

Ms. Scanlon:

I am writing in response to the letter we received last week on the upcoming public hearing on the proposed demolition of an existing garage and construction of a new garage at 2109 Chamberlain Ave. We reside 2113 Chamberlain, directly to the west of this house. As I will be traveling on October 4, 2010, and unable to attend the public hearing, I offer the following:

- We are not opposed to a new garage being constructed. The existing garage has been in disrepair for several years and the current owner, Mr. Bruns, has not done anything to improve it since he took ownership in the fall of 2009. In fact, he's allowed for its deterioration to occur at a more rapid pace by leaving the doors open and interior exposed to the elements. That said, the garage cannot be in any worse shape than what was the condition of the house when Mr. Bruns embarked on his remodeling/house-flipping odyssey last year. So, it may be possible to rehab the garage as he is doing with a house that was in tear-down condition when he purchased it.

- In the event that he is allowed to demolish the existing structure, we request that any new garage be consistent with the character of the neighborhood. We note that the proposed garage is much larger than the existing structure (on a very narrow lot) and will leave even less green space in an already small backyard. Moreover, the proposed design doesn't appear to be very "historic" but will admit to not being an expert on these issues. We do know that when we did our own addition, we spent a great deal of time discussing the garage design with Ms. Rankin to ensure that it was not out of place with the neighborhood. For instance, she did not want a single two-car garage door. Instead, she approved of two separate doors and a style of door (and lighting) that was not too modern. A photo of what was approved and what we built is attached. Blocked in this photo are the decorative but not functional handles on each door that make it look like each door opens out, not up, like the carriage doors that had been on our old garage.

- We are surprised that Mr. Bruns wants to demolish the garage instead of restoring it given that such plans have never before been included with his proposals for the property. In fact, at the April 26, 2010 Landmarks Commission meeting, I specifically questioned why the garage was not included in the earlier proposed plans for the property. While I don't recall Mr. Bruns' exact response, those of us in attendance that day were certainly left with the impression that he had no intention of demolishing this existing structure. Accordingly, we would request that the Landmarks Commission make sure that it now has the complete plans for this property and there are no other changes that we will all learn about at a later date.

- The site survey dated April 10, 2010 with the proposed garage indicated on it is NOT a current site survey in that it does not accurately reflect the footprint of the house as built this summer. That is, this site survey does not reflect the revisions to the rear addition that had to be made to comply with the setback requirements. We would request that in making its decision that the Landmarks Commission request and review a site survey that accurately and exactly reflects (not just sketched) the footprint of the house, proposed garage and any changes to the existing shared driveway. Given that this is a shared driveway by three properties, we assume that Mr. Bruns will be creating a new driveway extension off of the existing concrete instead of constructing an entirely new driveway footprint as indicated on the current site survey.

Thank you for your time and soliciting our input on the proposed plans. If you have any questions or follow-up prior to the meeting, please let us know.

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