has requested. I am not against development but what they have proposed will be the beginning of the destruction of the character of this neighborhood. Uptown in Minneapolis is no longer a destination for anything. It certainly lost all it's character very quickly. It has been argued that we need greater density to attract new business to those vacated by the droves the past few years but I would argue that the very developers who want to build this enormous building are the ones who have slowly bought up all the property on Grand and raised rents to the point that no business lacking deep pockets can afford it. The area surrounding Macalister College you can see have in fact survived due to rent control and local ownership. The condominiums on St Albans belonged to my husbands grandmother 65 years ago and I'm certain no one involved in this project really cares about the terrible changes to the quality of life the current owners will have to endure. This entire project smells of the cynicism and desire for making lots of \$\$\$\$ with no regard for the neighbors living around it. It could have been so much better had SOMEONE with a more creative approach taken it in hand. Probably this will pass and the condo dwellers will have to stare at a brick wall. We too with our lovely home 2 blocks away be dealing with the fallout. I had a conversation with our counsel person Rebecca Noecker last year and all she could come up with was the need for density. How simplistic. This is our neighborhood. I pay high taxes and work hard to maintain the character of my home and our neighborhood and we are frankly appalled at this proposal.

Jan Painter  
Dr Michael Somermeyer

Sent from my iPhone



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Grand Avenue Development Proposal

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**nancy ruppenthal** <nrruppenthal@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 7:13 PM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>

Members of the ZLU committee:

PLEASE do not minimize or discount negative sentiment about the proposed Reuter Walton building project at 695 Grand Avenue. A large contingency of our community feels exploited and outraged by this oversized, architecturally and culturally mismatched building proposal.

It must be obvious that the traffic environment that is intrinsic to the project will damage all businesses on Grand Avenue between Lexington Avenue and Dale (at least) by making parking more than challenging for residents and potential visitors and shoppers.

This particular building would detract from the unique character of the area, cause negative environmental impacts, and alienate current and potential residents and shoppers.

I can picture many favorable design plans for the 695 land that the community would likely support. I do not understand Mr. Kenefick's aspirations to leave a negative legacy after having been a positive contributor to our neighborhood for so many years.

PLEASE DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PROJECT!

Respectfully,  
Nancy Ruppenthal



ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

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## Dixies Grand Ave structure

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**Stephanie Scarrella** <sshomeloan@yahoo.com>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 9:54 AM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Hello,

Please vote to reject the zoning variances for 695 Grand Avenue on June 17th, 2021.

Please encourage a redesign and better scale of this structure that is compatible with local zoning.

Thank you.

Stephanie Scarrella  
672 Summit Avenue #1  
St Paul, Mn 55105

Sent from my iPad



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Proposal

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grtodd@comcast.net <grtodd@comcast.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 8:23 AM

ZLU,

The 695 Grand – Land Use Application Narrative, submitted by the developers, states that their building design “will be contemporary with nods to its historic context and surrounding neighborhood character.”

In reviewing the portfolios of Reuter-Walton and ESG Architecture & Design’s other projects (see attached), I found at least 5 other developments that are similar in scale and use the same architecture. Since the design is the same, how does the proposed design for 695 Grand show respect to the historic nature and character of the Summit Hill neighborhood? It seems to be simply replicating the design that is being used in multiple other locations. It is aimed more to transform the character of the neighborhood to look the same as many others rather than to complement the Summit/Grand “brand” which is why people come to this area to visit, shop, eat, walk and live.

I would strong advocate that SHA/ZLU vote against this project as proposed, especially in light of the fact that they are asking to throw out all current zoning codes to enable them to build this in our neighborhood.

Thank you.

GRT

Gary R. Todd

[682 Summit Avenue](#)

St. Paul, MN 55105

[grtodd@comcast.net](mailto:grtodd@comcast.net)

651-470-4720 – cell

“The best music forgets that it’s being sung.

It comes naturally.”

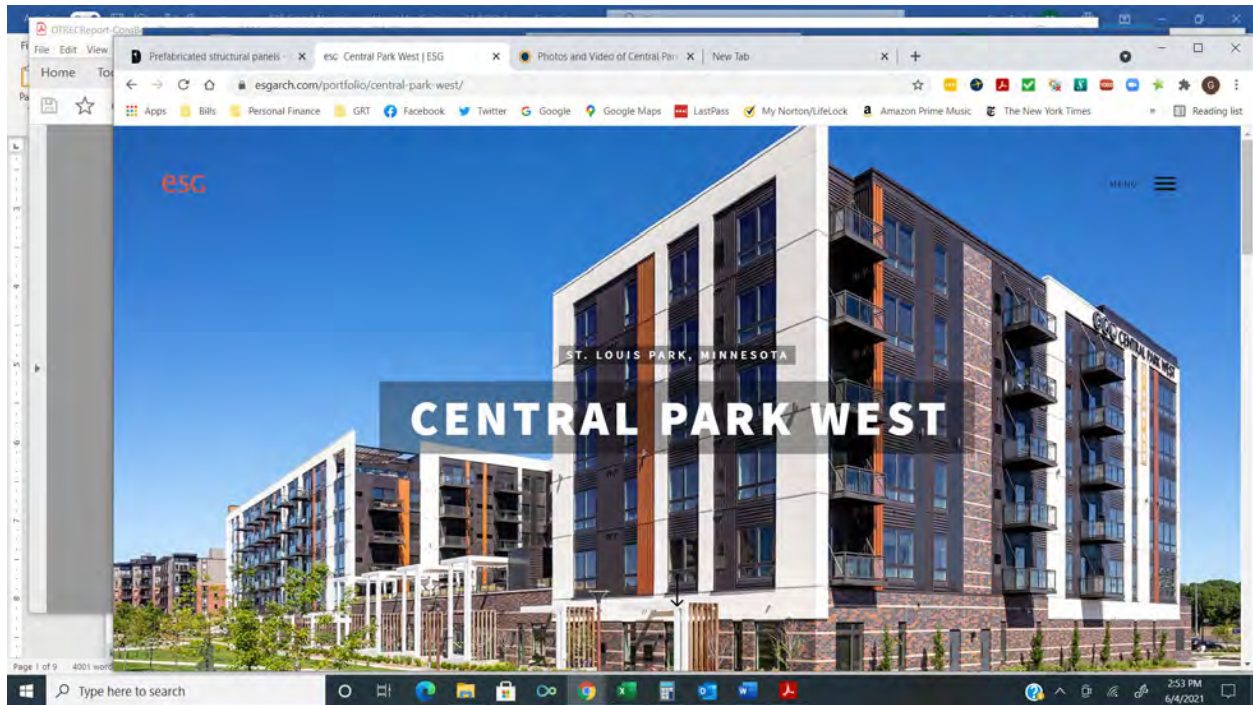
**Apeirogon** by Colum McCann



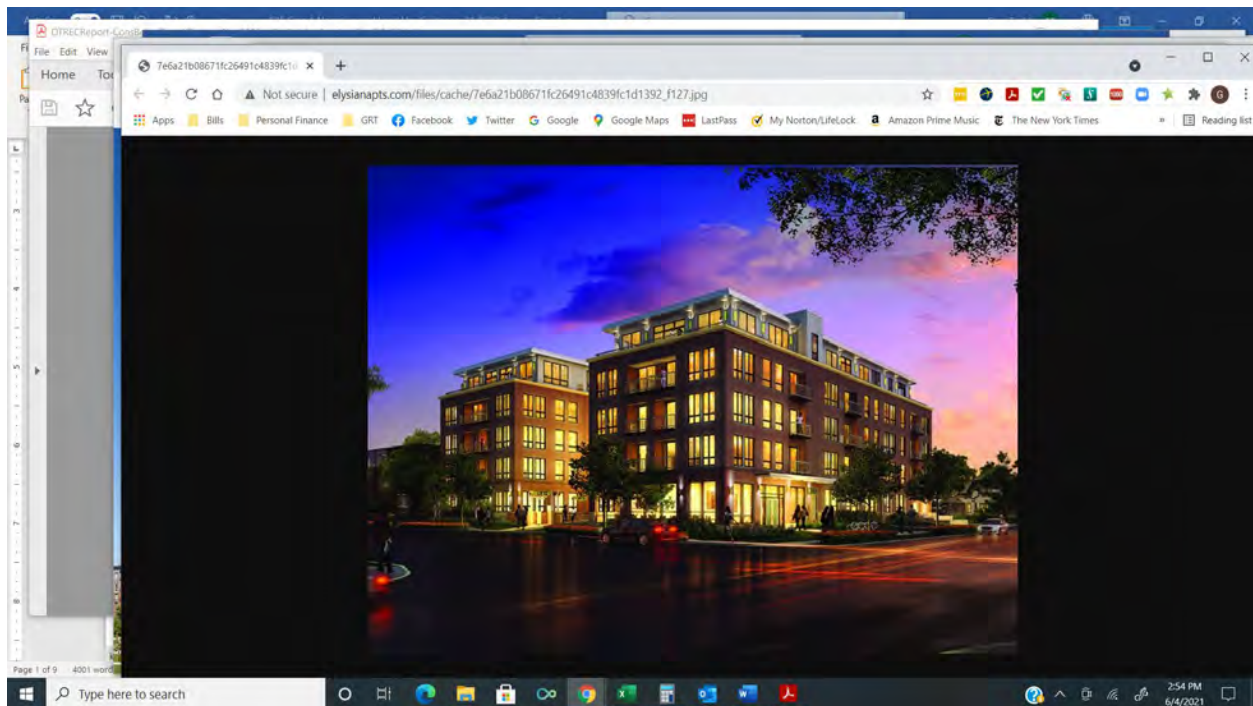


**Images from Reuter-Walton and ESG Architects portfolio.pdf**

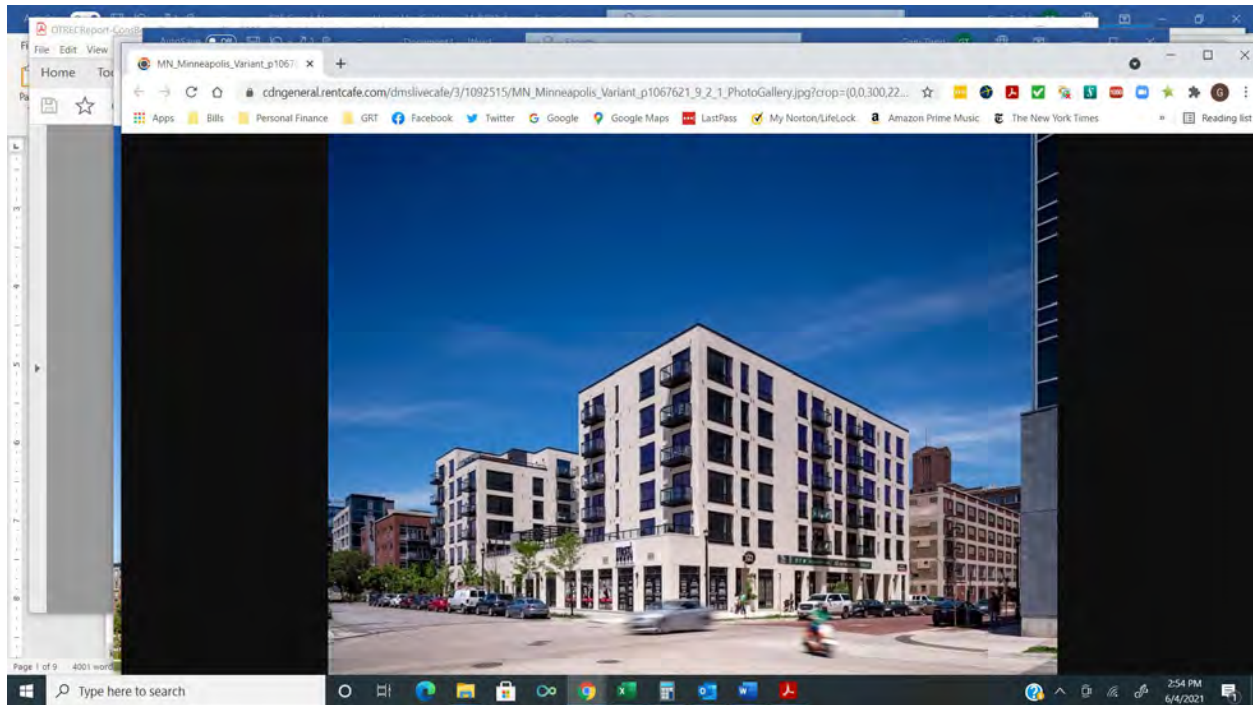
1113K



Central Park West – St. Louis Park



The Elysian Apartments – 4<sup>th</sup> Street Mpls

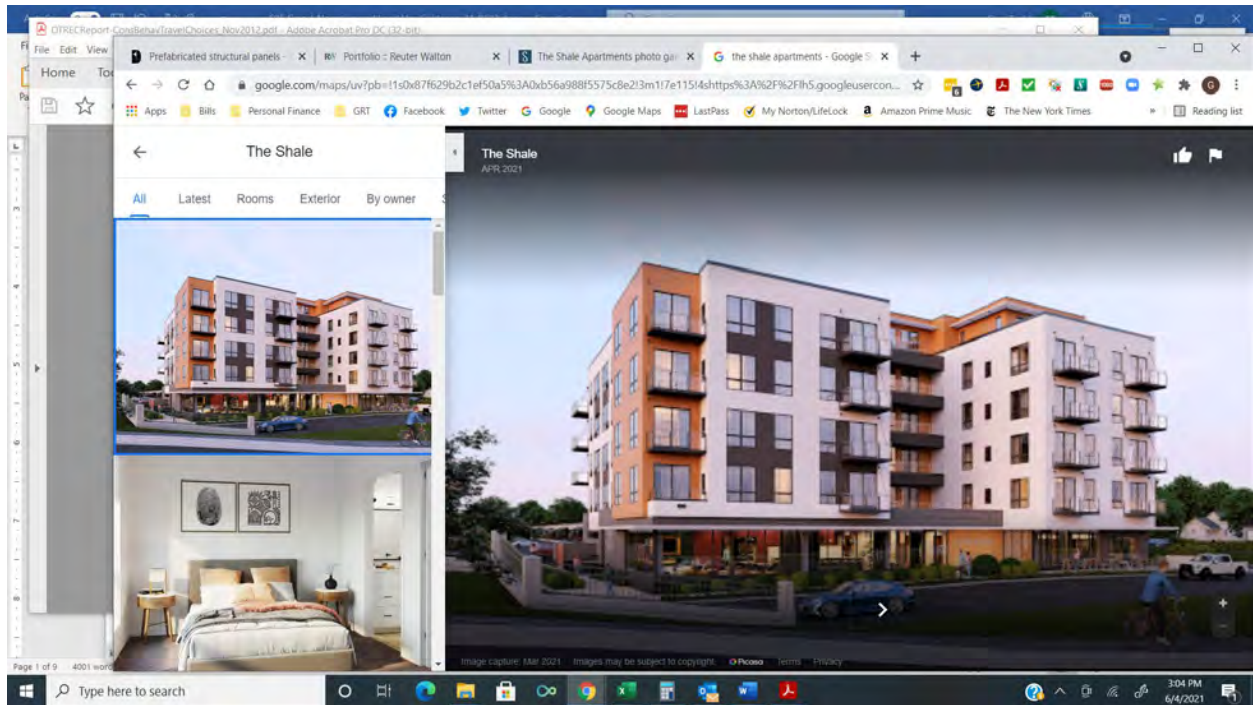


Variant Apartments – Warehouse District Mpls



Marquee in Loring Park





The Shale Apartments – Hiawatha Avenue – Mpls



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**Staehlin99** <steven.uusitalo@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 7, 2021 at 8:34 AM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Hello - this is Steven Usitalo, and I live at 30 St. Albans Street South (directly across the street, of course, from the proposed development).

I read the proposals by the developer (including the various architectural renderings). I have listened to both supporters of the project, and opponents.

I attended two Zoom meetings (one organized by the developers) about this project.

