

# UPSTATE

## MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

**Commentary on the planned development of the Kennedy Square Property by the Upstate Medical University  
Fall 2008**

### Statement 1

**From:** Brenda Davis

**Date:** 11/26/2008 1:57 PM

**Subject:** Development Ideas For How The Faculty And Students Should Live

Dear Wanda Thompson,

I am writing to present a development idea for an energy efficient and furnished luxury one floor condominium complex of 2,500 to 3000Sq ft with smart home telecommunications capabilities.

Residents can live in a gated community setting with 24hr audio/visual security outside and within the premises. With hotels in the area, concierge service can offer five-day trash pickup, maid service, meal delivery, yard maintenance and daily newspaper delivery. On the premises there should be a dry cleaners/laundry facility, a bank, a full line grocery store/pharmacy like Wegmans or Price Choppers, a car wash, and a small Post Office/FedEx/UPS store.

The interior should have appliances such as Wolf, Subzero, Electrolux and LG. The heating should be hot water steam/baseboard forced by electricity which can also heat the floor and driveway during winter months. I imagine two to four bedroom condos with California walk-in closets. More than one master bedroom with an oasis of a master bath can be included to set this development off from other condominiums. As for other rooms, a sunken living room with a fireplace with french style sliding doors, a formal dining room, a family media room, a family media room with a wet bar, a vestibule, foyer, billiard/gym, home office/study, butlers pantry, spacious kitchen, an enclosed lanai or patio deck, utility room, and a private garage.

The tiles and counter tops can be marble with hardwood flooring. The grout used should be mildew, germ, Virus, mold, and dirt resistant to make it a maintenance free living space for the busy students, and faculty. All of those things could make the development a well sought after place to live.

Personally, I would love to live in such a place one day.

Thank you so much for your time, and for inviting development ideas.

Sincerely,

Brenda Davis

P.S. I heard that stone homes hold in the heat in cold weather, and can keep the home cool in warmer seasons.

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### Statement 2

**From:** Larry Elin

**To:**

**CC:** Nancy Cantor

**Date:** 11/24/2008 10:57 AM

**Subject:** Kennedy Square vision

Dear all,

It's terrific that you have opened-up the Kennedy Square redevelopment planning and process to the community, and are soliciting ideas. Let me put this out there: CNY is attempting to position itself, and brand itself, as not only a 'green' region, but also ground-zero for green technology, life styles, green-friendly businesses, and R&D in the area of sustainable energy. But so far) it is mostly talk.

There is nothing to point at as a physical presence of that vision, and we do need one.

The redevelopment of Kennedy Square presents the unprecedented "clean slate" with which to design and build an Eco-Village, which would incorporate every kind of sustainable energy from solar to wind, geothermal, and whatever is on the drawing board. Building designs and orientation, building materials, construction

practices, and so forth -- all could incorporate the absolute latest innovations. Transportation to, from, and within the village could represent the best practices of sustainable, clean energy.

Done right, the Eco-Village would not even have to be on the grid. Its carbon footprint would be nil -- it would create more energy than it consumes. A terrific example of just this is the Solar Decathlon, sponsored by the

department of energy every year. But that village, which is designed, built, demoed and then dismantled, would be a permanent, and ever improving, demonstration village in Syracuse. It would make physical all of the hopes and hypes of CNY as the center of “green”. Such a village could, itself, become internationally known, and a destination/test bed/center of study. For Syracuse University and Upstate, it would be the very embodiment of scholarship in action.

There are so many potential partners for Upstate: The SU schools of architecture and engineering, college of ESF, the Center of Excellence, the department of energy, and on and on. Many young professors (I’m thinking of Ann Munly and Tim Stenson) at the School of Architecture, have already visualized homes, shops, and businesses built with this future in mind.)

I hope you will think 25-50-100 years out into the future while considering what to put on those 14 acres.

Sincerely,  
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### Statement 3 Greater Syracuse Tenants Network

This statement is in behalf of the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network. For twenty years the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network supported the efforts of the Kennedy Square Tenants Association to improve and preserve their homes. The tenants had to endure greedy uncaring owners, lack of action by the regulatory agencies and lastly the failure of ESDC and the state of New York to live up to the promises made to improve living conditions and not destroy the homes of the tenants.

None of this is the fault of Upstate Medical University but the University has a unique opportunity to give back to the residents a small part of what they lost, by requiring that low-income housing be part of the mix of development on the site.

