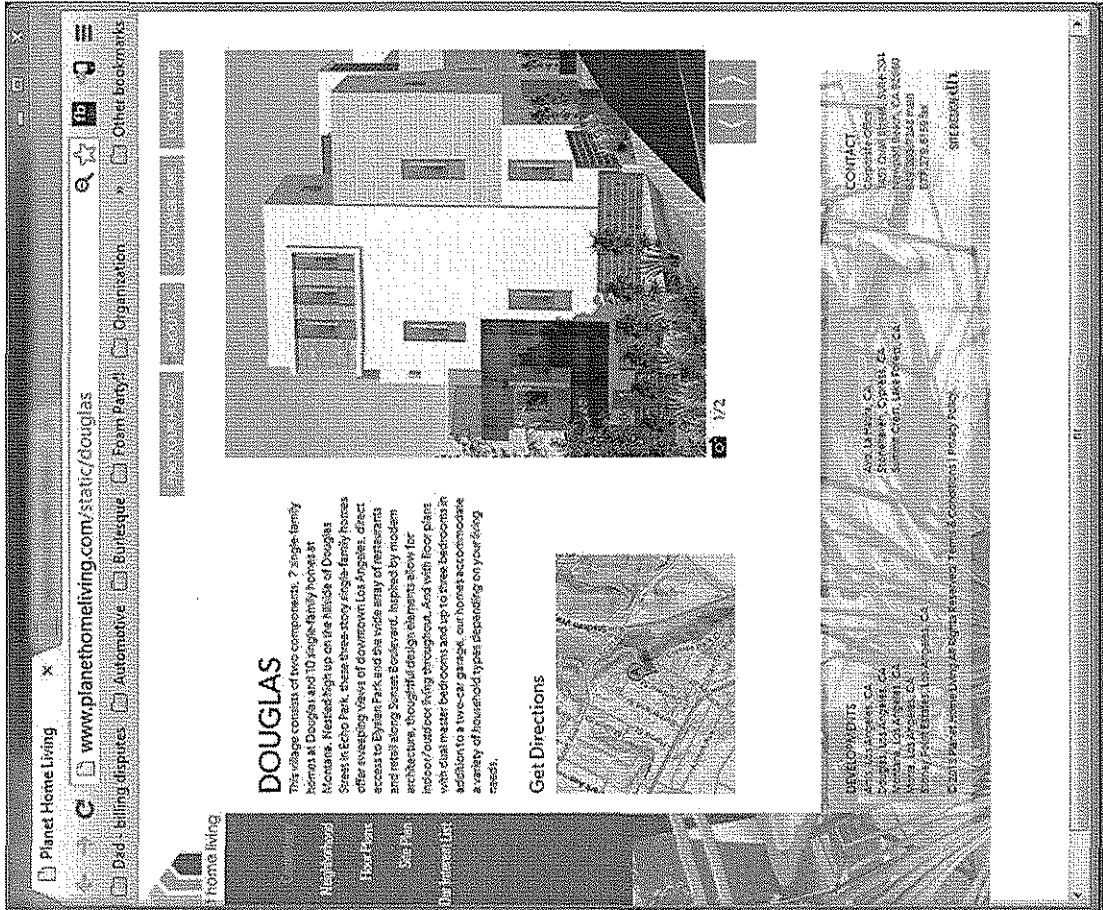
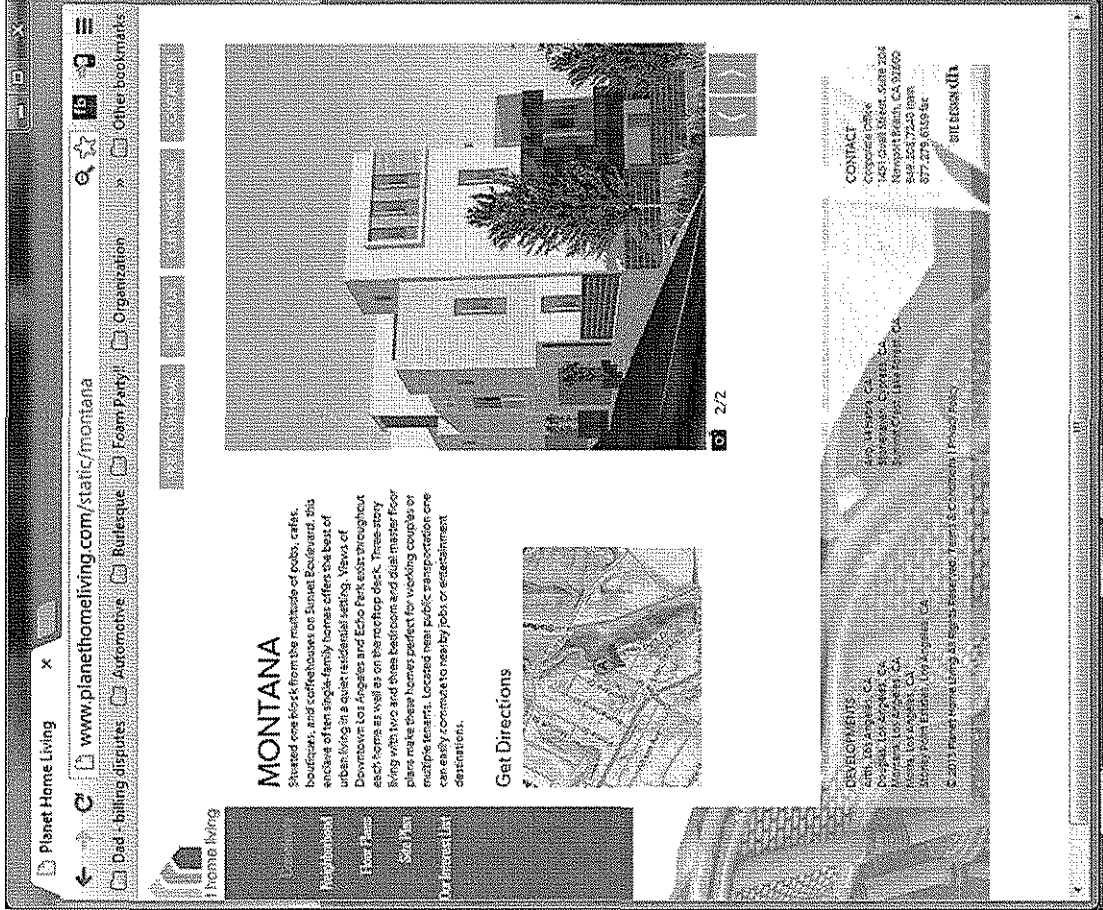


