

(This Letter to the Editor was sent to *The Times-Picayune* following the City Planning Commission's vote on March 9, 2004 to deny the request for a spot zoning change on Short Street. It was not published.)

Economic Development Without Preservation is Desecration.

Re: Short Street Condo Building, City Planning Commission, March 9, 2004

To the Editor:

Our neighborhood is pleased that the City Planning Commission made the correct decision and rejected a developer's proposal for a "spot zoning" change to build a 14-story, 9-story, or 7-story high-rise at Short Street and Leake Avenue. The Commission recognized that it is completely inappropriate and economically destructive to build such an enormous building only 21 feet away from its one- and two-story neighbors in historic Uptown New Orleans.

We totally reject the City Planning Commission's minority dissenting opinion, clearly articulated by Commissioner Sheila Burns, that "the pull of economic development considerations outway those of the neighborhoods." (CPC meeting, March 9, 2004.) Destroying a neighborhood by voting to change its zoning for such an outlandish project because it *might* be economic development is not acceptable. It is exactly this flawed economic-development-at-any-cost vision for New Orleans that has resulted in this appalling high-rise proposal for our neighborhood.

It is the history, diversity, and architectural uniqueness of our neighborhoods, which make New Orleans an attractive destination for millions of visitors each year. The historic Town of Carrollton was an established community many years before it joined the City of New Orleans. We do not wish to see our beloved century-old neighborhood destroyed in an ill-considered rush for high-rise economic overdevelopment.

According to the UNO Real Estate Market Data Center, over the past ten years property values have risen fastest in areas without high-rise developments, and slowest in areas with high-rises, as discussed on our neighborhood web site, www.zoningfordollarsiswrong.org. Our neighborhood, therefore, rejects Ms. Burns' economic development philosophy. Rather, our neighborhood remains committed to the rule, "Economic development without preservation is desecration."

Sincerely yours,
Sheldon Hersh, MD
Board Member and Spokesperson
Uptown Triangle Neighborhood Association