

Item No. 2



MUSEUM
DISTRICT
ASSOCIATION

MDA zoning@museumdistrict.org
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February 3, 2019

Mr. Jonathan Brown
900 EAST BROAD STREET - CITY HALL
5TH FLOOR

Re: Special Use Permit Amendment Application at 3131 Kensington Avenue

To amend to the existing SUP (Ord. No. 2015-250-244) to remove the existing vacant lot from the regulations applied to the adjacent property under the original SUP.

The MDA Board of Directors voted has reviewed the request and voted to advise you that we:

A. Do not oppose this request

B. Oppose this request

Stephen Versen
President
Museum District Association

Kyle Elliott
Chair, Zoning & Land Use Committee
Museum District Association

COMMENTS:

Brown, Jonathan W. - PDR

From: Lee Householder [lee.householder@mac.com]
Sent: Friday, February 01, 2019 9:43 AM
To: Brown, Jonathan W. - PDR
Subject: SUP Opposition

To: Planning Commission City of Richmond, VA
From: Lee Householder, 3210 Kensington Ave

My house is approximately 500 feet from the this proposed amendment. I oppose the SUP amendment proposed for 3131 Kensington Ave.

Here are my main concerns:

#1 The site plan approved with the SUP clearly shows this area as a vacant portion of an approved plan - therefore it should remain vacant as per the approved SUP. This vacant portion of the approved SUP was essentially proffered to the nearby neighborhood by a developer in order to gain acceptance for converting a former school to apartments. The developer also committed at the convert the apartments to condos (this never happened).

#2 It seems to me that approved SUP should override the Comp Plan recommendation. The Comp Plan guides future growth in areas where the City has not already made a decision on future growth -the City examined the site and approved an ordinance including a site plan -this should be stronger (if not invalidate) the general recommendations of the Comp Plan. The Comp Plan is also out-dated and not an accurate guide in this case.

#3 There is no historical single-family residential land use pattern to reference since it appears this site was always a school.

#4. There is no property rights issue b/c the site was bought with the constraints already in place.

#5 This site was sold by the City to the developer at a great discount. The developer already intensified the use of the property and received a great financial return.

#6 I think the architectural integrity of the original school site is enhanced by this portion of the property remaining vacant and an asset to the apartments and the surrounding neighborhood.

#7 I have several concerns about the process of informing the public about this request. This SUP amendment was submitted in Sept 2018. Yet, the signs were not posted until 3 weeks ago. Also, the staff report was not available to the public until 1 business day prior to the meeting. Lastly, the item was placed on the consent agenda without the public having an opportunity to know the staff position on this request.

#8 Here are the reasons based on the City charter that I oppose this request - (i) "moral and general welfare" the removal of this vacant portion of an approved SUP is going back on a promise made to the community (moral). The removal of open space and a community amenity has an impact on the general welfare of the community.

#9 (ii) congestion - slight congestion will be caused by allowing 3 homes with unknown ingress and egress points.

Lee Householder
3210 Kensington Ave
804-335-6338

#10 (iv) Based on the fact the site is vacant it is an overcrowding of land. This is the site of a historic school and cramming houses into this space significantly alters community character in this area.

#11 (vi) Interferes with adequate light and air. This vacant portion of the school site and provides a wonderful break to the urban pattern, the open space greatly contributes to the health and welfare of our community.

#12 Personally, I love this space :-) It provides a wonderful opportunity for community interaction. This simple open space is the reason I love my street. I love the way it looks at night with mural as a back drop. I absolutely appreciate the owner of the apartments maintaining it as community asset and allowing it to be used by the community for walking their dogs or throwing a frisbee. This is what makes an urban community the mix of uses, housing sizes, housing types, and an occasional open space. Yes, it would just be a few houses, but this site has meaning and is essential to character of our neighborhood.

Please consider opposing this amendment and keep the promise made to the community when this site was originally developed.

Respectfully,