

Sobyanin Bans Construction of Orthodox Church

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The  **Moscow Times**

Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has banned construction of a Russian Orthodox church in a northwest Moscow suburb where residents said they would rather keep a children's playground.

Church officials had obtained permission to build the church in Moskvoretsky Park in the Strogino district in 2003 but faced opposition from local residents, *Moskovskiye Novosti* [reported](#) late last week.

The long-simmering conflict escalated after the ouster of Sobyanin's predecessor, Yury Luzhkov, last fall. Residents obtained a promise from Sobyanin to stop construction in February, but district authorities continued to push the project through.

Sobyanin ordered construction halted after a meeting with residents earlier this month, the newspaper said, adding that district authorities had confirmed terminating the project.

Church supporters said they would have left the playground alone even though it would have been located on the church's premises, the report said.

Similar bans were levied in recent months in the Tekstilshchiki district over a mosque and in Vostochnoye Degunino, where an Orthodox church was to be built in a park.

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