

Agenda Items 48/49
Tracts 34/35

Thrower Design

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November 15, 2004

Ms. Barbara Bridges
West University Neighborhood Association
1106 W. 22-1/2 Street
Austin, Texas 78705

Original Sent via Regular Mail
Email sent to: Ms. Barbara Bridges
Mr. Jim Damron
Council Members
Council Exec. Asst's.

RE: 1919 Robbins Place & 1007 W. 22nd Street
Tracts 34 & 35 – WUNA

Dear Ms. Bridges,

Time is closing upon us to reach a resolution for the rezoning of the above referenced zoning case. You have asked that we present to you our information in writing and the following contains the information as well as the position for which we believe the financially viable rights of the landowner are protected as well as the integrity of the neighborhood.

The subject property located at 1919 Robbins Place and 1007 W. 22nd Street is developed with two structures with +/-6,064 s.f. being constructed some time ago as strictly a fraternity / sorority or other group residential use and 2,104 s.f. currently in use as a duplex unit. The larger structure has significant use limitations inherent to the design as a group residential structure. This is a major significant factor in the viability of the continued use of the structure on the property. The communal facilities associated with group residential living is not economically converted to uses which require separate facilities (restrooms, sinks, showers) such as found in condominiums and apartments.

As such, very few reasonably economic uses can be achieved which would warrant retaining the existing structure on the site. This is the topic of discussion for which the City Council had granted a postponement on this item to the December 2, 2004 agenda.

The current zoning recommendation of "MF-4-CO-NP" promotes the WUNA endeavor of precluding student housing within the vicinity of the single-family homes of the area. However, this very same zoning precludes

L A N D P L A N N E R S

any viability of future use on the property while retaining the existing structure other than the existing group residential use. Everyone should agree that the existing tenants of the property have not caused any negative incidents and are a good, quality residential component of the area compared to some other fraternity organizations.

Other potential commercial uses of the existing structure are administrative / business office, professional office, medical office, or a tutoring facility - all of which could reasonably be housed within the existing configuration of the structure, with some manageable adjustments. These commercial uses are not intrusive upon the neighborhood as they are primarily a day-time occupancy and would not set a precedent for the area. Other structures of comparable size and area in the vicinity have been converted to office use over the past years and do not appear to impose upon the neighborhood. The existing building as an office use or tutoring facility will blend in as well with the neighborhood as it currently exists today.

Placing an office use within the existing 6,064 s.f. structure would not increase any traffic upon the streets in excess of that which exists under the current zoning recommendation. Based on Transportation Codes, the existing structure would generate about 67 vehicle trips per day as an office use. A vehicle trip is counted once as a vehicle enters the site and then counted again as another vehicle trip upon leaving the site. An apartment use on the site could yield +/- 24 units and the traffic generated from that use would be close to 160 vehicle trips per day.

An office zoning classification of "GO" can mutually be coupled with a "CO" to prohibit uses which are not typically found interior to neighborhoods such as the following:


- 1) Art Gallery;
- 2) Art Workshop;
- 3) Communications Services;
- 4) Food Preparation;
- 5) Communication Service Facilities;
- 6) Personal Services;
- 7) Printing & Publishing;
- 8) Counseling Services;
- 9) Cultural Services;
- 10) Maintenance & Service Facilities;
- 11) Safety Services;

The "GO" zoning district does permit a height of 60' and a condition can be placed on the property to limit the height to the 40' desired by the neighborhood. The "GO" development standards require a 15' building setback from the street whereas "LO" zoning requires a 25' building setback. The site is rectangular shaped and the likely redevelopment scenario of the site would involve new urban design guidelines which would locate the parking behind the building. This style of development is a better fit for the neighborhood and hides most of the parking from public view. The site with a 150' in depth provides for a limited amount of space to achieve this style of development and a 15' building line not only provides for interior site flexibility, but also retains the existing structures compliance to building setbacks. If this building were to be destroyed it could not be rebuilt in the current location and this flexibility is crucial to economic viability of the property.

Through the process of the Neighborhood Plan it is vital to carefully consider the intricacies of an existing development and the existing entitlements for which the landowner has obtained. The existing underlying subdivision of the subject property has been dutifully recognized as an entitlement and the zoning boundaries now honor the subdivision. The existing structures on a property and the use for which they are designed also carry weight in defining an acceptable parameter for rezoning the property. In the instance of the subject property these two fundamental and essential planning guides warrant the rezoning of the property to "GO-MU-CO-NP" to allow for office uses to economically occur within the existing structure and if someone may choose, to allow for redevelopment of the site to an apartment and/or office use. Concurrent with this is the continued viability of the use within the existing structure to permit, in perpetuity, this use as group residential for which the building was originally constructed.

We, the owner and I, will make ourselves available to meet or answer any questions prior to the City Council meeting on December 2, 2004. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Ron Thrower". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A. Ron Thrower

Xc: Ms. Betty Hurst