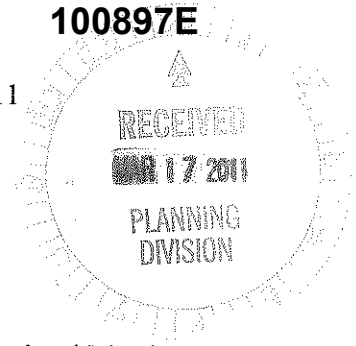


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March 15, 2011

City Planning Board

C/O City of Gainesville Planning Department



I am writing this message for your consideration, in response to a Notice of Public Meeting, dated March 8, 2011, in reference to Petition PB-11-20-PUD and PB-11-8 PDV. I am the homeowner of the churt cottage at 1223 NW 3rd avenue (see Enclosed Attachment #1), directly next to the proposed multi-story mixed use project (see Enclosed Attachment #2 and #3). I have expressed concerns during a Neighborhood Workshop regarding the proposed project on July 13, 2010, and I still have these concerns today. Specifically, I inquired about light pollution, noise pollution, increased traffic for a residential historic district, water runoff, and dumpsters and waste (sight, sound and smell), and parking issues.

I, also, expressed concern for the effects of such large scale construction within such close proximity to my 68 year old churt cottage. A Pre-Condition Structural Survey to photo document the condition of our house would be needed, at a minimum. I would like to speak to a representative from the appropriate City Staff to learn more about this issue.

Overall, it is my hope that the City Plan Board, in their role of providing advice and counsel to the City Commission, will do their jobs in protecting small homeowners like me in ensuring that responsible development, consistent with current residential properties, and like scale of construction occurs.

We have a wonderful churt home in a residential historic district that has a true cottage feel to it - it is unique, it is warm, and it is charming. It is hand-built from stone. That is a rare thing today, in a world of mass produced housing and construction, and I do not want to lose that.

If you look at the property of the proposed project (Attachment #2 and #3), the property owned by the developer surrounds ours on the North side and on the West - a total of 50% of our property boundaries. If a tall, multi-story complex is erected directly west of my cottage, which is being proposed, can you imagine the loss of sunlight my property will experience every day? Depending on the height of the project, the view from my house could potentially go from a historic residential district to a massive, imposing commercial structure that severely limits the view, blocks the light for a better part of the day, and looks directly into the backside of commercial businesses and parking garage. Additionally, any sense of privacy in my yard and near the windows in my cottage will be lost.

I am concerned about the loss of the historic, residential feel, the whimsy of a small stone cottage, lost to an imposing, industrial, commercialized impact of such a large development. I am not against development, but I am concerned that a tall project will permanently devalue my property for residential and historic feel and value that it has today.

But rather than simply stating my concerns as a layman who owns a wonderful contributing structure in the adjacent historic neighborhood, I offer the following excerpts from a very well respected architectural and planning source. The book entitled, A Pattern Language, Towns, Buildings, Construction, written by

Christopher Alexander, described as, "...perhaps the most important book on architectural design published this century," discusses building height in a few places.

First, in Chapter 21, Four Story Limit, the author discusses some of the disadvantages of structures greater than four stories tall. He states, "High buildings (in Gainesville, 8 stories is very high) have no genuine advantages, except for speculative gains for banks and land owners. They are not cheaper, they do not help create open space, they destroy the townscape, they destroy social life, they promote crime, they make life difficult for children, they are expensive to maintain, they wreck the open areas near them, and they damage light and air and view."

In Chapter 96, Number of Stories, the issue of building height is revisited. "Rule 1: Set a four story height limit on the site." "Rule 2: For any given site, do not let the ground covered by buildings exceed 50% of the site." "Rule 3: Do not let the height of your building(s) vary too much from the predominant height of surrounding buildings. A rule of thumb: do not let your buildings deviate more than one story from surrounding buildings. On the whole, adjacent buildings should be roughly the same height."

The example that follows in the book seems to fit this proposed project and my house exactly. It is titled, "Breaking the Rule of Thumb." It states, "I live in a small one story garden cottage at the back of a large house in Berkley. All around the cottage there are two-story houses, some as close as thirty feet. I thought when I moved in, that a garden cottage would be secluded and I would have some private outdoor space. But instead, I feel that I'm living in a fishbowl-every one of the second-story windows around me looks right down in my living room, or into my garden. The garden outside is useless and I don't sit near the window."

Can you imagine the impact of a towering eight-story structure would have if it is constructed right next door to a small, charming churt house in a historic neighborhood? I can, and I am appealing to the Planning Board and other responsible officials to protect the small home owners like us and preserve historic residential neighborhoods when they approve new projects like the one being proposed. I hope you will consider my concerns and ensure that you preserve the residential feel and historic heritage of my small, quaint, charming churt cottage. If that is lost, it can never be regained.

