

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I live near the Garden of our Lord and I am writing to oppose the proposed development at 110 Phoenetia Ave. I want to make both a specific case and a broader one.

The specific case is straightforward. The block is zoned for four stories and the proposal asks for nine. The surrounding neighborhood is one to four stories. Four single family homes are immediately adjacent. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code requires new development to be compatible with the surrounding area and to protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance protects this neighborhood specifically. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan requires it to remain low in height. The North Ponce Community Vision Workshop said two to four stories and preservation of the neighborhood character. The PAD benefit — a school courtyard accessible only outside school hours — does not meet the standard Coral Gables has always required. The streets cannot absorb a 350 car parking garage. Every framework the City has in place for this neighborhood says no to this project.

The broader case is about what kind of city Coral Gables intends to be. One of the things that sets this city apart — from Brickell, from downtown, from the parts of Miami where a developer can build whatever they want wherever they want — is the tree canopy. The way the streets are covered by mature trees that have had decades to grow because the buildings beneath them have stayed low enough to let them. That canopy is not guaranteed. It depends on this City continuing to make decisions that protect low rise residential neighborhoods from projects that do not belong in them.

Coral Gables needs to put its foot down when developers push projects that conflict with everything the City has decided to protect. This is one of those moments. The rules support denial. The community supports denial. The trees, in their way, support denial. I am asking the Board to vote no.

Thank you,

Ryan Boyd

Ryan Boyd

1014 E Ponce de Leon

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

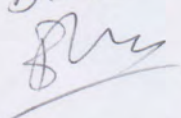
I want to tell the Board why I live in this part of Coral Gables, because I think it is directly relevant to this decision.

I chose this neighborhood for two things above everything else. The tree canopy — which on some streets is extraordinary, the kind of green tunnel over the road that makes you feel like you are somewhere that has been cared for over a long period of time. And the scale — buildings that are low enough that the canopy can exist, streets that feel wide enough for people not just cars, a neighborhood that has not been overrun by development that does not belong in it.

A nine story building threatens both of those things. The canopy on and near the project site would be fundamentally altered. The scale of the streets — already tight, already at the edge of what can reasonably absorb additional traffic — would be pushed past that edge by a 350 car parking garage.

The zoning says four stories. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan both say low rise. The community vision process said the same. I moved here because those protections meant something. I am asking the Board to make sure they still do and vote no on this application.

Regards,

Barb Shamer


1014 E Ponce DeLeon.

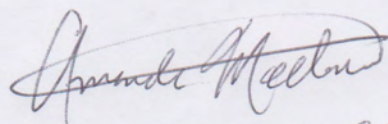
Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

George Merrick built this city with a vision that included the tree canopy, the scale of the streets, and the relationship between buildings and the neighborhoods around them. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code exists to carry that vision forward. So do the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan.

A nine story building on a four story block, in a neighborhood of one to four story buildings, next to single family homes, with a 350 car parking garage — this is not Merrick's vision. It is a developer's vision, and those are not the same thing.

The Board has the authority and the obligation to enforce the difference. Please do so and vote no.

Sincerely,


50 Menores Ave
Coral Gables 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to talk about what Coral Gables stands to lose if this project is approved, because I think that is the question the Board should be asking itself.

This neighborhood has something that most of South Florida has already given away. It has a tree canopy — real, established, mature trees that cover the streets and make walking through this part of the city a genuinely different experience from walking through most of Miami. That canopy exists because the buildings underneath it have been kept low. Change that and you do not get the canopy back. Trees that have taken decades to grow do not recover from being overshadowed by a nine story building in any timeframe that matters to the people who live here now.

The neighborhood also has a human scale that is increasingly rare. One to four story buildings. Quiet residential streets. Single family homes next to small apartment buildings. The kind of place where the streets feel like they were designed for the people who live on them rather than for whoever is passing through. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was written to protect that. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan was written to protect that. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code was written to protect that. The North Ponce Community Vision Workshop confirmed that this is what residents want.

A nine story building with a 350 car parking garage on narrow residential streets is not compatible with any of it. Four single family homes are right next door. The zoning allows four stories and the proposal asks for nine. The PAD benefit offered — a school courtyard open to the public only outside school hours — does not meet any reasonable standard for what PAD requires.

Coral Gables cannot afford to let developers treat its residential neighborhoods as negotiating positions. The rules that protect this neighborhood are not bureaucratic technicalities — they are the reason people choose to live here. I am asking the Board to defend them and deny this application.

With respect,

Zo AUSA

47 Salamance Ave

Coral Gables, FL

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I live near the Garden of our Lord and I walk past it often enough to have a real sense of how it fits into the neighborhood. It fits well. The scale is right. The building belongs where it is in the way that buildings in well-planned neighborhoods tend to belong — not dominant, not out of place, just there.

What is being proposed would produce the opposite of that. Nine stories would dominate every surrounding block. It would alter the tree canopy that covers those streets — one of the qualities this neighborhood is known for and one that depends on buildings staying low enough for trees to compete with. It would put a 350 car parking garage on streets that were designed for residents not institutions.

The Zoning Code allows four stories on that block. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance protects this neighborhood specifically. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan calls for the area to stay low and in scale. The community vision process said the same. Section 1-103 requires compatibility with the surrounding area.

There is a broader point here too. Coral Gables has to be willing to say no to developers when the project does not fit. If the rules only hold until a developer pushes hard enough against them then they are not really rules — they are suggestions. I am asking the Board to make clear that the rules here are real and vote no on this application.

Thank you for your time,

Alex Rosencranz
107 Monrovia Ave 302
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I want to ask the Board a straightforward question: what makes Coral Gables different from Brickell?

The answer most people give has to do with scale. The trees. The way residential streets actually feel residential. The fact that the City has ordinances that mean something and enforces them. That difference is real and it is valuable and it is also fragile. It does not survive automatically — it survives because the City makes decisions that protect it.

The proposed development at 110 Phoenetia Ave is a test of that. Nine stories on a block zoned for four. A 350 car parking garage on narrow residential streets. A PAD benefit consisting of a school courtyard with limited public access. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance violated. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan violated. The community vision process ignored.

The tree canopy over this neighborhood exists because the buildings beneath it have stayed low. That is not a small thing. Once you start approving nine story buildings in low rise residential neighborhoods the canopy goes, the scale goes, the character goes — and eventually the reason people choose Coral Gables over everywhere else goes with it.

