



LOUISIANA LANDMARKS SOCIETY, INC.

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November 16, 2009

City Planning Commission
City Hall - 1300 Perdido St.
New Orleans, LA 70112

By Mail and Fax (504) 658-7032

Re: ZD 110/09, 121 Royal Street
Royal Cosmopolitan LLC

Dear Commissioners:

The Louisiana Landmarks Society opposes the reaffirmation of the ordinance permitting an increase in height at 121-125 Royal Street. When this project was proposed in 2005, it was a request to convert the existing 5-story building to a 16-story *condotel*, far exceeding the legal 85-ft height limit, and the Council voted to allow a 168-ft, seventeen-floor tower. (ZD 59/05) French Quarter neighborhood groups did not oppose the 2005 168-ft proposal. However, in 2006, the proponents returned, seeking an additional 9 floors, increasing the floors from 17 to 26, and increasing the height by 90 ft, from 178 ft to 268 ft, more than triple the 85-ft height limit. (ZD 6/06) In the 2006 request, the developers claimed that they needed the additional number of units to compensate for the post-Katrina increase in construction costs. Almost 3 years have passed since the February 2007 approval of the 268 ft. project, and although construction costs have fallen sharply, construction has not begun. The allowance of a project which exceeded the height limitation in the Quarter by a factor of 3 was a nullification of the law, and given the developer's failure to proceed, this project should not be approved.

Louisiana Landmarks Society has worked for over half a century to preserve the history, architecture, and culture of New Orleans. The organization has helped save important local landmarks, including Gallier Hall, which the City wanted to sell to private developers, and the Carrollton Courthouse, which the School Board wanted to demolish. Its educational programs help maintain appreciation for the traditional crafts and trades crucial to maintaining historic structures. The organization also operates the Pitot House, a house museum on Bayou St. John.

Cordially,

Anne Morse
President

J. Keith Hardie, Jr.
Advocacy Chairman

"Fifty Years of Historic Preservation Leadership"

Member Organization of National Trust for Historic Preservation & Society of Architectural Historians