Ann-Marie Holman
1355 Elysian Park Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 268-2761
diamondbackannie@gmail.com

Neighbor Opinion re: Development at
1363 N. Douglas St 90026
Los Angeles City Council Hearing
April 9, 2013
council file # 13-0324

Side-by-side screen captures of the developer's website, taken 4/2/2013, show identical homes being planned for two different developments on the same block of Douglas Street. This lack of architectural variety directly violates the City of LA's own Suggested Guidelines for Small Lot Development, as well as the Echo Park Improvement Association's "Echo Park Design Guidelines."



PUTTING IDENTICAL BUILDINGS ON THE SAME BLOCK GOES AGAINST THE LOCAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Quote from the SILVER LAKE-ECHO PARK-ELYSIAN VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN > Chapter V - Urban Design > Design Policies for Individual Projects > Multiple Family Residential > Design (page V-8/page 94 in PDF):

"The design of all buildings should be of a quality and character that improves community appearance by avoiding excessive variety or monotonous repetition."

THE CITY COUNCIL IS REQUIRED TO MAKE LAND USE DECISIONS CONSISTENT WITH THIS COMMUNITY PLAN

Quote from the CITY OF LOS ANGELES GENERAL PLAN > HOUSING ELEMENT > Chapter I - Introduction > Purpose of the General Plan:

"California State law requires that the day-to-day decisions of a city follow logically from, and be consistent with, the General Plan. More specifically, Government Code Sections 65860, 66473.5, and 656474 require that divisions of land approvals and zoning ordinances as well as other plans and decisions be consistent with the General Plan."