I am a strong supporter of the project as detailed in the last May rendering by the developer.

Over the past five years, I've seen more and more businesses disappear on Grand Avenue (by my count at least 25 in the area running from Dale to Kowalski's).

As for the view from my balcony (admittedly a self-serving reference), it's of an empty parking lot - most of the time.

Some of the objections to the project echo complaints from people who wish for a certain type of neighborhood (perhaps with less density, and with a certain type of neighbor) that is frankly out of touch with today's wonderfully more diverse reality.

I came to live in St. Paul because I wished to live in a semi-urban environment with stores, restaurants, cafes, and the like, lining the street.

I strongly support the building of the 695 Project.

Thank you!

Steven Usitalo



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Comments on 695 Grand

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**Maggie Wenger** <maggieswenger@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 9:38 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Cc: Aditya Bhargava &lt;adit@adit.io&gt;

Hello,

Thank you for providing information on the 695 Grand project and the opportunity to comment. I support the redevelopment of the site and believe the project sponsors have done their best to address neighborhood concerns while balancing multiple needs. I think having mixed-use, transit-oriented development is critical to maintaining a neighborhood that is sustainable, vibrant, and equitable. It also helps Summit Hill do our part in making sure St. Paul serves all its residents and sustainability and climate goals. My family and I have been renters in the neighborhood and now own a house. We were glad to stay in the neighborhood through multiple life stages and want those opportunities for others. We love being able to walk and ride our bikes and we think having more housing and businesses in denser patterns is good for the neighborhood. I understand that people value the East Grand overlay, but if it has cut off beneficial redevelopment then we need to be more flexible moving forward.

My only complaint about the project is that I don't think it should have a Grand Ave curb cut and vehicle entrance. Keeping the Grand sidewalk for pedestrians would improve the project.

Thank you again for involving the neighborhood in this discussion.

Maggie Wenger and Aditya Bhargava  
1137 Lincoln Ave



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Comments on 695 Grand

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**Maggie Wenger** <maggieswenger@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 9:38 PM

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Cc: Aditya Bhargava &lt;adit@adit.io&gt;

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My only complaint about the project is that I don't think it should have a Grand Ave curb cut and vehicle entrance. Keeping the Grand sidewalk for pedestrians would improve the project.

Thank you again for involving the neighborhood in this discussion.

Maggie Wenger and Aditya Bhargava  
1137 Lincoln Ave





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## comments on proposal for 695 grand Avenue

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**Marilyn Bach** <bachx001@umn.edu>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 6:31 PM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

attention ZLUSHA committee

attached are my comments for tonights meeting.

Marilyn L. Bach, PhD

[bachx001@umn.edu](mailto:bachx001@umn.edu)

h: 651-290-2604

c: 612-423-2154

**planning commission.docx**

22K

To: Simon Tagloff, ZLUSHA

I have taken particular note that the 695 Grand Avenue development team has taken the position that the 695 Grand Avenue proposed project” fits “into the existing neighborhood since there are two larger buildings in the vicinity. I assert that these comparisons are both invalid and disingenuous.

The extensive rezoning and variance requests of the 695 Grand Avenue development team simply flout the process of zoning and planning. Why are there planning and zoning guidelines if a developer can simply proceed as if they do not apply –and whatever the developer decides –will be best for any given neighborhood?

In order to build the 695 Grand Avenue project as designed, the 695-development team

1. Is requesting:  
Rezoning from B2 to T3
2. Spot zoning out of the east grand avenue overlay district
3. CUP to exceed the height limit of T3
4. Variances so they can exceed the allowed setback between Grand and the restaurant space.

Exacerbating the situation is the fact the most recent response that Reuter Walton submitted to queries by ZLU SHA calls for an even higher building than the previous proposal. The building has ‘grown taller’. The top of the roof was 56-8 and now it’s 59-10.

The other two larger buildings in the area give far more ‘breathing room’ to the neighborhood in which they reside. And a comparison to these existing buildings is false and misleading.

1. Oxford Hill Condominium Development, built in 2005.

Not only is the 695 proposed building nearly twice the size of the existing Offord Hill Condominiums proposed 695 project, Oxford Hill Condominium Development is:

I Generously separated from the alley by 56 feet.

II Physically separated by a physical fence

I Steps down to integrate better with neighborhood

iii Is built on the south side of street so shadows are cast onto street

## 2. Grand Place

Built in 1981, prior to East Grand Overlay District zoning

- i. Tallest building on Grand Avenue –65 feet tall
- ii. Set back from Grand Avenue by approx. 30 feet
- iii. Set back on the East and West by 12 feet, and set back 26 feet from the alley
- iv. Built on the north side of street so this building casts shadow onto a parking lot

In contrast, the 695 project, basically “fills the available space” ---and cannot be fairly compared to these two buildings —which give ‘breathing room’ to the neighborhoods in which they reside. 695 Grand would be set back from an alley that is already treacherously icy in winter by a mere 8 feet—without a physical barrier between the proposed building and the alley.

The proposed 695 Grand Avenue project gives no ‘breathing room’ to the neighborhood in which it will reside and is a drastic intrusion into the historic and densest node of Summit hill --- the North West corner of Grand Avenue, a narrow two-way street and Saint Albans street south, a one-way street.

I strongly urge ZLUSHA to reject the zoning and variances request of the 695-development team

Marilyn Bach  
9 Saint Albans Street South  
Saint Paul, MN 55105





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand**

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**Julie Benolken** <jbenolk@comcast.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 7:06 PM

Hello,

As a lifelong resident of Saint Paul, I am dismayed by the proposed plans for the former Dixie's site- the plans are way too tall for the site and will ruin the ambiance of the area- Grand Ave has been a destination area with unique architecture and locally owned businesses and while this has changed - this complex will ruin what's left of the charm of the area. I love the mixed use building idea, having lived for some years above some businesses but the mixed use buildings currently being built in the area are ugly cookie cutter buildings with no businesses on the street levels- so much for mixed use- this part of Grand has terrible parking issues and adding such a large building will make it nearly impossible to shop. My family and I often walk to the area but that is difficult in the winter . a quarter of the year- we currently are not disabled but for those who are this lack of parking makes shopping year round difficult-

Please "right size" this project- please maintain the ambiance of Grand Ave for this and for future generations- please don't make Grand Ave part of "The Lost Twin Cities"

Julie Benolken

Sent from my iPhone



ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

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## 695 Grand Project

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**Rebecca Clanton** <burkhart.rebecca@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 3:59 PM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

I'm really impressed with what I'm seeing and reading about the plans for the new development at 695.

It'll be nice to bring new business and residents to the area! I'm all about (historic) preservation, but that also means preserving the economy and keeping storefronts open!

Thanks,  
Rebecca Clanton  
876 Osceola Avenue

Sent from my iPhone



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Project

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**Alec M. Danielson** <ADanielson@barr.com>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 4:52 PM

To: "zlu@summithillassociation.org" &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

I am unable to make the public hearing tonight, but I want to express my strong support for the 695 Grand Project. I am frankly confused about the opposition from some for this project. If development is repeatedly thwarted, then Grand Avenue will continue the slow death that it has been on for the last decade. I know my neighbors share a similar sentiment. The negative voices are usually the loudest but there is a lot of support for this project.

Alec M. Danielson, PE, PG

Senior Environmental Engineer  
Minneapolis, MN office: 952.832.2837  
cell: 612.708.9883  
[adanielson@barr.com](mailto:adanielson@barr.com)  
[www.barr.com](http://www.barr.com)



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ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Development Project

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**Eichten** <eeichten@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 5:00 PM

SHA ZLU members,

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's 695 Grand site as proposed.

The project as designed now diminishes the character of Grand Avenue and the Summit Hill neighborhood. The housing density proposed is not at a scale that will fit in with the surrounding residences. Nor will it add to the economic diversity of housing options needed in the area. It will not contribute to the economic vitality of Grand as crowded streets and lack of parking will keep people away.

I would like to see a revised plan that honors the character of Summit Hill, one that adds to the historic charm of the neighborhood rather than detracts from it.

I support the existing zoning codes and ask that you vote against the Dixie's/695 Grand Avenue requests to receive zoning exemptions.

Thank you,  
Ellen Eichten  
1067 Linwood Avenue

Sent from my iPad



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Avenue Development Proposal

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**Jessica Highland** <jessica.a.highland@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 12:48 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org, info@summithillassociation.org

Hello,

I am opposed to the development of the Dixie's/Emmetts/Saji Ya location as proposed.

I want to:

- **Strengthen and add to existing density and housing options at a compatible scale**
  - Add housing density to grow and revitalize Grand Avenue
- **Strengthen and add to economic diversity of housing options Summit Hill**
  - Support a mix of multifamily housing choices
- **Strengthen and add to economic vitality of Grand Ave, Summit Hill and Saint Paul**
  - Support small businesses

I oppose:

- **New construction that fails to transition to existing areas of the neighborhood**
  - Oversize structures that do not follow existing zoning codes undermine value of existing residences
- **New development that will alter the essential character of the neighborhood**
  - Bringing in a building design better suited for suburban areas detracts from the unique character of the neighborhood
- **Establishing a precedent that leads to further projects that degrades the area's charm**
  - Developments need to complement the eclectic nature of the area

The plans fail to protect the character of the Summit Hill neighborhood.

Please vote against the Dixie's/695 Project's requests to be given exceptions from existing zoning codes.

I want balanced development that respects the historic nature and character of the neighborhood.

Thank you,

Jess Highland

[28 Saint Albans St N #4](#)

8 June 2021

Attn: Planning and Economic Development Zoning Committee

I have lived at the corner of Saint Albans and Grand for over 45 years. This is a great place to live and I want my street and East Grand to remain a great place to live for all who chose to live here, new and long-time residents as well as young and old residents.

For the record, I am all in favor of developing the 695 site. It needs it! But it needs to be done within the parameters of the East Grand Avenue Overlay (EGAOD). These zoning ordinances have served this neighborhood well for 15 years and still today are solid guiding principles for future development.

695 Grand is directly across Saint Albans Street from Fillmore and Walter Homeowners Association (FWHA), owner-occupied condos since 1976, at 30 and 42 South Saint Albans.

This block of Saint Albans, a very narrow street from Summit to Grand, has been a one-way since the early 1980s. All the residences on this block of Saint Albans are owner-occupied condos. Also, the block of Summit-Saint Albans-Grand-Dale is one of the densest populated blocks in all of Saint Paul. (<https://www.city-data.com/city/St.-Paul-Minnesota.html>)

I challenge the developers to show us an example of a building, preferably one of their buildings, in this metro area, as tall and as large, that is built so close to an adjacent, very narrow, residential street, plus a street with historic preservation landmarks. This block of Saint Albans is no ordinary side street.

**1. Concerns:** I have several concerns and questions about the proposed 695 development, but I will list only a few.

A. The size and the height (60') of the proposed building at 695 Grand is not compatible with the immediate neighborhood. It will be 50% higher than the two FWHA buildings across the street. FWHA's two buildings are each 40' tall.

B. Whereas the design calls for a visual set back from Grand on floors two to five in the center front of the building, there is no similar layering of the floors or set backs on Saint Albans to mitigate the fortress appearance of the east wall. Saint Albans deserves the same design considerations as Grand Avenue.

C. The architectural drawings, thus far revealed to the public, do not show any setback from the sidewalks for lawn or green space on the south (Grand) or east (Saint Albans) sides. As I understand, the proposed back of the building will have an 8' green space on the alley, which for most of the year will be in total shadow.

D. The new 695 Grand will not only be the largest edifice on the east end of Grand, it may well be the largest on all of Grand. It is certain to encourage more cookie-cutter, 5-over-1 developments to replace older tired buildings on Grand. Unfortunately 5-over-1 structures do not have the expected lifetime of the century-plus buildings prevalent in Summit Hill neighborhood.

**2. Parking and Traffic** The proposed building needs to adequately support the increase of resident density (80 units could potentially house upwards of 125-150 people) with adequate accompanying amenities such as parking.

A. Parking: currently in the plans there are

- no accommodation for 695 residents' guests,
- no planned accommodations for four restaurant/business employees
- insufficient onsite parking for patrons of the four businesses,
- no consideration for Saint Albans' current residential needs for on-street parking.

B. Parking for 695 residents is

- minimal and very high priced at projected \$175/month.
- the in-building route for residents to their underground parking stalls is very arduous.
- the overlapping in/out routes for patron parking and resident parking are confusing and a disaster in the making.

C. The use of narrow, one-way Saint Albans as the entrance/exit for residential underground parking (and exit for commercial patron parking), plus trash and recycling pick-up, will create huge traffic snarls on Saint Albans. How many trash pick-ups per week? Amount of time needed for these pick-ups. Traffic will be blocked/stopped during these pick-ups.

D. How many car accidents will occur when 695 residents take a mad-dash shortcut, going the wrong way (north) from Grand to get to their underground parking places? As it is now, there are several cars that daily disregard/disrespect the one-way signs.

E. Our car insurance rates, already some of the highest in the state, are sure to rise because we now we live on a street with increased fender-benders.

3. Reducing the width of the boulevard (from the street to the sidewalk)

- will not allow room for stately tall trees, which provide shade, charm, livability, and help filter the air.
- will mean that the snow banks will spill over onto the sidewalk.

4. How will the new 695 insure that its tenants have the same (or even some of the) charms for which Grand Avenue is so well known and which now attracts so many people to want to live on/near Grand Avenue? What do the developers "owe" to their tenants when they (tenants) sign a lease? Living on Grand is more than a space with four walls with a Grand Avenue address. The developers will sell the existing charm, livability reputation, proximity to shops, plus the neighborhood vibrancy to entice people to live at 695, but will it still be here?

5. What is such a massive 60' building going to do to the real estate value of adjacent condo properties? When we condo owners no longer have any sun or breezes reaching our porches? When our friends and family, who want to visit us, can no longer park anywhere near #30 and #42? I wonder what will happen to the charm, the desirability, the livability, and even the future salability of my condo. All these worries would not be issues with a three-story building at 695.

6. The new colossal 695 claims

- that it will put the "Grand" back into Grand Avenue by its massive height and size.
- that its massiveness is necessary to make it viable. The real legacy here is not to the Summit Hill neighborhood, but to the pocketbooks of the property owners and developers.
- that it is doing the greater Summit Hill neighborhood a favor. The thinking seems to be that a few neighbors will have to suffer (unfortunately, but....), but this is all in the good name of legacy and progress. I fail to see the democracy (or civic neighborliness) of this thinking.

If the proposed building cannot make money and also fit within the EGAOD guidelines, then it is not the right project for this area.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marit Lee Kucera, 30 South Saint Albans



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand/Dixies proposal

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**Keith Lindgren** <klindgren82@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 1:40 AM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org, info@summithillassociation.org, luiserangelmorales@gmail.com, simon.taghioff@gmail.com, luis.pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us, sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us, rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us

All,

My name is Keith Lindgren, I am a new resident of Summit Hill. My wife and I moved here from downtown Minneapolis in March of this year. We love it here, and have found it to be varied and vibrant, from block to block as we enjoy finally being able to visit shops and restaurants after being vaccinated.

Please forgive me for writing this as a group email. As I am new to the neighborhood, I simply collected all the emails that I understood to be involved in the decision making around the planning and possible re-zoning of the Grand/Saint Albans corner. So this feels a bit impersonal, but I would love to chat with any/all of you on this topic, and about my new neighborhood in general.

While I am new to this neighborhood, I know all of the things about this neighborhood that guided us to move here, and it's safe to say the Reuter Walton proposal is the polar opposite of any of those things. I'm not naive, I understand that development is necessary, and I do expect to see change on that plot sooner rather than later. **But the proposed building design is antithetical to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.** This proposal would be unsuitable even if it were at an acceptable height, due to the clear contrast in style.

Reuter Walton's cynical 'take it or leave it' approach to this development as 'only possible if it is 5 stories' flies in the face of all the successful multi-use designs we see in other locations on Grand (and other nearby streets, for that matter). It frankly borders on gaslighting, and I don't understand why anyone would be willing to work with these people when they refuse to approach this development in good faith.

