

Home Depot plan draws neighbors' ire

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BY JANET RAUSA FULLER STAFF REPORTER

The Home Depot would not be at home on the southwest corner of Kimball and Addison, a group of Northwest Side residents said Saturday.

With posters and fliers in hand, about 100 members of the Irving Park Neighbors Association, store owners and homeowners gathered at the 10-acre site to protest plans for the home improvement retailer.

The store, they argued, would add to an already congested thoroughfare and run the many mom-and-pop hardware and home supply stores along Elston and Kimball into the ground. Better suited for the lot would be a library and community center, they said.

Residents are angry that a referendum last November, in which 90 percent of area voters supported a zoning change to allow for non-industrial, non-commercial use, seems to have fallen on deaf ears. "The temperature has risen from being worried and concerned to a lot of anger and determination that we're not just going to give up on this," said Vicki White, a neighbors association board member who lives a few blocks from the site.

The lot, once home to the International Paper Co., has been vacant for about a decade.

Mayor Daley has said he wants to keep the land industrial. Plans last summer for building town houses, though backed by Ald. Richard Mell (33rd), were scrapped because of the mayor's stance, residents say. Neither could be reached for comment Saturday.

Planning Department spokes-man Pete Scales said Saturday the department supports the plan, though a deal is not final as officials await results of a traffic study.

"From the first look, we think this is a good use as a buffer, if you will, between the industrial and the residential," Scales said.