

Dear DRB board members,

I would like to thank you for your work that you do. I realize many of you work full time and that this is a volunteer position for you on top of that.

Having said that, I strongly urge you all to unanimously deny Hill and Locust proposed design at the next meeting.

Adhering to guidelines made via a formal public process are important. The public expects every developer to be held to the same standard. No rational individual can argue that this proposed design meets the following guidelines:

1c. Compliment the architecture and landscaping of **adjoining** property.

2b. Encourage building forms that are complimentary to the mass of **adjacent** buildings.

2c. Design Building elevations to **compliment** the buildings **along the side or back streets** when buildings are to face more than one street.

2d. Screen service facilities or incorporate them into the design of new buildings so that they are not obtrusive.

Arguments that the Bank of America building, City County building, TVA building, and Neyland stadium are precedent, or that the proposed building design fits into some sort of broad context are not reasonable. The design guidelines effective date is 3/14/2020 and supplants anything of the prior time periods. They also take priority over the more general rules of zoning ordinances concerning height requirements. Furthermore, the language is explicit and states “adjoining” and “adjacent”. There is no room for interpretative language and this was intentional.

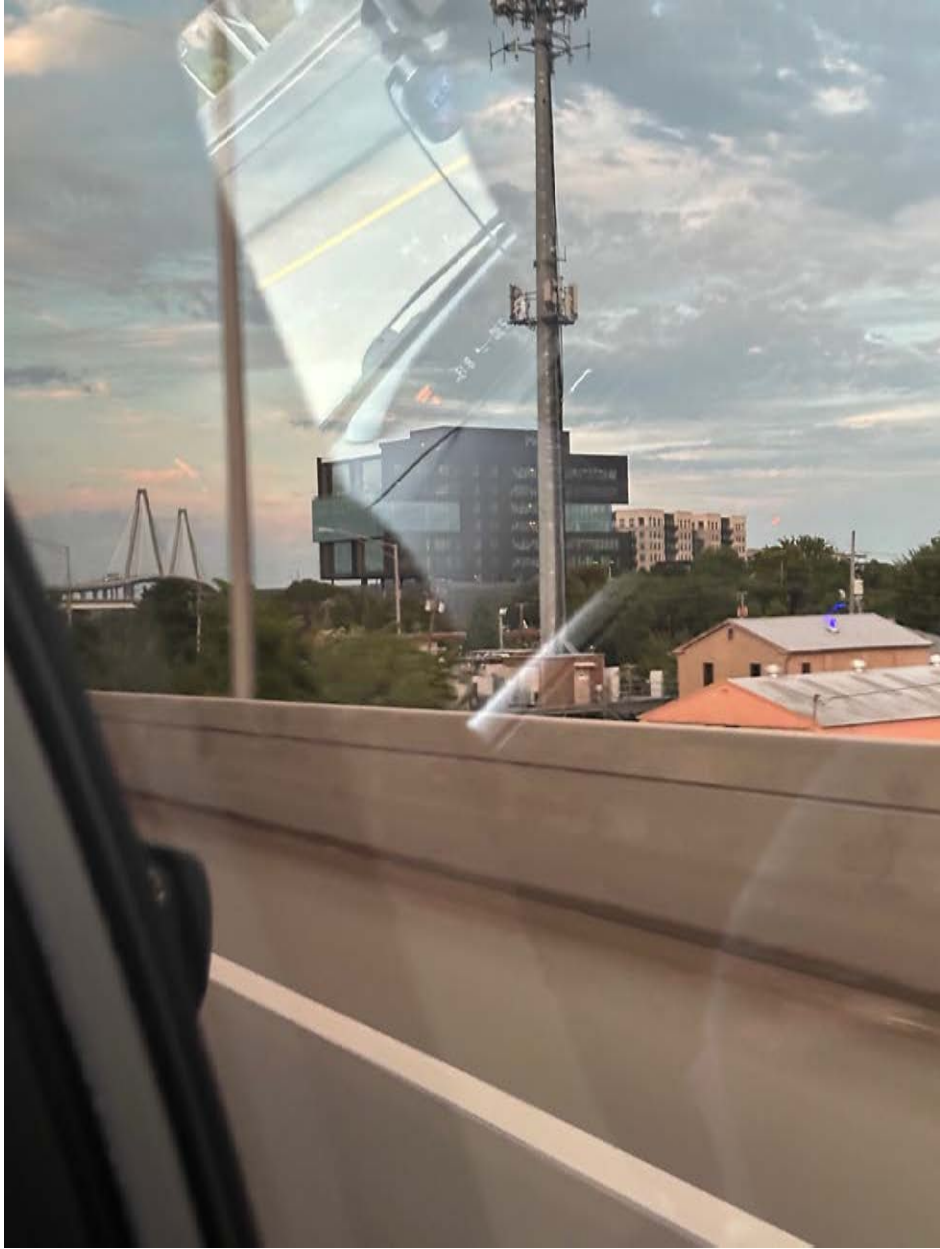
I am pro development and pro housing. If this proposed design is passed through due to board fatigue, you paradoxically run the risk of slowing development via an appeals process which will evaluate the language of the guidelines from a more judicial standpoint. You also further postpone the chance to get a design that is within the guidelines. It *can* be done. It is not the job of the board to ensure the largest return on investment for private equity investors.

I have lived within one square block of 608 West Hill Avenue for the last ten years. I love Knoxville and have been its biggest advocate when I meet other people. If this proposed design cannot activate Knoxville’s most loyal advocates and neighbors, how is it supposed to activate the broader public?

In closing, I've attached a photo of an apartment complex in Charleston that blocks the harbor, similar in design to the proposed building, similar in setting, and similar in scale. If you go to Woodfield development website, you may find that it is remarkably similar to Morrison Yard. I encourage you to do your own research. A final product and a render are two different things.

Knoxville is not generic and does not deserve a giant, generic, corporate box that does not meet the letter or spirit of the DRB guidelines.





Thank you,

Jeffrey Mahony, MD

**Feedback regarding the May 15th DRB meeting...**

1 message

Kathleen Goldsby <kathiegoldsby@yahoo.com>

Mon, May 20, 2024 at 9:32 AM

To: Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>, Christina Magrans <cmagrans@knoxville.gov>, Susanne Tarovella <susanne@sparkmanarchitect.com>, Dallas DeArmond <dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org>, Amy Brooks <amy.brooks@knoxplanning.org>, Mike Reynolds <mike.reynolds@knoxplanning.org>, John Thurman <jthurman@mhminc.com>, Cameron Bolin <cbolin@mhminc.com>, Rick Blackburn <rblackburn@comcast.net>, "Matthew (Avison Young - US)" <Matthew.DeBardelaben@avisonyoung.com>, Laura Seery <lscole@utk.edu>, Jared <jworsha2@utk.edu>, "ford@sweetpbq.com" <ford@sweetpbq.com>, Josh Wright <josh@architectswright.com>

Good morning to the members of the Downtown Design Review Board. I'd like to compliment the running of the meeting on Wednesday, May 15. I appreciate that public comments were allotted equal amounts of time on this occasion.

However, I feel compelled to call out a huge disservice done to the Board. This is the **second** time the applicant has intentionally dropped immense amounts of content on the Board and the public on the day of the meeting. The original packet of drawings posted May 8th had 20 pages in it; no renderings and only 3 floorplans. The one presented on May 15th had nearly twice that number of pages. It was an immense amount of information presented in 10 minutes, with some images posted for mere seconds in-meeting. This should be a huge red flag. In each new packet presented at the meeting, the Board and public are forced to imagine, at the moment, how the proposal interacts with the city and what it will look like. Will the packet presented at the May 15th meeting be available to the greater public? As of this morning, the information is not available. The applicant is responsible for showing the Board and the City what the building will truly look like and how it interacts with the City on every level. It is disrespectful of the applicant to place that responsibility on you and expect you to recognize and react to these complexities in real-time.

The discussion of the human-structure interaction is left entirely to the individual because there is so little depiction of the building structure at PROPER SCALE at the street level. As an example, the purported "dog walk" between the building and the adjacent parcels would feel like a slender tomb with high walls all around it. Also, many architectural renderings are from birds-eye view or out of proper proportions. Please look at applicants' depiction of the people on the Henley Street Bridge and their relation to the protective sidewall. That wall comes up about waist-high on myself. The view of downtown from people walking (or driving) on the Henley Street Bridge would be a multi-story garage and wall of concrete. People strolling on Neyland will experience the same thing. (Note: Somehow the Knox News ran an image of the design today that was presented in the meeting that is still not posted in the case file.)

The developers did NOT include any of the current, massive trees in their renderings. This is not a desolate area! There are three Northern Hackberry trees (60 feet tall) and a Southern Magnolia (38 feet tall) that are near 608 W. Hill. There is an 80-foot American Elm and an 80-foot Northern Hackberry near Riverhouse. But they are omitted from the applicant's packet. What is to become of these trees? The proposed design would certainly eliminate the many massive trees on the O W. Hill lot, but seemingly squeeze out the massive shade trees on adjacent properties, too. Shade and storm run-off savings will be gone. Something to ponder: Have they done a tree benefit report?

Let's address Front Street. It is a slender "street" that is essentially one-way and requires adept maneuvering to turn onto Locust (and then enter Neyland Drive). The few cars that attempt this must do 3 or 5-point turns and are in trouble if a car happens to be going down Locust while attempting the turn. (The proponents have realized in this most recent iteration that Locust is a one-way street, which is a seeming advancement in their understanding of the vicinity). Another item to ponder: Does the applicant's car access work with their traffic study?

Further, many community members and I feel obligated to straighten out the applicant's gross misrepresentation of the so-called "neighborhood meetings" on April 9th and May 1st. More than 18 months ago, Rick Blackburn met with City Council members one by one on the empty lot on W. Hill Avenue. Nearby residents watched and even asked when neighbors would get information. When Rick Blackburn met Tommy Smith in the empty lot in December of 2022, Thomas Goldsby went out (on crutches, easy for all to remember) and asked if he might get some information as well. Tommy Smith seemed surprised to learn that neither Rick nor the developers had engaged the community at all. It went on to be silent until one week before the April DRB meeting. An email to a few residents was sent inviting them to a small room in a hotel. The invitation even stressed the small size of the room and to bring residents of our building only. That meeting was standing-room-only. A few posters were at the front of the room, and not everyone could see them. It was up to the neighborhood to take photos of the posters with their phones. There was no PowerPoint, no handouts, no business cards, and they provided the wrong contact email and website - until a community member corrected them. We brought up many of the same concerns conveyed to you today. Their responses were aggressive and very derogatory. At one point, a member of our community stopped the developer to remind him that he did not need to be flippant and rude. Local community members had been hoping for communication for over a year, and this is what happened a week before the DRB meeting.

Then, at the May 1st "meeting," there were posters flat on a table and a few around the room. There was no presentation or focused discussion. Here, the strategy seemed to be present images around the room and diffuse dialogue. People were asked to put sticker dots on pictures "they liked" and fill out comment cards. We were asked to leave our name and contact information. Many of the pictures were close-ups of random landscapes or random sides of buildings with small murals or smoked glass. No one knew what they were looking at. There was zero context. Much like the Board, we were forced to imagine what this would look like from their proposal. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the *applicant* responsible for showing the Board and the neighborhood what the building will truly look like.

Thank you for your time. I feel it is important that the DRB understands how the community/the city has been treated with the lack of specifics and communication we have been given by the applicant. **There continue to be major red flags all over this project.** There are clear guidelines to be followed and time and again - a workshop and two DRB meetings later - here we are with vague and inaccurate renderings and many, many unanswered questions.