If anything, this proposal is a blindingly obvious example of exactly why zoning codes exist in the first place; to ensure the neighborhood doesn't get steamrolled by greedy developers. I strongly disagree with the premise that 'The final plans are the result of months of community engagement.' This proposal came in completely devoid of community engagement, and was cosmetically adjusted without addressing any of the most important concerns of the residents of Summit Hill.

I'm not sure if I'll be able to join the Tuesday evening meeting on this topic, so I wanted to make sure I communicated this before that conversation. Please do reach out if you have any questions for me, I would love to chat more on this topic.

Best regards,  
Keith Lindgren



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**Patricia Merwin** <pmkrezowski@icloud.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 2:26 PM

Good afternoon,

I am a resident in the 700s block of Goodrich Avenue and I am strongly in favor of the 695 Grand Avenue Development project.

In order to keep our community vital, forward looking and competitive in the new economic world following Covid, development and change must happen to keep our businesses vibrant and appealing. Doing nothing is a recipe for neighborhood decline, I prefer change and progress which is good for all of us.

Thank you,

Patty Merwin  
785 Goodrich Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN. 55105



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Proposed 695 Grand Project

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**John Norton** <gunflintnorton@usfamily.net>

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 12:34 PM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Please accept the attached comments regarding the proposed project at 695 Grand Ave.

Regards,

John and Ann Norton  
12 Crocus Hill  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

**695 Grand.docx**

25K



## 695 Grand Ave Development Proposal

**Summary:** The proposed development at 695 Grand Avenue should be required to comply with existing zoning. The requested re-zoning and variances should not be granted for the following reasons:

- Non-Conformance with City of St Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan
  - The proposal violates the Core Values of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - The proposal violates multiple Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Precedent for future development
  - The proposal would effectively re-zone the entire east end of Grand Avenue, not just this property.
- Impact on Historic Districts
  - The proposal would negatively impact the Saint Paul Historic Hill District, the State of Minnesota Historic Hill District, and the National Register of Historic Places Historic Hill District.

## Non-Conformance with 2040 Comprehensive Plan

- Core Values
  - **“Building on our assets.** We are a city that recognizes and builds on the unique human, physical and cultural assets of our diverse residents and neighborhoods.”
    - The proposed development would detract from the cultural assets of the neighborhood by dominating and, literally overshadowing, properties within three historic districts.
  - **“Growth and prosperity through density.** We are a city that supports well-designed development that responds to its neighborhood context, fosters diversity and prosperity, and brings economic opportunity to all residents.”
    - The proposed development is not a “well-designed development that responds to its neighborhood context.”
    - The proposed development is excessively large, out of context, and would overwhelm the surrounding neighborhood.
- Focus: Economic Development
  - “Integrating St Paul’s historic resources into neighborhood-based economic development strategies.”
    - The proposed development does not integrate with St Paul’s historic resources. It would, instead, degrade them.
- Focus: Urban Design
  - Encourage high-quality urban design for residential development that is compatible with the pattern and scale of the neighborhood, but allow for innovation and consideration of market needs.
    - The proposed development is not compatible with the pattern and scale of the neighborhood.
- Land Use
  - The proposed development is in an area designated for Mixed Use. It borders across the alley to the north with an area designated as an Urban Neighborhood.
  - Policy LU-6. Foster equitable and sustainable economic growth by integrating Saint Paul’s historic resources into neighborhood-based economic development strategies.
    - The proposed development does not integrate with St Paul’s historic resources. It would, instead, degrade them.
  - Policy LU-17. Promote access to sunlight for solar energy systems while accounting for the development rights of adjacent properties (Map LU-6).
    - The proposed development would significantly impair access to sunlight for solar energy systems for neighboring properties.
  - Mixed Use
    - Policy LU-29. Ensure that building massing, height, scale and design transition to those permitted in adjoining districts.
      - The design of the proposed development does not transition to those permitted in the adjoining Urban Neighborhood to the north, and instead would stand in stark contrast with them.
  - Neighborhood Nodes
    - A neighborhood node has been designated at the corner of Grand Avenue and Victoria Street, three blocks to the west of the proposed development.

- Policy LU-30. Focus growth at Neighborhood Nodes using the following principles: 1. Increase density toward the center of the node and transition in scale to surrounding land uses.
      - The proposed development is not toward the center of the node, and does not transition in scale to surrounding land uses.
  - Housing
    - Goal 6: Improved access to affordable housing.
      - The development proposal does not disclose proposed rental rates, however, is does say they will be “market rate”. However, similar units in the Oxbo Apartments development on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street rent starts at \$1155/month for a studio apartment and \$2245/month for a 2 bedroom. Similar units in the Harper Apartments development at the corner of Snelling and Selby Avenues rent for \$1260/month for a studio apartment and \$2275/month for a 2 bedroom. It seems highly unlikely the units in the proposed development will improve the affordability of housing in Saint Paul.
    - Benefits of Missing Middle Housing
      - The “missing middle” is a segment of the housing market that contains small-scale multifamily or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family neighborhoods. It is a land use, economic development and urban design strategy that allows cities to support walkable, transit-supportive neighborhoods without significantly increasing densities in predominantly single-family neighborhoods. Missing Middle housing provides more housing choice and therefore allows the city to better adapt to housing trends and market cycles. It is more sensitive to neighborhood context, allowing for gradual transition from Urban Neighborhoods to Mixed-Use areas and/ or Neighborhood Nodes. Missing Middle housing types include accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, courtyard apartments, bungalow courts, mansion-style multi-family and multiplexes. Excellent examples of these housing types can be found throughout Saint Paul.
      - The proposed development does not follow and is incompatible with these recommendations. To the extent that the proposed development occupies a site that could otherwise be used for Missing Middle housing, it would work in opposition to this goal.

## Zoning Issues

- Rezoning
  - According to Saint Paul’s website, some of the issues that are evaluated by the city with respect to rezoning proposals include:
    - Compatibility with land use and zoning of property within the general area.
    - Suitability of the property for the uses permitted under the existing zoning classification.
    - The trend of development in the area of the property in question.
    - Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and the plans for the area that have been adopted by the City Council.
  - Comments:

- The proposed development is not compatible with the surrounding land use and zoning.
  - The property is suitable for the uses permitted under the existing zoning classification. No change is needed for it to be used.
  - A new restaurant has been constructed and opened across the street from the proposed project, complying with the existing zoning.
  - The proposed changes are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the plans for the area that have been adopted by the City Council.
- Variances
  - According to Sec. 61.601 of the Saint Paul Zoning Code, the Board of Zoning Appeals must make the following six findings before they can grant a variance:
    1. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.
    2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
    3. The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision, that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.
    4. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
    5. The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.
    6. The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.
  - Comments: Four of the six findings do not apply to the proposed project: (2), (3), (4), and (6). As such, the requested variances must be denied. To grant them would violate the Saint Paul city code.
- Precedent for Future Development
  - This project is not the only one of its type to be proposed for the east end of Grand Avenue. Lunds/Byerlys has proposed a similar project at 791 Grand Avenue. That project would require similar zoning changes and variances. If the requested changes are granted for this project, even though it does not meet the requirements for the rezoning or variances, it will be impossible to legally deny similar changes for the Lunds/Byerlys project, or any similar project that might be proposed in the future. In effect, by granting the requested changes when the requirements are not met, the City of Saint Paul will be changing the zoning for the entire east end of Grand Avenue to that requested for this project.

#### Impact on Historic Districts

- Adjacent City of Saint Paul, Historic Hill District
- Within State of Minnesota, Historic Hill District
- Adjacent National Register of Historic Places, Historic Hill District
  - “Area 7: Grand Avenue; a one-block commercial/apartment area on Grand Avenue between St. Albans and Dale Streets.” “This area comprises the remainder of the turn

of the century commercial/services strip which served the Summit-Crocus-Grand Hill area. This area formerly extended several blocks to the west, however, the segment of Grand Avenue between Dale and Saint Albans Streets is the only portion to retain a significant degree of its pre-World War I integrity. In addition to several brick-faced one and two storey commercial structures, there are eleven four and five storey apartment structures within this one-block area. Only one of the structures (commercial) intrudes upon the overall architectural integrity; it now functions as a multi-functional auto-repair and shops building. To the east, Grand Avenue slopes to its intersection with Grand Hill and Oakland Avenue; to the north and south are found pre-dominantly single-family and duplex-type buildings; to the west the historic character deteriorates abruptly into a strip of autosales lots and fast-food establishments.” – Historic Hill District, National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form, August 13, 1976.

- Comment: To date, there has been no discussion regarding the potential impacts on these three historic districts. The potential impacts could include physical damage from construction equipment or vibrations, and visual damage to the resource due to the type of new construction. At a minimum, an Environmental Assessment needs to be performed to identify the potential impacts.

## St Albans Grotto Grand Summit Block Club

To: Ari Parritz, representative for ESG, Reuter Walton  
Cc/: Summit Hill Association, Rebecca Noecker, Planning Commission  
VIA EMAIL

RE: Dixies/ 695 Grand Proposal

June 8, 2021

We are writing to express our objection to the Dixies/695 application and the complete disregard shown by the development team for feedback from the neighborhood. We, and many others, have repeatedly expressed concern regarding the scale of the project, and the developers have returned with an **even taller building**. They **increased the ceiling heights on the main floor and for the penthouse**, so now the building height is 59'-10" instead of 56'-8" to the top of the fifth floor roof. The first floor does not adjust for the hill, so the height at the corner of Grand and St Albans the building will be 3'-6" higher, rising 64'-4" from the sidewalk, and **more than double the height limit** of the current B2 zoning. This creates 64 high x 120 wide vertical wall just 3 feet from the sidewalk on a narrow residential side street. We would welcome a mixed use development that would enhance Grand Avenue and Summit Hill, but this **proposal will severely alter the essential character, damage livability and vitality, harm property values, and negatively impact the locally designated historic district (located across the alley)**. Moreover, there are no practical difficulties preventing compliance with the zoning code. There are no unique circumstances or hardships caused by this large, evenly sloped parcel. This proposal is clearly and grossly **out of scale for the size of the lot and its location**. The developer could build a mixed use project by right without rezoning. Profits alone drive the application.

### We want "Missing Middle"

We are not against multifamily – we *are* multifamily housing. We are not against density – we *live in* density. The dominant housing type of our block is "Missing Middle." We are a group of neighbors who have met and had many discussions about this proposal. We represent our "Block Club" –households with frontage on the one-way stretch of St Albans (both sides) as well as on the "shared alley" block bounded by Grotto-St Albans-Summit-Grand. It's a "one and a half block" sized block club. Our block club has had input from homeowner, renter, multi-generational, and co-housing households. Our block club includes varied household types: traditional 2-story and 3-story multifamily flats, a modern 4-unit multifamily with an elevator, converted Victorian multifamily, modern townhouse and historic rowhouse, carriage house

(with windows right on the alley), single family, duplex.

Other than minor concessions related to traffic on the alley, the developer has dismissed, and even amplified, areas of concern. Expressed concerns and criticism of this proposal have centered on four areas: building bulk and form, negative impacts on the neighborhood, lack of compliance with existing zoning rules and regulations, and market concerns. **We oppose a large project of luxury rental that will create development pressure and lead to the loss of Summit Hill's Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH).**

Among those, the underlying, most repeated concern has been and continues to be the building size and form. And, it bears emphasizing that **the too-large scale** (extra tall height combined with near complete lot coverage) **creates or contributes to all the other problems.**

If there can be one overarching recommendation it is this: **the project should be scaled to match the neighborhood**, within the zoning requirements including the East Grand Avenue Overlay district requirements—which is the best and only tool we have to keep *Missing Middle* scale and density and affordability. The existing zoning rules support the essential character of our neighborhood

**We ask SHA and Commissioners to vote to deny the extreme level of zoning gymnastics to get around all the rules, and oppose "spot zoning" to "rezone out" of the EGAO.**

### Biggest shared concern: "Super Size" Scale of Project

#### BUILDING BULK AND SITE PLANNING

- too tall/ too big / out of scale
- too dense
- too close to alley
- height in wrong places / maximum shadows
- anti-social / double loaded corridor / fishbowl

#### NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON NEIGHBORHOOD

- traffic, parking and safety; no site lines for parking exits
- loss of neighborhood character/ historic value / property values
- construction impacts, physical damage to neighboring structures

#### EXISTING LAWS / ZONING CODE

- Support design that would conform to zoning (no variances, including all T2 design standards & footnotes)
- Support keeping B2 or T2 as appropriate rezoning; Oppose T3
- Support East Grand Ave Overlay height limits & design standards; Oppose CUP; oppose variances; oppose spot zoning

#### MARKET CONCERNS

- Too high rents / Unaffordable housing / too much "luxury" / displacement of NOAH / Condo vs rental/ Short Term Rental/ high vacancy rate of luxury rental /

Thank you for time and consideration,

**SAGGS Block Club**

I am writing to express my thoughts around the redevelopment of 695 Grand Ave.

First off, change is always difficult and it is impossible to please 100% of the people that may be impacted by the change. But you are asked to look at what will be best for the entire area of Summit Hill.

The most direct neighbors will be most impacted by the physical change of a new, larger building on the current parking lot. This building will mostly change their view out the windows.

There has been much worry over the shading the new building will cause. I think it is very important to understand, shading does not mean darkness. I would argue, those buildings are already highly shaded by the current boulevard trees and if they lost those, they would mourn them and seek to replace them as quickly as possible.

Another concern has been the height of the building. The building directly on the intersection of St. Albans and Grand Ave., is two stories taller than those across Grand Ave. As one drives down Grand Ave., it would be a very rare person that would think that condo building towers over the buildings on the other side of the street. There are many examples of buildings of varying heights co existing very well all throughout the Summit Hill area, Grand Ave and Dale, Selby and Western, Selby and Dale. Drive through any of these intersections to see how buildings with varying heights, look. I don't see that this concern has real merit. Five stories can easily belong with one, two and three story neighbors. Variation of building heights adds dimension and character to an area.

I understand this project does not perfectly fit the district overlay plan. But I think serious consideration should be given to whether or not the overlay district plan is helping or hurting our neighborhood. From what I have read, the district overlay plan is about fifteen years old and it replaced a plan that was about fifteen years old. Times change, needs change. I would argue, if the overlay plan was being successful we would not be having this discussion, Grand Ave would still be thriving. But it is not.

It doesn't take too much to look back to the 1960's when property values were dropping. Homes were run down and many abandoned. What brought it back? People being willing to take a chance and invest in the neighborhood. Please look at what investments have been made along Grand Ave over the past 15 years. Has there been adequate investment to sustain, grow and keep Summit Hill thriving? Are the needs of the neighborhood being met?

An undeniable fact is, without new investment on Grand Ave, our beautiful neighborhood will continue its decline. Without new investment, property values will plummet. Progress is necessary and this project will benefit our neighborhood as a whole for years and years to come. We will ALL lose if that is allowed to happen. I ask you to please approve this project at 695 Grand Ave.

Respectfully,  
Beth Sternitzky, 977 Goodrich Ave.





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Comments on 695 Grand Avenue project

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**rwt gmail** <thron.rw@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 2:51 PM

Thank you for offering the opportunity to submit comments regarding the development project at 695 Grand Avenue.

I wish to offer my full support for the proposed development.

The owners of the property at 695 Grand Ave. have been long time business owners who have provided an exceptional dining experience on the Avenue. These are local people, who have lived and worked in the neighborhood for decades.

My wife and I previously resided on Goodrich Ave., just a few block from 695 Grand, and were frequent customers. We now live on Grand Ave., and still appreciate the excellent cuisine and service provided by the owners.

Grand Avenue disparately needs new and expanded development; we should be giving the green light to those owners/developers that have vested so much of their lives in this neighborhood. We need an expanded tax base; as it's getting very expensive to live in St. Paul.

The proposed development is first class - in all respects. The owners will offer a first class building that will compliment the neighborhood nicely. The height of the building is not out of line with other development in the area. The developers have listened to concerns and made adjustments. We should not be overly concerned about traffic - after all, we should be promoting public transit.

