

PHX Neighbors Take Part in Architectural Competition

SOURCE: THE FLIP SIDE

Jason Morris, a Phoenix land use, zoning attorney and partner with **Withey Morris PLC** never had a case take a turn like this.

In the trendy and eclectic Phoenix area called the **Melrose District** along 7th Avenue between Camelback and Indian School Roads, clients Bruce and Kim Raskin wanted to transform a vacant, boarded-up building into a self-storage facility. The neighbors opposed it. Morris, along with the Raskins, came up with a creative solution to solve a difficult situation involving an angry neighborhood opposed to the storage location. The solution? An architectural competition with the neighbors judging building designs.

“The situation evolved into one in which my client agreed to allow the neighborhood a seat at the table,” said Morris. “And the solution turned into an architectural competition. I have never seen a developer who is willing to do anything like that, which is indicative of a trend of growing clout neighbors are having in development issues. There has never been a similar competition and we hope to start a trend for the future.”

The three architectural teams were **Andrews Design Group**, **180 degrees** and **LOCALstudio**. Neighbors met with the architects to provide input and direction on the concepts they could support for a storage facility that would complement the community’s character.

A panel including community members and the property owners recently judged the designs from the architectural teams and selected the winning design from Andrews Design. Community space was an important parameter to the community. The winning design included those elements with an art studio, an exhibition area and a multi-functional room that can serve as a lecture hall or a theater. The building also has capacity for moving trucks to drive into an enclosed area and unload in an air-conditioned setting.

“We’re not trying to lose character in our community,” said Pam Pawlowski, president of **Grandview Neighborhood Association**. “We want to maintain our character and still entice development

and businesses. We collectively were ready to write all of this off. But then we turned a different direction that would be more inclusive – one in which the developers were not doing something to the community but with the community. Involving the community in this way is almost like creating a model for responsible development and we’re hoping for our district that this model sets a precedent and raises the bar for

future development using this type of process.”

Pawlowski added she believes it’s important for developers to tell their personal stories. Once she got to know the Raskins, she understood they have a heart and soul and that they wanted more for the community. “It’s important for developers to tell their story – even at the first outreach,” she said. “It’s not your bio. It’s a human element. They need to have a willingness to be vulnerable and do that.”

Watch a video of the winning design [here](#).

On The Job

Melrose District Self Storage Facility,
Phoenix

Volume: 90KSF

Owner: Bruce and Kim Raskin

Architect: Andrews Design Group

GC: Not available at press time

AZBEX
DATABASE

ID # 980



Andrews Design Group’s contest winning entry. Courtesy of The Flip Side