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## Approximately 500 people say yes to preservation and no to commercialization of Arcadia

Posted by [Melissa](#) / September 30, 2015 / [No Comments](#)

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*(Editor's Note: Rose Law Group represents Peter Sperling in his fight to preserve the residential character of Arcadia)*



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Mayor Stanton addressing the audience

Last night about 500 people packed the Ingleside Middle School gym and appeared to support preservation but oppose the developer proposed commercialization of the Arcadia house that Frank Lloyd Wright designed. With the developer now having submitted actual plans and text to the City of Phoenix proposing, among other things, a bar, restaurant, 40 foot high outdoor amphitheater, 26,766 of underground meeting space, overnight stays at the massive facility, allowing 500 people at events, weddings, parking and an entrance off the currently quiet residential street of Exeter, many neighbors were incensed about what one across the street neighbor, Andy Ogden, called a “bait and switch, using preservation as a guise to get approved a major party venue in the middle of a quiet residential neighborhood.”

Mayor Stanton and Councilman DiCiccio both spoke about being supporters of preservation. Councilman DiCiccio stated strong objection to “highly inappropriate commercial activities.” Councilman DiCiccio began his talk by apologizing to the residents as “no one should have to go through this to protect their neighborhood” and called this the “most poorly handled issue I have ever seen ... the developer’s team actually refuses to meet with the neighbors closest to the site and expects to bully their way into an approval.”

Another Arcadia neighbor, Paul Barnes, said he was “sorry” he supported preservation early on but now feels duped as this plan to open a party venue, bar and 27,000 feet of underground meeting space is not what the developer originally said – which was that he just loved the house and wanted to preserve it. Still another neighbor, Jim Furcini, said “this is the biggest issue ever facing Arcadia and it will become a precedent; if it can happen in our quiet neighborhood it can happen anywhere in this great city.”

Next door neighbor Doctor Volker Sontag expressed dismay that the developer continually refused to meet with his next door neighbors and appears to believe he can just use the word preservation to achieve a massive commercial project.

Jenny Sheedy, who lives in the Arcadia home she grew up in down the street from the proposed development said that she started off thinking this developer had good intentions to save the house but with the latest submittals showing a 27,000 square foot meeting space, amphitheater, bar and proposing 365 days a week parties coupled with his repeated refusals to meet with the neighbors closest to the site, “it seems we misjudged the nature of the developer” Ms. Sheedy later noted that “he screams preservation but he’s really trying to bring a sort of Crowd of approximately 500 people in the Ingleside Graceland to historically residential Arcadia.”



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Crowd of approximately 500 people in the Ingleside Middle School gym

Finally, next door neighbor Peter Sperling, a resident of Arcadia since the early 80s, spoke to the proposal, “I have always been a committed preservationist and I supported the preservation of this historic home but I do not support this commercial project under the guise of preservation... [the developer’s team] clearly believes that by simply using the name Frank Lloyd Wright and the supposed preservation of the property he is attempting to force the city to accept a project that is entirely inconsistent with the historic character and fabric of the neighborhood...showing flagrant disregard for the neighbors objections, the zoning requirements, the deed restrictions on the property and in fact the historic use of the property. This is the perfect example of what is referred to as the tragedy of the commons where the individual for their own sole gain, usurps the work of many others for themselves. The fight is just now starting and we must all remain vigilant for the period to come to avoid Arcadia’s own tragedy of the commons.”

The developer’s team blanketed the neighborhood with emails suggesting that people needed to attend the meeting as the neighborhood groups were asking to bulldoze the home. Emcee and Arcadia resident Robin Sewell let everyone in attendance know that there was in fact no one advocating for demolition or movement of the home at this point in time. The developer’s consultants even stood outside the school and were overheard asking for signatures saying that they were collecting signatures in “support of what we are here for tonight.” While this reporter’s estimate is imprecise, it appeared they had a dozen or so consultants and supporters in attendance. Several of the neighbors who received the developer’s emails but did not appear to work for the developer directly, approached the meeting organizers afterwards to express their dismay in receiving the false information from the developer’s team that motivated them to come to the meeting.

Jordan Rose, the zoning attorney representing Peter Sperling, presented asking. “How did this transform from a community supported preservation project to an attempt to gain approval of a party/hotel/bar/concert venue in the middle of one of Phoenix’s premiere residential neighborhoods? We are all for a rezoning to Historic Preservation but are opposed to a rezoning to HP-L as that allows for them to apply for a Special Permit giving them the ability to conduct commercial activities as they have indicated in city submittals that they now want.”

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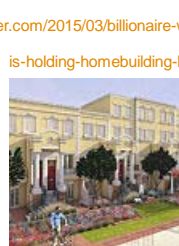
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