

February 28, 2022

Dear Ms. Melanie Wilson and Members of the Metropolitan Planning Commission:

I write to you today as a long time Victorian district resident, an experienced historic preservationist, and small developer, as well as an owner of one of the buildings on this proposed list of buildings of “exceptional importance”. I encourage MPC Board members to vote against the proposed text amendment adding historic protections to these non-historic properties in the Victorian neighborhood.

Of the wide variety of buildings on the list, almost none have the historic integrity or architectural features that would make them deserving of these protections. Due to the small size of some of the buildings, the ratio of parking area to building square footage is more inline with suburban development, and therefore inappropriate for the Victorian District. Many do not meet today’s development standards and would thus not be permitted to be built today. Several of the sites would much better serve the neighborhood if re-developed to meet our agreed upon standards.

Together, these issues highlight that the properties identified in the proposed text amendment are not aligned with key elements of the Victorian Neighborhoods Association 2020 strategic vision: a) that pedestrians should be prioritized over cars and b) new development should be in the scale and character of the neighborhood. The vision was developed through a multi-month, participatory process guided by a professional planner and consultant.

For these reasons, I strongly disagree that any of these buildings are of “exceptional importance” and I respectfully request that MPC board members vote against this text amendment enshrining these non-conforming properties by affording them historic protections.

It is also worth noting that the proposed amendment affecting these properties was added to the February meeting agenda just 4 days before the meeting, without any notice or community outreach. In contrast, when my neighbors petitioned to do a small renovation in the rear of their single family home, I received written notice weeks in advance, including a link to the work planned, architectural drawings, etc. I believe text amendments should require the same level of deference to affected property owners and to the community. I hope this is addressed in future MPC policy.

Thank you for your consideration,



**Brad Baugh**

Broker, Longleaf Partners—Real Estate Management and Development  
Co-owner, Brighter Day Natural Foods  
Treasurer, Victorian Neighborhoods Association  
Board Member, Savannah Development and Renewal Authority

## Leah Michalak

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**From:** Michael Sharkey <skindoctors@netscape.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 1, 2022 2:48 PM  
**To:** Leah Michalak  
**Subject:** Fwd: 2 East Henry Street is opposed to MPC 22-000389-ZA

To Metropolitan Planning Commission,

We are opposed to MPC File 22-000389-ZA suggested action for our property located at @ 2 E Henry St. We bought and held the property with out the historic designation and are opposed to this action after the fact.

Michael Sharkey  
owner

## Leah Michalak

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**From:** Bridget Lidy <blidy@Savannahga.Gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 1, 2022 7:57 AM  
**To:** Leah Michalak  
**Subject:** FW: [Caution - External Email] Former Sears building

FYI.

Bridget  
912-525-3097

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**From:** Jay Melder <Jay.Melder@Savannahga.Gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2022 9:59 PM  
**To:** Mike Stroming <mstrom81@gmail.com>; Marcus Lotson <lotsonm@thempc.org>  
**Cc:** Bridget Lidy <blidy@Savannahga.Gov>  
**Subject:** Re: [Caution - External Email] Former Sears building

Thank you for reaching out Mr. Stroming.

I believe the issue will be brought again to MPC for consideration tomorrow.

I'm including MPC staff [@Marcus Lotson](#) to inform you of the best ways to register your concerns formally with the MPC.

Regards,

Joseph A. Melder  
City Manager  
City of Savannah, Georgia

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**From:** Mike Stroming <[mstrom81@gmail.com](mailto:mstrom81@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Monday, February 28, 2022 at 3:49 PM  
**To:** Jay Melder <[Jay.Melder@Savannahga.Gov](mailto:Jay.Melder@Savannahga.Gov)>  
**Subject:** [Caution - External Email] Former Sears building

Hi Jay,

I recently read that the former Sears building at 2 E. Henry St. is being considered for historic status by the MPC.

This is appalling.

I live near that property and I walk by it every day. That building is urban blight in the neighborhood. The owner neglects to do any kind of maintenance. The property is full of broken glass, urine and garbage.

