

My name is Amanda Lee. Although I grew up in New York, I have been a seasonal visitor to Key West for most of my life. I remember my parents, early time share owners at the Banyan, taking me to James Merrill's annual Valentine's Day party at his home on Elizabeth Street and being awed by the guests, many of whom were on the reading lists of my high school and college English classes. My husband, Greg, and I honeymooned in Key West in 1997 and have visited at least once or twice a year each year since. Purchasing our home at 1013 Southard Street in 2018 was the fulfillment of a long-held dream and we hope ultimately to make Key West our primary home. In seeking a home here, we chose to live in a historic district. We very much wanted to live in an area that valued light and space and the peaceful preservation of Key West's residential neighborhoods.

We have recently learned that our property was once considered one parcel with 10 Lowes Lane; 1013 Southard Street was evidently subdivided before 2018. The fact that our property was, until recently, very much connected to the property that is now 10 Lowes Lane may give you some sense of how much any change to the 10 Lowes Lane property would impact our home. Indeed, our entire rear boundary line to the north is shared with 10 Lowes Lane. That boundary line was recently stripped of all plantings on the 10 Lowes Lane side so the property that was completely out of view to us when we purchased our home is now fully visible.

We understand that the 10 Lowes Lane owner seeks permission to build a new, tall structure adjacent to the existing structure. If approved, this new, tall structure will dominate our entire sightline. We also understand that the 10 Lowes Lane owner seeks permission to enlarge an existing window on the south side of the structure and to also add three windows and a three-panel sliding glass door all to the south side of the existing structure, which at present has no doors and only one dormer window. If approved, these windows and doors will look directly into our house and yard. The new structure will be completely visible to us and will have a dramatic impact on our property. The proposed changes seem intended to convert the existing 10 Lowes Lane structure from a North facing house (the house has a North facing entrance door and North facing windows) to a house whose focal point entirely faces south — through the proposed six new opening and one enlarged existing window. And the openings are not ordinary openings. The proposed series of sliding glass doors will, when open, essentially extend the indoor space outdoors toward the shared property line.

In addition to changing the entire nature and orientation of the house plan, the proposed plans increase on existing height, volume and footprint. We can't understand how these changes could be considered appropriate. Furthermore, the applicant never reached out to us. We received a post card notification from the City just days before the scheduled hearing. For these reasons, we oppose the application for variance.

We would appreciate your consideration in this matter.