I would like to know if there could be a recommendation given to the developers to provide ALL MATERIAL at the deadline, not dropped on the day of the meeting. It is not your responsibility or problem that they are in a hurry to force this project through the approval process.

May I suggest postponing deliberation further on the condition that the Board be allowed the time to fully review the new packet of documents without additional slide/documents by the applicant? This would properly respect the Board's time and allow for researched, side-by-side analysis and informed debate for the following meeting, or whenever the Board deems necessary. Which, by the way, is the Board convening on the 3rd Wednesday or Thursday next month (the website currently lists June 20 as the meeting date, a Thursday)?

Their treatment of this Board and the City sets a precedent for all future downtown buildings, and it will last for generations. Let's get this right.

Best regards,
Kathleen Goldsby



Total Projected Benefits (2024-2034) - Over the next 10 years, based on forecasted tree growth, i-Tree Design projects total benefits worth \$345:

- \$151 of storm runoff savings by avoiding 16,851 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 97,883 gallons of rainfall)
- \$195 of air quality improvement savings by absorbing and intercepting pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter; reducing energy production needs; and lowering air temperature
- \$-1 of savings by reducing -52 lbs. of atmospheric carbon dioxide through CO₂ sequestration and decreased energy production needs and emissions
- \$423 of summer energy savings by direct shading and air cooling effect through evapotranspiration
- \$-423 of winter energy savings by slowing down winds and reducing home heat loss

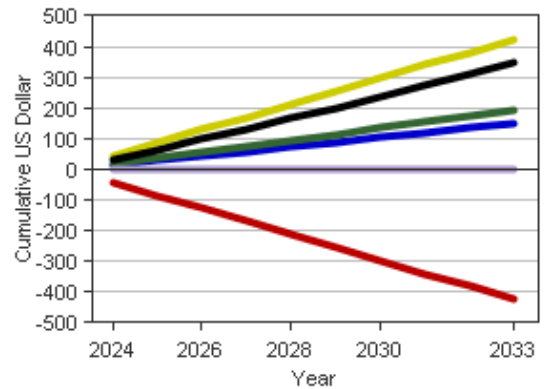


Figure 1. Tree benefit forecast for 10 years

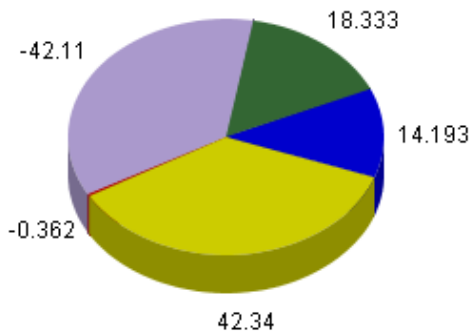


Figure 2. Annual tree benefits for 2024

Current Year - For 2024, i-Tree Design estimates annual tree benefits of \$32.39:

- \$14.19 of stormwater runoff savings by avoiding 1,588 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 9,226 gallons of rainfall)
- \$18.33 of air quality improvement savings
- \$-0.36 of carbon dioxide reduction savings
- \$42.34 of summer energy savings
- \$-42.11 of winter energy savings

A cooperative initiative between:





Future Year - In the year 2034, based on forecasted tree growth, i-Tree Design projects annual benefits of \$37.19:

- \$16.14 of stormwater runoff savings by avoiding 1,806 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 10,493 gallons of rainfall)
- \$20.88 of air quality improvement savings
- \$0.27 of carbon dioxide reduction savings
- \$42.04 of summer energy savings
- \$-42.14 of winter energy savings

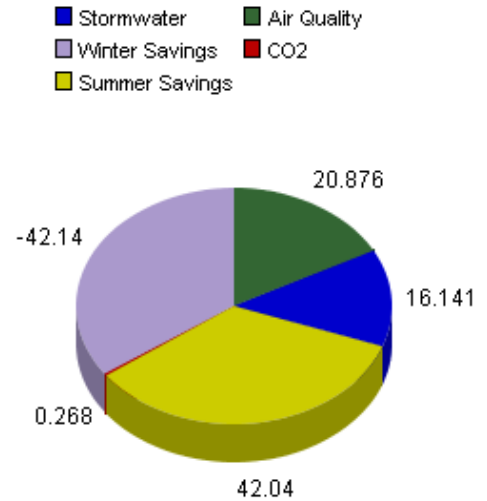


Figure 3. Annual tree benefits for the year 2034

- Stormwater
- Air Quality
- Winter Savings
- CO2
- Summer Savings

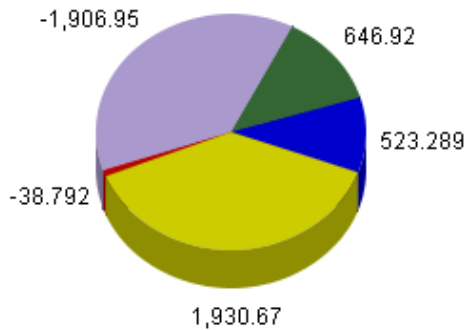


Figure 4. Total benefits to date

Total Benefits to Date - Over the life of the tree(s) so far, i-Tree Design calculates total benefits worth \$1,155:

- \$523 of stormwater runoff savings by avoiding 58,560 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 340,165 gallons of rainfall)
- \$647 of air quality improvement savings
- \$-39 of carbon dioxide reduction savings
- \$1,931 of summer energy savings
- \$-1,907 of winter energy savings

A cooperative initiative between:





Individual Tree Benefits

Tree	DBH (in)	Condition	Location to Structure	Benefits			
				Current Year (2024)	Future Year (2034)	Projected Total (2024-2034)	Total to Date
1. Northern hackberry	20.5	Fair	Southeast (11 ft)	\$23.12	\$24.65	\$238	\$821
2. Northern hackberry	18	Fair	Southeast (21 ft)	\$7.63	\$9.09	\$83	\$184
3. Northern hackberry	28	Fair	Southeast (30 ft)	\$13.16	\$13.83	\$135	\$624
4. Southern magnolia	18.3	Fair	South (25 ft)	\$-11.50	\$-10.37	\$-111	\$-473
Total				\$32.39	\$37.19	\$345	\$1,155

DBH: "diameter at breast height" is the standard measurement of tree trunk width at 4.5 feet (1.5 meters) above the ground.

A cooperative initiative between:



Overlook and River House Tree Inventories and Map

Overlook Property Tree Inventory

Tree Number	Address	Common Name	Latin Name	DBH	Height	Latitude	Longitude	Condition
1	608 West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	20"	60'	35.95921	-83.919	Fair
2	608 West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	18"	60'	35.95919	-83.919	Fair
3	608 West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	28"	60'	35.95916	-83.9191	Good
4	608 West Hill Avenue	Southern Magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	18"	38'	35.95915	-83.9191	Good

River House Property Tree Inventory

Tree Number	Address Street	Common Name	Latin Name	DBH	Height	Latitude	Longitude	Condition
1	West Hill Avenue	American Elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i>	42"	80'	35.95915	-83.9193	Good
2	West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	40"	80'	35.95916	-83.9194	Fair

Overlook and River House Property Map



Fwd: Hill and Locust Regional Arborist info

Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>
To: Dallas DeArmond <dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org>

Wed, May 15, 2024 at 8:17 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jeff Mahony** <jmahony88@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, May 14, 2024 at 4:36 PM
Subject: Hill and Locust Regional Arborist info
To: Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>

Hello Lindsay,

I have attached two documents from a local Knoxville volunteer arborist detailing tree inventory and eco benefits about trees on the Overlook and RiverHouse properties like the City does for public trees. The information was obtained with consent and interest of homeowners and the arborist who appreciate Knoxville's Urban Wilderness incorporated into design elements.

This is in response to discussion at the last DRB meeting about impact to or incorporation of trees on the Hill and Locust property and regional area. The developer has not provided the public information of the trees on their property (though did mention a dubious claim of saving them), of which there are at least twice as many trees as in the provided inventory of adjacent properties. The board may use this data to infer or request more information since it was discussed.

Tree age calculators available online suggest there are very mature regional trees in this area witnessing history of Knoxville urbanization and deforestation, particularly the RiverHouse American Elm located on historic property and the Overlook Southern Magnolia.

Below is an aerial photo from 1930 from a previous Knox News Sentinel article with a similar era RiverHouse facing photo contrasted with today aerial satellite image. As one can see, the deforestation is striking and the importance of the Knox Urban Wilderness campaign incorporated into design elements cannot be overstated.





2 attachments

 **i-Design-Overlook-Report-5-2024.pdf**
178K

 **Overlook and Riverhouse Property Tree Inventory.docx**
769K

Ms. Lindsey Crockett, AICP

Principal Planner/Design Review Program Manager

Knoxville-Knox County Planning

Via email: lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org

May 13, 2024

Re: Hill and Locust Proposed Development

Dear Ms. Crockett,

This letter is to inform you that we, the undersigned land sellers, are in full support of the applicants, Origin Development Partners and Woodfield Development, for the proposed development of multiple parcels that we currently own at the corner of West Hill Avenue and Locust Street and along Front Avenue.

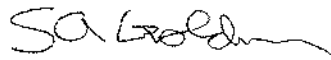
We had received several offers before agreeing to go under contract with this team. We selected them based on the quality of the product that they build and their ability to perform. The buyers have kept us informed of all the items that they are working through, including the DRB. We will continue to support them and work with them as they navigate the City's review process. We intend to support our buyers and this development team to ensure that this vacant site can realize its full potential.

Please share this letter and our collective support with the board and any other parties that you see fit.

