

From: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#); [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Letter of Opposition to SUP 2023-108
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 10:12:39 AM

From: S Norwood Thornton [mailto:eluzhun@ymail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 8:53 AM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>
Cc: Jeanette Brown <jbrown2009@comcast.net>
Subject: Letter of Opposition to SUP 2023-108

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TO: Ms. Alyson Oliver, Secretary of the Planning Commission
The Honorable Mayor of the City of Richmond
The Honorable Members of the City Council of Richmond
The City of Richmond Planning Commission
The City of Richmond Office of Economic Development and Planning
The Department of Planning and Development Review

From: Rev. Jeanette Brown, resident, Westwood Community; Westwood Civic Association; Friends of Westwood Playground; Westwood Baptist Church Associate and Church Administrator

We oppose the Special Use Permit request under Ordinance 2023-108 for 910 Parrish Street. We are very, very disappointed in recent zoning decisions impacting our Historic Westwood Community, the only historically black community in the First District.

Gentrification is real. The continued increase in property taxes, adversely impacts our most vulnerable ... our senior citizens who are on fixed incomes and is a real slap in the face and greatly adversely impact minority communities like ours. This is wrong on so many levels. Building houses that cost over \$400,000.00 in our community adversely impacts current residents. What are you doing to increase the number of affordable housing in the First District and throughout the City?

One of the primary ways for black families and other families of color to gain some type of economic stability is through home and land ownership. Somehow we have to continue to fight the City of Richmond for our rights to exist, the same as our founding ancestors who started this community over 150 years ago. We had to fight the City of Richmond in the 1930s, 40s, 50s and 2000 for our rights exist, own our own property and have adequate resources such as access to water and basic public utilities. We find history repeating itself again in our struggle as a community.

We are in the process of gaining the status of a "Historic District" as we work with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources as well as looking at other options for our community. The City of Richmond be embracing our community rather than making decisions that adversely impact us.

Additionally, current residents of the Historic Westwood Community are being harmed in the ability to get to their homes for weeks and months due to the historic lack of infrastructure improvements for decades until the sewer collapsed and you had no other choice but to fix it. We now have sewer rats as big as cats in and around the construction site. Not only that, residents have been told that completion of the sewer will take more than 10 months. Again, another inadequate response to this community. Our neighbors on Cary Street surely would never see this kind of disruption in their neighborhood.

It is clear, from the City of Richmond's track record with the Historic Westwood Community that you favor developers... we have continued to lose our community to development on Patterson Avenue, Snowden Lane and now in the heart of our community and on the most historic street in our neighborhood. Several of the homes on Parrish Street have existed for over 100 years.

Putting two homes on the property in question on Parrish Street is also a safety hazard. The intersection of Marian Street and Parrish Street is a heavy traffic area as Marian Street is only one of two streets that allow us to travel northbound in the community. Emergency vehicles already have difficulty navigating this area and added traffic and parked cars will make their access to residents in need even more difficult.

We would like to see your assessment of how you have come to the conclusion to approve this request. What studies and assessments have been completed? The SUP says that traffic will not be impacted, what is this based on? Please make this information available to us.

Shame, Shame, Shame!
Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jeanette Brown

From: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#); [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Letter of Opposition to SUP 2023-108
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 10:06:09 AM

From: Jeanette Brown [mailto:jbrown2009@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 6:40 AM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>; michaelawyer@rva.gov;
alysonoliver@rva.gov
Cc: Addison, Andreas D. - City Council <Andreas.Addison@rva.gov>; Brown, Whitney H. - City Council
Office <Whitney.Brown@rva.gov>
Subject: Letter of Opposition to SUP 2023-108

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TO: Ms. Alyson Oliver, Secretary of the Planning Commission
The Honorable Mayor of the City of Richmond
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greatly adversely impact minority communities like ours. This is wrong on so many levels.
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From: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#); [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 9:55:39 AM
Attachments: [April 16.docx](#)