I am asking the Board to protect what makes this city what it is and vote no on this application.

Thank you,

Editha Mendiola

107 Mendoza Ave. Apt 302 Coral Gables

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I live near the Garden of our Lord and I want to explain to the Board why this project matters beyond the specifics of one building on one block.

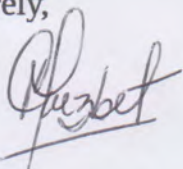
I have walked these streets for years. I know the tree canopy that covers them — the way it creates shade in the summer, the way it makes this part of the city feel like it was designed for people rather than for cars and developers. That canopy is one of the things Coral Gables is genuinely known for and it is not a coincidence that it has survived here. It survives because the buildings have stayed low enough to let it. The moment you start putting nine story buildings into neighborhoods like this one you begin trading something irreplaceable for something that benefits one developer on one project.

The planning case against this project is comprehensive. The block is zoned for four stories and this proposal asks for nine. The surrounding streets are lined with one to four story buildings. Four single family homes sit directly next to the site. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code requires compatibility with the surrounding area and protection of residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created to protect exactly this neighborhood. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan requires the area to stay in scale with its surroundings. The North Ponce Community Vision Workshop produced recommendations — two to four stories, preserve the neighborhood character, consider park space — that this project ignores entirely.

The infrastructure is also a real problem. Narrow residential streets and a 350 car parking garage are not compatible. The PAD benefit being offered is a school courtyard that is only open to the public outside school hours — something that has never been accepted as qualifying green space in Coral Gables and should not be accepted now.

I want to say something plainly: Coral Gables needs to put its foot down when it comes to developers who push projects that do not belong in residential neighborhoods. The rules exist. The ordinances exist. The community has spoken through multiple processes. The only question is whether this Board will enforce what the City has already decided. I am asking it to and to vote no on this application.

Sincerely,



40 Nadeira Ave - Apt 5
Coral Gables, FL 33134

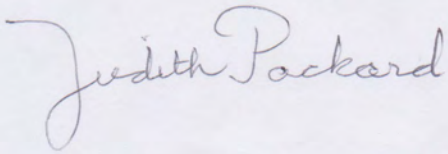
Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

Thank you for your service to Coral Gables. I am writing to respectfully oppose the proposed high-rise apartment development at the Garden of Our Lord site.

My primary concern is the size of the project. A building of this scale, together with approximately 350 parking spaces, is simply not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. It would introduce a level of density and activity that is out of character with the area and inconsistent with the vision that has made Coral Gables such a desirable community.

I respectfully ask that you reject the requested zoning changes and preserve the existing character of this part of our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith Packard". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Judith Packard
911 E Ponce De Leon Blvd
Coral Gables, Florida
305-444-4337

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

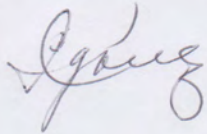
I am a homeowner in Coral Gables and I am writing to oppose the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord site. I ask that the Board deny this application.

The current zoning on that block allows for four stories. This project is asking for nine. The buildings immediately surrounding the site are one to four stories. There are single family homes right next door. Nothing about that context supports a nine story building.

I also want to mention the traffic issue because it is something I think about every time I drive through that area. The streets are narrow. They are residential streets. A 350 car parking garage on top of everything else is going to create real problems for the people who live nearby, and those problems will be permanent.

The Zoning Code and the City's own planning documents are clear about what belongs in this neighborhood. I am asking the Board to follow them and deny this application.

Thank you,



911 E Ponce de Leon Boulevard Apt. 1103
Coral Gables 33134 M.F.

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I live a couple of streets over from the Garden of our Lord and I am writing to say I do not support the proposed zoning changes.

My main concern is the parking garage. Three hundred and fifty cars is a lot of cars. The streets in that area were not designed for that kind of traffic. I drive through there regularly and I already know what it looks like during busy times of day. Adding a building of this size would change those streets in a way that affects everyone who uses them, not just the immediate neighbors.

The height is also just wrong for the location. Four stories is the limit. The surrounding buildings are one to four stories. Four families live in single family homes right next to the site. Nine stories does not belong there and the Zoning Code says as much.

I hope the Board will deny this.

Thanks,

IRIS RUIZ
123 menores ave coral gables FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

The Garden of our Lord has been part of this community for a long time and I say that as someone who has attended events there and who knows what it means to the people in that neighborhood.

But the development being proposed is not right for the area. Nine stories on a block zoned for four, surrounded by one to four story buildings, with single family homes immediately next door. It does not matter how the application is framed — that is not compatible with the neighborhood and the Zoning Code says so.

The PAD request also should not be approved. A school courtyard that is only accessible outside school hours is not a public benefit. It has never been accepted as one in Coral Gables and this should not be the first time.

I am asking the Board to deny this.

W. Desman
25 Menores Ave, Apt 1
Coral Gables FL 33134
Thank you for your consideration,

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing to oppose the Garden of our Lord zoning application. I want to focus on one part of it that I find particularly hard to accept — the PAD request.

The way PAD works is the developer provides meaningful public green space and in return gets additional development approvals. What is being offered here is a courtyard inside a school that the public can only access when school is not running. That is not green space. That is a school courtyard with limited public hours.

This kind of arrangement has not been accepted as a qualifying PAD benefit in Coral Gables before. Accepting it now would set a precedent that weakens the program for every future application. The Board should reject it outright.

The rest of the project has serious problems too — the height, the incompatibility with the neighborhood, the infrastructure concerns. But the PAD piece alone is reason enough to deny it.

Sincerely,

A Coral Gables Resident

ANDREA ORTIZ

1091 GALIANO ST

MIAMI, FL 33134

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

I live a few blocks from the Garden of our Lord and I drive past the site regularly. I know what those streets look like and how they function on a typical day.

Adding a nine story building with 350 parking spaces to that location would be a significant change for everyone who uses those streets. Morning and evening traffic would get worse. The residential feel of the area would shift. And it would be permanent.

The zoning says four stories. Multiple ordinances protect the low rise character of that neighborhood. There is a process the City went through to establish those rules and they should be respected. Please deny this application.

Thank you,

Frank Salala

3 Sidorow Ave Apt 4
Coral Gable FL 33134

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

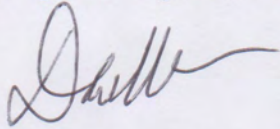
I want to submit my opposition to the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord. I will try to be straightforward about why.