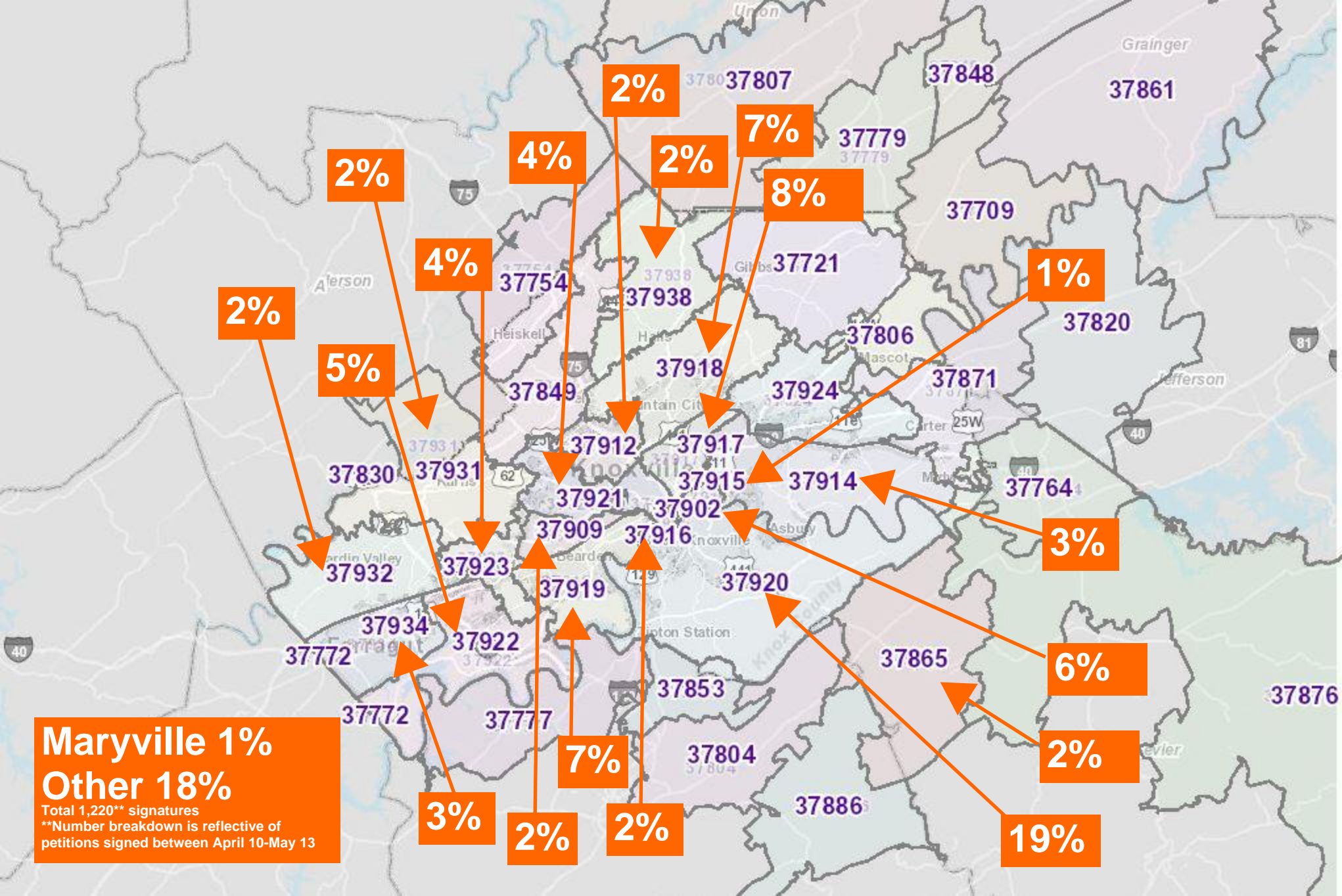
Sincerely,



Ward Whelchel



Stephen Goldman
Hill & Locust Partners, GP



Maryville 1%
Other 18%
 Total 1,220** signatures
 **Number breakdown is reflective of petitions signed between April 10-May 13



Fwd: Petition Update for the DRB Meeting Consideration

1 message

Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>
To: Dallas DeArmond <dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org>

Wed, May 15, 2024 at 8:16 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Wally Shaw** <wallyshaw@icloud.com>
Date: Tue, May 14, 2024 at 11:53 AM
Subject: Petition Update for the DRB Meeting Consideration
To: Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>

Dear Lindsay,

I writing to you as I would appreciate you to share this note with the various DRB members prior to the upcoming meeting, Wednesday, May 15.

On behalf of Keep Knoxville Charming, I would like to inform you that we now have over 1,200 petition signers from across Knoxville, details provided within, that are not in favor of the Hill & Locust development as proposed.

Ultimately, you can see Knoxvilleans are concerned over the lack of thoughtfulness of the design of the development, as well as the impact it will have on the riverfront district in general. Comments within various social media postings speak to the points of detraction from the riverfront in addition to potential traffic concerns for the area. That by itself it is not a reason to deny the approval, however, the lack of compliance to the standards in place is.

I hope that DRB will consider the feedback our citizens and ensure all guidelines currently in place are upheld. To be clear we are not against development, we are against a non-compliant proposal.

I truly hope that we can collectively ensure the riverfront area spend from the past is not wasted and I sincerely hope that our beautiful skyline is protected from this development.

Thank you for your assistance.

ZIP Code	Neighborhood/Area	Petition count	Percentage
37920	South Knoxville	231	19%
37917	North Knoxville	97	8%
37918	Fountain City	91	7%
37919	Bearden, Sequoyah Hills	82	7%
37902	Downtown Knoxville	68	6%
37922	Farragut	63	5%
37923	West Knoxville	52	4%
37921	West Knoxville	43	4%
37914	East Knoxville	39	3%
37934	Farragut, Turkey Creek	32	3%
37931	Farragut, Kams	30	2%
37932	Hardin Valley	29	2%
37909	WEst Hills, Bearden, W Knoxville	27	2%
37912	Fountain City, Norwood, N Knoxville	25	2%
37938	Halls Crossroads, Gibbs, Powell	25	2%
37865	Seymour	21	2%
37916	UT Campus, Fort Sanders	16	1%
37801	Maryville	13	1%
37915	Downtown Knoxville	12	1%
Various	Other	224	18%
		1220	

 2024-05-07_KeepKnoxvilleCharming_Zip Code Breakdown.pdf
173K

May 2, 2024

To the Design Review Board, regarding 4-D-24-DT:

The developers held another meeting for neighbors yesterday afternoon (May 1, 4:30-6pm), in response to DRB comments at the April 17 DRB meeting. I was out of town and unable to attend the DRB meeting but watched the recording later. I was not intending to make a direct outreach to the DRB with my comments/questions/concerns (as I am sharing them with the developers), but after speaking with Patrick Kassin and others yesterday I believe that's necessary and warranted. It was made clear (without being explicitly said) that their next steps are driven by responding to DRB comments from the meeting rather than responding to neighborhood comments and concerns, though they continue to welcome those from us.

Yesterday's meeting format was a series of sign boards, some of which had not been updated with current information, displayed for us to review. There were image boards related to the garage structural component visibility, screening, and murals where we were to select the visual options we found appealing. A couple of new boards showed how they are changing the garage interaction at the Front Ave level in response to DRB comments (which are relevant to Guideline A3a and perhaps A3b and A3g). This effort does not address the corner of the parking garage at Front & Locust, though I suggested they look for possibilities to do that. There was no (verbal) presentation component of the meeting. There were several representatives who we were welcome to speak with individually and we were also asked to provide written comments on cards (or by email, if we prefer). Their focus is nearly entirely on the comments related to the garage appearance and interaction at Front Ave level. There was nothing presented relative to the massing and scale considerations of the building. I specifically asked about them not being addressed, which led me to contact you with these comments.

Speaking for myself, and probably many of the neighborhood stakeholders, our primary concerns are the **scale of the south massing** and the **additional traffic to the block**. The issues they are focusing their response on, of the parking garage positioning, visual or pedestrian interaction, and appearance are important but are not the most significant issues for us residents.

I questioned the architect about the setback requirement in zoning code for buildings above 85 ft in height which is not present in the current design (one of the DRB members brought this up in April 17 meeting). I asked Lindsay about it and she said that planning had missed providing that requirement as a note for the April meeting. The architect confirmed that they would be implementing the setback along Locust Street (at least for the taller part of building above the garage) and Front Ave. Would they also need to implement the setback along the Henley Street Bridge façade?

The staff recommendation prior to the April 17 meeting included "The Board should discuss the overall scale of the proposed building (specifically, the south massing fronting the river) in relation to the context. The Board should also discuss the pedestrian-level design within the neighborhood context." Though these things were discussed at the meeting, the developers are not focusing on them in their response. I believe the "overall scale of the proposed building (specifically, the south massing fronting the river)" needs significantly more attention in board discussion at the May meeting (and any

comments the board may be submitting to developers prior to that meeting if that is a thing that happens). Some guidelines are clearly relevant that are not being paid adequate attention in the design.

Massing/Scale: Significant aspects of Guidelines are not being followed in the design.

B1a. Maintain a pedestrian-scaled environment from block to block.

B1b. Foster air circulation and sunlight penetration around new buildings.

I am very concerned about the unbroken mass of the south portion of their building casting all of the buildings on Hill Ave into shade, which will be unfortunate for us inhabitants but could also be very detrimental to our trees. We have a large, stately elm behind our building (Riverhouse) that is more than 6 stories tall. Our building dates from the late 1920s and I believe the tree probably is that old as well. Anyone who drives in from south Knoxville regularly is surely familiar with it as it's a very prominent component of the viewscape of our block. We own about 47 feet between the back of our building and our boundary line (if KGIS map is correct) and our tree is positioned well within that space, fairly close to our building. The project looks to be another 12-15 feet further than our property line. Even with 60 feet between buildings, if a building with solid, unbroken mass that's more than 150 feet taller than the grade of the tree base is constructed on its south-facing side, I'm concerned our beautiful and significant tree will suffer from lack of daylight and could die.

B1d. Divide larger buildings into 'modules' that are similar in scale to traditional downtown buildings.

If they were dividing their large mass of building into modules it would be much better for Hill Ave neighbors and our trees, as well as for the pedestrian experience. This was included in staff comments but did not get much discussion at the DRB meeting. **Staff comments specifically noted that "The south section is not pedestrian-scaled, divided into two large massings of a parking garage and a residential building. The Board should discuss the overall scale of the building's south massing in relation to the context of the area." I'm asking that you please give this significantly more attention in May.**

Traffic: We have expressed to the developers the existing challenging traffic pattern of how traffic comes from the HSB and wraps our block to get down onto Neyland Drive for events at the arena, the baseball stadium, as well as football. But the traffic backups are already a problem apart from event-related activities – daily use in and out of the Main Street garage, for the public accessing the City County Building, and general south Knoxville traffic headed to campus (especially the G10 garage) all cause issues on a regular basis. I have suggested that they add another ingress/egress for parking where their loading zone occurs off of Front Ave. That would help divide their residents' vehicle traffic and some of it could leave the block out through Maplehurst (it is never discussed that Front Ave is one-way that goes west, but that is true, and many users of it use it in whichever direction they want to). This is relevant to Guideline A1g. It is not necessarily a concern of DRB to attend to traffic except as it relates to the pedestrian experience and safety, but also as relates to the overall purpose of Design Review (from Zoning Code 16.5) that "Design Review is intended to foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation in Downtown Knoxville that reflects the goals of adopted plans, and the principles of the Downtown Design Guidelines . . . Promote Downtown as a place for a viable mix of commercial, office, civic, and residential uses, including street level development that creates a pedestrian-friendly environment . . . The Design Review Board's role is to provide certainty that both immediate surroundings as well as Downtown as a whole are taken into account with each building project."

The above are my most significant concerns. There are additional issues which are relevant to the Guidelines that I would also like to see improved. And I also have suggestions for improvement of pedestrian engagement possibilities along Locust and Front which seemed to be something DRB was also interested in. I believe the desire for improving the garage component is not only to make it look better but to leave open the possibility of improving engagement and activity in relation to our prominent waterfront area. I'll outline some of these things below. Hopefully you've read and considered at least the comments above (I know this is lengthy).

The corner at Front & Locust should be given further attention in design. I hope they'll consider if there is an opportunity for an entry, for a commercial use (a yoga studio or other fitness-related entity would be a good match), or a plaza/green space. Staff comment: The Board should discuss the proposed ground-level design within the neighborhood context. Relevant to Guidelines A3a, A3b, A3g, B2a, B2e, B4a, B5b, B6c, B6d, and the Boulevard District (some of these more than others).

