



LAVACA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Proudly Serving San Antonio's Oldest Residential Neighborhood

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September 17, 2021

Jessica Anderson
Office of Historic Preservation
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, TX 78205

Re: Demolition Request 1035 S. Presa

Dear Ms. Anderson:

The Board of the Lavaca Neighborhood Association (LNA) has reviewed the demolition request for the 1035 S. Presa St. The LNA has also reviewed the developer's plans for this site for McIntyre's Redevelopment. We have also been notified by the developer that they intend to seek demolition of the car wash in the adjacent lot at 1248 S. St. Mary's St. There is a great deal of concern should this demolition be allowed to move forward.

When we met with the Braun Enterprises' representative on April 4, 2020, the LNA Board agreed to support C-3 zoning for "The Patio" and carwash lot so long as there is no IDZ overlay on "The Patio" and carwash lot, but rather a parking variance. At the time, there was no discussion of demolishing "The Patio" building, which is why the LNA Board agreed to support the changes. However, in recent emails with Braun Enterprises, they have stated this was the plan last year.

The LNA board feels that the most recent design presented is not in keeping with the style or massing of the buildings in the neighborhood, nor is it conducive to maintaining the aesthetic of the historic district. We request that Braun Enterprises maintain "The Patio" building as originally planned to preserve a historically significant piece of the neighborhood, and we also request that you re-visit your design to remodel the existing building in keeping with the aesthetic of the Lavaca Neighborhood.

The LNA Planning and Zoning Committee and the board reviewed the plans and is not in support of demolition at this time.

Sincerely,

The Board of the Lavaca Neighborhood Association

To maintain transparency, below is the text of the email sent to Braun Enterprises on September 15, 2021:

This site is subject to the NCD-1 design standards, see attached. The site fronts both S. Presa and S. St. Marys and presents a great opportunity to take advantage of the visibility of each roadway. However, the parking is aligned to S. St. Mary's (the more heavily trafficked), and is set pretty far back from S. Presa and Claudia to allow for a large outdoor seating area. Even the seating area is set back another 5-8 feet from the property line. Also, the large building signage is oriented to Claudia Street, the least visible side of the three frontages.

Generally, the NCD-1 design guidelines state that commercial structures should be oriented to the street, similar to the Taco Haven building with storefront along the sidewalk and canopies providing coverage over the sidewalk. The main entrance should be on the principle elevation on the primary street, and a secondary entrance could provide access to parking. Parking areas should be of pervious material and completely separated from the streetscape with a landscape buffer, located behind buildings where possible. Projects must adhere to the landscape and tree preservation ordinance.

Overall, this is a suburban-minded development proposal for an urban site, which is exactly what the NCD-1 guidelines are trying to prevent. Their design could be altered very simply to adhere to these guidelines. Push the building towards Presa to allow for some seating along the sidewalk, but orient most outdoor seating to the sides of the property, either Claudia for "publicity" or the interior lot line for a more intimate outdoor dining experience. This allows the parking to be centered on the site, behind buildings and accessed along Claudia. The move would also provide enough space along St. Mary's for another commercial building to front that street, or at the very least, additional landscape to buffer the parking lot along.

This is intended as a productive critique that results in a successful project for both the developer/operator and the neighborhood, and we are excited about the potential of this project. To that end, we are happy to provide a diagram of our proposed adjustments to the design and/or arrange a video conference with the necessary parties to discuss the project.