

Naylor Court Development: Notes on the 06/11/2020 Meeting

The meeting was held to hear Architect/Developer presentations of their proposals for a condominium development at 1318 9th Street and a hotel at 1322 9th Street, and to provide an opportunity for feedback from affected residents.

1318 9th Street

The Architect/Developer. The proposal is for a shared 9-unit condominium and 10,500 square foot office space to be developed through additions to the top and rear of the existing building. The building would incorporate one shared and two private decks. The developer expected to close on the property shortly and indicated that encouraging signals had been received from the Community Development Committee (CDC) on May 27th (All in favor except one member) and Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC). A hearing with the Historic Preservation Review Board is expected by the end of June. The project would not require any application for variance relief.

The Residents. Responses to the project varied among residents with some firmly against it as a concept or because it threatened to have a direct adverse impact on their living conditions. Others were more supportive provided certain key issues could be dealt with. The main points raised included:

- **Project size and footprint.** Some residents felt that the project was too large and out of character with the Alley and would undermine the privacy of some of the existing homes. In addition, more consideration needed to be given to the “Alley-face” aspect of the project, which as proposed would seem to be a series of garages with little building context.
- **Garbage collection.** Several residents stressed the need to ensure an enclosed trash space to help contain the Alley’s serious rat problem.
- **Mother nature.** The project appeared to threaten the viability of an existing tree on 9th Street.
- **Community involvement.** Little consideration appeared to have been given to ensuring community involvement, especially as regards opportunities for people of color to engage with the commercial space.
- **Roof decks.** There was concern that these might be available for commercial use and hence potentially noisy.

The Architect/Developer. Consideration had been given to how the project would interface with the Alley, including by having large windows and a roof deck overlooking it. An enclosed trash facility was an “option” for the development. The fate of the 9th Street tree hadn’t been considered but it was probably safe given the City’s strict rules protecting trees. The project was considered to be too small to ensure greater community involvement. The roof decks would not be available for commercial use.

The Hotel

The Architect/Developer. The project envisages a high-end boutique hotel for which several areas of variance relief would be required (6 foot clearances from both sides of the property are being requested vs the 13 foot standard). There is a willingness to work with local residents to meet key concerns but there was little scope for reducing the overall size of the project given the need to ensure adequate profitability based on room keys. In particular, there was some scope for a reduction in building height (5 feet) but this would likely limit the high-end appeal of the hotel. Among the areas of variance relief, it was hoped to replace mandated parking spaces with a hotel restaurant/café that would face on to the Alley and the support of residents for this request would be welcomed. The developers had met with the CDC on May 27th where it was discussed that a discussion would be needed with the local residents. The community meeting on June 10th served as this first meeting. After getting CDC approval they hoped to get on the ANC agenda in July. The developers had not purchased the parking lot, which was contingent on getting agreement to develop the project, though there was interest in discussing alternative proposals to the hotel should residents put them forward (though the projects would need to be profitable). The developer has not indicated which hotel operator they are targeting aside from mentioning it may be a London based group. They are reluctant to proceed without the support of the local community. The architect also mentioned that there was no study completed in regards to the historic nature of the block.

The Residents. Responses varied considerably partly reflecting the fact the footprint of the hotel would impact much more directly and adversely on the quality of life of some residents whereas others might be more satisfied provided assurances were given on key areas. In particular:

- **Project size and footprint.** The scale of the development probably made this a much more serious issue than the 1318 9th Street with the impact on lighting and privacy being serious and probably irresolvable issues for some residents. The hotel would dwarf neighboring buildings and the historic feel of the Alley would be undermined. It seemed likely that the hotel would be more geared to serve the needs of the Convention Center than make a contribution to the local community. The size of the hotel also threatened the structural integrity of neighboring buildings.
- **Loading bay.** Residents could not support the prospect of day and nighttime loading bay activity because of noise and traffic concerns. One of the residents mentioned the possibility of a loading dock, instead.
- **Parking variance.** Some residents supported variance relief from parking in favor of an Alley facing restaurant/café.
- **Roof deck.** Residents had had a poor experience with roof deck noise from the Cambria Hotel a few blocks away and would not favor a similar facility in the heart of their community. As a minimum, sound mitigation measures needed to be taken.

The Architect/Developer. They expressed willingness to have further conversations on the project, though for them to go ahead the hotel needed to be a profitable entity. They would be happy to discuss the location of the loading dock. On the roof deck, they indicated the hotel operator usually puts up a higher than usual glass barrier (to prevent jumpers per the London

locations, not mitigate sound), but recognized that the European “experience” typically included a lot of people on the roof deck making a noise. They expressed willingness to listen to ideas for alternative (profitable) projects.