

From: todd@barnettarchitecture.com
To: [Scanlon, Amy](#)
Subject: 25 North Prospect
Date: Monday, February 13, 2012 10:11:25 AM

Dear Ms. Scanlon and Members of the Landmarks Commission-
I am short on time but feel strongly enough to drop you a quick note about the proposed residence at 25 North Prospect. A few supporting thoughts:

1. I am familiar with the architect, Thomas Pfifer and Partners, and have admired their work. Having one of their designs in Madison is appealing.
2. The effort to save the existing trees is applauded and the assembly of parts to accomplish it is a fine response.
3. There are many flat roofs in the area. Employing one for this design seems appropriate.
4. The scale is very respectful.
5. The potential palate of materials, as a starting point, is fine.
6. Modern architecture, done appropriately, has a place within the historic district.

Despite the above, there is one critical issue which I request that you discuss carefully: the exterior skin composition. The facade articulation turns its back on the street - other than the 45 degree chamfered windows and double-wide garage door. What connects all - perhaps with rare exception - of the houses in this district is a connection to the street, neighbors and environment. The proposed treatment, to be blunt, reminds me of the 1960's apartments that we see scattered about the isthmus: blank facades with the exception of a little front door (this design doesn't even have a "front" door) with all windows to the side. None to the street. No connection to the urban world which it is part of. I am confident in saying that none of us believe that these designs are historical precedents to model future work. Why here? If this was a design for a house truly in the woods where its relationship was solely to the trees - and not a neighborhood - I could find the approach reasonable (although I would want to see the trees out the front elevation). Personally, if I were building a home in this area, I would want to see the rich range of homes out front windows. I wonder why the approach here is the polar opposite and turn itself, essentially, inward. What does this say?

I am uncomfortable, as well, with the static approach to the panel format/grid. Although I appreciate the high quality of materials which are proposed, I believe it fails to be sympathetic to the area. Although it may sound a bit vague, the new Johnsen Schmalzing in the district is a successful, modern design because it has warmth, texture and pattern (yes, I know, vague) which connects it to its neighbors. As a last thought, imagine for a moment taking same pattern proposed and switched it another less attractive materials (yours for the choosing). What are you thoughts?

I also believe that simple elevations and 3D renderings shown from the ground level are important to get a better sense of the design. The current presentation format is to "graphic" and not "architectural" which may compromise how the design "reads".

Thank you for your consideration.

Todd

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