The block is zoned for a four story maximum. This project proposes nine. That is not a variance — that is a fundamental change to what is allowed in that location. The buildings around the site are one to four stories. Four single family homes are right next door.

The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created specifically to protect neighborhoods like this from exactly this kind of proposal. So was the Coral Gables Historic City Plan. Both should be enforced here.

Deny this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "J. Miller" or similar, written in a cursive style.

19 Sidonia Ave
Coral Gables FL

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I walk through that neighborhood most evenings. I like the way it feels — the size of the buildings, the trees, the pace of it. It is one of the better walks in this part of Miami.

A nine story building with a 350 car parking garage would change all of that. The streets are not set up for that kind of traffic and the scale is completely wrong for what is around it. The zoning only allows four stories and the surrounding buildings reflect that.

I know there are also bigger legal issues around the historic designation and the various ordinances that protect this area. But sometimes the simplest argument is the right one: this building does not belong here and the rules say so.

Please vote no.

Yisleny Suarez

14100 S Douglas Rd Apt 12 Coral Gables, FL

33134

YJS

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing as someone who spends a lot of time in the North Ponce neighborhood. I walk there, I shop nearby, I have friends who live on those streets. It is a neighborhood I care about.

What is being proposed for the Garden of our Lord site would change it in a significant way. Nine stories rising over a block of one and two story buildings is not a small adjustment — it is a transformation. And the infrastructure around it cannot support it. Those streets were not designed for a parking garage of that size.

Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code exists to prevent incompatible development from being forced into residential neighborhoods. This is exactly the kind of situation it was written for. I am asking the Board to apply it.

Sincerely,

Oswaldo Pérez Ramos
1400 S Douglas Rd Apt: 12
Coral Gables Florida 33134

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I am writing to oppose the zoning changes proposed for the Garden of our Lord site. I have lived in this area for a while now and this is not something I can stay quiet about.

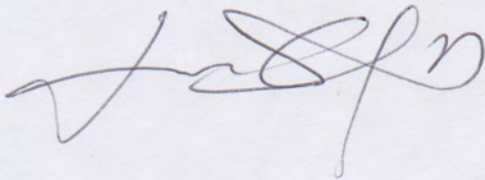
The height alone should disqualify this project. The block is zoned for four stories and they are asking for nine. I do not know how that conversation even gets started. The buildings on those streets are one, two, three stories. Single family homes are right next door. There is no version of nine stories that fits in that picture.

I am asking the Board to deny this and enforce the zoning that exists for exactly this reason.

Thank you,

A Coral Gables Resident

Jose C. Tapia
4461 SW Terrace
Coral Gables 33134

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Jose C. Tapia', written in a cursive style.

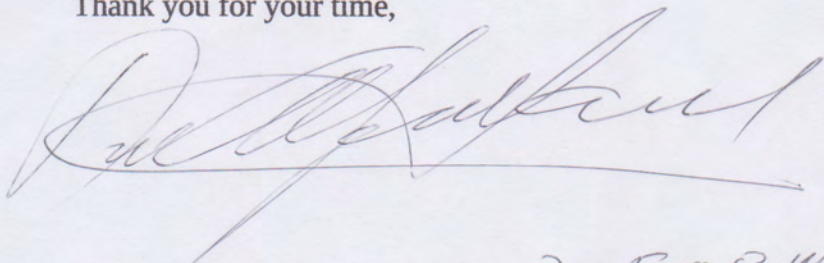
Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I want to write in about the Garden of our Lord project because I think it is important for the Board to hear from regular residents, not just organized groups or legal representatives.

I live in Coral Gables. I like my neighborhood. I do not want to see a nine story building go up in the middle of a low rise residential area. The zoning does not allow it. The City's historic plan does not support it. The community said it did not want it through the vision workshop process.

That should be enough. Please vote no.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dr. Alfredo R. Forms". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

DR ALFREDO R FORMS
911 E Ponce de Leon Blvd
APT 701
CORAL GABLES FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

The piece of this that keeps coming back to me is the historic designation study. This neighborhood is actively being considered for Historic District designation. Phoenetia Avenue has six historically designated structures. Antilla Avenue has three more. That process represents years of work by residents and preservationists who care about what makes this part of Coral Gables irreplaceable.

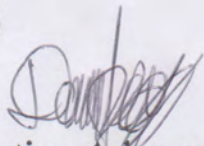
Approving a nine story building in the middle of an active historic designation study sends a message. It tells residents that participating in preservation processes does not actually protect them from incompatible development. It tells future applicants that they can move fast and get approvals before protections are finalized. That is a damaging precedent regardless of how this particular project turns out.

The Coral Gables Historic City Plan and the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance both call for this neighborhood to remain low rise and in scale with the surrounding homes. Those frameworks exist precisely to prevent what is being proposed here.

I ask the Board to take the historic designation process seriously and deny this application.

Sincerely,

David Presas



A Coral Gables Preservation Advocate

1470 NW 36th St

APT 122S

Miami, FL 33142

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I have lived on my street in Coral Gables for a long time now and in that time I have watched this city make a lot of decisions, good and bad. The ones I am proudest of are the ones where the City said no to development that did not belong and yes to protecting what makes this place worth living in.

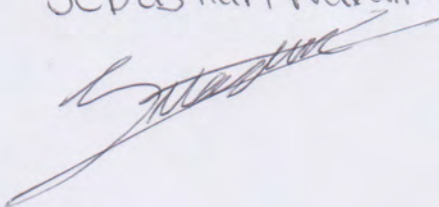
The Garden of our Lord has always been a peaceful presence in this neighborhood. I have walked past it more times than I can count and it always makes me feel like this city got something right. The scale of it, the way it sits in the neighborhood, it belongs there.

What is being proposed would change all of that. Nine stories rising over a neighborhood of single family homes and two story buildings is not a small change. It is a permanent one. The streets cannot handle the traffic. The neighborhood cannot absorb the scale. And the Zoning Code, which exists for exactly this reason, does not allow it.

I am asking you to say no and to mean it.

Warmly but firmly,

Sebastian Navarro



3685 SW 4th Street
Miami, FL 33135

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I live on one of the streets that runs alongside the Garden of our Lord property and I want the Board to know that this project would directly affect my daily life.

The noise and traffic alone from a building that size would be noticeable from my home. These are quiet residential streets. That is why people live here. A nine story building with hundreds of parking spaces does not belong in this setting and the people who would feel it most are the ones who live closest.