This means that the LA City Council must uphold the Silver Lake Echo Park Community Plan, because the community plans for each of the city's 35 Community Planning Areas represent the land use elements of the overarching citywide general plan.

At a minimum, city council should make sure Planet Home Living's Douglas St developments have clearly distinct characters.

ZIMAS

1333N DOUGLAS ST [Enter Address]

Address: 1333 N DOUGLAS ST
City: Los Angeles
State: CA
Zip: 90012

Parcel: 1333 N DOUGLAS ST
Area: 0.02 Acres
Zoning: R2

Map Layers: Aerial, Proposed, Zoning, Public, Bicycle, Fire, Bike, Business, Hospital, Library, Museum, Park, Police, Public, Rail, School, Social Services, Water, Waste, Other

Navigation: Home, About, Contact, Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, Feedback, Help

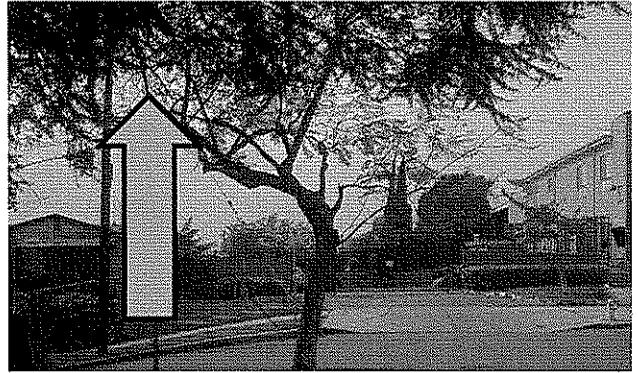
ZIMAS map showing that the two parcels being developed by Planet Home Living are just across the street from each other.

This is 1363 Douglas...

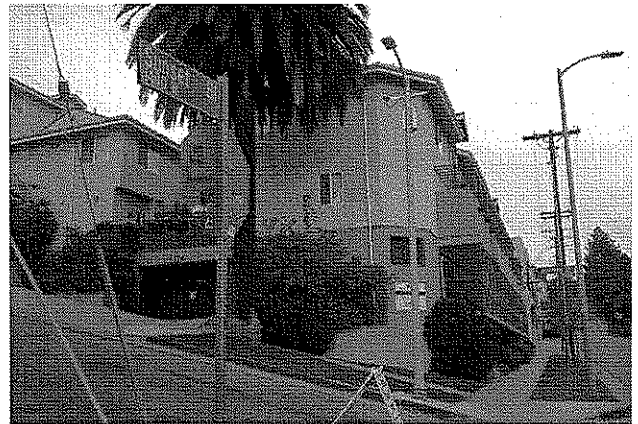
...and this is 1330 Douglas.

WHY EXISTING MULTIPLE-FAMILY/MULTIPLE STORY RESIDENCES IN THE AREA DON'T SET A HEIGHT PRECEDENT FOR 1363 DOUGLAS

The 2-story apartment building on the right-hand side of this photo - while immediately north of the construction site - is still too short to avoid having city views to the south blocked completely if densely packed 3-story buildings are put there. The arrow indicates about how tall 3-story buildings would be at 1363 Douglas, based on the height of the single-story cottage at the far left which will be torn down for Planet Home Living's development.