Savannah is nationally known for its beautiful neighborhoods, but it is also nationally known for poor zoning decisions made decades ago.

It is time to turn a new leaf and take a stand against negligent owners of commercial space. Granting that long neglected building historic status will ensure it will remain vacant and neglected for decades to come.

Kind regards,  
Mike Stroming  
Savannah, GA.

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# Leah Michalak

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**From:** andree patterson <bleuet207@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 3, 2022 10:01 AM  
**To:** Leah Michalak; Christy Adams  
**Subject:** HPC Meeting - March 23 - Victorian District - Amendment to Contributing Resources Maps

Dear Members of the HPC,

I have been vocal about protecting and preserving the Victorian District for over 20 years. Not only as a homeowner and resident but also as past president of the VNA as well as its past Governmental Affairs for several years.

Since the proposed addition of 10 buildings to the Contributing Resources Maps is not under the MPC but the HPC, I am repeating my urge to add the buildings in question so that they would be protected and preserved. Under the NewZO, those buildings could be refurbished and upgraded while keeping in mind the quality of life of the residents and still complement the environment they are located in.

I am attaching a copy of a Letter to the Editor which was published in the Savannah Morning News to that effect.

I support the HPC's request to amend the Contributing Resources Maps. The sooner, the better!

Sincerely,  
Andrée Patterson  
Past president of the Victorian Neighborhoods Association



Seacrest Seven, LLC  
1001 Whitaker St.  
Savannah, GA 31401

February 18, 2022

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FEB 18 2022

Ms. Melanie Wilson, Director  
The Metropolitan Planning Commission  
110 E. State Street  
Savannah GA 31401

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

**RE: City of Savannah Contributing Resources Map Update**

Dear Ms. Melanie Wilson and Members of the Metropolitan Planning Commission:

Seacrest Seven, LLC, the owners of 1001 Whitaker Street, are strongly opposed to the text amendment regarding the addition of our property to the Contributing Resources Map for the Victorian Historic Overlay District. This item is scheduled to be on the agenda of the March 1, 2022 MPC meeting. We ask the members of the MPC to DENY this request, initiated by Staff.

Our building was constructed along the very public Forsyth Park corridor at a time when there were no review processes in place. If one were to present our building's design to the MPC/HPC today, for new construction, it would quickly be denied based on the Visual Compatibility standards set forth in the Ordinance. The Ordinance would require greater massing, height, width, scale, site density and compatibility in design per neighborhood characteristics. The attached document (Exhibit A) illustrates the lack of visual compatibility of the southwest corner of Forsyth Park in a way that words cannot.

There has been ample time to list our building as "contributing." The Contributing Resources Map has been updated several times since inception in 1981 - including as recently as 2004, 2018, and 2019 (with the adoption of the NewZo). It was discussed at the February 8, 2022 MPC meeting, this is an on-going effort based on funding; however, the City of Savannah Code of Ordinances allows a building to be submitted/nominated individually at any time, with proper procedure. Our building was renovated in 2010, which would have also been the opportune time for it to be placed on this map. It was not. The staff report from the February 2022 MPC meeting presented paperwork from the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) completed in 2011 that no one has acted upon. As part of our renovation efforts, we applied for historic tax credits, which were also denied by the SHPO. How is this building now considered to be of "exceptional importance" by our City? The building was constructed in 1961, well outside of the "Period of Significance" (1870-1923) as noted for the Victorian Overlay District. We agree there are nice qualities with the building, however in our opinion per the definition of

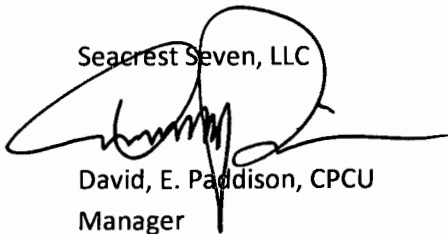
"Exceptional Importance" - the integrity of location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association with the District, among others, would disqualify this building. It is also not associated with any historical event or important persons and does not meet the other criteria listed under this section.

