

Katherine Showalter

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Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Design Overlay Zone Amendments, Recommended Draft**

Unfortunately, I became aware of this hearing at the last minute, so will keep my testimony short and general. I am attaching 2 photos of a block-large apartment building in the Westmoreland neighborhood of Portland. City planners, design schools and Smart Growth America are forever talking about the "vibrancy" of their vision for urban growth, but a box offering no concession to green space or context, featuring the ubiquitous and unwelcoming glass-fronted ground-floor retail common to all new commercial buildings is the opposite of vibrant, as is the chain fast-food restaurant housed there. Sellwood/Westmoreland was already a vibrant, walkable neighborhood full of small locally-run stores and a mixed-used library building that proved that new development could be an asset to the community. Within the last few years, uncaring development has degraded the qualities city officials claim to be seeking. Any design policy that would green-light the demolition of historic buildings to accommodate profit-seeking investors at the expense of a public wishing for human-scale buildings and social spaces will be, to put it mildly, bad public policy.

Testimony is presented without formatting.