

Gaudette, Angela

From: Paula Kothmann [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 2:26 PM
To: PAZ Preservation
Cc: Paula Kothmann
Subject: (updated) Item D1: 815 Rutherford Place

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Paula Kothmann [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 2:21 PM
Subject: Item D: 815 Rutherford Place
To: <preservation@austintexas.gov>
Cc: Paula Kothmann <[REDACTED]>

Dear Commissioners:

Per your direction, three of our committee members spoke with Hoon Kim and offered to meet with him at the property.

In my discussion with him over a week ago, he offered to engage an architect to review the viability of preserving part of the Tudor house at 815 Rutherford Place as a cabana for a contemplated swimming pool. Our committee was very pleased.

However, to date I have not heard back regarding this project. I request that you postpone further action until we've had an opportunity for Mr. Kim to report back to us about a potential cabana that he offered to explore.

Furthermore, there was no sign altering neighbors of Monday's meeting. Therefore, we designed flyers with the information to try to get more neighbor input and to alert them of the hearing.

Kind regards,

Paula Kothmann

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Paula Kothmann, CMM
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Chair, Land Development Code Revision ad-hoc Committee, [SRCC](#)
Chair, Preservation Committee, [SRCC](#) (South River City Citizens: Riverside to 71, Congress to Parker)

Director, Texas Chapter, District One
[National Association of Royalty Owners](#)

Member, Board of Directors
[Texas Energy Council](#)

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Gaudette, Angela

From: Paula Kothmann [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 2:12 PM
To: PAZ Preservation
Cc: Paula Kothmann
Subject: Backup for D1: 815 Rutherford Place and 1204 Alta Vista Avenue
Attachments: THZC7PointsOnePageCommitteeFinal.pdf

*** External Email - Exercise Caution ***

Dear Commissioners:

I write in opposition to a proposed demolition of 815 Rutherford Place and 1204 Alta Vista Ave. I am a resident of Travis Heights and a new member of the Preservation Committee. I also serve on the Zoning Committee and I chair the Land Development Code Revision *ad hoc* Committee. In these roles I've researched many historical properties and discussed with residents their efforts to restore their vintage homes so that they may provide shelter for many decades to come.

This Tudor revival-house multiple certainly captures the historic charm of the area. But I also think of it as a small footprint that is likely much more affordable than the many \$1-2M+ homes recently built in our neighborhood that only a handful of people can afford, thus diminishing the economic diversity that Travis Heights now enjoys.

The tax credits associated with the preservation of vintage homes also helps homeowners afford to stay here. My neighbors were able to enlarge their own 1925 home substantially yet gain historic designation through thoughtful design (and enjoy a tax exemption to boot, possibly keeping it affordable for them in retirement). This tax abatement would render the home much more affordable and the developer would benefit from a larger market of people who could qualify for the purchase price. Also, the developer would likely be able to have it ready to sell much faster than if he were to start from scratch.

The second home on the very large lot, on Alta Vista, is a boon as well. It currently rents for about \$1300/month per ABOR's MLS, which is affordable for this area. This income-producing property, obviously already habitable, could help the new owners afford to purchase the larger house and prevent displacement of the current resident.

Our research has shown that older rentals that are razed and rebuilt are nearly double the rental price. This transformation pushes many of our cherished neighbors, such as service-industry employees who can walk to work, to far-off neighborhoods. This push also exacerbates Austin's traffic woes.

It's unclear whether the new owner of this .207-acre lot would want to subdivide it into two lots. Because the current tax appraisal for this large lot is about the same as other lots in the area, it allows two residences to share the very high tax burden, either two owners, two renters, or a combination owner/renter. Isn't that the affordability in the Urban Core that Austin seeks?

Respectfully,

Paula Kothmann

p.s. Please see the attached 7 Points voted by the SRCC Neighborhood Association, especially the point on PRESERVATION / DEMOLITION

PRESERVATION / DEMOLITION

We agree with The Imagine Austin Plan, which advises that comprehensive urban planning and design should protect historic areas and help maintain neighborhood character.

However, McMansion FAR limits are not sufficient to discourage the extensive demolition of residences within the central neighborhoods. Preservation incentives, such as more flexibility in regard to ADUs coupled with greater density rather than new development, are a positive step and another tool to avoid extensive demolitions.

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Paula Kothmann, CMM

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**Outline of the South River City Citizens' Position 2019 Regarding
Proposed Land Use Code Revision**

1. SHADES OF TRANSITION ZONES

We agree that the City should allow for more housing density along the corridors of Congress Avenue, Riverside, IH-35, Ben White Boulevard, and on parcels already identified in the *SRCC Neighborhood Plan*.

However, the proposed application of transition zoning to single-family houses in close-in neighborhoods unfairly targets some homeowners. All neighborhoods in Austin should share equally in the responsibility for providing more affordable housing units.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS ARE PART OF AUSTIN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We agree with the reference to Neighborhood Plans, which have been carefully and thoughtfully worked out over long periods of time, and in many cases voted on by a majority of residents. Neighborhood Plans are adopted by City ordinances and are still in force.

However, we disagree with proposed maps that ignore Neighborhood Plans. Although we recognize that we need more density along corridors (see point 1), the neighborhoods themselves should help the city locate them since they know the areas best.

3. PRESERVATION / DEMOLITION

We agree with The Imagine Austin Plan, which advises that comprehensive urban planning and design should protect historic areas and help maintain neighborhood character.

However, McMansion FAR limits are not sufficient to discourage the extensive demolition of residences within the central neighborhoods. Preservation incentives, such as more flexibility in regard to ADUs coupled with greater density rather than new development, are a positive step and another tool to avoid extensive demolitions.

4. FLOODING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

We agree with the proposed zoning changes' goal to address environmental concerns, such as a decrease in total impervious cover, especially in light of the vulnerability of SRCC neighbors to flooding, according to post Atlas 14 floodplain definitions.

However, developers often remove trees that prevent erosion & decrease temperatures. These trees add to the property values, and we have the right to rigorously protect our property values in the State of Texas. The current infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, and utilities, likely would not support the proposed increase in density. The City of Austin cannot afford litigation expenses if property owners sue for damage suffered because of overdevelopment. Development should not result in downstream flooding.

5. AFFORDABILITY

We agree that Austin needs more Affordable Housing, especially close to large employers to help cut our traffic congestion. People earning 50-60% Median Family Income, including many government, nonprofit, academic, small business, service workers and young professionals flee our city because of lack of affordability. SRCC has numerous affordable units in older homes, ADUs, and multifamily homes today.

However, we disagree with fee-in-lieu alternative for developers who receive greater entitlements in exchange for community benefits. 20% of the units should be on-site affordable housing, and other developments such as boardwalks and climbing walls should not be considered an alternative to building on-site affordable housing.

6. COMPATIBILITY

We agree that we may need to increase height on the corridors in order to attain more housing.

However, we believe that we should retain compatibility standards within the neighborhoods in order to retain the character, decrease congestion, and increase safe walkability.

7. PUBLIC ACCESS TO DECISION MAKING

We agree that public access to the LDCR process and final product is necessary and appropriate. There are three periods in which public input should be maximized. These periods are 1) owner access to City staff regarding personal lots; 2) access to the City Planning Commission review of the revisions; and 3) City Council meeting on revisions.

However, we believe that decision-making should rely on accurate, transparent data, presented in a timely fashion for public input and approval.