

Parks, Timothy

From: Mary Norton
Sent: Saturday, August 02, 2014 8:54 PM
To: Parks, Timothy
Cc: Tom McHugh and Mary Mahon; Krista and Tim Crum; Erin and Todd Courtenay; Jason Valerius
Subject: 208 West Sunset Court

Dear Chris,

My name is Mary Norton and my house is on the southeast corner of the intersection of North and West Sunset Courts at 4127 N. Sunset Court. From the front windows of my house I can see the home in question at 208 Sunset Court as well as the houses on either side of it. I realize that my comments are being sent past the due date but I was out of town when this issue developed and I have only just read the application, letter of intent, and the site plan as well as comments submitted by my neighbors. I agree with the reactions of my neighbors and will not repeat all of their points. Three things about this proposal stand out for me:

1. The application process to date has been and remains totally unsatisfactory. This application to tear down and rebuild the once lovely home at 208 West Sunset Court is coming from a family which has lived in this neighborhood for two generations and to date they have not discussed this plan personally (or in writing) with any of the neighbors!. Not only have they failed to follow the correct procedures in terms of the city, but their behavior in this regard flies in the face of the norms of this tightly knit and friendly neighborhood.
2. The most important objection I have to this plan is that the proposed house is completely out of place in this neighborhood, which as I mentioned above is a neighborhood with which they are totally familiar. It is inappropriate both in terms of size (compared with neighboring houses and compared with the lot size) and style. In fact it looks like those very (to me) unattractive houses one finds in the suburbs. Obviously the people in this neighborhood have deliberately chosen not to live in the suburbs and there is no reason we should have to adapt to having such a house in our midst.
3. My last point is about the mature trees on the site. As an aside, my understanding is that our immediate area was once the wood lot of a farm and the trees left over from that era are treasures that need to be treated with great care, as the Crum letter has addressed. Therefore I strongly suggest that the construction plan should include very detailed steps for the protection of all the trees on the property, including drawings of where heavy construction equipment should be prohibited in order that the tree roots are not compressed and the tree trunks are not damaged.

I appreciate your interest in this unfortunate situation and any efforts on your part which will result in a better outcome for all of us.

Sincerely,
Mary Norton

Parks, Timothy

From: Lynette
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2014 11:20 AM
To: Parks, Timothy
Subject: 208 W Sunset Ct

Mr. Parks,

I just received an email indicating a demolition and rebuild in our neighborhood. This dwelling is way too big for our neighborhood. Not only that, it's ridiculous for one person to live in such a monstrous house. When will this need for more, more, more end?

Lynette Tucker

Parks, Timothy

From: Stroick, Jule
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2014 1:39 PM
To: Scanlon, Amy; Stouder, Heather; Parks, Timothy; Firchow, Kevin
Subject: FW: Hearing on Demolition Application for 208 West Sunset Court

Please see below. The neighborhood plan recommends preservation 12,14. Chapter 6 provides guidelines on renovations, etc.

From: Jean MacCubbin
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2014 1:22 PM
To: Tom McHugh
Cc: Kenneth Raffa Sunset Village Neighborhood Association -; Jason Valerius; Lerner, Sarah; Schmidt, Christopher; Stroick, Jule
Subject: Re: Hearing on Demolition Application for 208 West Sunset Court

I am not on the SVCA board; they did meet Mon. 28th; I was at the lake so did not attend.
I am cc; ken Raffa president and Jason Valerius, who co-chaired the neighborhood plan, he lives on west sunset court.
I wonder if the owners are aware of the approved neighborhood plan!
If you could reply all with the demolition hearing date, that would help.

Thanks for being on top of things and your desire to preserve our neighborhood.

Sent from my iPod
Jean MacCubbin

On Jul 29, 2014, at 10:08 PM, Tom McHugh <

Hi Jean! I am forwarding an email that I sent to Chris Schmidt concerning this Land Use application. I assume that the SVCA received a copy of the application and plans. I don't know how involved the Association gets in these matters. We neighbors are attempting to mobilize ourselves and we all intend to attend the hearing. You are the only Board member that I know, so I'm reaching out to you to find out if a representative of the Association usually attends these hearings and offers opinions. This is a charming (or at least it used to be charming) 75 year old house with a history that they want to rip down. Perhaps the Association would consider supporting the neighbors at the upcoming hearing.

Thanks!

Mary

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tom McHugh
Date: July 28, 2014 8:08:10 PM CDT
To: "district11@cityofmadison.com" <district11@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Hearing on Demolition Application for 208 West Sunset Court

Hi Chris!

