

From: [Phil Grant](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Re the 695 (Dixie's) proposal
Date: Sunday, August 8, 2021 2:50:56 PM

8.8.21

To: St. Paul City Council Members

“We had to destroy the neighborhood in order to save it.”

As far as I can tell, that’s the strongest argument brought forth by proponents of the 695 Grand proposal.

I’m referring, of course, to the steroidal vision of a five-story building in a three-story neighborhood. A grandiose vision of multiple, overpriced units crammed into a small space. Just like slums of yore, but shiny! And big! What’s not to dislike? Did I mention it’s really big?

I’m a new renter, now living on the next block. I moved to this neighborhood because I was attracted by its combination of quality architecture, walkability, and affordability. Why should I care about the Dixie’s proposal?

I care because blight is blight, regardless of type or origin. I’ve heard someone call the proposal sleazy. I don’t think it’s sleazy. Just an eyesore. It meets none of my needs, while disrupting my parking. So, yeah, I care about my convenience as well as aesthetic blight. And I don’t want to move.

I heard that the Summit Hill Association (SHA) expressed support. Then I heard that the immediate neighbors—those most affected by this monstrosity—couldn’t even vote on it. Apparently, the SHA has an unusual anti-democratic feature: neighbors can’t vote on a project if they live too close to it. Despite a lifelong interest in good governance, I can’t wrap my head around that quirk. I say, No Variation Without Representation!

If this project goes forth despite overwhelming local opposition, I fear for other neighborhoods as well. Which ones will be destroyed in order to save them?

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P.S. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments. Note that I have no problem with any proposal that fits within established zoning guidelines.