



August 21, 2012

To LandMark Commission:

This letter is to state that the West Washington Park Neighborhood Association (WWPNA) does not support the historic designation application submitted by Gene Elliott.

WWPNA boundaries are I-25 to the south, Speer Boulevard to the north, Downing to the east, and Broadway to the west. Our homes are adjacent to this plant, and former Gates employees have shared their memories of peering out the Gates windows and watching back yard activities in West Washington Park.

#### **The Gates factory application**

Members and representatives of WWPNA have been actively involved in the redevelopment plans for the former Gates site as well as the remediation plans and activities. We first engaged with Cherokee Denver LLC in August of 2002, which makes our engagement with this property and its different owners a full 10 years.

During the long and very interactive history with this project, we have been a part of numerous evaluations of how historic portions of the old Gates site could be preserved. We feel we have exhausted every avenue. Therefore, we see no benefit to this application.

Members of WWPNA met with Mr. Elliott to discuss his application. Mr. Elliott made no attempt to meet with any neighbors or learn our history with this project before he filed his application. While we find his willingness to get involved in something he believes in admirable, his actions here are not well conceived, and he has no ideas other than "let's look at this." He has not read or orientated himself to any of the existing documentation, only met with neighbors once and is incredibly naïve and uninformed about the activities to date concerning this property.

During our meeting with Mr. Elliott we discovered:

- His original interest in the property is because he is an Urban Explorer, and has admitted on the Urban Explorer Resource site (<http://www.uer.ca/>) having been in the building at least 5 times. Pictures on the application come from these trespasses onto the Gates property.
- Mr. Elliott's screen name on this site is Geneboy. Here is a link to a Gates conversation and pictures he took while on the property.  
[http://www.uer.ca/forum\\_showthread.asp?fid=1&threadid=88183&currpage=5](http://www.uer.ca/forum_showthread.asp?fid=1&threadid=88183&currpage=5)
- When he filed the application, he had no knowledge of the extensive work done by near neighbors on the redevelopment and the groundwater remediation.
- Mr. Elliott was unaware of the zoning, what it meant or who had been involved in that decision.

- Mr. Elliott had no clear plans with this application other than "Let's take 3 months to look at this." He has no team, no architects, and no experts with which to accomplish this task.
- Mr. Elliott was woefully uninformed about the levels of TCE contamination clean-up activities over the past 10 years.
- Mr. Elliott has managed to contact a number of news media sites and be published in the papers and journals. His efforts towards the news media seems to be greater than that of researching or understanding what has transpired to date with this property.

### **The damage this application could do to the Landmark Statute**

The greater threat here is what this application could do to the current Landmark statute. Councilman Brown is trying to make it more difficult for an interested party to file a 'hostile' (not one done by the owner) application. The silliness of this application, should the Landmark Commission/Board pass it on to City Council, will give canon fodder to those trying to add further restrictions to the statute.

WWPNA would like the statute to remain in its current form.

- In 2005, there was an historic Art Deco style building at the corner of Speer and Washington.
- The developer wanted to tear down the building and there was support from both the neighborhood and the City to preserve it.
- On Nov. 29, the developer promised to get together with interested parties to discuss the matter "in 30 days or so."
- On December 24, the developer destroyed the building in one day.
- The developer went bankrupt and the lot is still an empty lot today.

This statute, as it stands now, would have helped the neighborhood preserve this historic building. Approving silly applications such as this one will only put the current statute at risk.

While Mr. Elliott seems to enjoy the notoriety of the current media storm around this issue, if you approve this application and move it to City Council, his legacy will not be to save the Gates Factory, but to make it much more difficult for actual residents and homeowners in Denver to preserve historical buildings.

Sincerely,

Tim O'Byrne  
President, WWPNA