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Historical Resources Commission
City of Lawrence
Lawrence, Kansas

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Dear HRC Commissioners:

I write this letter to you from Brazil ... unfortunately (for me at least), I am out of the country for the period in which you will have your first meeting regarding the 'next' Compton building ... this time, the northeastern corner of 9th and New Hampshire streets in East Lawrence. I hope that you will read these concerns and take them to heart, even if I cannot be present personally. I am, by the way, available via email at town@ku.edu, if you have any questions about my comments.

I will begin by thanking you warmly for your honest and objective consideration of the 900 NH project proposal. I was proud to see that the HRC took a position and held to it ... if the project had to go forward, then at least the City Commission had to take responsibility for approving it. This outcome is MUCH more desirable than any impression that the HRC might have 'caved in' ... such did not happen, and the City Commissioners must now at least shoulder the responsibility for their actions. I personally know how I will vote when they come back up for voter approval.

In the case of this new proposal, I am disturbed by the general feeling that I got when discussing this new situation with several persons before I left for this trip, that this project is somehow an easier one for Compton and friends to get approved. To my eye, the *only* difference between the two projects is that this project has no residential structures on the west side of the 800 block of New Hampshire Street (my house was one of such structures in the case of the 901 NH building!). This point is relevant only in that there will not be an 'especially afflicted' class of local residents.

I would argue, however, that the present proposal is—in many ways—*worse than* the 901 NH project in its effects on the viewscape of the North Rhode Island Street National Historical District. That is, in the case of 901 NH, in some ways, my house and my neighbors' houses will buffer the District against having a monstrosity looming over it. (We also—that is, the HRC and the local residents—*did* make a difference in lowering the bulk of the 901 NH building significantly.) The new proposal, however, has nothing to buffer the District from the view. That is, one will be standing in the heart of the District (e.g., 9th and Rhode Island streets), and one will see the full bulk of this new structure—in this sense, and considering all THREE 9th and New Hampshire structures that Compton is building, I think that the impact on the viewscape of the District is nothing short of massive.

In addition to these concerns, a whole suite of other problems could be cited. Just to give you a sample,

(1) A 'neighborhood meeting' was held, in which Treanor, Kimball, and Compton, and friends were all present, but the meeting consisted of a presentation by them to us. No serious consideration was given to alternatives, neighborhood concerns, or the impact on East Lawrence.

(2) No affordable housing is being considered (as has been so successful in other recent East Lawrence projects), such that this will be genuine gentrification, in which the prosperous advance the border of the more humble neighborhood eastward, and never have to admit any of "them" into their buildings.

(3) The building is huge, far too massive to 'fit in' on the block. Unfortunately, now, they have the size standard of other recent projects to refer to, but the building is monstrous, and will forever look monstrous.

(4) Etc., etc., etc.

A final, and perhaps most critical comment is this: many in the neighborhood, and from the broader community, have asked the City Commission to stop this mad, unthinking race to develop, and commission a detailed 'district study' before proceeding. Indeed, I appeared before both the HRC and the City Commission to request such a study before approval of the 901 NH project. Quite simply, Lawrence has an amazing swath of underdeveloped areas ... 11th Street to the Kansas River, between New Hampshire and Rhode Island Streets. This area can be developed incrementally, basically following the developmental whims of the Comptons of our community, OR it could be developed intelligently, such that it best addresses the needs of our community. We requested such a study months ago, and that request was ignored; now, with another big project on the table, I consider it unconscionable that such a study would not be carried out first.

In sum, I urge you to do two things at your upcoming meeting. (1) Please make clear that this new project is no better than the 900 NH project as regards impinging on the integrity of the North Rhode Island Street National Historical District, by denying the request for HRC approval. (2) Please communicate to the City Commission that the HRC deems crucial a district study *prior to any further development* in the region. With these two elements, I believe that the HRC will again have done its duty ... if the project still goes forward, you will at least have preserved the integrity of the HRC, if not of the City of Lawrence!

Many thanks for your time and attention to this long letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Townsend Peterson', written in a cursive style.

A. Townsend Peterson

University Distinguished Professor
The University of Kansas

and East Lawrence resident!

East Lawrence Neighborhood Association

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September 19, 2012

Historic Resources Commission
City Hall
6 E. 6th Street
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Dear Commission Members,

During our September 4th, 2012 meeting of the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association we welcomed a presentation from the staff of Treanor Architects regarding preliminary development plans for 100 E. 9th Street at the corner of 9th and New Hampshire Streets. We were pleased that with this proposal the developer wanted to meet with the neighborhood, and we were quite surprised when along with Micah Kimball, who was presenting, Lauren Davis, Dan Watkins, Mike Treanor, and Doug Compton from the development group also attended.

As with the 900 New Hampshire developments, a lot of effort went into informing us what a great benefit this building will be for the city. Unfortunately, once again the presentation was from the perspective the developer's point of view. They were telling us what to like but not offering to work with the neighborhood. Even a request for a commitment on their part to work with the Spencer Museum and Dave Lowenstein in preserving the mural was met with silence. The lack of commitment after telling us they will work with the Museum and artist is telling. Once again it feels like the concerns and needs of the neighborhood are secondary to their proposal.

After the building of the 901 and the upcoming building of the 900 N.H. buildings, what happens at 100 E. 9th is considered the next logical step if you view the city with an arbitrary line running north south along N. H., or even the alley between New Hampshire and Rhode Island. It's as if the north/south orientation of Downtown and the North Rhode Island National Historic District is the only way to see the city. This, unfortunately, sets up a 'downtown development versus neighborhood' paradigm.

