

July 8, 2015

Dear Members of the City of Madison Plan Commission,

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposal to rezone 501 Welch Avenue and build a driveway on the 3200 block of Center Avenue. We request that the Plan Commission reject this proposal for the following reasons:

1. Driveway/Parking: The addition of a driveway on Center Avenue would make this congested, narrow block more dangerous for drivers and walkers. We are seeing a significant increase in the last year of traffic on this block that is too narrow for cars to pass one another in both directions. Adding a new driveway will only increase the factors affecting accidents and safety of pedestrians. Additionally, a driveway would remove 2 of the existing 7 parking spaces on a block that is already fully utilized on a daily basis. Furthermore, the proposal calls for a new home to be built on the Lot 20, thereby increasing demand for parking while simultaneously reducing available space. Finally, the driveway will require cutting down recently planted trees that provide some of the only green in the front yards on the 3200 block of Center Avenue. Due to the narrow boulevards on the block, the 3200 block lacks space for large trees to grow and the driveway would cut through the only space on that side of the block for these trees to grow.

2. Impact on Home values: We are seriously concerned that this project, as proposed, will negatively impact home values of the surrounding homes. In particular, the driveway plan will have a significant impact on Mary Conroy's home value and comfort due to the proximity of a new driveway and new home, the loss of privacy in her front and, especially her back yard, and fumes from cars in her windows. The new driveway would mean that she has a driveway hemming her in on both sides of her home. Barbara Wesley, who lives directly across Welch from Lot 20, is worried that the project will result in building a home with no green space, no parking and very little space inside. We are concerned that the resulting two properties will result in two homes of lower property value thereby negatively impacting the value of other homes in the neighborhood.

3. Insufficient Notification: The property owners and city have failed to properly notify neighbors of the substantive details of the proposal. A postcard from the City of Madison Planning Division arrived in some of our mailboxes on July 6th, only 1 week before the meeting. The owners convened a meeting with only two households on Welch (in late April), but most of us on either Center or Welch were not notified of this meeting. This meeting should not, as an email between Alder Rummel and one of the owners suggests, be considered sufficient to notify the neighborhood of their plans. Most of us only learned of the plan to build a driveway on Center Ave. at the end of June. Mary Conroy, who had informal conversations with owners, was never told of this plan, though the driveway will be right outside her front door.

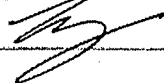
4. Destruction of historical integrity of Gardenridge Plat: The Gardenridge Plat is a triangular plat bounded by Welch, Atwood and Oakridge and cut into two blocks by Center Avenue. Gardenridge was developed in 1918 and 1919 as a complete subdivision (the first of its kind in Madison). All homes on these two blocks were built simultaneously with 501 Welch referred to as "the bungalow" (in the Capital Times article announcing the project, 6/28/1918) due to its architecturally distinct design and small status on the two-block plat full of Dutch Colonial homes.

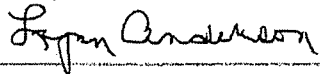
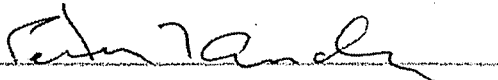
5. Loss of trees: The plan calls for cutting down some of the tall pines on the lot, trees that are the most prominent on the block and visible from all houses on the block. To lose these trees, in addition to the many Ash trees we are losing in the surrounding area, would be a shame.

6. Profit over community: We are troubled by the fact that this proposal is coming not from a resident homeowner, but from a group of investors with no long-term interest in the neighborhood. The project calls for significant changes to our neighborhood and the owners stand to gain financially from the plans, yet it is we, the undersigned neighbors, who will have to live with the results of this project. The previous owner, Margaret Lacy, lived in that house for 2 decades and when we lost her a year ago, we were all deeply saddened to have lost our community 'Grandmother'. In addition to the serious concerns about safety, loss of home value and aesthetic damage, we are also deeply saddened by the prospect of Margaret's home and garden being destroyed to make a profit for people who have not meaningfully approached neighbors to share their plans and get feedback from us.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned neighbors of 501 Welch, are asking the Plan Commission not to recommend this proposal for approval by the City of Madison Common Council.