Additionally, a wider sidewalk setback (B2a) would allow a more possible pedestrian experience along Locust. I'm specifically thinking of the option to have a hybrid step/slope sidewalk where perhaps 60% the width is the 5 foot or wider regular sidewalk and a 40% width could be steps. Steps are way more possible for a pedestrian on such a slope, which is particularly challenging for someone who might be wearing heels or dress shoes (in addition to the general public, they have two, or three?, egress doors along Locust). This exists in cities where the sidewalks are adjacent to especially steep roads (though most of them I'm aware of are not in America - except San Francisco). This would be a city engineering issue, but their project could propose and allow for it to occur. Guideline B6d "Provide yard space for apartment buildings in the Boulevard District." as well as B2e. could also be relevant to allowing for more pedestrian activation of this area. This focus is key for the Boulevard district and also suitable for proximity to the waterfront/greenway and UT's new focus on "the South entrance" to campus illustrated in the Zeanah Engineering Complex and their new "Entertainment Zone" adjacent to Neyland Stadium

Regarding Guidelines 7 Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities, I'm asking all to remember that the "back" of their building faces our existing residential buildings. I know specifics of these design components as well as landscaping plans are still to be developed. I already shared these other thoughts with the developers: *I want to know how access to the backs of our buildings can be made possible (for our maintenance/repair needs), either from a created alley or easement area, or from your loading area. I want to know how the grading/infill of the land strip between the back of our property and your building will be addressed. There is roughly 12-15 ft (?) of width that is part of your property and will need to be maintained by your ownership. We want to ensure it isn't an area where refuse is allowed to collect or where individuals might look for temporary camping accommodations.*

This development can be better than what is being proposed. These four parcels don't have to be treated as proposed. Overall I think this is too much project for this site, especially given the traffic and topography challenges. But apart from that, there is room for improvement. I also hope they will provide some pedestrian level renderings for the next meeting – as they did for the Hill & Locust corner in the April 17 submission. Thank you for your time and attention.

Kristen Faerber
Riverhouse owner and resident

To the Design Review Board, regarding 4-D-24-DT:

May 6, 2024

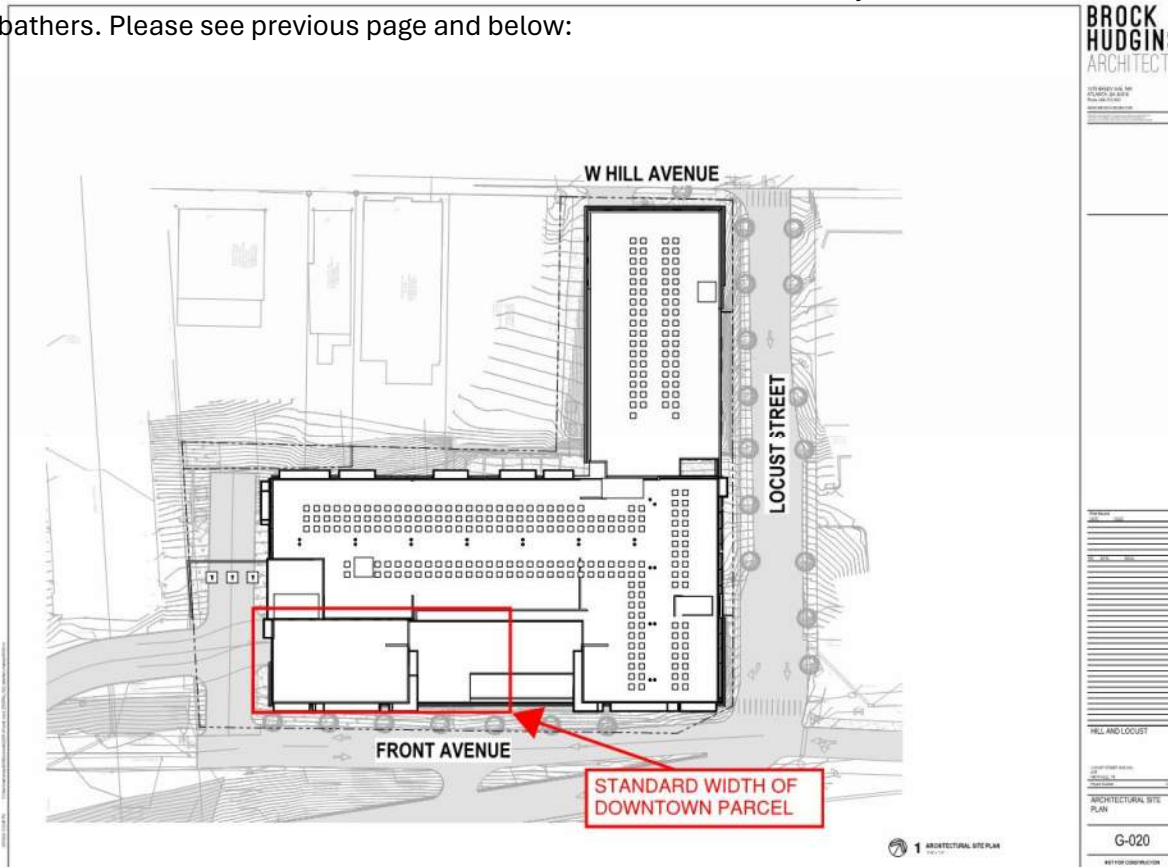
The 5 points below are just a few of my concerns, but they are pertinent at this time.

1. Mr. Thurman noticed that the renderings presented at the April 17th board meeting seemed “off.” He is correct. Below: Original rendering provided by Applicant to DRB for April 17th review. Bottom: Corrected rendering bringing the Waterfront facing façade to Front Avenue as shown in applicants site plan.



Item 1 continued:

The building footprint in the rendering does not match the site plan footprint as its waterfront facing façade is pulled back, by a width of a standard downtown parcel, to the gravel thoroughfare on the site yet to be purchased by the applicant (below). The applicant's provided rendering minimizes the building's impact and size, removing thousands of square feet of building. It also means that half of an arch of the Henley Street bridge will be obscured. Residents of the block have made the developers and Architect aware of this – they insisted that the gravel roadway through the property they are looking to purchase is Front Avenue. We live here, we know where Front Avenue is located. In the revised rendering, by the residents of the block, we can see the true impact of the proposal on the site, its surroundings, the waterfront, pedestrian safety, the overall aesthetic of Downtown Knoxville, and how the south entrance to downtown will be obliterated by a billboard of concrete, cars, and sunbathers. Please see previous page and below:



Above: In applicant supplied rendering, the waterfront façade plane is brought back to the gravel thoroughfare on the yet to be attained lots. Their site plan shows the waterfront façade plane being nearly on top of Front Avenue. Their rendering is inconsistent with the site plan and misrepresentative of applicant's intentions.

The development team is competent enough to provide correct renderings and drawings to convey their intentions (please see credentials in item 2). **The Architect's insistence that Front Avenue is the gravel road is very concerning and it either means that the Architect doesn't understand their own project or that they are intentionally lying to the Design Review Board, Knoxville citizens and the City of Knoxville.**

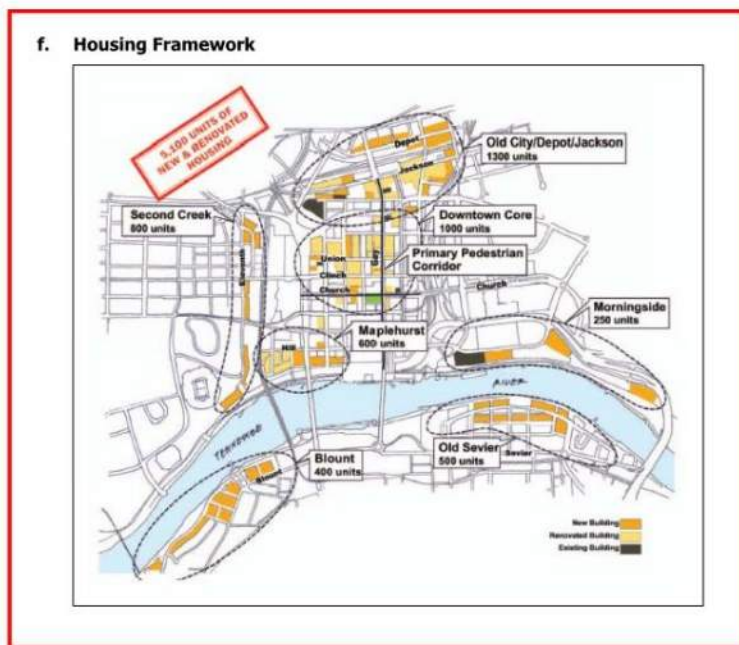
2. This is not the first multi million-dollar development project this team has done. They are competent enough, see highlights on page 3, and have a large enough team to be able to source, read and apply the guidelines and regulations of Knoxville to an acceptable design. **They are choosing not to do so.**

- i. Ben Hudgins – the Architect – heralds himself as “**emphasizing dynamic physical connections to public spaces and to shared areas by utilizing strategies that enable and encourage both social interaction and physical activity.**” (per the Brock Hudgins Architects website).
 1. Project examples from their website:
 - a. 1015 Boulevard in Atlanta, GA “6,000 SF of street-level retail and restaurant space provides an urban edge to both the Beltline and Boulevard, while the back portion of the building massing steps down to nearly half the height of the trail façade, respecting the scale of single-family homes along the adjacent residential street.”
 - b. The Lumberyard in Atlanta, GA, won the Atlanta Urban Design Commission 2001 Award for Adaptive Use, and Georgia AIA Award of Merit for Adaptive Use, “The Georgia AIA design jury commended the project for its intent to create an internal circulation space with the scale and interest of an urban streetscape.”
 - ii. Patrick Kassin – per Woodfield Development’s website - His responsibilities include: site selection, **due diligence, pre-development planning**, and oversight of consultants.
 - iii. Zach Bearden – per Origin Development Partner’s website: “Director of Client Services specializing in **zoning entitlements, due diligence** and site development. **He is also a licensed Landscape Architect in South Carolina.**”
3. The development team is proclaiming that they didn’t know about certain design requirements and are just being made aware; i.e. fenestration requirements they cited in the April 17th DRB meeting. This is an outright lie.
 - a. They have had the previous developer’s due diligence, site studies and contact information for any questions for the last 2 years.
 - b. They have had a workshop with the DRB and have a DRB and Historic Zoning Commission member advising them, who has also advised the previous developers.
 - c. The Design Review Board’s website lists links to the Design Review Board Guidelines, what to provide the Design Review Board for review, zoning ordinances and Boundary Map. There are also phone numbers, email addresses and photos of whom they are contacting for answers.
 - i. The developers held a meeting for the neighborhood on May 1st. I brought up to Mr. Bearden of Origin Development Partners about the guidelines and he feigned ignorance (please see my reasoning in items 2 and 3). I reiterated that the Board had outlined the applicable guidelines in the April 17th case review, the guidelines are readily available, and if he had any questions to call – the number is on the website.
 - d. I would also like to bring your attention to their materials listing. They have EFIS and Fiber Cement Board cited for the residential section facing the river. They are in a Fire District, and in addition to zoning regulation requirements, EFIS is not allowed. Their material selections require clarification.
4. This development group has worked with multiple Design Review Boards, a few are listed below, and I suggest reaching out to these DRBs and/or the city’s themselves to see how their guidelines were respected and treated:
 - a. Atlanta, Georgia – [Design Review Committee // Atlanta Beltline](#)
 - i. Lynnette Reid, Director of Planning, Atlanta Beltline Lreid@atlbeltline.org, 404-477-3551
 - b. Charleston, South Carolina - [Design Review Board \(DRB\) | Charleston, SC - Official Website \(charleston-sc.gov\)](#)
 - i. –843-724-3765

To the Design Review Board, regarding 4-D-24-DT:

May 6, 2024

- c. Nashville, Tennessee (under Lord Aeck Sargent, listed on Brock Hudgins Architect website) - [Design Review Committee - Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency \(nashville-mdha.org\)](http://Design Review Committee - Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (nashville-mdha.org))
 - i. Parker Brown – 615-252-3750
 - d. Chapel Hill, North Carolina Advisory Board Review | Town of Chapel Hill, NC
advisoryboardreview@townofchapelhill.org or 919-968-2743
5. The scale of the proposal is wildly out of character with its surroundings, the Boulevard district, and the Grid district. The applicant argued that the scale was in line with Neyland Stadium (8th largest in the world), the City County Building (a Government building with a holding facility), and the Riverview Tower (an office tower). These are not residential structures – and 2 were the reason the DRB was enacted.
- a. I would also like to bring your attention to the Downtown Improvement Strategy which the DRB guidelines are based upon. Specifically, the block this proposal is located on is cited to be part of the Maplehurst complex – a residential complex in scale and occupancy. This should be considered in addition to the district overlays. (Please see below)



DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY: PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT
March 18, 2005 Page 11 of 20



I fear the development team is purposely misrepresenting their design to push this project through the Design Review Board. This board is the City of Knoxville’s first task force to ensure applicants are amenable and respectful to the design guidelines and development plans of Knoxville, these go hand in hand with ordinances and zoning guidelines as well.