Major concerns of ELNA and many of the residents of the bordering area to downtown are issues of alienation and disregard. We live in the border area and recognize that the flow of in and out of downtown is in fact an East/West flow. From our perspective we are continually struck by the "great wall of wealth" which is developing between our neighborhood and downtown proper. East Lawrence has historically and to this day been low to moderate income residential. By their own admission, the new developments proposed by Mr. Compton/Mr. Treanor do not include affordable housing. The 900 NH, and now the 100 E 9th buildings, both contain plans for outdoor/ roof top swimming pools and recreational areas accessible only to their higher income residents.

I hope that the desire of the developers to have us view this new development from the N. H. north/south view does not influence the city to follow suit. It matter less what is going on 1 ½ blocks away at the Hobbs/Taylor Lofts up the street than what is going across N. H. at 100 E.

9th St and across the alley and street at 845/846 Rhode Island area. Both of these areas are 1 to 2 story buildings, and both are bordered on the north by street level parking.

East Lawrence, being the bordering neighborhood, has the following concerns:

1. The lot awaiting development sits between 2 areas of significant historic value to our city. The Downtown Lawrence Historic District and North Rhode Island National Historic District sandwich 100 E 9th. The interrelatedness of these 2 historic areas is the story of the founding and growth of the City. Merchants for downtown lived to the east and walked to work, be they Julius Fischer of the Ice business, A. G. Menger of Menger Boots, or Shalor Eldridge of the Eldridge House Hotel. While the height of 901 NH, the parking garage, and the Lawrence Arts Center affected the decision for 900 NH, north of 9th street is a different landscape environment. Ninth Street is at least a full driving lane wider than N.H. Street and offers a significant change of landscape from south of 9th Street.
2. 100 E. 9th sits in the environs of the locally historic listed Social Service League and other significant historic buildings not individually listed – The Turnhalle, as well as other contributing structures to the North RI National Historic District. While houses no longer stand on the west side of the 800 block of Rhode Island, the height of 100 E. 9th will be much more apparent after it is built because on 3 sides will be nothing of significant height, and one can argue that the width of 9th Street could be considered the 4th short side. 100 E. 9th rises only slightly from the level of the street of RI. This differs significantly from the 900 block of RI, where the ground level of 900 RI is at least 5 feet higher than the level of the street of RI.
3. Many cities require that a portion of new apartment buildings include a percentage of genuinely affordable units to maintain a non-exclusive blend of income levels and a healthier, diverse mix of people. This hotel plan with no low to moderate income priced living spaces is gentrification by definition.
4. Water pressure and sewer line capacity are of urgent concern of ELNA. While we have asked if there's been a capacity study done for the 900 RI building, we have not heard. Our concern is that while new infrastructure may be adequate for the new 900 building, how will it affect historic houses which still have original or old service lines? One of the houses in the 900 RI block already has city sewer coming back into her basement during heavy rains because of old lines. What will happen with her basement after there are 170 more toilets flushing? The potential impact of the 2nd and 3rd tall building is daunting. What assurances will the City make to assist home and business owners in the area when this exponentially larger number of water & sewer users comes online? How old home water service lines handle the increased water pressure needed to service tall buildings is yet to leak out.
5. Those of us who have lived in this area for a while have seen flash floor rain rush down RI and 9th Streets and fill the intersection of 9th & Connecticut. That is because the downhill grade starts at 9th and Vermont St and drops steadily to 9th & Conn. Also the streets still maintain most of the historic function of water run drainage. The neighborhood will now be faced with vastly increased amounts of displaced run-off.

6. Many of the residents of east Lawrence report the joys of evening quiet and dark skies at night, allowing a number of stargazers many opportunities. Noise pollution is now a large concern as 900 N.H. comes on line. Now at least 130 more air conditions, most sitting above the tree levels in the surrounding area will be running during the summer. They may each be individually tolerable, but for the neighbors it will be sound multiplied by 130 or more.
7. Since the building of 901 N.H. many local neighbors of the building now have lights shining into their bedrooms at night. The developers may say this is not a problem, but they are not lying in bed at night in a lighted room. All future building bordering East Lawrence residential areas should be required to have downward directed lights that don't spotlight beyond their own lots.
8. Speaking of lights and lighting. Why is the City of Lawrence not requiring at least some kind level of Energy efficiency and/or LEED certification requirements on new apartment developments? This issue should be explored with this project. Where is the green power and clean energy?
9. The idea of a roundabout in the intersection of 9th and N. H. is just dumb.

In summary, ELNA in the strongest terms, requests that the City Planning staff make several requirements for the development of the property at 100 E. 9th Street. First and foremost the District Study which was requested in December 2011 needs to be conducted before anymore development is approved along Downtown. It was stated by City Commissioners, that the city was busy with the Oread Neighborhood study and could not take on another study while busy with that one. The Oread study is now completed. It was further stated that a district study should not be started while a project was under city review, which the 900 N. H. project was. That project has now progressed, but the 100 E. 9th project only started after the Black Hills building was purchased. The request for the District study was made prior to the purchase of the Black Hills building. The District study should be conducted now.

The area between the Kansas River and 11th Street, between Vermont & New Hampshire Streets, contains many open lots, but also contains over 30 open retail spaces. Smart development, not just development for its own sack, will create lasting quality jobs for Lawrence.

A capacity study was requested when discussion of 900 N. H. was in process. ELNA is again requesting a capacity study on the increased burden on sewer drainage lines and on water pressure draw on fresh water lines. We would also like to have an assessment of the increase of light and noise pollution which can be expected with these developments, especially if there can be a cap put on the decibels of noise levels.

In order to stop the encroaching gentrification of our valuable East Lawrence neighborhood, please require affordable housing as part of any further living-space development along the eastern side of Downtown. We urge the city to honor the value of its Historic districts and treat them as equity invested in the future of our City.

Sincerely,

The East Lawrence Neighborhood Association