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BEFORE THE HEARING EXAMINER
OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE

In the Matter of the Appeal of
PROTECT VOLUNTEER PARK.,
of a Determination of Non-Significance
Certificate of Approval issued by the
Department of Construction and
Inspections for Construction in Volunteer
Park

Hearing Examiner File: MUP 17-015

Department Reference: 3024753

DECLARATION OF ELIZA
DAVIDSON

I, ELIZA DAVIDSON, declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of the City of Seattle, Washington and a member of Protect Volunteer Park. I live in the vicinity of Volunteer Park. I am over the age of 18 years and am competent to testify herein. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge.

2. I have used and loved Seattle's Volunteer Park my entire life of 60+ years. I have lived nearby for 33 years and have visited the park regularly throughout that period - on foot and bicycle as well as by car. I am outraged that project attorneys would challenge my standing in Protect Volunteer Park's DNS appeal. It may be a legal maneuver, but it is supremely insulting and irrelevant to the

1 serious matters at hand. Likely negative environmental impacts will directly affect me and others in
2 several significant ways.

3 3. Enlargement of the museum will diminish my experience of natural beauty whenever
4 I walk through the east side of Volunteer Park, which I do many times a week. I am a tree lover and
5 arborist, and the park's most magnificent beeches, a specimen redwood and several large cedars will
6 be rendered extremely vulnerable to damage and premature decline because of proposed construction
7 activity. Of particular concern to me is the circuitous site access route that sizable equipment and
8 vehicles would traverse in large numbers daily. Maneuvering the narrow road and tight curve would
9 be all but impossible without collateral damage occurring.

11 4. Drip line-defined root zone protection is nowhere near adequate to protect the mature
12 beeches, which are extremely sensitive to disturbance and compaction. Arboricultural Best
13 Management Practices require approximately double that diameter. SDCI's requirements are widely
14 criticized as woefully inadequate. It would be traumatic for me to watch these priceless trees suffer
15 through the building process, and likely far beyond. Volunteer Park's specimen trees are irreplaceable
16 in my lifetime, and if harmed would deprive me of the environmental services, shade, seasonal change,
17 bird activity and sheer beauty these trees provide.

19 5. Near and distant views of the trees would be spoiled by the intrusion of the building,
20 an unnatural barricade to Olmsted's carefully orchestrated landscape flow. My freedom of movement
21 would be impaired if I am forced to skirt the massive, projecting addition to get from one part of the
22 Olmsted-designed greensward to another. In addition, opportunities to enjoy privacy and peaceful
23 contemplation would be destroyed by the looming Park Lobby where museum goers can gawk down
24 at those of us below using the park as Olmsted intended - for intimate socialization, passive recreation
25 and rejuvenation of body and spirit. Long shadows would extend across most of the remaining lawn
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1 east of the museum, and the addition's huge overhangs cast permanent gloom to the north, creating a
2 haven for illicit activity. That area would be transformed to unusable open space in addition to land
3 taken for the enlarged museum footprint.

4 6. After dark, the floor-to-ceiling windows would cast an intrusive glare across the east
5 side of the park, utterly altering the character of the landscape and the user's experience, myself
6 included. Instead of being a place where I might take a quiet walk in soothing dimness, the east side
7 would be dominated by artificial light at night and looming shadows by day. These adversely impact
8 the natural surroundings I crave and find here, placing still more artificial structures in the heart of the
9 landscape park. The park was intended to transport visitors from the harsh, hard edged urban
10 environment that buildings embody, including the proposed, out-of-scale museum addition.

11 7. As Seattle's density explodes, pressure on the park will increase dramatically,
12 especially for the thousands having no private yards. If the project is executed, I would have to share
13 a reduced and degraded green space. Its increased discontinuity would severely constrain this popular
14 setting for informal activities many of us enjoy, including photography, landscape painting, sledding,
15 making music, exercising and playing frisbee. The east greensward is an actively used yet secluded
16 part of Volunteer Park, the character of which would be forever changed for the worse. I could never
17 again circulate so freely through the park, enjoying its varied and unfolding vistas, and sharing this
18 brilliant, subtle Olmsted work of landscape art with others as a tour guide and landscape restoration
19 volunteer. The features that define this world-class cultural landscape would be lost incrementally but
20 irreparably.

21 8. For more than three decades I have nurtured a special relationship with and deep
22 devotion to our rich Olmsted legacy of beautiful landscapes nationwide. Volunteer Park is our region's
23 Olmsted masterpiece. To see it needlessly and insensitively altered would, without exaggeration,

1 disturb me the rest of my life. Another aspect of the park's heritage would be affected at the same time,
2 its embodiment of the Olmstedian ideal of providing beautiful open space that is restorative, freely
3 accessible to people from all walks of life and completely democratic. Sacrificing park availability
4 even slightly diminishes the quality of our collective life in this city and privatizes a piece of the
5 precious public domain. I value sharing the park with all sorts of people doing all sorts of things. It is
6 enriching and fosters appreciation for others unlike myself. The more Volunteer Park becomes a
7 precinct catering to the monied and powerful at the expense of the common man's "pleasure ground,"
8 the more impoverished my experience as a citizen becomes. This statement may sound abstract and
9 subjective but it is absolutely real. Among criteria for defining a cultural landscape are its "function"
10 and "feel" which museum expansion would change considerably.
11

12 9. Finally, SAM's desire to increase museum attendance is touted as the primary impetus
13 for expansion. If successful, that would bring significant increases in traffic within and surrounding
14 the park, accompanied by additional noise, air pollution and vehicular-pedestrian-bicycle collisions.
15 The park's finite parking would become more crowded, more of the time. This would pose an
16 inconvenience to me and to aging friends and young families. The applicant's parking study was
17 flawed in its timing and seasonal limitations, skewing the numbers downward. Tight parking and
18 people driving around the park looking would directly and negatively affect my ability to enjoy and
19 use the park.
20

21 10. Given Volunteer Park's limited size and capacity to absorb all the new pressures
22 SAAM expansion would bring, these should be thoroughly and impartially evaluated before the
23 project proceeds. First and foremost, Volunteer Park is a valued landscape oasis that cannot be
24 replicated. It must be protected as usage mounts. The museum's expansion threatens the health and
25 integrity of this increasingly precious landmark landscape owned by us all, as is the building SAAM
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occupies. This project affects me personally and affects everyone who spends time in Volunteer Park. I do not see any offset being commensurate with the harm to be done.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated this 10th day of May, 2017, at Seattle, Washington.


ELIZA DAVIDSON