Planet Home Living might have submitted a photo of these 3-story townhomes to support claims that the height and density of their planned developments are typical of the neighborhood. But they're on a different street: Quintero, not Douglas. Not only are these townhomes at the base of a steep hill, where they don't block neighbors' sightlines...they're also mostly in a commercial zone because they're right on Sunset, as can be seen by their location on the ZIMAS map below:



ZIMAS

1363 N DOUGLAS ST

Address Legal

Site Address	1373 N DOUGLAS ST
Site Address	1269 N DOUGLAS ST
Site Address	1265 N DOUGLAS ST
Site Address	1363 N DOUGLAS ST
ZIP Code	80202
PIN Number	159-54211 128
Unimproved Area Calculated	6,849 sq ft
Thomas Brothers Grid	PAGE 054 - GRID 07
Assessor Parcel NO. (APN)	2426210010
Town	GOLDEN WEST HEIGHTS
Map Reference	M R 24-01
Block	None
LAX	VAC ORD 17526
Map Sheet	123-FA111

Planning and Zoning

- Assessor
- Case Numbers
- Citywide Code Amendment Cases
- Additional
- Seismic Hazards
- Economic Development Areas
- Public Safety

DOUGLAS STREET IS CHARACTERIZED BY SINGLE-STORY RESIDENCES

Of the 18 residences on Douglas Street, only 5 are 2 stories high. These are the 5.

There are NO three-story buildings on Douglas Street.

75% of the existing residences there are single-story.

And 50% of Douglas Street residences are single-family.

EXCESSIVE BUILDING HEIGHTS ARE AGAINST THE CITY'S SMALL LOT ORDINANCE GUIDELINES

The City of LA's Small Lot Design Guidelines were issued to help developers interpret the allowances afforded them by the Small Lot Ordinance. Section 2.3, which lays out official guidelines for the height and massing of infill buildings, tells developers to:

"Use surrounding built context to inform variations in height and massing"

and

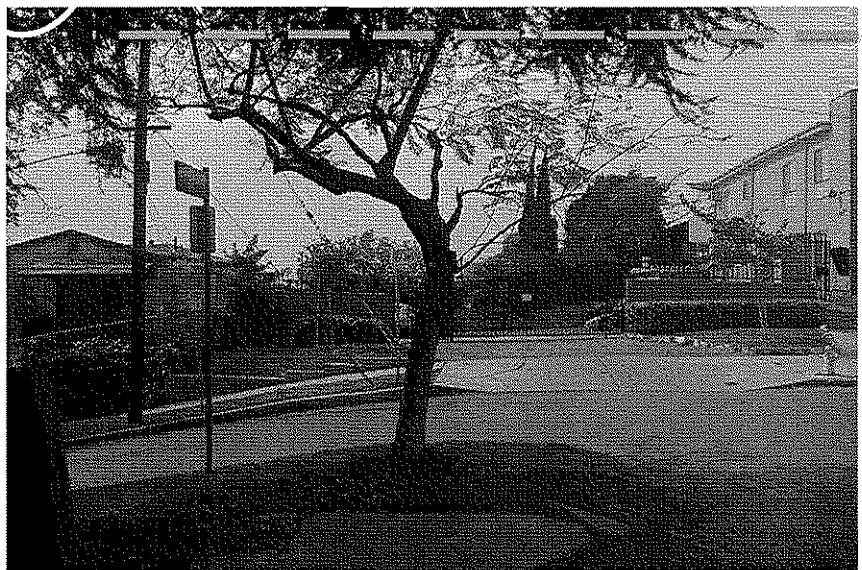
"Avoid excessive differences in height between the new development and adjacent buildings."

The Echo Park Community Plan and the design guidelines of the Echo Park Improvement Association also discourage excessive building heights and density.

The building circled lies at the southern border of the lot at 1363 Douglas and will be removed for this development. Three story homes would tower over the small white single-story home next door.



