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620 North Fourth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
April 6, 2009

Ann Arbor City Planning Commission,

I am writing to ask you to oppose the NeNo (also called Near-North, NoMa, and The Terraces on Main in previous iterations) apartment building project being proposed in the North Central neighborhood by the Three Oaks Group.

The North Central Neighborhood that my wife, Karen Park, and I call home is often unknown or misunderstood by the people of Ann Arbor. When we describe to people where we live, people think of either Kerrytown and the Farmers Market (a business district), the industrial Main Street corridor leading to M14, or the primarily student-rental houses closer to the UM campus. North Central is not any of these areas, it is a thriving residential neighborhood north of Kingsley Street and south of Depot Street, lying outside the city-defined Downtown Area.

North Central is a diverse neighborhood consisting of professionals, retirees, workers, graduate students, young families with children, and long time residents remaining from the days of the North Central Neighborhood being the area that African-Americans were allowed to purchase homes. The vast majority of structures in the neighborhood are single and two family homes, one and two stories tall. Some are three story structures, but architecturally they appear as two story structures, have third floors created in attic spaces with dormers. There are large 3000-4000 sq ft homes, homes as small as 416 square feet, and everything in between. We have small parks, greenspace, front porches, backyards, community gardens, and even a local knitting group.

I moved into the North Central neighborhood 17 years ago, as a young, single professional, renting half of a house. Nine years later I bought a house on North Fourth Avenue. A few years later I met Karen, who also lived in the neighborhood. Karen and I have now turned that 100+ year old home into Michigan's first (and the nation's fifth) LEED Platinum certified house remodel. *We both chose to stay and invest in North Central because of its unique position as a true pedestrian scale neighborhood with a sense of community that also provides great access to the Downtown Area. But we also chose it because it is not downtown Ann Arbor.* We didn't want to live in a large building, or next to one. We wanted the benefits of living in a residential neighborhood consisting of houses, parks, yards, and front porches.

A building project on the scale of NeNo destroys the residential vibe of our neighborhood and overshadows the surrounding community. Sure, one side of the development will face Main Street, but this section of Main Street is not downtown and consists entirely of one- and two-story houses (some converted to businesses) with the exception of the Community Center and the Summit Party Store (both one-story structures at grade). The other three sides of this development will directly abut two-story family homes. There is nothing on the scale of this building in our neighborhood. It's scaled to fit the transitional zone at the outer edge of downtown—but it's being proposed for a residential neighborhood.

This project will:

- Violate the Central Area Plan's goal to "protect, preserve and enhance the character, scale and integrity of existing housing in established residential areas, recognizing the distinctive qualities of each neighborhood"
- Violate the Central Area Plan's goal to "ensure that new infill development is consistent with the scale and character of existing neighborhoods..."
- Grossly violate zoned height limits, being FIVE STORIES tall.
- Exceed allowed zoning size by 150%, at 52,000 square feet.
- Ignore zoned setbacks desired in residential construction.
- Have a large parking area, uncharacteristic in our neighborhood.
- Create large amounts of ambient light, legally required for lighting parking lots and entrances in this type of a building.
- Destroy greenspace and landmark trees.

A project on the scale of NeNo is not appropriate in our neighborhood. Approving it would be an undeserved and unnecessary gift to a private developer who paid too much for a difficult property.

I hope I can count on you opposing the NeNo project.

Thank You,

John Beranek