

February 7, 2024

City of Madison Landmarks Commission  
201 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Madison, WI 53703

Re: Proposal at 1908 Arlington Place, University Heights

To the Members of the Landmarks Commission, City of Madison:

My husband, Ernesto Livorni, and I write to oppose the plans to divide the lot at 1908 Arlington Place. Please distribute this letter to the Commission prior to the hearing on February 12, 2024.

For the record, we will be affected by any changes to the property on Arlington. For 24 years, we have owned the Frank Riley designed home at 1917 Kendall Ave. Our house's backyard is situated directly behind the lot shared between 1902 and 1908 Arlington Place.

### **HISTORIC DISTRICT CONSIDERATIONS**

We completely agree with the legitimate historic preservation reasons **not** to split the 1908 parcel that are outlined in Lester Pines' letter. We would also like the Commission to recognize that many of us in the University Heights District have gone to great lengths to maintain our old homes in a manner that harmonizes with the historic character of the individual homes and of the neighborhood. It is not uncommon for us to be required either to abandon certain renovations or to pay hefty sums in order to comply with the District's stringent renovation requirements. Dividing the 1908 lot would not only fly in the face of the neighborhood's character (see Pines' letter), and it also disregards the many current homeowners who have acted in good faith for decades as stewards of the District's character.

