

10  
9-15-12

**Alexandria City Council Public Hearing**  
**Saturday, September 15, 2012**

Docket Item #10 – SUP re 628 South Pickett Street  
Comments of Donald N. Buch (dnbuch@hotmail.com)

The current physical state of South Pickett is hardly something for us to be proud of. I went to the Planning Commission last week with the hope that we might have some “leverage” to ask the applicant to improve the historical – and presumably to be continued – appearance of 628 South Pickett; if not formal zoning leverage, then perhaps some community/peer pressure.

Unfortunately my visit with the Planning Commission did not achieve much. At one point it was suggested that the community ought to recognize the upgrade in that we will now be driving by wrecked Mercedes rather than inferior makes. So, I come before you today to see if you might encourage the applicant to make some improvements to the view long provided by their predecessors.

Is there no reasonable way to screen the parking lot from passers-by? Can we not request, if not insist upon, roadside improvements where there is now no landscaping whatsoever? I look at all the improvements the last applicant (Enterprise Rent-A-Car) is being asked to make on Eisenhower despite having no plan to display wrecked vehicles.

Perhaps even more ironic is that when you come to Docket Item 11, you will be asked to affirm that the operator of a child care facility for 9 infants/toddlers be required to erect a privacy fence to screen the neighbors from the kids. Yet on South Pickett a totally open parking lot of wrecked vehicles is apparently acceptable and apparently viewed by some as more attractive than 9 toddlers!

I would also note that a developer is spending tens of millions of dollars to construct the Landmark Gateway project on South Pickett. Is it reasonable that some of their tenants will be overlooking a parking lot of wrecked vehicles (even if they are Mercedes!)?

Finally, I might point out that Mercedes already has a facility at 200 South Pickett. It has a well landscaped and maintained curb in front of it. Why not do much the same here? I assume that if this location does evolve into a Mercedes showroom, they will then find the current state of the frontage unacceptable.

I would urge you to urge the applicant to take this opportunity to improve the frontage of 628 South Pickett.

I am providing you with some photographs of the frontage in question. We are currently in a transition period from one auto body shop operator to another so at this point the parking lot is all but empty.

