

January 1, 2024

Subject: Opposition to SPUD-1581 — 408 NW 30th Street

Historic Preservation Commissioners:

We moved to Edgemere Park in 1997, first living in a 1927 Tudor Revival home for 11 years, then building our present home on a vacant lot in the neighborhood at NW 30th and Harvey Parkway that had never been built on. We understood the responsibility to build something that was in character with the two neighborhoods we bordered, hired an architect with historic preservation expertise and took great pains to design a house that was compatible with structures on both sides of NW 30th considering the height, massing, and detailing. Located directly across the street to the north of the proposed development site, we are one of numerous single family and duplex residences most affected by this proposed project.

As our home is infill development, we are obviously not opposed to the prospect and believe it is a positive thing for neighborhoods— when it is done thoughtfully and with serious consideration to what already exists in the area and, in this case, has existed for 100 years. However, the proposed project has been designed without any consideration for it's surroundings and we want to address our concerns that result from that lack of sensitivity.

Traffic and Safety Concerns

The configuration of the streets bordering the proposed development site is unusual and has a history of serious accidents, which we attribute at least partially to increased activity in the Paseo and at NW 30th and Walker and to increased speeds of that traffic. Hudson Avenue does not align continuously from south to north, but jogs at 30th Street creating two T-intersections terminating at NW 30th.

In 2014 a drunk driver traveling at a high rate of speed north on the east portion of Hudson failed to stop at the stop sign and drove his truck into our house (photos attached). The damage was so extensive that we were forced to move out of our home for nine months while it was reconstructed. Following that incident, as a preventative measure we had a retaining wall constructed at our south property line.

The next accident about two and half years later involved the police chasing four people in an SUV (photos attached). The driver of the SUV traveling at a high rate of speed crashed into our retaining wall killing one of the passengers and seriously injuring the others. We had the retaining wall reconstructed and requested the City install warning signage to alert drivers that Hudson terminated there.

In addition to these very traumatic accidents, there have been numerous others: a pickup traveling east on 30th Street rolled several times and landed in our side yard, a vehicle traveling

east on 30th Street hit the wood utility pole in our yard snapping it in two downing the power lines and preventing us from using our driveway, and the same utility pole was hit again in a separate accident. Another driver traveling east on 30th Street, crashed his car into a large Sycamore tree in Sparrow Park.

These events illustrate the traffic and safety problems that are already happening along the short stretch of NW 30th near Hudson and that will likely be exacerbated by the increase in density, traffic congestion and parking that will come with the proposed development.

Master Design Statement Elements

Many of the elements included in the Master Design Statement seem intended to circumvent Historic Preservation design guidelines and will have an adverse effect on the neighborhoods. Additionally, there are several discrepancies between the Staff Report and the MDS which results in some confusion as to what is being requested.

Following are specific objections to the proposed Master Design Statement, many of which are requested exceptions to the R-4 zoning and Historic Preservation Guidelines:

I. Special Development Regulations:

1. Permitted Uses

The applicant is requesting R-4 General Residential District, but also wants exceptions to the uses allowed. Uses requested that are not allowed in R-4 and certainly not allowed in Historic Districts include Murals, Dwelling Units and Mixed Uses, Live/Work Units, Administrative and Professional Offices, Eating Establishments: Sitdown, Eating Establishments: Sitdown, Alcohol Permitted, Retail Sales and Services: General. In addition, Three- and Four-Family Residential is not a permitted use in HP Districts and Multiple-Family Residential is only allowed by special exception.

The commercial uses (Eating Establishments, Retail Sales and Services) especially should not be allowed. This is commercial encroachment into the residential neighborhoods. It is already happening with the C-3 properties west of the subject site, but it needs to stop there. It is not justification for further commercial uses along NW 30th.

2. Maximum Building Height

Another exception request by the applicant. There is no justification anywhere for the requested 3 stories/40 ft building height– not in the current base zoning (2.5 stories/35 ft), the proposed zoning (one story when abutting a historic district) or the HP Guidelines (should align with the range of heights in the same block). The base zoning district height regulations when abutting HP and HL should apply along all property lines to ensure compatibility with the surrounding structures.

4. Maximum Number of Buildings

One huge building on this site will be overpowering and completely incompatible with the rest of the neighborhood structures. This is a discrepancy with the three building maximum discussed in the Staff Report. Consideration should be given to the configuration of the three lots currently making up the site. Aligning with those would contribute to the rhythm and pattern of the block.

5. Density

Another exception request. The density proposed in the MDS far exceeds present density in these neighborhoods, exceeds density in the proposed R-4 zoning, and even exceeds the density in plan OKC. With an inadequate number of parking spaces, the addition of 27 units will result in street parking issues, traffic congestion and decreased safety. The site is at the T-intersection of NW 30th and Hudson, which as we stated earlier is prone to accidents.