My wife and I have lived in this neighborhood for over 50 years, and have come to very much appreciate the owners of 696 Grand and what they offer. We should give deference to local developers over out of state big box developers or to others that would not provide the quality that we'd get from the owners of 695 Grand.

if this project is not approved, I'm convinced that the owners will move their business to a welcoming suburb; and we may go as well.

Thanks again for listening to my support for this project.

Regards,  
Ray T.

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Raymond W. Thron  
Grand Avenue resident  
[thron.rw@gmail.com](mailto:thron.rw@gmail.com)  
651-307-2280



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## A Response to the Developer and Investor's Application Narrative

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grtodd@comcast.net <grtodd@comcast.net>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Tue, Jun 8, 2021 at 6:27 PM

ZLU,

Attached is my response to the narrative submitted by the developers and investors with the rezoning, CUP and variance application.

Thank you.

GRT

Gary R. Todd

[682 Summit Avenue](#)

St. Paul, MN 55105

[grtodd@comcast.net](mailto:grtodd@comcast.net)

651-470-4720 – cell

“The best music forgets that it’s being sung.

It comes naturally.”

**Apeirogon** by Colum McCann



**Response to Application Narrative.pdf**

139K

## **A Better Way Response to the Developer and Investor's Application Narrative**

All the claimed benefits in the Developer and Investor's Application Narrative would equally be provided by a smaller structure, with transitions to the lower density surrounding areas, with less negative impact on the existing neighborhood. The narrative to justify the rezoning, the CUP and the variance requests centers on three main areas: Claimed Benefits, Compliance with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for St. Paul and Invalid Allegations and Comparisons.

### Claimed Benefits

None of the narrative accompanying this proposal mandates a five-story structure that utilizes 84% of the property with a design that does not integrate with the current nature of the neighborhood. The claimed benefits are:

- Add residential density
- Create a more inviting streetscape (activate)
- Support existing and new commercial uses on Grand Avenue
- Support mixed-use development

A smaller structure, with transitions to the lower density surrounding areas, would provide the same benefits with less negative impact on the existing neighborhood. The difference would be the amount of profit cleared by the owner. Bigger is not necessarily better.

### Compliance with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for St. Paul

All the references to Goals and Policies in of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for St. Paul in the narrative can be equally fulfilled with a smaller structure, with transitions to the lower density surrounding areas, with less negative impact on the existing neighborhood. There are three policy references that need to be challenged.

**Policy LU-1.** Encourage transit-supportive density and direct the majority of growth to areas with the highest existing or planned transit capacity.

- This policy clearly states that the "majority of growth" should be directed to area of "the highest existing or planned transit capacity." Grand Avenue is a two-lane city road with one bus line in contrast with other high transit capacity corridors that are four lanes wide and are county roads. Grand Avenues transit capacity does not rank among the highest existing nor are there plans to make it one of the highest.
- Why is this proposed density higher than projects on University Avenue which is a four-lane road with buses and rail transit options?
- Will the planners "direct" appropriate growth to Grand Avenue?

**Policy LU-29.** Ensure that building massing, height, scale and design transition to those permitted in adjoining districts.

- The proposed project's mass, height, scale and design **DO NOT TRANSITION** to the adjoining RT2 and RM2 zones.
- The narrative claims that "appropriate transitions" will be provided. Who is making the decision on the appropriateness? Are we going to allow the developers and investors whose primary goal is profitability decide what is appropriate for our neighborhood?

- Repeated feedback from the neighborhood objecting to the massiveness and height of this proposal cannot be written off by simply declaring that they are designing “appropriate transitions.” The appropriateness measures used by developers and investors are only driven by profit margins and do not protect the character of the neighborhood.

**Policy H-47.** Encourage high-quality urban design for residential development that is sensitive to context, but also allows for innovation and consideration of market needs.

- This proposal, using a generic design that the developers have used repeatedly all across the metro, **is not sensitive** to the context of the Summit/Grand neighborhood.
- The narrative claims that the building design will be “contemporary with nods to its historic context and surrounding neighborhood character.” How can this reused design be sensitive to context in all these various settings? This design will degrade our community charm.

## Invalid Allegations and Comparisons

The narrative implies that there has not been any new development within EGOD since it was enacted. Below is a list of recent developments along EGOD, which invalidates their allegation.

- New construction and reinvestment in EGOD
  - Union on Grand condominiums – new construction – 2018-2019
  - Two community businesses (Zoned BC) between Dunlap and Lexington – reinvestment
  - Red Balloon has been improved and expanded
  - Iron Ranger has expanded – 2020
  - Coconut Thai – new construction – 2020-2021
  - Planned Avivage Massage expansion – 2021

The one comparison that the narrative uses to justify their request to build a 60 foot, five-story building is the Grand Place condominium building at 745 Grand Avenue. Below is a table making comparisons between the two structures. Grand Place was built prior to EGOD yet even so chose greater setbacks from adjacent properties than what is being proposed for 695 Grand. This is an invalid comparison.

	Grand Place	695 Proposal
Built prior to EGOD	Yes	No
Height	65 feet	60 feet
Alley Setback	26 feet	8 feet
Grand Ave Setback	30 feet	
Bldg to West Setback	12 feet	6 feet
Street to East Setback	12 feet	3 feet
Shadow Cast	Surface Parking Lot	Residential neighbors
Lot coverage		84%

This rezoning request amounts to “spot zoning” of the type forbidden by federal regulation(s) deferred to in the applicable Minnesota Statute. It is not being undertaken as part of comprehensive zoning and would be done primarily to allow this developer to build a five-story building in this location. This amounts to an unjustified exception to the existing zoning codes with the primary benefit to the property owner and investors and it differs significantly from the zoning of other property in the immediate area.



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**Ellen Brown** <ellen@thebrownpartners.com>

Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 8:25 AM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org, "info@summithillassociation.org" &lt;info@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Cc: Rebecca Noecker &lt;rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us&gt;, Ari Parritz &lt;aparritz@reuterwalton.com&gt;

I am extremely disappointed in the opposition to this project that is being so vehemently expressed in the Zoning committee meetings. I have to believe that most of those opposed are St Albans neighbors or very nearby.

It is very troubling that there is no transparency about the addresses of the commenters, both pro and con. I hope the board will take this into consideration when evaluating the project.

As a strong proponent, I have said many times that I'm sure I wouldn't be as enthusiastic if I lived on St Albans. But the benefits to the Summit Hill neighborhood and to St Paul must take precedence over the personal impacts on a small cohort.

Those benefits, in a nutshell: bringing new residents to keep Grand Avenue commercial successful; viable options for Summit Hill empty nesters to downsize without abandoning the neighborhood, and thus freeing up large homes for new families; and providing a much needed property tax boost to the City.

The building design is well-suited to its proposed location: brick facade, architectural details and a major setback in the middle of the Grand Ave side in keeping with the historic mixed-use area; entry/exits for cars carefully planned; truck loading zone conflicts addressed; active retail space fronting Grand. Plus, a local owner who really cares about the neighborhood. Sure, 4 floors might be better in some ways but it won't work financially and that must be accepted rather than wishfully imagined.

I hope the SHA Board will recommend the 695 Grand proposal to the City for approval.

Sincerely,  
Ellen (and Peter) Brown  
874 Fairmount Avenue  
Saint Paul MN 55105  
651-226-3692



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand/Dixie's**

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**Christopher Clysdale** <ceclysdale@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 1:47 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident homeowner on the 700 block of Summit Ave. I'm contacting you to provide my support and encourage you to do so, as well, for the proposed development located at 695 Grand Ave. The development location is located one block south from my home and I believe this development with the higher density will be a great benefit for the local businesses and hopefully be the catalyst for additional investment in the East Grand Ave. Overlay District. Please don't be influenced by a small group of vocal neighbors in opposition of this redevelopment. Change is a good thing and should be embraced.

Best Regards,  
Christopher Clysdale  
721 Summit Ave.



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Dixies/Emmetts/Saji employee perspective: Say No

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**AJ Jones** <jonesaj090@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 9, 2021 at 12:41 PM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

My friend asked me to send this email, on account that they don't want to be identified. It could lead to retaliation and a bad employment recommendation. So they asked me to send this from my email because I can't get a bad work recommendation since I never worked there.

From my friend:

The perspective of employees on Grand is not being voiced. Let me tell you about working on Grand Avenue. I used to work at one of the three restaurants at 695 Grand, not saying which one. Before COVID it was a good place to work. I liked my coworkers. I liked working on Grand. Easy to get to, safe area, and mostly nice customers who left good tips that got shared. During COVID, the regular employees were pretty much all laid off even though the owners probably got big loans from PPE funds. They kept a few people on, but not very many.

I think the development is a cash grab that will hurt the employees. I saw a picture of it and it looks like something in Woodbury on the side of big 8 lane road. And how come they never show the whole thing? Too big to fit on the computer screen? People come to Grand because it's quaint, that is not quaint.

It's also going to make it harder to work here or for people to come to the restaurant. Where is everyone going to park? Right now there's employee parking and customer parking. Most of the customers come in their cars. I can tell you that I had customers tell me they were going to go to Braza but there was nowhere to park so they came to us instead. Employees drive, too. I drove to work for safety and time. I don't work 9-5. Employee parking is really nice, especially walking out late with cash tips. The employee spots were often full, more so in winter. I got a ticket once for a snow emergency. That was half my paycheck. I learned my lesson, but how will that even work after this giant building is built with no employee parking, less customer parking, and not even one parking spot per luxury apartment? Does this new development plan have employee parking? Nope. Will it make it harder for people like me to get to their job? Yup. Will it make it harder for customers to park to get to Grand businesses? Yup. The other businesses on Grand, the hair stylists and drycleaners and spice store and so forth, what about them? What about their customers? Those customers use street parking. Eighty new apartments with not much parking for the new apartments, well, those hundred or so people aren't going to make up for the thousands of people who come by car now. They aren't eating dinner at the downstairs restaurants every night or getting their hair cut or their clothes sewed or picking up new spices every day.

Then there's the construction. When the restaurants close for a year or two, no one is getting a benefit. No one wants a replacement job with the owners buddies out on Lake Minnetonka. It's too far away. We all stay around St Paul, West St Paul, Maplewood. And who's going to come back after they find something else? If the restaurants even come back. Does this new development of fancy apartments consider the employees at all? Nope.

I got myself a new job and I'm doing ok again, but it was a bad year. I just wanted you all to know that employees won't benefit from this. I still visit Grand Ave and I hope that you will not allow this project. I don't wish bad on the owners and especially not the managers, but I just don't understand why they would want to make this building that doesn't fit in, and hurt all their employees. So please vote no. They can do better.

Signed, Nameless





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand project

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**Pj Bensen** <pjbensen@gmail.com>  
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 5:48 PM

ZLU Committee-

I am writing to oppose the current proposal for development of the 695 Grand Ave site.

I wholeheartedly support development in the neighborhood, but believe this particular proposal is excessive. This proposal sets a dangerous precedent that will over time, erode the unique character of the Grand Avenue business and residential community. The design is too generic, too large, and it offers only minuscule transition(if that's what the corner cut at the alley is considered) to the existing neighborhood structures.

I love the existing restaurants and the potential for other businesses and increased density in line with the 2040 comprehensive plan. I would gladly support a proposal that is at or very close to compliance with the current zoning requirements that was thoughtfully implemented several years ago. This proposal is not that.

Please record my input as a NO to the current proposal by Peter Kennefick.

Thank You-  
Pj Bensen  
Summit Hill resident and homeowner

Sent from my iPhone



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Grand project

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**Rachel Lovec Currie** <rachel.lovec@gmail.com>

Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 9:56 PM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Hello,

I would like to express my support of the proposed new multipurpose building to replace the Dixie's complex at 695 Grand Ave.

The neighborhood needs these new modern and mixed use buildings that will certainly be lively and draw new residents and commerce into the area. We need to rejuvenate certain buildings on Grand to ensure that it remains an area with a lot of retail and dining. Also the removal of the large parking lot will be an improvement, by encouraging people to walk more and getting more meaningful use out of the building or patio that is built. The owner has proposed a great complex and I think it will be a welcome improvement.

Thanks to everyone working on this for your careful consideration and dedication to this great area, I hope we can reach an agreement with civility and kindness.

Rachel Currie  
751 Goodrich Ave



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave proposal for redevelopment

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**Robert Langford** <rob.langfordjr@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 11:49 AM

ZLU,

I'm writing to express my concern about the proposed redevelopment for 695 Grand Ave. and to go on record as to our opposition to the project in its current form. Below is a letter from Mr. Gary Todd whose sentiments we agree with.

Respectfully,

Rob & Colleen Langford  
22 Grotto St. S.

**Robert (Rob ) Langford Jr.**

Results Referral Services  
Colleen Langford & Associates  
RE/MAX Results

651-271-0598 / cell  
651-698-8006 / office  
651-698-7686 / fax

*"The 695 Grand – Land Use Application Narrative, submitted by the developers, states that their building design "will be contemporary with nods to its historic context and surrounding neighborhood character."*

*In reviewing the portfolios of Reuter-Walton and ESG Architecture & Design's other projects (see attached), I found at least 5 other developments that are similar in scale and use the same architecture. Since the design is the same, how does the proposed design for 695 Grand show respect to the historic nature and character of the Summit Hill neighborhood? It seems to be simply replicating the design that is being used in multiple other locations. It is aimed more to transform the character of the neighborhood to look the same as many others rather than to complement the Summit/Grand "brand" which is why people come to this area to visit, shop, eat, walk and live.*

*I would strong advocate that SHA/ZLU vote against this project as proposed, especially in light of the fact that they are asking to throw out all current zoning codes to enable them to build this in our neighborhood."*

Thank you.

GRT



## 695 Grand Avenue

Ida Lano <idalano@outlook.com>

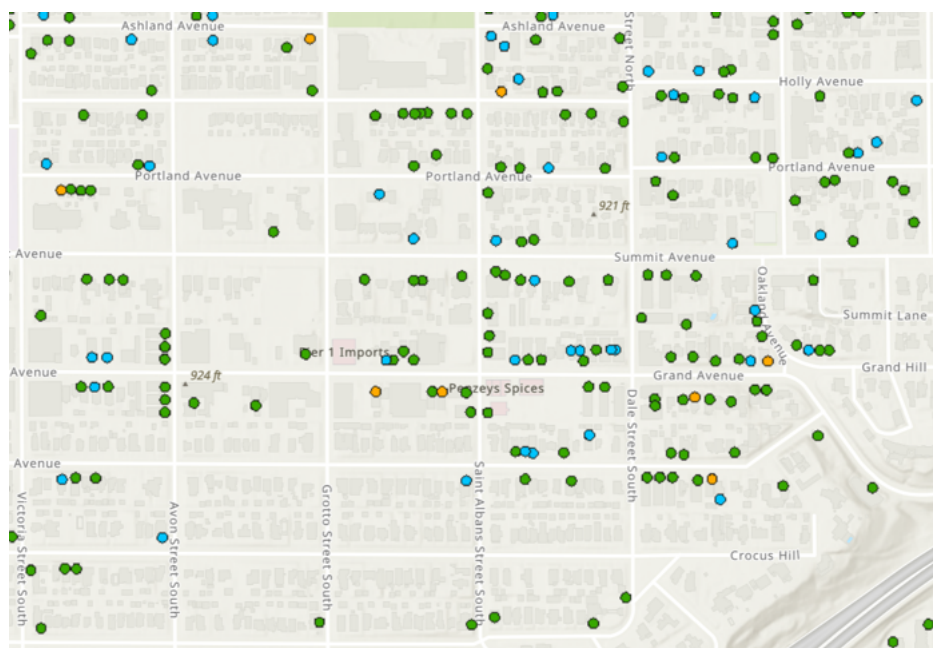
Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 7:11 PM

To: ZLU Committee <zlu@summithillassociation.org>

To the ZLU Committee,

I have listened in on some of the meetings related to this project. In general, while I understand and like most of the plan, the issue I don't feel is consistent with the overall plan and the neighborhood has to do with the height of this project. Specifically, the 5 floors above ground:

- It is not consistent with the majority of buildings along Grand Avenue. There is only 1 building on the NW corner of Grotto and Grand that is 5 stories high. The significant set back and elevation make it less obvious from the front. The rear view, however, is not pleasant. I noted that I've never seen a drawing of what ReuterWalton envisions for the rear view of 695.
- Density in that area is already at a high – the alleyway will be an issue given cars and delivery trucks – I see that it was noted that parking and loading were studied but may have missed any detail provided. Even without detail, having my garage off this alley, it's not hard to imagine the increased traffic in and out of this area. It's not hard for anyone to come to the conclusion that a 75+ unit housing addition will increase traffic significantly. Those of you who are proponents of this project are doing it for other reasons than the 4 project goals listed.
- As far as Objective 4: Increasing available housing options in neighborhood: There are plenty of multiunit housing options available in this area. I found this link <https://stpaul.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=1c165473388349069a83df8693df0a3b#> which shows all inspected residential Fire Certificate of Occupancy structures in Saint Paul during a time frame – so not ALL units are shown. If you narrow down the view to a few blocks of 695, there are 1,412 properties with multiple (more than 2 units). If you want to talk about lower income housing, I can point to the study done by HUD on the necessary median income. These new units will be out of range for this purpose



- If you want to talk about lower income housing, I can point to the study done by HUD on the necessary median income required to live in this area. The prices for these new units will be out of range for this purpose. <https://metro council.org/Communities/Services/Livable-Communities-Grants/Ownership-and-Rent-Affordability-Limits.aspx>.