The zoning on that block allows four stories. The surrounding buildings are one to four stories. There are single family homes right next door to the site. None of that is consistent with what is being proposed. The rules exist to protect neighborhoods like this one and I am asking the Board to apply them.

Please vote no on this application.

Deborah Escalona
911 E Ponce de Leon Blvd Apt 1204
Coral Gables FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I drive through the streets near the Garden of our Lord almost every day. I know exactly how tight they are and how little room there is for things to go wrong traffic-wise.

A nine story building with 350 parking spaces would change those streets permanently. The people who live on them — including four families in single family homes right next to the site — would deal with that every single day. That is not a small thing.

The height is also a clear problem. Four stories is the limit on that block. The surrounding buildings reflect that. A nine story tower does not fit and the Zoning Code does not allow it.

The community made its wishes clear through the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop. Two to four stories, preserve the neighborhood character. This project is not that. I am hoping the Board will respect what the community asked for and vote no.

Thank you for considering this,

MICHAEL GAFFNEY

987 SW 37th

APT 904

Miami

33135

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I live in the North Ponce area and I am writing to oppose the proposed development at the Garden of our Lord.

The scale is wrong. Four stories is the maximum on that block and nine is being requested. The surrounding area is low rise — one, two, three story buildings and four single family homes immediately adjacent to the site. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan and the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance both require this neighborhood to stay that way.

The North Ponce Community Vision Workshop also produced clear guidance — two to four stories, preserve the character of the area. This proposal ignores that entirely.

I am asking the Board to follow the frameworks the City has already put in place and deny this application.

Thank you,

Edith Marina Pincin
911 E Ponce de Leon Blvd.
Apto 503 - Coral Gables, Florida.

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

I am not someone who attends many public meetings or writes letters to the City. I am a working person with a busy schedule and I generally trust that the people in these roles are doing their jobs. But the Garden of our Lord proposal is something I felt I needed to speak up about.

Nine stories in a neighborhood zoned for four. Single family homes right next door. Streets that cannot handle the traffic. Ordinances that specifically protect this neighborhood being ignored. A PAD request based on a school courtyard that is only open part of the time.

I do not have a legal background but I know what seems fair and this does not seem fair to the people who live in that neighborhood. I am asking the Board to protect them.

Thank you, *Liah Perez*

1201 E ponce de leon BLVD

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

My wife and I have rented in the North Ponce area for three years. We have talked about buying here when the time is right. A big part of why we like this neighborhood is that it feels stable — the buildings are in scale, the streets are manageable, the residential character has been maintained.

The Garden of our Lord proposal would change that stability. Nine stories on a block zoned for four is a significant change in what the neighborhood is. Three hundred and fifty parking spaces on narrow residential streets is a significant change in how those streets function. The community has said through multiple processes that it does not want this. The City's own ordinances say the neighborhood should stay low rise.

We are asking the Board to listen to all of that and vote no.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'C. P. B.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

1010 Douglas Rd Apt 3
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I have been a Coral Gables resident for years and I have watched a lot of development proposals come and go. Some I supported, some I did not, but I tried to evaluate each one on its merits. This one I am firmly against.

The Garden of our Lord site is in a neighborhood that is zoned for four stories maximum. The proposal is for nine. The surrounding streets have buildings ranging from one to four stories. Four single family homes are immediately adjacent to the property. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan both require this neighborhood to stay low rise and in scale. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code requires compatibility with the surrounding area.

This project fails every one of those standards. That is not a close call — it is a comprehensive failure to meet the basic requirements for approval.

I am also deeply concerned about the infrastructure. Those streets were not built to absorb the traffic from a 350 car parking garage. The residents who live on those blocks would carry that burden every single day. That deserves real weight in this decision.

Please vote no.

Sincerely,

Addie Lipp

1010 S Douglas Rd
Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

I am writing to oppose the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord and to ask the Board to deny this application. I want to take a moment to explain why this matters to me personally before getting into the specifics.

I have lived in Coral Gables for years. I chose this city deliberately. I looked at a lot of neighborhoods in Miami before settling here and what stood out about Coral Gables was the consistency of it, the way the buildings relate to each other, the way the residential streets feel protected, the way you can tell the City actually enforces its own rules. That is not something you take for granted in South Florida.

The Garden of our Lord neighborhood is one of the places I think of when I think about why I live here. Low rise buildings. Quiet streets. Single family homes mixed in with small apartment buildings. Historically designated structures on both Phoenetia and Antilla Avenues. A neighborhood that has held its character over time.

Nine stories would change all of that. The current zoning allows four. The buildings around the site are one to four stories. Four families own homes directly adjacent to this property. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created specifically to protect this neighborhood. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan calls for it to remain in scale with the surrounding homes. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code requires new development to be compatible with the surrounding area.

I am asking the Board to enforce these protections and vote no on this application.

Thank you for your time,

Paul Guido
29 Antilla Ave, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I want to start by saying that I have a lot of respect for the people who serve on this Board. These are not easy decisions and I know that. But I am asking you to please deny the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord site, and I want to explain why it matters to me personally.

I grew up in this neighborhood. I know these streets. I know the scale of the buildings, the width of the sidewalks, the feel of the blocks on a Sunday morning. A nine story building with a parking garage for 350 cars does not belong here. It would not fit visually, it would not fit in terms of what the roads can handle, and it would not fit with what the Zoning Code requires.

Section 1-103 is very clear that development should protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses and preserve their character. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan both call for low rise development in this area. The North Ponce Community Vision Workshop backed that up with community input.

All of that points in one direction. I hope the Board will follow it.

Warmly,

A Coral Gables Native

Anishka Morales
119 Salamanca Ave, 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord and to request that the Board deny this application on the following grounds.

First, the project exceeds the current four-story height maximum by more than double, proposing nine stories in a neighborhood where surrounding structures range from one to four stories.

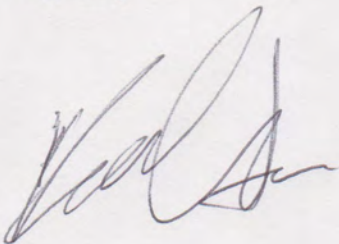
Second, the application violates Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code, which requires new development to be compatible with surrounding architecture, protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses, and preserve the low-intensity character of residential areas.