As noted in the Staff Report, “the density as proposed may contribute to a built form that is incompatible in height, setback, lot coverage, or other characteristics”. Attempting to build a structure for 27 units on this site results in a design that in no way complies with the HP Guidelines, requires the developer to have so many exceptions to the R-4 zoning (not to mention HL, HP) that it can’t possibly be an asset to the neighborhoods, but will detract from the historic character of both Jefferson Park and Edgemere Park.

6. Building Setback Lines

Another exception request. The setbacks requested are less than the proposed base zoning. For compatibility and continuity with the existing structures surrounding the site, all setbacks for new construction should align with the range of setbacks on the block as specified in the HP Guidelines. Moving the structure north of the north setback, closer to the street, creates an even more imposing, dominant building and breaks the rhythm of the street. Even if the setback of the Education Building of the former church was 5 feet, it was a much smaller building (perhaps 40 feet wide) than the proposed structure which extends the entire length of the north lot.

8. Landscaping

Vegetative screening and tree requirements should not substitute for other City of Oklahoma City Landscape Ordinance requirements. This is another exception request.

9. Signs

9.1 Freestanding Accessory Signs

Another exception request. No commercial use and signage should be allowed in the historic districts or in the SPUD. This will absolutely detract from the character of the historic districts and is not supported in the HP Guidelines.

9.2 Attached Signs

Another exception request. Attached signs should be in accordance with HP regulations. No commercial use and signage should be allowed in the historic districts or in the SPUD. This will

absolutely detract from the character of the historic districts and is not supported in the HP Guidelines.

9.4 Electronic Message Display Signs

Another exception request. Historic Preservation Guidelines do not support the use of electronic display signs and should not be allowed. This site is surrounded by residences and neighbors, including those residing in this project, should not be subjected to electronic signs flashing in their windows.

II. Other Development Regulations:

1. Architecture:

Another exception request. All materials should be compliant with the Historic Preservation Guidelines section on Exterior Materials at New Construction. EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finish System) is not allowed in historic districts according to the HP Guidelines and should not be used.

2. Open Space

Another exception request. The applicant is substantially altering the built-to-open-space ratio of the surrounding properties and neighborhoods, which is not appropriate according to the Guidelines. The ratio should be consistent with surrounding properties. The applicant is requesting an exception to the proposed R-4 base zoning. Clarification is requested on whether the open space percentage includes parking.

4. Covered Patio

Since this is not depicted on the renderings (which we know we should not rely on anyway), a more detailed description would be appreciated. Does this run the length of the one building in the SPUD or only at certain places along the building? Is it attached to the façade? It would extend 5 feet to the property line? That would be going beyond the historic setback.

5. Site Lighting and Other Site Standards:

Another exception request. If the building were constructed with a setback aligned with properties to the east and west, the existing sight triangle would work and would not need to be adjusted. Maintaining a generous sight triangle is essential to ensure safer traffic flow from Hudson onto NW 30th.

7. Parking:

This is another exception request. One space per unit is completely inadequate. City parking regulations would require 45 spaces for 18 one-bedroom units (1.5 spaces/unit) and 9 two-bedroom units (2 spaces/unit). This is an assumption of the number of one- and two-bedroom units from looking at the plan drawings.

Staff is incorrect that “the lack of adequate parking does not typically impact the physical character of a property or district”. Obviously, they don’t live here. A lack of parking impacts neighbors and the aesthetics of the neighborhood. It is also a safety issue when cars are parked on both sides of the street and moving vehicles only have a single lane. Access by emergency vehicles is impeded by street parking.

Only limited street parking is available. NW 30th is dangerous to park on and it is not done. NW 30th has higher traffic volume at higher speeds. Parking on N Hudson could potentially narrow the street to one lane and cause congestion from the intersection going south.

9. Drainage:

Consideration should be given to the aging infrastructure in this area, which was designed primarily for small, single-family homes. The proposed increased density has the potential to cause drainage and/or other infrastructure problems.

According to Section 59-14100.1 of the City’s Municipal Code, one of the purposes of a SPUD is to “Encourage innovative land development while maintaining appropriate limitations on the character and intensity of use and assuring compatibility with adjoining and proximate properties.” In Section 14100.2. Goals and Objectives, the SPUD should “Minimize adverse effects upon surrounding property, the character of the neighborhood, traffic conditions, parking, utilities or any other matters affecting the public health, safety and general welfare.” In addition, it should “promote infill development that is compatible and harmonious with adjacent uses, both existing and planned.”

As proposed, the development fails to meet the City’s purpose, goals and objectives for a SPUD.

We suggest the applicant develop what he purchased. The applicant bought three lots – each 50 ft by 140 ft zoned R-2. There are several styles of duplexes in Jefferson Park and Edgemere Park that would serve as inspiration for compatible development that would contribute to, and not detract from, the character of the neighborhoods.

Jann and Terry Hook
3101 N Harvey Parkway













On Jan 5, 2024, at 8:30 AM, Johnson, Thad A <thad.johnson@okc.gov> wrote:

The protest letter was an attachment. The photographs were embedded in the email sent. We need the photographs as an attachment to the email (.pdf file).