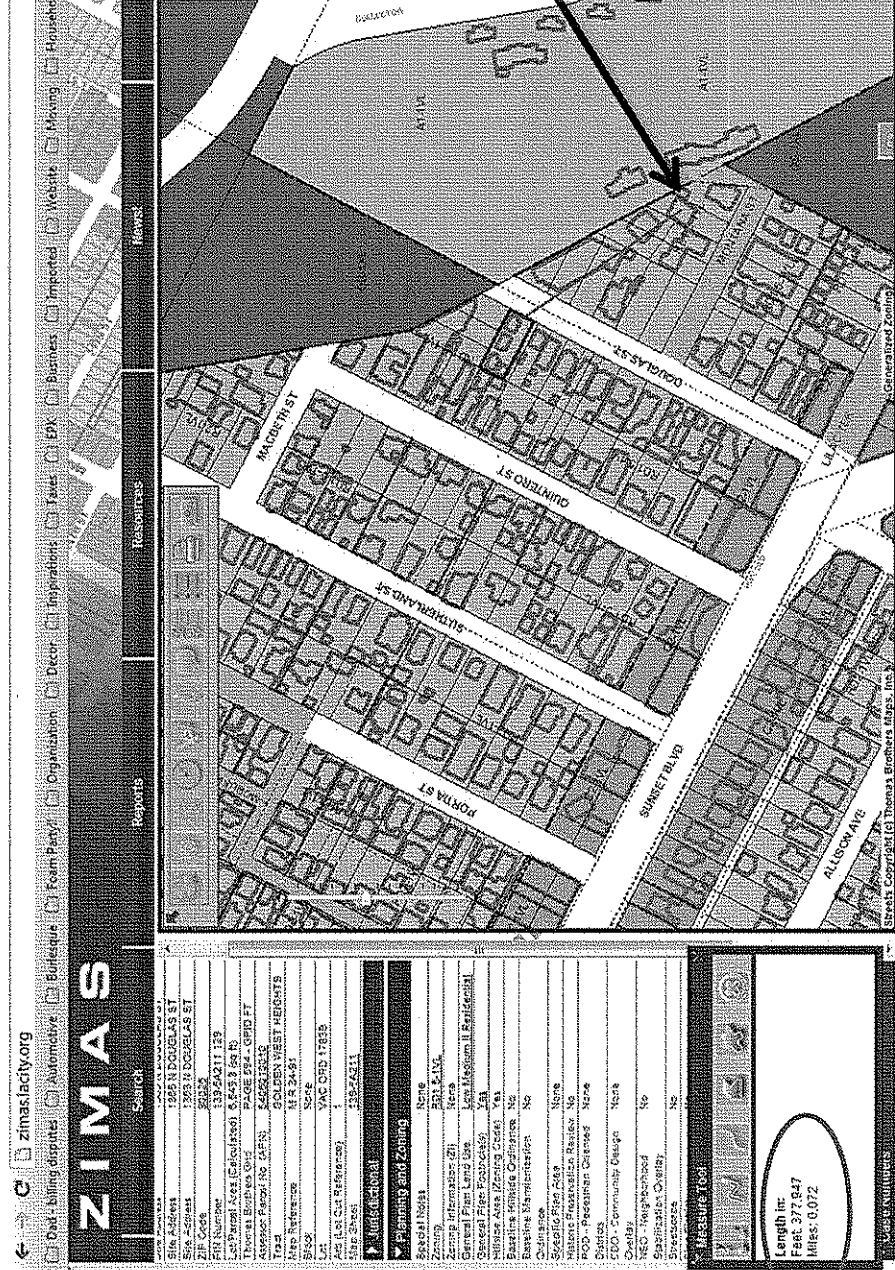
This photo shows the northern edge of the lot to be developed. The orange dotted line shows the height of a 3-story building next to the existing 2-story apartments.



PLANET HOME LIVING FAILED TO NOTIFY ALL RESIDENTS WITHIN 500 FEET OF 1363 N DOUGLAS ST

My roommate and I have never received any notices regarding 1363 N Douglas. Yet as the ZIMAS map below shows, my house at 1355 Elysian Park Drive is **less than 378 feet away** from 1363 N Douglas...well within the 500 foot radius legally required for notifications. Despite this, I heard nothing about any hearings for this project till a neighbor told me about the one for the East LA Area Planning Commission on March 27th.

Planet Home Living has made much of their neighborhood outreach for this project. It sounds as if no one cared enough to contest their plans till the 11th hour. But the truth is that PHL failed to do even the legal minimum. This means potential opponents were silenced by omission.



