

LCA/RANCH/HOB Objection to 1633 N. Halsted

We thank Alderman Hopkins for including us in discussions about this project. We are disappointed by the end product — meetings from which we were excluded — because the proposed building is too big, too tall and out of context with its surroundings. It also lacks on-site green or open space.

Current Zoning: Halsted Pedestrian Corridor

Halsted Street, from North Avenue to Belmont Ave, is a pedestrian corridor zoned B 3-2. As the noted architect Peter Landon has written in his statement to you: The proposed project “is a change from 2.2 to 5.0 FAR, which is more than double, and it changes the required site area of 1,000 sqft, (700 sqft for efficiency) per unit to 200 sqft, (135 sqft for efficiency) per unit. These both will result in a significant change to the overall character of our neighborhood.” Again this project doubles the allowable square footage. It will tower over the three-story townhomes on Burling St, and cast that area in shade.

We are very afraid of a domino effect, once developers are allowed such notable and excessive variances our neighborhood’s protected pedestrian way will become part of Chicago’s loss history.

History of Steppenwolf Theater

The Steppenwolf Theater is the only building which significantly exceeds the B3-2 zoning within our corridor. There is a deep history to this exception. The community’s support of the Steppenwolf theater buildings and the large concrete parking lot *only occurred* because of our community’s commitment to Chicago theater and the Steppenwolf Theater Group in particular. Steppenwolf has a long history within the north side. The development of our city’s cultural and theater community is important to us. The Steppenwolf theater is the only glass facade on Halsted Street. It sits across the street from the proposed site. Again, significant variances were approved because we as a community believe Chicago needs vital neighborhood theater centers. The proposed building is replacing another theater compound, The Royal George. COVID took a heavy toll on our city’s theater community and we mourn the loss of the Royal George. The proposed building which replaces the Royal George is not adding to our theater or cultural heritage.

Affordable Units

We understand Steppenwolf’s need for affordable units for their visiting actors and staff. Lincoln Central Association and RANCH whole heartedly support affordability within Lincoln Park and have a strong history of working with developers to assure on-site affordable units are built in our community. Lincoln Commons is one of the examples of just such a commitment. We worked closely with the McCaffery Interests. We are proud of the 55 affordable units which were built on-site. Developers such as McCaffery are models for all. Steppenwolf needs to know we will support their needs. We fully back on-site affordable units.

Other Developments on Halsted

We are *not* opposed to a modern design but this project fails to even “nod” to the context of our neighborhood and its immediate neighbors which include the federally landmarked Yondorff Block and Hall, built in 1877 and the city’s landmarked Halsted-Willow Gateway, a collection of buildings from the Victorian era. Both the current 2nd ward alderman and Michele Smith of the 43rd Ward diligently supported the landmarking of the Willow Halsted intersection. We are and will be forever grateful for that Landmarking. Years earlier a large suburban type mall development was voted down by the community at the Willow Halsted site. A new developer

entered the scene, protected two of the proposed landmarked buildings and built apartment complexes on the West side of Halsted which were fully approved by both RANCH and Lincoln Central Association. The developers of the project demonstrated a sensitivity to the community. And, the neighborhood associations approval of the residential buildings demonstrated a commitment to sensitive development. Such partnerships are mutually beneficial

We must strongly assert, LCA and RANCH are not anti-development. LCA has worked closely with multiple developers including approving the plans for two permitted buildings on Halsted which will hug Yondorff Hall. Both of those projects are modern, both are brick and glass, and even, generously, included elements from the Yondoff in their design. Such respect for the context of the pedestrian way and its history was and is greatly appreciated. This project would be more palatable if it was less imposing and more respectful of the community's context.

Neighbors to The East

We are very concerned about the neighbors to the east of this project. This project looms over them and their voices have been silenced with the proposed negotiated deal. HOB is not a NIMBY group. They are sophisticated city dwellers who are only asking that the impact upon their residential units be addressed, including traffic within their alley. They have over 200 supportive neighbors who have signed their petition. Their voice should not be ignored.

