

21 June 2021

RE: C14-2021-0078, Rezoning from LO to DMU-CO  
812 W. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, TX

Planning Commissioners:

Let me be perfectly clear, I have no objection to the change in zoning from LO to DMU-60 as recommended by staff, in the Downtown Plan and referenced in Austin's Preservation Guidelines. I strenuously object to a 90' height. At that height the project, on a relatively high point in the topography, will loom over its historic neighbors. The Original Austin Neighborhood has a rich mixture of historic houses, houses that have been converted to offices, historic public buildings and schools. As a neighborhood community we value the historic setting, encourage conservation, enhance urban green space, support multi-modal transportation, pedestrian access and support new denser development that is *respectful* of the historic context. The 90' height requested is not respectful of the small street or the property's historic neighbors. It is not respectful of a graceful urbanization of Austin as envisioned by the Downtown Austin Plan.

However, height and history are not the real objections. It is the arrogant premise that this density is about affordability. I understand it is "targeting" those in our community making less than 55,000 annually. These are lofty goals and I applaud them. But they are feel good goals that grant entitlements that go on for generations, without addressing lasting changes in affordability or moving the needle on housing those currently unsheltered. These are targets and not guaranteed! There is a big difference among a new graduate making 55k, a family of 3 or 4 with a parent who has been in the workforce for 10 years and a retiree who has successfully downsized and carefully sculpted income vs assets. All would be eligible if it is income driven only. Without the policies that keep these units affordable *for those who really need them* over generations or tie entitlements to tackling the more difficult housing challenges in the community, the gains are short-lived at best, or worse yet non-existent by the time the units change lease the first time.

This type of affordability giveaway feeds to the egos of those of us who feel we are not part of the problem and indeed are doing something to fix it. We are not. We criminalize those who are unsheltered and applaud the bright shiny new urbanist model with a catchy name. Until we demand that the developer provide units that accommodate *families* at the affordable rents, or clearly tell those of us who pay for these giveaways exactly how long the rents remain affordable and using what metrics, and / or how the gains the city might reap from the entitlement will be used provide the support, services and units for those that continue to be unsheltered, the granting of the CO is hollow lip service and feel good salve and *costly to the city as a whole*. There is nothing in this project that can tie the additional height to any of these goals.

I know we want to do the right thing; however density alone is not the right tool. When public entitlements are given there should be true public gains over and above what the law currently allows.

Given the historic homes and offices nearby and the Downtown Plan recommending DMU-60 is more than reasonable. The dispensation for parking would certainly be granted, as would the mixed uses requested.

*If the project housed John and others who have lived under the bridge at Shoal Creek, or occasionally on my porch; provided welcome and succor to those most in need at that location I would be all in and then some, other wise 90' is a hard NO! Please follow staff recommendation.*

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna D. Carter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donna" being the most prominent part.

Donna D. Carter, FAIA