

From: [Scott Finn](#)
To: [PDR Land Use Admin](#)
Cc: [Scott Finn](#); [Brown, Whitney H. - City Council Office](#)
Subject: 3600 Grove Proposal Concerns
Date: Wednesday, March 15, 2023 5:12:49 PM
Attachments: [3600 GROVE\[2\].docx](#)

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As a resident in the nearby 3400 block of Grove Avenue, a citizen of Richmond, and a former educator and architect with over 4 decades of experience, I am attaching herewith some concerns and observations I have regarding the proposed development of the 3600 block of Grove Avenue at the NW intersection of Thompson Street here in the Museum District.

It has been suggested that I sign up to speak, as this is going to the Planning Commission on March 20th.

Sincerely,

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RE: The Proposed Development at 3600 Grove Avenue

While it is appreciated that the developer wants to develop this parcel as multifamily housing, and adding housing is good, it needs to be *good* housing **appropriate** in the adjacent context. This is more like the density of the former industrial areas of Scott's Addition, or other dense and industrial neighborhoods like Manchester.

The scale of the proposed structure is simply too large and overwhelming for *this* site in *this* area of the city identified as "The Museum District" which has a distinct character, with which this proposed development is NOT in keeping. It would set an unfortunate precedent for further out of scale, overwhelming and inappropriate structures in the Museum District.

What are the closest developments of *this scale adjacent* to this site?

The developer has referenced other "large" structures in the Museum District, such as the VMFA and the other **museums**; but one *CANNOT COMPARE* institutional use typologies to a *RESIDENTIAL* typology. The developer should look at other *residential* complexes in the Museum District to compare. Between Thompson and Nansemond, from Hanover to Stuart to Kensington, there are multi-family housing units of a scale and density in keeping with the community.

They have cited the ADAPTIVE REUSE project on Kensington Avenue; turning a former hospital-related institutional building into a residential use makes sense in repurposing an existing structure for ecological, environmental, and economic reasons. That structure is set back from the sidewalk and street about 35' and is facing the large open space of the VMHC and is in a very different context. This is nothing like the 3600 Grove Avenue proposal. The building typology of a new zero lot line apartment block chosen by the developer has no precedent in the Museum District and is not appropriate on the Grove/Thompson site.

This was not designed specifically from the ground up for this site, but from a pro-forma template and pre-existing plans that are considered standard issue in the development business.

The project appears as a generic large-scale commercial development in what is a mainly residential and low-scaled community of diverse, independent buildings.

What does this proposal *add* to the character and quality of the *adjacent* community, other than greater density of residents and increased traffic at an *already complex and busy* intersection?

It would be critical to see the renderings of the proposed project NOT isolated and floating, but in the *complete CONTEXT of the neighborhood* (not a computer screen in an office). A three-dimensional massing study of the surrounding blocks is critical for review.

Elevations along Thompson and Grove would show that the scale of this proposed project is VERY DIFFERENT and VERY LARGE, and not in keeping with the adjacent structures in context.

The street massing here should be NO MORE than 4 stories tall; at the proposed 6 story height, it will loom over Thompson Street and the facing one-story structures.

Studying the plans shows that the "courtyard" containing the pool is simply a light shaft, a small light well, and the pool will never be in sunshine.

Units A4, A5, A6 and A7 will have negligible daylight, especially on the lower floors.

These will not be very desirable units; the potential is for the complex to devolve from the intentions.

Respectfully Submitted, J. Scott Finn, 3428 Grove Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221