\$300,000 Contribution to Alderman Hopkins

The \$300,000 last minute contribution to the 2nd Ward is a disturbing development. As of June 2023, we were assured the proposed project would not have the Alderman's support. Communication with the community from the Alderman's office offered us assurances again when the developer asked to appear before the July Dept of Planning Meeting without notifying the Alderman's office or the community. Regarding the developer's unexpected request to appear at the Planning Dept, July meeting, the Alderman's office notified our community: *"We were also surprised. It appears that Draper and Kramer submitted their zoning change application to be heard at July's Committee on Zoning, which is **NOT** something that Alderman Hopkins approved with the current design."*

We sincerely worry that \$300,000 contribution tipped the scale toward approval by our Alderman with no input from the community. Furthermore, there was no discussion as to how the donation came to be and how the monies would be distributed. Applying the monies to the site under the el near North Avenue had no public input. A large southeast park space is currently being developed by Chicago Park District as part of the city's community agreement with the neighborhood after the demolition of Cabrini Green. The under the EI space at North Avenue should be included within the Chicago Park District's budget. Any greening provided for by the unexpected donation logically should be used in the immediate area surrounding the projected development. The site is now barren of any green provided by the developer. The lack of permeability and green is not conducive to current urban planning which recognizes the need for greening within such urban sites. The Halsted pedestrian corridor should benefit from the green initiative not a site a mile away.

Sudden Lack of Support by Alderman's Office

Lincoln Central Association, RANCH Triangle Association and HOB firmly oppose this development and how the process for approval was recently advanced.

As James Sherwood of HOB noted our alderman has supported neighborhood concerns in the past. A project at 1320 W Fullerton had many similarities to the Halsted site but our alderman stood firm. The alderman wrote to his constituents: "Last summer, after much deliberation and

concerns from neighbors, it was determined that the zoning change request for 1320 W Fullerton had to be denied. The 14 story, 158-foot building proposed by Lakeshore Sport and Fitness was much too large for the location and would have significantly altered the character of the neighborhood in a way that local residents clearly expressed was undesirable. Additional issues of insufficient parking and increased traffic on an already very busy Fullerton were also factors in my decision. As your alderman, I highly value your feedback. In this case, the feedback was clear. The neighborhood does not desire a building of this size, so I did not and will not be supporting this zoning change.”

Mr. Sherwood subsequently wrote to our Alderman: *“The parallels here are self-explanatory, and in this case, the preservation of a historic corridor is involved. The precedent for a denial clearly exists. And the standards that apply to a local health club should also apply to an influential group of developers.”*

We ask this project not receive approval without further discussion with the local community. Again we are not opposed to development, but the way this project has advanced is a travesty to the community and its relationship with its Alderman.

Sincerely,
Lincoln Central Association and Ranch Triangle Association

Deirdre Graziano
LCA Zoning Committee

August 16, 2023

Dear Chicago Plan Commission,

The 2nd Ward borders my neighborhood, but is a diverse area by no means as consistent as the residential neighborhood that makes up the majority of the 43rd Ward. Over the past few years Alderman Hopkins has made changes to the nearby area, none of which I believe benefit our ward, or our residential neighborhood, but which I believe actually detract from it.

The new apartment/condo buildings identified to justify the size of the newest effort at 1633 N Halsted were all objected to by the neighborhood as well. These tall, large and mostly modern looking buildings are appropriate for structures south of North Avenue, not north of it. This fact has been conveniently overlooked.

The alderman and the developers of 1633 N Halsted have worked to change the original plan, but they have failed to appropriately address the concerns of the people who actually live next to the proposed effort. Providing for a structure that doubles permissible square footage does not strike an acceptable balance between the neighborhood and the desire to increase residential units near mass transit. I am opposed to the currently proposed development at 1633 N Halsted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynda Mooney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynda Mooney
1904 N Orchard St.
Chicago, IL 60614

Chicago Plan Commission per 1633 N Halsted

Peter Landon <PLandon@lbba.com>

Tue 8/15/2023 12:59 PM

To:CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Chicago Plan Commission Public Comment per 1633 N Halsted rezoning

Thank you Alderman Hopkins for including Lincoln Central and other neighbors in this discussion about the proposed rezoning of 1633 N Halsted.

I am sorry to say that we are disappointed by the fact that the zoning has apparently been approved with a significant part of the community opposed to many of the details of the development. Why is there a community process when there is no transparency and no real response to what the community is asking for and about? This is a change from 2.2 to 5.0 FAR, which is more than double, and it changes the required site area of 1,000 sqft, per unit to 200sqft per unit. These both will result in a significant change to the overall character of our neighborhood.