- Regarding Objective 3: Increase neighborhood vitality and safety: I disagree that dense urban infill for additional eyes on street will make it more safe. We already have random gunfire being reported. If you look at the development in the uptown area, Precinct 5 Ward 10 and look at crime statistics in the area for the past 10 years, you'll note that there is an increase in both violent and property crimes. If you've been to uptown, there is little room to park with large buildings "towering" over what used to present as a vibrant living area.

In previous meetings, the developers have mentioned that the project is not feasible without 5 levels. I find that curious and wonder how that area is doing now with only 3 restaurants. If we agree to let the developers have the variance required for 5 stories, then what's next: 7 stories, 10 stories?

If this is the only way to address what I believe is a tax base issue, then it's sad that we can't find a better solution. You have all worked very hard on this and it feels as if we could almost be at a point where the neighborhood could buy in if the mass of this project were addressed. I believe those against this project see down the road to where this neighborhood is going – much like what Uptown looks like today. Likely, none of you on this Committee will serve when overcrowding and public safety become issues.

I do appreciate all you do and I don't envy your positions – but I also believe allowing for these variances will be a bad decision overall. Again, I want to state that I object to the height of this project – if it was 4 stories versus 5 and a better plan for the alley, that would better address the other concerns on public safety, keeping consistent with the general design of buildings in this area, parking, while achieving the goals laid out.

Sincerely

Ida Lano

[20 Grotto St South](#)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave project comment

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**lcnielsen01** <lcnielsen01@gmail.com>

Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 7:18 AM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Dear SHA Zoning and Land Use Committee,

I writing to voice my support for the proposed zoning change and height variance on the 695 Grand Ave project.

I am a Summit Hill resident and live on Grand Ave. We need more projects like this. In a time where there is a housing crisis in our cities, a complex that includes both residential and commercial spaces is extremely important. And as we all know, Grand Avenue has been fading for years. How do we reverse that? How do we make Grand Avenue vibrant? To start, we build more housing to grow our community and we build more spaces for smaller, useful businesses to move into. And we reduce the number of large parking lots...parking lots don't create community.

I strongly urge you to vote yes on both the zoning and height variance changes.

Thank you,

Lauren Nielsen  
1217 Grand Ave

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S10e, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand/Dixies**

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**Thomas Patterson** <skipatterson@gmail.com>

Thu, Jun 10, 2021 at 9:25 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

We strongly encourage you to reject the request for changing the zoning for this proposed development. We do support new development for housing, retail, and restaurants, but a massive five story building is not compatible on Grand Avenue with it's historic apartment buildings, private homes, and smaller and more separated commercial areas. We do not want Grand Avenue to become Snelling Avenue with its five story huge developments.

Sally and Tom Patterson  
703 Linwood Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Sent from my iPad



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Development**

2 messages

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**Christina Anderson** <christina.anderson1920@yahoo.com>  
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 7:52 PM

Hello,

I think the 695 Grand Ave Development will revive our neighborhood. I'm fully in support!

I really like the changes that have been made. Especially the Avon setback, and utilizing the entire Grand Ave frontage.

The 3-story limit overlay has been hindering new development for the last 15 years, and should go! It's a handicap for keeping our neighborhood vibrant.

Kind regards,

Christina Anderson  
859 Osceola Ave.

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**Christina Anderson** <christina.anderson1920@yahoo.com>  
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Sat, Jun 12, 2021 at 10:29 AM

Excuse me, I meant St Albans Street, not Avon. Thank you.

[Quoted text hidden]



## Re: Dixie's Proposal

### I. Introduction

The City of Saint Paul, the Summit Hill Association and the Grand Avenue Business Association have spent years studying this neighborhood, this business district and they have compiled thoughtful, comprehensive policies to protect this unique neighborhood, promote business development, and address situations like this.

The property at issue here – 695 Grand Avenue – falls within a number of pre-existing zoning and overlay districts that control this decision-making process. The proposal envisions a five-story mixed use building, with retail on the first floor and 79 apartment units on the top floors. They plan for 99 enclosed parking stalls. The proposed square footage of the project is 151,000.

This project **does not** comply with the Summit Hill Association Master Plan and **does not** comply with the Summit Hill Association's endorsed East Grand Avenue Overlay District ("EGAOD"). As a result, to accomplish this project, the owners seek to change the B2 zoning to T3 zoning and to request a rezone out of the East Grand Avenue Overlay District ("EGAOD").

This proposed development, and the consequential zoning and variance decisions, will have implications and precedence for future development up and down Grand Avenue for the next 100 years. Much care and discretion must be exercised in reviewing this proposal to ensure that it complies with the laws and existing community endorsed plans. Of relevance are pronouncements by the City of St. Paul Zoning Code, the City of St Paul's Comprehensive Plan ("2040 Comp Plan"), the Summit Hill Plan, and the East Grand Avenue Overlay District ("EGAOD") and the affirmation of the EGAOD in the most recent community survey conducted by the Summit Hill Association.

This project literally complies with none of these guiding documents and is a monumental departure from the character of the neighborhood and Grand Avenue that the Summit Hill Board is to preserve. To approve this project would mean the Summit Hill Board would be disrespecting the fundamental governing principles that the residents expect their representatives on the Summit Hill Board to uphold.

To be clear, I am very much in favor of development, but not development that seeks to disregard the guiding principles we have all agreed to for this neighborhood. And the project proponents have been excellent in working with the neighborhood to explain their project and make accommodations. But, that does not mean the project should move forward when it is fundamentally and clearly inconsistent with the guiding principles of this neighborhood as codified in the Summit Hill Plan and the EGAOD.

## **II. The Proposed Project Does Not Comply with Zoning Requirements**

Currently, the relevant property is zoned B2. This designation permits mixed use development with a maximum height of 30 feet, with setbacks of 6 feet for the side and rear of the building.

- *The proposed building is much higher at 59 feet.*
- *The setback criteria are not met.*

The Summit Hill plan promotes the zoning of B2 sites. T2 is a parallel zone for commercial properties, and is supported in the Summit Hill guidelines. The Summit Hill guidelines curtail the use of B3 and its parallel T3 zoning; in fact, the policy states that no additions of B3 zoning should be approved. Summit Hill guidelines also provide that B3 properties should be re-zoned to B2 zoning when such properties are developed for B2 uses.

- *The proposed building needs T3 zoning as it is not allowed in B2 and T2.*

This property lies within the EGAOD; EGAOD is designed to preserve the historic character of East Grand Avenue. This zoning overlay district was the result of a recommendation that was incorporated in the last Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan and was a reaction to and repudiation of the Oxford Hill Condominium development at the corner of Oxford and Grand Avenues. Many residents felt Oxford Hill was too tall and too massive. As a result of what happened with the Oxford Hill building, the code further specifies that there will be no additional heights allowed for setbacks. The maximum building footprint to be no more than 25,000 square feet and the total building size, above ground, of 75,000 square feet. This recommendation was approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2006 and was incorporated into the **City of St. Paul Zoning Code** Article VI, 67.600. It limits mixed use building heights to 36 feet. There is no additional height allowed for setbacks. There are no parking exceptions allowed.

- The proposed building **is double** the allowable size at 151,000 square feet.

## **III. Because the Project Does Not Comply with Zoning Requirements, the Owner Asks for Multiple Exceptions in the form of Rezoning AND Variances – None of Which Meet Standards For These Exceptions**

### **Change of Zoning**

Because the project fails to meet the well-thought plans set forth by the City and Summit Hill, the owners/developers of 695 Grand propose changing the B2 zoning to T3 (“Traditional Neighborhood”) zoning and request a rezone out of the EGAOD.

For a situation such as this, the City of Saint Paul has established project design standards (Sec. 66.343) that take precedence “unless the applicant can demonstrate that there are circumstances unique to the property that make compliance impractical or unreasonable.” The developers have failed to meet this burden. In particular, this proposal fails to lessen the density in this area. The

policy states that “Transitions in density or intensity shall be managed through careful attention to building height, scale, massing and solar exposure.”

- *The proposed development is surrounded by residential units on all sides.*
- *Also, the largest mass and tallest and longest walls are on west, south and east side of the development, all bordering on residential units. The solar orientation is backwards and casts maximum shadows.*

In addition, in evaluating rezoning proposals, the City of Saint Paul considers:

- Compatibility with land use and zoning classification of property within the general area.
- Suitability of the property for the uses permitted under the existing zoning classification.
- The trend of development in the area of the property in question.
- Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and District Plan.

None of these considerations are met.

### **Application for a Variance**

Furthermore, this development has requested a variance. A Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) may be granted if the following findings are met:

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning code.
2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
3. The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision, that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.
4. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.
5. The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.
6. The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.

The developers have failed to establish these findings. To continue to support their application, the developers request that these conditions be modified. In order to modify CUP conditions, one must generally find that “[t]he extent, location and intensity of the use will be insubstantial compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and any applicable subarea plans which were approved by the city council; and “[t]he use will not be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety and general welfare.” [61.500](#)

More specifically, the governing body must find “exceptional undue hardship of the landowner” and must find the new use to be “consistent with the reasonable enjoyment of adjacent property.” ([61.502](#)) Applying these standards to the current proposal warrants a refusal for a CUP. Specifically,

- *the use is NOT in substantial compliance with the 2040 Comp Plan;*
- *the use is NOT in substantial compliance with the EGAOD, which is result of a small area plan;*
- *the use is NOT in substantial compliance with the D16 plan, which called for the EGAOD and called for B2/T2 as “top zoning”;*
- *the use WILL be detrimental to the existing character of the development in the immediate neighborhood;*
- *the use WILL affect the historic nature of the area; and*
- *the use WILL prevent reasonable enjoyment of adjacent properties.*

### **Incompatibility with City Comp Plan**

The City of Saint Paul has studied these issues and recently issued a **2040 Comp Plan**. This proposed project does not meet its land use and housing criteria; examples include:

**Policy LU-29.** Ensure that building massing, height, scale and design transition to those permitted in adjoining districts

**Policy LU-36.** Promote neighborhood- serving commercial businesses within Urban Neighborhoods that are compatible with the character and scale of the existing residential development

**Policy LU-29.** Ensure that building massing, height, scale and design transition to those permitted in adjoining districts

**Policy H-14.** Encourage the use of low-impact landscaping, such as no-mow yards, native landscaping and rain gardens, to reduce the consumption of natural resources in yard maintenance and encourage the use of yards as carbon sinks.

**Policy H-50.** Balance the market demand for larger homes in strong market areas with the need to maintain a mix of single-family housing types that is sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood context.

### **IV. Objections Summarized**

The developer proposes a 5-story, 79 bedroom multi-family building that would be out of character and scale compared to the rest of the surrounding area, with potentially large negative impacts with regard to parking spillover into an already parking-challenged area, increased alley traffic, potential water run-off issues, as well as blocking light/creating shadows across nearby properties due to its height and smaller setbacks, and almost entirely eliminating green space.

As proposed, this building would be grossly out of character with the surrounding area:

- It would be the tallest building by far for several blocks, looming over adjacent properties, eliminating privacy in back yards for at least a block in all directions, blocking light and air flow, and creating shadows across entire lots because of its height;
- Aside from its height, its huge mass, nominal proposed setbacks, would be a notable anomaly and interrupt the texture and flow of the adjacent blocks and neighborhoods; and
- It virtually eliminates green space between its footprint, and the impervious materials used in the very narrow area between the sidewalk and proposed building.

There is nothing that precludes the developers from using this property for a building which conforms to the zoning code, and it is clear that in fact, economic considerations are driving their desire to build a structure that is too large for the lot, cannot support the parking requirements attendant on the proposed density, and would be massively out of character with the surrounding area (see photos below). A three-story building would be a more suitable use for a lot this size and would not require the requested variances to function on this particular property. This option can be economically feasible and I encourage the Summit Hill Association to gather residents with development expertise to assist the developer on this if desired by the owners.

Analysis of many, varied City statutes and studies confirm that this proposed development should not proceed as designed. This design ignores the unique historical nature of our neighborhood. The design thwarts the expressed preference of Summit Hill neighbors; a recent survey showed that 50% of SHA residents want to keep the EGAOD in its entirety. The residents have made their thoughts and concerns known to our elected officials who should honor those preferences.

Factually, this project runs counter to many safeguards that have been in place for years in order to protect the unique and special area that is our neighborhood. To recap my objections - they are:

1. The building size, bulk and site planning.
  - a. The proposed building is too tall, too big and not in scale with the surrounding area.
    - i. Current zoning caps a building's height at 36 feet; this proposed building stands at 59 feet 10 inches.
    - ii. It is too dense.
    - iii. It is positioned too close to the alley.
    - iv. Its height is in the wrong places, casting maximum shadows.
2. The negative impact it will have on the neighborhood
  - a. The size of this proposed development will impact traffic, parking and safety in the area. Recent parking studies showed parking in this block is already at capacity.
    - i. The developers show 71 parking stalls for 79 apartments. There will be a likelihood of 2-car families/residents given the type of units being built and the cost. Those who can afford these rents will have cars.
    - ii. Residents will necessarily need parking on the surrounding streets. There is no parking available because of the already intensely parked adjacent streets.

- b. The size of this project will lessen the neighborhood character; the unique, charming and historic character will be lessened and the adjacent property values will likely fall as well.
- 3. Its noncompliance with existing laws and zoning rules as detailed above.
- 4. The absence of any real understanding of the parking issues in this area

This large scale project will exacerbate already existing parking shortfalls in this area.

- a. Existing restaurants are required to provide 60 parking spots with 9 made available for employees. This proposal includes 31 parking spots with no additional spots for employees.
- b. The proposal includes 79 units and 71 parking spots. The provision of roughly one spot per unit is inadequate. There will be more than one person in many of the apartments and they will have cars.
- c. The claim that residents will exclusively bike or walk to work is unrealistic. This intensification will add to a parking shortfall that already exists here. The same holds true for bus usage.<sup>1</sup>
- d. There is no concession made for the traffic generated by delivery trucks, garbage/recycling trucks, and other operations-related traffic. I will forward current pictures to explain the problem with the proposal.
- e. Grand Avenue is the same width for its entire length, approximately 40 feet. The road widths of other St Paul streets with larger developments are substantially wider; Snelling is 100 feet wide; Marshall is 80 feet wide on its west end and 60 feet on its east end; and University is 120 feet wide. Additionally, St Albans is a narrow one-way street with nearly 100% on-street parking occupancy. This will make traffic flow extraordinarily difficult.
- f. The increased traffic, parking and pedestrian safety issues that accompany increased density could actually drive potential visitors to Grand Avenue away.