Third, it conflicts with the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan, both of which call for low-rise development in this area.

Fourth, the PAD request relies on an interior courtyard that is only accessible to the public when the adjacent school is not in session. This has never been accepted as a qualifying public benefit under PAD in Coral Gables and should not be accepted now.

Fifth, the proposed infrastructure — a 350-car garage on narrow residential streets — is incompatible with the existing road network.

Each of these issues independently warrants denial. Together they make approval impossible to justify.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'V. A. A.', written in a cursive style.

119 Salamanca Ave 33134

Dear Elected Officials, Planning and Zoning Board,

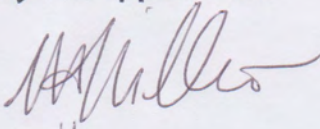
I have been following the Garden of our Lord zoning proposal and I want to add my name to those opposing it.

The neighborhood context is important here. Phoenetia Avenue has six historically designated structures. Antilla Avenue has three. The whole area is under consideration for Historic District designation. These are not just facts in a planning document — they represent the actual character of a real place that people live in and care about.

A nine story building in the middle of that context is not appropriate at any point, but it is especially inappropriate right now when a historic designation process is actively underway. The City should be protecting this neighborhood, not approving development that works against it.

Please deny this application.

Regards,


Marta Millero
110 Salamanca Ave
207
Coral Gables FL
33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I'll be honest — the PAD component of this application is what really gets me. The whole idea of Planned Area Development is that the community gets something real in exchange for approving additional development. What is being offered here? An interior courtyard attached to a school that the public can only use when school isn't in session.

That's it. That's the public benefit.

In the entire history of Coral Gables, this kind of conditional, occasionally-accessible space has never been accepted as a qualifying PAD benefit. Not once. And for good reason — it's not what PAD is for. Accepting it now would gut the program and signal to every future developer that they can offer basically nothing and still get approved.

Separate from the PAD issue, this project also blows past the four-story height limit, sits in a neighborhood of one-to-four-story buildings, and conflicts with multiple City ordinances. The infrastructure on those narrow streets cannot handle a 350-car garage.

There is no version of this application that should be approved.

— A Taxpayer and Coral Gables Homeowner

VCid Veronica Cid
911 E Ponce de Leon Blvd
Apt 1003 Coral Gables, FL

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

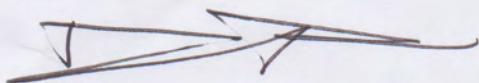
I have lived in Coral Gables for a long time and I have always been proud of the way this city takes its planning seriously. The rules here mean something. The character of the neighborhoods is protected in a way that you do not find everywhere.

So when I see a proposal like this come through — nine stories on a block zoned for four, next to single family homes, in a neighborhood with historic buildings on both sides — it genuinely surprises me that it has gotten this far.

Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code is supposed to prevent exactly this. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance is supposed to prevent exactly this. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan is supposed to prevent exactly this. These are not obscure regulations. They are the framework that keeps this city what it is.

I trust that the Board will enforce them and deny this project.

Thank you for your service,



DAVID TEUERWA

A Long-Time Coral Gables Resident

911 E Ponce de Leon Blvd
Apt 1003 Coral Gables, FL

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I am writing to oppose the zoning changes proposed for the Garden of our Lord site. I have a few things I want to say and I will try to be concise.

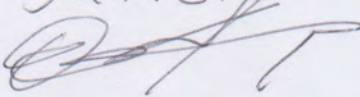
First, the height. Four stories is the limit. Nine is what is being requested. Everything around the site is one to four stories. There are four single family homes immediately adjacent. This is not a close call on compatibility.

Second, the ordinances. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan both specifically protect this neighborhood and require low rise development. These were not put in place casually — they represent deliberate decisions by the City to preserve this area.

Third, the PAD situation. A school courtyard accessible only during off-school hours is not a public benefit under any reasonable interpretation of what PAD requires. It should not be accepted as one here.

The Board has clear grounds to deny this application. I am asking them to use them.

Thank you,

David G. Rono


1091 Galiano St, unit 306, 33134

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I have been going back and forth about whether to write this letter but I decided I had to say something. What is being proposed for that site just doesn't sit right with me and I think more people need to speak up.

The block is zoned for four stories. They want nine. I know that probably seems like a technical detail but it matters because that limit exists for a reason. The whole neighborhood is one to four stories tall. Changing that changes everything about how it feels to walk down those streets, to live on those blocks, to have your home next to a structure that towers over everything.

And I have heard about the parking garage situation, on those narrow streets? I live close enough that I can already imagine what that does to morning traffic. It would not be good.

I just think the people making these decisions need to hear from regular residents too, not just lawyers and developers. This is our neighborhood. We live here. And we don't want this.

Thanks for reading this,

Mani GShapiro

113 Mendocino Ave #502
Coral Gables FL 33134

Dear Elected Officials, Planning and Zoning Board,

Look, I am not a lawyer and I am not going to pretend to know every detail of the Zoning Code. But I know my neighborhood and I know that a nine story building with a 350 car parking garage does not belong on those streets.

Every building around that site is four stories or shorter. There are single family homes right next door. The roads are narrow. It is a residential neighborhood, not a commercial corridor.

I also heard about the green space thing they are offering through PAD and honestly it is kind of insulting. A courtyard inside a school that you can only use when school is closed? That is not a park. That is not what public green space means. I don't know how that is even being considered seriously.

The City has rules for a reason. The neighborhood has been told to stay low rise for a reason. I hope the people making this decision remember that those rules exist to protect people like me who actually live here.

Sincerely,

Mónica Sánchez
Ruth?

118 Zamora Av.
Coral Gables
33134

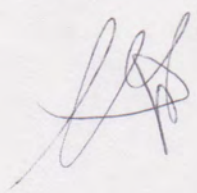
Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I am a Coral Gables resident writing to oppose the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord site. I ask that the Board deny this application.

Let me be direct about the scale problem. The block is zoned for a four-story maximum. The project wants nine stories. The immediate surrounding area consists of one, two, three, and four-story buildings. Four single-family homes are next door. There is simply no way to reconcile a nine-story building in this context with the zoning code's requirement that new development be compatible with adjacent established residential areas.

I am also concerned about what this project would mean for the historic character of the neighborhood. Six historically designated structures are on Phoenetia Avenue. Three more are on Antilla Avenue. The neighborhood is being studied for Historic District designation right now. Approving major upzoning in this context is exactly the kind of action that damages the fabric of a neighborhood before protections can be put in place.

