

**Honorable City Planning Commission
Cincinnati, Ohio**

December 21, 2007

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on a proposed zone change at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue from RM-1.2 Multi-family and RMX to a PD Planned Development in the neighborhood of Avondale.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Petitioner: Joe Bodkin
GBBN Architects
332 E. 8th Street
Cincinnati, OH. 45202

Request: A change of zoning at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue from RM-1.2 Multi-family and RMX to a PD Planned Development District.

Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:

South: IR – Institutional Residential
RMX- Residential Mixed

East: CN-M – Commercial Neighborhood Mixed
PD – Planned Development

North: CN-M – Commercial Neighborhood Mixed
RMX - Residential Mixed

West: RMX – Residential Mixed
CN-M - Commercial Neighborhood Mixed

Staff Conference: The Planning Division staff held a public conference on the zone change request from RM – 1.2 and RMX to PD on October 23, 2007. The petitioner, representatives of the Ronald McDonald House (RMH), and a few neighboring property owners attended. Some questions were asked regarding the addition, however there were no concerns regarding the development. There has been no opposition to the proposed zone change.

BACKGROUND:

Existing Use: Currently the property at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue is in use as the RMH and is categorized as a patient family home. The property is situated at the northwest corner of Burnet and Erkenbrecher Avenues in Avondale. Surrounding uses include commercial, institutional (Children's Hospital) and some residential on Hearne Avenue behind the RHM.

Current Zoning – RM – 1.2 Multi-family: The current zoning is a multi-family residential district, which permits moderately high-density development. The minimum land area for every dwelling unit is 1,200 square feet. A smaller portion of the property to the west along Erkenbrecher is zoned RMX Residential Mixed, which allows 1-3 unit residential structures. Since the RMH is expanding into the RMX, a patient family home is not permitted in the RMX and therefore the expansion requires a zone change.

Proposed Use: The use will be the same, a patient family home. Currently, the RMH property contains one 56,000 square foot building with 48 suites. The proposal is to add a 32,000 square foot, 3-story addition over a 20-car garage. A second floor bridge will connect the new addition with the existing house. There will be a new surface parking lot and a ground identification sign at the southwest corner along Erkenbrecher Avenue as well. See the attached site plan and the development program statement.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT:

According to Section 1429-05 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, a PD District and the development within a PD District must comply with the following:

- (a) *Minimum Area* – The minimum area of a PD must be two contiguous acres. However, Council may approve a PD District that contains less than the minimum acreage required for an area with an affirmative recommendation of the CPC that special site characteristics exist and the proposed land use justifies the development of the property as a PD.

The property at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue is 2.11 acres.

- (b) *Ownership* – Evidence that the applicant has sufficient control over the tract of land to affect the proposed plan, including a list of all ownership and beneficial interests in the tract of land and the proposed development.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities currently owns the property and is the developer.

- (c) *Multiple buildings on a lot* – more than one building is allowed on a lot.

Currently there is one building on this site. The proposal is to construct a 32,000 square foot addition to the existing building for an additional 32 suites.

- (d) *Historic Landmarks and Districts* –

The site and the immediate area are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

- (e) *Hillside Overlay Districts* –

The site is not located in a Hillside Overlay District.

- (f) *Urban Design Overlay District* –

The site is not located within an Urban Design Overlay District.

CONCEPT PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STATEMENT:

According to Section 1429-09 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, a petition to rezone a property to PD must include a concept plan and development program statement. The purpose is to describe the proposed use or uses to be conducted in the PD District. The concept plan must include text or diagrams that specify:

- (a) *Plan Elements* – the applicant has submitted a survey of the site, including a metes and bounds description and has included sufficient information regarding the proposed land use. A site plan has been submitted showing the proposed new addition, parking areas, streets and driveways, and landscaping and buffer zones (see attached site plan).
- (b) *Ownership* – the applicant owns the property at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue that is the subject of the proposed zone change.
- (c) *Schedule* – A construction schedule is approximately 12-14 months from the date of the ground breaking.
- (d) *Preliminary Reviews* – All utilities are available to the site and at adequate capacities. The owner has been coordinating the infrastructure issues with MSD, GCWW and other City departments. To ensure that all proposed infrastructure is sufficient, Planning Staff will circulate a copy of the final development plan upon submission to the necessary City departments.
- (e) *Density and Open Space* – Sufficient open space will be provided throughout the development with a land to building ratio of 3.19 to 1. (See attached site plan)
- (f) *Other Information* – The required parking spaces will be provided within the development as outlined in the Development Program Statement. (See attached)

PLANS:

There are no existing Plans that encompass or make reference to this property.