This is my house.
1363 N Douglas is the lot outlined in blue.

Just under 378 feet between 1363 Douglas & my home

THERE IS NO ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE @1363 N DOUGLAS STREET

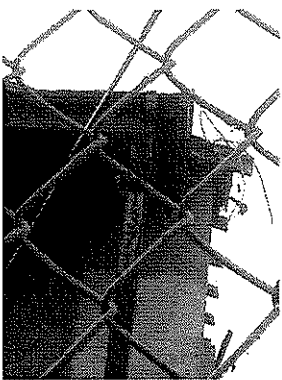
Developer representative Jennifer Chirco-Coker has stated repeatedly that she's been working with the Echo Park Historical Society to salvage architectural elements off the existing cottages on this lot, in order to "offer them free of charge to local residents."

This sounds like a generous and community-spirited offer - but unfortunately, there is nothing there to salvage, as the photos on this page show.



Typical salvage elements like doors and window frames were removed from every one of these buildings long ago, as the weather-beaten boards sealing these abandoned cottages attest - possibly before Planet Home Living ever acquired this property.

What appear to be retaining walls of vintage brick are actually just badly crumbled stacks of recycled broken concrete paving slab, as you see in this closeup:



Since the cottages were abandoned for so many years, their condition has deteriorated beyond repair, and the few remaining elements of wood are rotten & splintered.

As a result, the single element on the entire property that might be salvageable is this small scalloped awning over the front door of one cottage:



**A PRECEDENT FOR THE
BARLOW PROJECT:**

Dense development at 1363 N Douglas St. will pave the way for the unpopular Barlow Project, as the lot lies less than 100 feet away from the Barlow site within Elysian Park. These photos of the intersection of Douglas & Elysian Park Drive show that the park gate lies right behind the building just north of the lot Planet Home Living proposes to build on.



1363 N Douglas:
Site of Planet
Home Living
development

Gates to
Elysian Park



STREET WIDENING FOR DOUGLAS ST. SITES WILL REMOVE MATURE STREET TREES

Four mature street trees at Planet Home Living's other site on the block at 1330 Douglas would be removed if the city mandates street widening as part of the company's construction projects.

The 100-year-old rubber tree above, which is so large it nearly spans Douglas Street, is one of those four trees. Its loss would dramatically alter the face of the neighborhood; keeping it would be an asset and added value for the homes the developer builds on that lot.

After their meeting on April 2, 2013, the PLUM Committee recommended against street widening because it would remove these mature street trees.

April 7, 2013

To whom it may concern,

My name is Estefan Bravo and I have resided at 1357 Elysian Park Drive for the past fifty years this November. I have grown up on that street in and in the surrounding park and neighbourhood. As the longest homeowner in the neighbourhood, I am disappointed to say that I am not happy about a business from another county with its owners and handlers come into an area that is now popular for the first time since the 1930's for its looks and charm based on its antiquity and like a bunch of carpetbaggers swoop in and try to take advantage of the still naive environs evolution. Obviously these developers have no respect for our way of life and are choosing to dictate our futures. In just a few more years this kind of overcrowding development would not be able to happen because of awareness. Right now these things are capable of happening under certain radars. From what I have learned, variances and rules have been overlooked to accommodate these big spenders. Shame on you for letting this type of thing happen.

Signed,

Estefan Bravo
1357 Elysian Park Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90026

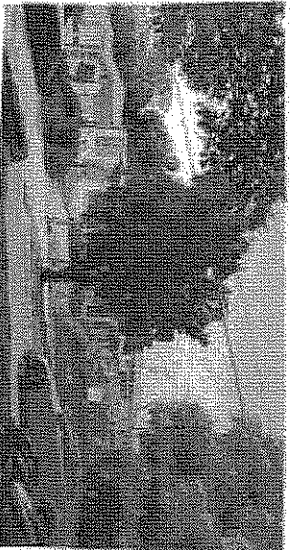
CITY OF LOS ANGELES - DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
SUBMISSION IN SUPPORT OF MASTER APPEAL FORM CP-7769

