

Re: The continuing destruction of our North East Portland Neighborhood thanks to City policy regarding development of substandard lots

Dear Mayor Hales, Commissioner Dan Saltzman, Commissioner Nick Fish, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, and Commissioner Steve Novick,

The neighborhood of Concordia was established around 1900 and was soon thereafter fully built out with many grand Craftsman style homes interspersed with humble Bungalows and elegant Tudor homes. In the Forties, remaining regions near Fernhill park and along Rosa Parks became stretches of tasteful Ranch homes. All of the development was completed when the R5 (residential 5000 square ft lots like 50x100) designation for zoning meant a minimum 5000 square ft lot. Much of the neighborhood was platted in 25 x 100 lots. It was the practice of the day to elect to own two, three or four such lots for your property. This established a neighborhood "character" of a less crowded nature where trees had room to grow without their bottom branches limbed, and gardens were the norm.

Today, because City policy allows development of these side yards and gardens, Concordia is particularly targeted by construction interests bent on replacing these historic and tranquil spaces with Skinny houses. The most fortunate kind of historic neighborhood and the most unfortunate development loop hole that this City has ever implemented have combined to create a construction nightmare for our residents. The 100 year old trees are disappearing along with the nature that they supported. Expensive Skinny houses selling for more than \$600,000 are lording over even the biggest bungalows and their back yards, taking away the sunlight that the neighbors took for granted. Saddest of all, with the "a" overlay, each place where a skinny house is built is a place where an ADU (additional dwelling unit, "granny apartment") no longer can be. Hence, the destruction by skinny homes doesn't even improve the number of units the neighborhood can support they just trash the place. This is a neighborhood which could easily be a "Conservation District." It is a Portland treasure that requires measures to protect its historic "character" from any further destruction.

Because of the very beauty of the 25 x 100 subdivided portions of the neighborhood and because of their open form of development, we are particularly harmed by "historic lot" development practices in the R5 areas of our neighborhood. The definition of R5 has been so diluted by this City that it is now only R2.5, particularly when you consider that every lot in these regions is 25 x 100, and they are now all available to develop within the current code. To allow these lots to be developed is a slap in the wallet to everyone who has purchased a home in an R5 neighborhood. First, the State does not recognize them as lots. They are only lots if they meet the zoning requirements for the standard of size. In the case of R5 you would need two 25 x100 lots to meet our zoning! To change the code to allow R2.5 development is to change our zoning! You have up zoned us to R2.5. Everyone in this neighborhood is suffering continued devaluation of our historic place from this development practice.

In response to this City having tacitly up zoned the finest portions of our neighborhood, the Concordia Neighborhood Residents ask that these historically platted and historically developed portions of our neighborhood be afforded the protection of R7 zoning. These subdivisions, like "Irvington Park" surrounding Concordia University, are the historic core of our community. Many homes were established with 10,000 sq/ft lots, many more with 7,500. Of course there are also 5000 square foot lots, but until the 2003 policy package 2A, there was never a 2500 square foot lot. As a neighborhood region historically developed with a character of larger lots interspersed in the fabric, and as that is the property of our neighborhood which we intend to defend, this methodology is akin to any other embattled neighborhood being granted similar protections by down zoning.

Concordia has a portion of our neighborhood which is Zoned R2.5 which is bounded by Alberta and Killingsworth and 22nd ave to the West and 33rd ave to the East. 30th Ave from Killingsworth to Ainsworth is similarly zoned. These are designations that are vestiges of the street car era which ended in 1949. These neighborhoods are built out with R5 construction practices and significant early architecture. The current designation of R2.5 leaves these neighborhood homes as targets of demolitions for the two building lots beneath. The character of this portion of our neighborhood is that of an R5 neighborhood as that was the style of the day. We value this region as it is historically built today. There is no compelling reason for this area to be zoned R2.5 as it does not abut a transit corridor. As an R5 neighborhood, all empty lots may still be developed with infill housing. We want to afford protection to the existing homes in this historic "Street Car" neighborhood region. This portion of the neighborhood will be protected to our satisfaction with an R5 designation.

Thank you for hearing and comprehending our concerns. The Neighborhood Association is willing to entertain a tour for our elected officials any time. Please join us and helps us all to find this solution.

Your neighbor,

Ansula Press  
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