## V. Conclusion

Developing a project at this site is possible and desirable. Current zoning B2 allows a 3-story mixed use project that could create new housing, provide updated space for the restaurants, improve street and sidewalk connections (instead of the large parking lot at the corner). Staying in existing zoning would create positive impacts for Grand *and* St Albans, for businesses *and* residents. Also, this block is part of the “GrandenDale node” – Summit Hill’s most dense residential area. Further intensity proposed is well beyond what is feasible or appropriate for this intersection and disrespects the immediate neighbors and surrounding neighborhood.

This surrounding neighborhood is special. It is a historic neighborhood. Directly to the north is Summit Avenue, a locally-designated historic district created in the 1980s to protect the integrity

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<sup>1</sup> Grand Avenue has one low frequency bus route #63. The route recently reduced its number of stops; there is no stop at St. Albans. Route #63 has below-average utilization in a bus system that saw a 4.5% reduction in ridership and a 1.4% reduction in total transit usage in 2018.

and preserve this treasure that attracts visitors from all over the world. Similarly, the areas directly to the south of Grand Avenue are national- and state-designated historic districts, with protections in place to preserve the unique character of these homes. And, Grand Avenue, itself, is a state-designated district.

The scale of the neighborhood is consistently 2-3 stories high. There are two notable exceptions that should not be given any precedential weight here: the building at 745 Grand (a 6-story condo at Grotto & Grand built in 1981 when a gap in the zoning code allowed something like that to be built), and at 1060 Grand (a 4-story Oxford Hill development at Oxford & Grand which also took advantage of gaps in the zoning code.) The EGAOD specifically closed these gaps.









ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Oxford Congestion

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**brianwenger24@gmail.com** <brianwenger24@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 11:55 PM

To: Denise Aldrich <Denise50aldrich@outlook.com>, Bridget Allan Ales <bridgetaa@comcast.net>, Simon Taghioff <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>, Peter Rhoades <peterrhoades@gmail.com>, Sonja Mason <sonjalmason@gmail.com>, zlu@summithillassociation.org

This picture, taken today at 8:30 am, shows:

- Trucks parked in the middle of street
- Car double parked in traffic lane
- Car unable to see around trucks in the middle turn lane when trying to turn into the bank.
- Car swerving into the middle turn lane because it cannot go down the traffic lane because of blocked car.

This is an example of the many problems with traffic flow and parking when an area is overbuilt. It will be worse for Dixie's because of the existing more intense parking need already in the Dixie's area.



**IMG\_8644.jpg**  
2020K



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Victoria and Grand at 10:45 am**

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**brianwenger24@gmail.com** <brianwenger24@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 11:59 PM

To: Denise Aldrich <Denise50aldrich@outlook.com>, Bridget Allan Ales <bridgetaa@comcast.net>, Simon Taghioff <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>, Peter Rhoades <peterrhoades@gmail.com>, Sonja Mason <sonjalmason@gmail.com>, zlu@summithillassociation.org

This picture was taken today. It shows three trucks parked illegally. This will be worse by St. Albans.



**IMG\_8647.jpg**  
3162K



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Victoria and Grand

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**brianwenger24@gmail.com** <brianwenger24@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 11:59 PM

To: Denise Aldrich <Denise50aldrich@outlook.com>, Bridget Allan Ales <bridgetaa@comcast.net>, Simon Taghioff <simon.taghioff@gmail.com>, Peter Rhoades <peterrhoades@gmail.com>, Sonja Mason <sonjalmason@gmail.com>, zlu@summithillassociation.org

This is a picture from my car window at 8:45 am today when turning south onto Victoria off of Grand. There are trucks on both sides of the road, one of which is parking illegally, making it impossible for two cars to pass – thus, backing traffic up onto Grand. This is a major safety risk and will be worse in the congested and more narrow St. Albans area.



**IMG\_8645.jpg**  
2028K



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**spot zoning request by the 695 Grand Avenue Development team**

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**Marilyn Bach** <bachx001@umn.edu>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 11:54 AM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org, General Information &lt;info@summithillassociation.org&gt;, luiserangelmorales@gmail.com, simon.taghioff@gmail.com, luis.pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us, sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us, rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us

TO:

Saint Paul key decision makers.

I have been in communication with Mr. Torstenson, City of Saint Paul--- and am totally baffled by the fact that the 695 Grand Avenue development team is requesting that a single block in Saint Paul be exempted from current zoning requirements. Could key decision makers kindly clarify why and how this request is being justified under current Minnesota law.

thank you

Marilyn L. Bach, PhD

[bachx001@umn.edu](mailto:bachx001@umn.edu)

h: 651-290-2604

c: 612-423-2154

**RESPONSE TO TORSTESON.docx**

17K

June 11, 2021

Mr. Torstenson,

Thank you for your reply to my query regarding the specific zoning and variance requests of the 695 Grand Avenue development team.

I am however somewhat baffled that the developers are asking for what I understand to be 'spot zoning'. By my understanding this is illegal in Minnesota.

Per your communication dated June 10, 2021:

*"The requested rezoning, conditional use permit, and variance are just for the 695 Grand site itself, at the NW corner of Grand and St. Albans."*

According to Wikipedia:

**Spot zoning** is the application of zoning to a specific parcel or parcels of land within a larger zoned area when the rezoning is usually at odds with a city's master plan and current zoning restrictions. Spot zoning may be ruled invalid as an "arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable treatment" of a limited parcel of land by a local zoning ordinance.<sup>[1]</sup> While zoning regulates the land use in whole districts, spot zoning makes unjustified exceptions for a parcel or parcels within a district.<sup>[2]</sup>

"Spot zoning---defined as creating an island by singling out a parcel for special privileges not consistent with surrounding uses...The practice is illegal in Minnesota. *Star Tribune* October 1, 2011.

This rezoning request amounts to "spot zoning" of the type forbidden by federal regulation(s) deferred to in the applicable Minnesota Statute. It is not being undertaken as part of comprehensive zoning and would be done primarily to allow this developer to build a five-story building in this location. This amounts to an unjustified exception to the existing zoning codes with the primary benefit to the property owner and investors and it differs significantly from the zoning of other property in the immediate area.

Could you kindly clarify the justification that is being offered for this spot zoning request?

Thank you for your interest,

Marilyn Bach

Saint Paul, Minnesota





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave. Mixed Use Project

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**Brenda Besser** <bbesser@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 10:31 PM

To: ZLU Committee &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;, rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us, info@summithillassociation.org

ZLU/SHA Committee Members,

I oppose the 695 Grand project as it currently stands. I believe it is ultimately too big for its surroundings. I submitted a previous letter but would like to further comment in response to the June 8 public meeting.

Some of the discussion mentioned exclusionary zoning as the end goal of those who live close to and oppose this project. As there is no affordable housing involved in this project, this does not make sense. If there is an element of exclusion here, it could be argued that the developer and property owner will accomplish that by catering to those who can afford high rent and expensive parking rates. I can understand why businesses would like to attract these new residents, who will have more disposable income, but this is no less self-serving than wanting to preserve the livability of your immediate surroundings. There should be a compromise, a project that will both maintain livability within the current zoning rules and attract diverse customers to our wonderful Grand Avenue businesses.

There was another suggestion that this project will mitigate climate change. Between the egregious lack of green space, the additional car traffic it will bring, and the maxed-out big box design of the building, I fail to see even one nod to climate change mitigation here. If the goal was a climate friendly building, then it might include, at the very least, more green space on all sides and levels and incentives for residents who do not have cars.

I live on a street where the buildings are all multi-family structures. Maybe our street can serve as a model for appropriately-sized development, inclusive zoning, and climate change mitigation.

Respectfully,

Brenda Besser  
24 St. Albans S.



## Proposed Development at 695 Grand Avenue

Lori Brostrom <lbrostrom@comcast.net>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 7:10 PM

To: zlu@summithillassociation.org, Information Summit Hill Association <Info@summithillassociation.org>, "Noecker, Rebecca (CI-StPaul)" <Rebecca.Noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, "Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)" <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, luiserangelmorales@gmail.com

Cc: "Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)" <sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us>, #CI-StPaul\_Ward2 <ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

The development as proposed for 695 Grand Avenue, with its requested variances and CUP, violates multiple sections of the St. Paul zoning code, does not meet most of the criteria for variances as set forth in same, violates established MN zoning law, and in general is grossly out of character in a neighborhood which is renowned for its historic character and charm, and a location which is literally surrounded by national- and state-designated historic districts. Per Visit St. Paul, Summit Hill is a central attraction to visitors ranging from large conventions to individuals for that reason, and thus, anything that detracts from that character—which this development and those that would surely follow if allowed to happen—would be harmful on multiple levels.

Please consider the following:

**In 2006 the St. Paul City Council voted the East Grand Avenue Overlay District into the zoning code with overwhelming support from Summit Hill neighbors, who wanted to avoid additional high-density, out of scale development and prevent future developments such as the massive Oxford Hill building and the 6-story condo building erected on the corner of Grand and Grotto avenues. Summit Hill neighbors still support the overlay district—the recent survey that the Summit Hill Association completed showed:**

- 89% strongly agree/agree that "The historical buildings and features of the neighborhood attract new residents, visitors, and business to the neighborhood."
- 63% strongly agree/agree that "property owners and developers are able to make improvements, re-purpose, and build new properties in the neighborhood while staying within current historical preservation guidelines."
- 49% of respondents feel that the overlay district is "a valuable way to maintain the character of our neighborhood" and another 28% generally believe its valuable with minor changes (unclear whether they want the district to be more vs. less restrictive) vs. just 14% who feel it won't meet our needs in the future. This overwhelming support comes despite a correction that was made to the wording of the question for the first 21 days of the 34 total days that the survey was available from an initial version that was incorrect, misleading—and clearly biased against the overlay district, including in the unorthodox ordering of the potential responses which was unlike that of any of the other questions. With accurate and unbiased phrasing for this question throughout the survey's open period, support would likely have been even greater.

**Despite this, Kenefick et al have proposed a development which:**

- Violates the overlay district—which mandates a maximum 3 stories/36' height for mixed commercial and residential use and 25,000 sf footprint—with a 5-story/60' tall building and 30,200 sf footprint.
- Would require T3 zoning, intended for "higher-density pedestrian- and transit-oriented mixed-use development" per the St. Paul zoning code and is grossly out of context in a primarily residential historic neighborhood, and the site on which it would sit, which is at the corner of a 1-way/1-traffic lane street (St. Albans) which is barely passable in the winter and 2-lane Grand Avenue.
  - Furthermore, even before Covid, ridership on the bus route servicing Grand was poor at best on an absolute basis and with net declines in onboardings and deboardings between 2017 and 2019 on the East Grand Avenue section of the route in both directions.
  - Other than on Snelling and W 7<sup>th</sup> Street, the closest T3-zoned parcel is at the corner of Selby and Dale—both transit corridors—unlike this site on the corner of 1-way/1-lane St. Albans and 2-lane Grand, with a poorly-used bus route.
  - The addition of a CUP would make this even worse—and create a building which would be 67% taller than allowed under the East Grand Avenue Overlay District, and in comparison to nearby buildings in all directions.
- Would create massive negative parking and traffic impacts on St. Albans, Grand and the surrounding alleys compared to the current use due to only 99 parking spaces for 80 residential units and 11,079 sf of commercial use.
  - The current one-story commercial building on site, with three restaurants on a footprint of approximately half the size of the proposed development, has 51 off-street spaces for patrons and 9 for employees; even with that, there is considerable overflow parking on the street in an area where there is already a significant parking deficit. Assuming demand for residential parking of at least 1 space per unit (which is not realistic and doesn't take into account guests), 19 off-street spaces for commercial customers and employees is wildly inadequate considering the current level of 60 spaces for establishment taking up half the proposed footprint.



- The traffic generated by the current use already puts a strain on St. Albans at busy times, but at least is limited by the 4-5 busier hours/day. The larger amount of commercial space alone in the proposed development would create more traffic. However, with residents and guests of 80 residential units coming and going for several more hours a day, sometimes with multiple trips, will exacerbate this impact exponentially.
- The impact of many more commercial trucks (food, supplier and merchandise deliveries), as well as what will likely be multiple other service delivery vehicles (Amazon, UPS, DHL, USPS and other restaurants, groceries and other tradespeople servicing 80 residential units) will make Grand Avenue almost impassable throughout the day and into the evening. While the plan to confine these deliveries to Grand Avenue and during daytime hours appears to be a much better solution vs. the current practice of alley deliveries, the reality is that there is no way to enforce this once the building is in place.
- Under increase property taxes with its higher valuation resulting from high-end market-rate rentals, making it even harder for the nearby naturally-occurring affordable housing—that the city needs and supposedly values—to survive.

**Furthermore, the requested variances and CUP would clearly constitute spot zoning.** According to multiple recent City of St. Paul Zoning Committee staff reports: *Court rulings have determined that “spot zoning” is illegal in Minnesota. Minnesota courts have stated that this term “applies to zoning changes, typically limited to small plots of land, which establish a use classification inconsistent with the surrounding uses and create an island of nonconforming use within a larger zoned property.”* Plannersweb.com, citing Anderson’s American Law of Zoning, 4th Edition, § 5.12 (1995), refers to spot zoning as “the process of singling out a small parcel of land for a use classification totally different from that of the surrounding area for the benefit of the owner of such property and to the detriment of other owners.” The City of St. Paul, on its webpage regarding nonconforming uses, states that the Planning Commission must find whether “Rezoning the property would result in “spot” zoning or a zoning inappropriate to the surrounding land uses.”

- As noted earlier, this proposed zoning would clearly be notably inconsistent with the surrounding use.
- The benefit of such rezoning would clearly accrue to the owner of this property to the detriment of the surrounding property owners.

Finally, if approved, this development would be found to **violate several of the six variance criteria** which the applicant needs to meet. Moreover, it also is **inconsistent in multiple areas with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.**

One needs only to look at the **Uptown area of Minneapolis as a cautionary example.** A couple of decades ago, it was thought of in comparable terms to the Grand Avenue/Summit Hill area. That is no longer the case, as overweening greed and excessive development have replaced the charming, smaller-scale businesses in their vintage buildings, and accessible lower-density housing if the same vintage, with the types of charmless, banal mid-rise mixed use and residential buildings. The result: too much traffic, too little parking, fewer visitors and rents that are so high that the residents who live in these buildings can’t afford to patronize area businesses, which in turn are struggling. The impact: large numbers of empty storefronts, a once-thriving commercial building (Calhoun Square) which is largely an empty shell, and an inability of established businesses to survive. Phil Roberts of Parasole Holdings stated, pre-pandemic in early 2018, that, “Uptown has changed. I don't know if it's people are house-poor because there's all those apartments being built. They're well-appointed with granite countertops and maybe a single bedroom is 1,900 bucks a month. Maybe that crowd just doesn't have the disposable income.” Subsequently, Parasole closed their two area restaurants—Libertine and Chino Latino—in recognition of that dynamic. Thus, contrary to some beliefs, density is not a panacea and in fact, can be harmful.

Peter Kenefick says that he wants to create a legacy. This is not the kind of legacy that the neighborhood which has supported his family’s restaurants for 40 years wants or needs. I, like most others, am all for development that is respectful of history, design context, the safety and well-being of the residents, and the zoning laws which support that. He owns the property on which he proposes to build—so he’s already far ahead of the game compared to most developers—and by all accounts has had success with a single-story commercial building with three restaurants. He could easily build a 3-story mixed use building with condos—similar to the successful 2-story building across the street—that conforms to the overlay district mandates. The condos would sell out instantly, and his ownership of the first-floor commercial area would ensure his family’s continuing presence and ability to create a much more valued legacy.

