A Citizen Analysis of
Albion Residential: 1450-1508 Sherman Avenue

Evanstonians for Responsible Planning
“As of Right” shows project is “Not Right” for site.
Five Zoning Variances = Double the Structure
Zoning Variances

- **Height:**
  - D4 limit is 105’. PUD with 2 parking levels is 125’
  - Project requests 178’ to main roof. **40% over PUD**

- **Density:**
  - D4 limit is 5.4 FAR. PUD extends to 6.0
  - Project requests FAR 6.90. **15% over PUD**
Zoning Variances

- **Number of Units:**
  - By site area, per D4 limits, the maximum number of units is 93
  - Project requests 287 Units. **300% over limit**

- **Parking:**
  - By number of bedrooms for 287 units, parking required is 389 spaces
  - Project provides 185. **50% of required**
Violates the INTENT of the Zoning

D4 Downtown Transition District:  
“...To provide business infill development and redevelopment...**Massing and scale** of structures **should reflect established uses and provide suitable transitions** between downtown and neighboring areas

D3 Downtown Core Development:  
“To provide the **highest density** of business infill development and redevelopment”
RESIDENTIAL TOWER – 12 STORIES
93 DWELLING UNITS ON 8 RESIDENTIAL FLOORS
HEIGHT 125 FT
AMENITY FLOOR 10 FT
8 RESIDENTIAL FLOORS 80 FT
2 PARKING DECKS 19 FT
RETAIL LEVEL 16 FT

TYPICAL FLOOR – 12 UNITS
(2) – 3 BEDROOM
(6) – 2 BEDROOM
(3) – 1 BEDROOM
(1) – STUDIO

TOTAL PARKING – 191 SPACES

1454 Sherman Avenue – Typical Floor Plan
City Staff has officially stated that the proposed development is **NON-COMPLIANT** with zoning!
Disregards Downtown Evanston Plan

- D4 Developments must: “...ensure consistency with the “Plan for Downtown Evanston...”

- 2009 Plan shows that 1450-1508 Sherman Avenue is located in the “South Traditional Zone” which is zoned for 3 to 5 stories

- More traditional shopping street character with smaller buildings and shops

- Smaller scaled, mixed-used buildings are recommended to reinforce their traditional character
Let’s recognize the spirit of this plan, as adopted by City Council.

NO EXTRA VARIANCES!
The Wall Street Journal

New Luxury Rental Projects Add to Rent Squeeze

A focus by builders on high-end apartments helps explain why rents are soaring across the country.

**WSJ: “New Luxury Rental Projects Add to Rent Squeeze”**

- City’s approval of luxury high rises contributes to increasing overall rents, decreasing diversity.

- Albion would be the 10th LUXURY RENTAL HIGH RISE in Evanston! One still needs to be built!

- We HAVE FULFILLED this type of housing in the Evanston market.

- We are adding the wrong TYPE housing supply!
Saturated Luxury Rental Market

10 Luxury Rental Developments:

1. 831 Emerson (242 units)**
2. 2) 1571 Maple (101 units)**
3. 1717 Ridge (175 units)
4. E2 (354 units)
5. The Main (112 units)
6. AMLI Building (214 units)
7. Reserve at Evanston (193)
8. Park Evanston (283 units)
9. Evanston Place (189 units)
10. 1620 Central (47 units)

TOTAL: 1,910 luxury rental units

*** not built or just approved

Proposed Developments + New Units on Market:

1) Albion Residential, 16 stories (286 Units)
2) 601 Davis, 33 stories (217 units)
3) 1700 Sherman, 37 stories, 152 rental units

Total Proposed New Units: 685

Current + Proposed = 2,595 rental units
Affordable Housing Crisis;
Albion onsite units not solution

• Evanston **lost 3,296** affordable housing units, **or 43% of its affordable housing units**, between 2000 and 2011

• Albion’s onsite micro units NOT a solution, when building makes core problem worse

• Mirco units are not appropriate for families

• As far as we can tell, they are not following the affordable housing ordinance!