Personally I do not have an issue with density increases when done properly, particularly as part of a TOD development. However, on a pedestrian street in a residential neighborhood an increase such as you are proposing should definitely include requirements to have the new structure to respond to the scale and context of the neighborhood. Responding to the scale and context does not mean to copy or to match the neighboring building designs and heights (we are not asking for historic buildings) but it does mean that there should be a sensitivity to the overall character of the community. At the north end of the Steppenwolf group there is a small all glass gem but that doesn't justify an all glass 7- 9 story building across the street. Scale can be achieved in many ways. The zig-zag form shown at the south end of the proposed building is nice and breaks down the scale well, but somehow the facade becomes completely flattened out at the north end and results in an overwhelming scale. Why? The phantom building shown at the south end of the block appears to be a well scaled and respectful design. Why was that shown and the 1633 proposal designed without that sensitivity? Maybe some people like the design but the community as a whole clearly expressed issues with the design, so why was it approved without even a response?

Lincoln Park and this immediate neighborhood is filled with people who understand the need for affordable housing. Why is the developer, who is getting significant boost from the city, not providing anything other than the absolute minimum required affordability for the units they are building? The developer said that providing some below 60% units to hopefully address a need that older and hopefully younger (possibly Steppenwolf actors) might need access to must be countered with 80% units. This is disingenuous. Why not offer some of the elderly and artists affordable apartments at prices they can afford without upping the other unit costs? We understand that the code allows that but the developer acts like they are doing us a favor by providing the affordable units. We are not looking for favors, we are looking for a balance.

We also object to a \$300,000 commitment, by the developer, to add to existing park space a few blocks away? Why make a donation to another neighborhood when the sidewalk and under "L" spaces in the immediate neighborhood are absolutely in need of attention and dollars? What is this about?

Development and redevelopment can be a good thing. Our community is not anti-development. Rather we are community members looking for development that is sensitive to the needs and realities of the

community. We want a building that reflects the community and one that we can be proud of, particularly if we are giving considerable benefit to the developer.

Thank you.

Peter Landon
Lincoln Central

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Ziegenhagen, Gordon

From: Alderman Brian Hopkins <ward02@cityofchicago.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 2, 2023 4:52 PM
To: Ziegenhagen, Gordon
Subject: Neighborhood Notice: Proposed Development at former Royal George Theater

[View this email in your browser](#)

Brian Hopki

2nd Ward Alderman

Proposed Development at former Royal George Theater



Dear 2nd Ward Residents,

In June 2021, developer Draper & Kramer had an initial meeting with my office to discuss the possibility of rezoning the former Royal George Theater property and a neighboring building to allow for the construction of a new, multi-family residential building. The zoning being sought would allow for 192 residential units and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 5.0. I instructed the developer at that outset that putting forth a proposal to the community at those maximums would not be acceptable regardless of the recent nearby approvals at 1623 N. Halsted and 750 W. North Avenue.

The developer came back to my office in October of that year with an actual proposal containing 134 residential units and ground-floor retail space. I asked them to meet with Lincoln Central Association, which they did in February and May of 2022. Those meetings resulted in façade upgrades and changes in materials and window sizes. Reductions were also made in the massing of the building on the upper floors. The developer also met with Steppenwolf Theater and decided to set aside 2-4 units for visiting Steppenwolf artists and indicate artist preference on all affordable units built (15% of total unit count).

In June 2022, my office hosted a virtual community meeting where the proposal was introduced to the wider community with the changes outlined above already included. A traffic study for the street and alley was also presented. Outcomes of that meeting included an agreement that deliveries and garbage pickup for both the residential and retail elements of the building would be limited to off-peak hours. My office received requests that an in-person community meeting be held. An in-person meeting was then conducted at Steppenwolf Theater this past March. In that meeting, a proposal with further massing reductions on the upper floors, which I had asked for, was presented. It was also agreed at that meeting that residents of the proposed building would be restricted from obtaining on-street permit parking.

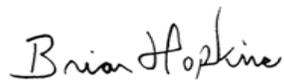
As the result of more feedback from both the community and the Department of Planning and Development, the developer asked the architect to modify the appearance of the façade. Brickwork at grade replaced glass and vertical terra cotta accents were added.