In conclusion, this development, if allowed to go ahead as proposed, would set **unimaginable precedents** for future development along Grand Avenue. With greatly-increased traffic and more demand for parking—in an area with a long-standing, documented high parking deficit already—and the resulting exacerbation of current pedestrian safety issues, there would be irreparable damage to the historic charm and neighborhood-like feel that residents clearly value and businesses—as demonstrated by an East Grand Avenue commercial landscape that is almost completely rented—benefits from.

Please defend and enforce the East Grand Avenue Overlay District and **deny the variances** being requested for this development.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Brostrom  
710 Summit Avenue, Apt. 1

6/12/2021

Summit Hill Association Mail - Proposed Development at 695 Grand Avenue



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)

Date: June 11, 2021  
To: SHA Board Members  
From: Don Drake  
681 Lincoln Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105  
[drake.dondrake@gmail.com](mailto:drake.dondrake@gmail.com)

Re: My Comments on the 695 Grand Proposal

As soon as I got the first notice of this proposal, I had serious questions about it. I “attended” the first Zoom meeting with a serious chip on my shoulder from my experience in the Pearl District in Portland, where a 15-story apartment building was built across the street from the 6-story condo building in which I lived. The whole process was riddled with questionable tactics, casual inattention to policies and practices and an out-of-town company that did not appear to have local interests at heart.

I could see halfway through that first public Zoom meeting that this was a different situation entirely. The team behind this project has been candid and professional throughout and has bent over backwards to accommodate the various concerns they heard from people in the general Summit Hill area and particularly from those adjacent residents on St. Albans. They have proposed a market-rate building that will fit in to the immediate area, and they have been very clear that anything less than the five-story retail/residential building simply will not work financially on this site. The developers have also made many changes to the proposal both before and after hearing public feedback. This proposal should be considered all the way to the final approval level, so that all the elements can be introduced and factored into a final decision that is best for all, not just the immediate neighbors.

I live one half-block south of Grand, where the alley hits St. Albans. During the pandemic, I have spent a lot of time at my kitchen table, which faces Grand Ave. I guess I have become two of those eyes on the street that the developers have been talking about. If nothing else, I am acutely aware of the traffic patterns on Grand and St. Albans.

### **Full Disclosure**

I have absolutely no skin in this game, other than as a neighbor a half-block away. I knew no one on the development team or the SHA when I first learned about the

project. After attending three community meetings, I have become convinced that this would be a very positive addition to our neighborhood and Saint Paul for reasons I will give below. I assume I will be inconvenienced from time to time, certainly while it is being built and less so afterwards. I expect that as the price of progress. This is not about me; it is about us.

### **Six Reasons I Support This Development**

I want to remind people that this general area was not in good shape a number of years ago, but individuals and entrepreneurial businesses turned things around through a lot of mainly private efforts. TPT in the past 3-4 years had a very good program on the revival, and it is both sobering and uplifting to watch. Those of us living here today owe a debt to those who saved the greater Hill Area.

#### Reason One

**This will be an improvement overall for Summit Hill, Grand Avenue and Saint Paul.**

- a. The proposal itself is the result of many inputs, with sensitivity to where it is and the history of this area.
- b. Compared to other buildings of its type recently built in Saint Paul on Snelling and Grand, it appears to be several steps above the others in nearly every way.
- c. Its new residents provide needed customers to existing and new businesses in the immediate area, not just on Grand.
- d. Over 100 new residents in the 70+ apartments will bring an excitement and vitality to the area, in part because they have chosen to live in Summit Hill.
- e. A building of the quality proposed is likely to send a message to others who might be not sure about opening a business or building housing in the immediate area.
- f. This building could easily attract long-time residents of Summit or Ramsey Hill who love the neighborhood after years of living here, but have chosen to downsize from their large homes. Their experience and commitment are invaluable.

#### Reason Two

**The operative question should be: “Would this proposed project be good or bad overall for the viability and sustainability of Grand Avenue and the immediate area within a two-block radius of 695 Grand?”**

Much of the community meeting time has been dominated by the effect on the existing residences on both sides of St. Albans just north of Grand. There will be some changes, just as there have been all up and down Grand for well over a century. Somehow, the area has survived and usually thrived.

### Reason Three

**Two existing locally-owned businesses that have stood the test of time will continue in new space on the same property, which is a good thing.**

Two more, if selected carefully and kept local, will help build the strength of local business. The ownership of the apartment building will be in the hands of a family with deep roots in Saint Paul.

### Reason Four

**Three stories with retail is simply not a viable option in today's market for a quality building that references the history.**

The current owners are giving us an option to keep two proven businesses alive, and to bring in two new ones that could add to the quality of life in our neighborhood. If nothing changes, we still have the large parking lot on the corner for all to see 24/7 and a building that is deteriorating. Things can only get worse over time if this project is not approved at five stories with whatever changes are needed to meet current community standards. This strikes me as a golden opportunity to improve our immediate surroundings, breathe some new life into the area and perhaps provide some inspiration for other historic areas in Saint to look for ways they can honor their past and build a sustainable future.

### Reason Five

**The height of this building is a red herring.**

The height of the building has been the major focus of discussion, but once the building has been built the height will cease to become an issue over time. We simply don't spend our lives looking up all that much. We adjust, in part, because we have to watch where we are going in our great historic neighborhood. We risk injury by not paying close attention to the sidewalks and streets in frozen and nice weather. In case you have not noticed, the price of all these beautiful trees we love is that our sidewalks are treacherously uneven because of their expanding roots.

We can live with this building, especially if it has design appeal and relates to the surrounding buildings well.

### Reason Six

**The imagined but as yet undefined increase in parking demand is something we can handle with some thoughtful planning and thinking about others.**

Another frequent concern raised in these community meetings has been the 695 Grand potential impact on street parking, which is not abundant here now. Please remember that there are 70+ underground spaces for the tenants of the new building, which covers almost the number of apartments available. The underground parking is within City guidelines for the number of apartments. Street parking is something that can be figured out in a relatively short time, and it is not reason enough to deny this project. I see people finding parking on Lincoln and St. Albans all the time. This may well make it more challenging, but it is certainly something we can figure out as a community. Who knows, it might even result in a few people happily giving up their cars, sharing them and walking more. We also have a good bus line on Grand. A man can dream, can't he?

### **My Recommendation**

An existing local businessman with decades of running businesses here has stepped up to build what he calls a “legacy building.” He didn't have to do this, and he certainly did not have pay such close attention the quality and impact of the building he is proposing. My personal opinion is that he deserves the fullest possible consideration, which depends, of course, on what the official City bodies do with any zoning changes or variances. We all know that nothing can possibly happen without the approval of the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Candidly, after the June 8 meeting it appeared to me — based on what I heard at the three meetings from both community members and SHA officials — that this was very unlikely to get a thumbs-up from the SHA board. I understand that what you send forward to the Planning Commission is only a recommendation, but that can be a very powerful message. I hope and trust that they take all this community deliberation and your role in facilitating it seriously, as they should.

If it is your intent to send it on with a thumbs-down message, I think you would be missing an opportunity to use this as a test case for what is possible in the future

for Grand Avenue development. Even discounting the height, mass and parking concerns, this is a serious proposal from a known, successful local businessman with deep roots in this area. It deserves to be treated as such. By all means, send in the concerns of the community and any you have as a board to the Planning Commission, but at least give them the opportunity to judge this project by the rules that exist, as well as the options for granting exceptions to those rules also provided for by law.

**If you cannot in good conscience recommend this project, I strongly suggest that in fairness to the development team and to the overall community that you send it forward with no recommendation and suggest that a full review depends upon what they have to say about the zoning change and any variances that might be requested. Everyone will benefit from this full review, and you will have some clear references for future development proposals that come before you for your review.**



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**Dixie's**

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**Rosalyn Goldberg** <blueskater3@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU Committee <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>

Sat, Jun 12, 2021 at 12:20 AM

*I am adamantly opposed to any rezoning or variances in relation to 695 Grand. The developers knew prior to their proposal that their plans were non-compliant. They had multiple opportunities to redesign to be in compliance. They are operating under the guise of "working with neighbors", yet they repeatedly ignore the "elephant in the room", which is height and mass ! Then, to add insult to injury, their last design was TALLER ! They obviously have no respect for the neighborhood. They want what they want. They said they could not make it smaller. This is a load of crap ! They keep referencing the building on Oxford and Grand. That building is also non-compliant. I was around for that fight. Those developers finally compromised and made the building one story shorter, and implemented a wedding cake design to "hide" the mass.*

*We can not have "spot zoning" !!! Maybe all the properties in Summit Hill could all have their own*



*personal zoning. This is ridiculous ! The overlay plan was designed to prevent this type of thing. Much effort, time, and research went into it. The recent Neighborhood Plan survey made it very clear what the neighborhood wants. It does not want T2/T3 zoning ! This is a historic neighborhood. It does not fit in. What happens down the road if this building is sold ?*

*The developers kept saying Dixie's building was "old". This is laughable. I was walking in the neighborhood the other day and passed houses with signs on them saying, "Built in 1880", "built in 1893". No one in this neighborhood is buying the "too old" line. I am older than Dixie's building.*

*You must be very mindful of making decisions you can not reverse !! This will change the neighborhood forever. As you know, there are other "developments" on the horizon. You can not "give one kid and ice cream cone and not the other". Other developers will want these exceptions, as well.*

*We are not University and Snelling, where two of these buildings are already going up.*

*Now they want to add three restaurants and a retail space. You must imagine the traffic and parking issues this will create.*

*For those of you who live deep into the neighborhood, you need to know that living on Grand Ave is very different from living on Lincoln or Crocus Hill. I have spoken with my Lincoln neighbors many times over the years regarding this. It is like a totally different neighborhood. Many renters have no off street parking. They will be impacted greatly. It will no longer be a "pedestrian-friendly" neighborhood. You can barely cross the street now. The traffic is already working its way deeper into the neighborhood. This project is totally disrespectful to the neighborhood. They CAN make the project smaller, they just don't want their profits smaller. Follow the money...*

*Please do not "kill the goose that laid the golden egg". What you love about Summit Hill will be destroyed. There are rules for a reason. The developers intentionally, and with full knowledge of the zoning laws created a project they knew*

*from the beginning was non-compliant. How arrogant and insensitive ! Do not allow Grand Ave to become Greed Ave. Please do not allow rezoning ! It won't stop there. It is a Pandora's Box. Please !!1 I love this neighborhood. Don't allow it to be destroyed.*

*In addition, they mentioned "no guarantees" when it came to renting those "dream" spaces to chains. We have been fighting this for years. Mom and Pop's won't be able to afford to be on Grand. No one is going to drive from Maple Grove to a neighborhood with no parking to go to Bed Bath and Beyond. They will come for the one and only Cafe Latte.*

*By the way, they did not include enough parking for all that is going into that building. They keep changing their tune. First they were not going to charge their tenants for parking, now they are. The employees of these businesses will not be able to live there. Also, because the residential units are rental, they can jack up the rent anytime.*

*This oversized project is not what is good for the neighborhood. This is a selfish, disrespectful project designed to put money in the developers pockets.*

*SHA represents this neighborhood. The neighbors have spoken. It is your obligation to deny the rezoning and variances. Please do not be bamboozled by their smoke and mirrors.*

*Please preserve this historic and wonderful neighborhood. Do not turn us into Uptown.*

*Thank you.*

*Rosalyn Goldberg*

*1023 Grand Ave., #6*

*(40 years a renter on Grand, worked at Estaban's in 1980)*

*I realize this was sent a few minutes after midnight. I got home late, and I do not type fast. I did not even edit this, so I could get it to you on time. Please consider this when making your decisions.*

*Thank you. Choose wisely.*





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Please Reject Proposed Zoning Variances for 695 Grand Ave

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Jeff Grady &lt;jjgrady@mmm.com&gt;

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 10:55 AM

To: "ZLU@summithillassociation.org" &lt;ZLU@summithillassociation.org&gt;

Dear Summit Hill Zoning Land Use Committee & Full SHA Board:

I live and own the home at 674 Lincoln Ave. (Corner of Lincoln & St. Albans). We purchased our home in 2001 and have had the pleasure and honor of living in this wonderful neighborhood for 20 years. We are grateful to live in a neighborhood filled with charm and character. As a resident, I served as a neighborhood representative on the SHA/GABA Parking Task force in the early 2000's.

I am writing to ask you to **REJECT** the proposed zoning variances for 695 Grand Ave. I have virtually attended the March/April Developer meetings and the June 7<sup>th</sup> SHA public hearing. I have kept an open mind to new development of 695 Grand, but this proposal is simply wrong (too intrusive- Height/Mass/Impact on neighborhood) and should not be allowed to happen. A few of the reasons I am opposed to this proposal:

1. The proposed building is not compliant with the East Grand Overlay Plan at five stories. The five story height is too massive and is simply being driven by "Economics". The building has actually grown in height from the initial meetings and a fourth Retail space was added at the last minute. The Owner has not been open to making the structure shorter due to economics. Why should the community suffer due to personal economics in this case?
2. Employee Parking- When asked where the 125 employees will park, the answer was "we will figure it out". That is not an acceptable answer. The current residential parking layout may meet the bare minimum requirements but does not account for employees. This will drive parking congestion and safety issues on surrounding blocks which do not have permit parking.
3. I am not opposed to development of 695 Grand Ave. I am opposed to **THIS** development due to the massive scale and what it will do to the neighborhood character. Legacy for family vs. Legacy for Community- the right and only conclusion is Legacy for Community in this case.

To the ZLU & SHA Board, thank you for all the time and energy you have spent on this zoning variance request. That is sincerely appreciated. Please vote to **REJECT** this request.

Sincerely,

**Jeff Grady**

**674 Lincoln Ave.**

**St. Paul, MN 55105**

Mobile: 651-283-3459

[jjgrady@mmm.com](mailto:jjgrady@mmm.com)





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Response to Dixie's Proposal

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**Kathleen G Wenger** <kbmdmpj@aol.com>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 8:13 PM

Reply-To: Kathleen G Wenger &lt;kbmdmpj@aol.com&gt;

To: "zlu@summithillassociation.org" &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

To whom it may concern :

I am writing in opposition to Dixie's proposal to tear down and re-develop 695 Grand Avenue. My reasons are set forth below.

Developing a project at this site is possible and desirable. Current zoning B2 allows a 3-story mixed use project that could create new housing, provide updated space for the restaurants, improve street and sidewalk connections (instead of the large parking lot at the corner). Staying in existing zoning would create positive impacts for Grand *and* St Albans, for businesses *and* residents. Rezoning is **not necessary** for a mixed use project. The Grand Avenue brand is "charming" "historic" "small town"; three-stories will enhance the Grand Avenue brand that attracts customers and residents.

Rezoning is a method to get a higher height and lot coverage limits, but on top of that the developer is also asking to *surpass the higher limits* with a conditional permit and variances, and "zone out" of Grand-specific overlay designed to preserve the historic character of East Grand Avenue.

To reiterate, the proposed development would be detrimental to the character of our neighborhood. Neighborhood character is central to the appeal of Summit Hill. People live, work and shop in areas like Summit Hill, first and foremost, because of its unique and historic character. They appreciate the neighborhood feel and sense of community that the current scale of the neighborhood brings.

The specifics of this proposed development do not satisfy existing zoning rules. Likewise, the proposal does not meet the standards for a change in zoning, or issuance of a variance. The rules and regulations governing this issue are straightforward and protective of the unique, historically significant neighborhood in which we live.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Kate

Kathleen G. Wenger  
[kbmdmpj@aol.com](mailto:kbmdmpj@aol.com)





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## The four corners of Grand and Saint Albans: Correction to info from 695 Grand Development Team

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**Kucera Marit Lee** <maritleekucera@comcast.net>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 10:21 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org, info@summithillassociation.org, Simon Taghioff &lt;simon.taghioff@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: sonja.butler@ci.stpaul.mn.us, luis.pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us, rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us, luiserangelmorales@gmail.com

Dear ZLU and SHA,

This letter is to correct misinformation repeatedly given by Bob Loken of ESG architectural firm for the Kennefick and Reuter Walton project at 695 Grand.