Our Zoning Code, specifically Section 1-103, was written to prevent exactly this kind of incompatible development. I urge the Board to enforce it.

 110 S. Solomon Ave.

Dear Elected Officials, Planning and Zoning Board,

I have been following the Garden of our Lord zoning proposal with concern and I want to submit my opposition formally.

What gets me about this project is the combination of issues. It is not just that the height is wrong — though it is, four story limit and nine story request is a significant problem. It is not just that the streets cannot handle the traffic — though they cannot, 350 parking spaces on narrow residential roads is a real problem. It is not just that multiple ordinances prohibit it — though they do, and clearly.

It is all of it together. Every angle you look at this project from, it does not work for this location. The Zoning Code, the historic city plan, the conservation overlay ordinance, the community vision workshop — they all point toward denial. I am asking the Board to follow that direction.

Fabiola Forns

*911 East Ponce de Leon Blvd #701
Coral Gables, FL 33134*

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I want to add my voice to the opposition to the Garden of our Lord zoning proposal.

I moved to Coral Gables because of the neighborhoods. The way the residential areas are protected, the way development is kept in scale, the way the City's planning rules are actually enforced — that is not something you find everywhere. It is something worth protecting.

This project tests that. Nine stories in a four story neighborhood. A 350 car garage on residential streets. A PAD request built around a school courtyard. Multiple ordinances violated. None of it should be approved.

I trust the Board to see this clearly and vote no.

Thank you for your time,

Manelka Villegas
29 Antilla Ave APT 2 Coral Gables, FL 33134

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I want to say something about what this project would mean for the people who actually live on those streets day to day.

The streets near the Garden of our Lord are quiet. The buildings are small. The pace is residential. That is not an accident — it is the result of zoning rules and planning decisions made over many years to keep it that way. A nine story building with 350 parking spaces would disrupt all of that in ways that are hard to fully explain until you live there.

The rules support denial. The community input supports denial. I am asking the Board to support it too.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be a stylized 'S' or 'D' followed by a flourish.

15 Alhambra Cir Apt 26 Coral Gables FL 33134

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

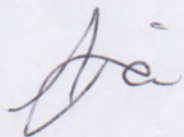
I am a Coral Gables resident writing in opposition to the proposed zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord site.

The PAD request in this application is what I keep coming back to. The developer is offering a courtyard inside a school campus as the public green space benefit. The public can only access it when school is not in session. That is not a genuine public benefit. Coral Gables has never accepted something like that under PAD and it should not start now.

The rest of the application has problems too — the height, the incompatibility with the neighborhood, the conflict with multiple ordinances. But if the Board only focuses on one thing I would ask them to look closely at what is actually being offered through PAD and ask whether it meets any reasonable standard.

It does not. Please deny this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'De' or similar, written in a cursive style.

3571 SW 105T #3

Miami FL, 33135

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Mayor,

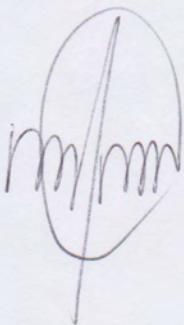
I am writing on behalf of myself and several neighbors who share the same concerns about the Garden of our Lord zoning proposal.

The height is the most obvious problem — four story limit, nine story request — but we also want to mention the historic context. Phoenetia and Antilla Avenues both have multiple historically designated structures. The neighborhood is being studied for Historic District designation right now. The Board's decision here will be felt beyond this one project.

We are asking the Board to protect the neighborhood and deny this application.

Sincerely,

Jose G.



45 Antilla Ave.
Miami, FL.

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

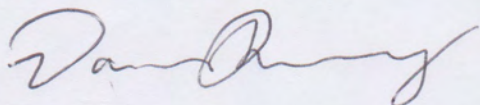
I do not write to the City often but the Garden of our Lord proposal is something I feel strongly enough about to put in writing.

I have walked and driven through that neighborhood for years. It is one of the better preserved parts of this area — low buildings, reasonable traffic, a residential feel that is increasingly rare. A nine story building with hundreds of parking spaces would change all of that.

The Coral Gables Historic City Plan calls for this neighborhood to stay in scale with its single family homes. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance protects its character. The community vision process backed that up. The application conflicts with all three.

Please deny it.

Thank you for reading this,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan Remy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "R".

221 Sidonia Ave, Apt 7

Coral Gables, FL 33134

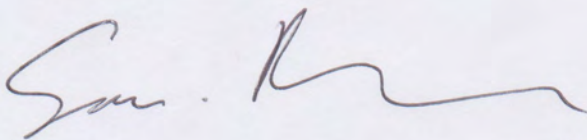
Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I live close enough to the Garden of our Lord that this project would affect me directly and I want to be on record opposing it.

The noise and traffic from a building that size would be part of my daily life. Three hundred and fifty parking spaces worth of cars coming and going on narrow residential streets is not a small thing. People who do not live on those streets may not fully appreciate how much that would change things for the residents who do.

The zoning only allows four stories. Everything around the site is low rise. The rules are clear. I am asking the Board to apply them.

Thank you,


3139 SW 17th St
33145 FLORIDA

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

I am writing to oppose the zoning changes for the Garden of our Lord. My concern is straightforward — the project is too tall for the neighborhood and the infrastructure around it cannot support it.

Four stories is the maximum on that block. The buildings that actually exist on the surrounding streets are one to four stories. There are four single family homes right next to this site. Going to nine stories would mean more than doubling the permitted height in a low rise residential neighborhood. That is a big deal.

The traffic generated by a 350 car garage on those narrow streets would also be a real daily problem for the families who live nearby. That deserves serious consideration.

Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code was written to prevent this kind of incompatible development. I am asking the Board to enforce it.

Thank you for your time,

Alejandro Perez

11 Santillane ave, apt 1 Coral gables 33134

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

I have spent time talking to people who live near the Garden of our Lord site and the reaction has been consistent: nobody wants this project. People are worried about the traffic, the height, and what a building of this scale would do to streets that are currently quiet and residential. They are worried about the tree canopy that makes those streets pleasant to walk. They are worried that a decision is being made that affects them directly and that their voices are not being heard.

I want to make sure those voices are on the record through this letter.

