

REQUEST:

The Historic Preservation Commission is asked to advise the Planning staff and Planning Commission regarding an application for a special permit/Community Unit Plan at the northwest corner of 9th & D Streets, the former location of Zion Congregational Church, within the South Bottoms Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

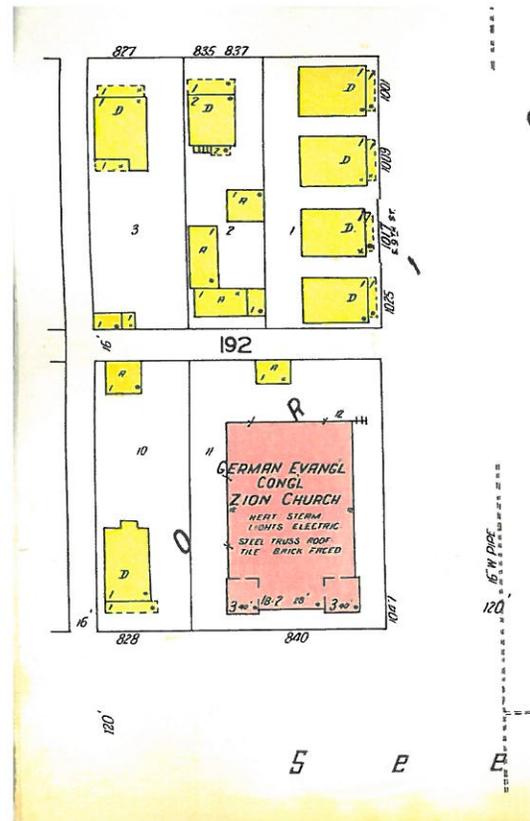
DISCUSSION:

NeighborWorks Lincoln has acquired five lots formerly occupied by Zion Congregational Church, on the east half of the block bounded by D, 9th, E, and 8th Streets. The church was built in the 1920s and was destroyed by fire 8 years ago.

In the historic development of that half-block, the church and seven houses had been constructed by 1927, when Sanborn Map Company issued an atlas of Lincoln. The church and one house occupied the three lots on the southeast quarter of the block and six houses occupied three lots on the northeast quarter. The church had acquired five of those houses and removed them before the fire. Only 827 E Street remains on the half-block and it would still remain, under NeighborWork’s proposal.

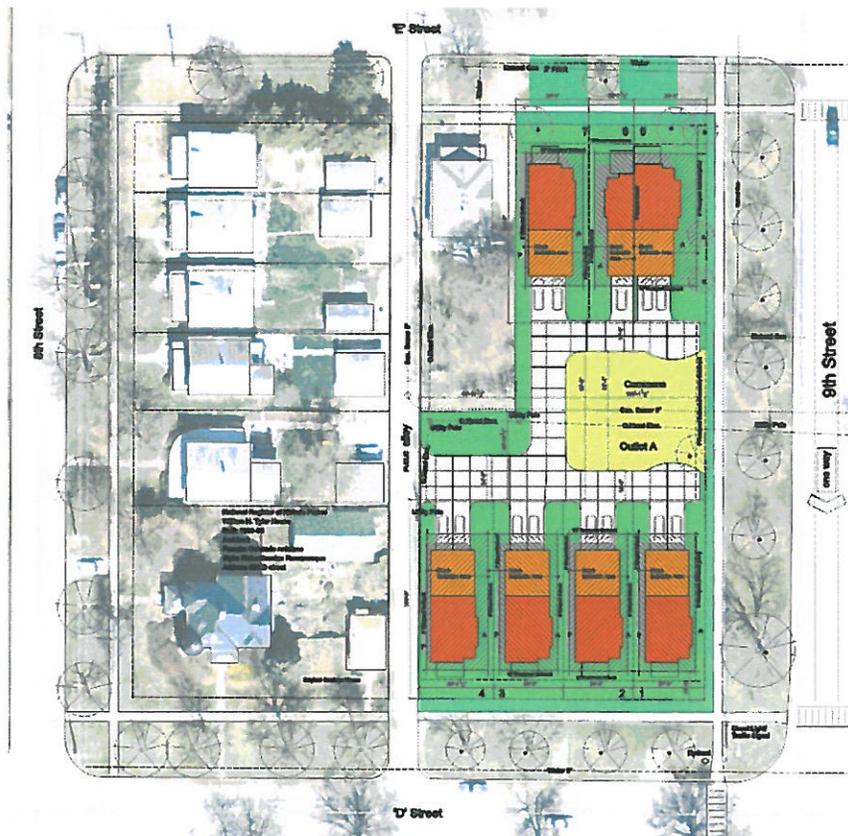
Along the west half of the block, six houses were developed and all still stand, including the William Tyler house at 808 D Street.

