



December 7, 2021

Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee
City of Kansas City, Missouri
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Re: Ordinance No. 210900
Ordinance No. 210901
(December 8, 2021, Agenda)

Dear Council Members:

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association opposes the project presented by the proposed Ordinances referenced above because it conflicts with the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan and is completely incompatible with the existing fabric of our historic neighborhood.

The proposed project is a nine-unit apartment building on a 75-foot-wide lot at 3933 and 3937 Kenwood Avenue, a prominent location overlooking Gillham Park. It is within the South Hyde Park National Register Historic District, which was established in 2007 to further a desire to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.

The proposed project, which has a “contemporary” design that resembles three columns of stacked shipping containers, requires a change of the land use from R-5, to R-1.5, Residential High Density, contrary to the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan, which the project violates in many respects:

- The Midtown/Plaza Area Plan states that High Density housing should be clustered “in nodes and along corridors as consistent with the Recommended Land Use Map and Development Form Map.” The 3900 block of Kenwood is R-5, Medium Density, and it is not



within a node or along a high-traffic corridor designated as appropriate for High Density housing in the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan.

- The Midtown/Plaza Area plan states: “Any property that requires a rezoning . . . **shall** be subject to the Plan’s Development Form Guidelines” (emphasis supplied), which this project largely ignores. The Midtown/Plaza Area Plan also provides that incorporating neighborhood-specific characteristics into infill development is encouraged and **should be required** if additional land use approvals (e.g., rezoning) are required.
- Throughout the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan, it emphasizes the importance of ensuring that new development is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood. The Plan encourages respect for appropriate, established land uses; encourages residential infill with compatible scale and character; stresses the importance of ensuring that new development “strengthens the existing character of the neighborhoods”; and refers to ensuring “compatibility of the new development into the area’s existing fabric.”
- The Midtown/Plaza Area Plan states that a new structure should have a prominent front entrance. There are 96 historical properties on Kenwood (and one 1960’s apartment building), all with a prominent front entrance, which is completely lacking in the proposed project. Nothing within the South Hyde Park Neighborhood looks even remotely like the proposed project.
- Rather than being compatible with the existing character of the surrounding four-plex, six-plex, and colonnade-style apartments in Hyde Park, the proposed project lacks a strong horizontal element, does not have a unifying crown at the top of the building connecting the vertical elements, has thin metal picket railings on front balconies that are boxed in (rather than open on three sides), and presents a weak use of brick.



- In addition, the project has less than the required 1:1 parking ratio on site. The developer has only provided a draft agreement to use parking from a nearby project (which seems to then reduce the parking ratio at that site below what is required) and also, because the contract is for a short term and between entities owned by the developer, appears to be a sham, easily voided after construction and occupancy permits are issued.

In meetings with the developer, he admitted that he was aware of the R-5 zoning when he purchased the two existing houses in late 2020 and early 2021, but he claims that the Hyde Park Neighborhood should accept the rezoning and incompatible design because of the amount he paid for the houses.

Midtown residents spent tens of thousands of hours working with the City to formulate the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan, which reflects an obvious intent to protect neighborhoods from incompatible development and to set out clear expectations for developers to follow. The proposed project does much more than merely rezone a 75-foot-wide lot – it reflects a complete lack of respect for the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan, seeks to set a dangerous precedent, and changes the architectural character of our neighborhood.

We respectfully ask you to vote Do Not Pass. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angie Splittgerber", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Angie Splittgerber
President

cc: Lee Barnes, Jr., Chair (Keema.McCoy@kcmo.org; lee.barnes@kcmo.org);
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