

November 20, 2017

Re: Houden Proposal for 700 block East Johnson

To Whom It May Concern:

The Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association (TLNA) Council has considered the proposal by Chris Houden for 717 through 751 E. Johnson Street, south side only. On Nov. 9, 2017, **TLNA Council voted 10-4 to oppose the proposal** and the associated zoning change from TR-V2 to NMX.

Given that TLNA Council is made up of neighbors from across Tenney-Lapham, as was the Steering Committee that evaluated the proposal and advised Council prior to their Nov. 9 vote, these findings represent the opinions of the neighborhood. A strong majority of the Steering Committee also opposed the proposal.

TLNA hopes that readers will investigate and appreciate the opinions of all involved, including the Steering Committee and other neighborhood input, all available at our development website: <http://www.tenneylapham.org/development.html>.

We do appreciate the willingness of the development team to meet multiple times with the Steering Committee and TLNA Council. Their willingness to listen to and address neighborhood input was helpful. Most members of both Council and the Steering Committee felt that the proposal improved as the neighborhood process unfolded, but not sufficiently to warrant overall support.

Following are aspects of the proposal that TLNA Council finds **unfavorable to the neighborhood**:

- The proposal **does not follow many aspects of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan**, hence the City's Comprehensive Plan, related to protecting and enhancing the built portions of the neighborhood.
- Given the scale of the proposal, the portions of the Neighborhood Plan that call for additional commercial and mixed-use space on this block of E. Johnson are outweighed by the Plan's many calls for **preservation of existing housing stock and neighborhood fabric in the established portions of the neighborhood**.
- The proposed new buildings **do not support the organic conversion of residential structures to mixed uses** with some small-scale redevelopment that is envisioned in the Neighborhood Plan.
- The scale of the two proposed new buildings, particularly in depth, width and footprint, is **too large compared to the adjacent older homes and other structures**, including the new RPG building being constructed adjacent to the proposal site on E. Johnson.
- The demolition of 3 homes and the potential moving of 4 others (3 offsite and 1 onsite) contribute to the **loss of historical context** in an established portion of Tenney-Lapham.
- The proposal contributes to the inflation of neighborhood land values due to speculative teardown/replacement development proposals in the built part of the neighborhood, which drives up housing costs, **promotes demolition by neglect, and if teardowns proliferate, will further negatively impact the fabric of the neighborhood**.
- **The lack of an affordable housing component** in the new buildings does not support

TLNA's 2016 statement on affordable housing in new apartment buildings (see TLNA development website). Note that in 2009, City Row on E. Johnson was supported by TLNA Council despite the demolition of 11 older rental houses due primarily to it being a 100% affordable housing development.

- TLNA Council does not consider the existing apartments that are to be retained or moved to be bona fide affordable housing given that **rent structures are unknown and cannot be guaranteed.**

Following are aspects of the proposal that TLNA Council finds are larger **issues that TLNA, the City and the Developer should work further resolve should the proposal move forward:**

- **The footprints of the two new buildings should be reduced** to better match adjacent structures on Johnson, Livingston, Dayton and Blount, particularly in the rear.
- The proposed sites for all 4 moved homes should be **verified as compliant with all zoning and building codes** before the proposal is fully considered by the City.
- At least 10% of the new buildings' units should be **bona fide affordable housing with a range of income restrictions.** The developer's earlier offer to underwrite the affordability of the affordable units could be revisited and potentially formalized with an agreement between the developer and the neighborhood, although with a wider range of CMI caps. Any agreement, provision, or deed restriction that details the developer's self-funding of affordable units should be fully vetted by TLNA Council and should TLNA Council hire an attorney to review proposed agreements, any legal fees incurred by TLNA Council should be paid by the developer.
- Neighbors had a range of opinions about the contemporary style of the new buildings, so the **new buildings' aesthetics should be carefully reviewed** by city staff and UDC, assuring its appropriateness in the built portion of Tenney-Lapham.
- City Traffic Engineering and Planning staff should carefully **consider the cumulative increase in traffic on N. Livingston and other nearby streets**, including the bike boulevard, that is created by this and all recent nearby developments before this proposal's parking ramp entrance/exit location is approved. Traffic calming on nearby streets should be encouraged.
- While TLNA Council is encouraged by the latest proposal version's number of larger units, which includes an existing 4-bdrm unit and nine 3-bdrm units, we would prefer **as many large, family-friendly units as possible in the new buildings** so that residents could send children to and support Lapham School.
- Commercial entities that locate in the mixed-use building should appeal to neighbors, be locally owned, and enhance the neighborhood. Office usage for the commercial spaces is undesirable. **Primary customer bases should be those who walk or bike**, thereby reducing parking pressures from commercial customers and employees.
- **Additional green features**, including solar panels, rain barrels to decrease runoff, etc., should be considered whenever possible in all of the buildings, thereby providing a benefit to the community.

Should the proposal move forward, TLNA Council believes that in addition to the previously stated unresolved issues, these **conditions are important to the project's ability to contribute to Tenney-Lapham:**

- Exhaust fans for the parking level should create minimal noise, should not negatively

impact neighbors' quality of life, and should not face N. Livingston or E. Dayton neighbors.

- Garbage bin placement and emptying should not negatively impact neighbors on N. Livingston or E. Dayton.
- HVAC systems with exterior components should create minimal noise and be aesthetically unobtrusive for neighboring properties on all sides. Exterior venting/input for living and commercial units should be flush mounted if not on roofs. Usage of Magic-Paks or other HVAC grills should be discouraged, but if used they should not face neighboring buildings on adjacent properties or across streets. Wall packs mounted on balconies should be mounted perpendicular to or towards the building's facade and face away from all neighboring properties.
- Given the proposed large decrease in useable soil/green areas and grade-level soil, assure proper drainage away from neighbors on all sides.
- Gardening opportunities and truly usable green space for tenants should be maximized on top of the parking plinth, in areas at grade, and on patios and decks.
- Electric car-charging stations should be included in the parking level.
- A Zipcar stall in the parking level is crucial to encouraging new tenants to forgo car ownership. The Zipcar should also be available to other neighbors, providing an important benefit to Tenney-Lapham. Zipcar does have nearby locations, but with the increasing density in the neighborhood, we feel that more locations are warranted.
- Given the increasing strain on street parking, indoor and exterior bicycle parking should exceed city requirements.
- Residents of the proposed development should not have access to City residential parking permits should the program be in existence or established on nearby streets. We realize that this is currently City policy for larger new developments, but want to reiterate our concern. Current residents of any retained, but not moved, existing houses who have permits could be grandfathered into a parking permit program, but new residents should not be allowed to participate.
- The developer should underground all utility wiring.
- Maximize and retain street trees and yard trees. Canopy-sized trees should be used for the street terrace whenever allowed by the Fire Department, since utility undergrounding will allow the planting of larger tree species. Wherever possible, the development's design should allow for canopy-sized trees in side and/or rear yard areas to provide shade and a visual buffer for neighbors.
- Retain the placement of the first floor retail/commercial space at ground level, including its large windows, to increase its attractiveness.
- Should dogs be allowed, at least one station for the collection of dog waste should be included in the project so as to discourage dog waste from collecting on nearby streets.

Sincerely,



Patty Prime  
TLNA President