I urge this board to reflect on how your questions/suggestions about the project are dismissed or respected by the applicant. I further urge for a vote to be postponed until the applicant can provide correct information and display adherence to guidelines and regulations.

Thank you for your time,
Jessica Wright
Overlook owner and resident

Fwd: Hill and Locust Regional Arborist info

Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>
To Dallas DeArmond dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org

Wed, May 15, 2024 at 8:17 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jeff [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Date: Tue, May 14, 2024 at 4:36 PM
Subject: Hill and Locust Regional Arborist info
To: Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>

Hello Lindsay,

I have attached two documents from a local Knoxville volunteer arborist detailing tree inventory and eco benefits about trees on the Overlook and RiverHouse properties like the City does for public trees. The information was obtained with consent and interest of homeowners and the arborist who appreciate Knoxville's Urban Wilderness incorporated into design elements.

This is in response to discussion at the last DRB meeting about impact to or incorporation of trees on the Hill and Locust property and regional area. The developer has not provided the public information of the trees on their property (though did mention a dubious claim of saving them), of which there are at least twice as many trees as in the provided inventory of adjacent properties. The board may use this data to infer or request more information since it was discussed.

Tree age calculators available online suggest there are very mature regional trees in this area witnessing history of Knoxville urbanization and deforestation, particularly the RiverHouse American Elm located on historic property and the Overlook Southern Magnolia.

Below is an aerial photo from 1930 from a previous Knox News Sentinel article with a similar era RiverHouse facing photo contrasted with today aerial satellite image. As one can see, the deforestation is striking and the importance of the Knox Urban Wilderness campaign incorporated into design elements cannot be overstated.





2 attachments

 **i-Design-Overlook-Report-5-2024.pdf**
178K

 **Overlook and Riverhouse Property Tree Inventory.docx**
769K



Total Projected Benefits (2024-2034) - Over the next 10 years, based on forecasted tree growth, i-Tree Design projects total benefits worth \$345:

- \$151 of storm runoff savings by avoiding 16,851 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 97,883 gallons of rainfall)
- \$195 of air quality improvement savings by absorbing and intercepting pollutants such as ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter; reducing energy production needs; and lowering air temperature
- \$-1 of savings by reducing -52 lbs. of atmospheric carbon dioxide through CO₂ sequestration and decreased energy production needs and emissions
- \$423 of summer energy savings by direct shading and air cooling effect through evapotranspiration
- \$-423 of winter energy savings by slowing down winds and reducing home heat loss

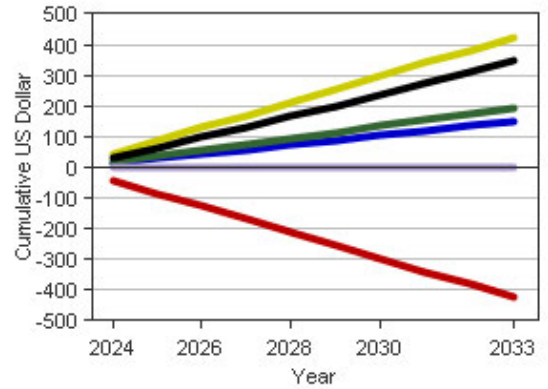


Figure 1. Tree benefit forecast for 10 years

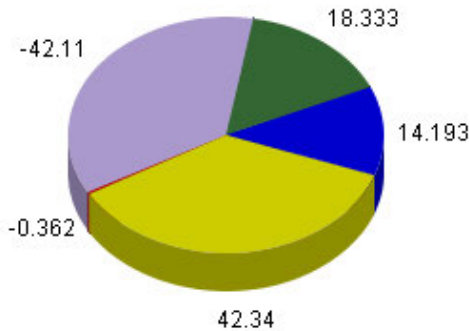


Figure 2. Annual tree benefits for 2024

Current Year - For 2024, i-Tree Design estimates annual tree benefits of \$32.39:

- \$14.19 of stormwater runoff savings by avoiding 1,588 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 9,226 gallons of rainfall)
- \$18.33 of air quality improvement savings
- \$-0.36 of carbon dioxide reduction savings
- \$42.34 of summer energy savings
- \$-42.11 of winter energy savings

A cooperative initiative between:





Future Year - In the year 2034, based on forecasted tree growth, i-Tree Design projects annual benefits of \$37.19:

- \$16.14 of stormwater runoff savings by avoiding 1,806 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 10,493 gallons of rainfall)
- \$20.88 of air quality improvement savings
- \$0.27 of carbon dioxide reduction savings
- \$42.04 of summer energy savings
- \$-42.14 of winter energy savings

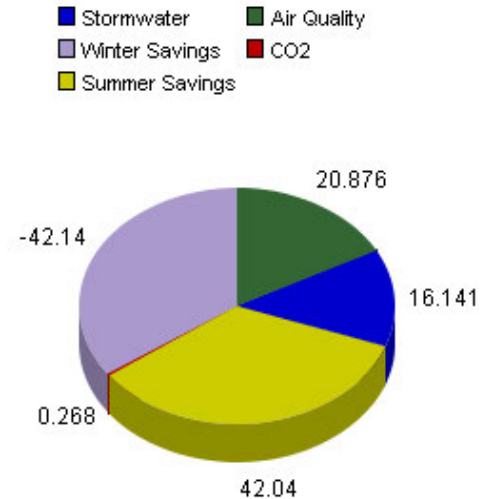


Figure 3. Annual tree benefits for the year 2034

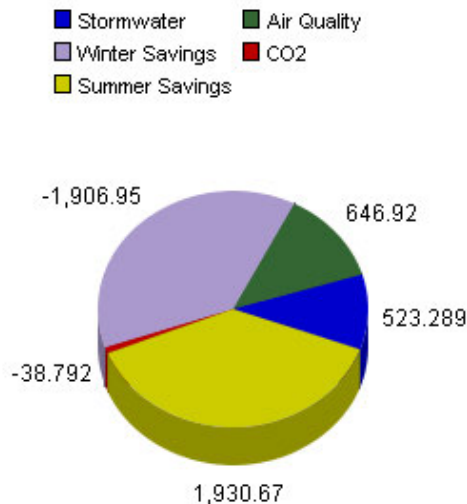


Figure 4. Total benefits to date

Total Benefits to Date - Over the life of the tree(s) so far, i-Tree Design calculates total benefits worth \$1,155:

- \$523 of stormwater runoff savings by avoiding 58,560 gallons of stormwater runoff (intercepting 340,165 gallons of rainfall)
- \$647 of air quality improvement savings
- \$-39 of carbon dioxide reduction savings
- \$1,931 of summer energy savings
- \$-1,907 of winter energy savings

A cooperative initiative between:





Individual Tree Benefits

Tree	DBH (in)	Condition	Location to Structure	Benefits			
				Current Year (2024)	Future Year (2034)	Projected Total (2024-2034)	Total to Date
1. Northern hackberry	20.5	Fair	Southeast (11 ft)	\$23.12	\$24.65	\$238	\$821
2. Northern hackberry	18	Fair	Southeast (21 ft)	\$7.63	\$9.09	\$83	\$184
3. Northern hackberry	28	Fair	Southeast (30 ft)	\$13.16	\$13.83	\$135	\$624
4. Southern magnolia	18.3	Fair	South (25 ft)	-\$11.50	-\$10.37	-\$111	-\$473
Total				\$32.39	\$37.19	\$345	\$1,155

DBH: "diameter at breast height" is the standard measurement of tree trunk width at 4.5 feet (1.5 meters) above the ground.

A cooperative initiative between:



Overlook and River House Tree Inventories and Map

Overlook Property Tree Inventory

Tree Number	Address	Common Name	Latin Name	DBH	Height	Latitude	Longitude	Condition
1	608 West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	20"	60'	35.95921	-83.919	Fair
2	608 West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	18"	60'	35.95919	-83.919	Fair
3	608 West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	28"	60'	35.95916	-83.9191	Good
4	608 West Hill Avenue	Southern Magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	18"	38'	35.95915	-83.9191	Good

River House Property Tree Inventory

Tree Number	Address Street	Common Name	Latin Name	DBH	Height	Latitude	Longitude	Condition
1	West Hill Avenue	American Elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i>	42"	80'	35.95915	-83.9193	Good
2	West Hill Avenue	Northern Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	40"	80'	35.95916	-83.9194	Fair

Overlook and River House Property Map



Ms. Lindsey Crockett, AICP

Principal Planner/Design Review Program Manager
Knoxville-Knox County Planning
Via email: lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org

May 13, 2024

Re: Hill and Locust Proposed Development

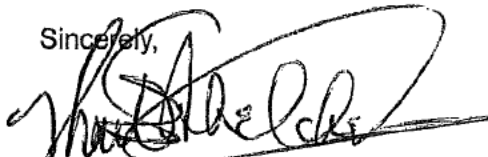
Dear Ms. Crockett,


This letter is to inform you that we, the undersigned land sellers, are in full support of the applicants, Origin Development Partners and Woodfield Development, for the proposed development of multiple parcels that we currently own at the corner of West Hill Avenue and Locust Street and along Front Avenue.

We had received several offers before agreeing to go under contract with this team. We selected them based on the quality of the product that they build and their ability to perform. The buyers have kept us informed of all the items that they are working through, including the DRB. We will continue to support them and work with them as they navigate the City's review process. We intend to support our buyers and this development team to ensure that this vacant site can realize its full potential.

Please share this letter and our collective support with the board and any other parties that you see fit.

Sincerely,


Ward [REDACTED]


Stephen [REDACTED]
Hill & Locust Partners, GP



Fwd: Petition Update for the DRB Meeting Consideration

1 message

Lindsay Crockett lindsay.crockett@kno planning.org
To: Dallas DeArmond <dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org>

Wed, May 15, 2024 at 8 16 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Wally** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Tue, May 14, 2024 at 11:53 AM
Subject: Petition Update for the DRB Meeting Consideration
To: Lindsay Crockett lindsay.crockett@kno planning.org

Dear Lindsay,

I writing to you as I would appreciate you to share this note with the various DRB members prior to the upcoming meeting, Wednesday, May 15.

On behalf of Keep Knoxville Charming, I would like to inform you that we now have over 1,200 petition signers from across Knoxville, details provided within, that are not in favor of the Hill & Locust development as proposed

Ultimately, you can see Knoxvilleans are concerned over the lack of thoughtfulness of the design of the development, as well as the impact it will have on the riverfront district in general. Comments within various social media postings speak to the points of detraction from the riverfront in addition to potential traffic concerns for the area. That by itself it is not a reason to deny the approval, however, the lack of compliance to the standards in place is.