At three of the public Zoom meetings, Mr. Loken stated that one justification for the new 695 to come right up on the property lines on Grand and St. Albans is that the other buildings on the other three corners of the Saint Albans/Grand intersection, all come right up to the sidewalks. Only on the southeast corner, the dry cleaners, is this true.



ABOVE: On the southwest corner, the 3-story apartment building (682 Grand) abuts the sidewalk on the St. Albans side, but the Grand front-of-the-building has 12'8" of grass, scrubs, and trees. Since this used to be a bus stop, there is no boulevard of green grass.



ABOVE: To the west of 682 and directly across the street from the current Dixie's and Emmett's building are 694 and 696 Grand; both have a setback from the sidewalk of approximately 30', with a boulevard of 6'5". The 2-story residential buildings just west of 695 on the north side of Grand, are similar to these shown above, with a wide setback from the sidewalk.





ABOVE: On the northeast corner are two six-unit buildings (30 and 42 South Saint Albans, Fillmore and Walter Homeowner's Association, twelve owner-occupied condos since 1976), with enclosed screen porches that come up to the sidewalk, but there is a 26' wide garden from the south side of #42 South Saint Albans to the Grand sidewalk, running the entire length of the building, approximately 75'. DETAIL BELOW) This garden won an award from GABA in the 1990s as the best garden on Grand. The award came with a black/white photo of the two large stately houses, facing St. Albans, which once occupied what is now Dixie's/695.



BELOW: Plus there is a green garden space with a tree, flowering plants, and hostas, 26' wide x 9', between the two buildings, with parking for condo owners east of the fence.





I respectfully submit these pictures for the record. The contention of the 695/Dixie's development team that the footprint of nearby buildings justifies their to-the-lot-line/sidewalk design is not true; it is false.

Thank you to ZLU and SHA for all the time and efforts all have given to this 695 development project. As a 45+-year resident (both renter and owner), I urge you, please, be sure that all the "facts" given by the 695 Development Team are true, pertinent, valid, and verifiable.

I urge you to support the East Grand Avenue Overlay District guidelines.

Respectfully,  
Marit Kucera  
30 South Saint Albans



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**Michele Molstead** <michelemolstead@icloud.com>  
To: Summit Hill Association <ZLU@summithillassociation.org>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 5:23 PM

Hello Summit Hill Association,

I am writing to share my strong support for the proposed mixed-use development at [695 Grand Avenue](#), a few blocks from my residence.

My support is based on three issues:

- Our neighborhood's inequitable East Grand Overlay policy
- Our city's housing crisis
- Our planet's climate crisis

Research involving urban density and its effects on inequity, housing, and the environment is solid, as I'm certain you're much more aware of than I. The proposed development addresses each of the above issues in a positive manner.

I also commend the developers and architects for their public engagement process, which went beyond my expectations, and for creating a design that fits nicely with the neighborhood character. I would happily live, eat, drink, and shop there, and will encourage others to do the same.

In summary, I request that you support the 695 Grand Avenue project by granting zoning changes and variances needed.

Best regards,  
Michele Molstead  
Saint Paul



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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**695 Grand Ave**

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**Carl Ohrn** <ohrncarl@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 8:06 PM

Dear SHA Board

I am very supportive of more housing in St. Paul. Five and six story apartments are great...on Snelling, University, West Seventh (in some areas) and other major transit corridors. But not on Grand Avenue that has limited bus service.

I do not support the development proposed for 695 Grand. The footprint is huge and way out of scale with surrounding development. This is already a very dense residential part of the neighborhood. We also do not need more apartment buildings with retail space that goes vacant.

Four stories with setbacks from the adjacent residential like the development at Oxford Place is the maximum scale we should support for the redevelopment of Grand

Please do not extend support for this development in the name of the Summit Hill Neighborhood.

Thank you  
Carl Ohrn

Sent from my iPhone



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Avenue

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**William Pesek** <williampesekcity@gmail.com>

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 11:10 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Cc: Carole &lt;carottee@aol.com&gt;

Trusted Members of SHA,  
Please share w all voting members.

I oppose the granting of a T3 status for the above address.

I oppose the granting of a conditional permit also.

Many people worked so long and so hard to put together a long range view into the future by developing a plan accepted by the city for this neighborhood.

Now a developer and business person are insulting the work of this neighborhood by proposing a development that is not in good faith following our plan.

The main concern is that the buildings scale does not compliment the neighborhood's surrounding ambiance. The team has spent time and money trying to push this "you'll like it" idea without even working to change the scale of this complex and again, that's what our neighborhood is wanting, scaling back of that massive structure..

We are not opposed to revitalization -just adhere to our Summit Hill's development plan.

I hope all reading this will walk to the south side of Grand and project up what the height of the proposed bldg will be. Does it reflect what our community's plan is? No. Does it tower over adjacent structures?

I hope all reading will stand on the n side of Grand and vision how an out of scale structure will dwarf those bldgs across the street.

Additional Traffic on Grand and our neighborhood, additional noise, less green space, more carbon footprint, another variance? Why add more to the pot!!!

This project must respect our neighborhoods concerns and only then can this project advance.

Please vote against the proposal for 685 development.

Thank you  
Bill Pesek  
769 Lincoln Avenue.





ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave Development

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**PeggyReichert** <par8313@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 7:50 PM

Dear SHA

I am very supportive of redevelopment on Grand Avenue...provided it is generally in scale with the neighborhood.

The proposed Dixie.s redevelopment does not respect the scale of the neighborhood in massing, height, and setbacks. It is larger in massing and scale than the development under construction at University and Dale and University Avenue. The project on University is set back more from the alley and adjacent residential behind than the proposed dixie's redevelopment would be.

The recent neighborhood survey indicates that the vast majority of the residents of Summit Hill support redevelopment and SOME potential revisions to the current overlay zone, but not this much. Summit Hill residents want to maintain the charm and historic character of the neighborhood . This massive building will not enhance the charm of our neighborhood, especially in this historic and architecturally significant location adjacent to Summit and Saint Albans.

This project, as recently revised to address (allegedly) neighborhood concerns, would also add additional retail space. The market research commissioned by SHA concluded there was too much retail space on Grand and the market could not support all that is currently provided.

I would support a 4 story development with at least 25 foot setback from the alley and 10 feet on st albans with and a stepped back second floor and above on all sides

I cannot support this project as designed and i urge the SHA Board to please listen to the neighborhood and withhold endorsement.

Thank you for all the work you done on this

Regards  
Peggy Reichert  
617 Goodrich

Sent from my iPad

Sent from my iPhone



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Zoning Variances

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**Eric Ruhland** <dr.ruhland@gmail.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 9:51 PM

Dear Summit Hill Association Board,

My name is Eric Ruhland. I am a local home owner ([790 Summit Ave](#)), and local business owner(St Paul Pet Hospital).

I purchased my home on Summit Ave just over 7 years ago. During that time we have converted a dilapidated vacant home into a historic gem, and retrofitted an old grocery store space into a veterinary hospital. I have obeyed the principles of historic preservation and seem confused by the recent push to turn this neighborhood into something it is not, and something it does not want to be.

I ask that you vote to reject these zoning variances proposed at 695 Grand Ave and others like it. We have not come all this way to bow to the pressure of the almighty dollar.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Eric Ruland

--

Dr. Eric Ruhland *Owner*  
St. Paul Pet Hospital  
Cell: **651-238-6815**  
Office: **651-789-6275**  
Fax: **651-225-0869**



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## Letter of Protest Regarding Zoning Application for Variances by 695 Grand Avenue Development Group

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Susan St John &lt;privateartmn@gmail.com&gt;

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 7:16 PM

To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

June 10, 2021

Mr. Torstenson,

Thank you for your reply to my query regarding the specific zoning and variance requests of the 695 Grand Avenue development team.

I am however somewhat baffled that the developers are asking for what I understand to be 'spot zoning'. **By my understanding "Spot Zoning" is illegal in Minnesota.**

Per your communication dated June 10, 2021:

*"The requested rezoning, conditional use permit, and variance are just for the 695 Grand site itself, at the NW corner of Grand and St. Albans."*

According to Wikipedia:

**Spot zoning** is the application of zoning to a specific parcel or parcels of land within a larger zoned area when the rezoning is usually at odds with a city's master plan and current zoning restrictions. Spot zoning may be ruled invalid as an "arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable treatment" of a limited parcel of land by a local zoning ordinance.<sup>[1]</sup> While zoning regulates the land use in whole districts, spot zoning makes unjustified exceptions for a parcel or parcels within a district.<sup>[2]</sup>

"Spot zoning---defined as creating an island by singling out a parcel for special privileges not consistent with surrounding uses...The practice is illegal in Minnesota. *Star Tribune October 1, 2011.*"

This rezoning request amounts to **"spot zoning" of the type forbidden by federal regulation(s) deferred to in the applicable Minnesota Statute.** It is not being undertaken as part of comprehensive zoning and would be done primarily to allow this developer to build a five-story building in this location. This amounts to an unjustified exception to the existing zoning codes with the primary benefit to the property owner and investors and it differs significantly from the zoning of other property in the immediate area.

**Could you kindly clarify the justification that is being offered for this spot zoning request?**

Thank you for your interest,

Marilyn Bach

Saint Paul, Minnesota

**In Addition:**

Susan St. John, Resident  
[25 South Saint Albans Street](#)  
[Saint Paul 55105](#)  
[privateartmn@gmail.com](mailto:privateartmn@gmail.com)  
Cell: 651.491.4431

I agree with Marilyn Bach's letter, however,  
she has overlooked a very important point:

It is incorrect to compare the 695 Grand Avenue project to the Grand Place Development since the 695 project will have four commercial sites including restaurants and other shops. Commercial businesses generate significant delivery trucks, extra trash and most critical--- significant traffic which Grand Place, a residential building does not generate and Grand Place has the space already designated in the original design in the back of the structure to handle nonresidential, extra traffic.

Thank you,  
Susan St. John

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**In addition:** -----

**June 10, 2021**

**To: Saint Paul Decision Makers**

We have taken particular note that the 695 Grand Avenue development team has taken the position that the [695 Grand Avenue](#) proposed project" fits "into the existing neighborhood since there are two larger buildings in the vicinity. I assert that these comparisons are invalid.

The extensive rezoning and variance requests of the [695 Grand Avenue](#) development team totally disregard established governmental processes of zoning and planning. Why are there planning and zoning guidelines if a developer can simply proceed as if they do not apply – and whatever the developer decides –will be best for any given neighborhood?

In order to build the 695 Grand Avenue project as designed, the 695-development team is requesting:

**Rezoning from B2 to T3**

- + Spot zoning out of the east grand avenue overlay district
- +. CUP to exceed the height limit of T3

- + Variances so they can exceed the allowed setback between Grand and the restaurant space.

Exacerbating the situation is the fact that the most recent response which Reuter Walton submitted to queries by ZLU SHA calls for an even higher building than the previous proposal. The building has 'grown taller'. The top of the roof was 56-8 and now it's 59-10.

The other two larger buildings in the area give far more 'breathing room' to the neighborhood in which they reside.

And any comparison to these existing buildings is false and misleading.

#### **Oxford Hill Condominium Development, built in 2005.**

Not only is the 695 Grand Avenue proposed building nearly twice the size of the existing Oxford Hill Condominiums,

Oxford Hill Condominium Development is:

Generously separated from the alley by 56 feet.

Physically separated by a structural fence which steps down to integrate better with the neighborhood on the southside of the street so shadows are cast onto the street.

#### **2. Grand Place**

Built in 1981, prior to East Grand Overlay District zoning

- i. Tallest building on Grand Avenue –65 feet tall
- ii. Set back from Grand Avenue by approx. 30 feet
- iii. Set back on the East and West by 12 feet, and set back 26 feet from the alley
- iv. Built on the north side of street so this building casts shadow onto a parking lot

In contrast, the [695 Grand Avenue](#) project, basically "fills the available space" --- and cannot be fairly compared to these two buildings — which give 'breathing room' to the neighborhoods in which they reside. 695 Grand Avenue building would be set back from an alley that is already treacherously icy in winter by **a mere 8 feet—without a physical barrier between the proposed building and the alley.**

The proposed 695 Grand Avenue project gives **no 'breathing room' to the neighborhood** in which it will reside and is a drastic intrusion into the **historic and densest node of Summit Hill neighborhood --- the North West corner of Grand Avenue, a narrow two-way street and Saint Albans Street South, a one-way street.**

I strongly urge ZLUSHA to reject the zoning and variances request of the 695 Grand Avenue development team.

Marilyn Bach

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ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Ave

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**David Stevens** <davidstevens26@gmail.com>  
To: zlu@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 11:00 AM

I'm not sure we have anything new to say, but Janet and I want to contribute a few comments.

The bottom line up front: we think the project should proceed.

Our rationale is:

- We think that we need investment in both retail and housing on Grand Ave, with consequent property tax income.
- We prefer a local hand in the development, and fear a sale to some anonymous investor who might care much less about the community.
- We understand the concerns about height but hope that the zoning process can find the right path to allow progress without flouting precedent.
- We hear the 'we need a building of this size in order to be economically viable' argument from the developer, but have never seen any real evidence supporting the argument.
- We appreciate what we sense is a sincere attempt to engage the community, although we also sense that only cosmetic changes have been made in response to that engagement.

Janet and I moved to Crocus Hill about 2 years ago, moving from Lake Elmo where we had lived since moving to the US in 2001.

We are originally from the UK so may miss some of the cultural and zoning nuances in play here!

Many thanks.



ZLU Committee &lt;zlu@summithillassociation.org&gt;

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## 695 Grand Avenue Project

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**Christopher Tyndall** <tyndallchristopher@yahoo.com>  
To: ZLU@summithillassociation.org

Fri, Jun 11, 2021 at 12:22 AM

Esteemed Members of the Summit Hill Association Zoning and Land Use Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed construction project for 695 Grand Avenue in its current form. I am a resident of the Como Park neighborhood in Saint Paul but am a frequent visitor to the area around the site of the proposed project. First of all, I should point out that I am a strong proponent of creating in our city increased options for "high-density" living. The environmental and social costs of our sprawling patterns of development are too high, and it is time to encourage new sorts of development that allow residents to live healthy and meaningful lives without wasting an abundance of land and natural resources to achieve this goal. The currently-proposed apartment building and the restaurants it would house might seem at first glance to represent a development project that lives up to the ideal I have suggested here.

Unfortunately, I am strongly doubtful that this is the case. Missing from the vast majority of discussions about "high-density" housing is the implied meaning of this term, which is much more along the lines of "high-density lifestyle." This higher-density lifestyle allows residents to live a greater part of their lives closer to home, to waste less time just getting from one remote place to another, to interact more with their neighbors living around them and to consume fewer of the world's natural resources in so doing. The problem with the current proposal is that it does nothing to promote this changed lifestyle. Whether there is one family living at 695 Grand Avenue or one thousand, the fact of the matter is that the neighborhood and transportation resources remain the same as before. There is no reason why the tenants of the proposed apartment building will use transit alternatives any more than any of the other residents of the neighborhood. There is no reason why they will seek jobs close to home or shop close to home. What will happen is that an enormous number of residents living in an over-sized apartment building will be living a low-density lifestyle based on driving great distances by car away from home either for work or to shop. The building as it is proposed will only increase vehicle traffic to the area, and the associated noise and pollution, as residents drive in and out of the location and an endless number of commercial and delivery cars and trucks deliver food for the restaurants or Amazon and Fed-ex packages to the residents. And while a few of the building tenants might occasionally choose to dine close to home in one of the building restaurants, the vast majority of patrons will drive in from far away, just as has always been the case with the restaurants at this location.

True high-density housing needs to be part of a coordinated plan so that not only is housing offered to residents, but other important resources they need for their daily lives are also offered as well. High-density housing needs to be promoted as part of a coordinated plan that truly leads to a change in our low-density lifestyle.

Thank you very much for considering my views as you make your recommendations in regard to this project.

Sincerely,  
Christopher R. Tyndall