



December 10, 2019

Alder Frank Douglas, Chair
Board Of Alderman
City of New Haven

Dear Chair Frank Douglas and Rose Santana and Members of the Board of Alderman:

The Friends of the Dwight Historic District supports in principal the neuroscience center. However the plan does need more work if it is to fit into the neighborhood and the Dwight Historic District, and be a benefit to the community. While the plan creates major changes to the area, For instance, the plan for the new garages and parking expansion was not discussed at all with the neighborhood. We ask that the commission to table the item, and continue the public hearing after we have had an opportunity to work with the YNHH to discuss details of the plan.

Only this Friday did I received the Parking and Traffic Summary from the legislative office.

The Friends of Dwight see three major issues:

- 1.The burden of increased health and safety risks which residents will face due to expansion of parking and traffic;
2. The loss of the human-scaled streetscape, pedestrian walkability, and safe routes for bicyclists in a neighborhood with many children and people with disabilities.
- 3.The plan to demolish 3 historic properties that contribute to the character the neighborhood;
4. The hospital's plan does not conform to the Dwight Neighborhood Plan, the GDDC and DCMT has developed with the Yale School of Architecture, and which is part of the City's Comprehensive Plan of Development.

This project lies within and/or abuts the Dwight National Register of Historic Places District and is two city blocks of three schools: the Amistad Academy Elementary School, the Montessori School, and Augusta Lewis Troup School – which are all on Edgewood in the Dwight Neighborhood. The area has become a pollution hotspot and will not improve with an additional 1000 + car garage. The question we are asking is: How can both the Dwight neighborhood and the Hospital benefit from an expansion plan and still retain the character of the Dwight Historic District and guarantee that there will be no net increase in pollution, and that streets and sidewalks are safe for all.

We ask that the community that is most affected by the project be in discussion with YNHH and that we fully understand the health and traffic impacts to the neighborhood, and that the plan is amended to prevent harm

In addition to working on these basic, area-wide planning principles, we also ask that YNHH preserve the two Victorian residences and the St. Raphael Convent on Sherman Avenue and the retail space at 1386 Chapel Street. There are several vacant lots nearby that could accommodate the Sherman Avenue properties, and the convent and retail space could be renovated for adaptive reuse – perhaps as a independent café in 1386 Chapel and using the Convent for short-term housing for hospital visitors and temporary staff.

It concerns us deeply that viable historic structures and three blocks of neighborhood streetscapes will be destroyed for the hospital expansion and a new garage. We request responsible development a plan that does NOT damage the community and bring further blight due to bad urban planning and higher pollution.

We are opposed to the massive expansion of the Orchard St. garage. The increased traffic will harm our air quality, increase noise, and make the narrow streets here more congested and unsafe for all users. We ask that YNHH provide an environmental impact study to see how this increase in cars will impact a predominately residential neighborhood. Stabilization and homeownership has been a goal of the Dwight Neighborhood Plan and with the increase of traffic and pollution homeownership will be less attractive.

Lastly, the entire project lacks the essential grounding of transit-orientated development. Why so many parking spaces when we have YNHH shuttle buses from the Metro-North Train station, good CT Transit bus service, parking lots on Rt. 34, and have been told jobs will be available for local residents? The lack of retail space on the ground floor of the garages, combined with the pedestrian overpasses helps isolate the hospital from the community—making it difficult for small businesses on Chapel and George to sustain them, while privatizing a large oasis within our community.

Our discussions that are just beginning with the city and YNHH have a meaningful opportunity to make a difference. While improving the plan is important for our health, safety and quality of life, we know that our concerns and ideas will also make the hospital's new campus better for the Dwight neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Olivia Martson
Chair of the Friends of the Dwight Historic District