To Our Glen Ellyn Neighbors
Together, we can build for the future.

March 2019
Volume 1, Issue 1

Together, we can do better in building for the future, delivering economic gain and enriching lives while preserving the historic charm and unique identity of Glen Ellyn.

OVER THE OBJECTIONS of hundreds of residents, the Glen Ellyn Village Board on January 28, 2019, approved a five-story mixed-use development for the Giesche site at Main Street and Hillside Avenue. Apex 400 will be situated at the southern gateway of the Village’s central business district, abutting the South Main Street National Historic District. It will include 107 luxury rental apartments and 8,844 square feet of first-floor retail. Also included will be a two-story parking garage, only the first floor of which will be open to the public.

At approximately 150,000 total square feet, the development will be ten times the size of the Giesche building and will consume roughly 75 percent of the west side of Main Street between Hillside Avenue and Duane Street. The structure, which will average nearly 60 feet tall, required several code variances, all of which were approved. The development will return to both the Plan Commission and the Village Board for final approval within the next few weeks (dates TBD).

SAVE MAIN supports the development of this site, as long as any development conforms with the Village’s own published plans and guidelines. As it stands, we are opposed to Apex 400 for several reasons, including:

• Architecture: the style of the building runs counter to the Village’s published Appearance Guidelines and does not fit the unique character of Glen Ellyn
• Bulk: at 150,000 square feet and 10 times the size of the Giesche building, the building is too massive for the central business district

• Design: the design of the building does not adhere to the Village’s 2009 Downtown Strategic Plan, 2001 Comprehensive Plan, or other reports commissioned by the Village
• Height: at roughly 15 feet above current zoning code, the 33 percent height variance is too great, and the building will dwarf nearby structures
• Parking: the development likely will result in the net loss of anywhere from 11 to 53 parking spaces on Main Street and Hillside Avenue
• Retail: with 8,844 square feet of retail in Apex 400, the Village will lose roughly 7,000 square feet of retail space in the central business district with the demolition of the Giesche building

Apex 400 will forever change the face of Glen Ellyn. SAVE MAIN believes we can do better. As such, we are committed to ensuring that any development in the South Main Street National Historic District promotes economic growth in Glen Ellyn while protecting the history of the Village, and we strongly encourage the Village Board and Village staff to reconsider approval of this development.

Figure 1: From the developer, this rendering shows how Apex 400 will dwarf all other buildings along Main Street. The five-story building will consume roughly 75 percent of the west side of Main.

Figure 2: From the 2009 Downtown Strategic Plan, this is how the Village has long envisioned south Main Street. The plan noted that buildings in this area should be no more than four stories tall.
APEX 400—MYTHBUSTERS

MYTH: The Glen Ellyn Village Board approved this already. It’s a done deal.
REALITY: The Glen Ellyn Village Board did, indeed, approve the Apex 400 development during its January 28 meeting. However, the developer must submit final plans for review and approval, which was done in late February. The final application must go through both the Plan Commission and the full Village Board. These meetings could take place as early as March 2019.

MYTH: This development is necessary for the continued economic viability of Glen Ellyn.
REALITY: Apex 400 supposes increased tax revenues for the Village of roughly $400,000 per year—which sounds great but represents only 0.2 percent of the Village’s budget (and equates to roughly $13/resident per year or $44/household per year). No data suggest that this five-story mixed-use development is the only development that could generate such revenue for the Village.

MYTH: This new development will mean lower taxes for those of us living in Glen Ellyn.
REALITY: Despite increased annual tax revenue, this development will not result in lower property taxes for current or future property owners in Glen Ellyn. Nor will it result in reduced sales tax.

MYTH: This new development will add much-needed parking to downtown Glen Ellyn.
REALITY: Despite the addition of a parking garage, only part of which will be open to the public, Apex 400 will not result in a net gain of parking on or around south Main Street. In fact, with the loss of on-street parking along Hillside Avenue and Main Street, the Village could lose up to 53 parking spaces.

MYTH: This new development will add high-end condos to the Village, making Glen Ellyn more competitive with neighboring suburbs.
REALITY: Apex 400 is an apartment building. Although of “condo quality,” the 107 units in Apex 400 are luxury rental units, with rents starting at roughly $1,800 per month and soaring to more than $3,000 per month. The development will attract transient apartment dwellers rather than new homeowners.

MYTH: There are taller buildings all around downtown Glen Ellyn.
REALITY: At five stories, with zero setback off Main Street or Hillside Avenue, and sitting atop one of the highest points in the Village, this will be—by far—the tallest building in the CSA core retail area, and the tallest building along Main Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Hillside Avenue, setting an unwanted precedent and permanently changing the face of Glen Ellyn. No other buildings of this height or mass are situated within the central business district; nor do any other buildings of this height abut a National Historic District within the Village limits as Apex 400 would.

MYTH: This new development will bring more retail to downtown Glen Ellyn.
REALITY: There is no guarantee whatsoever that a five-story, 150,000 square foot behemoth will bring new stores, restaurants, or other businesses to Glen Ellyn. No contracts have been signed for businesses to enter the 8,844 square feet of retail in Apex 400. Furthermore, the Village currently has few empty retail spaces on South Main Street; Katy’s Boutique currently is the only vacant retail spot.

MYTH: Giesche’s has been vacant for years! This is our last chance for getting a new development here.
REALITY: Giesche’s has, indeed, been vacant since 2014. Similar proposals for five-story mixed-use developments for this site have been rejected. However, the Village has not issued any RFPs for this site; instead, it has reacted to proposed developments rather than soliciting new ideas for this space. Threats that Apex 400 represents the last, best chance to develop the site are overblown and unfounded.

MYTH: Apex 400 will bring more residents to Glen Ellyn, which will boost pedestrian traffic and bring untold benefits to retail and other businesses in the Village.
REALITY: The developer claims Apex 400 will bring about 150 new Glen Ellyn residents, but research suggests that dense residential buildings like this do not move the needle on economic development. Indeed, approving a development that risks the historic character and unique charm of the central business district actually puts the Village’s economic engine at risk. We risk more than we gain with this development.

SAVE MAIN supports smart development
that promotes economic growth in Glen Ellyn while preserving the unique identity, distinct charm, and historic character of the Village. We oppose the five-story, mixed-use development known as Apex 400, which fails to comply with existing Village legal planning requirements.

Momentum is gathering! Early indications suggest sufficient legal grounds to stop the Apex 400 development. We need your support. Donate at www.gofundme.com/save-main

Contact us at Info@SaveMainGE.org
Visit us at www.SaveMainGE.org
Join us on Facebook at @SaveMainGlenEllyn