Sincerely,

Greg and Lara Miller, 3221 Center Avenue
 Lara M.O. Miller

PETER + LYNN ANDERSON 3213 CENTER AVE
 

Mike Richardson + Madeleine Michel

3217 Center Ave ~~Madeleine Michel~~ M-R

Jay Swenson (owner of property at 413 Welch Ave)

3218 James + Jay Swenson

JANE JORGENSEN 509 WELCH AVE (owner)

Jane Jorgensen

Virginia Harrison 510 Welch Ave. (owner)

Virginia T. Harrison

Sue Shaw 3213 Atwood Ave (owner)

Sue Shaw

Mary Conroy 3209 Center Ave. (owner)

~~Mary~~ Mary J. Conroy

Barbara Rae Wesley 506 Welch Avenue (owner)

~~Barbara Rae Wesley~~ Also owner of 502 Welch Ave

Adeline Brickson 514 Welch Avenue (owner)

Adeline Brickson

Jamie Lovely 3212 Center Ave

Jamie Lovely Madison, WI 53704

Andrew Roberts 3118 Center Ave.

Andrew Roberts Madison WI 53704

~~Alice O'Mahar~~ 3118 Center Ave

Alice O'Mahar Madison WI 53704

Quinn O'Mahar 3118 Center Ave

Quinn O'Mahar Madison WI 53704

Melissa A Peyton 510 Welch Ave, Madison WI 53704
MELISSA A PEYTON

Firchow, Kevin

From: Barbara Wesley [mailto:barbarawesley506@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, July 07, 2015 9:17 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Cc: Rummel, Marsha
Subject: Opposition to Planned Development at 501 Welch Avenue

My name is Barbara Wesley. I own and reside in the home located at 506 Welch Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin. This home is located directly across the street from the current empty lot at 501 Welch for which there is a proposal to build upon. I also am the owner of the house located at 502 Welch Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin, which is directly across the street from the home located at 501 Welch Avenue.

I have lived at 506 Welch Avenue for the past almost 55 years, my whole life. I purchased the property located at 502 Welch Avenue in 1987. I am the person who has lived on this street the longest; therefore, I feel I am in a unique position to have witnessed the most history of this street.

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed rezoning application to divide the lots located at 501 Welch. Due to my location, I am one of the most directly affected by these proposed changes. This project is not in the best interest of the street/neighborhood whatsoever for numerous reasons.

Street parking is a major concern. I have attached photographs that I took on the morning of Sunday, June 28, 2015, looking up Welch Avenue and each side on Center Avenue. You will note that every parking spot is taken. The proposed project has the potential of bringing at least 4 additional cars to this immediate area which will require parking, while 2 spaces will be lost with the change of moving the driveway over to Center Avenue. Parking is at a premium now; there is no room to add all these additional vehicles to the street.

Another concern is the loss of the majestic trees that are currently located on the property. These trees can be seen from afar; it would be a loss of beauty that would impact all of us who live nearby. No trees can be planted on Center Avenue due to the narrow terrace between the sidewalk and the street; therefore, we treasure the large, old trees that are currently on the property.

I am concerned about how this project will affect property values. Even after relocating the driveway at 501 Welch, there appears to be no provision for a garage. The very vague outline of a proposed house on the other lot makes absolutely no provision for a driveway or, from what I can tell, any sort of garage. Dividing the lots also results in neither property having any sort of usable yard. We are quite landlocked here as it is, and people surely would wish to have a property with a usable yard rather than just a strip of yard around the perimeter of the house. I feel that 2 lots, neither of which will provide a garage or a usable yard, will be valued at much less than what could be commanded had this site been optimally improved in its current state. I feel that potential future residents will not be inclined to establish here long term without the basic amenities of a driveway, garage or functional yard. This is not in keeping with most of the surrounding properties that do provide these features where lot size permits.

In prior years, a building permit application was made by the prior resident, an elderly woman, who only wanted a simple, very small screened porch to sit on away from the elements. While I understand this was denied due to the current setback requirements, I cannot fathom how this simple request could be denied but yet this project encompassing such magnitude potentially be allowed to go forward.

I also feel it is important to address the phrase noted in their letter of intent stating "in keeping with the spirit and values of the neighborhood." The owners have spent mere hours on the property; they cannot possibly know anything about the spirit and values of the neighborhood. **I DO** know these and can speak to them having lived in this same house for almost 55 years.