The zoning on that block allows four stories. Nine is being requested. The surrounding buildings are one to four stories. Four single family homes are immediately adjacent. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created to protect this neighborhood. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan requires it to remain low rise. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code requires new development to be compatible with the surrounding area. The community vision process recommended two to four stories and preservation of neighborhood character.

The infrastructure is also a genuine concern. Narrow residential streets and a 350 car parking garage are not a compatible combination. The PAD benefit — a school courtyard with limited public access — does not meet the standard Coral Gables has always required.

The tree canopy over those streets is one of the things residents value most about the neighborhood. It exists because the buildings have stayed low. This project would change that in a way that is not easily undone.

The Board has comprehensive grounds for denial. I am asking it to use them.

Thank you,

TARIQ KHALID

SOCORRO MARQUEZ

1650 GALIANO ST APT 406

CORAL GABLES 33134

tariq.khalid@gmail.com

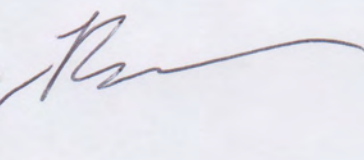
Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

The streets surrounding the Garden of our Lord site are narrow residential streets. They were designed for a neighborhood of single family homes and low rise apartments, not for a nine story building with a 350 car parking garage.

The residents who live on those streets would absorb the daily traffic, the noise, and the congestion from a building of this scale without having agreed to any of it. That impact is permanent.

Combined with the clear zoning violation — four story limit, nine story request — and the multiple ordinances protecting this neighborhood, there is no reasonable basis for approval. Please deny this application.

Thank you,

Cassidy 

15 Phoenetia Ave

Coral Gables

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to submit my opposition to the Garden of our Lord zoning application and make one point that I think ties everything together.

Coral Gables has always been different from the rest of Miami because the City actually enforces its own rules. The zoning code means something here. The historic city plan means something. The neighborhood conservation overlay districts mean something. When a developer comes in asking for nine stories on a four story block, in conflict with multiple ordinances, after ignoring community vision outcomes, the question the Board is really being asked is: do the rules still mean something?

The residents of this neighborhood are watching to find out. The people who bought homes here, who chose this city over less regulated alternatives, who participated in planning processes in good faith — they are all watching.

I believe the rules mean something and I am asking the Board to show that they do. Vote no on this application.

— A Coral Gables Resident

Laura Sanchez

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

There are several reasons to deny the proposed development at 110 Phoenetia Ave and I want to lay out the ones I think deserve the most attention.

The first is the historic context. This neighborhood has six historically designated structures on Phoenetia Avenue and three on Antilla Avenue. It is actively being studied for Historic District designation. Approving a nine story building in the middle of that process sends a damaging message about how seriously the City takes its preservation commitments — and those commitments are not just administrative. They are tied to George Merrick's original vision for Coral Gables, a vision that Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code was written specifically to protect.

The second is the tree canopy. The canopy over the streets of the North Ponce neighborhood is one of the most visible expressions of what makes this part of the city distinctive. It exists because the buildings have stayed low. That relationship is not incidental — it is structural. A nine story building does not fit into it. It shadows what is beneath it and over time diminishes what makes those streets worth walking.

The third is the straightforward zoning issue. Four stories is the limit on that block. Nine is being requested. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan both require the area to remain low rise. The community vision workshop said the same. The surrounding buildings are one to four stories. Four single family homes are right next door.

All of it points toward denial. I am asking the Board to get there.

Sincerely,

Patricia van Daler
145 Madeira

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Vice Mayor,

George Merrick designed this city with intention. The scale of the streets, the architecture, the relationship between buildings and the natural environment around them — it was all considered. The tree canopy that covers the streets of the North Ponce neighborhood is part of that legacy. It has been maintained because the buildings here have stayed low enough to let it. Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan exist specifically to protect that legacy from development that does not fit.

A nine story building on a four story block, surrounded by one to four story buildings, next to single family homes, with a 350 car parking garage — this is not what Merrick built and it is not what those ordinances are designed to allow. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance adds further protection. The community vision workshop confirmed what residents want.

Coral Gables is different from the rest of South Florida because the City has held the line on exactly this kind of proposal. I am asking the Board to hold it again and vote no.

Sincerely,

Manuel Aldana Reyes

121 Zamora St

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

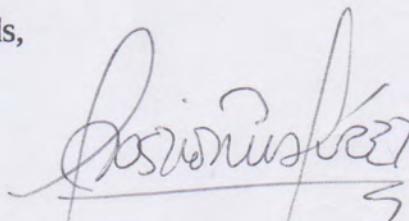
There are three things about the Garden of our Lord application that I want to highlight specifically.

The first is the PAD request. A school courtyard accessible to the public only when school is not in session is not a public benefit under any reasonable reading of what PAD requires. It has never been accepted as one in Coral Gables. Accepting it here would set a precedent that weakens the program and invites every future developer to offer something similar.

The second is the infrastructure. A 350 car parking garage on narrow residential streets is not a small addition to a neighborhood — it is a permanent change to how those streets function and who they function for. The residents who live there did not sign up for that.

The third is what this decision says about Coral Gables as a city. The zoning says four stories. Multiple ordinances protect this neighborhood. The community said no through the vision process. If the Board approves this anyway, people will reasonably ask what makes Coral Gables different from cities where developers build whatever they want wherever they want. The answer should be clear. Please make it clear by voting no.

Regards,


145 Madeira Ave.
Suite 314
Coral Gables
33134

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

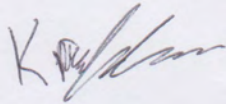
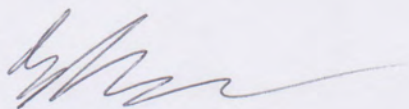
The Garden of our Lord development proposal is the kind of project that tests whether a city's planning rules mean what they say.

The block is zoned for four stories. The request is for nine. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance protects this neighborhood. So does the Coral Gables Historic City Plan. So does Section 1-103 of the Zoning Code. The community vision process produced clear recommendations that this project ignores entirely.

Coral Gables has a reputation as a city that holds the line on developer pressure. That reputation is valuable and it is not self-maintaining. It requires the City to say no when a project does not belong — regardless of how the application is packaged or how persistent the applicant is. This is one of those moments. The community has made its position clear. The ordinances have made the City's position clear. I am asking the Board to be clear as well and vote no.

Regards,

15 Phoenicia Ave

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'K. [unclear]'.A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'by [unclear]'.

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I want to ask the Board to consider what Coral Gables loses if this project is approved, because I think that framing is important.