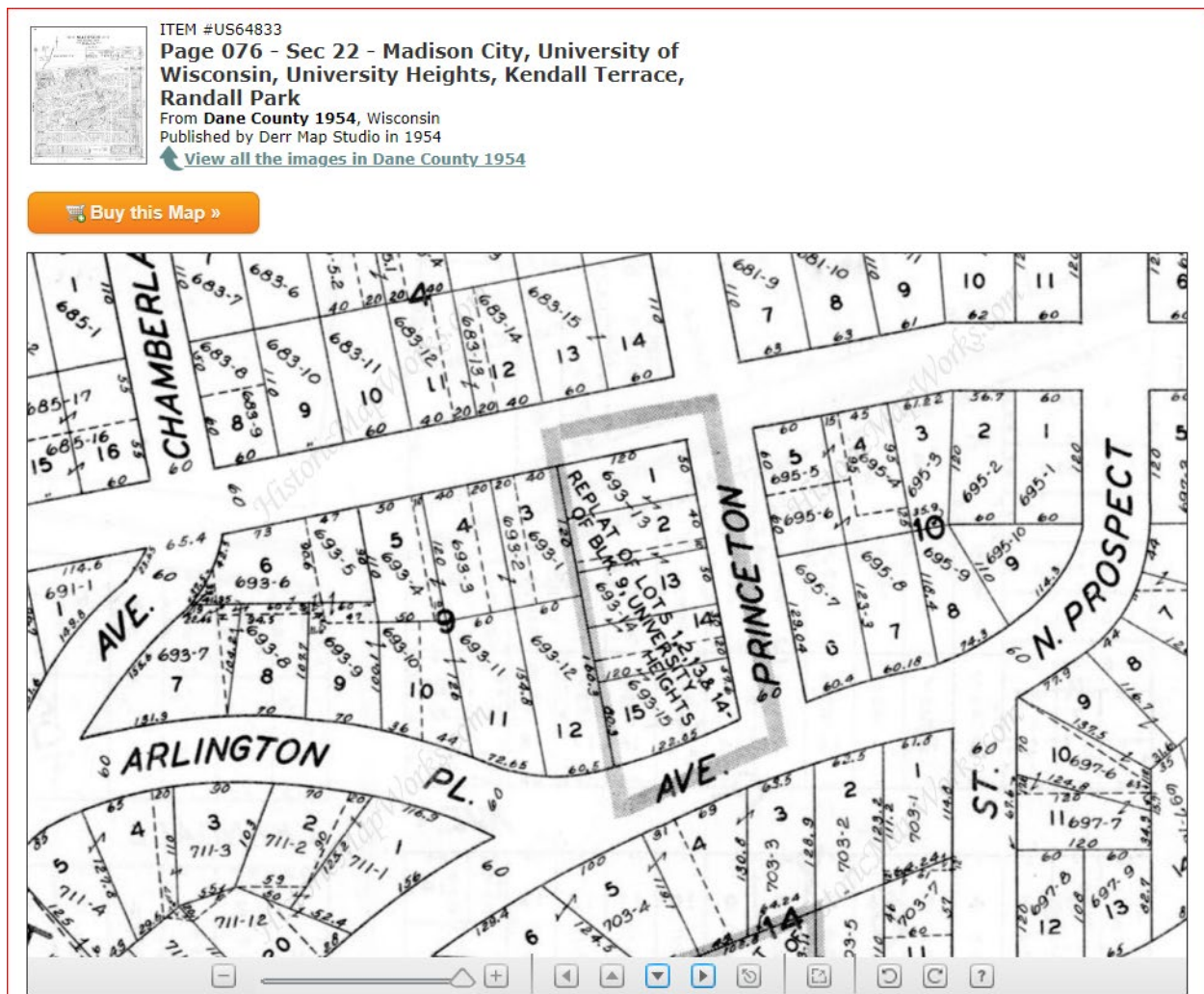
### **NEIGHBORS OR INVESTORS?**

We also question how an LLC, in other words, an investor, can make a purchase in a historic district and then immediately begin reshaping lot lines. The goal of an investor (profit) does not align with the goals of homeowners in a historic district (supporting the charm and character of a neighborhood with a storied past). Mr. Rieber and the LLC behind his name wrote a January 2, 2024 letter to the Commission that builds its strategy on two arbitrarily chosen cases.

**Case 1:** Sandborn Fire Insurance Map of 1942. Using this single map, they argue that the division of lot 10 was already in place. However, I submit a 1954 map of University Heights (by Derr Map Studio) that shows Lot 10 with a dotted line presumably merely indicating shared ownership of that lot. Also note the replatting of Lots 12-14 in Block 9 (along the

west side of Princeton St) that *consolidates* the originally subdivided lots from 5 possible housing units into only 3 (that currently exist). This was presumably done to harmonize with a) the sizes of the yards on Arlington Place (which range from 60 to 130 feet of frontage length along the street) and b) the yards on the East side of Princeton.

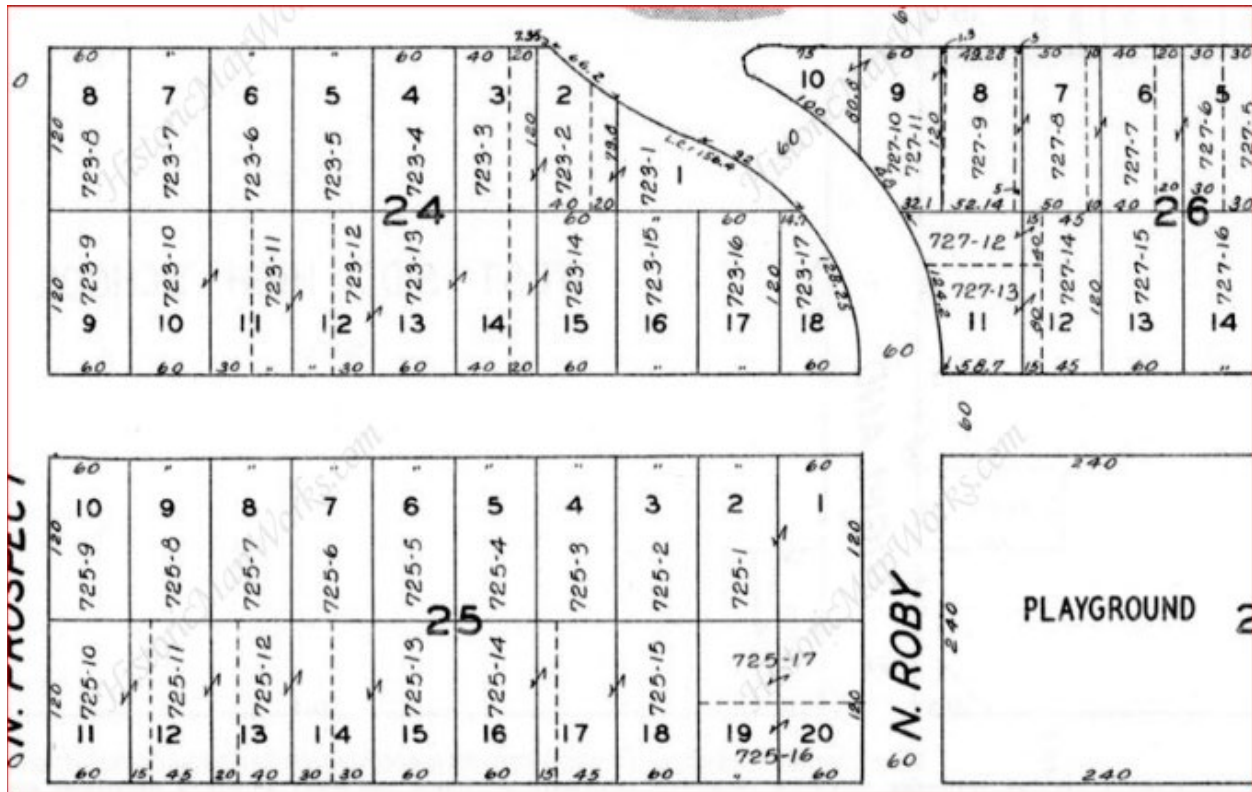
<https://historicmapworks.com/Map/US/64833/Page+076+++Sec+22+++Madison+City++University+of+Wisconsin++University+Heights++Kendall+Terrace++Randall+Park/Dane+County+1954/Wisconsin/>



