

Mark A. & Karen L. Olinger
1013 Oakwood Ave.
Richmond, VA 23223

--SENT VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION--

To: Mr. Matthew Ebinger, Secretary
Richmond City Planning Commission
c/o Dept. of Planning & Development Review
900 E. Broad St., Rm. 511
Richmond, VA 23219

From: Mark A. Olinger and Karen L. Olinger
1013 Oakwood Ave.
Richmond, VA 23223

Date: August 12, 2021

Subject: Ordinance No. 2021-206 SUP: 1005 Chimborazo Blvd.

Thank you for allowing us this opportunity to comment on the above referenced SUP that sits immediately adjacent to our property at 1013 Oakwood Ave.

We first met with the developer and his consultant team on-site summer of 2020 to discuss this project. At that time, our biggest concern was that the site scheme fit into the character of this small area of the Oakwood-Chimborazo National Register Historic District. Further, that the project takes its cues from the interesting collision of grids that exists between P and Q Streets along both Oakwood and Chimborazo Blvd. This “collision of grids” created the charming James Christian, Jr., Place. It is truly a special place with building layouts, a mix of uses (we hope on the small commercial buildings across the street); a sense of place unique for this area. It was precisely this kind of micro-Node that drew us to this house to begin with, and for which we would like to see this project support and enhance.

I will break our comments down into two larger issues: overall site and building architecture/design.

1. Overall Site.

We are pleased to report that after our meetings and conversations with the development team, the project has evolved from its original sense of “just another infill project” in the Oakwood-Chimborazo District—AND become much more reflective of the character, scale, and orientation of the area. The north-south off-set and the step-down as the units move towards

P Street uses the existing topography to good advantage, creating an interesting bit of relief and character to the project, successfully following the existig site pattern in the area.

We also very much appreciate the changes in the orientation and siting of the buildings that create a more interesting design and preserves sight lines from 1013 Oakwood to James Christian, Jr., Place. We appreciate how this will help frame James Christian, Jr., Place, and will establish a strong precedent for how the remaining vacant lots in this area may develop.

2. Building Architecture/Design.

The Architecture of the buildings has improved, too. We are happy with the overall look of the two units, and the developer has been very amenable to incorporating design ideas that we suggested to improve the overall look and feel of the units (e.g., deeper porch, window placement, landscape, foundation height, HVAC screening, etc.).

The only concern we have--and we have shared this with the development team--relates to three units presently under construction by other parties nearby where the windows are one color on the front elevation and a different color on all other elevations. We're not exactly sure where this "betterment" originated, but it looks very much out of character with just about every other infill building I've ever seen over the past 35+ years. It just looks silly. We'd argue that having these three in the neighborhood is quite enough, thank you.

We have been assured by the development team that the windows will be a uniform color, but that they requested that nothing would create a situation where this would cause a continuance of the project. We don't want that either but believe that there might be an administrative means to make sure when the permit sets come in, that they are checked to make sure that the window schedule shows a uniform window color on each of the units.

In conclusion, we support the development of the project and believe it will add to the character of this little area we call home.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for all the work you all do.

C: Mark Baker, Baker Development Resources (via email)