Kennedy Square was a unique planned community created on urban renewal land. The original tenants were a mix of working people, seniors and very low-income people. Its concept design was to have housing combined with retail storefronts. For many years it was very desirable low-income housing with townhouse apartments with many amenities. Unfortunately, the development was constructed poorly and owners interested only in profit never kept up necessary repairs. HUD and DHCR let

conditions deteriorate until the Tenants Association brought things to a head. The Tenant Association succeeded in driving the owners out but conditions got worse under ESDC.

When ESDC took back the property in 1996 the authority promised that they would find new owners who would repair the property. Ten years, later the same agency abandoned the commitment and closed Kennedy Square. Until ESDC shut off the funds there were waiting lists of people who wanted apartments at Kennedy Square. Kennedy Square was not a failure to the people who lived there. It was their home and they wanted to stay.

The Greater Syracuse Tenants Network knows that there are many former residents of Kennedy Square who want to move back to the site. Ideally, the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network would like to see the whole 10 acres redeveloped as a low & moderate-income rental development. This is what Syracuse really needs. We would like to see the return of 300 hundred units of brand new totally accessible rental apartments of the quality of the housing being constructed by Housing Visions. Returning to the site would be Project Connection for the youth, Senior Services (like those that were provided

through Mrs. Spears) and a day-care center (like the one that once operated by the Grace family). We know that such a development would have long waiting lists just as the Housing Visions and Syracuse Housing Authority developments have today.

This would be a place where the many working people from Upstate could live in walking distance to their place of employment. These are workers who in the current economy can not afford a car. This would be a place where consumers of hospital services could live. Residents could continue to walk downtown to do their banking, pay their bills; visit government offices and enjoy arts & culture.

We put forward this vision of what could happen and what we feel would be a fair result to the former tenants so that it is clear to the decision makers how important it is that the RFP does include some low income housing in the mix. A new development on the site which does not provide a place for former residents to return would be a disservice to those who had to give up their homes.

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#### Statement 4

Benjamin Gembler, Marketing/Community Outreach Coordinator  
Below is my written statement regarding Kennedy Square development:

I work for NEHDA, Inc, a local non-profit on Syracuse's Northeast Side.

Our service area borders near the Kennedy Square site. I work with the Hawley-Green neighborhood that adjoins the Kennedy Square site as well. Also, I used to be a tenant organizer working with the Kennedy Square Tenants Association, back when there were tenants. So I come in to this issue having worn some different hats.

Overall, I feel that the opportunity to redevelop this site, and the near Eastside, is a tremendous one. The critical mass of homes that use to permeate this area when it was the old 15th Ward are no longer. We need to change that. A sensitive redevelopment of this site could do several things:

1. it could re-knit and connect the fabric between the Hawley Green neighborhood and adjacent neighborhoods with the Connective Corridor and University Hill, and help to *serve* some of the needs of those area

2. it could create the beginnings of an attractive, mixed-use neighborhood with some coherence to it

3. it could integrate and connect with the disparate parts that are now in that area such as the News10Now Building, Center of Excellence site and others, as well as complementing the existing assets in adjacent neighborhoods and districts

4. it could reintroduce the original street grid, reverting the site to a more human scale development I would encourage a mixed-use (commercial/residential) development, with perhaps a 20% inclusion of "affordable" housing in the mix. I'd also encourage homeownership in the area, perhaps through the development of condos/townhouses. Student housing could be included in that mix. And attention to the design of what gets built here is of paramount importance. Not big box stores and bland dorm buildings. We should look at some of the nice existing homes in adjoining neighborhoods, and take some of those elements to use in housing development in Kennedy Square. It would be a nice visual connection.

I would also like to see the site integrated into the existing and future transportation network, including bike lanes/racks, sidewalks, buffering street trees and the like. Also hooking into

the intermodal transportation plans at the Center of Excellence and the Connective Corridor transportation route would make sense. Students walking and biking back and forth between Hawley-Green and campus have had a lot of safety concerns about that area, and we really need to make sure that this environment is a safe commuter route for pedestrians.

This could be a great opportunity to really think in a progressive manner. We may really have a blank slate to work with if the existing Kennedy Square is demolished. This is a rarity in Syracuse to be able to start from scratch on this large a scale.

Lastly, I would hope that stakeholders in Hawley-Green could continue to be apprised and included in further input sessions and development efforts. There has been some success in this neighborhood the past few years and we'd like to see it spill over into the Kennedy Square area.

Thank you,  
Benjamin Gembler  
Marketing/Community Outreach  
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Association  
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