

April 5, 2017

Josh Williams
City of Saint Paul, Dept. of Planning and Economic Development
25 W. Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Josh;

On March 22, 2017, the Housing and Land Use Committee (“HLU”) of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council (“MGCC”) held a public meeting, at which it considered the site plan for a proposed mixed-use structure at the properties located at 246-286 Snelling Ave. The applicant, who has appeared before the HLU to discuss the project on three prior occasions, appeared to speak to the site plan and to answer questions.

Prior to the meeting, the HLU received twenty-four (24) comments expressing a variety of opinions regarding the current site plan design and additional feedback was shared at the meeting. After speaking with the applicant, considering neighborhood feedback, consulting the Macalester Groveland Long Range plan, and assessing the merits of the application, the HLU makes the following observations and recommendations concerning the site plan dated 3/22/2017:

- A stated goal of the Long Range plan is to “Support land use that preserves Macalester-Groveland as a uniquely connected, walkable, mixed-use sustainable neighborhood with a *pedestrian-oriented human-scale streetscape*.”
- Another stated goal of the Long Range plan is to “explore creating and/or implementing design standards that promote pedestrian-friendly streetscapes—*especially along mixed-use corridors*.”
- The HLU provides the following feedback in furtherance of those goals:
 - Beautify Alley Wall: The wall as shown on plans dated 3/22/207 is long, uninterrupted and shown as one material. Design features or textural elements should be added to this surface.
 - Improve Streetscape: Pedestrian-friendly alternatives to a uniform façade at the street level on the Snelling side should continue to be developed. Possible options include:
 - Variation in building frontage, such as recessed “nooks” or seating areas at sidewalk level. There is excellent visual “place-making” potential for this type of design.

- Visually breaking up the building into different sections with distinct, yet related feel, creating a different rhythm in different sections as if they were a collection of retailers or a collection of buildings. Some sections could have awnings and windows could fluctuate on size or design. Brick could differ slightly in tone or texture to create interest.
 - Incorporate landscaping into the building façade through screening that includes planter boxes, ivy trellis etc.
 - Maximize window openings into “active” spaces and eliminate spandrel windows.
- Setback of upper floors: To the extent possible, upper residential floors should be set back to reduce the mass of the building.
- Minimize curb cuts on St. Clair: The width of the final curb cut providing access from the parking level to St. Clair Ave should be minimized, especially considering the proximity to the alley.
- Pedestrian Safety: Include pedestrian safety improvements for all driveways crossing sidewalks including signage, pavement markings and multiple mirrors.
- Provide for conversion of parking into retail: Future market conditions may allow for a reduction in parking spaces provided at this site. Design and construction should be completed in such a way as to allow for conversion of current parking area into future retail area.
- Bike parking: Facilities for bike parking should be included in three areas:
 - Outside the publicly accessible retail space
 - In the public area of the enclosed parking garage
 - On the first floor of the portion of the parking garage dedicated to residential tenants
- Roofline variation: To the extent possible, incorporate variation in the roofline and windows to create visual and architectural interest.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Liz Boyer
Executive Director
Macalester-Groveland Community Council

cc (via email): Ward 3, City of Saint Paul
Tia Anderson, City of Saint Paul Department of License and Inspections
Tom Hayden, LeCesse Development Inc.