It loses a piece of the tree canopy that makes the North Ponce neighborhood one of the most pleasant areas to walk in this part of Miami. The canopy survives here because the buildings have stayed low enough to let it. A nine story building changes that balance in a way that mature trees cannot quickly recover from.

It loses the credibility of the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance and the Coral Gables Historic City Plan — both of which were created specifically to prevent this kind of development. If they do not hold here, when a project violates them this comprehensively, they lose their force for every future application.

It loses the trust of the residents who participated in the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop. That process produced clear recommendations — two to four stories, preserve the neighborhood character, consider park space. Approving something that contradicts all of those outcomes tells residents their participation was theater.

It loses a piece of the reputation that makes Coral Gables what it is — a city where the rules mean something and developers cannot simply override residential neighborhoods by pushing hard enough.

None of those things are small. The zoning, the ordinances, the community process, the infrastructure limitations, the PAD standards — all of it points toward denial. I am asking the Board to protect what this city has built and vote no.

Sincerely,

FABIAN AVILA
ANTILLA APP 1

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, and Elected Officials,

I want to say something about the PAD request in this application because I think it is worth being direct about.

The developer is offering a courtyard inside a school as the public green space benefit in exchange for PAD approval. The courtyard is only open to the public when school is not in session. That means most weekdays during the school year it is not available to anyone in the community.

That is not what PAD is for. The whole point is to get real usable green space for the public in exchange for additional development approvals. A courtyard you can only access on weekends and school breaks does not meet that standard. It never has in Coral Gables and there is no reason to make this the first exception.

Everything else about this project — the height, the traffic, the conflicts with multiple ordinances — is also a problem. But the PAD piece alone should be enough to deny it.

Natalie Jennings (47 Sidonia Ave)

Dear Mayor and Elected Officials,

I chose to live in Coral Gables because of what it is, the tree canopy over the streets, the low buildings, the sense that the City actually protects its residential neighborhoods rather than just saying it does. Those things are not small. They are the reason a lot of people choose this city over the alternatives.

The proposed development at 110 Phoenetia Ave puts all of that at risk in one vote. Nine stories in a four story neighborhood. A 350 car garage on streets that were not built for it. Multiple ordinances violated. The canopy on those blocks depends on the buildings staying low — it is not going to survive a nine story building being dropped into the middle of it.

If this gets approved people will reasonably ask what separates Coral Gables from Brickell or downtown Miami. The answer should not require any hesitation. I am asking the Board to make sure it does not and vote no on this application.

Regards,

417 S:donia Ave

Daniel Jennings

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to submit a thorough opposition to the Garden of our Lord zoning application because I think each dimension of it deserves to be named clearly.

On height: the block is zoned for four stories. Nine is being requested. The surrounding neighborhood is one to four stories. This is not a marginal variance — it is a fundamental incompatibility with the established character of the area.

On the ordinances: the North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created to protect this neighborhood's historic buildings and traditional fabric. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan calls for the area to remain low in height and in scale with surrounding homes. Both are violated directly by this proposal.

On the community process: the North Ponce Community Vision Workshop recommended two to four stories, preservation of neighborhood character, and park space on this site. This application contradicts all three.

On infrastructure: the surrounding streets are narrow residential streets that cannot absorb the daily traffic from a 350 car parking garage without significant impact on the residents who live there.

On PAD: a school courtyard accessible only outside school hours is not a public green space benefit. It has never been accepted as one in Coral Gables and should not be now.

On the canopy: the tree canopy over these streets exists because the buildings have stayed low. Nine stories disrupts that in ways that are not easily reversed.

On precedent: approving this application tells every future developer that the frameworks protecting residential neighborhoods in Coral Gables are negotiable. That is a damaging message with consequences that extend far beyond this one project.

The grounds for denial are clear and comprehensive. I am asking the Board to deny this application.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Aguado 131 Menores

Dear Planning, Zoning Board, Mayor and Commissioners,

I am a lifelong Coral Gables resident who has spent more than forty years living in the North Ponce neighborhood. The proposed architecture is cheap. It looks like a box. The small gestures toward a Mediterranean aesthetic are superficial at best and insulting at worst. This is a city that George Merrick built with a genuine architectural vision, a city where design standards exist and matter. What is being proposed does not come close to honoring that.

Beyond the aesthetics, the scale of this project is a monstrosity. The block is zoned Special Use/Religious with a four story maximum height. The proposal asks for nine. That is more than double what the code allows. Section 1-103 of our Zoning Code is explicit, new development must be compatible with the surrounding area in type, intensity, design, and appearance, and must protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses. The North Ponce Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Ordinance was created specifically to preserve the character of this neighborhood. The Coral Gables Historic City Plan, unanimously approved by the City Commission, calls for this area to remain low in height and in scale with the single family homes around it. This project violates all three. Not technically, not marginally, comprehensively.

Why are we breaking every rule that was carefully put in place for this area? These ordinances were not written by accident. They were written because residents and planners and elected officials sat down together and decided what this neighborhood should be and should stay. Why does that work get thrown out the window when a developer comes along with a project that suits them?

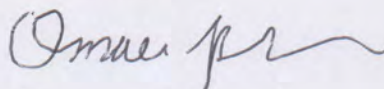
And why are we seriously entertaining a nine story building with a 350 car parking garage next to single family homes and small boutique apartments? Those families bought those homes in a neighborhood zoned for four stories. The people who live in those small apartment buildings chose this neighborhood because of what it is. Nobody signed up for this.

The infrastructure question alone should stop this project. I know these streets because I have walked them for forty years. They are narrow. They are residential. In the mornings they are already tight with school traffic and people heading out for the day. How are those small Coral Gables streets supposed to absorb the traffic generated by 350 parking spaces? Who absorbs the noise, the congestion, the daily disruption? The neighbors do. The people who already live there do. And they will do it every day for as long as that building stands.

What makes Coral Gables worth living in? What makes it different from Brickell or downtown Miami or any other place where high rises go up on whatever block the developer decides to target? The answer has always been that Coral Gables is protected. That the neighborhoods are residential and the rules are enforced and the City takes its own planning seriously. That is the promise this city makes to the people who move here and pay taxes here and build their lives here.

I am asking the Board to deny this application. Not as a procedural matter. As a statement about what this city is and intends to remain.

A Lifelong Coral Gables Resident,


Omar Packard

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