NARRATIVE IN SUPPORT OF VARIANCES

10, 14 ½, 16 AND 18 VANDEVENTER AVEUNE

The applicant owns the four residential properties listed above. While they all have Vandeventer Avenue addresses, only 16 and 18 actually front on Vandeventer Avenue. 10 and 14 ½ are set behind the houses on Vandeventer and actually front on the dead-end public street known as Lincoln Court. Each of 10 and 14 ½ has a 3-foot wide walkway out to Vandeventer.

This application proposes to reorganize the combined properties, by first demolishing the badly deteriorated dwellings at 10 and 14 ½. In their place, the proposal is to construct a new ten-unit rental apartment building (two of those units being affordable dwellings). 16 and 18 would be converted from their current mixed-uses to a duplex, with one dwelling in each half of the building.

Currently, the land behind 16 and 18 and the land in front of 10 and 14 ½ is used in a haphazard fashion to park 16 cars (some belonging to tenants and some rented to area workers). This application would formalize the rear parking area, with 9 spaces in a paved lot behind 16 and 18. Along the sides of 16 and 18, the existing driveway would be cut off and parking areas would be created for two cars to be parked along each side of the duplex, with access only from Vandeventer. With this application 16 current spaces would be replaced by 13.

<u>Variance for 16 and 18 Vandeventer Avenue</u>

16 and 18 Vandeventer are located in the R-4 zone and are not historically designated.

The only new variance required is for 16 Vandeventer and involves Maximum Impervious Coverage, where 49.5% is permitted, and 76.6% exists on 16 Vandeventer. The proposal is to increase the coverage at 16 Vandeventer by 11.4% to 88% and to *reduce* the impervious coverage by 2.3% at 18 Vandeventer to 68.2%.

As noted above, the coverage of the duplex building itself will not change at all.

The current configuration has a driveway running from Vandeventer Avenue to the rear parking lot. The reason that the coverage on 18 Vandeventer is being reduced is that the driveway is to be closed off and approximately 281 square feet of gravel removed.

The reconfiguration and formalization of the parking to the rear of 16 and 18 Vandeventer will call for those cars to enter and exit via Lincoln Court, a short dead-end public street accessed via Tulane Street. Lincoln Court is a little used street. The vehicular entrance to the new Nelson Glass building uses Lincoln, as did the suppliers and trash removal trucks for Triumph Brewery, which is immediately adjacent to the site.

It is noted that Lincoln Court and the areas around it (apart from the rear yard of 16 and 18 Vandeventer) are in the CBD, where higher rates of coverage are permitted. Here, the parking lot proposed for the rear yard of 16 and 18 Vandeventer will serve only the new apartment building at 10 and 14 ½ Vandeventer.

One small element of the impervious coverage is the proposed public passageway from Lincoln Court to Vandeventer Avenue. It will be made up of pavers, which are impervious.

Variances for 10 and 14 ½ Vandeventer

There are four variances: 1) Parking: 13 stalls are provided where 15 are required; 2) Floor area ratio: 1.99% provided, 1.5% permitted; 3) Coverage: 72.5% provided, 60% permitted; and 4) Impervious coverage: 81.9% provided, 49.5% permitted.

10 and 14 ½ are located in the CB District and are designated as historic buildings.

Parking The two duplexes facing Vandeventer will each have their own two-car parking spaces with access directly from Vandeventer Avenue, which conforms to zoning. The nine spaces which will use Lincoln Court will serve the 10 apartments located there. Based on the applicant's experience with other downtown rental properties, not all 10 unit renters will have cars. It is noted that the municipality has concluded that buildings in the CBD or on the commercial parts of Nassau Street do not all need the parking spaces otherwise called for by ordinance. So, in the new Affordable Housing Overlay zones, one of which is located just across Spring Street from this site, considerable reductions are provided from the otherwise-required on-site parking spaces. The applicant's engineer will testify regarding this layout, but with the reduction in the number of parking spaces from the present count, it is not believed that a separate traffic study is warranted.

FAR The new 10-unit apartment building is intended to take up the majority of the lots on which it will be located. Many other buildings in the Central Business District exceed the 1.5 percent floor area ratio. For example, the building will abut the large blank-walled exterior of the now-closed Triumph Brewery, which has no on-site parking and is significantly larger than the proposed apartment building. There are numerous other examples of existing buildings which exceed the permitted floor area, and neither they nor the proposed building have a negative impact on the neighborhood. Recent zoning amendments suggest a desire on the part of the municipality to encourage more dense growth in the center of town, where access to public transportation and walking are both encouraged. This is particularly true where affordable dwellings have been incorporated, as here.

Coverage and Impervious Coverage The existing impervious coverage for 10 and 14 ½ Vandeventer (located in the CBD) is at 72.6% and is proposed to rise to 81.9%, where only 49.55 is permitted. Many buildings in the CBD have coverages of almost 100%, and it appears that the municipality has encouraged more dense development in the CBD or in other zones along and near Nassau Street, with increased coverage being the result. For example, the Triumph Brewery building, immediately adjacent to the proposed building, seems to cover all of its lot.

Offsetting these variances is the provision of two affordable apartments (one three-bedroom and one two-bedroom) and the provision of a public pathway from Lincoln Court to Vandeventer Avenue.