These values absolutely do NOT include flipping houses solely for profit. This has never before been done here, and it should not begin now. I grew up on this street with many long-term established families, many of whom still remain. I fear that people who have no connection whatsoever to this street will be allowed to make such radical changes and then walk away free and clear leaving me to forever be impacted by their decisions entirely for their financial gain.

The proposed project is not welcome here whatsoever as evidenced by the opposition of the affected neighbors. I request that you vote to maintain the integrity of the property at 501 Welch Avenue in its current configuration—a gem of a property which is unique, beloved for its many wonderful attributes and truly represents in its present state the spirit and values of the neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara R Wesley
500 Welch Avenue
Madison, WI 53704
~~608-249-7728~~
cyranose506@charter.net

ADDENDUM: Please be advised that as of end of day Tuesday, July 7, 2015, I have not yet received in the mail the postcards informing me of the Planning Commission hearing which is to take place on Monday, July 13,

2015. **THIS LACK OF NOTIFICATION IS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE**, and I will be following up to learn why I have not been properly informed. As the property owner directly across the street from the proposed project, I am more than entitled to receive such notification. As a matter of fact, I should be receiving **TWO** postcards representing my ownership of each of my properties at 502 and 506 Welch Avenue, but I have received none. I expect you to be forthcoming with an explanation for this oversight that will meet with my satisfaction.



Firchow, Kevin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 05, 2015 3:39 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: 501 Welch Ave

Hi Kevin

My name is Jay Swenson and I own the property at 413 Welch Ave. I just found out about the proposed changes for 501 Welch Ave. I wanted to send you this quick note to let you know I oppose all the changes proposed for 501 Welch Ave.. Can you please explain to me why I haven't received any information in the mail? I would like to have as much information as possible.

Thanks

Jay Swenson

Firchow, Kevin

From: Peter Anderson [mailto:panderson@charter.net]
Sent: Sunday, July 05, 2015 1:29 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin; [mailto:marsha@marshamassachusetts.com]
Cc: Gregory Miller
Subject: 501 Welch

Kevin and Marsha,

We were made aware last Sunday, June 28, of the proposed rezoning of 501 Welch to allow the two lots, 1 and 20, to be split and a proposed new driveway on Center Avenue. My wife and I have lived at 3213 Center since November of 1983 and have raised our family here. That is one lot removed from 501 Welch. We also have owned 3217 Center, as 3217 LLC, since 2007. That house is now rented to a young family of four.

We are strongly against this zoning change. Our first concern is Parking. The 3200 block of Center Avenue is a narrow street and therefore it is one side allowed parking. It is common for the 7 spaces on our block to all be occupied, especially nights and weekends. People visiting homes on Atwood use these spots too. The new driveway as proposed will eliminate at least 2 spaces. Parking overflow from our block often ends up on Welch. The proposal for lot 20, the redivision, said that it would be rezoned for a future "...code compliant, single family dwelling." The Proposal goes on to say, "...No Parking is proposed for lot 20 at this time." Logically this means more cars parked on the street with less space to put them.

The driveway to be created on Center Ave. would be dangerous. The south side of the 3200 block of Center Ave has 4 addresses plus a duplex on Atwood which shares a driveway on Center. On our block there are currently three driveways, 2 shared, for six dwelling units, the duplex included. Three of the houses in the 3200 block have children that attend and walk to and from Lowell School and they play outdoors. When two autos approach from opposite directions one must move aside to allow the other to pass. It can be quite congested. The curved nature of the street, Parked cars on the street, and vehicles turning left off of Atwood require great care be taken when backing out. Center Ave through our block is quite narrow. There have been close calls over the years. We believe an additional driveway will create a greater risk for the families living here.

We also believe that it would be an injury to our neighborhood to replace a 96 year old garden with a new structure that is to be squeezed onto a property the concept of which was to provide space for the resident of 501 Welch.

Parking for lot 20 will be on street. There are many towns and cities that require on site parking for new construction. We realize Madison does not. But in this single family neighborhood on site parking is the norm and we hope that is maintained.

Thank you,
Peter and Lynn Anderson

Firchow, Kevin

From: mary conroy [mailto:mary0551@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 02, 2015 8:49 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: 501 Welch zoning proposal

Dear Kevin,

I live next door to 501 Welch Avenue. The proposed zoning plans would insert a driveway right next to my yard. This concerns me for several reasons.