My husband, Tom McHugh and I live at 4137 Hillcrest Drive, at the corner of West Sunset Court. I don't know if you are familiar with the Land Use application that was submitted, seeking to demolish the house at 208 West Sunset Court. Several of the close and adjacent neighbors have serious issues with this request.

My biggest concern is that I am unaware of any prior tear downs in this immediate neighborhood, and allowing this tear down would set a dangerous precedent. This neighborhood was surveyed for consideration as an historic district.

Also, the owner of the property is using the "poor" condition of the house as the reason for needing to demolish it, but she and her family have owned the property since 2002, according to the application, and so are the ones who have allowed the property to decline. In fact, in early June, before they even submitted their application to the City, they ripped the siding off the entire house, letting it sit that way all summer, which probably added to its "poor" condition.

The neighbors are preparing written comments to submit to the City, and I will forward a copy to you. We would ask you to consider them, to drive by and take a look at the property if you can, and support us at the hearing, which is scheduled for August 11, at 6pm.

Please give Tom and I a call if you have any questions:

Thank you!

Mary Mahon

Sent from my iPad

Parks, Timothy

From:
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2014 3:31 PM
To: Parks, Timothy; Schmidt, Christopher
Cc: Jean MacCubbin; Ken Raffa
Subject: 208 w sunset ct - demo permit comments

Chris,

Please consider and pass along the following comments regarding the demolition permit request for 208 w Sunset ct. I have interest in this project as a neighbor (232 w sunset ct) and as co-chair of the neighborhood planning committee that helped bring together the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan adopted earlier this year. The adopted plan includes guidelines to inform situations such as this.

While I am saddened that the owner was unable or unwilling to maintain the existing home appropriately in order to preserve its character and history, I am thrilled to see investment in our neighborhood.

My primary concerns are three aspects of the proposed home that I believe to be inconsistent with the neighborhood and the neighborhood plan:

1) the percentage of the front facade this is window appears to have shrunk dramatically. I would guess that the total window area facing the street is less than in the current house, while the total facade area is quit a bit larger. This reduces the new home's fit with its neighbors and limits a healthy connection between the home and the street, something I look for in my work as a community planner because it is a hallmark of healthy neighborhoods like ours. I respectfully encourage the city to ask for more and larger street-facing windows.

2) the architectural detailing does not strike me as compatible with the neighborhood, especially the faux fieldstone skirting along the front facade. This seems to be more like a craftsman-style home, which is not really found in our part of the city. I respectfully encourage the city to ask for a reconsideration of the detailing and materials to improve fit with neighboring homes.

3) I do not see a landscaping plan. My primary concern is the long, unbroken north wall that will be highly visible from the street. I would like the city to ensure that this unappealing view will be mitigated with landscaping. Windows along this garage wall would also improve on this problem.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed investment in my neighborhood.

Jason Valerius
W Sunset Ct

Sent from my iPhone

Parks, Timothy

From: Tom McHugh
Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2014 10:25 AM
To: Parks, Timothy
Cc: Schmidt, Christopher
Subject: 208 West Sunset Court

Dear Alderman Chris Schmidt,

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments regarding the proposed tear-down/re-build at 208 W. Sunset.

Our principal concerns are: the proximity to our home, the manner in which the project has proceeded thus far, our desire to protect the historical character of this area, and our reaction to the design itself.

Proximity

We are residents of 204 W. Sunset, the home immediately adjacent to the right of the property in question. Our sightline and neighborhood experience will be directly impacted by the proposed project. Because we are a corner lot, our side yard is our "back" yard and directly faces the side of this building. We anticipate that in addition to noise and demolition there will arise a need to traverse our property in order to proceed with construction.

Process

Thus far we have felt uncomfortable with the way this project has been undertaken. We have not been contacted or informed about plans to tear down the current house and were quite surprised to see the siding removed. Another family in the neighborhood informed us about the plans after they had taken it upon themselves to contact the city to learn more about what was taking place. Needless to say, this does not bode well in terms of neighborly intentions on the part of those planning to erect the new building.

Impact on Historical Character

As you might imagine, the proposed project has prompted a good deal of conversation throughout the neighborhood. During one of these conversations a neighbor who grew up on Sunset Court told me about the family that lived in the house when she was a girl and how beloved the home had been. As we talked about the house and her childhood on Sunset Park it occurred to me that her stories captured the magic of what makes this little area so special. It is no exaggeration to say that the current home at 208 W Sunset Ct. with its charming front window, sweet roof lines and contiguous character to the surrounding homes is a wonderful representation of the Sunset Village style.

