
[EXTERNAL] 808-816 Virginia Park comments

From Paul Mack <paulhudsonmack@gmail.com>

Date Tue 10/7/2025 9:16 AM

To Historic District Commission (Staff) <hdc@detroitmi.gov>

Cc Virginia Park <virginia-park-block-club@googlegroups.com>

 1 attachment (136 KB)

808VP Development Feedback.pdf;

Greetings. Unfortunately, we unfortunately won't be able to join for the HDC meeting (have tickets to see a performer dear to our hearts, Lori McKenna - much to my chagrin, it is at The Ark in A2, please pray for us as we journey to such a place leaving this sacred city, and beseech the goddess that such artists perform their shows in Detroit in the future).

I would encourage the HDC to either require the developer to put forward a design that truly has nearly unanimous community support (which I think will be difficult / impossible due to differing POVs in the community) OR require the developer to submit a design that directly meets HDC standards for our community. If this Notice to Proceed is approved, particularly considering the filing's mention of the Mayor's office (and their expected presence at the Oct 6 meeting), I expect that approval will cause uproar and deep hurt in our community, and be (reasonably) perceived as a developer using access to the Mayor's office to overpower, misrepresent, and ignore the very clear voice of the community.

I think this development sits in an interesting place - as one of the people tasked to liaise with the developer, I've appreciated their friendliness and desire to work with the community to find a win-win solution. Personally, I am good with the development proceeding as is - and a few other community members have voiced strong support.

However, as I understand the bar for the "notice to proceed" the developer has NOT achieved - the community is certainly NOT unified in agreeing that the current design is an improvement over leaving the lot as is (NOR that the lot is a hazard as is), NOR does the majority of the community agree it suits well our historic district nature / home styles. This has been made clear in several surveys and several community meetings - see survey results attached. The developer has been closely involved in this process and reviewed the attached survey results, so their claim in their filing, that "Staff impression was that there was a general community consensus that a multi-family/attached townhouse style development was desirable at this parcel" is misleading at best.

Specifically regarding the notice to proceed, per June survey results:

- The community unanimously disagrees with MCL - Section 399.205 - 6a applying ("I believe the vacant parcel at the NW corner of Virginia Park and Third (808-816 VP) constitutes a hazard to the safety of the public or the neighborhood." 22 voted No to this, 0 voted Yes)

- The community largely disagrees with 6d applying ("I believe this vacant parcel would be better left as is than developed according to the developer's current plans" - 14 yes, 8 no - I think we can pretty clearly say that the proposed design is not a benefit to the majority of the community if 63.6% of respondents think the lot is better left vacant than developed with the proposed designs)

My recommendation several months ago in an email to the developer was that they consider creating an architectural design that the HDC can directly approve as within its guidelines (the rejection from previous HDC meeting made clear changes that would be needed). This is what each of us as homeowners in the historic district most often do with exterior renovations to our own homes. As shared in bold italics at the top of this email, this is still my recommendation.

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