April 9, 2013

HEARING BEFORE THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

Re: Vesting Tract Map No. 71930-SL
Address: 1363-1371 Douglas Street, Los Angeles, California 90026
Community Plan: Echo Park-Elysian Valley
Zone: RD 1.5-1
Council District: 13
CEQA No.: ENV-2012-
Case Applicant: Douglas French, Douglas LLC

STATEMENT OF FACTS

ASSERTION	FACT	ANALYSIS
<p>The site is level. (DCP representative: "We don't actually go out to the site. We look at it on Google Earth.")</p>		<p>Clearly, the site is not level. This calls into question all engineering, grading, excavation, and soils reports relying on the DCP's erroneous statement contained in its initial report.</p>
<p>The proposed development conforms to the General Plan and the Specific Plan.</p>	<p>The proposed development is four times taller, at least three times denser, and many square feet larger than comparable "single family residences" in the neighborhood.</p>	<p>The proposed development violates the provisions of the General Plan and the Specific Plan with regard to size, scale, massing, and density.</p>
<p>The proposed development conforms to the City of Los Angeles Design Guidelines.</p>	<p>The proposed development violates numerous design, orientation, and landscaping guidelines.</p>	<p>The proposed development violates the provisions of the Design Guidelines, the formal expression of the City of Los Angeles intention with regard to new construction.</p>

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<p>The neighborhood approves of the proposed development.</p>	<p>All residents, except one, have expressed their opposition to the proposed development as it stands.</p>	<p>Applicant continues to rely on letters and representations made by individuals and groups who do not - and cannot - speak for the residents.</p>
<p>The residents support the proposed development.</p>	<p>Since the first hearing on this matter (December 2012), over a dozen residents have appeared, testified, and/or submitted written opposition.</p>	<p>No resident or group representative has appeared on Applicant's behalf since the sole individual in December 2012.</p>
<p>The proposed development increases property values.</p>	<p>The proposed development decreases property values.</p>	<p>The immediate residents will suffer a diminution in the value of their property, based on loss of privacy, view, sunlight, and airflow.</p>
<p>The proposed development is "good for the neighborhood." (ZA representative: "Every nearby property owner can build like this, too")</p>	<p>The proposed development works a detriment to the neighborhood, not only aesthetically but in matters of liveability.</p>	<p>The Zoning Administrator's suggestion is both disingenuous and dismissive to the residents' concerns, and would invite only more disputes such as this one to arise.</p>
<p>Applicant has been "working with" the community for over a year.</p>	<p>Applicant has had no contact with the <i>actual residents</i> other than through emails and one meeting with Appellant.</p>	<p>Applicant's misstatements wrongfully suggest that there has been interaction and consensus, which is not true.</p>

<p>The neighborhood is a mix of one-story and two-story structures.</p>	<p>None of the two-story structures are adjacent or close to the proposed development.</p>	<p>The three (possibly four) story height of the proposed development is completely out of scale for neighboring residences.</p>
<p>The neighborhood has approved of the renderings of the proposed development.</p>	<p>The renderings shown repeatedly since December 2012 depict only the front and north-facing sides.</p>	<p>Residents do not have sufficient information to “approve” of anything. Repeated requests for the south-facing and west-facing sides have been ignored.</p>
<p>Appellant has been involved in this matter only recently.</p>	<p>Appellant filed the an initial response less than two weeks after receiving notice, appeared at every hearing, and filed lengthy and detailed appeals in both the tract and zoning matters within every deadline.</p>	<p>There has been no delay or abandonment regarding the grounds upon which this appeal is based.</p>

<p>There is no way to achieve a compromise with neighbors' concerns. (Applicant: "We intend to build these seven units, and we are going to build these seven units.")</p>	<p>Appellant suggested dropping the proposed development's elevation by a mere 10', and re-sizing the units.</p>	<p>The suggestions if adopted would result in a solution to this situation, and resolve the current impasse.</p>
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