The NeighborWorks proposal would build seven dwelling units in six buildings—five single family residences as well as two attached units in building at 9th & E.





Zion Congregational Church, 9th & D, 1990s



The site would include shared driveways off the north-south alley, and a “Common” green space along 9th Street, behind the houses.

The proposed density of dwellings is very similar to both the historic density on this half block (or less, considering that 7 houses formerly shared the half-block with a large church) and very similar to the historic development of the west half of the block, which has a monument building at the southwest corner occupying two lots, and five more houses on the remaining four lots. The proposed homes are larger than many found in South Bottoms, but are characteristic of those east of 8th Street, where both proximity to the Park and high ground safe from Salt Creek floods seems to have historically induced greater investment.

Preliminary designs for the houses have been provided, showing 1.5 story buildings with an assortment of pitched roofs, a combination of lap and board-and-batten siding, consistent entrance orientation to the streets, and rear, attached garages.





This development parcel inherits some unique characteristics from the 1867 Original Plat of Lincoln. Both D and 9th Streets were assigned 120 feet of right-of-way in that plan, rather than the typical 100 feet, so the distance from curb-to-sideway (and subsequently from travel lanes to houses) is greater than is usual. The first of the renderings above and the overall site plan show that characteristic.



In the preliminary designs, none of the houses are depicted with front porches, a common but not universal characteristic of South Bottoms houses. However, the site plan is annotated with indications of the porch setback for each house. In Lincoln's zoning code, porches may occupy a portion of the required front yard, and often provide a useful transition between the public and private realms. The Commission may wish to explore with the project representatives their thoughts on including porches on some or all of the houses.



Overall, the project appears carefully laid out and designed for its setting in the South Bottoms Historic District.

Staff Recommendation: That the Planning Commission be encouraged to approved the requested CUP, with conditions that the design of the houses generally conform to the preliminary plans shown, as verified by the Planning Director.

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May 9, 2016

David Cary, Director
City of Lincoln Planning Department
555 S 10th St, Suite 213
Lincoln, NE 68508

Mr. David Cary,

NeighborWorks Lincoln completed a request for proposals for the redevelopment of vacant land approximately one-half city block in size in the area generally between D and E Streets and 9th and 10th Streets. The name of the project has yet to be determined. Residents who live on the focus block and NeighborWorks Lincoln staff conducted interviews with five architects who submitted proposals for the project. As a result, Gill Peace, Peace Studio was the architect selected for the development project.

NeighborWorks Lincoln and Gill Peace hosted a design kick-off open house on March 23rd to get feedback on a preliminary design proposal. The current proposal includes seven single-family units with slight variations in styles and floor plans. Units will be 2 or 3 bedroom with two car garages that include off street parking. The design will be inspired by existing historic architecture in the area with some contemporary design elements. The design includes a green commons area and community garden space. The homes will be available for purchase by NeighborWorks Lincoln first-time homebuyers. There is another design presentation open house planned for June. The project will be built in two phases, and it is hopeful that construction will begin in fall of 2016.

Please contact me with questions at 402-477-7181, ext. 102 or sryba@nwlincoln.org.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn Ryba, COO". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "SR" being prominent.

Shawn Ryba, Chief Operating Officer