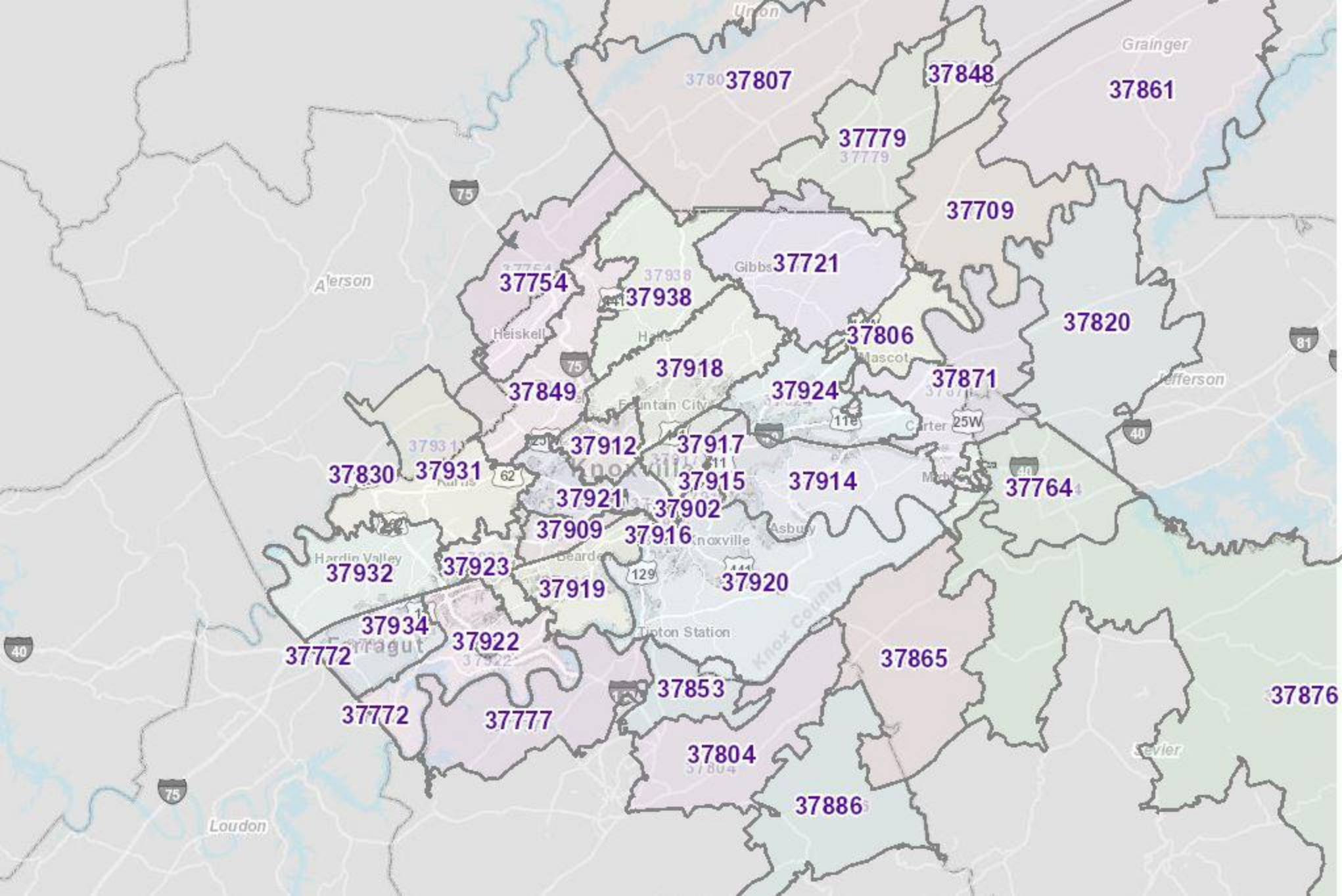
I hope that DRB will consider the feedback our citizens and ensure all guidelines currently in place are upheld. To be clear we are not against development, we are against a non-compliant proposal.

I truly hope that we can collectively ensure the riverfront area spend from the past is not wasted and I sincerely hope that our beautiful skyline is protected from this development.

Thank you for your assistance.

ZIP Code	Neighborhood/Area	Petition count	Percentage
37920	South Knoxville	231	19%
37917	North Knoxville	97	8%
37918	Fountain City	91	7%
37919	Bearden, Sequoyah Hills	82	7%
37902	Downtown Knoxville	68	6%
37922	Farragut	63	5%
37923	West Knoxville	52	4%
37921	West Knoxville	43	4%
37914	East Knoxville	39	3%
37934	Farragut, Turkey Creek	32	3%
37931	Farragut, Kams	30	2%
37932	Hardin Valley	29	2%
37909	WEst Hills, Bearden, W Knoxville	27	2%
37912	Fountain City, Norwood, N Knoxville	25	2%
37938	Halls Crossroads, Gibbs, Powell	25	2%
37865	Seymour	21	2%
37916	UT Campus, Fort Sanders	16	1%
37801	Maryville	13	1%
37915	Downtown Knoxville	12	1%
Various	Other	224	18%
		1220	

 2024-05-07_KeepKnoxvilleCharming_Zip Code Breakdown.pdf
173K



May 2, 2024

To the Design Review Board, regarding 4-D-24-DT:

The developers held another meeting for neighbors yesterday afternoon (May 1, 4:30-6pm), in response to DRB comments at the April 17 DRB meeting. I was out of town and unable to attend the DRB meeting but watched the recording later. I was not intending to make a direct outreach to the DRB with my comments/questions/concerns (as I am sharing them with the developers), but after speaking with Patrick Kassin and others yesterday I believe that's necessary and warranted. It was made clear (without being explicitly said) that their next steps are driven by responding to DRB comments from the meeting rather than responding to neighborhood comments and concerns, though they continue to welcome those from us.

Yesterday's meeting format was a series of sign boards, some of which had not been updated with current information, displayed for us to review. There were image boards related to the garage structural component visibility, screening, and murals where we were to select the visual options we found appealing. A couple of new boards showed how they are changing the garage interaction at the Front Ave level in response to DRB comments (which are relevant to Guideline A3a and perhaps A3b and A3g). This effort does not address the corner of the parking garage at Front & Locust, though I suggested they look for possibilities to do that. There was no (verbal) presentation component of the meeting. There were several representatives who we were welcome to speak with individually and we were also asked to provide written comments on cards (or by email, if we prefer). Their focus is nearly entirely on the comments related to the garage appearance and interaction at Front Ave level. There was nothing presented relative to the massing and scale considerations of the building. I specifically asked about them not being addressed, which led me to contact you with these comments.

Speaking for myself, and probably many of the neighborhood stakeholders, our primary concerns are the **scale of the south massing** and the **additional traffic to the block**. The issues they are focusing their response on, of the parking garage positioning, visual or pedestrian interaction, and appearance are important but are not the most significant issues for us residents.

I questioned the architect about the setback requirement in zoning code for buildings above 85 ft in height which is not present in the current design (one of the DRB members brought this up in April 17 meeting). I asked Lindsay about it and she said that planning had missed providing that requirement as a note for the April meeting. The architect confirmed that they would be implementing the setback along Locust Street (at least for the taller part of building above the garage) and Front Ave. Would they also need to implement the setback along the Henley Street Bridge façade?

The staff recommendation prior to the April 17 meeting included "The Board should discuss the overall scale of the proposed building (specifically, the south massing fronting the river) in relation to the context. The Board should also discuss the pedestrian-level design within the neighborhood context." Though these things were discussed at the meeting, the developers are not focusing on them in their response. I believe the "overall scale of the proposed building (specifically, the south massing fronting the river)" needs significantly more attention in board discussion at the May meeting (and any

comments the board may be submitting to developers prior to that meeting if that is a thing that happens). Some guidelines are clearly relevant that are not being paid adequate attention in the design.

Massing/Scale: Significant aspects of Guidelines are not being followed in the design.

B1a. Maintain a pedestrian-scaled environment from block to block.

B1b. Foster air circulation and sunlight penetration around new buildings.

I am very concerned about the unbroken mass of the south portion of their building casting all of the buildings on Hill Ave into shade, which will be unfortunate for us inhabitants but could also be very detrimental to our trees. We have a large, stately elm behind our building (Riverhouse) that is more than 6 stories tall. Our building dates from the late 1920s and I believe the tree probably is that old as well. Anyone who drives in from south Knoxville regularly is surely familiar with it as it's a very prominent component of the viewscape of our block. We own about 47 feet between the back of our building and our boundary line (if KGIS map is correct) and our tree is positioned well within that space, fairly close to our building. The project looks to be another 12-15 feet further than our property line. Even with 60 feet between buildings, if a building with solid, unbroken mass that's more than 150 feet taller than the grade of the tree base is constructed on its south-facing side, I'm concerned our beautiful and significant tree will suffer from lack of daylight and could die.

B1d. Divide larger buildings into 'modules' that are similar in scale to traditional downtown buildings.

If they were dividing their large mass of building into modules it would be much better for Hill Ave neighbors and our trees, as well as for the pedestrian experience. This was included in staff comments but did not get much discussion at the DRB meeting. **Staff comments specifically noted that "The south section is not pedestrian-scaled, divided into two large massings of a parking garage and a residential building. The Board should discuss the overall scale of the building's south massing in relation to the context of the area." I'm asking that you please give this significantly more attention in May.**

Traffic: We have expressed to the developers the existing challenging traffic pattern of how traffic comes from the HSB and wraps our block to get down onto Neyland Drive for events at the arena, the baseball stadium, as well as football. But the traffic backups are already a problem apart from event-related activities – daily use in and out of the Main Street garage, for the public accessing the City County Building, and general south Knoxville traffic headed to campus (especially the G10 garage) all cause issues on a regular basis. I have suggested that they add another ingress/egress for parking where their loading zone occurs off of Front Ave. That would help divide their residents' vehicle traffic and some of it could leave the block out through Maplehurst (it is never discussed that Front Ave is one-way that goes west, but that is true, and many users of it use it in whichever direction they want to). This is relevant to Guideline A1g. It is not necessarily a concern of DRB to attend to traffic except as it relates to the pedestrian experience and safety, but also as relates to the overall purpose of Design Review (from Zoning Code 16.5) that "Design Review is intended to foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation in Downtown Knoxville that reflects the goals of adopted plans, and the principles of the Downtown Design Guidelines . . . Promote Downtown as a place for a viable mix of commercial, office, civic, and residential uses, including street level development that creates a pedestrian-friendly environment . . . The Design Review Board's role is to provide certainty that both immediate surroundings as well as Downtown as a whole are taken into account with each building project."

The above are my most significant concerns. There are additional issues which are relevant to the Guidelines that I would also like to see improved. And I also have suggestions for improvement of pedestrian engagement possibilities along Locust and Front which seemed to be something DRB was also interested in. I believe the desire for improving the garage component is not only to make it look better but to leave open the possibility of improving engagement and activity in relation to our prominent waterfront area. I'll outline some of these things below. Hopefully you've read and considered at least the comments above (I know this is lengthy).

The corner at Front & Locust should be given further attention in design. I hope they'll consider if there is an opportunity for an entry, for a commercial use (a yoga studio or other fitness-related entity would be a good match), or a plaza/green space. Staff comment: The Board should discuss the proposed ground-level design within the neighborhood context. Relevant to Guidelines A3a, A3b, A3g, B2a, B2e, B4a, B5b, B6c, B6d, and the Boulevard District (some of these more than others).

