



134/29/2008

June 18, 2007

**Fenway Community Development Corporation**  
**73 Hemenway Street, Boston, MA 02115**

[www.fenwaycdc.org](http://www.fenwaycdc.org), 617.267.4637

**Jay Rourke, Project Manager**  
**Boston Redevelopment Authority**  
**One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02210**  
**Jay.rourke.bra@ci.boston.ma.us**

**Project Notification Form, Article 80 Large Project Review,**  
**316 and 320 Huntington Avenue, (GrandMarc at St Botolph)**  
**June 18, 2007 – sent by fax**

Dear Jay:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Project Notification Form for this project. .

The Fenway CDC is a membership organization that works to achieve greater residential stability and diversity in the Fenway neighborhood. We engage residents in community planning, develop affordable housing and advocate for community services primarily aimed at meeting the needs of low- and moderate-income residents. We envision the Fenway as an Urban Village, a model of smart growth and sustainability where both residential and institutional neighbors thrive. Toward this end, we seek to capitalize on the opportunities and address the challenges arising from the Fenway's unique concentration of world-renowned institutions, which are important drivers of the regional economy and on which the proponents of this project will rely for tenants

The Fenway zoning regulations were developed through an extensive community process, and therefore embody the community's goals and expectations regarding height, density, land use, open space, and other characteristics of the built environment essential to maintaining the character and quality of life in the neighborhood. In effect, through zoning, the city and Fenway community have decided to offer an appropriate allocation of development rights to private landowners/developers. The GrandMarc proponents, however, are essentially assuming that the city will grant them millions of dollars worth of publicly-held development rights (above the generous allocation provided as-of-right) without any substantive compensation for the broader community (on site improvements that can be capitalized into the development do not qualify). This is an audacious assumption; if the city permits an egregious violation of as-of-right zoning such as those proposed by the GrandMarc proponents it undermines the community process and the trust engendered by it.

Zoning also provides legal protection for the community's expectations of how the community will look in the future. Ignoring the zoning to such an egregious degree, as this proposal has, creates expectations of further excess. A comfortable residential block can be torn down and built higher even though it is currently built out to the allowed zoning because these extra development rights have altered the value of the land. Rampant land speculation can be expected. Long-term residents of moderate means would then be driving out of their homes and the community as a whole will greatly suffer. These are wholly



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predictable outcomes in a neighborhood of rapidly escalating real estate values and are inimical to our mission..

Our support for this project can only be contingent on the proponent meeting all of the current provisions of Article 66- Fenway Neighborhood District with regard to dimensional requirement:

- a floor area ratio no greater than 8.0 as opposed to the far of 13 requested,
- a height of 90 feet, rather than the nearly quadrupled height of 345 feet requested.

While we acknowledge the difficulty of meeting the open space requirement, the small courtyard is an inadequate solution.

We take this opportunity to voice our concerns about the intended operation of the project as it is described. We have no confidence that students from different institutions can be supervised effectively under one roof, and we have no information that a project of similar size and configuration has worked. We are also concerned that any future owner will continue to manage and supervise the dormitory with the same or better Resident Assistant to student ratio that at least matches that of the surrounding colleges and universities, and that it will maintain security and sanitation at a high standard. A faceless institutional investor (pension fund, insurance company, etc) will not stand in the same relationship to the property as an owner

While we agree that a privately owned dormitory has the positive result of providing tax revenue, we point out that although legally and technically it is a private residential property, functionally as a for profit dormitory it is as much institutional/commercial as it is residential. Were it to fall under institutional rules, linkage payments would be required. We assert that this is a gray area, and further strengthens the argument below concerning community benefit.

While we remain steadfastly opposed to the violation of our community's zoning, if indeed additional development rights are to be granted we urge the proponent and the city to reach out to the community, including the Fenway CDC, to determine whether the impacts of additional height and density can be effectively mitigated or counterbalanced through the provision of community benefits. Simply drawing students out of privately owned apartment buildings with no consideration as to who subsequently occupies the vacated units is NOT a community benefit. In alignment with Fenway CDC's recently introduced strategic plan, which stresses the formation of partnerships to ensure a diverse and affordable Fenway, a more palatable benefit might involve a partnership between PPC Land Ventures and FCDC to create new affordable housing in the East Fenway. This would ensure that Lincoln's speculative claim that the GrandMarc will remove students from the core residential neighborhood is backed by substance and commitment.

In summary, we cannot support this project as presented.

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Sincerely,

Joyce Foster, President

Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director

Copy:

Via e-mail

Carl Koechlin, Executive Director, Fenway CDC

Steve Wolf, Board Member, Fenway CDC

Mike Ross, Boston City Counselor

Byron Rushing, Massachusetts State Representative

Via fax