• The Albion development will likely only worsen affordable housing crisis
**Does Density Help Tax Base?**

- A Body of Peer-Reviewed Research says: density is expensive, tax benefits are unclear at best

- “It is noteworthy that new housing capital ... is not correlated with any of the [tax] burden measures. This dichotomy with business investment may well reflect the greater expenditure needs that added population places on local government relative to its contribution to government revenues. This finding is in harmony with the view that people "simply don't pay for themselves."

Does Density Help Tax Base?

• The study balances the engineering and planning view that greater population density lowers the costs of providing public services by documenting a U-shaped relationship between spending and density; ... higher density typically increases public sector spending. The results suggest that rapid population growth imposes fiscal burdens on established residents in the form of lower service levels.


• In sum, established residents in fast-growing areas may experience declines in service quality as well as rising local tax burdens. Fiscal impacts of local population growth: A conceptual and empirical analysis.

Architectural Issues

• A north-south building with long east and west faces suffers the worst possible solar orientation. Long flat glass and silver-panel walls are essentially huge mirrors in the full-on low-angle morning and afternoon sunlight, absorbing great heat and reflecting light as a blinding nuisance to neighbors.”

• The long and high west wall will greatly concentrate and echo the sounds from the CTA and Metra trains to the neighbors on the west, also a nuisance.

• East and West walls should have vertical articulation, both as potential sun control from low-angle light as vertical louvers, and as well as visual interest, what formerly was called “shade and shadow,” as a constantly changing play of light.
• “Too visually large and factually dense, by the nominal 20% that it exceeds the generous bonuses already allowed by the PUD guidelines; provides no appropriate visual interest or improvement in context with Evanston; is handicapped by planning complexities resulting from excess scale; and promotes little to the quality of life for current and future Evanston residents, while causing a discriminatory increase in rental rates.”
What about density for small business?

- Six/Seven small businesses interviewed on Sherman Avenue were opposed to the development. The other was 50/50.

- Becky and Me Toys, Wellspring, Other Brothers, Cupitol, Salon Lotus, Kansaku

"Against the Allure of Evanston"
"We need something, but human scale development"
"It will be a sad day for Evanston"
"Entrepreneurs can’t afford it. It’s only Class A triple net leases"
"I am 50/50, but I wish it were something else"
"As it is, my good customers, with disposable income are inconvenienced with parking and traffic. This might be unbearable."
For Smart Growth,
Not All Urban Density is Created Equal

- Danish architect and walkability guru Jan Gehl said three- to six story heights optimize the urban pedestrian experience

- Considerable benefits of still-relatively-high city density at a human scale

- The National Trust for Historic Preservation study found cities with smaller and older buildings were found to score better on multiple measures of urban vitality.
Lack of Significant Public Benefits

- City Code Section 6-3-6-6 states: “City Council may modify the established site development allowances for a zoning district by a two thirds vote, if such a modification is essential to achieve a public benefit.”

- The public benefits Albion is proposing are NOT significant enough to warrant City Council allow FIVE major variances.

- Exactly what benefit will the city receive out of the significant amount of variances that are being asked for?!
We can re-imagine this block to be an asset! Think of the benefits of “human-scale” urban density.
In summary, here is why the development is problematic:

1. It **obliterates the zoning code** by requesting FIVE major variances (Height, Density, Number of Units, Number of Parking Spaces, Floor Area Ratio) which amount to an unofficial rezoning. The law suggests you cannot in effect **rezone property without following the proper procedure** for rezoning the property.

2. It **fails to provide sufficient onsite affordable housing**, instead catering to the already oversaturated high-end luxury rental market.

3. Calculations show that **Albion cannot earn enough points for LEED Silver certification**, a requirement for Planned Developments in Evanston.

4. The proposed **16-story building will loom over the nearby historic district**. It should be shorter to allow for a graceful transition from downtown to residential neighborhood.

5. It will **provide numerous nuisances** like increased garbage, rodent population, noise, heat and light pollution, shade throughout the day, and strong winds.
More than 1,800 Evanstonians ask you to NOT APPROVE the Albion mega-development!
Vote NO on the Albion mega-development!