

Record#: 1426.12

13 June 2022

Knoxville-Knox County Planning
Knoxville City County Building
400 Main Street – Room 403
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902

RE: Rezoning Case 7-C-22-RZ
Address: 4450 Candora Ave.

Dear Knoxville/Knox County Planning:

I am writing in regards to a rezoning application for the property which contains the historic warehouses associated with the Candoro Marble Company. My firm Sanders Pace Architecture had the pleasure of working on the restoration of the Candoro Marble Showroom Building and through that process we were able to learn more about the important role these sites played in the growth of the marble industry in Knoxville.

At the height of the marble industry the region boasted more than 50 quarries which provided Tennessee Marble to shaping facilities in Knoxville. Arguably the most important was the Candoro Marble Company with noted sculptor Albert Milani serving as foreman. As the marble industry began to fade in the latter half of the twentieth century, buildings like the Candoro Marble Showroom and the historic warehouses began to decay, serving as vacant reminders of this important time in our city's history.

In the early 2000's a small group of preservationists was able to purchase the Candoro Marble Showroom Building from the current owner and later purchased by The Aslan Foundation. With their support, the exterior of the former showroom was painstakingly restored to National Park Service Preservation Standards and the interior was restored, rehabilitated, and modernized. The building is now the home of Tri-Star Arts, an arts organization who provides space for local artists along with exhibition and event space that is open to the public. This new use has been a catalyst for development in the Vestal Community and private investment has followed suit including two properties in "downtown vestal" that I am personally invested in. This part of South Knoxville is also an anchor and neighborhood node for the Battlefield Loop, a long-range vision plan supported by the City of Knoxville at the western edge of Knoxville's Urban Wilderness. With direct access to the miles of trails within the Urban Wilderness, these historic warehouses have the potential to support a wide range of mixed uses that are more public in nature, and you can look to other cities within our region to see how historically significant and strategically located properties like this can become an anchor for smart growth within the Vestal community, so long as they maintain an industrial mixed-use zoning designation which promotes these types of uses.

For these reasons I am recommending that the requested rezoning to I-H be denied. In my opinion the current I-MU zoning is the proper zoning to allow this important property to develop in ways that continue to promote smart growth within this community while also promoting the preservation and respecting the history of this important piece of Knoxville's industrial past.

Respectfully submitted,



Brandon F. Pace, FAIA
Principal
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