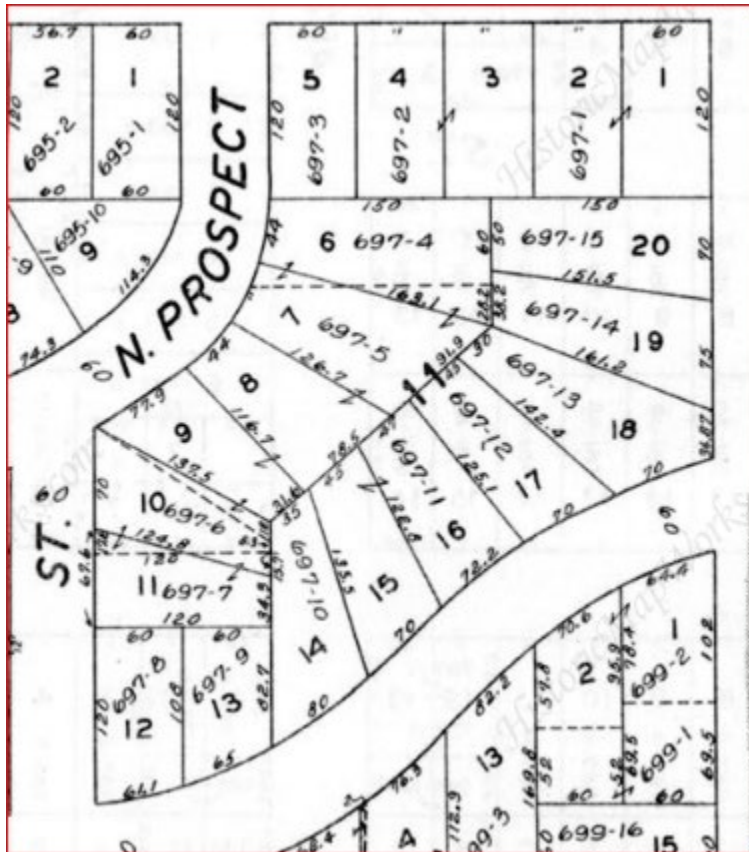
Furthermore, Mr. Rieber/LLC's letter attempts to draw legitimate comparisons with the lot sizes on the 1900 block of Kendall Ave. It should be noted that the replatting/division of lots 3, 4 and 5 on Kendall to accommodate 4 homes (#1911-1915) on 3 drawn lots resulted in

the need for shared driveways among 4 homes: 1911 and 1913 share a drive; 1915 and 1917 share a drive. Shared driveways do not exist on Arlington place.

**Case 2:** 2012-2020 Chadbourne Ave. Looking at the 1954 Derr map of this area, there is a difference between Block 9 (Arlington) and Block 24 (Chadbourne & Roby). It is clear that there were individual Lots demarcated in Block 24 and no dotted lines. Therefore, the argument that these lots were drawn as future new home-sites is much more tenable for dividing the lots at Chadbourne 2012-2020.



The land division of 2012-2020 Chadbourne resembles the division that occurred when Dr. Harvey Barash, former owner of the Historic Ely House at 205 N. Prospect, split his property. There again, the Derr map shows there was already a separate demarcated lot at this site (Lots 9 & 8; Lot 8 split off). Fortunately, Dr. Barash sold lot 8 to a family who built a home there and has lived there since the sale.