Building Design

There are several renovations and additions to homes in this neighborhood, this isn't surprising given the relatively small size of the original structures. Most of them are quite lovely and take into account the character of the neighborhood; unfortunately this is not the case with the design proposed for 208 W. Sunset Ct. The proposed structure is quite large and will be a drastic change from the current dimensions. In addition, the faux stone façade and the four car garage are outside of the norm in Sunset Village. It is a contemporary design that would be pleasant in a newer area, but will surely stand out on this street.

Although the NIMBY label might literally be applied in our case, our objections to this structure are not based on a reluctance to change. We enjoy seeing the creative and pleasing renovations that homeowners have made in the area, and hope to make some to our own home one day. The issue here is one of approach, scale, and style.

Thank you for considering our concerns and we hope that you will contact us if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Erin & Todd Courtenay

From: Chris Lalande
Sent: Monday, July 28, 2014 8:16 PM
To: Tim Crum
Cc: John Lalande; Alison S. Lebwohl
Subject: 208 Sunset Court Construction Comments

Tim,

First of all, thank you for organizing some comments from the neighborhood. My husband and I own 207 S Owen Drive (the back door neighbor to the house).

My concerns about these plans are impacts on water runoff from a new, higher roof downhill to our lot, so I would be interested in having more information on gutters, drainage, etc.

In going from a one story to a two story house sitting above us, combined with removal of some large mature trees, I also have questions regarding loss of privacy between the houses.

Lastly, I want to be sure to express my sincere hope that from this point forward, the project follows the appropriate permitting process and zoning / code rules. This has not gotten off to a good start and I would like to see that turned around. It's in everyone's best interest in the neighborhood to see this done right. We look forward to this project and think it's great that the property is being invested in, provided it is done respectfully and thoughtfully.

Chris & John Lalande

We are Tom McHugh and Mary Mahon and we live at Hillcrest Drive at the corner of West Sunset Court. We moved into our house in 2003. At that time a woman named Carol and her family lived at 208 W Sunset Court. The property was maintained at that time; the lawn was mowed; there were holiday decorations, etc. As we understood it, Carol was spending more and more time caring for her aging parents on Owen Drive. Her family seemed to have moved out, and it was then just Carol and her dogs. After a while, it seemed as if it was just the dogs living there, with someone coming by occasionally to care for them. Then, even the dogs were gone, and the house sat empty for a year or longer until the day a work crew came and ripped all the siding off the house and told the neighbors that the house was to be torn down. We assume that the sister referred to in the permit application is Carol, and we are not aware that anyone else had rented and lived in the house.

Sunset Court is a gem within the Sunset Village neighborhood, a little community built around Sunset Park. It has a new vitality; young couples and families with children are moving in. And when these families need to restore and expand their houses, they have done so by adding onto the existing house, maintaining the original spirit of the house and keeping to the scale of the neighborhood.

What the applicant is seeking for 208 West Sunset is a total tear down. As far as we are aware, there has never been tear down in Sunset Court, or in the immediate neighborhood surrounding it. It sets a precedent that perhaps should not be set. Additionally, the proposed new house, based on the plans that we viewed, in style and scale seems more appropriate for a contemporary development than for our neighborhood.

One of the reasons that this permit process and hearing is required is "to protect neighborhood character". Another reason is to encourage re use of existing buildings. The applicant briefly states that the house is in "poor shape". It appears that was the negligence of the owners that led to the present condition of the house. Because of that negligence, the owners should have additional responsibility to re use and restore the house, and not be allowed to tear it down before reasonable measures have been taken to preserve it. The permit application also "strongly encourages" the applicant to "discuss your proposal directly with nearby property owners prior to submitting your application". The applicant has never done this, and the only reason we have a copy of the application and plans, is that a neighbor contacted the City and obtained copies.

We certainly do not want the house to sit much longer in its present shape. It is a sad eyesore; no one has mowed the lawn or done anything to keep up the property or to protect the house since the siding was removed, leading us to believe that the applicant is confident that the permit will be issued. We urge the Board to consider our concerns and the concerns of our neighbors and do what's best not just for the property owners but for our neighborhood.

