

ANC 6D Rebuttal of Protest for 07-13G
Prepared by ANC 6D02 Commissioner Cara Shockleyⁱ
April 19, 2018

The Randall School project has been nearly two decades in the making. The school itself has two sections designated historic which need to have their exteriors restored and preserved as part of any building project on this lot. The original legislation in 2004 sold the property to the Corcoran for development with provisos including both residential development and art education as part of the project.

When the Corcoran was unable to complete its ambitions, the property was sold to Telesis/Rubell with the legal requirement for art education still in place. In addition, the statute permitting the sale to Telesis allowed a hotel as one of the potential uses – something the ANC is grateful is not in the current proposal – and mandated twenty percent (20%) of all residential housing be made available to District residents at eighty percent (80%) of area median income (AMI). These provisions are commemorated in law which is one reason why, when the developer offered to go to sixty percent (60%) of AMI for fourteen percent (14%) of the units, the change was not allowed.

Telesis/Rubell was permitted to purchase from the Corcoran at least partially because of the Rubell's vast and amazing collection of art that would fulfill the provision for art education through the proposed museum and bring to the District of Columbia its first museum of modern art.

The expense of refurbishing and preserving this building would make many projects too expensive for the space. Continuing to allow the building to become derelict abrogates our duty to preserve and greatly hurts the neighborhood. Having a museum, free to all District residents, enhances the character of Southwest and helps to cement the quadrant as an arts district, a goal under the District's Comprehensive Plan and a guiding principle in the Southwest Small Area Plan.

In the time since this project was originally proposed, the District's population has grown, and the economic impact has been noted. New Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) legislation has been passed, but this legislation has no impact on this project which is already providing affordable housing at more than double the percentage required by law. Additionally, the new IZ law only affects projects which are not built as a matter of right.

The necessity for IZ and for deep affordability bands (under fifty percent (50%) of AMI) is noted by ANC6D. Economic integration will not be accomplished by only including the families under 50% of AMI. In order for the District to thrive economically, people of all financial and economic strata need to be able to live as well as work within its boundaries. Making provision for people who are at the lowest AMI levels is very important. However, there is an economic gap between apartments at the deepest affordability and market rate apartments. The 80% affordability has value and will allow, for example, a single income DCPS teacher's family to be able to afford to live in the area where s/he works.

Moreover, this is already a neighborhood within the quadrant which has a great deal of economic diversity. Capitol Park Plaza and Twins welcomes Section 8 vouchers. Greenleaf Gardens is cater-corner to the school and will soon be redeveloped providing over 2,000 affordable and market rate units. The condominium/townhouses at Capitol Park IV provide good quality single family homes at the other diagonal corner. There is a diversity of social and economic spheres in these few blocks that any area of the District should envy. As neighbors to the project, these stakeholders would like to see

the Randall School project begin as it has been proposed as the current state of the school creates a dead space between them and Randall Recreation Center. This allows for vandalization, vermin, and litter to fill the area.

The submission by DC4RD references "the Ward 6 Study Group." Nowhere on their website or on the document they submitted are the members of the study group listed, nor are there mentions of which studies were conducted using which methods, nor what standards were used to produce the analyses stated in the document. DC4RD may have worthwhile aims, but, in this case, they are letting the perfect be the enemy of the good and some of the facts in the matter may have been missed. As an example, mentioned in the document, not only does ANC6D stand squarely behind build-first for the renovations to King Greenleaf and Greenleaf Gardens, but also this discussion was held publicly with Councilman Charles Allen at the February 2018 ANC6D Business meeting. At that time, the Councilman Allen reiterated to the audience that that project would be a "build-first" and an RFQ has been released and includes a Master Plan with land uses identified. Randall School, for the reasons outlined above, is not identified as a potential site as the membership of DC4RD would (and should) know had they attended that meeting or indeed any recent ANC6D meetings.

There is no reason that the long-awaited Randall School Redevelopment should not move forward. Delaying it is very detrimental to the neighborhood – economically and aesthetically. Much needed employment opportunities are also being held up. If the project is not begun soon, it may not begin at all which would mean losing approximately 80 residences in one of the workforce housing bands. Lowe Enterprises along with Telesis/Rubell has presented solid plans. They have been cooperative with the ANC, the Zoning Commission, the surrounding neighborhood, and District organizations. The Applicants even expanded their requirement for the 80% AMI from the 20 years required by law to "in perpetuity." These apartments could be a long-term anchor for economic diversity, but only if the development is allowed to move forward.

ⁱ At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed public meeting on February 12, 2018 with a quorum being present, a quorum being 4 Commissioners, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6D voted 6-0-0 to designate Commissioner Cara Shockley (SMD 6D02) as its authorized representative in this matter.