From: S Norwood Thornton [mailto:eluzhun@ymail.com]
Sent: Monday, September 4, 2023 10:55 PM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>
Cc: Jeanette Brown <jbrown2009@comcast.net>; Sawyer, Michael B. - DPW <Michael.Sawyer@rva.gov>
Subject: Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street

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TO: Ms. Alyson Oliver, Secretary of the Planning Commission
The Honorable Mayor of the City of Richmond
The Honorable Members of the City Council of Richmond
The City of Richmond Planning Commission
The City of Richmond Office of Economic Development and Planning
The Department of Planning and Development Review

FROM: Mr. S. Norwood Thornton and Concerned Residents of the Historic Westwood Community

RE: Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street

Along with the other requests that were written in the opposition letter dated, April 16, 2023 (see attached) and before the Ordinance No. 2023-108 – Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street is considered, the Historic Westwood Community is also requesting to have a Traffic/Safety Study done by the City of Richmond Traffic Engineer, Michael Sawyer for the corner of Parrish Street and Marian Street, located in the Historic Westwood Community.

The Traffic/Safety Study is needed for the purpose that is mentioned on page 2, first paragraph of the attached.

Please confirm receipt of this email and let me know if you need additional information.

Best regards

S. Norwood Thornton

From: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#); [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Corrected version for today's 1:30 pm meeting: Homes needed by local families but lost to investors is tearing us up
Date: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 10:09:31 AM

From: Susan Mitchell [mailto:susanmartinmitchell@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 7:48 AM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>
Subject: Corrected version for today's 1:30 pm meeting: Homes needed by local families but lost to investors is tearing us up

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I submitted this for today's 1:30 pm meeting. (Local working folks like myself can't attend the first day back from a holiday - otherwise, I'd round up a crowd against allowing rentals by non-residents.) I made a couple of typos -please use this version.

Thank you!

Susan Mitchell

REVISED VERSION:

From: Susan Mitchell <susanmartinmitchell@gmail.com>
Date: September 5, 2023 at 1:43:02 AM EDT
To: PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov
Subject: Homes needed by local families but lost to investors is tearing us up

My daughter is a 28-year-old nurse at a Richmond hospital who - after several attempts - cannot buy a starter home in Richmond despite being pre-qualified because she is being outbid by all-cash investors. Multiply her situation by dozens of young people like her who are in healthcare, teaching, social services, or nonprofits (among other essential professions in Richmond) and are attempting to but cannot buy a home. Cannot live near their families and jobs! Cannot invest in a future in Richmond! Cannot because ... they can't compete against savvy, seasoned, cash-rich, non-residing investors!

It's a travesty that my daughter and I have observed firsthand. At open houses across Richmond in traditionally residential neighborhoods, we've overheard more than once a potential buyer gloating about his plans to submit an all-cash bid, acquire the house, then rent it out — “fitting up to four” interns or traveling nurses into a modest home whose yard, living space, and neighborhood are desperately needed and better cared for by permanent homeowners.

What he's after are the more affordable starter homes (or empty nester homes) in the many charming neighborhoods that make Richmond a wonderful place to live

- a place to put down roots, raise a family, invest in home maintenance and thrive. These homes are perfect for my daughter as well as for me because - hey! - I might be ready to downsize, freeing up my larger home for another family to buy. (The buying and selling of homes stimulates the local economy in ways that rented-out houses never will.)

Bottom line: As a decades-long City of Richmond homeowner, I desperately want my daughter living near me! Allowing homes to be bought up and rented out is not just destroying the futures here for our young adults. It's ripping apart our families as well. After failing to purchase a house, my daughter is on the verge of resigning her nursing position - and her fiancé resigning from his landscaping job - to move to a more affordable community hours away. Both sets of Richmond-area parents are sick over this.

Only the City can stop this wrenching situation. Please see the ripple effect of allowing the renting out of houses by non-residents. It will cripple residents who desire the permanence and wealth-building of home ownership but can't compete against bankrolled investors. It will affect local businesses, which thrive on permanent residents' daily and lifelong patronage. It will affect all aspects of our local communities, which depend on lifelong residents to pump energy, time and money into local nonprofits, parks, schools, and institutions.