Dear Alderman Chris Schmidt,

Our names are Krista and Tim Crum. We live directly across the street from this home, at 211 W. Sunset Court. We look out of all West facing windows directly across to this home and are deeply concerned over the plans to demolish the existing home and rebuild another in its place. We are both educated in design (Tim – Architecture; Krista – Interior Design; Both hold Masters Degrees in our fields). We moved into the Sunset Village neighborhood in August 2013 and chose this neighborhood because of its historic character and charm, and we value the extremely friendly and caring residents. Needless to say, the process and plans for this project go against the grain of everything we value about our forever home and community.

Important Information to Know and Consider:

An intensive survey of the architecture/historic buildings, structures and sites within the area of the city known as the Near West Side Neighborhoods was published in 2013 indicating that the home at 208 W. Sunset Court falls within the outline of the Sunset Village Historic District. The homes within this zone, and others outlined in this report are valued resources in this area and up for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Link to the report: www.cityofmadison.com/planning/HoytParkPlan/background/studies.cfm

Concerns about the permitting and building process:

1. I (Krista) returned home during my lunch hour, to find the house at 208 W. Sunset Court being demolished by Habitat Restore. The siding had been removed and all “salvageable” items from inside the home removed. I was told by the Habitat staff that they were taking the entire house down within days. I asked to see the permit for demolition and was told there was not one.
2. I (Krista) called the contractor (no answer), the city and our alder to request any and all information about whether the owner, designer or contractor had gone through the appropriate avenues to demolish, remodel or rebuild anything at the address. I was told many differing stories and ultimately was told that nothing had been approved by way of permits.
3. As residents and neighbors we are very disappointed about the lack of communication and complete disregard for city process and general kind neighborly behavior that the owner, designer, and contractor have exhibited. There is a complete lack of respect for what is valued in this city and neighborhood!
4. We continue to look out of our windows at a ravaged home that should have been better cared for by the family of the resident seeking to rebuild, and should now be restored to its original condition and historically valued character. The lack of care of the house by the family should not be used as a precedent for demolition approval. Additionally, there was never any evidence of attempt to rent the house (per letter of intent by owner).

Concerns about the Proposed Plans:

1. The design and style of the proposed home does not take into consideration the character and history of the existing neighborhood.
2. The proposed home is too large in scale and will look out of place among the other homes directly adjacent and in the neighborhood as a whole.

3. The proposed design is too modern in style relative to the character of the homes in this neighborhood.
4. The proposed design reflects a poor understanding of the historic character applied to all homes in the neighborhood.
5. There is very little design detail that captures the character of the original home, the historic value of the surrounding homes and the character of the neighborhood.
6. The proposed design demonstrates disregard for appropriate scale (square footage), proportion and style. The elevations and plans indicate roof lines, window style & placement and details that look unfinished and disconnected from other elements within the design and from the character of surrounding homes.
7. The selection and use of exterior finishes (cultured stone) on the proposed design in no way fit the neighborhood character.
8. The site and building prep/construction necessary to complete a demolition and construction project on any home, especially a home of this scale will negatively affect the trees, water runoff, street condition, neighboring yards and living standards/comfort of surrounding families.
9. The site plan does not adequately reflect the trees existing on the site and the trees likely to be removed or impacted negatively by demolition and construction. The two trees nearest the screen porch at the back of the proposed house are too close to the structure to survive; the foundation will damage the root systems. There are two trees indicated on the site plan (West of the tree, indicated "to be removed") that do not exist. It is unacceptable to remove or damage these mature, large, character defining hickory trees from this neighborhood.
10. The proposed 16' wide driveway at street is larger than the current 12' wide driveway. This is unacceptable because of the larger area of impervious surface.

Closing remarks:

1. The home is considered valuable per the Near West Side Neighborhood Intensive Survey Report and the residents of the Sunset Village Neighborhood and should be treated as such.
2. We do not want to see the existing home demolished.
3. We want the existing home restored to its original character. It is within reason and possible to restore a home that is damaged by neglected animals and waste, through tested remediation techniques.
4. If the project is approved and moves forward we are concerned about the impact of the home on our property value and the values of our neighbors' homes.
5. If the project is allowed to proceed we feel the owner and contractor should redesign the home to fit the scale, character and identity of the Sunset Village Neighborhood.
6. If the project is allowed to proceed we want to see all of the plans and step-by-step outlines for all phases of the demolition and construction process. We want notification, ahead of time about how it will in any way impact our street, water and sewer lines below street, yard, access to our home and lifestyle over the entire length of time.

7. The owner and contractor should be held responsible (in time and monetary fees) for not adequately following the city process, pulling permits, and notifying neighbors of plans.

Sent from my iPad