First is pedestrian safety. Many young children live on our block. This will be just one more opportunity for a vehicle to hit one of them. The children already have to watch for cars coming from driveways at three other spots on our short block. And we all know children aren't the only ones who can be rash or distracted as they walk or run on the sidewalk. I own a dog, and this driveway would be the first thing we encounter as we turn left from my house to take walks. Often, I'm still balancing a leash, water bottles, keys and books for the Little Free Library by the time I get to the spot where the driveway will be. I have multiple sclerosis, and at 65, my reaction time is far slower than it ever was.

Second is street safety and parking. The proposal seems to show that the driveway will take up at least two parking spaces. Center Avenue is an extremely narrow street with a lot of traffic often people turn off Atwood to get to Oakridge. It's so narrow that parking is only permitted on one side. In addition to residents, teachers from Lowell School and commuters who want to catch a bus on Oakridge park on Center. The proposed driveway creates one more opportunity for a vehicle collision on Center. Just two weeks ago, we had a car-bicycle collision.

The terrace on the Center Ave. side of 501 Welch is the only space for snowplows to deposit snow. Terrace space is practically non-existent in front of the rest of the houses. On the other side of Center Avenue, residents have no terraces. It's already very difficult to find another place to park on both Center and Welch Avenues for street-sweeping days and Isthmus snow parking days.

Third is the loss of trees. Margaret Lacy, the previous resident, planted aspens that would have to be cut down should this driveway be allowed. I've lost two arborvitae in front of my house, and no one else has trees in their miniscule front yards. Under the proposal, majestic blue spruces would be cut down from the 501 lot.

Fourth, I'm concerned about the loss of property values to my home. I've lived there for 23 years and have never voted against a school referendum. My home was built in 1918, and needs repairs every year. I've tried to keep the home attractive and welcoming as part of being a good neighbor. I will lose a considerable amount of my investment if a driveway is put in next to my house.

Fifth, I still have not received anything in writing from the owners or the city. What kind of proper notification is that? I'm concerned about the fact that we were only alerted to these changes by signs put in Margaret's window Thursday.

Sixth, the plans are very vague regarding placement and size of the second home, and whether the new owners intend to put a fence along the lot line. With a second home on the lot, I'll lose my privacy. Currently, the lot line has a small picket fence, a privacy fence, the back of Margaret Lacy's garage, and a trellis that is in disrepair. Will I have to put up a fence?

Last, I'm concerned that the new owners care nothing about the neighborhood. They are from Minnesota and visit the home only occasionally. We have no way to contact them, and in fact, don't even have their names, since only one was listed on the city assessor's page. Grapevines and Queen Anne's lace from 501 Welch are overtaking my yard this year. I feel as if I've been hit in a drive-by shooting.

Please help us, Kevin. Thanks so much.

Mary

Firchow, Kevin

From: Gregory Miller [gregorymiller@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2015 8:54 PM
To: Rummel, Marsha; Firchow, Kevin
Subject: RE: Subdivision of lot at 501 Welch

Marsha and Kevin,

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed division of 501 Welch into 2 lots. Now that we have seen the plans on the Planning Commission site, it is clear to us that this proposal is not in the best interest of the neighborhood. We are particularly concerned about the following:

1. The creation of a driveway off Center Ave (resulting in the likely loss of 2 of 7 parking spots on the block, as well as the loss of recently-planted trees in the only place on the block where large trees could grow due to the 12"-24" boulevards on the block)
2. the impact on property values to surrounding properties
3. the loss of the tallest trees on the block (non-Ash) in the side yard (we recently lost a large Maple directly opposite 501 Welch and anticipate losing many other trees in the coming years)
4. and finally, we are deeply troubled by the fact that this proposal is coming from people with no demonstrated long-term interest in the neighborhood, but rather from owners who are interested in flipping the home for a profit. Housing policy should not be set by people with no stake in the long-term consequences of these decisions.

We have spoken to all but one of the property owners on the 3200 block of Center and ALL have expressed deep concerns not only about the details of the proposed plans, but also the lack of clear information provided to us about this important decision by the property owners and the city.

