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1554 Guy Street
San Diego, California 92103

February 6, 2024

Planning Commission
1222 First Avenue
Mail Station 501
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: Project Name: 3627 Crowell Street;
Project Number PRJ-0688860
Hearing Date: February 8, 2024

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I am writing to state our strong disapproval of the above-referenced project. I own the home directly across the street from 3627 Crowell. I grew up in the neighborhood, and I am very familiar with the area and nearby homeowners. Crowell and Guy Streets were and are home to neighbors of diverse backgrounds, ages, income levels, Races and Genders.

In my opinion, the project is ill-advised, absurd, and, yes, immoral. This project would result in drastic changes to the neighborhood, and negatively affect it forever. True, property owners should be allowed to do what they want with their properties but the impact on neighborhoods and quality of life of residents must be considered. Not every act authorized by law is prudent. Here, I am afraid we are not dealing with a bona fide homeowner, but rather a profiteering property owner and unscrupulous building developer.

The Project Would Exacerbate Existing Parking and Disturbance Problems

For several reasons, completion of this project would result in irreparable harm to the neighborhood and homeowners. First, since the 1960s, there have been problems relating to the narrow streets and insufficient parking on Guy and Crowell streets. The problem has gotten worse, to the point that arguments, violence, and accidents often occur over parking. Police have had to respond to reports of parking related violence, damage, and vandalism. Neighbors often call the police on each other. I recall my parents' caregivers receiving citations for technical violations of traffic

laws.

I once tried to get the City to create a Disabled Parking space on Crowell for my disabled parents and me. I am a Disabled Army Combat Veteran. The City refused, but put in an unusable, inaccessible cut in the sidewalk on Guy Street below the property. The sidewalk cut made parking worse, because one cannot park too close to the cut without getting a citation.

I understand there may be some, partial vehicle access to the project from Glenwood Drive, but the inevitable increase in vehicles parking and traffic resulting from completion of the project will certainly negatively affect the Guy-Crowell neighborhood.

The Project Does Not Promote Legitimate Goals and Intent of "In-Fill Development Projects" and the Uptown Community Plan

I understand the policies behind "In-Fill Development Projects" and the Uptown Community Plan. It seems these projects are exempted from environmental and other laws, and even due process, common sense, and decency. There are urban areas where such projects make sense, but not here. Providing affordable housing near public transportation is a laudable goal in many situations. But it makes no sense to harm a neighborhood on a steep hill by putting multiple units on a tiny lot.

The push to corral people into small houses on tiny lots is dangerous. Science tells us what happens when rats and other animals are forced to live in confined, close proximity. Anxiety, agitation, violence and crime result. The increasing parking turmoil on Crowell and Guys Streets is just the beginning. Violence and crime at "the Housing Projects" in other large cities further prove this point.

Public Transportation Is Largely Inaccessible From Guy and Crowell Streets

Next, I've heard nonsense talk about the neighborhood's walking proximity to public transportation. The trip from Guy and Crowell to public transportation would be treacherous for all but the super fit and nimble. The hill is quite steep, with many uneven areas on the sidewalk. Many residents of the neighborhood are senior citizens. When I was young, I had a paper route in the area from Washington to Sassafras streets. The Crowell Street hill was once of the most challenging for me, going up or down. Most residents would be forced to use Uber or Lyft to travel to the bus stop, which would defeat the purpose and intent of "In-Fill Development Projects" and the Uptown Community Plan.

Protect What Remains of the Park and Neighborhood

When I was growing up, the land on which the house at 3627 Crowell Street was built was part of an acres-large Park ("the Park"). There were rumors among neighbors that Kate Sessions created the Park. There were walking paths, stone walls, and two above-ground, stone ponds. There were no fish in the ponds, but they filled with water and frogs when it rained. There were critters of all kinds, and occasional stray cats. The gracious landowner allowed children to play in the Park and adults walked the paths, admiring nature.

When I learned that selfish, new landowners and unscrupulous developers planned to build houses over the Park, I was heartbroken. We neighbors considered the Park sacred land. As is often the case, powerful politicians and developers got their way. The paths and old trees are gone now, along with the ponds. Some say that parts of some walls and paths are still in the canyon, but they are now inaccessible. (The Commission should investigate this!)

The City, the landowner, and unscrupulous developer worked in secret, and sprung the almost finalized project on the neighborhood at the last minute. The neighbors were powerless to stop destruction of the Park. I fear a similar process is taking place with the above-referenced, malignant project.

There is a song by the Rock Group, Cream, "World of Pain." One of the verses is...

"Outside my window is a tree
There only for me
And it stands in the grey of the city
No time for pity, for the tree or me."

The line, "there only for me," is because no one else gives a damn about the tree, but him. I hope you on the Commission care about what remains of the Park and this neighborhood. I hope you will not allow a nice neighborhood like this to decay into "the grey of the city" as part of a soulless, heartless, cookie-cutter implementation of law.

The Neighbors Have Been Denied Due Process

Frankly, this project has been surrounded by unusual secrecy and lack of public openness. We only received notice of the secret project a few weeks ago, and have

not had sufficient time to prepare and present our concerns to the Commission.

In conclusion, I urge the Commission to recommend denial of approval for this ill-conceived, ill advised project. Alternatively, I would request that the Commission delay any sort of approval recommendation for six months, so the neighbors can investigate and evaluate environmental, historical, and archeological issues concerning the Park and the neighborhood. In my opinion, the neighbors are entitled to at least this much due process, given that their lives and properties would be affected by the project.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

RJVatt

Richard J. Vattuone

cc: John P. Martin, Esq.