

Former Shroder Site Redevelopment Proposal – 3500 Lumford Place, Kennedy Heights Brief History and FAQ's by the KHCC and the KHDC – March 17, 2023

The former Shroder School property, approximately seven acres located at 3500 Lumford Place in Kennedy Heights, has been purchased by a local developer. Representatives from Kennedy Heights Community Council and the Kennedy Heights Development Corporation have been meeting with residents close to the property and engaging in productive discussions with the developer. On March 21, 2023 the developer will discuss his plans for the project with the community. This will mark the eighth meeting between the developer and community representatives. We appreciate the willingness of the developer to share his plans before they are formally submitted to the City so the community can be engaged in the process.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why didn't Kennedy Heights acquire the Shroder property?

The Shroder property is very complicated. The owner was asking \$1.5 million. The demolition of the building (required by the City) was estimated to be another \$1 million. The topography of the land further complicated development of the site. Kennedy Heights simply did not have the resources and experience to overcome these obstacles.

2. Were there other potential buyers/developers for the property?

Yes, over the years many potential buyers have considered, and then rejected, the site. Several charter/private schools determined that the building could not be salvaged. Several developers proposed high-density apartment complexes (up to 220 units plus parking garages) that were not supported by the current SF-6 zoning. KH invited several partners to consider the site for affordable senior housing, but again the site was considered too expensive and complicated.

3. Who bought the property?

Vandercar Holdings, LLC, a local developer who has been in business since 1991 and has experience developing problematic properties like Shroder. Their office is on Madison Road and we are lucky to be working with a local company that is capable and interested in tackling the challenges that the Shroder site presents. Their recent development experience includes the "Neighborhoods at Summit Park" (See: [The Neighborhoods at Summit Park | Work. Live. Play.](#)) and "The Row on Merchant" (see: [Luxury Apartments in Cincinnati | Row on Merchant Apartments](#)) in Springdale, Ohio. These two projects represent significant redevelopment of outdated and under-utilized properties and include the development of both for-rent and for-sale homes. You can learn more about their business at www.vanhold.com.

4. Didn't the recently completed Neighborhood Plan include plans for the Shroder property?

Yes. The Shroder property has been vacant and in declining condition for many years. The recently adopted Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan suggested that Kennedy Heights attempt to acquire the property and work with City partners, such as Cincinnati Parks and The Port, to develop the site. Even though the neighborhood did not acquire the site we have a positive working relationship with the new owner. The Shroder Working Group was formed to gather input on what the community would like to see at the property prior to its sale. We are using

the work of that group in our discussions with the developer, understanding that as owner the developer has wide discretion regarding the site. We do not want the status quo. We need the building demolished and the property responsibly developed. We are making progress on that goal.

5. What is this developer proposing for the site?

No formal plan has been submitted to the City. Nothing is final yet. During initial discussions with community representatives Vandercar proposed 73 market rate rental units. After productive discussions including points grounded in the recommendations of the Shroder Working Group, Vandercar reduced the subdivision to approximately 64 total homes - 22 patio homes and 42 townhomes. About 20 will be accessed from Lumford Place, and the rest from Robison Road. There will be no through street. Again, nothing is final yet. This is the idea the developer has shared so far.

6. This property is zoned SF-6, why doesn't the developer have to work within that limitation?

The current zoning of SF-6 would allow for 42 homes. Unfortunately, given the site's significant development costs, these homes would have to be priced well above what the market could bear. The developer will ask the City for an increase in the density restriction, and we have asked that they try to keep the total number of homes as low as financially possible in order to blend in with the existing neighborhood streets.

7. Can we ask the Developer to consider the recommendations of our recent planning efforts?

Yes. The developer has listened to our concerns about density, traffic, neighborhood character, respecting the park boundaries, and so forth, so the Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan and Shroder Working Group Recommendations are influencing those discussions and have resulted in beneficial changes to the original development proposal. However, our Shroder Vision includes many elements that neither we nor the City of Cincinnati have the legal authority to control because we don't own the property. As the property owner, the developer has the latitude to make certain choices that we wouldn't necessarily have made. The discussion is ongoing.

8. Our Plan includes Affordable Housing as a priority. Will Affordable Housing be offered?

No. The developer will offer market rate, rental townhomes and patio homes, and this is an area that we cannot influence under applicable State and Federal Law. We did look into affordable housing here, but it would have required a much higher density than appropriate for the site and neighborhood setting. We will continue planning for affordable housing elsewhere. 50 units of affordable senior housing are planned for the corner of Kennedy and Montgomery through a partnership with an experienced affordable housing developer. And our Housing Committee continues to look at other options that improve the quality and diversity of housing choices within the neighborhood.

9. Our Neighborhood Plan includes Increased Homeownership as a priority. Why is the developer offering to build rental housing instead of owner-occupied homes?

There are several factors guiding the trend towards rental housing in today's real estate market. The largest influence is the dramatic shift in the lifestyle preferences of working age consumers in the "Gen Z" and "Millennial" populations. Householders in these post-Baby boomer demographic segments now comprise the highest percentage of the nation's workforce and value quality of life and the flexibility that rental housing provides at a much higher percentage than the Baby boom and Gen X populations that preceded them.