This is a huge issue that will affect all of us.

Thanks for reading this.

Susan Mitchell
Richmond homeowner since 2003 - District 1
Living locally and employed in Richmond for 20 years
Tel. 804-314-4330
susanmartinmitchell@gmail.com

From: Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2022 10:24 AM
To: Brown, Jonathan W. - PDR
Subject: FW: SUP @ 908.5 & 910 Parrish St
Attachments: [ymail-tmp-8628111756311868726.jpg](#); [ymail-tmp-4659115543845521355.jpg](#)

I believe you are the person working on this case. There's a second email to follow...

From: PDR Land Use Admin
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2022 12:20 PM
To: Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR <Matthew.Ebinger@rva.gov>; Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR <Alyson.Oliver@rva.gov>
Subject: FW: SUP @ 908.5 & 910 Parrish St

From: Anna [<mailto:grlofgd@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2022 8:42 PM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>
Subject: SUP @ 908.5 & 910 Parrish St

CAUTION: This message is from an external sender - Do not open attachments or click links unless you recognize the sender's address and know the content is safe.

Members of the Planning Committee,

The property at 908 1/2 & 910 Parrish Street was sold after many years of being vacant and neighbors having to maintain the grounds.

I mention this, because Baker Development Resources is assisting the new land owner of 908.5 & 910 to obtain a Special Use Permit (SUP) to put three two-story houses on these two parcels. I feel this would create congestion on the street, even though the developer assures there will be off street parking. The plans show only one parking space per house. A two story house with three bedrooms typically means at least two adults, i.e. two cars. Parrish Street is a two way street and barely enough room for two cars to pass. If someone parks in front of these parcels they will block traffic from both Parrish Street and Marian Street. Most school busses already have a difficult time making this turn and the few times someone parked there to play basketball at the park blocked the bus altogether causing quite a dangerous scene when the bus driver was frustrated by the parked car.

Also, all houses on Parrish Street are one story, thus neighbors would lose privacy as well as adequate light, views of the park, and shade from the trees. Two story houses on this lot would not fit with the current historical architecture of the 1920s homes on Parrish St. This section of Westwood is dead center of the neighborhood and has the most original houses still standing.

Westwood recently got a historical marker at the Willow Lawn entrance, it would be a shame to add three new structures that resemble unattached modern townhouses, which is not keeping with the look and feel of an historical location.

It's crazy to think 908 1/2 is even large enough for a house and then to know someone is contemplating splitting 910 in half is more crazy. This historic neighborhood is on the outskirts of the city touching Henrico County, made up of a suburban area. Building these houses fits in with the fan but doesn't belong in a suburban area where yards are cherished.

With this information I would like you to consider NOT approving the SUP for 908 1/2 and 910 Parrish St.

Thank you for your time and service,

Anna Mooney
905 Parrish Street
Richmond, VA 23226

Attachments include the letter from developer. Pictures of the overgrown property that is not being maintained by the owner (grass over 12" and shrubs encroaching on the road). Will be sent in a second email.

Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR

From: PDR Land Use Admin
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 10:15 AM
To: Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR; Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR
Subject: FW: Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street.

From: Anna [mailto:grlofgd@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 5:57 PM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>
Cc: grlofgd@yahoo.com
Subject: Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street.

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Good Day,

I have been informed of the Planning Commission meeting on Monday April 17th will include the consideration of Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street. Please accept this as a citizen's comment to be shared with all the members of the Planning Commission for this subject ordinance.

I live across from 908 1/2 and 910 Parrish Street. When I moved in, 2006, this was one lot with one house; a few years later the house was torn down and the property has since changed owners, none of which cared for the land. I was ecstatic to hear the property was finally going to have a house again after a decade of being empty and unkept, unfortunately hearing 3 houses will occupy one lot left me not so ecstatic. I never realized the city had 1/2 lots (908 1/2) and a house could be built with windows just a foot from the fence...but hey we are here to talk about 910.

