

February 9,2026

Hello Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about project #HDC2025-00706.

As with the previous proposal from 2021, this proposal includes demolition of 2 historic homes. West Village is an historic district and these historic houses have become increasingly valuable and desirable. They may not be stable enough to move, but they can be restored. My house across the street and the house next-door to me were in similar condition before restoration. The houses at 1514 and 1532 Van Dyke have value and people are interested in them. They are listed on Zillow for \$70K and \$260K.

It would be a loss to demolish TWO “worker’s cottages” that are original to the village. One is mentioned in the documents used to gain the historic designation for West Village. Because of the previous proposal, I spent some time at the Burton Collection and found that both houses were built prior to 1897. The smaller house to the north was built by Michael Mitchel Convery, a ship carpenter who immigrated from Ireland in the 1840’s. The house was in the family for generations and eventually went to the Land Bank. The 2021 HDC review commented upon the detailing, specifically of the windows. I imagine that flourish is because the house was built by a skilled carpenter. They are wooden houses built about 150 years ago and they are still here.

This same developer purchased these houses to demolish. He purchased 1532 Van Dyke from the Land Bank in 2022 and the house at 1514 from Mrs. Dixon the year earlier. This house was occupied at the time. Since the project has not moved forward, the houses have not been maintained – roofs are now deteriorating, windows missing and there are squatters. This is demolition by neglect. He could fix them or sell them to someone who will restore them.

This project could move forward in so many ways. It should be smaller, more consistent with the aesthetics of the neighborhood in size, materials, massing and frontage. The developer could restore the two historic houses, build some in-fill houses, and then mirror the existing Coe along Coe Street. Two affordable housing complexes are being built very close by, so perhaps the pressure of housing is less than it was 5 years ago. The complex at VanDyke and Jefferson will have 148 affordable units and some are 2/3 bedroom. This proposal is 48 one-bedroom/studio units. When a suggestion was made in 2021 to downsize the project to that of the original Coe, this developer shared that he was not making any money on the Coe and it would not be profitable for him to build anything smaller. His profit comes with a steep price to this historic community.

Restoration of two historic houses along with development of the vacant land would, in accordance with the HDC mission, “stabilize and improve property values, strengthen the local economy and foster community pride”.

Thank you,

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