Additionally, a wider sidewalk setback (B2a) would allow a more possible pedestrian experience along Locust. I'm specifically thinking of the option to have a hybrid step/slope sidewalk where perhaps 60% the width is the 5 foot or wider regular sidewalk and a 40% width could be steps. Steps are way more possible for a pedestrian on such a slope, which is particularly challenging for someone who might be wearing heels or dress shoes (in addition to the general public, they have two, or three?, egress doors along Locust). This exists in cities where the sidewalks are adjacent to especially steep roads (though most of them I'm aware of are not in America - except San Francisco). This would be a city engineering issue, but their project could propose and allow for it to occur. Guideline B6d "Provide yard space for apartment buildings in the Boulevard District." as well as B2e. could also be relevant to allowing for more pedestrian activation of this area. This focus is key for the Boulevard district and also suitable for proximity to the waterfront/greenway and UT's new focus on "the South entrance" to campus illustrated in the Zeanah Engineering Complex and their new "Entertainment Zone" adjacent to Neyland Stadium

Regarding Guidelines 7 Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities, I'm asking all to remember that the "back" of their building faces our existing residential buildings. I know specifics of these design components as well as landscaping plans are still to be developed. I already shared these other thoughts with the developers: *I want to know how access to the backs of our buildings can be made possible (for our maintenance/repair needs), either from a created alley or easement area, or from your loading area. I want to know how the grading/infill of the land strip between the back of our property and your building will be addressed. There is roughly 12-15 ft (?) of width that is part of your property and will need to be maintained by your ownership. We want to ensure it isn't an area where refuse is allowed to collect or where individuals might look for temporary camping accommodations.*

This development can be better than what is being proposed. These four parcels don't have to be treated as proposed. Overall I think this is too much project for this site, especially given the traffic and topography challenges. But apart from that, there is room for improvement. I also hope they will provide some pedestrian level renderings for the next meeting – as they did for the Hill & Locust corner in the April 17 submission. Thank you for your time and attention.

Kristen [REDACTED]
Riverhouse owner and resident

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May 6, 2024

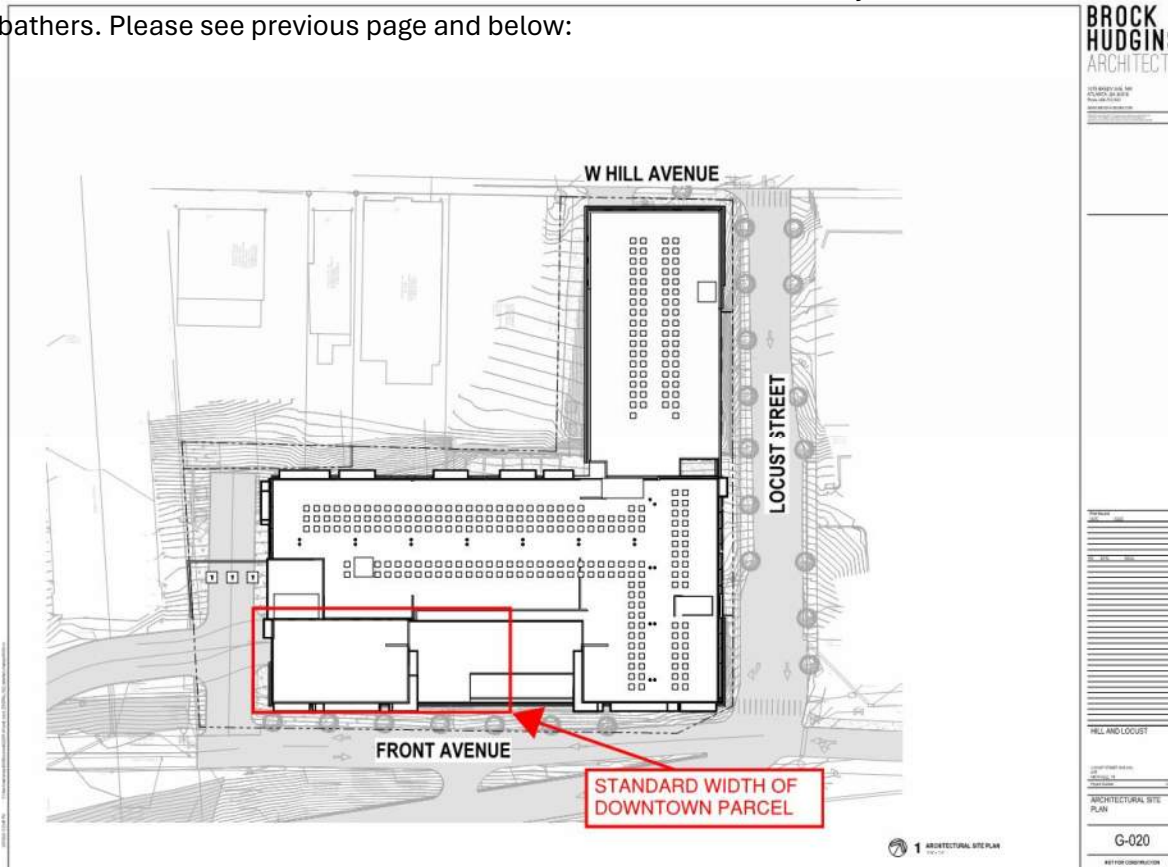
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The development team is competent enough to provide correct renderings and drawings to convey their intentions (please see credentials in item 2). **The Architect's insistence that Front Avenue is the gravel road is very concerning and it either means that the Architect doesn't understand their own project or that they are intentionally lying to the Design Review Board, Knoxville citizens and the City of Knoxville.**

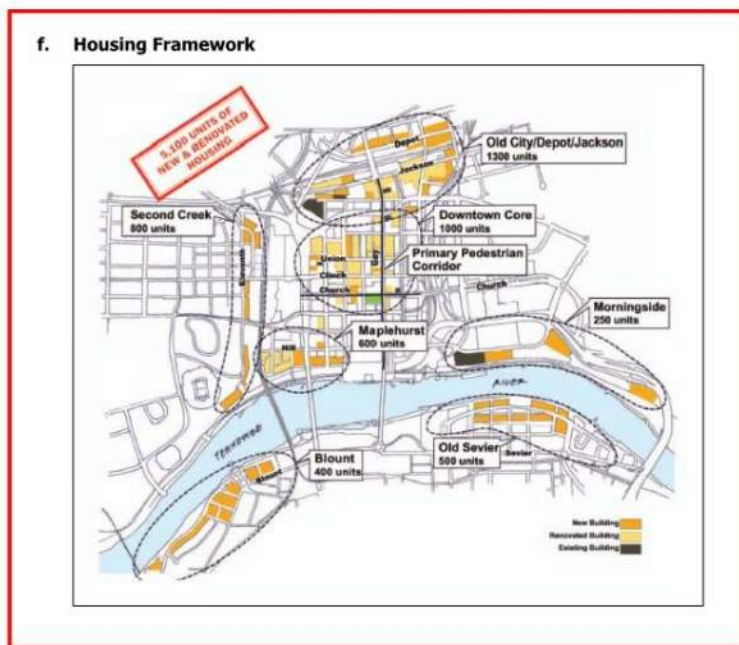
2. This is not the first multi million-dollar development project this team has done. They are competent enough, see highlights on page 3, and have a large enough team to be able to source, read and apply the guidelines and regulations of Knoxville to an acceptable design. **They are choosing not to do so.**

- i. Ben Hudgins – the Architect – heralds himself as “**emphasizing dynamic physical connections to public spaces and to shared areas by utilizing strategies that enable and encourage both social interaction and physical activity.**” (per the Brock Hudgins Architects website).
 1. Project examples from their website:
 - a. 1015 Boulevard in Atlanta, GA “6,000 SF of street-level retail and restaurant space provides an urban edge to both the Beltline and Boulevard, while the back portion of the building massing steps down to nearly half the height of the trail façade, respecting the scale of single-family homes along the adjacent residential street.”
 - b. The Lumberyard in Atlanta, GA, won the Atlanta Urban Design Commission 2001 Award for Adaptive Use, and Georgia AIA Award of Merit for Adaptive Use, “The Georgia AIA design jury commended the project for its intent to create an internal circulation space with the scale and interest of an urban streetscape.”
 - ii. Patrick Kassin – per Woodfield Development’s website - His responsibilities include: site selection, **due diligence, pre-development planning**, and oversight of consultants.
 - iii. Zach Bearden – per Origin Development Partner’s website: “Director of Client Services specializing in **zoning entitlements, due diligence** and site development. **He is also a licensed Landscape Architect in South Carolina.**”
3. The development team is proclaiming that they didn’t know about certain design requirements and are just being made aware; i.e. fenestration requirements they cited in the April 17th DRB meeting. This is an outright lie.
 - a. They have had the previous developer’s due diligence, site studies and contact information for any questions for the last 2 years.
 - b. They have had a workshop with the DRB and have a DRB and Historic Zoning Commission member advising them, who has also advised the previous developers.
 - c. The Design Review Board’s website lists links to the Design Review Board Guidelines, what to provide the Design Review Board for review, zoning ordinances and Boundary Map. There are also phone numbers, email addresses and photos of whom they are contacting for answers.
 - i. The developers held a meeting for the neighborhood on May 1st. I brought up to Mr. Bearden of Origin Development Partners about the guidelines and he feigned ignorance (please see my reasoning in items 2 and 3). I reiterated that the Board had outlined the applicable guidelines in the April 17th case review, the guidelines are readily available, and if he had any questions to call – the number is on the website.
 - d. I would also like to bring your attention to their materials listing. They have EFIS and Fiber Cement Board cited for the residential section facing the river. They are in a Fire District, and in addition to zoning regulation requirements, EFIS is not allowed. Their material selections require clarification.
4. This development group has worked with multiple Design Review Boards, a few are listed below, and I suggest reaching out to these DRBs and/or the city’s themselves to see how their guidelines were respected and treated:
 - a. Atlanta, Georgia – [Design Review Committee // Atlanta Beltline](#)
 - i. Lynnette Reid, Director of Planning, Atlanta Beltline Lreid@atlbeltline.org, 404-477-3551
 - b. Charleston, South Carolina - [Design Review Board \(DRB\) | Charleston, SC - Official Website \(charleston-sc.gov\)](#)
 - i. –843-724-3765

To the Design Review Board, regarding 4-D-24-DT:

May 6, 2024

- c. Nashville, Tennessee (under Lord Aeck Sargent, listed on Brock Hudgins Architect website) - [Design Review Committee - Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency \(nashville-mdha.org\)](http://DesignReviewCommittee-MetropolitanDevelopmentandHousingAgency(nashville-mdha.org))
 - i. Parker Brown – 615-252-3750
 - d. Chapel Hill, North Carolina [Advisory Board Review | Town of Chapel Hill, NC](http://AdvisoryBoardReview|TownofChapelHill,NC)
advisoryboardreview@townofchapelhill.org or 919-968-2743
5. The scale of the proposal is wildly out of character with its surroundings, the Boulevard district, and the Grid district. The applicant argued that the scale was in line with Neyland Stadium (8th largest in the world), the City County Building (a Government building with a holding facility), and the Riverview Tower (an office tower). These are not residential structures – and 2 were the reason the DRB was enacted.
- a. I would also like to bring your attention to the Downtown Improvement Strategy which the DRB guidelines are based upon. Specifically, the block this proposal is located on is cited to be part of the Maplehurst complex – a residential complex in scale and occupancy. This should be considered in addition to the district overlays. (Please see below)



DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY: PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT
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I fear the development team is purposely misrepresenting their design to push this project through the Design Review Board. This board is the City of Knoxville’s first task force to ensure applicants are amenable and respectful to the design guidelines and development plans of Knoxville, these go hand in hand with ordinances and zoning guidelines as well.