At my request, the developer has agreed to contribute \$300,000 toward the construction of new park land at the southwest corner of Larrabee and North Avenue. This space, once a portion of Ogden Avenue's right-of-way, will significantly increase the size of Park 598 as the Chicago Park District prepares it to go through a major makeover. The project will connect the entire park with the greater neighborhood by bringing it underneath the CTA tracks and all the way north to North Avenue.

The developer has now formally filed an application seeking approval for a planned development rezoning of the property. I am satisfied that the current version of the proposal strikes an appropriate balance between promoting moderate scaled residential

near transit (in accordance with city ordinance and policy) while also mitigating the impact of concerns expressed by the neighborhood. Therefore, I have agreed to the request by the Department of Planning and Development and the developer that this proposal be placed on the August agenda for consideration by the Chicago Plan Commission. With the addition of the \$300,000 investment from the developer making a larger park possible, I believe that I am making a decision in the best interest of the neighborhood and city as a whole. Thank you to those who attended meetings and provided feedback.

Sincerely,



Alderman Brian Hopkins
2nd Ward

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This email was sent to gziegen@draperandkramer.com

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2nd Ward City of Chicago · 1400 N Ashland Ave · Chicago, IL 60622 · USA



August 15, 2023

Alderman Brian Hopkins
2nd Ward
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle St., Room 200
Chicago, IL 60602

Commissioner Maurice D. Cox
Department of Planning & Development
City of Chicago
121 N. LaSalle St., 10th Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Alderman Hopkins and Commissioner Cox,

On behalf of the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce, I am writing in support of the proposed development by Draper and Kramer at 1649 North Halsted Street. The project matches the scale and density of 2 recently approved adjacent multifamily projects and complements the new addition to the Steppenwolf Theatre building across the street. The addition of 134 new apartments, which includes 20 affordable units, will provide much needed density to this corridor, increasing foot traffic and creating a larger pool of residents to spend dollars locally. The proposed ground floor restaurant with outdoor dining space will help enliven the street and add more eyes to the street, promoting safety in the neighborhood.

Draper and Kramer addressed local stakeholder concerns about this project by adjusting the design, including changing the side and rear facades from metal panels to brick and reducing the building mass by incorporating multiple upper-level setbacks. They are committed to continuing to contribute to the community by agreeing to aside 2 to 4 units for visiting artists of Steppenwolf Theater Company as well as indicating artist preference on all affordable units. They will also provide funding for the construction of new park land to increase the size of Park 598 which will provide a significant benefit to the community.

We believe that this project will help sustain Halsted Street as a thriving commercial district by attracting more people to the neighborhood to live, dine and support local businesses. Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Schilf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "K" and "S".

Kim Schilf, IOM, ACE
President and CEO

Dear Neighbors,

On behalf of Steppenwolf Theatre Company, I am pleased to write today with an endorsement of Draper & Kramer's development project at 1649 N Halsted Street. As the property facing our artistic campus, we were pleased to be engaged in conversations with their team from the early phase of the design and development. They have approached this project with a spirit of collaboration and listened when we have shared our hopes and fears for the development.

We believe that the architectural design of their project is in direct conversation with our theatrical complex. The addition of residential units will serve to increase the vibrancy indicators of our neighborhood and elevate the sense of community and density of our cultural corridor – serving our three theaters, bars and café at Steppenwolf and increasing patronage at the many restaurants that call Halsted Street their home. We hope to utilize units for artist housing, offer our Front Bar Café as a gathering place for residents, and have our patrons activate the new street-level restaurant that will serve as the anchor commercial tenant in the 1649 N Halsted Street Development. Ours will be a symbiotic relationship, reflective of the spirit that has made Chicago a great city in which to live and work.

At a time where businesses and residents alike are working to rebuild the quality of life across neighborhoods in the City of Chicago, the addition of this residential mixed-used property will activate our block and increase safety and engagement in our neighborhood. This is a positive addition for our artists who come to Chicago to create, teens who come to Steppenwolf for arts learning, audiences who engage in world-class artistry in one of our three theaters, and residents (like me and my family who live around the corner) who call Lincoln Park our home.

With hope to see you all at the theater soon!



E. Brooke Flanagan
Executive Director