

February 5, 2024

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
#017
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Proposal for land division at 1908 Arlington Place
In the University Heights Historic District

To City of Madison Landmarks Commission:

I am writing on behalf of myself and my wife Roberta Gassman in opposition to a proposed land division at 1908 Arlington Place. The proposal is the subject of a public hearing scheduled for 4 p.m., February 12, 2024, by Zoom. I request that a copy of this letter be distributed to the Commission's members before or at the time of the hearing and that it be made a part of the Commission's formal record of the hearing.

Our home is at 1915 Arlington Place which is located on the south side of the street immediately across from the property at 1908 Arlington Place. We have lived there since 1988 and are very familiar with the history of this historic neighborhood.

1908 Arlington Place, known as the Edmund Ray Stevens house ("the Stevens house"), was designed by Claude & Starck, the well-known Madison architectural firm. It was built in 1899. Edmund Ray Stevens was a well-known Madison attorney who ultimately served on the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

When the house was constructed, there were virtually no other houses in University Heights because of the economic downturn in the 1890s. The woods between Camp Randall and the location of the house had been harvested by the encamped soldiers during the Civil War leaving only open fields to the east of where the house was built. The entrance to the Stevens house faces east rather than facing south to the street, because the easterly orientation afforded its occupants an unimpeded view across the fields. There is no other house in University Heights oriented in the same manner,

which makes the Stevens house unique. The wide lawn to its east, which is the proposed location for the land division, is a remnant of that view.

Roberta and I oppose the division of the property. The lot has existed in its current form since at least 1899. There is no good reason to alter it. Doing so would create a buildable lot on which a residence could be constructed. Any such future construction would destroy the last remnant of the wide fields that existed when the Stevens house was built. It would also obscure and possibly cover-up the house's primary façade, which is also an historic neighborhood asset.

The Landmarks Commission should stop those possibilities now by declining to allow the division of the lot. Such action will ensure that the historic nature of the Stevens house is preserved, not only because of its provenance and ownership, but because of its significance to the history of the development of the nationally registered University Heights Historic District and the neighborhood's historic relationship to Camp Randall and the Civil War.

Very truly yours,

PINES BACH LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lester A. Pines".

Lester A. Pines

LAP:mkj

CC: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway (by email)

Alder Regina Vidaver (by email)

Bailey, Heather

From: Jean Halferty <madtowngirl@uwalumni.com>
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2024 8:51 PM
To: PLLCApplications; Fruhling, William
Cc: Mayor; Vidaver, Regina; David Cottingham
Subject: February 12 Landmarks Commission Meeting- Proposal for Land Division at 1908 Arlington Place

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Re: Proposal for land division at 1908 Arlington Place
In the University Heights Historic District

To: City of Madison Landmarks Commission

We are the current owners of 1919 Arlington Place and we are writing to express our opposition to a proposed land division at 1908 Arlington Place. The proposal is the subject of a public hearing scheduled for 5 p.m., February 12, 2024, by Zoom. I request that a copy of this letter be distributed to the Commission's members before or at the time of the hearing and that it be made a part of the Commission's formal record of the hearing.

We purchased 1919 Arlington Place in March of 2023 and are returning to Madison. When we decided to move back to Madison we were attracted to the University Heights neighborhood and Madison's commitment to preserving the neighborhood's character as part of a historic district. Our experience in our suburban Chicago community in recent years has been one of older homes being purchased by developers, torn down, and then very large, expensive homes built in their place. This ultimately has changed both the appearance of the neighborhoods as well as who can purchase there. While we realize the current proposal is only for land division, it is clear to us what the next logical step is once the subdivision is approved. An open lot in University Heights won't remain that way very long.

Since our purchase of 1919 Arlington Place we have enjoyed learning more about the history of the homes and places within the University Heights Historic District. The significance of the Edmund Ray Stevens house and the remaining open field to the east of it are an important part of that history and should be preserved.

Regarding the open land that is proposed to be divided from the 1908 address, we also have concerns about the potential for rainwater runoff to the homes below the lot on Kendall Avenue. The construction of any new structure on the divided lot would create an impervious surface instead of the open space, and rainwater will end up going downhill to Kendall instead of into the ground of the open space.

Finally, Arlington Place is a quiet, and very narrow street. It is already extremely difficult to park on the street, and can also be difficult for trucks of any size to navigate, particularly in the winter. With the subdivided lot, and another curb cut for a new address and driveway, Arlington Place loses nearly all street parking.

For these reasons mentioned above we strongly oppose the division of the property and respectfully ask the Landmarks Commission to decline to allow the division of the 1908 Arlington property.

Best regards,

David J. Cottingham and Jean M. Halferty