FINDINGS:

Community Response: The RMH presented this expansion to the Board of the Avondale Community Council, however they have not yet presented it to the full body of the Avondale Community Council. As stated above there has been no opposition to this zone change.

ANALYSIS:

The RMH is an important institution in Cincinnati serving numerous families with sick children. Their institution has been a good neighbor in the Avondale community and fortunately now they have the opportunity to expand. Even though RMH International Headquarters allows RMH Cincinnati to expand up to 90 rooms, the RMH has chosen to scale down their expansion to an additional 32 rooms for a total of 78. They have allowed for an additional exit off Hearne to eliminate congestion. They are also providing ample off street parking spaces (87). The RMH made sure to design the addition and garage so the buildings are appropriately scaled for the

neighborhood. Even though there is an eight-story Children’s Hospital building to the south, the RMH designed the scale of the expansion to relate to the lower scale residential structures to the west and the south.

Currently, the RMH is caring for nearly 1,100 families per year with an average stay of 15 days. They have between 25 and 50 families on their waiting list every night who would like a room if space permitted. Last year, they had to turn away 825 families due to lack of space. For RMH to be able to serve all families there is a strong need to expand their facility.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

According to Section 1429-11(a) of the Cincinnati Zoning Code, City Planning Commission may recommend approval or conditional approval, with restrictions on the establishment of a PD District on finding that all of the following circumstances apply:

1. The PD concept plan and development program statement are consistent with applicable plans and policies and is compatible with surrounding development;

The development of this site for an addition to the existing RMH is an appropriate use for the property abutting institutional and commercial zones.

2. The PD concept plan and development program statement enhance the potential for superior urban design in comparison with the development under the base district regulations that would apply if the plan were not approved;

Development of an attractive, low scale addition with a properly landscaped parking lot is appropriate.

3. Deviations from the base district regulations applicable to the property at the time of the PD application are justified by compensating benefits of the PD concept plan and development program statement;

Under the RMX zoning district only residential development is permitted, which does not include the proposed use.

4. The PD concept plan and development program statement includes adequate provisions for utility services, refuse collection, landscaping, traffic circulation, building design and preservation.

All aspects are covered in the concept plan as submitted. This issue is also addressed above.

FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

Pursuant to Section 1429-13 *Final Development Plan*, a final development plan and program statement would be submitted to City Planning Commission after approval of the concept plan and Planned Development (PD) designation by City Council.

A final development plan must be filed for any portion of an approved concept plan that the applicant wishes to develop and this plan must conform substantially to the approved concept plan and development program statement. The final development plan requirements anticipate changes from the concept plan by requiring significantly more detail. Approval of the final development plan will allow the developer to obtain building permits.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The RMH is an important institution in Cincinnati serving numerous families with sick children with a need and the financial ability to expand.
2. Last year, they had to turn away 825 families due to lack of space. For RMH to be able to serve more families, there is a strong need to expand their facility.
3. Even though they are allowed to expand up to 90 rooms, the RMH has chosen to scale down their expansion to an additional 32 rooms for a total of 78.
4. They have allowed for an additional exit off Hearne to eliminate congestion and they are providing ample off-street parking spaces (87).
5. The RMH also made sure to design the addition and garage so the buildings are appropriately scaled for the neighborhood. Even though there is an eight-story Children's Hospital building to the south, the RMH designed the building to relate to the lower scale residential structures to the west and the south.
6. The applicant, Joe Bodkin, has submitted a satisfactory concept plan and development program statement and has successfully met all basic requirements of the Planned Development District.
7. The Ronald McDonald House, the institution, will be able to remain in Avondale and continue their history in the community.
8. The PD zoning designation will not negatively impact the existing character of the surrounding area.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the City Planning Department recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following action:

1. Accept the concept plan for the proposed addition to the RMH at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue.
2. Approve a zone change from RM-1.2 Multi-family to a PD Planned Development District at 350 Erkenbrecher Avenue with the findings that the PD is consistent with the following requirement of Section 1429-11:
 - a. The PD concept plan and development program statement are consistent with applicable

- plans and policies and is compatible with surrounding development;
- b. The PD concept plan and development program statement enhance the potential for superior urban design in comparison with the development under the base district regulation that would apply if their plan were not approved;
 - c. Deviations from the base district regulations are justified by compensating benefits of the PD concept plan and development program statement; and
 - d. The PD concept plan and development program statement includes adequate provisions for utility services, refuse collection, open space, landscaping, buffering, pedestrian circulation, traffic circulation, building design and building location.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:

Caroline Hardy Kellam
Senior City Planner

Charles C. Graves III
Director of the City Planning Department

Attachments