I urge this board to reflect on how your questions/suggestions about the project are dismissed or respected by the applicant. I further urge for a vote to be postponed until the applicant can provide correct information and display adherence to guidelines and regulations.

Thank you for your time,
Jessica Wright
Overlook owner and resident



Fwd: Proposal at 4-D-24-DT Researched Concerns

Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>

Mon, May 6, 2024 at 1:16 PM

To: Amy Brooks <amy.brooks@knoxplanning.org>, Mike Reynolds <mike.reynolds@knoxplanning.org>, Dallas DeArmond <dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org>, Christina Magrans <cmagrans@knoxvilletn.gov>

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jessica Wright** <Jessica@architectswright.com>

Date: Mon, May 6, 2024 at 11:48 AM

Subject: Proposal at 4-D-24-DT Researched Concerns

To: Josh Wright <josh@architectswright.com>, Susanne Tarovella <susanne@sparkmanarchitect.com>, bolin.cameron@gmail.com <bolin.cameron@gmail.com>, ford@sweetpbqq.com <ford@sweetpbqq.com>, jworsha@gmail.com <jworsha@gmail.com>, jthurman@mhminc.com <jthurman@mhminc.com>, lscole@utk.edu <lscole@utk.edu>, Matthew Debardelaben <thetwohundredblock@gmail.com>, Lindsay Crockett <lindsay.crockett@knoxplanning.org>

To the Design Review Board,

I felt compelled to write the board about my concerns over the proposed development at 0 West Hill Avenue – 4-D-24-DT. I am appalled at their treatment of the Design Review Board and the City of Knoxville's guidelines and regulations. I urge you to read my research about their misrepresentations to the board (please see attached).

I fully disclose that I am Josh Wright's wife, and a project manager for our architectural, development and contracting firms. I am writing this for my own conscience because the applicant's misrepresentations are unacceptable. In addition, there are currently over 4,000 units under construction within a 1-mile radius of this property (per Groundbreakers map on the City of Knoxville's website). There is time to make sure their proposal for the lots they are looking to purchase adhere to the City of Knoxville's design guidelines and regulations.

I understand they will be presenting again at the May 15th meeting and I look forward to attending, hearing the opposition and the discussion.

Thank you for your time and service to our community and the City of Knoxville,

Jessica Wright

Project Manager

Machinations Development


Architects Wright

Wright Makers LLC

mobile: 901.268.4683

office: 865.321.9600 ext. 002

www.machinations.info

 **Jessica Wright Concerns on 4-D-24-DT for DRB.pdf**
255K



Dallas DeArmond <dallas.dearmond@knoxplanning.org>

Fwd: Proposal at 4-D-24-DT Researched Concerns

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Mon, May 6, 2024 at 1:16 PM

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 **Jessica Wright Concerns on 4-D-24-DT for DRB.pdf**

255K

May 2, 2024

To the Design Review Board, regarding 4-D-24-DT:

The developers held another meeting for neighbors yesterday afternoon (May 1, 4:30-6pm), in response to DRB comments at the April 17 DRB meeting. I was out of town and unable to attend the DRB meeting but watched the recording later. I was not intending to make a direct outreach to the DRB with my comments/questions/concerns (as I am sharing them with the developers), but after speaking with Patrick Kassin and others yesterday I believe that's necessary and warranted. It was made clear (without being explicitly said) that their next steps are driven by responding to DRB comments from the meeting rather than responding to neighborhood comments and concerns, though they continue to welcome those from us.

Yesterday's meeting format was a series of sign boards, some of which had not been updated with current information, displayed for us to review. There were image boards related to the garage structural component visibility, screening, and murals where we were to select the visual options we found appealing. A couple of new boards showed how they are changing the garage interaction at the Front Ave level in response to DRB comments (which are relevant to Guideline A3a and perhaps A3b and A3g). This effort does not address the corner of the parking garage at Front & Locust, though I suggested they look for possibilities to do that. There was no (verbal) presentation component of the meeting. There were several representatives who we were welcome to speak with individually and we were also asked to provide written comments on cards (or by email, if we prefer). Their focus is nearly entirely on the comments related to the garage appearance and interaction at Front Ave level. There was nothing presented relative to the massing and scale considerations of the building. I specifically asked about them not being addressed, which led me to contact you with these comments.

Speaking for myself, and probably many of the neighborhood stakeholders, our primary concerns are the **scale of the south massing** and the **additional traffic to the block**. The issues they are focusing their response on, of the parking garage positioning, visual or pedestrian interaction, and appearance are important but are not the most significant issues for us residents.

I questioned the architect about the setback requirement in zoning code for buildings above 85 ft in height which is not present in the current design (one of the DRB members brought this up in April 17 meeting). I asked Lindsay about it and she said that planning had missed providing that requirement as a note for the April meeting. The architect confirmed that they would be implementing the setback along Locust Street (at least for the taller part of building above the garage) and Front Ave. Would they also need to implement the setback along the Henley Street Bridge façade?

The staff recommendation prior to the April 17 meeting included "The Board should discuss the overall scale of the proposed building (specifically, the south massing fronting the river) in relation to the context. The Board should also discuss the pedestrian-level design within the neighborhood context." Though these things were discussed at the meeting, the developers are not focusing on them in their response. I believe the "overall scale of the proposed building (specifically, the south massing fronting the river)" needs significantly more attention in board discussion at the May meeting (and any

comments the board may be submitting to developers prior to that meeting if that is a thing that happens). Some guidelines are clearly relevant that are not being paid adequate attention in the design.

Massing/Scale: Significant aspects of Guidelines are not being followed in the design.

B1a. Maintain a pedestrian-scaled environment from block to block.

B1b. Foster air circulation and sunlight penetration around new buildings.

I am very concerned about the unbroken mass of the south portion of their building casting all of the buildings on Hill Ave into shade, which will be unfortunate for us inhabitants but could also be very detrimental to our trees. We have a large, stately elm behind our building (Riverhouse) that is more than 6 stories tall. Our building dates from the late 1920s and I believe the tree probably is that old as well. Anyone who drives in from south Knoxville regularly is surely familiar with it as it's a very prominent component of the viewscape of our block. We own about 47 feet between the back of our building and our boundary line (if KGIS map is correct) and our tree is positioned well within that space, fairly close to our building. The project looks to be another 12-15 feet further than our property line. Even with 60 feet between buildings, if a building with solid, unbroken mass that's more than 150 feet taller than the grade of the tree base is constructed on its south-facing side, I'm concerned our beautiful and significant tree will suffer from lack of daylight and could die.

B1d. Divide larger buildings into 'modules' that are similar in scale to traditional downtown buildings.

If they were dividing their large mass of building into modules it would be much better for Hill Ave neighbors and our trees, as well as for the pedestrian experience. This was included in staff comments but did not get much discussion at the DRB meeting. **Staff comments specifically noted that "The south section is not pedestrian-scaled, divided into two large massings of a parking garage and a residential building. The Board should discuss the overall scale of the building's south massing in relation to the context of the area." I'm asking that you please give this significantly more attention in May.**

Traffic: We have expressed to the developers the existing challenging traffic pattern of how traffic comes from the HSB and wraps our block to get down onto Neyland Drive for events at the arena, the baseball stadium, as well as football. But the traffic backups are already a problem apart from event-related activities – daily use in and out of the Main Street garage, for the public accessing the City County Building, and general south Knoxville traffic headed to campus (especially the G10 garage) all cause issues on a regular basis. I have suggested that they add another ingress/egress for parking where their loading zone occurs off of Front Ave. That would help divide their residents' vehicle traffic and some of it could leave the block out through Maplehurst (it is never discussed that Front Ave is one-way that goes west, but that is true, and many users of it use it in whichever direction they want to). This is relevant to Guideline A1g. It is not necessarily a concern of DRB to attend to traffic except as it relates to the pedestrian experience and safety, but also as relates to the overall purpose of Design Review (from Zoning Code 16.5) that "Design Review is intended to foster attractive and harmonious development and rehabilitation in Downtown Knoxville that reflects the goals of adopted plans, and the principles of the Downtown Design Guidelines . . . Promote Downtown as a place for a viable mix of commercial, office, civic, and residential uses, including street level development that creates a pedestrian-friendly environment . . . The Design Review Board's role is to provide certainty that both immediate surroundings as well as Downtown as a whole are taken into account with each building project."

The above are my most significant concerns. There are additional issues which are relevant to the Guidelines that I would also like to see improved. And I also have suggestions for improvement of pedestrian engagement possibilities along Locust and Front which seemed to be something DRB was also interested in. I believe the desire for improving the garage component is not only to make it look better but to leave open the possibility of improving engagement and activity in relation to our prominent waterfront area. I'll outline some of these things below. Hopefully you've read and considered at least the comments above (I know this is lengthy).

The corner at Front & Locust should be given further attention in design. I hope they'll consider if there is an opportunity for an entry, for a commercial use (a yoga studio or other fitness-related entity would be a good match), or a plaza/green space. Staff comment: The Board should discuss the proposed ground-level design within the neighborhood context. Relevant to Guidelines A3a, A3b, A3g, B2a, B2e, B4a, B5b, B6c, B6d, and the Boulevard District (some of these more than others).

Additionally, a wider sidewalk setback (B2a) would allow a more possible pedestrian experience along Locust. I'm specifically thinking of the option to have a hybrid step/slope sidewalk where perhaps 60% the width is the 5 foot or wider regular sidewalk and a 40% width could be steps. Steps are way more possible for a pedestrian on such a slope, which is particularly challenging for someone who might be wearing heels or dress shoes (in addition to the general public, they have two, or three?, egress doors along Locust). This exists in cities where the sidewalks are adjacent to especially steep roads (though most of them I'm aware of are not in America - except San Francisco). This would be a city engineering issue, but their project could propose and allow for it to occur. Guideline B6d "Provide yard space for apartment buildings in the Boulevard District." as well as B2e. could also be relevant to allowing for more pedestrian activation of this area. This focus is key for the Boulevard district and also suitable for proximity to the waterfront/greenway and UT's new focus on "the South entrance" to campus illustrated in the Zeanah Engineering Complex and their new "Entertainment Zone" adjacent to Neyland Stadium

Regarding Guidelines 7 Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities, I'm asking all to remember that the "back" of their building faces our existing residential buildings. I know specifics of these design components as well as landscaping plans are still to be developed. I already shared these other thoughts with the developers: *I want to know how access to the backs of our buildings can be made possible (for our maintenance/repair needs), either from a created alley or easement area, or from your loading area. I want to know how the grading/infill of the land strip between the back of our property and your building will be addressed. There is roughly 12-15 ft (?) of width that is part of your property and will need to be maintained by your ownership. We want to ensure it isn't an area where refuse is allowed to collect or where individuals might look for temporary camping accommodations.*

This development can be better than what is being proposed. These four parcels don't have to be treated as proposed. Overall I think this is too much project for this site, especially given the traffic and topography challenges. But apart from that, there is room for improvement. I also hope they will provide some pedestrian level renderings for the next meeting – as they did for the Hill & Locust corner in the April 17 submission. Thank you for your time and attention.

Kristen Faerber
Riverhouse owner and resident