After seeing how small a 1/2 lot is with 908 1/2 and wondering where the occupants will park (no street parking on Parrish due to two way traffic and narrow street), I can't imagine two more houses in the same spot having room for parking. This area is a block away from the county and a car is most likely going to be accompanying the occupants and it's new construction with 3 bedrooms so more than likely will have two drivers living in it with two cars. There's just no room for all these vehicles.

There's also the issue of school buses and other large vehicles already finding it difficult and sometimes impossible to turn onto Parrish from Marian, I can't imagine the headaches caused by more occupants here.

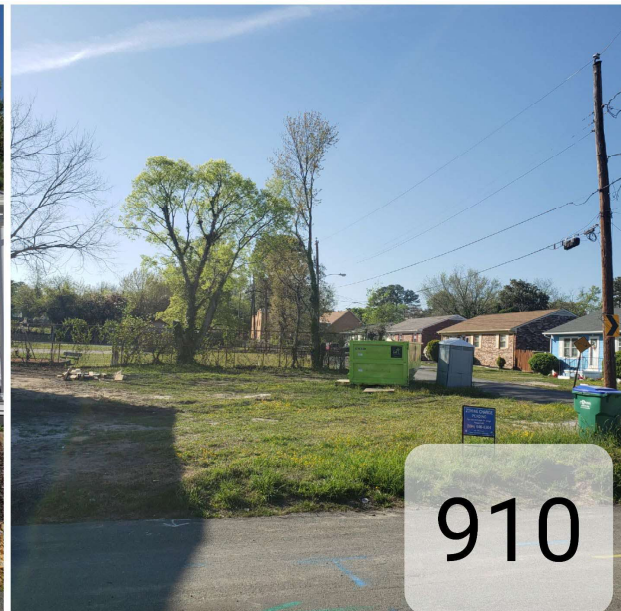
The houses proposed are two story. There are no other two story houses on Parrish, except now 908 1/2 which its windows align nicely to look out of and into the one story house that's just a couple of feet away. Heck, the front first floor windows can see into the back of my house if I don't close the blinds because of the height and closeness to the road. Most of the houses on Parrish are the original houses built in the early 1920s (mine included) and these new houses just don't look right in a historical area. My house wasn't even built with a bathroom. I love this neighborhood because of the rich history and knowing that some families are descendants of the free Patterson Plantation slaves that were allowed to build here. I take pride in this neighborhood and help

with restoration efforts...I've done everything that I can to maintain the historical charm of my home and it's being crushed by these thin 2 story townhouse looking buildings.

I have attached photos for additional support to REJECT the Ordinance No. 2023-108 Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to catch the live feed of the meeting while I am at work on Monday.

Anna Mooney
905 Parrish St
Richmond, VA 23226
804-301-7334
grlofgd@yahoo.com





Ordinance No. 2023-108

Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street

Roads closed due to sewer issues.

A



908 1/2 Parrish Street

B



The Empty Lot of 910 Parrish St.

(Construction is on 908 1/2 Parrish St.)



Typical homes on Parrish St.



DATE: April 16, 2023

TO: Ms. Alyson Oliver, Secretary of the Planning Commission
The Honorable Mayor of the City of Richmond
The Honorable Members of the City Council of Richmond
The City of Richmond Planning Commission
The City of Richmond Office of Economic Development and Planning
The Department of Planning and Development Review

FROM: Mr. S. Norwood Thornton and Concerned Residents of the Historic Westwood Community

RE: Ordinance No. 2023-108 - Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street

This correspondence is in **opposition** to the proposed approval of a special use permit to construct two, two-story single-family dwellings on the said property located at 910 Parrish Street. This property is located in the heart of the Westwood Community which was dedicated in August 2019, as a Historic community.

My family has owned property in the historic Westwood neighborhood since the late 1800s. "Parrish Street" was named after my grandmother's family. Recently, we received notification for a Special Use Permit for a vacant lot that is adjacent to two of our properties, 906 Parrish Street and 908 Parrish Street.

