

23-story high-rise would be nightmare on Bissonnet

■ For the sake of quality of life in all Houston, project must be stopped

By LESLIE MILLER

PICTURE the long shadow a 266-foot, 23-story building casts over a surrounding neighborhood of 30-foot homes as the seasons change.

Visualize 500 cars from a high-rise garage emptying onto neighborhood two-lane streets.

Imagine the diminished joy of looking out from a peaceful garden of one of the neighborhood homes into a six-story parking garage that is 10 feet away, atop which is perched 17 stories of apartments. A structure so tall and so closely located to homes that it's almost impossible to see the sky from some back yards.

None of us may have to just imagine these nightmares much longer. For residents of the lovingly planned and carefully maintained neighborhoods of Southampton, Boulevard Oaks and Broadacres, these images could become realities. The lack of regulatory tools available to the city of Houston combined with the greed of two local developers have brought about the latest threat to Houston's very soul — a planned high-rise in the Museum District, one of the many communities falling

under the threat of unregulated development in Houston.

Kevin Kirton and Matthew Morgan, principals in Buckhead Investment Partners, have purchased the property currently known as Maryland Manor, which is located at the corner of Bissonnet and Ashby. Their intent is to reshape many residents' concept of neighborhood living by placing a 23-story high-rise in the midst of one- and two-story homes. These two gentlemen do not live in Houston but prefer the restric-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE E1
ive ordinances and tight zoning of West University and Southside Place.

Their proposed high-rise begs these questions: While it may be legal for a developer to ruin neighborhoods to make a buck, should it be? Or, should there at least be a thoughtful review of such proposed activities?

Smoking is legal, but as a community, we have chosen to exert some control over where a person is free to smoke. Isn't it time Houstonians care about our city's quality of life as much as we care about the quality of

the air we breathe in public places?

Unless we as a community — and I do not mean just those of us homeowners currently affected — act to establish some

that will continue to impact all of us within the city of Houston.

It's hard to identify a neighborhood within Houston that is not dealing with issues similar to the one faced by the Museum

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order and planning to such unbridled growth, our city will become better known for its monuments of greed than its social responsibility and sense of caring.

This is the tip of an iceberg

District neighborhoods of Southampton, Boulevard Oaks and Broadacres.

In this mix of unregulated development and a proliferation of developers without concerns about the impact of their ac-

tions, we are witnessing the destruction of our neighborhoods and the diminution of our quality of life.

A perfect storm is brewing — literally in my back yard in Southampton and yours.

The mayor of our city, Bill White, exercised great courage and civic responsibility in helping thousands who were escaping from the terrible storm, Katrina. I would urge him and all those on City Council to exercise that same courage and civic responsibility to stop this impending storm.

Its destruction will be every bit as real.

Miller is a native Houstonian and has been resident of Southampton for 35 years.

Please see PROJECT, Page E4



JON KRAUSE

PROJECT:

We're witnessing destruction