If I can be of assistance or I you wish to discuss anything that I have provided to you, please let me know. You may call me at 352 262-2354.



D. Bruce Hawkins

Attachments #1-3

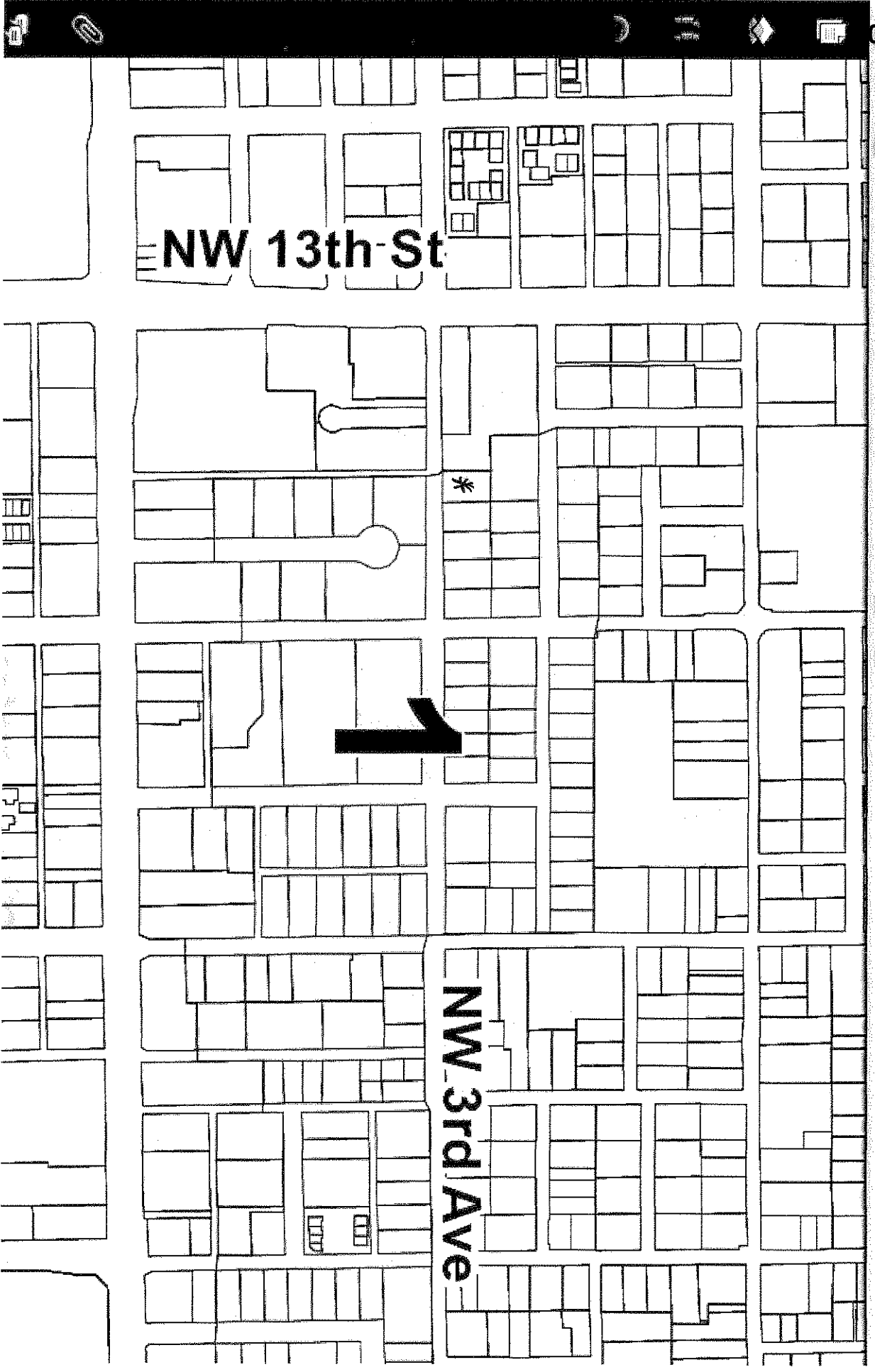


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* HAWKINS RESIDENCE

ATTACHMENT #3

Historic Districts

City of Gainesville, Florida

Historic Districts

- 1. University Heights Historic District-North
- 2. University Heights Historic District-South
- 3. Pleasant Street Historic District
- 4. NE Residential Historic District
- 5. SE Residential Historic District

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