Since the renovation, we have outgrown our building and want the freedom to utilize the Ordinance to its fullest intent, an opportunity that would be prohibited by the proposed change to the Contributing Resources Map. The timing and swiftness of the petition initiated by Staff is of grave concern. Savannah is not a museum to be frozen in time, but a living city with active residents and thriving businesses. Placing our building on the Contributing Buildings map now, would present undue economic hardship not only upon us, as the owners of 1001 Whitaker Street, but on the neighborhood and the City of Savannah. It would freeze in time an urban planning mistake.

If there are pressures of new site activity, as Staff noted, then the Historic Preservation Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Commission and the City of Savannah Code of Ordinances are in place to ensure any new construction meets zoning requirements and visual compatibility standards. I urge you to let these municipal bodies and supporting documents do their job, to guide the built environment in the best interest of the City, protecting property owner rights for individual citizens and businesses, while keeping in mind the best long-term built environment and use for the decades ahead.

Sincerely,

Seacrest Seven, LLC

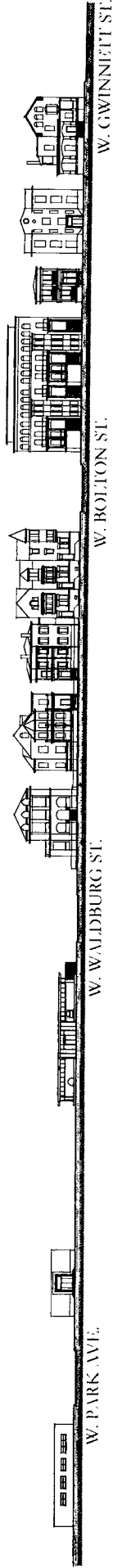


David, E. Paddison, CPCU  
Manager

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FEB 18 2022

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION



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EXHIBIT A - FOR 1001 WHITAKER STREET



February 07, 2022

Dear Ms. Melanie Wilson and Members of the Metropolitan Planning Commission:

The Victorian Neighborhoods Association is opposed to the list of historic properties in our district, appearing on the February 08, 2022 agenda (No. 22-000389-ZA). We urge the MPC to deny approval, or otherwise table the decision until the community has time to further discuss and reach an informed consensus.

The VNA undertook a study of historic properties in 2018-2019, with assistance from Rebecca Fenwick of Ethos Preservation. We convened a committee of property owners and preservationists from the VNA board of officers and membership, and we dedicated two of our regular VNA meetings to discussions of preservation. The VNA committee established a “long list” of individual properties for consideration, with hopes of arriving at a future “short list” that we could support. Following numerous meetings of the committee and a survey ranking of individual properties sent to VNA membership, we failed to establish a consensus beyond a small handful of properties which were constructed just outside of the Period of Significance. We also note that several of the buildings on the MPC list did not qualify for state and national registries at the time of the previous survey, which was also a consideration in our VNA study.

A majority of committee members and VNA respondents arrived at the conclusion that most of the buildings on the VNA list, which includes those on the MPC list, did not meet the criteria for inclusion. In particular many of the Mid-Century Modern buildings were deemed fourth-rate examples of the style, poorly detailed, constructed of cheap materials, and unfit as lasting testaments to modernism. A case in point is the new SEDA headquarters on Drayton Street, formerly the Red Cross building, which required a near-total gutting in order to “rehabilitate” the building. The result is a remarkable improvement over the previous iteration of the property, but perhaps a low-rise building facing Forsyth Park, situated on an urban parcel dominated by surface parking, is not the highest and best use for that location.

We are also aware of an opinion that these properties should be protected for reasons quite apart from their merits, namely to prevent undesirable future development. We ask that the MPC reject such arguments. Preservation should not be used cynically as a fig leaf for NIMBY (“Not-in-my-backyard”) attitudes and real estate estate protectionism. The preservation of valid contributing structures, on the other hand – while informed residents can have reasonable debate on their merits – should always have a place in good urban planning policy.

Kind Regards,



Ryan Madson  
President, Victorian Neighborhoods Association