

Mr. Cooper Pierce  
Jones Pierce Architects  
400 Plasters Ave., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30324

February 15, 2018

Dear Mr. Pierce:

The members of the Villa de Grip Working Group, which was established at the request of the Inman Park Neighborhood Association, have unanimously determined that they cannot support the application for re-zoning as it currently stands. The application and accompanying site plan represent too radical a departure from the existing Zoning Ordinance, the express NPU policies incorporated in the Comprehensive Development Plan, and the principles and rationale underlying both the Ordinance and the Plan.

Inman Park depends upon the Zoning Ordinance and CDP to protect the residential character of the neighborhood. The viability of Inman Park as a residential neighborhood was under serious threat in the 1970s. One threatening force was the incursion of commercial and industrial uses on the core residential area. The considered and consistent policy of the Zoning Ordinance and the CDP is to foster the residential character of Inman Park by ensuring that, moving forward, residential would be across the street from residential for new development. The parcels under consideration were intentionally zoned as residential in order to establish a buffer between the commercial parcels to the north and west and the single-family residences to the south. The existing zoning designation of these parcels promotes the policy of residential across the street from residential.

The existing zoning designation also protects against the threat to the neighborhood's residential character that follows from the overly dense and intense uses. The proposed rezoning would allow the parcels to be built to a density that is more than four times that allowed under the current zoning designation. The site plan indicates an actual intention to construct a three-building complex that would be at least three to four times that allowable under the current zoning designation or under existing Historic Preservation guidelines for the neighborhood's core residential area, subarea 1, in which the parcels are located. The contemplated uses include up to 9,000 square feet of restaurant space (which translates to 325 seats) and a 100 space parking deck. All of this to be located directly across the street from single family residences, in spite of the considered judgment of the neighborhood embodied in the Zoning Ordinance and the CDP.

The Working Group has identified numerous specific defects in the proposed rezoning and site plan:

- The proposal does not include any residential component. A truly mixed-use development, one that includes a significant residential component, could respect the neighborhood's principle of residential across the street from residential. The proposal violates this fundamental precept of the existing Ordinance and the CDP.
- The proposal represents an overreach and would yield a building complex that is too dense and a use mix that is too intense.

- Rezoning these parcels from residential to commercial would establish a dangerous precedent and limit our ability to effectively resist rezoning of other residential parcels. The parcels at 320 N. Highland and Copenhill are by no means unique. The CDP identifies several sensitive intersections where it is the policy of the neighborhood and of NPU-N to prohibit expansion of commercial use. The intersection of Copenhill and N. Highland that is the site for the proposed rezoning is explicitly identified as one such site. This designation limits the future land use designation (“mixed-use”) of the two parcels. The reasons for this policy are explained above. If this application is approved, it would allow intense commercial development within the core residential area of the neighborhood and it is difficult to see how the neighborhood would be able to protect itself against objectionable development at other sensitive, transitional sites and beyond.
- The proposed development could not preserve historic platting patterns. The proposal presumes a lot consolidation. The result of this lot consolidation would be the loss of Copenhill as the block face for the lot being consolidated into 320 N. Highland. This will alter set back requirements and the character of the Copenhill block face.
- The proposed development would have significant and adverse traffic impacts. 325 seats of restaurant space would add immensely to a traffic burden that already snarls the surrounding streets.
- As a consequence of the overreaching density, the proposed development would add a 100 space parking deck within the Beltline overlay. This is antithetical to the purpose of the Beltline, which is to promote walkability and alternative means of transportation to driving.
- The proposed development would create serious safety concerns. As designed, the new parking deck would use for ingress and egress an alley to Elizabeth Street. Visibility at this intersection would be severely limited.
- The site plan appears to require the elimination of every tree on the parcels, including several large, old-growth trees. No consideration seems to have been given to preserving these trees or to maintaining green space on the site.

The Inman Park Neighborhood Association stands ready to work with developers to achieve development that respects the needs of the City, the developer, and the neighborhood. We have done so with respect to significant developments such as the former Mead Paper site and Inman Quarter. We are doing so presently for a number of other important sites. The members of the Working Group for the Villa de Grip development regret that we have not, as yet, been able to achieve consensus on a plan for the subject site. Should the development team bring forward a plan that allays the concerns set forth above, we would be eager to consider it.

Sincerely,



Neil Kinkopf  
President, Inman Park Neighborhood Association