## FUTURE BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

1908 and 1902 each own half of the slice of green between their homes. In order to make a legitimate new lot, the LLC will sizably reduce the front yard and main entrance of 1908. This already violates the historic character of the siting of the existing historic home (as the Pines' letter has noted).

If a new residence were built directly alongside 1908, it would obscure and obstruct the main entrance to 1908. It is therefore reasonable to assume that a new residence would be set further back on the lot, perhaps not dissimilar to the newer construction at 209 N. Prospect that was built next to the Ely House. However, such a set-back placement on Arlington would necessarily encroach on the *downhill* backyards of 1917 (our home) and 1921 Kendall Ave. Not only would this be another instance of flouting the historic character of the architectural placements in Block 9, there is also the concern of runoff noted in Jean Halferty's letter. Such runoff would have a deleterious effect on our property.

This letter of opposition, like the Pines' and Halferty's letters, urges the Landmarks Commission to preserve the enduring historic character and original lot lines of University Heights by not allowing the proposed land division at 1908 Arlington Place.

Furthermore, this letter also underscores the need to **protect** all neighborhoods from the strategies of investors (LLCs) to reshape residential areas only for their profit and not for the good of the current and future families living in and caring for these neighborhoods.

Sincerely yours,

Monica Messina

nikmess@hotmail.com

1917 Kendall Ave, Madison, WI 53726

CC: Co-owner, Ernesto Livorni (by email)

**From:** [BRUCE D. KIEFFER](#)  
**To:** [PLLCApplications](#)  
**Subject:** Subdivision at 1908 Arlington Place  
**Date:** Thursday, February 8, 2024 11:49:57 AM

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Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

To: Landmarks Commission (& Staff)

Re: Proposed subdivision of the current lot at 1908 Arlington Place in the University Heights Historic District

(Thanks for your quick response to my questions regarding the issues and concerns (as well as roles and responsibilities) of the Landmarks Commission in property subdivisions in historic districts. The information and references provided were very helpful in formulating a response to the requested property subdivision at 1908 Arlington Place.)

We would like to register our **opposition** to the granting of a 'certificate of appropriateness' to the proposed subdivision because it appears to both 'adversely impact the historic character or significance of a landmark' and also would 'fail to maintain the general lot size pattern of the historic district'

Specifically

Adversely affect the historic character or significance.....:

The east (side) facade is the house at 1908 Arlington's main / primary facade. In fact, we believe it is the only facade that gives it its character and historical significance! The actual front and other side are quite bland and from our perspective somewhat meritless. Also, all the primary rooms of the 1908 house on both floors as well as the fully integrated 'front porch' have as their focus, this primary east facing exterior space. The east 'side' yard also has significant frontage on the street, amplifying its front yard appearance and function. It appears to us, that the potential removal of that exterior space (by subdivision of the existing lot), which is an integral part of its apparent design scheme would significantly degrade it's historic character. In addition, the construction of a code compliant house on the proposed subdivision lot would block from public view the most architecturally significant aspects of this historic property. We do not know if the property is a designated Landmark (we are currently out of the country and unable to determine its status on short notice). Never-the-less, we perceive it as an historic landmark since it has a significant history as one of the first homes to be built in the area. It also has a significant pedigree, namely its design by architects Claude and Starck. A subdivision of the lot and possible construction of a new house would obscure its historic architectural features and leave only bland facades facing the street, thus also degrading the historic district's character. The historic details might remain but how historic would they be if they aren't visible? Thus we conclude that the proposed lot subdivision 1908 Arlington Place would eventually adversely impact the historic character or significance of a landmark and thus should be determined to be inappropriate.

Incompatible w/adjacent lots /fail to maintain lot size pattern of District:

The District has significantly different lot size and street patterns in its various neighborhoods. There is a grid pattern to the streets at its edges and in its more evenly level areas. However, in areas of significant topographic variation, the streets were laid out in a curvilinear pattern. This is a significant visual characteristic of many areas of University Heights. The lots identified as comparable and similar (in the agenda) are all located on grid pattern streets at the norther edge of the district and we believe are not representative of the more curvilinear pattern that exists on Arlington Place or other hilly areas of the District. Kendall Avenue and area (location of the

comparable's) has a linear street pattern and much narrow lots with basically only the front facades visible from the street. That is very much different from Arlington Place and other District streets that follow a more curvilinear pattern. As such, the Arlington lots are wider and much more of the house's front and side facades are exposed and visible. As people walk or drive thru on these streets, the experience is one of unfolding views of varied and historic houses, not a linear street of more compactly arranged house fronts only! We believe that this neighborhood scale experience of much of the District also merits preservation. Not only is it historic but it is also unique! Anecdotally and to illustrate this point, we do not believe any of the existing houses on Arlington Place nor its extension into several blocks of Chamberlain Ave to the west or Prospect Ave. to the east could fit into the proposed lot subdivision at 1908 Arlington Place. Thus for the above reasons we conclude that the proposed lot subdivision 1908 Arlington Place is 'Incompatible w/adjacent lots sizes and fails to maintain lot size pattern of the District' and thus should be determined to be Inappropriate.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns regarding this proposed lot subdivision and could you please acknowledge your receipt of this message. We hope to also attend the upcoming virtual meeting but as mentioned we are out of the country and do not know how successful we will be in making the necessary internet connections. Thus consider this our formal response.

Bruce and Monica Kieffer  
1914 Arlington Place

February 8, 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:

We received the postcard from City of Madison Planning regarding the proposed land division on Arlington Place and are very much opposed to the idea. It seems the only compelling reason to restructure that green-space is so that it can be sold as a buildable lot. That would be a real shame.

We cannot see this property from our home, but we've walked by hundreds of times. The setting is so unique, as the house is built on the western boundary of the lot and its large front porch faces the parcel's **only** yard and that is to the east. This "front yard" expanse is dotted with lovely old pines and offers a breath of fresh air to folks strolling along Arlington Place.

This 125-year-old parcel and home are part of what makes University Heights so special. We would argue that for more than a century the various owners/stewards of this home would list its front yard and view as one of its top assets. We urge the Commission to decline this proposal for a land division. The setting and siting of the home at 1908 Arlington Place surely **are** unique and should be maintained as part of University Height's quirks and charms.

Sincerely,

Jean and Brian Parks  
302 Chamberlain Ave



## Bailey, Heather

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**From:** Martin Reed-McBain <martinreedmcbain@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 8, 2024 7:17 PM  
**To:** PLLCApplications; Fruhling, William  
**Cc:** Mayor; Vidaver, Regina  
**Subject:** February 12 Landmarks Commission Meeting- Proposal for Land Division at 1908 Arlington Place

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February 8, 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

We are the current owners of 1920 Arlington Place, and we are writing to express our strong 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 1920 Arlington Place in July of 2018 having searched for a property in this historical neighborhood for several years since our move to the US from the UK in 2014. We were looking for an established neighborhood that had retained both its charm and character. Having previously lived in historical neighborhoods designated as Conservation Areas, and as such protected by law, we fell in love with this area and were delighted with the obvious care and effort that has gone into preserving the historical significance of the neighborhood. The residents, as stewards of the homes they own, have frequently incurred large financial costs and have gone to considerable lengths to maintain the unique architecture of the individual properties, which, in turn, protects the nature of the neighborhood. The previous owners of our home undertook extensive remedial structural work and enlisted Madison historical engineers to ensure that neither the property nor the street would be adversely affected by this essential work.

We were alarmed when we discovered that there is a proposed lot subdivision at 108 Arlington Place as we firmly believe that this action would be incompatible with the efforts to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood for future generations to enjoy. It is apparent that the sole reason for such a subdivision must be to construct a new property on the divided lot. We are extremely concerned that this would negatively impact the houses in the immediate vicinity of the lot due to the potential for rainwater runoff and the associated damage that this would result in. Moreover, there is a significant risk that the major architectural features of the properties immediately adjacent to any new structure would be degraded and that the public view of these unique homes would undoubtedly be substantially impaired.

In the event of any new construction, there are additional concerns due to the inability of the

surrounding properties and the road to support the level of work, including the digging of foundations, that such a large project would involve. Along with the potential for structural damage, the loss of street parking and challenges associated with accommodating large trucks on a short, narrow road would negatively impact residents' quality of life.

For the above reasons, we strongly propose any subdivision of 1908 Arlington Place, and are grateful for this opportunity to voice our concerns to the Landmarks commission.

Best regards,

Martin O Reed-McBain and Catherine A L Reed-McBain  
1920 Arlington Place, Madison, WI 53726