A final note: You will find that feelings about this property run strong as the former owner, Margaret Lacy, was beloved by everyone on this block and beyond. Margaret loved nothing more than inviting the neighborhood children over to play in her yard and offering parents a glass of wine. We know these sentiments don't guide policy decisions, but it informs our feelings about this place and the thought of that being lost so that someone can turn a profit is abhorrent to both of us.

You should expect significant opposition to this plan from the people most impacted by it and we request that the application be denied in its current form.

Sincerely,

Greg and Lara Miller
3221 Center Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

> From: district6@cityofmadison.com
> To: gregorytmiller@hotmail.com
> Subject: Re: Subdivision of lot at 501 Welch
> Date: Sun, 24 May 2015 02:58:21 +0000
>
> Hi Gregory and Lara-
>
> Thanks for contacting me about your concerns regarding the subdivision of 501 Welch. The owners said they had contacted some immediate neighbors but I don't know how far out into the neighborhood they went.
>
> I haven't seen an application yet from the Planning Division so as far as I know nothing has been submitted but I expect it is in the works.
>
> Just now I looked at the Planning Division page on the city's website under current projects. You can find the link at the top of the city's home page if you select Agencies and then Planning and then Current Development Projects. Since a subdivision would need to be reviewed by the Plan Commission, it should show up on this list.
>
> <http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/projects/current.html>
>
> Another way to track items is to check out the Plan Commission Secretary's report at the end of each Plan Commission agenda. The May 19th Secy's report for June 8 and June 22 does not list 501 Welch.
>
> <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=A&ID=347766&GUID=87E6330D-DCF7-4137-BA5B-41B311C612A1>
>
> You can find the Plan Commission agenda if you search the Legislative Information Center which is located at the bottom of the city's homepage and scroll down for Plan Com
>
> I will check in with Planning staff to see what they know.
>
> Marsha
>
> _____
> From: Gregory Miller <gregorytmiller@hotmail.com>
> Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2015 8:24 PM
> To: Rummel, Marsha
> Cc: Lara Miller
> Subject: Subdivision of lot at 501 Welch
>
> Dear Ald. Rummel,
>
> I am writing to inquire about possible subdivision of the lot at 501 Welch, at the corner of Welch and Center Ave. I am a property owner down the block at 3221 Center and have questions and concerns about plans to subdivide this lot and build a new home in the side yard. Can you give me guidance on any permits that have been requested for this property? Is the property a subject of any upcoming Planning Commission meetings (6/13?) or other city administrative considerations? Many neighbors on the surrounding blocks are concerned by the plans shared by the new non-resident owners with another neighbor last weekend.
>
> Thank you in advance for any guidance you might be able to provide.

>
> Sincerely,
>
> Greg Miller

Firchow, Kevin

From: Carrie H [redacted@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2015 8:51 PM
To: Firchow, Kevin
Subject: Concerns Re: 501 Welch Ave Project

Dear Mr. Firchow,

I see that the 501 Welch project (Rezone 2 platted lots developed with a single-family residence to allow lots to be sold separately) will be brought in July, and unfortunately, I will be out of town. I wanted to pass along my thoughts on the project in writing to be considered at the July 13th Plan Commission meeting and the July 21st Common Council meeting:

I have some significant concerns about this proposal and fully do not support the proposal to split the property. This property does not need to be "flipped" in any way, as described in the proposal. The neighborhood is not in need of additional housing, and while it is a desirable place to live, adding a new property will not enhance the neighborhood. Rather it will reduce the property values of the current and proposed lot by creating two lots with minimal green space, and no parking option for one house. Also, it will take away visual open green space and will remove mature non-ash trees, as well as smaller trees not shown on the proposal where the second house would be placed. This part of our neighborhood has recently experienced the loss of a mature maple tree during a large storm, which has significantly altered the landscape. The proposed removal of the trees would be another drastic alteration of the neighborhood. And while I understand we can't tell people what trees to keep on their property, this proposal suggests that the current owner intends to sell/flip the property anyway and they are not doing it for personal use, but instead to only increase profits without taking the neighborhood impact into consideration. I am saddened to learn the current owners place so little value on such a beautiful piece of property. The current owners bought this property only a few months ago, intend to thoroughly disrupt a large visual portion of the block, then sell to make a few bucks. I live in a neighborhood that does not believe that just because you can do something, you should. And this seems to be the intent behind these plans.

Sincerely,
Carrie Hinterthuer
618 Welch Ave