Coupled with recent increases in for-sale home prices and mortgage interest rates, many of the potential buyers in the Millennial and Gen Z populations simply cannot afford a down payment plus the monthly payment and choose to rent in neighborhoods that offer the services, conveniences and amenities that match their lifestyle preferences. Also, patio homes with the option for one-level living, including a garage, offer an option for seniors to remain in the neighborhood.

Renting also decreases the burdens of homeownership, knowing that the landlord is responsible for maintenance and updates to the property that would otherwise occupy time and resources that could otherwise be spent on quality-of-life experiences and pursuits. Rental Townhomes and Detached Single-family rental housing have become a much larger component of the housing choices available in nearby neighborhoods such as Kenwood, Silverton, Oakley and Madisonville.

See the following links for additional information on recent market-rate rental townhomes developments within two miles of our neighborhood boundary:

[The RED Corner - Village Green - The Red Apartments](#)

[The Jameson: Luxury Apartments & Townhomes in Cincinnati, OH \(jamesonapts.com\)](#)

Modern rental housing is a highly desirable option that broadens the choices that will be available in Kennedy Heights. Well-built and managed apartment communities hold their value over time and increase access to quality housing for those seeking the flexibility and amenities that they provide. By example, the Indian Creek development along Galbraith Road in Kenwood features well maintained market-rate rental townhomes that were developed over 50 years ago and rent for as much as \$4,300 per month. The rental rates for the proposed Townhomes and patio homes are not yet determined, but will be set to be competitive within the local rental market.

10. Our Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan includes reference to updates to Kennedy Heights Park as part of the development of Shroder. Will the development harm the park? Will we get any of our desired improvements?

Vandercar's proposed housing is tailored to appeal to individuals, couples and families that value the amenities that Kennedy Park and our neighborhood provide. The developer recognizes the value that the Park provides to the development and has stated their willingness to work with the neighborhood, City of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Parks District to determine mutual interests and priorities for improvements that enhance the relationship between the Shroder site and the Park. Some of these improvements could possibly be funded using Tax Increment Financing which would redirect future property tax revenues to pay for priority public improvements which benefit that park and/or neighborhood.

11. How will this development affect the water/sewer issues we have in the area?

Any future development of the property must meet a litany of requirements imposed by federal, state and local agencies including the Ohio EPA, Greater Cincinnati Metropolitan Sewer District and the City of Cincinnati. The City of Cincinnati's Subdivision regulations include rigorous permitting requirements for the attainment of minimum water quality and stormwater run-off mitigation.

12. When will demolition of the building begin, how long will it take, and what is our remedy for noise, traffic and environmental issues caused by the demolition?

The demolition of the former school building and remediation of the site is dependent upon the availability of funding and completion of permits to conduct the work. Grant funding is competitively awarded on an annual basis and requires matching funds from the developer and/or local jurisdictions. Market conditions also impact the timing and feasibility of both the demolition and development. It's premature to speculate on how long it may take for the work to start but we will learn more as the application process advances.

13. What is the next step, and how do we remain active in this process?

We have a lot of partners throughout this process and several important steps where community input will be sought.

All plans discussed by Vandercar to date require a re-zoning of the property under the City of Cincinnati's Planned District (PD) Zoning Ordinance. Planned District Zoning approvals (aka P.U.D.'s) typically involve a much more rigorous review process as applicants must provide greater details than those required under the current RM-6 zoning designation.

As part of the PD application, it is customary that the developer solicits a letter of support from the affected neighborhood Community Council. Vandercar is currently planning to attend the March 21, 2023 KHCC meeting to present their conceptual plans and renderings of the proposed development and answer questions from those in attendance. KHCC will provide background on our work to date prior to inviting the developer to present their proposal. We will vote on a letter of support at the April meeting. There have been many discussions with the community. Nothing has been rushed. We will continue to provide ample time for community input and dialogue.

The City Planning and Zoning Staff directs all reviews related to the PD application and involves the Departments of Transportation & Engineering, Public Works, Fire, Police and other affected departments to review the applicant's plans.

The City Planning Commission reviews all application materials and the findings of City Staff and convenes a public meeting to hear the case prior to voting on a resolution to approve or deny the proposed PD. Only once the Planning Commission is satisfied that all relevant public health, safety and welfare issues are adequately understood will they render their decision. All Kennedy Heights Residents are invited to attend and offer comments as part of the Planning Commission Hearing(s). All zoning district revisions must then be approved by City Council.

There will be another opportunity for public comment during the Council hearing for the Proposed Zone Change.

If the re-zoning is approved by City Council, plans must then be submitted for final permitting and approvals under the City's subdivision regulations. Required details include final site grading, drainage and utility plans, stormwater management plans, floorplans and elevations of the proposed homes, proposed lighting, landscaping, and the Property Owners Association role and involvement. The City's Engineering and Building departments also consider issues affecting adjoining property owners and the larger community including traffic safety, parking, fire and emergency access, etc.

KHCC will continue to dialogue with the developer and keep residents informed as the application process unfolds. We appreciate the helpful contributions from the developer and each of those community members involved to date.