

Comments on Project DR23-0004; 228 Packard Street
December 12, 2023

Members of the Ann Arbor City Design Review Board.

My wife and I have lived at 528 South Fourth Avenue since the late 1970s. We purchased a very run down home and outbuildings property built 1898 for working class German Immigrants. Over the course of several years we built an architecturally fitting (same design and footprint as the original structure) new home, garage, patio, and tool shed where we could live and raise our family. We have been supporters of higher density Ann Arbor City Residential projects for the most part over the years. We hoped when Fingerle's Lumber went up for sale that a Real Estate Development Company would buy it and put in more single-family housing. Once the University of Michigan announced it had purchased Fingerle's, we hoped they would build new housing in our area especially for Married Students and Students with Children.

After the initial review of the DR23-0004 project, we are concerned about the demolition of so many old German Neighborhood houses, and we understand part of the proposed project is an eight story Parking Garage. I know there is not much you or the City of Ann Arbor can do to influence or change what the University of Michigan is building and will do with the old Fingerle Lumber property and surrounding neighborhood to the north and east. However, DR23-0004 228 Packard Street is a privately proposed and funded building project that cannot move forward without dramatic changes to the existing zoning for the Old German Town houses and few existing low-rise older apartment buildings that will be demolished and replaced.

I walk routinely around our neighborhood, the campus, and downtown areas. I have never seen except for the occasional Football Saturday any of the existing Ann Arbor City, Privately Owned, or University parking lots/structures filled with no public parking available. The recently approved and built high-rise residential in our South Main Street area all have underground and some street level main floor parking for residents etc. We cannot see the need now or in the future with all the area's transportation and parking amenities (including the main city bus terminal) around this proposed project within easy walking distances, and the City's own unfilled parking lots and structures to approve any sort of high-rise parking structure surrounded by residential living and the University of Michigan Student Buildings. Do we really want commuters and increased vehicle traffic within high density residential areas where people and bicycles are also in high density moving about day and night?

There cannot be a commercially viable reason that the high-rise residential buildings proposed for this development project cannot also have below ground and/or street level areas set aside for resident vehicle parking. Please do not approve any plans that contain a separate parking structure or multiple stories above ground within the proposed apartment buildings for vehicle parking in this area set aside for non-building resident commuters. We are frankly also concerned that allowing these new high rise residential buildings taking down all but 5 homes of the existing block will further and more seriously damage the appeal of living in the Old Germantown neighborhood and district. Is Ann Arbor's long term plan to have the City Center Business and Housing district expand with high rise only structures further and further south and east? Will the Old West Side face the same sorts of high-rise development? Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dennis and Connie Burke
528 South Fourth Avenue
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
(734) 996-2416
burkedw@umich.edu