The Historic Westwood Community was founded by freed slaves and free men and women in 1871 that desired to own property and homes of their own. **This Historic Community was built on faith and resilience and is the only Black neighborhood in the First District.** The initial homes built by my ancestors and others have a historic significance in the history of the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Over the years, residents of the Historic Westwood Community have had an unsettling history with the City of Richmond. Sewer, running water, and other utilities were denied to the residents as the City tried to condemn the community calling it "unsafe and unhealthy." The Westwood Residents had to frequently challenge the City to provide adequate utilities and the right to exist. As history repeats itself, we find ourselves once again in a fight to maintain the existence of our historic neighborhood. The Commonwealth of Virginia's Historic designation for the community was acquired in 2019. Discussions are currently underway with the Department of Historic Preservation to include the Historic Westwood Community on the State's National Register and on the Heritage Walking Trail within the City of Richmond.

The owner/developer requesting the Special Use Permit to build two homes on the lot located at 910 Parrish Street originally housed only one single dwelling. The Special Use Permit states that the 'proposed density of 910 Parrish Street is two units within .12 acres or 16 units per acre.' By making this Special Use request, the owner/developer is taking advantage of the permitting process. Building three two-story homes on this small parcel of land is an encroachment on my family's homes. The proposed buildings would be too close together and adversely impact parking on the street. These three structures, *908 1/2(1 house) and 910 (2 houses) on the small lots will adversely impact drivability due to an increase in the number of cars on this narrow street. **It will be detrimental to the safety, health, morale, and legacy of the Westwood Community. Furthermore, it will be a hazard for all emergency vehicles and school buses.** Currently, sewer repairs are adversely impacting the community. The streets have been blocked off for months and neighbors have experienced an influx of sewer rats and rodents. (See photo "A" on vxpe.info/parrish)

Parrish Street has the most historic homes in the neighborhood. These homes have existed since the neighborhood's inception. The proposed construction is not appropriate with the historic architecture of the Parrish Street homes and the Westwood Community in general due to the size of the structures and the requested variance setback requirements. The proposed dwellings will not reflect the character of the existing community.

Based on the above concerns, I passionately believe that the Richmond City Planning Commission needs to:

1. Reject Ordinance No. 2023-108 – Special Use Permit for 910 Parrish Street.
2. Have the Department of Historical Resources (DHR) review all future proposed new construction in the Historic Westwood Community.
3. Have Tim Roberts, Archaeologist for Community Outreach Coordination at DHR to review all future proposed new construction in the Historic Westwood Community. Although the construction of the new housing units is on private property, we believe that significant archaeological evidence that pertains to a successful formerly enslaved population may be lost during the development of the lot(s).
4. Consult with the Westwood Civic Association to review any and all future proposed new construction in the Historic Westwood Community.

Please confirm receipt of this email and let me know if you need additional information.

Best regards.

S. Norwood Thornton

*The property located at 908 1/2 Parrish Street has never had a structure on it and appeared to be a part of the 910 lot. The owner/developer is presently building a new massive structure on the very small lot of 908.5 Parrish Street (See photo “B” on [vxpe.info/parrish](https://www.vxpe.info/parrish)). There are building code concerns with 908 1/2 Parrish Street that will be addressed in another letter.

From: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
To: [Oliver, Alyson E. - PDR](#); [Ebinger, Matthew J. - PDR](#)
Subject: FW: Property at 910 Parrish Street
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2023 10:14:25 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: PennySurina [<mailto:pennyann12@comcast.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 5:18 PM
To: PDR Land Use Admin <PDRLandUseAdmin@rva.gov>
Subject: Property at 910 Parrish Street

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I live on Parrish Street and don't want double houses on the property. It has already been split and one house constructed. One more on the originally single house lot is more than enough.
The utilities are not up to the existing homes. The sewer line is gone and we're running on a pump in the middle of the street. (Noise 24/7) I have steel plates in front of my house, and no solution in sight.
We are a small historic community and have experienced limited resources from the city.
This decision is important to our neighborhood to maintain its social status.
I welcome members to visit the area or call me.

Penny Surina
901 Parrish Street
804-615-6149

Sent from my iPad